

Response to Comments – National Mall and Memorial Parks (NAMA) West Potomac Park Volleyball Courts

Comment Period ending April 27, 2015

The table below summarizes the public comments and provides National Mall and Memorial Parks (NAMA) staff response. Public comments were received on the Planning, Environment and Public Comment website (PEPC) (464) and by letter and email (25). The majority of the comments, 50%, questioned the mix of permitted courts and non-permitted courts and; stated that all courts should be available on a first come-first use basis on the weekends in support of maintaining a permitting system similar to that of the DC Department of Recreation.

Additionally 26% percent of the comments support a plan in which all courts would be free, on a first-come, first-served bases. Other comments included general statements (21%); support for the new permit system (2%) and duplicate comments (1%). NAMA’s permitting process must adhere to CFR Title 36: 7.96 (b) Athletics: “Playing baseball, football, croquet, tennis, and other organized games or sports except pursuant to a permit and upon the grounds provided for such purposes, is prohibited.”

Public comments (grouped as appropriate)	NAMA Response
Why is the NPS requiring permits for the use of public property? The atmosphere of the volleyball courts is congenial, friendly, open and welcoming to new-comers. Turning this into a reservation “pay to play” atmosphere will kill the atmosphere and discourage new-comers.	*During the mid-1970s, the National Park Service (NPS) established an agreement with the DC Department of Recreation (DPR) to oversee and permit the use of the volleyball courts in West Potomac Park. In 2014, DPR informed NPS that they would no longer administer the program.
	*NPS regulations stipulates that organized games or sports except pursuant to a permit and upon the grounds provided for such purposes, is prohibited. *Permitting allows players guaranteed time and place for their games.
	*All tournament requests must be acquired through a Public Gathering Permit. Dates will be blocked out on Recreation.Gov by the NPS. *All reservations will be posted daily on the court bulletin board.

	<p>* “Pick-up games” will be allowed on non-reserved courts on a first-come, first-used bases. These non-reserved, casual use courts cannot be “held”.</p> <p>* Four courts will be dedicated for open play.</p>
<p>The collection of fees for permits should also reflect the NPS’ commitment to maintaining the courts to a high standard (suitable nets without holes, proper lines, enough sand and proper drainage so water doesn’t pond).</p>	<p>*NAMA is in the process of upgrading the courts. Nets, poles, sand and drainage are being improved.</p> <p>*Personnel will be assigned to monitor court use daily.</p> <p>*From November through March, the courts will be closed for rehab each year.</p> <p>*DPR collected fees to maintain their reservation system, however fees were not used to maintain the courts.</p>
<p>Limit per day, the number of permits that any individual or league can purchase. Leave the weekends available for “challenge only.”</p>	<p>* NPS regulations stipulates that organized games or sports except pursuant to a permit and upon the grounds provided for such purposes, is prohibited.</p> <p>*Applicant will be limited to reserving no more than 4 courts per day, at one time. Reservations will not be accepted for more than seven days out from the requested date.</p>
<p>The partial permitting has worked well for years and neither the free play players nor the leagues should be allowed to take over all the courts. The weekends should be free drop in play as it always has been.</p>	<p>*NPS regulations stipulates that organized games or sports except pursuant to a permit and upon the grounds provided for such purposes, is prohibited.</p> <p>*Applicant will not be able to apply for a court no more than 7 days out from the requested date.</p> <p>*All tournament requests must be acquired through a Public Gathering Permit. Dates will be blocked out on recreation.gov by the NPS.</p> <p>*All reservations will be posted daily on the court bulletin board and courts that are not reserved will be on a first come-first use basis.</p>

<p>Have occupant limitations on the courts per their size and establish at least 1 court for female play only. This is to avoid 6v6 play on a doubles court and vice versa and provide a court with a lower net, and more accommodating</p>	<p>*During 2015/2016 winter rehab of the courts, hooks will be added to the poles to adjust net height to accommodate women's play. *Smaller courts will be identified to accommodate single and double players' use.</p>
<p>Over the years volunteers have helped maintain the courts with nets, sand and portable restrooms.</p>	<p>*Volunteers may be recruited to assist with maintaining the courts with a possible establishment of a Friends group. *Interested parties may contact the NAMA Volunteer Coordinator to inquire about volunteering.</p>
<p>A small segment of the responders supported the new NAMA reservation system.</p>	<p>*NPS concurs.</p>