

**From:** [Dana Pariza](#)  
**To:** [emnrd-parkscomments, EMNRD](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: New Mexico State Parks Division Proposes Changes to Fee Structure and Park Rules  
**Date:** Friday, March 1, 2024 3:58:46 PM

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CAUTION: This email originated outside of our organization. Exercise caution prior to clicking on links or opening attachments.

Hello,

I'm writing to submit comments to the proposed changes to the Fee Structure and Park Rules mention in the email below.

In particular I have comments about the following:

One the one hand you say –

State Park's current fees, which are set by rule, have not been updated in decades and have not kept pace with inflation. NM State Parks are decades behind surrounding states when it comes to our fees structure.

And then in the next paragraph you say –

NM State Parks Division completed an extensive evaluation of our fees structure and compared our rates to surrounding states as well as considered the impacts of inflation. The principal objective of the Fees Study was to explore options to adjust fees to address that gap to both improve the agency's financial position while also enhancing the Division's mission to maintain affordable state park access.

The incongruity of these statements is breathtaking. If NM is behind other states in fee structure, wouldn't that lead the thinking person to conclude that our current fees are already providing affordable state park access?

And if being "decades behind surrounding states" in fee structure, and "the impacts of inflation" are a concern, why would you feel that eliminating the day use fees to NM residents is the answer?

I am in favor of keeping the Day Use fees and Annual Passes in place. Keeping them the same or raising them is in the interest of protecting our state parks from casual visitors who will show up simply because they can, not because they have any interest in them.

Here are my responses to your bulleted points:

Key recommendations from our Fees Study include:

- Elimination of day-use fees for New Mexico residents. The fees paid by all – residents and non-residents – helps maintain the infrastructure of the parks such as restrooms, trash collection, signage, park ranger patrols, and parking lot maintenance. The fees also discourage those who have no vested interest in the parks from utilizing the parks' resources without regard to impact. Once fees are eliminated, that type of visitor will deny access to those who do wish to enjoy the park since the available resources such as parking spaces, picnic tables, etc. will be taken. I'm also concerned about what kind of element will start frequenting the parks, and the activities in which they will engage if there is no purchase requirement to be there. I have already witnessed marijuana use in NM state parks. What other types of activities will become prevalent when there are no fees to discourage it?
- Implementation of a non-resident day-use fee. Really? How do you prove whether or not

a visitor is from out of state? A non-resident visitor with friends or family in NM can use a resident's vehicle to access the parks. I have already witnessed a work-around during the COVID shutdown when the state parks were allegedly only open to NM residents. Texans, Oklahomans, and Coloradans borrowed vehicles from residents, rode in with residents, or had rental vehicles that were registered to NM at a popular state park I frequented in the NE corner of our state. If there is going to be an ID check, what will help fund the park rangers to do so?

- Eliminating Annual Passes. The annual passes provide valuable revenue for park infrastructure. They should not be eliminated. The current annual fee is reasonable and affordable to all NM residents who are serious about park usage.
- Adjusting camping and utility fees. No comment
- Adjusting boat registration and launching fees. No comment
- Adjusting entrance fees at Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park and Smokey Bear Historical Park. No comment on Smokey Bear Historical Park, but a larger entrance fee at Living Desert would be beneficial. The park is badly in need of maintenance and clean-up.

I hope you will give serious consideration to these points before deciding to eliminate the fees that protect our state parks.

Thank you,  
Dana Pariza  
Albuquerque, NM

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**From:** New Mexico Department of Game & Fish <nmdgf@public.govdelivery.com>

**Sent:** Tuesday, February 27, 2024 2:49 PM

**To:** Dana Pariza

**Subject:** New Mexico State Parks Division Proposes Changes to Fee Structure and Park Rules

*This message is being shared on behalf of our partners at New Mexico State Parks.*

## New Mexico State Parks Division Proposes Changes to Fee Structure and Park Rules



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NM State Parks Division is reaching out to our loyal customers to provide you with important information regarding proposed changes to our fees structure and park rules.

State Parks has 35 locations in 25 of New Mexico's 33 counties. State Parks rely

heavily on self-generated revenue through entrance and camping fees, concessions, and other related revenue streams to accomplish its mission of enhancing natural and cultural resources, providing first-class recreational and education facilities and opportunities, and promoting public safety to benefit and enrich the lives of more than five million visitors each year. State Park's current fees, which are set by rule, have not been updated in decades and have not kept pace with inflation. NM State Parks are decades behind surrounding states when it comes to our fees structure. Adjustments are necessary to better support park operations and maintain our beautiful landscapes with diverse natural and cultural resources for future generations.

To address these concerns, NM State Parks Division completed an extensive evaluation of our fees structure and compared our rates to surrounding states as well as considered the impacts of inflation. The principal objective of the Fees Study was to explore options to adjust fees to address that gap to both improve the agency's financial position while also enhancing the Division's mission to maintain affordable state park access for New Mexico citizens and visitors to our state. Based on the completed study, the NM State Parks Division has proposed several revisions to our rules.

Key recommendations from our Fees Study include:

- Elimination of day-use fees for New Mexico residents.
- Implementation of a non-resident day-use fee.
- Eliminating Annual Passes.
- Adjusting camping and utility fees.
- Adjusting boat registration and launching fees.
- Adjusting entrance fees at Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park and Smokey Bear Historical Park.

The NM State Parks Division is in the process of soliciting public input on our recommended rule revisions. We are holding informational meetings across the state to provide information on our recommendations to the public. We encourage you to review our recommendations and meeting schedule in full on our website at <http://www.emnrd.nm.gov/spd/public-meetings/>. To submit comments on our proposed revisions, please email [EMNRD-ParksComments@emnrd.nm.gov](mailto:EMNRD-ParksComments@emnrd.nm.gov) or mail your comments to EMNRD-State Parks Division, 1220 S. St. Francis Dr., Santa Fe, NM 87505.



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