COLORADO RECREATION RESOURCE ADVISORY
FEDERAL LANDS RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT
NEW FEE OR FEE CHANGE
PROPOSAL FORM

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Name of Project Area/Site: **Penitente Canyon Campground**

Project Contact Person: **Sean Noonan**
Position Title & Phone #: **Outdoor Recreation Planner, 719-655-6136**

County: **Saguache**
Congressional District: **3**
BLM Field Office: **Saguache Field Office**
Site Type: **Campground**

Capacity: **25 Sites** Season of Use: **March through November**

Fee Type: Standard Amenity___ Expanded Amenity_**X**__ Special Rec. Permit___

Proposed Action: New fee____ Change of fee_**X**__

Existing Fee: **$ 5/15**
Proposed Fee: **$ 11/20**

Date of last fee increase: **1997 (LWCF)**

Summary of **benefits** the public receives or will receive:

- **Increased safety and law enforcement patrols.**
- **Improved sanitation.**
- **Increased Accessibility and reduced barriers.**
- **Improved protection of cultural artifacts.**
- **Improved natural resource protection.**
- **Improved routine and annual maintenance.**
- **Reduced deferred maintenance.**
- **Expanded Interpretation program.**
- **Enhanced setting for recreation experiences and beneficial outcomes.**

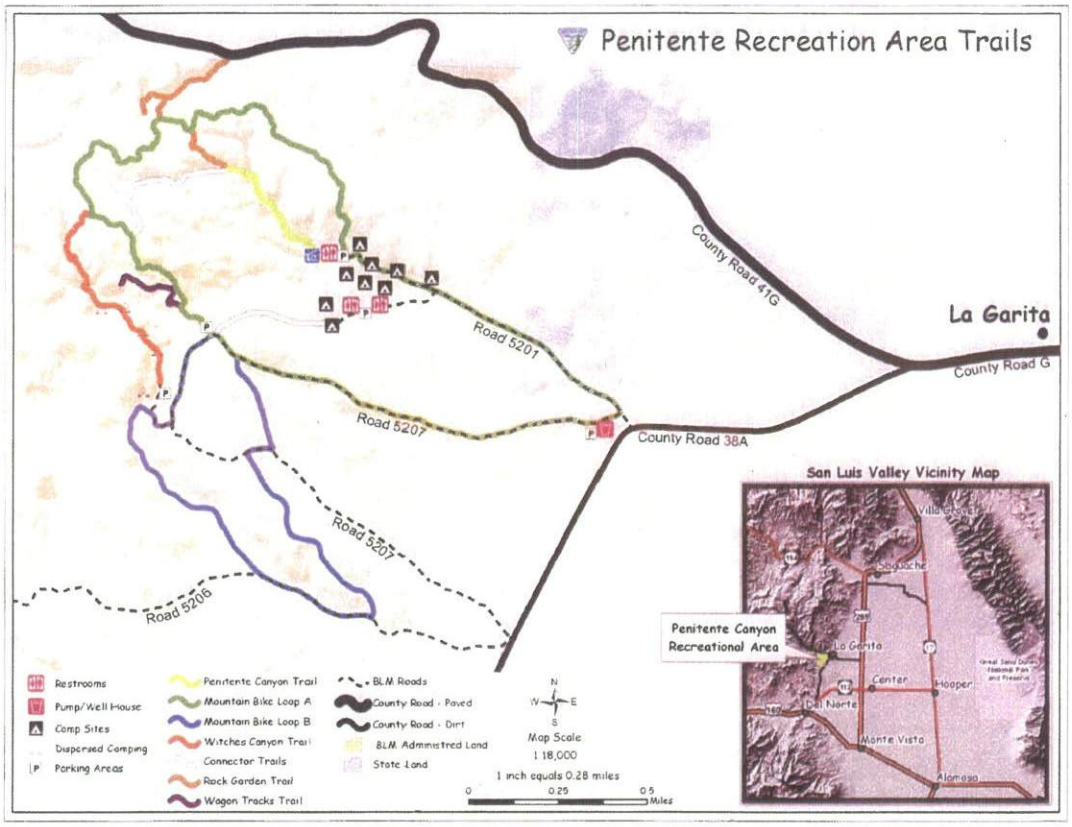
Facilities/Amenities Checklist (check all that apply, list each site separately):
Site Name:_

1. __**X**__Designated developed parking
2. __**X**__Permanent toilet facility: ____Flush __**X**__Vault
3. __**X**__Permanent trash receptacle
4. __**X**__Interpretive sign, exhibit or kiosk
5. __**X**__Picnic tables
6. __**X**__Security services

Other Amenities: __**X**__Garbage Removal, ____Paved Access Road, __**X**__Drinking Water,
__**X**__Information/Directional signs, ____Shower/Bath House, __**X**__Tent Pads,
____Electricity, ____RV Hookups, __**X**__Fire Rings/Grills, __**X**__Other (Group Picnic Gazebo)

Photo(s):

Map (HIRA's show boundaries and ID amenities):



Setting & General Description (include description of the site, natural resources/features, scenic values, recreational attractions, amenities, current/projected visitation, etc.):

Penitente Canyon Campground is located within the Penitente Canyon Special Recreation Management Area, an internationally recognized sport rock climbing destination managed by the Saguache Field Office. The facility has 18 walk-in tent sites, 5 drive-in tent or camper sites, 2 group sites, 3 vault toilets, trash receptacles, and a water system.

Besides the principal attraction of rock climbing, the area is also home to a mountain biking trail system, and a number of important cultural and historic sites. All of these attractions are primarily accessed through the combined campground and free day-use area. Not surprisingly, given its popularity with climbers, the campground and general area are physically defined by impressive geologic formations, the remnants of the La Garita Caldera volcanic explosion from 26 million years ago. The historic and heritage-based aspects of Penitente Canyon (Native American pictographs, Spanish pictographs, and wagon tracks of the Old Spanish National Historic Trail carved into the rocks) are expressed by a very modest interpretive program as well.

Despite its increasing popularity among visitors, Penitente Canyon is still characterized by its sense of solitude and spirituality. Based on data collected in 2010, of the over 40,000 annual visitors to the recreation area, 21,000 of them came specifically to Penitente Canyon. Increased visitation to Penitente Canyon is a trend that is expected to continue due to increasing participation in the sport of rock climbing, the promotion of Penitente Canyon as a heritage tourism destination by the Colorado Tourism Office (Penitente Canyon was also the subject of a Channel 4 Colorado Getaways segment in June 2010), and increasing population projections for the country as a whole, the West, and especially Colorado in the years ahead.

NRHP Eligibility (Cabins/Structures): _ Archeologist's concurrence: ___Y _X_N
Comments: **Archaeological and Heritage Program assessment conducted in 2009.**

2. CURRENT AND PROJECTED REVENUES and ANNUAL OPERATION & MAINTENANCE COSTS

Revenues: Current annual revenues generated at Penitente Canyon Campground have averaged around $3,700 in recent years. Projected annual revenue (based on approval of the proposed fee increase) is expected to be around $6,800

Operations & Maintenance: Fee expenditures for O&M in recent years have averaged around $3,375 per year - $1,375 for CG Maintenance worker salary, $500 for supplies (including water system compliance and testing expenses), and $1,500 for toilet pumping. Projected expenses (based on approval of the proposed fee increase) are expected to be similar for FY 11, with the addition of $1,000 for deferred sign maintenance.

3. COST OF BACKLOG WORK NEEDS:

Roads/Parking Areas:	**$11,000**
Building/Facilities:	**$3,000**
Water/Waste water Systems:	**$**
Associated Trails:	**$12,000**
Signs:	**$5,000**
Other (list): Campsite Rehab	**$76,141**
Total:	**$107,141**

4. FEE COLLECTION METHOD AND ESTIMATED FEE COLLECTION COSTS

Method: On-site self pay station with Campground maintenance worker compliance checks.

Costs: Salary of CG Maintenance worker, who collects fees weekly as part of other maintenance duties. Fee collection for a GS-4 Maintenance worker at $18.25 x 30min./wk for approx. 30 weeks= $275. (Note: Total cost of a seasonal CG maintenance worker =$16,500.

Note: No collection costs are incurred for sites under the National Recreation Reservation Service (NRRS).

5. FEE DETERMINATION PROCESS SUMMARY

Fair Market Value Comparison (compare similar fees at other FS, state, federal, or private recreation sites in the area with similar facilities & services):

Facility type(s): Public Lands-style Developed Campgrounds and one private campground/RV park.

Number of facilities compared: 30+

Proximity to project area: Throughout the San Luis Valley and within 50 miles outside of the Valley.

Price range:

- **Rio Grande National Forest: $5-$16 for individual sites and $26-$32 for group sites (similar to other National Forest and Field Office campgrounds in surrounding areas and based on varying services and amenities).**
- **Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve: $14 for individual sites and $65-$80 for group sites, plus park entrance fees (similar to other National Park system campgrounds in surrounding areas).**
- **San Luis Lake State Park: $20/night for all campsites.**
- **Fun Valley RV Camping: $24.50/night for 2 people. (Private CG's in the San Luis Valley are typically RV campgrounds with full hook-ups).**

Selected fee and method: Increase from $5 to $11/night per individual site and $15 to $20/night per group site.

Comments: Currently, operations and maintenance of Penitente Canyon CG (San Luis Valley BLM's only developed campground), which includes fee collection, compliance checks, visitor services and safety patrols are being conducted as part of the San Luis Valley Public Lands Center's Service First partnership with the Rio Grande National Forest.

6. PLANNED USE OF FEES RETURNED TO SITE (list by priority; include daily O&M if appropriate; add to list if appropriate)

1. **Improve public safety through increased visitor services and Law Enforcement and security patrols.**
2. **Improve sanitation with improved operations and maintenance, bear-proof trash cans and additional toilets.**
3. **Improve Accessibility and reduce barriers to all developed sites and amenities.**
4. **Protect cultural resources located in campground through interpretation, education and physical means.**
5. **Improve natural resource protection by reducing soil erosion on campsites and trails, the spread of noxious weeds and damage to rock resources from climbing activities.**
6. **Improve routine and annual operations and maintenance with increased patrols, equipment and supplies.**
7. **Reduce deferred maintenance with rehabilitation of campsites, roads, trails, parking areas and replacement of campsite amenities and signs.**
8. **Expand interpretation of cultural and natural history – a high priority with visitors as expressed in a recent GPRA survey. Implement Penitente Canyon SRMA Interpretation Plan - this includes signs, kiosks, brochures, maps, etc.**
9. **Improve visitor experiences by being responsive to customer desired enhancements and aesthetic improvements to the campground.**

7. CUSTOMER/PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MECHANISM TYPES

__X__Site Monitoring
__X__Customer Survey Card
__X__Comment Log / Cabin Guest Book
__X__Newspaper Articles
__X__Website Listing
__X__E-mails
____ Direct Mail
__X__Personal Contacts
__X__On-site Posting
__X__Other (list): GPRA Survey

8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION RESULTS

Campground visitor contacts have been documented since June, 2009. To date, all fee-paying visitors to the campground that provided comments about the proposed fee increase have expressed understanding and the need for a fee increase in order to continue to provide existing services, to address the deferred maintenance backlog, as well as to expand and enhance customer desired visitor services, such as new interpretation.

A news release was submitted to local area papers, Congressional staffs, Saguache and Alamosa County Commissioners, and internally to San Luis Valley Public

Lands Center employees on or before September 21, 2010. The same information was posted at information kiosks at the campground along with customer comment cards. The complete proposal will also be posted to the BLM website on or about October 1, 2010.

Combined with the 5 documented campground visitor contacts, only one other comment has been received at this time, which appeared to be the result of a frustration with out of state campground hosts (presumably in concessionaire campgrounds), which exist at some locations on the neighboring Rio Grande National Forest.

9. ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

List and reference additional information (documents) that can be provided upon request to document this project proposal and the public response.

Penitente Canyon SRMA Interpretation Plan

Penitente Canyon 2007 GPRA Visitor Survey

10. PROJECT SUBMITTAL & CERTIFICATION

Project Submittal:
This recreation site is already, or being submitted for inclusion as, a fee site under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA). This proposal has been reviewed by representatives on the unit. I understand that any reservations must be made through the NRRS system. I also fully understand and agree to comply with the accounting and reporting requirements necessary to participate in the fee program.

_____ 11/09/2010
Forest Supervisor/ BLM Field Manager Date

Project Certification:
This recreation site is already, or is now forwarded as, a fee site and the proposed fee schedule is forwarded to the RRAC for their review under REA.

_____ 1/7/2011
Recreation Fee Board Chair Date

BLM Washington Office Review ✓ Y ____ N

RRAC Project Recommendation:
This site and proposed fee schedule is____ / is not____ recommended as a fee site.
This recreation site is already a fee site and the proposed fee schedule is____ / is not____ recommended to the Secretary for acceptance under REA.

_____ _____
Colorado Recreation RAC Chair Date

Project Acceptance:
This site and proposed fee schedule is____ / is not____ accepted as, a fee site.
This recreation site is already a fee site and the proposed fee schedule is____ / is not____ accepted by the Secretary under REA.

_____ _____
Regional Forester/BLM State Director Date