

New Melones Lake Implements Phase II of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act

Decision: The Bureau of Reclamation began the implementation of fee changes at New Melones Lake on Thursday, May 1, 2008, for Phase I. Phase II fee changes are scheduled to begin, Wednesday, October 1, 2008. As proposed in the “Initial Plan for Phased Implementation of the 2005 Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (Draft)”, the fee for day-use is \$6, boat-launching is \$8 per day (includes the \$6 day-use fee), Annual Day Use pass is \$40, Annual Boat Launch Pass is \$60, and the Daily camper’s overflow vehicle/visitor fee is \$6 (includes the \$6 day-use fee). Additionally, the Federal Interagency Pass Program will be implemented.

The Bureau of Reclamation announced proposed changes to its fee program on Friday, February 15, 2008 for New Melones Lake in order to implement the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA), Public Law 108-774, Title VIII. REA authorizes Reclamation to issue special recreation use permits and participate in both a fee collection/retention program and the nationwide Federal Interagency Pass Program. Implementing REA marks the first time a Reclamation-managed recreation area may retain revenues collected on-site and use them to enhance recreation facilities and services. Prior to REA, all revenues collected at New Melones went to the Federal Treasury.

Public Involvement: On Monday April 7, 2008, Reclamation announced a public review and comment period on the proposed Phase II fee changes with comments due by Friday, June 6, 2008. Phase II implementation is scheduled to begin on Wednesday, October 1, 2008.

Reclamation asked for the public’s input on the new proposed fees for Phase II as follows:

- Day-use - \$6.00
- Boat-launch - \$8.00 (includes the \$6 day-use fee)
- Annual Day Use pass - \$40.00
- Annual Boat Launch pass - \$60.00
- Daily campers’ overflow vehicle/visitor - \$6.00 (includes the \$6 day-use fee)
- Implementation of the Federal Interagency Pass Program

From April 7 to June 6, 2008, a public review and comment period was held. During this period, the public was asked for their suggestions on the proposed Phase II fee program and how Reclamation should use the revenues generated at New Melones under REA.

Summary of Comments: The Phase II comment period closed Tuesday, June 6, 2008. Reclamation received 28 comments; of these, 0 were submitted by fax, 13 by mail, 13 were submitted by e-mail, and 2 were submitted by telephone to the New Melones Office. The Board of Supervisors for the County of Tuolumne, the Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center, and the New Melones Lake Marina each submitted comments. 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. Reclamation staff compiled, reviewed and analyzed the comments and provides the following responses to the comments. Like comments have been grouped together.

All comments pertaining to Phase II have been evaluated as a part of the decision to charge for day-use, boat-launching, camper's overflow vehicles/visitors, and to sell Annual Day Use Passes, Annual Boat Launch Passes, and the Federal Interagency Annual Passes.

	Comment	Reclamation Response
1	Boat launch and day use fees are acceptable if the revenue is retained and used at New Melones Lake	Reclamation Directives and Standards LND 01-02 states that eighty percent (80%) of the REA user fees collected onsite, one hundred percent (100%) of all recreation pass fees collected on site, and one hundred percent (100%) of all REA user fees collected by the National Recreation Reservation Service will remain available for expenditure, without further appropriation, until expended at that site.

2	<p>Improvements and operations costs should be born by all tax payers, not just local area users.</p>	<p>Appropriated funds provided by all taxpayers were used to construct, operate and maintain existing facilities and services at NML. However as facilities and infrastructure age and need replacement, and as increasing populations require provision of more services, and these services cost more to provide, the cost of providing parks and recreation programs exceeds the supply of available funding. Congress recognized the responsibility of visitors to contribute a greater portion of their funding when it established broad fee authority over forty years ago, in 1965, under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF). Congress subsequently enacted the Fee Demonstration Program in 1996, and the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (Public Law 108-447) (REA) in 2004. The rationale is that those who use specific services and facilities should pay for a larger portion of the costs, rather than require taxpayers who never use the amenities to assume the entire cost.</p>
3	<p>The counties of Tuolumne and Calaveras have already lost significant tax base from this project.</p>	<p>While revenues from property taxes may have been reduced from lands acquired for the NM project, many lands were simply withdrawn from the public domain. These lands were not subject to property taxes. The Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program provides local government with revenues to partially offset loss of revenues from county tax rolls. Economic benefits from the project, including tourism-generated sales tax in local communities, business opportunities associated with recreation, adjacent landowner property values, project personnel and operations and maintenance budget spent largely in local communities, etc., also help to offset loss of tax revenues.</p>
4	<p>With the high price of fuel, this is not a good time to institute new fees.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

5	Collection of the new fees will not be cost effective.	Reclamation estimates that the percent of revenues spent on fee collection will be approximately 30% in the initial start-up phase, then decreasing to approximately 25% annually. This is in keeping with other recreation-management agencies.
6	If the decision is to collect these fees, then spending 80% of the revenue locally is appropriate.	See response #1.
7	Mountain bike riders, hikers, wildlife viewers, and beach patrons use less facilities than other day users and should be charged a reduced fee or no fee.	Glory Hole and Tuttle town Recreation Areas meet the REA criteria to charge a standard amenity fee. The decision to charge daily amenity fees is based on the provision of standard amenities to visitors in a recreation area. From an operational standpoint, it is the industry standard to "presume" those visiting an area with standard amenities such as restrooms, parking, etc. will use them. It is not feasible to base the decision to charge a fee on whether some or all of those facilities are actually used during a given visit. Therefore, all visitors to amenity fee areas will be subject to the appropriate amenity fee.
8	It seems apparent that mountain bike riders, hikers, wildlife viewers, and beach patrons are unfairly being asked to compensate for boaters. Rates should be lowered for bike riders, hikers, etc and raised for boaters.	Boat launching facilities are considered an "expanded amenity" while facilities used by hikers, bicyclists and picnickers are "standard amenities". Both types of fees are appropriate for the amenities present at NML, and fee amounts are comparable with other regional recreation areas. Fees charged by Reclamation are based on "market" or "comparable" prices to ensure that fees do not undermine the ability of other local businesses and agencies to compete for recreation dollars. The current fees are based on a user fee study completed in 2007.
9	Fees should be used to expand and maintain trails at New Melones.	REA 8(a)(3)(A) states that fees may be used for "repair, maintenance, and facility enhancement directly related to visitor enjoyment, visitor access, and health and safety;..." Future trail planning is included in the Resource Management Plan alternatives.

10	Current shower rates are a bargain and should not be raised.	Fees charged by Reclamation are based on "market" or "comparable" prices to ensure that fees do not undermine the ability of other local businesses and agencies to compete for recreation dollars. The current fees are based on a user fee study completed in 2007.
11	Separate camping areas should be designated for RV users and tent campers.	Future campground development may be included in the Resource Management Plan alternatives.
12	New fees will impose a hardship on senior citizens. All fees should be waived for senior citizens. Seniors should be given a discount on any new fees.	U.S. citizens 62 years of age and older may purchase a lifetime Interagency Senior Pass for a one-time fee of \$10. The Senior Pass provides a 100% discount on standard amenity fees and a 50% discount on expanded amenity fees.
13	When the New Melones Project was authorized, Congress specifically required that the water areas created by the new dam be open to the public without charge for boating, swimming, bathing, fishing and other recreational purposes, (See Public Law 78-534 [Flood Control Act of December 22, 1944] and Public Law 87-874 [Flood Control Act of October 23, 1962]). The Army Corps of Engineers told the public that there would never be any fees imposed on the public to use New Melones.	The initial authorizing legislation for NML did include a provision for free recreation, but this was rescinded a few years later by section 2(a) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (Sep. 3, 1964, P.L. 88-576). Use fees are authorized in the Reclamation Recreation Management Act, codified at 16 USC S. 4601-33a, P.L. 102-575, 106 Stat. 469 (Title XXVIII of the Reclamation Projects Authorization Act of 1992)(1992 Act). In addition to these laws, with the passage of REA, and the designation of New Melones as an authorized REA site, Reclamation has clear authority to implement the fees proposed in the Draft Initial Implementation Plan for REA.

14	<p>Establishing new fees will continue to diminish access to federal lands.</p>	<p>Reclamation's goal is to enhance access and opportunities for recreation and to receive and offer fair value for recreation. Reclamation is aware of the concerns of diminished access and has included several "discount" passes for seniors, disabled, and frequent users in its proposed fee program, while limiting fees to the two highly developed, existing fee areas, Glory Hole and Tuttle town Recreation Areas. In the proposed plan, visitors may continue to access other New Melones areas for dispersed recreation without being charged a fee, and may in the future benefit from improvements to these areas made possible by REA revenues. Volunteers who contribute a specified number of volunteer hours can earn a free Interagency Annual pass, New Melones Annual Day Use Pass or Annual Boat Launch Pass. Additionally, Reclamation has designated free access to standard amenity fee areas on Veteran's Day, National Public Lands Day, and an annual Customer Appreciation Day each year.</p>
15	<p>Reclamation has not evaluated potential impacts on the local economy if out-of-area users decline to visit as a result of the establishment of user fees.</p>	<p>The implementation of REA and optimizing fees is an administrative action which does not affect a particular ethnic group or income class differently. Additionally the optimizing of fees will prevent federal facilities from unduly competing with local industry and other public agencies that depend on recreational dollars in Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties. As required under NEPA, an analysis of potential environmental impacts was conducted. No impacts to natural or cultural resources were identified, and the REA project qualifies for categorical exclusion as: "Changes in regulations or policy directives and legislative proposals where the impacts are limited to economic and/or social effects." (DOI Departmental Manual 516 DM 6 Appendix 9, A.1). Since economic and/or social effects have not been shown to be an issue, no further analyses are planned.</p>
16	<p>New user fees would be a hardship to Tuolumne County citizens and visitors.</p>	<p>See response #14.</p>

17	<p>Reclamation should follow the Congressionally-mandated Coordination requirements cited in Tuolumne County Resolution 156-07, dated December 4, 2007. The resolution notes that several legal provisions exist to insure that local governments, including counties, are included in Federal agency policy formulation and project planning at the earliest stage.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
18	<p>Local stakeholders did not have the opportunity to participate in drafting the initial REA Plan.</p>	<p>The draft plan development was completed in December, 2007, reviewed by Reclamation in January, and released to the public and local agencies for review and comment on February 15, 2008. Per Reclamation's normal process, an interagency coordination meeting was held to discuss the draft plan on the same date, with officials from Tuolumne and Calaveras County in attendance. Reclamation also gave public presentations at the March 11, 2008 Board of Supervisors meeting in Sonora, and the March 18, 2008 City Council meeting in Angels Camp. As the plan called for only minor changes to the existing recreation fee program in Phase I, a 30 day comment period was initially established. However, as requested by Tuolumne County, Reclamation extended the comment period for Phase I of this plan until April 4th, 2008, to allow more time for public review and comment. A second comment period, to address Phase II of the Implementation Plan, was open for 60 days from April 7 through June 6th, 2008.</p>
19	<p>Establishment of user fees for New Melones Lake under REA is inconsistent with previous Congressional policy and is subject to legal challenge.</p>	<p>See response #13.</p>

20	Tuolumne County and its citizens should have the right to proper public due process concerning the creation and implementation of new use fees.	See response #18. A public involvement program consisting of paid advertisements, news releases, mailings and website postings, and presentations at local agency meetings has been conducted to ensure the public is informed of the opportunity to be involved in the establishment or changing of fees as required under REA.
21	Mountain bike riders help to maintain the trails. It would be tough to pay just to ride bikes for the day.	See response #7. Authorized volunteers who provide 50 hours of volunteer work at New Melones may be issued a New Melones Annual Day Use Pass.
22	The public was promised many millions of dollars worth of recreation facilities to appease and "bribe" people into believing that the dam was a good thing to build. Why were these facilities not built?	Federal law now requires that a Cost Share partner provide 50% of the construction, operations and maintenance cost for any new recreation areas to be built.
23	The old Parrott's Ferry Road access and the Mark Twain area have been closed to trailered boat launching, which forces boaters to pay a boat launch fee to get on the lake.	In the original Project Master Plan of 1976, these sites were intended to be used only as informal launch sites for car-top boats, and only subject to safe conditions. The Parrott's Ferry and Mark Twain lake access points have now been closed to trailered launching due to safety concerns with the continued deterioration of the old roadways. These sites continue to be open to the public for hand-launching and other lake access.
24	Tuolumne and Calaveras County residents should receive free boat launching at the lake.	New Melones Lake is a Federal project managed by the Bureau of Reclamation. All visitors to New Melones are required to be treated equally, regardless of their county or state of residence.
25	Reclamation should open up more access to launch small boats on the upper portion of the lake or restore access at the Old Parrotts Ferry.	Future access development may be included in the Resource Management Plan alternatives.
26	Reclamation should pay for improvements and operations of Parrotts Ferry access by establishing an annual pass/fee exclusively for use at Parrotts Ferry. Only those who purchase the annual pass would be allowed access to Parrotts Ferry.	See response #25.

27	No monies should be spent on any new facilities until existing facilities are repaired and closed facilities are re-opened.	REA 8(a)(3)(A) states that fees may be used for "repair, maintenance, and facility enhancement directly related to visitor enjoyment, visitor access, and health and safety;..."
28	Law Enforcement should be increased at New Melones both on the lands and water.	REA 8(a)(3)(D) states that fees may be used for "law enforcement related to public use and recreation..."
29	The boat launch fee should be \$10.	See response #10.
30	There should be some sort of tracking to show where the fee revenues go and what it is being spent on.	Reclamation Directives and Standards LND 01-02, Paragraph 7.I. requires annual reporting of revenue, obligations and expenditures. Paragraph 12 requires the posting of clear notice of locations of completed REA projects and where work is being performed using the REA revenues.
31	Why does the lake release so much water during the summer?	Water releases are controlled by the Central Valley Project Office in response to needs and requests of entities with water rights from New Melones Lake.
32	Funds needed to maintain the recreation facilities should come from vacationers, not local residents.	See response #2.
33	Slip holders at the marina should not have to pay a day use fee to get to their boat at the marina.	See response #7.
34	Hopefully fees may be lowered in the future if agency budgets rebound from the current levels.	Fees charged by Reclamation are based on "market" or "comparable" prices to ensure that fees do not undermine the ability of other local businesses and agencies to compete for recreation dollars. The current fees are based on a user fee study completed in 2007. User fee studies will be completed in the future to ensure that fees are comparable and market based.
35	It is preferable to keep any federal lands fees low or without charge because the public feels that federal lands already belong to them and should have minimal costs for use.	See response #14.
36	The \$40 annual pass fee appears to offer a practical rate for low income visitors who want to utilize New Melones frequently throughout the year.	See response #10.
37	Fees can help to reduce vandalism	Comment noted.

38	Revenues should be used to increase interpretive programming and environmental education.	REA 8(a)(3)(B) states that fees may be used for "interpretation, visitor information, visitor services, visitor needs assessments and signs..."
39	The implementation of a fee program is supported and is overdue.	Comment noted.
40	Houseboat rental customers should be given 4 daily amenity passes for each houseboat rental.	See response #7. With the purchase of a day use pass or boat launch pass, houseboat rental customers are entitled to use the same standard and expanded amenities as the general public. Fees paid for the rental of a houseboat are for the use of that specialized vessel, and for the overhead required to provide marina services and facilities which are not available to the general public without additional fees.
41	One hundred percent of fee and pass revenue should go into lake enhancement rather than into the federal and county government coffers.	See response #1.
42	Reclamation has not been totally up front with the public as Reclamation has not declared that it is the county that will administer the charges, not the federal government.	Reclamation is a Federal agency and is the agency that manages and administers the recreation program, including REA, at New Melones Lake.
43	We would hate to have to pay a day use fee and not have full use of the swimming area due to low water. Is there a plan to provide some kind of alternate swimming area for low water conditions?	Visitors are allowed to swim at their own risk at New Melones except within 100 feet of the boat launches and courtesy docks, within the marina's concession area, or in other areas identified in 43 CFR 423.36 (a). A future swimming area may be addressed in the Resource Management Plan alternatives.
44	New Melones is taxpayer funded and provides huge economic benefit to a small number of water users. Water is delivered well below cost and in many cases this taxpayer-funded windfall benefits large, extremely wealthy agribusiness corporations and individuals. Recreational use of New Melones is one of the few benefits provided to the taxpayers who pay for that windfall. The cost of any budget shortfall should be borne by the water users.	Comment noted.
45	To charge eight and fifteen dollars for using the dump station is far out of line.	See response #10.

46	The \$80 Interagency Annual Pass seems steep. I thought a pass to Yellowstone, Yosemite, etc was \$40. If so, why would a New Melones annual day use pass be \$80?	The fee for the Interagency Annual Pass is set by an interagency group. In 2008 the Yosemite Annual Pass is \$40. The New Melones Annual Day Use Pass is \$40. A person possessing the Interagency Annual Pass will not be charged additional daily standard amenity fees.
47	Many county residents who make under \$50,000 per year may not be able to afford the new fees.	See response #14.
48	If there have to be fees, they should only be charged during the summer recreation season.	Recreation use fees will continue to be collected throughout the year. See response #2.
49	The campsites should be upgraded to include electricity and sewer. Then camping fees can be raised and there would not be a need for boat launch or day use fees.	See response #10 and #27.
50	Work crews from the Cal-Fire conservation camps could do work at New Melones to save money and eliminate the need to charge fees.	Reclamation currently utilizes Cal-Fire conservation crews to perform labor at New Melones Lake as part of the Baseline Conservation Camp lease agreement.
51	Boat launch fees should not be charged because the services that are provided at the lake are substandard in comparison to other lakes in the area that have launch fees, such as proper marina services, bathroom and shower services, and proper maintenance of the boat ramps and courtesy docks.	See response #10.
52	Fee revenues should be used to fund additional personnel to enforce launch ramp etiquette. With video games, gangs, and childhood obesity in the news, let's keep New Melones open as an alternative to these problems. If a working man cannot afford fees, kids will be shut out too.	See responses #14, #27 and #28.
53	I can't afford to pay all the fees this state has come up with to see Mother Nature. This state may need money but they're looking in the wrong places.	Comment noted.
54	Charging day use and boat launch fees would have a serious negative trickle down effect on the economies of Calaveras and Tuolumne counties.	Comment noted.

55	Many Tuolumne county residents are poor and would not be able to afford to pay the day use fee and would be restricted from visiting the lake.	See response #14.
56	What is the process for how businesses that are providing services (boat recovery, tow services, marina employees) be allowed to enter the park?	Businesses that are performing authorized services will be issued a free short term permit to enter the park.
57	Proposed fees are a good idea and should have been implemented earlier. There should be a lower priced annual boat launch fee for local residents, suggested fee of \$40.	See responses #2 and #10.
58	Will annual passes be available for boat launch and day use?	A New Melones Annual Day Use Pass will be available for \$40. A New Melones Annual Boat Launch Pass will be available for \$60. The Interagency Annual Pass will be available for \$80. Persons possessing an Interagency Senior, Interagency Access, Golden Age, or Golden Access Pass may purchase the New Melones Annual Boat Launch pass at a 50% discount. Persons possessing an Interagency Senior, Interagency Access, Golden Age, Golden Access, or Interagency Annual Pass will not have to pay any additional standard amenity fees at New Melones.
59	House boat owners should receive a discount or free entry since they already pay the marina monthly fees for mooring and part of those fees are paid to Reclamation as franchise fees.	See response #7. Concession franchise fees are not a part of REA.
60	The government is trying to be covert about giving this plan to the public.	See response #18.
61	Would like to see the camping fee raised to \$25 so that the day use and boat launch fees would not have to be started. Charging day use and launch fees will only be the beginning of many future fees, including parking fees.	See response #10.
62	Reclamation is just trying to grow their own program and give themselves job security.	See response #2.

63	Local folks will not visit if they have to pay day use/launch fees because they cannot afford the fees or annual passes.	See response #14.
64	Fees will make New Melones a bay area resort.	Comment noted.
65	Very supportive of all proposed fees. What percentage of recreation fees will be retained by New Melones?	See response #1.
66	Fees for local users will prevent youth from using the lake, which will result in more parties and drinking.	See response #14. REA 3(d)(3)(A) prohibits charging standard amenity fees for any person under 16 years of age.
67	I can understand some sort of fee for a boat launch as it costs to maintain them, but these fees are unreasonable.	See response #10.
68	Have these fees been posted anywhere else than the Stockton Record such as the Glory Hole website?	Reclamation has conducted an extensive public involvement program which included press releases to local and regional newspapers, paid ads in several newspapers, and postings of flyers in the local area. See response #20.
69	These fees will hurt the many retired people that fish at New Melones. Please help us to continue to enjoy your lake and it's fishing by giving us a fee we can live with. We may have to give up fishing due to the high cost.	See response #12.
70	If New Hogan is able to support the lake's facilities with the Golden Age Passport fees, maybe you can do the same.	The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which manages New Hogan Lake, no longer sells Golden Age Passports. The Golden Age passport will continue to be honored throughout the lifetime of the holder.
71	I do approve of charging a fee and would like a senior discount on seasonal boat launch fees.	See response #12.
72	A small club like ours could not afford the new event fees for fishing tournaments and we will not be having any this year. There is no problem paying a \$50 fee.	A Special Event Classification and Fees schedule has been established by Reclamation's Central California Area Office. This schedule details the standard criteria and fees for special event permitting.

73	I would be in full favor of a day use and boat launch fee. Everywhere we fish they charge the fees. Don Pedro, Tulloch, Hogan are all in the same proximity of fees. This is a much fair way of getting funds. Everyone would pay an equal share.	See responses #2 and #10.
74	A user fee would put a burden on an already strained economic situation.	Comment noted.
75	There is revenue already provided from the sale of hydro generation which should cover the cost of any minimal launch fee proceeds generated. The derby fees paid during the year generate revenue.	Hydropower revenues do not support the recreation program at New Melones Lake. Fees from fishing tournaments and special events meeting the criteria outlined in the Special Event Classification and Fees schedule are remitted as recreation use fees.
76	The fees will never be removed and will always escalate, just like other mother lode lakes.	See response #10.
77	Will possession of the Interagency Senior Pass reduce these fees and can we obtain this Senior Pass from your office?	See response #12. The Interagency Senior Pass is available for purchase at the New Melones Lake Visitor Center.
78	It does seem that hiring a gatekeeper and locating self pay boxes will offset quite a few entrance fees.	See response #5.
79	Will we be allowed to bike past the entrance station without paying a fee? Will we be required to pay \$6 every time we wish to swim there?	See response #7.
80	You would be taking away a place where people feel comfortable going any time they wanted without worrying about fees.	See response #14.
81	This is the only lake that does not charge in the region.	Comment noted.
82	It's time that people recognized and accepted the fact that it costs money to maintain our parks. It's the most equitable to charge the people who actually use them than to tax everyone.	Comment noted.
83	Will boaters have to pay both a day use fee and a launch fee? If it is both, that is double charging for a single product.	Persons entering the recreation areas with a boat will be charged a boat launch fee. The boat launch fee includes the use of all standard amenities as well as the expanded amenities of the boat launch facilities. Visitors will not have to pay both fees.

84	This is totally unfair and over priced. I can understand a very small increase, \$2-\$4.	See Response #10.
85	We have a house boat and pay an annual fee already, why should we have to pay to enter the lake just to board the house boat? Houseboat owners should receive several annual day use passes for free since they already pay mooring fees at the marina.	See response #7. Concession franchise fees are not a part of REA.
86	The reason we go to this lake is because there are no fees.	Comment noted.
87	Charging fees would diminish the quality of our retirement.	Comment noted.
88	What does the government do with the boat license fee?	The state of California collects boat registration fees. Reclamation does not have any input into how California collects or spends these boat registration fees.
89	This is the one place in our valley that one can take their families to without financial restrictions.	Comment noted.
90	Will the new rates mean full time staff to man control points, clean restrooms and provide security for vehicles in the parking lots? Would additional informational programs for the public be scheduled such as nature hikes, fishing classes and biking tours?	New Melones Lake plans to staff the entrance stations, full-time, from April through September of each year. Janitorial services are currently funded through normal appropriations. See responses #28 and #38.
91	How about more camp ground sites and restrooms around the lake for boaters?	REA 8(a)(3)(A) states that fees may be used for "repair, maintenance, and facility enhancement directly related to visitor enjoyment, visitor access, and health and safety;..." Future campground and facility planning may be included in the Resource Management Plan alternatives.
92	Are you looking to increase total usage of the lake and surrounding open space or just to collect fees from the current level of users?	Reclamation is neither trying to increase nor decrease visitation, but is striving to provide a quality recreation experience for the public who visits the lands and water of New Melones Lake and to receive and offer fair value for recreation, as required by the Government Performance and Results Act.
93	We are so unhappy with the irresponsible marina and feel we pay enough for nothing already.	Comment noted.

94	There has been little protection for camps or day use areas; I would think the current fees would fund some security to protect public and private property.	See responses #27 and #28.
95	I would think the fees collected should be spent to improve conditions at the ramps.	See response #27.
96	Current camp fees should pay for a ranger or two for security.	See responses #27 and #28.
97	We would consider going to a different lake if New Melones becomes more like Don Pedro by charging fees.	Comment noted.
98	The affordable recreation for families to camp or do a day trip keeps local businesses and the Marina going, which helps the community.	Comment noted.
99	There should be plenty of revenue available from marina operations, water sales and other sources currently in place.	Revenues from the marina concession are not a part of REA. Revenues from water contracts and hydropower do not support the recreation program at New Melones Lake.
100	I will gladly pay for continued use of the lake. I am sure to take advantage of the annual passes.	Comment noted.
101	Can fee revenues be used to build a boat storage facility on Reclamation property?	This type of facility could be a part of future concessions contracts. Future concessions opportunities are identified in the Resource Management Plan.
102	We already pay more than enough taxes to maintain this facility.	Comment noted.
103	During the spring and summer months, the campgrounds are close to full or full. This must bring in plenty of income to operate and maintain the campgrounds and boat launches.	Prior to REA implementation, camping fees were remitted directly to the US Treasury and were not available for use at New Melones Lake. As a part of REA, Reclamation Directives and Standards LND 01-02 states that eighty percent (80%) of the REA user fees collected onsite, one hundred percent (100%) of all recreation pass fees collected on site, and one hundred percent (100%) of all REA user fees collected by the National Recreation Reservation Service will remain available for expenditure, without further appropriation, until expended at that site.

104	Perhaps there could be an annual day use pass for low income persons, based upon a certain income level, which would be available at \$10 per year instead of the proposed \$40 per year.	See response #10.
105	A new boat ramp and entrance road should be built on the southwest end of the lake.	REA 8(a)(3)(A) states that fees may be used for "repair, maintenance, and facility enhancement directly related to visitor enjoyment, visitor access, and health and safety;..." Planning for future boat ramp facilities may be included in the Resource Management Plan alternatives.
106	Fee revenues should be used to pay for staffing of the entrance stations.	REA 8(a)(3)(E) states that fees may be used for "direct operating or capital costs associated with the recreation fee program;..."
107	The area beneath the footprint of New Melones was previously used for recreation, including hunting and fishing, and was lost when New Melones was constructed.	To partially offset such losses, additional fish and wildlife lands were purchased as part of the required mitigation for the New Melones Project. 2,500 acres in the Peoria Wildlife Management Area are set aside for dispersed recreation and fish and wildlife habitat management.

General Questions Asked throughout comments

Q. Where did all of this change originate?

A. H.R. 4818 Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2004, VIII Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, Sec. 803. Recreation Fee Authority (a) Authority of Secretary – Beginning in fiscal year 2005 and thereafter, the Secretary may establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees at Federal recreational lands and waters. On December 13, 2006, Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Robert W. Johnson approved the participation of Reclamation in the Federal Lands Recreation Act (Public Law 108-447), hereafter termed "REA" and named New Melones Lake as a "Designated REA site".

Q. Will boaters have to pay both a day use fee and boat launch fee?

A. If a visitor pays a boat launch fee they will not be required to pay an additional day use fee. The boat launch fee allows the visitor to use the boat launch and all of the day use facilities. As a daily fee this permit would expire at midnight on the date of the issuance. This fee would not apply to registered campers.

Q. What is the minimum age to get a senior discount?

A. U.S. citizens, 62 years of age and older can purchase the Interagency Senior Pass. The Senior Pass is available for \$10 and is good for the lifetime of the holder. The previously issued Golden Age Pass will continue to be honored throughout the lifetime of the holder. The Interagency Senior and Golden Age Passes provide a 100% discount on standard amenity fees, which includes the proposed daily amenity use fee. These passes provide a 50% discount on expanded amenity fees, which include individual camping fees, RV dump station fees, daily camper's overflow vehicle/visitor fees, and the annual boat launch pass.

Q. Has Reclamation considered a reduced annual pass for residents of Tuolumne and Calaveras counties?

A. New Melones Lake is a Federal project managed by the Bureau of Reclamation. All visitors to New Melones are required to be treated equally, regardless of their county or state of residence. All visitors are eligible to purchase the proposed annual passes, which would provide unlimited visits for a 12 month period at a discounted rate.

Q. When the New Melones Project was authorized, Congress specifically required that the water areas created by the new dam be open to the public without charge for boating, swimming, bathing, fishing and other recreational purposes, (See Public Law 78-534 [Flood Control Act of December 22, 1944] and Public Law 87-874 [Flood Control Act of October 23, 1962]). The Army Corps of Engineers told the public that there would never be any fees imposed on the public to use New Melones. Why is Reclamation now going to charge use fees?

A. The initial authorizing legislation for NML did include a provision for free recreation, but this was rescinded a few years later by section 2(a) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (Sep. 3, 1964, P.L. 88-576). Use fees are authorized in the Reclamation Recreation Management Act, codified at 16 USC S. 4601-33a, P.L. 102-575, 106 Stat. 469 (Title XXVIII of the Reclamation Projects Authorization Act of 1992)(1992 Act). In addition to these laws, with the passage of REA, and the designation of New Melones as an authorized REA site, Reclamation has clear authority to implement the fees proposed in the Draft Initial Implementation Plan for REA.

For additional information, please contact Mr. Jeff Laird at (209) 536-9094 x229.