



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Business Plan

For Valley of Fires and Rob Jagers Campground



RECOMMENDATIONS, REVIEWS, and APPROVALS

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This business plan was prepared by the Bureau of Land Management's Roswell Field Office pursuant to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004 ([16 U.S.C. 6801-6814](#)) and BLM recreation fee program policies. It establishes future management goals and priorities for Roswell Field Office fee sites.

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Executive Summary

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

The Roswell Field Office (RFO) manages the Valley of Fires Recreation Areas (VOF) and Rob Jagers Campground (RJ) at the Fort Stanton – Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area (NCA) both located in Lincoln County, New Mexico, part of the 1st Congressional District. VOF was established to provide public access to and protection for one of youngest lava flows in the continental United States. The site has been developed for day and overnight use, with amenities including a visitor center, restroom facilities, two interpretive trails, camp and picnic sites, RV hookups, site hosts, and more. RJ was developed as a campground at the NCA to provide day and overnight use, with amenities including restroom facilities, two interpretive trails, camp and picnic sites, RV hookups, site hosts, and more. A more in-depth description of the available amenities is included in the body of the document.

Fee collection at VOF began in 1990 and at RJ in 2014. Fee revenue is generated by standard, expanded, additional expanded amenity fees and annual day-use passes. Table 1 below outlines existing and proposed recreation fees, with detailed discussion provided in the body of this business plan.

Both sites meet the FLREA requirements for Amenity Fees by providing the following amenities: designated developed parking, a permanent toilet facility, a permanent trash receptacle, interpretive signs, exhibits, or kiosks, picnic tables, and security services. Current fees are used for maintenance, repair, and replacement of campsite amenities, for supplies including consumables and cleaning supplies, and to pay for pumping of vault toilets. Expanded Amenity Fee at these sites refer to campground-related fees. Revenue from Expanded Amenity Fees supports campsite-specific amenities and services such as individual shade shelters, grills, fire rings, and RV electrical service.

Cost recovery, in this context, refers to analyzing and ensuring that the fees charged for recreational use cover the costs of managing the services and facilities provided at VOF and RJ. This includes accounting for expenses related to maintenance, staffing, and operations. In addition to cost recovery, factors like visitation growth, economic inflation, and a comparative review of fees charged by nearby facilities offering similar services were analyzed as part of this business plan process. Based on the results of these analyses, RFO proposes to increase some fees for VOF and RJ.

The proposed fee rate adjustments are as follows, and are proposed to begin in July 2025:

- **Day-use fees at VOF:** Increase from \$3 or \$5 (based on vehicle type) to \$5.
- **RV campsites:** Increase from \$18 or \$20 to \$25 per night.
- **Non-electric campsites:** Increase from \$7 or \$12 to \$15 per night.

- **Horse corrals:** Decrease from \$12 to \$5 per day. (decreased price is more reflective of the costs associated with repairs and replacements)
- **Group site fees:** Increase from \$25 or \$35 (based on group size) to \$35 per day.
- **RV pump-out services:** Increase from \$15 or \$30 (based on size or service type) to \$30.
- A new **single-site day-use pass** for VOF is proposed at \$30 per year.

The public can submit feedback during the 30-day comment period, which will occur prior to the scheduled Resource Advisory Council (RAC) meeting.

The proposed fee rate adjustments align with the pricing and amenities offered by other campground providers in the region, it is important to note that rates are not solely based on this comparison. BLM’s facilities provide more amenities than more primitive facilities provided by other public agencies but fewer or lower-quality amenities than local privately-operated campgrounds. The proposed rates are positioned between these two service levels, reflecting not only regional comparisons but also the costs of maintaining and improving BLM’s facilities, compliance with FLREA requirements, and the goal of ensuring long-term sustainability for the sites.

Table 1 Current and proposed fees (fee changes proposed are highlighted)

Fee Related Service or Activity	Valley of Fires Current Fee	Valley of Fires Proposed Fee	Rob Jagers Current Fee	Rob Jagers Proposed Fee
<i>Camping RV (per site/per day)</i>	\$18	\$25	\$20	\$25
<i>Camping non-electric (per site/per day)</i>	\$7 or \$12	\$15	n/a	n/a
<i>RV Dump</i>	\$15	\$30	\$30	\$30
<i>Horse Corral (per day)</i>	n/a	n/a	\$12	\$5
<i>Group Site (per group)</i>	\$25	\$35	\$35	\$35
<i>Day Use single vehicle</i>	\$3 or \$5	\$5	n/a	n/a
<i>Day Use Bus (per vehicle)</i>	\$15	\$15	n/a	n/a
<i>Site Specific Pass</i>	n/a	\$30	n/a	n/a

AUTHORITIES

This business plan was prepared pursuant to the **Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA)** of December 2004 (P.L. 108-447, as amended) as well as Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recreation fee program policy and manual (Manual 2930 – Recreation Permits and Fees) and handbook (H-2930-1 Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook). FLREA provides the BLM authority to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees at Federal recreational lands and waters. FLREA authorizes the BLM to locally retain collected recreation fees and outlines how revenues may be used for such things as facility repair, maintenance, facility enhancement directly related to public use, and operating or capital costs associated with the Recreation and Visitor Services program.

Under FLREA, three fee categories were established:

- *Standard Amenity Fee:* covers areas that provide significant opportunities for outdoor recreation, have substantial federal investments, have fee collection mechanisms, and have the following amenities: designated developed parking, a permanent toilet facility, a permanent trash, interpretive signs, exhibits, or kiosks, picnic tables, and security services (Sec. 803 (f)(4)(D) of REA).
- *Expanded Amenity Fee:* covers specialized outdoor recreation sites and services including but not limited to developed campgrounds with most of the following amenities: tent or trailer spaces, picnic tables, drinking water, access roads, fee collection by an employee or agent of the BLM, reasonable visitor protection, refuse containers, toilet facilities, and simple devices for containing a campfire (Sec. 803 (g)(2)(A) of REA).
- *Additional Expanded Amenity Fee:* covers recreation facilities or services including rental of cabins, group day-use or overnight sites, binoculars or other equipment, use of hookups for electricity, cable, or sewer, use of sanitary dump stations, and use of reservation services (Sec.803 (g)(2) (C-G) of REA).

Section 804 of FLREA addresses the minimum public outreach requirements that an agency must consider when developing or changing recreation fees. This outreach process includes the involvement of a Resource Advisory Council (RAC). RACs provide recommendations to agency officials on matters including, but not limited to:

- Implementing or eliminating fees.
- Expanding or limiting the recreation fee program; and
- Implementing fee level changes.

In addition to FLREA, the authorities and regulations for this business plan, including fee collection at federal recreation lands, are:

- Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-579), which contains the BLM’s general land use management authority over public lands.
- [43 Code of Federal Regulations 2931.2](#), which establishes a permit and fee system for use of fee areas such as campgrounds and day use areas.
- [43 Code of Federal Regulations 2932](#), which establishes a permit and fee system for special recreation permits.
- [43 Code of Federal Regulations 2933](#), which further outlines Recreation Use Permits guidance.

This business plan also follows applicable BLM recreation fee program policies and guidance, including:

- [BLM Manual 2930, Recreation Permits and Fees](#)
- [BLM Handbook 2930-1, Recreation Permit and Fee Administration](#)
- [BLM Information Bulletin No. 2019-056, Recreation Fee Revenue Spending Plans and Accomplishment Report](#)
- [BLM Manual 1105 – Donations, Solicitation, and Fundraising](#)

In addition to specific authorities and regulations, this business plan assists in fulfilling the following strategies:

- [Connecting with Communities: BLM Recreation Strategy](#), by making the benefits of recreation more accessible to communities while supporting local social, economic, and environmental goals.
- [Environmental Justice Strategic Plan](#), by increasing access to environmental benefits that help make the RFO communities safe, vibrant, and healthy for all those who live, work, and engage in recreation there.
- [Roswell Field Office Resource Management Plan](#), identifies Valley of Fires as a place of “intensive use with emphasis on maintaining and upgrading the existing facilities” including trail development and campground expansion and the Fort Stanton ACEC (the previous designation of the Fort Stanton - Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area) as a Special Recreation Management Area to include facilities such as “trails for non-motorized use, day use and camping areas, overlooks and waysides.”

PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

The BLM Handbook H-2930-1, Recreation Permits and Fee Administration (Rel. 2-300, Dated November 17, 2014), requires that each recreation fee program have an approved business plan which thoroughly discusses fees and explains how fees are consistent with the criteria set forth in FLREA. Business plans are to assist management in determining the appropriateness and level of fees, the cost of administering a fee program, the expected benefits to be derived for the public and to provide a structured communication and marketing plan. The primary purpose of this plan is to provide transparency and notify the public of the objectives for the use of recreation fee revenues. The final business plan will guide the expenditure of collected FLREA funds, ensure accountability, and include a process for public participation prior to implementation, allowing for input on the proposed fees and their uses.

FLREA provides agencies with recreation fee authority and the ability to retain those fees collected. This allows agencies to improve the efficiency of the program, provide better facilities and services to visitors, employ greater use of technology, and enter into more fee management agreements to provide additional services to visitors. Fees have remained at their current levels for over 10 years at both VOF and RJ. Revenues from current fees are not sufficient to offset the long-term costs of managing the recreation sites.

This business plan describes the fee sites, proposed changes in fees to these sites, associated operating costs, planned expenditures of fee revenue, a financial analysis utilizing a regional comparative market study, and the impacts of proposed fee changes. The data used to analyze and prepare this business plan was obtained through internal BLM tracking and accounting mechanisms such as the Federal Business Management System (FBMS), Recreation Management Information System (RMIS), Collections and Billing Systems (CBS), and other locally generated recreation and visitor use tracking, including Recreation Use Permits (RUPs), Special Recreation Permits (SRPs), and TRAFx vehicle counters. For detailed information, contact the BLM Roswell Field Office.

Introduction to the Roswell Field Office Recreation Fee Program



Figure 1: Large Shade shelter at Rob Jagers Campground

BLM’s Roswell Field Office, located in Southeast New Mexico, has two developed campgrounds in Lincoln County: Valley of Fires Recreation Area and Rob Jagers campground at the Fort Stanton – Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area. In addition to the developed campgrounds mentioned above, there are other recreational opportunities within the Field Office’s lands in Lincoln County. In addition to the Rob Jagers Campground, the Fort Stanton – Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area has over 70 miles of trails 20 miles of roads, a small fee-free campground, and dispersed camping. The NCA includes the Fort Stanton Cave. Though currently closed to general access to prevent the spread of white nose syndrome among bat populations, the cave is an active site for scientific and exploratory expeditions. Valley of Fires includes RV sites with electrical hookup, shower and restroom facilities, visitor center, tent sites, one group site, a popular accessible hiking trail, and popular off-trail access to the malpais lava flow. Adjacent to the Valley of Fires Recreation Area there are two designated wilderness study areas (WSAs) (Carrizozo Lava Flow, and Little Black Peak WSAs). Both Valley of Fires and Rob Jagers Campground meet the requirements of Section 803(g) of the REA to charge “expanded amenity fee(s)” as they provide: trash receptacles, restrooms, fire rings, fee collection, visitor protection, interpretive signage, RV hook-ups, and dump stations.

In addition to the developed facilities, there are other dispersed and undeveloped BLM lands throughout Lincoln County that provide recreation access. All the Roswell Field Office's recreational access lands in Lincoln County are in the New Mexico first Congressional District.

The Roswell Field Office's lands in Lincoln County have diverse landscapes. Lands associated with the Fort Stanton NCA are at a higher elevation and include a mix of forests and grasslands. Valley of Fires is at a lower elevation with the dramatic remains of a prehistoric lava flow dominating the landscape. In the area, the Lincoln National Forest has a variety of camping, day use, and wilderness areas. The area also includes one ski resort, recreation at three small lakes (Bonito, Alto, and Grindstone), and two state historical monuments (Lincoln and Fort Stanton).

Roswell Field Office recreation areas are not only used by people within the field office boundaries. They are also very popular with visitors from around New Mexico and from other states. In the western portion of the field office, the presence of a seasonal ski resort draws visitors from all over the country, especially from western Texas. The relatively cool temperatures provided by the elevation of the area mean that it is a popular summer destination as well. Both Valley of Fires and Fort Stanton experience surge visitation at popular times such as school breaks, hunting seasons, and holidays.

The Roswell Field Office engages with partners to enhance the recreational opportunities. At Valley of Fires, the Public Lands Interpretive Association (PLIA) operates a bookstore and has secured a grant to expand the trail opportunities. PLIA also stocks a bookstore at Valley of Fires which is staffed by volunteers. At Fort Stanton, a partnership with the Fort Stanton Cave Study Project ensures that the groundbreaking scientific work conducted in the cave is shared with BLM. Also, regular communication with the State of New Mexico's historic monuments at Fort Stanton proper and at Lincoln ensure that the public has venues in museums and visitor centers to learn about the conservation area. PLIA has partnered with BLM to develop an educational experience about the cave targeted to seventh graders in Lincoln County and Mescalero. Partnership with Ecoservants, (an AmeriCorps affiliate), helps to maintain and improve trails for hikers, bikers, and equestrians.

RFO manages 1.5 million surface acres and 4.6 million subsurface acres of public lands across 6 counties in southwest New Mexico, In Lincoln County as shown in Figure 2 it includes:

- Fort Stanton – Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area (25,000 acres)
- Valley of Fires Recreation Area (462 acres)
- 2 Wilderness Study Areas (30,144 acres)
- The petroglyph National Recreation Trails
- Diverse wildlife and plant species
- Significant cultural (historic & prehistoric) resources dating back 8,000 years
- Over 200 caves

RFO VISITATION

The Roswell Field Office visitation totals are included in the table below. Field Office visitation is concentrated in the Valley of Fires and at the Fort Stanton – Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area. OHV areas including Mescalero Sands and Haystack Mountain have smaller

visitation, and there are additional dispersed recreational visits to other BLM lands, including many caves in the Roswell Field Office.

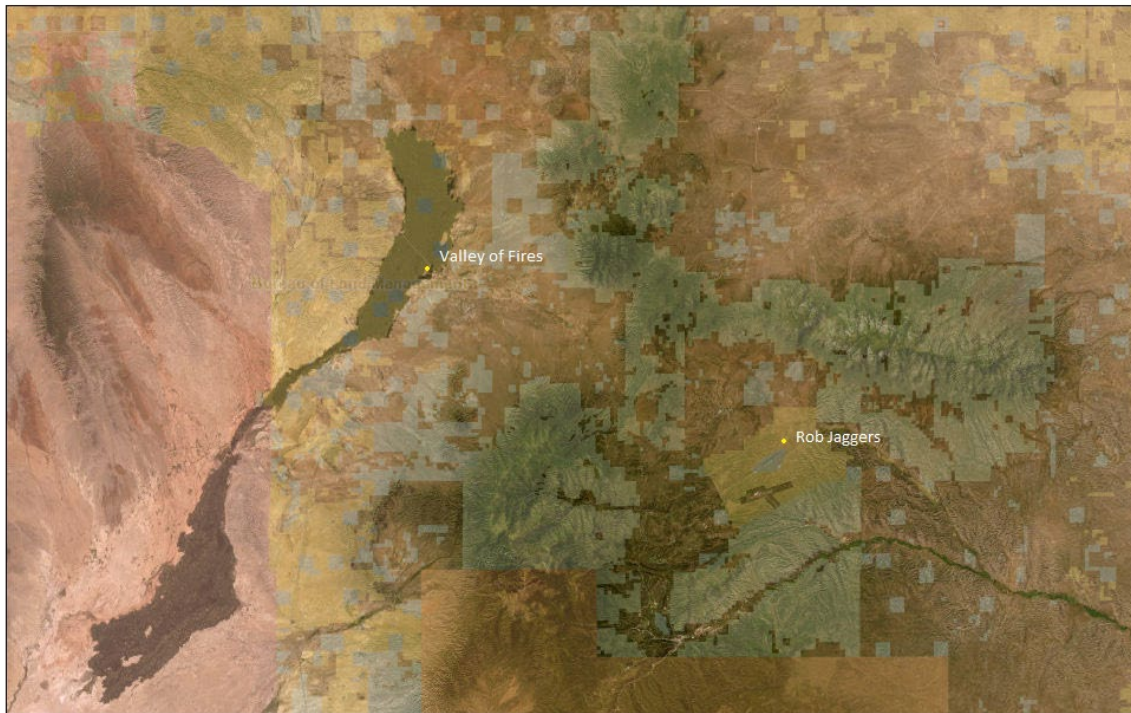
Visitation totals are derived from a variety of collection methods. Vehicle counters in remote portions of the Fort Stanton – Snowy River Cave NCA provide a total number of vehicles, to which a multiplier is applied to reach an estimate of people. Individual recreation use permits (for day use or camping) are collected through iron rangers and recreation.gov provide specific visitor totals for fee areas. Special Recreation Permit holders and outfitters and guides provide reporting of visitation as part of their permits. And on-site monitoring checks provide information to estimate use in dispersed areas.

The visitation data for the Roswell Field Office, as outlined in the table, shows a steady increase in the number of visitors over the past several years. This upward trend in visitation directly impacts the demand for services and maintenance of facilities. As visitation grows, there is a corresponding increase in wear and tear on infrastructure, greater demand for amenities such as restrooms, sites, parking, and a need for additional staffing to ensure the sites remain safe and accessible for all users. These factors contribute to rising operational costs, which the current fee structure is insufficient to offset. Therefore, the proposed fee increases are necessary to maintain the quality of services, support infrastructure improvements, and ensure the recreational areas can accommodate growing visitation in a sustainable manner.

Year	Visitation
2020	125,481
2021	127,503
2022	128,195
2023	128,955
2024	129,437

Table 2 Roswell Field Office visitation.

Roswell Field Office Campgrounds



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Surface Management Agency	US Forest Service (USFS)	Department Of Defense (DOD)
Department Of Defense (DOD)	Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)	State	US Forest Service (USFS)

1:577,791
 0 4 8 16 mi
 0 5 10 20 km

BLM Energy, Minerals & Realty Management, Earthstar Geographics

ArcGIS Web AppBuilder

BLM Energy, Minerals & Realty Management | BLM Energy, Minerals & Realty Management | Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Alaska | Compiled by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), National Operations Center (NOC), OC-530 | Bureau of Land

Figure 2: Map of the Roswell Field.

DESCRIPTION OF FEE SITES

Valley of Fires Recreation Area

Table 3 Summary of Services at Valley of Fires

Valley of Fires at a Glance



Location:	4 miles west of Carrizozo, NM, on U.S. Highway 380. Heading west from Carrizozo four miles and turn left into the parking lot.
Acreage:	Approximately 460 acres
Amenities Offered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 25 developed camping sites with shelters, picnic tables, grills, and trash cans o 6 tent-camping sites with tent pads o 19 RV hookup sites with water and electricity o 2 Accessible camping/picnicking site o 1 large group site with pavilion, picnic tables, and grills o 1 flush toilet facility and potable water o 2 hiking trails o Accessible Malpais Nature trail o Site hosts
Daily Fees:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Day use: \$3 per vehicle (single person), \$5 per vehicle (2 or more people), \$15 per bus o \$7 per night per tent camping site o \$18 per night per RV hookup site o \$12 per night site (RV, no hookup) o \$15 dump fee per use o \$25 per group site reservation per night
Visitation, last 5 years	Average: 38,350 annual visitors
Season of Use:	Open year round; busiest September-March
Where Most Visitors Originate:	New Mexico, Texas
Popular Activities:	Hiking, sightseeing, camping, picnicking, travel
Average Group Size:	2 people

Description



Figure 3: Malpais Nature Trail at Valley of Fires

Valley of fires is designated to protect and provide public access to one of the youngest lava flows in the continental United States for recreation. It is also one of the few sites giving visitors such direct access to the lava flow and the plants and animals that live on it. The lava flow dates from several episodic eruptions from Little Black Peak from 5000 to 2000 years ago, that filled the Tularosa basin up to 160 feet in black and red volcanic rocks. Higher-relief lands created islands in the lava flow, called kipukas. On one of the largest of these kipukas the New Mexico State Parks developed a campground, including a trail that takes visitors out over the lava flow. In 1989 that recreation area was transferred to the Bureau of Land Management. **Figure 5** shows the map that is included in the Valley of Fires brochure, which is available at the visitor center and kiosk, and illustrates the trails most prominent natural and historical features.



Figure 4: Campground at Valley of Fires

The Valley of Fires is located approximately 4 miles west of Carrizozo on U.S. Highway 54 in western Lincoln County. Nearby developed recreation opportunities are available at the Lincoln National Forest (USFS), the Fort Stanton-Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area (BLM), the Three Rivers Petroglyphs Site (BLM), and White Sands National Park (NPS).

Campground Basics

Valley of Fires has been developed for day and overnight use. These developments include:

- 25 developed camping sites with shelters, picnic tables, grills, and trash cans: half of the sites are available for reservation on Recreation.gov, half are first-come/first-served
- 2 Accessible campsites
- 6 tent-camping sites with tent pads
- 19 RV hookup sites with water and electricity
- 2 Accessible camping/picnicking site
- 1 large group site with pavilion, picnic tables, and grills, reservations can be secured for the use of these facilities by contacting the Roswell Field Office
- 1 flush toilet facility and potable water
- 2 hiking trails
- Site host compound with hookups.

Season/Hours

- Open year-round
- **Quiet Hours from 10:00 pm to 7:00 am**

The Roswell Field Office takes a proactive approach in managing Valley of Fires to meet the following, primary objectives:

1. Minimize conflicts with adjacent private landowners.
2. Minimize conflicts between recreation user groups.
3. Minimize conflicts with other resources and uses.
4. Provide for visitor safety and interpretive needs.
5. Provide for quality developed recreation experience compatible with other uses.
6. Provide for quality primitive and semi-primitive recreation experience in a manner compatible with other uses.



Figure 5: A map of Valley of Fires

Fees

Fees were in place when BLM acquired Valley of Fires from the New Mexico State Parks. After the development and implementation of a BLM business plan for Valley of Fires fees were set at standard amenity fees of \$3 for a single individual in a vehicle, \$5 for two or more people in a vehicle, and \$15 per bus for day use. In addition, expanded amenity fees apply for overnight use, including \$18, \$12, and \$7 for overnight camping and RV camping, a \$15 pump out fee, and additional expanded amenity fees of \$25 per group site for day use. Half of the campsites are available for reservation through Recreation.gov, the other half are first-come/first-served. The group shelters can be reserved by contacting the Roswell Field Office.

With amenities including access roads, tent, trailer, and RV areas, fee collection and security presence by site hosts and BLM staff, permanent trash receptacles, a flush toilet facility, interpretive panels, and picnic tables and shelters, Valley of Fires meets or exceeds all FLREA fee requirements and conditions.

Rob Jagers Campground

Table 4 Summary of Services at Rob Jagers campground

Rob Jagers Campground at a Glance



Location:	5 miles east of Capitan, NM and 9 miles west of Lincoln, NM, on State Route 220. Heading east from Capitan on U.S. Hwy 380, turn right onto State Route 220, the campground will be on the right.
Acreage:	Approximately 20 acres
Amenities Offered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 27 developed camping sites with fire rings and RV hookup with water and electricity (2 Accessible) o 1 Accessible large group site with pavilion, picnic tables, and grills o 1 Accessible smaller group site with pavilion, picnic tables, and grills o Accessible vault toilets o Horse corrals o Access to several hiking and equestrian friendly trails o Site hosts
Daily Fees:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o \$20 per night per site (RV hookup) o \$30 dump fee per use o \$12 per night horse corral o \$35 per day group shelter reservation
Visitation last 5 years	Average: 955 annual visitors
Season of Use:	Open year round; busiest March through September
Where Most Visitors Originate:	New Mexico, Texas
Popular Activities:	Hiking, sightseeing, camping, picnicking, travel, equestrian use
Average Group Size:	2 people

Description



Figure 6: Native tree species ready for planting at Rob Jagers

Rob Jagers Campground is located in the Fort Stanton – Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area (NCA). The NCA was established in 2009, following the 2001 discovery that the Fort Stanton Cave had substantial newly discovered passages that included the “Snowy River” a bed of calcite crystals that extends for miles and is the single largest known cave feature in the world. Exploration of new passages is ongoing in the cave along with research into geology, cave biota, and cave hydrology. Currently at over 44 miles of passage, the full extent of the cave has yet to be determined.

Rob Jagers Campground originally started out as a casual dispersed camping area immediately off of New Mexico Route 220. It was initially popular with equestrian users because the extensive flat area was ideal for parking and maneuvering horse trailers. BLM’s Roswell Field Office undertook small improvements over the years, including adding a small handful of RV hookups, a group shade shelter, and a host site. Roswell Field Office began to charge fees at Rob Jagers in 2012. In 2018 an extensive expansion of the site added additional campsites, horse corrals, and a new group shelter providing dramatic views of the Capitan Mountains. Planned and ongoing improvements to the campground include planting of native species in and around the camp loop and the new group shelter and installation of small shade shelters at each of the sites. Though it is named and described as a campground there is also a large parking area that remains very popular with day-use equestrian users.



Figure 7: Rob Jagers Campground during a busy special Recreation Permit event

Rob Jagers Campground is located 5 miles east of Capitan, NM and 9 miles west of Lincoln, NM, on State Route 220. Nearby developed recreation opportunities are available at the Lincoln National Forest (USFS), the Valley of Fires Recreation Area (BLM), and White Sands National Park (NPS).

Campground Basics

Rob Jagers has been developed for day and overnight use. These developments include:

- 27 RV sites with hookups for water and electricity (2 Accessible)
- 1 Accessible large group site with picnic tables and fire ring
- 1 Accessible smaller day use group site with picnic tables and grill
- Accessible restroom facility with vault toilets
- Potable water
- Site host compound with hookups and storage shed.

Season/Hours

- Open year-round
- Quiet Hours from 10:00 pm to 6:00 am

The Roswell Field Office takes a proactive approach in managing Rob Jagers to meet the following, primary objectives:

1. Minimize conflicts between recreation user groups.
2. Minimize conflicts with other resources and uses.
3. Provide for visitor safety and interpretive needs.
4. Provide for quality developed recreation experience compatible with other uses.
5. Provide for quality primitive and semi-primitive recreation experience in a manner compatible with other uses.

Fees

Fees at Rob Jaggers were first implemented in 2012 under the Appropriations Act and Recreational Fee Demonstration Program and have remained unchanged since. Currently, there are expanded amenity fees of \$20 per night per site for RV camping, \$12 per night for horse corrals, \$30 for pump out, and additional expanded amenity fees of \$35 per group site for day use. Sites at Rob Jaggers are first-come/first-served basis. Online reservations through Recreation.gov are currently not planned for this site. The group site can be reserved by contacting the camp host or the Roswell Field Office.

With amenities including access roads, tent, trailer, and RV areas, fee collection and security presence by site hosts and BLM staff, permanent trash receptacles, toilet facilities, interpretive panels, and picnic tables and shelters, Rob Jaggers Campground meets or exceeds all FLREA fee requirements and conditions.

VISITOR SATISFACTION

In compliance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA, 1993), and to better understand and meet the needs of the recreating public, Visitor Surveys have been periodically conducted at BLM recreation fee sites. These surveys are developed to measure visitor satisfaction and BLM performance related to the Bureau's goals of providing quality recreation experiences and ensuring the public receives fair value for their recreation activity.

The most recent Visitor Survey for Valley of Fires was conducted in 2023 and for Fort Stanton – Snowy River Cave NCA in 2014. For Valley of Fires, the results of the survey indicate that 95% of the visitors surveyed (n = 96) rated the overall quality of their visit as “Very Good”, and 4% as “Good”, leading to an overall satisfaction level of 99%. For the NCA, the results of the survey indicate that 76% of the visitors surveyed (n = 59) rated the overall quality of their visit as “Very Good”, and 22% as “Good”, leading to an overall satisfaction level of 98%.

Regarding fees, at Valley of Fires about 6% of respondents thought that the fees charged were too low. 93% thought the fees were just right. 1% thought the fees are too high. At the NCA, 91% thought the fees were just right and the remainder was divided between those who thought they were too high or far too high. It should be noted that the survey at the NCA was conducted prior to the 2018 improvement and expansion of the campground and is of limited applicability.

These survey results demonstrate that visitors value the quality of their experiences at Valley of Fires and Fort Stanton – Snowy River Cave NCA. To sustain this high level of visitor satisfaction and accommodate rising operational costs, including maintenance of existing amenities and further improvements, the proposed fee increase is essential. The feedback also underscores that the majority of visitors consider the fees fair, reinforcing the feasibility of the proposed adjustments.

VISITATION AND VISITOR USE

The primary recreation activities at Valley of Fires include hiking, picnicking, and camping. The average group size is 2-3 people with an average stay of two days. Valley of Fires has a mix between in-state and out-of-state visitors with a strong presence of local or repeat visitors. Many of those who stop in have intentionally planned their visit. The site is also frequented by tour

groups and nearby schools. The increasing visitation, which reached 35,700 individuals in the most recent fiscal years compared to a five-year average of 35,150, underscores the need for continued investment in maintaining and improving amenities to meet visitor expectations.

Similarly, Rob Jagers Campground caters primarily to equestrian users with dedicated corrals and a strong presence of visitors from Texas. The site recorded 3,200 visitors in the most recent fiscal year, consistent with the five-year average of 3182 individuals. Visitation has generally been steady and that is the expected trend in the future. Though visitation at Rob Jagers remains steady, maintaining specialized facilities for equestrian users requires additional resources to ensure safety, accessibility, and a quality experience.

These visitation trends highlight the need for a fee modification to align with the increasing demands and costs associated with providing high-quality recreation experiences and ensuring the long-term sustainability of these sites.

DEMOGRAPHICS AT RFO CAMPGROUNDS

Valley of Fires is a popular campground, and the users are generally older than median age, frequently of retirement age, and often traveling without children. Observations from camp hosts indicate that tent campers tend to be younger than RV campers. Visitors to Valley of Fires are mostly regional, i.e. from New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona. A 2023 visitor satisfaction survey included Valley of Fires, with 93% of respondents indicating that the current fee was “about right,” 6% responded it was “too low,” and only 1% responded “too high.” These findings suggest that the existing fee structure is well-received and supports incremental adjustments in line with maintaining the high quality of amenities and services provided. Additionally, with the implementation of scan and pay through Recreation.gov visitor’s fee interactions have become easier and the cash that has been handled has reduced, even while total fees collected has risen – indicating broad acceptance of the system. Figure 8 includes demographic data on age, gender, and place of origin of visitors to Valley of Fires from the 2023 Visitor Satisfaction Survey.

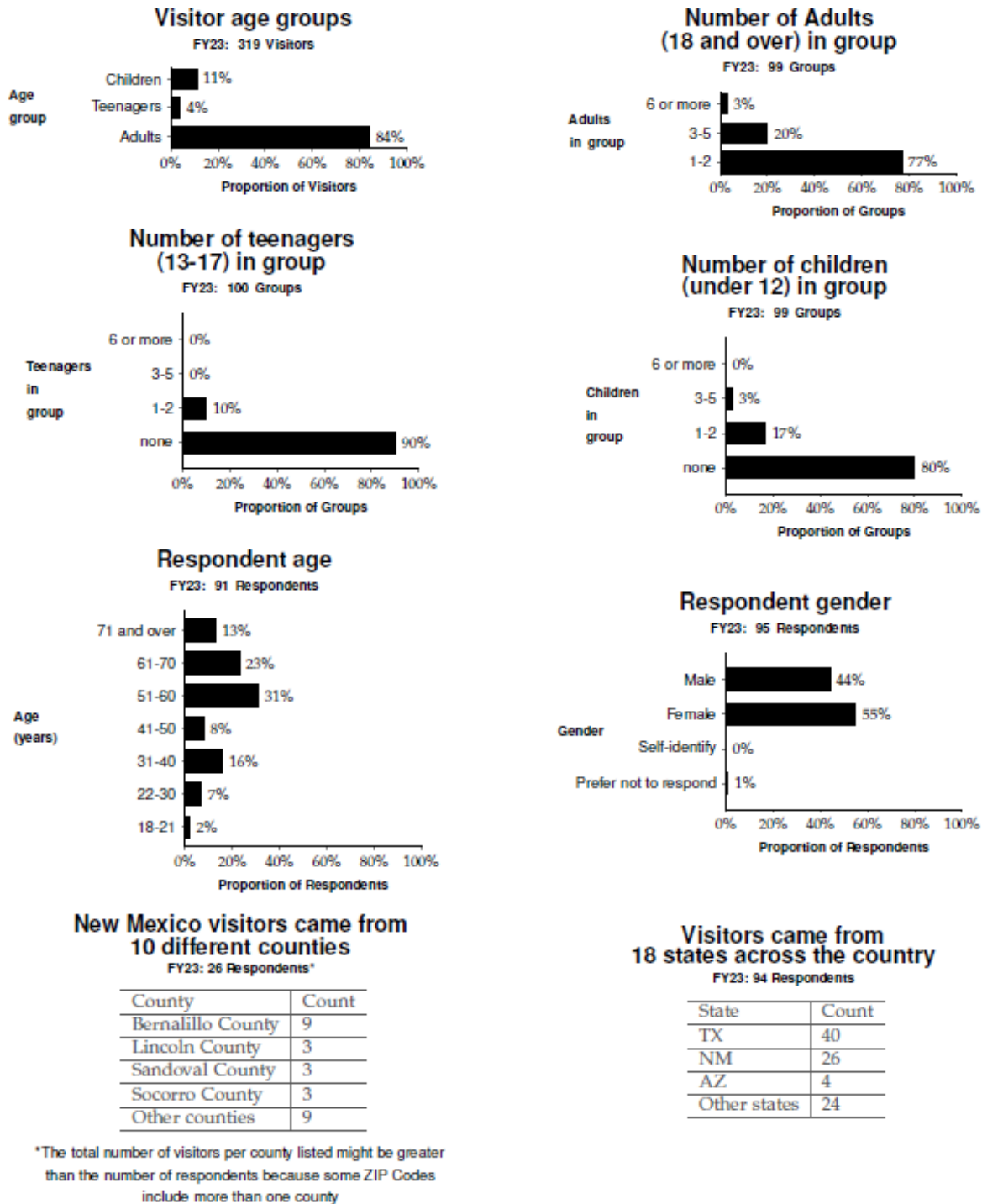


Figure 8 Demographic Data for Valley of Fires

RECREATION NON-FEE SITES

In the vicinity of Rob Jagers Campground and Valley of Fires, the Roswell Field Office offers a variety of non-fee recreational opportunities. Campers are welcome at the Fort Stanton – Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area. The small Cave Canyon Campground offers four

developed campsites and a vault toilet. Campers can also camp in dispersed locations within the conservation Area near and along over 20 miles of roads. Other recreational opportunities at the conservation area that do not have fees include horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, hunting, and wildlife viewing. Included in these opportunities are the Petroglyph National Recreation Trail. As well at lands along the Rio Bonito east of the conservation area have opportunities for horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, fishing, and wildlife viewing.

By maintaining a mix of fee and non-fee options, the Roswell Field Office ensures equitable access to public lands while providing enhanced amenities at fee-based sites like Rob Jagers Campground and Valley of Fires. The proposed fee adjustments are critical to sustaining and improving these enhanced facilities, which offer visitors conveniences and services beyond those found in non-fee areas. This balance reflects the BLM's commitment to meeting diverse visitor needs while ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of its developed recreation sites.

Proposed Modifications to Recreation Fee Rates

The proposed fee increases aim to align fees across both Valley of Fires (VOF) and Rob Jagers (RJ) Campground, reflect the value of the amenities provided, and ensure the financial sustainability of these sites. The changes are as follows:

- **Day Use Fees:** At VOF, the day-use fee will shift from \$3 (single occupant vehicle) or \$5 (multi-occupant vehicle) to a flat rate of \$5 per vehicle, simplifying the fee structure and aligning it with regional standards.
- **RV Campsites:** RV campsite fees will increase from \$18 per night at VOF and \$20 per night at RJ to a uniform \$25 per night at both locations, reflecting the value of provided services and amenities such as electricity and water hookups.
- **Non-Electric Campsites:** At VOF, fees for non-electric campsites will increase from \$7 or \$12 to \$15 per night to standardize pricing and better support maintenance and operations.
- **Horse Corrals:** At RJ, the fee for horse corrals will decrease from \$12 to \$5 per day, addressing feedback from users and ensuring affordability for equestrian visitors.
- **Group Sites:** The group site fee will increase from \$25 per day at VOF and \$35 per day at RJ to a consistent \$35 per day at both locations, providing equitable pricing across the field office.

These changes are proposed to begin in July 2025. Proposed fee changes are included in red on the following table.

Table 5 Existing and proposed rates

Fee Related Service or Activity	Valley of Fires Current Fee	Valley of Fires Proposed Fee	Rob Jagers Current Fee	Rob Jagers Proposed Fee
<i>Camping (RV)</i>	\$18	\$25	\$20	\$25
<i>Camping non-electric</i>	\$7 or \$12	\$15	n/a	n/a
<i>RV Dump</i>	\$15	\$30	\$30	\$30
<i>Horse Corral</i>	n/a	n/a	\$12	\$5
<i>Group Site</i>	\$25	\$35	\$35	\$35
<i>Day Use single vehicle</i>	\$3 or \$5	\$5	n/a	n/a
<i>Day Use bus</i>	\$15	\$15	n/a	n/a
<i>Site Specific Pass</i>	n/a	\$30	n/a	n/a

RATIONALE FOR FEE IMPLEMENTATION OR CHANGE

A fee increase is necessary to support the cost of operating the expanded amenities at both campgrounds. Failure to implement fee adjustments will result in reductions of services and benefits. Even at existing fee levels key service and equipment cost inflation ensures that collected fees do not have the same purchasing power as they once did. At current fee rates RV dump stations and some vault toilets could be closed and that service no longer offered because of the associated pump-out costs. Specific campsites could be closed because damaged amenities (power pedestals, water spigots, picnic tables) could not be replaced.

Fees at Roswell Field Office campgrounds have not changed since 2014. BLM is proposing fee changes for several reasons. Costs for recreation-related support services such as vault pumping and janitorial service have increased while fees have not. As well, fees at equivalent facilities, such as nearby Forest Service campgrounds have increased, or have increases under consideration. Rate adjustments will bring Roswell Field Office facilities in line with local market conditions.

The Fair Market Value Method was used to determine fee increases and any additional amenity fees to add for the campgrounds to be more self-sufficient. This method entails comparing fees to public and private recreation areas with similar amenities. A fair market value fee can be estimated based on the types of amenities offered at the visitor use areas and whether they are inferior or superior to the amenities available at other recreation sites in the vicinity. This allows the RFO to determine whether the current fee structure is appropriate. The proposed fee rate for RV dumping was calculated using the Cost Recovery Fee Calculation Method. This is a departure from the rest of the business plan, which used the Fair Market Value Fee Calculation. Generally, to pump a vault can cost approximately \$3,000. A vault pump out is required after about 100 uses. Therefore, the cost per vault use is calculated by dividing the total vault pump-out cost by the number of uses. Consequently, the cost per use is at or near \$30.

In a situation where fees can fully cover operations and annual and deferred maintenance, excess fees collected can be applied to facility improvements such as improved interpretive and informational signage, improvements to group shelters such as lighting and electrical service,

updated or improved grills, fire rings, and picnic tables, native plant restoration, improved plumbing and trail expansion and improvement.

At the Valley of Fires recreation area, the Roswell Field Office proposes a site-specific agency annual pass that would provide a discount on day-use fees for pass holders who visits the recreation area often.

PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE EXPENDITURES

An increase in fees directly corresponds to an improvement in the recreational environment. An improvement to the recreational environment will result in higher visitor satisfaction, leading to return visits, recommendations, and positive feedback in public venues such as recreation.gov, yielding higher use of quality facilities.

Proposed fees will supplement and support improvements to address concerns that the public has raised with BLM staff and camp hosts. Installation of individual shade shelters at Rob Jagers Campground will provide gathering spaces for campers and result in a campground experience similar to Valley of Fires. Improvements to the plumbing at Valley of Fires will make the system more efficient and sustainable, and more important to the public, the hot water will get hotter faster and last longer in the showers. Improvements to fencing and native plant restoration at both campgrounds will enhance privacy at individual campsites. Better wayfinding and interpretive signage will make the use of the campgrounds easier and foster an appreciation for and connection to the human and natural stories of the area.

Short-term projects will focus on delineating public use areas and direct traffic flow, such as fencing and planting and signage to identify and separate individual campsites or to create specific trail accesses and discourage development of new trails.

Longer-term projects will focus on installing more sustainable and efficient plumbing at Valley of Fires and installation of culverts and erosion control at Rob Jagers Campground.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

BLM anticipates that some members of the public may have initial concerns regarding fee increases. However, previous visitor satisfaction surveys at Valley of Fires indicate that the majority of visitors felt that current fees were reasonable, with 93% stating the fee was about right, 6% indicating the fee was too low, and only 1% indicated that fees were too high.

Increased fees will benefit recreational users as funds so derived will continue to be applied to maintenance and improvement of the campgrounds and associated amenities. Plumbing improvements at Valley of Fires and shade shelter installation at Rob Jagers will improve the visitor experience.

High-quality campgrounds also benefit the local economy in general. The campgrounds provide a place to stay for potential patrons of local stores and restaurants. Annually the campsites are filled up in early August with people who attend the Lincoln Days festival. During the 2023 annular

eclipse both campgrounds were full of visitors who not only experienced a unique astronomical phenomenon but also spent money in Lincoln, Capitan, Carrizozo, and Ruidoso.

At both Valley of Fires and Rob Jagers campground in recent years BLM has seen an increase in the use of large RVs, custom van campers---and at Rob Jagers--custom horse trailers. These campers have committed significant effort and financial investment in their camping and recreation activities. An adjustment to the fees will be an insignificant change to the total amount of money these visitors have committed to recreation.

For low income/underserved users, there are a variety of camping and recreation opportunities that are free or low-cost that BLM is committed to maintaining in that condition. Dispersed camping at the National Conservation Area, or even the minimally developed Cave Canyon campground is free, as are the trails and roads on the Conservation Area.

Failure to implement new fees will result in diminution of services, less frequency of repair, and potential seasonal closures. Vault toilet pumping will be less frequent, either reducing the quality of the use experience or a management decision to reduce the number of available toilets during less busy times of year. Reduced frequency of repair could lead to certain campsites, or loops of campsites to be closed seasonally or for portions of the week.

The proposal for a site-specific pass for Valley of Fires is a response to comments BLM has received about providing options for frequent visitors to the recreation area. While the pass is expected to appeal strongly to local residents, such as those from Carrizozo and Capitan, it is also designed to benefit frequent visitors who use the site regularly, regardless of their location. For those users who would visit Valley of Fires for day-use at least six times in a year the pass would pay for itself.

ANTICIPATED RESULTS OF NOT EXPANDING RECREATION FEES

Overall, impacts from not changing fees include:

- Loss of potential revenue to augment funds for labor and operational costs.
- Potential environmental degradation of resources.
- Potential degradation of recreation experience and public satisfaction for current and new visitors with less funding available for aging facilities and not enough personnel to work the area.
- Costs of goods, labor, and services increase at a faster rate than fee revenue projections making it more difficult for BLM to purchase resources it needs to maintain facilities.
- Favorable socio-economic impacts to low-income or minority populations.

Impacts to Recreational Users

Recreational users may benefit in the short-term from not increasing recreation fees, as they would not pay higher sums to recreate. But over time at the current rates visitor experience quality could decline as less funding is available to support and maintain facilities

With this business plan, the BLM seeks to service recreationists, the local economy, and the BLM in the long-term. Replace costs for the infrastructure at the campgrounds will continue to increase,

given current trends. The requested fee increase would be partially used to cover replacement costs of existing infrastructure. A failure to raise the recreation fee would mean that aging infrastructure would not be replaced in a timely manner to maintain site quality. In addition, a failure to raise recreation fees would mean improvements to recreation sites, such as adding RV site amenities, upgrading signage, repairing trails, and expanding developed recreation opportunities would not be added to the existing infrastructure.

Impacts to Local Economy

Not raising recreation fees could erode services like cleaning and site host presence at sites. This would eventually impact the recreation sector of the region, resulting in decreased visitation to BLM sites. Visitation dollars are entirely discretionary; people can spend their vacation dollars at other locations if they find their experience on BLM to be underwhelming or unsatisfactory. Should people be less likely to recreate at BLM sites because of poor or unmaintained facilities, the regional economy would suffer. Local ski facilities have had seasons shortened due to lack of snow, major fires and floods in the area have reduced recreational access to portions of the Lincoln National Forest and the community of Ruidoso. BLM’s facilities at Valley of Fires and Rob Jagers have been consistently open and available to the public and have remained a small but reliable contributor to the regional tourist economy.

Financial Analysis

OPERATING COSTS

Annual Costs:

The 2020-2024 operational costs for Valley of Fires and Rob Jagers Campground are included in the following tables. These expenditures are generally representative of annual costs associated with the operation of these campgrounds.

Table 6 Annual Operating costs Valley of Fires

Expense Valley of Fires	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Consumables	\$ 45,980	\$ 85,842	\$ 106,959	\$ 110,897	\$ 110,320
Maintenance and Repair	\$ 3,177	\$ 4,435	\$ 5,380	\$ 8,899	\$ 9,524
Office Supplies	\$ 2,917	\$ 15,403	\$ 3,290	\$ 2,397	\$ 4,254
Operations	\$ 4,485	\$ 13,020	\$ 13,210	\$ 54,507	\$ 10,971
Volunteer support	\$ 12,826	\$ 7,612	\$ 10,716	\$ 9,487	\$ 8,676
Contracts/Leases/ Professional Services	\$ 2,415	\$ 12,193	\$ 40,542	\$ 1,376	\$ 9,512
Totals	\$ 71,799	\$ 138,506	\$ 180,096	\$ 187,563	\$ 153,257

Table 7 Annual Operating Costs Rob Jagers

Expense Rob Jagers	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Consumables	21,138	15,916	24,330	52,592	69,131
Maintenance and Repair	986	1,642	49	8,155	11,278
Office Supplies	1,199	409	472	375	1,116
Operations	1,896	1,051	1,500	2,559	5,677
Volunteer support	4,797	3,410	4,598	5,500	4,752
Contracts/Leases/Professional Services	2,768	8,844	0	3,325	4,936
Totals	32,784	31,272	30,948	72,505	96,891

Fee Program Administration Costs:

As fee collection is already in place at both campgrounds, there are no anticipated start-up costs since fee collection is already in place. There will likely be increases in fee program administration costs including expanding electronic fee collection methods and replacing signage to update information to new fees.

This plan deploys two types of analyses: the Cost Recovery Method identifies funds collected at and allocated to the recreation areas compared with expenditures, particularly for vault pumping; and the Fair Market assessment that compares fees at Rob Jagers and Valley of Fires with fees charged at similar public and private campgrounds in and around southwest New Mexico.

REVENUES

Current Revenues and Expenditures:

Management of recreation sites is funded through two revenue streams: appropriated funding and fee collections. Fees collected at Valley of Fires and Rob Jagers supplement appropriated funding and are used to maintain and enhance recreation facility services and operations. They are intended to help provide a desirable setting that will meet quality standards to enhance the visitor’s experience and protect natural and cultural resources.

Amenities and upkeep are maintained with Fee Account revenue from recreation fees paid by visitors. The table below: *Revenues* displays fee revenues since 2020.

Table 8 Revenues

	Valley of Fires revenue	Rob Jagers revenue
2020	\$34,535	\$9787
2021	\$61,199	\$5524
2022	\$73,299	\$22,545

2023	\$74,749	\$34,043
2024	\$75,355	\$36,203

Significant increases in revenues collected at these sites are reflective of changes in services provided and improved fee collection. Collected fees for Valley of Fires were significantly reduced in 2020 due to COVID-related closures. Increases from 2022 on reflect the implementation of scan-and-pay through Recreation.gov. Rob Jagers experienced a relative surge in 2020 as it was not closed during the COVID pandemic and its layout was particularly suited to socially distanced camping. The sharp increase in Rob Jagers revenues is associated with the full implementation of campground improvement such as electrical service pedestals and the expansion to the current 27 sites. These increases are reflective of significant increases in use and a commensurate need for more maintenance, increases in consumable supplies, and an increase in staff and volunteer time which is evident in the operating costs tables above. These increased costs support the need to update fees to reflect costs.

Anticipated Future Revenue:

The following table highlights projected annual revenues at both campgrounds with fee adjustments as proposed enacted.

Table 9 projected revenues with fee adjustments

	Valley of Fires	Rob Jagers
Recreation Use Permits (RUP)	\$130,000.00	\$35,000.00
Special Recreation Permits (SRP)	\$ -	\$7,500.00
Interagency Passes	\$5,680.00	\$ -
Totals	\$135,680.00	\$42,500.00

Future revenues were estimated based on applying the proposed new fees to the current use levels at the campgrounds.

FEE PROGRAM DETAILS

Fee Collection, Enforcement, and Compliance

Fee collection at RFO is managed through the Recreation Use Permit (RUP) program. All vehicles entering the recreation site are required to obtain an RUP for day-use. The RUP covers both Standard and Expanded Amenity Fees per vehicle and differ according to the visitor’s use of the recreation sites. Visitors using an annual pass are exempt from paying certain fees but still fill out a RUP, which allows RFO to track visitation. Visitors purchase RUPs at self-service stations located near the entrance. Camping RUPs at Valley of Fires and Rob Jagers can be paid through the fee envelope system described below or through Recreation.gov either as a reservation or a

scan-and-pay. All passes must either be displayed on the campsite post or be visible in a vehicle's front window.

User fees are collected regularly by staff from the "iron rangers" where visitors submit RUP envelopes. Iron rangers use an inner lockbox system, so cash is not handled in the field. These inner lockboxes are transported to a secure location where they are sorted, opened, and revenues are counted, then deposited, in the presence of more than one staff person in accordance with BLM fee collection policies as described in Washington Office Instruction Memorandum 2006-211 (I).

Payment of Standard and Expanded Amenity Fees via the RUP program is enforced through the presence of volunteer campground hosts and by a rotation of BLM employees that patrol the sites. If problems arise, local, state, or BLM law enforcement are contacted.

Fee compliance is positively affected by several factors, including amenities perceived to offer value and BLM presence on site by Park Rangers, volunteers, or site hosts. However, fee compliance is imperfect at BLM sites, as some visitors can fail to comply with fee requirements. Failure to comply with fee requirements can result in a warning from volunteers or BLM employees (possibly including law enforcement officers where repeated violations occur). Fee compliance estimates are currently unknown.

Expanded Amenity-Reservation Services

RFO will use various e-commerce technologies, as instructed in BLM Instruction Memorandum 2022-019, to provide recreation visitors opportunities to find, reserve, and pay for campsites and day use within the field office. Most of these options are provided through the interagency reservation service Recreation.gov.

If the RFO decides to make reservation services or other types of e-commerce options available in the future, an expanded amenity fee for reservation services would be charged in addition to any other standard or expanded amenity fees in accordance with 16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(G). Reservation services fees could range from \$0.50 to \$10.00 depending on the type of service provided. This range is approximate and may be adjusted based on contractual requirements or with future updates to the business plan. For visitors who wish not to pay the expanded amenity fee of reservation services, the traditional iron ranger with RUP envelopes will exist until the field office moves the fee area completely to e-commerce options and/or the RUP envelope is no longer available for payment.

Fee Discounts

RFO upholds various opportunities for discounted or fee-free recreation at fee sites through the America the Beautiful Pass and fee-free holidays and events. These opportunities are discussed below.

America the Beautiful Interagency Pass

FLREA established an interagency National pass known as the America the Beautiful – The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass. The America the Beautiful (ATB) Pass took the place of the popular Golden Eagle, Age, and Access Passports in 2007, although existing Golden Passports will continue to be honored until expired, lost, or stolen.

Any of the seven types of ATB Passes provide the bearer full coverage of standard day use fees at fee sites on public lands, which apply at the RFO at Valley of Fires, Rob Jagers Campground, as well as Haystack and Mescalero Sands OHV areas.

Table 10 Interagency Pass Program Details

Type	Who Can Use	Cost and Timeframe	Benefits
Annual	Anyone can purchase	\$80, annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Waives day use fees for public lands. ✓ May be jointly owned by 2 people. ✓ Covers fees for passholder(s) at per person fee sites and for 1 car at per car fee sites. ✗ Does not waive expanded amenity fees such as camping or group sites. ✗ Cannot be used by people other than passholder(s)
Military Lifetime	Military veterans and Gold Star Families	Free, lifetime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Waives day use fees for public lands. ✓ Waives fees for passholder at per-person fee sites and for 1 car at per-car fee sites. ✗ Does not waive expanded amenity fees such as camping or group sites. ✗ Cannot be used by people other than passholder.
Military	Current U.S. Military personnel and their dependents with specific documentation	Free, annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Waives day use fees for public lands. ✓ Waives fees for passholder at per-person fee sites and for 1 car at per-car fee sites. ✗ Does not waive expanded amenity fees such as camping or group sites. ✗ Cannot be used by people other than passholder
4 th Grade	U.S. 4 th graders for duration of 4 th grade year	Free with voucher, annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Waives day use fees for public lands. ✓ Waives fees for passholder at per-person fee sites and for 1 car at per-car fee sites. ✗ Does not waive expanded amenity fees such as camping or group sites. ✗ Cannot be used by people other than passholder

Senior	Any U.S. citizen or permanent resident 62 and older	\$20, annual \$80, lifetime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Waives day use fees for public lands. ✓ Waives fee for passholder and up to 3 additional adults (w/ passholder present) ✓ Some discounts for overnight camping on individual sites, guided tours, and non-optional transportation (valid only for passholder) – contact specific sites to verify discounts. ✓ Annual passes may be exchanged for a lifetime pass; seniors may present up to 4 annual passes and/or pay the difference between annual and lifetime pass. ✗ Cannot be purchased by non-permanent U.S. residents (i.e., “snowbirds”)
Access	U.S. citizens or permanent residents with documentation of permanent disability	Free, lifetime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Waives day use fees for public lands. ✓ Waives fee for passholder and up to 3 additional adults (w/ passholder present) ✓ Some discounts for overnight camping on individual sites, guided tours, and non-optional transportation (valid only for passholder) – contact specific sites to verify discounts
Volunteer	Anyone with 250+ hours of volunteer service on public lands	Free, annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Waives day use fees for public lands. ✓ Waives fees for passholder at per-person fee sites and for 1 car at per-car fee sites. ✗ Does not waive expanded amenity fees such as camping or group sites. ✗ Cannot be used by people other than passholder

Key components to remember about the ATB Pass:

- The ATB pass waives entrance or standard amenity day use fees at sites managed by six federal agencies: Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of Agriculture-Forest Service (USDA-FS), and National Park Service (NPS).
- The ATB Pass does not cover expanded amenity fees charged for parking, camping, tours, boat launches, or group sites (excepting Senior and Access Passes; see **Table 7** for specifics).
- Not all federal recreation agencies participate in the program; for example, much of the Bureau of Reclamation lands are managed by nonfederal partners. **Contact sites directly to ensure the America the Beautiful Pass is accepted there.**

- Visitors must present the actual pass for use, not a copy or electronic version or any other documentation such as confirmation emails, versions saved to apps like Google or Apple wallets, purchase receipts, or hangtags.

AGGREGATE EFFECT OF FEES ON RECREATION USERS AND RECREATION PROVIDERS:

The aggregate effect of a change in fees will be that prices for several fee-related activities or services will increase while one will decrease. But in the long term as funds generated by the fee adjustments result in increased revenues, BLM will be able to make long-term improvements, such as upgraded facilities, expanded services, or enhanced amenities, that will increase the quality of the recreational experience. These improvements will make the campgrounds cleaner, safer, and more resilient.

Market Value Analysis of Recreation Fee Rates

New fee proposals were developed using the fair market value fee calculation method. Information on local facilities that provided similar services, both public and private was collected to inform the analysis.

Both Valley of Fires and Rob Jagers campground are in areas with a variety of public and private camping opportunities to consider as comparable to determine fair market value. In both cases, Valley of Fires and Rob Jagers campground have more amenities than other public (Forest Service or BLM) facilities in the area but fewer than privately owned RV parks and campgrounds. Consequently, the proposed rates fall between the rates used by these two categories. Proposed day use fees at Valley of Fires correspond to fees at the BLM's Three Rivers Petroglyph site as it is a facility with similar day use activities.

Table 11 Cost Comparison Table Federally Operated Campground/Recreation Areas in Lincoln and Otero Counties

Oak Grove Campground (USFS-LNF)	Three Rivers Campground (USFS-LNF)	South Fork Campground (USFS-LNF)	Three Rivers Petroglyph Site (BLM-LCD)
Camp Fees: \$10/Night \$5/Extra Vehicle	Camp Fees: \$15/Night	Camp Fees: \$20/Night \$5/Extra Vehicle Day Use Fee: \$5/Vehicle	Camp Fees: \$10-25/Night Day Use Fees: \$5/Vehicle, \$15/Bus Group Site Fee: \$60
Amenities: Grills, Camp Host, Vault Toilet	Amenities: Water on-site, host, vault toilet	Amenities: Water on-site, fire ring, garbage can, picnic tables, vault toilet	Amenities: Water, Electric (2 sites), Picnic Tables and Grills (7 campsites and Group Site)

Table 12 Cost Comparison Table: Private Sector Operated RV Parks located within Lincoln County, NM

Mountain Springs RV Park (Carrizozo, NM)	Mama Bear RV Park (Capitan, NM)	Bonito Hollow RV Park (Alto, NM)	Mountain High RV Park (Alto, NM)	Boutique Barns RV Park (Capitan, NM)
Camp Fees: \$30/Night Full-Hookups	Camp Fees: \$28/Night Full-Hookups	Camp Fees: \$40/Night Water/Electric \$44/Night Water/Electric/Sewer	Camp Fees: \$50/Night Full-Hookups	Camp Fees: \$30/Night Full-Hookups
Amenities: Electric, Water, Sewer Hookups, clubhouse w/ games & activities, laundry room and shower-house.	Amenities: Electric, Water, Sewer hookups. Shower-house. Gathering area w/ tables, lights.	Amenities: Dump Station, WIFI, Library. Picnic Table and Campfire ring at each site. No tents.	Amenities: Water, Electric, Sewer hookups, Picnic Tables and Campfire Rings	Amenities: Water, Sewer, Electric Hookups

There are few or very limited local comparable items to consider regarding a site-specific day use pass for Valley of Fires. But a review of state park day use passes demonstrates a wide range of fees associated with them. New Mexico State Parks provide an annual day use pass for \$40, Arizona State Park Pass is \$80, Utah State Park Pass is \$125, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife offers a variety of passes from \$29 for state residents to \$120 for families. Generally, these passes are the cost equivalent of between five- and ten-day use visits. A similar day use pass is available for the BLM Las Cruces district for one year at \$30. Likewise, the proposed day use pass for Valley of Fires is set at \$30, as that is six times the proposed day use fee, placing this fee in a similar proportion to the number of day use visit equivalents of these other passes, but generally at a lower total than the state-wide passes as it is only valid at one location.

There are no local comparable items to consider regarding provided horse corrals as a campground amenity. There are several factors that go into this proposed rate adjustment. Adding the current corral rate of \$12 to the proposed RV fee of \$25 for Rob Jagers campground would result in a total camping fee that would be among the highest of those evaluated. The new proposed corral fee of \$5 would result in a total nightly camping rate of \$30 for those who use a corral, which is a total that is much closer to the middle of the range of evaluated camping rate. Additionally the original rate of \$12 was arrived at to defray the one-time cost to acquire corral panels. These panels are durable and very infrequently need to be replaced. The adjustment proposed to \$5 per corral per night is more reflective of the actual costs to repair and replace panel pieces now that the original acquisition costs have been recovered through the current \$12 price.

Over the last ten years, a combination of inflation and increased visitation has contributed to a commensurate increase in operating costs for both campgrounds. This includes daily maintenance, septic services, supplies, security, volunteer stipends, etc., the increased costs associated with the replacement of aging/defunct infrastructure such as buildings, roads, shelters, fencing, parking areas, camp-host site/facilities, etc., and cleanups from severe weather, monsoons, and vandalism. An example of these rising costs-driven both by increased use and inflation-is the staggering rise in the costs of consumables (paper products, soap, cleaning supplies, etc.) at both Rob Jagers and Valley of Fires. At Rob Jagers from 2020 to 2024 consumables costs more than tripled from \$21,000 to \$69,000. At Valley of Fires during the same period consumables costs rose from \$46,000 to \$110,000. Major improvements have also added significant associated costs. In 2022 an exterior stuccoing project at the Valley of Fires visitor center cost over \$40,000.

Visitor use at the site continues to increase, thus requiring a commensurate outlay for maintenance, improvements, security, and visitor information.

Feedback and Public Participation

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Section 804 of FLREA addresses the minimum public outreach requirements that an agency must consider when developing or changing recreation fees. This outreach process involves sharing and getting feedback on the proposed Business Plan by a Resource Advisory Council (RAC). RACs provide recommendations to agency officials on matters including, but not limited to:

- Implementing or eliminating fees.
- Expanding or limiting the recreation fee program.
- Implementing fee level changes.

RFO will initiate public notification and outreach for the fee proposal per PL 108-447 Sec. 804 (d)(4) and the BLM Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook (H-2930- 1). This includes:

- Soliciting public comments for at least 30 days on the draft business plan by:
 - Posting it on the BLM Recreation Site Business Plans website.
 - Issuing news releases, posting information on social media platforms (including RFO's Facebook page), and/or purchasing ads in local media outlets.
 - Publishing a notice in the Federal Register, as well as notices at recreation fee sites.
 - Presenting information on proposed fee changes at public meetings in the local communities, county board of supervisors meetings and village board meetings
 - Sending letters to interested parties and stakeholders
- Reviewing and considering public comments, revising the draft business plan as warranted, and finalizing the business plan for Resource Advisory Council recommendation.
 - Including the number and content of public comments in an additional section of this business plan.

Maintaining RFO's fee program can only come with widespread public support when fees have a direct connection to a perceived and/or tangible benefit. To ensure ongoing public support of any/all proposed fee adjustments, RFO will publish and vet proposals in newspapers with regional circulation, and on the BLM websites and recreation site bulletin boards. In addition, site hosts will inform visitors regarding details of fee proposals and provide a venue to comment if they choose.

At both Valley of Fires and Rob Jagers Campgrounds BLM has volunteer hosts to monitor site conditions, make basic repairs, assist with any questions or feedback visitors may have. BLM staff based out of the Fort Stanton – Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area and Valley of Fires regularly patrol and interact with visitors to get a sense of current conditions and to identify needed repairs or improvements. The phone number for the Roswell field office is prominently displayed at both campgrounds for complaints and concerns. All these avenues will be available for visitors to share input on fee proposals.

BLM staff also regularly monitor online review applications, such as YELP! to identify visitor concerns. Plus, portions of Valley of Fires are available for reservation on Recreation.gov, and uses the Recreation.gov scan and pay application, both of which provide a forum for public

comments. In fact, the public comments that were received about the sun-faded interpretive signs led directly to BLM staff working to develop a contract to update and replace interpretive signage on the Malpais nature trail. Scan and pay implementation has begun at Rob Jagers so BLM will have that opportunity for feedback in 2024.

BLM communicates how fee revenues are used effectively by identifying improvements that have been funded through use fees at park kiosks and information boards. As improvements continue, the fee-supported improvements will also be highlighted on the Recreation.gov pages for Valley of Fires and Rob Jagers campgrounds.

VISITOR FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

The following mechanisms provide visitors, stakeholders, and the public mechanisms to provide direct feedback to RFO on proposed changes:

- **Visitor Contacts:** BLM recreation staff and the law enforcement patrol the campgrounds and surrounding recreation area regularly. This provides opportunities for direct visitor feedback.
- **Recreation Use Permits/Fee Envelopes:** Visitors often provide constructive comments on the permit or fee envelopes, and these comments are noted by recreation staff.
- **Volunteer Hosts:** The RFO coordinates regularly with site hosts who collect and provide valuable feedback and suggestions regarding visitor satisfaction and facility needs.
- **Visitor Use and Satisfaction Surveys:** BLM conducts these surveys on a rotating basis for all fee sites and related facilities. Valley of Fires was surveyed for visitor satisfaction in 2023, and Rob Jagers, as part of the Fort Stanton – Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area is engaged in the survey at present.
- **Resource Advisory Council:** All fee proposals must first undergo review by BLM's New Mexico Resource Advisory Council (RAC), which will provide feedback on RFO's proposal.
- **Facebook:** Visitors can provide feedback by privately messaging the Bureau of Land Management New Mexico's Facebook Page.
- **Direct Contact:** Visitors can provide direct feedback about the fee proposal by contacting the BLM Roswell Field Office.