



## MONTANA STATE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

**Meeting Date:** October 15, 2014  
**Agenda Item:** Biennial State Park User Fee Rule  
**Division:** Parks  
**Action Needed:** Final  
**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 15 minutes

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**Background:** At the August 20, 2014 Board meeting the Parks Division proposed an updated Biennial Fee Rule that included the following highlights:

- A 20% increase in fees for camping, electrical service at campsites, non-resident daily entry, non-resident annual entrance pass, Lewis & Clark Caverns tours, rental of cabins, yurts and tipis and use of showers.
- Holders of a non-resident annual entrance pass would be subject to the same camping fees as residents.
- Establish new categories and fees for rustic campsites, wild cave tours and sewage dump stations.
- Establish a sliding fee schedule based on group size for use of meeting rooms, shelters, pavilions, and other facilities, etc.
- Establish the authority to implement “premium” campsite fees.

The Board authorized the Parks Division to seek public comment on these proposed fees.

**Public Involvement Process & Results:** The Parks Division solicited public comment for a 30 day period ending on September 26, 2014. A total of 15 comments were received and are summarized as follows:

- Supportive of the proposed fees: four comments.
- Conditional support of the proposed fees: five comments.
  - Supportive, except for Lewis & Clark Caverns candlelight tour fees.
  - Supportive except for boat camping, cabin and yurt fees.
  - Fee more complicated than they need to be; opposed to shower use fee.
  - Suggested more flat rate fees.
  - Suggested more flat rate fees.
- Opposed to the proposed fees: four comments.
- Concerned with DNRC cabin site lease fees at Painted Rocks Reservoir: 2 irrelevant comments

**Alternatives and Analysis:** The Parks Division conducted internal staff dialogue regarding potential changes to user fees; conducted comparability research of recreational user fees in neighboring state park systems, federal public lands and private entities; and solicited and reviewed public comments related to the proposed user fees.

The following alternatives have been identified regarding updated user fees:

- 1) Adopt an updated Biennial Fee Rule with no significant fee changes.
- 2) Adopt an updated Biennial Fee Rule with modest fee increases.

**Agency Recommendation and Rationale:** User fees provide a critical source of revenue to support the state park system. The last increase in park user fees occurred in 2010 and was applicable to non-resident camping fees and new camping reservation fees only. The last user fee increase for residents occurred in 2003. The Parks Division proposes a Biennial Fee Rule with modest fee increases as presented at the August 2014 Board meeting, with the exception of Lewis & Clark Caverns candlelight tours fees, which the Parks Division views as too expensive for families.

**Proposed Motion:** I move that the Board adopt the state park user fees as proposed in the 2014 Biennial Fee Rule.