



National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior

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National Park Service News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 10, 2018

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Public reminded of upcoming fee increases at Great Falls

Fees would benefit parks in both Maryland and Virginia

POTOMAC, Md.- Entrance fees for the Great Falls area will increase effective January 1, 2019. Also beginning January 1, the National Park Service will reinstate a reciprocal agreement allowing visitors who purchase a pass at either Great Falls Park (Va.) or on the Maryland side of the Potomac River at Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park to re-enter from the other side while their pass is valid.

“Entrance fees collected are returned directly to the parks and help the National Park Service address deferred maintenance needs to meet the needs of today's visitors,” C&O Canal Superintendent Kevin Brandt said. “Both C&O Canal and Great Falls Park, a site within George Washington Memorial Parkway, use fee money to directly benefit visitors such as offering educational programs, taking care of trails and buildings and being good stewards of the parks’ nature and history.”

The changes effective January 1, 2019, are as follows:

Per Vehicle:

Current: \$10/vehicle for 3 days. Valid only at park where fee was paid.

New: \$15/vehicle for 7 days. Valid at both parks.

Per Person (hikers/walkers, bicyclists):

Current: \$5/person for 3 days. Valid only at park where pass was purchased.

New: \$7/person for 7 days. Valid at both parks.

Per Motorcycle:

Current: \$10/motorcycle for 3 days. Valid only at park where pass was purchased.

New: \$10/motorcycle for 7 days. Valid at both parks.

Park Annual Pass:

Current: \$30. Valid at both parks.

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

New: No change.

While supporting park projects and programs, entrance fees provide visitors full access to services including park and trail maps, visitor center exhibits and information, ranger programs and restrooms. An annual pass is a great value for frequent visitors. There are also options that provide access to national parks across the country; more information at <https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/passes.htm>.

During the past two years, entrance fees have supported many projects along the C&O Canal and Great Falls Park including:

- Ranger-led programming at both parks
- Rehabilitation of bathrooms at both parks
- Rehabilitation of Locks 3 and 4 at the C&O Canal
- Rehabilitation of Swains Lockhouse for the [Canal Quarters Program](#) at the C&O Canal
- Rehabilitation of Lock 2 of the Potomack Canal at Great Falls Park

These changes bring the parks into full compliance with the National Park Service's standard pricing. No other increases or new fees are proposed at this time. The last fee increase for these locations was in the summer of 2015.

Despite record-breaking visitation of 1.5 billion visitors over the last five years, the combination of aging infrastructure and increased visitation has put a strain on park roads, bridges, campgrounds, waterlines, bathrooms, and other visitor services, leading to a \$11.6 billion deferred maintenance backlog nationwide.

Entrance fees collected by the NPS in 2016 totaled \$199.9 million. The NPS estimates the new fee structure will increase annual revenue by roughly \$60 million. The majority of national parks (300) will remain free to enter; 117 NPS sites charge an entrance fee.

The new fee schedules result from public comments received on a fee proposal released in October 2017 and include modest fee increases for all fee-charging parks instead of the higher peak-season fees initially proposed at 17 highly-visited national parks. All of the money received from entrance fees remains with the National Park Service (NPS) and will help address \$11.6 billion in deferred maintenance.

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About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for the 418 parks in the National Park System and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Visit us at www.nps.gov, on Facebook www.facebook.com/nationalparkservice, Twitter www.twitter.com/natlparkservice, and YouTube www.youtube.com/nationalparkservice.