

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Why are Flagstaff Area National Monuments (Walnut Canyon, Sunset Crater Volcano and Wupatki) proposing to raise entrance fees?

Flagstaff Monuments propose to raise entrance fees to align with a new entrance fee schedule developed by the National Park Service for parks throughout the United States. Across the country, the proposed increases in park entrance fees will allow the National Park Service to invest in the improvements necessary to provide the best possible experience to our visitors.

What would entrance fees be under the proposal?

Two options are proposed. One is to maintain the current fee structure of charging entrance fees on a per person basis but to raise the fees, the other is to convert to charging a per vehicle entrance fee.

Option 1 -- Per person fee structure

- This is the current structure (per person) for charging entrance fees but with an increase in price.
- The proposed per person entrance fee at Walnut Canyon would change from \$5 to \$8 for a seven day pass.
- The proposed per person entrance fee for visiting Sunset Crater Volcano and Wupatki would change from \$5 to \$10 for a seven day pass.

Option 2 – Institute a per vehicle fee

- Institute a per vehicle fee of \$20/vehicle for Walnut Canyon and a \$20 per vehicle fee for Sunset Crater Volcano and Wupatki National Monuments. This would be a “flat rate” entrance fee, regardless of the number of passengers.
- Institute a \$15/motorcycle fee.

Proposed Fee changes common to both options

- The proposed monuments’ annual pass would increase from \$25 to \$40. Note that this pass allows unlimited visits to all three monuments for one year from purchase.
- The proposed fee for Crack-in-Rock Overnight Hikes at Wupatki would increase from \$50 per person to \$75 per person.

What is the difference between the per person fee and the per vehicle and motorcycle fees?

Under the proposed entrance fee schedule for Option 2, vehicles and motorcycles would pay a “flat rate” entrance fee, regardless of the number of passengers. If implemented, this would be a change from how the Flagstaff Monuments currently charge fees, which is for each passenger to be charged individually. Under Option 2, there would still be a per person fee, but it would only apply to visitors entering the monuments by means other than private, non-commercial vehicle or motorcycle.

When would the fees be increased under this proposal?

The proposed timeline for increasing the fees is January 1, 2016 for the entrance fees and October, 2015 for the Wupatki Crack-in-Rock Overnight Hikes.

How long would the per vehicle, per motorcycle and per person passes be valid?

As is currently the case with the per person pass, the passes under both options 1 and 2 would be valid for seven days from the date of issue, allowing visitors to enter and exit the park multiple times during that 7-day period by showing their paid receipt.

How do the other kinds of passes fit into the proposal?

Entrance fees are not charged to holders of the America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands (Interagency) Pass, Senior, Access or Military Passes. Interagency Passes, which are honored at all federally managed land units, are not affected by the proposed fee increase and will remain at \$80 for the Interagency Annual Pass, \$10 for the Senior Pass and free for the Access or Military passes. These passes will continue to be available for purchase at the monuments.

Why isn't there one entrance fee for all three of the monuments?

Most visitors who plan to visit Sunset Crater Volcano also visit Wupatki because they are accessed by the same loop road. Walnut Canyon is 20-40 miles away from the other two and many visitors to that monument do not intend to travel north to Sunset Crater Volcano and Wupatki as part of their trip. The monuments' annual pass does cover all three monuments, providing the opportunity for people who live or spend a lot of time in this area to have unlimited visits for a year from purchase.

Are commercial fees being considered for an increase too?

At this time, commercial fees are not being considered for an increase.

Why is a fee increase needed?

The majority of entrance fees across the National Park Service have not increased since 2006. At Walnut Canyon and Sunset Crater Volcano/Wupatki, the last entrance fee increase was in 1997. In the meantime, the cost of maintaining facilities and resources for safe and enjoyable visits has grown considerably.

How much do the Flagstaff Area Monuments currently collect?

Walnut Canyon collects approximately \$200,000 per year; Sunset Crater Volcano/Wupatki collects approximately \$300,000 in entrance fees each year.

How much do we project our revenues will increase based on the new fee schedules for Options 1 and 2?

At this time, we can only speculate that revenues would increase. If one of the new rate schedules is implemented, we will track and provide accurate figures on changes in revenue.

Is all of the fee revenue kept by Flagstaff Area Monuments?

Yes. Based on the total fee revenue, Flagstaff Monuments are authorized by Federal law to keep 100% of what is collected. Funds are used to cover the cost of collecting the fees and a variety of projects and services that directly benefit visitors.

What types of projects and programs are funded by entrance fees?

Since 1996, Flagstaff Monuments have spent over \$4 million in fee revenues to enhance visitor services, funding facility repair and maintenance, visitor amenities, and visitor programs and services.

Some recent projects supported by fees include:

Walnut Canyon: Improvements to the Rim Trail; preservation treatments for the historic Ranger Cabin; exhibit of artwork depicting Northern Sinaguan lifeways.

Sunset Crater Volcano: Construction of a new accessible trail (Bonito Vista Trail); installation of automatic doors at the Visitor Center; improvements to the Lava Flow Trail.

Wupatki: Rehab of the stone steps and handrails at Wupatki Pueblo; preservation and stabilization treatment of frontcountry pueblo sites.

Planned and proposed projects for fee revenues:

Walnut Canyon: Updating exhibits with improved lighting and “new” artifacts and text.

Sunset Crater Volcano: Develop a dark sky ambassador program.

Wupatki: Produce a virtual tour of Wupatki’s ancient trails; improve a section of Wupatki Pueblo trail to improve wheelchair access.

How can I comment on the proposal (Option 1 and Option 2)?

Flagstaff Area National Monuments are seeking comments through February 8, 2015. There are several ways you can comment:

By email: FLAG_Information@nps.gov

Online: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/FLAGfees>

In person: By filling out a visitor comment form at any of the three monument visitor centers (open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) or at the headquarters office (open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.).