



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Business Plan

For Haystack Mountain and Mescalero Sands OHV Areas



RECOMMENDATIONS, REVIEWS, and APPROVALS

Prepared by:

Blake Ingram, Outdoor Recreation Planner
Roswell Field Office
bingram@blm.gov

Date

Reviewed by:

Amanda Eavenson, Assistant Field Manager, Resources
Roswell Field Office
aeavenson@blm.gov

Date

Approved By:

Charles Schmidt, Field Manager
Roswell Field Office
cschmidt@blm.gov

Date

This business plan was prepared by the Bureau of Land Management's Roswell Field Office pursuant to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004 ([16 U.S.C. 6801-6814](#)) and BLM recreation fee program policies. It establishes future management goals and priorities for the Roswell Field Office's OHV Areas.

2909 West Second Street
Roswell, N.M. 88201
(575) 627-0272

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1 Executive Summary

This business plan was prepared pursuant to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) of 2004 (P.L. 108-447, as amended) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recreation fee program policy and manual direction. FLREA allows the BLM current jurisdiction to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees on federal recreational lands and waters. Haystack Mountain OHV Area (Haystack) and Mescalero Sands OHV Area (Mescalero Sands) are managed by the Roswell Field Office (RFO) BLM administered public lands located in Chaves County of New Mexico's 2nd Congressional District. The sites have been developed for day and overnight use, with amenities including OHV trails, staging areas, restroom facilities, camp and picnic sites, and a site host at Haystack Mountain. A more in-depth description of the available amenities for each site is included in the body of the document.

Plans for both sites stated that after facilities were developed at both OHV areas, the sites would be nominated as fee areas and voluntary fee stations would be established. Visitors would pay a nominal day-use/camping fee and the details would be determined when the areas became Pilot Recreation Fee Demonstration areas. Fee revenue is generated by standard, expanded, and additional expanded amenity fees. Table 1 below outlines existing and proposed recreation fees at Haystack and Mescalero Sands. Detailed discussion on this proposal occurs in the body of this business plan.

Cost recovery, visitation growth, economic inflation, and a comparative review of fees charged by nearby facilities that provide similar services were analyzed through this business plan process. RFO proposes to increase all fees for both OHV sites based on the results of these analyses.

To account for inflation or other economic changes, this business plan also proposes tying the new fee structure to the Western U.S. Consumer Price Index (CPI). Fees would be reviewed annually against this index. The BLM would institute an automatic commensurate increase, rounded to the nearest whole dollar, if CPI rises by 20% from the date of approval of this plan. This process would be repeated further based on a 20% increase of the CPI from the date of the last BLM price increase. Meaning that, when the cumulative average annual Western CPI adds up to 20%, from the date of approval, BLM we would increase the fee at these sites by 20%.

BLM would implement the above fee structure as proposed and then would reference the CPI through the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, specifically targeting the CPI closer to rural Western Colorado by using the monthly Western U.S. CPI. This CPI targets the entire western U.S. outside of the large metro areas that have their own CPIs calculated separately. While this is not a CPI for only Western Colorado, it does target the rural west and is the closest CPI that would represent the region. A yearly average of this CPI is published every January. This would create a more sustainable and consistent funding source that would increase assurances for users that the program could continue to provide regular maintenance and necessary capital improvements into the future. Fees could be adjusted without resubmitting a business plan. BLM would return

to the Resource Advisory Council (RAC) after each fee increase (approximately every 4-5 years) to update the RAC on successes and challenges in using the Western U.S. CPI. The comment period was from Jan. 15 to Feb. 14. The BLM plans to implement the changes in July 2025.

Current Fees:

- Standard/Expanded amenity fees are charged per day and include camping:
 - \$3.00 per vehicle with a single occupant
 - \$5.00 per vehicle with more than two occupants.
 - \$15.00 per bus with more than 10 people.

Proposed Fee Changes:

- **Day-Use Fees:**
 - Increase to \$5.00 per day per vehicle for up to 9 occupants.
 - Bus rates will remain at \$15.00 per day.
- **Camping Fees:**
 - Introduce a \$10.00 fee for camping sites without hookups.
 - Introduce a \$20.00 fee for sites with RV hookups.
- **Group Site Fee:**
 - A new Group Site is planned, with a proposed fee of \$25.00 per day.
- **Dump Station Fees:**
 - A new dumping station is planned, with a proposed fee of \$30.00 per use.
- **Implementation Timeline:**
 - The proposed changes are scheduled to take effect in July of 2025.

Table 1:

Haystack and Mescalero Sands Fee Increase Proposal		
Service	Current Fee	Proposed Fee & Changes
Day Use Standard Amenity Fee (per vehicle per day with single occupant)	\$3	\$5
Day Use Standard Amenity Fee (per vehicle per day with more than two occupants)	\$5	\$5
Day Use Standard Amenity Fee Bus Rate (per vehicle per day with 10 or more occupants)	\$15	\$15
Camping Expanded Amenity Fee (per site per day)	Day Use Fee	\$10
RV Hookup Campsite Expanded Amenity Fee (per site per day)	n/a	\$20
Group Site Expanded Amenity Fee (per day)	n/a	\$25
Dump Station Expanded Amenity Fee (per use)	n/a	\$30

INTRODUCTION

Authorities

This business plan was prepared pursuant to the **Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA)** of December 2004 (P.L. 108-447, as amended) as well as Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recreation fee program policy and manual (Manual 2930 – Recreation Permits and Fees) and handbook (H-2930-1 Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook). FLREA provides the BLM current authority to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees at Federal recreational lands and waters. FLREA authorizes the BLM to locally retain collected recreation fees and outlines how revenues may be used for such things as facility repair, maintenance, facility enhancement directly related to public use, and operating or capital costs associated with the Recreation and Visitor Services program.

Under FLREA, three fee categories were established:

- **Standard Amenity Fee:** covers areas that provide significant opportunities for outdoor recreation, have substantial federal investments, have fee collection mechanisms, and have the following amenities: designated developed parking, a permanent toilet facility, a permanent trash, interpretive signs, exhibits, or kiosks, picnic tables, and security services (Sec. 803 (f)(4)(D) of REA).
- **Expanded Amenity Fee:** covers specialized outdoor recreation sites and services including but not limited to developed campgrounds with most of the following amenities: tent or trailer spaces, picnic tables, drinking water, access roads, fee collection by an employee or agent of the BLM, reasonable visitor protection, refuse containers, toilet facilities, and simple devices for containing a campfire (Sec. 803 (g)(2)(A) of REA).

- *Additional Expanded Amenity Fee*: covers recreation facilities or services, including rental of cabins, group day-use or overnight sites, binoculars or other equipment, use of hookups for electricity, cable, or sewer, use of sanitary dump stations, and use of reservation services (Sec.803 (g)(2)(C-G) of REA).

Section 804 of FLREA addresses the minimum public outreach requirements that an agency must consider when developing or changing recreation fees. This outreach process includes the involvement of a Resource Advisory Council (RAC). RACs provide recommendations to agency officials on matters including, but not limited to:

- Implementing or eliminating fees;
- Expanding or limiting the recreation fee program; and
- Implementing fee level changes.

In addition to FLREA, the authorities and regulations for this business plan, including fee collection at federal recreation lands, are:

- Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-579), which contains the BLM's general land use management authority over public lands.
- [43 Code of Federal Regulations 2931.2](#), which establishes a permit and fee system for use of fee areas such as campgrounds and day use areas.
- [43 Code of Federal Regulations 2932](#), which establishes a permit and fee system for special recreation permits.
- [43 Code of Federal Regulations 2933](#), which further outlines Recreation Use Permits guidance.

This business plan also follows applicable BLM recreation fee program policies and guidance, including:

- [BLM Manual 2930, Recreation Permits and Fees](#)
- [BLM Handbook 2930-1, Recreation Permit and Fee Administration](#)
- [BLM Information Bulletin No. 2019-056, Recreation Fee Revenue Spending Plans and Accomplishment Report](#)
- [BLM Manual 1105 – Donations, Solicitation, and Fundraising](#)

In addition to specific authorities and regulations, this business plan assists in fulfilling the following strategies:

- [Connecting with Communities: BLM Recreation Strategy](#), by making the benefits of recreation more accessible to communities while supporting local goals.
- [Roswell Resource Management Plan \(Oct 1997\)](#), by aligning with RFO's comprehensive framework for managing public land and for allocating resources using principles of multiple use and sustained yield.

Purpose of Document

The BLM Handbook H-2930-1, Recreation Permits and Fee Administration (Rel. 2-300, Dated November 17, 2014), requires that each recreation fee program have an approved business plan which thoroughly discusses fees and explains how fees are consistent with the criteria set forth in FLREA. Business plans are to assist management in determining the appropriateness and level of fees, the cost of administering a fee program, the expected benefits to be derived for the public and to provide a structured communication and marketing plan. The primary purpose of the plan is to provide transparency and notify the public of the objectives for the use of recreation fee revenues. The final business plan guides the expenditure of collected FLREA funds, ensures accountability to the public, and includes a process for public participation prior to implementation, allowing for input on the proposed fees and their uses.

FLREA provides agencies with the authority to charge standard or expanded amenity fees at areas that meet defined criteria. The collection and use of these fees allows agencies to improve the efficiency of the recreation program, provide better facilities and services to visitors, employ greater use of technology, and enter into more fee management agreements to provide additional services to visitors. Mescalero Sands and Haystack were developed as fee areas under the BLM fee site pilot program. Mescalero Sands has had the same fees for approximately 34 years and fees have remained the same at Haystack for approximately 27 years. Revenues from current fees are not sufficient to offset the long-term costs of managing either of these OHV recreation sites.

The business plan describes the fee sites, proposed changes in fees to these sites, associated operating costs, planned expenditures of fee revenue, a financial analysis utilizing a regional comparative market study, and the impacts of proposed fee changes. The data used to analyze and prepare this business plan was obtained through internal BLM tracking and accounting mechanisms such as the Federal Business Management System (FBMS), Recreation Management Information System (RMIS), Collections and Billing Systems (CBS), and other locally generated recreation and visitor use tracking, including Recreation Use Permits (RUPs), and Special Recreation Permits (SRPs). For detailed information, contact the BLM Roswell Field Office.

Background

The Roswell Field Office is part of the Pecos District. The field office encompasses 1.5 million acres of public lands in seven counties in New Mexico: Chaves, Curry, De Baca, Guadalupe, Lincoln, Quay, and Roosevelt. Haystack Mountain and Mescalero Sands OHV Areas are located within Chaves County.

Revenues from the Recreation Fee Account are used to maintain recreation facilities at their site of collection. Specifically, the account covers restroom maintenance, septic pumping services, vandalism cleanup and repairs, sign replacement, trail maintenance, grounds keeping, roadway repairs, and facilities installation and improvements.

2 RFO Recreation Program

ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT & OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM

The RFO lies within New Mexico's 2nd Congressional District. The RFO planning area encompasses 1.5 million acres across Chaves, Curry, De Baca, Guadalupe, Lincoln, Quay, and Roosevelt counties. Haystack Mountain and Mescalero Sands OHV areas fall within the RFO, as well as other popular fee-free recreation opportunities such as the Rio Bonito Acquired Lands (four tracts), Fort Stanton - Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area (NCA), the Overflow Wetlands ACEC, the Carrizozo Land Partnership and the Alleged UFO Skip Site, to name a few. The RFO offers many areas for dispersed camping as well. In addition to the two OHV fee sites, the RFO manages the Fort Stanton-Snowy River Cave NCA and the Valley of Fires Recreation Area. Each of these areas has their



Figure 1: Rainbow over Rob Jagers Campground in Fort Stanton-Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area

own budgets and staff and are distinct from the two OHV areas and other RFO sites. See Figure 2 for a map overview of Roswell Field Office.

RFO manages 1.5 million surface acres of public lands across seven counties in southeast New Mexico, including:

- Haystack Mountain and Mescalero Sands OHV Areas (4,110 acres)
- Fort Stanton-Snowy River Cave NCA (24,630 acres)
- Rio Bonito Acquired Lands (1,127 acres)
- Alleged UFO Skip Site (3,680 acres)
- Valley of Fires Recreation Area (463 acres)
- Carrizozo Land Partnership (45,000 acres)
- Dunahoo Hills (640 acres)
- Comanche Hill (1,783 acres)
- 2 Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), totaling ~ 35,300 acres
- 5 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), totaling ~ 96,100 acres
- 5 National Natural Landmarks (NNLs), totaling ~ 900 acres
- Diverse wildlife and plant species, including 23 special status and 10 Threatened & Endangered species with many more labeled as potential

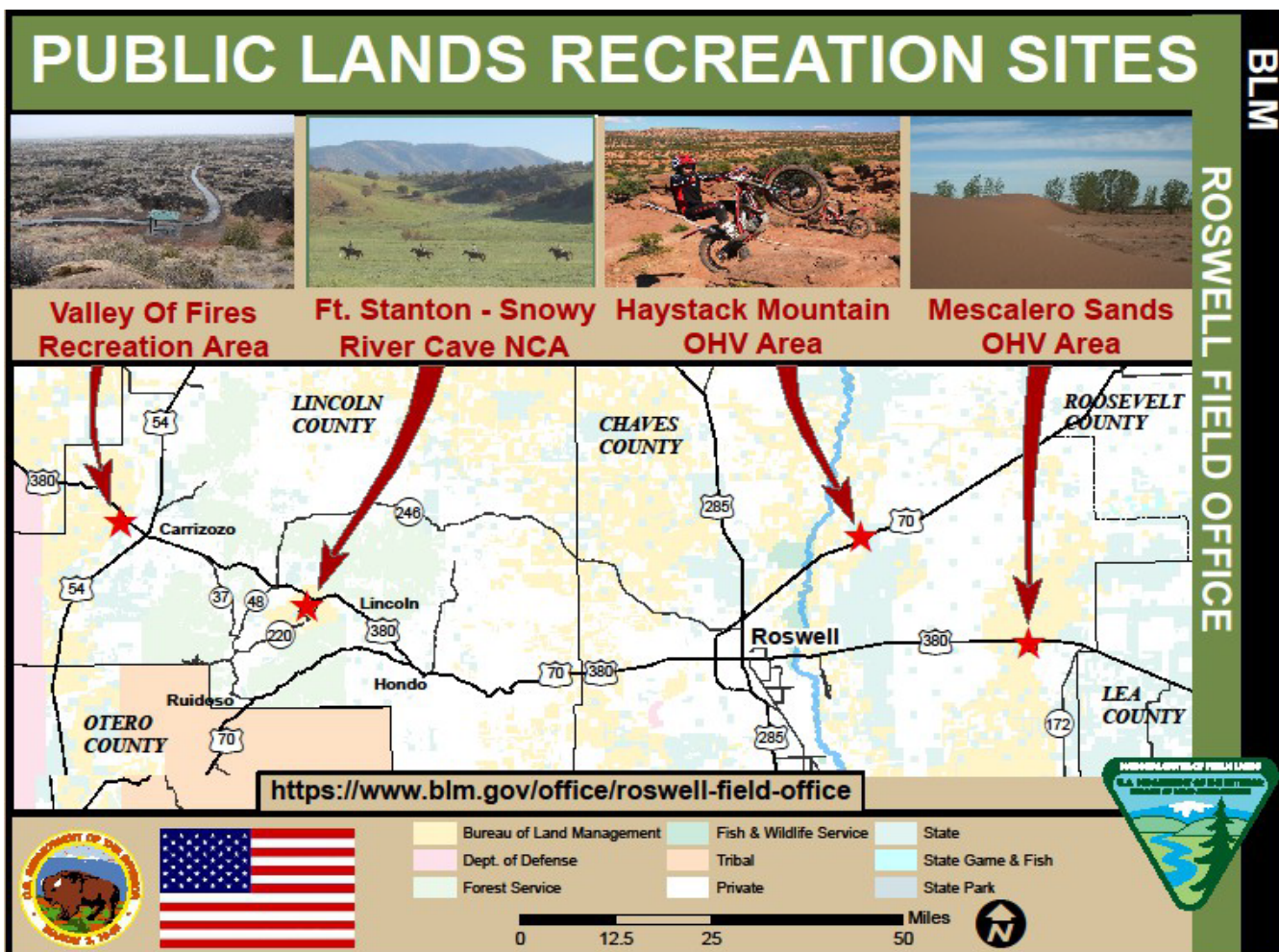


Figure 2: Map of the Roswell Field Office.

HAYSTACK MOUNTAIN OHV AREA

Haystack Mountain OHV Area is located within Chaves County. Perched on the rugged breaks overlooking the Pecos River, Haystack Mountain OHV Area offers 1,920 acres of riding trails. From novices to experts, on bare rock and sandy washes, OHV enthusiasts can find terrain to fit their skill level. The terrain is extremely rugged, including such varied features as deep gullies with difficult hill climbs in and out of a scenic sandstone escarpment.

The OHV area is designated as limited use and is designed for OHVs no wider than 50 inches. The OHV area is ideal for motorcycles, with nationally sanctioned "moto-trials" events held each year under the authority of approved Special Recreation Permits (SRPs). Haystack Mountain's central parking lot is large enough for easy loading/unloading and can be used as a staging area for large events. The single-track trail system is ideal for mountain biking as well. See Figure 7 for a map of the trails in the OHV area.

Haystack Mountain is currently set up with a camp host site, four camping sites equipped with shelters, picnic tables, grills, and fire rings at each. All sites are dry with no water or electric hook-ups. The area has a new double vault toilet as well, installed April 2020. Current Standard Amenity Fees for day use are \$3.00/day/vehicle with single occupant, \$5.00/day/vehicle with more than two occupants, and \$15.00 for buses per day (more than 10 occupants). These Standard/Expanded amenity fees are charged per day and include camping. See Table 2 for a full list of amenities and fees.



Figure 3: Moto-trials event



Figure 4: Haystack Mountain OHV Area

The Roswell Field Office takes a proactive approach in managing Haystack Mountain and Mescalero Sands OHV Areas to meet the following, primary objectives:

- 1.Minimize conflicts with adjacent private landowners.
- 2.Minimize conflicts between recreation user groups.
- 3.Minimize conflicts with other resources and uses.
- 4.Provide for visitor safety and interpretive needs.
- 5.Provide for quality developed recreation experience compatible with other uses.
- 6.Provide for quality primitive and semi-primitive recreation experience in a manner compatible with other uses.



Figure 5: The art of balancing (Moto-trials)



Figure 6: The morning safety briefing (Moto-trials)

Table 2:

Haystack Mountain OHV Area at a Glance



Location:	22 miles northeast of Roswell, NM on U.S. Highway 70
Acreage:	Approximately 1,920 acres
Amenities Offered:	• 4 developed camping/picnicking sites with shelters, picnic tables, grills, fire rings and trash cans • 1 double-sided vault toilet • Developed Staging area/parking lot • OHV trails • ADA-accessible • Site host • Area has a limited use designation, OHVs wider than 50 inches are prohibited.
Daily Fees:	Standard Amenity Fees • \$3 per day per vehicle (one person in vehicle) • \$5 per day per vehicle (two or more people in vehicle) • Camping fees included in day-use fees • \$15 per bus (10 or more people)
Visitation (since 2014):	Average: 454 annual visitors (based on Recreation Use Permit collection) Highest Visitation Year: 592 (2021)
Season of Use:	Open year round; busiest September-March
Where Most Visitors Originate:	New Mexico, Texas
Popular Activities:	OHV riding, nationally sanctioned moto-trials events, mountain biking, horseback riding, camping, picnicking, wildlife viewing
Average Group Size:	2 people

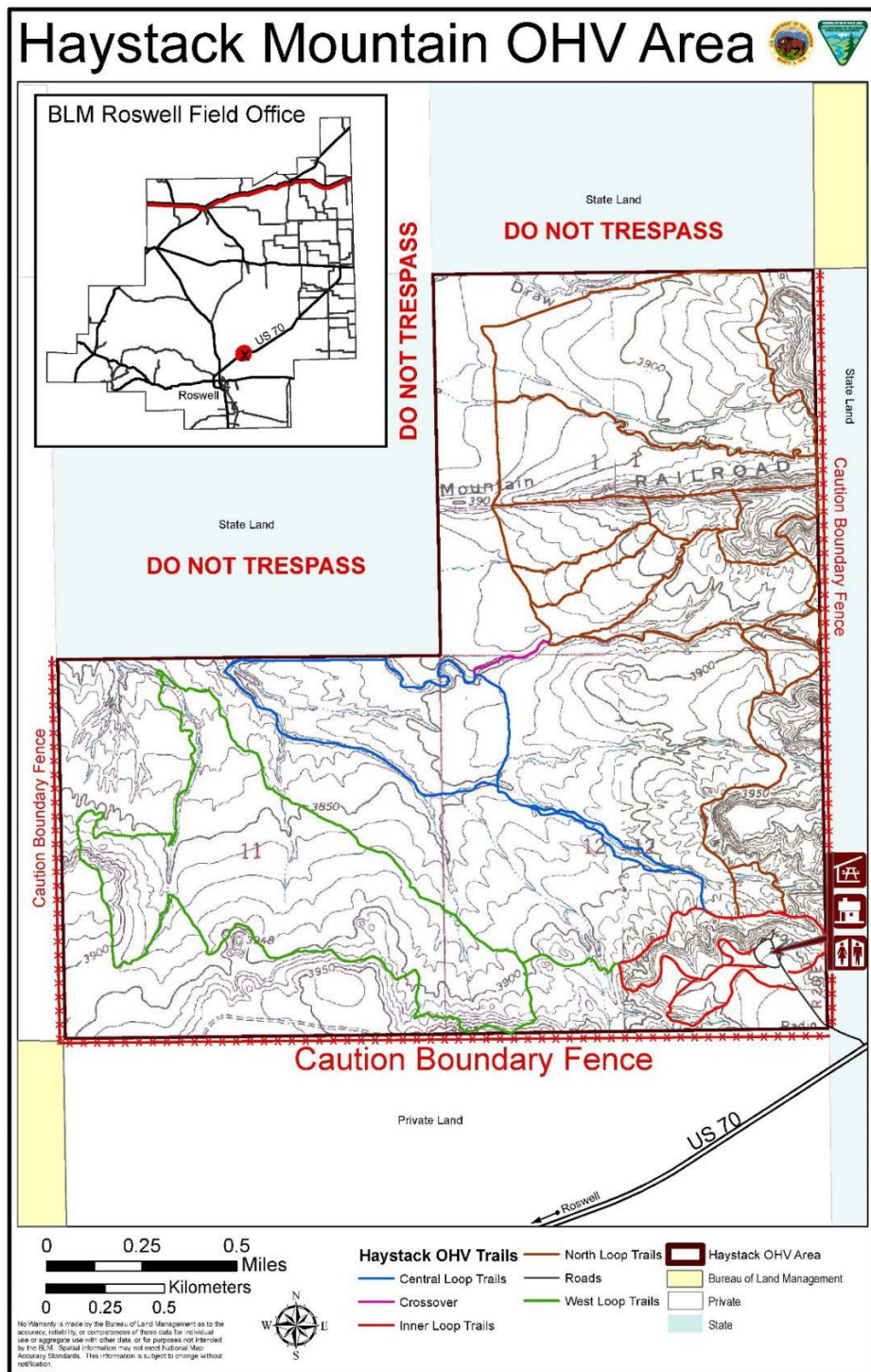


Figure 7: Map of Haystack Mountain OHV Area and Trail System

Visitation and Visitor Use

The primary recreation activities at Haystack include OHV riding (primarily dirt bikes, trials bikes, and ATVs), picnicking, camping and mountain biking. The average group size is 2-3 people with an average stay of two days. Haystack is primarily used by local and repeat visitors. Many of those who stop in have intentionally planned their visit. Fall and spring are the busiest seasons at Haystack. Note the increase in visitation and the percentage of that increase.

Visitation data demonstrates a significant increase in use over the past decade, with total visitation rising from 373 visitors in 2015 to 585 visitors in 2024, representing a 56.8% increase. This steady growth reflects the area's popularity and highlights the increased demand for recreation facilities and services.

The proposed fee adjustments aim to address the costs associated with maintaining and improving the facilities and infrastructure necessary to support the growing number of visitors. Enhanced amenities, such as RV hookups and a new group site, are intended to accommodate larger and more diverse user groups while ensuring that the site remains a high-quality recreation destination.

Table 3: Haystack Mountain OHV Area Site Visitation

Haystack Mountain OHV Area Site Visitation	
Fiscal Year	Visitation Figures
2015	373
2016	360
2017	418
2018	430
2019	555
2020	430
2021	592
2022	455
2023	530
2024	585
Total:	4,728
Average:	473
Percent change from 2015 to 2024:	+56.8%

SOURCE: Visitation numbers are collected from Recreation Use Permits (RUPs).

By aligning the proposed fees with increasing visitation and demand, the plan ensures sustainable funding for site operations and maintenance, benefiting both current and future visitors.

MESCALERO SANDS OHV AREA

Mescalero Sands OHV Area consists of 610 acres of towering 90-plus foot sand dunes. The dune field stretches over most of the area and lends itself well to all terrain cycles, sand rails and dune buggies. The dunes are made up of quartz particles and are constantly changing due to the prevailing southwest wind. When the dunes are active, they move about a foot per year. See table 13 for a map of the Mescalero Sands OHV Area.

Among the biggest surprises in the area are the mature cottonwood trees. The combination of a very shallow water table and the sand's capacity to hold water allows these trees to thrive in an arid environment.



Figure 8: OHV riders at Mescalero Sands

While the roads and parking areas in the Mescalero Sands OHV area are capable of supporting cars, trucks and buses, the soft sand off established roads is not. BLM does not recommend leaving the surfaced areas in any vehicle other than an all-terrain vehicle.

The Bowl Parking Area provides access to the northern portion of the dunes, which includes the "Bowl." The Bowl is a large depression surrounded by dunes. The Cottonwood Site provides access to the southern portion of the dunes. Trails connect both portions of the dunes.

Mescalero Sands is currently set up with six camping sites equipped with shelters, picnic tables, grills, and fire rings at each. All sites are dry with no water or electric hook-ups. The area has a new vault toilet as well, installed February 2020. Current Standard Amenity Fees are \$3.00/vehicle with single occupant, \$5.00/vehicle with more than two occupants, and \$15.00 for buses (more than 10 occupants). These fees are per day and camping is included with day-use. See Table 4 for a detailed list of amenities and fees at Mescalero Sands.



Figure 9: Mescalero Sands OHV Area

Aside from RUPs utilized by OHVers and campers, Mescalero Sands has also hosted a permitted Special Recreation event for the Texas Military Historical Society group for a WWII reenactment (Ziel Tobruk). **Table 4:**



Figure 10: WWII reenactment event at Mescalero Sands



Figure 11: Reenactment event with a Special Recreation Permit

Table 4:

Mescalero Sands OHV Area at a Glance



Location:	45 miles east of Roswell, NM on U.S. Highway 380
Acreage:	Approximately 610 acres
Amenities Offered:	• 6 developed camping/picnicking sites with shelters, picnic tables, grills, and fire rings • Access roads • Refuse container • 1 vault toilet • Area is considered “open” with no trail restrictions
Daily Fees:	Standard Amenity Fees • \$3 per day per vehicle (one person in vehicle) • \$5 per day per vehicle (two or more people in vehicle) • Camping fees included in day-use fees • \$15 per bus per day (10 or more people)
Visitation (since 2014):	Average: 1,201 annual visitors (based on Recreation Use Permit collection) Highest Visitation Year: 1,687 (2021)
Season of Use:	Open year round; busiest September-March
Where Most Visitors Originate:	New Mexico, Texas
Popular Activities:	OHV riding, horseback riding, camping, picnicking, wildlife viewing
Average Group Size:	2 people

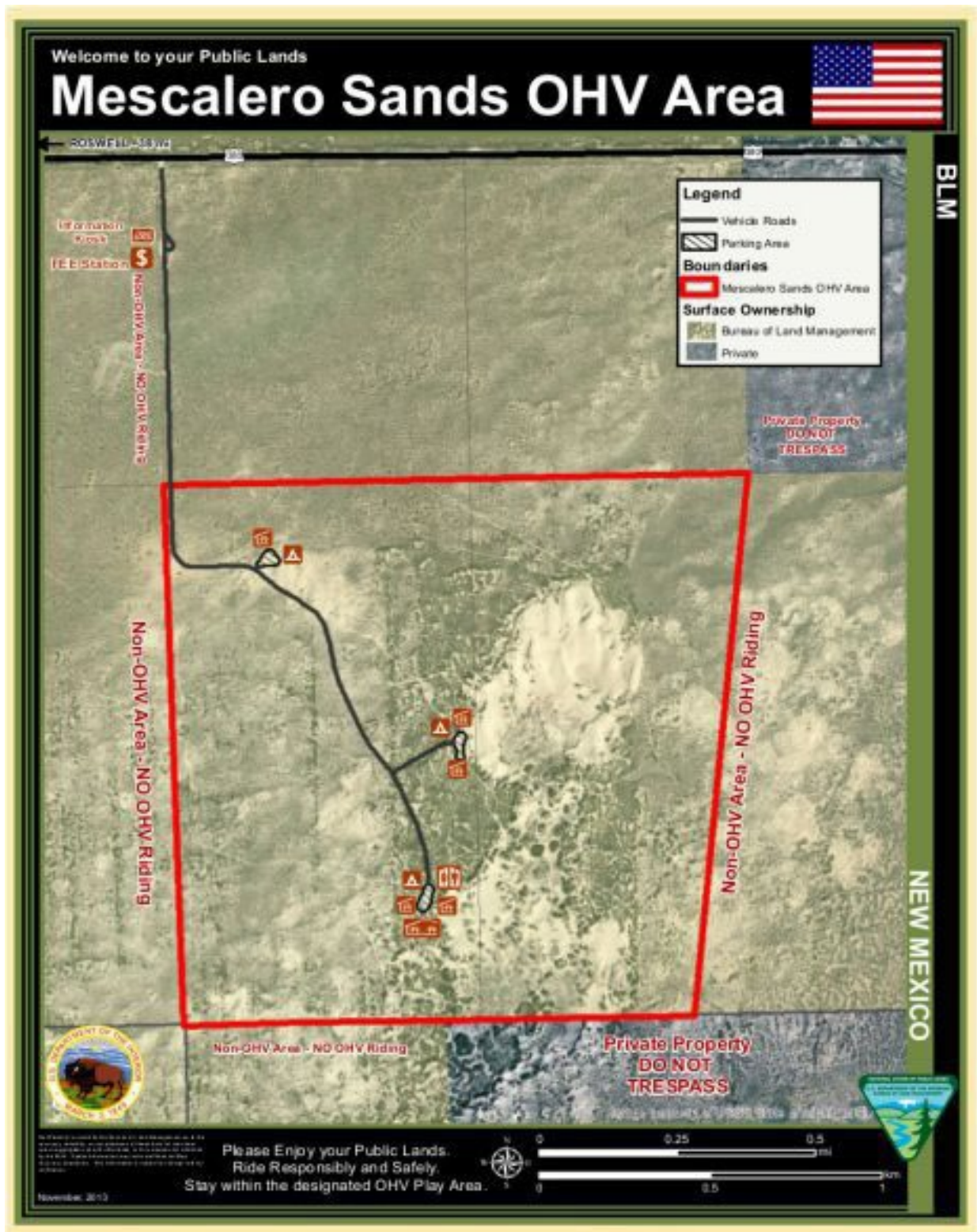


Figure 12: Map of Mescalero Sands OHV Area

Visitation and Visitor Use

The primary recreation activities at Mescalero Sands include OHV riding (primarily sand rails, dune buggies, and side-by-side UTVs), picnicking, camping, and horseback riding. The average group size is 2-3 people with an average stay of two days. Mescalero Sands is used by out-of-state visitors as well as local and repeat visitors. Visitation has increased in the last few years, partly due to a popular OHV site being shut down in nearby west Texas. Many of those who stop in have intentionally planned their visit. Fall and spring are the busiest seasons. Note the increase in visitation and percentage of that increase.

Visitation data reflects significant growth over the past decade, increasing from 894 visitors in 2015 to 1,510 visitors in 2024, representing a 70.8% increase. This growth highlights the need for expanded facilities and services to accommodate the rising demand.

The proposed fee changes aim to support the maintenance and improvement of site infrastructure, ensuring that Mescalero Sands remains a high-quality recreation destination capable of meeting the needs of its diverse and growing visitor base.

Table 5: Mescalero Sands OHV Area Site Visitation

Mescalero Sands OHV Area Site Visitation	
Fiscal Year	Visitation Figures
2015	894
2016	884
2017	983
2018	1143
2019	1176
2020	1366
2021	1687
2022	1385
2023	1406
2024	1510
Total:	12,434
Average:	1,243
Percent change from 2015 to 2024:	+70.8%

SOURCE: SOURCE: Visitation numbers are collected from Recreation Use Permits (RUPs).

The proposed fees are designed to address the increased visitation and the associated operational and maintenance costs, ensuring the site continues to provide safe and enjoyable experiences for all users.

Stakeholders and Partnerships

As part of its [Connecting with Communities Recreation Strategy](#), BLM seeks engagement and partnerships with local stakeholders to accomplish mutual objectives for public access and recreation. The BLM strongly believes that community partners must be engaged to have a successful recreation program. The BLM not only gains great volunteers, but also gains essential community attachment to a place. A community that is attached to a campground or trail system is more likely to promote these places and take pride in their stewardship. The community benefits



Figure 135: EcoServant crew at Haystack Mountain OHV Area

from tourism dollars associated with these sites, the skills that the BLM staff teaches area youth, and the extra finances directly tied to the assistance agreements, all of which are empowering for rural communities.

Through the fall, winter, and spring seasons, a volunteer site host stays at Haystack. This site host volunteers their time to maintain both Haystack and Mescalero OHV areas. RFO hopes to improve the site host campsite to allow a volunteer to be present year-round. The site host is paid \$22/day plus mileage reimbursement for an average total of \$5,000 per year. The site host assists the BLM with a diverse set of tasks that include visitor engagement and education, trash cleanup and site maintenance, and rule enforcement.

RFO partners with EcoServants, a branch of AmeriCorps. The cooperative agreement consists of corps-style crews who will perform minor maintenance duties, such as painting, erosion control projects, and trail maintenance. This program assists RFO with staffing while offering young people

valuable experience in a federal land management agency. This program does not cost the RFO but does offer numerous mutual benefits to the BLM and interns.



Figure 6: Mescalero Sands - Fun in the sun

FEE-FREE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Outside of the Haystack Mountain and Mescalero Sands OHV Areas, there is an abundance of free dispersed recreation opportunities for visitors to hike, mountain bike, hunt, camp, observe wildlife and drive off-highway vehicles.



Figure 75: A Southern Trail at Haystack Mountain OHV Area.

Fort Stanton-Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area

The Fort Stanton - Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area (NCA) was established in 2009 to protect, conserve, and enhance the unique and nationally important historic, cultural, scientific, archaeological, natural, and educational subterranean cave resources of the Fort Stanton - Snowy River Cave system. The NCA was once known as the Fort Stanton Military Reservation. In 1855, the U.S. Army established Fort Stanton as an Infantry and Cavalry post in the east-central New Mexico Territory to protect settlers in the region. Within the NCA is Fort Stanton Cave. At over 31 miles, it is the second longest cave in New Mexico, the 14th longest cave in the U.S., the 62nd longest in the world, and the largest cave managed by the BLM. Snowy River is a significant passage within Fort Stanton Cave, and is the longest cave formation in the world. Today, approximately 15 miles of previously unknown passage have been mapped, without reaching the end. The NCA offers many opportunities to recreate. Popular activities include hunting, camping, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking and wildlife viewing. The area has two developed campgrounds: Rob Jagers Campground and the Cave Canyon Campground.



Figure 86: Horseback Riders on the NCA

Rio Bonito Acquired Lands (Tracts)

The Salazar tract is a great place to explore the riparian area and the apple orchard. Access is from a parking lot near the apple orchard, off U.S. Highway 380, and from Salazar Canyon Road. The Salazar Tract is open to hiking, biking, fishing, and equestrian use. There is a rudimentary trail that runs from the apple orchard to the Salazar Canyon access point. Apples can be picked from late August to mid-September. The Lincoln Tract is behind the town of Lincoln, NM. It is a great place to hike and get back to nature. There are several access points to the Lincoln Tract. Within the town of Lincoln, there are two access points to BLM's nature trail, which forms a loop through the riparian area of the Rio Bonito. At the northeast corner of the NM Historic Site museum's parking lot is the beginning of the nature trail, where there is a kiosk with information. The other end of the nature trail is at the east end of the town park. At the north end of the town of Lincoln, there is a parking area on the east side of the road.



Figure 17: Trail running through the

Lincoln Tract

that serves as the parking area is a great location for starting a hike or bike ride and is used for equestrian access. Equestrian users can ride the trails north of this access point. Hiking and biking are permitted on the nature trail but equestrian use on the nature trail is not allowed. Do not ride horses on the bridges. The Dow Canyon tract of land has the riparian area along the Rio Bonito with grassy upland benches, interspersed with pinyon and juniper groves stretching up to the highway. The trail system starts at the parking lot, heads north and south and connects with a two track that parallels the river. Because there is not a lot of elevation change, the area is perfect for easy hiking, biking and equestrian use. BLM has completed a two-mile-long river restoration project on this tract, creating pools, mitigating erosion, and creating a cold-water fishery. This section of the Rio Bonito is stocked periodically by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. The access point for the Dow Canyon Tract is on U.S. Highway 380 at mile marker 100.9. There is a parking lot and an informational kiosk with a map at the trail head.

Carrizozo Land Partnership

Public lands managed by the BLM between the Carrizozo Lava Flow and the White Sands Missile Range makes up the Carrizozo Land Partnership and can only be reached by crossing private land. The Carrizozo Land Partnership, a partnership between the BLM, private landowners, and ranchers of this area, has arranged for public access to BLM lands in this area by a vehicle pass process. Once on the BLM lands in the area, the public is allowed to hunt, camp, hike, observe wildlife and other appropriate recreational activities.



Figure 18: One of the amazing views while visiting the Carrizozo Land Partnership

While there are abundant free dispersed recreation opportunities in the area, such as hiking, mountain biking, and camping, the proposed fee increases at Haystack and Mescalero Sands are essential to ensure that the unique amenities and visitor services offered at these sites can be maintained and enhanced.

The fees at these OHV areas will allow for the continued development and upkeep of crucial infrastructure such as improved campgrounds, enhanced visitor services, and resource protection. These funds are necessary to support the increased demand for managed recreation experiences, especially as visitation continues to grow.

The presence of free alternatives does not diminish the need for fee-based management at these specific sites, which provide more specialized activities, such as OHV riding and developed camping. As these areas attract both local and out-of-state visitors, the fees will support their sustainability and ensure high-quality experiences for all users.

3 Financial and Fee Revenue Analyses

This plan deploys two types of analyses: the Cost Recovery Method (discussed in [Section 3](#)) identifies funds collected at and allocated to the recreation areas compared with expenditures; and the Fair Market assessment (discussed in [Section 4](#)) that compares fees at Haystack Mountain and Mescalero Sands OHV Areas with fees charged at similar public and private campgrounds in and around southwest New Mexico.

REVENUES FROM THE RECREATION PROGRAM

Management of recreation sites is funded through two revenue streams: **appropriated funding** and **fee collections**. Fees collected at Haystack and Mescalero Sands supplement appropriated funding and are used to maintain and enhance recreation facility services and operations. They are intended to help provide a desirable setting that will meet quality standards to enhance the visitor's experience and protect natural and cultural resources.

Amenities and upkeep at Haystack and Mescalero Sands OHV Areas are maintained with Fee Account revenue from recreation fees paid by visitors. *Table 7: Roswell FO OHV Area Site Cost Recovery* on page 28 displays fee revenues since 2014.

Fee Collection, Enforcement, and Compliance

Fee collection at both Haystack Mountain and Mescalero Sands OHV Areas is managed through the **Recreation Use Permit (RUP) program**. All vehicles entering each OHV area are required to obtain a RUP for day-use/camping. The RUP covers both Standard and Expanded Amenity Fees per vehicle and differ according to the visitor's occupant load per vehicle. Currently, the RUP cost for day-use also covers any camping use per day. Visitors purchase RUPs at self-service stations located near each OHV area entrance. All passes must be displayed in a vehicle's front window.

User fees are collected regularly by staff from the “iron rangers” where visitors submit RUP envelopes. Iron rangers use an inner lockbox system, so cash is not handled in the field. These inner lockboxes are transported to a secure location where they are sorted, opened, and revenues are counted, then deposited, in the presence of more than one staff person in accordance with BLM fee collection policies as described in Washington Office Instruction Memorandum 2006-211 (I).

Payment of Standard and Expanded Amenity Fees via the RUP program is enforced through the presence of volunteer campground hosts and by a rotation of BLM employees that patrol the sites. If problems arise, local, state, or BLM law enforcement are contacted.

Fee compliance is positively affected by several factors, including amenities perceived to offer value and BLM presence on site by BLM staff or site hosts. However, fee compliance is imperfect at BLM sites, as some visitors can fail to comply with fee requirements. Failure to comply with fee requirements can result in a warning ticket from BLM employees or volunteers. Fee compliance estimates are currently unknown.

Fee Discounts

RFO upholds various opportunities for discounted or fee-free recreation at fee sites through the America the Beautiful Pass and fee-free holidays. These opportunities are discussed below.

America the Beautiful Interagency Pass

FLREA established an interagency National pass known as the America the Beautiful – The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass. The America the Beautiful (ATB) Pass took the place of the popular Golden Eagle, Age, and Access Passports in 2007, although existing Golden Passports will continue to be honored until expired, lost, or stolen.

Any of the seven types of ATB Passes provide the bearer a full discount of standard day-use fees and a discount on expanded amenity fees at fee sites on public lands, which apply at the RFO to Haystack Mountain OHV Area, Mescalero Sands OHV Area, Valley of Fires Recreation Area, and Rob Jagers Campground.

Table 6: Benefits per America the Beautiful Pass type

Type	Who Can Use	Cost and Timeframe	Benefits
Annual	Anyone can purchase	\$80, annual	✓ Waives /standard amenity day use fees for public lands ✓ May be jointly owned by 2 people ✓ Covers fees for passholder(s) at per person fee sites and for 1 car at per car fee sites ✓ NPS and some FWS sites offer upgrades from entrance receipts and park-specific annual passes to ATB. ✗ Does not waive expanded amenity fees such as camping or group sites ✗ Cannot be used by people other than passholder(s)

Type	Who Can Use	Cost and Timeframe	Benefits
Military Lifetime	Military veterans and Gold Star Families	Free, lifetime	✓ Waives /day use fees for public lands ✓ Waives fees for passholder at per-person fee sites and for 1 car at per-car fee sites ✗ Does not waive expanded amenity fees such as camping or group sites ✗ Cannot be used by people other than passholder
Military	Current U.S. Military personnel and their dependents with specific documentation	Free, annual	✓ Waives /day use fees for public lands ✓ Waives fees for passholder at per-person fee sites and for 1 car at per-car fee sites ✗ Does not waive expanded amenity fees such as camping or group sites ✗ Cannot be used by people other than passholder
4th Grade	U.S. 4 th graders for duration of 4 th grade year	Free with voucher , annual	✓ Waives /day use fees for public lands ✓ Waives fees for passholder at per-person fee sites and for 1 car at per-car fee sites ✗ Does not waive expanded amenity fees such as camping or group sites ✗ Cannot be used by people other than passholder
Senior	Any U.S. citizen or permanent resident 62 and older	\$20, annual \$80, lifetime	✓ Waives /day use fees for public lands ✓ Waives fee for passholder and up to 3 additional adults (w/ passholder present) ✓ Some discounts for overnight camping on individual sites, guided tours, and non-optional transportation (valid only for passholder) – <i>contact specific sites to verify discounts</i> ✓ Annual passes may be exchanged for a lifetime pass; seniors may present up to 4 annual passes and/or pay the difference between annual and lifetime pass ✗ Cannot be purchased by non-permanent U.S. residents (i.e., “snowbirds”)
Access	U.S. citizens or permanent residents with documentation of permanent disability	Free, lifetime	✓ Waives /day use fees for public lands ✓ Waives fee for passholder and up to 3 additional adults (w/ passholder present) ✓ Some discounts for overnight camping on individual sites, guided tours, and non-optional transportation (valid only for passholder) – <i>contact specific sites to verify discounts</i>

Type	Who Can Use	Cost and Timeframe	Benefits
Volunteer	Anyone with 250+ hours of volunteer service on public lands	Free, annual	✓ Waives /day use fees for public lands ✓ Waives fees for passholder at per-person fee sites and for 1 car at per-car fee sites ✗ Does not waive expanded amenity fees such as camping or group sites ✗ Cannot be used by people other than passholder

Key components to remember about the ATB Pass:

- The ATB pass waives entrance or standard amenity day use fees at sites managed by six federal agencies: Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of Agriculture-Forest Service (USDA-FS), and National Park Service (NPS).
- The ATB Pass does not cover expanded amenity fees charged for parking, camping, tours, boat launches, or group sites (excepting Senior and Access Passes; see **Table 6** for specifics).
- Not all federal recreation agencies participate in the program; for example, much of the Bureau of Reclamation lands are managed by nonfederal partners. **Contact sites directly to ensure the America the Beautiful Pass is accepted there.**
- Visitors must present the actual pass for use, not a copy or electronic version or any other documentation such as confirmation emails, versions saved to apps like Google or Apple wallets, purchase receipts, or hangtags.

Fee-Free Holidays and Events

In 2025, BLM will offer five days on which standard amenity fees are waived: Martin Luther King Jr. Day on January 20, Juneteenth National Independence Day on June 19, BLM's Birthday on July 16, Great American Outdoors Act Anniversary on September 27, National Public Lands Day on September 27, and Veterans Day on November 11.

COST RECOVERY FOR THE RECREATION PROGRAM

Costs for the Recreation Program

Management of RFO sites is funded through **appropriated funding** and **fee collections**.

Fee collections at Haystack and Mescalero Sands contribute to the Field Office' recreation fee accounts with revenues of \$3,825 and \$7,530 in the 2024 fiscal year, respectively. These revenues are used primarily to cover operating costs of the site and pay for basic maintenance and repairs of site infrastructure, septic pumping and water system testing, vandalism cleanup and repairs, volunteer stipends and reimbursements, grounds keeping, roadway repairs, monsoon cleanup, and the purchasing of supplies to accomplish these tasks.

Fee collections can be carried over from year to year, thereby providing needed funds to address emergency circumstances and to fund improvement projects that require additional revenues. Fees

collected at recreation sites supplement appropriated funding and are used to maintain and enhance recreation facility services and operations. They are intended to help provide a desirable setting that will meet quality standards to enhance the visitor's experience and protect natural and cultural resources.

Fee collection revenue does not cover the labor costs associated with the staff that manages either OHV area. These costs are borne by **appropriated funds**. These include the proportional salaries of a GS-11 Outdoor Recreation Planner, a GS-12 Assistant Field Manager, and a GS-11 Law Enforcement Officer, and the intermittent salaries of the force account crew and other BLM staff. Appropriated funds also cover the costs associated with administering the fee collection program and provide some financial assistance for executing significant capital improvement projects. These funds are not included in this business plan, as they do not relate to direct revenues or expenditures for recreation fee sites.

Cost Recovery

From 2015 to 2024 a combination of inflation and increased visitation (Tables 3 and 5) has contributed to a commensurate increase in operating costs for Haystack and Mescalero Sands OHV areas. Operating costs include daily maintenance, infrastructure improvements, septic services, supplies, security, camp host stipends and propane costs, and dumpster service.

Visitor use at the site continues to increase steadily, thus requiring an appropriate expenditure for maintenance, improvements, security, and visitor information. It should be noted from 2020 to 2021 that the boom in outdoor recreation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic significantly increased visitation and the resulting maintenance at each OHV site, particularly Mescalero Sands. Overall fee site visitation has grown 33% at Haystack and 30% at Mescalero Sands from 2014 to present.

Ideally, fees collected at the site should be enough to sustain the day-to-day operation and upkeep of the site, plus a surplus that can be saved up to supplement significant capital improvement projects. Currently, maintenance costs and expenditures compete with RFO's ability to provide management for many of fee-free recreation sites across the district.

As shown in **Table 7**, the cost of the described maintenance, labor and goods required at the sites has risen 6% since 2020. An increase in fees, and commensurate increase in revenue, is necessary to bring the management of both Haystack Mountain and Mescalero Sands OHV Areas back to a self-sustaining level.

As **Table 7** and **Figure 19** show OHV area expenditures versus revenue since 2020. Haystack Mountain is showing a -\$13,478 deficit and Mescalero Sands is showing a \$10,051 return with a -\$3,427 total deficit for both OHV areas over 5 years. Mescalero Sands brings in more visitation, which generates more revenue. This deficit leaves no financial cushion for larger expenditures such as upgrades to facilities nor for unexpected expenses such as cleanup for weather, vandalism, and inclement events.

Table 7: Roswell FO OHV Area Site Cost Recovery

Comparison between annual costs and revenues collected at both OHV areas for the past 5 years. Note that “costs” include the cost of regular maintenance plus site host reimbursements. Revenues are RUP fees collected at the OHV areas.

Haystack Mountain OHV Area			
Fiscal Year	Costs	Revenue	Difference
2020	\$5,768	\$2,250	-\$3,518
2021	\$6,005	\$3,566	-\$2,439
2022	\$6,088	\$2,877	-\$3,211
2023	\$6,000	\$3,940	-\$2,060
2024	\$6,075	\$3,825	-\$2,250
Total:	\$29,936	\$16,458	-\$13,478
Average:	\$5,987	\$3,291	-\$2,695

Mescalero Sands OHV Area			
2020	\$5,768	\$8,230	\$2,462
2021	\$6,005	\$9,915	\$3,910
2022	\$6,088	\$7,814	\$1,726
2023	\$6,000	\$6,498	\$498
2024	\$6,075	\$7,530	\$1,455
Total:	\$29,936	\$39,987	\$10,051
Average:	\$5,987	\$7,997	\$2,010

4 Market Values

ASSESSING FAIR MARKET VALUE OF THE OHV AREAS

The Fair Market Value Method was used to determine fee increases and any additional amenity fees to add for the OHV area to be more self-sufficient. This method entails comparing fees to public and private recreation areas with similar amenities. A fair value fee can be estimated based on the types of amenities offered at the OHV areas and whether they are inferior or superior to the amenities available at other recreation sites in the vicinity. This allows the RFO to determine whether the current fee structure is appropriate.

To calculate the appropriate fees for the OHV areas, the RFO assessed the fees at 34 campgrounds. The campgrounds are in Roswell, Alamogordo, Carrizozo, Ruidoso, and the Lincoln National Forest (Appendix 1).

Comparable Fee Site Analysis

Table 8 below compares fees at other recreation fee sites proximate to the Roswell Field Office, as well as BLM-wide, with levels of development comparable to Haystack and Mescalero Sands OHV areas.

The Lincoln National Forest does not charge fees for every campground, but the Lincoln National Forest has many fee sites, which accrues sufficient funding to meet the maintenance costs of the fee-free campgrounds. Like the Lincoln National Forest, the intent of the RFO is to charge a standard/expanded amenity fee at developed campgrounds.

The average cost for camping at a privately owned campground is \$37.00 per night. Private campgrounds offer additional amenities (e.g., cable television), and the price is commensurate with the added creature comforts. These kinds of amenities are inconsistent with the goals of the BLM, which is to encourage the public to make use of public lands. As such, the amenities at the OHV areas are intentionally limited.

The regional analysis shows that the two OHV areas are a couple of the few developed campgrounds in the region that do not charge a camping fee (camping fee is covered by the day-use fee). Camping fees in the region range between fee-free and \$7 per night. The average fee for public campgrounds is \$7.00 per night. Campgrounds with RV hookups are rare, and average \$15.00 per night. In addition, the regional average for group shelters is \$43.00 per night. Currently, both OHV areas lack a group shelter, but group shelters installed at both OHV areas will be a true beneficial addition to the public.

The Rob Jagers Camping Area and the Valley of Fires Recreation Area are the only two public campgrounds in the region with an onsite RV dump station. As the RV dump station is a user-specific amenity, it is the responsibility of users to bear the cost directly. The proposed fee rate for RV dumping was calculated using the Cost Recovery Fee Calculation Method. This is a departure from the rest of the business plan, which used the Fair Market Value Fee Calculation Method. Both OHV areas do not have a dump station but once installed, could be a huge public benefit as well.

Based on the rates at these campgrounds and the fees charged, the RFO concluded that the current fee structure of charging a \$3 - \$5.00 day-use fee (to cover camping/night) is not appropriate after improvements are made. As such, BLM proposes to modify the current fee structure.

Table 8:

Comparative Analysis of Regional Campground Rates				
Site	Day Use	Camping	RV w/ Hookups	Group Site
BLM Valley of Fires	\$3.00 to \$5.00	\$7.00	\$18.00	\$25.00
BLM Aguirre Springs	\$5.00	\$7.00	N/A	\$50.00
BLM Three Rivers Petroglyphs	\$5.00	\$7.00	\$18.00	\$50.00
BLM Orilla Verde	\$3.00	\$7.00, \$10.00	\$15.00	\$30.00 & \$40.00
BLM Rob Jagers CG	\$0	\$10.00	\$20.00	\$35.00

Comparative Analysis of Regional Campground Rates				
USFS Sam Tobias CG	N/A	\$6.00	N/A	\$60.00, \$80.00, \$100.00
USFS Oak Grove	N/A	\$6.00	N/A	N/A
USFS Three Rivers	N/A	\$6.00	N/A	\$20.00 & \$50.00
Bottomless Lakes State Park	\$5.00	\$10.00	\$14.00 to \$18.00	\$30.00
Average fee for pay site	\$4.20	\$7.00	\$15.00	\$43.00
Current OHV Area Fees	\$3.00 to \$5.00	covered by day-use fee	N/A	N/A
Proposed OHV Area Fees	\$5.00	\$10.00	\$20.00	\$25.00

5 Expanding Recreation Fees

If this business plan is approved, the RFO will continue the process on implementing the proposed OHV area improvements. The RFO will begin charging a fee of \$10.00 per site per night for camping without hookups and a fee of \$20.00 per site per night for use of campsites with potable water and electrical hookups. The fee for each use of the dump station will be \$30.00. The proposed fees will improve the effectiveness of recreation facility maintenance, cover the costs of developing additional informational materials, and allow the RFO to compensate camp hosts.

The proposed camping and camping with amenities fees are slightly higher than the regional average but are consistent with the fees that would likely be assessed at other campgrounds if similar amenities were offered. Looking forward, the fees at surrounding campgrounds are probably going to increase over time but it is unlikely that the rates at the OHV areas will remain anomalous. Furthermore, this proposed fee increase reflects the fair market value for the foreseeable future.

The proposed fee structure would help BLM cover the operating costs for these two recreation areas. More revenue would be available for OHV area maintenance and improvements. In addition, improving the OHV areas and increasing the number of campsites would attract additional visitors and SRP events. This would further supplement the annual revenue garnered at the OHV areas. Improving the OHV areas and adding fees is therefore anticipated to render the OHV areas more accessible to the public, thereby encouraging the public to use their public lands.

To account for inflation or other economic changes, this business plan also proposes tying the new fee structure to the Western U.S. Consumer Price Index (CPI). Fees would be reviewed annually against this index. The BLM would institute an automatic commensurate increase,

rounded to the nearest whole dollar, if CPI rises by 20% from the date of approval of this plan. This process would be repeated further based on a 20% increase of the CPI from the date of the last BLM price increase. Meaning that, when the cumulative average annual Western CPI adds up to 20%, from the date of approval, BLM we would increase the fee at these sites by 20%.

BLM would implement the above fee structure as proposed and then would reference the CPI through the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, specifically targeting the CPI closer to rural Western Colorado by using the monthly Western US CPI. This CPI targets the entire western US outside of the large metro areas that have their own CPIs calculated separately. While this is not a CPI for only Western Colorado, it does target the rural west and is the closest CPI that would represent the region. A yearly average of this CPI is published every January. This would create a more sustainable and consistent funding source that would increase assurances for users that the program could continue to provide regular maintenance and necessary capital improvements into the future. Fees could be adjusted without resubmitting a business plan. BLM would return to the Resource Advisory Council (RAC) after each fee increase (approximately every 4-5 years) to update the RAC on successes and challenges in using the Western U.S. CPI.

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

Managing for Positive Recreation Program Results

The 1997 RFO Resource Management Plan goal for Outdoor Recreation Management states to ensure the continued availability of outdoor recreation opportunities and experiences, protect the health and safety of visitors and natural, cultural and other resource values and to stimulate public enjoyment of public land and resolve user conflicts. The goal of RFO's recreation program is also to meet increasing demand for outdoor recreation services, including camping, hiking, biking, and visiting natural and cultural heritage sites. To meet the demand, RFO aims to increase recreation revenues by managing for positive results for the following three groups: BLM recreationists (individual and group), the local community, and the BLM. Recreation at BLM sites provide a business base for many local entrepreneurs, as the sites bring customers directly to the local community.

The recreationists benefit by having:

- 1) Low-cost recreation sites accessible and available for their use
- 2) Improved public lands facilities (i.e., clean toilets, paved roads) and amenities (i.e., footrails, interpretive education, and signage)
- 3) Outstanding and reliable nature-based recreation opportunities, providing on-site experiences (i.e., exercise, solitude, adventure, and developing skills) and personal benefits (i.e., fitness, personal health, and self-confidence)
- 4) A focused opportunity to build relationships with family, groups, and fellow recreationists as well as foster interest and stewardship for their shared public lands and the area's rich natural, cultural, and historical characteristics

The local community benefits by developing:

- 1) Improved services and quality of life through facility development and resource protection
- 2) Business opportunities in the outdoor recreation sector (i.e., guide services, gear stores), the hospitality sector (i.e., restaurants, hotels), and the retail sector (i.e., outfitter stores, souvenir merchandise)
- 3) Jobs for its citizens and tax revenues for local government
- 4) A heightened sense of community pride in their shared natural and cultural landmarks

The BLM benefits by:

- 1) Meeting land management goals, including protection of natural and cultural resources
- 2) Partnering with recreationists as stewards of the public lands
- 3) Providing for a more stable (and hence knowledgeable) BLM work force
- 4) Lowering costs by developing improved business management systems
- 5) Obtaining revenues to provide for program management and facilities enhancement
- 6) Reducing negative impacts to natural resources by containing impacts to developed areas and thus managing impacts properly (i.e., waste, fire, garbage)

Anticipated Results of Expanding Recreation Fees

Overall, impacts from changing fees include:

- Generation of revenue to be used for labor and operational needs.
- Ensure adequate staff to halt resource damage and provide the level of service the public has come to expect.
- Improve recreational opportunities and the quality of the experience and public satisfaction for visitors.
- Ability to continue operations despite potential increase of costs of goods, labor, and/or services.

- Greater fee equality with comparable private recreation sites.
- Greater self-sufficiency for management of the recreation site.

Return visitors may find it off-putting that they are now required to pay a higher fee with the change to per person.

Impacts to Recreational Users

Recreational users may be initially disappointed with the decision to expand recreation fees, as this would force them to spend more to recreate at the OHV areas.

Still, with increased demand for public land recreation, the BLM will need to improve sites to meet demand and to maintain health and human safety. Should fees be raised, services could continue to be offered in the recreation program. In addition, revenues could be used to gradually improve infrastructure as part of routine upgrades and long-term projects.

Impacts to the Local Economy

Chaves County depends on tourism. Its location presents a crossroads between diverse recreation opportunities across the BLM, NPS, and USFS. The increase in visitation brings increased expenditures from tourism to the Chaves County economy. Local businesses benefit from increased area visitation as visitors are likely to make purchases at those local business.

BLM sites offer important low-cost recreation. Many tourists prefer to camp at public campgrounds, but with many local Forest Service campgrounds being closed between October and May, regional capacity can be low. Thus, campers rely on BLM campgrounds. Many tourists would be unable to come to the OHV areas if not for the availability of BLM campgrounds and dispersed camping opportunities. This is also true for group site campers, as many low-income and youth groups cannot afford to stay in motels. Recreation is important to the local economy to keep site infrastructure in good condition, and to service and clean facilities at a high standard.



Figure 20: An OHV rider carefully negotiating the dunes at Mescalero Sands

Impacts to Natural Resources

Amenity fees enable RFO to operate the recreation program. Developed sites reduce negative impacts to resources associated with higher levels of visitation. By providing developed recreation sites for visitors, the BLM can better contain impacts to these smaller areas. Associated recreation

impacts, including waste, fire, and garbage, are more limited to developed recreation areas and allow impacts to be managed more efficiently.

Local Economic Impacts

RFO seeks to meet the needs of local communities by removing barriers to participation in decision-making, and increasing access to benefits that help make BLM lands and communities safe, vibrant, and healthy for all those who live, work, and recreate there.

Fees and fee increases can decrease visitor use and reduce compliance in paying fees. Increasing fees may force those who chose not to pay or cannot pay to pursue recreation opportunities on other public lands where fees are not required.



Figure 21: OHV tracks in the sand-Mescalero Sands

BLM campgrounds also offer a very low-cost alternative to staying in a hotel in nearby Roswell where prices can range from \$40 to \$250 per room per night.

Fees aside, there remains an extensive matrix of fee-free public lands throughout the region that provide for a wide variety of undeveloped, dispersed, and exciting outdoor recreation opportunities. Overall, a modest fee increase is not predicted to significantly negatively impact local communities.

Anticipated Results of Not Expanding Recreation Fees

Overall, impacts from not changing fees include:

- Loss of potential revenue in L1232 funds to augment funds for labor and operational costs.
- Potential degradation of natural resources.
- Potential degradation of recreation experience and public satisfaction for current and new visitors with less funding available for aging facilities and not enough personnel to work the area.
- Costs of goods, labor, and services increase at a faster rate than fee revenue projections making it more difficult for BLM to purchase resources it needs to maintain the OHV areas.

Impacts to Recreational Users

Recreational users may benefit in the short-term from not increasing recreation fees, as they would not pay higher sums to recreate at the OHV areas.

With this business plan, the BLM seeks to service recreationists, the local economy, and the BLM in the long-term. Replace costs for the infrastructure at the OHV areas will continue to increase, given current trends. The requested fee increase would be partially used to cover replacement costs

of existing infrastructure. A failure to raise the recreation fee would mean that aging infrastructure would not be replaced in a timely manner to maintain site quality. In addition, a failure to raise recreation fees would mean improvements to recreation sites and expanding developed recreation opportunities would not be added to the existing infrastructure.

Impacts to Local Economy

Not raising recreation fees could erode services like cleaning and site host presence at sites. This would eventually impact the recreation sector of the Chaves County economy, resulting in decreased visitation to BLM sites. Visitation dollars are entirely discretionary; people can spend their vacation dollars at other locations if they find their experience on BLM to be underwhelming or unsatisfactory. Recreation is important to the local economy. Having site infrastructure in good condition as well as clean facilities is more likely to draw repeat visitors to the local area. Should people be less likely to recreate at BLM sites because of poor or unmaintained facilities, the Chaves County economy would suffer.

Impacts to the Natural Resources

RFO developed recreation sites mitigate the negative impacts to resources resulting from unrestrained dispersed use. Dispersed use can result in harmful impacts to wildlife, riparian resources, wilderness areas, cultural resources, and enjoyment by other recreation visitors. Failure to maintain the recreation program would result in negative impacts. For example, should the BLM be unable to regularly service vault toilets (all routine cleaning costs are paid by the RFO Fee Account), people would be less likely to utilize developed toilet facilities and potentially damage natural or cultural resources by leaving human waste and trash on the land. Additionally, recreation maintenance staff/camp hosts (funded entirely by fees) conduct site cleanup and weed control. Not increasing fees would mean such work would be reduced, resulting in negative impacts. The OHV areas are unique for their cultural resources, which are fragile and irreplaceable. Should recreation facilities erode, these resources may suffer.



Figure 22: Moto-trials participants at Haystack Mountain

PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE EXPENDITURES AND PLANS

Development Plans for the OHV Areas

The RFO proposes to improve the OHV areas in hopes of providing the public more amenities. These upgrades would provide the public a better recreational experience while visiting the sites. The proposed OHV area improvements follow the models of other campgrounds operated by the RFO. The Rob Jagers Campground and Valley of Fires Recreation Area are heavily visited fee campgrounds which generate enough revenue to cover their annual operations. If the OHV areas

were improved to a similar scale, the revenue generated onsite should greatly aid in meeting the needs of both sites.

Several large annual Moto-trial events already make use of Haystack Mountain despite its limited accommodations. These events utilize all 4 sites and the main parking lot as a staging area. They also park in designated undeveloped areas where space allows. These groups have all commented on the need for expansion and more amenities. Most Moto-trial participants travel to Haystack Mountain pulling a camper or in their RVs. Having sites that provide water and electric hook-ups for these trial groups and other members of the recreating public would be a huge benefit.

The RFO plans to use capital improvement project funding to expand the Haystack Mountain with an additional 6 new campsite locations, as well as improving amenities on current sites, thereby increasing the number of sites available to the public. A centralized group shelter would be developed along with a dump station positioned alongside the road where visitors exit. The campsites would be established surrounding the main parking lot. The development of a water well equipped with a RO system has already been scheduled for construction. Each new campsite would have the following:

- Gravel back-in parking pad
- Shelter
- ADA picnic table
- 30/50-amp electrical hookup pedestal
- Water hydrant (potable water)
- Fire ring and grill
- Trash can
- Group shelter – water hydrant, 20A/125V electric outlets (2), ADA tables (6), grills (3), fire rings (2), trash cans (2)).

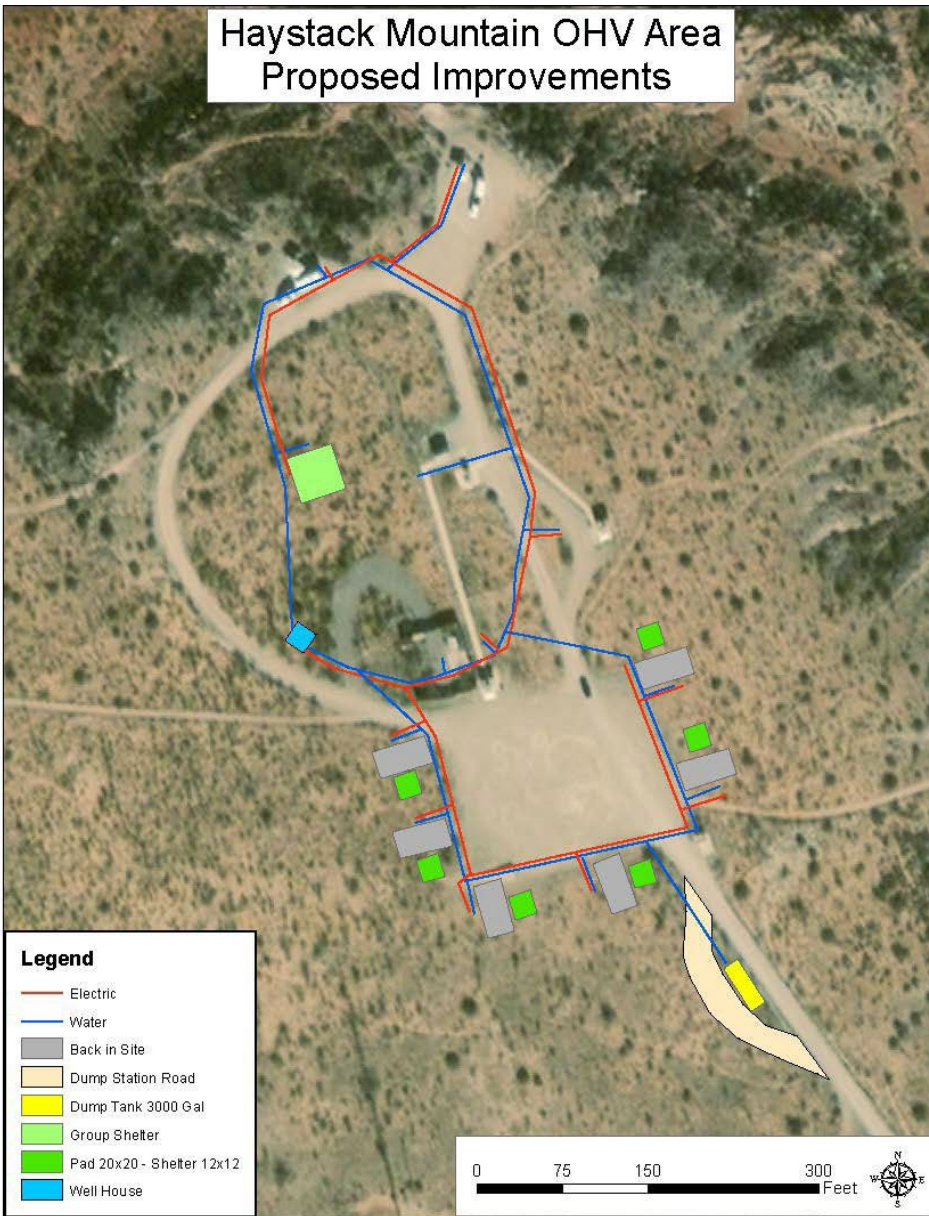


Figure 93: Overview of the proposed Haystack Mountain OHV Area Improvements

There would be a total of 14 water hydrants and 11 electric pedestals, including the camp host site. However, it has yet to be determined how many hydrants the well and RO system can support. A storage tank could easily be added to the well system if needed.

Improvements to Mescalero Sands OHV Area would consist of the same amenities at each site plus the addition of approximately seven or eight new sites and a group shelter. A camp host site would be constructed along with a dump station and one more vault toilet.

The additional revenues generated by the OHV area improvements will be used for facility maintenance, upgrades, and improvements to the RFO's two OHV areas. Projects may involve

existing developed recreation opportunities, developing new recreation opportunities, and producing informational materials that discuss ethical land use. The revenue will also be used to reimburse volunteers for the costs they incur while donating their time to the RFO.

The following priority and planned capital improvements in Table 9 have been identified. Funding would be provided through the annual appropriation awarded to the BLM. The RFO may garner additional project-specific funding by developing partnerships with the private sector and by collaborating with other State and Federal agencies. Grants and donations are also sources for additional funding. Volunteers who donate their time are also a valuable resource for the RFO.

Recreation.gov

Roswell Field Office will use various e-commerce technologies, as directed in BLM Instruction Memorandum 2022-010, to provide recreation visitors opportunities to find, reserve, and pay for a campsites and day use within the field office. Most of these options are provided through the interagency reservation service Recreation.gov. If RFO adopts site reservations through Recreation.gov, based on recommendations provided by the Southern New Mexico Resources Advisory Council approximately 50% of sites will remain available as first-come/first-served campsites.

A Standard amenity fee for reservation services is charged at both Haystack Mountain and Mescalero Sands OHV areas.

Table 9: Priorities and Planned Accomplishments

Facility Maintenance and Upkeep	Information and Education
Cattle guard Picnic tables Vault toilet Campsite maintenance - grills, fire rings, shelters, and tables Trash pickup Signing Host site maintenance (holding tank)	Signs for self-service fee system, Rec.gov Informational/Interpretive signage Directional signage Safety/Regulatory signage Printed brochures/maps
Campground Hosts & Site	Collections
Reimbursement Supplies and equipment for host (Toilet paper, cleaning supplies, trash bags, etc.)	Recreation fee collections, reconciliations, and deposits

6 Feedback and Public Participation

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Section 804 of FLREA addresses the minimum public outreach requirements that an agency must consider when developing or changing recreation fees. This outreach process involves sharing and getting feedback on the proposed Business Plan by a Resource Advisory Council (RAC). RACs provide recommendations to agency officials on matters including, but not limited to:

- Implementing or eliminating fees.
- Expanding or limiting the recreation fee program.
- Implementing fee level changes.

RFO will initiate public notification and outreach for the fee proposal per PL 108-447 Sec. 804 (d)(4) and the BLM Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook (H-2930-1). This includes:

- Soliciting public comments for at least 30 days on the draft business plan by:
 - Posting it on the [BLM Recreation Site Business Plans website](#).
 - Issuing news releases, posting information on social media platforms (including the BLM – NM Facebook, Instagram and X pages), and/or purchasing ads in local media outlets.
 - Publishing a notice in the Federal Register, as well as notices at recreation fee sites.
 - Sending letters to interested parties and stakeholders
- Reviewing and considering public comments, revising the draft business plan as warranted, and finalizing the business plan for Resource Advisory Council recommendation.
 - Including the number and content of public comments in an additional section of this business plan.

Maintaining RFO's fee program can only come with widespread public support when fees have a direct connection to a perceived and/or tangible benefit. To ensure ongoing public support of any/all proposed fee adjustments, RFO will publish and vet proposals in newspapers with regional circulation, and on the BLM websites and recreation site bulletin boards. In addition, site hosts will inform visitors regarding details of fee proposals and provide a venue to comment if they choose.

Visitor Feedback Mechanisms

The following mechanisms provide visitors, stakeholders, and the public mechanisms to provide direct feedback to LCDO on proposed changes:

- **Visitor Contacts:** BLM recreation staff and the law enforcement patrol the campground and surrounding recreation area regularly. This provides opportunities for direct visitor feedback.
- **Recreation Use Permits/Fee Envelopes:** Visitors often provide constructive comments on the permit or fee envelopes, and these comments are noted by recreation staff.
- **Volunteer Hosts:** The RFO coordinates regularly with site hosts who provide valuable feedback and suggestions regarding visitor satisfaction and facility needs.
- **Visitor Use and Satisfaction Surveys:** BLM conducts these surveys on a rotating basis for all fee sites and related facilities.
- **Resource Advisory Council:** All fee proposals must first undergo review by BLM's New Mexico Resource Advisory Council (RAC), which will provide feedback on RFO's proposal.
- **Direct Contact:** Visitors can provide direct feedback about the fee proposal by contacting the BLM Roswell Field Office by phone at (575) 627-0272 or by mail at 2909 W. 2nd St., Roswell, NM 88201.

RESULTS OF PUBLIC OUTREACH

BLM received the following feedback from public outreach efforts:

- **Resource Advisory Council presentation and recommendations:** RFO presented a draft of this business plan to the Southern New Mexico Resource Advisory Council on January 24, 2025. The RAC voted on the draft Haystack Mountain and Mescalero Sands OHV Area proposal. The RAC did recommend approval of the draft plan with the condition that the BLM change the proposed business plans to provide clarification in the language regarding the sites' use of specific discounts, such as the seniors getting the 50% off and the restriction on the use of Recreation.gov. In regard to if RFO were to implement Recreation.gov at Haystack Mountain and Mescalero Sands, the RAC would like half of those permits sold through the website and the remainder open to first-come, first served by location so that there is an option that a user could not have to use Recreation.gov. These recommendations have been incorporated into this plan.
- **Public comments:** The BLM held a public comment period from Jan. 16, 2025, to Feb. 18, 2025, and did not receive any comments.

Appendix 1: Survey of Regional Private and Public Campgrounds

1.0 REGIONAL PRIVATE CAMPGROUND FEES – VICINITY OF ROSWELL, RUIDOSO, ALTO, CAPITAN, MESCALERO RESERVATION, NEW MEXICO	
1.1 Red Barn RV Park, Roswell, NM – restrooms, showers, laundry facility, WiFi cable TV, store, game room, pet friendly	
Nightly Rate	\$30.00
Weekly Rate	\$170.00
Additional Person Charge (over 4 people)	\$2.00
Average	\$67.33
1.2 Trailer Village, Roswell, NM – every site has full hook-ups, all rates include water, electric, sewer, WiFi , coin laundry, restrooms and showers.	
Daily Rate – Back-in	\$28.00
Daily Rate – Pull-through	\$36.00
Weekly 30 amp	\$150.00
Weekly 50 amp	\$195.00
Monthly 30 amp	\$400.00
Monthly 50 amp	\$450.00
Additional Person Charge (over 2 people)	\$3.00
Average	\$180.00
1.3 Spring River RV Park, Roswell, NM – full-service park including restrooms, showers, laundry facility, direct TV, WiFi , pet friendly, dog park on site	
Daily Rate	\$40.00
Weekly Rate	\$150.00
Monthly Rate	\$425.00
Average	\$205.00
1.4 Riverview RV Park, Ruidoso, NM - On Ruidoso River, <u>30 & 50 amp</u> hookups; limited space, (reservations requested), water, sewer, electric & cable; Rates are for 4 people, under 6 Free.	
Winter Nightly Rate including tax, November 1 to March 31	\$29.00
Per Night Off River (plus tax)	\$34.00
Per Night On River (plus tax)	\$40.00
Extra Persons per night	\$3.00
Average	\$26.50
1.5 Recreation Village RV and Mobile Home Park, Ruidoso, NM - 101 spaces, 11 acres, choice of <u>30 or 50 amp</u> hookups, cable, water, and sewer, free WIFI is available throughout the park.	
Per night + tax	\$35.00
1.6 Eagle Creek RV Resort, Alto, NM - 33 <u>acres</u> , <u>community</u> fire pit, hiking and walking trails, pavilion w/picnic tables & BBQ, 34 sites (full hookups, 30/50 amp service, pull thru sites); no tent camping, groups welcome, fire pits.	
RV SITES: Open April 1st - November 1st	
Nightly RV rate including tax, max 4 persons - per site	\$35.00
Nightly RV rate including tax, max 4 persons - per site	\$40.00
Average	\$37.50
1.7 Bonito Hollow RV Park & Campground, Alto, NM - full & partial hook-ups, tent sites, cabins, restrooms & showers, general store, camping & fishing supplies, campfire rings, laundry & phones, BBQ, pavilion for groups, dump station.	
Full Hookup (water, electric and sewer) includes 2 people and 1 car	\$36.00
Premium back-in partial hookup, water & electric on river & backed up to forest, 2 people & 1 <u>car</u>	\$32.00
Partial hookup, water & electric, 2 people and 1 car	\$29.00
Each additional person per night (maximum 8 people including visitors)	\$3.00
Tent – Pets ok 2 people & 1 car (Maximum 6 people including visitors)	\$19.00
Each additional person per night	\$7.00

Average	\$21.00
1.8 Along the River RV Camp, Ruidoso, NM - RV's & tents, public showers available, pull-thru RV sites: 50, 30, 20 amp electrical, sewer, & water hookups, grills or fire rings, & picnic tables; bath house with hot showers & toilets	
Non-River & Pull-thru RV sites per night for 2	\$35.00
River Bank RV sites per night for 2	\$39.00
Per tent per night for 2 people	\$20.00
Average	\$31.00
1.9 Arrowhead Motel & RV Park, Ruidoso, NM - 18 RV spaces with complete hook-ups including water/sewer, electric; Rates are for 4 people, under 6 Free.	
RV Park Price Range	\$49.00
RV Park Price Range	\$109.00
Average	\$79.00
1.10 Sleeping Springs Trout Lakes & RV Park, Ruidoso Downs, NM - 50 spaces with full hookups, water, sewer, electricity, free cable TV, & phone service; 15 pull-through spaces; 17 back-in spaces	
Summer prices are for two people with full hookup (per night + tax)	\$27.00
1.11 Stone Mountain RV Resort, Nogal, NM - Open all year; no summer/winter rate change; pull through spaces, <u>30 & 50 amp</u> , tent camping area; pull through & full hookup spaces available; water & septic dump, free <u>wifi</u> .	
Good Sam members & fellow veterans 15% discount, RV	
RV1 per night	\$55.00
RV2 \$50.00	\$50.00
RV's under 31 ft per night	\$28.99
RV's 31 ft and over per night	\$33.99
Average	\$42.00
1.12 Circle-B RV Park, Ruidoso Downs, NM - Largest RV Park in Lincoln County with RV parts & supplies.	
Winter Nightly Rate including tax	\$29.00
30amp RV Sites	\$33.00
30amp RV Sites Good Sam	\$29.70
50amp RV Sites	\$37.00
50amp RV Sites Good Sam	\$33.30
Average	\$32.40
1.13 Rainbow Lake Cabin & RV Resort, Ruidoso, NM - Open year-round; 49 RV Sites, full hookup, free WIFI, cable TV, rec room, laundry, meeting room; Rates are for 4 people, under 6 Free.	
Winter Nightly Rate + tax, October 26-May 14	\$26.99
Summer Rate + tax May 15-October 25 nightly	\$32.99
Holiday	\$40.00
Extra Persons per night	\$2.75
Average	\$25.68
1.14 Riverside RV Park, Ruidoso, NM - 31 level river & off-river sites, with full hookups including cable, picnic tables, group pavilion area, (no tent camping or shower facilities), water, sewer, electric & cable; Rates are for 4 people, under 6 Free.	
Winter Nightly Rate including tax, November 1 to March 31	\$29.00
Per Night Off River (plus tax)	\$34.00
Per Night On River (plus tax)	\$40.00
Extra Persons per person/per night	\$3.00
Average	\$28.50
1.15 Elk Run RV Park, Alto, NM - Each person daily- \$3, 50/30 AMP, cable TV, picnic table/BBQ grill, laundry/shower facilities. RV Rates: electricity included in the price.	
Per night + tax	\$34.00
1.16 Twin Spruce R.V. Park, Ruidoso, NM - 111 sites w/ full Hook-Ups, running water, restroom, and cable TV hookup	

Per night	\$45.00
1.17 Mama Bear RV Park, Capitan, New Mexico - Electric, Sewer, 50 amp, WiFi , Water, Pull-Thru – Sites-10	
Winter	\$22.00
Summer	\$24.00
Average	\$26.50
1.18 Pinon Hills RV Park, Capitan, New Mexico - Electric, Sewer, WiFi , Water, Pull-Thru Sites, Tents Allowed, Restrooms, Showers, 50 amp power, water, and sewer.	
July	\$25.00
September	\$18.00
March	\$20.00
Average	\$21.00
Deer Crossing RV Park, <u>Located</u> east of Ruidoso, New Mexico, full hook-ups, Electric, Sewer, 50 amp, WiFi , Water, Pull-Thru Sites, picnic table at every site.	
Nightly Rate including tax, April 15 October 15	\$34.00
1.19 Mescalero Apache Tribe	
<u>14.16.1.1</u> Ino of the Mountain Gods, Mescalero, New Mexico - 5 sites - Electric, Sewer, Restrooms, Showers, 50 amp, WiFi , Water, Pull-Thru Sites, Tents Allowed. Cam.	
Per night	\$25.00
<u>14.16.2</u> Silver Lake Campground & RV Park, RV and Camping	
RV per night	\$30.00
Tent camping per night	\$15.00
Average	\$22.50

2.0 EXISTING FEE SITE\$ IN/NEAR THE ROSWELL FIELD OFFICE AREA\$ OF JURISDICTION

2.1 Valley of Fires Recreation Area BLM (4 miles west of Carrizozo) - Recreation area of 19 RV campsites with picnic shelters, tables, grills, & potable water at each site. RV ~~30 & 50 amp~~ electric hookups are available at 14 sites. 2 sites are wheel chair accessible. The full facility comfort station is fully accessible and has showers, 5 vault toilets are available throughout site. No RV size limit. Separate tent camp area and 2 group shelters, Visitor Center, has drinking water and flush bathrooms.

Day Use - one person in vehicle	\$3.00
Day Use - two or more in vehicle	\$5.00
Tent Camping	\$7.00
Camping - with Electric	\$18.00
Camping - without Electric	\$12.00
Group Shelter - group use	\$25.00
Dump Fee	\$15.00
Tour Bus - 15 or more persons on board	\$15.00
Average for camping is	\$12.33
Fees – number of nights and or activity written on fee envelope determines day use or camping	

2.2 Rob Jagers Camping Area BLM (8.5 miles west of Lincoln, NM) – 27 sites, water, electric (30/50 amp), horse corrals, 2 vault toilets, group shelter, group pavilion, 2 dump stations, camp host site, tent sites

Day Use	free
Camping	\$10.00
RV w/hook-ups	\$20.00
Dump Fee	\$30.00
Group Shelter / day	\$35.00

2.3 Three Rivers Campground 12 sites; portion of site designed for Group Camping; tent camping, camping trailer, picnic tables, drinking water, parking, vault toilets .

Per night for camping	\$7
RV / water and electric	\$18.00
Group Shelter / day	\$50.00

3.0 TOWNS IN LINCOLN COUNTY	
3.1 Village of Ruidoso - The Ruidoso Parks & Recreation Department is charged with operating and maintaining a variety of recreation facilities and trail systems conveniently located throughout the Village. Parks and outdoor recreational facilities are open from sunrise to sunset, year-round.	
3.1.1 Two Rivers Park, 100 Robin Road - This park is located behind the Chamber of Commerce on Sudderth Drive at 100 Robin Road at the junction of the Ruidoso River and Carrizo Creek. Over 27 acres of open space, picnic tables, grills, and benches, including a paved trail that meanders along the Ruidoso River. Pavilion (group shelter) use is based upon a first come first use <u>basis</u> , but can be reserved for a fee. Pavilions are popular for birthday parties, weddings, and reunions.	
Pavilion 1-4 Hours	\$40
Pavilion 4+ Hours	\$75
Average	\$57.50
3.1.2 Wingfield Park, 300 Center Street - Park located near the Midtown Shopping District on Wingfield Street. Open 7 days a week from dawn to dusk. No overnight parking allowed without a permit. Park use is based upon a first come first use basis, park amenities can be reserved for a fee. Park Amenities - <u>1/2 mile</u> gravel walking path, Playground - Ages 5-12, Restrooms, Picnic Tables, Near Midtown Shopping District, Parking available to accommodate large events. A Special Event Permit is required for Community Events. Please submit the Special Event Application to the Parks and Recreation Department. Call 575-257-5030 for additional information or assistance. Weddings, Memorials, Fairs, Reunions, Car Shows, Concerts, Birthday Parties	
Pavilion 1-4 Hours	\$40
Pavilion 4+ Hours	\$75
Average	\$57.50
3.2 City of Alamogordo	
Bonito Lake (10 miles northwest of Ruidoso) - No electrical or water hookups for RV's at any campgrounds. Drinking water available, and restrooms. Port-a-potties available throughout the campgrounds.	
Location	Price
Westlake (Alamogordo Resident)	\$10.00
Senior Camping (60 & <u>Up</u>) (Alamogordo Resident)	\$8.00
Other Camping Areas (Alamogordo Resident)	\$8.00
Senior Camping (60 & <u>Up</u>) (Alamogordo Resident)	\$6.00
Westlake (Non-Resident)	\$14.00
Senior Camping (60 & <u>Up</u>) (Non-Resident)	\$11.00
Other Camping Areas (Non-Resident)	\$11.00
Senior Camping (60 & <u>Up</u>) (Non-Resident)	\$9.00
Dump Station	\$12.00

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