



Park Planning, Facilities and Lands

Managing the Second Century of Campgrounds in the National Park Service Campground Industry Trends Reports Introduction

Campgrounds provide a low-cost and unique opportunity for visitors to experience National Park Service (NPS) sites across the country. More than 330 million visitors explore parks annually, with tent, RV, and backcountry campers spending an estimated 7.9 million nights at park system campgrounds in 2018.

Growing interest in expanding and supporting public recreational access supports the need to fully understand, optimally manage, and strategically invest in campgrounds throughout the NPS.

Enhancing Transparency and Consistency in Decision-Making

The National Park Service must ensure its investment, modernization, and campground operating models appropriately reflect parks' unique circumstances, markets, and visitor expectations. The NPS does not plan to modernize every campground but would like to make smart, consistent decisions on when to modernize or rehabilitate a campground based on the park's unique circumstances, local market and financial factors, visitor expectations, and applicable policies and regulations. To better understand these factors, the National Park Service is undertaking a study to generate an industry analysis, financial strategy, and operating model decision framework.

Industry analysis: Two campground industry trends reports were contracted to provide an overview of national and regional camping markets and assist NPS in developing a Second Century Campground Strategy. The reports were completed by independent business management consultants CBRE and CHM Government Services. Each report compiles existing market data and includes:

- current and developing expectations for camping
- economic profiles and trends
- campground industry standards
- summaries of national and regional camping markets
- comparable public lands management operation models (BLM, USFS, state, local, etc.)
- recommendations and conclusions

The reports provide valuable background data for the National Park Service to consider in the development of the Second Century Campground Strategy. Recommendations and conclusions are included as an assessment of how market factors and trends may affect the NPS campground market and include approaches to consider incorporating into the Service-wide campground strategy. The NPS is under no obligation to adopt contractor suggestions. The reports, and the included recommendations and conclusions are informational only.