

# **Bureau of Land Management Bishop Field Office Campground Business Plan**



**Final Fee Schedule for the Tuttle Creek,  
Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, Pleasant  
Valley Pit, and Crowley Lake Campgrounds  
in Inyo and Mono Counties, California**

March 2017

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## Plan Approval and Executive Summary

This campground business plan was prepared in consultation with the Central California Resource Advisory Council and in accordance with the *Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004* (REA) (16 USC 6801 *et seq.*) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Recreation Permit and Fee Administration policy (H-2930-1) (USDI BLM 2014).

### Plan Approval

#### Recommended By:



\_\_\_\_\_  
Steven Nelson  
Bishop Field Manager  
Bureau of Land Management

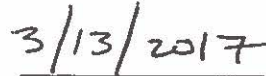


\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

#### Approved By:



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Este Stifel  
Central California District Manager  
Bureau of Land Management



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Date

3/13/2017

## Executive Summary

This business plan outlines the fee schedule and associated business rationale for five developed recreation sites (campgrounds) managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Bishop Field Office: Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, and Pleasant Valley Pit (PV Pit) campgrounds located in Inyo County, California and Crowley Lake Campground located in Mono County, California (Figure 1).

Together these five developed campgrounds include approximately 300 individual campsites, all located along the scenic U.S. Highway 395 corridor near world-class recreation destinations in the eastern Sierra region of California. These campgrounds provide the most economical opportunities for area visitors to stay within a developed recreation site that includes amenities such as access roads, tent and recreational vehicle (RV) spaces, picnic tables, trash receptacles, restrooms, campfire pits, and other amenities. These campgrounds also offer on-site campground hosts, interpretive kiosks, interpretive programs led by staff and partner organizations, and regular patrols by BLM park rangers and law enforcement officers that collect fees, perform facility maintenance, and provide for visitor health and safety.

Fees for the Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, PV Pit, and Crowley Lake campgrounds were last established in 2005 and have not changed since that time. Between 2010 and 2012 the BLM invested approximately \$3.6 million in campground upgrades at these five developed recreation sites.

A draft business plan (USDI BLM 2015a), which included BLM proposed fee adjustments for developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office, was released for a 30-day public review and comment period on December 21, 2015. Public notice of this formal 30-day comment period was published in the Federal Register (80 FR 79357) (USDI BLM 2015c), advertised via press releases sent to media contacts throughout California, including the eastern Sierra region, and posted on the BLM public website. The public review and comment process is summarized in Section XI.ii of this final business plan.

In accordance with Section 804 of the *Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004* (REA) (16 USC 6801 *et seq.*) and BLM policy (H-2930-1) (USDI BLM 2014), the Central California Resource Advisory Council (RAC) was formally consulted and given opportunities to provide recommendations regarding the proposed fee adjustments for developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office. The RAC consultation process included three separate meetings, all of which were noticed in the Federal Register (80 FR 60709, 81 FR 5132 and 81 FR 61714) (USDI BLM 2015b, 2016a and 2016b), advertised via press releases sent to media contacts throughout California, including the eastern Sierra region, and posted on the BLM public website.

On October 20, 2016, the Central California RAC voted unanimously to support a slightly revised fee proposal that was developed based BLM review and consideration of public comments received on the draft business plan and recommendations provided by the RAC on October 29, 2015 and March 18, 2016. The RAC consultation and recommendation process is summarized in Section XI.iii of this final business plan.

The previous, BLM proposed, and Central California RAC supported/BLM approved daily site fees and special amenity fees for developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office are summarized below:

Previous, BLM Proposed, and RAC Supported/BLM Approved Daily Site Fees and Special Amenity Fees			
Campground	Previous Site/Amenity Fee <sup>1</sup> (2005 - 2017)	BLM Proposed Site/Amenity Fee <sup>1</sup> (2015)	RAC Supported/BLM Approved Site/Amenity Fee <sup>1</sup> (2017)
Tuttle Creek <sup>2</sup>	\$5/site	\$8/site (adjustable \$5 to \$10)	\$8/site (adjustable \$5 to \$15)
Goodale Creek	\$5/site	\$5/site (adjustable \$5 to \$10)	\$5/site (adjustable \$2 to \$10)
Horton Creek <sup>2</sup>	\$5/site	\$8/site (adjustable \$5 to \$10)	\$8/site (adjustable \$5 to \$15)
Pleasant Valley Pit (PV Pit)	\$2/car	\$5/site (adjustable \$5 to \$10)	\$5/site (adjustable \$2 to \$10)
Crowley Lake <sup>2</sup>	\$5/site	\$8/site (adjustable \$5 to \$10)	\$8/site (adjustable \$5 to \$15)
Tuttle Creek <sup>2</sup> Group Site	\$30/group	\$30/group (adjustable \$30 to \$50)	\$30/group (adjustable \$20 to \$50)
Tuttle Creek Horse Corral	\$5/corral	\$10/corral (adjustable \$5 to \$12)	\$10/corral (adjustable \$5 to \$15)
Dump Stations (Tuttle Creek, Horton Creek and Crowley Lake)	\$5/dump	\$5/dump (adjustable \$5 to \$8)	\$5/dump (adjustable \$5 to \$20)

The approved fee schedule identifies initial daily site and special amenity fee rates, as well as a fee rate range that may be charged in the future. The intent of the fee rate range is to provide the flexibility needed to change fees if campground occupancy, special amenity use, and/or operation and maintenance costs either increase or decrease in the future. Daily camping permits will continue to be available for all five developed campgrounds, with a maximum stay limit of 14 days per calendar year per campground and an overall stay limit of 28 days per calendar year (49 FR 40106) (USDI BLM 1984).

After the initial change in fees, daily site and special amenity fees will be set by the Authorized Officer at a rate within the approved fee ranges. Fee decisions will be based on multiple factors including the occupancy rate and use of special amenities at each campground; the cost to government of operating, maintaining, and improving the campgrounds and special amenities, and; the impacts of dispersed camping outside of the campgrounds on the cultural and natural

<sup>1</sup> Interagency Senior and Interagency Access passes (previously Golden Age and Golden Access passes) accepted for a 50% discount on daily site fees. No discounts on special amenity fees.

<sup>2</sup> Potable drinking water and dump station available during the spring through early fall camping season, weather permitting. Daily site fee may be reduced to match the daily site fee for campgrounds without potable drinking water at the discretion of the Authorized Officer when potable drinking water is unavailable.

resource values of surrounding public lands. Daily site and special amenity fees will be reviewed, and adjusted if needed, every two years in accordance with BLM policy (H-2930-1) (USDI BLM 2014) and in consultation with the Central California RAC.

The previous, BLM proposed, and Central California RAC supported/BLM approved long-term camping permit fee schedules for developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office are summarized below:

Previous, BLM Proposed, and RAC Supported/BLM Approved Long-Term Camping Permit Fee Schedule			
Permit Duration	Current Permit Fee (2005 - 2017)	BLM Proposed Permit Fee (2015)	RAC Supported/BLM Approved Permit Fee (2017)
30-Day Permit	Available for Tuttle Creek, Horton Creek, Goodale Creek, and Crowley Lake  \$100 for 30 days (1 month) (\$3.22/day)	Available for Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, Pleasant Valley Pit (PV Pit), and Crowley Lake  \$120 for 30 consecutive days (\$4/day)	Available for Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, Pleasant Valley Pit (PV Pit), and Crowley Lake <sup>3</sup>  \$120 for 30 consecutive days (\$4/day)
90-Day Permit	Available for Tuttle Creek, Horton Creek, Goodale Creek, and Crowley Lake  \$300 for 90 days (3 - 8 months) (\$1.25 - 3.33/day)	Available for Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake  \$300 for 90 consecutive days (\$3.33/day)	Available for Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake  \$320 for 90 consecutive days (\$3.56/day)

The approved long-term camping permit fee schedule includes both 30-day and 90-day permits. The fee for the 30-day permit will be \$120. The fee for the 90-day permit will be \$320. Both 30-day and 90-day permits will be available for use in the Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake campgrounds.

The 30-day permit will be expanded to include use in the Pleasant Valley Pit (PV Pit) Campground. Long-term camping permit holders will be allowed to camp in developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office for a maximum of 180 days (about 6 months) per calendar year using any combination of 30-day and 90-day permits.

<sup>3</sup> Interagency Senior and Interagency Access passes (previously Golden Age and Golden Access passes) may be accepted for a 50% discount on 30-day permits valid for use only in the Goodale Creek or Pleasant Valley Pit campgrounds, and for a 20% discount on 30-day permits valid for use in all Bishop Field Office campgrounds, at the discretion of the Authorized Officer when and where needed to ensure: 1) That the average daily rate for senior and disabled 30-day long-term camping permit holders staying in the Goodale Creek or Pleasant Valley Pit campgrounds does not exceed the discounted daily site fee rates available to senior and disabled campers staying in these campgrounds, and; 2) That senior and disabled 30-day long-term camping permit holders receive an overall fee discount of 60% relative to daily site fee rates for all Bishop Field Office campgrounds.

Long-term camping permit holders will be required to change campgrounds every 30 to 45 days and allowed to camp only in sites specifically designated as available for long-term camping (> 14 days, but ≤ 30 to 45 days) within each campground. The consecutive day stay limits and the number and location of sites available to long-term camping permit holders in each campground will be established by the Authorized Officer on an annual basis. The intent of these management strategies are to ensure that both daily and long-term visitors have fair and equitable access to developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office and to the types of campsites (creekside, shaded, RV, pull through trailer, etc.) available in each campground.

# Bishop Field Office Campground Business Plan

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## I. Introduction

This business plan outlines the fee schedule and associated business rationale for five developed recreation sites (campgrounds) managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Bishop Field Office: Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, and Pleasant Valley Pit (PV Pit) campgrounds located in Inyo County, California and Crowley Lake Campground located in Mono County, California (Figure 1).

Fees described and established herein are authorized under the *Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004* (REA) (16 USC 6801 *et seq.*). This law authorizes the BLM to collect recreation amenity fees at developed recreation sites including campgrounds that meet certain requirements, allows the BLM to keep the fee revenue collected, and directs the BLM on how to manage and utilize the fee revenue collected.

The BLM is a land management agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior. Our mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Congressional direction, established in the *Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976* (FLPMA) (43 USC 1701 *et seq.*) as amended, requires the BLM to manage public lands under the principals of “multiple use and sustained yield.” The Bureau seeks to fulfill energy, forage, wildlife, recreation, and other needs of the Nation and the people of California through stewardship and collaboration with advisory councils, elected officials, special interest groups, civic and industry groups, partner organizations, local communities, and the public at large. The BLM manages about 15 million acres of public land in California.

The Bishop Field Office cares for a unique vestige of wild California, emphasizing conservation, education and partnerships. The field office mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of over 750,000 acres of public land that we are entrusted to manage for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. These public lands, located in Inyo and Mono counties, span the length of the eastern Sierra from Owens Lake in the south to Topaz Lake in the north at the California-Nevada Stateline. The region is dominated by public lands administered by the BLM, U.S. National Park Service, and U.S. Forest Service. Together these public lands provide a rich diversity of recreational opportunities including several popular world-class recreation destinations such as Bodie, Death Valley National Park, Mount Whitney, and Mammoth Mountain Ski Area.

Public lands administered by the Bishop Field Office are intermingled with lands administered by the Inyo National Forest, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, and Manzanar National Historic Site; as well as lands owned and managed by the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). The Inyo and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forests combined manage over two million acres in the eastern Sierra, while the LADWP owns and manages about 310,000 acres. Private lands comprise about 2 percent of Inyo County and 6 percent of Mono County. The Bishop Field Office emphasizes collaborative, citizen-centered stewardship as well as interagency coordination and cooperation in fulfilling our mission.

## II. Bishop Field Office Recreation Program Overview

The mission of the Bishop Field Office Recreation Program is to proactively protect and enhance public lands for the recreational enjoyment of present and future generations. This is accomplished by building, maintaining and monitoring recreation sites; providing environmental education and interpretation through interpretive programs, written materials and day-to-day public contacts; and cultivating both internal and external partnerships to increase capacity, exchange information and reach balanced management decisions.

The program includes active management of a variety of developed and undeveloped recreation sites including hiking trails, natural hot springs, rock climbing and bouldering areas, an extensive network of Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) trails, and an abundance semi-primitive recreation opportunities including dispersed camping. Popular recreational use areas include the Alabama Hills, the Inyo Mountains and Granite Mountain wildernesses, the Poleta Canyon Open OHV area, the Tungsten Hills, the Volcanic Tableland including the Fish Slough Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and the Happy and Sad bouldering areas, the Travertine Hot Springs ACEC, and the Adobe Valley, Long Valley, Bodie Hills and Bridgeport Valley areas. The field office issues 30 to 40 Special Recreation Permits annually for organized events ranging from marathons and mountain bike events to guided horse trips and OHV tours.

The Bishop Field Office manages five developed campgrounds that provide opportunities for approximately 300 campers and include a diverse mix of tent and recreational vehicle (RV) sites. All five campgrounds are located near the scenic U.S. Highway 395 corridor and provide easy access to world-class recreation destinations in the eastern Sierra region of California. These campgrounds provide the most economical opportunities for area visitors to stay within a developed recreation site and are a good alternative to unmanaged dispersed camping, which may occur in environmentally sensitive areas and can cause unanticipated adverse environmental effects.

Daily camping permits are available for all five developed campgrounds, with a maximum stay limit of 14 days per calendar year per campground and an overall stay limit of 28 days per calendar year (49 FR 40106) (USD I BLM 1984). Under the final fee schedule recommended for approval in this business plan, long-term camping permits would be available for all developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office. Thirty-day (30-day) and 90-day permits would be available for use in the Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake campgrounds. The 30-day permit would be expanded to include use in the Pleasant Valley Pit (PV Pit) Campground. Long-term camping permit holders would be allowed to camp in developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office for a maximum of 180 days (about 6 months) per calendar year using any combination of 30-day and 90-day permits.

Under the previous long-term camping permit program, long-term permits were only available for four of the five developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office. These long-term permits were valid for 30 days (1 month) and a permit holder could purchase up to three consecutive 30-day permits (3 months). Once a permit holder purchased three consecutive 30-day permits, the permit could be extended to cover the remainder of the spring through early fall camping season. This permit structure, which effectively allowed for up to five months of free camping within developed recreation sites, was never formalized under a business plan or any other process that meets the requirements of the *Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004* (REA) (16 USC 6801 *et seq.*). This permit structure was also out of compliance with Bureau policy which provides that “persons using federal facilities and services should pay a

greater share of the associated costs than should the public as a whole” (H-2930-1) (USDI BLM 2014).

These long-term camping permits were also incorrectly characterized as “Long-Term Visitor Area” permits. None of the developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office are designated as Long-Term Visitor Areas (LTVAs) nor are they part of the Bureau’s LTVA program. The LTVA program is limited to “specially designated” areas managed by the California Desert District and the Colorado River District in Arizona (48 FR 41651 and 72 FR 54450) (USDI BLM 1983 and 2007).

Four of the five developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office underwent significant upgrades from 2010 to 2012, including the installation of new picnic tables, restrooms, campfire pits, lantern holders, information kiosks, and other amenities. In addition, potable water and dump stations were installed at three campgrounds and a horse corral and group campsite were installed at one campground. The total cost of upgrades was \$3.6 million.

Fees for developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office were last established in 2005 and have not changed since that time.

## **i. Visitor Demographics and Trends**

The eastern Sierra region of California provides a wide spectrum of recreation opportunities and hosts visitors from local, regional, national and international locales. The Bishop Field Office is located along U.S. Highway 395, the only major north-south highway in eastern California which is commonly used to travel from southern California to northwestern Nevada. All five developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office are located within easy access of Highway 395. The field office is also located on a popular sightseeing route from San Francisco, California, to Las Vegas, Nevada that includes destinations such as Yosemite National Park, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area and Mount Whitney on the Inyo National Forest, and Death Valley National Park.

The Bishop Field Office manages public lands in two of the most sparsely populated counties in California and public lands comprise most of the land base in both Inyo and Mono counties. The 2010 U.S. Census reported a total population of 18,546 for Inyo County and 14,202 for Mono County, yielding population densities of two and four persons per square mile, respectively.<sup>4</sup> The predominant and closest visitor markets for the Bishop Field Office are southern California including the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area, the San Francisco Bay area in northern California, the Reno-Carson City area in northwestern Nevada, and the Las Vegas area in southern Nevada. These locations range between 200 to 500 miles from the field office.

While no visitor surveys have been conducted on public lands administered by the Bishop Field Office in recent years, the Inyo National Forest conducted a National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) survey in 2011. Because of the geographic overlap between the Bishop Field Office and the Inyo National Forest, it is likely that the survey findings are representative of visitation to BLM administered public lands in the region. That survey found that 93.3% of respondents identified themselves as Caucasian, with 10.3% identifying themselves as being of Hispanic heritage. Visitor household incomes in the \$50,000 to \$74,999 and \$150,000 and up categories were the largest categories reported, representing 23% and 22% of respondents respectively.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2010. <http://www.census.gov/2010census/popmap/ipmtext.php?fl=06>

Foreign travelers accounted for 6.6% of area visitors and the average group size of visitors was 3.5 people. Visitation to the Inyo National Forest by persons with disabilities was low; the 2011 NVUM survey reported that 2.5% of visits included a group member with a disability.<sup>5</sup>

In 2011 the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) conducted a roadside intercept study on U.S. Highway 395 and U.S. Highway 6 to obtain relevant data about trip movement and travel patterns. The survey period included both winter and summer seasons. The Caltrans survey found that almost 61% of people were traveling for recreational reasons. The main origin of travelers to the eastern Sierra was from the southern California, which accounted for 47% percent of vehicles entering the survey area. Visitors from Nevada accounted for 16% of respondents. The Caltrans survey also found that 54% of those surveyed planned to spend one to three nights in Inyo or Mono counties, with 18.9% planning to stay in a campground.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Forest Service, *National Visitor Use Monitoring Results: Inyo National Forest, 2011*.  
<http://apps.fs.usda.gov/nrm/nvum/results/A05004.aspx/Round3>

<sup>6</sup> California Department of Transportation, *US 395 Origination & Destination Study, 2011*.  
[http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist9/planning/docs/o\\_d\\_study\\_2011\\_2.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist9/planning/docs/o_d_study_2011_2.pdf)

### III. Bishop Field Office Campground Facilities

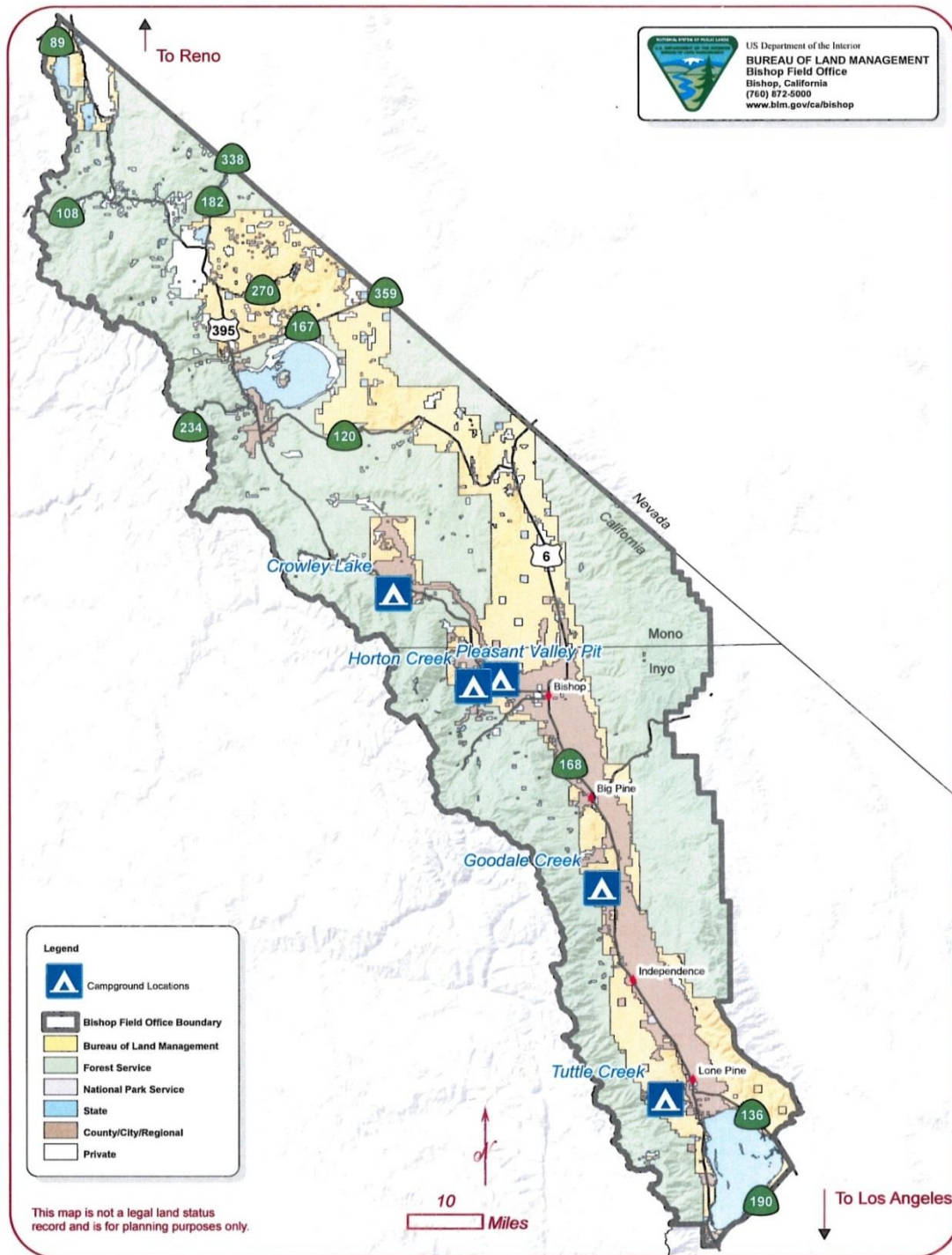


Figure 1: Bishop Field Office Developed Campground Locations

## i. Tuttle Creek Campground

Tuttle Creek Campground is located just west of Lone Pine in Inyo County at an elevation of 5,120 feet. The campground sits in the desert scrub-sagebrush steppe ecotone of the Owens Valley and is shadowed by some of the most impressive peaks in the Sierra Nevada. Mount Whitney and Mount Williamson both rise to over 14,000 feet west of the campground. To the north and east are the Alabama Hills, with their world-famous movie history, colorful spring wildflower displays, and scenic motor touring opportunities. Beyond the Alabama Hills, the Owens Valley continues to the north bordered by the rugged Inyo Mountains on the east. Campsites are available on both sides of the creek. Camping is good throughout the year, along with opportunities for exploring, hiking, and sightseeing. Anglers can enjoy fishing for rainbow and brown trout during the open season.



<b>Tuttle Creek Campground</b>	
<b>Open:</b>	Open Year Round, weather permitting.
<b>Site Fees:</b>	First come, first served. No reservations accepted except for group campsite. Cost \$8.00/night per site, long-term camping permits accepted in designated sites. Interagency Senior and Interagency Access passes (previously Golden Age and Golden Access passes) accepted for a 50% discount on daily fee and a 20% discount on 30-day long-term camping permit fee.
<b>Number of Sites:</b>	83 RV/tent sites, some pull through trailer spaces.
<b>Group Campsite:</b>	One group site is located on the southeastern loop with 6 picnic tables and 6 fire rings. This site is reservation only, \$30/night, please call (760) 872-5008 to reserve.
<b>Usage:</b>	Moderate.
<b>Busiest Season:</b>	Spring and Fall.
<b>Restrictions:</b>	Dogs must be under the owner's control at all times. This is bear country so food must be secured overnight and when not attended. Always keep a clean camp and do not feed wildlife.
<b>Closest Town:</b>	Lone Pine, 4.5 miles east: gas, restaurants, groceries, hardware, climbing supplies, and sporting goods.
<b>Water:</b>	Drinking water available March to October, weather permitting.
<b>Restrooms:</b>	9 Vault Toilets.
<b>Dump Station:</b>	Cost \$5.00. Recreation use passes not valid for dump station use, no discounts given. Closed in winter.
<b>Campground Host:</b>	On-Site, depending on visitor use levels.
<b>Other Amenities:</b>	Two horse corrals (please call ahead to confirm availability). Must provide weed free feed only. Campfire rings (bring your own wood), tables, and lantern holders.

## ii. Goodale Creek Campground

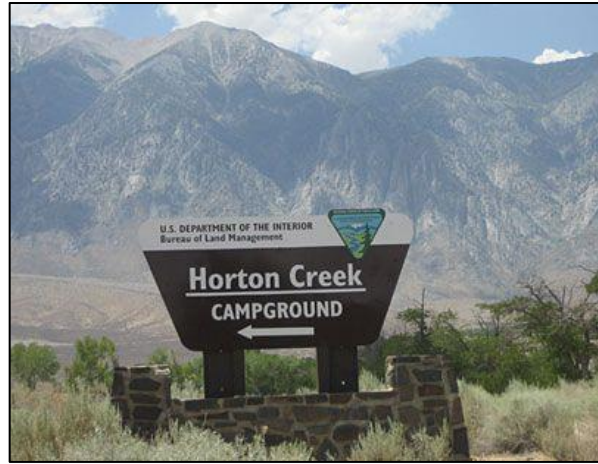
Goodale Creek Campground is located just west of Aberdeen in Inyo County at an elevation of 4,440 feet. Tucked into the foothills of the Sierra Nevada and situated among several interesting volcanic lava flow formations, the campground provides impressive views of the Sierra Nevada to the west and the Inyo Mountains and Owens Valley to the east. The climate is high desert. Spring and fall are ideal times for camping. Summers can be very hot and dry with only the hardiest of campers seeking out this campground. Campsites are available on both sides of the creek with some trees and willows scattered throughout the sites. Goodale Creek Campground appeals primarily to visitors who have travelled to the area for years and enjoy a nice quiet campground. Fishing is good and anglers can pursue rainbow and brown trout during the open season. From late-fall through early spring, wildlife enthusiasts enjoy outstanding opportunities to view migratory mule deer on nearby alluvial fans and lava flows that comprise the Goodale winter range. Visitors also have the convenience of being fairly close to the towns of Independence and Big Pine, which are only 12 to 15 miles away. Goodale Creek Campground is easily accessible and provides a quiet rest stop for weary U.S. Highway 395 travelers who often camp for one night only.



<b>Goodale Creek Campground</b>	
<b>Open:</b>	Open Year Round, weather permitting.
<b>Site Fees:</b>	First come, first served. No reservations accepted. Cost \$5.00/night per site, long-term camping permits accepted in designated sites. Interagency Senior and Interagency Access passes (previously Golden Age and Golden Access passes) accepted for a 50% discount on daily fee and 30-day long-term camping permit fee.
<b>Number of Sites:</b>	43 RV/tent sites, some pull through trailer spaces.
<b>Usage:</b>	Moderate.
<b>Busiest Season:</b>	Spring and Fall.
<b>Restrictions:</b>	Horses and horse trailers prohibited in the campground. Dogs must be under the owner's control at all times. Always keep a clean camp and do not feed wildlife.
<b>Closest Town:</b>	Aberdeen, directly east: convenience store and cafe. Independence, 12 miles south: gas, restaurants, and convenience store. Big Pine, 15 miles north: gas, restaurants, and groceries.
<b>Water:</b>	No drinking water available.
<b>Restrooms:</b>	3 Vault Toilets.
<b>Campground Host:</b>	On-Site, depending on visitor use levels.
<b>Other Amenities:</b>	Campfire rings (bring your own wood), tables, and lantern holders.

### iii. Horton Creek Campground

Horton Creek Campground is located just south of Round Valley in northern Inyo County at an elevation of 5,000 feet. Situated on an expansive alluvial fan next to Horton Creek, outstanding views of the Sierra Nevada including Mount Tom and the Wheeler Crest abound. Large numbers of wintering mule deer are often found on the adjacent alluvial fans during the late spring and early fall camping seasons. Nearby are the Tungsten Hills, also managed by the BLM, a very popular area for OHV activities, horseback riding, hiking, and rock hounding. Mountaineers and climbers often stay at Horton Creek Campground and use it as a base camp for exploring nearby peaks and bouldering areas. Visitors can enjoy a myriad of recreational opportunities in the surrounding area including fishing, hunting, hiking, biking, sightseeing, and bird watching. Visitors also have the convenience of being fairly close to the city of Bishop, which is only 12 miles away.



<b>Horton Creek Campground</b>	
<b>Open</b>	Normal season of operation is May 1 to October 31, weather permitting.
<b>Site Fees:</b>	First come, first served. No reservations accepted. Cost \$8.00/night per site, long-term camping permits accepted in designated sites. Interagency Senior and Interagency Access passes (previously Golden Age and Golden Access passes) accepted for a 50% discount on daily fee and a 20% discount on 30-day long-term camping permit fee.
<b>Number of Sites:</b>	49 RV/tent sites, some pull through trailer spaces.
<b>Usage:</b>	Moderate.
<b>Busiest Season:</b>	September through October.
<b>Restrictions:</b>	Horses and horse trailers prohibited in the campground. Dogs must be under the owner's control at all times. Always keep a clean camp and do not feed wildlife.
<b>Closest Town:</b>	Bishop, 12 miles southeast: gas, restaurants, groceries, hardware, climbing supplies, and sporting goods.
<b>Water:</b>	Drinking water available, weather permitting.
<b>Restrooms:</b>	5 Vault Toilets.
<b>Dump Station:</b>	Cost \$5.00. Recreation use passes not valid for dump station use, no discounts given. Closed when campground is closed.
<b>Campground Host:</b>	On-Site, depending on visitor use levels.
<b>Other Amenities:</b>	Campfire rings (bring your own wood), tables, and lantern holders.



#### iv. Pleasant Valley Pit Campground

Pleasant Valley Pit Campground sits just outside of Bishop in Inyo County at an elevation of 4,460 feet. The campground is nestled in a reclaimed borrow pit, at the edge of the Volcanic Tableland near several prime bouldering areas including the Happy Boulders and Sad Boulders. Bolted rock climbing is also available nearby in the Owens River Gorge. The campground provides easy access to fishing and other recreational opportunities found along the Owens River. There are no trees, but the campground is somewhat sheltered. The campground provides impressive views of the Sierra Nevada escarpment, the Owens Valley, and the White Mountains. The Pleasant Valley Pit Campground was developed primarily to provide camping opportunities for climbers who flock to the Bishop area during the winter and spring. Prior to development of this campground, unmanaged dispersed camping was having substantial adverse impacts on the cultural and natural values of the nearby Volcanic Tableland. Fondly referred to as the “PV Pit” by locals and visitors alike, the Pleasant Valley Pit Campground allows climbers and other visitors to the area to do their part to protect the fragile ecosystem and associated sensitive resources found on the Volcanic Tableland.



<b>Pleasant Valley Pit Campground</b>	
<b>Open:</b>	Open Year Round, weather permitting.
<b>Site Fees:</b>	First come, first served. No reservations accepted. Cost \$5.00/night per site, long-term camping permits accepted in designated sites. Interagency Senior and Interagency Access passes (previously Golden Age and Golden Access passes) accepted for a 50% discount on daily fee and 30-day long-term camping permit fee.
<b>Number of Sites:</b>	75 RV/tent sites, some pull through trailer spaces.
<b>Usage:</b>	Moderate.
<b>Busiest Season:</b>	November through April.
<b>Restrictions:</b>	Horses and horse trailers prohibited in the campground. Dogs must be under the owner’s control at all times. Always keep a clean camp and do not feed wildlife.
<b>Closest Town:</b>	Bishop, 8 miles south: gas, restaurants, groceries, hardware, climbing supplies, and sporting goods.
<b>Water:</b>	No drinking water available.
<b>Restrooms:</b>	4 Vault Toilets.
<b>Campground Host:</b>	On-Site, depending on visitor use levels.
<b>Other Amenities:</b>	Campfire rings (bring your own wood) and tables.

## v. Crowley Lake Campground

Crowley Lake Campground is located just north of Tom's Place in Mono County at an elevation of 6,980 feet. Nested in the Long Valley Caldera at the base of the Sierra Nevada escarpment, the campground offers outstanding views of Lake Crowley and the Glass Mountains to the north, and expansive views of the White Mountains to the east. Popular recreational activities in the area include lake and stream fishing, boating, windsurfing, OHV touring, hunting, horseback riding, hiking, and wildlife viewing. The Crowley Lake Campground provides easy access to some of the best fishing available in the eastern Sierra including Lake Crowley, Convict Lake, Hot Creek, the upper Owens River, Rock Creek Canyon, and the Mammoth Lakes Basin. Visitors also have the convenience of being fairly close to the town of Mammoth Lakes, which is only twelve miles away.



<b>Crowley Lake Campground</b>	
<b>Open:</b>	Normal season of operation is late April to late October, weather permitting.
<b>Site Fees:</b>	First come, first served. No reservations accepted. Cost \$8.00/night per site, long-term camping permits accepted in designated sites. Interagency Senior and Interagency Access passes (previously Golden Age and Golden Access passes) accepted for a 50% discount on daily fee and a 20% discount on 30-day long-term camping permit fee.
<b>Number of Sites:</b>	47 RV/tent sites, some pull through trailer spaces.
<b>Usage:</b>	Moderate.
<b>Busiest Season:</b>	Eastern Sierra trout fishing opener (last weekend in April), Fourth of July weekend, and July through August.
<b>Restrictions:</b>	Horses and horse trailers prohibited in the campground. Dogs must be under the owner's control at all times. Always keep a clean camp and do not feed wildlife.
<b>Closest Town:</b>	Crowley Lake, 2 miles south: gas and convenience store. Mammoth Lakes, 12 miles northwest: gas, restaurants, groceries, hardware, and sporting goods.
<b>Water:</b>	Drinking water available from mid-May to October 31, weather permitting.
<b>Restrooms:</b>	4 Vault Toilets.
<b>Dump Station:</b>	Cost \$5.00. Recreation use passes not valid for dump station use, no discounts given. Closed when campground is closed.
<b>Campground Host:</b>	On-Site, depending on visitor use levels.
<b>Other Amenities:</b>	Campfire rings (bring your own wood), tables, and lantern holders.

## **IV. Bishop Field Office Recreation Use Permit Program**

### **i. Campground History**

The Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake campgrounds were all built in the 1960's and various campground fee programs have been in place off and on for over 30 years. In the early 1980's, the BLM discontinued the fee program because of the inability to provide potable water to the campsites due to aging water systems. During the ensuing decade, the campgrounds reverted to a voluntary donation system and collections were deposited into a Bureau-wide contributed fund account. In 1996, the Bishop Field Office was designated as Fee Demonstration Site and donations were deposited into the field office's campground account. These contributed funds were used to partially offset the costs of campground operations and maintenance.

In 1997 the Bishop Field Office experienced an explosion in visitation from rock climbers who were inclined to disperse camp on public land near popular bouldering areas. This resulted in damage to archaeological sites and threats to other sensitive resource values associated with the fragile ecosystem of the Volcanic Tableland. This visitation occurred primarily during the winter and spring when existing developed campgrounds in the area were closed. In response, the BLM built the Pleasant Valley Pit (PV Pit) Campground in 1999, which successfully redirected camping from fragile areas into a previously disturbed area that was well suited for concentrated use. Voluntary donations were accepted at the PV Pit Campground up until the passage of the *Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act* (REA) (16 USC 6801 *et seq.*) in 2004.

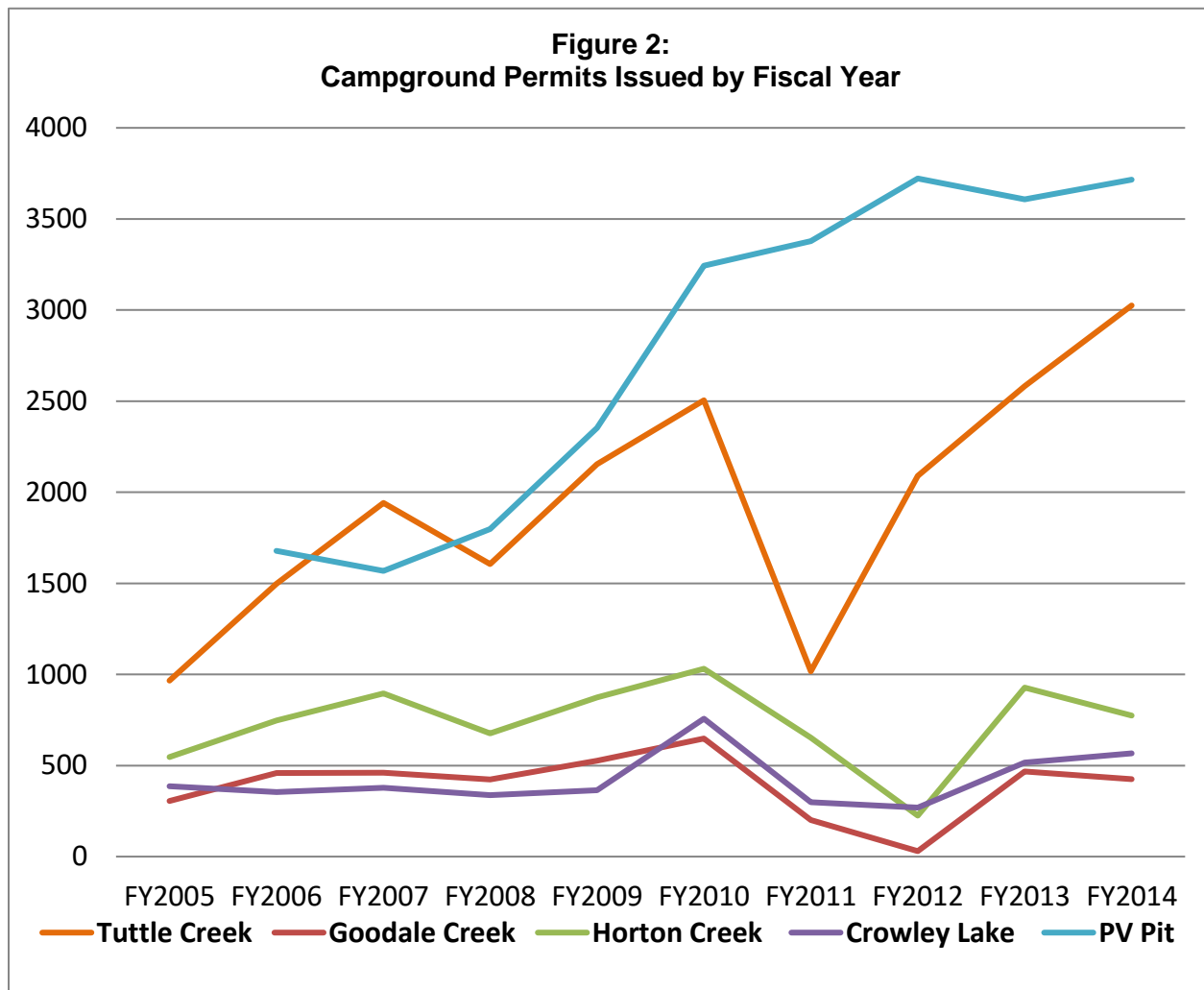
The long-term camping permit program was established in 2001 to accommodate demand for long-term seasonal visitation and to protect cultural and natural resources by concentrating camping in established campgrounds. The intent of the program was to provide long-term camping opportunities at four of the five developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office during the peak camping season in the eastern Sierra. The Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake campgrounds were incorporated into the program and these developed campgrounds were made available for long-term use. The PV Pit Campground was not incorporated in to the Bishop Field Office long-term camping program at that time.

With the passage of the REA in 2004, all five of the developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office were found to meet the expanded amenity fee criteria as defined under the REA. In May 2005, after approval from the Bureau's Washington Office and six months of public notification, the Bishop Field Office implemented daily fees for all five campgrounds and long-term camping permit fees for four of the five campgrounds.

### **ii. Campground Visitation**

Daily Recreation Use Permits (BLM Form 1370-36) sold at developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office increased at the PV Pit and Tuttle Creek campgrounds between 2005 and 2010 but remained steady at the Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake campgrounds during that same time period (Figure 2). Between 2010 and 2012 the BLM invested \$3.6 million to upgrade all five campgrounds (Figure 3). During the upgrades, the Tuttle Creek and Goodale Creek campgrounds were closed for five months between May and September of 2011. The Horton Creek and Crowley Lake campgrounds were closed for two months during the upgrades from August to October of 2011. The upgrade closures dramatically

reduced visitation in these campgrounds during 2011 and 2012 (Figure 2). Visitation rebounded in these four campgrounds in 2013 following completion of the upgrades (Figure 2). The PV Pit Campground was not closed during the minor upgrades that it received. Visitation at the PV Pit Campground has steadily increased since fees were instituted in 2005 (Figure 2).



Long-term camping permit sales have been variable since 2005, ranging from a low of 20 long-term permit holders in 2009 to a high of 70 long-term permit holders in 2014. On average, 36 long-term camping permit holders per year stayed in developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office between 2005 and 2014. The number of long-term camping permit holders per year has increased since campground upgrades were completed in 2012.

Between 2005 and 2014, long-term camping permits were only available for use in the Tuttle Creek, Gooddale Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake campgrounds. These long-term permits were valid for 30 days (1 month) and a permit holder could purchase up to three consecutive 30-day permits (3 months). Once a permit holder had purchased three consecutive 30-day permits, the permit could be extended to cover the entire spring through early fall camping season (approximately eight months). The PV Pit Campground was not included in the previous long-term camping permit program for developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office.

The long-term camping permit structure outlined above effectively allowed for up to five months of free camping within developed recreation sites. This permit structure was never formalized under a business plan or other process that meets the requirements of the REA. This permit structure was also out of compliance with Bureau policy which provides that “persons using federal facilities and services should pay a greater share of the associated costs than should the public as a whole” (H-2930-1) (USDI BLM 2014).

These long-term camping permits were also incorrectly characterized as “Long-Term Visitor Area” permits. None of the developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office are designated as Long-Term Visitor Areas (LTVAs) nor are they part of the Bureau's LTVA program. The LTVA program is limited to “specially designated” areas managed by the California Desert District and the Colorado River District in Arizona (48 FR 41651 and 72 FR 54450) (USDI BLM 1983 and 2007).

Observations from BLM staff and volunteer campground hosts indicate that visitation at the Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake campgrounds is highest during the spring and fall when temperatures are cooler and other campgrounds in the eastern Sierra are closed due to lingering spring snowpack or the approaching winter. During this high use period, the Tuttle Creek and Crowley Lake campgrounds receive the most visitation and both can be full on busy weekends. The Goodale Creek and Horton Creek campgrounds receive less use and normally do not exceed 50% occupancy. During July and August daytime temperatures frequently exceed 100° Fahrenheit in the Owens Valley and visitation drops substantially. However, on holiday weekends such as the Fourth of July, the Tuttle Creek and Crowley Lake campgrounds can be at 100% occupancy regardless of the daytime temperatures.

At the PV Pit Campground, visitation dramatically increases around the Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents Day, and Easter holidays and the campground is often completely full during these times. Spring also brings increased visitation as college students from around the country travel to the eastern Sierra to enjoy camping and climbing during their spring break. Occupancy numbers at the PV Pit Campground correspond with trail counter data from nearby bouldering areas, indicating that rock climbers still comprise the bulk of PV Pit visitors during the fall through spring. The bouldering season in the Bishop area typically extends from early November through April or May, depending on weather, and the PV Pit Campground is generally busy throughout this entire season. Visitation at the PV Pit Campground tends to decrease as temperatures increase in April and May.

Visitor comment forms collected over the years indicate that visitors come back for repeated visits and enjoy the natural setting and simplicity of BLM campgrounds in the eastern Sierra. Prior to implementation of fees under the REA, campground donations were steady, indicating a public willingness to provide financial support for the operation and maintenance for Bishop Field Office campgrounds.

### iii. Recent Campground Capital Improvements

Between 2010 and 2012 the BLM invested \$3.6 million to upgrade the five developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office. Major improvements included the addition of potable water and dump stations at the Tuttle Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake campgrounds. New vault toilets, picnic tables, fire rings, lantern holders, kiosks, signs, and other amenities were also installed.

Figure 3 outlines the upgrades that occurred at each campground.

<b>Figure 3: 2010-2012 Campground Upgrades</b>	
<b>Tuttle Creek Campground</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Constructed official host site</li><li>• Paved entrance road</li><li>• Installed dump station for visitor use and plumbing for host site</li><li>• Drilled potable water well, installed solar array to power well, and installed new water storage tanks to comply with American Water Works Association standards</li><li>• Planted native shade trees</li><li>• Installed new vault toilets</li><li>• Created an ADA soft slope for walking to vault toilets area in several central sites</li><li>• Installed new picnic tables, fire rings, and lantern holders at each campsite</li><li>• Improved water control devices for erosion control</li><li>• Installed new kiosks, one with large camp site map</li><li>• Installed new signs including a new entrance sign, speed limit signs, interpretive signs, and campsite number signs</li><li>• Installed two horse corrals and one group campsite</li></ul>	
<b>Goodale Creek Campground</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Constructed official host site</li><li>• Planted native shade trees</li><li>• Installed new vault toilets</li><li>• Installed new picnic tables, fire rings, and lantern holders at each campsite</li><li>• Installed a "Nature Walk Path" for visitors</li><li>• Improved water control devices for erosion control</li><li>• Installed sediment tank and water storage tank for irrigation</li><li>• Installed new kiosks, one with large camp site map</li><li>• Installed new signs including a new entrance sign, speed limit signs, interpretive signs, and campsite number signs</li></ul>	

### **Horton Creek Campground**

- Constructed official host site
- Installed dump station for visitor use and plumbing for host site
- Drilled potable water well, installed solar array to power well, and installed new water storage tanks to comply with American Water Works Association standards
- Planted native shade trees
- Created an ADA soft slope for walking to vault toilets area in several central sites
- Installed new vault toilets
- Installed new picnic tables, fire rings, and lantern holders at each campsite
- Improved water control devices for erosion control
- Installed new kiosks, one with large camp site map
- Installed new signs including a new entrance sign, speed limit signs, interpretive signs, and campsite number signs

### **Crowley Lake Campground**

- Constructed official host site
- Installed dump station for visitor use
- Drilled potable water well, installed solar array to power well, and installed new water storage tanks to comply with American Water Works Association standards
- Planted native shade trees
- Installed new vault toilets
- Installed new picnic tables, fire rings, and lantern holders at each campsite
- Improved water control devices for erosion control
- Installed new kiosks, one with large camp site map
- Installed new signs including a new entrance sign, speed limit signs, interpretive signs, and campsite number signs

### **Pleasant Valley Pit Campground**

- Added one additional vault toilet

## V. Financial Analysis

### i. Previous Fee Schedule

Daily site fees for developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office were last established in 2005 and are listed in Figure 4.

<b>Campground</b>	<b>Fee</b>
Tuttle Creek	\$5/site
Goodale Creek	\$5/site
Horton Creek	\$5/site
Pleasant Valley Pit	\$2/car
Crowley Lake	\$5/site

After the addition of special amenities such as group campsites, horse corrals, and dump stations to some campgrounds a part of the campground renovations completed between 2010 and 2012, a fee schedule was developed for their use. Special amenity fees for developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office were last established in 2012 and are listed in Figure 5.

<b>Amenity</b>	<b>Fee</b>
Tuttle Creek Group Site	\$30/group
Tuttle Creek Horse Corral	\$5/corral
Dump Stations (Tuttle Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake)	\$5/dump

The long-term camping permit program began in 2001. Fees for long-term camping within developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office were last established in 2005 and are shown in Figure 6.

<b>Permit Duration</b>	<b>Fee</b>
30-Day Permit (1 month)	Available for Tuttle Creek, Horton Creek, Goodale Creek, and Crowley Lake  \$100 (\$3.22/day)
90-Day Permit (3 months) (up to 5 months free)	Available for Tuttle Creek, Horton Creek, Goodale Creek, and Crowley Lake  \$300 for 3 months (valid for up to 8 months) (\$1.25 - 3.33/day)



## ii. Operating Costs and Revenue

Campground operations are currently funded through a combination of annually appropriated dollars and fees collected in the campgrounds. Annual campground operating costs in 2014 were estimated to be approximately \$216,887 (Figure 7). Total revenue has increased steadily over time to \$71,196 in 2014 (Figure 8). Based on 2014 numbers, fee revenue currently covers approximately 33% of the annual campground operating costs. Fees generated by short-term visitors cover about 25% of the annual operating costs. Fees generated by long-term visitors cover about 8% of the annual operating costs. Short-term visitors accounted for 8,505 visitor days while long-term permit holders accounted for up to 16,800 visitor days.

**Figure 7: Estimated Annual Campground Operating Costs**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Campground Hosts</b>	<b>\$19,040</b>
Tuttle Creek (Year Round)	\$6,188
Goodale Creek (April to Nov. 1)	\$3,332
Horton Creek (May to Nov. 1)	\$2856
Crowley Lake (May to Nov. 1)	\$2856
Pleasant Valley Pit (Labor Day to Memorial Day)	\$3808
<b>Pumping and Trash Service</b>	<b>17,000</b>
Pumping and Dump Stations	\$7,500
Trash Service	\$9,500
<b>Water Testing</b>	<b>\$1,500</b>
Tuttle Creek	\$500
Horton Creek	\$500
Crowley Lake	\$500
<b>Materials, Repairs, and Maintenance</b>	<b>\$6,400</b>
Toilet Paper	\$1,200
Cleaning Supplies	\$1,200
Repairs (broken water pipes, etc)	\$4,000
<b>Vehicle Costs</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>
Gas and Maintenance	\$12,000
<b>Salary</b>	<b>\$165,500</b>
Park Ranger (100% of one GS-09)	\$73,000
Recreation Technician (100% of one GS-05 seasonal)	\$20,000
Outdoor Recreation Planner (25% of one GS-11)	\$21,750
Law Enforcement Officer (25% of one GS-11)	\$26,750
Administration (purchasing, contract administration, collections accounting, supervision, etc.)	\$24,000
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED OPERATING COSTS</b>	<b>\$216,887</b>

**Figure 8: Bishop Field Office Campground Permit Numbers and Revenue FY 2009 to FY 2014**

Campground	FY2009		FY2010		FY2011		FY2012		FY2013		FY2014	
	Permits	Revenue	Permits	Revenue	Permits	Revenue	Permits	Revenue	Permits	Revenue	Permits	Revenue
Tuttle Creek (\$5.00/site)	2,153	\$15,129	2,504	\$15,624	1,017	\$8,138	2,090	\$15,455	2,582	\$18,513	3,025	\$20,358
Goodale Creek (\$5.00/site)	526	\$3,659	648	\$4,924	200	\$133	30	\$166	468	\$2,945	425	\$2,857
Horton Creek (\$5.00/site)	873	\$6,062	1,031	\$7,044	653	\$5,174	225	\$1,572	928	\$7,254	774	\$6,803
Crowley Lake (\$5.00/site)	364	\$2,860	757	\$5,633	299	\$2,358	269	\$2,433	516	\$4,923	566	\$4,719
Pleasant Valley Pit (\$2.00/vehicle)	2,353	\$12,443	3,243	\$16,373	3,378	\$17,310	3,722	\$17,167	3,608	\$17,514	3715	\$18,759
<b>Daily Permit Sub Total</b>	<b>6,269</b>	<b>\$40,153</b>	<b>8,183</b>	<b>\$49,598</b>	<b>5,547</b>	<b>\$33,113</b>	<b>6,336</b>	<b>\$36,792</b>	<b>8,102</b>	<b>\$51,150</b>	<b>8,505</b>	<b>\$53,496</b>
Long-Term Camping Permits	20	\$6,000	44	\$13,200	29	\$6,200	34	\$7,000	54	\$12,300	70	\$17,700
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$46,153</b>		<b>\$62,798</b>		<b>\$39,313</b>		<b>\$43,792</b>		<b>\$63,450</b>		<b>\$71,196</b>

## VI. Fair Market Value Assessment

To determine whether BLM campground permits are priced at a fair market rate, a survey and assessment of fees at other area campgrounds was conducted (Figure 9). This survey and assessment revealed that all five BLM campgrounds are priced well below other campgrounds in the eastern Sierra. Most U.S. Forest Service (USFS) campgrounds, which are priced from \$18 to \$22 per night, are destination campgrounds where people stay for easy access to lakes and other popular recreation sites directly from their campsites. Most Inyo County campgrounds, which are priced from \$10 to \$14 per night, contain more shade trees than BLM campgrounds and therefore are more popular during the hot summer months.

A fair market value assessment was also undertaken for horse corrals, group campsites, and dump stations. The only horse corral available for short-term rent in the vicinity of the Tuttle Creek Campground is at the Cottonwood Equestrian Camp in Lone Pine, which currently charges \$12 per night with a one night stay limit. This is more than double the current price of the Tuttle Creek horse corral which is \$5 per night and more than the BLM proposed fee of \$10 per night.

Comparable rates for group campsites at the Lone Pine and Whitney Portal campgrounds, both operated by Forest Service concessioners, are \$60 per night. This is twice as much as the BLM group site at the Tuttle Creek Campground which is \$30 per night and proposed to remain at that rate at this time.

Dump stations in the Owens Valley generally charge from \$5 to \$8 per dump. This is in line with the current and BLM proposed rate of \$5 per dump at the Tuttle Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake campground dump stations.

Finally, a market assessment of long-term camping and RV options was conducted. The Inyo County Department of Parks and Recreation is the only other public agency campground operator in the eastern Sierra that offers a long-term camping permit. They issue a 30-day senior (55 and over) camping permit for \$110 and unlike the BLM long-term camping permit, the permit is restricted to a designated site in a specified campground. A survey of local RV parks revealed that the Boulder Creek RV Park in Lone Pine, located in the vicinity of Tuttle Creek Campground, sells a monthly permit that costs \$725 during the winter and \$825 during the summer with additional charges for electric. All other RV parks only offer weekly rates. The Creekside RV Park, which is located along the South Fork of Bishop Creek, charges \$329 per week or approximately \$1,316 per month with full hookups.

**Figure 9: Comparison of Area Camping Facilities, Including Fees**

<b>Tuttle Creek Vicinity</b>	<b>Fees</b>	<b>Drinking Water</b>	<b>Toilets</b>	<b>Agency</b>
Tuttle Creek Campground	\$5 per site	Yes	Vault	BLM
Diaz Lake Campground	\$14 per vehicle	Yes	Flush	Inyo County
Portagee Joe Campground	\$10 per vehicle	Yes	Vault	Inyo County
Lone Pine Campground	\$19 per site + \$5 for additional vehicle	Yes	Vault	USFS
Whitney Portal Campground	\$21 + \$7 for additional vehicle	Yes	Vault	USFS

<b>Goodale Creek Vicinity</b>	<b>Fees</b>	<b>Drinking Water</b>	<b>Toilets</b>	<b>Agency</b>
Goodale Creek Campground	\$5 per site	No	Vault	BLM
Taboose Creek Campground	\$14 per vehicle	Yes	Vault	Inyo County
Tinemaha Campground	\$10 per vehicle	Yes	Vault	Inyo County
Greys Meadow Campground	\$18 + \$7 for additional vehicle	Yes	Vault	USFS
Onion Valley Campground	\$18 + \$7 for additional vehicle	Yes	Vault	USFS

<b>Horton Creek Vicinity</b>	<b>Fees</b>	<b>Drinking Water</b>	<b>Toilets</b>	<b>Agency</b>
Horton Creek Campground	\$5 per site	Yes	Vault	BLM
Millpond Campground	\$23 + \$5 for additional vehicle	Yes	Flush	Inyo County

<b>Pleasant Valley Pit Vicinity</b>	<b>Fees</b>	<b>Drinking Water</b>	<b>Toilets</b>	<b>Agency</b>
Pleasant Valley Pit Campground	\$2 per vehicle	No	Vault	BLM
Pleasant Valley Campground	\$14 per vehicle	Yes	Vault	Inyo County

<b>Crowley Lake Vicinity</b>	<b>Fees</b>	<b>Drinking Water</b>	<b>Toilets</b>	<b>Agency</b>
Crowley Lake BLM Campground	\$5 per site	Yes	Vault	BLM
McGee Creek Campground	\$20 + \$7 for additional vehicle	Yes	Flush	USFS
Convict Lake Campground	\$22 + \$5 for additional vehicle	Yes	Flush	USFS
French Camp Campground	\$22 + \$7 for additional vehicle	Yes	Flush	USFS
Tuff Campground	\$20 + \$7 for additional vehicle	Yes	Vault	USFS

## VII. Draft Campground Business Plan Fee Proposal

### i. Single Visit Camping Permits

In the *Draft Campground Business Plan* (USDI BLM 2015a) the Bishop Field Office proposed changing the single visit camping permit fee schedule to increase the amount of revenue available to offset the costs of campground operations, the costs of maintaining new amenities associated with recent campground upgrades (e.g. the addition of drinking water), and the costs of further improving these developed recreation sites. The draft fee schedule identified an initial daily fee rate, as well as a daily fee rate range that may be charged in the future. The intent of daily fee rate range is to provide the flexibility needed to change the fees if campground occupancy and/or operation and maintenance costs either increase or decrease in the future. Daily camping permits would continue to be available for all five developed campgrounds, with a maximum stay limit of 14 days per calendar year per campground and an overall stay limit of 28 days per calendar year (49 FR 40106) (USDI BLM 1984).

The BLM proposed daily site fee schedule as outlined in the *Draft Campground Business Plan* (USDI BLM 2015a) is summarized in Figure 10.

<b>Figure 10: Previous and BLM Proposed Daily Site Fees</b>			
<b>Campground</b>	<b>Current Fee<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>BLM Proposed Initial Fee<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>BLM Proposed Fee Range<sup>7</sup></b>
Tuttle Creek <sup>8</sup>	\$5/site	\$8/site	\$5 to \$10
Goodale Creek	\$5/site	\$5/site (no potable water)	\$5 to \$10
Horton Creek <sup>8</sup>	\$5/site	\$8/site	\$5 to \$10
Pleasant Valley Pit	\$2/car	\$5/site (no potable water)	\$5 to \$10
Crowley Lake <sup>8</sup>	\$5/site	\$8/site	\$5 to \$10

The BLM proposed fee schedule would increase the fee from \$5 per night to \$8 per night at campgrounds that now have drinking water (Tuttle Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake). This is below the Inyo County rate of \$10 dollars per night for a campsite with drinking water and vault toilets, and significantly less than the National Forest rates of \$18 to \$22 per night for campgrounds with drinking water and vault or flush toilets. The proposal to maintain lower rates at BLM campgrounds reflects the lack of shade trees and other destination specific amenities (i.e. a lake to swim in) associated with these campgrounds. The proposal would also change the daily fee at the Pleasant Valley Pit (PV Pit) Campground from \$2 per vehicle per night to \$5 per site per night. This would bring the daily site fee at the PV Pit Campground into alignment with the Goodale Creek Campground which also lacks drinking water.

Using FY14 Recreation Use Permit numbers, the proposed fee change would result in an estimated \$13,000, or about a 24% increase, in additional revenue per year being generated from daily fees for the Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake

<sup>7</sup> Interagency Senior and Interagency Access passes (previously Golden Age and Golden Access passes) accepted for a 50% discount on daily site fees. No discounts on special amenity fees.

<sup>8</sup> Potable drinking water and dump station available during the spring through early fall camping season, weather permitting. Daily site fee may be reduced to match the daily site fee for campgrounds without potable drinking water at the discretion of the Authorized Officer when potable drinking water is unavailable.

campgrounds combined. The increased revenue would be used to maintain and further improve the visitor experience at these developed recreation sites (see Section IX). The change in revenue at the PV Pit Campground is more difficult to project because of the proposed switch from a per car fee to a per site fee. At present, most PV Pit sites are occupied by two to three cars; therefore, it is most likely that the proposed fee change would not significantly change the revenue collected at this campground.

After the initial change in fees, campground fees at all five campgrounds would be set by the Authorized Officer every two years at a rate within the proposed daily fee rate range. Fee decisions would be based on multiple factors including the occupancy rate at each campground; the cost to government of operating, maintaining, and improving the campgrounds, and; the impacts of dispersed camping outside of the campgrounds on the cultural and natural resource values of surrounding public lands. Fees would be reviewed, and adjusted if needed, every two years in accordance with BLM policy (H-2930-1) (USDI BLM 2014) and in consultation with the Central California Resource Advisory Council (RAC).

## ii. Special Amenities

The Bishop Field Office also proposed changing the fee schedule for special amenities available in the Tuttle Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake campgrounds. The BLM proposed fee schedule for special amenities as outlined in the *Draft Campground Business Plan* (USDI BLM 2015a) is summarized in Figure 11.

As outlined in Figure 11, the Bishop Field Office did not propose changing the group campsite rate or dump station fees at this time. However, similar to the single visit camping permit fee schedule described above, the proposed special amenity fee schedule would provide the flexibility needed to change fees charged for these amenities within a fee rate range if operating costs and/or use-levels increase or decrease in the future. These potential future rates are within the range of rates charged at other area campgrounds for group campsites and dump stations.

<b>Amenity</b>	<b>Current Fee</b>	<b>BLM Proposed Initial Fee</b>	<b>BLM Proposed Fee Range</b>
Tuttle Creek Group Site	\$30	\$30	\$30 to \$50
Tuttle Creek Horse Corral	\$5	\$10	\$5 to \$12
Dump Stations (Tuttle Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake)	\$5	\$5	\$5 to \$8

The Bishop Field Office did propose changing the fee for use of the Tuttle Creek horse corrals from \$5 per night to \$10 per night at this time. While the horse corrals are a relatively new addition to the Tuttle Creek Campground, they have proven to be very popular and are subjected to heavy wear and tear. Charging \$10 per night is still below the market rate of \$12 per night and the additional revenue will be used to maintain the corrals over time. This proposal also provides the flexibility to set the future fee for the horse corrals within a fee rate range if maintenance costs and/or use-levels change in the future. The proposed fee range is within the market rate for the area and provides flexibility to lower or raise the rate if needed.

### iii. Long-Term Camping Permits

In the *Draft Campground Business Plan* (USDI BLM 2015a) the Bishop Field Office also proposed changing both the durations and fees for long-term camping permits (Figure 12). The current duration for the longest permit (up to eight months) significantly exceeds, and the current cost is significantly less expensive than, any other long-term camping option offered for developed campgrounds in the eastern Sierra region. The current permit structure, which effectively allows for up to five months of free camping within developed recreation sites, was never formalized under a business plan or any other process that meets the requirements of the *Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004* (REA) (16 USC 6801 *et seq.*). This permit structure is also out of compliance with Bureau policy which provides that “persons using federal facilities and services should pay a greater share of the associated costs than should the public as a whole” (H-2930-1) (USDI BLM 2014).

**Figure 12: Current and BLM Proposed Long-Term Camping Permit Durations and Fees**

Permit Duration	Current Permit Duration and Fee	BLM Proposed Permit Duration and Fee
30-Day Permit	Available for Tuttle Creek, Horton Creek, Goodale Creek, and Crowley Lake  \$100 (\$3.33/day)	Available for Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, Pleasant Valley Pit (PV Pit), and Crowley Lake  \$120 for 30 consecutive days (\$4/day)
90-Day Permit	Available for Tuttle Creek, Horton Creek, Goodale Creek, and Crowley Lake  \$300 for 3 months (valid for up to 8 months) (\$1.25 - 3.33/day)	Available for Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake  \$300 for 90 consecutive days (\$3.33/day)

Under the BLM fee proposal outlined in the *Draft Campground Business Plan* (USDI BLM 2015a), long-term camping permits would continue to be available for use in the Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake campgrounds. Both 30-day and 90-day permits would be available. The fee for the 30-day permit would be increased to \$120. The fee for the 90-day permit would remain at the previous rate of \$300.

The 30-day permit would be expanded to include use in the PV Pit Campground. The PV Pit Campground would not be available to 90-day permit holders because it is a highly popular campground during the winter and spring and is often at full occupancy on weekends and holidays. Long-term camping permit holders would be allowed to camp in developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office for a maximum of 90 days (three months) per calendar year using three 30-day permits or one 90-day permit.

## VIII. Central California RAC Supported Fee Proposal

In accordance with Section 804 of the *Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004* (REA) (16 USC 6801 *et seq.*) and BLM policy (H-2930-1) (USDI BLM 2014), the Central California Resource Advisory Council (RAC) was consulted and given opportunities to provide recommendations regarding the proposed fee adjustments. On October 20, 2016, the RAC voted unanimously to support a slightly revised fee proposal that was developed based on BLM review and consideration of public comments received on the draft business plan and recommendations provided by the RAC on October 29, 2015 and March 18, 2016. The RAC consultation and recommendation process is summarized in Section XI.iii.

The current, BLM proposed, and Central California RAC supported daily site fees and special amenity fees for developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office are summarized in Figure 13.

<b>Figure 13: Current, BLM Proposed, and RAC Supported Daily Site Fees and Special Amenity Fees</b>			
<b>Campground</b>	<b>Current Site/Amenity Fee<sup>9</sup></b>	<b>BLM Proposed Site/Amenity Fee<sup>9</sup></b>	<b>RAC Supported Site/Amenity Fee<sup>9</sup></b>
Tuttle Creek <sup>10</sup>	\$5/site	\$8/site (adjustable \$5 to \$10)	\$8/site (adjustable \$5 to \$15)
Goodale Creek	\$5/site	\$5/site (adjustable \$5 to \$10)	\$5/site (adjustable \$2 to \$10)
Horton Creek <sup>10</sup>	\$5/site	\$8/site (adjustable \$5 to \$10)	\$8/site (adjustable \$5 to \$15)
Pleasant Valley Pit (PV Pit)	\$2/car	\$5/site (adjustable \$5 to \$10)	\$5/site (adjustable \$2 to \$10)
Crowley Lake <sup>10</sup>	\$5/site	\$8/site (adjustable \$5 to \$10)	\$8/site (adjustable \$5 to \$15)
Tuttle Creek <sup>10</sup> Group Site	\$30/group	\$30/group (adjustable \$30 to \$50)	\$30/group (adjustable \$20 to \$50)
Tuttle Creek Horse Corral	\$5/corral	\$10/corral (adjustable \$5 to \$12)	\$10/corral (adjustable \$5 to \$15)
Dump Stations (Tuttle Creek, Horton Creek and Crowley Lake)	\$5/dump	\$5/dump (adjustable \$5 to \$8)	\$5/dump (adjustable \$5 to \$20)

The Central California RAC supported fee proposal identifies initial daily site and special amenity fee rates, as well as a fee rate range that may be charged in the future. The intent of the fee rate range is to provide the flexibility needed to change fees if campground occupancy, special amenity use, and/or operation and maintenance costs either increase or decrease in the future. Daily camping permits would continue to be available for all five developed

<sup>9</sup> Interagency Senior and Interagency Access passes (previously Golden Age and Golden Access passes) accepted for a 50% discount on daily site fees. No discounts on special amenity fees.

<sup>10</sup> Potable drinking water and dump station available during the spring through early fall camping season, weather permitting. Daily site fee may be reduced to match the daily site fee for campgrounds without potable drinking water at the discretion of the Authorized Officer when potable drinking water is unavailable.



campgrounds, with a maximum stay limit of 14 days per calendar year per campground and an overall stay limit of 28 days per calendar year (49 FR 40106) (USDI BLM 1984).

After the initial change in fees, daily site and special amenity fees would be set by the Authorized Officer at a rate within the RAC supported fee schedule. Fee decisions would be based on multiple factors including the occupancy rate and use of special amenities at each campground; the cost to government of operating, maintaining, and improving the campgrounds and special amenities, and; the impacts of dispersed camping outside of the campgrounds on the cultural and natural resource values of surrounding public lands. Fees would be reviewed, and adjusted if needed, every two years in accordance with BLM policy (H-2930-1) (USDI BLM 2014) and in consultation with the Central California RAC.

The current, BLM proposed, and Central California RAC supported long-term camping permit fee schedules for developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office are summarized below:

<b>Figure 14: Current, BLM Proposed, and RAC Supported Long Term Camping Permit Durations and Fee Schedule</b>			
<b>Permit Duration</b>	<b>Current Fee</b>	<b>BLM Proposed Fee<sup>11</sup></b>	<b>RAC Supported Fee<sup>11</sup></b>
30-Day Permit	Available for Tuttle Creek, Horton Creek, Goodale Creek, and Crowley Lake  \$100 for 30 days (1 month) (\$3.22/day)	Available for Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, Pleasant Valley Pit (PV Pit), and Crowley Lake  \$120 for 30 consecutive days (\$4/day)	Available for Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, Pleasant Valley Pit (PV Pit), and Crowley Lake  \$120 for 30 consecutive days (\$4/day)
90-Day Permit	Available for Tuttle Creek, Horton Creek, Goodale Creek, and Crowley Lake  \$300 for 90 days (3 - 8 months) (\$1.25 - 3.33/day)	Available for Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake  \$300 for 90 consecutive days (\$3.33/day)	Available for Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake  \$320 for 90 consecutive days (\$3.56/day)

Under the Central California RAC supported fee proposal both 30-day and 90-day long-term camping permits would be available. The fee for the 30-day permit would be increased to \$120. The fee for the 90-day permit would be increased to \$320. Thirty-day (30-day) and 90-day permits would be available for use in the Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake campgrounds.

<sup>11</sup> An Interagency Senior Pass or Interagency Access Pass discount may be applied to long-term camping permits at the discretion of the Authorized Officer.

The 30-day permit would be expanded to include use in the Pleasant Valley Pit (PV Pit) Campground. Long-term camping permit holders would be allowed to camp in developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office for a maximum of 180 days (about 6 months) per calendar year using any combination of 30-day and 90-day permits.

Long-term camping permit holders would be required to change campgrounds every 30 to 45 days and allowed to camp only in sites specifically designated as available for long-term (> 14 days, but ≤ 30 to 45 days) camping within each campground. The consecutive day stay limits and the number and location of sites available to long-term camping permit holders in each campground would be established annually by the Authorized Officer. The intent of these management strategies are to ensure that both daily and long-term visitors have fair and equitable access to developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office and to the types of campsites (creekside, shaded, RV, pull through trailer, etc.) available in each campground.

## IX. Business Rationale

The revised fee schedule outlined in this business plan will help ensure that a fair and reasonable amount of user generated revenue is available to partially offset the costs of campground operations, the costs of maintaining new amenities associated with recent campground upgrades (e.g. the addition of drinking water), and the costs of further improving the developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office.

To ensure the equitable distribution of cost among different user groups, modest fee increases are planned for both the single visit camping permit fee schedule and the long-term camping permit fee schedule. Daily permit fees for BLM campgrounds will remain the lowest

This permit structure was also out of compliance with Bureau policy which provides that “persons using federal facilities and services should pay a greater share of the associated costs than should the public as a whole.”

that “fees should be reasonable and fair with respect to the services received and the amenities provided” and

The objective of the proposed changes to the daily fee schedule are to provide the Field Office with flexibility as visitor use patterns and campground operating costs change over time.

limit costs associated with long-term occupancy of campsites, thereby reducing the overall campground operation costs. Long-term camping permits are currently very low at a daily rate of \$1.25/day for an eight month permit. Under the proposed fee changes, the three month permit would raise the rate to \$3.56/day. This is still well below the cost of other long-term campground opportunities in the Owens Valley. The addition of a one month permit for the PV Pit campground would allow visitors to stay in a designated camping area rather than disperse camping in the delicate Volcanic Tableland, while also limiting the stay duration so that camping sites are available at the Field Office’s most highly used campground. These changes in the duration and price of long-term camping permits are designed to reduce the operation costs associated with the long-term camping program.

The previous duration for the longest permit (up to eight months) significantly exceeds, and the current cost is significantly less expensive than, any other long-term camping option offered for developed campgrounds in the eastern Sierra region.

The goal of this moderate rate increase is to retain visitors in BLM campgrounds (rather than dispersed camping in sensitive environmental areas) while providing a small amount of additional revenue for campground maintenance and improvements.

Planned short-term campground improvement projects include putting oil seal on the entrance road to the Tuttle Creek Campground, repaving the Horton Creek Campground, and continuing to plant native trees and install irrigation lines at the Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, and Horton Creek campgrounds. Long-term projects include installing bear boxes at campgrounds that are experiencing bear problems, maintaining the new infrastructure installed between 2010 and 2012, and improving access for campers with disabilities. Additional campground improvements are expected to be identified over the next several years.

Beginning in 2017, rates could be changed at the campgrounds to anywhere between \$5 to \$10 per night. This proposal would allow the Field Manager to lower camping rates if occupancy levels drop significantly or if impacts from dispersed camping increase. It also would allow the Field Manager to raise camping rates if operating costs increase in the future. The CenCal RAC would be notified prior to implementation of fee increases permitted by this business plan, and kept informed of changes in campground operating costs, occupancy levels, and associated revenue.

Campground operations are currently funded through a combination of annually appropriated dollars and fees collected in the campgrounds. Annual campground operating costs in FY14 were estimated to be approximately \$216,887 (Figure 7). Total revenue has increased steadily over time to \$53,496 in FY14 (Figure 8). Fee revenue currently covers approximately 25% of the annual campground operating costs.

Using FY14 Recreation Use Permit numbers, the proposed fee change would result in an estimated \$13,000, or about a 24% increase, in additional revenue per year from the Tuttle Creek, Goodale Creek, Horton Creek, and Crowley Lake campgrounds combined.

## **X. Social and Economic Impacts**

### **i. Impacts to Underserved Communities**

The anticipated impact on underserved communities is expected to be minimal. Daily fees for the Goodale Creek and Pleasant Valley Pit (PV Pit) campgrounds will remain at the current or equivalent rate and these campgrounds will retain the same amenities that they currently provide (no potable water, vault toilets, etc). The proposed daily and amenity fee increases for the Tuttle Creek, Horton Creek and Crowley Lake campgrounds are modest and these campgrounds will continue to be the most affordable option for camping within a developed campground that includes potable water, dump stations, and other amenities in the eastern Sierra region of California. Interagency Senior Pass and Interagency Access Pass holders will continue to receive a 50% discount on daily site fees. These campgrounds will also retain the same amenities that they currently provide.

The changes in the fee schedule for long-term camping permits may have some adverse impact on fixed and/or low income users. Some long-term camping permittees have historically used developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office for up to eight months of the year. Because long-term camping permit holders will only be allowed to camp in BLM developed campgrounds for a maximum of 180 days (about 6 months) per calendar year under the new permit structure, those wishing to remain in the eastern Sierra region and camp in a developed campground will have to pay the higher fees associated with County, National Forest, and/or commercial campgrounds.

The addition of the PV Pit Campground to the Bishop Field Office long-term camping permit program will provide fixed and/or low income visitors to the eastern Sierra region the most economical opportunity to stay in close proximity to Bishop.

The RAC approved fee schedule identifies initial site and special amenity fee rates, as well as a fee rate range that may be charged in the future. The intent of fee rate range is to provide the flexibility needed to change fees if campground occupancy, special amenity use, and/or operation and maintenance costs either increase or decrease in the future.

After the initial change in fees, site and special amenity fees would be set by the Authorized Officer at a rate within the RAC approved fee schedule. Fee decisions would be based on multiple factors including the occupancy rate and use of special amenities at each campground; the cost to government of operating, maintaining and improving the campgrounds and special amenities, and; the impacts of dispersed camping outside of the campgrounds on the cultural and natural resource values of surrounding public lands. Fees would be reviewed, and adjusted if needed, every two years in accordance with BLM policy (H-2930-1) (USDI BLM 2014) and in consultation with the Central California RAC.

A 50% Interagency Senior Pass or Interagency Access Pass discount could be applied to long-term camping permits at the discretion of the Authorized Officer, when and where needed to ensure that the long-term camping permit daily rate for senior and disabled long-term permit holders does not exceed the discounted daily fee rate for senior and disabled permit holders.

Overall, the Fair balanced and affordable for all members of the public and under every scenario the BLM campgrounds would remain the least expensive campground option in the eastern Sierra.

## **ii. Impacts on Local Businesses**

Due to the facts that BLM campground fees are currently well below market rate and will remain below market rate under the proposed fee schedule, no impacts to local business owners or other campground operators is anticipated. Campground use is projected to remain at the same level or possibly increase over time as visitors learn of the new amenities available at BLM campgrounds in the eastern Sierra region of California.

## **XI. Public Participation**

### **i. Public Scoping**

In July 2013, the Bishop Field Office held three public open houses to discuss campground fees. Open house meetings were held on Tuesday, July 16 at the Bishop Field Office conference room; Wednesday, July 17 at the Crowley Lake Campground host site; and Thursday, July 18 at the Tuttle Creek Campground host site. A total of 21 individuals participated in these public scoping opportunities.

Most open house participants were current long-term camping permit holders who stay in developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office for multiple months each year. Opinions on campground fees varied widely. Some people felt that camping should be free while others stated that daily fees should increase to reflect the campground upgrades and new amenities added between 2010 and 2012. Among those who favored an increase in fees, there was broad consensus that the increase should be gradual over time. There was also recognition by most participants that BLM campgrounds are often used by visitors with fixed and/or low incomes and that these campgrounds should remain accessible to those visitors.

Most long-term camping permit holders felt that long-term camping permit fees should not increase. Many expressed their opinion that the current fee of \$300 for the 90-day (3 month) permit, which effectively allowed for up to five months of free camping, was already at the high end of what was affordable.

Scoping was also conducted at the Mono County, Long Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee meeting on August 28, 2013. Five planning committee members and the District 2 Mono County Supervisor were in attendance. No objections or issues related to fee increases were raised.

### **ii. Public Comment on the Draft Fee Proposal**

In August 2015, the BLM completed preparation of a *DRAFT Campground Business Plan* that outlined proposed fee adjustments for developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office in Inyo and Mono counties, California (USDI BLM 2015a). The draft business plan also included the business rationale for the proposed fee adjustments.

On December 21, 2015, the BLM published a "Notice of Intent" to change the fees for developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office in the Federal Register (80 FR 79357) (USDI BLM 2015c). Publication of this notice initiated a formal 30-day public review and comment period on the fee proposal outlined in the draft business plan. Public notification announcing this formal 30-day comment period was advertised via press releases sent to media contacts throughout California, including the eastern Sierra region, and posted on the BLM public website. The formal comment period ended on January 20, 2016.

Only four comment letters were received during the formal 30-day comment period. Three additional comment letters were received between January 26 and January 28, 2016. Two additional comment letters expressing opposition to any proposed fee increases were received between October 1 and October 5, 2016. All nine comment letters were considered during the development of the final fee proposal presented to the Central California Resource Advisory

Council on October 20, 2016. The primary issues raised in public comments are briefly summarized below:

### **1. Fees**

Comments specific to fee rates ranged from those that completely opposed any increase in fees to those that supported moderate fee increases. Several commented that the fees should not be raised to a level that would preclude those on fixed-incomes, such as senior citizens and disabled individuals, from using the campgrounds.

### **2. Long-Term Stay Limits**

Most comments related to long-term camping permit stay limits expressed concern that reducing the maximum long-term stay limit from eight months to three months was too restrictive. It was also clear that most of the commenters interested in long-term permit camping permits did not understand that the developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office are not designated as Long-Term Visitor Areas (LTVAs) nor are they part of the Bureau's LTVA program.

### **3. Camping Opportunities**

Comments related to camping opportunities indicated general support for maintaining both daily and long-term permit options. One commenter suggested the use of management strategies in addition to fees, such as requiring long-term camping permit holders to change sites or campgrounds, to ensure that desirable campsites were available to both daily and long-term camping permit holders.

### **4. Campground Open Seasons**

One commenter recommended that the BLM consider keeping campgrounds open year round for a reduced fee rate to generate additional revenue.

### **5. Dispersed Camping Impacts**

One commenter inquired whether law enforcement and other costs were related to impacts associated with unmanaged dispersed camping or activities within the campgrounds. The inquiry seemed to indicate that the commenter felt that fees should remain low enough to encourage campers to stay in the campgrounds as a means to minimize the costs and resource impacts associated with unmanaged dispersed camping.

## **iii. Resource Advisory Council Consultation and Recommendation**

The Central California Resource Advisory Council (RAC) was formally consulted and asked to provide recommendations regarding the proposed fee adjustments for the five developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office at three separate RAC meetings. All three meetings were noticed in the Federal Register (80 FR 60709, 81 FR 5132 and 81 FR 61714) (USDI BLM 2015b, 2016a and 2016b), advertised via press releases sent to media contacts throughout California, including the eastern Sierra region, and posted on the BLM public website. The formal RAC consultation and recommendation process is summarized below:



On October 29, 2015, the BLM Central California District Manager asked the RAC to participate in the consultation and recommendation process for the Bishop Field Office fee adjustment proposal. The Bishop Field Office also provided a brief overview of the *DRAFT Campground Business Plan* (USDI BLM 2015a) that was subsequently released for public review and comment on December 21, 2015. To facilitate implementation of the REA, the RAC agreed to participate in the consultation and recommendation process following completion of the formal 30-day public review period.

During this meeting, the RAC expressed general support for the fee adjustment proposal and strong support for the establishment of fee ranges that would allow the field manager to increase or decrease daily use fees in response to changes in campground occupancy rates, operation and maintenance costs, and/or inadvertent impacts to cultural and natural resources associated with unmanaged dispersed camping. The RAC unanimously approved two motions related to the Bishop Field Office fee adjustment proposal: 1) The field manager should have the discretion to adjust fees bi-annually and should report back to the RAC when fees are adjusted, and; 2) The fee adjustment proposal outlined in the *DRAFT Campground Business Plan* (USDI BLM 2015a) should proceed to the next stage for public review. No public comments regarding the fee adjustment proposal were received at this RAC meeting.

On March 18, 2016, the Bishop Field Office provided a presentation to the RAC outlining the specifics of the fee adjustments proposed in the *DRAFT Campground Business Plan* (USDI BLM 2015a), public comments received regarding the fee adjustment proposal, and other management strategies the BLM was considering to ensure fair and equitable use of the campgrounds. The RAC expressed opposition to any fee proposal that would allow long-term campers to stay beyond three months (90 days) without paying additional fees. The RAC also recommended that the BLM consider allowing long-term camping permit holders to purchase additional 30-day and/or 90-day permits. The RAC further recommended that the BLM broaden the range, and increase the upper limit of, the fees being considered. Finally, the RAC recommended that the BLM consider a cap on the number of long-term camping permits that would be available. No public comments regarding the fee adjustment proposal were received at this RAC meeting.

On October 20, 2016, the Bishop Field Office provided a presentation to the RAC outlining a slightly revised fee adjustment proposal that was developed based on BLM review and consideration of public comments received on the draft business plan and recommendations provided by the RAC on October 29, 2015 and March 18, 2016. No public comments regarding the fee adjustment proposal were received at this RAC meeting. Following a question and answer session, the RAC unanimously approved a motion to support implementation of the slightly revised fee proposal presented at this meeting.

#### **iv. Communication and Marketing Strategy**

To inform the public of the fee changes, the Bishop Field Office will issue a press release prior to implementing the new fee schedule. Notification of the new fees will also be posted on information kiosks available at developed campgrounds managed by the Bishop Field Office. Long-term camping permit holders will be mailed a letter informing them of the changes to the long-term camping permit program. The Bishop Field Office will continue to post information at campground kiosks about how fees are being used to operate, maintain, and improve the campgrounds.

## **XII. References**

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- U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (USDI BLM). 1984. Campground Use Fee Increase, Occupancy Restriction Order Established; Bishop Resource Area, Bakersfield District, CA. Federal Register Vol. 49, No. 199, pp. 40106 - 40106. October 1984.
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- U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (USDI BLM). 2016b. Notice of Public Meeting of the Central California Resource Advisory Council. Federal Register Vol. 81, No. 173, pp. 61714 - 61714. September 2016.