



## Background Information

Since 1949, the National Park Service has had an agreement with the District of Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to manage the group picnic area reservations on National Park Service property at Rock Creek Park and Fort Dupont Park. Recently, DPR asked the National Park Service to begin managing the reservation process for these National Park Service sites.

## Proposed Changes

The National Park Service will be moving the picnic grove reservation process to [Recreation.gov](http://Recreation.gov), a convenient website used by many national parks and thousands of park visitors across the country. The transition to [Recreation.gov](http://Recreation.gov) will be effective on March 1, 2014.

The reservation fee for a group picnic area has not changed since the early 1990s. The National Park Service proposal will bring the fee in line with the price for similar group picnic areas in the Washington, D.C. area, and will provide options for full-day and half-day rentals. The proposal is to phase in this increase over the next 3 years, starting in the spring of 2014 with an increase to \$25/half day. Additional increases will occur in 2015, when the cost will rise to \$45/half day, and in 2016, when the cost will rise to \$65/half day.

## Our Authority to Collect Fees

Congress gave the National Park Service the authority to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees at Federal recreational lands and waters in 2005, when it passed Public Law 113-036. This law created Title 16, Section 6802 of the United States Code, which says that recreation fees shall be established in a manner consistent with the following criteria: (1) the amount of the recreation fee shall be commensurate with the benefits and services provided to the visitor, (2) shall consider the aggregate effect of recreation fees on recreation users and recreation service providers, (3) shall consider comparable fees charged elsewhere and by other public agencies and by nearby private sector operators, and (4) shall consider the public policy or management objectives served by the recreation fee.

## How These Fees are Used

Fees collected are to be used to fund projects that address deferred maintenance needs, provide new visitor programs and services, protect resources, and improve and rehabilitate facilities for visitors. The majority of funds used for national park management come from Congressional appropriations. By using collected recreation fees, visitors help the National Park Service cover part of the cost of their visit. The fees also help the National Park Service improve the condition of the picnic areas, and respond to increased demand for visitor facilities and services.

## How to Comment

We are inviting comments during a 30-day public comment period that runs through **January 10, 2014**. If you wish to comment on this proposal, you may submit comments electronically at the National Park Service Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/picnic>. You can also submit written comments to the following address:

Superintendent  
Attn: COMMENTS - Group Picnic Area Comments  
1900 Anacostia Drive, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20020



## Recreation.gov – Frequently asked Questions

### **Q. What is Recreation.gov?**

A. Recreation.gov is your one-stop resource for reservations, trip planning, and information for recreation facilities and activities offered by the US Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, USDA Forest Service and many other Federal agencies (agency partners are listed on the Participating Partners page of Recreation.gov). Recreation.gov is the largest outdoor recreation reservation service in the US with over 60,000 reservable facilities at over 2500 field locations. Recreation.gov offers advance reservations for Federal facilities and activities such as individual campsites, cabins and lookouts, group campsites, tours, picnic shelters, and wilderness permits.

### **Q. How do I make a reservation?**

A. In addition to making an online reservation at www.recreation.gov, customers may contact them at 1-877-444-6777.

### **Q. What are the Call Center hours of operation?**

A. The Call Center hours are 10:00 AM EST to Midnight EST from March 1st through October 31st and 10:00 AM EST to 10:00 PM EST from November 1st through February 28th. Call Centers are closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Group Sales for ticket facilities is closed on Sundays.

### **Q. How far in advance can I make reservations?**

A. Almost all facilities and activities can be booked beginning 1 year in advance.

### **Q. I don't know the name of the facility. How can I find it?**

A. There are a few options. First, you can try entering in a few characters of the city or state you think the facility might be near. Then try entering in the national park that the picnic area is associated. Alternatively, if you at least know what the campground name starts with, we can start matching against what you can remember. If you still can't find it, select 'Search' anyway and you will land on our 'Did you mean' page which will provide some more facilities that match your input.

### **Q. Can I cancel my reservation online?**

A. Yes. Sign in to find a list of your current reservations, and then click 'See Detail' for the reservation you wish to cancel. That will take you to the Reservation Detail page. Click 'Cancel Reservation' to begin your online cancellation.

### **Q. Are there fees for cancelling reservations?**

A. Yes. Whether cancelling online or by phone, there will be a cancellation fee. The closer to your arrival date you cancel, the less money you will receive back as a refund. For cancellation policy details, see the 'Fees & Cancellation Policies' section of the Recreation.gov website.