

Appendix 2A

Feasibility Assessment

This appendix provides a framework for assessing management options and developing a management strategy. Appendix 2C contains a cost/benefit-analysis form for use in assessing site-specific feasibility.

Programmatic Feasibility

To evaluate whether to develop a concession, use previously established goals for operating the recreation sites. Typical goals for managing recreation sites are:

- To optimize quality recreation facilities and services. It may be desirable to keep as many sites open as possible, to provide quality opportunities.
- To collect fees where feasible and consistent with policy, to cover operational costs.
- To convert sites that are not efficient to manage as developed sites to dispersed use, or naturalize them.

Criteria for evaluating management options should include:

- programmatic-feasibility factors,
- agency objectives, and
- an estimate of O&M costs to the Government for program alternatives.

Programmatic-Feasibility Factors

Consider the following management options, and decide whether a concession is the best way to meet the agency's goals.

Closure of the Site and Conversion to Dispersed Use

FS Management

- Human resource programs (volunteers, SCSEP).
- Change in managed season/site closures (temporary closures, shorter managed season, partial closures based on use levels).

Recreation Fee Demonstration

G-T Concession

- Site capacity. (Generally, larger sites are more efficient to operate.)
- Managed season of use.
- Potential as a fee site or feasibility of increasing fees.
- Current use.
- Is the site a destination area or transient-use site?
- Impact on 25 Percent Fund.

PPV Concession

- Suitability of site for expansion.
- Market demand for additional capacity.
- Managed season and use fees balance

required staff and construction costs.

Term Permit Program Concession

- Demand for facilities and services, and fees generated, support construction and management costs.
- Business opportunity is attractive to the private sector.

Agency Objectives

- What role does this site serve?
- Is it part of a larger recreation complex?
- What market segment is served?
- What range of opportunities (ROS) will the FS provide?
- What range of accessible recreation opportunities will be provided?

Estimate of O&M Costs to Government for Program Alternatives

- Cost to operate.
- Cost of M&R.
- Cost of closure and conversion.
- Cost of construction or reconstruction.

If the results of the evaluation show significant change in current services or facilities, involve interested parties through informal scoping or as part of the NEPA process. Examples of potentially interested parties include site users, state parks and recreation agencies, local chambers of commerce, and permit holders.

Site-Specific Feasibility

Estimate the minimum required costs for the recreation site operation, as well as FS expectations for a standard level of service. Use Meaningful Measures standards.

Cost to the Government

Include all inspections and monitoring that should be accomplished, both by District Rangers and Forest Supervisors, such as:

- Annual hazardous-tree and health-and-safety inspections prior to the managed use season (FSM 2332.1).
- Updating of infrastructure facility condition records.
- Potable water testing.
- Waste treatment and disposal inspections, where appropriate.

Calculate the costs of the current operation-and-maintenance plan, including policing, cleanup, maintenance, and administration costs at each site. This plan is typically kept in workbook form for field use and contains:

- A clear statement of goals and site management objectives. This section will normally identify ROS class development level and accessibility objectives.
- Inspection documents for the current year.
- Job lists for the year, both for recurring needs and special projects.
- Work schedules.
- Policing and cleanup standards for the site (see the updated version of *Cleaning Recreation Sites*).

Review other documentation on the site, and consider how it affects the potential concession operation.

- Complete or update the site plans. They will assist in establishing an inventory of FS improvements.
- Review any permanent working file on the site, and include the cost of updating it annually.

- Review or complete a vegetation management plan (FSM 2331.4). This plan may affect the cost of operations and long-term objectives for managing the sites. Consider the effects of prescribed treatments on the overall cost of the operation.

Review water, sewer, and other utility-oriented infrastructure for the site.

- Include the cost of meeting current laws and regulations.
- Assess the likelihood of changes in laws or regulations that could affect the cost of operation, and include any likely additional costs.
- Consider any special skills that a concessionaire would need, or FS workloads that would be affected by a concession, and adjust costs accordingly.

Consider the effect of a concession on law enforcement operations, including any changes required in the law enforcement plan for the site.

- Assess any change in the need for orders and regulations for visitor and resource protection.
- Assess the effect on the schedule for monitoring recreational activities.

Consider the change in returns to the Treasury from using a different fee authority (G-T versus Land and Water Conservation Fund Act), and the implications for the 25 Percent Fund, and of fee offset work.

- Analyze the use fees to be charged. Will they differ from those charged by the FS?
- What are the agency's costs for collecting use fees? These costs are usually contained in a use fee compliance plan.

Consider the cost of audits.

- FS audits. Include annual audits that are performed on a representative sample of fee sites in each District.

- Concession audits. Include periodic audits of financial information, permit fee payments, and fee offset.

Scope of the Concession Opportunity

Consider the inventory of developed sites and the scale of the proposed concession. The concession could be a single site or multiple sites in a single geographic area, a whole Ranger District, multiple Districts, a whole Forest, or multiple Forests.

- Review the Forestwide inventory of all developed sites to determine existing opportunities, priorities, and needs.
- Identify market segments currently being served, and those that could potentially be served by a concession.
- List the current use by recreation visitor day (RVD) and type for each site. This information will be needed to determine potential revenues. (Note, however, that concession income corresponds to nights a unit is rented, not the number of users.)
- List ROS class, and accessibility and management objectives, for each site. This information will assist in developing concession operating plans.
- Consider vegetation management objectives.
- Consider capital investment needs for each site.
- Identify similar or complementary opportunities offered by other recreation providers, both private and Government.

Economic Feasibility

To determine whether conversion to a concession would be cost effective for the Government and whether a concession would be economically viable, conduct an economic feasibility analysis as discussed in Appendix 2B (pages 2–9-10).

Additional Documentation

Decisions resulting from the site-specific feasibility assessment must be accompanied by:

- A communication plan. Potential users must be advised of changes in management. Local chambers of commerce and resort permittees also need this information.
- A law enforcement plan. Changes in management may result in shifts in law enforcement responsibilities, or increases in law enforcement workload.
- Recreation Data.
 - ‡ Recreation data going into regular Forest and District recreation reports must be updated to reflect changes in management.
 - ‡ Consider updating recreation maps.
 - ‡ Signs at sites may require modification.