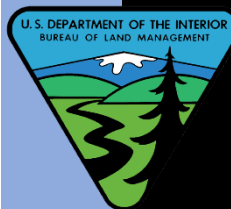


# **Business Plan John Day Basin Fee Area**



**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Prineville District  
Central Oregon Field Office**

**July 2025**





**Business Plan  
John Day Basin Fee Area**

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## 1. Executive Summary

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Central Oregon Field Office manages recreation within the John Day Basin on BLM lands. Each year the John Day Wild and Scenic River and developed campgrounds within the river basin provide thousands of visitors with vast recreational opportunities.

The John Day River System was first established as a fee area in 1998 under the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program and includes 17 recreation sites and about 282 river miles of the mainstem, South Fork, and North Fork John Day Rivers. Visitors pay Expanded Amenity Fees in the form of Recreation Use Permits (RUPs) to camp at four established fee campgrounds and pay Individual Special Recreation Permit (ISRP) Fees in the form of boater permits to boat the Wild and Scenic portion of the John Day River. Fees are not currently charged at other campgrounds, day use sites, boat launches/takeouts, and areas with dispersed recreation opportunities within the Basin. Fees are authorized under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA, 1976) and the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), 2004 (P.L. 108-447, as amended).

BLM uses the fee money collected to maintain and improve the campgrounds and recreation sites within the Basin providing the public a direct return on investment. However, current fee revenue from boater permits and the four fee campgrounds (\$43,631.50 and \$4,693.43 respectively in 2024) does not cover the cost to support river and campground operations and maintenance (between \$380,000 to \$540,000 per year). Visitation has increased, infrastructure has aged, and inflation has reduced purchasing power. Adjusting fees will help the BLM improve public access, facilitate a more positive recreational experience, provide for public health and safety, serve local and regional residents, and continue to draw visitors and their tourism spending to the local area.

This Business Plan for the John Day Basin Fee Area presents the fee proposals described in the following bullets and summarized in the subsequent table:

- Increase existing Expanded Amenity Fees at four fee campgrounds (Service Creek, Muleshoe, Lone Pine, and Big Bend) from \$5 per single site per night and \$2 per extra vehicle per night to \$15 per single site per night, \$30 per group site per night, and \$5 per extra vehicle per night. Single sites accommodate two vehicles and up to eight people. Group sites accommodate four vehicles and up to 16 people. These four campgrounds do not currently have groups sites, but they may be added in the future.
- Add new Expanded Amenity Fees at Burnt Ranch, Priest Hole, and Thirtymile campgrounds for \$15 per single site per night, \$5 per extra vehicle per night, \$30 per group site per night, as well as \$5 per parked vehicle per night for designated dispersed and overflow lot camping areas. Single sites accommodate up to two vehicles and up to eight people. Group sites accommodate up to four vehicles and up to 16 people. The BLM will not charge fees at Thirtymile until campground construction is complete.
- Adjust existing fees to boat on the Wild and Scenic sections of the John Day River during High Seasons from \$20 per trip for up to 16 people for up to 14 days, to \$5 a person a day for overnight trips; and from \$10 per trip up to 16 people to \$5 a person for day trips. The fee change does not affect group size limit, which is 16 people per group,



except in Segment 1 during the Fall High Season when the group size limit is 4 people per group.

- Include a new frequent boater pass option for non-commercial, day-use in river Segments 3A/3B and 1A/1B year-round excluding the fall Segment 1A/1B High Season. Frequent Boater Passes will be \$30 a person per calendar year and are non-transferable. The BLM will monitor day-use each year and impose blackout dates for weekends that reach 75% of the allowed quota for two years in a row.

<b>Campground</b>	<b>Existing Fee Per Site/Night</b>	<b>Proposed Fee Per Site/Night</b>
Service Creek	\$5 per single site. \$2 per extra vehicle.	\$15 per single site. \$30 per group site. \$5 per extra vehicle.
Muleshoe	\$5 per single site. \$2 per extra vehicle.	\$15 per single site. \$30 per group site. \$5 per extra vehicle.
Lone Pine	\$5 per single site. \$2 per extra vehicle.	\$15 per single site. \$30 per group site. \$5 per extra vehicle.
Big Bend	\$5 per single site. \$2 per extra vehicle.	\$15 per single site. \$30 per group site. \$5 per extra vehicle.
Burnt Ranch	Developed camping, no current fee.	\$15 per single site. \$30 per group site. \$5 per extra vehicle. \$5 per vehicle for designated dispersed and overflow lot camping areas.
Priest Hole	Developed camping, no current fee.	\$15 per single site. \$30 per group site. \$5 per extra vehicle. \$5 per vehicle for designated dispersed and overflow lot camping areas.
Thirtymile	Undeveloped dispersed camping, no current fee	\$15 per single site. \$30 per group site. \$5 per extra vehicle. \$5 per vehicle for designated dispersed and overflow lot camping areas.



Permit Type	Existing Boater Permit (ISRP) Fee	Proposed Boater Permit (ISRP) Fee	Proposed Frequent Boater Pass
Overnight Boating Permit	<b>High Season:</b> \$20 per group up to 16 people up to 14 days. <b>Low Season:</b> No current fee.	<b>High Season:</b> \$5 dollars per person per day. <b>Low Season:</b> No current fee.	Not available.
Day Use Boating Permit	<b>High Season:</b> \$10 per group up to 16 people. <b>Low Season:</b> No current fee.	<b>High Season:</b> \$5 dollars per person. <b>Low Season:</b> No current fee.	\$30 per person per calendar year. Available for non-commercial, Segment 3A/3B and 1A/1B day use boating, except for Segment 1A/1B Fall High Season. Passes are not transferrable.

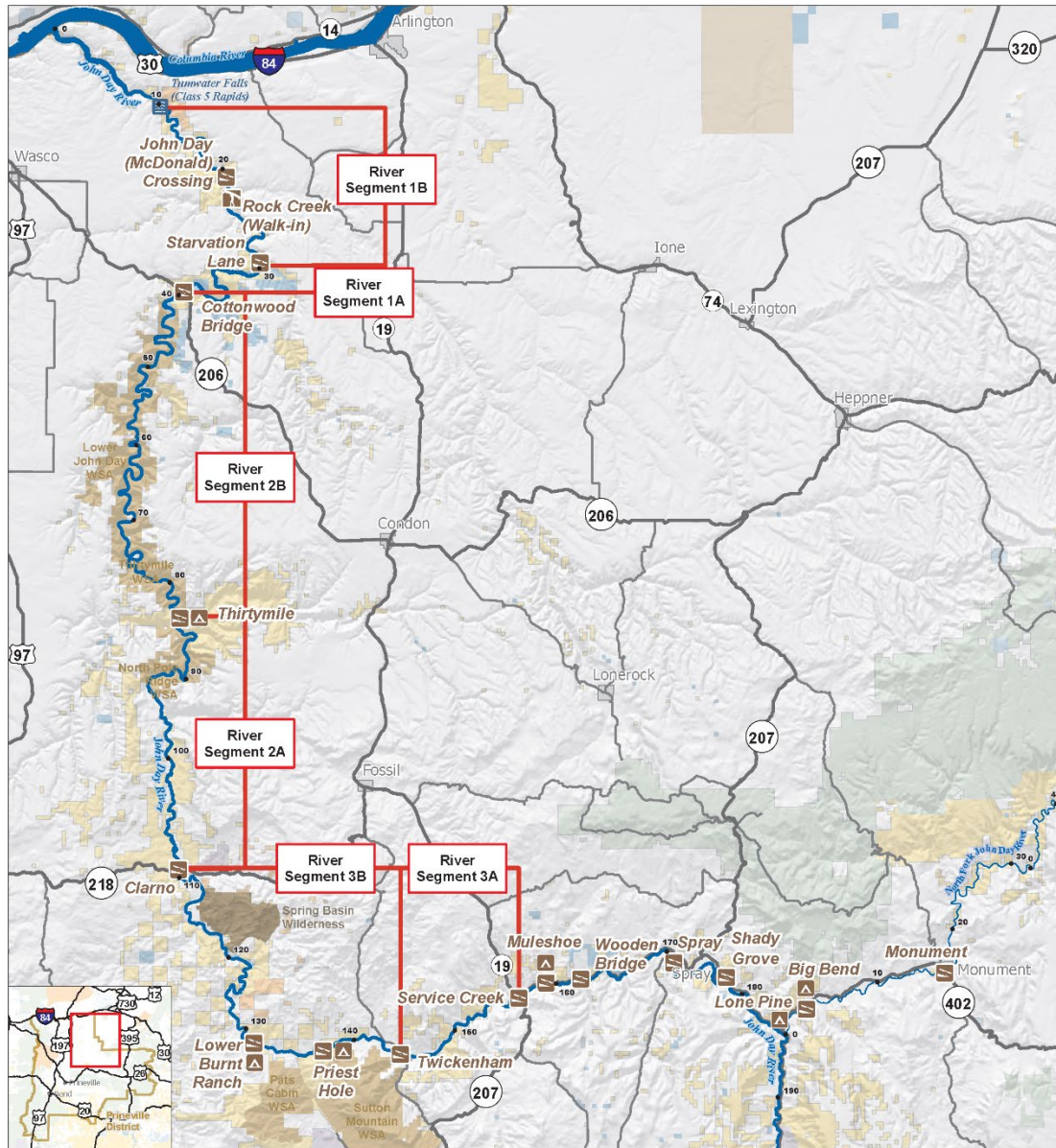
This business plan analyzes these proposals, describes how the Central Oregon Field Office plans to use recreation fees and provides a formal method for public and stakeholder feedback, comment, and engagement in the fee program.



# Map of the John Day River Basin Fee Area



3/18/2025



- Boating Access Point
- Walk-in Access Point
- Campground
- Major road
- Highway

## Administered Lands

- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Indian Affairs

- Other Federal
- State
- Private/Other



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of this map or the data displayed for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

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## **2. Authorities, Guidance and Management Direction Background**

FLPMA contains BLM's general land use management authority over public lands and establishes outdoor recreation as one of the principal uses of those lands. Section 302 (b) of FLPMA authorizes the BLM to manage the use of the public lands through permits.

43 CFR 2930 - Recreation Permits on Public Lands contain the BLM's regulations governing recreation permits and fees, and recreation fee program policy is further explained and guided by MS-2930 (Recreation Permit and Fees Manual), and H-2930-1 (Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook).

The 2015 John Day Basin Resource Management Plan (JDBRMP) is BLM's land use planning document for the John Day River Basin. The John Day Wild and Scenic River and developed campgrounds within the Basin provide diverse recreational opportunities and help the BLM meet recreational objectives in the JDBRMP.

Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), 2004 (P.L. 108-447, as amended) replaced applicable portions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act for BLM's authority to collect recreation fees. It provides the BLM the authority to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees at federal recreation lands and waters that meet certain requirements. FLREA allows the BLM to keep fee revenue at local offices where it is collected. It directs how the BLM will manage and utilize the money, including for expenses such as facility repair, maintenance and enhancement, interpretation, visitor information, services and needs assessments, signage, law enforcement directly related to public use and recreation, and operating or capital costs associated with the Recreation and Visitor Services program.

BLM guidance requires that each fee program have a business plan to propose recreation use fee adjustments or additions. A business plan helps determine where fees are appropriate, the cost of administering the fee program, how much fees should be, and how fees will be spent. It also provides a communications plan to encourage and ensure public participation.

Under FLREA, Standard or Expanded Amenity fees may be charged for using certain facilities or services, including developed campgrounds, that meet the criteria defined below. These fees are usually implemented through a BLM Recreation Use Permit (RUP). FLREA also allows BLM to charge fees for allocated use of special areas in the form of an Individual Special Recreation Permits (ISRP). Special areas include National Wild and Scenic River Systems, such as the John Day River. FLREA and BLM policy require that recreation fee revenue be deposited into a separate account from appropriated funding. This business plan is focused on Expanded Amenity fees (campgrounds) and ISRP fees (boater permits) and will not address other FLREA fee types.

FLREA describes the required amenities for charging campground fees, a type of Expanded Amenity Recreation Fee. In order to charge a fee, the developed campground/s must have at least five of the nine following amenities: (1) tent or trailer spaces, (2) picnic tables, (3) drinking water, (4) access roads, (5) fee collection by an employee or agent of the BLM, (6) reasonable



visitor protection, (7) refuse containers, (8) toilet facilities, (9) simple devices for containing a campfire.

Special Areas are defined under CFR 43 U.S.C. 2932.5 and include Wild and Scenic Rivers. ISRPs are used to permit boating use on the John Day Wild and Scenic River in accordance with the JDBRMP and the John Day River Special Recreation Permit Fee Business Plan approved by the John Day-Snake Resource Advisory Council (RAC) in 2015.

### **3. Background**

#### *3.a. John Day Basin Fee Area Description and Activities*

Central Oregon Field Office within the Prineville District manages BLM land in the John Day Basin. Much of the field office is high desert with sage, juniper, and the occasional ponderosa pine. Several small towns lay within the field office boundaries including Wasco, Moro, Fossil, Condon, Mitchell, Monument, Kimberly, Spray, and Dayville. The cities of Bend, Redmond, Prineville, and Madras are within a one-to-three-hour drive of the Basin, and the larger cities of Portland and Eugene are within a three-to-five-hour drive. Sherman, Gilliam, Wasco, Wheeler, Jefferson, and Crook Counties all have land in the John Day Basin. Most of the Basin falls within the ceded lands of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs and partly within the ceded lands of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, as well as within the areas of interest of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Burns Paiute Tribe.

The John Day Basin has several recreation management zones identified in the JDBRMP. Activities listed within these zones include driving for pleasure, sightseeing, camping, fishing, hunting, watercraft access, natural landscape views, motorboating, education and interpretation, photography, swimming, boating, and wildlife watching.



*Campsite at Service Creek*

#### *3.b Campground Descriptions*

The Field Office manages four developed fee campgrounds within the Basin (Service Creek, Muleshoe, Lone Pine, and Big Bend) and two developed campgrounds where fees are not currently charged (Burnt Ranch and Priest Hole). The BLM manages the Thirtymile Recreation Site for dispersed use but plans to develop the Thirtymile Campground once funding is secured. At present, all sites are first-come, first-served and open year-round.

At fee sites, the BLM currently charges fees from April 1 through November 30 and does not collect during winter months. However, fee collection periods may be reevaluated based on staffing, use levels, and management needs. Fee collection is conducted through a variety of methods including mobile and on-site systems, consistent with current BLM policy and available technology.

The campgrounds within the Basin are basic in design and amenities. Each campsite contains a flat area for camping, a fire ring, and picnic table. Each campground has road access, at least one toilet, and a reasonable level of visitor protection. A BLM ranger currently collects fees at fee



sites. At present, garbage collection and drinking water are not available at any of the campgrounds, and there is no reliable cell phone coverage.

#### *Existing Fee Campground Details*

Service Creek and Muleshoe Campgrounds are located near Service Creek, Oregon along the John Day River and State Route 207. Big Bend and Lone Pine Campgrounds are between Kimberly and Monument along the North Fork of the John Day River and State Route 402. Priest Hole is on a gravel road between Twickenham and Burnt Ranch. Thirtymile is approximately 20 miles southwest of Condon down Armstrong Canyon Road.

Service Creek Campground has four walk-in tent sites in one continuous area under ponderosa and juniper trees. A large gravel lot accommodates parking for campers and for boaters using the Service Creek primitive boat launch adjacent to the campsites.

Muleshoe Campground has six graveled drive-in sites and two walk-in sites that overlook the John Day River. Muleshoe also offers a primitive boat launch adjacent to the campground.



*Campsite at Muleshoe Campground.*



*Campsite at Lone Pine Campground.*

Lone Pine Campground has five graveled drive-in sites near the river. The entrance road drops down into the campground providing privacy from the highway.

Big Bend Campground has four graveled drive-in sites near the river. The entrance road is steep and four-wheel drive is recommended.

#### *New Addition Fee Campground Details*

Burnt Ranch Campground is located down the Burnt Ranch gravel road just east and upstream of the Burnt Ranch primitive boat launch. The campground has four drive-in sites with picnic tables, fire rings, and a flat area for parking. There is a vault toilet between the campground and the primitive boat launch and launch kiosk. This plan proposes the inclusion of Burnt Ranch into the fee program.

Priest Hole Campground is accessed by two gravel roads. One road comes from the Burnt Ranch Road to the west, and the other comes from the Burnt Ranch-Twickenham Road to the south. The campground has 14 drive-in campsites, one group site, a designated dispersed walk-in camping area, day-use areas, two vault toilets, three large parking areas, a primitive boat ramp, kiosks, and interpretive signage. BLM identified a large overflow lot that may be upgraded as overflow parking or a group site in the future. Each drive-in campsite has a picnic table, fire ring, and a flat camping area. One site has power hook ups for a camp host. This area was undeveloped and open to dispersed camping until the BLM developed it in 2025 due to resource



concerns (USDI BLM 2023). The Aquatics Program invested over \$1 million in these facility upgrades to improve water quality, human health and safety, and the recreational experience. This plan proposes the inclusion of the brand-new Priest Hole Campground into the fee program.

Thirtymile was acquired by the BLM in 2018 and 2019 and is accessed by Armstrong Road near Condon. The site is open for dispersed camping and is awaiting funding for development (USDI BLM 2021). Construction will include up to 20 campsites with a flat area to camp, picnic table, fire ring, and vehicle parking. Other amenities include two toilets, a kiosk, boat ramp, interpretive signage, accessible trail, and parking areas. This plan proposes the inclusion of Thirtymile Campground into the fee program once construction is complete.

### *3.c John Day Wild and Scenic River Description*

The John Day Wild and Scenic River is one of the nation's longest free-flowing rivers draining nearly 8,100 square miles of central and northeast Oregon. Elevations range from 9,000 feet at its headwaters in the Strawberry Mountains to 265 feet at the confluence with the Columbia River.

Designated in 1988 through the Omnibus Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the Wild and Scenic section of the John Day River stretches 147.5 miles from Service Creek to Tumwater Falls. In 1970, the State designated 158 miles from Parish Creek to Tumwater Falls an Oregon State Scenic Waterway. The BLM and the State work together to protect and enhance the river's water quality, free-flowing condition, and Outstandingly Remarkable and Significant Values: scenery, recreation, fish, wildlife, geology, paleontology, archaeology, history, ecology, and botany.

The BLM (USDI BLM 2001) separated the Wild and Scenic River corridor into three recreation management zones (RMZs), beginning on the downriver segment and moving upriver:

Segment 1 includes the 30 miles from Cottonwood Canyon Bridge (J.S. Burres launch, river mile 40) to Tumwater Falls (river mile 10). The last public take out is at McDonald's Ferry (river mile 20), a one-to-two-day float from Cottonwood Bridge. Starvation Lane (river mile 29) provides river access for day trips or short overnight floats. This section of river is characterized by long, quiet stretches broken by a few Class I and II rapids and is interspersed with private and State land.

The BLM manages the John Day River Segment 1 RMZ as a middle country setting. The zone is moderately remote, with evidence of the sights and sounds of humans and subtle alterations to the landscape and moderate human development. Facilities accommodate visitors by providing some comfort as well as resource protection and education. Cottonwood Canyon State Park, located between river mile 43 and 29, provides walking trails, cabins, and a range of camping opportunities. John Day State Wildlife Refuge is also located in Segment 1. Activities for this segment include steelhead and bass fishing, motorized and non-motorized boating in a scenic river canyon environment, and upland bird and big game hunting. Social encounters are moderate with some chance for isolation but a high expectation to see other people especially at access points.



Segment 2, the most popular river segment, includes the 70 miles from Clarno to Cottonwood, typically a four-to-six-day float. The BLM acquired the Thirtymile property in 2018 and 2019, which provides public river access 25 miles downstream of Clarno and allows for a shorter overnight boating trip. This section of river is well known for its scenic canyons and is characterized by long, quiet stretches broken by one Class III/IV rapid (Clarno), one Class III rapid (Basalt), and the occasional Class I and II rapids.

The BLM identified the setting characteristic for the Segment 2 RMZ as backcountry. This provides a more rugged, primitive, and unconfined experience with fewer encounters with other boating groups (<6 per day) than in Segments 1 and 3. Boat-in campsites on BLM are sufficient to accommodate each overnight group with enough distance to offer privacy and solitude. Facilities are minimal and provide only for resource protection. Segment 2 includes parts of the North Pole Ridge, Thirtymile, and Lower John Day Wilderness Study Areas. Activities include fishing, non-motorized boating, and camping in a scenic river canyon environment along with upland bird and big game hunting, wildlife watching, photography, and swimming.

Segment 3 includes the 48 miles from Service Creek to Clarno, which is generally a three-to-four-day float. This section contains multiple access points (Twickenham, Priest Hole, and Burnt Ranch) for boaters looking for a day trip or a shorter overnight trip. Public land is interspersed with agricultural lands in this section of river and is characterized by wide valleys, colorful hills, and long, calm stretches broken by Class I and II rapids.

The BLM classified the Segment 3 RMZ as middle country but identified that some areas, like boat launches, need to be managed as front country. Facilities and remoteness are similar in character to Segment 1, and the number of expected encounters is higher than Segment 2 (<15 per day). Boat-in campsites on BLM land are sufficient to accommodate each overnight boating group with enough distance between each site to allow for a reasonable amount of privacy. Boaters in Segment 3 float by Spring Basin Wilderness. Activities for this segment include steelhead and bass fishing, motorized and non-motorized boating in a scenic river canyon environment, and upland bird and big game hunting.

### Permit System

To protect and enhance river values, provide for public health and safety, and support a positive recreational experience managing for the prescribed number of encounters, the BLM implemented a permit system to boat the Wild and Scenic sections of the John Day River. Permits are required year-round and are currently available through a reservation system. Permit reservations are limited during the high-use season and unlimited during the low-use season. The BLM charges use fees via a boater permit (ISRP) during the high-use season (currently Segments 1, 2, and 3 from May 1 – July 15, and Segment 1 from September 1 – November 30).

Permits are currently available online, are first-come, first-served, and release daily at 7am Pacific Time. At present, half of the permit quota rounded up to a whole number is released four months prior to a given launch date and the remainder is released one month prior to a given launch date. Currently, an online boater permit and fee is not required when boating less than 100 yards upstream or downstream of a launch point, to cross the river to the opposite bank, or for



short daytrips within the Priest Hole Recreation Site (one mile between River mile 136.5 and 137.5). Self-issued permits to float within Priest Hole are required and are located onsite at Priest Hole.

For further information on boater permits visit our Recreation.gov John Day River [Day Use Permits](#) and John Day River [Overnight Permits](#) websites. See also Appendix C for current versions of these webpages.



*Photo: Floating the John Day River*

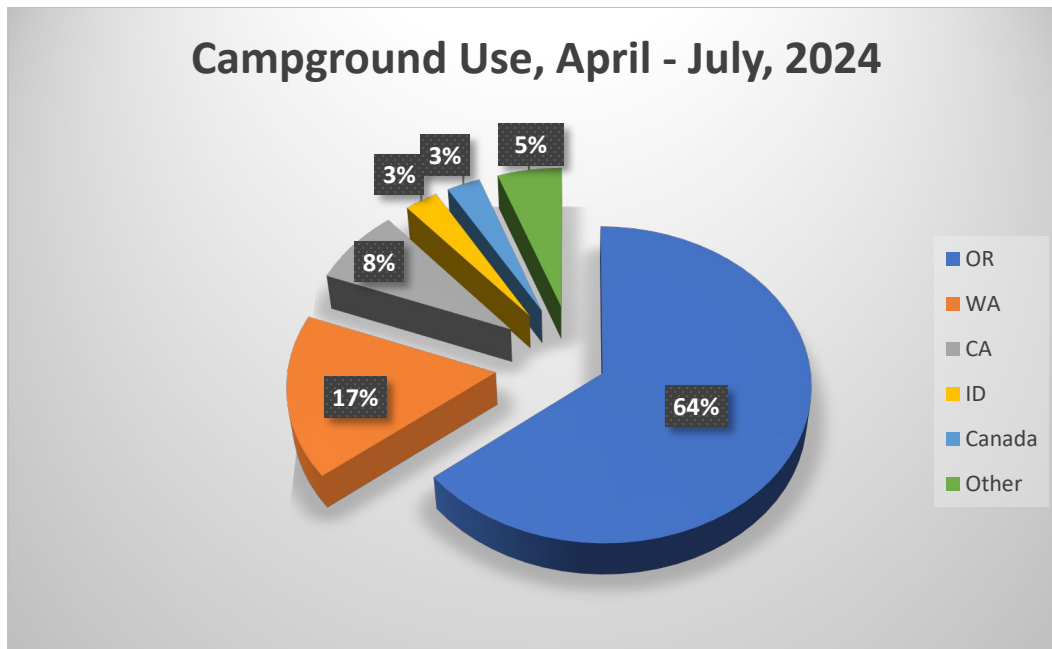
### *3.d. John Day Basin Fee Area Visitor Demographics*

#### *Where visitors are coming from*

To see where campers have been traveling from, the BLM compiled data from RUPs (fee envelopes from Service Creek, Muleshoe, Lone Pine, and Big Bend campgrounds) sampled from April through July of 2024. To see where boaters have been traveling from, the BLM pulled Recreation.gov permit reports for all non-cancelled overnight and day-use boating permits purchased for launches during the 2024 Spring High Season (May 1- July 15, Segments 1, 2, and 3) along with permits for the 2024 Segment 1A/1B day-use Fall High Season (Sep 1 – Nov 30).

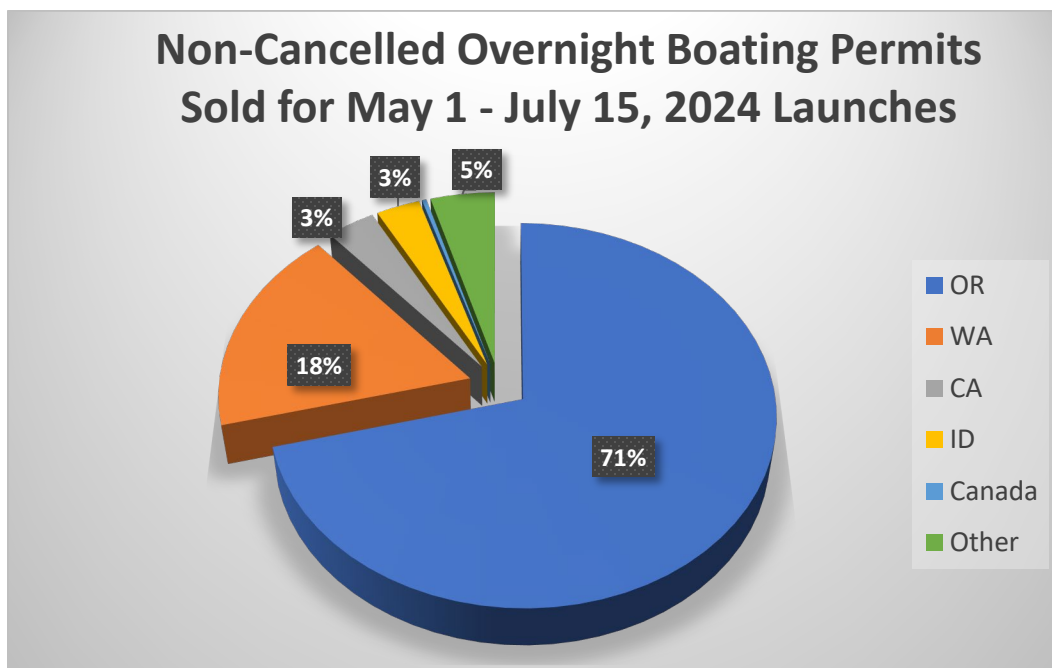
The data displayed in Figure 1 shows that 64% of campers came from Oregon, 28% from Washington, California, and Idaho, 3% from Canada, and the remaining 5% from other states.





*Figure 1: Distribution of campsite purchases from April through July 2024.*

Similarly, Figure 2 shows that 71% of non-cancelled, overnight boater permits purchased were from Oregon, 24% from Washington, California, and Idaho, less than 1% from Canada, and the remaining 5% from other states. Neither data set had representation from countries outside the United States, besides Canada.

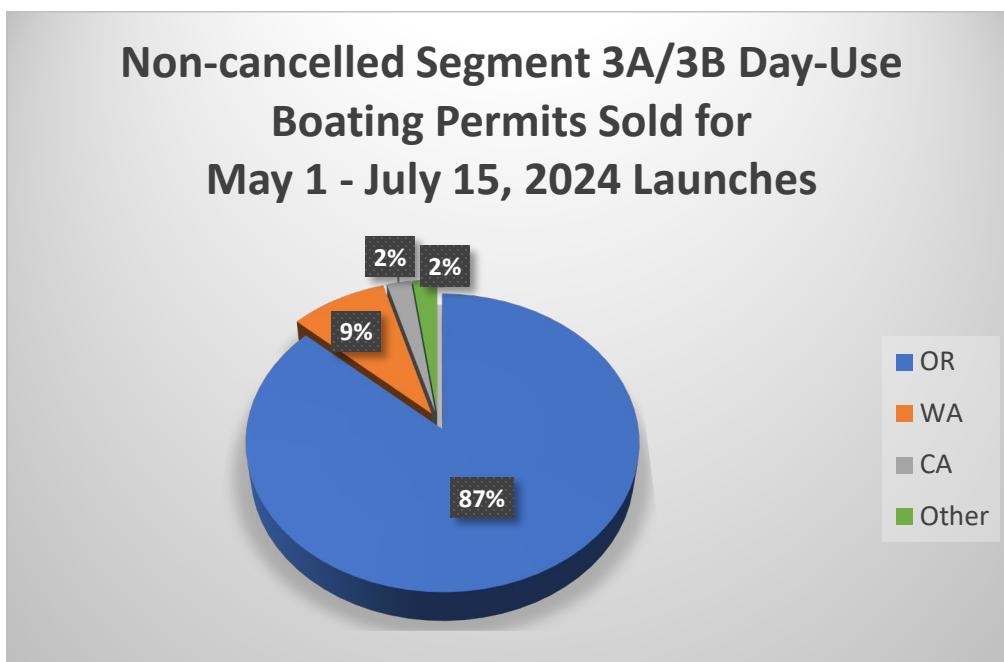


*Figure 2: Distribution of overnight boater permit purchases from May 1 through July 15, 2024.*



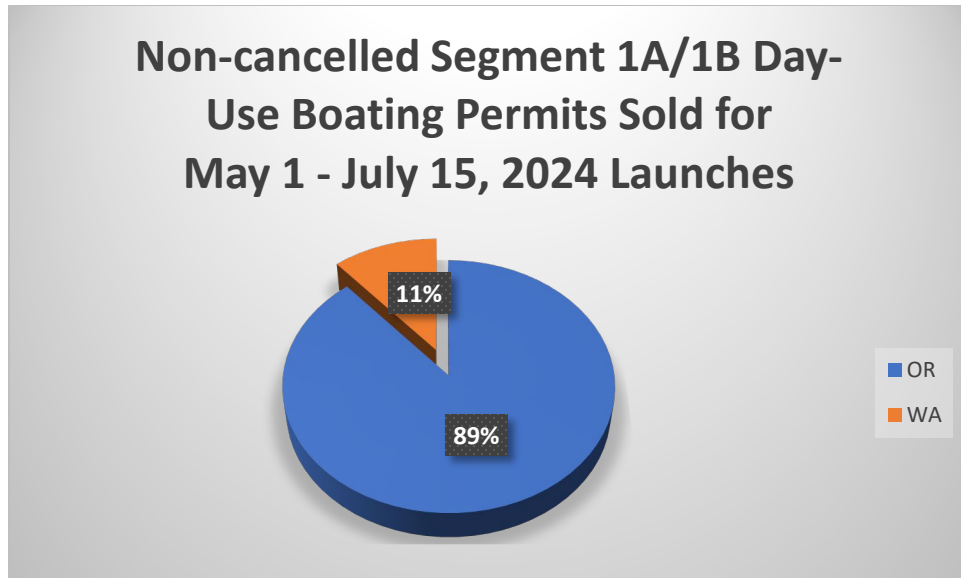
Figures 3-5 show that day use boaters show little representation outside of Oregon and Washington in Segments 3A/3B and no representation outside of Oregon and Washington in Segments 1A/1B. Data suggests that most visitors traveling from outside of Oregon and Washington are coming for a multi-day boating experience.

BLM looked at data for Segments 3A/3B and 1A/1B during spring High Season and 1A/1B during fall High Season separately for day use permits only. BLM expected a larger variance due to the distance between segments, the varied recreational use, and the different regions visitors may be traveling from. However, the data shows a similar use trend.

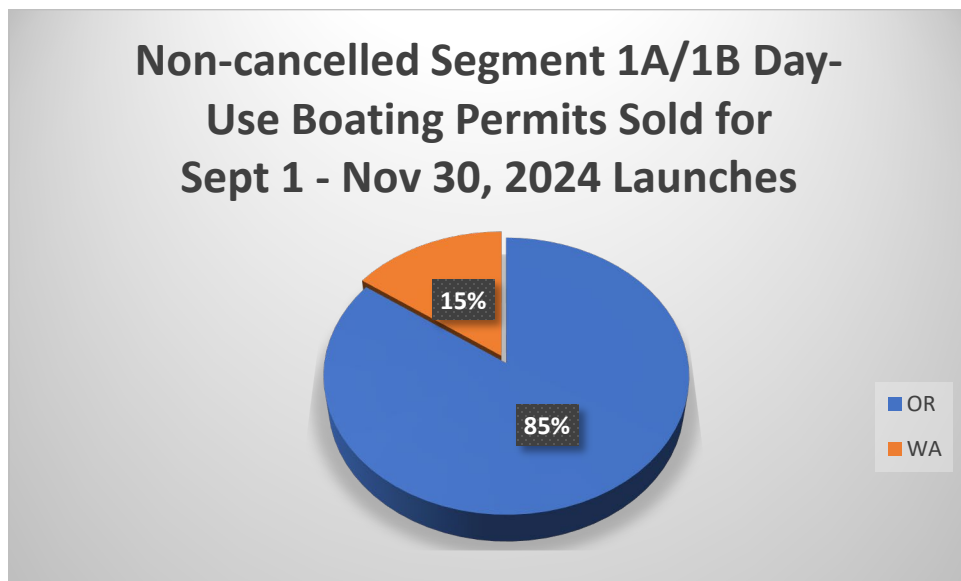


*Figure 3: Distribution of Segment 3A/3B day-use boater permit purchases from May 1 through July 15, 2024.*





*Figure 4: Distribution of Segment 1A/1B day-use boater permit purchases from May 1 through July 15, 2024.*



*Figure 5: Distribution of Segment 1A/1B day-use boater permit purchases from Sep 1 through Nov 30, 2024.*

Figure 6 focuses on Oregon only data to distinguish which Oregon areas campers are traveling from within the State. The graph shows that 4% of campers from Oregon came from local counties (those near the existing fee campgrounds -Wheeler, Gilliam, and Grant Counties), 39% from the Portland Area, 21% from the Bend area, 12% from the Eugene and Corvallis area, 6% from Hood River, Maupin and the Dalles, and the remaining 19% from the rest of Oregon. This data set represents the high use season when RUPs are collected.



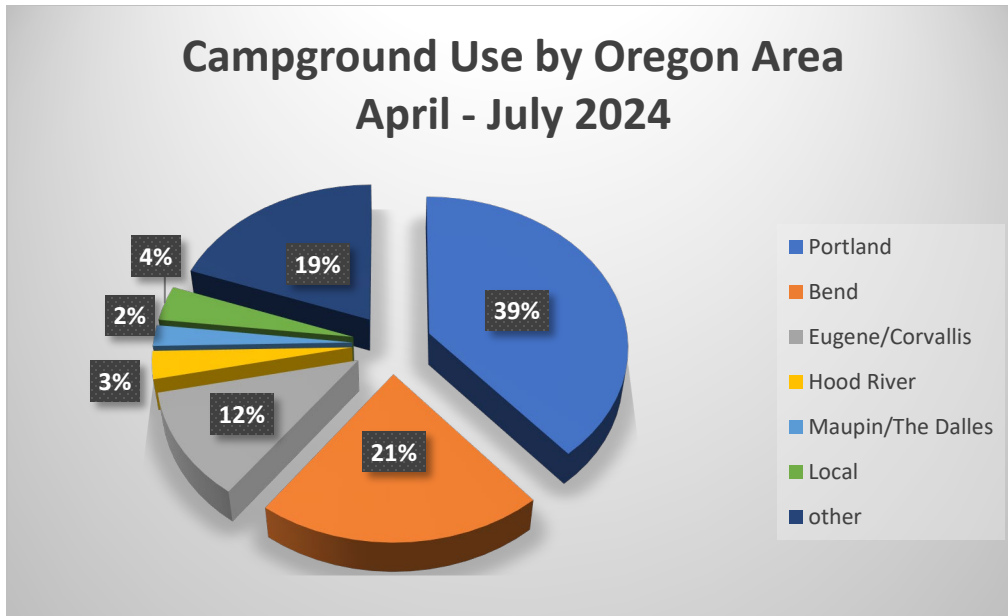


Figure 6: Distribution of where campers were traveling from between April through July, 2024 based on fee envelopes collected from Service Creek, Muleshoe, Lone Pine, and Big Bend Campgrounds.

Similarly, Figure 7 shows that 1% of overnight boaters from Oregon came from the local counties, 40% from the Portland Area, 29% from the Bend area, 10% from the Eugene and Corvallis area, 6% from Hood River, Maupin and the Dalles, and the remaining 14% from the rest of Oregon.

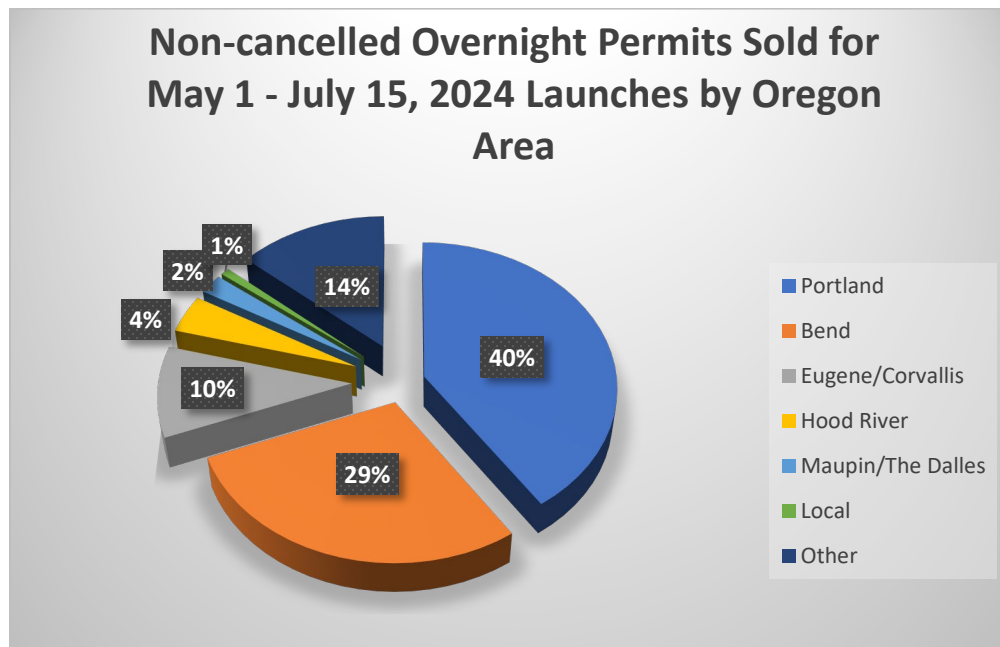


Figure 7: Distribution of overnight boater permit purchases within Oregon for launches from May 1 through July 15, 2024.



Figure 8-10 show where day-use boaters are coming from in Segments 3A/3B and 1A/1B Spring High Season and the 1A/1B Fall High Season. Compared to all other data, day-use boating shows the highest representation of use from locals. Local use represents visitors from Wheeler, Gilliam, and Grant Counties.

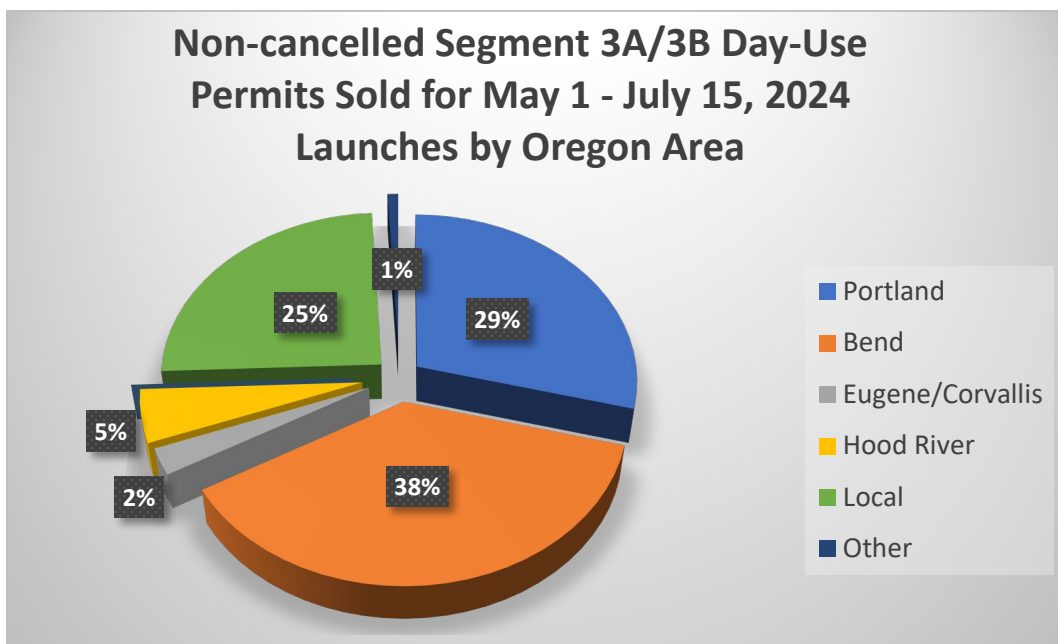


Figure 8: Distribution of day-use 3A/3B boater permit purchases within Oregon for launches from May 1 through July 15, 2024.

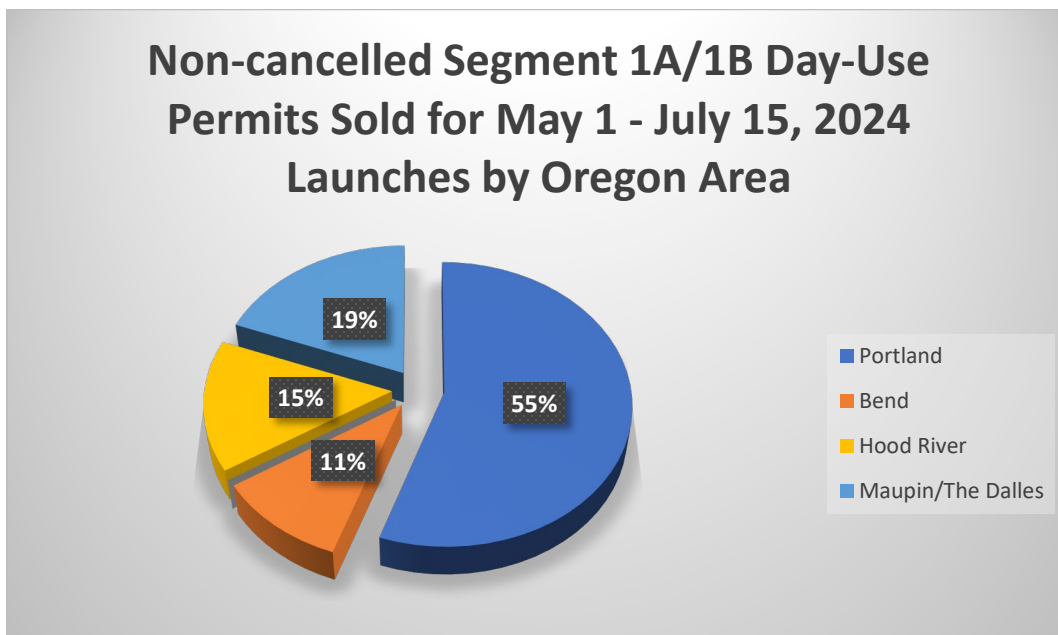
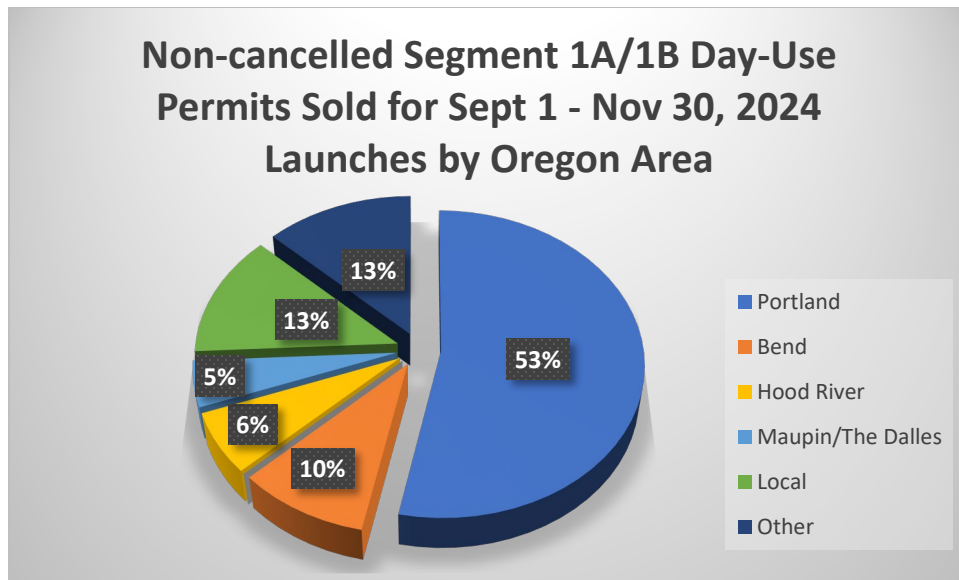


Figure 9: Distribution of day-use 1A/1B boater permit purchases within Oregon for launches from May 1 through July 15, 2024.





*Figure 10: Distribution of day-use 1A/1B boater permit purchases within Oregon for launches from Sep 1 through Nov 30, 2024.*

In summary, the data shows that most campers and overnight boaters are traveling from the metropolitan areas of Oregon (Portland, Eugene, Bend). The highest representation of local use is from day-use boating. Segment 1 shows a higher representation from Maupin, the Dalles, and Hood River, which aligns with the closer proximity of the Segment. This trend helped shape the fee proposal by balancing affordability for local, day-use visitors with fair cost for overnight users, many of whom travel from more distant communities. The trend also inspired the frequent boater pass for non-commercial, day-use boating. The proposed fee structure aims to ensure that revenue generation aligns with the level of service provided, while still maintaining access for local users.

#### *John Day Basin Area Visitor Satisfaction Survey*

The BLM completed a visitor satisfaction survey in 2023 that collected visitor information. BLM staff administered the survey at Priest Hole boat launch and dispersed camping area, Service Creek boat launch and campground, and Clarno boat launch. Visitors included campers, boaters, or those passing by. Aligning closely with RUP and permit data, the survey found most respondents came from Oregon (65%), while 26% came from Washington and 9% came from other states. Most of the total respondents, including those from outside states, came from Deschutes, Multnomah, Clackamas, and Lane Counties (67%) representing metropolitan areas of Bend, Portland, and Eugene.

The survey provided a few extra details that RUPs and permit data did not. Seventy eight percent of group members were adults while 6% were teenagers and 16% were children. Sixty-eight percent of respondents were male, 29% female, and 3% preferred not to respond. Twenty-six percent of respondents were over 61 years old, 61% were between 41 and 60 years old, and 13% were 40 years old or younger. In summary, most of the survey respondents were middle-aged, male, and from the metropolitan areas of the Bend, Portland, and Eugene.



### *Demographics Information*

Table 1 shows demographic information for a representation of John Day Basin counties and the three Oregon counties that held most of the reported use (Multnomah, Deschutes, and Clackamas Counties). Oregon data is included for comparison.

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Gilliam County</b>	<b>Grant County</b>	<b>Wheeler County</b>	<b>Deschutes County</b>	<b>Clackamas County</b>	<b>Multnomah County</b>	<b>Oregon</b>
Population estimate, 2023	2,206	7,215	1,436	208,513	423,173	789,698	4,233,358
Change in population, (2020-2023)	1.5%	-.2%	-.5%	5.2%	.4	-3.2%	-.1%
Population per Square Mile, 2020	1.7	1.6	.8	65.7	225.3	1,891.2	44.1
Median household income, (2018-2020)	\$58,409	\$56,045	\$50,774	\$82,042	\$95,740	\$83,668	\$76,632
Median Value of Occupied Units, (2018-2022)	\$151,500	\$185,500	\$194,900	\$526,200	\$532,200	\$492,100	\$423,100
Persons in poverty	11.2%	15.5%	15.9%	9.6%	8.2%	12.1%	12.2%

*Table 1: Demographic information for select Oregon counties (U.S. Census Bureau 2024).*

The median household income in the local counties of Gilliam, Grant, and Wheeler is lower than Deschutes, Clackamas, and Multnomah counties. The percent of persons in poverty displays a similar pattern, where Wheeler and Grant County are above 15%, and Deschutes and Clackamas Counties are below 10%. These statistics are important when proposing new fees or increasing existing fees because they could reduce participation in natural resource-based recreation for low-income populations. With that in mind, the BLM does not have income information from a visitor survey. County-level information is useful for context but does not discern if visitors from a low-income county are low-income themselves.

### *3.e. John Day Basin Fee Area Operating Costs*

John Day Basin developed campgrounds and recreation sites along the river require considerable trash pick-up, visitor interaction, maintenance, law enforcement, and support to ensure a positive recreational experience and reasonable level of visitor protection. Operational expenditures include labor, equipment and supplies, services, law enforcement, support labor, and site facility replacement and construction.

Labor and support includes river ranger and park ranger staff time for field operations, driving and vehicle upkeep, land and river patrols, river shuttles, public contacts for permit and required river gear checks, toilet cleaning, painting, trash and fire ring clean-up, weed control and vegetation management, replacing signs and posts, road and tent pad maintenance, picnic table and fire ring upkeep and replacement, hazard tree mitigation, road crew support, camp host training and stipends, site and river monitoring, data reporting, fee collection, and fee counting. Support includes front desk support for public inquiries, fee program management, volunteer and staff coordination, required trainings, fee collection and counting support, depositing funds, site



monitoring, planner support for public calls and email inquiries, and managing websites and public communication including the John Day River BLM website, recreation site specific BLM websites, and Recreation.gov websites John Day River Basin Developed Campgrounds, John Day River Overnight Permits, and John Day River Day Use Permits. Additional support includes GIS, supervision, human resources, safety, engineering, and travel assistance when required.

Supplies and Equipment include vehicles, personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, toilet paper, fuel for small engines, weed eaters, mowers, tools, picnic tables, fire rings, signs, hardware, gravel, parts, and other equipment. River supplies include river and boating equipment and gear not limited to trailers, rafts, canoes, life jackets, helmets, first aid and repair kits, communication and data collection equipment, camping gear, garbage bags and pickers.

Services include toilet pumping, porta potty rentals, and dumpster contracts, professional training, planning support, and agreements with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department for maintenance and management of Segment 1 and the City of Monument for mowing and maintenance at Monument Park. Depending on BLM staffing levels, possible future contracts may include river shuttles, toilet cleaning, weed eating and mowing, weed spraying, maintenance, repair, welding, river patrols, etc.

Law enforcement includes BLM law enforcement staff and contracts with Grant, Wheeler, and Gilliam County Sheriff's Offices. Oregon State Police help support BLM efforts but are funded externally.

Repair and Construction includes picnic table, fire ring, sign, and kiosk replacements along with construction or improvements of boat launches, campgrounds, and other facilities.

Varied funding sources help support the recreation program throughout the John Day Basin fee area. These include congressional appropriations, grant opportunities, external partnerships, volunteers, and Special Recreation Permit fees from outfitters and guides that operate on the river. Collected fees help supplement other funding sources.

Table 2 shows the operational expenditures that supported recreation in the John Day Basin from 2020 through 2024. BLM used annual budget reports for charges to the John Day River charge code to inform expenditures. Labor and support include all direct labor used for John Day River operations and 50% of overhead labor. Labor expenditures were lower than normal in 2024 due to a severe shortage in recreation staffing. Law enforcement expenditures vary with vacancies, outside assignments, and fire response. BLM accrued repair and construction costs in 2023 and 2024 to develop Priest Hole Campground. BLM expects future expenditures to increase slightly alongside inflation if BLM can maintain current staffing levels. If staffing levels cannot be maintained, BLM expects expenditures will increase due to the likely increased costs in contracted services.

Contracted service costs are expected to be greater than BLM staffing due to high travel costs to remote sites, limited contractor availability, decreased diversity of services offered per site visit, and higher hourly rates. Some services may not be offered by contractors.



Cost Type	Expenditures 2020	Expenditures 2021	Expenditures 2022	Expenditures 2023	Expenditures 2024	Average Expenditures
Labor & Support	\$343,275	\$337,457	\$365,099	\$365,465	\$281,089	\$338,477
Supplies & Equipment	\$8,781	\$29,689	\$38,043	\$64,436	\$15,643	\$31,318
Vehicle Costs	\$28,228	\$23,692	\$17,475	\$15,648	\$27,786	\$22,566
Services	\$5,753	\$2,162	\$2,162	\$44,050	\$13,912	\$13,608
Law Enforcement	\$12,821	\$26,441	\$20,445	\$33,152	\$14,340	\$21,440
Repair & Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$14,000	\$29,000	\$8,600
Total	\$398,858	\$419,441	\$443,224	\$536,751	\$381,770	\$436,009

*Table 2: Operational expenditures for the John Day River program, including fee money and budgeted funds. Expenditures vary year to year depending on projects, staffing, and emergency response to fire.*

### *3.f. Recreation Use and Fee Revenues*

BLM data and staff observations show similar use trends among campers and boaters in the John Day Basin. The Basin is rural and tends to be quiet except during spring boating and fall hunting seasons. Visitation is greater on weekends compared to weekdays. Memorial Day, Father's Day, and Fourth of July weekends have the highest use at the campgrounds. Memorial Day weekend through the end of June sees the highest demand for boating permits, especially between Clarno and Cottonwood (Segment 2). Weather and water flow are highly variable and directly affect visitation patterns in the spring and fall. Mid-summer tends to be hot with low water flows along the river and lower visitation. Winters are often cold and quiet.

In the long-term, the use trend is increasing alongside population growth. According to the [World Population Review](#), the Bend Metropolitan Statistical Area grew 663.8% between 1970 to 2023, and increased from 20,500 to 104,600 from 1990 to 2023.

The BLM estimates combined visitation at the four fee campgrounds to be 5,000 visitor days in 2006 and 12,207 visitor days in 2024, an increase of 144% in 17 years (USDI BLM 2015, USDI BLM 2024). BLM recorded 608 non-cancelled boater permits in 2013 and 1,177 in 2024 in Segments 2 and 3, a 94% increase in ten years. During the 2021 pandemic year, BLM recorded 1,541 non-cancelled boater permits in Segments 2 and 3, the highest number of recorded boater permits in John Day River's history. BLM staff observations, permit sales, and use data indicate a surge in use during the pandemic and a slight decrease in use since. The long-term increase in use trend aligns with Bend's population growth since the early 2000's, which is about double.



Figure 11 displays the number of visits at John Day River Basin campgrounds for FY 2020 through FY 2024. One visit is equal to one person regardless of the length of stay. BLM collated data from RMIS, the BLM visitor use database (USDI BLM 2024).

Figure 12 displays counted fee revenue for John Day Basin campgrounds from FY 2020-2024. 2024 collections were low due to a wildfire closure in late summer. This had less effect on Service Creek and Muleshoe revenue since both sites are heavily used during the spring boating season, prior to the fire closure. In general, collection trends align with use data and patterns observed by field staff. BLM used internal fee count reports to inform Campground revenue, which are not yet available for Priest Hole, Thirtymile, or Burnt Ranch.

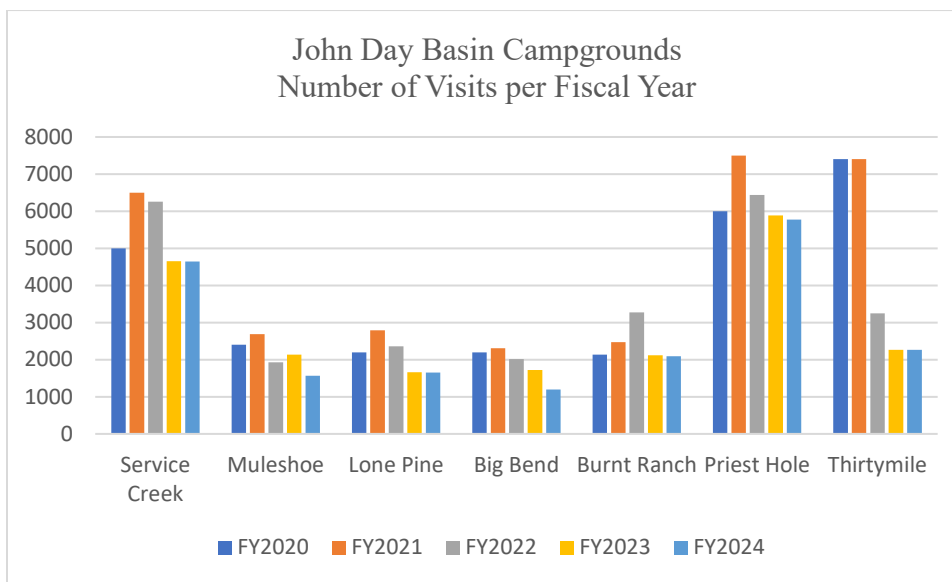


Figure 11: Number of visits at John Day River Basin campgrounds for FY 2020 through FY 2024.

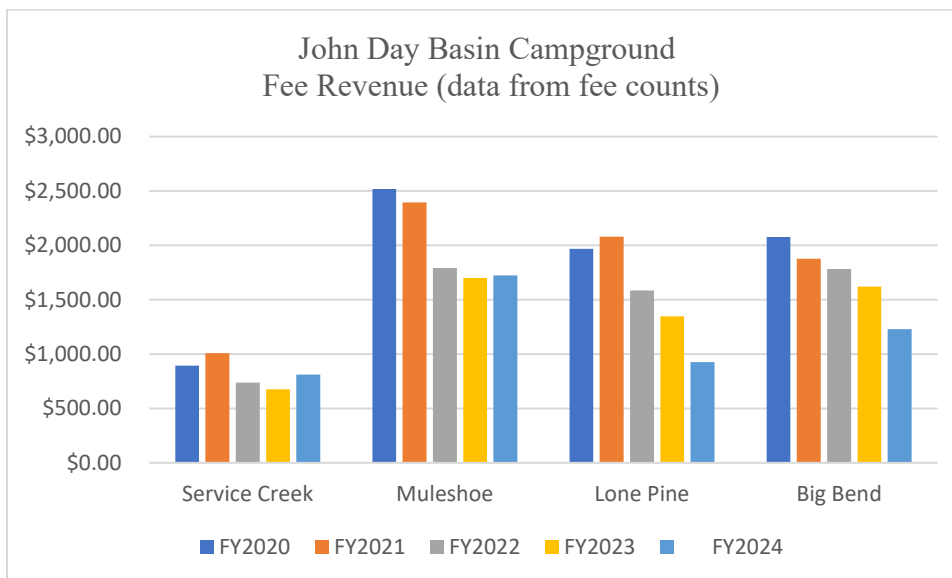




Figure 12: Existing campground fee revenue from FY 2020-2024. FY 2024 displays a lower revenue due to an extended wildfire closure.

Figure 13 displays the trend in number of overnight, non-cancelled permits on the John Day Wild and Scenic River from 2013 until 2024. Data variability exists when the BLM moved permits from the BLM website to the Recreation.gov platform in 2020. BLM began collecting comparable Segment 1 data in 2021, which is reflected in the graph. The general trend shows increasing use over time and a peak during the pandemic.

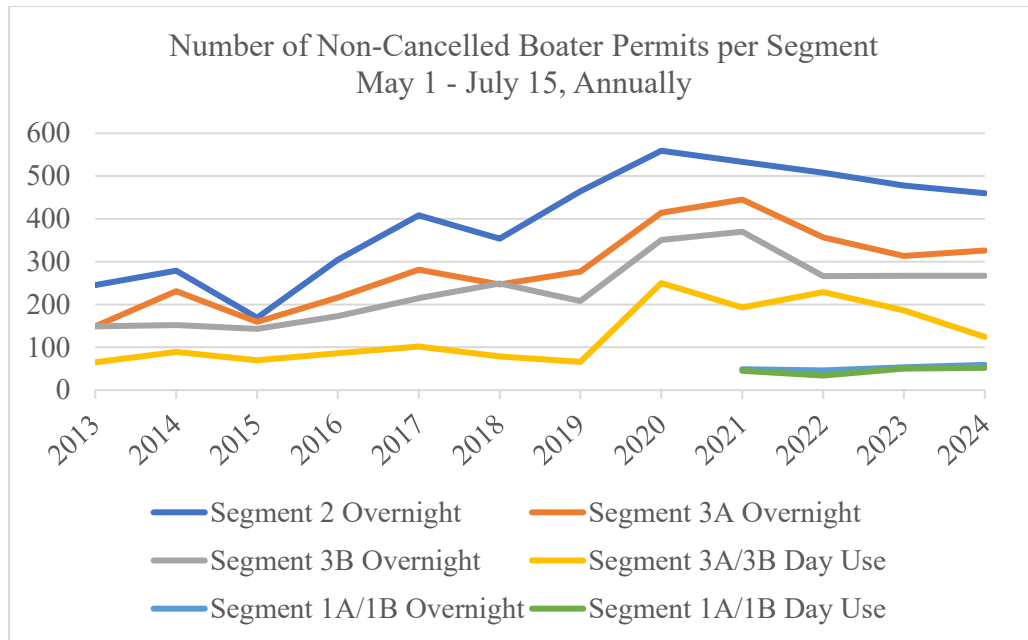


Figure 13: Overnight permit trends on the John Day Wild and Scenic River from 2013 until 2024.

Table 3 Displays the revenue collected from boater permits (ISRPs). 2021 and 2022 are combined due to reporting measures. The BLM did not collect boater permit fees prior to 2020. BLM used reports for ISRP income from Central Billing Services to inform Boater Permit revenue. A graph was not used here due to combined data in 2020 and 2021.

*FY2020 & 2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	Average
\$87,886	\$48,864	\$43,822	\$43,631	\$44,841

Table 3: Revenue from boater permits (ISRPs) (Central Billing Services data). \*2021 and 2022 are combined due to reporting measures.

Both visitor use and revenue data show a peak during the pandemic and a slight fall of recreational use after the pandemic. However, long term data supports a growth trend. Now that pandemic peak use has settled, the BLM expects visitor use to increase alongside population growth.



#### 4. Fee Analysis, Background, Proposal

##### 4.a. Summary

The BLM is proposing to increase fees at the four existing fee campgrounds, introduce three new fee campgrounds, and adjust the fee structure of boater permit fees (ISRPs) for John Day River boater permits.

The fee proposals for expanded amenity fees (campgrounds) and ISRPs (boater permits) are separated in the following sections because they are separate proposals. The BLM included the option for a one-time CPI-based future adjustment to fees. A fee reduction of 50% is available to Senior or Access Pass holders for expanded amenity fees at campgrounds. Discounts do not apply for ISRPs and are not available for boater permit fees.

##### 4.b Expanded Amenity Fee Proposal – John Day Basin Developed Campgrounds

###### Existing and Proposed Fee Types and Amounts

Table 4 summarizes the proposal to increase existing campground fees and introduce fees to new campgrounds with expanded amenities. Fees were rounded up or down to make cash payment easier. The BLM will not implement fees at Thirtymile until campground construction is complete. This proposal includes group site fees at existing campgrounds that do not yet have group sites but will likely in the future.

Campground	Existing Fee Per Site/Night	Proposed Fee Per Site/Night
Service Creek	\$5 per single site. \$2 per extra vehicle.	\$15 per single site. \$30 per group site. \$5 per extra vehicle.
Muleshoe	\$5 per single site. \$2 per extra vehicle.	\$15 per single site. \$30 per group site. \$5 per extra vehicle.
Lone Pine	\$5 per single site. \$2 per extra vehicle.	\$15 per single site. \$30 per group site. \$5 per extra vehicle.
Big Bend	\$5 per single site. \$2 per extra vehicle.	\$15 per single site. \$30 per group site. \$5 per extra vehicle.
Burnt Ranch	Developed camping, fees not currently charged.	\$15 per single site. \$30 per group site. \$5 per extra vehicle. \$5 per vehicle for designated dispersed and overflow lot camping areas.
Priest Hole	Developed camping, fees not currently charged.	\$15 per single site. \$30 per group site.



		\$5 per extra vehicle. \$5 per vehicle for designated dispersed and overflow lot camping areas.
Thirtymile	Undeveloped dispersed camping, fees not currently charged.	\$15 per single site. \$30 per group site. \$5 per extra vehicle. \$5 per vehicle for designated dispersed and overflow lot camping areas.

Table 4: Existing and proposed expanded amenity fees for developed campgrounds.

#### Fair Market Value Summary, Comparable Fees, and Fee Calculation

The BLM compared 13 public fee campgrounds in the John Day Basin area to determine an average cost for services (Table 5). Campgrounds listed are Federal, State, County, and privately operated and have similar amenities as the BLM John Day Basin campgrounds, with a common exception of potable water and garbage collection (USDI NPS 2024). All sites listed have a toilet, picnic tables, and fire rings. BLM calculated the fair market value by averaging the costs of single sites, extra vehicles, and group sites for the campgrounds listed in Table 5.

Name & Location of Campground	Agency	Single Site/ Extra Vehicle/ Group Site	River Front	Trash	Water	Electric
Wheeler County Fairgrounds, Fossil	County	\$15/X/X		X	X	X
Bear Hollow, near Fossil	County	\$20/5/X		X	X	
Shelton Wayside, near Fossil	County	\$20/5/X		X	X	
Spray Riverfront Park, Spray	City	\$12/X/X	X	X	X	
Bull Prairie Lake, north of Spray	USFS	14/5/X	*		X	
Magone Lake, near Prairie City	USFS	\$13/6.5/60	*		X	
Bates, east of Prairie City	State Park	\$14/10/X	*	X	X	
Clyde Holiday State Park	State Park	\$34/10/48	X	X	X	X
Cottonwood Canyon	State Park	\$13/10/74	X	X	X	
Ochoco Divide, near Ochoco Pass	USFS	20/10/50				
Mitchell City Park, open park	City	\$12 /X/X		X	X	
Spoken Hostel	Private	\$20/X/X		X	X	
Gilliam County RV Park, Condon	County	\$15/X/X		X	X	X

Table 5 compares campground fees in the regions with similar amenities and calculates the average fair market value. \*Indicates campgrounds that are located near a lake but are not riverfront. The Average fair market value is as follows: Single Site \$17.08, extra vehicle \$7.69, group site \$58.

Except for potable water and garbage collection, the John Day Basin developed campgrounds provide similar amenities to most campgrounds in the area, are all river front, and are about one third of the average fair market value described in Table 5. Proposed fees in Table 4 are in line with the average fair market value when considering a river front experience and adjusting for a lack of potable water and trash services. The proposed fees were rounded up or down to simplify



cash payments. Note that many campgrounds in Table 5 have not adjusted their prices for some time, and it is likely the average fees in the area will increase soon.

#### Financial Analysis

Table 6 estimates the revenue the proposed campground fee adjustments will generate. This revenue will help the Central Oregon Field Office improve public access and protect and enhance the visitor experience by financing facility updates and supplementing maintenance and operational costs. Annual visitation at Service Creek includes boat ramp use, which is greater than camping use at this specific site. Thus, the average annual fee revenue per visitor at Service Creek is lower than at other sites.

<b>Campground</b>	<b>Average Annual Visitation (2020-2024)</b>	<b>Average Annual Fee Revenue (2020-2024)</b>	<b>Average Fee Revenue Per Visit (2020-2024)</b>	<b>Estimated Annual Revenue with Proposed Fees</b>
Service Creek	5,412	\$824.99	\$.15	\$2,474.97
Muleshoe	2,143	\$2,026.11	\$.89	\$6,078.33
Lone Pine	2,134	\$1,581.74	\$.70	\$4,745.22
Big Bend	1,887	\$1,717.55	\$.83	\$5,152.65
Burnt Ranch	2,418	*1,668	*.69	\$5,005.26
Priest Hole	6,318	*4,360	*.69	\$13,079.09
Thirtymile	4,517	*3,117	*.69	\$9,350.19
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,830</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>\$45,885.71</b>

*Table 6: Estimated revenue from proposed fees. \*The average revenue per visit for the four existing fee campgrounds (\$.69) was multiplied by the average annual visits at the proposed new fee campgrounds to calculate the theoretical average fee revenue for 2020-2024. The estimated annual revenue with proposed fees was calculated by multiplying the average annual fee revenue from 2020-2024 by a factor of 3 (\$5 increased to \$15 is a multiple of 3). Detailed calculations for this table are described in Appendix B.*

#### *4.c ISRP Fee Proposal - John Day River Boater Permits*

##### Existing and Proposed Fee Types and Amounts

Table 7 summarizes the proposal to increase existing boater permits fees for both overnight boater permits and day use boater permits. Fees were rounded down from the average fair market value for simplicity.

The BLM included an option for a Frequent Boater Pass for non-commercial day-use in Segments 3A/3B and 1A/1B. This pass will not accommodate Segment 1A/1B Fall High Season use. Local representation is low for overnight use (1%) but well represented for day use (25% in Segments 3A/3B and 19% in Segments 1A/1B). Locals have repeatedly requested a frequent boater pass for day use.

Segment 3A/3B has a quota of 24 groups per day. Segments 1A/1B has a quota of 10 groups per day during spring High Season and 3 groups per day during fall High Season. The highest use in



2024 was 12 groups per day for day-use Segment 3A/3B permits, and 5 groups in Segment 1A/1B spring High Season. Thus, Spring High Season never reached capacity limits. However, Segments 1A/1B Fall High Season use reached capacity 10% of total days.

The BLM expects the number of frequent boater permit sales to be low (between 5-10 based on inquiries), and BLM does not expect a frequent boater pass to bring use over capacity limits during the Spring High Season. Fall High Season (Segment 1A and 1B) was not included as an option for the frequent boater pass since permits currently reach capacity. The BLM will monitor day use each year and impose blackout dates for weekends that reach 75% of the available capacity for two years in a row. Passes will be per person and are non-transferable.

Permit Type	Existing Boater Permit (ISRP) Fee	Proposed Boater Permit (ISRP) Fee	Proposed Frequent Boater Pass
Overnight Boating Permit	<b>High Season:</b> \$20 per group up to 16 people up to 14 days. <b>Low Season:</b> No current fee.	<b>High Season:</b> \$5 dollars per person per day. <b>Low Season:</b> No current fee.	Not available.
Day Use Boating Permit	<b>High Season:</b> \$10 per group up to 16 people. <b>Low Season:</b> No current fee.	<b>High Season:</b> \$5 dollars per person. <b>Low Season:</b> No current fee.	\$30 per person per calendar year. Available for non-commercial, Segment 3A/3B and 1A/1B day use boating, except for Segment 1A/1B Fall High Season. Passes are not transferrable.

*Table 7: Summary of the Individual Special Recreation Permit proposal. This table does not include the expanded amenity fee for reservation services, which is currently \$6 per transaction. The fee change does not affect group size limit, which is 16 people per group, except in Segment 1 during the Fall High Season when the group size limit is 4 people per group.*

#### Fair Market Value Summary & Comparable Fees

In Table 8, the BLM compared 17 permitted rivers and river sections across the American West and listed the average fair market value for boater permits. The expanded amenity fee for reservation services is not included except in rivers managed by the National Park Service (NPS). Rivers listed and used for the comparison are managed mostly by federal agencies with one state managed river. Boaters are accustomed to paying permit fees and in general seem to appreciate the direct return in services for fees collected.

The BLM calculated the average fair market value by averaging the estimated cost per person per day for an average length trip on each river (see Appendix B for calculation details). The BLM averaged the cost of frequent boater passes from the two rivers known to utilize such a pass. Finally, the average application fee was included to recognize that some rivers have a non-refundable application fee in addition to per person fees, usually for lottery applications. The BLM included refund and allocation system columns for additional information.



River	State	Managing Agency	Allocation System	Per Person Per Day Fee	Frequent Boater Pass	Refunds
*Lower Deschutes	OR	BLM	Rolling Release	\$5	\$50 per person per year	No
*Desolation Gray Canyon, Green	UT	BLM	Lottery	\$6.66	NA	Yes, 30 days out
*Rogue	OR	BLM/ USFS	Lottery	\$2.50	NA	No
*Middle Fork and Main Salmon	ID	USFS	Lottery	\$4	\$40 per person per year for both rivers combined	Yes
*San Juan 1	UT	BLM	Lottery	\$5	NA	Yes, 15 days out
*San Juan 2	UT	BLM	Lottery	\$5	NA	Yes, 15 days out
*San Juan 3	UT	BLM	Lottery	\$6.67	NA	Yes, 15 days out
*Salt	AZ	USFS	Lottery - \$10 non-refundable lottery application fee	\$33.75-\$2.25 cost penalty for smaller groups	NA	Yes, 21 days out
*Gates of Lodore & Yampa, Green	CO/ UT	NPS	Lottery - \$15 non-refundable lottery application fee	\$2-\$50 cost penalty for smaller groups	NA	Yes, 30 days out
Gunnison Gorge	CO	BLM	On Site	\$5	NA	No
*Cataract/ Canyonlands, Colorado	UT	NPS	Block Release - \$36 non-refundable reservation fee, plus park entrance	\$12.5 cost penalty for smaller group due to reservation fee	NA	Yes, 7 days out
*Westwater Canyon, Colorado	UT	BLM	Rolling Release	\$5	NA	Yes, 14 days out
*Ruby Horsethief, Colorado	CO/ UT	BLM	Rolling Release	\$1.78- \$10 cost penalty for smaller group	NA	Yes, 8 days out



Grand Canyon, Colorado	AZ	NPS	Weighted Lottery - \$25 non-refundable application fee plus park entrance	\$14.76	NA	No
Smith River	MT	FWP	Lottery -\$5 non-refundable application fee	6.25-resident \$15-non-resident	NA	No
*Rio Chama	NM	BLM	Lottery	\$2.50	NA	Yes, 14 days out
Missouri River Breaks	MT	BLM	On Site envelopes	\$4	NA	No

Table 8: Comparison of river fees. For rivers that have a cost penalty for smaller groups, the cost per person for a medium sized group was used for the overall average. Boater permit averages are as follows: cost per person per day \$8, frequent boater pass \$45, non-refundable application fee \$18.20, refunds were offered at 65% of all locations. Calculations are explained in Appendix B. \*Denotes rivers currently using Recreation.gov as their reservation platform.

### Fee Calculation

Boating permit comparables shown in Table 8 provide similar amenities and recreational experiences as a John Day River float. This includes boat launches with toilets and boating and camping experiences in a remote and scenic setting. Each river offers a unique experience, but all offer a multi-day overnight river experience.

The current cost for a John Day River boater permit is about \$.50 per person per day (\$20 for the average trip length of 5 days and average group size of 8). This is far below the average of \$8 per person per day for a similar river trip, not including application and/or entrance fees required on some rivers. The BLM is proposing a per person per day fee structure to tier the price to services needed per group size and length of trip.

### Financial Analysis

Table 9 summarizes current boater permit fee revenue and expected revenue from proposed fees. Calculations are explained in Appendix B.

Permit Type	Average Annual Fee Revenue (2020-2024)	Expected Proposed Annual Fee Revenue
Boater Permits	\$44,841	\$141,417
Frequent Boater Passes	0	\$300
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$44,841</b>	<b>*\$142,00</b>

Table 9: Current boater permit fee revenue and expected revenue from proposed fees. \*Total expected revenue was rounded up for simplicity.



Table 10 summarizes the campground and boater permit fee revenue and presents the total estimated revenue with the proposed fee adjustments.

Fee Type	FY2020 – FY2024 Average Annual Fee Revenue	Expected Proposed Annual Fee Revenue
RUPs	\$6,150.39	\$45,400
ISRP	\$44,841	\$142,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$50,991.39</b>	<b>*\$188,000</b>

Table 10: Summary of annual fee revenue. \*Total expected revenue was rounded up for simplicity.

#### 4.d Common to Both Expanded Amenity and ISRP proposals

##### Future Fee Adjustments

To account for inflation or other economic changes, this business plan proposes tying the new fee structure to the western U.S. Consumer Price Index (CPI-W) (<https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/CWUR0400SA0>) by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The CPI-W more closely reflects the costs of goods and services in the western U.S. Specifically, a single CPI-based fee increase of 30% rounded up to a whole and reasonable number when CPI increases by 30% compared to the base year (2025) may be implemented without additional public involvement. Any subsequent increase—regardless of CPI movement—must go through the appropriate public participation process, including public notification and RAC review if required. This one-time commensurate increase will allow fees to reflect changing conditions and will provide a logical fee increase increment.

To better understand this proposal, here are some examples. If annual inflation remained constant at 2%, 3%, or 4%, price increases would take effect in approximately 15 years, 10 years, and 7.5 years, respectively. Prices for single sites will increase from \$15 to \$20; group sites will increase from \$30 to \$40; and extra vehicles, overflow lot camping, and designated dispersed camping will increase from \$5 to \$7. Boater permit fees will increase from \$5 per person per day to \$7 per person per day. Keep in mind, the actual year CPI-based fee increases would go into effect will be directly tied to CPI-W compared from the base year of 2025.

##### Fee collections

To collect payment, the Central Oregon Field Office will use various e-commerce technologies, as directed in BLM Instruction Memorandum 2022-010, to provide recreation visitors opportunities to find, reserve, and pay for a campsite, permits, and day use within the Field Office. Most of these options are provided through the interagency reservation service.

If the Central Oregon Field Office decides to make reservation services or other types of e-commerce options available, an expanded amenity fee for reservation services will be charged in addition to any other standard or expanded amenity fees in accordance with 16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(G). The reservation service fee is subject to contracting requirements and will be adjusted with contract changes or with future updates to the business plan. For visitors who wish not to pay the expanded amenity fee of reservation services, the traditional iron ranger with RUP envelopes will exist at campgrounds until the field office moves the fee area completely to e-



commerce options and/or the RUP envelope is no longer available for payment. Boater permits do not currently have an onsite or cash option.

#### *4.e Use of Fees*

BLM Handbook H-2930-1 directs the BLM to use collected fees for recreation facilities, services, and programs that impact visitor enjoyment, visitor access, and health and safety. In line with BLM guidance, the Central Oregon Field Office will use revenue from the proposed fees to support John Day Basin recreation facilities, services, and programs.

Campground fees have not been updated since 1998, and boater permit fees are 94% below fair market value. The cost to operate is between \$380,000 and \$540,000 annually, while current fee revenue averages just over \$50,000 per year. This fee proposal estimates annual revenue will increase to \$188,000 once Thirtymile Campground is complete and in operation. This is \$137,000 more than the current revenue but over \$200,000 less than the average cost to operate. The increase in fees will not provide cost recovery, but it will supplement budgeted funding to improve public access and enhance recreational experiences. The Field Office's priorities for fee revenue are listed below.

#### Improving Public Access

- **River Access:** All boat ramps along the John Day River corridor are primitive. Due to the free-flowing nature of the river, conditions of the ramps vary wildly, and the BLM regularly hears complaints and requests for upgrades. The BLM would like to improve boat ramps throughout the entire John Day River corridor and will work closely with partners and stakeholders. Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB) offers grants and assistance for boat ramp improvement projects that require matching funds. Costs will likely accrue hundreds of thousands of dollars over the course of 15 – 20 years considering the John Day has 11 primitive boat ramps. A small portion of fee money will assist in improving the ramps on BLM managed land in this much larger endeavor to improve river access.
- **Boat Launch Kiosks:** The BLM plans to replace existing and aged signage at all boat access points with updated kiosks and informational panels to include an area map. This project will cost between \$10,000 and \$20,000 and will improve access by communicating where access is located and providing better information. The BLM plans to apply for OSMB grants that require matching funds to help with this project.
- **Facility Upgrades:** The BLM plans to upgrade picnic tables, fire rings, campground pads and driveways, toilets, general signage, campsite posts, and fencing/barriers at all of the developed campgrounds within the Basin. The BLM has applied for funding opportunities for large scale upgrades to the existing fee campgrounds requesting approximately 3 million dollars. Fee money can help fund minor improvements and help provide seed money for larger funding proposals.



- Future Development: As stated earlier, the field office plans to develop Thirtymile Campground which will cost over a million dollars. Fee money can help supplement larger scale funding.

#### Wildfire Prevention, Human Health and Safety, and Visitor Enjoyment:

- Law Enforcement: Both BLM and State law enforcement provide for health and human safety throughout the Basin. The average annual cost for law enforcement is \$20,000 but varies year to year. Increased fee revenue will help increase law enforcement presence within the Basin improving human health and safety and fire prevention measures.
- Wildfire Prevention: BLM field staff provide an enormous amount of fire prevention services while in the field completing other maintenance and public service duties. Staff ensure provided fire rings are far enough from vegetation and are cleaned out each year; clean up hundreds of illegal fire rings annually to prevent an escaped campfire; post fire orders and related educational signage; mow, weed eat, and control invasive weeds at sites to decrease fuel load; and educate visitors onsite during fire season ensuring visitors are fire aware. Ranger services likely save millions of dollars each year by preventing human-caused wildfires.
- Field Rangers: rangers including river rangers, park rangers, and volunteers provide consistent visitor services and assistance, permit and required gear checks for boating parties, janitorial services at recreation sites and along the river, invasive weed management, along with support for projects such as river clean ups, fence removal, youth engagement, and supplies for volunteer and community engagement events and projects. Labor costs have averaged about \$340,000 per year from 2020-2024 and are expected to increase with inflation and if services are contracted. Fees will help secure funding for on the ground personnel providing a large return in investment, ensuring health and human safety and visitor enjoyment.
- Campground Hosts: Since the development of Priest Hole Campground and with the upcoming development of Thirtymile Campground, the field office is actively seeking creative methods to provide improved services to the visiting public. The BLM plans to staff volunteer camp hosts at Priest Hole and Thirtymile Campgrounds. Hosts will be offered per diem and mileage reimbursements, providing a stark improvement to visitor health and safety at a relatively low cost between \$5,000 - \$10,000 annually.
- Field Supplies: For staff to provide visitor services, supplies are needed and include maintaining and replacing equipment such as lawn mowers, weed eaters, hand tools, pressure washers, chain saws, drills, purchasing field supplies such as cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, toilet paper, air freshener, fuel, paint, gravel, lumber, picnic tables, fire rings, etc. Annual supply costs average \$20,000 per year with some years showing a larger investment when purchasing larger items such as picnic tables or lawn mowers.
- Services: Current services include toilet pumping, dumpsters during high use boating seasons, and porta potty rentals. Fee money supports these direct services ensuring the



recreation sites are clean and accessible to all. Costs are about \$5,000 annually. Garbage services could be expanded if the field office can maintain camp host presence and secured dumpsters at a reasonable price.

#### *4.f Partners, Volunteers, and Community Engagement*

By prioritizing and embracing partnerships, the BLM builds community and encourages public engagement in public lands. Engaged partners and communities provide different points of view and offer innovative solutions. Solving difficult problems helps build pride and ownership and creates stewards for public lands and for the John Day River.

There are countless partnerships in the John Day Basin, but several stand out for their proven record of accomplishment. The John Day River CORE team cooperatively manages the John Day Wild and Scenic River through a memorandum of understanding to implement the John Day River Management Plan. The JDBRMP (page 42) directs the CORE team to continue cooperation. The team includes the BLM, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs (CTWS), the Department of State Lands, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Coalition of Counties, Oregon State Police, and Oregon State Marine Board. The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department manages Cottonwood Canyon State Park and BLM lands in the lower portion of the John Day River through a Cooperative Agreement. The City of Monument partners with the BLM to maintain Monument Park along the North Fork John Day, a key river access site for the community and visitors alike.

Certain Treaties, Federal Laws, and Executive Orders give special and unique standing to Native American Tribes. Tribes in the John Day Basin Fee Area include the CTWS and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. The Burns Paiute Tribe also has interest in portions of the same area. These tribes have recognized traditional uses established on and/or near the John Day River. The CTWS is an active partner in planning and monitoring the John Day River. Direct consultation has occurred during land use plan development and will continue as BLM implements its land use plans.

In addition, non-profit organizations have assisted BLM with a variety of environmental education and stewardship activities. For many years the Oregon Hunters Association has collaborated with the BLM to cultivate wildlife food and cover crops at Clarno and Priest Hole. Western Rivers Conservancy assisted with the acquisition of Thirtymile and McDonald's Ferry properties, and the Oregon Natural Desert Association partners with the BLM in Wilderness and WSA monitoring.

To help support operational and educational efforts throughout the John Day Basin, the Central Oregon Field Office is expanding volunteer efforts. The BLM is recruiting a volunteer camp host for the new Priest Hole Campground and would like to have volunteer hosts at Thirtymile and McDonald's Ferry in the future. The field office is recruiting river ranger volunteers to help support field work and is engaging in youth assistance programs with BLM partners.

The BLM expects that volunteers, local Tribes, county officials, Natural Resources Conservation Service, private landowners, and many organizations will continue the collaboration necessary to protect and enhance the John Day River.



#### *4.g Impact of Fee Change*

##### *Recreational, Resource, and Environmental Impacts*

The cost to camp at the four existing fee campgrounds has remained the same since 1998, while the cost of goods, labor, and services is now almost double. Visitation has more than doubled since 2006. The purchasing power from fees has decreased while the demand has increased. This has resulted in backlogged maintenance, aged infrastructure, a lack of adequate permit and required gear checks at boat launches, inadequate compliance checks on the river, unclean dispersed camping areas along the river, and a reduction in quality recreational experiences.

If the proposed fees in this plan are not implemented, facility maintenance and visitor services will continue to be reduced, and funding will not be available to replace aging infrastructure. Law enforcement presence will likely decrease leading to increased user conflicts, property damage, and resource degradation. Access roads and gravel pads will become undefined promoting campground sprawl and resource impacts. Signs will become faded and outdated and will not adequately communicate important messages. Toilets and dispersed camping areas will become unsanitary, and garbage will collect furthering health, safety, and environmental concerns. These issues will get worse as visitation and inflation continue to grow. The declining ability to care for recreation areas will not support the BLM mission. BLM may have to close some developed recreation sites if amenities cannot be adequately maintained, decreasing public access.

If the proposed fees in this plan are implemented, the BLM will be better able to offer improved services, replace deteriorating infrastructure, and provide adequate maintenance. The BLM will also seek further opportunities for partnerships, education, and youth involvement, providing added support for the program and resource with little revenue spent other than staff coordination time. This will in turn prevent resource and environmental impacts while protecting and enhancing the visitor experience and public access, supporting the BLM mission, and engaging partnerships.

##### *Impacts to Recreation Users & Resources*

The proposed and current fee campgrounds are in Wheeler, Grant, and Gilliam counties. The median household income in these counties is about 30% less than the average in Oregon and 29% below the average in the United States. The RUP and permit analysis completed in the Demographic and Visitor Use section suggests that most Oregon visitors come from Multnomah, Deschutes, and Clackamas counties (Portland, Bend, and Eugene/Corvallis areas), where the average median household income is 39% greater than local Oregon counties. Because nearly all users are non-locals, there are already travel costs to reach the site, including gasoline, lodging, food, and recreational equipment. The fee increases should not be so high that they prevent this travel from occurring, so the benefits would remain.

The proposed fee adjustments and additions could displace some local visitors during high use seasons. However, local representation during high use seasons is low (4% of total campers, 1% of overnight boaters, but a higher representation for day use boaters, 25%). Fees are not currently charged during low use seasons, and the BLM has many areas for dispersed camping. The proposed frequent boater passes will allow non-commercial, day use boaters the ability to boat



the river for a year-round flat fee. This will improve both convenience and cost for frequent boaters, typically locals. Displacement of local use is not expected or should be minimal, and the frequent boater pass could increase local use.

The fee increases and additions may encourage some groups who are unwilling or unable to pay the price to camp or boat elsewhere. However, most visitors are traveling over two hours to get to the Basin, accruing fuel and other travel costs. Boaters incur additional costs including shuttles, river equipment, food, and sometimes lodging. The increase in fees will likely account for a small fraction of the overall cost to recreate and should not affect the willingness to pay. Comparable campgrounds exist in the area with more amenities for only a slightly higher price, and some visitors may utilize these sites instead. However, proposed fees are comparable to those charged at nearby campgrounds, and BLM campgrounds offer the experience and convenience of camping by the river adjacent to boating, swimming, and fishing opportunities.

If the proposed plan is implemented, the Central Oregon Field Office will have ten recreation areas and over 455,000 acres of undeveloped camping opportunities that are currently without a fee for those looking for a more affordable and rustic experience. Fees are not currently charged to boat on the North Fork of the John Day River, which offers a scenic overnight boating experience. At present, the United States Forest Service maintains three free campgrounds in the area: Fairview, Billy Fields, and Barnhouse Campgrounds. Public land agencies in the Pacific Northwest currently offer multiple, overnight boating trips without a fee on rivers such as the Lower Salmon River in Idaho, Grande Ronde River in Oregon, Illinois River in Oregon, and the Owyhee River systems in Idaho and Oregon. Two extremely renowned overnight river trips, Hells Canyon of the Snake River and the Selway River, currently have no per person fee associated with their river permits but do require a reservation fee.

The fees proposed in this plan could increase pressure on areas without fees and developed infrastructure, which may have a negative impact on resources outside of the developed areas. Due to the small fraction of total costs in a recreation trip to the John Day Basin Fee Area, the BLM does not expect significant displacement. If this fee proposal is implemented, staff will continue to care for dispersed recreation areas within the John Day Basin Fee Area and will continue to monitor use. Monitoring will include informal field contacts and requests for feedback, formal and informal feedback from BLM partners at official meetings or informal phone calls, and visitor use comparisons to years prior to the fee increase.

If this business plan is not implemented there will be minimal immediate impacts to recreational users. However, staffing and budget changes may reduce operations and services. Recreationalists, including low-income visitors, may no longer enjoy the current level of recreational opportunity and public access in the area. This could decrease visitation and tourism in surrounding communities.

An estimated 26,243 people annually visit the four fee campgrounds and three proposed fee camping areas and just under 51,000 boater use days were calculated for the John Day River in 2024 (one boater per day is one boater use day). Many of these visitors contribute to the local economy by buying food, gas, and other goods and supplies. Some may decide to stay at a local



hotel or visit a local museum. A decrease in BLM visitation will likely decrease tourism dollars in this region. If the proposed business plan were implemented and the campgrounds were maintained to their current standards or better, the BLM expects an increase in visitation in concert with an increase in population over time. This will in turn increase tourism dollars in the local communities.

## **5. Outreach**

### *5.a Public and Stakeholder Participation and Outreach*

The opportunity for public participation in recreation fee establishment and implementation is required by Section 804 of FLREA and is essential to promote public awareness and receive feedback. It is also important to communicate how the BLM plans to spend fee money and for the BLM to hear suggestions on how the public would like to see their fee dollars spent.

BLM objectives in the public participation process regarding the recreation fee program include:

- Identifying key individuals, groups, and communities of interest.
- Communicating recreation fee needs and benefits.
- Hearing and addressing public issues and concerns.
- Encouraging participation in recreation by establishing positive relationships with public users and gateway communities.

To actively involve the public, the BLM will release a media article and post notice of the fee proposal on applicable BLM and Recreation.gov websites. The BLM will post a notice of the fee proposal at relevant recreation sites within the John Day Basin for at least 30 days. While staff are making public contacts at recreation sites within the John Day Basin, they will offer information about the fee proposal. Public outreach and materials will include directions on how to comment. The BLM will publish the inclusion of new fee sites (Thirtymile, Priest Hole, and Burnt Ranch) in the Federal Registry.

To actively involve stakeholders, the BLM will inform the CORE team and John Day River Outfitters and Guides of the draft business plan.

### *5.b Feedback*

#### *Visitor Satisfaction Survey*

The BLM in partnership with Washington State University administered a visitor satisfaction survey on the John Day Wild and Scenic River from May 1 through July 15, 2023, at Clarno boat launch and at Service Creek and Priest Hole boat launch and campgrounds.

The survey helped to identify areas where the BLM can focus fee dollars to improve visitor satisfaction. These categories were: providing useful maps and brochures, road conditions, site cleanliness, law enforcement presence, and protection of natural resources.

BLM ranked very high in staff services electing that staff courteousness, knowledge, and overall performance was highly satisfactory.

Regarding programs and fees, 72% of respondents paid a fee between \$25 and \$50, indicating the \$26 overnight boating fee including the reservation fee, and 21% did not pay a fee. Twenty-



five percent of respondents felt the fee was too low while 67% felt the fee was about right. Eighty-seven percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the value of recreation opportunity and services were at least equal to the fee asked to pay.

The BLM distributed this survey at areas with outdated infrastructure and at a time of limited staffing.

#### *Public Comments*

The BLM will compile public comments gathered during the open public comment period.

#### *5.c Visitor Feedback Mechanisms*

To communicate how fee dollars are spent, the BLM will post the annual spending plan and accomplishments report online [here](https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/permits-and-fees/flrea-revenue) (<https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/permits-and-fees/flrea-revenue>). The BLM may provide additional information on the use of fee revenue through press releases, the annual commercial guide and outfitter meetings, and web site and social media postings.

The BLM always accepts and encourages public comment and feedback on recreation and visitor services at the Prineville District Office front desk, from public contact field staff, by mail and by phone.



## 6. Appendices

### 6.a References

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World Population Review, 2024. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/oregon/bend#:~:text=Bend%20is%20a%20city%20located,population%20of%2099%2C674%20in%202020.>



### 6.b Calculations & Data Explained

This section describes BLM calculations in further detail.

#### Visitor Demographics

##### *Campground Demographics*

To figure demographics for campers at the four existing campgrounds, the BLM pulled fee envelopes from April through July of 2025 for Service Creek, Muleshoe, Lone Pine, and Big Bend Campgrounds and recorded a zip code from each envelope. The zip code was used to identify the county, state, and country. Oregon area was organized to include the Portland Area (Washington, Multnomah, and Clackamas Counties), Bend Area (Deschutes, Crook, and Jefferson Counties), Eugene Corvallis Area (Linn, Lane, and Benton Counties), Hood River, Maupin/The Dalles, and the general local area (Grant, Wheeler, and Gilliam Counties).

State	# RUPs	%
OR	269	64
WA	70	17
CA	33	8
ID	12	3
Canada	12	3
Other	23	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>100</b>

Oregon Area	# RUPs	%
Portland	104	39
Bend	57	21
Eugene/Corvallis	31	12
Hood River	8	3
Maupin/The Dalles	6	2
Local	10	4
Other	53	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>100</b>

##### *Boater Demographics*

To figure demographics for boaters in the fee portion of the John Day River, the BLM pulled Recreation.gov reports that include city along with county for each permit. BLM discarded cancelled permits from data. Oregon area was organized to include the Portland Area (Washington, Multnomah, and Clackamas Counties), Bend Area (Deschutes, Crook, and Jefferson Counties), Eugene Corvallis Area (Linn, Lane, and Benton Counties), Hood River, Maupin/The Dalles (local to Segment 1), and Local area (Grant, Wheeler, and Gilliam Counties).

#### Spring High Season Overnight Boater Permits All Segments

State	# Permits	%
OR	1336	71
WA	331	18
CA	64	3
ID	58	3
Canada	6	0.3
Other	85	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1880</b>	<b>100</b>

Oregon Area	# Permits	%
Portland	541	40
Bend	382	29
Eugene/Corvallis	134	10
Hood River	56	4
Maupin/The Dalles	29	2
Local	11	1
Other	183	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>1336</b>	<b>100</b>



### Spring High Season Segment 3A/3B Day Use

State	# Permits	%
OR	118	87
WA	12	9
CA	3	2
ID	0	0
Canada	0	0
Other	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100</b>

Oregon Area	# Permits	%
Portland	34	29
Bend	44	38
Eugene/Corvallis	3	2
Hood River	6	5
Maupin/The Dalles	0	0
Local	29	25
Other	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>100</b>

### Spring High Season Segment 1A/1B Day Use

State	# Permits	%
OR	47	89
WA	6	11
CA	0	0
ID	0	0
Canada	0	0
Other	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>

Oregon Area	# Permits	%
Portland	26	55
Bend	5	11
Eugene/Corvallis	0	0
Hood River	7	15
Maupin/The Dalles	9	19
Local	0	0
Other	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100</b>

### Fall High Season Segment 1A/1B Day Use

State	# Permits	%
OR	62	85
WA	11	15
CA	0	0
ID	0	0
Canada	0	0
Other	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>

Oregon Area	# Permits	%
Portland	33	53
Bend	6	10
Eugene/Corvallis	0	0
Hood River	4	6
Maupin/The Dalles	3	5
Local	8	13
Other	8	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100</b>

### Estimated Fee Revenue – Campgrounds

To calculate the estimated fee revenue, the BLM multiplied the average fee revenue from 2020-2024 by how much the fee will increase. For example, Service Creek has an average of \$824.99 in collections per year. To calculate estimated fee revenue for a new fee of \$15, the BLM multiplied \$824.99 by 3, since the cost would increase by a factor of 3 (15 divided by 5). For a \$12 fee estimate, the BLM multiplied \$824.99 by 2.4 (12 divided by 5), and for a \$20 estimate the BLM multiplied \$824.99 by 4. This method was used for all campgrounds listed. Since none



of the existing campgrounds have group sites, there was no need to calculate group site revenue for existing sites. Only the increase to \$15 was brought forward in the main portion of the business plan since that is the price the BLM is proposing. We have kept the full chart in the appendix for reference.

The increase in extra vehicle cost will increase by a factor of 2.5 (\$5 divided by the original \$2 per extra vehicle). Since the average revenue data includes extra vehicles and the factor of 2.5 is not widely different from the price increase in each category, the BLM felt the difference in expected revenue is negligible and did not include it.

Campground	Average Annual Visitation (2020-2024)	Average Annual Fee Revenue (2020-2024)	Estimated Annual Fee Revenue for \$12	Estimated Annual Fee Revenue for \$15	Estimated Annual Fee Revenue for \$20
Service Creek	5,412	\$824.99	\$1,979.98	\$2,474.97	\$3,299.96
Muleshoe	2,143	\$2,026.11	\$4,862.66	\$6,078.33	\$8,104.44
Lone Pine	2,134	\$1,581.74	\$3,796.18	\$4,745.22	\$6,326.96
Big Bend	1,887	\$1,717.55	\$4,122.12	\$5,146.65	\$6,870.20
Burnt Ranch	2,418	*1,600	\$4,004.21	\$5,005.26	\$6,673.68
Priest Hole	6,318	*4,132	\$10,463.27	\$13,079.09	\$17,438.78
Thirtymile	4,517	*3,3251	\$7,480.15	\$9,350.19	\$12,466.92
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,829</b>	<b>\$6,150.39</b>	<b>\$36,708.57</b>	<b>\$45,885.71</b>	<b>\$61,180.94</b>

*\*Denotes calculated hypothetical revenue for campgrounds that do not currently have fees.*

To calculate estimated revenue for new campgrounds using the method described above, the BLM had to calculate the theoretical revenue new campgrounds may generate if BLM charged fees at the current rate of \$5 per site per night. To do so, BLM used annual visitation data recorded in the RMIS database. BLM divided the average annual fee revenue by the average annual visitation for each of the existing campgrounds to come up with an average dollar per visit of \$.69.

Campground	Average Annual Visitation (2020-2024)	Average Annual Fee Revenue (2020-2024)	\$ per visit
Service Creek	5,412	\$824.99	\$0.15
Muleshoe	2,143	\$2,026.11	\$0.95
Lone Pine	2,134	\$1,581.74	\$0.74
Big Bend	1,887	\$1,717.55	\$0.91

*Table shows calculations for dollars per visit.*



The BLM then multiplied the average annual visitation by \$0.69 to calculate the theoretical average annual fee revenue for new campgrounds as indicated in Table 6 (Burnt Ranch, Priest Hole, and Thirtymile).

Notice that the dollars per visit is much lower for Service Creek. Most Service Creek visitors are only using the boat launch. Muleshoe also has a boat launch that may redirect values, but the ramp is rarely used due to its primitive condition. All three new campgrounds have boat launches. To help account for both types of visitation within the data, the BLM averaged the dollar per visit between all four campgrounds instead of using a campground by campground calculation.

#### Visitor Use and Fee Tables

These tables show the raw data used for annual revenue and visitor use. The average for 2020-2024 was used for the calculations described in the preceding section.

Campground	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	Average
Service Creek	\$892.50	\$1,008.50	\$737.50	\$674.96	\$811.50	\$824.99
Muleshoe	\$2,518.68	\$2,395.07	\$1,792.42	\$1,699.07	\$1,725.30	\$2,026.11
Lone Pine	\$1,968.24	\$2,080.32	\$1,586.80	\$1,346.13	\$927.23	\$1,581.74
Big Bend	\$2,077.50	\$1,875.58	\$1,782.99	\$1,622.29	\$1,229.40	\$1,717.55
Totals	\$7,456.92	\$7,359.47	\$5,899.71	\$5,396.45	\$4,693.43	\$6,161.20

*Campground Revenue (data from fee counts).*

Campground	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	Average
Service Creek	5000	6500	6258	4657	4643	5412
Muleshoe	2400	2688	1928	2132	1569	2143
Lone Pine	2200	2794	2360	1664	1654	2134
Big Bend	2200	2310	2012	1723	1192	1887
Burnt Ranch	2132	2473	3274	2119	2092	2418
Priest Hole	6000	7500	6435	5887	5770	6318
Thirtymile	7407	7400	3249	2262	2267	4517



Totals	27339	31665	25516	20444	19187	24830
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*Number of Visits (estimated RMIS data)*

#### Estimated Fee Revenue - Boater Permits

BLM calculated boater permit expected revenue by multiplying the number of people on non-cancelled, 2024 high use season permits in each segment by the average number of days per trip to calculate the approximate number of person days. The total number of person days for the spring high use season was then multiplied by \$5 to calculate how much revenue a \$5 per person per day fee should generate.

Permit Type	# People on Non-cancelled Permits	Average Days Per Trip	# of Person Days
Segment 1A	410	3	1230
Segment 1B	26	2	52
Segment 2A	2,318	6	13,908
Segment 2B	1,601	5	8,005
Segment 3A	2,355	4	9,420
Segment 3B	2,546	4	10,184
Long Distance	459	7	3,213
Segment 1A/1B Day-use	279	1	279
Segment 3A/3B Day-use	848	1	848

*Use data for permits. Total number of person days: 47,139, times \$5 equals \$235,695. \$235,695 times 60% equals \$141,417.*

The current permit system does not encourage boaters to report the accurate number of people per trip. There is no penalty for an inaccurate number of boaters recorded on a permit, and permit holders are allowed to add or subtract people up to the day of their trip. Therefore, the BLM expects permit data to show a higher number of people than who is physically on the river. Due to random field audits and permit confirmation counts, the BLM expects that up to 40% of parties do not cancel their trip and do not go on the trip (i.e.: no-show). Due to these inaccuracies in reporting, the BLM subtracted 40% from the above calculated value of \$219,630 as a corrective factor (actual calculation for correction is  $235,695 \times .6$ ). The BLM expects the per person per day fee will improve actual data accuracy. If refunds are implemented in the future, BLM expects the no show rate to decrease considerably.

\*BLM estimated expected Frequent Boater Permit fees based on the number of inquiries received in the last four years (about 10 inquiries times \$30 is between \$300).



\*\*BLM rounded the total for simplification.

Permit Type	Average Annual Fee Revenue (2020-2024)	Expected Proposed Revenue
Boater Permits	\$44,841	\$141,417
Frequent Boater Passes	0	*\$300
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$44,841</b>	<b>**\$142,00</b>

*This table describes current and expected boater permit revenue.*

#### Average Fair Market Value - Campgrounds

The BLM used a simple average of each fee to calculate the average fair market value. Therefore no detail explanation is included here.

#### Average Fair Market Value – Boater Permits

To find the average fair market value, BLM took the average of the cost per person per day column. If use fees are reported as per person per trip, the cost per person per day was calculated by dividing the use fee by the number of days in a typical trip for each river. For rivers with complicated fee structures, the BLM calculated the per person per day cost by dividing the permit cost by the number of days in a typical trip and then by the number of people in a trip. The highest price per person per day (a 1-person trip) and the lowest price per person per day (a trip with the maximum allowed participants) were recorded along with the median of these two values. The BLM used the median values in the average fair market value calculation.

To simplify calculations and provide a fair comparison, the use fee does not include application, reservation, or national park entrance fees that are common to National Park Service river permits.

River	Managing Agency	Use Fee	Typical Days per Trip	Cost per Person per Day	Frequent Boater Pass
Lower Deschutes	BLM	\$5 per person per day	X	\$5	\$50
Desolation Gray Canyon, Green	BLM	\$40 per person	6	\$6.66	X
Rogue	BLM/ USFS	\$10 per person	4	\$2.50	X
Middle Fork and Main Salmon	USFS	\$4 per person per day	X	\$4	\$40
San Juan 1	BLM	\$10 per person	2	\$5	X
San Juan 2	BLM	\$20 per person	4	\$5	X
San Juan 3	BLM	\$40 per person	6	\$6.67	X
Salt	USFS	\$125 per trip for 1-15 people	4	\$33.75-\$2.25 per person per day: median 18\$	X
Gates of Lodore & Yampa, Green	NPS	\$185 per trip for 1-25 people	4	\$50-\$2 per person per day: median \$26	X



Gunnison Gorge	BLM	\$10 per person for one night, \$15 per person for two nights	2-3	\$5	X
Cataract/ Canyonlands, Colorado	NPS	\$25 per person	2	\$12.5	X
Westwater Canyon, Colorado	BLM	\$10 per person	2	\$5	X
Ruby Horsethief, Colorado	BLM	\$20 per night for 1-5 people, \$50 per night for 6-14 people, \$100 per night for 15-25 people	2	\$1.78-\$10 per person per day: median: \$5.90	X
Grand Canyon, Colorado	NPS	\$310 per person	21	\$14.76	X
Smith River	FWP	\$25 per adult resident, \$60 per adult non-resident	4	\$6.25 resident, \$15 non-resident	X
Rio Chama	BLM	\$5 per person	2	\$2.50	X
Missouri River Breaks	BLM	\$4 per person per day	X	\$4	X

Average Fair Market Value Per Person Per Day Boater Permit	Average Fair Market Value Per Person Per Year Frequent Boater Pass
\$8	\$45

#### Use Data for 3A/3B Day Use Permits

The below table displays the days with the greatest number of permits sold for Segment 3A/3B day use permits during the spring of 2024. The patterns shows that Memorial Day weekend, then Friday/Saturdays from mid-June through Fourth of July have the highest use. The data also shows that even during the highest use days, only one third of the permits available were sold. The number of permits available is 24 per day.

Date	# Permits	# People	Day of the Week	Holiday Weekend
5/25/2024	7	80	Saturday	Memorial Day
5/26/2024	8	104	Sunday	Memorial Day
6/15/2024	6	20	Saturday	Father's Day
6/21/2024	6	17	Friday	Juneteenth
6/22/2024	7	58	Saturday	Juneteenth
7/5/2024	5	46	Friday	Fourth July

*This table summarizes peak use days for Segment 3A/3B Day Use Permits.*



### Use Data for 1A/3B Day Use Permits

Segments 1A/1B during the 2024 Spring High Season (May 1 – July 15), only saw two days with over three non-cancelled permits sold (6/22 and 7/5 with 5 and 4 permits sold respectively). On the busiest day only half of the permits had sold (5 out of 10 available permits).

On the contrary, during the 2024 Segment 1A/1B Fall High Season (Sep 1 – Nov 30), the total number of available permits (only 3) sold out on ten days (11% of total days during the Fall High Season). The sold-out days had slightly higher representation on the weekends.

<b>Sold Out Date</b>	<b>Day of the Week</b>
9/28/2024	Saturday
10/28/2024	Monday
10/29/2024	Tuesday
11/2/2024	Saturday
11/10/2024	Sunday
11/14/2024	Thursday
11/16/2024	Saturday
11/17/2024	Sunday
11/21/2024	Thursday
11/22/2024	Friday

*This table summarizes peak use days for Segment 1A/1B Day Use Permits.*

### Budget Data Explained

**Labor:** The budget analyst ran a report for labor for L1220 budget funds and L1232 funds to the John Day River WBS code. The total direct costs were added to half of the total overhead costs for each year. Annual travel per diem for John Day River field staff was added to the total.

**Supplies and Equipment:** The budget analyst ran reports for purchase card expenditures for L1220 and L1232 from the river program's purchasers for each year. The totals were reported.

**Vehicle costs:** The budget analyst ran reports for each vehicle used by the field office's recreation personnel for each year. Mileage charged to John Day River recreation from law enforcement each year was added into the total.

**Services:** The budget analyst ran purchase request reports for contracted services for each year for L1220 and L1232 funds for the John Day River. The totals were reported.

**Law Enforcement:** Labor charged to recreation for the one designated law enforcement officer for the John Day River was used for each year.


**Repair and Construction:** Recreation money used for the Priest Hole construction project was used for 2023 and 2024. This project was funded with over one million dollars of aquatics money. No major construction projects occurred from 2020-2022.



6.c Supporting Websites: John Day River Day Use Permits:  
(<https://www.recreation.gov/permits/621745>)

6/26/25, 5:29 PM

John Day River - Day Use Permits, John Day Wild and Scenic River - Recreation.gov

 **Water Level:** Water flow is often too low to boat outside of the spring season. See our [waterflow](#) tab for links to gauges, forecasted flows, and recommended flow per craft.

New Boater Guides are available by visiting or calling the Prineville District Office (541) 416-6700. They are sometimes available [online here](#).

1 Show Less

[Home](#) / [John Day Wild and Scenic River](#) / John Day River - Day Use Permits

## John Day River - Day Use Permits

Part of [John Day Wild and Scenic River](#)

16 Reviews

 No Mobile Service

 Favorite

### Available Permits

Select an available day to reserve a permit

Select Entry Segment

Select Entry Segment...

< June 2025 >

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	Select a location to view availability.			20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

 Unavailable

Book Now

Detailed Availability

 Find Next Available Day

<https://www.recreation.gov/permits/621745>

1/5



**Additional Information**

[John Day River Boater Guide](#)  
[BLM John Day River Website](#)  
[Water Flow, Outfitters & Shuttles](#)  
[Oregon State Marine Board](#)  
[Oregon Waterway Access Permit FAQs](#)  
[Prineville District BLM](#)  
[Oregon Parks and Recreation](#)  
[Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife](#)  
[Oregon State Road Conditions](#)

**Overview****Need to Know****Fees & Cancellations****Getting Here****Contacts**

The **John Day River** offers a range of recreational opportunities including boating, fishing, and camping.

See our new **John Day River Know Before You Go video!**

**Map of John Day River Segments** and **Segment Descriptions**

New Boater Guides are available. Call 541-416-6700.

**An online permit is required year-round**

for both day and overnight boating trips within the Wild and Scenic section of the John Day River (Service Creek to Turnwater Falls) and is only available here on Recreation.gov. One permit covers your entire group for the length of the trip and is based on your launch segment.

**LOW SEASON**

- Choose Low Season in the drop down menu regardless of river segment
- Choose Fall Low Season for Sep 1 - Nov 30 launches except for Segment 1A or 1B

**HIGH SEASON****Launch Segments:**

- Segment 3A or 3B (May 1 - July 15): Entering the Wild and Scenic section from upstream of Service Creek, or launching at Service Creek, Twickenham, Priest Hole, or Lower Burnt Ranch. This permit does not allow parties to takeout downstream of Clarno.
- Segment 1A or 1B (May 1 - July 15): Launching at Cottonwood Bridge (Burres), Starvation Lane, Rock Creek, or **McDonald's Ferry**
- Fall High Season Segment 1A or 1B (Sep 1 - Nov 30): Launching at Cottonwood Bridge (Burres), Starvation Lane, Rock Creek, or McDonald's Ferry

**\*Trip leaders are required to register at the boat launch.** Print the permit and leave the bottom registration section of the permit in the box at the launch kiosk, or hand it to agency personnel if present. Carry the rest of the permit on the river in an accessible location.

**Whitewater boating and outdoors skills are necessary for all sections of river.** The John Day is a free-flowing desert river; levels can change quickly and vary from under 100cfs to over 20,000cfs! May through late June typically have the best flows. **Check flow** and weather forecasts. Tie up boats and strap down anything that can blow away!

**All boat ramps are primitive and can be steep and/or difficult to catch depending on flows. Do not commit your vehicle to a ramp you cannot drive off of. Take outs are not signed from the river.** The river flows through a mix of public and private lands. It is your responsibility to **research your trip, carry a map, and know where you are.** See the See the lists of **guides and outfitters** if a guided trip is desired.

A permit system is in place to help protect the John Day River, which is designated as a **National Wild and Scenic River** and an **Oregon State Scenic Waterway**. By working together as a community and by practicing **Leave No Trace** techniques, we can help preserve this precious resource for tomorrow and for future generations.

For further information, please visit our **John Day River website**.

[^ Read Less](#)

**Permit & Season Information**

This permit is for a **one-day boating trip**. **For Overnight Permits click here.**

**Permits are unlimited except during High Season which is from:**

- Service Creek to Turnwater Falls from May 1-July 15



6/26/25, 5:29 PM

## John Day River - Day Use Permits, John Day Wild and Scenic River - Recreation.gov

- Cottonwood Bridge (Burres) to Turnwater Falls from September 1-November 30

**Daily Rolling Release:** High Season permits are first-come first-served and become available on Recreation.gov at 7am Pacific Time 4 months and 1 month in advance of a given launch date. See the [High Season Release Schedule](#) .

You cannot print your permit more than 14 days before your trip. Prior to printing your permit, you can cancel directly on Recreation.gov. Once printed, you must email or call the BLM to cancel. Cancelled permits return to the Recreation.gov availability calendar. See Fees/Cancellations.

**Trip leaders or alternates** must be present the entire trip. Add alternate trip leaders when first obtaining your permit, they cannot be added later. You can be a trip leader or alternate on 1 overnight permit at a time.

### Important Dates

DATES	INFORMATION
October 1, 2024 - May 15, 2025	Priest Hole launch is closed for campground construction.
May 1, 2025 - July 15, 2025	Spring High Season between Service Creek and Turnwater Falls
September 1, 2024 - November 30, 2024	Fall High Season between J.S. Burres (Cottonwood Bridge) and Turnwater Falls
January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2025	Daily rolling release allows 50% of permits to become available for reservation 4 months prior to a given launch date at 7am PT
April 1, 2024 - December 31, 2025	Daily rolling release allows remaining 50% of permits to become available for reservation 1 month prior to a given launch date at 7am PT
December 1, 2024 - April 15, 2025	Thirtymile Boat Launch is not accessible by vehicle from Dec 1 - April 15 during the winter closure of Armstrong Canyon Rd.

### How Does the Quota Work for this Permit?

Quota for High Season Day Use permits is measured in the number of day use boating groups launching or entering the Wild and Scenic River (Service Creek to Turnwater Falls) per day. One permit covers an entire group.

**Low Season quota:** Unlimited

**High Season quota** (total groups per day):

50% of the following quota (rounded up to a whole number) will be released 4 months in advance of a given launch date. The remaining 50% will be released 1 month in advance. See [Quota](#) and [High Season Release Schedule](#)

- Segment 3A or 3B: 24
- Segment 1A or 1B: 10; 3 in the fall

**The maximum trip length is 1 day (0 nights).**

**Groups may have no more than 16 people.**

**However, Segments 1A and 1B from Sep 1-Nov 30 has a group size limit of 4.**

Group limits are put in place to help protect the resource and for solitude. Please pay respect to other boaters and to the river by remaining within these limits.

See [Boater Etiquette](#)

### Media Gallery



RECREATION.gov

Guest Reviews (16)

4.5

5 stars

4 stars

3 stars

2 stars

1 stars

10

5

0

1

0

Mobile Coverage

AT&T (5 reviews)  
No Service

Verizon (8 reviews)  
No Service

Sprint (0 reviews)  
No Reviews

T-Mobile (0 reviews)  
No Reviews

Sort by: Most Recent

Steve P

Submitted on 12/1/2024

Zone: 1A or 1B Fall High Season (Sep 1 - Nov 30)

Reservation Dates: 11/25/2024 - 11/25/2024

The river was nice and quiet. Very relaxing. Great experience especially the Big Horn sheep we saw. The bathrooms at cottonwood were clean and well stocked. The road down to starvation was easily pa...

Show More

Phone Carrier: AT&T

Coverage Strength: (0) No Service

Was this review helpful?

Yes (0)

No (0)

Mark M

Submitted on 11/20/2024

https://www.recreation.gov/permits/621745



4/5

51



**Zone:** 1A or 1B Fall High Season (Sep 1 - Nov 30)  
**Reservation Dates:** 11/14/2024 - 11/14/2024

Nice upgrade to the Starvation take-out/launch since I was last there. "Boat ramp" is a bit rough—definitely need a 4X4 to pull a trailered boat out

 **Phone Carrier:** Verizon  
 **Coverage Strength:** (0) No Service


Was this review helpful? 

Yes (0)

No (0)



**David S**  
*Submitted on 5/31/2024*  
**Zone:** 1A or 1B High Season  
**Reservation Dates:** 5/25/2024 - 5/25/2024

 **Phone Carrier:** Verizon  
 **Coverage Strength:** (0) No Service

Was this review helpful? 

Yes (0)

No (0)




See More Reviews



## John Day River Overnight Permits: (<https://www.recreation.gov/permits/621746>)

6/26/25, 5:32 PM

John Day River - Overnight Permits, John Day Wild and Scenic River - Recreation.gov

 Fires and smoking are not allowed from June 1 - October 15. This includes portable propane campfires and wood pellet burning devices. You may use metal camp stoves and shielded lanterns with bottled propane or liquid fuel and operate...

2 Show More

[Home](#) / [John Day Wild and Scenic River](#) / John Day River - Overnight Permits

RECREATION.gov

Part of [John Day Wild and Scenic River](#)

180 Reviews

 No Mobile Service

 Favorite

### Available Permits

Select an available day to reserve a permit

Select Entry Segment

Select Entry Segment...

< June 2025 >

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	Select a location to view availability.				21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

 Unavailable

Book Now

Detailed Availability

 Find Next Available Day

### Additional Information

[John Day River Boater Guide](#)

<https://www.recreation.gov/permits/621746>

1/5



[BLM John Day River Website](#)  
[Water Flow, Outfitters & Shuttles](#)  
[Oregon State Road Conditions](#)  
[Oregon Waterway Access Permit FAQ](#)  
[Oregon State Marine Board](#)  
[Prineville District BLM](#)  
[Cottonwood Canyon State Park](#)  
[Oregon Parks and Recreation](#)  
[Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife](#)

## Overview

## Need to Know

## Fees &amp; Cancellations

## Getting Here

## Contacts

The **John Day River** offers a range of recreational opportunities including boating, fishing, and camping.

See our new **John Day River Know Before You Go Video!**

**An online permit is required year-round** for both day and overnight boating trips from Service Creek to Tumwater Falls and is only available here on Recreation.gov. See our **Map of John Day River Segments** and **click here to learn which permit you need**. The links have a description of the launch, take-outs, and dates each permit pertains to. One permit covers an entire group for the length of the trip and is based on launch date and launch segment. Launch date or segment cannot be changed. You do not need more than one permit for your entire trip.

Purchase a **brand new boater guide** by calling 541-416-6700 or they are sometimes available **here**.

**Parties are required to register at the boat launch.** Print the permit and leave the bottom registration section of the permit in the box at the launch kiosk on your launch day. **Carry the rest of the permit on the river in an accessible location.**

**Whitewater boating and outdoors skills are necessary for all sections of river.** The John Day is a free-flowing desert river; levels can change quickly and vary from under 100cfs to over 20,000cfs! May through late June typically have the best flows. **Check flow** and weather forecasts. Tie up boats and strap down anything that can blow away!

**Take outs are not signed from the river. Don't miss the takeout! Scout it out beforehand by map (satellite imagery helps) or on foot.** The river flows through a mix of public and private lands. It is your responsibility to **research your trip, carry a map, and know where you are**. See the list of **guides and outfitters** if a guided trip is desired.

**All boat ramps are primitive and can be steep and/or difficult to catch depending on flows. Do not commit your vehicle to a ramp you cannot drive off of. You may need to hand carry at certain flows due to a steep ramp or mud.**

Visit our **BLM John Day River** website for more information. See the **know before you go** section for recommended water levels per craft, short term, and long term flow forecasts along with safety tips and more!

**Waterway Access Permit Exemption:** On the John Day Wild and Scenic River an Oregon Waterway Access Permit is not required during High Season from Service Creek to Tumwater Falls but is required during Low Season. Please visit the **Oregon State Marine Board website** for further information. Help lessen the spread of invasive species by limiting travel through infested areas and by **cleaning and drying watercraft**.

[^ Read Less](#)

## Permit & Season Information

This permit is for an **Overnight boating trip**. **For Day Use permits click here.**

**Permits are unlimited except during High Season which is from:**

- Service Creek to Tumwater Falls (May 1-July 15)
- Cottonwood Bridge (Burres) to Tumwater Falls (September 1-November 30)

**Daily Rolling Release:** High Season permits are first-come first-served and become available on Recreation.gov at 7am Pacific Time 4 months and 1 month in advance of a given launch date. See the **High Season Release Schedule**.

You cannot print your permit more than 14 days before your trip. Prior to printing your permit, you can cancel directly on Recreation.gov. Once printed, you must email or call the BLM to cancel. Cancelled permits return to the Recreation.gov availability calendar. See Fees/Cancellations.

**Trip leaders or alternates** must be present the entire trip. Add alternate trip leaders when first obtaining your permit, they cannot be added later. You can be a trip leader or alternate on 1 overnight permit at a time.



**Important Dates**

DATES	INFORMATION
October 1, 2024 - May 15, 2025	Priest Hole launch is closed for campground construction.
May 1, 2025 - July 15, 2025	Spring High Season between Service Creek and Tumwater Falls
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January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2025	Daily rolling release allows 50% of permits to become available for reservation 4 months prior to a given launch date at 7am PT. See the High Season Release Schedule.
April 1, 2024 - December 31, 2025	Daily rolling release allows remaining 50% of permits to become available for reservation 1 month prior to a given launch date at 7am PT
December 1, 2024 - April 15, 2025	Thirtymile Boat Launch is not accessible by vehicle from Dec 1 - April 15 during the winter closure of Armstrong Canyon Rd.

**How Does the Quota Work for this Permit?**

Quota for Overnight High Season permits is measured in the number of boating groups entering the Wild and Scenic River (Service Creek to Tumwater Falls) per day. One permit covers an entire group.

**Low Season quota:** Unlimited

**High Season quota** (total groups per day):

50% of the following quota (rounded up to a whole number) will be released 4 months in advance of a given launch date. The remaining 50% will be released 1 month in advance. See [Quota](#) and [High Season Release Schedule](#).

- Long Distance Permits: 2
- Segment 3A: 8
- Segment 3B: 9
- Segment 2A: 5
- Segment 2B: 4
- Segment 1A: 4
  - 2 in Fall High Season
- Segment 1B: 2
  - 1 in Fall High Season

**Stay limit is 14 days.**

**Groups may have no more than 16 people.**

**Except Segments 1A & 1B:**

- Group size limit is 4 from Sep. 1 - Nov. 30
- Stay limit is 1 night per segment year round

Size and stay limits are put in place to help protect the resource and for solitude. Respect to other boaters and the river by remaining within these limits.

See [Boater Etiquette](#)

**Media Gallery**



---

**Guest Reviews (180)****4.4**

<b>5 stars</b>	110
<b>4 stars</b>	42
<b>3 stars</b>	16
<b>2 stars</b>	7
<b>1 stars</b>	5

**Mobile Coverage****T-Mobile** (16 reviews)  
📶 0.1 - No Service**Verizon** (71 reviews)  
📶 0 - No Service**AT&T** (27 reviews)  
📶 0.2 - No Service**Sprint** (0 reviews)  
📶 0 - No Reviews

Sort by: Most Recent

**Keila C**

Submitted on 6/24/2025

**Zone:** 3A High Season (Restricted Takeouts)**Reservation Dates:** 6/14/2025 - 6/17/2025

Great trip, water levels were perfect, not a lot of people and fun camp spots

📶 **Phone Carrier:** Verizon📶 **Coverage Strength:** (0) No Service

Was this review helpful?

Yes (0)

No (0)





6/26/25, 5:32 PM

John Day River - Overnight Permits, John Day Wild and Scenic River - Recreation.gov

**Gary E**

*Submitted on 6/21/2025*

**Zone:** 2A High Season

**Reservation Dates:** 6/7/2025 - 6/12/2025

The float is an awesome adventure. Clarno to Cottonwood. Pretty incredible scenery, wildlife, and river. Hard to put it in words. But definitely lived up to an exceeded expectations.

Was this review helpful?

Yes (0)

No (0)



**KIM G**

*Submitted on 6/20/2025*

**Zone:** 3A High Season (Restricted Takeouts)

**Reservation Dates:** 6/12/2025 - 6/13/2025

My grandson and I did an overnight. It was his first float trip. He caught a lot of fish, and we saw some beautiful scenery. We hope to go again next year.

**Phone Carrier:** Verizon

**Coverage Strength:** (0) No Service

Was this review helpful?

Yes (0)

No (0)



[See More Reviews](#)



John Day River Basin Developed Campgrounds:  
(<https://www.recreation.gov/camping/campgrounds/10317439>)

6/26/25, 5:31 PM

John Day River Basin Developed Campgrounds, John Day Wild and Scenic River - Recreation.gov

[View Photos](#)

[← Back to Search Results](#)

 CAMPGROUND

## John Day River Basin Developed Campgrounds

John Day Wild and Scenic River  
Near Spray, Oregon

★★★★★ (1) |  No Service |  Favorite |  Reservation Rules

The Central Oregon Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management oversees four separate fee campgrounds within the John Day River Basin in Central Oregon. Service Creek and Muleshoe Campgrounds are located near Service Creek, Oregon along the John Day River and State Route 207. Big Bend and Lone Pine Campgrounds are located between Kimberly and Monument along the North Fork of the John Day River and State

[Campsite List](#) [Seasons & Fees](#) [Rules & Cancellations](#) [Facility Information](#) [Ratings & Reviews](#)

## Facilities

The John Day River Basin Developed Campgrounds are basic in both design and amenities. Each campsite is flat and has a fire ring and picnic table. Each campground has an ADA accessible vault toilet. No garbage collection or drinking water is available at any of the campgrounds. There is no reliable cell phone coverage.

Service Creek Campground has four walk-in only tent sites in a one acre area under large ponderosa trees. All sites are close to each other. You must walk your camping equipment into the campsites. Parking is available in a large, open gravel lot. Service Creek is also a boat launch and is a great location to camp the night before a river trip. Boaters often leave trucks with trailers in the parking lot while on the river. The mornings can be busy during spring months with boaters preparing for a multi-day river trip.

RECREATION.gov

a primitive boat launch.

**Lone Pine Campground** has five graveled drive-in sites that are flat. Some of the sites are closer to the river than others. The entrance road drops down into the campground and helps provide privacy from the main road.

**Big Bend Campground** has four gravelled drive-in sites that are flat and are all near the river. A steep gravel road leads down into the campground. The entrance provides privacy from the road but can be a challenge to some vehicles. Four-wheel drive and caution is recommended.

### Natural Features

All four campgrounds are on the river with the road nearby. Be ready for gorgeous views of desert landscapes with steep hillsides and dark night sides. Without a dam to tame its waters, the river changes drastically from still pools in the summer to a cold and brown torrent in the spring. Juniper trees and the occasional ponderosa pine will provide shade and shelter from hot summer sun and canyon winds.

### Recreation

Many travelers visit this region along the [Journey Through Time Scenic Byway](#). Beginning in Biggs and ending in Baker City, Oregon, the Scenic Byway travels 286 miles through northcentral and eastern Oregon. John Day River Basin Developed Campgrounds make for a great resting point along this scenic and historic journey. They are also well situated if you are interested in visiting the [John Day Fossil Beds National Monument](#).

The John Day River Basin is well known for its river related activities. These include fishing, boating, photography, wildlife viewing, camping, and simply relaxing by the river. The spring snowmelt attracts boaters from around the country. Both Service Creek and Muleshoe serve as common entry points to boat the Wild and Scenic section of the John Day River. A permit is required year-round to boat between Service Creek and Turnwale Falls. For further information visit the [John Day River Day Use Permits](#) and our [John Day River Overnight Permit](#) webpages.

### Recreation Sites

- Standard Nonelectric
- Walk To
- Overnight

### Activities

- Photography
- Water Access
- Camping
- Star Gazing
- River Trips

<https://www.recreation.gov/camping/campgrounds/10317439?tab=info>

 $\frac{1}{3}$



#### Amenities

- Accessible Vault Toilets
- Fire Pit
- Parking Area
- Pets Allowed
- Picnic Tables
- River Access
- Waterfront Sites

#### Nearby Attractions

- [John Day Fossil Beds National Monument](#)
- [Fossil Museum](#)

#### Getting Here

Latitude Longitude  
44° 47' 38.2272" N 120° 0' 3.4812" W

[Copy to Clipboard](#)

#### Service Creek Campground:

From Prineville, Oregon, take US 26 east out of town and drive 46.5 miles to OR 207 N. Turn left and drive 23.5 miles. Service Creek Campground and boat launch will be on the right.

#### Muleshoe Campground:

From Prineville, Oregon, take US 26 east out of town and drive 46.5 miles to OR 207 N. Turn left and drive 23.8 miles. Pass Service Creek Campground, and at the stop sign take a right onto OR 207 N. Drive for 1.9 miles and Muleshoe Campground will be on your right.

#### Lone Pine Campground:

From Prineville, Oregon, take US 26 east out of town and drive 77.7 miles. Turn left onto OR-19 N. Drive 18.4 miles then turn right onto OR-402 E. Drive for 1.8 miles and Lone Pine Campground will be on your right.

#### Big Bend Campground:

From Prineville, Oregon, take US 26 east out of town and drive 77.7 miles. Turn left onto OR-19 N. Drive 18.4 miles then turn right onto OR-402 E. Drive for 3 miles and Big Bend Campground will be on your right. Be cautious as this campground is on a sweeping bend in the road.

#### Need to Know

- All campsites are first-come, first-served. Campsites are not reservable.
- All campers must register at the campground kiosk.
- Payment can be made by scanning the QR code at the campground kiosk.
- To use the QR code, you must download the Recreation.gov mobile app prior to arrival.
- Onsite cash or check are also accepted methods of payment. See the onsite campground kiosk for instructions.
- There is no reliable cell phone coverage at any of the campgrounds.
- No garbage services or drinking water is available. Please pack it in, pack it out.
- Each site can have up to 8 people.
- Stay limit is 14 days in a 28-day period within 25 miles.
- Fires are not allowed from June 1 - October 15
- When allowed, fires must:
  - Be contained within designated fire rings.
  - Be attended at all times unless fully extinguished.
  - Not be used to burn or dispose of trash or food.

#### Please:

- Camp in designated sites only.
- Do not alter or modify sites.
- Keep motor vehicles on designated roads and parking areas.
- Do not leave personal property unattended for more than 24 hours.
- Do not hold campsites for others.
- Remain quiet from 10 pm to 7 am.
- Do not run generators during quiet hours.
- Keep pets on leash or under physical control and clean up after them.
- Do not discharge firearms or fireworks into or from developed recreation sites.
- Enjoy your stay!





6/26/25, 5:31 PM

John Day River Basin Developed Campgrounds, John Day Wild and Scenic River - Recreation.gov

#### Contact Information

##### Mailing Address

Bureau of Land Management  
Prineville District Office  
3050 NE 3rd Street  
Prineville, OR 97754

##### Phone Number

For campground inquiries, please call: (541) 416-6700

##### Email

[blm\\_john\\_day\\_river@blm.gov](mailto:blm_john_day_river@blm.gov)

#### Additional Information

- [Prineville District BLM](#)
- [Service Creek Campground](#)
- [Muleshoe Campground](#)
- [Lone Pine Campground](#)
- [Big Bend Campground](#)
- [Oregon Road Conditions](#)

#### Explore Nearby Campgrounds

Sites with availability around next weekend

[Add Dates](#)

[Add Filters](#)

Explore Nearby Campgrounds

Jun 27 - 29

Jun 27 - 29

Jun 27 - 29

Jun 27 - 29

**Olive Lake Campground (OR)**  
Umatilla National Forest  
★★★★☆ (26)

**Lepage Park**  
John Day Lock and Dam, Lake Umatilla  
★★★★☆ (172)

**Perry South Campground**  
Deschutes National Forest  
★★★★☆ (66)

**Rock Creek Campground (Mt. Hood National Forest, OR)**  
Mt. Hood National Forest  
★★★★☆ (66)



## John Day River BLM Website

(<https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/permits-and-passes/lotteries-and-permit-systems/oregon-washington/john-day-river>)

6/26/25, 5:35 PM

Know Before You Go | Bureau of Land Management

 An official website of the United States government [Here's how you know](#)



[Home](#) > [Programs](#) > [Recreation and Visitor Services](#) > [Recreation Program Areas](#) > [Permits and Fees](#) > [Lotteries and Permit Systems](#) > [Oregon-Washington](#) > [John Day River](#) > [Know Before You Go](#)

## Know Before You Go

[Homepage](#) | [Know Before You Go](#) | [Caring for the River](#) | [Resources](#)

An online permit is required to boat between Service Creek and Tumwater Falls and is available on Recreation.gov.

## Permit Requirements

An online permit from Recreation.gov is required year-round to boat within the Wild and Scenic section of the John Day River (Service Creek to Tumwater Falls) for both day and overnight trips. For further information please visit the John Day River Recreation.gov sites for [Day Use](#) and [Overnight Permits](#).

A self-issued paper permit, found at the appropriate launch kiosks, is required to boat:

- Within Priest Hole Recreation Site from River Mile 136.5–137.5 (if floating further, an online permit is required)
- The North Fork of the John Day between Dale and Monument (toilet and fire pan required)

A permit is not required to boat:

- Less than 100 yards upstream or downstream of the launch or to cross to the opposite bank
- The 1/4 mile between Cottonwood Bridge (Burres) and Lone Tree Campground at Cottonwood Canyon State Park
- Between Monument on the North Fork of the John Day River and Service Creek on the Main Stem of the John Day River

## Group Size and Stay Limits

- Regardless of the number of permits obtained, groups can have no more than 16 people
- The stay limit is 14 days
- In Segments 1A & 1B the group size limit is 4 from Sep. 1–Nov. 30, and the stay limit is 1 night per segment year round
- Group size and stay limits are in place to help protect the resource and to be considerate of others seeking solitude. Please pay respect to other boaters and to the river by remaining within these limits.

<https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/permits-and-passes/lotteries-and-permit-systems/oregon-washington/john-day-river/know-go>

1/5



### Water Flow

Without dams to control water levels, flows on the John Day River fluctuate in relation to snowpack and rainfall. When planning a trip, it is helpful to consider the long-term water level forecast and the historical average flows available on the Summary Hydrograph.

- [Current River Flow at Service Creek](#) from the USGS
- [Short Term Flow Forecast](#) and [Long Term Flow Forecast](#) by NOAA
- [Summary Hydrograph](#) (select the 50% exceedance level)
- [Snow Pack Information](#)
- Other USGS Gauges: [North Fork at Monument](#), [John Day at McDonald Ferry](#)

Prior whitewater boating skills are necessary to navigate all sections of the John Day River. The difficulty of rapids and the time necessary to boat each section varies wildly with water level. At low flows, the river alternates from technical and rocky to long pools with no current. You may only be able to make 1-2 miles per hour. Pack light and be prepared to drag or line boats. Higher flows allow for easier miles (3-6 miles per hour) depending on wind. Keep current water levels and weather forecasts in mind when trip planning, and please bring the proper craft for those conditions.

Recommended minimum flow levels are

- Drift boats: 1200cfs
- Inflatable rafts: 1000cfs
- Canoes: 300 cfs if portaging or lining Clarno Rapid
- Inflatable kayaks: 300 cfs if portaging or lining Clarno Rapid

Recommended maximum flows:

We do not have a maximum flow recommendation. Please use your best judgment based on your skills and experience. The rapids in general do not get harder at higher flows, but eddy lines and boils can become hazardous. The most challenging level for Clarno is between 5,500 and 7,500 cfs, and at high flows the eddy for the Clarno scout can be challenging to catch.

When the river is high keep in mind:

- The water is cold and fast
- If someone were to swim they could be separated from the boat very quickly
- Stopping at campsites becomes more difficult
- Some campsites may be under water

The most popular multi-day float trips are

- Service Creek to Clarno: Class II-III, 48 miles, 3-5 days (average of 3 days)
- Clarno to Cottonwood: Class II-IV (Clarno Rapid III-IV), 70 miles, 4-10 days (average of 5 days)

\*Clarno Rapid (III-IV) can be unrunnable at low water; scout left, portage on either side, line right. Days needed per trip is highly flow and craft dependent.

### Boater Safety

Each year there are boating accidents that could be prevented with a few safety tips.

- Boat Sober! Boating under the influence (BUI) laws apply to all watercraft.
- Set an example and wear your life jacket. Oregon Marine Board regulations require a Type III or V PFD (life preserver) for all persons on a boat. An approved PFD must be worn by all persons in a boat in any section of waters



rated Class III or higher. Children 12 and younger must wear a PFD at all times while riding in a boat.

- Carry safety gear. Oregon State Marine Board also requires each boat to carry a whistle, and the BLM recommends that each group carry a throw rope, first aid kit, repair kit, spare oars/paddles, spare PFD, and a pump.
- It's always a good idea to carry the "[ten essentials](#)" including a map and a form of communications that work in a remote environment.
- Pro tip: Make sure boats and equipment are secure. On a free-flowing river the water can spike without warning. Tie boats up with solid knots and anchor points and envision where the boat would swing if flows came up. The wind is known to carry away unsecured gear such as: PFDs, cooler covers, and sometimes boats. Clip it in, strap it down.

Being prepared with the right equipment, experience, and education can help ensure a fun and enjoyable trip.

#### Motorized Boating

The table shows the type of watercraft and where and when they may be used. Personal watercraft (Jet-Skis and similar boats) are permitted on the John Day River downstream of Tumwater Falls only.

	Non-Motorized Boats	Electric Motors (40 lbs. thrust or less)	Motorized Watercraft
Upstream of Service Creek (Seg 4)	Open	Open	Open
Service Creek to Clarno (Seg 3)	Open	Open	Open Oct 1 - April 30
Clarno to Cottonwood (Seg 2)	Open	Closed	Closed
Cottonwood to Tumwater Falls (Seg 1)	Open	Open & Oct 1 - April 30	Open Oct 1 - April 30

\* John Day (McDonald) Crossing is the last public take-out before Tumwater Falls.

#### Oregon Waterway Access Permit

On the John Day River, an Oregon Waterway Access Permit is not needed when boating during the High Season (between Service Creek and Tumwater falls from May 1-July 15, and between Cottonwood Bridge (Burren) and Tumwater Falls from September 1-November 30). Since use fees are collected during High Season the following [exemption](#) applies: "A person/outfitter guides operating a boat on a federally designated wild and scenic river for which a separate fee system is in place."

When boating during Low Season on the Wild and Scenic section of the John Day or any time of year in the non-Wild and Scenic stretches, a Waterway Access Permit is required.

For more information please visit the [Oregon State Marine Board](#) website.

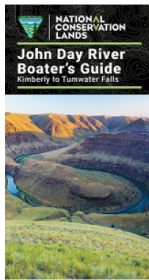


### John Day River Know Before You Go



### John Day River Boater's Guide

The brand new John Day River Boater's Guide has just arrived! This 67-page, spiral-bound guide can be purchased by visiting the Prineville District Office or by calling 541-416-6700.



### Quick Links

- [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov)

### Contact Us

**Prineville District BLM**  
3050 NE 3rd Street  
Prineville, OR 97754  
541-416-6700  
Email: [blm\\_john\\_day\\_river@blm.gov](mailto:blm_john_day_river@blm.gov)

### Was this page helpful?

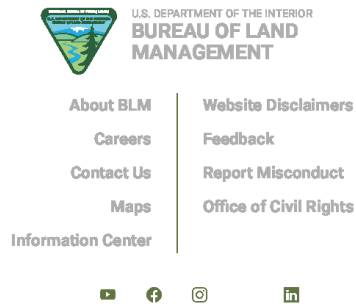
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☐ No

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## World Population Review

(<https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/oregon/bend#:~:text=Bend%20is%20a%20city%20located,population%20of%2099%2C674%20in%202020.>)



WORLD POPULATION REVIEW



US Cities > Oregon > Bend



## Bend

County: [Deschutes County](#)

County Seat: Yes

Area (mi<sup>2</sup>): 34.801

State: [Oregon](#)

Bend is a city located in [Deschutes County, Oregon](#). Bend has a 2025 population of **107,812**. It is also the county seat of [Deschutes County](#). Bend is currently growing. Its population has increased by **8.16%** since the most recent census in 2020. **99,674** in 2020.



Ad ends in 13

The average household income in Bend is \$126,760 with a per capita income of \$40,300. The median age in Bend is 40.3 years: 38.9 years for males, and 41.4 years for females.

AdChoices

107.8K

3,098



**1.6K** 1.53%

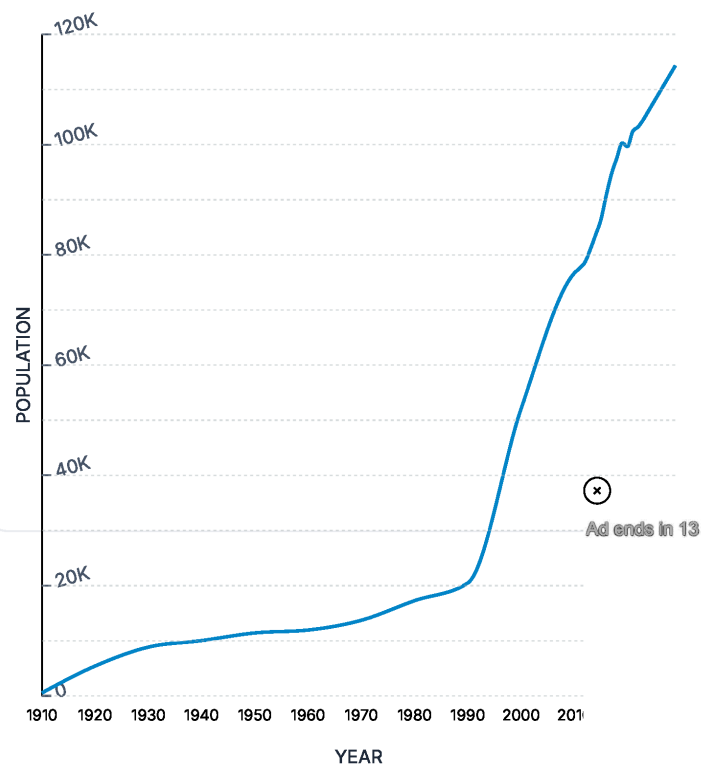
Growth

## Bend Population

By Population By Age By Growth Rate

### Bend Population

Data after 2023 is projected based on recent change



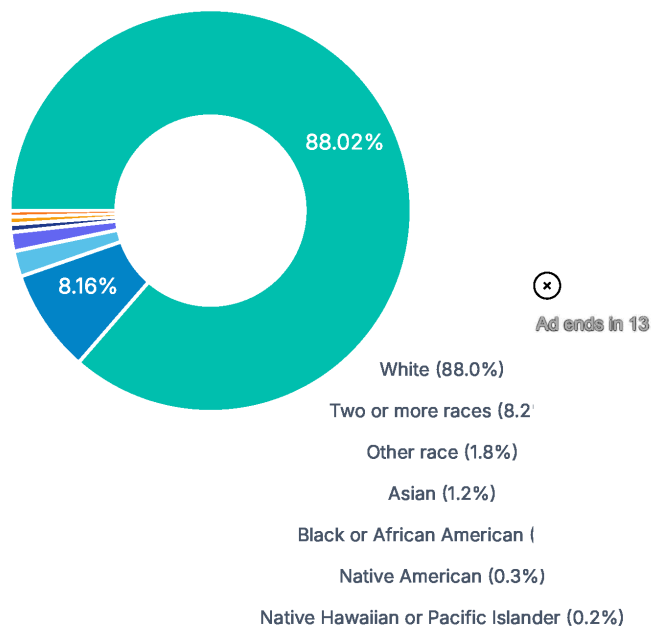


## Demographics

The racial composition of Bend includes 88.02% White, and smaller percentages for other race, Asian, Black or African American, Native American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander and multiracial populations.

### Population by Race

All Hispanic Non-Hispanic

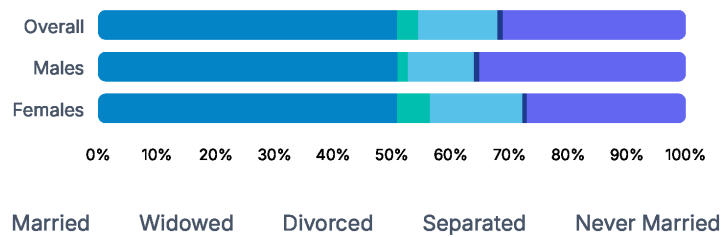






RACE	Count	Percentage
Two or more races	8,285	8.16%
Other race	1,810	1.78%
Asian	1,254	1.24%
Black or African American	332	0.33%
Native American	289	0.28%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	185	0.18%

### Bend Marital Status




Ad ends in 13


### Economics and Income Statistics


Bend's average per capita income is \$55,878. Household income levels show a median of \$88,792. The poverty rate stands at 9.46%.



related to them - whether through birth, marriage, or adoption. This includes relatives like spouses, children, parents, siblings, grandparents, and any other family members.

 **Households:** A household includes all the people who occupy a housing unit (such as a house or apartment) as their usual place of residence.

 **Non Families:** A nonfamily household is either someone living alone or when the owner/renter lives with people they aren't related to, like roommates.

NAME	MEDIAN 	MEAN
Married Families	\$124,663	-
Families	\$110,351	\$152,429
Households	\$88,792	\$126,760
Non Families	\$59,497	\$81,187

**\$55,878**

Average Income

**\$88,792**

Median Household Income

**9.46%**

Poverty Rate




Ad ends in 13



### Nearby Cities

- > [Tetherow, OR](#)
- > [Seventh Mountain, OR](#)
- > [Deschutes River Woods, OR](#)
- > [Tumalo, OR](#)
- > [Pronghorn, OR](#)

### Sources

1. [US Census State Population Estimates](#) - Most recent state estimates from the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program 
2. [US Census County Population Estimates](#) - Most recent county estimates from the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program Ad ends in 13
3. [American Community Survey \(2009 - 2013\)](#)
4. [Census QuickFacts](#)
5. [Historical Populations of States and Counties \(1790 -](#)





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