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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
MANUAL TRANSMITTAL SHEET

Release

2-296

Date 10/22/2007

Subject 2930 – RECREATION PERMITS AND FEES - (Public)

1. Explanation of Material Transmitted. This release transmits a revised Recreation Permit and Fee Manual. This Manual revision provides detailed policy, direction, and guidance for managing recreation fees and issuing and administering various recreation permits as a means of authorizing recreational uses of public lands and related waters under the administration of the Bureau of Land Management.

This revised Manual provides overall policy direction to supplement the recreation permit regulations set forth in 43 CFR 2930.

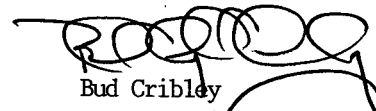
2. Reports required. None.
3. Material superseded. None.
4. Filing Information. File as directed below.

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2930 Rel. 2-292  
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### **.01 Purpose.**

This manual/policy statement and the H-2930-1 Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook provide the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) policy, direction, and guidance for establishing, modifying and managing recreation fees and for issuing and administering the various recreation permits as a means of authorizing recreational uses of public lands and related waters.

### **.02 Objectives.**

The objectives of the BLM's recreation permit and fee policy are to:

- A. Standardize administrative procedures for the issuance and management of recreation permits and to be as consistent as possible with other Federal agency policies.
- B. Use the best business practices to efficiently manage permits, recreation fees, concessions and commercial services in an accountable manner.
- C. Provide direction to supplement the recreation permit regulations set forth in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 2930.
- D. Establish a permit and fee program that supports the emphasis on resource-dependent recreation opportunities (or "niches"), while responding to demonstrated needs for recreation programs and facility development which protect resource values and public health and safety.
- E. Establish a permit and fee program that provides needed public services; satisfies recreation demand within allowable use levels; minimizes user conflicts; and protects and enhances public lands, recreation opportunities, and sustainable healthy ecosystems. This includes managing recreation programs and facilities in a manner that protects the resources, the public and their investment, and that also fosters pride of public ownership.
- F. Assure that recreational users assume an appropriate share of the cost of maintaining recreation programs and facilities and protecting the resources by establishing and assessing equitable fees at appropriate facilities and for certain uses of the public lands. Assure that the United States is provided a fair return for commercial recreational use of the public lands. Fees are not used to maximize revenue.

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- G. Issue recreation permits in an equitable manner for specific recreational uses of the public lands and related waters as a means to manage visitor use; provide for visitor health, safety, and enjoyment; minimize adverse resource impacts; and provide for private and commercial recreation use according to limits or allocations established through the BLM's planning system.
- H. Assure that recreation permits are specifically addressed in land use planning. This includes identifying both the types of recreation permits and activities that support the management objectives for each Recreation Management Area (RMA) and Recreation Management Zone (RMZ), as well as identifying recreational events and activities that would not be permitted. The foundation for recreation permitting decisions in Land Use Plans is a Benefits Based Management approach as outlined in the BLM's Unified Strategy to Implement "BLM's Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services" Workplan, 2007.

#### **.03 Authority.**

A. Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, Public Law (P.L.) 94-579 (43 United States Code (U.S.C.) 1701 et seq.)

B. Federal Lands Recreation and Enhancement Act of 2004 (REA), P.L. 108-447 (16 U.S.C. § 6804.)

C. Wilderness Act of 1964, P.L. 88-577 (16 U.S.C. 1131.)

D. National Trails System Act of 1968, as amended, P.L. 90-543 (16 U.S.C. 1241, et seq.)

E. National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, as amended, P.L. 90-542 (16 U.S.C. 1271-87, et seq.)

F. Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980, P.L. 96-487 (16 U.S.C. 3101, et seq.)

G. Oregon and California Grant Lands Act of 1937, P.L. 75-876 (43 U.S.C. 1181a, et seq.)

H. Sikes Act of 1974, P.L. 93-452 (16 U.S.C. 670, et seq.)

I. National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, P.L. 91-190 (42 U.S.C. 4321, et seq.)

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J. Title 36 CFR, Subpart 71 – Recreation Fees.

K. Title 43 CFR, Subpart 2930 – Special Recreation Permits, Other than on Developed Recreation Sites.

L. Office of Management and Budget Circular A-25 of 1993, Revised.

**.04 Responsibility.**

A. The Deputy Director (Operations), through the Assistant Director, Renewable Resources and Planning, and the Chief, Division of Recreation and Visitor Services, is responsible for:

1. Establishing policy, goals, objectives, and procedures for managing recreation permits and fees on public lands and related waters within the framework of public law and Departmental policy.

2. Providing direction, management, and leadership relating to issuing recreation permits and establishing fees for use of public lands and related waters. Communicating policy and management direction through the issuance and update of Manuals, Handbooks, Instruction Memoranda, and provide training opportunities for Field personnel through the National Training Center.

3. Handling requests for waivers or to deviate from established policy and procedures.

4. Identifying, addressing, and reconciling interrelationships, policy issues, and conflicts between the recreation permit and fee program and other related programs.

5. Maintaining liaison with other Government agencies, permittees, concessionaires, user groups, and organizations concerned with recreation permits and fees on the public lands and related waters.

6. Implementing a recreation permit and fee policy that is consistent with the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA).

B. The State Directors are responsible for:

1. Implementing policy and providing statewide program coordination and guidance for managing recreation permits and fees on the public lands and related waters.

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2. Reviewing, evaluating, and ensuring accomplishment of approved Annual Work Plan items related to recreation permits and fees, planning, allocation, and recreation permit administration.
3. Providing program development and technical assistance to Field Offices to ensure recreation permit and fee program administration is accomplished.
4. Maintaining liaison with other Government agencies, permittees, concessionaires, user groups, and organizations concerned with recreation permits and fees in their respective States.
5. Implementing a recreation permit and fee policy that is consistent with Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA).

C. The District/Field Managers are responsible for:

1. Providing for the appropriate consideration of recreation permits and fees within the Resource Management Planning (RMP) process, including the establishment of special areas where permits may be required to accomplish resource management objectives.
2. Managing, monitoring, evaluating, and ensuring accomplishment of the approved Annual Work Plan items related to coordinating and guiding the recreation permit and fee program.
3. Ensuring that individuals responsible for issuing recreation permits and collecting fees receive appropriate training.
4. Developing, implementing, and monitoring actions related to recreation permits and fees.
5. Maintaining liaison with other Government agencies, permittees, concessionaires, user groups, and organizations concerned with recreation fees and permit administration in the Field Office.
6. Implementing the recreation permit and fee policy, including properly collecting fees, determining estimated permit processing costs, and pursuing cost recovery.
7. Implementing a recreation permit and fee policy that is consistent with the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA).

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**.05 References.**

- A. BLM Manual 1372 - Collections
- B. BLM Manual 1384 - Accountable Officers & Agents
- C. BLM Collections Reference Guide, January, 2003.
- D. BLM Manual 1601 – Land Use Planning.
- E. BLM Manual 2920 – Leases, Permits, and Easements.
- F. BLM Manual 8300 – Recreation Management.
- G. BLM Manual 8323 – Recreation Project Planning.
- H. BLM Handbook H-2930-1 – Recreation Permit and Fee Administration.
- I. The Limits of Acceptable Change, United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, General Technical Report INT – 176, 1985.
- J. Part 516, Departmental Manual, Chapter 6, Appendix 5 – Categorical Exclusion Review.
- K. Visitor Capacity on Public Lands and Waters, Making Better Decisions, The National Recreation and Park Association, 2002.
- L. The BLM’s Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services Workplan (Purple Book), May 2003.
- M. A Unified Strategy to Implement “The BLM’s Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services” Workplan (Purple Book), January 2007.
- N. Estimating Future Recreation Demand: A Decision Guide for the Practitioner, U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, January, 2007.
- O. U.S. Department of the Interior’s GPRA Strategic Plan Fiscal Year 2007-2012.

**.06 Policy.**

The BLM’s recreation permit and fee policy is described below.

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### A. Recreation Permits.

Under the authority of Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA), the BLM uses the recreation permitting system to satisfy recreational demand within allowable use levels in an equitable, safe, and enjoyable manner while minimizing adverse resource impacts and user conflicts. The BLM recreation permits authorize the permittees' use of public lands and/or related waters for specified purposes. The use of public lands and/or related waters is a privilege subject to the terms and conditions of the permits. The BLM recreation permits are the basis for BLM's recreation fee program and are used to implement REA's Standard Amenity, Expanded Amenity, and Special Recreation Permit Fees.

1. Management. Recreation permits are managed consistent with the management objectives determined in Resource Management Plans (RMPs), Recreation Area Management Plans (RAMPs), or in their absence, through the recreation management objectives resulting from analysis of resources and visitor use for each area. Recreation permits are a tool for managing recreation use; reducing user conflicts; protecting natural and cultural resources; informing users; gathering use information; and obtaining a fair return for commercial and certain other uses of public land.

a. Visitor Capacity. As use in a recreation area increases, the authorized officer may act to determine the desired level of use or the visitor capacity. When necessary, visitor capacities are set in accordance with decisions in the management plan for each area or, in the absence of management plans, through recreation management objectives resulting from analysis of resources and visitor use for each area.

If the use level in an area exceeds the visitor capacity, measures must be taken to remedy the problem. Consideration should first be given to using indirect visitor and resource management techniques such as controlling public land access, interpretive efforts to promote environmental awareness and protection, providing extra protection for fragile resources, encouraging voluntary scheduling of commercial trips, or using other mitigating measures to resolve user conflicts.

When indirect management techniques are insufficient it may be necessary to use direct management methods such as allocating use among users or denying permits. Under these direct management methods, use opportunities are allotted and rationed among competing types of uses. This allocation consists of imposing limits on users who participate in similar types of recreation activities. These limits may affect: 1) the overall number of individuals who receive permits; 2) the number of groups or parties who receive permits; 3) the number of permitted individuals per group; 4) the number of permitted users by sector (e.g., commercial, competitive, or individual/group use); and 5) the duration of permitted use.

The BLM's allocation goals are to maximize opportunities, experiences, and allowable uses within established objectives and to minimize resource impacts and user conflicts. Allocation



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methods must be feasible to implement, defensible to users, and consistent with legal and budgetary constraints. They also must be responsive to changes in demand and use, and must, to the greatest extent possible, be fair and equitable.

b. Planning. Successful recreation permitting for activities on the public lands and related waters begins with the planning process. In this context, recreation permitting is a means to implement recreation management plan objectives. Issuance of a recreation permit must serve the public interest and support the goals and objectives of land use plans. The RMP process must be used to identify and quantify the areas that have restrictions on users, such as numbers of permitted users, season of permitted use, location, group size, activity type, or modes of transportation. At a minimum, areas should be identified as sites designated specifically for certain activities. The details to implement the decisions in the RMP are established in a site specific RAMP. The RAMP identifies the specific recreation prescriptions or actions to implement the decisions made in the RMP. These decisions need to be made with public scrutiny and involvement. Land use allocation decisions made through the planning process with public involvement are definitive and require little to no additional scrutiny or analysis.

c. Waiver of Permits and Fees for Volunteer Work. The BLM does not waive recreation permit or fee requirements in exchange for volunteer work. Instead, the BLM will recognize significant volunteer contributions through the BLM Volunteer Recognition program. Local managers may reward individual or group volunteer work with a local or regional recreation pass or with the “America the Beautiful – National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass – Volunteer Pass” (Interagency Volunteer Pass). The Interagency Volunteer Pass can only be awarded to volunteers providing 500 cumulative service hours.

d. Permitted Use by Other Programs. If a use authorized by another program has a commercial recreation component (e.g. paleontology or archaeology tour, excavation, or recreational mining) an SRP will be required in addition to the program permit. Likewise, use under an SRP does not obviate the need to either pay standard or enhanced amenity fees at RUP fee sites or to pay individual Special Area Fees.

2. Permit Types. The BLM manages the following two types of recreation permits:

a. Recreation Use Permits (RUPs). RUPs are issued for the short-term recreational use of specialized sites, facilities, equipment, or services furnished at Federal expense. The BLM most often uses RUPs to authorize individual and group recreational use of recreation facilities, commonly known as “fee sites” (such as campgrounds). BLM uses RUPs to implement REA’s Standard and Expanded Amenity Fees (as discussed in Section .06.B.3).

b. Special Recreation Permits (SRPs). SRPs are issued to authorize specified and often time-restricted recreational uses of the public lands and related waters. The

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BLM issues SRPs to manage visitor use; to protect natural and cultural resources; to achieve the goals and objectives of Field Office recreation program as outlined in a land use plan; and to authorize specific types of recreational activities. BLM uses SRPs to implement REA's Special Recreation Permit Fees. There are five types of activities for which SRPs are required: commercial use, competitive use, vending, special area use, and organized group activity and event use (as described in BLM Handbook H-2930-1). The following limitations and requirements apply to SRPs:

i. Cost Recovery. The cost recovery of direct and indirect costs, excluding management overhead, related to an SRP will be charged when it is determined that a proposal will take more than 50 hours of BLM staff time. Cost recovery may apply to Federal activities that convey special benefits to recipients beyond those accruing to the general public. The purpose of cost recovery is to have individuals or groups that are clearly the beneficiary of an activity on public lands shoulder the costs associated with providing, administering, and monitoring that activity or event. Processing cost recovery projects should not occur until sufficient funds are on deposit in the cost recovery account. Procedures are described in the H-2930-1 Handbook.

ii. Co-sponsored Events. BLM will co-sponsor an event only when there is both a clear benefit to the BLM public lands and a direct association to accomplishing a specific management objective or purpose developed through the BLM's land use planning process described in the BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1). When the BLM co-sponsors an event, the requirement for an SRP and associated fees is waived. The BLM will not waive fees for educational, therapeutic, or fundraising events if the activity or event meets the conditions and requirements for an SRP.

iii. Statewide Permits. The BLM will not issue blanket statewide SRPs for commercial, competitive, or organized group activities or events held on BLM public lands. Permitted recreation activities involving more than one jurisdiction (i.e., two or more BLM offices, other agency lands, private lands, etc.) may require the development of joint permits.

iv. County Roads and County Claimed Highways. Any highway claimed under R.S. 2477 that has not been adjudicated or issued to another entity through a right-of-way (ROW), is considered BLM public lands. Any direct or indirect use of the BLM public lands that meets the definition of commercial use and has an element of concern for public health or safety, has the potential for resource damage, or requires monitoring or management must have a commercial SRP (e.g. sightseeing, jeep tours, bird watching, charity fund-raising events, etc). Events and activities that occur entirely on county roads that cross BLM lands are generally not subject to an SRP, but might be subject to the SRP requirement if there is a concern for

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significant resource damage, public health and safety or other public land management issues. Most rights-of-way, including county roads and adjudicated RS-2477 highways are nonexclusive. The BLM may permit any other activity not provided for in the ROW grant. BLM may also impose permit requirements on county and state roads when necessary to protect public health and safety or to protect the public lands and resources..

v. Re-enactments. Historical re-enactments are leisure activities and are recreational in nature. As such, these events may require an SRP.

3. Paperwork Reduction. Regarding recreation permit forms, the BLM conforms to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.) by disclosing to the public the estimated burden hours needed to comply with the information collection requirements of 43 CFR 4100; why the information is being collected; and for what purpose the information will be used. This information is provided on each form that the BLM requires the public to complete.

### B. Recreation Fees – General.

Recreation fees are used to provide needed public services while protecting and enhancing public lands and recreation opportunities. Fees should be balanced and affordable for all members of the public, should not be an impediment to visiting public lands, and should not be used as a means to affect the allocation of recreation opportunities. However, those persons actively using recreation opportunities should make a greater, but reasonable, contribution to protect and enhance those opportunities than those who do not use these opportunities.

The BLM collects recreation fees at all recreation sites which meet fee collection guidelines as provided for in REA. The collection of recreation fees supports the Department of the Interior's 2007-2012 Strategic Plan Performance Goal "To Provide for and Receive Fair Value in Recreation" and conforms to the BLM's "Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services" strategic plan. Fee programs should support protection of natural resources, provide for public health and safety, and facilitate access to public lands.

Recreation fees are one part of a comprehensive funding strategy to support recreation sites and services. Other elements of the funding strategy include appropriated funding (as a primary funding source), volunteer assistance, interagency cooperation, grants, partnerships with the private sector, commercial operations, and leveraged funding. Fees are not used to maximize revenue.

1. Recreation Fee Logo. The BLM recreation fee logo is to be incorporated into all new and existing signs, brochures, maps, collaborative fee program materials, and other materials dealing with the recreation fee program.

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2. Establishing New Recreation Fee Areas and Sites and Developing or Changing Recreation Fees. The process to establish a new fee area or site and to develop or change recreation fees includes:

a. Providing an opportunity for the public to participate in developing or changing a recreation fee established under REA.

b. Reviewing recreation areas and sites to identify those areas and sites that can be designated as fee areas or sites and analyzing the potential for permits and/or fees at those areas and sites.

c. Producing a comprehensive business and communication plan that thoroughly discusses and explains how fees are consistent with the criteria set forth in REA (Section 3(b) (1-6) and Section 3(c)), "Basis for Recreation Fees".

d. Publishing a notice of a new recreation fee or change to an existing recreation fee in local newspapers and publications located near the area or site at which the recreation fee would be established or changed.

e. Conducting a periodic fee comparability review for recreation fee areas, sites and services except in cases where the fee is based on cost recovery considerations.

f. Assuring accountability for all money collected at recreation areas and sites.

g. Publishing a notice in the *Federal Register* of the proposed establishment of a new recreation fee site or area at least six months before the proposal takes affect.

h. Providing Recreation Resource Advisory Committees (RRACs) or Resource Advisory Councils (RACs) an opportunity to review and make recommendations on certain agency fee proposals (see below).

3. Recreation Resource Advisory Committees (RRACs) and Resource Advisory Councils (RACs) to Review Fee Proposals.

a. As required by REA, the BLM provides an opportunity for either: 1) a Recreation Resource Advisory Committees (RRAC); or 2) an existing Resource Advisory Council (RAC) acting as an RRAC to review and make recommendations on proposed BLM recreation fee adjustments and new fees and fee sites/areas. This includes RUPs issued for standard and expanded amenity fees and individual SRPs authorizing use of special designated areas. The RRAC or RAC may make recommendations on these fee proposals. The BLM and

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the USDA Forest Service, as authorized by an Interagency Agreement, are using the same RRAC or RAC to review fee proposals within a state or region.

b. The BLM is not required to consult with either a RRAC or RAC on:

i. Proposed recreation fee adjustments and proposed new fees and fee sites/areas within states where the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Governor of the affected state, has determined that sufficient interest does not exist to use a RRAC or RAC.

ii. Fee proposals and cost recovery for commercial, competitive, and organized group Special Recreation Permits, including application, assigned sites and exclusive use fees.

iii. Adding units (such as camp sites) to an existing fee site/area where the fee is unchanged.

iv. Actions that do not affect the fee paid by the public, such as changing the location or method of collection, or changing accounting codes or procedures.

v. Fees and administrative charges to the public for using the National Recreation Reservation Service (NRRS), a federal interagency reservation service for outdoor recreation facilities and activities.

vi. Fees and administrative charges (including reservations and application fees) to the public for processing and issuing individual SRPs and RUPs.

c. When the RRAC/RAC makes a recommendation, the following options exist:

i. Implement the proposal when the recommendation matches or affirms the proposal.

ii. Where modifications are recommended, the State Director, or designee, may modify the proposal to match the recommendation and then implement the proposal.

iii. When the recommendation does not affirm the proposal, the State Director, or designee, must determine if the Field Office would still like to move forward with the original proposal. If the State Director wishes to pursue the original proposal, the National Recreation and Visitor Services Division will coordinate with the Field and DOI to

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issue the REA-required written notification to Congress for rejecting the RRAC/RAC recommendation.

d. If the RRAC/RAC declines to make a recommendation, the BLM may proceed to implement the fee as proposed.

4. RUP Fee Categories. Public lands recreation areas, sites and services provide an array of benefits and amenities ranging from collective societal good to personal use. This forms a spectrum of benefits for the provision of visitor services. The BLM recognizes the following three RUP fee categories:

a. Category 1 - Free Sites and Services. This category reflects the broad societal benefits of providing general taxpayer-supported recreational opportunities and the principle that a portion of all BLM public lands should be available free of charge to all members of the public. Under Category 1, the BLM will not charge a fee for the following:

- i. General access to BLM Public Lands.
- ii. Drive-through, walk or hike-through, horseback ride-through, or float-through only, without using the facilities and services unless specifically authorized. This excludes Special Areas designated through the land use planning process, where SRPs are issued to authorize special uses of the public lands (for example, outfitting or guiding permits, and individual use of Special Areas).
- iii. Parking that does not immediately support and/or adjoin a fee site or area, undesignated parking or picnicking along roadsides.
- iv. Overlooks, scenic pullouts, or interpretive waysides.
- v. Dispersed areas where the BLM makes little or no expenditures to provide facilities or services;
- vi. Information offices and small centers that provide general area information, regulations, orientation, and limited services and/or interpretive exhibits. This does not include BLM's larger Interpretive or Visitor Centers.
- vii. Camping at undeveloped sites that do not provide REA's minimum number of facilities and services listed under Category 3- Expanded Amenity Recreation Sites and Services Fees below.
- viii. Access by any person who is authorized to have access for hunting or fishing privileges under a specific provision of law or treaty.

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ix. Providing special attention or extra services necessary to meet the individual needs of the persons with disabilities.

b. Category 2 - Standard Amenity Recreation Sites and Services Fee. This category reflects a mix of societal and personal benefits, where it is appropriate for users to share in some of the costs. The decision on whether or not to charge a standard amenity fee for sites or services meeting REA criteria is based on a business plan analysis, which includes local considerations.

Fees for standard amenity recreation sites and services are typically collected either on site or through a reservation system. Holders of a valid “America the Beautiful – the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass” (Interagency Pass) (Annual, Volunteer, Senior or Access) as described in Section .06.C below are exempt from the payment of standard amenity fees. Standard amenity fees may be charged for sites and services that meet one of the following criteria. The site or area is:

i. A designated National Conservation Area or National Volcanic Monument.

ii. A destination visitor or interpretive center that provides a broad range of interpretive services, programs, and media.

iii. A site or area that provides significant opportunities for outdoor recreation; has substantial Federal investments; allows for efficient fee collection; and requires intensive management to enhance visitor experiences, address environmental needs and manage conflicting uses. The area must contain all of the following 6 amenities:

- 1) Designated developed parking;
- 2) Permanent toilet facility;
- 3) Permanent trash receptacle;
- 4) Interpretive sign, exhibit, or kiosk;
- 5) Picnic tables; and
- 6) Security services.

Prohibitions: BLM will not charge a standard amenity fee for 1) persons under 16 years of age; 2) outings conducted for noncommercial educational purposes by schools or bona fide academic institutions; and 3) any person engaged in a non-recreational activity authorized under a valid permit issued under any other Act, including a valid grazing permit.

c. Category 3 - Expanded Amenity Recreation Sites and Services Fees. This category includes sites and services that provide direct benefits primarily to individuals or groups rather than to society as a whole. The individual or group receiving a direct service or

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using a specialized facility should bear a greater share of the direct costs of providing the service or facility.

Expanded amenity fees cover specialized outdoor recreation sites and services. The decision on whether a standard or expanded amenity fee applies at sites that could fall into category 2 or 3 must account for local considerations, including fees charged at nearby sites that are similar in nature, value for fee paid, and degree of development. Expanded amenity recreation sites and services include the following:

i. Developed campgrounds where a majority (five of nine) of the following amenities is provided:

- 1) Tent or trailer spaces;
- 2) Picnic tables;
- 3) Drinking water;
- 4) Access road;
- 5) Refuse containers (refer to trash receptacle);
- 6) Toilet facilities;
- 7) Fee collection by an employee or agent of the BLM;
- 8) Reasonable visitor protection; and
- 9) Simple devices for containing a campfire (if campfires

are permitted in the campground).

ii. Highly developed boat launches with specialized facilities or services such as mechanical or hydraulic boat lifts or facilities, multi-lane paved ramps, paved parking, refuse containers, restrooms and other improvements such as boarding floats or docks, loading ramps, fish cleaning stations. In addition to the facilities identified, the following contribute to defining “highly-developed boat launches:” ramp or parking lighting, security services, changing rooms, mooring floats, picnic area, or playground areas.

iii. Developed swimming or hot spring sites with at least a majority (four of seven) of the following amenities:

- 1) Bathhouse with plumbing (showers and/or flush toilets);
- 2) Refuse containers;
- 3) Picnic areas;
- 4) Paved parking;
- 5) Attendants, including lifeguards;
- 6) Floats encompassing the swimming area; and
- 7) Swimming decks.



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iv. Rental of cabins, boats, stock animals, lookout towers, historic structures, trail shelters, audio tour devices, portable sanitation devices, binoculars or other equipment.

v. Group day-use sites.

vi. Group overnight sites.

vii. Use of hookups for electricity, cable or sewer.

viii. Use of sanitary dump stations.

ix. Participation in an enhanced interpretive program such as guided tours, movies, and seminars.

x. Use of reservation services..

xi. Use of transportation services.

xii. Use of areas where emergency medical or first-aid services are administered from facilities staffed by public employees under a contract or reciprocal agreement with the Federal Government.

### 5. SRP Fees.

REA authorizes the charging of a fee with the issuance of a Special Recreation Permit. Detailed direction concerning BLM SRP fees is found in BLM Handbook H-2930-1. The following provisions apply:

a. The BLM Director establishes all fees associated with commercial use, competitive use, and organized group activities or events. The BLM minimum fees for SRPs are adjusted every three years based on the gross National Product Implicit Price Deflator Index and published in the Federal Register.

b. State Directors may establish application fees for SRPs and/or minimum fees that are greater than the Director's Fee Schedule. Such higher minimum fee rates shall be clearly outlined in site/area business plans.

c. State Directors establish the fees associated with individual use of Special Areas. Proposed individual use SRP fees are published in the Federal Register six months before the fee is established. These fees may be adjusted periodically to reflect changes in costs and to ensure a fair return for the use of public lands.

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d. A fee discount for time off public lands is appropriate for commercial, competitive and organized group events. The key to successfully determine the time off public lands is to agree with the permittee, prior to issuing the permit, when and where the trip or event starts and ends on public lands. In no case may the discounted SRP fee be less than the minimum SRP fee.

6. Recreation Fee Payment and Revenue Expenditure Guidelines.

a. Fee revenues will not be used to supplant normal appropriations, so that areas and sites that collect fees will not have fee revenues offset by reductions in appropriations or a redirection of base funds.

b. Decisions to either charge or not charge a use fee will be based upon the criteria set forth in REA (Section 803(b)) including:

i. The amount of the recreation fees shall be commensurate with the benefits and services provided to the visitor.

ii. The aggregate effect of recreation fees on recreation users and recreation service providers.

iii. Comparable fees charged elsewhere and by other public agencies and by nearby private sector operators.

iv. Public policy or management objectives served by the recreation fee.

v. Input from the appropriate RRAC when applicable.

vi. Other appropriate factors or criteria.

c. On a regional basis, the BLM will provide a range of outdoor recreation opportunities including areas or times where there is no fee charged for participating in recreational activities.

d. Recreation fee revenues will be retained for use at the recreation site where they are collected and will be used to provide benefits visible to and desired by visitors.

e. The BLM's goal is to use 100 percent of the fee revenues at the site of collection providing they can be used efficiently and effectively. Revenues are to be used: first, at the site of collection; second, to establish new fee sites within the Field Office of collection; and third, in the state where fees are collected to offset existing and new fee site costs.

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f. Business plans are to be used in determining the appropriateness and level of fees. Plans will include, but not be limited to, the level and type of development; cost and security of collection; type, season, duration, and intensity of visitor use; compliance and enforcement capability; partnerships; stakeholder input; impacts to underserved communities and local businesses; private sector alternatives; and a communication and marketing plan.

g. BLM Field and District Offices will involve the public in decisions about fee project design and how the fee money will be invested.

h. BLM will monitor the recreation fee program's fiscal integrity, efficiency, adherence to national policy, and revenue distribution.

i. BLM will regularly evaluate the recreation fee program, including conducting periodic, independent, formal evaluations of the fee program in individual State and Field Offices.

j. Reports will be provided to the public through annual feedback on revenue collected, expenditures, projects completed, and priority projects for the following fiscal year. Reporting will be in the form of an accountability statement posted at the recreation site of revenue collection. Reporting can also include brochures, newspaper articles, radio spots, and oral presentations.

#### **C, Concessions**

Recreation concession leases are long-term authorizations used for commercial entities to possess and use public lands to provide recreational visitor services typically with a requirement for significant capital investment to ensure highly developed recreational facilities and services are provided.

Consistent with the Department of Interior Concession Management Policy, BLM will ensure that a fair return to the government is realized from concessionaire operated activities. Fees for recreation concessions are based on fair market value, including land use rental, a recreation use fee for use of public lands and facilities, and cost reimbursement for administrative costs. Guidance for land use rental and cost reimbursement may be found at 43 CFR 2920, while recreation use fee guidance can be found in 43CFR 2930.

#### **D. “America The Beautiful – The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass”.**

As authorized by REA, the “America the Beautiful – the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass” (Interagency Pass) provides the public with access to sites and areas where the BLM charges standard amenity fees. There are four types of interagency passes: the Annual, Senior, Access, and Volunteer passes. All four passes grant the holder free admission to sites where the BLM charges standard amenity fees. In addition to covering standard amenity

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fees, the Senior and Access passes entitle the holder to a 50% discount on expanded amenity fees. Passes are never applied toward SRP fees.

The Standard Operating Procedures for the Interagency Pass program govern administration of the “America the Beautiful – the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass.” All fees from the Interagency Pass program are to be used to maintain and improve the recreation sites and services in the area of collection.

### E. Recreation Fee Collections

#### 1. General:

a. Recreation fee collections shall be conducted in accordance with established BLM policy set forth in BLM Manuals 1372 and 1384 and the BLM Collections Reference Guide.

b. Fee payment must be designed and implemented for the visitor’s convenience; should be consistent and similar among agencies and private providers; and provide convenient payment options (e.g., credit cards, Internet, or off-site sales) where appropriate.

#### 2. Recreation Sites:

a. Wherever fees are collected, notification should be posted requiring payment in U.S. currency.

b. Replaceable locked box fee tubes must be used at fee stations. Otherwise, when collections are picked up from recreation sites, two people must be present. Once the collections are placed in a locking bag or box, only one person needs to transport the funds to the office. No one should have sole access to funds.

c. Money must be transmitted in a locked bag or locked box. Receipts, log or register tape from direct collections from the public must be included with the money. Funds must be counted in the office by two people.

d. In the field, every effort should be made to handle money as little as possible. This can be accomplished by using some or all of the following methods:

i. Use of replaceable locked box fee tubes.

ii. Collection of permit fees through the mail.

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- iii. Acceptance of payment by credit cards, such as the automated pay stations.
- iv. Collection of permit fees through the Internet.
- e. Where available, law enforcement personnel should be used to transport funds to the office. (Two people must be present when funds are removed unless replaceable locked boxes are used.)
- f. When either transporting funds from the recreation site or otherwise handling funds, the following procedures should be observed, whenever possible, to protect employees and deter robbery:
  - i. Do not transport funds after dark.
  - ii. Avoid establishing a routine by varying the transportation route, day, and time of pick up.
  - ii. Develop radio check-in policies, providing such information as estimated time of arrival, time en route, and time of return..
  - iii. Work with law enforcement personnel for suggestions to maximize safety.
  - iv. If confronted by a robber, surrender the money as demanded.
  - v. Do not confiscate a credit card regardless of circumstances.
- g. BLM funds must be kept separate from all personal and non-Federal funds in an office. It is important not to mix personal and government funds, make change out of fee envelopes, or mix association funds with BLM funds.
- h. The functions of receiving/reconciliation, receipting, and depositing must be kept separate and performed by different employees to ensure proper separation of duties. One person may perform two of the three functions. If an employee must perform all three, then an independent review (audit) must take place for each deposit. Otherwise, a review should take place periodically (at least every six months). Deposits must be performed by BLM employees.

3. Reconciliations:

- a. At staffed recreation sites and areas, including entrance stations, fee booths, kiosks and visitor centers, reconciliations must be performed on a daily basis by balancing collections to receipts. This process entails:

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i. Preparing a calculator tape of the remittances (cash, checks, and credit cards), and

ii. Balancing the remittances to the log, register tape or receipts.

b. At all un-staffed sites where standard and expanded amenity fees (i.e. Recreation Use Permits) are collected using a self registration and fee payment system, the Recreation Fee Permit Envelope (B 1370-036) should be used. The Recreation Fee Permit Envelope may also be used at staffed sites. Reconciliation requirements include:

i. Two people must open envelopes, count remittances, and document collections on the Recreation Fee Collection Affidavit.

ii. The Affidavit information must be entered into the Collection Billing System (CBS).

iii. A copy of the Affidavit and the envelopes should be returned to the Recreation Specialist.

iv. There is no financial requirement to keep the envelopes for collection records.

c. Change Making Fund. Funds used to make change must be kept separate from all recreation fee collections.

#### 4. Deposits:

Refer to the BLM Collections Reference Guide for deposit procedures.

#### 5. Loss of Funds:

Loss of funds must be reported immediately to both the Field Manager and law enforcement officials having jurisdiction over the site/area where the loss occurred. Procedures for loss of funds and employee relief are described in BLM Manual BLM Manual 1384 - Accountable Officers & Agents.

#### 6. Refunds:

a. Application and/or minimum annual permit fees are not refundable.

b. RUP fees may be refunded when a fee site is closed to public use after fees have been paid.

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c. For multi-year commercial permits, over-payment of fees will be applied to the following year's use. Refunds should be granted for overpayment of commercial fees for single-year or one-time permits.

d. Commercial use fees and SRP fees for vending, competitive use, and organized group event use may be refunded less the direct cost of processing the permit, if the estimated use is less than calculated or the event or activity is canceled. If the event or activity is in a fully allocated area, and the cancellation occurs without sufficient time for the authorized officer to reallocate the use, the fees will not be refundable. The standard for a refund in this case is making the determination of whether or not the permittee notified the BLM Field Office issuing the permit in sufficient time for the use to be reallocated regardless of whether or not it actually was reallocated. This determination of what constitutes sufficient time shall be established by the local Field Office issuing the permit.

e. Refunds are not made for Special Area permits issued to individuals in allocated use areas except when BLM actions prevent the permittee's use of the permit. Credit towards future use may be authorized where use was canceled in sufficient time to reallocate it to others.

f. When cost recovery is charged, all costs incurred up to the time of cancellation will not be refundable.

#### **.07 File and Records Maintenance.**

Establish and maintain case files in accordance with BLM Manual Section 1274. See BLM Manual Section 1271 for case file disposition.

#### **.08 Relationships to Other Planning Efforts.**

A. Resource Management Planning. The administration and issuance of recreation permits and establishment of recreation fees for activities on public lands and related waters is an integral part of the resource management planning process. Allocation and use of public land and related waters prescribed within the resource management planning process must quantify, as determined necessary, the specific carrying capacity and use allocation levels for resources related to recreation use. Determination of carrying capacities, allowable levels of use, allocation methodologies, and management objectives should be specified for a particular region, area, or resource within either the RMP or the subsequent activity-level plan with the appropriate level of NEPA analysis.

The RMP process also requires identifying special recreation management areas (SRMAs). SRMAs are divided into discrete recreation management zones (RMZs) that produce a set of recreation opportunities and facilitate the attainment of different experience and benefit

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outcomes (to individuals, households and communities, economies, and the environment). Management of recreation fees and permits should incorporate the Benefits Based Management (BBM) approach required for all recreation and visitor services programs and activities.

B. Recreation Activity Plans. Activity plans for recreation areas are completed as necessary to implement the decisions in the RMP. Specific recreation activity plans are subdivided into two levels as follows:

1. Recreation Area Management Plans (RAMPs). RAMPs identify the specific recreation management actions to be taken to implement the allocation decisions made in the RMP, including specific recreation permitting decisions. RAMPs precede project plans and provide specific project parameters to guide the development of project plans.

2. Project Plans. Recreation project plans document proposed user requirements, profiles, and design parameters to ensure that final project designs meet specified recreation management objectives. Project Plans should include consideration of a proposed project's ramifications for permitting and fees.

C. Multi-resource Activity Plans. One multi-resource activity plan for a management area is preferable to many individual resource activity plans for the same area. Incorporation of recreation permit concerns and related participation in multi-resource activity planning efforts is encouraged.

D. Program Relationships. Most of the Bureau's resource programs are highly interdependent, and require coordinated resource management and efficient use of personnel. This requires managers and recreation program staff to initiate and pursue continued coordination with other resource programs, supporting program staffs, and other agencies involved in issuing recreation permits. Familiarity with these relationships and with other resource programs enables personnel assigned with recreation permit program responsibilities to help managers in understanding the ramifications of resource allocation and other management decisions in providing permitted opportunities on public lands and related waters. Similarly, activity planning efforts must ensure that recreation management goals as set forth in the RMP are not adversely affected by other program actions.