

This letter is going out as information, and a request to the State Parks (SP) to revisit the proposed changes to their policy and regulations. It will be sent to Jared Langenegger of SP, also sent to Rep. Jack Chatfield, and to Sen. Pat Woods.

These changes were presented to the public at various meetings earlier this year. I attended the meeting held in Tucumcari. Current policies were presented, and then the proposed changes were presented. The public asked questions, there was much discussion, and the public was asked to send in comments by email.

I visited with SP personnel at Ute, Cimarron Canyon, and at the meeting. I sent my comments, via email, to Jared and the committee.

For the past 3 years, Viola and I have stayed at Tolby Campground numerous times. This year we will have stayed there for a total of 9 weeks, on 5 different trips. We have socialized/visited with nearly everybody there, and have had several discussions about the proposed changes. We have helped/volunteered around the campground with various projects. We really enjoy visiting Tolby, and have developed many great friendships with numerous families, the majority being from Texas and Oklahoma. The SP staff in Cimarron Canyon are doing a fantastic job. We really appreciate their efforts.

It appears to me that the SP is only looking at this as a bureaucratic move, and not concerned about the wishes and needs of the of the public; the actual users of the parks. Some of the proposed changes are justified and good. I will try to explain my thoughts.

The day use fees, the daily camping fees, the utility use fees, are all ok, and justified. The dump station fee is mostly a moot point, simply because most of the camps we use do not have a dump station. The annual passes (ACP), which were originally eliminated, were brought back into consideration, because of public concern. This is great, showing some consideration from the SP. I had originally suggested that we are willing to increase from \$100 to \$200, or even \$300, to keep our annual pass. The proposed ACP is \$150, which is great for residents. A simple \$50 increase. We visit with many Texas and Oklahoma campers. In our travels, and camp stays, we have noted that at least 50% of campers are from those two states. Probably another 10-20% are other nonresidents. They make up a very large portion of our visitors. We need to appreciate the fact that

New Mexico tourism is very dependent on our neighbor states. The reason I bring this to attention is that the non-resident ACP is proposed to go from \$225 to \$600. This is a large increase. The non-residents that I have discussed this increase with, have made it quite clear that they won't be back. They will use their national park (NP) pass, and go to the NP, which honors a lifetime pass, for \$11 a night. I give these numbers to simply make a point; the increase is too big a bite. Even though the SP has waited for 20-25 years to initiate increases, that is too much. Let's take smaller bites, and keep the non-residents coming to NM to enjoy our resources.

The other item that is proposed to change is the time of stay our parks. At the present we can stay 14 out of 20 days. Then we must leave the park for a minimum of 6 days before we can return. SP claims that the reason is that people are attempting to "live" in the park. They also state that this is a big problem at the southern parks, that are open year round. They claim that this also keeps other people from using the park. ALL people have the same opportunity, because of the full reservation system the SP has in place. We do attempt to make our camp comfortable, while we are there. When we have to leave, we leave our camp site as well, or better than when we arrived. SP staff has informed most of regulars that they love to have us as they know we are friendly, we are clean, we make the camp a social event, and we help out at the park, in any way asked. If the SP goes to the new proposal, we will only be able to stay for 7 days, and then leave for the 13 days. Nearly every camper that we have discussed this with has made it clear; they will go to a NP, where we can stay for 14 days. 7 days only makes it a challenge, especially for the elderly campers, to setup, and then take back down to leave. I sincerely hope that this proposal is left as it is now. Simply for the good of the people.

We really enjoy our State Parks. New Mexico has so much to offer. Let's try to remember that the People (visitors) pay the bill, and as public employees, we are here to serve the People. I say this with humbleness; remember, I was one of you for 25 years, with the NM ISC. I can say with pure honesty, that I worked very hard to know that I worked for the public.

I sincerely thank you for your time and effort. I would be happy to discuss these thoughts with any of you.

Thanks again,  
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