

**Everglades National Park**  
**Entrance Fee Changes**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**

| <b>Type of Recreation Fee</b>                      | <b>Current</b>                        | <b>Jan 1, 2019**</b>                  | <b>Jan 1, 2020*</b>                    |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Vehicle/Vessel* Entrance                           | \$25 (7-day pass)                     | \$30 (7-day pass)                     | \$35 (7-day pass)*                     |
| Motorcycle   | \$20 (7-day pass)                     | \$25 (7-day pass)                     | \$30 (7-day pass)*                     |
| Pedestrian/Cyclist/Human Powered Paddle-craft      | \$8 (7-day pass)                      | \$15 (7-day pass)                     | \$20 (7-day pass)*                     |
| Everglades Annual Pass (good for vehicles/vessels) | \$40 (12-mo. pass)                    | \$55 (12-mo. pass)                    | \$70 (12-mo. pass)*                    |
| Boat Launch  | Varies (7-day and annual)             | Eliminated*                           | Eliminated*                            |
| Backcountry Permit                                 | \$15/permit +\$2/per person/per night | \$15/permit +\$2/per person/per night | \$15/permit +\$2/per person/per night* |

*\*Denotes Proposed Changes*

*\*\*All fees in this column were mandated by NPS subsequent to civic engagement conducted in 2017, apart from elimination of boat launch fee, which is proposed.*

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Why is Everglades changing entrance fees?**

The fee changes at Everglades National Park are part of a broad National Park Service (NPS) initiative to standardize fee rates in parks across the country. As part of ongoing efforts to address aging park infrastructure and improve the visitor experience, entrance fee changes will be phased in over the next two years. In response to public comments on a national fee proposal released in October 2017, there will be a modest increase for all entrance fee-charging parks, rather than the higher peak-season fees initially proposed only for 17 highly-visited national parks.

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

Entrance fees are used to provide, sustain and enhance visitor services at Everglades National Park.

Some examples of projects funded in the last five years from entrance fees at Everglades National Park:

- Rehabilitate Back Country Camping Facilities;
- Installation of new shower houses in Long Pine Key Campground;
- Installation of new entrance signs at Pine Island, Shark Valley, and Gulf Coast;
- Replacement of the Anhinga Boardwalk at Royal Palm;

- Replacement of the Bobcat Boardwalk at Shark Valley.

Some examples of projects planned for the next five years, using entrance fees:

- Repaving of the main entrance road;
- Replace Marine Route Markers in the Florida Bay District;
- Replace Marine Route Markers in the Gulf Coast District;
- Replace Marine Route Markers in the Flamingo District;
- Rehabilitation of the Gumbo Limbo Trail;
- Rehabilitation of the Long Pine Key campground amphitheater;
- Rehabilitation of the sewage lift stations in the Flamingo District.

### **Does all the revenue generated by the park stay at the park?**

Out of the 417 units in the National Park Service (NPS), 117 parks charge an entrance fee. The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) requires the NPS to collect and retain revenue and requires that fee revenue be used to enhance the visitor experience. At least 80 percent of the money stays in the park where it is collected, and the other 20 percent is used to benefit parks that do not collect fees. In Everglades National Park, 80 percent of entrance fees stay in the Park and are devoted to spending that supports the visitor. The Park shares the other 20 percent of entrance fee income with national parks that do not collect entrance fees such as Biscayne National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve for their projects.

### **Do I have to purchase an entrance pass if I enter the park when the entrance station is closed?**

Yes. Park visitors are required to have a valid entrance pass when in the park, regardless of when they entered. Passes can be purchased 24/7 online at Your Pass Now <https://yourpassnow.com/parkpass>.

### **How do I purchase a park pass?**

Passes can be purchased at the Everglades National Park main entrance in Homestead, at the Shark Valley entrance, in the Gulf Coast visitor center, or online at Your Pass Now <https://yourpassnow.com/parkpass>.

### **I'm a local resident who visits the park regularly; what pass should I get?**

The annual pass for Everglades National Park allows entrance to the pass holder and those traveling with him/her in a single private, non-commercial vehicle or vessel. The annual pass is valid for 1 year through the month of purchase (i.e. if you purchase a pass on August 15, 2018, it is valid through August 31, 2019)

### **Will I have to buy a new pass when the fees go up?**

Not necessarily. All passes will be honored up to their expiration dates. Passes are non-refundable and non-transferable and cannot be replaced if lost or stolen. If lost or stolen, a new pass will need to be purchased.

**Does the park offer any discounted passes?**

Yes. Entrance fees are not charged to persons 15 and under or to holders of the America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands Pass Series. Information on the Interagency Pass Series can be found at <https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/passes.htm>. If you are permanently disabled, in the US Military, volunteer for the NPS or have a child in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, you may be eligible for a free entrance pass.

**I pay taxes; why do I still have to pay an entrance fee?**

National park lands are major financial investments. Although Congress expected general revenues to remain a major source of national park funding, it clearly considered recreation fees as an important supplemental revenue source for the parks when it authorized parks to charge recreation fees through the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. Park lands require and continue to need development for visitor access and accommodation, interpretation of park resources, and maintenance of facilities along with other improvements.

**PRIVATE BOATING (Florida Bay and Gulf Coast Waters)**

**Will I be required to pay an entrance fee for boating in the park?**

Yes. Private boaters pay entrance fees the same way as all other visitors. Passes are available at park entrance stations or online at Your Pass Now <https://yourpassnow.com/parkpass>. The above table will help determine the appropriate fee for your vessel.

**Do I still have to pay the boat launching fee if I come in through the main park entrance station?**

No. Boat launch fees will no longer be required as of January 1, 2019. Entrance fees are required for all park visitors, regardless of park entry through an entrance station or through a marine boundary.

**I'm a resident of Chokoloskee and have to transit through the park to get out to the Gulf of Mexico and other non-federal waters. Do I have to pay an entrance fee for this?**

No. As long as you are only transiting through the park in the most direct route possible and do not stop; then you will not have to pay an entrance fee.

**Do I have to pay an entrance fee if I am only entering the park to seek safe harbor?**

No. Should your vessel encounter foul weather, you are allowed to seek shelter in the park without being subject to the entrance fee. However, you are not allowed to recreate (e.g. fish) while inside the boundaries for the purpose of safe harbor.

**What is the park doing to protect the marine resources of the park?**

The park has created a boater education program that will be mandatory for everyone piloting a vessel in the park.

**What is the status of the boater education program?**

The boater education program is in the final stages of production. We hope to make it available before January 1, 2019.

**Do I need a permit to pilot a motorized vessel in the park?**

Yes. In order to protect the Florida Bay from continuing resource damage including prop scars and grounded vessels, the park is creating a mandatory boater education program for all motorized vessel operators within the park. A permit will be issued to everyone upon completion of the boater education program.

**Do I have to pay a separate fee for the mandatory boater education program?**

No. The boater education program will be free of charge.

**How often am I required to take the mandatory boater education program?**

Every two years.

**Why do I have to pay an entrance fee to boat in the park if I don't use any of the park's facilities?**

Revenue generated from recreation fees are used for items such as navigational aids and backcountry facilities. These facilities are important for the shared use and enjoyment of all park visitors.

**I bought an annual boat launch permit for \$60; can I get a refund?**

Unfortunately, refunds will not be issued as the current fee structure remains in place until January 1, 2019. It is recommended that you purchase a boat launch pass based on your need in the months and weeks prior.

**COMMERCIAL BUSINESSES / COMMERCIAL USE AUTHORIZATION HOLDERS**

**If I have a valid Commercial Use Authorization (CUA) do I have to pay an entrance fee?**

No

**If I have a valid Commercial Use Authorization (CUA) do my clients have to pay an entrance fee?**

Yes

**Who is responsible for paying the entrance fee?**

The visitor (your client) is responsible for paying the entrance fee. However, the park asks all Commercial Use Authorized businesses to notify their clients of the required entrance fee.

**How can my client obtain an entrance pass?**

Your client can purchase a pass at any entrance station in the park or online at Your Pass Now <https://yourpassnow.com/parkpass>. In addition, a local vendor, or vendors, can request to enter into a Fee Agreement with Everglades National Park. This agreement would allow them to sell passes on behalf of the park.

**Can I sell passes to my clients?**

Yes. As long as you have a valid Commercial Use Authorization, you can request to enter into a Fee Agreement with Everglades National Park. The Fee Agreement would allow you to collect entrance fees.

**How does a Fee Agreement Work?**

You would collect the applicable entrance fee from your client before going on the water. You would have to maintain a log consisting of trips into the park, number of clients, and the entrance fee that was paid. This log would have to be up-to-date and on the vessel. The log and entrance fees collected would have to be submitted to the park on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the following month.

**If I'm a commercial use authorized vessel operator, do I have to take the Boater Education Course every year?**

No. However, vessel operators with a Commercial Use Authorization (CUA) will be required to take the course once it is available and every 5 years thereafter. If the park makes significant changes to the Boater Education Course, CUA holders will be notified that they need to take the Course again; but the 5-year requirement will be reset at that time.

**I have a Commercial Use Authorization and I've always met my clients inside the park boundaries (e.g. Flamingo or Nine Mile Pond). Do the new changes affect my clients?**

No. Your clients have always been required to pay an entrance fee when they passed through the entrance station.

**I have a Commercial Use Authorization and I've always met my clients at a predetermined location before passing through an entrance station. We would then caravan to our destination inside the park. Do the new changes affect my clients?**

No. Your clients have always been required to pay an entrance fee when they passed through the entrance station.

**I have a Commercial Use Authorization and meet multiple clients before passing through the entrance station; we will enter the park in a commercial vehicle (e.g. 15-passenger van). What is their entrance fee?**

When you reach the entrance station with your passengers, report to the ranger how many per person or vehicle passes your passengers need referring to the above table. The ranger may help figure out appropriate fees also. If there are multiple families in multiple vehicles, each will need a valid entrance pass. If your clients have valid Interagency park passes, that will cover the passengers in their vehicle.

**I heard the road-based commercial tour (i.e., charter bus) rates are increasing; do you have any information on that?**

The National Park Service is standardizing road-based commercial tours including commercial use authorization requirements and entrance fees agency-wide. Presently, road-based commercial tour operators must deal with varying permitting processes and associated fees. The standardized process affects road-based commercial tour operations occurring after September 30, 2019. After that date, road-based commercial tour operators will be required to:

- Obtain a CUA for each NPS unit in which they operate;
- Pay required CUA fees (see below), and;
- Submit mandatory annual CUA reports after each CUA operating season.

**I have a Commercial Use Authorization that is unique and is not covered in the examples listed above. How do I get further clarification?**

You can contact the park at [everdrto\\_cua@nps.gov](mailto:everdrto_cua@nps.gov). Make sure to include the name of your business and a short summary of your situation.