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**Bureau of Land Management
Salem District Office**

DRAFT-Molalla River Corridor Recreation Sites Business Plan



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

Business Plan for Molalla River Corridor Recreation Sites – OR28

Approval Process

This business plan was prepared pursuant to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) of December 2004 (P.L. 108-447, as amended), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recreation fee program policy and manual (Manual 2930 – Recreation Permits and Fees) and handbook (H-2930-1 Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook) guidance for Molalla River Corridor Recreation Sites.

This Business Plan proposes a new fee structure at two campgrounds, a group campground, and a future campground based on a regional comparative market study of fees charged for other similar recreation facilities. The BLM will implement the following fee schedule after approval by the BLM Deputy State Director, consultation with the BLM Resource Advisory Council, and proper public notification.

Fee Schedule and Definitions

The fee schedule outlines the existing and proposed changes for expanded and standard amenity recreation fees at Molalla River Corridor Recreation Sites.

Standard Amenity	Existing Fees	Proposed Fees
Day-Use Vehicle	NEW	\$5
Annual District Day-Use Vehicle Pass		\$30 (Northwest Oregon BLM Pass)

Expanded Amenity	Existing Fees	Proposed Fees
Individual Tent Campsite	NEW	\$15
Double Tent Campsite		\$30
Group Campsite		\$50 (up to 20 people) \$2.50 for each additional person
RV/Trailer Campsite (future development)		\$20
Extra Vehicle		\$5
Firewood (half cart)		\$5
Firewood (full cart)		\$10

Definitions of Standard and Expanded Amenities taken from H-2930-1 BLM Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook for area covered under this business plan:

- Standard Amenities** fees cover outdoor recreation sites and services for a well-defined area or developed day-use recreation site that has all of the following amenities: (1) parking, (2) permanent toilet facility, (3) permanent trash receptacle, (4) interpretive sign, exhibit, or kiosk, (5) picnic tables, (6) security services, (7) convenient and effective fee collection (8) identification and informational signs (p. 2-11 to 2-12).

- Expanded Amenities** fees cover specialized outdoor recreation sites and services including but not limited to developed campgrounds with at least five of the following amenities: (1) tent or trailer spaces, (2) picnic tables, (3) drinking water, (4) access roads, (5) fee collection by an employee or agent of the BLM, (6) visitor protection, (7) refuse containers, (8) toilet facilities, (9) devices for containing a campfire; group overnight sites; and use of reservation services (p. 2-13 to 2-14).

Contact Person for Business Plan

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

Signatures for Approving Business Plan

Recommended By:

 Jeff McCusker, Salem District Supervisory Recreation Planner

 Date

Approved By:

 Kim Titus, Salem District Manager

 Date

Concurrence By:

 Oregon Deputy State Director for Resources, (Acting)

 Date

Fee Site Description – OR28

The 37,487 acre Molalla River-Table Rock Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) is located southeast of the city of Molalla, Oregon in the western Cascade Mountains. It includes 27,405 acres of public land. The area exhibits traits typical of the Cascade Range including dense coniferous forests, heavy precipitation, and volcanic-origin geology. The Molalla River recreation corridor is within Oregon's 5th Congressional District. The recreation area features the 5,700-acre Table Rock Wilderness and the 25-mile Molalla River Shared Use Trail System.

Three Bears, Cedar Grove, and the proposed Pine Creek campgrounds provide developed camping in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains within the Molalla River-Table Rock Special Recreation Management Area. The surrounding public land offers excellent opportunities for picnicking, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, whitewater boating, hunting and nature study.

Design and construction of Three Bears and Cedar Grove campgrounds took place in 2012 and 2013. They are located on a forested river terrace above the scenic Molalla River. Each campground provides paved parking, designated campsites, information kiosk, potable water, vault restrooms, trash service, improved river access, and on-site volunteer hosts. Amenities at each of the 26 campsites include constructed tent pads, picnic tables, fire rings, and BBQ grills.

Three Bears offers 13 individual campsites, three double campsites, one volunteer host site, potable water, designated parking, and vault toilets. Cedar Grove offers 10 individual campsites, one double campsite, one volunteer host site, potable water, designated parking, and vault toilets. These campsites are available on a first come, first served basis between May and October each year. Operating seasons and reservation procedures may be adjusted based on public demand.

A third proposed campground in the *Molalla River-Table Rock Recreation Area Management Plan*, Pine Creek, would offer 14 back-in or pull-through RV/trailer campsites located near the Pine Creek Bridge. Pine Creek would offer similar amenities as Three Bears and Cedar Grove, with an emphasis to accommodate RVs and trailers.

Aquila Vista is currently utilized as a group campsite through issuance of a Special Recreation Permit. The site offers picnic tables, fire rings, vault restroom, trash services, covered structure and parking. Aquila Vista would be converted to a group campsite that could be reserved through the National Recreation Reservation System. Visitors would make reservations via the online system instead of coordinating a group camping visit with district recreation staff. This would allow customers to check availability, generate a reservation and pay all online.

Season of Use

The majority of recreation use within the SRMA takes place between May and October, coinciding with higher temperatures and rain-free days, water temperatures conducive for swimming, and full access to trail systems and high elevation roads.

Visitors

The planning area lies adjacent to communities in Northwest Oregon and the Willamette Valley that have seen continual population growth since 1990. The region is the most densely populated in Oregon, including eight of the state's ten most populous cities (including Portland and Salem). The region is expected to grow in the coming decades; the Metro regional government predicts the Portland metropolitan area alone will add up to 500,000 households by 2035. In proximity to a large proportion of the state's population, the Molalla River-Table Rock area has seen a steady growth in visitation over the past decade and now hosts between 70,000 and 80,000 visitors annually.

School groups and educational organizations can arrange free vehicle access at any time of the year for educational activities by contacting the BLM and providing a curriculum of their planned educational activities (see Conditions for Recreation Use Fee Waivers). Other recreational events must be held under a special recreation use permit issued by the Salem District Office.

Fee Collection and Enforcement

Staff and law enforcement presence will administer Molalla River Corridor Recreation Site fee compliance. On-site volunteer hosts will directly interface with visitors to ensure they clearly understand payment requirements and procedures. Regular patrols by seasonal recreation technicians will compliment this presence. Additionally, BLM law enforcement officers and Clackamas County law enforcement, under contract, will have a consistent presence.

Conditions for Recreation Use Permit Fee Waivers

Section 803(d) of the REA provides that standard amenity recreation fees shall not be charged for (shortened list): use of overlooks or scenic pullouts, any person engaged in the conduct of official Federal, State, Tribal, or local government business, special attention or extra services necessary to meet the needs of the disabled, any person under 16 years of age, outings conducted for noncommercial educational purposes by schools or bona fide academic institutions, and others. Waivers of fees both for purposes of traditional cultural importance and education may be obtained in writing by contacting the Northwest Oregon District Office.

Fee Discounts

Section 805 of the REA provided for the establishment of a single interagency national pass known as the "America the Beautiful – the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass," which provides the bearer full coverage of standard amenity fees and holders of the Interagency Senior and Access Passes half-off some expanded amenity fees. The national interagency pass replaces the popular Golden Passports, which provide for free standard amenity day-use, and half-off some expanded amenity fees, in the case of Golden Age and Access Passports. No discount is allowed for group use sites, shelters, yurts or cabins. The BLM would honor existing Golden Passports until they expire or exchanged for interagency passes. It is not expected that this pass would make a substantial impact on fee revenue in the near future.

Projected Development Costs

The Three Bears and Cedar Grove are already developed recreation sites. Development costs for expanding recreation opportunities and other plan implementation costs are listed below.

- Ivor Davies day-use site (\$250,000)
- Rosette Basalt day-use site (\$250,000)
- Pine Creek Campground (\$400,000)

Operations and Maintenance Costs

The BLM currently spends substantial resources in managing visitor use within the SRMA including day and overnight use along the Molalla River, the Molalla River Shared Use Trail System, and Table Rock Wilderness. Current management levels and associated costs will still be required within the Molalla River-Table Rock area without implementation of this fee proposal.

Current direct costs for recreation management of the area include labor, services such as restroom pumping, law enforcement support, volunteer reimbursement, supplies, and materials. These costs total \$80,500. They do not include annual road maintenance, which facilitates the full range of BLM's programs and cannot be attributed solely to recreation management.

The sites represent approximately \$500,000 in capitalized infrastructure investment.

Projected Fee Revenue

Revenue projections based on a 184-day camping season with an average regional tent/basic occupancy rate of 40 percent. The projected revenue using these parameters for the 22 tent sites is \$24,288, and the projected revenue for the double sites is \$8,832. The expected occupancy of the Aquila Vista group site is 40 percent as well; the projected revenue for this site is \$3680. This results in the total fee revenue collection of \$36,800.

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

Proposed Use of Additional Fee Revenue

- Supplement the continued current level of annual maintenance needed.
- Improve site accessibility, trails, interpretation, and signing.
- Make facilities appealing and enjoyable to use.
- Develop more recreation opportunities in the corridor.

Financial Analysis of Existing Private and Public Facilities

The BLM proposes to charge expanded amenity fees for camping at Three Bears, Cedar Grove, and Pine Creek campgrounds and a standard amenity fee for day-use at developed sites in the Molalla River Corridor. A comparative analysis conducted by the BLM Salem District recreation staff in 2016 reviewed expanded and standard amenity fees at similar state, federal, and local park facilities. Fees would increase in 2017 based on this comparative market analysis.

The BLM conducted a comparative market study of similar public park facilities in the region. A review of comparable state, federal, and local parks in a 50-mile radius of the Molalla River resulted in the proposed fee changes. No comparable sites in the private sector currently exist; RV parks are available but do not provide the same amenities and were not included in the fee comparisons charts. Proposed fees are based on what the public sector currently charges for similar visitor facilities, number of campsites, access, and service. See Table 1 for a full comparison of fees within the market area.

All campgrounds within the market comparison area charge nightly fees ranging from \$10 at rustic Oregon Department of Forestry campgrounds to \$28 for full hookup sites at State Parks. However, the Oregon Department of Forestry is proposing fee increases of 50 to 100 percent of their current rates, increasing the nightly rate to \$15 for tent sites. Group tent sites are available for \$71 at both State Parks included in this analysis. Nearly every site also charges a fee for additional vehicles. Some parks (including those managed by Clackamas County) charge a daily fee in addition to overnight fees.

Individual tent campsite fees for the Molalla River Recreation Sites were determined directly from this analysis at an average fee of \$18. However, the fees will be reduced to \$15 which reflects the relative level of service offered at Three Bears and Cedar Grove and to make it more convenient for visitors to pay. During the analysis of comparable campgrounds, the emphasis was placed on walk-in and no hookup tent sites that provided the same level of amenities, recreation values and accessibility as Three Bears and Cedar Grove. In campgrounds that did not provide either of the aforementioned sites, that campground's fees were excluded from the average to ensure the accuracy of the analysis. Oregon Department of Forestry is the most comparable for size and quality of each camping site, but is lacking in similar recreation opportunities, ease of access to the campgrounds and employee interaction when compared to the BLM. While the Molalla River sites have fewer amenities than those found at Clackamas County facilities.

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

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

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

Day-use and additional vehicle fees range from \$3 to \$8 per vehicle for both. Day-use fees would apply to all vehicles in the recreation sites within the Molalla River Corridor. Additional vehicle fees apply for vehicles exceeding their allotted designated parking spaces within the main parking area, based on site capacity. Additional vehicles will be required to park in overflow locations within each parking area. Nearly every comparable campground charges for extra vehicles and day-use, with the exception of two Oregon Department of Forestry campgrounds. The day-use and additional vehicle fee would be \$5 per vehicle.

Firewood is an important part of resource protection for the area surrounding campgrounds. Providing local sourced firewood for campers reduces the amount of invasive weeds that are introduced to the area. Campers are also less likely to cut down trees, remove small woody undergrowth and to collect fallen wood that is important to the ecology of a natural area. The price for firewood was determined from years of firewood vending; the price has to be at a low enough rates for campers to be willing to purchase, but high enough for local residents to not want to purchase for their own wood stoves.

Beginning in 2015 the BLM experimented with issuing a vending permit to a local storeowner to sell firewood at the campgrounds. Unfortunately, a very dry year, and fire restrictions cut short the experiment. If the experiment is not successful, and another private sector option cannot be found, the BLM may opt to sell firewood itself. The fee is \$5 for a half cart and \$10 for a full cart. Each cart holds roughly 2 cubic feet of firewood.

Stakeholders and Partnerships

The BLM has worked closely with Molalla RiverWatch and the Molalla River Alliance in managing of the Molalla River-Table Rock SRMA. The Bureau works collaboratively with these groups to recruit volunteers, identify project work, and perform public outreach. Both groups were involved in the Molalla River planning process from 2008 to 2011.

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

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

Public Communication and Marketing Plan

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

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

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

Ways to Inform Public of Fee Expenditures

Fee expenditure information is collected on an annual basis and presented in the Federal Statistics document available online. More specifically, each area will post fee expenditure information on site to inform the public where and on what services, maintenance, operations their fees are spent.

Table 1: Analysis of Existing Campgrounds

Expanded Amenities: Green colored campgrounds have all 9, Orange colored campground have 7-8, Red colored campgrounds have 5-6.

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

Campground	Fee														
Molalla River Corridor (BLM)	<i>Proposed Fees</i>														
	Tent site \$15														
	Double site \$30														
	RV/camper \$20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		
	Extra vehicle \$5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
	Day-use \$5														
Group campsite \$50 (\$2.50 per over 20 people)															
Little North Fork Recreation Area (BLM)	<i>Proposed Fees</i>														
	Basic site \$20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
	Extra vehicle \$5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Day-use \$5															
Feyrer Park (Clackamas County)	Partial hookup \$26				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		
	Extra vehicle \$5				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		
	Day-use \$5														
Metzler Park (Clackamas County)	Partial hookup \$26														
	Tent site \$21														
	Extra tent(3+) \$5	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		
	Extra vehicle \$5	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		
	Day-use \$5														
Barton Park (Clackamas County)	Partial hookup \$26														
	Tent site \$21														
	Extra tent(3+) \$5	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Extra vehicle \$5	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Day-use \$5														
Milo McIver (State Parks)	Partial hookup \$24														
	Walk-in tent \$18														
	Extra vehicle \$5	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
	Day-use \$5	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
	Group campsite \$75 (\$3 per over 25 people)														
Champoeg State Heritage Area (State Parks)	Full hook-up \$28														
	Partial hookup \$26	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
	Tent sites \$19	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
	Extra vehicle \$5														

Campground	Fee															
	Day-use \$5 Group campsite \$71 (\$3 per over 25 people)															
Silver Falls (State Parks)	Horse campsite \$19/\$58															
	Electric only site \$26															
	Tent site \$19															
	Extra vehicle \$7															
	Cabin \$40/\$50															
	Day-use \$5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
	Group shelter \$50/\$100 Group campsite \$71 (\$3 each over 25 people) Group RV \$101 (\$10 per after 10)															
Shellburg Falls (ODF)	<i>Proposed</i> Tent site \$15	✓	✓	✓			✓							✓		
	Walk-in tent \$8	✓	✓	✓												
	Extra vehicle \$3															
Butte Creek (ODF)	<i>Proposed</i> Tent site \$15	✓	✓	✓												
Rock Creek (ODF)	<i>Proposed</i> Tent site \$15	✓	✓	✓												
Lazy Bend (USFS Mt. Hood)	Tent site \$20	✓			✓	✓										
	Extra vehicle \$8	✓			✓	✓										
Carter Bridge (USFS Mt. Hood)	Tent site \$16	✓			✓	✓			✓							
	Extra vehicle \$8	✓			✓	✓										
Armstrong (USFS Mt. Hood)	Tent site \$19	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
	Extra vehicle \$8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										