

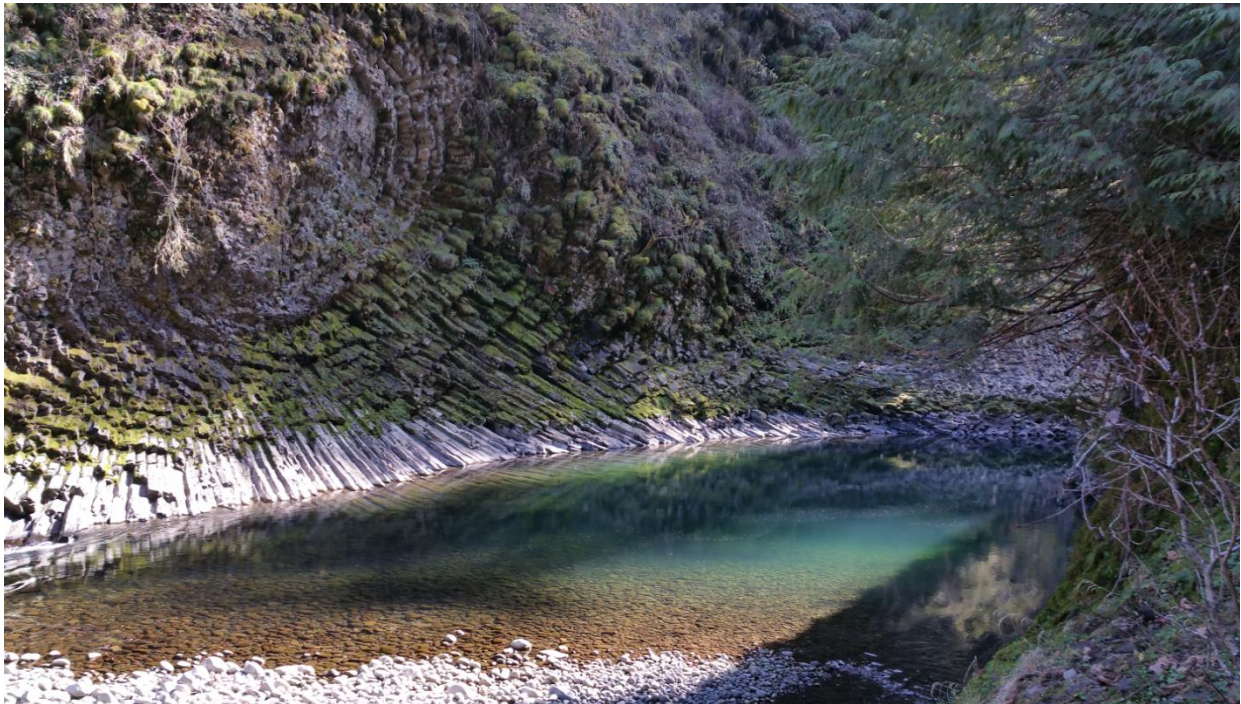
August 2017



**Bureau of Land Management  
Northwest Oregon District Office**

---

# **Molalla River Corridor Recreation Area Business Plan**



**Bureau of Land Management  
Northwest Oregon District Office  
1717 Fabry Road  
Salem, Oregon 97306  
(503) 375-5646**

**Developed By:**

Dan Davis, Outdoor Recreation Planner  
Northwest Oregon District BLM  
1717 Fabry Road, Salem, OR 97306  
(503) 315-5935  
E-Mail: [ddavis@blm.gov](mailto:ddavis@blm.gov)

**Signatures for Approving Business Plan**

Reviewed By:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Traci Meredith, Northwest Oregon District Supervisory Recreation Planner

8/23/17  
Date

Recommended By:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jose Linares, Northwest Oregon District Manager

8/23/17  
Date

Approved By:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathy Stangl, Deputy State Director for Resources

8/28/17  
Date

## **Executive Summary**

This business plan was prepared pursuant to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) of December 2004 (P.L. 108-447, as amended), and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recreation fee program policy and manual direction. REA provides the BLM current authority to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees at Federal recreational lands and waters. Section 804 of REA 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.**

The fee analysis portion of this business plan was based on a comparative review of fees charged elsewhere and by other public agencies within the geographic area of the Molalla River Corridor Recreation Area that provide similar services. Based on the comparative fee analysis, this business plan proposes two new day-use and camping fees for the day use areas and campgrounds within the Molalla River Corridor Recreation Area.

The **Molalla River Corridor Recreation Area** is located in Clackamas County, Oregon approximately 35 miles east of Woodburn and south of the town of Molalla. The recreation area spans 13.7 miles of river, which includes dispersed day-use sites, two campgrounds, a group campsite and two day-use trailhead facilities. Future development calls for the creation of four day-use sites, an additional campground that is focused on RVs and camp trailers and the possibility for another campground that focuses on equestrian use.

The proposed recreation fee sites include 22 individual tent campsites, 14 RV/Camper trailer campsites, and three double tent campsites designed for twice as many people. Day-use activity currently takes place in the developed campgrounds; people will generally park in the campground parking and use the developed amenities for day-use activities. Establishing a day-use fee will encourage visitors to utilize the fee free developed day-use sites along the corridor instead of the developed campgrounds. Amenities include paved or surfaced access and parking, picnic tables, barbecues and fire pits, potable water, interpretive or informational kiosks, garbage cans, and toilet facilities that access many recreation opportunities.

**Table 1: Existing Fees and Proposed Fee Changes**

Standard Amenity	Existing Fees	Proposed Fees
Day-Use	<b>None</b>	\$5
Annual Day-Use Pass <sup>1</sup>		\$30
Expanded Amenity		Proposed Fees
Individual Tent Campsite		\$15
Double Tent Campsite		\$30
Group Campsite		\$50 (up to 20 people) \$2.50 for each additional person
RV/Trailer Campsite (future development)		\$20
Extra Vehicle		\$5

## **Introduction**

### **Regulatory Framework**

This business plan was prepared pursuant to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) of December 2004 (P.L. 108-447, as amended), 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). REA provides the BLM current authority to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees at Federal recreational lands and waters. REA 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 REA, a Standard Amenity fee and an Expanded Amenity fee may be charged for the use of certain facilities or services, which include developed day-use sites and campgrounds. The developed recreational sites must meet the criteria that are defined below. These fees are usually implemented through the issuance of a recreation use permit (RUP), or through a specific annual pass. BLM policy requires that revenue from RUPs be deposited into a separate account (pg. 2-3 of H-2930-1). Doing so allows the BLM to more readily track and report collections; and ensures that RUP revenue is spent at or near the site of collection. This business plan and these fee sites are associated with the **Molalla River Corridor Fee Project Area**.

Definitions of Standard and Expanded Amenities taken from Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) of December 2004 (P.L. 108-447, as amended), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recreation fee program policy and manual (Manual 2930 – Recreation Permits and Fees) for the area covered under this business plan:

- **Standard Amenity Recreation Fees** cover outdoor recreation areas that provides significant opportunities for outdoor recreation; has substantial Federal investments;

---

<sup>1</sup> The proposed revision of the annual day-use pass is covered in a separate business plan for the Northwest Oregon BLM Pass which is designed to cover multiple recreation sites, but is shown for informational purposes only as one of the fee types for the Molalla River Corridor Recreation Sites.

where fees can be effectively collected, and that has all of the following amenities: (1) designated developed parking, (2) a permanent toilet facility, (3) a permanent trash receptacle, (4) interpretive sign, exhibit, or kiosk, (5) picnic tables, (6) and security services (Sec. 803.(f)(4)(D) of REA).

- **Expanded Amenity Recreation Fees** cover specialized outdoor recreation sites and services including but not limited to developed campgrounds with at least a majority of the following amenities: (1) tent or trailer spaces, (2) picnic tables, (3) drinking water, (4) access roads, (5) fee collection by an employee or agent of the BLM, (6) reasonable visitor protection, (7) refuse containers, (8) toilet facilities, (9) simple devices for containing a campfire (Sec. 803.(g)(2)(A) of REA).
- **Additional Expanded Amenity** recreation facilities or services include rental of cabins, group day-use or overnight sites, binoculars or other equipment (Sec.803.(g)(2)(C) of REA); use of hookups for electricity, cable, or sewer (Sec.803.(g)(2)(D) of REA); use of sanitary dump stations (SEC.803.(g)(2)(E) of REA); and use of reservation services (Sec.803.(g)(2)(G) of REA).

## **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 REA. 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 serve as public notification of the objectives for use of recreation fee revenues and to provide the public an opportunity to comment on these objectives. The finalized business plan guides the expenditure of collected REA funds and insures public accountability.

The business plan will specifically cover a description of the fee site, proposed changes in fees to these sites, associated operating costs, planned expenditures of fee revenue, a financial analysis utilizing a regional comparative market study of fees charged for other similar recreation facilities, 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 spreadsheets. For additional detailed information, contact the BLM Northwest Oregon District. Much of the data is open and available, but associated personally identifiable information contained in these systems may be subject to Privacy Act requirements.

## **Prohibitions on Charging REA Fees**

Section 803(d) of the REA provides that standard or expanded amenity recreation fees shall not be charged for (shortened list): solely for parking, undesignated parking, or picnicking along roads or trail sides, general access, low investment sites or areas, persons moving through



without using the facilities or services, for camping at undeveloped sites that do not provide a minimum number of facilities or services as described above (expanded amenity recreation fee), use of overlooks or scenic pullouts, any person engaged in the conduct of official Federal, State, Tribal, or local government business, special attention or extra services necessary to meet the needs of the disabled, any person under 16 years of age, outings conducted for noncommercial educational purposes by schools or bona fide academic institutions, and others.

## **Fee Discounts**

Section 805 of the REA provided for the establishment of a single interagency national pass known as the “America the Beautiful – the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass,” which provides the bearer full coverage of standard amenity fees and holders of the Interagency Senior and Access Passes a 50 percent discount on some expanded amenity fees. The National Interagency Senior and Access Passes replaced the Golden Age and Access Passports in 2007; the BLM continues to honor these passes. No discount is allowed for expanded amenity group use sites, shelters, yurts or cabins. The Northwest Oregon District Pass provides only provides the bearer full coverage for standard amenity fees, with no discounts for expanded amenity fees. It is not expected that the total use from passes would make a substantial impact on fee revenue for the Molalla River Corridor Recreation Sites in the near future.

## **Background**

### **Fee Site Description**

The 37,487 acre **Molalla River-Table Rock Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA)** is located southeast of the city of Molalla, Oregon in the western Cascade Mountains. It includes 27,405 acres of public land. The area exhibits traits typical of the Cascade Range including dense coniferous forests, heavy precipitation, and volcanic-origin geology. The Molalla River Recreation Corridor is within Oregon’s 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. The recreation area features two developed campgrounds, two developed day-use areas, and plans to develop another



campground, a day-use area and improve a day-use area. The 5,700-acre Table Rock Wilderness and the 25-mile Molalla River Shared Use Trail System is also within the Molalla River Recreation Corridor.

**Three Bears, Cedar Grove,** and the proposed **Pine Creek** campgrounds provide developed camping in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains within the Molalla River-Table Rock SRMA. **Aquila Vista** is currently an environmental education site, but has been used at very low rates in recent years. The site already meets criteria and fills a need in the outdoor recreation market for private group campsites. The BLM will be able to increase site utilization and help fill an unmet need by converting the site into a group campground and it can be accomplished by instituting a group use fee at the site. The surrounding public land offers excellent opportunities for picnicking, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, whitewater boating, hunting and nature study.

Design and construction of **Three Bears** and **Cedar Grove** campgrounds took place in 2012 and 2013. They are located on a forested river terrace above the scenic Molalla River. Each campground provides paved parking, designated campsites, information kiosk, potable water, vault restrooms, trash service, and volunteer host. Amenities at each of the 27 campsites include constructed tent pads, picnic tables, fire rings, and BBQ grills.

**Three Bears** offers 13 individual campsites, two double campsites, one volunteer host site, potable water, information kiosk, self service fee station, designated parking, and vault toilets. **Cedar Grove** offers nine individual campsites, one double campsite, one volunteer host site, information kiosk, self service fee station, potable water, designated parking, and vault toilets. These campsites are available on a first come, first served basis between May and October each year. Operating seasons and reservation procedures may be adjusted based on public demand and weather conditions.



A third proposed campground in the *Molalla River-Table Rock Recreation Area Management Plan*, **Pine Creek**, would offer 14 back-in or pull-through RV/trailer campsites located near the Pine Creek Bridge. Pine Creek would offer similar amenities as Three Bears and Cedar Grove, a volunteer host site, information kiosk, self service fee station, potable water, designated parking, and vault toilets, with an emphasis on accommodating RVs and trailers. Sight specific planning and NEPA is expected to begin in 2017/2018.

Each individual site would allow up to 8 people and 2 vehicles. An additional tent would be allowed at each site in addition to their primary camping type. For example, an RV site would allow for 1 RV and a tent, a tent site would allow for 2 tents. An RV and camper trailer at one site would not be allowed, 2 camper trailers or 2 RVs would not be allowed.

**Individual Tent Sites** offer a picnic table, fire ring, barbeque grill, tent pad, and assigned parking. No hookups are available and only tents are allowed. Potable water and restroom facilities can be found nearby.

**Double Tent Sites** offer two picnic tables, two fire rings, two barbeque grills, two tent pads, and assigned parking. No hookups are available and only tents are allowed. Potable water and restroom facilities can be found nearby.

**RV or Camper Trailer Sites** would offer a picnic table, fire ring, barbeque grill, tent pad, and assigned parking. No hookups would be available at the site. Potable water and restroom facilities would be found nearby.

**Aquila Vista** is currently utilized as an environmental education site. The site offers picnic tables, fire rings, vault restroom, trash services, two covered structures and parking. Aquila



Vista would be converted from an environmental education site to a private group campground and by utilizing the Recreation Use Permit system, which would allow the site to be reserved through the National Recreation Reservation System; the National Recreation Reservation System is an online reservation system that would increase efficiency for reserving the group site. Visitors would make reservations via the online system instead of coordinating a group camping visit with

district recreation staff. This would allow customers to check availability, generate a reservation and pay all online, reducing staff time spent on administrating the site.

### **Season of Use**

The developed campgrounds of the **Molalla River Corridor Recreation Area** are open to vehicles from May through October, with the option to expand or shorten the season based on user demand, weather conditions and budget. The current developed trailheads, day-use areas and the proposed developed day-use sites are open year round with seasonal closures in some sections based on the wet season. The majority of use in the corridor corresponds with the warmer weather months of June through September.





## Recreation Use

Visitation at the **Molalla River Corridor Recreation Area** is recorded annually in the BLM’s Recreation Management Information Systems (RMIS) database. The use at a specific site is captured as “visits” which equates to one person entering onto lands or waters, administered by the BLM for pursuit of recreational experiences. The applicable rule is that one entrance per individual per day to public lands is reportable as a visit. Visitation in RMIS also follows the federal fiscal year (FY) cycle that begins on October 1, and runs through September 30 of the following year. Calculating or estimating visitor use is derived through several methods including tallying the information from recreation use permits (fee envelopes and passes), traffic counters, trail counters, and through simple observation. In most cases, the number of visits is a combination of these methods. The following table captures the visits at the sites within the Molalla River Corridor Recreation Area.

**Table 2: Annual Visitation**

Site	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16
Molalla Campgrounds*	650	400	401	401	7,765
Molalla Day-use	9,550	7,500	7,250	7,395	7,903
Molalla Dispersed	67,585	65,000	55,830	61,307	62,932
Total	78,035	73,200	63,781	69,409	78,600

\*Campgrounds were not monitored until FY2016, aside for Aquila Vista.

Due to the campgrounds being fairly new, and no fees being required at the sites, visitation numbers were not counted in the past at the campgrounds. The only site recorded was Aquila Vista. However, for the 2016 fiscal year daily counts were made at the campgrounds during host and park ranger patrols. This yielded both visitation counts and occupancy rates.

**Table 3: Visitation and Occupancy by Site**

Site FY 2016	Visitors	Occupancy
Three Bears	4,594	61.21%
Cedar Grove	3,040	61.36%
Hardy Creek Trailhead	4,960	
Aquila Vista	131	
Table Rock Wildness Trailhead	2,943	
Dispersed	62,932	
Total	78,600	

The majority of visits occur from June to August with camping, picnicking, mountain biking, horse riding and river activities being primary activities. During the winter season visitation focuses on hunting for both deer and elk, and fishing for steelhead, some snowshoeing takes place in the Table Rock Wilderness as well. Visitation varies from year to year, based on factors including weather and regional economics. Many visitors are repeat users from surrounding communities. The overall occupancy rate for the 2016 year was about 62 percent, with most of the use being on weekends, resulting in fully occupied campgrounds during these days.

## **Fee Revenue**

Currently there are no fee sites within the Molalla River Corridor Recreation Area. However, there are developed campgrounds, day-use sites and proposed development of additional campgrounds and day-use sites.

## **Fee Collection and Enforcement**

All vehicles entering **Three Bears, Cedar Grove and Pine Creek Campgrounds** would be required to pay for a recreation use permit for overnight camping (expanded amenity fee) or day-use (standard amenity fee). Visitors can purchase the recreation use permits at self-service fee stations located near the entrances. All passes must be displayed either on the campsite post or within view from the vehicle's front window. The BLM is considering placing some or all of the campsites on the National Recreation Reservation System.

The day-use locations such as **Hardy Creek Trailhead, Table Rock Wilderness Trailhead** and the proposed day-use sites of **Ivor Davies Wayside and Basalt Rosette Overlook** will remain fee free at this time. The campgrounds will have a day-use fee, to encourage visitors to recreate during day trips at the above mentioned developed day-use sites. The BLM and partners have spent a tremendous amount of time and resources restoring the river banks, old dispersed day-use locations and camping sites along the river. The BLM believes that it may push people out of the developed day-use locations and back to dispersed use along the river, negating the restoration efforts if fees are placed at the developed day-use sites.

The Molalla River Corridor Recreation Area fees are enforceable through the presence of onsite hosts that monitors the sites and a rotation of BLM employees that patrols the sites. If problems arise, the host contacts BLM staff or law enforcement in the Northwest Oregon District, Salem Office. Clackamas County Officers patrol the area and are available to assist as well.

School groups and educational organizations can arrange free vehicle access at any time of the year for educational activities by contacting the BLM and providing a curriculum of their planned educational activities (see Prohibitions on Charging REA Fees). Other recreational events must be held under a special recreation use permit issued by the Northwest Oregon District Office.

## **Operations and Maintenance Costs**

The BLM spends about \$107,850 each year to operate and maintain the sites, which includes staff salary, vehicles, supplies, law enforcement, and operations. The estimation for fee collections is approximately \$3,000 annually, which includes collection, maintenance of self-service fee stations, and costs associated with the sale of the new district annual pass. As use increases to the Molalla River Corridor Recreation Area due to the development and restoration efforts the BLM has done; operation and maintenance costs will likely increase as well. Any future facility development is unlikely to significantly impact the operation and maintenance expenses, beyond upkeep and replacement of the facilities as they become unserviceable. The

largest rise in operations and maintenance costs would be for additional staff time, services, and supplies.

**Table 4: Annual Expenditures by Expense Cost Category**

Expense Category (These costs show averages and include benefits.)	Current	Projected Year 2021 (No New Development)	Projected Year 2021 (After Development)
Park Ranger (6 months)	\$12,000 (1 ranger, 50% away)	\$13,911 (1 ranger, 50% away)	\$20,867 (1 ranger, 25% away)
Other Staff Labor (outdoor recreation planners, specialists, other rangers...etc.)	\$34,000	\$39,415	\$39,415
Youth Core Labor	\$7,200 (1 week)	\$8,347 (1 week)	\$8,347 (1 week)
Vehicle	\$7,000	\$8,115	\$8,115
Equipment/Supplies	\$7,500	\$8,694	\$9,854
Services (water testing, waste pumping, trash pickup, etc.)	\$5,000	\$5,796	\$8,115
Camp Host Stipend	\$4,700	\$5,449	\$5,449
Law Enforcement	\$30,450 (15% present)	\$35,300 (15% present)	\$35,300 (15% present)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$107,850</b>	<b>\$125,027</b>	<b>\$135,462</b>

Molalla’s recreation facilities represent over \$500,000 in capitalized infrastructure investment. In addition, alternative program funds, including recreation pipeline funding, have been invested in improving and maintaining Molalla’s facilities and infrastructure since 2013. With continual stagnation or decreases in annual recreation budgets, the fee collection program is necessary to continue maintenance, improvements and development of new user demanded experiences, such as the recent development of new campgrounds, proposed development of Ivor Davies Day-use Site, Rosette Basalt Columnar Day-use Site, Table Rock Wilderness Trailhead improvements and the many trail systems improvements in the corridor.

Below is a list of recent improvements, repairs and their costs:

- Three Bears Campground (\$275,000)
- Cedar Grove Campground (\$225,000)
- Trail Construction (\$10,000)
- Hardy Creek Trailhead (\$50,000)

**Projected Costs for Development and Maintenance Projects**

The Molalla River Corridor Recreation Area is currently being developed to meet recreational needs and demands in the area. Three Bears, Cedar Grove and Hardy Creek Trailhead have already seen significant investment and development. Additional development costs for trail building, trailhead improvements, formal day-use sites and an additional campground are listed below.

- Ivor Davies day-use site (\$250,000)
- Rosette Basalt day-use site (\$250,000)
- Pine Creek Campground (\$400,000)
- Trail Building (\$30,000-\$50,000 per year for next 3 years)
- Vault Restroom at Table Rock Wilderness Trailhead (\$30,000)
- Security Improvements, increase patrols...etc. (\$10,000)

## **Fee Proposal**

### **Summary**

The fee analysis portion of this business plan was based on a comparative review of fees at other existing private and public facilities that provide similar services within the geographic area of the Molalla River Corridor Recreation Sites. Based on the comparative fee analysis, this business plan proposes to add the day-use and camping fee structure.

The following fee schedule outlines the existing and proposed changes for recreation fees at the Molalla River Corridor Recreation Area.

**Table 5: Existing Fees and Proposed Fee Changes**

<b>Standard Amenity</b>	<b>Existing Fees</b>	<b>Proposed Fees</b>
Day-Use	<b>None</b>	\$5
Annual Day-Use Pass <sup>2</sup>		\$30
<b>Expanded Amenity</b>		<b>Proposed Fees</b>
Individual Tent Campsite		\$15
Double Tent Campsite		\$30
Group Campsite		\$50 (up to 20 people) \$2.50 for each additional person
RV/Trailer Campsite (future development)		\$20
Extra Vehicle		\$5

### **Financial Analysis of Existing Private and Public Facilities**

An analysis conducted by the BLM Northwest Oregon District recreation staff in 2016, reviewed comparable fees charged elsewhere by similar state, federal, and local park facilities in Clackamas, Yamhill and Marion counties, Oregon. The analysis resulted in the proposed fee changes, which are based on what other public agencies are currently charging for similar sites, facilities, equipment or services. No comparable sites in the private sector currently exist; RV parks are available but do not provide the same amenities and were not included in the fee comparisons charts. Appendix 1 displays in a table format the comparative analysis by the type

<sup>2</sup> The proposed revision of the annual day-use pass is covered in a separate business plan for the Northwest Oregon BLM Pass which is designed to cover multiple recreation sites, but is shown for informational purposes only as one of the fee types for the Molalla River Corridor Recreation Sites.



of services and amenities each recreation site offers. The following information summarizes the comparative analysis by fee type.

All campgrounds within the market comparison area charge overnight camping fees ranging from \$15 at rustic Oregon Department of Forestry campgrounds to \$28 for full hookup sites at State Parks. Group tent sites are available for \$71 at both State Parks included in this analysis. Nearly every site also charges a fee for additional vehicles. Some parks (including those managed by Clackamas County) charge a day-use fee in addition to overnight camping fees.

**Individual Tent Campsite:** Fees for the Molalla River Recreation Sites were determined directly from this analysis at an average fee of \$18. However, the fees will be reduced to \$15 which reflects the level of facilities and services offered at Three Bears and Cedar Grove. During the analysis of comparable campgrounds, the emphasis was placed on walk-in and no hookup tent sites that provided the same level of amenities, recreation value and accessibility as Three Bears and Cedar Grove. Campgrounds that did not provide similar amenities as either of the aforementioned sites were excluded from the average to ensure the accuracy of the analysis. Oregon Department of Forestry is the most comparable for size and quality of each camping site, but is lacking in similar recreation opportunities, ease of access to the campgrounds and employee interaction when compared to the BLM, while the Molalla River Corridor Recreation Sites offer fewer amenities than those found at Clackamas County facilities.

**Double Tent Campsite:** Analysis did not provide a solid comparable for the group tent sites at the Molalla River campgrounds, which can accommodate twice as many visitors as the individual tent site. However, they are not as large, nor do they offer comparable amenities, to the group tent sites found at Milo McIver and Champoeg Park. Therefore, the \$30 proposed nightly fee reflects the double capacity of these sites compared to individual tent sites, but recognizes these sites are not full group sites at comparable campgrounds.

**RV/Trailer Campsite:** Fees averaged \$22 for RV and trailer campsites based on other comparable campgrounds that offer similar amenities. All other comparable campgrounds with designed RV and trailer campsites also included water and electrical hookups, which the Molalla River sites do not support. Due to these additional amenities that are beyond what the Pine Creek campground would likely offer, a 5 percent reduction of the fee was applied for each amenity resulting in a total of a 10 percent fee reduction. The reduced price was then rounded to the nearest whole dollar amount of \$20.

**Group Campsite:** Fees would be applied to Aquila Vista campsite in the Molalla River Corridor. The market analysis indicated that the average cost per person per night for group camping is \$3; however the campgrounds with group camping available provided a higher level of amenities than those that are offered within the Molalla River Recreation Corridor. This resulted in the per person fee for the Molalla River Recreation Corridor to be set at \$2.50 per person. Aquila Vista would allow up to 20 campers per night at a fee of \$50, with an added fee of \$2.50 per person past the first 20 people.

**Day-use and Additional Vehicle:** Fees range from \$3 to \$8 per vehicle for both. Day-use fees would apply to all vehicles in the developed campgrounds within the Molalla River Corridor

Recreation Area. Additional vehicle fees apply for vehicles exceeding their allotted designated parking spaces within the main parking area, based on site capacity. Additional vehicles will be required to park in overflow locations within each parking area. Nearly every comparable campground charges for extra vehicles and day-use, with the exception of two Oregon Department of Forestry campgrounds. The day-use and additional vehicle fee would be \$5 per vehicle.

### Projected Fee Revenue

Revenue projections based on a 184-day camping season with an average regional tent/basic occupancy rate of 40 percent. The projected revenue using these parameters for the 22 tent sites is \$24,288, and the projected revenue for the 3 double sites is \$6,624. The expected occupancy of the Aquila Vista group site is 40 percent as well; the projected revenue for this site is \$3,680. This results in the total fee revenue collection of \$36,800 of already developed sites.

The future development of the Pine Creek campground would generate additional fee revenue. The average regional occupancy rate for RV/camper trailer sites is 55% during the camping season. The completion of Pine Creek campground (14 RV sites) and the implementation of the proposed fee would result in a projected increase in the total fee revenue collected by \$28,336.

For the campsites, the estimated revenue was derived by multiplying the number of available campsites by the regional occupancy rate of 40 percent, then multiplying that by the average 184 day season, and finally multiplying that number by the fee. The regional occupancy rate was used rather than the 2016 occupancy rate due to the sites most likely having an inflated rate from them being free.

**Table 6: Projected Fee Revenue:**

Type	Amount	Occupancy Rate	Days Available	Cost Per Night	Revenue
Tent	22	40%	184	\$15	\$24,288
Basic Sites	14	40%	184	\$20	\$28,336
Double Sites	3	40%	184	\$30	\$6,624
Group Site	1	40%	184	\$50	\$3,680
Camping				Total	\$63,028

No estimation was made for day-use visitation to the campgrounds as there is no current tracking method for day-use visitation to the campgrounds.

It is unlikely that the district pass will have a significant impact on the amount of fee revenue collected in the Molalla River Corridor Recreation Area. Day-use will most likely be done by local community members that frequent the site and by avid mountain bikers or equestrian users that make weekly trips to the Hardy Creek Trailhead. Since there will be no day-use fees placed at these day-use areas it is unlikely to have an overall impact on the day-use fee within the campgrounds.

**Table 7: Estimated Fee Revenue by Site Type**

Fee Type & Site	Estimated Revenue
Molalla Campgrounds (Tent)	\$24,388
Molalla Campground (Double Site)	\$6,624
Molalla Campground (RV Sites)*	\$28,336*
Aquila Vista Group Site	\$3,680
Total	\$63,028

\*Not Developed

Based on both the current and projected fees, operation and maintenance costs for the Molalla River Corridor Recreation Area (See Table 8), the site will become more self-sufficient and will allow for improved maintenance and services, as well as other enhancements in the recreation area.

**Table 8: Difference Between Revenue Collected and Expenditure Costs**

	Current	Projected After Fee Increases	Projected 2021 (after development)
Fees Collected	\$0	\$34,692	\$63,028
Operation & Maintenance	\$107,850	\$107,850	\$135,462
<b>Difference</b>	<b>-\$107,850</b>	<b>-\$73,158</b>	<b>-\$72,434</b>

### Proposed Use of Additional Fee Revenue

The Northwest Oregon District’s primary goal for recreation sites is to provide high-quality recreation opportunities and experiences for all visitors. Labor will continue to be the highest operating cost for the recreation sites. BLM staff provides visitor information and interpretive programming; conducts field patrols; maintains facilities; collects and reconciles fees; and rehabilitates natural resource damage. Recreation fee revenue is needed to help support the operation and maintenance of these developed recreation sites. The following is an initial list of how the proposed recreation fee revenue would be used:

- Service contracts for garbage collection, septic pumping, water testing, and firewood.
- Increased patrols for visitor safety, property protection and compliance.
- Renewal of county and state drinking and wastewater permits.
- Supplies including but not limited to cleaning supplies, toilet paper, hand soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, fuel for motorized equipment, paint, lumber, rock, concrete...etc.
- Maintain, improve and replace recreation site infrastructure such as trails, signage, barbeque grills, fire rings, picnic tables, cement and wood fencing, restroom buildings, kiosks, lighting, roadway striping, maintenance building, communication devices, curb stops, non-motorized...etc.
- Maintain and replace equipment such as lawn mowers, leaf blowers, weed trimmers, hand tools, golf carts, ATVs, pressure washers, chain saws, drills...etc.
- Operating or capital costs associated with government vehicles, trailers, tractors, and bobcats.
- Information material such as maps, brochures, and interpretive signage.

- Fee collection equipment and upkeep.
- Audits and evaluations.
- Construction of recreation facilities, such as additional camp sites, trailheads and trails.
- Campground Host stipend payments.
- Purchase native trees and shrubs to prevent social trailing through sensitive areas,
- new interpretive panels could be installed to educate visitors on the importance of the natural resources and how a healthy forest system works
- increased effort to eradicate invasive species from recreation sites could occur

Due to continued stagnation or decreases in the BLM budget there is a growing need for the recreation program to become more self-sufficient, while recognizing that appropriated funds still provide the majority of the recreation program funding. Over the next five years, the recreation program is looking to achieve greater self-sufficiency and resiliency through market rated fee increases, repurposing low visitation recreation sites and designing purpose built recreation sites that fill popular recreation needs. The Bureau of Land Management’s Recreation Strategy “Connecting with Communities”, provides a vision to increase and improve collaboration with the local community network of service providers to help communities produce greater well-being and socioeconomic health to deliver outstanding recreation experiences to visitors while sustaining the distinctive character of public land recreation settings. The Northwest Oregon District is also striving to continue relationships with local youth groups in helping to promote a positive experience for youth on public lands and to inspire them to take a greater interest in public land issues.

### **Impacts of Implementing or Not Implementing Fee Changes**

**Positive Impacts** – The Molalla River Corridor Recreation Area currently does not have any fees. If the proposed fees were adopted, current services would continue to be offered and additional services (developed day-use sites) would be available. Some of the revenue would be used to add improvements to the existing campgrounds, like cement fencing around the campsites to reduce campsite creep and vegetation understory destruction. Also benefiting would be additional law enforcement, employee oversight of the sites that would reduce vandalism, negative behavior and increased visitor safety. Site infrastructure, cleanliness, and visitor services and information would be benefited as well. All of these combine to improve the overall visitor experience.

Benefits to the local economy could also be realized. It is imperative to the local economy to keep recreation site infrastructure in good condition, clean and serviced to high standards. Maintaining these high standards and creating new opportunities improves the overall recreational experience for current and new visitors alike.

Increased fees also add benefit to the environment. It would allow the Northwest Oregon District to improve, manage, and operate recreational facilities to the fullest. By providing day-use trailheads, campgrounds, and day-use areas for visitors, it allows the District to consolidate resource impacts to a much smaller area. Human waste and garbage are dealt with in an appropriate manner in areas where infrastructure is provided. If these services were not available, the impacts would be felt across a wide area, as illegal dumping would increase. Fees

would also allow for more purchasing power to acquire items that help reduce negative impacts to the environment. For example, native trees and shrubs could be purchased to prevent soil trailing through sensitive areas, new interpretive panels could be installed to educate visitors on the importance of the natural resources and how a healthy forest system works and an increased effort to eradicate invasive species from recreation sites could occur.

**Negative Impacts** – Currently with no fees being implemented, the existing facilities are seeing a loss of functionality as operation and maintenance efforts are unable to keep pace with the increased use of the sites. As costs continue to increase, maintenance may not happen as quickly or as often as needed and some services may be reduced. Deferred maintenance costs would increase as facilities age and deteriorate without proper annual maintenance. Maintenance which is deferred because of insufficient funding may result in increased safety hazards, reduced service to the public, higher costs in the future and inefficient operations.

A reduction in recreation and maintenance staff could occur as those positions may not be filled if vacated due to lack of funds. Law enforcement patrols are not expected to be affected. Recreation demands will continue to increase as the Northwest Oregon District is seeing some of the highest population growth in the nation, which in turn increases visitation, thus the costs to operate the fee sites would become more dependent on the fluctuating appropriated funding. The opportunities for future planned developments would be constrained and likely dropped from implementation.

Negative impacts to the environment could also occur. Fewer trash pickups and pumping of toilets could occur, thus creating human waste and garbage impacts. Less-frequent patrols from recreation staff to maintain trails, signage and education materials may allow some visitors to act inappropriately by cutting new trails and vandalizing facilities.

## **Outreach**

### **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. One example is the Molalla River Watch and the Molalla River Alliance in managing of the Molalla River-Table Rock SRMA. The Bureau works collaboratively with these groups to recruit volunteers, identify project work, and perform public outreach. Both groups were involved in the Molalla River planning process from 2008 to 2011.

Molalla River Watch is an all-volunteer group established in 1992 “for the purpose of protecting, preserving, and restoring the flora, fauna and water quality of the Molalla River and its tributaries. Concerned with the excessive amount of garbage dumped along the river bank and often into the river, we are committed to promoting respect and understanding of the Molalla River watershed through education and conservation for present and future generations.”



Molalla River Alliance is an umbrella group of government, user groups, businesses and conservation organizations that is “dedicated to preserving the water quality of the Molalla and sustaining the wildlife, fish and plants that inhabit its watershed.”

## **Public Comments**

Partners realize that fees are a part of using developed facilities and continually ask when fee changes will be implemented. Partners understand that fee collection provides available funds for the completion, operation and maintenance of developed sites. Fees also act as a tool for resource protection by helping prevent miss-use and individuals using locations as housing.

The BLM has been reaching out to the public around fee-based overnight facilities since 2008 as part of the overall planning effort for the Molalla River-Table Rock SRMA. At various points during this effort, the public had the opportunity to comment on alternatives (including an early version of this fee proposal) that would result in expanded amenity fees for overnight use. Public information was distributed via the BLM’s website, press releases and posting at information kiosks in the recreation area. Nearly 90 comments were received during the formal comment period for the Environmental Assessment in 2010; the vast majority of these comments supported BLM’s plans for facility development and the establishment of new fees for the use of developed facility operation and maintenance. The BLM received no appeals on the final Molalla River-Table Rock Recreation Area Management Plan during a 30-day appeal period in 2010.

On August 11, 2016, information about the Northwest Oregon District’s Proposed Fee Changes was posted onsite at the Molalla River Corridor Recreation Area; simultaneous news releases were pushed to local newspapers. The news release was also published in the Statesman Journal, which prints for the upper Willamette Valley area on August 14, 2016. The Northwest Oregon District also posted news releases online for viewing. All documents provided an email address where public comments related to any recreation project may be submitted ([blm\\_or\\_no\\_rec\\_publiccomments@blm.gov](mailto:blm_or_no_rec_publiccomments@blm.gov)); the email is monitored daily during the workweek. As of March 22, 2017, the Northwest Oregon District has received seven comments, nothing specific to Molalla River Corridor Recreation Area. Commenters generally were confused about the America the Beautiful-The National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands Pass and in general support of fee increases.

## **Public Communication and Marketing Plan**

1. Public notice of the proposed fee changes will be posted onsite until implemented.
2. News releases will appear in local newspapers informing the public of fee changes the Salem District BLM is planning.
3. Both the public notice and news release will contain contact information for public comments on the proposed fee changes.
4. Website information will inform the public of the proposed fee changes.
5. Fee signs and paper materials will reflect proposed fee change.
6. Notice of Intent to Collect Fees will be published in a Federal Register Notice six months prior to fee collection at new fee sites.

In addition, the Northwest Oregon District will be presenting the campground fee proposals to the Coastal Oregon and Northwest Oregon Recreation Resource Advisory Council (RAC) for its formal review. The RAC is a 15-member advisory panel which provides advice and recommendations to the BLM on resource and land management issues for approximately 720,000 acres of public lands in Oregon. The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act mandates that the appropriate Recreation RAC or District RAC will be consulted and given opportunities to provide recommendations to the BLM on all recreation fee proposals prior to implementation. Comments from both the public at large and the BLM RAC will be considered prior to the implementation of the proposed recreation fees.

The BLM monitors visitor use to detect changes in site utilization and document written and oral communication from the public. Business plan review occurs on a biennial schedule from the date of the last signature. Future adjustments to the Molalla's fee schedule will reflect public comment and program implementation needs.















### **Ways to Inform Public of Fee Expenditures**















Fee expenditure information is collected on an annual basis and presented in the Public Land Statistics available online at [https://www.blm.gov/public\\_land\\_statistics/](https://www.blm.gov/public_land_statistics/). More specifically, each area will post fee expenditure information on site and online to inform the public where and on what services, maintenance, operations their fees are spent.















### Appendix 1: Analysis of Existing Campgrounds

Expanded Amenities: **Green** colored campgrounds have all 9, **Orange** colored campground have 7-8.

\*Full hookup is water, electric, and sewer. \*Basic is no hookups

Campground	Fee														
<b>Molalla River Corridor (BLM)</b>	<i>Proposed Fees</i>														
	Tent site \$15														
	Double site \$30														
	RV/camper \$20														
	Extra vehicle \$5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	
	Day-use \$5														
Group campsite \$50 (\$2.50 per over 20 people)															
<b>Little North Fork Recreation Area (BLM)</b>	<i>Proposed Fees</i>														
	Basic site \$20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓						
	Extra vehicle \$5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓						
Day-use \$5															
<b>Feyrer Park (Clackamas County)</b>	Partial hookup \$26														
	Extra vehicle \$5				✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		
	Day-use \$5														
<b>Metzler Park (Clackamas County)</b>	Partial hookup \$26														
	Tent site \$21														
	Extra tent(3+) \$5	✓	✓												
	Extra vehicle \$5	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		
	Day-use \$5														
<b>Barton Park (Clackamas County)</b>	Partial hookup \$26														
	Tent site \$21														
	Extra tent(3+) \$5	✓													
	Extra vehicle \$5	✓			✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Day-use \$5														
<b>Milo McIver (State Parks)</b>	Partial hookup \$24														
	Walk-in tent \$18														
	Extra vehicle \$5	✓	✓												
	Day-use \$5	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
	Group campsite \$75														

Campground	Fee															
	(\$3 per over 25 people)															
<b>Champoeg State Heritage Area (State Parks)</b>	Full hook-up \$28															
	Partial hookup \$26															
	Tent sites \$19															
	Extra vehicle \$5	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	
	Day-use \$5	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	
Group campsite \$71 (\$3 per over 25 people)																
<b>Silver Falls (State Parks)</b>	Horse campsite \$19/\$58															
	Electric only site \$26															
	Tent site \$19															
	Extra vehicle \$7															
	Cabin \$40/\$50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
	Day-use \$5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
	Group shelter \$50/\$100															
Group campsite \$71 (\$3 each over 25 people)																
Group RV \$101 (\$10 per after 10)																
<b>Shellburg Falls (ODF)</b>	Tent site \$15	✓	✓	✓										✓		
	Walk-in tent \$8	✓	✓	✓				✓								
	Extra vehicle \$3															
<b>Butte Creek (ODF)</b>	Tent site \$15	✓	✓													
<b>Rock Creek (ODF)</b>	Tent site \$15	✓	✓		✓											

Campground	Fee															
<b>Lazy Bend (USFS Mt. Hood)</b>	Tent site \$20 Extra vehicle \$8	✓			✓	✓										
<b>Carter Bridge (USFS Mt. Hood)</b>	Tent site \$16 Extra vehicle \$8	✓			✓	✓		✓								
<b>Armstrong (USFS Mt. Hood)</b>	Tent site \$19 Extra vehicle \$8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										