



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



# Draft Business Plan for: Atlantic City, Big Atlantic Gulch, and Cottonwood Campgrounds Lander Field Office June 2024



# Draft Business Plan for: Atlantic City, Big Atlantic Gulch, and Cottonwood Campgrounds

## RECOMMENDATIONS, REVIEWS, AND APPROVALS

Recommended by:

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This business plan was prepared pursuant to the Federal Land Recreation Enhancement Act (Public Law 10-8-447) and BLM recreation fee program policy. It establishes future management goals and priorities for the recreation fee program for campgrounds in the Lander Field Office.



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Dear Reader,

I would like to present for your review and comment the Draft Business Plan for Lander Field Office Campgrounds. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Lander Field Office (LFO) currently manages three campgrounds that annually provide over 3,000 visitors with outstanding camping opportunities on their public lands. The draft business plan proposes to establish a field office wide campground business plan that standardizes fees for all campgrounds within the field office. This includes Atlantic City, Big Atlantic Gulch, and Cottonwood Campgrounds.

Currently the camping fees at the Lander Field Office campgrounds, set in 1992, are \$6 per night per individual site. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FPLMA) authorizes the BLM to regulate the use of public lands, and the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) authorizes the BLM to collect recreational fees when sites and areas meet specific criteria. All three developed campgrounds in the LFO meet the criteria as an expanded amenity site under FLREA.

The proposed fees outlined in this business plan would be initiated on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025. This includes a proposed cost of \$20 per night for standard sites and \$40 per night for group sites. Additional vehicles can be added at a rate of \$10 per vehicle or camping unit. For additional details see Section 5 of this document. The rationale for these fees, including comparison of other campgrounds with similar amenities, various fee scenarios contemplated, and a breakdown of operating costs versus anticipated revenue, is also found in this document.

The objective of the Draft Business Plan for Lander Field Office Campgrounds is to provide you with the opportunity to submit comments on the proposed fee changes. Comments may be mailed to "BLM, Campground Business Plan Comment, 1335 Main Street, Lander WY 82520" or email to [joakleaf@blm.gov](mailto:joakleaf@blm.gov) (subject line: "campground business plan comment"). Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. The BLM will not consider anonymous comments. Thank you for your interest in your public lands.

Sincerely,

John R. Elliott, Jr., Lander Field Manager

## Contents

|       |   |    |
|-------|---|----|
| 1     | Executive Summary .....                               | 2  |
| 2     | Introduction .....                                    | 3  |
| 2.1   | Background and Authorities .....                      | 3  |
| 2.2   | Department of the Interior and BLM Priorities .....   | 4  |
| 2.3   | Lander Field Office Overview .....                    | 4  |
| 2.4   | Lander Field Office Recreation Program Overview ..... | 4  |
| 2.4.1 | Applicable Land Use Plan Decisions .....              | 4  |
| 2.4.2 | Resources and Attractions.....                        | 5  |
| 2.4.3 | Visitation Statistics and Trends.....                 | 5  |
| 2.4.4 | Visitor Demographics .....                            | 6  |
| 2.4.5 | Partnerships and Volunteers .....                     | 6  |
| 3     | Description of Fee Sites Covered by This Plan .....   | 7  |
| 3.1   | Site Overview and Amenities .....                     | 7  |
| 3.1.1 | Atlantic City Campground .....                        | 8  |
| 3.1.2 | Big Atlantic Gulch.....                               | 9  |
| 3.1.3 | Cottonwood Campground.....                            | 9  |
| 3.2   | Visitor Use, Trends, and Demographics.....            | 9  |
| 3.2.1 | Visitation Statistics and Trends.....                 | 9  |
| 3.2.2 | Visitor Demographics .....                            | 11 |
| 3.3   | Partnerships and Volunteers .....                     | 11 |
| 4     | Existing Financials .....                             | 12 |
| 4.1   | Annual Operating Cost .....                           | 12 |
| 4.2   | Priorities for Future Expenditures .....              | 12 |
| 4.2.1 | Maintenance Expenses .....                            | 12 |
| 4.2.2 | Savings To Ensure Continuity of Operations .....      | 13 |
| 4.2.3 | Planned New Investments .....                         | 13 |
| 4.3   | Existing Revenue .....                                | 13 |
| 5     | Proposed Financial Change .....                       | 13 |
| 5.1   | Assumptions:.....                                     | 13 |
| 5.2   | Proposed Method:.....                                 | 14 |
| 5.3   | Other Methods .....                                   | 15 |



|       |   |    |
|-------|---|----|
| 5.3.1 | No Change.....                            | 15 |
| 5.3.2 | Break-even.....                           | 15 |
| 5.3.3 | Comparables.....                          | 15 |
| 6     | Effects Comparison.....                   | 16 |
| 6.1   | Recreation and Visitor Services.....      | 16 |
| 6.2   | Biological and Cultural Resources.....    | 17 |
| 6.3   | Socio-economic.....                       | 17 |
| 6.3.1 | Impact to Underserved Communities.....    | 17 |
| 6.3.2 | Impact to Revenue of Other Providers..... | 18 |
| 7     | Public Outreach.....                      | 18 |

**List of Tables**

|          |  |    |
|----------|--|----|
| Table 1: | LFO Recreation Management Areas (RMA).....                           | 5  |
| Table 2: | Overview of LFO Expanded Amenity Sites.....                          | 8  |
| Table 3: | Overview of Expenditures at LFO Campgrounds.....                     | 12 |
| Table 4: | Yearly Gross Revenue of LFO Campgrounds.....                         | 13 |
| Table 5: | Proposed Fee.....  | 14 |
| Table 6: | Comparable Facilities.....   | 16 |
| Table 7: | Percent of Annual Operating Cost Generated from Users by Method..... | 16 |

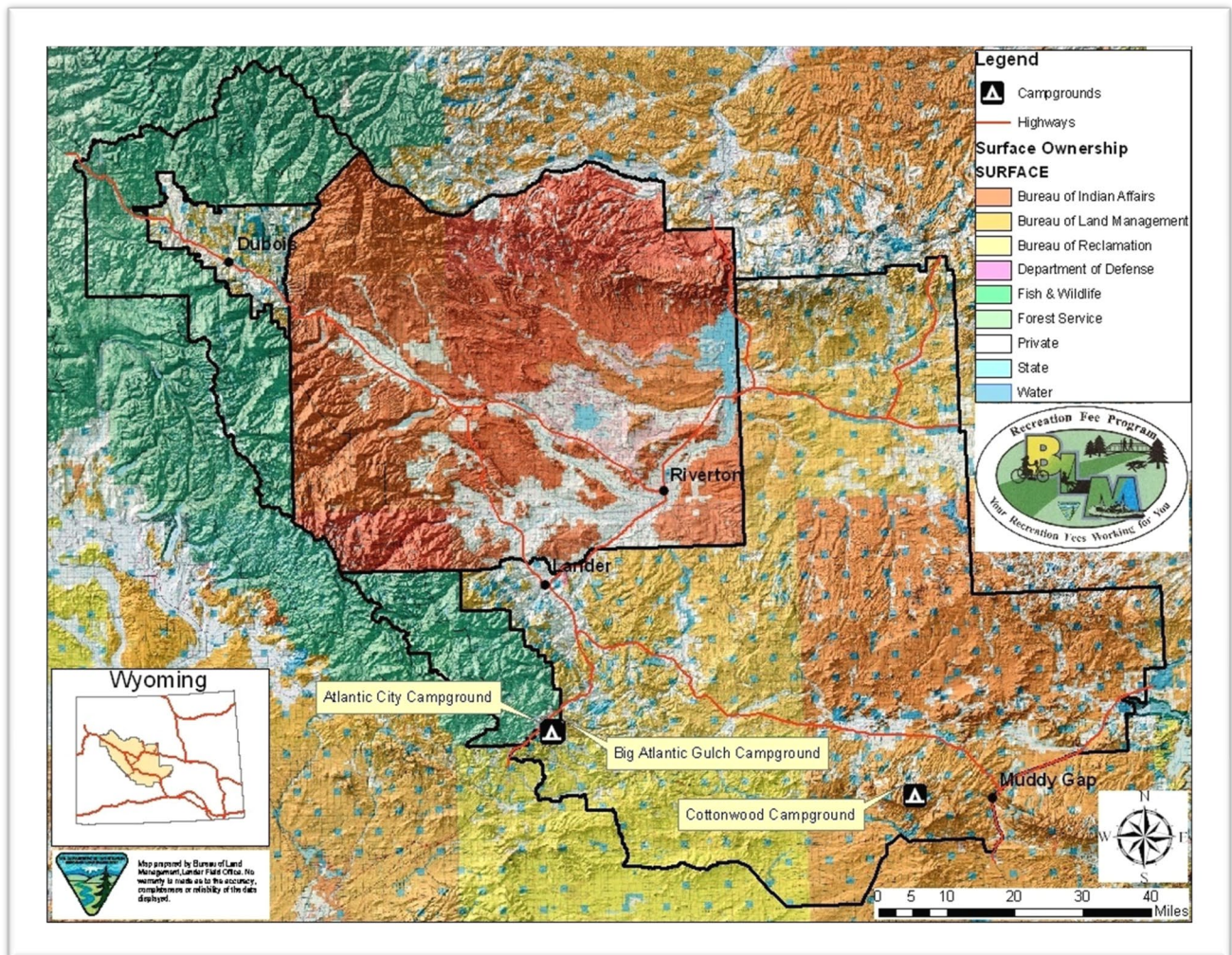
**List of Figures**

|           |   |    |
|-----------|---|----|
| Figure 1: | Map of LFO Fee Sites.....                           | 2  |
| Figure 2: | Lander Field Office Visits and Trend.....           | 6  |
| Figure 3: | Atlantic City Campground Visits and Trend.....      | 10 |
| Figure 4: | Big Atlantic Gulch Campground Visits and Trend..... | 10 |
| Figure 5: | Cottonwood Campground Visits and Trend.....         | 11 |

# 1 Executive Summary

As directed by the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004, this business plan provides information regarding fee rates at the three Lander Field Office Expanded Amenity Sites: Atlantic City Campground, Big Atlantic Gulch Campground, and Cottonwood Campground. These campgrounds are displayed in Figure 1. The plan also compares the proposed fee schedule with three other fee options including no change, break-even, and a comparables methods. The proposed fee could change as a result of the public input process outlined in Chapter 6 of this document.

**Figure 1: Map of LFO Fee Sites**



## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Background and Authorities

The authorities and regulations for this business plan are:

- **The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-579)**, contains the BLM's general land use management authority over the public lands, and establishes outdoor recreation as one of the principal uses of those lands. Section 302 (b) of FLPMA authorizes the BLM to manage the use of the public lands through permits.
- **Section 315 of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 1996**, established the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program (Public Law 104-134) as a 3-year pilot program, which authorized the BLM to keep recreation fees collected and expend them within the guidelines of the law. Public Law 106-291 extended the authorization for the program through September 30, 2004, until enactment of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.
- **The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-447)** repealed applicable portions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act and replaced the BLM's authority to collect recreational fees. This law authorizes BLM to collect recreation fees at sites that meet certain requirements, allows BLM to keep the fee revenues at the local offices where they are collected, and directs how BLM will manage and utilize these revenues. Section 6802 contains BLM's authority to issue permits and charge a permit fee for use at the LFO Campgrounds.
- **Code of Federal Regulations, Title 43, Part 2930 (43 CFR 2930)**, contains the regulations governing the BLM's recreation permitting programs. 43 CFR, Subpart 2933.11 contains the BLM's authority to issue recreation use permits for use of the LFO Campgrounds. It states that, "You must obtain a Recreation Use Permit for individual or group use of fee areas. These are sites where we provide or administer specialized facilities, equipment, or services related to outdoor recreation. You may visit these areas for the uses and time periods the BLM specifies. We will post these uses and limits at the entrance to the area or site and provide this information in the local BLM office with jurisdiction over the area or site. You may contact this office for permit information when planning your visit. This information will also be posted online.
- **BLM Recreation Permit Administration Handbook (H-2930-1)**, explains how the BLM implements its recreation permit and fee program. Chapter 2, page 71, states: "The intent of the BLM Recreation Fee Program is not to maximize revenue but to help protect natural resources, provide for public health and safety, and facilitate access to public lands and related waters. Fees should be balanced and affordable for all members of the public, rather than an impediment. Fees are a way of ensuring that those who actively use recreation opportunities make a greater, but reasonable, contribution toward protecting and enhancing these opportunities than those who do not."

## 2.2 Department of the Interior and BLM Priorities

The Department of the Interior (DOI) Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022-2026 provides the BLM with goals, objectives, and strategies for implementing the Biden-Harris Administration priorities as well as the priorities of DOI Secretary Haaland.

This business plan makes progress towards the DOI strategic plan. Specifically, performance goal 2.3.1 directs the BLM to ensure that visitors to public lands are satisfied with recreational opportunities. As such, this business plan seeks to ensure that fee revenue is returned to the site of where it is generated, while also ensuring that the facilities maintain a revenue stream to support maintenance and provide for visitor enjoyment.

The business plan also makes progress towards *The Bureau of Land Management's Blueprint for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Outdoor Recreation*. Specifically, this plan implements several 'core strategies' that are integral to achieving the four pillars of the blueprint, including:

1. Grow and Diversify Resources for BLM Recreation
2. Prioritize and Embrace Partnerships
3. Expand Outreach and Establish a Culture of Inclusion
4. Meet the Demand, Protect Resources, and Improve Access

## 2.3 Lander Field Office Overview

The Lander Field Office (LFO) encompasses 6.6 million acres in central Wyoming and includes most of Fremont County; the southwest corner of Natrona County; and small portions of Carbon, Sweetwater and Hot Springs Counties (Figure 1). Of the 6.6 million acres, 2.5 million acres are public lands (surface estate) managed by the BLM. The LFO also manages approximately 2.7 million acres of federal mineral estate.

The LFO manages a wide diversity of resources and uses including National Historic Trails, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST), historic mining areas, rock climbing, hiking, mountain biking, hang gliding, livestock grazing, and wild horses.

## 2.4 Lander Field Office Recreation Program Overview

### 2.4.1 Applicable Land Use Plan Decisions

The Approved Lander Resource Management Plan (2014) provides a framework for Recreation and Visitor Service decision making across the entire planning area. Specifically, the RMP identified Recreation Management Areas (RMAs) in response to demonstrated customer demand for recreation opportunities. H-8320-1 Planning for Recreation and Visitor Services, defines the two types of RMAs as follows:

**Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA):** An administrative unit where the existing or proposed recreation opportunities and recreation setting characteristics are recognized for their unique value, importance, or distinctiveness, especially compared to other areas used for recreation.

**Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA):** An Administrative Unit that requires specific management consideration to address recreation use, demand, or recreation and visitor service program investments.



Of the 2.5 million surface acres within the LFO, 21% (518,680 acres) are within an RMA where visitor services and recreation opportunities are a management priority. In contrast, 79% (1,981,320 acres) of the Field Office are not within an RMA and therefore resource protection, user health and safety, and conflict reduction is the focus of the R&VS program in these areas. Table 1 below list the RMAs designated in the 2014 Lander RMP.

**Table 1: LFO Recreation Management Areas (RMA)**

| <b>RMA Name</b>  | <b>RMA Acres</b> |
|--|------------------|
| Lander Valley Community-based SRMA<br>Zones: Johnny Behind the Rocks (4,828 acres), The Bus at Baldwin Creek (1,159 ac.), and Sinks Canyon Climbing Area (139 ac.)                                 | 6,126            |
| Dubois Mill Site Community-based SRMA  | 608              |
| Sweetwater Rocks Undeveloped SRMA  | 41,806           |
| Sweetwater Canyon Undeveloped SRMA   | 9,136            |
| Green Mountain ERMA <sup>1</sup>   | 129,579          |
| Lander Slope/Red Canyon ERMA   | 38,876           |
| Whiskey Mountain/Eastfork ERMA   | 15,913           |
| Beaver Creek Nordic Ski Area ERMA  | 748              |
| CDNST Destination SRMA<br>Zones: Alkali Basin (37,407) and Sweetwater Historic Mining District (45,394) <sup>2</sup>   | 82,801           |
| National Trails Undeveloped SRMA   | 92,598           |
| National Historic Trails (NHT) Destination SRMA<br>Zones: NHT Auto Tour Route and Group Reenactment  | 62,331           |
| CDNST ERMA   | 4,589            |
| Willow Creek National Scenic and Historic Trails (NSHT) ERMA   | 33,569           |
| 1. Cottonwood Campground is located within the Green Mountain ERMA<br>2. Atlantic City and Big Atlantic Gulch Campgrounds are located within the Sweetwater Mining District Zone of the CDNST SRMA |                  |

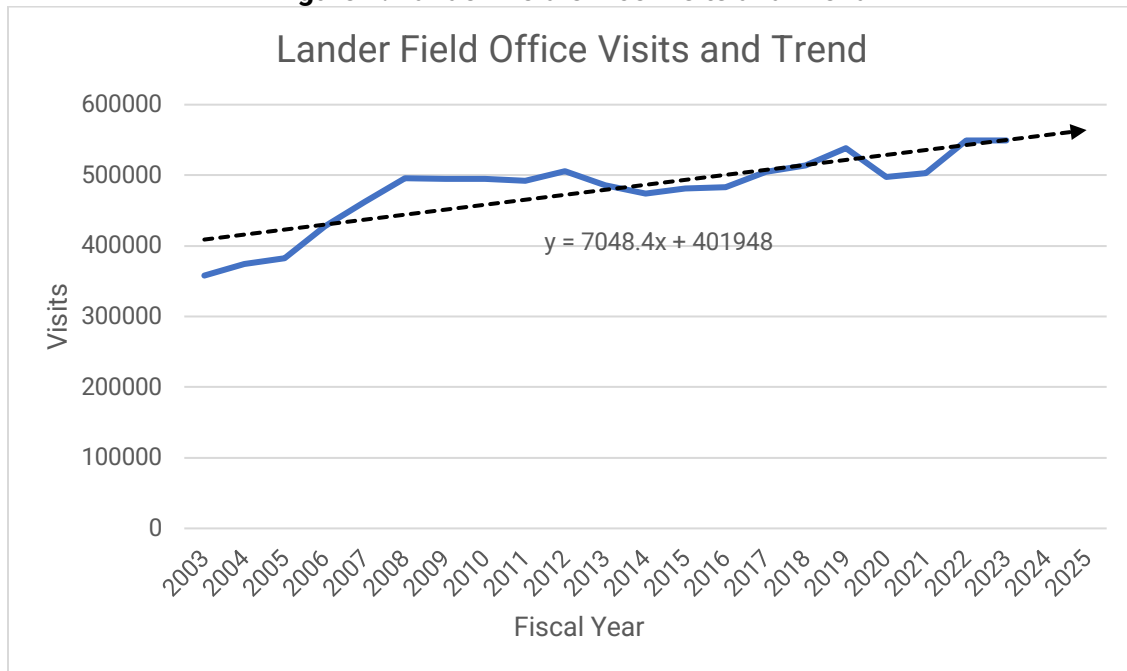
### 2.4.2 Resources and Attractions

The Lander Field Office has always attracted traditional users (such as hunters, recreational shooters, and rockhounds) who disperse throughout the large blocks of contiguous public lands offered within the field office. In addition, there is immense growth and interest to attractions such as the South Pass Segment of the Oregon/California/Mormon Pioneer/Pony Express National Historic Trail and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. Finally, the LFO is known as a destination area for mountain biking and climbing. Most recently, Johnny Behind the Rocks was recognized by the International Mountain Bike Association as a top 20 BLM Mountain Biking Area; and Sinks Canyon received similar recognition from the climbing community as a top 20 Climbing Area.

### 2.4.3 Visitation Statistics and Trends

As displayed in Figure 2 below, visitation in the Lander Field office has been increasing. This trend is due to the increased popularity of destinations like the National Historic and Scenic trails, but also an increased interest in close to home recreation opportunities like those provided at Johnny Behind the Rocks.

**Figure 2: Lander Field Office Visits and Trend**



#### 2.4.4 Visitor Demographics

In the summer months (June - August), the Lander Field Office receives an influx of destination-oriented visitors. Many of these visitors are on their way to Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Park. However, many visitors' primary destination is the National Historic Trails within the Lander Field Office, as these trails contain numerous facilities that attract visitors. Specifically, handcart trekking and site visitation in association with the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail account for over 75,000 visitors annually. In addition, it is during this time that the community of Lander hosts several festivals and social attractions such as the International Climbing Festival and the Jurassic Classic Mountain Bike Festival.

By fall (September-November), the visits tend to be focused on the Big Game Hunting Season with use dispersing throughout the field office. Hunters tend to focus within the South Pass and Green Mountain region, due in part to the facilities available as well as the hunting opportunities prescribed by Wyoming Game and Fish in these areas. The visits during this timeframe are mixed between Wyoming Residents and non-residents.

The winter and spring (December-May) season brings local and sometimes regional visitors to the close to home recreation areas such as the Lander Valley Community SRMA and the Beaver Creek Nordic Ski ERMA. Each of these areas are intensively developed to provide for close to home recreation and skill development. In addition, dispersed uses from locals continues so long as access is not impeded by snow or mud.

#### 2.4.5 Partnerships and Volunteers

The LFO has a diverse partnership and volunteer program that supports the stewardship of public land and facilities. Non-profit groups such as Boy Scouts of America, Lander Cycling,

Wyoming Pathways, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Oregon-California Trails Association, Friends of Dubois Badlands, and Wind River Backcountry Horsemen are all active in the LFO. These partnerships are essential to providing for more intensive customer demands for recreation opportunities that could not be provided solely by the LFO recreation program.

## 3 Description of Fee Sites Covered by This Plan

### 3.1 Site Overview and Amenities

This business plan is focused on the three fee sites in the Lander Field Office: Atlantic City Campground, Big Atlantic Gulch Campground, and Cottonwood Campground. Each of these sites contain enough amenities to be classified by the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) as an Expanded Amenity Site.

These sites are further defined in H-2930-1 as:

*"This category includes sites and services that provide direct benefits to individuals or groups. It is appropriate that the individual or group receiving a direct service or using a specialized facility should bear a greater share of the direct costs of providing the service or facility. ..."*

*Expanded amenity recreation sites and services include the following:*

*(1) Developed campgrounds with at least five of the following nine amenities: tent or trailer spaces, picnic tables, drinking water, access road, refuse containers (trash receptacles), toilet facilities, fee collection by an employee or agent of the BLM, reasonable visitor protection, and (if campfires are permitted in the campground) simple devices for containing a campfire. ..."*

As detailed in table 2 below, each of the campgrounds discussed in this plan contain all the services required of a campground to be considered an 'Expanded Amenity Site'.

**Table 2: Overview of LFO Expanded Amenity Sites**

| <b>Amenity</b>         | <b>Atlantic City Campground</b>  | <b>Big Atlantic Gulch Campground</b>                                       | <b>Cottonwood Campground</b>   |
|------------------------|--|--|--|
| Tent or Trailer Spaces | 18 sites   | 8 Sites  | 17 Sites   |
| Picnic Tables          | One per site   | One per site   | One per site   |
| Drinking Water         | Well, holding tank, and distribution system with seven hose bibs.  | One well and hand pump   | One well and hand pump   |
| Drinking Water Testing | Testing, monitoring, and facility maintenance by LFO staff meets EPA Transient Drinking Water Standards. |  |  |
| Access Roads           | Access roads are open seasonally and maintained annually to reasonably accommodate trucks and campers.   |  |  |
| Refuse Containers      | Four containers with biweekly trash removal conducted by a contractor.                                   | Two, with biweekly trash removal conducted by a contractor.                | Four, with biweekly trash removal conducted by a contractor.                 |
| Visitor Protection     | Campground host, Consistent LFO staff and LEO patrols.   | Campground host, Consistent LFO staff and LEO patrols.                     | Consistent LFO staff and LEO patrols.  |
| Toilet Facilities      | Five units with biweekly cleaning and toilet paper restocking by a contractor                            | Two units with biweekly cleaning and toilet paper stocking by a contractor | Four units with biweekly cleaning and toilet paper stocking by a contractor. |
| Fee Collection         | Fee Deposit Tube with collection by LFO employees.   |  |  |
| Fire Rings             | One prefabricated metal fire ring and cement pad per site. Weekly ash removal by a contractor.           |  |  |

### 3.1.1 Atlantic City Campground

Atlantic City Campground is located just a few miles from the community of Atlantic City and the South Pass City Wyoming State Historic Site. The Campground is shaded by a forested draw with mixed conifers and aspen. Nearby attractions in the area include Miner’s Delight Historic Site, South Pass City Historic Site, Atlantic City, the National Historic Trails and interpretive sites, Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, and the USFS Managed Wild Iris rock climbing area. Atlantic City Campground offers 18 campsites featuring picnic tables and campfire grills. Also included are vault toilets, potable water, receptacles for garbage collection, and a campground host during the summer months. It is handicap accessible and can accommodate large recreational vehicles.



### 3.1.2 Big Atlantic Gulch

Big Atlantic Gulch is located in a pocket of young aspens on the Fort Stambaugh Loop Road just one-half mile from Atlantic City campground. The attractions and uses of this campground are the same as detailed for Atlantic City Campground. Big Atlantic Gulch Campground offers 8 sites for tent and recreational vehicle use with picnic tables and campfire grills. Potable water, vault toilets, and receptacles for garbage collection are also included. This site is overseen by the Atlantic City Campground Host during the summer.

### 3.1.3 Cottonwood Campground

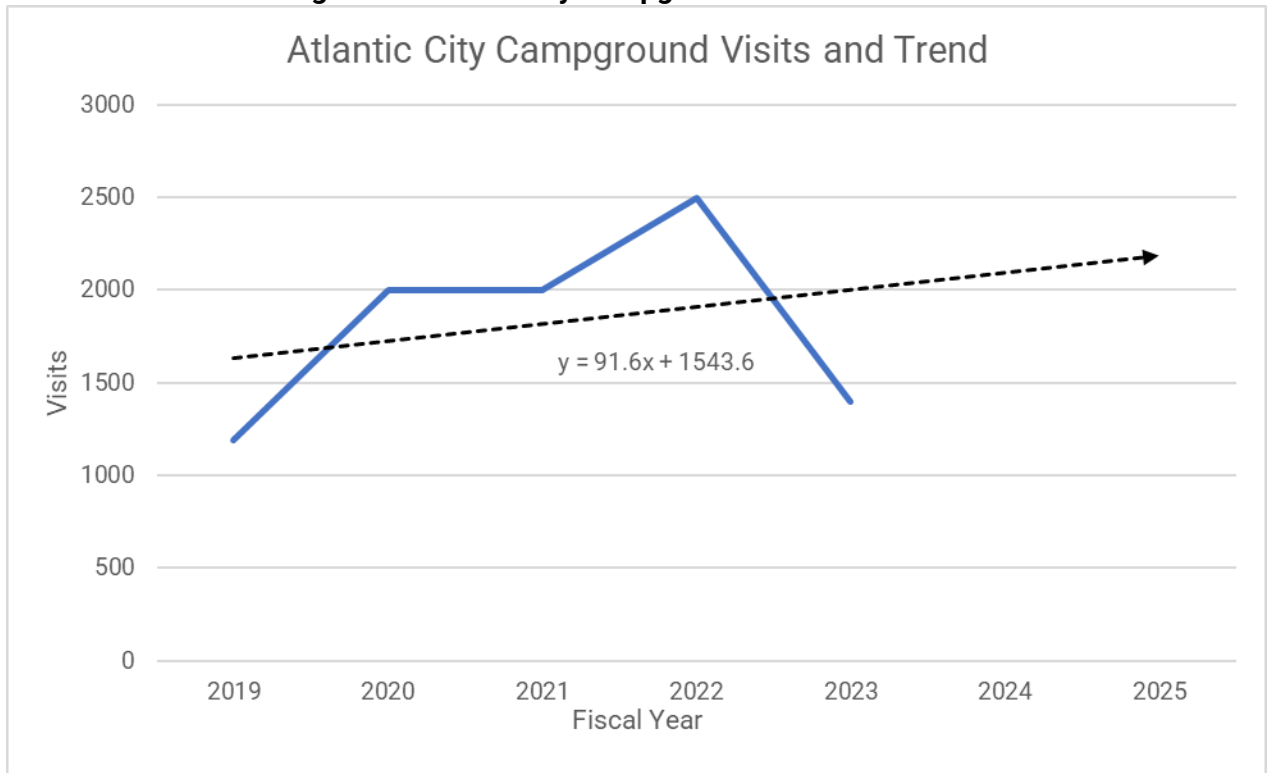
Cottonwood Campground is situated on Cottonwood Creek on the east loop of Green Mountain Road in south-central Wyoming. It's location among aspens and pines offers visitors cool shade on warm summer days, and excellent opportunities to view wildlife throughout the summer and fall. Popular activities in the area include hunting, fishing, viewing Wild Horses and other wildlife, camping, picnicking, rock collecting, and driving off-highway vehicles (OHVs). Cottonwood Campground offers 17 campsites for tent or recreational vehicle use with picnic tables and campfire grills. Also included are vault toilets, potable water, and receptacles for garbage collection. The campground is open from June 1 to December 1.

## 3.2 Visitor Use, Trends, and Demographics

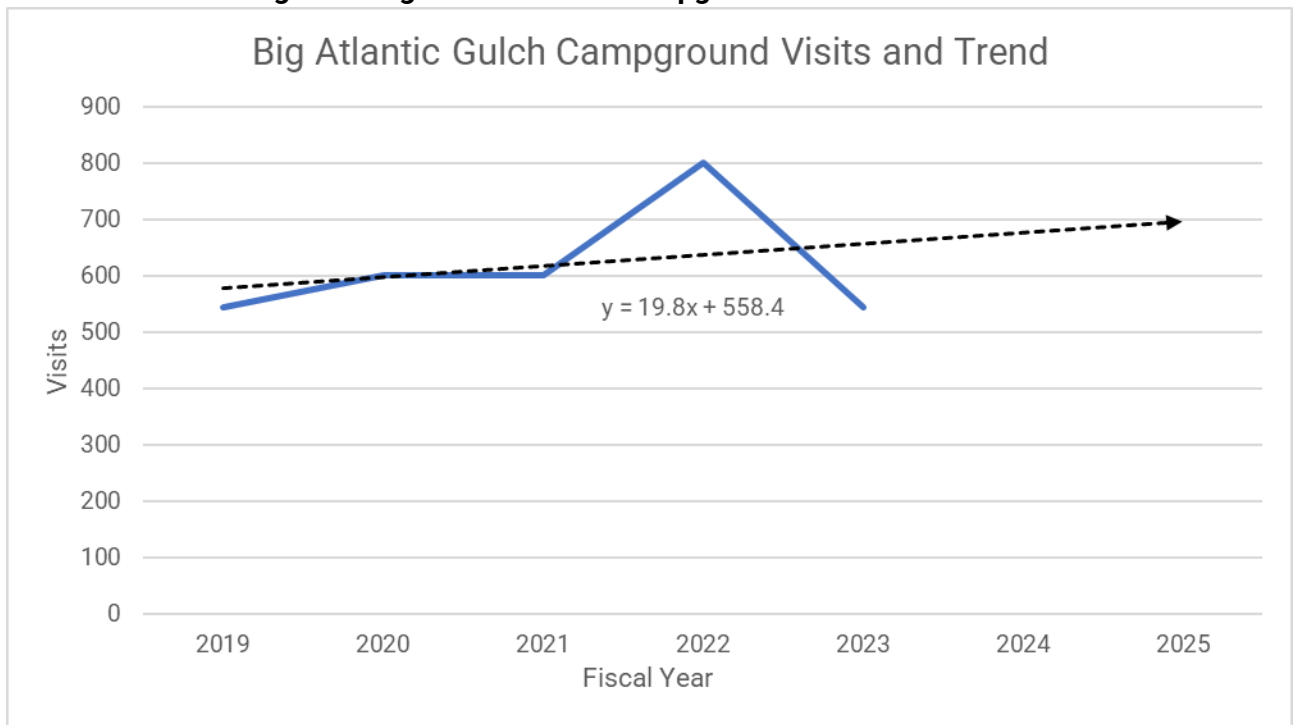
### 3.2.1 Visitation Statistics and Trends

As demonstrated in the figures below, over the last 5 years, visitation to all of the campgrounds is on an upward trend. Visitation was down in 2023, while many variables could be driving this, it is very likely that the late opening of the campgrounds (45 days later, due to record snow loads) in spring of 2023 contributed heavily to this decline.

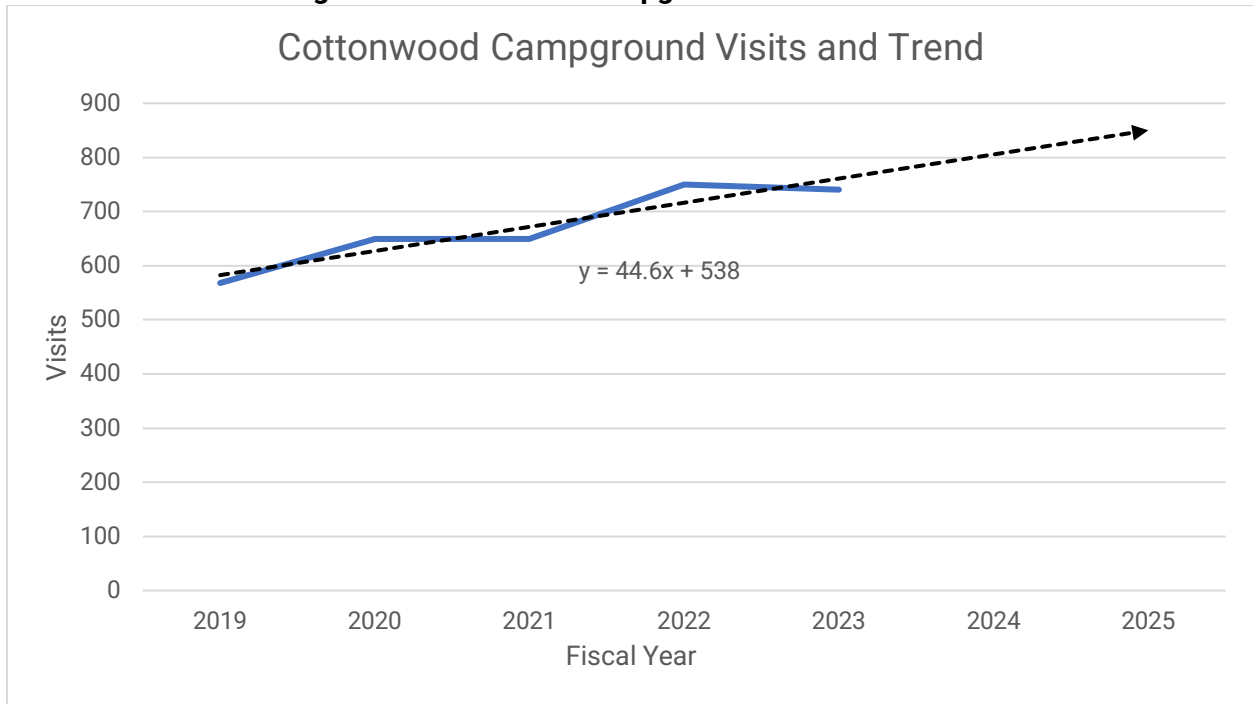
**Figure 3: Atlantic City Campground Visits and Trend**



**Figure 4: Big Atlantic Gulch Campground Visits and Trend**



**Figure 5: Cottonwood Campground Visits and Trend**



### 3.2.2 Visitor Demographics

The visitor demographics to the campgrounds is congruent with that of the Field Office that is discussed in section 2.4.4. The Atlantic City and Big Atlantic Gulch Campgrounds receive heavy visitation from groups interested in the history of the area, as well as prospectors. Each campground receives annual visitation from both national and international visitors, with Wyoming residents comprising the majority of visitation. The Cottonwood Campground attracts visitors from the Casper region, while the Atlantic City and Big Atlantic Gulch Campgrounds attract visitors from Rock Springs and Green River region. All three sites are popular to residents of Riverton and Lander due to their proximity to these population centers.

The highest visitation period to Atlantic City and Big Atlantic Gulch tends to occur in early to mid-July, culminating with the State Parks events surrounding Gold Rush Days. On the other hand, Cottonwood Campground receives peak visitation during the fall hunting season, culminating in Mid-September to Mid-October with opening of Pronghorn, Elk, and Mule Deer seasons.

### 3.3 Partnerships and Volunteers

Over the last 5 years, the LFO has implemented several partnerships and volunteer projects at each of these campgrounds. For example, a troop of Boys Scouts assisted the LFO with replacing and painting the boards in each of the campgrounds. In addition, the site-host is a volunteer position who receives free camping, hookups, and a small daily stipend during their time of service. These volunteer efforts have proven extremely economical to the BLM, whilst

providing meaningful volunteer opportunities to customers who want to be involved with the stewardship of the site. Ultimately, these partnerships keep operating cost low, and these savings are passed to the campground user.

## 4 Existing Financials

The current rate for a Recreation Use Permit (RUP) at each campground is \$6.00 per site/night, with Golden Age Passport Holders paying \$3.00 per night. Dividing the total revenue generated in 2023 by the total RUPs, indicates an average visitor fee of \$4.66 per RUP. Therefore, the three LFO Campgrounds sell a yearly average of 2,380 Recreation Use Permits (RUP) to generate \$11,100 in annual revenue. Annually, the BLM spends \$53,172 to operate the three sites, which results in an annual loss of \$42,072. These data are further detailed in the rest of this section.

### 4.1 Annual Operating Cost

The table below details the annual operating expenditures for the three LFO Campgrounds.

**Table 3: Overview of Expenditures at LFO Campgrounds**

| <b>Expenditure Item<br/>(provider)</b>   | <b>Cost</b> | <b>Funding Source</b>                            |
|--|-------------|--|
| Janitorial Services<br>(contracted service)                                    | \$20,039    | Mix of fee revenue<br>and appropriated<br>funds. |
| Toilet Pumping<br>(contracted service)   | \$18,133    | Mix of fee revenue<br>and appropriated<br>funds. |
| Water Testing<br>(BLM Labor)   | \$3,700     | Appropriated funds.                              |
| Fee Collection<br>(BLM Labor)  | \$3,800     | Appropriated Funds                               |
| Atlantic City and Big<br>Atlantic Gulch<br>Campground Host<br>(Paid Volunteer) | \$3,000     | Fee Revenue                                      |
| Law Enforcement<br>(BLM Labor)   | \$3,200     | Appropriated Funds                               |
| Incidental<br>Maintenance<br>Supplies  | \$1,300     | Fee Revenue                                      |
| <b>Total Annual<br/>Expenditure</b>  | \$53,172    |  |

### 4.2 Priorities for Future Expenditures

#### 4.2.1 Maintenance Expenses

The BLM Lander Field Office expends \$39,500 annually on standard maintenance activities including cleaning and toilet pumping. Other maintenance costs include painting and finishing of picnic tables, painting of outbuildings, and sign replacements. These costs occur on a



random basis in unpredictable increments, however, the LFO tentatively plans for these activities at least one-in-five years.

#### 4.2.2 Savings To Ensure Continuity of Operations

To ensure an entire year of continuous service, the BLM Lander Field Office needs to be able to fund the janitorial services and toilet pumping operations which cost \$38,172 annually. Since the campgrounds average \$11,100 in annual revenue, the minimum (under the current fee structure) that the LFO should save to ensure operations is \$27,072.

#### 4.2.3 Planned New Investments

In the next 5-10 years (as funding allows), the BLM Lander Field Office is planning to install tent pads and new fire grates and pits at all 46 sites within the three campgrounds. The projected cost of the tent pads materials and labor is \$100,000, while the projected cost for the fire grates and pits is \$60,000. Finally, the LFO desires to implement electronic kiosks at all sites. The initial investment in electronic kiosks is high, but the ease of use for users and the reduced collection time is worth the investment. The projected cost for purchasing and installing the electronic kiosks is \$30,000.

### 4.3 Existing Revenue

Table 4 below shows the revenue generated by each fee site for the last 5 years.

**Table 4: Yearly Gross Revenue of LFO Campgrounds**

|                               | 2019       | 2020        | 2021        | 2022        | 2023        |
|-------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Atlantic City Campground      | \$4,143    | \$4,733.75  | \$5,756.75  | \$4,917.54  | \$6,152.06  |
| Big Atlantic Gulch Campground | \$2,350.75 | \$1,952.25  | \$2,602.89  | \$2,086     | \$2,291     |
| Cottonwood Campground         | \$3,318.67 | \$3,608.65  | \$4,340.25  | \$3,178.73  | \$4,051.85  |
| Sum of All Campgrounds        | \$9,812.45 | \$10,294.65 | \$12,699.89 | \$10,182.27 | \$12,494.91 |

## 5 Proposed Financial Change

### 5.1 Assumptions:

The following assumptions are necessary to project the fee calculations for each fee method:

- 1) RUP sales will remain at the five-year annual average of 2,380 permits. In the last 2 years the BLM LFO has refined its RUP counting process during receipting. As a result, historic RUP data is inconsistent and produced error. To account for this issue, the BLM LFO divided each year's total RUP Revenue by the average paid per RUP (4.663) to produce a yearly total of RUPs issued. The Five-year annual RUP average was then calculated by totaling the last 5 years of RUPs (11,900) and dividing by the number of years (5).
- 2) To avoid the need for coins, any odd number or decimal is rounded to the nearest even number.

- 3) The Golden Age and America the Beautiful discounts will continue to be popular. Currently the undiscounted fee is \$6 per night, but the average paid per RUP is \$4.663. The average paid per RUP is 78% of the undiscounted rate. This analysis assumes that the average paid per RUP will remain at 78% of the undiscounted rate.
- 4) The cost of maintaining the sites has increased substantially in the last two decades. However, it is unlikely that annual expenses will increase significantly because the cleaning and pumping contracts (72% of the annual expenditures) are fixed through 2026. Therefore, annual expenditure projections will remain at the 2023 level of \$53,172.
- 5) The proposed fee structure could result in a positive net revenue to the BLM. If this occurs, all revenue will go back to the priorities for future expenditures detailed in section 4.2 of this document.

## 5.2 Proposed Method:

The Table below describes the proposed fee:

**Table 5: Proposed Fee**

| <b>Site Type</b> | <b>Proposed Nightly Fee Per Site (Passport)</b> | <b>Maximum number of people per site<sup>1</sup></b> | <b>Any Combination of Vehicles or Trailers Allowed Before Additional Charges</b> | <b>Additional Vehicle or Trailer Fee (Passport)</b> | <b>Estimated Vehicle and Trailer Capacity<sup>2</sup></b> |
|------------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| Standard         | \$20 (\$10)                                     | 10   | 2  | \$10 (\$5)  | 4   |
| Group            | \$40 (\$20)                                     | 20   | 4  | \$10 (\$5)  | 6   |

1. All rules and restrictions in developed sites are established through the process identified in 43 CFR 8365.2. Many of these rules can and do change as needed to address visitor service issues.  
2. All vehicles, trailers, and tents must locate within the established parking area and tent pads at each site. Tents are allowed on both the parking area and tent pads. Vehicles or trailers are not allowed on the tent pads.

Since this fee rate varies based on use and site type, the prediction of revenue assumes an undiscounted rate of \$30 and an average paid per RUP of \$23.40 This will result in \$55,692 of annual revenue. Assuming 2023 spending levels, the proposed method would result in a net revenue of \$2,520. In the event of positive net income, the BLM will ensure the entirety of the revenue goes back to the future expenditures detailed in section 4.2 of this document or other pressing investments in the campgrounds.

The Lander Field Office will use various ecommerce technologies as directed in BLM Instruction Memorandum 2022-010, 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 LFO decides to add additional reservation services of other types of e-commerce options available in the future, and 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 \$.50 to \$10.00 depending on the type of service provided. The reservation service is subject to contracting requirements and will be adjusted with contract changes or with future updates to the business plan. For visitors who wish not to pay the expanded amenity fee of reservation services, the field office will attempt to continue to provide a blend of reservation and first come-first served options at each of the campgrounds and day use areas. Other payment options may also be considered in the future as technology and software develops, including onsite credit card payment systems or scan and pay (as examples).

### 5.3 Other Methods

The document compares the proposed method to three other methods: no change, break-even, and comparables. Each of these methods are explained further.

#### 5.3.1 No Change

This method would continue to charge \$6 per night and \$3 per night for the discounted rate for Golden Age Passport holders. Annual gross revenue would remain near the current five-year average of \$11,100, which will result in an annual operating loss of \$42,072.

#### 5.3.2 Break-even

This method implements a fee structure of sufficient rate to recover most of the 2023 operational cost.

Given these assumptions, the BLM would charge \$28/night and \$14/night for the discounted rate for Golden Age and America the Beautiful Passport holders. This rate will result in an average paid per RUP of \$21.84, which will bring the annual revenue to \$51,790, which is nearly commensurate with the 2023 annual operating cost, but still results in an annual loss of \$1,382.

#### 5.3.3 Comparables

This method derives a fee by finding the median of other fees charged by nearby facilities that contain similar amenities to the LFO campgrounds. The following adjustments were necessary to facilitate this calculation:

1. The Dexter Mill RV Park in Atlantic City has electric and sewer to each RV site, however, it has 5 sites that are not shaded and in a gravel lot, so it is considered comparable to the LFO developed sites.
2. The Sleeping Bear and Twin Pines RV parks in Lander have variable rates ranging from full hook-up RV sites to tent sites. Since the RV sites provide more amenities than the LFO campgrounds and the tent sites provide less, the BLM calculated an average rate for each of these businesses.
3. Wyoming State Parks charges a discounted rate for Wyoming Residents, this type of discount is not feasible on Federal Lands. Therefore, an average was derived between the non-resident and resident calculation.

4. The USFS Campgrounds are currently \$15 per night but are in the process of moving that rate to \$20 a night. This method assumes the higher rate.

The comparables used for this method are displayed below in Table 6.

**Table 6: Comparable Facilities**

| <b>Name</b>   | <b>Manager</b>      | <b>Comparable Standard Rate per Night</b> |
|---|---------------------|---|
| Dexter Mill RV Park                                     | Private             | \$45                                      |
| Sleeping Bear RV Park                                   | Private             | \$35                                      |
| Twin Pines  | Private             | \$38.5                                    |
| Boysen State Park                                       | Wyoming State Parks | \$25.25                                   |
| Sinks Canyon State Park                                 | Wyoming State Parks | \$15.75                                   |
| Worthen Meadows Campground                              | USFS                | \$20                                      |
| Fiddlers Lake Campground                                | USFS                | \$20                                      |
| Average Comparable                                      |                     | \$28.50                                   |
| Average Comparable Rounded to Nearest Even Number       |                     | \$28.00                                   |
| <b>Median Comparable</b>                                |                     | <b>\$25.25</b>                            |
| <b>Median Comparable Rounded to Nearest Even Number</b> |                     | <b>\$26</b>                               |

With this method the BLM would charge \$26 per night and \$13 per night for Golden Age and America the Beautiful Passport holders. This rate would result in an average paid per RUP of \$20.28, which would bring the annual revenue to \$48,266, which will result in an annual operating loss of \$4,906.

## 6 Effects Comparison

### 6.1 Recreation and Visitor Services

Table 6 below shows each method and the projected annual operating cost born by users of facilities.

**Table 7: Percent of Annual Operating Cost Generated from Users by Method**

| <b>Method</b> | <b>Nightly Undiscounted Rate</b>                     | <b>Projected Gross Annual Revenue</b> | <b>% of 2023 operating cost from users</b> |
|---------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Proposed      | Variable based on use and site type. See section 5.2 | \$55,692 <sup>1</sup>                 | 100% <sup>2</sup>                          |
| No Change     | \$6  | \$11,100                              | 21%  |
| Break-even    | \$28   | \$51,790                              | 97%  |
| Comparables   | \$26   | \$48,266                              | 91%  |

1. Since this method is variable based on use and site type, projected gross annual revenue was calculated using a projected undiscounted rate of \$30.  
2. The proposed fee structure could result in a positive net revenue to BLM. If this occurs, all revenue will go back to the priorities for future expenditures detailed in section 4.2 of this document.



The Lander Field Office and Wyoming has experienced an increase in the cost to maintain recreation sites which has been compounded by increased demand for a developed camping experience. The increase of fees at the LFO fee sites would allow the facilities to be more self-sustaining. Self-sustaining sites are insulated from agency budget fluctuations which will allow the LFO to continue to fund annual campground operating costs, without reliance upon appropriated funds, which can fluctuate. This is especially important regarding the agency's ability to continue to fund the restroom cleaning contracts for each campground. These services increase public health and safety at the campgrounds and improve visitor experience.

Campground facilities (e.g., restrooms, trash receptacles) also help to protect resources in other locations throughout the LFO by decreasing the potential for negative effects to resources from human waste and refuse. An increase in fees commensurate with available amenities would ensure that funds are available to provide for routine maintenance and replacement of infrastructure.

Since the proposed fee schedule has the structure to grow with use, it will also be the most self-sustaining and the least reliant on appropriated funds, which will allow the LFO to sustain the quality of the site and services. The fee structure will also potentially provide a partial funding source for improvements. As a result, visitor experience, satisfaction, and health and safety would be improved.

Finally, it is impossible to project how the proposed increase will impact use patterns and ultimately fee revenue. In example, while use could decrease to a level below current visitation levels, it is impossible to project that with enough accuracy to also relate that to gross and net revenue. Also, it is important to conversely assume that operations cost would also go down commensurately with visitation. As directed by the FLREA, BLM will continue to evaluate and update this business plan to ensure fee levels meet FLREA and LFO Planning objectives.

## 6.2 Biological and Cultural Resources

Visitation to public lands within the LFO continues to increase. The availability of maintained campgrounds may decrease negative effects to the environment from the creation of dispersed camping sites and the accumulation of human waste. Developed campground facilities provide the BLM with opportunities to reduce the amount of human waste, trash, fire pits, and other resource damage on the land that it manages. An increase in funds available to maintain campground facilities would help to avoid the use of funding or workforce from other program areas, preventing negative effects to resources beyond the immediate scope of the campground program.

## 6.3 Socio-economic

### 6.3.1 Impact to Underserved Communities

While the 'no change' method has the least impact to underserved communities because it proposes the lowest fee; it is assumed that under all fee calculation methods the likelihood of impacts to underserved communities will be greatly reduced because the LFO continues to allow free camping in the majority of the 2.5 million acres it manages. These opportunities are prevalent in the areas directly adjacent to the developed campgrounds, so visitors will not be displaced to other areas if they seek a free site. In addition, the LFO has several developed sites

within the field office where fees could be charged but aren't to promote access and enjoyment of the area.

Additionally, the proposed method gives visitors the option to share sites and carpool if they desire to keep fees low, while also, increasing the cost as the use on infrastructure increases. For these reasons, the proposed method strikes a balance between the fiscal considerations and accessibility to underserved communities.

### 6.3.2 Impact to Revenue of Other Providers

The 'no change' method would continue to provide services at a level not commensurate with the services provided at the LFO campgrounds. This fee level would undercut other providers, especially private facilities, because non-resident visitors would be far more likely to choose the BLM campgrounds over those provided at the higher rate. In contrast, the proposed method is close enough to the fees of other providers that fee rates would no longer be a factor influencing the users facility choice.

## 7 Public Outreach

Draft business plans must be made available for public review and comment for a minimum of 30 days. Prior to implementing fee increases, the LFO will conduct the following outreach efforts to notify the public of its opportunity to review and comment on the draft business plan:

- Issue a press release to notify the public and partners of the opportunity to comment on the Draft Business Plan.
- Present Draft Business Plan at Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation Collaborative meetings, ensuring at least one presentation to the Windriver Outdoor Recreation Collaborative.
- The Draft Business Plan for BLM Lander Field Office Campgrounds will be posted to the website (<https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/permits-and-fees/business-plans>) for 30 days.
- A copy of the draft business plan will be made available at the Lander Field Office.
- LFO will present the draft Plan and proposed fee increase to the Wyoming interagency Recreation Action Team (REACT) for a formal review. The FLREA mandates that the appropriate Recreation RAC review all BLM recreation fee proposals prior to approval. BLM Wyoming has approval from the agency Director to use the REACT for this purpose.
- Comments from both the public, partners, Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation Collaboratives, and the REACT will be considered prior to approval of any decision.