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## [Are RV Park Fee Increases Deadly to Travel?](#)

The last few years, RV park rates have increased approximately 50 percent, the quality of the parks, maybe 10 percent.

Yes, gas prices are currently low, but we know that is temporary. The greed of the oil producers will rise again, so we will put fewer miles on the rig. But the big detriment to travel now is the rising cost of RV parks. Now, it is the greed of the companies that control the vast number of RV parks in the country that is taking advantage of the increase in RV travel.

Unfortunately, most of the RV parks in the USA are over 30 years old. These parks are owned by corporations that take the money out and put little money in to upgrade the parks to current standards. Yet ... they feel free to raise their rates without increasing the quality of the stay.

One indication of the reaction to high fees is the increase in the sale of solar panels and controllers. Many more travelers are staying in the west where there are thousands of acres of free parking. The RV parks have brought this on themselves with the fee increases in the last couple of years. One year's park fees can pay for a complete solar installation, allowing options where there was none before.

The obvious upside to the park fee increases is the need for creative thinking in the field of batteries. One day the RV will be totally self-contained, energy provided by lithium (or other type) batteries and solar panels. Once the cell tower networks completely cover the USA, we can turn our backs on high fees and travel on.

## **Essential Boondocking Equipment**

If you plan to spend more than two or three nights without AC power from an outside source, add a few necessities to that perfect RV list.

Keep in mind that fifth wheels and trailers often are sold without any of these items. Most Class A motorhomes are equipped with the *Occasionally Boondocking* list. **Some** Class C motorhomes have the short list.

### **Boondocking as a Lifestyle**

- Generator
- Inverter (not converter)
- Extra Battery Capacity
- Solar Panels
- Large Fresh Water, Gray Water, and Black Water Tanks
- Blue Boy portable container to transport black water (when necessary)
- Outside cooking equipment that runs on propane
- Become a devout water conserver
- Become energy efficient with water, computer and lighting use

### **Occasionally Boondocking**

If you only plan to boondock a few times a year at rallies, then spend the rest of the time plugged into power at an RV Park, the list is shorter.

- Generator
- Two deep cycle batteries
- Inverter (to properly charge the batteries and provide A/C backup)

### **Update on Battery Options**

The "right" battery for an RV is still a hotly discussed subject. Pick any forum and join the fray; the opinions range from AGM and Gel to the old favorite, flooded cell. A new option on the market is the Lithium-Ion and it looks like a winner.



Lithium batteries on the other hand, are a much more recent invention, and have only been commercially viable since the 1980s. We should start seeing them in high-end motorhomes soon. As cheaper versions start appearing, look for them as after-market choices in most RVs.

#### **Lithium Battery Advantages:**

- Extended Lifespan
- More Usable Capacity
- Low Voltage Sag
- High Current Output

- Fast & Simple Charging
- Minimal Maintenance
- Efficient Charge/Discharge
- Temperature Resistance
- Easy Placement
- Weight Reduction
- Tax Incentives

## True Deep Cycle

*Available in Flooded and AGM styles*



This type of battery is commonly used as a “house battery” in an RV to power appliances with stored energy from the solar panels.

Lead-acid batteries are made from a mixture of lead plates and sulfuric acid. This original rechargeable battery type, invented way back in 1859, can explode and start a fire or throw sulfuric acid your way.

They are reliable, available everywhere and reasonably priced. They must be vented, so an outside cabinet separated from other equipment is best.

*What is a Deep Cycle?* A deep cycle is when you start out with a fully charged battery, use 80% of its rated capacity, and then fully recharge it.

Depending on the type, all batteries have a set amount of deep cycles built in before they need to be replaced.

Digest this information and add some specific research to your plan. Then decide if you want to be able to turn your backs on expensive RV parks and enjoy true freedom.

## The RV Lifestyle Collection by Margo Armstrong



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