



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mount Rainier National Park
Superintendent's Office

55210 238th Avenue E.
Ashford, WA 98304-9751

360-569-2211 phone
360-569-2169 fax

Mount Rainier National Park News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Acting Superintendent Tracy Swartout-360-569-6502

FEE INCREASES PROPOSED FOR MOUNT RAINIER- UPDATE 11/6/2014

Mount Rainier National Park is seeking feedback on proposed fee increases to be implemented as early as 2015. This release provides a description of the proposed changes, as well as information on how you can provide input.

Mount Rainier became the fifth national park in 1899, and was the first to admit vehicles for a fee in 1907. Eighty years later, the cost for a one week visit to the park was raised from \$2 to \$5 per vehicle. In 1996 the fee was increased to \$10, and by 2006 it reached \$15 where it has remained. This fee provides entry for all occupants in a single vehicle for seven consecutive days. Entrance fees are not charged for holders of a variety of passes, including the Interagency Pass, the Military Pass, and the Senior Pass. These annual passes may be purchased online or at Mount Rainier National Park when booths are staffed. To learn more about passes that are available, visit <http://www.nps.gov/findapark/passes.htm>.

With few exceptions, National Parks across the United States have not increased entrance fees since 2006. However, in order to provide funding necessary for key projects and programs, all 131 fee-collecting National Park sites are now evaluating fee increases. The current National Park Service (NPS) fee program allows Mount Rainier to retain up to 80% of fees collected in the park. This revenue makes it possible for the park to provide many essential services, including repair and maintenance of visitor facilities, capital improvements, resource protection, and amenities such as the proposed online backcountry reservation system, in addition to supporting park entrance staff, maps, and brochures for visitors. In August, the NPS released an updated rate schedule for all units that charge entrance fees. The entrance fee at both Mount Rainier and Olympic National Parks is proposed to increase to \$25 for a seven-day vehicle pass. Other areas including Bryce Canyon, Zion and Yosemite National Parks are proposing to charge \$30, while fees at smaller parks and recreation areas are set at lower rates.

Mount Rainier is also seeking to increase camping fees to \$20 per night for any park "single" campsite (up to six people). Group sites (up to 40 people) would increase to \$60. A 2014 campground comparability analysis confirmed that the current park rates, which presently range from \$12 to \$15 per night for single sites and \$40 to \$64 for group sites, are significantly lower than local area public and private campsites outside of the park.

Recreation fee revenue is an important component of the overall financial health of Mount Rainier National Park. In recent years, fee funding has been used to perform restoration work for meadows damaged by visitors, complete trail and campsite improvements, perform long-needed picnic area repairs, update aging interpretive exhibits, and make accessibility improvements at the Sunrise Visitor Center. In addition, deteriorating electrical systems at Ohanapecosh have been updated and new utility conduits were installed during the Nisqually to Paradise road rehabilitation project. Over the next few years, the park plans to continue rehabilitating restrooms, trails, campsites, and further improving accessibility for a variety of park facilities. In addition, the park will continue to invest in progress along the Carbon River trail corridor and evaluate improved visitor services elsewhere in the park.

A 2014 NPS economic impact report demonstrated that just over one million visitors to Mount Rainier National Park in 2012 spent \$36.8M in communities around the park. This spending supported over 430 jobs in the local area, not including the 100-110 permanent and 180-200 seasonal staff working directly for the park and another 450-500 commercial concessions service employees in or near the park. National park tourism is also recognized as a significant driver in the national economy – returning \$10 for every \$1 invested in the National Park Service.

The fee schedule below shows how Mount Rainier fees would change under the proposed fee structure.

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Fee type	Current fee (2014)	Proposed fee (2015)
Mount Rainier NP annual pass <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants unlimited entry for one year to pass owner and passengers in same car 	\$30	\$50
Mount Rainier single vehicle fee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants unlimited entry for one vehicle and passengers for seven consecutive days 	\$15	\$25
Mount Rainier “per person” fee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk-up or single bicycle fee Grants unlimited entry for seven consecutive days 	\$5	\$12
Mount Rainier motorcycle fee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants unlimited entry for one motorcycle and passenger for seven consecutive days 	\$5	\$20
Campground fee (single sites, nightly) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodates up to six people 	\$12-\$15	\$20
Campground fee (group sites, nightly) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodates 25 to 40 people 	\$40-\$64	\$60

You are invited to provide feedback on Mount Rainier National Park’s proposed fee increases either electronically via the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website at parkplanning.nps.gov/rainierfees by December 31, 2014. If you prefer, you may also send comments by regular mail to:

Superintendent
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At Mount Rainier National Park, we are honored to have the park entrusted to our care, and we commit to working hard to ensure that its resources are protected for this and future generations, while at the same time ensuring that visitors near and far have the opportunity to connect with the park.

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