



# National Park Service Second Century Campground Strategy

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Prepared for the  
National Park System Advisory Board  
June 30 Meeting





# National Park Service (NPS) Campgrounds at a Glance



Low cost accommodations at 1,421 campgrounds


7.9 million stays in 2018




\$331.6 million in deferred maintenance

# NPS Campgrounds at a Glance

Range of facilities and amenities includes:

 25' RV pull-throughs to unstaffed back-country sites

 36 campgrounds with electric hook-ups

 426 campgrounds with water stations

 131 campgrounds with year-round hot showers

 33 campgrounds with Wi-Fi



# NPS Campgrounds at a Glance

Multiple management models include:



NPS-operated



Concessions-managed



# Managing the Second Century of Campgrounds

There is a growing interest in expanding public recreation access.  
The National Park Service must:

- Determine the criteria for an updated campground
- Generate tools to support sound financial investment
- Ensure use of a repeatable decision framework



# Second Century Campground Strategy

Teams across NPS directorates are working together on the strategy, which consists of the following three main branches:

1. Campground inventory / data management improvement
2. Market analysis contracts
3. Development of campground design guide



# Managing the Second Century of Campgrounds

Strategy development has been funded and initiated; it won't:

- ❌ Change every campground
- ❌ Make all campgrounds the same



# Managing the Second Century of Campgrounds

The three branches of the strategy create a suite of management decision tools and resources for:

- ✓ Business case for investment
- ✓ Efficient and consistent financial decisions
- ✓ Reduce deferred maintenance
- ✓ Align with NPS funding goals



# Campground Inventory / Data Management

**Cross disciplinary NPS team includes:**

- **Park Planning Facilities and Lands**
- **Commercial Services**
- **Conservation and Outdoor Recreation**
- **Office of Communications – Digital and [nps.gov](https://www.nps.gov)**
- **[recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov)**



# Campground Inventory / Data Management

## Goals include:

- Develop comprehensive and reliable data set
- Incorporate data-driven decision making
- Standardize data across public lands reservations
- Increase availability of digital reservations
- Expand reservation details to improve visitor experience (views, site size, site power, etc.)



# Campground Inventory / Data Management

Recreation.gov **user benefits** include:

- Reserve and pay for more than 100,000 campsites
- Reservations for sites, tickets, permits, and lotteries
- Real-time visitor updates



# Campground Inventory / Data Management

Recreation.gov **park benefits** include:

- No up-front cost to parks
- Reduction in cash handling
- Consolidated reporting to support management decisions



# Market Analysis Contracts

Contracted work is underway to develop analysis requirements, including:

- Discussion of fiscal and operational realities
- Total life-cycle costs, including operations and maintenance
- Safety and accessibility
- Policy and regulation



# Market Analysis Contracts

Contract task order deliverables include:

- Industry analysis report
- Financial strategy tool
- Operating decision framework tool
- Pilot park site visits



# Market Analysis Contracts

Industry analysis goals include:

- Increase understanding of current and future visitor expectations
- Summarize national and regional camping markets
- Survey practices of other public land management agencies
- NPS is pursuing the ability to modify the contract to update the industry analysis to reflect market and industry changes from recent current events.



# Market Analysis Contracts

Financial strategy tool goals include:

- Standardized decision process for campground investment
- Consideration of total life-cycle costs
- Reduction of deferred maintenance



# Market Analysis Contracts

Operating decision framework tool goals include:

- **Consistent consideration of appropriate campground operating model**
  - **NPS operated**
  - **Third-party operated / concession contract**
- **Cost-benefit analysis**



# Market Analysis Contracts

Pilot park inclusion for development and testing of tools.  
The following six pilot parks were selected:



**Lake Mead National Recreation Area**



**Olympic National Park**



**Great Smoky Mountains National Park**



**Big Bend National Park**



**Blue Ridge Parkway**



**Glen Canyon National Recreation Area**



# Market Analysis Contracts

Pilot park campgrounds include:

- Range of seasonal and year-round campgrounds
- Array of sizes from 5 to 244 sites
- Diversity of management models
- Variety of amenities (showers, utilities, etc.)
- Both remote and developed locations



# Development of Campground Design Guide

Standard design elements are needed for efficiency and consistency.  
A design guide should:

- Simplify process for park managers
- Include rehabilitation, expansion, and reduction considerations
- Centralize code compliance resources (including Mission 66)



# Development of Campground Design Guide

Improve accessibility and universal design

- **accessibility** refers to a minimum standard to meet legal regulations; e.g., sidewalk slopes
- **universal design** is the design of buildings, products, or environments to make them accessible to all people regardless of age, disability, or other factors

# Development of Campground Design Guide

Seven principles of *universal design*:

1. Equitable use
2. Flexibility in use
3. Simple and intuitive use
4. Perceptible information
5. Tolerance for error
6. Low physical effort
7. Size and space for approach and use



# Development of Campground Design Guide

**We request the  
NPS Advisory Board  
provide recommendations  
for improving accessibility  
and universal design in  
campgrounds for inclusion  
in the NPS design guide.**

# Questions and Discussion

