



United States Department of the Interior  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

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(2410)

Memorandum

To: Regional Directors, Associate & Assistant Directors, National Leadership Council

From: Associate Director, Business Services  
Associate Director, Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science  
Acting Associate Director, Park Planning, Facilities and Lands

Subject: Creation of National Campground Office and Release of Tools for Managing the Campgrounds in the National Park Service for Second Century

In September 2019, Business Services, in partnership with Park Planning Facilities and Lands and Cultural Resources Partnerships and Science, initiated a multi-faceted and multi-year effort to strengthen and streamline national and local campground management and to enhance transparency and consistency in decision-making.

In the coming months, Business Services will stand up a National Campground Office and recruit for a national program manager to lead this important ongoing effort. This new national program will be responsible for improving the visitor experience across the National Park Service's more than 1,400 campgrounds by improving coordination across programs and facilitating technical assistance to parks and regions on campground related issues and services.

In the year since our previous update, the NPS:

- Released comprehensive [Campground Design Guidelines](#) that were developed with significant input from Parks, Regions and Program staff.
- Released process guidelines for [Mission 66 Campgrounds Determination of Eligibility](#) and [Mission 66 Campground Treatment Guidelines](#) developed via cooperative agreement with the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (NCSHPO).
- An interagency group has issued "[Federal Camping Data Standards](#)," a set of standard data elements for describing campground amenities and accessibility. The NPS is in the process of working across the Directorates to review the standards and develop an implementation plan.
- Increased the availability of campsites reservable through Recreation.gov.

- Created multiple flexible bookings windows within Recreation.gov ranging from 6 months to 4 days to meet visitor concerns about lack of availability while preserving spontaneity.
- Launched the [R1S Ranger App](#), which provides field staff with a user-friendly solution to seamlessly upload images and location information for individual campsites. Contact [Shelagh Forester@nps.gov](mailto:Shelagh_Forester@nps.gov) for information.

Building on these accomplishments, we are pleased announce the release of a [Campground Financial Model](#) for Decision Making. This financial model is designed to give decision makers some of the tools necessary to consistently evaluate key aspects of their campground investment and operations. Specifically, this model can assist with:

- Analyzing revenue and expenses when setting campground rates
- Estimating and assessing financial impacts of potential infrastructure investments
- Evaluating the tradeoffs associated NPS versus concession operated business models

Recognizing the need for thoughtful and sustainable investments, the National Park Service's Bureau Investment Review Board (BIRB) has purposefully shifted its focus towards better understanding the long-term consequences of our development decisions. The Campground Financial Model is intended to support parks seeking to build their case for support by addressing the BIRB's most frequent questions. As such, parks are strongly encouraged to use the Campground Financial Model in their project development. Alternatively, parks may present other similarly robust financial analysis such as a Financial Feasibility Analysis developed as part of a concession prospectus.

In February, the Washington Commercial Service Program, which is temporarily tasked with assisting parks with the campground financial model, will host two overview sessions on February 14 and 15 at 4 PM Eastern. These sessions will be geared toward Superintendents, Administrative Officers, Facility Managers, or others who may be tasked with building out the model. Detailed information about these sessions will be sent by the Commercial Service Program in a separate email.

As we transition this effort from a focused initiative to a sustained investment in our campground operations please contact Justin Unger, Associate Director for Business Services for questions about the program or for assistance with the Campground Financial Model.

We are proud of the work completed to date and we are appreciative of our colleagues in the field for their ongoing efforts to build a high quality and more inclusive experience for the visiting public.

CC: Deputy Regional Director, Deputy Associate and Assistant Directors