

# RECLAMATION

## *Managing Water in the West*

### **New Melones REA Phase II Implementation Justification** **8/29/08**

A public review and comment period for the proposed Phase II fee changes was held from April 7, 2008 through June 6, 2008. Twenty eight (28) comments were received during this public review period. During the previous public comment period on Phase I fee changes one hundred thirty (130) comments were received. Many of these comments received during Phase I (February 15, 2008 through April 4, 2008) were directed towards proposed fee changes of Phase II. New Melones staff compiled, reviewed and analyzed the comments and provides the following recommendations for REA Phase II fee changes.

#### **Proposal: Daily Amenity Fee of \$6**

Decision: Implement Daily Amenity Fee of \$6 as proposed beginning October 1, 2008.

Justification: The Daily Amenity Fee is a standard amenity fee. The fee comparability study conducted in 2007 supports a daily amenity fee of \$6. Reclamation recreation budgets continue to shrink over time while operations and maintenance costs continue to rise. A daily amenity fee of \$6 would provide a revenue source to offset the widening gap between budgets and costs, and allow for recreation enhancements which otherwise would not likely be funded. Per the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA), visitors possessing an Interagency Senior, Interagency Access, or Interagency Annual Pass are not required to pay this daily amenity fee. Visitors may purchase an annual New Melones Day Use Pass, which offers a discount for frequent users. New Melones Lake proposes to hold an annual Customer Appreciation Day on the Saturday closest to Earth Day where all standard amenity fees will be waived. This day will be in addition to the existing National Public Lands Day, when visitors are not charged any standard amenity fees. Also on Veterans Day, veterans and their immediate family will not be charged any standard amenity fees. These days when no standard amenity fees are charged will provide opportunities for all of the public to visit and enjoy the highly developed recreation areas at New Melones Lake.

The daily amenity fee amount should be equal to the daily overflow vehicle/visitor fee to provide ease of understanding for the public and ease of management for Reclamation. The daily amenity fee and the daily overflow vehicle/visitor fee, which will be charged per vehicle, will encourage carpooling and promote fuel conservation. Eighty (80%) of these daily amenity fees collected at New Melones will remain available for expenditure at New Melones, until expended.

**Proposal: Daily Camper's Overflow Vehicle/Visitors Fee of \$6**

Decision: Implement Daily Camper's Overflow Vehicle/Visitors Fee of \$6 beginning October 1, 2008.

Justification: This fee is an expanded amenity fee. The fee comparability study conducted in 2007 supports a daily camper's overflow vehicle/visitors fee of \$6. Reclamation recreation budgets continue to shrink over time while operations and maintenance costs continue to rise. A daily camper's overflow vehicle/visitors fee of \$6 would help keep revenue up to offset the widening gap between budgets and costs, and allow for recreation enhancements which otherwise would not likely be funded. Per REA, visitors possessing an Interagency Senior or Access Pass would receive a 50% discount on this expanded amenity fee. The camper's overflow vehicle/visitors fee should be equal to the daily amenity fee to provide ease of understanding for the public and ease of management for Reclamation. The camper's overflow vehicle/visitors fee, which will be charged per vehicle, will encourage carpooling and promote fuel conservation. Charging a camper's overflow/visitors fee will have the effect of reducing the overall number of vehicles in the campgrounds. Fewer vehicles will enhance resource protection and visitor enjoyment, and reduce maintenance costs. Reducing the number of camper's overflow vehicles parking overnight in day use areas will open up additional parking for day use and provide for better use of these parking areas for their intended purposes.

Eighty (80%) of these daily camper's overflow vehicle/visitors fees collected at New Melones will remain available for expenditure at New Melones, until expended.

**Proposal: New Melones Lake Annual Day Use Pass for \$40**

Decision: Implement the New Melones Lake Annual Day Use Pass, selling for \$40, beginning October 1, 2008.

Justification: A site-specific annual day use pass provides the public a discount on standard amenity fees for those who make frequent visits to New Melones. The Visitor Use Survey conducted in 2007, identifies that the average visitor visits New Melones thirteen (13) times per year. A visitor (other than those qualifying for the Interagency Senior or Access passes) who anticipates coming to New Melones more than six (6) times in a single year should purchase an annual pass to save money on individual daily standard amenity fees. The fee comparability study conducted in 2007 supports a price of \$40 for a site-specific annual day use pass. Visitors possessing an Interagency Senior, Interagency Access, or Interagency Annual Pass would not be required to purchase this annual day use pass to use the standard amenities at New Melones. One hundred percent (100%) of revenues from the sale of site specific passes at New Melones will remain available for expenditure at New Melones, until expended.

**Proposal: Daily Boat Launch Fee of \$8**

Decision: Implement Daily Boat Launch Fee of \$8 beginning October 1, 2008.

Justification: This fee is an expanded amenity fee. The fee comparability study conducted in 2007 supports a daily boat launch fee of \$8. Reclamation recreation budgets continue to shrink over time while operations and maintenance costs continue to rise. A daily boat launch fee of \$8 would provide a revenue source to offset the widening gap between budgets and costs, and allow for recreation enhancements which otherwise would not likely be funded. Per REA, visitors possessing an Interagency Senior or Access Pass would receive a 50% discount on this expanded amenity fee. The daily boat launch fee enables a visitor to use the specialized facilities associated with the boat launch ramps as well as all of the standard amenities.

**Proposal: Annual Boat Launch Pass for \$60**

Decision: Implement the Annual Boat Launch Pass, selling for \$60, beginning October 1, 2008.

Justification: An annual boat launch pass provides the public a discount on boat launch fees for those who make frequent use of the boat launch facilities at New Melones. The Visitor Use Survey conducted in 2007, identifies that 57% of visitors to New Melones participate in motor boating and the average visitor visits New Melones thirteen (13) times per year. A person who anticipates using the boat launch ramp at New Melones more than seven (7) times in a single year should purchase an annual pass to save money on individual daily boat launch fees. The fee comparability study conducted in 2007 supports a price of \$60 for an annual boat launch pass. Per REA, visitors possessing an Interagency Senior or Access Pass would receive a 50% discount on the purchase of an annual boat launch pass. One hundred percent (100%) of revenues from the sale of site specific passes at New Melones will remain available for expenditure at New Melones, until expended. The annual boat launch pass enables a visitor to use the specialized facilities associated with the boat launch ramps as well as all of the standard amenities.

**Proposal: Sell and accept the Interagency Annual Pass for \$80**

Decision: Sell the Interagency Annual Pass for \$80 and accept the pass for standard amenity fees beginning October 12, 2008.

Justification: The fee of \$80 for the Interagency Annual Pass has already been established by a Federal interagency group and is currently being sold by other Federal agencies. Visitors could use this pass at New Melones to satisfy the daily standard amenity use fee. Selling and accepting the Interagency Annual Pass would provide high-quality customer service to the public who may visit recreation areas managed by Reclamation, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. One hundred percent (100%) of revenues from the sale of Interagency passes at New Melones will remain available for expenditure at New Melones, until expended.

**Proposal: Issue a New Melones Annual Day Use Pass for 50 hours of volunteer work.**

Decision: Issue a New Melones Annual Day Use Pass to volunteers who provide 50 hours of volunteer work at New Melones.

Justification: Fifty (50) hours of volunteer work at the GS-3 level (\$11.34 per hour) provides the government with \$567.00 worth of services. Volunteer opportunities at New Melones will provide the public with a way to earn an annual day use pass, while providing valuable services to Reclamation and encouraging stewardship of public lands. Using the annual day use pass as a volunteer incentive will encourage and reward volunteerism.

**Proposal: Issue a New Melones Annual Boat Launch Pass for 75 hours of volunteer work.**

Decision: Issue a New Melones Annual Boat Launch Pass to volunteers who provide 75 hours of volunteer work at New Melones.

Justification: Seventy-five (75) hours of volunteer work at the GS-3 level (\$11.34 per hour) provides the government with \$850.50 worth of services. Volunteer opportunities at New Melones will provide the public with a way to earn an annual boat launch pass, while providing valuable services to Reclamation and encouraging stewardship of public lands. Using the annual boat launch pass as a volunteer incentive will encourage and reward volunteerism.