



MONTANA **FWP**

MONTANA STATE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: October 16, 2018
Action Needed: Endorsement
Agenda Item: Fee Analysis Resolution
Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background: Performance audits are designed to assess state government operations and are conducted at the request of the Legislative Audit Committee, a bicameral and bipartisan standing committee of the Montana Legislature. Based on ongoing legislative interest in the management of state parks, the Legislative Audit Committee requested a performance audit be done on Montana State Parks. The Legislative Audit Committee report resulted in six recommendations and one of the primary recommendations is to clarify the duties and responsibilities of the State Parks and Recreation Board.

According to Mont. Code Ann. § 23-1-111, the powers and duties of the Board include setting the policies and providing direction to Department and to encourage citizen involvement in management planning for these properties, lands and waters. One area in which policy guidance from the Board can be particularly useful is in Department fee-setting. User fees represent a significant, reasonable, and fair source of the revenues required for responsible stewardship, if established with a sensitivity to the relationship between price and access and an emphasis on yield management.

The proposed fee resolution will advise the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks to set fees in a manner and at levels that do not price Montanans out of their state parks and when feasible, set differing fees for in-state and out-of-state park visitors in recognition of the fact that Montana taxpayers already contribute to the revenues allocated to their state parks. In addition, the policy will direct the Department to review fee schedules annually to ascertain whether fees are responsive to inflation, commensurate with user impacts on the resource, and not a barrier to access.

The policy will establish a process that ensures that the public is notified in a timely manner of the intent to set or adjust user fees, has access to the information cited as the basis for that decision, and is provided an opportunity to comment on the proposed fees or fee increases prior to their establishment or adjustment.

Public Involvement Process & Results: There will be an opportunity for public comment at this meeting only.

Alternatives and Analysis: There are no alternatives or analysis for this motion.

Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends the Parks and Recreation Board approve the Resolution on setting and/or adjusting of user fees for Montana State Parks.

Proposed Motion: I move that the Parks and Recreation Board approve the Resolution on setting and/or adjusting of user fees for Montana State Parks.