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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: January 27, 2016

To: The Honorable Chair and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator 

Re: **Colossal Cave Mountain Park 2015 Year-end Review**

Attached is the 2015 year-end review with regard to the transition of operation and management of Colossal Cave Mountain Park (CCMP) to Ortega National Park (Ortega). I and County staff also recently met with Ortega's owners and their local representative.

Attendance at CCMP has nearly doubled over that of 2014, and revenues from experience cave tours have increased substantially, as have those for retail sales and food and beverage.

The year-end report also discusses a number of five-year capital improvement activities Ortega is contemplating, contingent upon County approval.

Ortega would also like to implement tour fee increases as shown in the report. Exhibit 1 to the report compares the current and proposed CCMP fees to other attractions, including Kartchner Caverns and Grand Canyon Caverns. Ortega has, however, eliminated the \$5.00 park entrance fee; and the elimination of this fee makes access to CCMP easier and more convenient for the public.

I am approving Ortega's requested fee increases, as they are appropriate and reasonable when compared to the fees of other, similar attractions in Arizona.

CHH/mjk

Attachment

c: Tom Moulton, Director, Economic Development and Tourism



TO: C. H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator  
Pima County

FROM: Tom Moulton   
Director  
Pima County Economic Development & Tourism

DATE: January 25, 2016

SUBJ: Colossal Cave Mountain Park Year – End Review

On the January 20, 2016, Ortega National Park (ONP) Senior Management met with ED&T, NRPR, and OSCR to conduct a very productive, short and long-range planning and strategy session. As a result of this session, we reached a consensus on the following goals. ONP would like to accomplish the following in the remainder of the current five-year term of the operating agreement subject to County approval.

- a) **Toilet Facilities.** Starting with the restrooms at the cave (as the highest priority), ONP is requesting Pima County assistance in renovating the park bathrooms to provide more capacity, reduce water use, and upgrade the restrooms to more modern and easier to maintain standards. ONP will rehabilitate the camping and picnic area restrooms to modern ADA standards and may also run water lines to them to provide for sink and possibly timed shower facilities. In the interim, ONP will rent ADA bathroom trailers for the cave and possible the ranch areas until the upgrades can be completed.
- b) **Roads.** ONP is requesting Pima County assistance to repair the park road leading from the park entrance to the Cave attraction (less than one mile), and the internal loop road at the ranch. ONP will convert the campground road from a poorly maintained asphalt overlay to a gravel road. ONP will maintain the old Colossal Cave Road that lies within the park and connects the entrance to the Ranch. Pothole repair has been accomplished by ONP during the short-term.
- c) **Food and Beverage.** Continue to improve the Terrace Café (at the Cave) to include these and other improvements - an improved menu, counter and alcoholic beverages (pending the Pima County-owned liquor license), and extended operating hours.
- d) **Cave Tours.** Develop new cave tours that are more scientifically and historically correct, with themed options focusing on Geology and Natural History, Cultural History and Anthropology, or the CCC.

- e) **Ranch House.** Rehabilitation and re-opening the Posta Quemada Ranch House, with a second retail operation focused on Arizona Trail hikers and picnickers, and a facility for art and cultural exhibits and shows.
- f) **Cave Specialist.** Contracting with noted Cave Specialist, Tom Ailey, to assess the condition of the cave and develop ways and methods of re-establishing some of habitat inside to make it more attractive for the original flora and fauna to return.
- g) **Marketing and Revenue.** Establishing more photographic opportunities for guests in the cave and other areas of the attraction to enhance the guest experience.
- h) **Building Restoration.** In conjunction with an Historical Archeologist contracted through OSCR, fully assess the historic structures and develop a plan with Pima County to stabilize and restore them as needed.
- i) **Signage.** In conjunction with NRPR and PC DOT, renovate and standardize all signage in the park to make it consistent with other Pima County Attractions and Parks.
- j) **Trail System.** In conjunction with NRPR, renovate and/or create new, multi-use trails in the park to attract a more diverse set of outdoor and geo tourists.
- k) **Park Development Plan.** Update the Park Development Plan with NRPR and interested parties.
- l) **New Adventure Activities.** Continue moving forward on developing a zip-line attraction to attract a different set of customers and add depth to the visitor experience.

2. **Price increase.** With the much improved cave experience, expenses rising and the last price increase at CCMP being in June of 2011, ONP has submitted, per the agreement, a recommended admission price increase. As you will see it is very modest and established a local resident rate. In the past they have had some seasonal rates but the trend now with the Leased Properties is back to offering a local resident price. One item to note, the dropping of the \$5.00 park entrance fee, has increased park and camping usage. The Vail residents have expressed it has been “most welcomed”. As part of the formal request we asked ONP to include the results of a survey of similar cave attractions, and a competitive price analysis. After reviewing their request (Exhibit 1), and after consulting with them, we have agreed to the following recommended price schedule subject to your comments:

		<u>Current</u>	<u>Requested</u>
a. Standard Cave Tour (45-50 mins)	Adult	\$13.00	\$16.00
	Local Resident	N/A	\$14.00
	Military	\$11.00	\$14.00
	Child (5-12)	\$6.50	\$9.00
	Local/Military Child	\$6.50	\$7.50
b. Intermediate Cave Tour (65-70 mins)	Adult	N/A	\$19.50
	Local & Military	N/A	\$16.50
	Child (5-12)	N/A	\$9.00
	Local/Military Child	N/A	\$7.50

c. Daytime Ladder Tour	Adult	\$30.00	SAME
	Local & Military	\$30.00	SAME
d. Nighttime Ladder Tour (w/meal)	Adult	\$60.00	SAME
	Local & Military	\$60.00	SAME
e. Intermediate Wild Cave Tour	Adult	\$70.00	\$74.99
	Local & Military	\$70.00	\$74.99
f. Advanced Wild Cave Tour	Adult	\$90.00	\$99.99
	Local & Military	\$90.00	\$99.99

**3. Attendance.**

a. Sep 2014 = 1,952	Sep 2015 = 2,752
b. Oct 2014 = 2,152	Oct 2015 = 3,474
c. Nov 2014 = 2,272	Nov 2015 = 3,798
d. <u>Dec 2014 = 1,921</u>	<u>Dec 2015 = 3,471</u>
4 mo total= 8,279	13,495

**4. Revenue - Paid Cave Tour Visits.**

a. Sep 2014 = \$16,755	Sep 2015 = \$28,222
b. Oct 2014 = \$19,351	Oct 2015 = \$28,412
c. Nov 2014 = \$22,264	Nov 2015 = \$35,764
d. <u>Dec 2014 = \$20,443</u>	<u>Dec 2015 = \$37,764</u>
4 mo total= \$78,813	\$130,163

**5. Retail Sales.**

a. Sep 2014 = \$3,397	Sep 2015 = \$14,626
b. Oct 2014 = \$4,161	Oct 2015 = \$17,296
c. Nov 2014 = \$5,000	Nov 2015 = \$21,342
d. <u>Dec 2014 = \$4,679</u>	<u>Dec 2015 = \$21,695</u>
4 mo total= \$17,237	\$74,959

**6. Food & Beverage.**

a. Sep 2014 = \$1,237	Sep 2015 = (N/A - kitchen not open)
b. Oct 2014 = \$1,418	Oct 2015 = \$1,719
c. Nov 2014 = \$1,708	Nov 2015 = \$5,494
d. <u>Dec 2014 = \$1,214</u>	<u>Dec 2015 = \$3,503</u>
4 mo total= \$5,577	\$10,716

# EXHIBIT 1



December, 2015

Pima County Economic Development & Tourism

Attn: Mike Holmes and Tom Moulton

I am writing on behalf of Colossal Cave Mountain Park to request an increase in our daily Stand Tour rates on the regular cave tours. The requested rates are attached and as follows:

Adult (13 and over) - \$16.00 per person

Military and Local Adult - \$14.00 per person (must provide military identification)

Children (ages 5-12) - \$7.50 per child

Children (0-4) - Free

We are also proposing to add an additional tour that is designed to provide an option that allows guests to experience more of the beauty in the cave, but at a much lower price than the Ladder or Wild Cave Tours. The requested tour and rate is as follows:

An Expanded Tour (not quite the ladder tour but a slightly longer basic tour) :

Adult (13 and over) - \$19.50 per person

Military and Local Adult - \$16.50 per person (must provide military identification)

Children and Local (ages 5-12) - \$7.50 per child

Children (0-4) - Free

With the removal of the park entry fee and the improvements made to the facility, the small fee increase and additional tour option will continue to provide an affordable activity to individuals and families while allowing us to offset the increase in operating cost.

Thank you for the consideration,

Brian Held

General Manager

Colossal Cave Mountain Park

**COLOSSAL CAVE MOUNTAIN PARK  
FEE REQUEST  
2016**

<b>Tour/Ticket Type</b>					
	Current Approved Rates	Requested Max Rates	Kartchner Caverns Comp Rates	Cave of the Winds	Grand Canyon Caverns
<b>Standard Tour: 45 - 50 minutes</b>					
Adult	\$ 13.00	\$ 16.00	\$ 23.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 19.95
Military (Local)	\$ 11.00	\$ 14.00	\$ 23.00	\$ 16.00	\$ 19.95
Children (Ages 5 - 12)	\$ 6.50	\$ 9.00	\$ 13.00	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.95
Children - Local	\$ 6.50	\$ 7.50			
Children (Ages 0 - 4)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Intermediate Tour: 65 - 70 minutes</b>					
Adult	N/A	\$ 19.50	\$ 23.00	N/A	N/A
Military (Local)		\$ 16.50	\$ 23.00		
Children (Ages 5 - 12)		\$ 9.00	\$ 13.00		
Children - Military and Local		\$ 7.50			
Children (Ages 0 - 4)		\$ -	N/A		
<b>Daytime Ladder Tour:</b>					
Adult	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	N/A
Military	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 26.00	
<b>Nighttime Ladder Tour:</b>					
Adult	\$ 60.00	\$ 60.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Military	\$ 60.00	\$ 60.00			
<b>Intermediate Wild Cave Tour:</b>					
Adult	\$ 70.00	\$ 74.99	N/A	N/A	\$ 69.95
Military	\$ 70.00	\$ 74.99			\$ 69.95
<b>Advanced Wild Cave Tour:</b>					
Adult	\$ 90.00	\$ 99.99	N/A	N/A	N/A
Military	\$ 90.00	\$ 99.99			

Source: CCMP





# COLOSSAL CAVE MOUNTAIN PARK

## FEE STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

2015

Tours	Description	Colossal Cave	Kartchner Caverns	Cave of the Winds	Grand Canyon Caverns	Notes:
<b>Basic or Standard</b>						
	Adult Price	\$ 13.00	\$ 23.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 19.95	
	Military Price	\$ 11.00	N/A	\$ 16.00	\$ 19.95	
	Paid Child Price	\$ 6.50	\$ 13.00	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.95	
	Free Child Age	4	7	5	5	
	Underground Length of Tour	50	50	45	45	
	Total Length of Tour	50	90	45	45	
	Distance Covered if Applicable		1/2 mile	1/2 mile	3/4 mile	
	Helmet Provided (Y/N/\$)	N/A	N	N	N	
	Light Provided (Y/N/\$)	N/A	N	N	N	
	Gloves Provided (Y/N/\$)	N/A	N	N	N	
	Interactive (can touch, feel, photo opportunities, etc.)	Y	N	Y	Y	
<b>Intermediate Tour:</b>						
	Adult Price		\$ 23.00	N/A	N/A	
	Military Price		N/A			
	Paid Child Price		\$ 13.00			
	Free Child Age		7			
	Underground Length of Tour		60			
	Total Length of Tour		105			
	Distance Covered if Applicable		1/2 mile			
	Helmet Provided (Y/N/\$)	N/A	N			
	Light Provided (Y/N/\$)	N/A	N			
	Gloves Provided (Y/N/\$)	N/A	N			
	Interactive (can touch, feel, photo opportunities, etc.)	Y	N			
<b>Daytime Ladder Tour:</b>						
	Adult Price	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	N/A	
	Military Price	N/A	N/A	\$ 25.00		
	Paid Child Price	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 15.00		
	Minimum Age	12	12	12		
	Underground Length of Tour	90	60	75		
	Total Length of Tour	90	75	90		
	Distance Covered if Applicable	3/4 Mile	1/2 mile	2/3 mile		
	Helmet Provided (Y/N/\$)	Y	Y	N		
	Light Provided (Y/N/\$)	Y	Y	N		
	Gloves Provided (Y/N/\$)	N	N	N		
	Interactive (can touch, feel, photo opportunities, etc.)	Y	N	Y		

# COLOSSAL CAVE MOUNTAIN PARK

## FEE STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

2015

<b>Nighttime Ladder Tour:</b>						
Adult Price	\$ 60.00	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Military Price	\$ 60.00					
Paid Child Price	N/A					
Minimum Age	12					
Underground Length of Tour	90					
Total Length of Tour	90					
Distance Covered if Applicable	3/4 mile					
Helmet Provided (Y/N/\$)	Y					
Light Provided (Y/N/\$)	Y					
Gloves Provided (Y/N/\$)	N					
Interactive (can touch, feel, photo opportunities, etc.)	Y					
<b>Intermediate Wild Cave Tour:</b>						
Adult Price	\$ 70.00	N/A	\$ 45.00	\$ 69.95		
Military Price	\$ 70.00		\$ 45.00	\$ 69.95		
Paid Child Price			\$ 45.00	N/A		
Minimum Age	16		13	13		
Helmet Provided (Y/N/\$)	Y		N	Y		
Light Provided (Y/N/\$)	Y		N	Y		
Gloves Provided (Y/N/\$)	N/\$		N	N		
Interactive (can touch, feel, photo opportunities, etc.)	Y		Y	Y		
<b>Advanced Wild Cave Tour:</b>						
Adult Price	\$ 90.00	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Military Price			N/A			
Paid Child Price	\$ 90.00					
Minimum Age	16					
Underground Length of Tour	240					
Total Length of Tour	240					
Distance Covered if Applicable	2 miles					
Gloves Provided (Y/N/\$)	N/\$		N			
Interactive (can touch, feel, photo opportunities, etc.)	Y					
Source CCMP						

**COLOSSAL CAVE MOUNTAIN PARK  
ANALYSIS  
2015**

<b>Comparability Criteria</b>	Colossal Cave	Kartchner Caverns	Cave of the Winds	Grand Canyon Caverns
<b>Competition</b>				
Must have at least one competitor engaged in similar business	1 hr	1 hr	2 hrs	3 hrs
<b>Seasonality</b>				
Year round - 2	2	2	2	2
Seasonal - 1				
<b>Similar Area</b>				
Park - 2	2	2		2
Public - 1			1	
<b>Similar clientele</b>				
Recreation	1	1	1	1
<b>Similar services</b>				
Food	1	1	0	1
Alcohol	1	0	0	0
Retail/Gift Shop	1	1	0.25	1
Hiking	1	1	0	1
Biking	1	0	0	1
Camping	1	1	0	0.75
Other Amenities - petting zoo, wildlife viewing, etc.	1	1	0.75	1
	12	10	5	10.75
<b>Standard Rates:</b>	\$16	\$23	\$20	\$20