

## RECREATION FEE PROGRAM MANAGEMENT EVALUATION CALIFORNIA STATE FEE PROJECTS



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## **RECREATION FEE PROGRAM MANAGEMENT EVALUATION CALIFORNIA STATE FEE PROJECTS**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is the result of data collected from all California (CA) Recreation Fee Projects. The data were collected using online surveys from all Fee Projects and onsite evaluations of two CA Fee Projects, specifically the Dumont Dunes OHV Area in the Barstow Field Office and the Imperial Sand Dunes Area in the El Centro Field Office. In accordance with GAO guidance, this evaluation was conducted by an independent evaluation entity with guidance from BLM recreation program management.

Congress authorized an on-going Recreation Fee Program through the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA). The Act was enacted in December of 2004, and replaced the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program. REA authorizes the charging and collection of recreation fees at federal lands and waters for ten years, through 2014. REA also provides that recreation fee revenues are available for expenditure by the land managing agencies without further appropriation, until expended. The BLM practice is to retain and expend at the collecting unit 100 percent of revenues from recreation fees.

When Congress passed REA, it sought to improve upon the demonstration program by standardizing the types of fees, increasing flexibility for fee revenue expenditures, and authorizing a new national, interagency “America the Beautiful—the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass” designed to minimize visitor confusion over which passes can be accepted where. REA also provides criteria for establishing several different kinds of fees (entrance, standard amenity, expanded amenity, and special recreation permit).

Under REA, BLM is not allowed to charge entrance fees. BLM is authorized to collect standard amenity fees, which are fees for access to a National Conservation Area; a National Volcanic Monument; a destination visitor or interpretive center that provides a broad range of interpretive services, programs, and media; or use of an area that provides significant opportunities for outdoor recreation and contains six amenities: (1) designated developed parking; (2) a permanent toilet facility; (3) a permanent trash receptacle; (4) an interpretive sign, exhibit or kiosk; (5) picnic tables; and (6) security services.

In addition, BLM can collect expanded amenity fees, as well as fees for special recreation permits. Expanded amenity fees may be charged for the use of a specialized facility, equipment, or service, such as a campground, boat launch, reservation service, or interpretive tour. REA outlines the criteria that must be met in order to charge this fee. For example, in order for BLM to charge an expanded amenity fee for use of a developed campground, the campground must include at least a majority of nine specified amenities such as tent or trailer spaces, drinking water, and simple devices for containing a campfire. BLM can also collect a special recreation permit fee in connection with the issuance of a permit for specialized recreation uses of federal recreational lands and waters, such as group activities, recreation events, and motorized recreational vehicle use.

In general, REA directs the Secretary of the Interior to involve the public in developing recreation fees and requires BLM to establish committees, called Recreation Resource Advisory Committees (RRACs) or use an existing Resource Advisory Committee, to allow public input on recommendations for fee amounts and their usage, and the establishment of new fee sites. Under this authority, the Pacific Southwest Recreation RAC in California reviews and makes recommendations on all BLM and FS fee proposals.

BLM CA has 12 fee projects (as per collection code project number) or 15 REA fee projects, several with multiple sites. Some Field Offices have multiple projects. These projects accounted for 1,875,790 visits in FY06 and 3,380,768 visits in FY07. However, collections increased from about \$3,526,761 to about \$3,649,604 in the same time frames, an increase of \$122,843. A decrease in SRP revenue came from the El Centro and Ukiah Field Offices (both down more than \$50,000). Visits increased at the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area with a respective increase in collections of \$220,679, accounting for all of the increase in collections, as well as the decrease in Special Recreation Permit (SRP) revenue from other Field Offices.

Two fee projects were visited on-site as part of the evaluation. The visitation and collections data for the fee projects evaluated on-site are listed in the table below. Collections include fees collected, the fee project’s share of passes sold (such as the **America the Beautiful – National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass**), and SRP revenue.

Fee Projects Visited On-site During Evaluation	Number of Visits to Site in FY06	Amount Collected in FY06	Number of Visits to Site in FY07	Amount Collected in FY07
Dumont Dunes OHV	167,779	\$514,686	120,656	\$523,858
Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area	1,424,450	\$2,609,536	1,464,120	\$2,830,215

Overall, the two sites visited have done a good job of implementing the primary tenets of REA. Further, both sites have a number of exemplary management practices used to enhance visitor experience and to reduce operating costs. In particular, the engagement, involvement, and participation of volunteers and partnerships to help maintain and enhance the sites, to establish user-specific priorities for fee collection spending, and to further user education and safety is outstanding. Donations and contributions by volunteers have also improved the sites. Another important best practice has been the use of grants to leverage BLM funds to enhance the sites. “Green Sticker” revenue from the State of California is a critical source of funding for the sites. Both Green Sticker and private grants have been a major source to leverage additional funds for the sites.

The costs and stress of operating and responding to the public’s intermittent but intense use of sand dunes is a major burden on a Field Office’s resources, as well as on recreation, law enforcement and EMT resources required to staff busy holiday weekends. The work to serve and control the public during these weekends is stressful and can be dangerous. The public can carry weapons and the nature of the recreation can draw some people who are not law-abiding. Ongoing maintenance is extremely expensive and requires creative funding and work with partners and volunteers to continue site operation and enhancement.

The Pacific Southwest Recreation RAC in California is an effective interface with recreation site users and CA communities which provides valuable input on fee-related matters. Recently, The RRAC has disagreed with some fee proposals presented to them by the Forest Service. To date, all BLM CA fee proposals have received positive recommendations by the RRAC.

Finally, CA is adding fees to a previously free dry lake bed and hills OHV site, El Mirage, in the Barstow Field Office. This is expected to impact the demand for law enforcement support and other resources. The fees will fund the user demand for additional resources – park rangers, maintenance staff, law enforcement, etc. Another proposed fee project that had been readied to launch in the Hollister Field Office was indefinitely postponed due to naturally occurring asbestos in the ground.

## FEE PROJECT-SPECIFIC REPORTS

These follow the executive summary. The following are the major findings:

### National Issue

1. National Business Center Acquisitions Office recognition of the BLM Recreation Concessions Program. (Due: 9/31/09)
2. National Business Center Acquisitions Office implementation of Fee for Service Contracts and wireless devices for connectivity for credit card payment. (Due: 9/31/09)
3. Fee Logo modified to include OHV recognition. (Due: 12/31/08)
4. Develop a process to allow the scanning and electronic transmission of credit card data and charges, rather than the long paperwork and manual process now required. (Due: 9/31/09)
5. (From Online Surveys Results) A significant number of fee program staff, many new to their positions, report having received little or no training for 12 categories of fee program management. (Due: 9/31/09)



### State-wide Issues

1. State-wide deferred maintenance planning support and priorities. (Due: 9/31/09)
2. Grant writing support. (Due: 9/31/09)
3. (From Online Surveys Results) There is a possible misunderstanding among fee site staff of the REA definition of a "standard amenity fee", and what is required to properly charge for one. (Due: 9/31/09)
4. (From Online Surveys Results) At least one site, El Centro Hot Springs LTVA, reports not having the appropriate fee logo posted. The State recreation staff needs to ensure that logos are ordered and properly posted at all fee sites. (Due: 12/31/08)

### Dumont Dunes OHV

1. Written standard operating procedures for recreation fee collections and deposits. (Due: 6/30/09)
2. Communication plan to increase percent of off-site passes sold. (Due: 6/30/09)
3. Consider putting up a security camera at each entrance (rear and front) to improve safety. (Due: 12/31/08)

### Imperial Sand Dunes

1. Written standard operating procedures for recreation fee collections and deposits, if new contract for fee collection is not awarded by beginning of season. (Due: 12/31/08)
2. Communication plan to increase percent of off-site passes sold. (Due: 6/30/09)
3. Consider putting up a security camera at each entrance (rear and front) at Butter Cup site to improve safety. (Due 12/31/08)

## RECREATION FEE PROGRAM MANAGEMENT EVALUATION CALIFORNIA STATE FEE PROJECTS

### BACKGROUND

Congress authorized an on-going Recreation Fee Program in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA), which was enacted in December of 2004, and replaced the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program. The REA authorizes collection of recreation fees for ten years, through 2014.

Under REA, BLM is authorized to charge and collect recreation fees at federal lands and waters. When Congress passed REA, it sought to improve upon the demonstration program by providing fee authority for 10 years until December 2014, standardizing the types of fees, increasing flexibility for fee revenue expenditures, and authorizing a new national, interagency “America the Beautiful—the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass” designed to minimize visitor confusion over which passes can be accepted where.



REA also provides criteria for establishing several different kinds of fees (entrance, standard amenity, expanded amenity, and special recreation permit). Under REA, BLM is not allowed to charge entrance fees. BLM is authorized to collect standard amenity fees, which are fees for access to a National Conservation Area; a National Volcanic Monument; a destination visitor or interpretive center that provides a broad range of interpretive services, programs, and media; or use of an area that provides significant opportunities for outdoor recreation and contains all of the following six amenities: (1) designated developed parking; (2) a permanent toilet facility; (3) a permanent trash receptacle; (4) an interpretive sign, exhibit or kiosk; (5) picnic tables; and (6) security services.

In addition, BLM can collect expanded amenity fees, as well as fees for special recreation permits. Expanded amenity fees may be charged for the use of a specialized facility, equipment, or service, such as a campground, boat launch, reservation service, or interpretive tour. REA outlines the criteria that must be met in order to charge this fee. For example, in order for BLM to charge an expanded amenity fee for use of a developed campground, the campground must include at least a majority of nine specified amenities such as tent or trailer spaces, drinking water, and simple devices for containing a campfire. BLM can also collect a special recreation permit fee in connection with the issuance of a permit for specialized recreation uses of federal recreational lands and waters, such as group activities, recreation events, and motorized recreational vehicle use.

In general, REA directs the Secretary of the Interior to involve the public in developing recreation fees and requires BLM to establish committees, called Recreation Resource Advisory Committees (RRACs) or use an existing Resource Advisory Committee, to allow public input on recommendations for fee amounts and their usage, and the establishment of new fee sites.

REA provides that recreation fee revenues are available for expenditure without further appropriation, until expended. BLM's practice is to retain and expend at the collecting unit 100 percent of revenues from recreation fees.

As of this date, 204 Bureau of Land Management projects collect fees. Fee revenues have increased in the Bureau of Land Management every year. Visitation to recreation sites participating in the Recreational Fee Program continues to appear unaffected in any significant way by the new fees. Visitation at BLM Recreation sites was estimated at 55.4 million in FY2006.

## **PURPOSE**

To ensure that the intent of the REA is being administered properly, the BLM is conducting an independent evaluation of its recreation fee program implementation on a State-by-State basis, completing approximately 2 per year. The fee programs across the BLM run the gamut from highly developed visitor centers, to rafting or camping sites, to wilderness sites.

These fee programs have significant Congressional interest and the fee collections for all of the Department of the Interior now amount to over \$1.5 billion since 1996. As such, the program has significant fiduciary responsibility for management and control of public funds. The integrity and management of the processes for managing these funds should be regularly audited. Since 2002, six separate external audits (OIG, GAO, and OMB) of BLM's recreation fee program were conducted. While many of these reviews complimented the Bureau for its evaluation program, they also expressed concerns that the evaluations were not conducted by an independent entity. Because a significant percentage of the BLM's recreation fees come in the form of cash, the potential for fraud and abuse is high. The external audits strongly recommended the use of an outside entity to examine the recreation fee program collection, accounting, and reporting procedures, as well as to ensure that offices are in full compliance with REA. In response to these audits of BLM's recreation fee program, the BLM in FY 2007 re-initiated State-by-State independent evaluations of its recreation fee program.

Further, the program manages some of the premier sites managed by BLM from a visitor services perspective. It is in the Bureau's best interests to evaluate the management of these resources and of the interaction with the public it serves. Such evaluations should lead to discovering and promulgating best practices for other recreation sites and new fee sites and for development and communication of improvement recommendations within each project or set of sites evaluated.

BLM's cost of recreation fee collection in FY07 was 3%. It is important to keep such costs down and to increase the percent of cost of operations of these sites for which fees pay. The BLM has become more efficient with its collections. The evaluation process is intended as a means to collect and apply "lessons learned" from our experience with collecting fees. Further, the evaluation process will help to monitor and improve the appropriate use of revenues collected on priority maintenance and enhancement projects.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This evaluation of the CA Recreation Fee Projects is an implementation of a new, streamlined evaluation process that was pilot tested in 2006. This methodology reduces travel and on-site costs by using on-line pre-work surveys to collect data on all of the Fee Projects within a state, evaluate that data using an independent contractor to comply with a GAO recommendation, and

then follow-up at selected fee programs via on-site visits within a State. Fee Project on-site visits are determined from survey results or other indicators.

*Fee Project and site selection process.*

The intent of the Recreation Fee Program Evaluation Cycle is to evaluate a representative sample of Fee Sites in line with the following criteria. The intent is to evaluate the fee programs in every BLM State and on-site to selected fee programs, with high-revenue, high-visit sites being evaluated more frequently, and low-revenue, low-visit sites being evaluated less frequently. Further, fee programs with issues identified by audits, regulatory agency interest, or other circumstances (e.g. newly designated sites, sites with significant changes to fees generating public interest, etc.) would receive priority.

The following factors are key in determining which sites will be visited when:

1. Level of Fiscal Risk--Revenue generated (highest to lowest)
2. Level of Fiscal Risk--Remote geographic locations (most remote to most central)
3. Reasonable travel clustering for evaluation team
4. Indication of Management or Fiscal Issues, such as:
  - IG/GAO report findings
  - Customer research findings (comment cards, recreation use survey)
  - Substantial changes in revenue collection, obligations, costs
  - Unusual Cost/Revenue Ratios
  - Request of State or WO Recreation Fee Program

*Intended audience of the evaluation and the site-specific report.*

This report is intended for use by BLM management responsible for oversight, management and operation of recreation fee programs designated for fee collection in accordance with REA. These managers and staff include: Site Management, Area, District and Field Office Management, State Management, and National Landscape Conservation System and National Recreation Program Management, as well as the Assistant Director for Resources. The results will also be used for regulatory agency inquiries and the REA Triennial Report to Congress.

*Evaluation method & records review process.*

Pre-Work Survey. A pre-work survey (see Appendix) and a set of requested reports are sent to fee program managers shortly after the evaluation has been announced. The list of requested reports includes:

- The most recent business plan and activity plan
- A table of PE charges for the last full FY for this Fee Project
- The FY07 FAMS report of maintenance backlog activities or improvements within the fee project
- The results of the BLM Visitor Survey (aka Rec Satisfaction Survey)
- The most recent Alternative Internal Control Review (AICR) process report (i.e. Technical Program Review)
- The most recent financial audit (internal or external)
- The most recent independent audit
- Any other audits (OIG, GAO, etc.)
- List of SRPs
- Study of compliance
- MIS reports
- RMIS report
- Recreation Use Survey Statistics for the project
- Major contracts for operations
- Formal study of comparable sites

**Fee Program Survey.** Once the pre-work survey was completed by the fee project lead, the Recreation Fee Program Evaluation and REA Survey (see Appendix) was completed by the fee project lead and other key staff for every fee project within the state. The responses to the survey(s) are analyzed by an independent contractor. Based on the results and other indicators, certain fee programs and sites within them are selected for on-site review.

**On-Site Review.** The evaluation was conducted by an interdisciplinary team consisting of one or more of the following people, depending on evaluation needs for the set of fee programs managed within the state:

- State recreation representative (usually the State Recreation Lead)
- State Evaluation Program Lead
- WO recreation specialist (team leader)
- Financial/Accounting Expert (knowledgeable about MIS, CBS, and RMIS)
- Program Evaluation Expert (under contract)

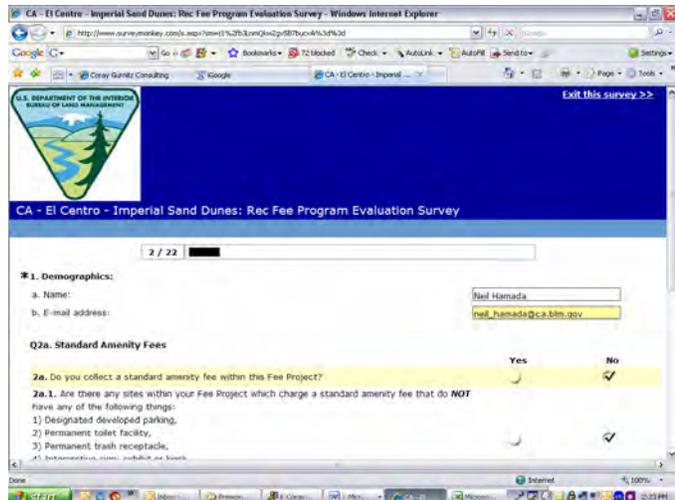
For CA, the team members were: Anthony Bobo, Team Leader (WO 250); Michael Ayers, CA State Recreation Lead; and Kevin Coray, Coray Gurnitz Consulting.

The team generally followed the attached on-site evaluation guide (see Appendix). The guide follows after the online surveys which request fee project-specific management and financial documents. Key documents requested include reports from the Collections and Billings System (CBS), the Management Information System (MIS), and cuff records, as well as the various business, marketing and communications plans, the Recreation Use Survey results, fee schedule, activities plan, and website for the site.

Team members conducted a preliminary review of the survey results and fee-project specific documents. Shortly before the on-site portion of the evaluation commenced, the evaluation team met and the Team Leader assigned sections of the evaluation guide for which specific team members were responsible. Information from the pre-work and fee project surveys was provided to team members. Additional questions were added to the on-site evaluation guide based on the preliminary review. The team then followed the evaluation agenda/schedule established by the team leader and the State Recreation Lead.

The CA Fee Projects site visits followed the typical agenda/schedule including:

- Team briefs State Office management about the review and add any content they recommend.
- Team travels to the first of the selected fee project sites, selected based on survey results, fees collected, or other pre-existing issues. The team meets with site and program-related management at the site. They tour the site together and most of the questions from the on-site evaluation guide (see Appendix) are asked and answered.
- Back at the Field Office, the team asks any remaining questions, particularly about financial controls, and then meets separately to discuss the strengths and opportunities for improvement of the Fee Projects.



- Team begins the report preparation for that site, travels to the next location and repeats the interview process.
- Following the site visit and drafting of the final report, the State Recreation Lead conducts a close-out briefing and discussion with State-Office representatives and representatives from relevant staff from every fee program. This is a participative session, rather than a one-way negative findings briefing, in which the SO, FO, and fee project management staff meet together with the evaluation team to develop the recommendations and implementation plan. By the end of the closeout, the outline of an implementation plan is to be complete and available immediately. The purposes of the closeout are apparent in the four-step closeout process:
  1. Share best practices and best experiences from the site visit.
  2. Share constructive ideas for improvement.
  3. Design strategies for making practical improvements, using the combined resources from the State, the FO, the Project staff, the evaluation team, and WO staff.
  4. Develop a plan for State Director signature to authorize implementing the strategies.

### **REVIEW OF ONLINE SURVEYS RESULTS ACROSS CA FEE PROJECTS**

Two online surveys were administered for each CA fee project. All REA fee projects were sent surveys. The online survey results were completed for 9 CA fee projects (17 separate site surveys were returned), accounting for \$3.2 million of the \$3.4 million, representing 94% of the collections in FY07. These data include the following key results. There was some missing data in the surveys, which accounts for some of the following incomplete results. El Mirage is included in this analysis even though fees are not being collected as a fee project there until October of 2008.

1. In general most sites are experiencing a slow increase in visitation, mostly from in-state residents. However, gas prices and other factors have decreased use by some out-of-state travelers. One site reports extensive use by street gangs.
2. 100% of collected fees have been retained at 16 of the 20 reporting fee projects. The other 4 report 90% of fees were retained (all in El Centro not including ISDRA) in line with REA guidelines. The 10% of fee collections from the 2 fee projects (4 sites reporting) in the El Centro FO were used at other fee projects within the FO. This is allowed only if the sites are managed as one project — an approach that creates some flexibility within FOs and reduces some site-specific paperwork.
3. 9 of 17 sites collect a standard amenity fee. 4 projects charge expanded amenity fees but not standard amenity fees. The Recreation Lead has reported that the data provided on this question by the Fee Project Leads is erroneous in that only two closed sites in CA — North Fork of the Kaweah and Clear Creek — charged standard amenity fees. Both of these sites are now closed. This suggests a possible misunderstanding on the part of the Fee Project Leads as to the precise definition of a “standard amenity fee” as defined in the REA.
4. All but 3 of the 17 reporting projects manage SRPs.
5. 5 of the 17 reporting projects do not accept the national passes. 4 appear to be unattended campsites. The other one is the El Centro FO Hot Springs LTVA project. Sites using individual SRPs (such as LTVA sites, Dumont Dunes, Imperial) do not accept the Interagency Pass because the pass is not intended to be valid at those sites.
6. Of the 17 reporting projects, multiple sources of data and input were used for determining the fee structure at the projects. 21 possible sources/inputs were rated in the survey. With the exception of the special LTVA project (in which communication

with other sites and cost of providing services were considered), at least 7 of these inputs (e.g. visitor survey, public meetings, agency policy, legal authority) were used to at least some extent by all reporting fee projects. In many cases all 21 factors were considered. For more information about these inputs see question 4 in the final survey in the appendix.

7. Project leads evaluated guidance for managing projects on 12 categories. Of the 16 projects reporting, all reported having received guidance in every category. Overall, the 16 projects rated guidance for: interagency passes and public participation to be of only some use or worse. All in all, the WO guidance was reported as moderately useful or better for 7 of the 12 categories.
8. Similarly, project leads evaluated training for managing projects on the same 12 categories. Again, of the 17 projects reporting, 5 reported that little or no training had been received for any of the categories. This is likely because staff in these FOs are new to their positions (e.g. Barstow FO). Of the 12+ projects that reported having received training, the trainings with the greatest need of improvement were (i.e. those scoring less than some use): interagency passes and interaction with the RRAC. Only 4 of the categories were of moderate use or better.
9. Project leads were asked to describe whether their project(s) currently use or not use each of 15 categories in their fee structure, administration, and collection methods. Of these, only participation in the national reservation system is not used by any of the 17 reporting sites. The El Centro FO Hot Springs LTVA project uses none of them, but uses a camp host instead to collect fees. The Alturas FO Pit River Campground project also reported using none of the methods, but did not specify another method. Manual fee collection stations such as iron rangers or fee tubes are the most frequently used methods (10 of 17 sites). Dumont Dunes and Imperial Sand Dunes use more forms of fee collection than other sites (e.g. internet sales), using 7 and 10 methods respectively.
10. Project leads were asked to rate to what extent the activities or improvements have been fully or partially funded by recreation fee revenues (1232 account) which have been identified as high priority within their Fee Project. Of the 16 reporting sites, only 5 reported that 1232 funds were used to little or no extent. All 5 of these had expenditures below \$3,000. Across the rest of the projects, 2 reported to a very great extent; 3 reported great; 5 reported moderate; and 1 reported some extent.
11. Retained fees at the projects were largely spent on visitor services and/or annual maintenance for the 15 reporting projects. In the Barstow FO Owl Canyon project, 100% of fees were reportedly spent on deferred maintenance.
12. Project leads were asked what other accounts are being used (engineering/facilities & other) to fund high priority activities or improvements at their projects. Of the 16 reporting projects, all used 1220 funds; 15 used 1651 and 1652 funds; 7 used 1653 funds; 5 used 1770 funds; and 3 used 2110 funds.
13. Of the 10 unstaffed reporting projects that reported on whether two people were present to collect fees from unstaffed sites such as fee tubes, 7 said sometimes and 3 projects said never. All 12 reporting projects use a replaceable lock box.
14. Administrative staff make deposits in every case except one in which the Imperial County Sheriffs Office makes the deposits. Further, in every case (12 reporting projects), the combination to the lock was changed when people with access to the safe left BLM employment. All but 2 projects' combinations have been changed as recently as 2008. The other 2 were changed in 2007 and 2006, respectively.
15. Of 16 reporting projects, 6 projects accept credit cards and receipts are adequately secured in all but one of these (those collected by Friends of Dumont Dunes).
16. 10 projects reported having had an AICR or other independent audit of its projects in the recent past.

17. Trash dumping and vandalism are reported as complaints in 5 projects.
18. No projects reported that proper fee signs are not in place.
19. Of the 13 reporting projects, all are using information bulletins to report to the public on the use of recreation fee collections from their fee projects. Further, 5 projects are using newspapers and the web, and 3 are using self-printed materials.
20. Of the 16 reporting sites, only the El Centro FO Hot Springs LTVA site is not using the approved "Recreation Fee Program" logo to advertise on fee project sites entrance signs, project related information (e.g. brochures and maps), and project improvements (e.g. toilets and other infrastructure) which have been paid for with fee program funds.

### OVERVIEW OF CA ON-SITE FEE PROJECTS EVALUATION CONTEXT

Two fee projects were visited on-site as part of the evaluation. For CA, the following Fee Projects and related Offices were visited on the dates specified and attended by the listed staff in addition to the Evaluation Team.

Site	2008 Date	Staff Present
Dumont Dunes OHV	July 9	Lynnette Elser, Recreation Supervisor; Larry Blaine, Outdoor Recreation Planner & OHV Coordinator
Barstow Field Office	July 9	Lillie Cooper, Public Contact Representative; Bessie Hayes, Budget Technician (via phone); Bob Hastey, LE Ranger
Imperial Sand Dunes	July 7	Neil Hamada, Outdoor Recreation Planner; Jamie Neilans, Dunes Supervisor/Recreation Technician
El Centro Field Office	July 8	Marisa Williams, Outdoor Recreation Planner

The visitation and collections data for the fee projects evaluated on-site are listed in the table below. Collections include fees collected, the fee project's share of passes sold (such as the Interagency Pass), and SRP revenue.

Fee Projects Visited On-site During Evaluation	Number of Visits to Site in FY06	Amount Collected in FY06	Number of Visits to Site in FY07	Amount Collected in FY07
Dumont Dunes OHV	167,779	\$514,686	120,656	\$523,858
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Overall, the two sites visited have done a good job of implementing the primary tenets of REA. Further, both sites have a number of exemplary management practices used to enhance visitor experience and to reduce operating costs. In particular, the engagement, involvement, and participation of volunteers and partnerships to help maintain and enhance the sites, to establish user-specific priorities for fee collection spending, and to further user education and safety is truly outstanding. Donations and contributions by volunteers have also improved the sites. Another important best practice has been the use of grants to leverage BLM funds to enhance the sites. "Green Sticker" revenue from the State of California is a critical source of funding for the sites. Both Green Sticker and private grants have been a major source to leverage additional funds for the sites.

The costs and stress of operating and responding to the public's intermittent but intense use of sand dunes is a major burden on a Field Office's resources, as well as on recreation, law enforcement and EMT resources required to staff busy holiday weekends. The work to serve and control the public during these weekends is stressful and can be dangerous. The public can carry weapons and the nature of the recreation can draw some people who are not law abiding. Ongoing maintenance is extremely expensive and requires creative funding and work with partners and volunteers to continue site operation and enhancement.

The Pacific Southwest Recreation RAC in California is an effective interface with recreation site users and CA communities which provides valuable input on fee-related matters. Recently, The RRAC has disagreed with some fee proposals presented to them by the Forest Service. To date, all BLM CA fee proposals have received positive recommendations by the RRAC.

Finally, CA is adding fees to a previously free open OHV area of dry lake bed and hills site, El Mirage, in the Barstow Field Office. This is expected to impact the demand for law enforcement support and other resources. The fees will fund the user demand for additional resources – park rangers, maintenance staff, law enforcement, etc. Another proposed fee project that had been readied to launch in the Hollister Field Office was indefinitely postponed due to naturally occurring asbestos in the ground.

## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following is a brief summary of recommendations. For more information on site-specific recommendations see the appropriate site-specific section below this summary.

### **National Issue**

1. National Business Center Acquisitions Office recognition of the BLM Recreation Concessions Program
2. National Business Center Acquisitions Office implementation of Fee for Service Contracts and use of wireless devices for connectivity for credit card payments
3. Fee Logo modified to include OHV recognition
4. Develop a process to allow the scanning and electronic transmission of credit card data and charges, rather than the long paperwork and manual process now required.
5. (From Online Surveys Results) A significant number of fee program staff, many new to their positions, report having received little or no training for 12 categories of fee program management.

### **State-wide Issues**

1. State-wide Deferred Maintenance Planning and Priorities
2. Grant writing support
3. (From Online Surveys Results) There is a possible misunderstanding among fee site staff of the REA definition of a "standard amenity fee", and what is required to properly charge for one.
4. (From Online Surveys Results) At least one site, El Centro Hot Springs LTVA, reports not having the appropriate fee logo posted. The State recreation staff needs to ensure that logos are ordered and properly posted at all fee sites.

### **Dumont Dunes OHV**



1. Written Standard Operating Procedures for Recreation Fee Collections and Deposits
2. Communication plan to increase percent of off-site passes sold
3. Consider putting up a security camera at each entrance (rear and front) to improve safety

**Imperial Sand Dunes**

1. Written Standard Operating Procedures for Recreation Fee Collections and Deposits
2. Communication plan to increase percent of off-site passes sold
3. Consider putting up a security camera at each entrance (rear and front) at Butter Cup site to improve safety

## DUMONT DUNES OHV AREA ON-SITE EVALUATION REPORT



### **CA Office & Site Staff Who Completed Survey or Were Interviewed by the Evaluation Team:**

Lynnette Elser, Recreation Supervisor; Larry Blaine, Outdoor Recreation Planner and OHV Coordinator; Bob Hastey, LE Ranger; Lillie Cooper, Public Contact Representative; Bessie Hayes, Budget Technican

Lynette Elser completed the online pre-work and final surveys.

### **BACKGROUND**

The following background information was provided in the pre-work survey and onsite interview and site visit.

#### *a. Demographic Trends*

Users are getting older. Use was increasing each year, until FY 07. It seems to be dropping somewhat now. CA's Technical Review Team (TRT) predicted that use likely will be different next year due to the increasing fuel prices. The TRT expects longer, less frequent stays. Approximately 20-25% of visits occur on 5 high-use holiday weekends.

#### *b. Description of Sites within the Fee Project*

While Dumont Dunes is open to the public all year, because of the intense summer heat, the high use season is Halloween to Easter. Some night and early morning day trip type use does occur during the hot summer. There is a campground host on site during the high use season. The site has a well-maintained access road, interpretive signs, and 12 vault toilets.

#### *c. Visitor Use*

Dumont dunes is used for recreational OHV riding and undeveloped open camping at the base of the dunes. It is an OHV open area. All sites are first come first serve.

#### *d. Improvement Efforts*

Grading entry road all weekend on holiday weekends, placing ground asphalt on the road last year (>\$100,000), restrooms

*e. Collections*

Collections are made via fee machines, off site sales, employees selling passes at the entrance and employees checking on fee payment in the Amargosa River canyon in high use weekends. The town of Baker, CA, caters greatly to this user group. This symbiotic relationship between users and the local community greatly enhances off-site sales. More annual passes are being sold at present (2,100 in FY 06 and 3,000 in FY 08).

*f. Unusual Conditions in Last Year Affecting Collections, Use, or Improvement Efforts*  
County Sheriff Officers and California Highway Patrol also patrol the area for the BLM.

**BEST PRACTICES**

The site has several exemplary practices worth mentioning. It has an excellent relationship with its TRT. This relationship has helped to establish priorities for use of fees retained at the site, enhanced education and safety, and helped out with various volunteer activities. The recreation staff has a great relationship with several off-site vendors who sell passes to Dumont Dunes, greatly increasing compliance and decreasing lines and workload at the entrance to the Dunes. Partnerships and other excellent relationships have resulted in substantial donations. For example, a sand rail worth over \$100,000 was donated to the dunes for law enforcement and emergency response. There are excellent relationships with the community medical resources for emergency response.

*Fee Project Staff Ideas for Improvement.* As part of the review process on-site at the CA Fee Projects, the evaluation team asked staff about their vision and ideas for improving the site. These ideas demonstrate both their understanding of the site needs and include critical steps that management will need to consider over the next couple of years. Staff desires for the site include:

- The LE Ranger has authority (not fully funded mandate) to hire up to 11 LE Rangers. Six are in place, one is at El Mirage and 2 are assigned to Dumont. The other rangers are in the process of being hired. But even when they are hired it takes time to have them fully trained. As such, when El Mirage becomes a fee site in Oct. of 2008, it is expected to strain the LE staff to cover El Mirage and Dumont Dunes during times of peak use. LE coverage on regular weekends should be sufficient. Additional LE help comes from the national pool when possible or other nearby BLM offices, such as Las Vegas.
- Pave the 5 miles of road to get to Dumont Dunes to improve access, compliance, emergency management, and dust control.
- Move to all off-site sales of passes to eliminate danger to staff and reduce handling and workload related to collecting over \$100,000 on busy holiday weekends.
- Screen users for alcohol or drugs. Helicopter emergency response staff at Dumont indicate that 70-90% of accidents involve alcohol or other illegal drugs. Ideally drugs and alcohol would be banned from the site as this is a site that involves driving vehicles and thousands of people. There are precedents in the Park Service, Forest Service and CA counties (e.g. Moses Lake Sand Dunes in Grant County) to ban alcohol in recreation sites.

**PLANNING AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT: BUSINESS PLANNING, COMMUNICATIONS/MARKETING, AND CUSTOMER SERVICE**

The shift to selling passes off-site with community-based vendors has worked out very well for both Dumont Dunes and Baker. The current plan is to increase internet sales of passes to decrease the demand for on-site service at the Dunes and to increase overall compliance. A communications plan as part of the business plan to better plan for and execute the sales strategy is warranted.

Sales of passes are used to estimate visitor use. A road vehicle counter was used in past years.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

D-1) Develop a written communications plan to increase online sales of passes.



**FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND REPORTING**

The following table provides some information (from Barstow Field Office) about data collection, obligations and execution.

**Fund 1232 Activity during Fiscal Year 2007 for Dumont Dunes OHV**

Collections	\$ 523,858.00
TOTAL FEE COLLECTIONS	\$ 523,858.00

expenses	\$ 412,981.00
TOTAL Fund 1232 EXPENSES	\$ 412,981.00

Unobligated carry-over balance into FY08 \$ 110,877.00

All fee income has been retained at the site. Dumont Dunes carried-over less than 21% of its fee income from the prior Fiscal Year. The Dumont Dunes carry-over is used at the beginning of the year to get started before passes are sold for the current year. Staff is hired and trained, maintenance is performed, and vehicles are readied. The season starts at the end of October so carry-over funds provide for work at the first of October before the passes are sold the last week of October.

The table below, from the online survey, shows how funds have been allocated in FY2007.

<b>Allocate the percent of dollars spent on the categories below for 2006. (1232 funds only)</b>	<b>Must total to 100%.</b>
<b>a. Visitor services</b> (development and delivery of interpretation and environmental education programs, printing of informational materials, and visitor use management funded by recreation fee dollars, including payment of contractors to provide these services)	65%
<b>b. Resource protection</b> (activities to protect or enhance cultural and natural resource)	2%
<b>c. Deferred maintenance</b> (activities to address maintenance that was previously delayed due to the lack of finding, materials, or labor)	3%
<b>d. Capital improvements</b> (new investments in facilities, including work such as site reviews, permits, surveys, and design)	0%
<b>e. Annual maintenance</b> (routine operational activities, such as inspections, hazardous tree removal, mowing, pruning, landscaping, pest control and care for facilities)	30%

Fee collections at Dumont are in transition. Ideally, management would like all passes to be sold off-site. For on- site sells, a new contract is in place to collect fees through automated fee machines, but the BLM will still be responsible for deposits.

In the past, fees were collected by the BLM employees. There were two reported differences in deposits. These incidents were reported to management and the BLM Law Enforcement. The National Business Center evaluated the collections at the site and produced a report with recommendations. The Field Office has addressed all the recommendations, but has not formally sent a response to the Center.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

D-2) Complete a set of written standard operating procedures for recreation fee collections and deposits

**PUBLIC WELFARE, EMPLOYEE SAFETY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT:**

Off-site pass sales dramatically help to increase compliance and to decrease cash handling. However, dunes sites and high use weekends require substantial LE and emergency response support. Controlled access also helps to increase compliance. Most on-site sales are via machines. LE and emergency response patrols through the area also serve to check for safety and compliance. People who don't have passes are encouraged to get one. On egress from the site, the staff checks every vehicle, increasing compliance to an estimated 94%.

In the past, a contractor managed collections and some discrepancies were discovered. This situation has been rectified with new processes, off-site sales, machine sales and internet sales. It is not clear whether these approaches will satisfy all needs. Collections at the fee machine are managed by the outdoor recreation planner and other staff. The process is varied each day. While there are no written standards, employees are shown how to do the work. All collection officers are trained by Bessie Hayes, Budget Technician. The locked boxes from the iron rangers are transported to banks, including night deposits, when needed throughout the collection period.

While many staff are first responders and first aid is carried on the sand rails, emergency response is dispatched from Baker and is generally considered adequate and timely. There are always several teams of EMTs on site during high use weekends, including recreation staff and four teams of fire fighter EMTs in 2-person teams. EMT services are regularly provided by cross-trained fire, maintenance, and recreation personnel. The nature of the sport is such that numerous accidents happen every weekend and, on average, 12 fatalities occur per year.

Regular trash dumping and infrequent black water dumping in toilets is a recurring problem at Dumont. Continued public outreach is needed to contain these issues as much as possible. Employee safety procedures for handling black water dumping should continue to be carefully followed.



**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

D-3) Consider installing a security camera at each entrance to improve safety.

**STATE/AREA MANAGEMENT**

Staff are happy with the support they get from the State Office. When they need help, State staff are very helpful in researching and providing answers to queries. Engineering is a challenge, not because of the State or District Offices, but because there is a civil engineering technician in the FO. Unfortunately, the local person is not an a professional engineer and is unable to do the engineering on-site. Barstow depends on the DO and SO for engineering support when needed. As such, the district engineer has to pitch in to do local drawings and civil engineering.

At the national level it would be useful to the site to get support from the Denver Business Center to allow credit card transactions via a wireless system. Weeks of staff work are necessary after each busy weekend to key in the transactions for the business center. Further, bad credit cards are not caught on-site and go uncollected.

As to ways to fund the services requested by the users, the FO recreation staff are in process on fee collection for El Mirage in FY 09. Further campsites at Sawtooth are being proposed for fees.

## IMPERIAL SAND DUNES RECREATION AREA ON-SITE EVALUATION REPORT



### **CA Office & Site Staff Who Completed Survey or Were Interviewed by the Evaluation Team:**

Neil Hamada, Outdoor Recreation Planner; Jamie Neilans, Dunes Supervisor/Recreation Technician

Neil Hamada completed the online pre-work surveys.

### **BACKGROUND**

The following background information was provided in the pre-work survey and onsite interview and site visit.

#### *a. Demographic Trends*

In 2006, the average visitor to the ISDRA was a middle-aged white male who was very familiar with the Dunes given previous visits over a number of years; visited multiple times in the past year for about 18 days; stayed overnight in a motorized vehicle; lived in Southern California; had some college education or a degree; primarily visited the Dunes to drive vehicles; and felt that socialization with friends and family is a very important component of a Dunes visit. The ISDRA visitors seem to be loyal, experienced, dedicated, social, and committed to OHV recreation at the ISDRA. From the United Desert Gateway (UDG) perspective, a large majority of visitors already stop in the local communities. They are also interested in more information about the communities. Given their repeat visitation pattern, more information could affect what people do across their multiple visits in any year. Thus, there is likely a large economic development opportunity for the local communities and private businesses through providing

more visitor information about their services and their locations. Certainly a high quality website and a "Welcome to the Dunes" newspaper or publication has support of the visitors.

Most of the survey questions about additional services (e.g., hotels, RV parks, storage, restaurants, shopping centers, casinos) were of interest to a relatively small percentage of the visitors, but it is important that the community and private investors remember that a small percentage of a large group of 1.2 million visitors constitutes a substantial demand and potential economic impact. From a BLM perspective, visitors are highly satisfied with their ISDRA visit. In terms of changes from the 1993 study, today visitors are older, more educated, more interested in information, and more visitors are of Hispanic background. It is apparent that many people want the ISDRA to simply remain as it is with no new improvements or services. But there are many people who are interested in additional improvements and services (e.g., water, trash cans, reservations, rangers, interpretation) (ISDRA Report May 2008).

It is important to remember that a small percentage of a large group of 1.2 million visitors may constitute a substantial change. For example, shifting 15% of visitation from a holiday to non-holiday period is a significant number, or getting the support of 15% of the visitors to take their trash home is significant. The survey asked questions about some innovative management tools. There is mixed support for these ideas. For example, Glamis visitors are the least interested in differential fees while there is much higher support at Gecko and Dune Buggy. Portable showers appear to be of greater interest to Glamis and Wash Road area visitors, and less so to Gecko visitors. The point is that any new management program might best be targeted initially to visitors to specific units. Of most importance to the UDG and BLM is the fact that the 2006 visitors rate their recreation experience very high. Because of the quality of their visits, their long-term experience and loyalty to ISDRA, and their information, both UDG and BLM have an opportunity to use information/education as a key management tool to help sustain the natural resources of ISDRA, and thus, the benefits that ISDRA provides to its visitors and local communities.

*b. Description of Sites within the Fee Project*  
Visitation season runs from Oct - May

*c. Visitor Use*

The 160,000-acre Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (Dunes) receives the highest concentration of visitor use of any Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recreation area nationwide and offers the largest dunes area of its kind for off-highway vehicle (OHV) activities in the United States. BLM faces management challenges at the Dunes due to the high concentration of visitors on holiday weekends, public safety concerns and impacts on listed plant and wildlife species.

*d. Improvement Efforts*

Fees mainly pay for operations and maintenance. For example, ISDRA has installed 28 toilets and 5 acres of camping pads.

*e. Collections*

\$3 to \$3.5 Million per year (these numbers are higher than what is finally reported due to payments to contractors for collections).

*f. Unusual Conditions in Last Year Affecting Collections, Use, or Improvement Efforts*

Last year, the BLM had an agreement with the Imperial County Sheriff's Office for fee collection. This agreement has ended, following a recent local election. There is an acquisition in process to

get a contract for fee collection at ISDRA. Until that competition is completed, nothing can be said about FY 09 projections. One final note is that 49,000 acres were recently closed as part of the Pierson Milk Vetch court settlement. This closure continues to be an extremely contentious issue for certain recreationists.

### **BEST PRACTICES**

ISDRA has several best practices worth mentioning. These include:

- Involvement of the TRT in an effective partnership has improved overall user satisfaction and community involvement in the site. The TRT was created in 1998 when the fee program was created. The group has at least four formal meetings per year. But ISDRA staff report that TRT members participate in another 2-3 meetings per year and take numerous telephone calls to deal with issues during the season. The TRT is critical both in resolving issues and in identifying priorities for use of fees collected.
- Grant writing and resultant grants from CA Green Sticker funds and from Industry (e.g. Honda and Yamaha) have provided substantial resources for improvements.
- Donations/Volunteers. ISDRA has enjoyed significant help from volunteers. Sometimes this interest and participation comes from the families of individuals who have been in accidents at the site. Other times it has come from involved visitors. For example:
  - The Kris Chili Dog Frick Foundation donated the funds to build the EMS site at Glamis. Further, the UDG and the American Sand Association (ASA) have been helpful.
  - Grants have helped to get the Buttercup facility built.
  - A long term local partner and volunteer, Jennifer White, has developed and made ISDRA cleanup into a major user group event. She has received the volunteer of the year award. Corporate sponsors, challenge cost share, and UDG have also added to the critical mass and success of these cleanup events.
- EMT support at ISDRA is exemplary. EMT training is provided every year to staff who support the site. Further, the community involvement and partnerships have improved emergency response.
- ISDRA was an early adopter of the fee machines for fee payment. This idea was adopted from the Tonto National Forest.



### **Fee Project Staff Ideas for Improvement**

As part of the review process on-site at the CA Fee Projects, the evaluation team asked staff about their vision and ideas for improving the site. These ideas demonstrate both their understanding of the site needs and include critical steps that management will need to consider over the next couple of years. Staff desires for the site include:

- One of the biggest ongoing issues for the site is trash collection. Over \$575,000 is spent on trash collection and toilet maintenance, in addition to the staff work and volunteer efforts. ISDRA needs additional dumpsters, more law enforcement on litter compliance, dump stations, and more help and resources for trash collection and toilet maintenance and pumping.
- ISDRA staff are concerned about the impact of ending the Sheriff's contract. More law enforcement is an ongoing need. With El Mirage being added to the greater SoCal area, additional strain on LE is expected.
- More help with education and interpretation would be helpful.
- Roads and access maintenance are also an ongoing need.

### **PLANNING AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT: BUSINESS PLANNING, COMMUNICATIONS/MARKETING, AND CUSTOMER SERVICE**

A completed business plan is available on-line for the site. By using the TRT and other user group input, it has been determined that 75% of ISDRA visitors want Dunes information via the internet. Site staff keeps the internet webpage current. The site staff would like to increase internet and off-site sales of passes. However, conditions are very different from the controlled access enjoyed by Dumont Dunes. Nonetheless, it would be useful to develop a communications plan to increase such off-site and internet sales.

Visitor use is estimated using a camp sampling technique. This technique appears to be relatively accurate. Some aerial photographs (see cover page) have been taken during peak weekends which also give some indication of usage.

The TRT and the UDG are effective vehicles for identifying priorities for use of fees collected, as well as for getting the word out to the user community about the good work of the ISDRA staff. As an example of the importance of the TRT, it has provided testimony at Congressional hearings on OHV issues. UDG has conducted user surveys and ISDRA fares very well. Further, the surveys help to provide input for priorities.

ISDRA has received numerous awards for their efforts and partnerships with user groups and the community from the CA Off-Road Vehicle Association, the ASA and the Off-Road Business Association.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

I-1) Develop a communications plan to help to increase sales of passes off-site and via the internet. Internet sales have been troublesome in that visitors who have purportedly purchased such



passes sometimes claim that they have not received them. Since internet information sharing is the most common way that visitors want to receive Dunes data, internet sales seem to be a worthwhile approach to continue to explore. More work on enhancing the process, improving data sharing between the vendor and ISDRA, and increasing internet sales is warranted.

**FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND REPORTING**

The following table (from site records and MIS) provides some information about data collection, obligations and execution.

**Fund 1232 Activity during Fiscal Year 2007 for ISDRA**

ISRP Fee Collections	\$ 3,627,470
Commercial/Vendor SRP Collections	\$ 227,865
TOTAL FEE COLLECTIONS	\$ 3,855,335
Expenditures	\$ 4,331,594
TOTAL Fund 1232 EXPENSES	\$ 4,331,594

Unobligated Carry-over balance into FY08 \$ 486,325

Carryover balance (as indicated on Aug 1 in MIS) was \$486,325 for FY07 to FY08 for CA670-CF14 (ISDRA).

The table below, from the online survey, shows how funds were allocated in FY2007.

Allocate the percent of dollars spent on the categories below for 2006. (1232 funds only)	Must total to 100%.
<b>a. Visitor services</b> (development and delivery of interpretation and environmental education programs, printing of informational materials, and visitor use management funded by recreation fee dollars, including payment of contractors to provide these services)	88%
<b>b. Resource protection</b> (activities to protect or enhance cultural and natural resource)	0%
<b>c. Deferred maintenance</b> (activities to address maintenance that was previously delayed due to the lack of finding, materials, or labor)	0%
<b>d. Capital improvements</b> (new investments in facilities, including work such as site reviews, permits, surveys, and design)	0%
<b>e. Annual maintenance</b> (routine operational activities, such as inspections, hazardous tree removal, mowing, pruning, landscaping, pest control and care for facilities)	12%

Similar to Dumont, the fee collections at Imperial is in transition. Ideally, management would like all passes to be sold off-site. A contract is being procured that will allow a private contractor to sell passes on site and through the internet.

In the past, the local sheriff's office collected the fees and returned the receipts to the BLM. This agreement is no longer in place. It was determined that it would be best to seek a private contractor to collect the fees.

The procedures for the collection and processing of the fees will be outlined in contract.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

I-2) Develop a written standard operating procedure for fee collections and deposits in the case the contract is not in place for the high-use season.

**PUBLIC WELFARE, EMPLOYEE SAFETY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT:**



Most fees are collected on-site. Access to ISDRA cannot be easily controlled. As such, fee collection and compliance is an ongoing issue. Last year, the Sheriff's office had a contract to collect fees. Collections are made at some primary entrances to ISDRA sites. Further, since site access is hard to control, the sheriff's office staff conducted patrols for safety and fee compliance. Prior to using the Sheriff's office for fee collection, visitor fee compliance was estimated at about 24%, based on relatively accurate sampling methodology. When the sheriff's office did the collections, compliance was estimated at 89% in 2006 and 79% in 2007.

The contract with the sheriff's office as the method for fee collection also provided for an increased degree of safety of employees. As many as 200 sheriff's deputies, two LE rangers, and other staff come to ISDRA during peak weekends to help manage the crowd. This year a new contract is being awarded. Until that contract is awarded, the impact on fees and safety will not be known. The Sheriff's office is not a participant in the acquisition. Further, sales of passes via the internet or off-site vendors is insufficient to take the load off of either staff or the contractor for fee collection and the inherent risks associated with handling lots of cash in a large crowded area. Nonetheless, dispatch through San Bernardino, on-site radios, and the large corps of staff provides for sufficient safety from robbery or other crime.

As to safety procedures, staff are well trained for duty at the dunes and for EMS at the site prior to the opening of the season. An on-site medical facility and building for EMS trucks and equipment has been in part donated by an NGO at Glamis. This facility has greatly increased the ISDRA capability to deal with EMS cases. At Buttercup, a very complete administration, EMS, and law enforcement facility has been built. When this facility goes into operation this season, it will help with compliance and safety issues. ADA compliant ramps have been established at certain improved campsites.



There is some concern at Buttercup with employee safety due to drug running from Mexico. A Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agent was killed by drug runners in the recent past. When this happened, the CBP increased both presence in the area and cooperation with BLM. Further, the CBP is putting up a fence on the border. It is not clear at this time how the fence will affect safety issues.

The Sheriff's office issued over 1,000 County citations. These citations have been very effective in increasing compliance and safety, as the fines are relatively high and enforceable. A few of the LE Rangers for BLM are "932" trained, authorizing them to enforce State laws as well. Alcohol related issues are also an ongoing issue. It is of interest that the Forest Service has banned alcohol in some sites.

Vandalism is an ongoing issue at the site. Trial and error has shown that BLM signage and regulations on signs are better respected and less-defaced if they are incorporated on commercial OHV signage from the industry sponsors (e.g. Honda, Yamaha, etc.). Also, the Mammoth site is very remote. At that site signs are regularly stolen.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

I-3) Installation of security cameras at Buttercup is warranted, given the security facility and the high likelihood of local vandalism, as well as the risk to employees of simply being present on the border.



### **STATE/AREA MANAGEMENT**

The ISDRA is in the top three sites for BLM fee collection. Thus, it receives considerable national attention, including by the BLM WO and the national interagency recreation fee team. The WO 250 listens to the needs of the ISDRA and works to ensure they are met.

The CA State Director also is very supportive of the site. The Field Office supports ISDRA as much as it is able, given limited staff and resources. ISDRA feels it may be over-assessed for WO or State Office (SO) initiatives, given that it has such a high level of collections. However, it has extremely high costs and needs as well. As such, the FO would benefit from additional support in order to better assist in managing ISDRA.



One area of concern is the need to better use deferred maintenance dollars to prioritize and make improvements at ISDRA. The deferred maintenance justifications are primarily focused on engineering. As such, the recreation specialists and planners have a difficult time writing up and competing for these dollars. A SO level resource to help recreation sites do better with this and to better decide where funds should go would be useful. Again, the perception that fee dollars should fund most needs, hinders the ability of the ISDRA to compete for these dollars.

## APPENDIX

A. On-Site Evaluation Guide

B. Recreation Fee Program Evaluation Online Pre-work Surveys



Appendix A. On-Site Evaluation Guide

## RECREATION FEE PROGRAM EVALUATION



### 2008 On-Site Evaluation Questions (6/29/08 version)

**INSTRUCTIONS TO FIELD AND ASSESSMENT TEAM MEMBERS:** Our intent in the Fee Program Evaluation is for the experience to be a positive one for all. In the process of the evaluation, we hope to generate examples to help improve the BLM implementation of the Fee Program. As such, this is less about audit findings and more about how to make things work more effectively, more accurately, and to reduce fiduciary risks as much as possible.

The following questions should be asked of the appropriate Recreation Fee Program staff including: line managers, fee project/site managers, finance accounts staff, and support staff. The specific person who should answer each question is indicated by section of the survey starting on the next page.

Many of these questions can be answered in the field on-site visit(s). It will be helpful if you can conduct a group interview of all of the appropriate people at the specific location you are visiting. All attempts should be made not to make people travel to you, as it is likely that if they travel they will not have all of the supporting documentation available.

The set of questions are divided into the following sections: A) Background, B) Kudos and Best Practices: Appreciative Context, C) Fiscal Accountability and Reporting, D) Program Management & Customer Service, E) Public Welfare, Employee Safety and Law Enforcement, F) State/Area Management. The last section, Section G, is an abstract of questions of interest from the automated on-line survey and/or the pre-work on-line survey completed by the Fee Program Manager and other relevant staff prior to the visit. This section contains questions that should be further examined based on the results of the on-line survey. Use the attached format. Attach any requested or provided documents to this interview guide. Maintain a folder for each site.

**OPENING REMARKS:** Interviewees are part of the group of people identified by the State Recreation Lead and/or the Fee Program Manager to be interviewed for the assessment of the implementation and management of the Fee Program for this State. Describe the evaluation process. Remind interviewees that their responses will be used to provide a closeout briefing to State and local management and that their responses will become data for the BLM assessment report.

### SITE INFORMATION

Site Name: **Muddy Mountain Environmental Education Area**

MIS Project No.:

Single site project / **Multiple site project** (circle one)

Interviewee & Type of Position of Interviewee: Proj. Mgr, Line Mgr (DO AO, FM), SO accts person, FO Accts person, Rec specialist, LE, etc. See legend below.

Interviewer(s): Anthony Bobo, Kevin Coray

**2008 FEE PROGRAM EVALUATION ON-SITE QUESTIONS**

**DEFINITIONS**

**Project** - single or group of sites in the Fee Demonstration Program.

**Facility Requirements** - new construction, enhancements, improvements, literature, and or services provided at the site where the fees are collected.

**Abbreviations** - SM=site management group (PM, RP, RT, Admin. Officer Support Srvcs, Park Ranger, Visitor Use Assis.); Line Officer=FO/DO manager; PM= Rec Planner for Project as a whole; RP=Rec. planner working the site; RT=Rec. Tech; PR=Preliminary review; FB=Financial or budget person in FO & SO collections review staff; ME=maintenance, engineering or operations; LE=law enforcement.

A. BACKGROUND	ASK
1. Tell us about your site. (Pework question 1a-1f) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain full scope of the site and visitor use. Does the public use the site?</li> <li>• What disability access is available?</li> </ul>	SM
2. Describe unusual conditions over the last year that may have affected collections or use or improvement projects. (Pework question 1g)	SM
3. Describe visitor and collections trends (e.g. seasonal use, improvement efforts, other agencies or partners involved). What changes in visitation have taken place since the fee project started? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the trends in use over the last 5 years?</li> </ul> Visits                      Collections                      Visits                      Collections FY06 _____ FY06                      FY07 _____ FY07 _____	SM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was a visitor use survey conducted?</li> <li>• How is visitor use monitored?</li> </ul> (Q18 & 18a online full survey, to be verified on ground) Are recreation sites/areas within the project posted with the standard U.S. Fee Area sign (36 CFR, Part 71)? Please point these out to the Team on the tour of the site. (Q20 & 20a online full survey, to be verified on ground) Is the "Recreation Fee Program" logo used on sites/areas entrance signs, project related information (i.e. brochures and maps) and project improvements (i.e. restrooms and bulletins) which have been paid for with demonstration receipts?	SM
B. KUDOS / BEST PRACTICES: APPRECIATIVE CONTEXT	ASK
4. Describe a high-point experience in your work at the site. Please tell a complete story.	SM
5. What is working great at your site? What practices are in place at your site to make it as successful as successful as it is?	SM
6. What are the best aspects of this site and its management? What best practices are you employing at this site that could be used elsewhere? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What processes or best practices have you adopted/adapted from elsewhere?</li> <li>• What has worked well to improve compliance?</li> <li>• What has worked well to help keep expenses down?</li> </ul>	SM

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What has worked well to generate additional revenue (e.g. donations, local agreements, passes...)?</li> </ul>	
7. What positive publicity, awards or kudos has your site received?	SM

C. FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & REPORTING FOR EACH PROJECT	ASK
<p>8. <b>(PreWork)</b> Demonstrate that all funds collected in the account are being used to pay for operation, maintenance, improvements, resource protection, law enforcement, and interpretation to enhance the recreational opportunities, and visitor experiences for sites within that project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you keep local records (e.g. Quick Books, cuff records)? (prework question 3)</li> <li>If so, how often do you reconcile your records with the official accounts?</li> <li>How different are your records from the official records? Why are they different?</li> <li><i>Quant.: FY07 or current amount in MIS \$ _____</i></li> <li><i>Quant.: Difference: FY07 or current amount in cuff records \$ _____</i></li> <li><i>Quant.: Difference: Cuff records - MIS amounts = \$ _____</i></li> <li>Can the fee demo amounts be clearly identified from the data entries?</li> </ul>	PR, PM, FB*
9. Please attach a table of PE charges for the last full FY for this site. Discuss any entries in this chart that would help us understand the unique aspects of charges at this site. (Asked for in pre-work)	PR, PM
<p><b>Questions for Finance Staff for the project.</b></p> <p>10. How are receipts processed?</p>	FB
11. Check the dollars in the safe. Has it all been logged into CBS?	FB
12. Look at the deposit file. Is it current? Check deposit dates and amounts to determine if money is not being deposited timely.	FB
13. Separation of duties - is there a separation between the person receipting and receiving the money and the person doing the deposit?	FB
14. Have there been any losses and/or differences in collections vs. deposits? How were the losses discovered? Reported? Remedied? Were they reported to the National Business Center and Management?	FB
<p>15. <b>(on survey, to be verified on ground)</b> Are credit cards an acceptable form of payment for this site? If yes, Who processes credit card transactions? Are credit card numbers locked up?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>What forms of payment are accepted?</i></li> </ul>	FB
16. <b>(on survey, to be verified on ground)</b> Is a reconciliation being done daily?	FB
17. <b>(on survey, to be verified on ground)</b> Is everyone responsible for collecting fees designated as a Collections Officer with their State Office?	FB
18. <b>(on survey, to be verified on ground)</b> Is everyone responsible for a cash fund designated at the	FB

National Business Center?	
19. What processes are in place for when CBS is not operational (down)?	FB
20. Are campground envelopes opened and counted by two people?	FB
21. How soon are collections entered into CBS?	FB
22. How often are the fee tubes emptied? Who empties them? How far does the cash have to be transported? How is it transported?	PM, FB*

<b>D. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT &amp; CUSTOMER SERVICE</b>	ASK
23. (on survey, to be verified on ground) How are you monitoring and reporting your maintenance backlog? (Attach a copy) Are you using FFIMS?	PM, ME

<b>E. PUBLIC WELFARE, EMPLOYEE SAFETY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT</b>	ASK
24. Where are the fees physically collected (e.g. where are the posts) relative to the FO? How remote are the fee collection sites? How long does it take to collect the fees? What route is used to collect the fees? Who collects the fees? What procedure is used to collect the fees? (Also see the answer to Q43)	SM,LE
25. Describe the safety procedures that are in place to ensure the safety of employees when collecting fees and the security of the fees collected. Are the standards in a written form? Are relevant employees familiar with the standards? What methods are used to get these employees familiar with the standards?	SM,LE
26. What degree of compliance in fee payment are you getting? % of visitors paying fees: ____% How are compliance issues addressed? Have any warnings, tickets or letters been sent out? Is law enforcement of fee payment adequate? Is it an issue? Who has authority for issuing a ticket? Has a study been performed on compliance?	SM,LE
27. Are appropriate fee payment compliance/penalty signs in place, inspected and maintained? Please point them out to the Team on the site tour.	SM,LE
28. What priority in backlog/deferred maintenance is given to public health and safety?	SM,LE, ME,FO
29. What steps are being taken to prevent crime or robbery?	SM,LE
30. Are there law enforcement agreements in place with local law enforcement agencies? Are these agreements working well? Why or why not? If there are no agreements in place, why not?	

<b>F. STATE/AREA MANAGEMENT (SEE FS VERSION)</b>	ASK
31. How adequate is management support for the recreation fee program? Please provide examples that demonstrate the level of support (e.g. management has attended public meetings,	PM

provides additional resources in peak periods).	
32. If you had 3 ideas to make the project all that you envision for it or improvement ideas for the Recreation Fee Program, what would they be?	SM
33. Do you need anything from the National level to help you manage the project better? What ideas do you have for improving/expanding the recreation fee program?	SM, FO

**List of Documents Requested**

- The most recent business plan and activity plan
- A table of PE charges for the last full FY for this Fee Project
- The FY07 FAMS report of maintenance backlog activities or improvements within the Fee Project
- The results of the BLM Visitor Survey (aka Rec Satisfaction Survey)
- The most recent Alternative Internal Control Review (AICR) process report (i.e. Technical Program Review)
- NPS concessions specialist review
- MIS reports
- RMIS report: The site/project is identified in the Recreation Mgmt Information System (RMIS) as a fee pilot site. YES / NO (circle one)
- Recreation Use Survey Statistics for the site (if applicable)
- Barn contractor contract
- Formal study of comparable sites
- List of SRPs
- Study of compliance

**List of Reports to be Collected or Run by Assessment Team Prior to Going on Site (& question for which the report is used)**

- MIS reports
- RMIS report: The site/project is identified in the Recreation Mgmt Information System (RMIS) as a fee pilot site. (circle one) YES / NO
- Recreation Use Survey Statistics for the site (if applicable)
- Fee Program submission for Report to Congress
- Review of PE charges for 1232, 1220, 1230, 1650-1653 regarding possible offsets
- Review the website
- Any GAO/IG reports on site within the last 5 years

Appendix B. Recreation Fee Program Evaluation On-line Surveys

# CA - El Centro - Imperial Sand Dunes: BLM PRE-WORK Survey

## BLM Recreation Fee Program Evaluation & REA Survey

This survey asks questions about BLM's recreation fee program, as well as fee-related issues such as collection and accounting, priorities for expenditure of fee revenue, and Recreation Enhancement Act (REA)<sup>1</sup> implementation. In selected cases, our evaluation team may follow up personally with you or other appropriate staff or stakeholders to clarify, document, or verify the factual information provided.

You were identified by the Washington Office to answer this survey. Your cooperation in completing this survey, with appropriate consultation and input from colleagues in your State, District and Field Office, is essential to our review. Responses to the survey will be a vital part of our evaluation report. Please complete a survey for each separate Fee Project.

If you have any questions, please call Anthony Bobo at 202-452-0333.

### DEFINITIONS:

Fee Project - single or group of sites in the Collection and Billing System (CBS) as a part of the Fee Program subject to the Recreation Enhancement Act of 2005.

Facility Requirements - new construction, enhancements, improvements, maintenance and/or other facilities and activities/improvements completed at the sites within the Fee Projects where the fees are collected.

### ABBREVIATIONS:

- FPM=Fee Project Manager, i.e. Rec. Planner or other BLM staff responsible for the Fee Project as a whole;
- RP=Rec. planner working site within the Fee Project;
- RT=Rec. Tech or other site specific BLM staff;
- FB=Financial or budget person in FO & SO collections review staff;
- ME=maintenance, engineering or operations;
- LE=law enforcement.

The survey begins on the following page (click the "Next" button to begin). Prior to starting, however, please make sure you have sent a copy of each of the following items to Anthony Bobo (Anthony\_Bobo@blm.gov).

- The most recent business plan and activity plan
- A table of PE charges for the last full FY for this Fee Project
- The FY06 FAMS report of maintenance backlog activities or improvements within the Fee Project
- The results of the BLM Visitor Survey (aka Rec Satisfaction Survey)
- The most recent Alternative Internal Control Review (AICR) process report (i.e. *Technical Program Review*)
- The most recent financial audit (internal or external)
- The most recent independent audit
- Any other audits (OIG, GAO, etc.), if applicable

<sup>1</sup>Enacted as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005, Pub. L. 108-447, 118 Stat. 2809 (December 8, 2004).

# CA - El Centro - Imperial Sand Dunes: BLM PRE-WORK Survey

Have you sent the following items below to Anthony Bobo?

	The most recent business plan and activity plan	A table of PE charges for the last full FY for this Fee Project	The FY07 FAMS report of maintenance backlog activities or improvements within the Fee Project	The results of the BLM Visitor Survey (aka Rec Satisfaction Survey)	The most recent Alternative Internal Control Review (AICR) process report (i.e. <i>Technical Program Review</i> )	The most recent financial audit (internal or external)	The most recent independent audit	Any other audits (OIG, GAO, etc.), if applicable
Yes	€	€	€	€	€	€	€	€
No	€	€	€	€	€	€	€	€
Not Applicable	€	€	€	€	€	€	€	€

## A. BACKGROUND

### \* Demographics:

- a. Name:
- b. Title:
- c. Phone number, including area code:
- d. E-mail address:

### 1. Tell us about your Fee Project.

#### a. Demographic Trends.

#### b. Visitor Use (including seasonal, if applicable).

#### c. Description of sites within the Fee Project.

#### d. Improvement efforts.

#### e. Collections.

# CA - El Centro - Imperial Sand Dunes: BLM PRE-WORK Survey

f. Other agencies involved.

g. Unusual conditions in last year affecting collections, use, or improvement efforts.

2. What are the recreation sites (names in RMI S) within this Fee Project?

Sites:

1	<input type="text"/>
2	<input type="text"/>
3	<input type="text"/>
4	<input type="text"/>
5	<input type="text"/>

Sites:

6	<input type="text"/>
7	<input type="text"/>
8	<input type="text"/>
9	<input type="text"/>
10	<input type="text"/>

Sites:

11	<input type="text"/>
12	<input type="text"/>
13	<input type="text"/>
14	<input type="text"/>
15	<input type="text"/>

Sites:

16	<input type="text"/>
17	<input type="text"/>
18	<input type="text"/>
19	<input type="text"/>
20	<input type="text"/>

## C. FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & REPORTING FOR EACH PROJECT

# CA - El Centro - Imperial Sand Dunes: BLM PRE-WORK Survey

3. In addition to MIS, do you keep local records (e.g. Quick Books, cuff records)?

Yes

No

4. Our records show that recreation fees collected at this Fee Project for FY07 were:

\$

4a. Is the total above correct?

Yes

No (please enter the correct amount in the space below)

4b. What percent of the collected recreation fees were: (total must add to 100%)

Retained at this fee project

Used at another fee project within the field office

Used at another fee project outside the field office

Used at the state office

Thank you for your cooperation in completing this survey.

# CA - El Centro - Imperial Sand Dunes: Rec Fee Program Evaluation

## BLM Recreation Fee Program Evaluation & REA Survey

This survey asks questions about BLM's recreation fee program, as well as fee-related issues such as collection and accounting, priorities for expenditure of fee revenue, and Recreation Enhancement Act (REA)<sup>1</sup> implementation. In selected cases, our evaluation team may follow up personally with you or other appropriate staff or stakeholders to clarify, document, or verify the factual information provided.

You were identified by the Washington Office to answer this survey. Your cooperation in completing this survey, with appropriate consultation and input from colleagues in your State, District and Field Office, is essential to our review. Responses to the survey will be a vital part of our evaluation report. Please complete a survey for each separate Fee Project.

If you have any questions, please call Anthony Bobo at 202-452-0333.

### DEFINITIONS:

Fee Project - single or group of sites in the Collection and Billing System (CBS) as a part of the Fee Program subject to the Recreation Enhancement Act of 2005.

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### ABBREVIATIONS:

- FPM=Fee Project Manager, i.e. Rec. Planner or other BLM staff responsible for the Fee Project as a whole;
- RP=Rec. planner working site within the Fee Project;
- RT=Rec. Tech or other site specific BLM staff;
- FB=Financial or budget person in FO & SO collections review staff;
- ME=maintenance, engineering or operations;
- LE=law enforcement.

<sup>1</sup>Enacted as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005, Pub. L. 108-447, 118 Stat. 2809 (December 8, 2004).

## \* 1. Demographics:

a. Name:

b. E-mail address:

# CA - El Centro - Imperial Sand Dunes: Rec Fee Program Evaluation

## Q2a. Standard Amenity Fees

	Yes	No
2a. Do you collect a standard amenity fee within this Fee Project?	jn	jn
2a.1. Are there any sites within your Fee Project which charge a standard amenity fee that do NOT have any of the following things: 1) Designated developed parking, 2) Permanent toilet facility, 3) Permanent trash receptacle, 4) Interpretive sign, exhibit or kiosk, 5) Picnic tables, 6) Security services?	jn	jn

2a.2. If yes to 2a.1 provide the RMIS site name(s) for those sites for which amenity fees are charged but amenities 1-6 above do not exist.

Site Name 1:

Site Name 2:

Site Name 3:

Site Name 4:

Site Name 5:

2b. Does this Fee Project collect an expanded amenity fee?

Yes

No

2b.1. If an expanded amenity fee is collected within your fee project for any of the following, please write in the relevant name(s) and site number(s).

If not, please leave blank.

1. Developed campgrounds	<input type="text"/>
2. Use of highly developed boat launches with specialized facilities or services	<input type="text"/>
3. Rental of facilities and equipment	<input type="text"/>
4. Use of utility hookups	<input type="text"/>
5. Use of sanitary dump stations	<input type="text"/>
6. Participation in interpretive programs	<input type="text"/>
7. Reservation services	<input type="text"/>
8. Transportation services	<input type="text"/>
9. Use of areas with medical or first aid services provided by the federal government	<input type="text"/>
10. Developed swimming sites	<input type="text"/>
11. Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>

# CA - El Centro - Imperial Sand Dunes: Rec Fee Program Evaluation

\* 2c. Does your Fee Project collect a special recreation permit fee for specialized recreation uses of federal recreational lands and waters, such as group activities, recreation events, and motorized recreational vehicle use?

Yes

No

2c.1. Please check all that apply:

- 1. Individual SRPs (limited number, e.g. wilderness, river, OHV areas)
- 2. Outfitters & Guide
- 3. Competitive events, commercial, organized group vendors

3a. Does your Fee Project accept or not accept each of the following national passes for standard amenity fees?

	Accept	Not accept
a. America the Beautiful – the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass (Inter-Agency Annual Pass)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Inter-Agency Senior Pass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Inter-Agency Access Pass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. National Parks Pass with Golden Eagle Hologram (2007 only)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Golden Age Passport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Golden Access Pass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Golden Eagle Passport (2007 only)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3b. Does your Fee Project accept or not accept each of the following regional passes for standard amenity fees?

	Accept	Not Accept
g. Washington and Oregon Recreation Pass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Northwest Forest Pass (Oregon and Washington)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Oregon Coastal Pass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3c. Please list other passes accepted:

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

# CA - El Centro - Imperial Sand Dunes: Rec Fee Program Evaluation

4. To what extent, if at all, has each of the following factors influenced the type of fees and amounts that your Fee Project currently charges for recreation?

	Little or No extent	Some extent	Moderate extent	Great extent	Very great extent	Don't Know
a. Formal (documented) study of comparable sites	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
b. Informal comparison of fees at comparable sites	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
c. Communication with other sites	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
d. The price of other passes or fees at this unit (such as national or regional passes)	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
e. Proximity to other similar sites that charge a fee	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
f. Survey of visitors	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
g. Input from user groups	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
h. Input from local or state elected officials	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
i. Input from local partners	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
j. Input from BLM fee team (at level higher than FO)	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
k. Public meetings	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
l. Market demand	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
m. Agency policy or fee schedule	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
n. Legal authority	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
o. The cost of providing services (e.g., maintenance, personnel, security)	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
p. Cost of collection	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
q. Professional judgment	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
r. The ability to provide a new service or activity	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
s. The level of amenities	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
t. Requirements of REA (e.g., fee criteria and process to change fee)	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
u. Input from Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (RRAC) or Resource Advisory Council (RAC)	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ

v. Other (please specify)

# CA - El Centro - Imperial Sand Dunes: Rec Fee Program Evaluation

5. To what extent, if at all, do you feel that the guidance you received to manage your recreation fee program in each of the following areas was useful?

	Little or No extent	Some extent	Moderate extent	Great extent	Very great extent	No Guidance Received
a. Authorized types of recreation fees (standard amenity fees, expanded amenity fees, and special recreation permits)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
b. Authorized uses for fee revenue	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
c. Fee structure and/or passes	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
d. Controlling and accounting for collected funds	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
e. Revenue deposit procedures	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
f. Project selection and priorities for spending fee revenues	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
g. Amount of funds that can be used in the unit that collects them	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
h. Inter-agency pass	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
i. Public participation	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
j. Volunteer recognition	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
k. Coordination with other agencies and partners	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
l. Interaction with RAC/RRAC	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
m. Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>					

# CA - El Centro - Imperial Sand Dunes: Rec Fee Program Evaluation

6. To what extent, if at all, do you feel that the formal training you received covering each of the following areas was useful?

	Little or No extent	Some extent	Moderate extent	Great extent	Very great extent	No Training Received
a. Authorized types of recreation fees (standard amenity fees, expanded amenity fees, and special recreation permits)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
b. Authorized uses for fee revenue	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
c. Fee structure and/or passes	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
d. Controlling and accounting for collected funds	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
e. Revenue deposit procedures	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
f. Fee Project selection and prioritization for spending fee revenues	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
g. Amount of funds that can be used in the Fee Project that collects them	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
h. Inter-Agency Pass	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
i. Public participation	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
j. Volunteer recognition	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
k. Coordination with other agencies and partners	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
l. Interaction with RAC/RRAC	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
m. Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>					

# CA - El Centro - Imperial Sand Dunes: Rec Fee Program Evaluation

7. Does your Fee Project currently use or not use each of the following in your fee structure, administration, and collection methods?

	Use	Not use
a. Fees collected jointly with other Federal Fee Projects	jn	jn
b. Cooperation with non-federal government entities	jn	jn
c. Cooperation with non-governmental entities	jn	jn
d. Site-staffed fee collection station	jn	jn
e. Volunteer-staffed fee collection station	jn	jn
f. Automated self-service pay stations (vending or ATM type)	jn	jn
g. Manual self-service pay stations (e.g., fee tube, box, "iron ranger")	jn	jn
h. Fee collection through national third party sales ( i.e., vendors, associations, contractors)	jn	jn
i. Fee collection through regional third party sales (i.e., vendors, associations, contractors)	jn	jn
j. Fee collection through local third party sales (i.e., vendors, associations, contractors)	jn	jn
k. Internet sales administered through your Fee Project	jn	jn
l. Participate in national reservation system	jn	jn
m. Phone sales of fees and/or passes	jn	jn
n. Cash registers with data collection capability, such as visitation statistics	jn	jn
o. On-site electronic payments accepted	jn	jn
p. Other (please specify)		
<input type="text"/>		

8a. Overall, to what extent have the activities or improvements been fully or partially funded by recreation fee revenues (1232 account) which have been identified as high priority within this Fee Project?  
 [Projects are the activities or improvements that recreation fees are spent on in the unit collecting the fee revenue.]

- jn Very great extent
- jn Great extent
- jn Moderate extent
- jn Some extent
- jn Little or no extent
- jn Don't know

# CA - El Centro - Imperial Sand Dunes: Rec Fee Program Evaluation

8b. What were the expenditures of recreation fee revenue (1232 account) at the end of fiscal year 2007 for your Fee Project?

[Please include both REA and demonstration fee program balances at the end of FY2007. Enter only whole dollar amounts. Do not use any commas or decimal points.]

None

Amount \$

8c. Allocate the percent of dollars spent on the categories below for 2007. (1232 funds only)

Must total to 100% using amount from question 8b above.

a. Visitor services (development and delivery of interpretation and environmental education programs, printing of informational materials, and visitor use management funded by recreation fee dollar.)

b. Resource protection (activities to protect or enhance cultural and natural resource.)

c. Deferred maintenance (activities to address maintenance that was previously delayed due to the lack of finding, materials, or labor)

d. Capital improvements (new investments in facilities, including work such as site reviews, permits, surveys, and design)

e. Annual maintenance (routine operational activities, such as inspections, hazardous tree removal, mowing, pruning, landscaping, pest control and care for facilities)

8d. What were the *unobligated* balances of recreation fee revenue at the end of fiscal year 2007 for your Fee Project, including pass revenues?

[Please include both REA and demonstration fee program balances at the end of FY2007. Enter only whole dollar amounts. Do not use any commas or decimal points.]

None

Amount \$

# CA - El Centro - Imperial Sand Dunes: Rec Fee Program Evaluation

8f. To what extent are the following factors reasons for the unobligated 1232 balance for FY2007?

	Little or No extent	Some extent	Moderate extent	Great extent	Very great extent	Don't Know
a. Lack of projects meeting agency criteria	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
b. Saving funds for large project	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
c. Design and engineering work to be completed	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
d. Environmental compliance or analysis to be completed	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
e. Legal actions need to be resolved	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
f. Contracting delays	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
g. Weather caused delays	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
h. Lack of personnel to manage and oversee project	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
i. Lack of personnel to implement project	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
j. Change in unit's priorities	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
k. Used appropriated dollars before fee revenue	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
l. Actual expenditures less than original estimate	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
m. Funds are needed for next season's operations	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
n. Unanticipated growth of fee revenues (e.g., weather related)	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
o. Project approval process at higher levels	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
p. Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>					

# CA - El Centro - Imperial Sand Dunes: Rec Fee Program Evaluation

9. What other accounts are being used (engineering/facilities & other) to fund high priority activities or improvements? (check all that apply)

- 1220 (Recreation Management)
- 1651 (Operations Maintenance)
- 1652 (Annual Maintenance)
- 1653 (Deferred Maintenance)
- 1654 (Infrastructure Improvements)
- 1770 (Challenge Cost Share)
- 2110 (Construction)
- 5105 (Recreation Cost Recovery)
- 6110 (O&C Western Oregon Construction)
- 6251 (O&C Operations Maintenance)
- 6252 (O&C Annual Maintenance)
- 6253 (O&C Deferred Maintenance)
- 6332 (O&C Western Oregon Recreation Management)
- 5852 (SNPLMA Cap Imp Spec Pln Prk Tr)
- 5856 (SNPLMA Parks & Trails)
- 5863 (SNPLMA Repair Trails & Roads)
- 5864 (SNPLMA Interpretation Activity)
- Other (List Subactivity # and Name)

9.1. If other accounts not listed above are being used to fund high priority activities or improvements, please write the sub-activity number and name of each account in the boxes below.

Account 1:

Account 2:

Account 3:

Account 4:

Account 5:

# CA - El Centro - Imperial Sand Dunes: Rec Fee Program Evaluation

10. What type(s) of collection methods exist within your fee project?

- Staffed areas (such as fee booths or visitor center counter)
- Unstaffed areas (iron rangers, fee tubes, etc.)
- Electronic collections (automated tellers)
- Online reservations

10a. How often are two people present when fees are collected from field drop boxes (iron ranger, fee tubes, other unstaffed collection devices)?

10b. Is a replaceable locked (drop) box used?

10c. Do you use any other procedure (e.g. loose envelopes, need for radio contact, etc.)?

No

Yes (please specify)

10d. Who collects fees? (check all that apply)

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Other (please specify)

10e. How are fees collected? (check all that apply)

- Automated cash registers with printed receipts
- Cash box
- Other (please specify)

# CA - El Centro - Imperial Sand Dunes: Rec Fee Program Evaluation

11a. Describe the field controls that have been established to ensure protection of the funds collected.

11b. Who collects fees?

11c. What happens on a busy day during a shift change?

11d. What procedures are followed to get fees from the collection booth to the office?

11e. How often do you make a deposit? How do you decide when to make a deposit?

11f. Who deposits fees?

11g. Is there double accounting?

11h. What ideas do you have for improving or facilitating fee collection and/or fee handling?

12a. Was the combination to the safe changed after the last person with access to the combination left the BLM Field Office?

Yes

No

12b. When was the combination last changed?

-      Year      Month

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12c. Who has the combination to the safe?

Name

Position

13. Are credit cards accepted at this Fee Project?

Yes

No

13a. Who performs credit card transactions?

14. Are credit card numbers maintained in a secure location?

Yes

No

15. When were your most recent internal reviews or audits conducted?

	Year	Month
Alternative Internal Control Review (AICR) process as required under OMB Circular A-123.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Most recent financial audit.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Most recent independent audit.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Any other audits (OIG, GAO, etc.)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

16a. This question was not included for this survey.

16b. What changes have been made as a function of the results?

16c. Customer surveys regularly suggest the need for more interpretation/environmental education. During the last two years, what have you done to improve interpretation/environmental education?

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16d. Do you educate volunteers who have visitor contact about the interpretive and educational aspects of the Fee Project?

17a. Cleanliness of facilities is a major factor in the satisfaction of visitors. What do you do to keep the facilities clean?

17b. What issues/complaints have you had about cleanliness of facilities in the site(s) within the Fee Project?

18. Are there any recreation sites/areas within the fee project that are *NOT* properly posted with the standard U.S. Fee Area sign (36 CFR, Part 71)?

Yes

No

18a. Please list the recreation sites/areas that are not properly signed.

Site 1	<input type="text"/>
Site 2	<input type="text"/>
Site 3	<input type="text"/>
Site 4	<input type="text"/>
Site 5	<input type="text"/>

19. What methods are you using to report to the public on the use of recreation fee collections from your fee project?

- Newspapers, other locally printed publications
- Web/Internet
- Self-printed publications, e.g. "Your Fees at Work"
- Information bulletins posted at site

Other (please specify)

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20. Have you used the "Recreation Fee Program" logo to advertise on fee project sites entrance signs, project related information (e.g. brochures and maps), and project improvements (e.g. toilets and other infrastructure) which have been paid for with fee program funds?

Yes

No

20a. Please list the RMIS site names that are deficient.

Site Name 1	<input type="text"/>
Site Name 2	<input type="text"/>
Site Name 3	<input type="text"/>
Site Name 4	<input type="text"/>
Site Name 5	<input type="text"/>

Thank you for your cooperation in completing this survey.