

**Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission**  
**September 17, 2009**

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**Agenda Item:** 2 Action  
**Topic:** Division 15 rule changes, including increased park visitor fees  
**Presented by:** Richard Walkoski

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On August 19, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department began accepting public comment related to proposed changes to state park rules in six areas:

1. Extend the current camping and fee waiver for Oregon foster children so it continues after the child had been adopted by their Oregon foster family.
2. Allow campers in state park horse camps with pack animals other than horses.
3. Allow veterans with a service-connected disability, who already receive a limited state park camping fee waiver in standard RV and tent sites, to receive the same fee waiver in horse camps.
4. To prevent overbooking, limit refunds for campers who book more than five nights, and then later call to drop unwanted nights. Full cancellations receive a full refund, less the reservation fee.
5. Make the 12- and 24-month day-use parking passes transferable between vehicles, eliminating the need for duplicate passes, and eliminate the requirement for a motorcycle or other open vehicle to display the day use pass.
6. Increase 2010 state park user fees for the first time in 13 years.

People made more than 2,000 comments related to the proposed changes. Overall comments were positive, with 68% generally supportive of the recommendations. Aside from straight-forward comments dismissing the need for or wisdom of raising rates at this time, the most common suggestions for changing the proposed rules fell into three broad categories:

1. Raise fees more slowly, more frequently, rather than by larger amounts less frequently. Phase in this increase over several years.
2. Make the percentage increase for tents and RVs more even.
3. Charge nonresidents more, and seniors, veterans and disabled visitors less.

The final proposed rates are detailed in an attachment to this brief. Reflecting public comment and considering the tent camping market in general, staff recommend the tent increase be dropped from +\$4 to +\$3 (making the new tent rate \$19 at destination parks, and lower at value parks), and the primitive rate from +\$2 to +\$1 (new rate \$9). This change will decrease the expected overall revenue from park visitors in the 2009-2011 biennium by an estimated \$170,000. In addition, the Director has the authority to offer seasonal and other discounts, such as the popular Discovery Season discount, which reduces camping rates by \$4 per night from October 1 to April 30 every year.

While not the subject of formal rulemaking, staff also intend to review fees as part of the biennial budget process (to encourage smaller, regular fee adjustments as dictated by the market and operational costs), and to formally study other major issues brought forward by the significant amount of public comment.

Staff recommend adopting the revised rules, effective September 29, 2009. Reservations for stays starting May 1, 2010 and later will be charged the new park rates. Day-use fees would increase January 1, 2010.

**Prior Action by Commission:** Approval to start rulemaking, Agenda Item 8a, July 16, 2009.

**Action Requested:** Approval

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