

Hello,

First, I'd like to say that **I find it discouraging that this 'public' meeting still discussing proposed fee increases was not advertised like the Spring meetings were.**

There were no notices of proposed fee increases and asking for feedback posted at the state parks, themselves, where the most campers are likely to see it. Most people I have spoken with had no idea the fee increases from Spring were still being pursued, much less that there is a meeting Oct 22, 2024.

I believe the proposed increases to New Mexico State Park fees are too high a jump for a single increase.

1) While I understand your reasoning that since there has been no increase in many years, you want to increase the fees, to what you're claiming is reasonable for today, in one large jump.

One problem with this, and your projections, is that you seem to believe that the public will understand fee increases of 100% and more, and continue to visit and camp in the parks in the same numbers.

I doubt that will happen. I think the parks system will take in (possibly considerably) less than in your projected new revenue because fewer people will camp for lesser lengths of time.

Particularly in the winter in the central and northern parks. When I brought this up to Director Velasquez last Spring, his immediate response was that some parks are already closed for the winter, many more parks could also be closed for the winter. I found that to be a Very troubling response from an official of the parks system.

2) **Day Use fees are needed.** First, they are a significant source of funds. Second, without them there will certainly be an increase in littering, vandalism, and illicit activities. It is sad but true that people in general do not treat things that are free with the care of things they pay for. Or, these days, even then if no official (e.g. ranger) is around. Just look to the issues with Federal lands over the past few years.

3) **State Park camping comparisons to private campgrounds is pretty much apples to oranges.** The people that stay at state parks are usually there for the outdoor experience, in nature away from cities. The people that stay at most private campgrounds do so either to be near certain locations (e.g. visiting Albuquerque, near an amusement park, near a beach, visiting relatives), or for their amenities (such as playgrounds, pools, included WiFi and/or cable TV, laundry facilities, common game room, etc).

3) The projected fee increase is being justified with comparisons to neighboring state parks that I find somewhat misinformed. For example, from the NM State Parks Fees Study 2023-1 report

Page 10, Developed Camping Fee:

- NM = \$10/night

- TX = \$12-\$25/night, "campers also pay a daily use fee per person"

As far as I know, having camped all over Texas and reviewing ALL parks with camping on their reservations system:

- Developed sites in TX almost all include Electric and Water. So the \$12-\$25 is E+W, which is not at all equivalent to NM Developed sites which do not have any hookups.

- Anyone that camps in TX for more than a week a year will purchase their Annual Pass for \$70 (per vehicle) and not pay any daily use fee, per person or per vehicle.

4) In the "Revised Fee Increase Presentation" Powerpoint, page 13 the comparison to other State Park campgrounds is misleading.

It uses a 3 night stay with full hookup as it's example. This is the most expensive option, but not representative of normal campers. For one thing, most campgrounds at parks have at most a few full hookups (many have none at all).

TX example:

The \$150 for 3 days not only takes the most expensive full hookup rate of any park (fees vary by park in TX), it also seems to add in the daily fee that TX charges? The problem with this is that anyone that camps more than 1 week in Texas will purchase an Annual Day Pass for \$70 one time (1 pass per vehicle, not per person). So the 3 day rate in TX would be more like \$48 (cheapest park is \$16/day E+W+S) to \$90 (most expensive park is \$30/day E+W+S).

So the proposed example of TX to new NM fee for camping with the standard Electric+Water:

NM resident \$15 + \$10 E+ \$5 W = \$30

NM non-res \$20 + \$10 E + \$5 W = \$35

TX everyone, 70% of sites are <= \$20 for E+W, 90% of sites are <= \$25 for E+W

So that 3 day weekend for all the people using Electric and Water is:

NM Resident 3 days = \$90

NM Non-Res 3 days = \$105

TX everyone 3 days is <=\$60 for 70% of parks, <=\$75 for 20% of parks, \$90 for remaining 10% of parks (2 parks, the others are \$30/day for E+W+S as the only choice).

I have attached a PDF file of this letter which also includes a table showing the fees for all TX campgrounds, created from reviewing their reservation system a few months ago.

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Errors in the Annual Information Exchange Report 2020-2021?

- Table 3A, page 19, what is Overnight Fee Area NM = 2,921,237?
- Appears to be wrong. Has 1.5M Day visitors but 2.9M Overnight?
- Did NM enter Overnight as MONEY, rather than people?
- TX has day= 5,445,111 and Overnight= 3,046,546.
- Table 3B,
- Visitation and Use Overnight, Campers for NM = 2,921,237 ?
- Number of Campsite Nights Rented for NM = 108,724
- What the heck does it mean to have 108,000 campsite nights but 2.9 million Overnight Campers??
- NM does not monitor number of people entering parks or campsites, only vehicles. How can they possibly arrive at 28+ people per campsite?????
- Texas has 2,983,157 vs 905,702 campsite nights. They monitor number of individuals entering each park, so they seem to have average 3 people per campsite, okay.

Thank-you for reviewing my comments,

Bob Willan

Sheet1

The following rate information was found using Reserve America by the simple method of going to each park and reserving for a date in the month in 2024.

		E+W+S	E+W	E only	W only	Primitive
State	Campground					
TX						
	McKinney Falls (Austin)		20			
	Lake Colorado City		20			
	Palo Duro Canyon		26			
	Abilene State Park	24	20		12	
	Caprock Canyons			17	14	
	San Angelo State Park		20			
	Franklin Mountains (far west)					10
	Davis Mountains (west, off 10)	25	20			
	Monahans Sandhills (W off 20, N of Pecos)		15			
	Seminole Canyon (SW, Mexico border)		20			
	Kickapoo Cavern (only 5 RV sites)	20				
	Lake Casa Blanca (S, Mexico border)		18			
	Falcon State Park (S, Mexico border)	18	16			
	Choke Canyon (just S of San Antonio)		22			
	Lake Corpus Christi (S of San Antonio)	25	20			
	Mustang Island (Corpus Christi)		20			
	Goose Island (N of Corpus Christi)		22			
	Goliad State Park (NE of Goose Island)	25	20			
	Galveston Island (SE Texas)		20			15
	Sea Rim (E and N of Galveston)		20			
	Brazos Bend (outside Houston)		25			
	Stephen F. Austin (W of Houston)	30				
	Lake Livingston SP (N of Houston)	30	20			
	Huntsville SP (just W of Lake Livingston)	25	20			
	Village Creek (N of Beaumont)		16			
	Martin Dies Jr. (N of Village Creek, on lake)		20			
	Fairfield Lake State Park, TX (CLOSED)					
	Purtis Creek SP (E of Dallas)		20			
	Tyler SP (E of Dallas)	28	24			
	Martin Creek Lake SP (E of Tyler)		17			
	Caddo Lake SP (NE of Martin Creek)	25	20			
	Atlanta SP (Texarkana, N of Caddo)	16	14			
	Daingerfield SP (SW of Texarkana)	25				
	Lake Bob Sandlin SP (W of Daingerfield SP)		18			
	Cooper Lake SP Park Doctors Creek		25			
	Cooper Lake SP South Sulphur		30			
	Cooper Lake SP South Sulphur (Equestrian)		25			
	Lake Tawakoni SP (NE of Dallas)	24	22			
	Bonham SP (NE of Dallas)	26	22			
	Eisenhower SP (N of Dallas)	23	20			
	Ray Roberts Lake SP (N of Dallas-FW)		26			
	Cedar Hill SP (inside Dallas-FW suburbs)	30	25			

Sheet1

Fort Parker SP (S of Dallas)		20			
Cleburne SP (SW just outside FW)	28	20			
Lake Whitney SP (S of FW)	24	20			
Possum Kingdom SP (NW of FW)		20			
Lake Mineral Wells SP (NW just outside FW)		30			
Dinosaur Valley SP (W of Cleburne SP)		25			
Meridian SP (W of Lake Whitney)	25				
Mother Neff SP (W of Waco)	25				
Lake Brownwood SP (SE of Abilene)	25	15			
Lake Somerville SP (E of Austin)		20			
Buescher SP (E of Austin)		18			
Bastrop SP (E of Austin)	25	20			
Lockhart SP (S of Austin)	24	20			
Palmetto SP (S of Austin)		18			
Colorado Bend SP (NW of Austin)					15
Inks Lake SP (S of Colorado Bend SP)		23			
Blanco SP (W of Austin)	25	20			
South Llano River SP (SW of San Antonio)		20			
Lost Maples State Natural Area (SW of San A)		20			
Garner SP (W of San Antonio)		26			
Copper Breaks SP (NW of FortWorth)		20			
Caprock Canyons SP (NW of Fort Worth)		17			
Note TX has a day use fee, including when camping. It varies by park from \$3 to \$7/day per person >=13 years old. Rates shown assume you have an annual park pass, so don't have to pay day use on top of campsite. Get Annual Park Pass for \$70 for free day use.					
70% of campgrounds are <= \$20 for E+W					
90% of campgrounds are <= \$25 for E+W					
\$20 for 28 campgrounds of 54 total (63 but 9 have no E+W option)					
\$15 for 2 campgrounds					
\$14 for 1 campground					
\$17 for 1 campgrounds					
\$18 for 4 campgrounds					
\$16 for 2 campgrounds					
\$22 for 4 campgrounds					
\$23 for 1 campground					
\$24 for 1 campground					
\$25 for 5 campgrounds					
\$26 for 3 campgrounds					
\$30 for 2 campgrounds					
none for 9 campgrounds, 7 only have E+W+S, 2 primitive only					