Newsletter #24 (June 21, 2006)

Contents

What's New

Version 4.0 Released

Campground Master version 4.0 has been released, making it more flexible and "programmable" than any other system. As with any programmable system, the details of customization are rather technical. However a lot of new things can be done without programming knowledge. We'll also include regular "projects" in future newsletters that anyone can do or get ideas from.

Of course there are a number of other enhancements and the usual round of "annoyance" fixes in this version, so we do recommend that everyone upgrade to it when they can.

Some key changes since v3.6 are:
- Advanced Customization of receipts, forms, reports, menus, dialogs and more
- Payments can be categorized manually for the Receipts by Category report
- Site numbers on maps can be any font, size, or angle
- All past newsletters (with lots of helpful tips) are included in the Help

For a complete list of changes, see this web page:
http://www.campground-master.com/rel40/index.html

IMPORTANT: If your annual updates subscription has lapsed (see View / Product Authorizations to see when your updates are free through), be sure to contact us before installing the update. If you're not yet a customer, you can install the new version to try it but be aware that the "demo" database will be replaced when you install the new version -- make a backup of your data first if you want to keep it!

Q & A

Advanced site selection in tab views

Q: How can I print out just some sites from the Rack, On Site, or other views?

A: You can set up a temporary Advanced filter for sites on each tab view. Click on the "All Site Types" drop-down list, and select the "Advanced..." item near the bottom. A Site Filtering dialog appears where you can select the exact sites you want to see, or the site types, classes, or parks. After you're done, just select "All Site Types" from the drop-down list again.

Notice that there's also a "Default..." item in the list. This works the same way, except that it keeps that filtering to use as the default for the view from now on (until you use the "Reset All" selection in the filter to clear it). Also note that this filtering is separate on each workstation, so in a networked environment you could have each workstation set up to show different sites by default.

Getting rid of "No Site" for Waiting Lists

Q: How do I get rid of the "No Site" indications on the Rack? They appear to all be Waiting list reservations but we don't want to show them on the Rack.

A: In the Rack view, click the Options button and uncheck "Include Waiting List reservations...".

Note: It may be tempting to also uncheck "Show Unassigned reservation counts...", but we don't recommend this. If you're seeing "No Site" in the Rack unexpectedly, it's usually due to a mistake that should be corrected -- if you uncheck this box then you may not know that the mistake was made. For more information on correcting "No Site" issues, see the article in Newsletter 23.

Installing a new printer

Q: I installed a new printer but Campground Master won't print to it. How do I fix that?

A: Depending on which types of output you want to go to the new printer, one or more printer selections may need to be updated in File / Printer Setup. For instance to use the new printer for reports, go to File / Printer Setup / Default (grid-type reports), and select the new printer. Likewise you can change the printer selection for various receipt formats, mailing labels, and envelopes.

Deleting some sites from a group

Q: How do you delete a few sites from a group reservation? For instance, a group books 6 sites, but when it is time for a deposit only 4 sites need to be reserved. How do I now release only the 2 sites back into available sites.

A: Go into Reservation Details for each of the sites that you want to release. Check the "Canceled" box in the upper-right status area to cancel it, and then make sure you answer "No" if it asks if you want to keep them synchronized (otherwise it will cancel the whole group).

Linked members staying different lengths of time

Q: We have several reservations that reserve multiple sites, but they do not always stay for the same length of time at each site. For example, they might be at cabin 1 for two days and cabin 2 for three days. I want to link those so that we don't get multiple bills for them, so I can't make them non-synchronized.

A: For the ones that need to be different lengths, you need to make them "sub-members" instead of synchronized. This will keep them on the same bill but allow them to be different lengths or even check in on different days.

To change this for an existing linked reservation: locate it on the Rack, right-click on it, and go to Linked Reservations -> Make this a sub-member reservation. Then you can change dates of that one without affecting the other linked reservations, and it will still be on a single bill. Note that this can't be done on the "linked master" -- it must be done on one of the others (usually below it). If you're not sure which one is the linked master, just double-click on the reservation in the Rack. The list of linked reservations in the quick-info window will show which one is the [Linked Master].

For more information and details on making them sub-members to begin with so you don't have to change them later, see the "Groups and linked reservations" section of the documentation.
Web link: http://campgroundmaster.com/help/groupsandlinkedreservations.html

Tips & Techniques

Are you using right-click effectively?

Occasionally we find out that a user doesn't know about the right-click menus or doesn't realize how useful they are.

In general, any grid item in the tab views has a menu. Just right-click on an empty site or a name in the Rack (or even the Site name), or a transaction in the Transactions view, or any line of the On Site view, Arrivals view, etc. A menu will appear with functions that can be done for that particular item. Some of these functions are helpful shortcuts, like Check In, Extend reservation, Transactions, etc. that can save a couple steps, but some are unique functions that can only be done from the right-click menu.

For instance, a reservation can only be Split from the right-click menu. You can also batch-print receipts, labels, forms, etc. for all reservations shown in the view. Another handy function is to show all reservations for a particular site (both prior and future). Just right-click on a site name in the Rack (the left-most column) to find this function.

If you use the Meter Readings reports, note that they also have right-click functions available for adjusting the previous readings, etc.

Probably the most overlooked right-click function is "Transactions" -- available on any reservation's right-click menu, this will take you directly to the Reservation Transactions dialog for adding or editing transactions. There's no need to go through Reservation Details first. Likewise on the Transactions tab view, this will open the appropriate dialog where a transaction was originally entered, whether it's for a Reservation, Customer, Unbound, or Point of Sale. This can be handy when researching the reason for a transaction.

Don't be afraid to explore -- right-click things to see if a menu appears, and what actions are available (note that in some views, even the column you click on makes a difference).

(One word of warning: In versions prior to 4.0, right-clicking on a "blank" line in the Transactions tab view can cause it to freeze up due to a bug. If you install the update, this won't be a problem.)

Adding multiple sites as non-synchronized

Many parks need to use non-synchronized linking for some groups, at least by the time they check in, so that each group member pays their own bill and/or so each group member has separate Customer information. Ideally you want to make them non-synchronized to start with to avoid having to change them later. While this isn't technically difficult, it does require that you use the correct procedure.

If you're adding sites one-by-one when making the reservation, you must uncheck "Synchronize With:" before each site is added. Some have asked that we keep this unchecked, but there's a subtle but important reason why it's re-checked after each site is added which would probably make this cause more problems than it solves.

Here's another way to do it when adding many sites at once, which may be quicker for some:

First you need to go to Maintenance / Program Options / Reservations, and check "Enable automatic multiple-site selection...". This is normally used to let the program automatically select a specified number of sites based on the preferences selected (which may also be useful at times), but this also allows overriding the way multiple sites are linked when the Add Selection(s) button is used.

Now in the New Reservation dialog, a "Qty" field will appear before the Add Selection(s) button. To add multiple sites as non-synchronized, first put a "#" character in the Qty field. (You may recall that this is the shorthand identifier for non-synced sites when a list of sites is shown.) Also make sure "Synchronize with" is not checked if you added any sites previously.

Now select (but don't double-click) multiple sites using the grid -- e.g. click-drag or Ctrl-click the sites (clicking the cell under the arrival date), so each one is highlighted in dark blue. Presumably you've also already selected the appropriate date range, reservation type and other specifics for the reservation. Now click "Add Selection(s)", and all selected sites will be added as non-synchronized. You can repeat this to add more sites (even for different date ranges), but remember to uncheck "Synchronize with" each time you add a group of sites.

To verify that they were added correctly, click on the "Sites added" list to drop it down. Each site except for the first one should have a "#" character in front of it. If you see a "=" character, then it was synchronized and you need to delete that one and re-add it (select that site so it appears next to "Sites added", then click the "Delete" button).

Resolving customer balances not matching reservation balances

Sometimes you may see a Customer balance that doesn't match the Reservation balance (for instance a negative customer balance but a $0 reservation balance).

There are 3 possible causes of this.

1. The same customer may have more than one reservation, and the balance is from one of the others. From Customer Details, check Reservation History to see if the balance is coming from other reservations. If so, then there may not be any problem.

2. It may be due to a transaction that's on the Customer instead of the Reservation (e.g. was entered through Customer Details, even though there's a warning not to do so). Through Customer Details, go to Transaction History. Scroll over to the "Reservation" column where it lists the date of each reservation. If there's no date in this column for a transaction, then it was mistakenly put on the Customer. If it's a duplicate transaction (e.g. you also see it on properly on the Reservation), then you may need to delete it (understanding that this may affect reports). If it needs to be moved to a Reservation, then go back to Customer Details, New / Edit Transactions and use Transfer Pmt (or Transfer Dep) to transfer it.

3. It might be due to a glitch in the database. Go to Maintenance / Database Maintenance, and run all 3 "Report and repair...Orphaned..." functions. If it reports any orphaned transactions, then you need to decide whether each one is a duplicate that should just be deleted, or whether it needs to be fixed (linked back to the customer or reservation it belongs to). First Delete any that should not be fixed, and then use the "Fix" function to repair the linking for the remaining transactions. Note that this is best done on the Master workstation if you're networked, followed by "Request a full database refresh" on each client computer to make sure they're in sync (orphans are most often caused by network synchronization problems, so any orphan probably indicates that the databases aren't synchronized).