

Public Comments – Migration of Wilderness Permit Reservation System to Recreation.gov  
Glacier National Park

Correspondence ID: 1Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,03 2023 16:36:13

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: This sounds like a TERRIBLE IDEA! Based on the description, for groups of 1-4, it would become a Ticketmaster-like free for all for reservations starting March 15th. While the current lottery system also has winners and losers, it at least is both civilized and feels fair. The future lottery need not be done manually - matching algorithms for this sort of thing are done by computer all the time - but please do not turn it into a death match free-for-all on March 15th every year.

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Correspondence ID: 2Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,03 2023 17:28:53

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Love this idea! Do worry about the execution of it for multiple night treks that involve booking multiple backcountry sites. Would you have to book each night individually or would there be a way to secure all the sites in one easy step? If it goes as quickly as other reservations for the park, could you end up with no campground for one of your nights in the middle of a trip?

If there is a way to make it work logistically and smoothly, I fully support the rec.gov move.

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Correspondence ID: 3Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,04 2023 10:18:54

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Our family appreciates the intent of the National Park Service to continue to evaluate the impact humans play on the ecosystem and environment of Glacier National Park. That said the regulations are increasingly absurd. Obtaining a backcountry permit has been difficult and when hiking with children extremely hard to identify and plan routes that can accommodate our family members with really short legs. That said we have navigated the previous system year after year almost always getting our family into the wilderness of our local national park.

This new regulation of a maximum of four campers will NOT accommodate our family of five. We have always slept in one tent and abided by the designated cooking and camping boundaries. We have rarely if ever been into sites that don't have frequent day hikers. If forced into this regulation how would we decide which child to leave home.....the youngest? The oldest?

If the committee proceeds with this regulation maybe a consideration could be made for family units? Maybe those household members that are filed as residences on a tax return or something similar.

Please don't do this to our family or others.

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Correspondence ID: 4Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,04 2023 11:12:25

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am assuming you pay the \$7 per person, per night fee when the permit application is accepted. Is there any refund if you decide later that you cannot use the advance permit?

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Correspondence ID: 5Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,04 2023 11:31:04

Public Comments – Migration of Wilderness Permit Reservation System to Recreation.gov  
Glacier National Park

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I wondered if the new system will accommodate undesignated sites ? Some climbing and fishing objectives require undesignated sites as do some of the classic traverse routes in GNP. Spring and summer skiing too. Some of my fondest memories of wilderness travel in GNP involve cross country travel and camping in undesignated sites so I'd like the option preserved.

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Correspondence ID: 6Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,04 2023 11:45:52

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have read through the proposed changes, and I believe this would be a positive change. Applicants would know right away if they could get their itinerary on specific dates. This would help with the planning of their vacations and possible flight reservations.

One other thought...would this system be able to handle the amount of users that would be accessing it right at 8:00am? I know that there would be a tremendous amount of use at that time, and would hate to see confirmation issues based on crashes or something of that nature.

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Correspondence ID: 7Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,04 2023 12:56:50

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Vehicle reservation passes sell out very quickly; how will this work when you need to string multiple campsites together for a backpacking trip? Will we have to do one a ta time and risk not getting the next needed site? Or will there be a way to put the whole trip together with multiple sites and check out at one time. And if so, what happens if one of the needed sites gets booked out while putting together the reservation? Seems like this could work but all the details need to be carefully considered and worked out prior to implementing. Wasn't enough information in the newsletter to see how this will work.

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Correspondence ID: 8Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,04 2023 17:30:26

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Due to my experience utilizing the Recreation.gov website over the past seven years, I have no confidence in rec.gov being a benefit to users if Glacier National Park were to switch to this company. I understand the work load and time that park staff must put forth to accomplish the current process that is used for all advanced backcountry permits, but I feel that it instills a sense of fair and equitable use among all participants. If GNP were to switch, I have experienced the use of 'bots' and the unattainable of any way for people to secure a permit. In the long run, although GNP might see a consistent number in permit users, I feel you would alienate the core group of backcountry users as they would not be able to obtain a permit. I feel that the current system or another alternate system would be more conducive and I am thoroughly against the switch to rec.gov.

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Correspondence ID: 9Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,04 2023 18:08:58

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Looks good to me overall. Only thing I'm curious about is how far in advance you're able to go in to pick up the permit. If I reserve a trip over the weekend and I have work the rest of the week it can be hard to get into the office the day beforehand if I'm working and you hate to waste time on the first day of the trip stopping in at the office as well.

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Public Comments – Migration of Wilderness Permit Reservation System to Recreation.gov  
Glacier National Park

Correspondence ID: 10Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,04 2023 18:32:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am wondering on the lottery system for groups 5 - 8 if you have to put specific dates or a date range. We are flexible up to two weeks and wondering if there is a way to indicate this or if the computer will just take specific dates. I do like the systems (like Grand Canyon) where the rangers take in variables of dates or alternate campsites and help make it possible for more people to win permits. i appreciate all the hard work you do!

And not quite understanding the 1 to 4 people permits. Everyone jumps on at once and tries to get their itinerary. That sounds kind of crazy. Like get 2 of 3 needed sites then one not available so have to start over?? I'm guessing I am not exactly understanding process and will have to look at samples you send out in mid Feb.

Again thanks for your help.

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Correspondence ID: 11Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,04 2023 21:09:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Greetings park officials and those whom it may concern.

As someone who has been victimized by parks.gov, any kind of revamp, from a structural perspective is welcomed. The system is so glitchy and so slow it creates misconstrued plans on what we as campers can and can't do. So, a streamlined system, from a software engineering standpoint, is NEEDED.

Secondly, as someone who has ventured into the backcountry during "peak" season, these systems are not as utilized as booking processes online may lead one to believe. Campsites that are booked "full" often go empty. This is in part due to online booking, which makes people feel like they won't have a spot after a 10 mile hike across GNP. This simply isn't true. Giving people access to these wild areas can be an incredible and life changing endeavor. So expanding "walk in" areas will help enable those with the actual drive to do so.

Im conclusion thank you all for taking the time to revise a badly engendered system. And consider helping people experience the ability to truly "unplug" in a world deeply engrained in the digital.

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Correspondence ID: 12Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,05 2023 07:18:53

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: This change isn't going to solve the main problem. The cost for backcountry sites during peak weeks needs to be more market driven. Increase the permit costs significantly and make these fees non-refundable. I was in RMNP last year in August. The backcountry sites had booked up very quickly months earlier, yet when we got there, at least half the sites were unused - likely because the weather wasn't perfect. Increase the fees to where they should be, make them non-refundable, and you will backpackers who really want to be there, even if the weather is less than perfect.

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Correspondence ID: 13Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,05 2023 07:59:10

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am very concerned about a 1st come 1st served reservation.gov system for glacier backpacking. This type of system favors fast computers and fast internet. It will make planning an itinerary a nightmare as 1000s of people are overloading the system at 8 am competing for campsites. The lottery system that allows all applications on received the

first day to be treated equally is much fairer and more equitable and sustainable as numbers of applications continue to rise.

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Correspondence ID: 14Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,05 2023 08:06:45

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: If I am understanding the proposed changes it sounds like it will be similar to the vehicle reservation system which favors those with faster internet. Most of us who live in Montana have found it extremely difficult to be competitive getting vehicle reservations, our internet connections are not fast enough and by the time we log on all the reservations are gone. I am afraid the same will happen with back country permits  
Please don't change the reservation system as you are proposing, you will be punishing those of us with average computers and average internet speed.  
Maybe you could use more volunteers from the GNP volunteer association to help process applications. I would most definitely volunteer to help with that  
Thank you

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Correspondence ID: 15Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,05 2023 10:32:59

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: You're letting groups of 12 apply BEFORE normal size groups? I would love to come to a meeting where you guys brainchild some of this stuff. Also since you're letting groups of 12 apply how about block them from applying to Boulder pass, Glenn's head, Isabel, any site where literally 12 people is the entire campground. So if 9 people want to take a 5 day trip and you're issuing 30 of those .... I'm not excellent at math but how is there going to be 30% left for walk ins let alone for other advance groups. The fact that is not \$40 anymore is five thumbs up though. Also should we open the two med office at 6 so we don't have to wait 2 hours after entering gate lol just a thought

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Correspondence ID: 16Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,05 2023 10:55:48

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I recognize the need to transition to Rec.gov for backcountry permits. My comment relates primarily to reservations for small groups (4 or less), though they may also be relevant for the larger groups. Based on experience seeking reservations via Rec.gov in other parks i know it can be very frustrating to find your choices &quot;unavailable,&quot; even when you submitted the request exactly when the booking period opens (like March 15 at 8:00 am MT). I have appreciated the flexibility of the old Pay.gov system, whereby we could indicate three different itineraries, indicate whether we would accept hiking any of them in reverse, indicate whether we would accept something similar in the same area of the park and indicate a range of dates for our trip. I realize the Rec.gov system may not be able to accommodate all that flexibility, but it would be a huge help if our INITIAL submission could include 2-3 itineraries and/or a range of dates for our trip. I highlight &quot;initial submission&quot; in order to avoid a situation in which our first choice is denied and we need to quickly submit our second (and later) choices, by which time other users may have locked in those later choices as well. This is an especially important issue in GNP because many times an itinerary might get denied simply because one of the campgrounds was unavailable on a given date, even though all of the others were available.

Also, i have experienced in other parks that some users have found creative ways to game the system, which is another source of frustration and unfairness for others. I do not know what form that may take in GNP under this new system but i hope and trust you are building in some steps to discourage and minimize that.

Finally, when we are online will we be able to see (in real-time) which campgrounds are still available for a given range of

dates?

Thanks for all you do.

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Correspondence ID: 17Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,05 2023 11:14:18

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Will Reservation.gov be set up for stock reservations as well? Stock sites are often quite far apart and in past attempts my reservations have NEVER been accepted despite very flexible dates in part due to needing more than the 16 mile maximum imposed in reservation applications. It's been frustrating in the past as well when getting walk-on permits that I have needed to ride up to 30+ miles between camps because the camp sites in between that DID allow stock were completely full with backpackers. It would be greatly appreciated if there was an early stock application option like for large groups or early access to Reservation.gov. That or some way for Reservation.gov to have a way of accommodating stock users and their limited campsite options. Stock users essentially have fewer options but just as much competition with hikers. Your consideration in this matter is greatly appreciated from an avid Glacier NP lover and hopeful 2023 visitor.

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Correspondence ID: 18Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,05 2023 14:22:16

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have used the lottery system for the last seven years. I have used recreation.gov for all of my front country camping. I much prefer the lottery system. Given the magnitude of wilderness permit applications. I foresee issues with jammed websites at 8 am when it opens, as we have have seen with the road permits and with highly sought after front country sites. I feel the recreation.gov site creates a more competitive environment giving unfair advantages based on internet speed, advanced software programs and high dollar travel agencies.

I have always appreciated the lottery system for the fair nature for all who submit applications and would be sad to see this change. I appreciate how we can list 4 options and variations that we are willing to accept. If the recreation.gov works as it does for front country, we will have to enter each option and variations sequentially, and given how the system works for other reservati9ns, by the time you see that your first choice is not available, all other options will have been booked.

Is there a way to still do a "lottery" per 24 hrs of applications on reservation.gov? Would it be reasonable to develop a software that could process the permits using the same lottery system that we have now? I know this could carry a price.

I realize and greatly appreciate all the man hours that go into processing all the applications, i would be discouraged to see it change.

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Correspondence ID: 19Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,05 2023 15:24:08

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: In the past, the large group category was for groups of 9-12 campers. It looks like you are changing that to 5-12 campers. Since a large group would now only need 5 people you are basically going to starve out smaller groups (4 or less hikers) from the advanced permit process since they will have access to reservations earlier on March 1st. This is a not fair process and you will see far fewer smaller groups or solo hikers. In my opinion smaller groups and solo hikers have less impact on the wilderness areas than the larger groups.

Also, what measure is the park service putting in place to discourage no shows for advanced reservations. Last year there

was an epidemic of this where groups never showed up. This limited the ability to assign walk-up permits until 24 hours after a group had not picked up their permit. There needs to be a way to discourage no shows and encourage people to cancel permits in advanced that they do not intend or can not use. It's such a waste when there are many folks looking for permits on a walk-up basis.

Speaking of walk-up permits. Reducing the number of walk-up permits is another negative change in my opinion. These type of permits give wilderness camping users a way to find camping opportunities under short notice. Many folks don't know if they can make dates months in advance. I really think this is probably the worst change to the permitting process in a long time. It directly leads to things like no shows that we saw last year.

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Correspondence ID: 20Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,05 2023 15:58:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hi, while I recognize the workload required for the current lottery system I am strongly opposed to transitioning to a live booking free for all on recreation.gov. this website routinely gets overloaded in these situations (even on very basic things such as a lookout at 8am when the next day opens). It gives numerous errors that routinely prevent continuing the booking process and lead to lost reservations.

I would like to suggest instead transitioning to a modified version of the river permits lottery system through recreation.gov. I'm sure the initial work to do this could be significant especially with enabling the functionality to link multiple campgrounds but if people could submit an itinerary and date preference and know that everyone will be considered equally instead of a free for all approach I think that would be much better.

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Correspondence ID: 21Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,05 2023 17:18:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I think this a great plan!! Many other parks I visit use this system and I much prefer it.

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Correspondence ID: 22Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,05 2023 18:53:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I understand the wish and need to make the reservation system more efficient. I only hope that it won't become less effective. I have greatly appreciated the tremendous work that has gone into making it possible for my family, which lives far from the park, to make wilderness camping reservations instead of relying solely on walk-up permits -- THANK YOU.

Given that the Recreation.gov site isn't live for preview until 13 days before the new reservation system will go into effect, I have to wonder whether comments will actually make any difference. What follows are comments based on not yet seeing the Recreation.gov site.

It would be helpful to add information to Summary of Changes, explaining not just the fee difference but the "forfeited fee" difference. In the past, a canceled reservation resulted in forfeit of the reservation fee (\$40 total) but because per person/night fees were not paid in advance those were not forfeited. Which fees, if any, will be refunded by Recreation.gov in the case of canceled reservations? This is information that should be available now, since it's a policy issue, not a website programming issue.

Other information that could be shared now is whether the new system will have any ability to fulfill requests when none of

the exact trips requested are available? In the old system, one could add notes that alternate itineraries fitting certain parameters would be accepted.

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Correspondence ID: 23Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,05 2023 19:51:23

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I like the proposal to move to recreation.gov for advance reservations and am happy the park has proposed it. My concern is more advance reservations will go unused because people will book whatever campsite is left without knowing that area, and then later decide they are not interested in that campsite/area. Because of this I think the park should go back to 50/50 split between advance and walk in permits. Additionally, Yellowstone uses recreation.gov for winter backcountry reservations and I think Glacier needs to for winter as well. The current system is terrible to use and I have missed multiple opportunities for winter trips because the current system does not allow for short (1-3 days) notice trips. If the goal is to provide access to the public then the current system is unacceptable. I love recreating in Glacier and appreciate you taking these comments into consideration.

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Correspondence ID: 24Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,05 2023 20:00:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have been blessed with many permits to camp in the back country of the park over the last several years. I am a native Montanan, born and raised in the Flathead Valley. It is with great sadness to me that it is so hard to even get in to the park these days with the vehicle reservation pass, and just as hard to get a camping spot at one of the camp grounds. Knowing all the information that is involved with planning a backpacking trip, with how many nights you can stay at each spot, how many spots are available for advanced reservations, etc., I hope if you do go to this new system it is pretty cut and dry and we can quickly choose where we would like to go with those dates. The other issue with Rec.gov is everyone tries at once and then you get the message that says the system is overwhelmed and to please try again. I know it is a lot of work for staff to work it all out the old way. Please just make sure the new process works very well before you implement it. Good Luck with that.

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Correspondence ID: 25Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,05 2023 22:36:01

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I think this reservation system will be unfair and will reward people with high speed internet. Many places in MT this is not a possibility. At my own home internet drops constantly. This would make the reservation system proposed bias towards individuals who can afford faster WiFi. If the new permitting system is implemented I fear people will reserve as many backcountry permits as possible as soon as they are available to book then everyone who wasn't quick enough or didn't have the service/internet connection to make a reservation will miss out. Backcountry access of GNP is something I think everyone deserves to experience weather or not they have fast acting technology.

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Correspondence ID: 26Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,06 2023 01:27:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I think that transitioning the reservation process to Recreation.gov makes a lot of sense. I have previously booked backpacking permits at Grand Teton National Park using this system, and I found it to be user-friendly and efficient. However, if you transition to this system, please consider opening the reservations at a time that does not conflict with standard working hours within the continental US. Opening reservations at 8 am MST gives an unfair advantage to folks in the Pacific timezone who are more likely not to be at work yet and therefore may be able to make reservations more easily, as well as anyone working remotely (which are disproportionately higher paying jobs). In the

interest of equitable access, please consider opening the reservation portal at a time where most working people are more likely to be available to compete for desirable permits.

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Correspondence ID: 27Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,06 2023 08:55:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I do not agree with the idea of moving the backcountry reservation system wholly to Recreation.gov. There is growing frustration with that website, as it is becoming increasingly more difficult to book anything. It will be heavily bottlenecked, which Rec.gov has not been able to quell. The park is in denial if they think this isn't already happening. Trying to get front country sites is hard enough, because again, bots. You can't get a site even if you log in right at 8:00am because bots are too quick. Since bots will snatch up many sites with no intention of using them, this can leave a lot of backcountry sites booked, but empty, which is unfair to those that would love to actually use them. This is an inappropriate way to do this. The public will become more frustrated with how things are handled. I strongly believe that they should be in person reservations only. Set aside a budget to pay your employees accordingly in the permit office, instead of moving to automation, thus eliminating these jobs in the future. Please do the right thing, and do not move to an online &quot;advanced&quot; reservation system.

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Correspondence ID: 28Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,06 2023 09:28:02

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Glacier National Park should NOT move the reservation system for Wilderness Camping Permits to recreation.gov due to the inherent disadvantage it imposes on non-technologically savvy individuals. It is imperative that the reservation system be designed to promote equal access for all.

Currently, the reservation process on recreation.gov is susceptible to exploitation by individuals who understand coding technology, thereby granting them an unfair advantage in acquiring road access and camping permit reservations, to the exclusion of all other individuals. If you don't know - now you know, the overreliance on recreation.gov has resulted in a situation where the reservation system is fatally flawed, as third-party bots can scoop up everything within a second of those sites becoming available. As a result, it is nearly impossible to book a campsite during the height of the season, which leaves the less technologically advantaged individuals behind and effectively denies them access to public lands that are meant to be enjoyed by all. This undermines the fundamental principle of non-discrimination at the core of NPS policies.

Given these considerations, the Park Service must find alternative solutions for the Wilderness Camping Reservation system that better aligns with traditional and wilderness-centric values while promoting equal access for all.

Additionally, the Frontcountry Reservation system should be moved off recreation.gov to alleviate the aforementioned issues. The National Park Service has a duty to ensure that everyone has a fair and equal opportunity to enjoy the public lands that belong to all of us. Therefore, it is critical that they take the necessary steps to rectify the current reservation system so that it is in line with the principles of equal access for all.

reference: <https://thebolditalic.com/how-tech-is-deciding-who-gets-to-go-camping-7481c587d94>

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Correspondence ID: 29Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,06 2023 10:34:07

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I like the reduction in fees which removes having to pay for a booking that ultimately can not be used. I think it will be very difficult for individuals to book their own trips while many other people are trying to do the same thing,

but we will see.

I am a bit confused why multiple group leaders are required. It sounds like one person can still make the larger group booking but will need to identify multiple group leaders?

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Correspondence ID: 30Project:114545Document:126169  
Received: Feb,06 2023 10:34:31  
Correspondence Type: Web Form  
Correspondence: Dear NPS, I have had very positive experiences with the existing process and I think it fairly allocates the available campsites to prospective hikers. The ability to submit alternate itineraries is very beneficial and makes for a less stressful submission experience. The process may be labor intensive, but at least it is well organized and fair. I would recommend increasing the associated fees and hire some college interns to execute the process if needed.

I am concerned that the Reservation.gov reservation process will be more chaotic, and perhaps susceptible to bots. On the opening day, I would anticipate a crush of hikers trying to enter their proposed itineraries, only to have them rejected as campsites fill up. Then we'd all have to scramble to find alternate itineraries, which may not be possible due to time and distances required. It would be great if you could explain more about how the reservation system would work on the website so we can have a better idea of how to prepare if this comes to pass. I have used the Reservation.gov site for car camping and for that it works fine. I don't see how it would work for backcountry camping with a high demand for campsites and the need to be able to sequence each night's stay in a manner that is achievable.

Perhaps try a pilot project and transition only 25% to the Reservation.gov system and see how it works the first year?

Thanks

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Correspondence ID: 31Project:114545Document:126169  
Received: Feb,06 2023 10:56:45  
Correspondence Type: Web Form  
Correspondence: Outside observer without much skin in the game, but I do have experience with a high demand low availability Glacier Park backcountry.

I recognize why it is important to make this change. At some point you need a tool to say no to more people faster.

The ugly hairball that I feel compelled to comment on is that mess of instruction on how to actually go about it. It is unclear if the visitor is engaging with recreation.gov or pay.gov. A lot of if this / or that and on what date going into it. Very confusing. There is no clear starting point to the process

I recommend these things:

Only one URL starting point. (recreation.gov).

And get rid of at least one of these two puzzles the visitor has to sort out to get started.

\*If more than 4 people do this, if less than 5 do that.

\*If before this date do this, if after do that.

Or is it a case that the new recreation.gov part is creating these barriers to entry rather than simplifying public entry to the process. In which case I recommend not doing it until there is a lower barrier way to go about it.

Also I would expect the online process to get bombarded with duplicate requests, especially the large party requests. Can you comment on the process for weeding out duplicates or cleaning up redundant requests granted.

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Correspondence ID: 32Project:114545Document:126169  
Received: Feb,06 2023 12:39:58  
Correspondence Type: Web Form  
Correspondence: The Mt Rainier National Park uses Recreation.gov website for their early lottery system and the wilderness camping reservations for the Wonderland Trail. May be more streamlined and easier to use one system instead of using Pay.gov and Recreation.gov.

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Correspondence ID: 33Project:114545Document:126169  
Received: Feb,06 2023 15:14:42  
Correspondence Type: Web Form  
Correspondence: As a Flathead county resident I have seen the changes in the Park over the last 15 years. Although I am very happy that people are out visiting our National Parks it is so disappointing that as a local we have so much trouble enjoying the Park. I'm hoping that the Rec.gov system we will be able to access the campsites a little easier. I'm also really hoping you list clear instructions on how to try to obtain a site before the rec.gov opens. I'm really glad you're going to move to this system. And I want you all to know how much we locals appreciate what you do!!!

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Correspondence ID: 34Project:114545Document:126169  
Received: Feb,06 2023 15:37:14  
Correspondence Type: Web Form  
Correspondence: Moving to a fully electronic system for wilderness reservations is long overdue. Now that this change is being made, it would be the perfect time to incorporate a couple of features to modernize the system and plan for the future.

Demand for backcountry campsites in Glacier exceeds supply, and in the future this situation will only become worse. Now is the time to develop a data base of successful and unsuccessful applicants. This will allow GNP to more fairly apportion sites in the future. A well-establish model here is the allocation of big game hunting tags in western states. To fairly distribute a scarce resource, successful applicants are typically put at the back of the line among applicants in future years. In addition, a points system rewards patient and initially unlucky applicants with preference points based on how many years they've unsuccessfully applied. As competition for backcountry sites becomes more intense, eventually successful applicants will need some sort of cap on nights, either per season or over their lifetime.

The good news is that there are many existing software systems operated by states that can efficiently do these things, and one of these systems could probably be acquired, modified for backcountry camping permits, and implemented by GNP for minimal development costs.

Demands on national park resources are increasing in almost all parks. Although it's painful to many of us who've enjoyed GNP's backcountry for decades, we must accept that the days of unlimited free access are simply over. Now is the time to implement a system that ensures fair allocation of park access in the future, and a fully electronic system is a foundational first step to do this.

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Correspondence ID: 35Project:114545Document:126169  
Received: Feb,06 2023 16:57:01  
Correspondence Type: Web Form  
Correspondence: I do not support the new proposed reservation system that only allows 1-4 campers per permit. This really could limit the ability of families of greater than 4 people to use the new system without having to draw two separate permits and have two separate group leaders or needing to go through the pay.gov lottery which appears to have a

relatively limited number of permits and a very early, short application period. The one day application period may limit applications, but having a nonrefundable \$10 application fee seems excessive if a large percentage of applications are unsuccessful. This system may reduce labor for park staff, but appears to add a level of complexity for applicants and make the process of applying for a permit more challenging.

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Correspondence ID: 36Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,06 2023 17:44:04

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am all in favor of changing the system. The old system put too much work on wilderness office staff when they should be concentrating on helping the public with other things. I have used a completely online system at other national parks and it is MUCH better. It does put the responsibility on the hiker to know their limits for mileage and altitude gained and be familiar with the campsites and alternatives if they do not get exactly what they wanted as their first chance. There is enough on your backcountry campground map showing mileage, but elevation would be great to show on the map.

I am a F&W Biologist who has hiked and kayaked 90% of the trails and lakes and participated in the Citizen Science Program, so I know the park very well and I help people on Facebook with trail choices for day hiking and backpacking. I just consider GNP to be the most frustrating park to get a permit, and have not gotten a permit in several years. I would like to know in advance there are no permits available rather than waiting till June.

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Correspondence ID: 37Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,06 2023 18:31:39

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Moving the reservation system to recreation.gov does have some advantages, such as backpackers finding out if they got an itinerary faster than with the lottery system. However, given that you may have to put in for each backcountry campsite at a time, it seems like you could get most of your itinerary planned and then be frustrated by not getting a single necessary campsite if everyone is trying for the same sites at the same time. I imagine that thousands of people will all be trying at once, making it as frustrating as it is now to get a front country site at 9 a.m. when recreation.gov releases them.

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Correspondence ID: 38Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,06 2023 18:41:28

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: With any new system you use, please consider offering some sort of refund in the event of cancellation. It will encourage those who know they won't use their reservation to cancel and get some money back, instead of just doing a no show. That will allow others to reserve and enjoy. Thank you.

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Correspondence ID: 39Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,06 2023 20:32:23

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Getting high-demand reservations at Recreation.gov seems to be heavily biased toward people with great internet connections, good tech skills, and connections with better 'ping' than Montanans are likely to have. A lottery would be fairer. Last year, I had no luck, until by chance, my internet provider replaced my modem.

People who get one reservation should have to wait a while to give others a chance before they can book a second trip.

Backpackers need a way to pre-load itineraries - if you have people entering data in a rush at 8 am, there will be a lot of messed-up itineraries.

The system should have a way to request flexible dates.

The lottery for large groups should be limited from booking up too much of the most popular sites before the Recreation.gov reservations open up.

Good luck with starting the new system!

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Correspondence ID: 40Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I don't think this system could be any worse than the previous system.. From the information available it is also unclear as to the time line a normal permit requestor would here back on whether the permit is approved or not. If permit is not granted it should be refunded to the requestor even if this makes the cost of granted permits go up. It is very discouraging to put 5 trip plans together, get rejected, and still be out the ten dollars.

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Correspondence ID: 41Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 08:44:50

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I agree with this proposal to migrate camp permits to rec.gov. I like that system much better than a lottery system.

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Correspondence ID: 42Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 08:55:49

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I fully support this as people can immediately know whether they have a reservation or not. It would be helpful for the instructions to address the issue of multi-night itineraries and how to approach those on the reservation system. Do you try first to book the night closest to the originating trailhead? And then proceed to try to get the remaining nights on your itinerary? Given how fast the front country campsites go (within a split second of the time they become available), I can see frustration with people getting their first night, but not the second, and then having to cancel that first night and go back and try for a different start date (at the same time that hundreds of other people are hitting 'enter' on their own reservations). Alternatively, if you can select all the nights you want and then wait for the clock to hit 8am and hit 'enter', that might work. In any event, instructions on how to do that will be key. Thanks for the work on this -- will make a big improvement.

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Correspondence ID: 43Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 10:23:58

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Good morning, I hope your week is going well. I think moving the reservation system over to Recreation.gov makes sense and should help the process.

As Glacier has become more popular the pain of securing a front country campsite or a ticketed entry to Going to the Sun road has increased causing much frustration for both travelers and local residents.

My interpretation of the single permit changes leads me to think that this process will create the same type of frustration.

If possible, I do recommend adding a lottery system for the single permits (groups of 1 to 4) as part of the advanced reservation process as well. It looks like that is the plan for the larger groups, with a 24 hour application process and then lottery to select the reservations.

But the proposed changes to the single permit is just like a front country campsite (first one on the internet with the fastest

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internet on March 15th will get the permit).

Add the 24 hour application process/lottery for all advanced permits and you have my vote for all the changes.

Thank you for listening and good luck with the decision.

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Correspondence ID: 44Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 10:40:33

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Given that Recreation.gov is COMPLETELY BROKEN when it comes to securing campground reservations in busy American national parks, I cannot see how migrating Glacier's present backcountry system is going to improve or be more fair. Bots have beaten the system and pretty much deny ordinary Americans who want to book campsites or reservations for recreation inside national parks. Now you're pretty much going to make even the backcountry unavailable to us.

Recreation.gov is neither user friendly nor fair. If I didn't know better, I'd say the National Park Service is trying to keep Americans out of their national parks. Especially the more crowded ones.

I strenuously object to moving the backcountry reservation system to Recreation.gov. ANYTHING else is going to be better and more fair.

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Correspondence ID: 45Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 12:11:12

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The changes proposed do not provide a good incentive for people to login to Rec.gov and cancel a permit if they do not intend to use it. You should really consider allowing for a substantial refund in the event of cancellation to encourage people to cancel reservations they are not going to use. This would free up spots for people that can't click fast enough on opening day to get what they want.

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Correspondence ID: 46Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 12:19:53

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please get it done already, and please give us the ability to pickup permits in Waterton National Park, its challenging to have to drive to Apgar to get permits and drive back to Canada, we access the trail head at Chief Man border so if that could be open and functioning that would be great too. We have been going into Mokowanis for the last 25yrs and love it.

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Correspondence ID: 47Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 12:57:12

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The process should be changed to accommodate groups of more than 4 people on a single permit. This is an arbitrary number and creates an excessive barrier, more likely an impossibility, for user groups that are larger than 4. Pay.gov programming limitations should not be dictating use and management decisions for backcountry use in national parks. Please find a talented programmer to work with Pay.gov to allow the National Park Service to use science and management practices to set appropriate and adequate permit limits.

Thank you

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Correspondence ID: 48Project:114545Document:126169

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Received: Feb,07 2023 13:09:09

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I'm hoping part of the process that continues is the option to list a range of dates for trip start and end. I like the opportunity to submit one itinerary with a wide date range, rather than needing to submit multiple applications for the same route if a range of dates are acceptable to the applicant. I am grateful for this Park and the people that take care of it.

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Correspondence ID: 49Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 14:00:53

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I find the Recreation.gov process for other parks to have a few glitches that should be addressed by Glacier if transitioning to that system is indeed what will happen.

It seems the Recreation.gov model works well for out and back sites, zone camping or "at-large" camping sites but can be difficult to get a contiguous route on a night-to-night basis for a reasonable backpacking trip when specific campsites are required.

For example, I have tried to "string together" a backpacking itinerary in Olympic NP and there was always a problem when I would have to string my days together ending up with a super long day or a super short day just to ensure a campsite. It was very frustrating to hike past a campsite that could have been more appropriate for my itinerary that was left unused. In Glacier, especially when a number of trails cross or certain sites are needed for multiple backpackers on different itineraries may want a campsite in one location, it becomes difficult to string together a good route. For example, Goat Haunt , Gable Creek, Fifty Mountain, Granite Park are all campsites with limited spaces but lie on a large variety of potential "customized" itineraries.

I do not have a solution to this that does not involve expanding the number of sites (which has a deleterious impact on the surroundings) or somehow ensuring that the more popular routes can be made contiguously.

It seems like the itinerary preparation is being pushed out to the "first come, first served" backpackers rather than the way Glacier used to do it.

Lastly, give people enough time once they log into the system to set up their itinerary. Some other parks time out at 15 minutes and that just isn't enough time. Also, make sure the campsite names and locations are well defined. Searching through scrolls of campsites that may have different names than those shown on the planning maps is a problem (see Inyo National Forest site)

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

A Glacier Lover !!!

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Correspondence ID: 50Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 14:24:58

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I think this is a great proposal! The majority of other national park reservations are hosted on recreation.gov, which is an easier and more intuitive platform than pay.gov.

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Correspondence ID: 51Project:114545Document:126169

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Glacier National Park

Received: Feb,07 2023 16:12:49

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: This would be an incredibly helpful adjustment. I have never had luck receiving my desired itinerary by requesting advance permits with the current reservation system in place. It would be preferable to work with what is available on Recreation.gov without having to pay a processing fee for unsuccessful permit reservations.

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Correspondence ID: 52Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 16:31:36

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I obtained wilderness camping permits in both 2021 and 2022 using the lottery system (group of 2). I found the lottery to be a relatively stress-free and fair method of submitting for a permit for my August 2021 and September 2022 trips, and I was very pleased with the itinerary that I was able to get.

My concern with moving away from a lottery system for groups of 4 and under is three-fold. First, it creates a mad dash/scramble on March 15th at 8 am for all the reserveable permits for that season - this could result in people trying to snag multiple itineraries and trips all at once to cover their bases, possibly removing available itineraries from others. Further, it preferences those individuals that have ready access to the internet at that exact time and date (i.e. they are not prevented by work duties from being online at that moment). Finally, it removes the aspect of fairness and equity that the lottery system currently demonstrates.

While I understand that the lottery system is indeed labour-intensive and takes some time to complete, I find it to be a fair and equitable system, and I do hope that it will remain in place.

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Correspondence ID: 53Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 16:58:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: While I am use to using the current system it is the year 2023 and it is time to bring it into the future. While it remains to be seen exactly how it will be implemented, and to fully expect some kinks, I believe it's time to streamline the process.

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Correspondence ID: 54Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 17:09:16

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The mechanism by which permits would reserved on Recreation.gov was not described in the document. If the method is a free for all approach, it will be very difficult to build a multiple day itinerary as selected campsites will fill while individuals are in the process building their itinerary requiring them to start over. Some type of lottery system or a system in which sites are held for a period of time once added to an itinerary is needed. Long enough to allow the applicant to finish and finalize the itinerary.

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Correspondence ID: 55Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 17:15:48

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The pay.gov reservation system is confusing and difficult to use. Switching to recreation.gov would be a welcome improvement. However, the proposed permit dissemination plan will incentivize greedy permit hoarding, much the way the online campsite reservation and vehicle reservation system has. The proposed permit dissemination system will incentivize a "book it in case I want it attitude". By the end of the first hour of the first day virtually every campsite will be booked for the rest of the summer season, and probably only a fraction of reservations will end up being used. I for one

will book anything and everything the very first minute, whether I'm serious about using the permit or not because this has unfortunately become the only way to access many amenities in the park. To combat this issue, 30% of permits should be reservable in advance and 70% should be available for walk up. This would ensure issued permits are actually used and prevent the hoarding behavior park policies have made a de facto prerequisite for visiting.

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Correspondence ID: 56Project:114545Document:126169  
Received: Feb,07 2023 17:16:57  
Correspondence Type: Web Form  
Correspondence: This is a bad idea. Back country needs to stay old school  
. Leave this aspect of Glacier alone.

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Correspondence ID: 57Project:114545Document:126169  
Received: Feb,07 2023 17:33:57  
Correspondence Type: Web Form  
Correspondence: I am opposed to this plan. Backcountry travel and camping is one of the free remaining ways to enjoy a park without going through Recreation.gov which is not user friendly. It further erodes opportunities for people without access to high speed internet and six months advance planning, and adds a service fee to the camping fee. Most important, users of the Backcountry permit offices gain valuable face to face instruction and up to date information about trail conditions or closures and bear safety. Doing away with use of cash and first come first serve camping already has had a negative effect on visitors of lower financial means.

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Correspondence ID: 58Project:114545Document:126169  
Received: Feb,07 2023 17:42:28  
Correspondence Type: Web Form  
Correspondence: I did not see a plan for returning/releasing wilderness permits back to the available pool or limits on how many permits one may hold for a season. What will discourage people from booking many or longer permits than are needed at the beginning on 03/15? The fee is already high enough for those who want to go- \$10 per reservation PLUS \$7/person /night. Additionally, if these are obtained online via reservation.gov, why would picking them up at the station in-person then be required? Increasingly, once these go online, there is less need to keep stations open and manned, and the hours tend to shrink (from experience out west), and it's frustratingly prohibitive to plan to arrive incredibly early the day before or wait to head out on the trail until late in the morning, just to "confirm" a permit already reserved and paid for. They should be printable online within the week beforehand, like so many others. I like that 30% would still be available as walk-ups. I'd like to see the schedule for re-releases or cancelled permits back into circulation (immediate or regularly-scheduled?) I'd also love to see advance reservation permits staggered into two phases, an early summer released on this timeline, and a late summer/fall released on a much later timeline, but I understand this is the (frustrating) standard. I'd only suggest trying to stagger this release date with other wilderness areas elsewhere. It is frustrating to have to chose between several places for the entire year 6 months in advance, simply because they all release on the same day and you can only be online in the first few minutes they release for one of them.

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Correspondence ID: 59Project:114545Document:126169  
Received: Feb,07 2023 17:44:36  
Correspondence Type: Web Form  
Correspondence: I think the updated approach via Recreation.gov would be good and user friendly. I am not sure how groups larger than 4 are currently handled but I think what you are proposing for those groups is fair. Importantly, I really appreciate the fact that you would be keeping 25% of permits for walk-ins. This is a thing that several parks do not offer (or in lesser quantity). Not everybody is able to plan months ahead of time, so that quota for walk ins is important and needed I feel. Fees for permits are fair too.

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Overall I'd vote yes for the updated approach you are suggesting.  
Thank you! Keep Glacier beautiful!

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Correspondence ID: 60Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 18:00:55

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: My concern with the new system is the cap an 4 people per reservation. I have 3 kids making us a family of 5. Seems silly to need 2 reservations for my family. We will be staying in the same tent/tents and not need to use the 2nd site. I think exceptions need to be made for this type/family situation.

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Correspondence ID: 61Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 18:08:04

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I understand the need for transitioning to Rec.gov to streamline and realize cost savings but I disagree that the groups should have primary access to the sites. As a general rule, groups are harder on the environment than individuals and many parks limit them to protect the natural resources. This plan gives them preferential treatment and 2 chances to obtain their permits. Groups should be limited and not be given advanced access.

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Correspondence ID: 62Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 18:39:03

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I think a system like recreation.gov is a much needed improvement. The main issue I see is this almost completely gets rid of the lottery system. I find the lottery system very beneficial in that you don't have to show up at just the right time to get a permit. You have a time period where you submit. By switching to recreation.gov you will make it very hard for certain people to get permits. We can see this already with GTSR tickets which sell out immediately. I would love to see a more automated system, but it should retain the lottery system.

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Correspondence ID: 63Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 19:03:43

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I support the transition of wilderness camping permits to Recreation.gov. This will simplify and streamline the system and place all reservations within the same system. This will reduce confusion and eliminate needless redundancies.

Recreation.gov is already successfully used across the nation by millions of users, this proposal makes sense.

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Correspondence ID: 64Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 21:50:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I do not agree with this plan. The current system is a good thing --people there in person, waiting in early lines--these folks are real humans investing their time to get those permits. Recreation.gov is dominated by bots and groups with computer capabilities to score in the first milliseconds when a campsite opens up. It is very frustrating. Even with my finger on the trigger at 10am EST when campsites become available six months in advance I can never get a campsite! The computers win and regular folks lose out.

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Correspondence ID: 65Project:114545Document:126169

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Glacier National Park

Received: Feb,07 2023 23:03:57

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The online reservation system is nice for the ability to make a quick reservation. However the system makes it almost impossible to reserve because there are so many people trying at the same time. I have been online everyday at 8 a.m. multiple days in a row to try to get lucky in getting a reservation. The last 2 years have become more and more difficult to get anything. I think if you leave it as it is people will have a fair chance. Plus when people reserve online the chance of them sticking to it and following through with showing up is less likely than those who are here and doing the "walk up" reservation.

you can see the overload of inquiries you get just from your other online required reservations, I'm sure it's overwhelming. Maybe you could just do some online and still leave some for the "walk up" reservation.

Plus I think about some of the young adults who have a spur of the moment availability to snag an impromptu trip into glacier and having a chance to get a spot would be nice. But if everything is online then those folks won't stand a chance.

I mention this because some of my children's best memories were made over summer being able to do just that when they happened to get the same few days off of work to do a backpacking trip into Glacier- its good for the the soul 😊

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Correspondence ID: 66Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 23:07:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I know I already made my comments... I forgot to say maybe allow for more than 25 percent - walk up

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Correspondence ID: 67Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,07 2023 23:14:44

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Thank you so much for the update. This sounds like a wonderful change and hopefully easier on the Backcountry office. I very much enjoy using recreation.gov. Yellowstone National Park switched to recreation.gov, they have a lottery system in which you can apply from March 1st to 20th, then if you are selected you are given a day and time in which you can pick your back country campsite if it is available, if it isn't available you move to your next choice etc...

Grand Tetons national park is first come first serve, whoever is the quickest at 8am on the day reservations open gets their itinerary. I think I prefer Yellowstone's way of doing it because it seems more random and fair but either way you look at it you gotta be a little lucky;) )

I do have one request: Could you please make it possible to use the chalets as place holders for Backcountry camping, ie: staying at Sperry Chalet on September 3 please let the system allow a camper to get reservations at Ellen lake on the 2nd and Sperry campground on the 4th or for Granite Park Chalet let it link Many Glacier to the chalet and then on to another back country campsite. I hope this makes sense.

Thank you for giving us a chance to comment. Look forward to spending time in the back country .

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Correspondence ID: 68Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,08 2023

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I sympathize with your wanting to ditch the old system, which must have been exhausting for you guys, and there should be a way to do it with computers entirely, and recreation.gov has a lot of experience doing that.

PLEASE POST A DETAILED EXPLANATION ASAP. In the meantime I can only speculate. And worry.

Will the new system keep the old application form, have computers at recreation.gov put all the March 15 ones in random order, and then the computers go through them one by one the way your staff did in the past? That would be a pretty good

compromise. Otherwise....

I have experience with recreation.gov's system where everyone gets online at precisely 8:00 a.m. and tries to send forms in in two seconds. Usually I'm too late.

It will require a lot of imagination and new code for recreation.gov to adapt that system to one that can accommodate multi-day itineraries fairly. Is that new code happening?

For example, let's assume (optimistically) that I get to pre-fill my application so that I can submit it in less than ten seconds. If that one is rejected because someone has beaten me to the draw for one campsite, does the system hold my other 4 campsites for me while I try to substitute for the one? Or am I free to try again, but only by starting over from the beginning. In that case it seems I would be at a huge disadvantage versus anyone else who is trying to book only one campsite, because they can complete and submit much faster.

If it's the latter, the Northern Loop will become a thing of the past, replaced by people doing an out-and-back to Fifty Mtn, others out-and-back to Stoney Pass, etc. Only very strong hikers accepted at those camps.

If on the other hand I don't get to pre-fill my application and submit it in a few seconds, then the above scenario will be even more true.

Will I be able to pre-fill my 5-night application stipulating (as with your old application system) that I could begin it on any of ten consecutive dates and will the computers be able to try all ten of those itineraries instantly? Will I be able to stipulate that certain campground substitutions are acceptable (as with your old application system), and the computers able to handle that instantly?

If not, I suggest you should delete the advice currently on your website that says our odds are better if we are flexible about dates and about campgrounds.

I predict a lot of interminable online discussion of the best strategies. I also won't be surprised if recreation.gov's servers bog down and get glitchy for those two hours.

Please post the details soon.

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Correspondence ID: 69Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,08 2023

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Unless recreation.gov can treat all the March 15 applications equally, with a lottery, the system will be unfair to people and counties with slow internet connections. Recreation.gov's system for USFS campgrounds that get booked up in the first 3 seconds of each calendar day are like that. They are creepy.

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Correspondence ID: 70Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,08 2023 06:30:48

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Greetings, I have been backpacking in Glacier since 1977 and have seen the res changes through the years. IMHO an online live reservations system is total chaos. The lottery system seemed to be the fairest to me. Can't a computer figure out how to reserve requests with a lottery system so the staff doesn't have to work every reservation request? I foresee just using the walkup to obtain a permit as the online system is so chaotic and setup to fail with

thousands of people sitting at their computers at the witching hour. More comments: It has been crazy in the BC. I have seen many ill prepared backpackers and illegal campers. in 2020 I saw 5 tents at one site in Hole in the Wall. Yes I have pictures. I have also witnessed illegal camping on Boulder Pass. At Boulder Pass campground I had 2 hikers arrive and just stay because they were too tired to continue to Hole in the Wall. They camped illegally near us. When I woke up in the am and went to the bear pole, their food hang was laying on the ground because the rope broke. Their rope was so thin it was laughable. I can go on about the ill prepared and rules being broken. I used to see staff in the BC but not lately. We need you guys back there. For a deterrent the NPS should increase fines for violations and fees for nights in the BC and have a paragraph on the fines when signing for your BC permit. If you don't do this the park will keep suffering with the rules violators and litter bugs.

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Correspondence ID: 71Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,08 2023 09:37:49

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The internet age is becoming very detrimental to our national parks. Tech savvy bot users already have made it impossible for an average park enthusiast to camp at most popular national parks as a normal person has no chance of manually clicking a button in recreation.gov faster than a computer program.

I am very much against surrendering the wilderness permitting to the same fate. I propose the following that I suspect bureaucracy will never allow to make our popular parks of equivalent value to as many citizens as possible. Otherwise, popular parks reservations and permits are only obtainable and enjoyed by the underhanded. It is questionable to support federal funding of something I or my friends and family have no chance of every enjoying.

Simple online lottery system for popular permits and campsites

1. Use online applications that require a passport number.  
- this should be done for homeland security reasons anyways.
2. Only one application per passport number per year.  
- you only get one application per year to wilderness camp in Glacier.
3. Charge a nonrefundable fee per application.
4. Successful lottery winners must pay immediately and show their passport with the correct number to obtain the permit / campsite the day before or morning of.
5. All persons who do not show up with the correct passport lose their permit to first come first serve.

Understand this is not a simple problem, but the bot dominated recreation.gov is a bad choice to solve the increasing cost concern of the current system.

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Correspondence ID: 72Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,08 2023 12:41:43

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I support these changes.

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Correspondence ID: 73Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,08 2023 12:50:19

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It's not exactly clear, but it looks like the new system would not be lottery based but would instead be first come first served. If this is the set-up, it would make it nearly impossible to obtain reservations as everyone would be loading onto Recreation.gov at the same time and only a few people would have a chance to secure the permits who have

the time and the resources to use recreation.gov at the time/date required to have a chance. I'm worried this would create inequitable results. Furthermore, it is unclear that if, during the "preview period" beginning on February 7, you could create the itinerary ahead of time. Many backcountry routes in GNP are complex and require juggling multiple backcountry sites across long periods of time. If the expectation is that someone will log on on March 15, attempt to select the proper sites/dates and then be forced to start all over if the dates are no longer available, that would seem to be nearly impossible to navigate.

Generally speaking, moving to an online reservation system makes sense but I think it should still be managed via lottery to give people a fair shot to access GNP's backcountry sites.

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Correspondence ID: 74Project:114545Document:126169  
Received: Feb,08 2023 17:14:52  
Correspondence Type: Web Form  
Correspondence: Using rec.gov would be SO MUCH BETTER.

The previous system required so much waiting and lack of flexibility given you had no idea what the person processing the permit would actually interpret. I'm excited to put together a trip given what is available and have more flexibility and control :)

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Correspondence ID: 75Project:114545Document:126169  
Received: Feb,08 2023 17:28:13  
Correspondence Type: Web Form  
Correspondence: It sounds to me that this change would eliminate the current lottery system in place and change to a system of speed. I am concerned that even if I prepare multiple potential itineraries, if I am unable to secure my first choice then I would not have time to get to my second before other people had already selected theirs. The way this new system sounds is that it rewards the fastest people and if I am slow at selecting things on the website then I am out of luck. I think I would prefer some sort of lottery system still in place even if the entire reservation/itinerary system was digitized.

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Correspondence ID: 76Project:114545Document:126169  
Received: Feb,08 2023 21:42:28  
Correspondence Type: Web Form  
Correspondence: My husband and I have lived in the Flathead Valley for more than 30 years, and we cherish the ability to get into Glacier's magnificent backcountry. We restore and rejuvenate there, ground and recenter, and it is there we feel most connected with God, spirit, and nature. With the extensive crowding in the park's frontcountry areas, the backcountry has become the only real way for us to enjoy peace and solace in the park. We do understand how labor-intensive the lottery system has been, and know the burden on park staff in recent years has been overwhelming and unmanageable with the current backcountry permitting system. However, the lottery system has felt fair- like each applicant has an equal chance of securing a reservation. The proposed system seems to lack that equity of access. Like the entry ticket system, only the people with the fastest internet connection (severely lacking for locals in MT!), fastest devices (usually, the most expensive devices), and fastest typing skills would be able to get their reservations at exactly 8:00am, and those of us with slower internet speeds (so much of MT), slower/older devices, and slower typing skills would find ourselves shut out of reservations when our submissions connect at 8:02am. This proposed system of free-for-all at 8:00am seems to favor the urban wealthy and young people who have the fastest internet speeds, latest devices, and fast fingers, and leaves most Montanans- and anyone living in rural areas nationwide or those who cannot afford fast, new devices- at a significant disadvantage. With the road access situation already favoring those wealthy enough to afford fast internet, new devices, and lodging inside the park or expensive activities like jammer bus rides, horseback excursions, etc, the backcountry seems the only place left in the park where fair and equal access has remained. The proposed new system has the potential to

eliminate the fairness and equity that the lottery system protected, in that every submission to the lottery system had an equal and unbiased chance for access that will disappear with the competition to be the first to submit the permit request at 8:00am. We beg you to find a fairer process to preserve access to the backcountry in equitable ways. Thank you for considering!

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Correspondence ID: 77Project:114545Document:126169  
Received: Feb,08 2023 22:11:22  
Correspondence Type: Web Form  
Correspondence: I have concerns with the proposal to change the wilderness campground reservations to the recreation.gov method.

I had comfort in the lottery system before. In my experience, I could plan a route and backup routes very carefully and accurately once, and after submitting, trust the system and organizers would match to the itinerary as close as they could, since there was an option to indicate flexibility. This system has worked once for me the first attempt I tried, in 2017, but the next time (2022) I attempted but didn't get a reservation, but I had still trust in the system that the lottery was fair - I accepted the result, especially knowing that the application pool was understandably larger (I would have also accepted the result if the application pool was the same as it was in 2017).

With the proposed change to recreation.gov, I'm concerned that the website will be too glitchy/tricky to stitch together a multi day itinerary quickly enough and without errors before hitting "submit" to try to get a spot before other people submitting at the same time. There is risk in making everyone put this information into the system and trying to beat the clock, and it may actually cause additional oversight and administrative anguish on the part of GNP staff if something goes wrong. Additionally, people trying to stitch together longer itineraries would be at a disadvantage, as people with shorter itineraries or out-and-backs may take the first available campsite within 10 miles of the trailheads before longer itineraries or loops would be able to be entered/booked. In my experience, every second matters with recreation.gov - it's always a scramble.

Since Glacier has a unique reservation system compared to other national parks (no dispersed camping), this complicates the use of recreation.gov. For example, Yosemite only requires knowing your start date, hike trailhead, first night location (roughly,) end date, and exit trailhead - every night's campsite is not quota'd or required to be reserved. Yosemite has a 24-week-in-advance lottery system that has worked well, but it might be better suited to a dispersed camping condition with fewer constraints on camping location for every night. How will recreation.gov "know" whether the campsites reserved are within an acceptable distance from the next night? Without knowing the interface of how GNP will be implementing the system, this gives me some anxiety. Since a Glacier backpacking reservation requires inputs for data for each night in the backcountry, it will be a stressful and potentially mistake-prone process to get every element into the system correctly when you are in a rush to hit "submit."

Additionally, the backcountry reservation date on March 15 is offset from the GTSR driving reservation opening, making the coordination of getting to the trailhead fraught with multiple "risk events" to try to beat the clock. Do backpackers automatically receive GTSR driving passes on the day of/before their hike start date?

The note that the tripling of applications in recent years is valid and helpful to know, but the argument that it required additional labor makes me skeptical - wouldn't the labor of sorting applications simply end once all the quotas were filled?

I recommend GNP staff keep the existing lottery system. I am empathetic - but overall hold great trust for - the staff that have managed this lottery system in the past. For people coming in from out of town, it's very valuable to be able to arrive knowing that I could have an itinerary in hand, vs. the stress of early-morning line stakeouts at the ranger station.

A few suggestions for alternatives to this plan:

- I would pay MORE money for a staff-managed lottery reservation system, even if I didn't win the itinerary I hoped to reserve.

- If recreation.gov needs to be used, I would recommend a rolling reservation system similar to Yosemite, either on a daily or weekly basis, as opposed to everyone who wants to hike in the season getting access to the system at the same time on the same day (seems chaotic and potentially prone to people gaming the system, making multiple reservations, reserving campsites on consecutive days that are impossible to hike in between, cancelling later, etc.).

Please continue to use the existing lottery!

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Correspondence ID: 78Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,09 2023 06:34:58

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It does NOT make sense to me to give larger groups priority, ie: advance reservations, over smaller groups. (March 1 vs. March 15). Just because a group has 5 people and not 4 is simply not fair. Whats to prevent applicants from simply submit for a larger group than they really intend to get that early shot at reservations. The higher fee is not a deterrent.

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Correspondence ID: 79Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,09 2023 08:55:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: On the surface shifting to rec.gov for these wilderness camping permits sounds reasonable. There is one area; however, I feel is completely amiss. That is the reduction from 8 to 4 campers per permit. I feel this severely limits people making plans to visit the backcountry of Glacier. What happens when your group is 5, or 6, or even 8, which is often how we locals have used these permits. You have just forced me to limit my group to four.

It is disingenuous to say back to me, &quot;Just have the other members of my group put in for the same permit so we can go as a group.&quot; The chances of that happening are extremely slim the way this first-come-first-served system works with rec.gov. I have tried getting a permit using the vehicle reservation system to travel with more than one vehicle, it is impossible because of the demand. It will be the same with wilderness permits, the chances of two &quot;groups&quot; getting the same itinerary so they can backpack together has about zero chance of happening.

The one-day lottery on March 1st is a step in the right direction but only allowing 30 groups for the whole park for the whole backpacking season seems extremely limiting. Is setting 30 as the limit based on historical data? What are the chances of my group of 6 landing a permit on March 1st? Hopefully you have taken that probability into consideration before setting this cap.

I truly hope you rethink this specific policy because it is way too restrictive and really serves no purpose other than catering to the rec.gov software programmers. Allowing us to put in for a group of 8 and using two sites at a campground will still be based on availability and should not affect the overall permits issues.

Please revisit this and put it back to allowing groups of 8 to reserve regular permits with everyone else on March 15th.

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Correspondence ID: 80Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,09 2023 11:14:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hello,

My comment would be that this is a welcomed moved. Recreation.gov is used for so many other park's advanced reservations and it is easy to use. The pay.gov application felt outdated and not as user friendly as the interface you find with recreation.gov. Just my thoughts! Thanks!

Correspondence ID: 81Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,09 2023 11:50:30

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Concern with having mid- to large-group permits go off via lottery prior to mass general reservation date as it incentivizes being untruthful to gain a permit. If I had a group of 4, I would be tempted to "just say"; I had a group of 5 to enter the lottery, and if I got one, only go with the group of 4 (or 3, or 2) which would lead to unused spots. Or, it wouldn't be outside the realm of possibility for strangers linking up on the internet (multiple groups of 2 or 3 agreeing on the same itinerary simply to join the lottery due to large group). I've never participated in Early Access lotteries (like Yellowstone, Rainier, North Cascades) but I feel that approach is better. It has to be a random lottery for everyone, regardless of group size; or a bigger distinction of what group size participates in lottery (more like 8+ people required for lottery participation...I would not be tempted with a group size of 4 to "just say"; I had 8+ in my group). Just some thoughts on an ever-complicating process that I find fascinating. Thanks everyone! Feel free to reach out if you want more thoughts.

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Correspondence ID: 82Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,09 2023 11:58:21

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have 2 questions and 1 concern.

Question 1:

Will the March 15 opening still result in a 1 day lottery drawing? Or would it be a real-time online booking where the fastest typist compete for the first permits?

Question 2 for lottery method:

Other national park applications are restricted to 1 permit application per group per lottery. If the rangers discover that more applications were submitted for the same group, all permits are voided. Will Glacier NPS adopt a similar restriction to help with the historic problem of multiple permit applications by the same group/person?

Concern:

By opening early for large group applications, someone is able to apply for a group of 5 on March 1st. If they are denied, they find out quickly and can reapply for a group of 4 on March 15. If they are approved for the group of 5, they can modify their reservation at a later date to change it to 4 people. My point being you have allowed a loophole for groups 1-4 people to apply twice during the same year. This may result in a balloon of applications that cannot be processed for large groups between March 1-7.

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Correspondence ID: 83Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,09 2023 13:32:46

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am concerned that releasing all of the available dates to everyone at one time that the computer will not be able to handle the amount of people trying to obtain a permit. Trying to piece together a longer itinerary will be incredibly difficult. In the same way you propose a lottery for group trips, consider a lottery for itineraries 5 days or longer.

Or follow the example of North Cascades N.P. and have a lottery to assign “windows” of being able to try to get a permit so registration will be staggered. This will allow less frustration due to server traffic.

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Correspondence ID: 84Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,09 2023 14:01:26

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I think this proposal is a very positive and necessary step. This will provide a convenient mechanism for everyone who is interested to plan and book their backcountry visit.

I think this puts the onus on the group leader to understand the trail system in order to plan reasonable trips, and I would hope that there will considerable thought put into how the reservation system builds the trip. The current map uses three letter acronyms for campsites for example, which would not be familiar to the casual visitor. I'm mostly familiar with recreation.gov in the context of booking facilities like forest service cabins, so concerned about having a tool which is friendly enough for people to build an itinerary that connects logically and with reasonable distances.

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Correspondence ID: 85Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,09 2023 15:37:40

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I applaud your efforts to streamline the process for backcountry permits, but I predict this will be a disaster. I am a frequent user of Recreation.gov and love the site, but even for single site reservations like Many Glacier Campground, it is extremely difficult to secure a site in the summer (they are gone in the first second after 8AM every morning). Now imagine trying to book a multi-campground trip through the backcountry with everyone doing it at the same time. The campgrounds close to trailheads will get booked immediately, making it almost impossible for other hikers to book multi-day adventures. It seems like an on-line lottery based system would work better. Give everyone a couple of weeks to enter their desired trips, then randomly start selecting submissions and run them through the recreation.gov logic to book them. I realize it presents more challenges for collecting revenue, but you could give people two weeks to pay before releasing that itinerary back into the pool of available sites (similar to what Sperry and Granite Park do, although their assignment process is manual).

Thanks for listening and good luck with the decision!

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Correspondence ID: 86Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,09 2023 15:53:42

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: First: If you don't have access to the very best, highest speed internet you will NEVER get a campsite. Much of rural Montana doesn't have that kind of access so basically you are cutting out lower income people who can't afford the super high speed internet or don't have high speed internet available where they live. Have any of you people gone to the recreation.gov website and attempted to get a reservation for a high demand campsite, cabin or ticket entry? Like Glacier Parks Going to the Sun Road ticket. I challenge everyone making this decision to give it a try and see if you have any luck at all.

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Correspondence ID: 87Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,09 2023 20:06:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: In regards to backcountry camping in Glacier National Park I do not support a move to the recreation.gov website. I think the current system of putting in your backcountry requests in a 24 hour period (lottery style) is a much better system than the recreation.gov. I have been attempting to get permits for cabins, lookouts, and camping

Public Comments – Migration of Wilderness Permit Reservation System to Recreation.gov  
Glacier National Park

spots for weeks now using the recreation.gov website without an success. Using the "who has the fastest internet connection" has not been a good solution. If people actually have to drive up to the permit offices for walk in permits that eliminates a large portion of people because they are not wilking to do that. I think the current system is much better then anything the recreation.gov website has to offer. I may not always get the exact itinerary i put in for but I usually always get something. I appreciate you taking the time to read this and hope whoever is reading this has a great day. God bless and thanks!

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Correspondence ID: 88Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,09 2023 21:01:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: More groups of 5-8 please. According to Wildernesscollege.com: First and foremost, travel in groups and make noise while you travel, especially in grizzly country. There has never been a fatal bear attack on a group of four or more.

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Correspondence ID: 89Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,09 2023 21:34:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hello,

People in rural areas with slow internet connections are often locked out of popular rec.gov reservations when they are available on a first come first serve basis. A much fairer and more equitable way to handle the reservations is to open a 24 hour lottery on the first day that the reservations are available. It looks like Glacier is doing this for large group backcountry permits. I hope that the park does it for small group permits as well. Thank you!

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Correspondence ID: 90Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,10 2023 07:35:34

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I think that moving the reservations to recreation.gov is not a good idea. Recreation.gov is slow and sometimes cannot refresh fast enough to get tickets, sometimes leaving you with no option but to get the permits in person. I also believe that the site is confusing and not user-friendly, sometime leaving you scrambling to find the campsite you want as they are not in alphabetical order. I believe that this is a poor decision as the site that is currently in use is just fine for getting advanced reservations.

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Correspondence ID: 91Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,10 2023 10:09:07

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hello,

I think it is great you are reaching out to the hiking community for input.

The lottery system has seem to have taken hold at many other national parks as to how to obtain a permit. Two of the things that bother me about this approach is one, how do you make sure some of the same individuals are not getting "lucky" year after year and obtaining a permit for some of the more popular areas while the rest of us, year after year are "unlucky" in obtaining these same permits. Second, planning a hike takes place several months in advance for many of us, especially ones that live far from the park. With the cost of accommodations and air transportation and the fact that accommodations are being booked several months if not a year in advance makes it difficult for individuals to wait until possibly only two or three months before a hike to see if we got "lucky" in obtaining a permit. By knowing in advance that permits open up on such and such date and knowing right then and there if you have obtained that permit you can now better plan and hopefully obtain accommodations and airfare.

For me, setting a date and time when permits are available is a better option than the lottery system. Though I know in

these times when more and more people are venturing into the backcountry that it will still be a challenge in obtaining a permit and much frustration will still fall upon many us who don't score a permit.

Thanks

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Correspondence ID: 92Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,10 2023 15:57:31

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: How will equity be achieved between the advanced large-group lottery and the 1-4 small-group reservations with regard to time of reservation. If a majority of large group requests are for the August-early September time frame, won't this greatly reduce the probability of securing a small group reservation in this same time frame? To maintain equity, will you be spacing the 35 large-group allotments out equally over the entire summer season? If not, the large group reservations allocated as part of the March 1 lottery could make it very difficult to secure any small group reservations in the prime hiking season.

Regarding the the March 15th date on Recreation.gov, I'm assuming there won't be any first day lottery process that has been historically used at the Pay.gov site. If so, this creates a mad rush during the first hour that the website opens for reservations. I have been exposed to this Recreation.gov process at other parks and it is a very chaotic process with website crashing issues.

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Correspondence ID: 93Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,10 2023 20:09:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It is great that Glacier plans to use the Recreation.gov site for wilderness camping reservations as it is a very well run site.

However, after reading the proposal, I believe that it may be difficult for the user to generate a multi day packing itinerary using the system. Other national parks that use this site have different camping regulations that Glacier NP.

For example, Yosemite NP for the most part has dispersed wilderness camp sites. The backpacker has to select an entry and exit point and must hike a specific distance from the trail head before setting up camp, but the exact camp site is not designated by the park.

Glacier currently requires backpackers to stay at specific wilderness sites when generating an itinerary. Is the Recreation.gov site going to be set up to allow the user to select multiple camp sites along a proposed route as they wish? If so, it seems this may be a rather complicated system, with many users working to reserve a very limited number of sites.

Thank you for soliciting comments and working to improve the wilderness camping reservation system.  
Glacier is a great National Park.

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Correspondence ID: 94Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,11 2023

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I've used Recreation.gov for reserving wilderness permits in the past and it's worked pretty well for the most part. One thing I would like to see in this proposal is more details about how the reservation slots will be made available, specifically whether or not the slots for the entire season will be made available all at once. One limitation of Recreation.gov's reservation system is that it does not have live updates on the campsite selection page; this makes it hard to tell if your desired itinerary is available until after you've submitted it, and by that time you've already lost out on your

other itineraries for other dates. It's why I've noticed many popular national parks (Mt. Rainier, Yosemite, Sequoia/King's Canyon, to name a few) move away from the "all at once" approach on Recreation.gov. These parks have taken a few alternate approaches: a lottery system, like Mt. Rainier and Yosemite do, or a rolling window, like Sequoia/King's Canyon does. A rolling window means you can only make reservations for campsites X months in advance of your proposed start date. For example, if you made the rolling window three months, you would only be able to register for trips starting on or before June 15th on March 15th. The next day, you'd be able to register for trips starting on or before June 16th. Both of these approaches have been successful in the past and are supported by Recreation.gov, but I'd at least like some clarification on which approach you'll in the document. Thank you!

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Correspondence ID: 95Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,11 2023 07:57:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Rec.gov is historically an absolute chaotic mess when trying to reserve any highly sought after permit. I greatly discourage using this platform as it limits folks' planning, accessibility to dates and group sizes. Lotto permits are much better (how yosemite does it) rather than a first come first serve permit basis on Rec.gov.

Truly the whole reservation system needs to be overhauled and more user friendly and more clear rolling openings for reservations.

Having to use rec.gov for all camping (across the country) has led me to now only disperse.

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Correspondence ID: 96Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,11 2023 08:47:25

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Seems good to use rec.gov. A lot of campgrounds are on there now so it would be nice to have more 1 place. Hopefully it will be very obvious these will be hike in-hike out campsites to avoid non backpackers from booking and not using it. Just booked a campsite from a different site which said "hike to campsite", but i had to look online to see that you are able to park 40 ft away from the campsite. With how busy the park is now, at least you can know well in advance if you have a site or not.

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Correspondence ID: 97Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,11 2023 11:07:09

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Although this is a move in the right direction, I have concerns that releasing basically ALL the backcountry reservations at the same day and same time will make it difficult to have adequate time to select a longer itinerary since users would be competing with everyone. For example, last year, I received a permit for and went on a 7 night trip out of the Many Glacier area. That would be very difficult to book quickly enough and get proper campsites aligned for a reasonable permit (safe hiking distances) while competing with the large volume of users trying to get backcountry campsites all at once. I have used the Mount Rainier and North Cascades backcountry permit lottery process and have found that one to be a better way of giving people time to properly add their campsites to their permit and be able to checkout without extreme competition for campsites. Their process is that they both have a lottery for a time slot to book your backcountry sites. These time slots are spread over a few weeks. Users can see ahead of their timeslot which sites are still available and make adjustments to their itinerary before it is time to book. Once that period is over, remaining backcountry sites are open to everyone. The lottery time slots would also be a more equitable way to incorporate the group site process. Perhaps there could be a few group lottery slots intermixed with the 1-4 person permit lottery slots. Thanks for your work on improving this system.

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Correspondence ID: 98Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,11 2023 18:15:08

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am interested in seeing how this works. Will the campsites be released for the whole summer season on March 15, or is in segments on different dates? I can't imagine how taxing it is to manually go through permit itinerary's, however I feel as though that is the only fair way to do it. This first year or two switching will be crazy, however my main concern is that it will be like every other campsite you try to get on Recreation.gov. With the technology advances that are out there it will boil down to who can give themselves the best edge. Everything to having the best timing or the fastest internet when the campsites drop; to people building their own bots on their computers to help them when the draw must exist, and are getting easier and easier to do or find and build. Rec.Gov claims this isn't happening but I don't think they could possibly know for sure. Every time I try to book something at a busy site, it takes weeks of me signing in at 9:00 am central and clicking at the right time. Since I am flexible I usually get it eventually but this summer getting into Many Glacier took me two weeks of doing that everyday. It feels like you are up against some kind of machinery at that point and is very discouraging. No one can resell the campsites and so they think that makes a difference, but according to what you read on the internet, anyone who is a little tech savvy can give themselves the advantage over someone else or build a bot on their computer. It makes no sense to me and I can barely figure out how to set up an account for Rec.Gov let alone build a bot but it seems like it is out there. I haven't gotten an advance permit for any of the hikes ever in the last 4 years I have been trying, but at least I feel like I am losing the draw fairly and not just because I am terrible with computers. That is my only concern. I also realize that the original version isn't sustainable either so whatever you all think is best I'm going to try either way :) Thanks for trying to open up whatever you can and make these beautiful places accessible at all.

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Correspondence ID: 99Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,11 2023 18:38:32

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Any system that does not involve a lottery is a non-starter, full stop.

A first come first serve system with a singular date and time for reservation is discriminatory towards people with limited internet as well as those with personnel or work obligations at that very specific time.

Look no further than the debacles of first come first serve 2018 backcountry permit fiasco, or even the fraud of reservation system for Going to the Sun Road or Front Country Campsites that are literally gone in seconds each day. Bots and scammers.

No need to re-invent the wheel here, Yellowstone already has it figured out:  
<https://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/backcountryhiking.htm>

"Because demand for backcountry campsites in many areas of the park exceeds capacity during peak periods, an optional early access lottery is available. This lottery is based on a fair and randomized process to provide an equal opportunity for each applicant to be selected. Successful applicants are granted early access to reservations, with the earliest access having more options to secure a reservation for popular areas. Lottery participants with later access may not have access to their preferred itinerary but can create an alternate trip using available campsites."

All available via rec.gov: submit lottery application, then are later provided with a date/time the earliest you can start a reservation, which are staggered based on lottery results such that people have a reasonable amount of time to process.

The 5-8 person group size getting special treatment to the detriment of smaller groups is also a non-starter. Rec.gov can handle this already, as it does with Tetons or Yellowstone, where a group size is provided and date/campground availability grid showing quantity available, such that a multi-person (or multi-site in this case) can be added to cart. Giving 5-8 special treatment is not fair and will just invite more gaming to jump the line. Tetons also does first come first serve, and all of the Teton Crest Trail sites were sold out in minutes - ridiculous to have to dynamically route plan under duress like that.

All this said, very much appreciate the openness and willingness to change the process, as waiting until May to receive confirmation on permits isn't reasonable to be able to purchase affordable travel accommodations (flights, hotels, cars).

Don't overcomplicate it and just replicate Yellowstone lottery system that staggers initial reservation time and use the existing framework that has already been developed to accommodate Glacier's complex site constraints.

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Correspondence ID: 100Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,12 2023 08:25:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: While I think it's a great idea to move away from the arduous task of manually processing applications, I can't say that I love a free for all that works most for those that aren't at work or are the most computer literate. I would like to see a modified lottery like Mt. Rainier NP does where you enter a lottery for a time frame to access the booking portal. This makes it much less of a mad dash at 8 am 3/15 but still moves the actual route finding, scheduling, etc to the person booking rather than park staff. I believe you have thirty minutes or an hour to choose your route along with a handful of other people rather than thousands trying to book similar routes in the same minutes after they go live.

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Correspondence ID: 101Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,12 2023 09:51:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hello, thank you for allowing comment on this issue. The proposed system seems quite convoluted. I am wondering how a group of 3-4 would request a trip, with being open to different campsites than the ones originally requested. Would that be an option? I couldn't seem to find the answer in the document. For example, a trip requested with two one-night stays at Gunsight Lake and Lake Ellen Wilson. If Gunsight was available, but Ellen Wilson was full, would it automatically give you a chance to find a spot at the Sperry campground? The older system, although not perfect, seems to work. Then again, I'm not in the office trying to dole out campsites to irate backpackers. Thank you for your time.

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Correspondence ID: 102Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,12 2023 10:20:32

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I agree that it is a good idea to try a new system and using recreation.gov makes sense. I am worried that just allowing everyone to access all at once and make reservations for the entire season will cause technical problems and make it harder to get a desired itinerary. I'm pretty good at the on line processes but have a slower internet connection and often get electronically pushed aside during an all at once process. I would respectfully ask you to look at the process used by Yellowstone National Park.

Open window to submit name (like 10 days)

Computer randomly assigns a day/hour to you when you can access and book something (others also have access during same hour)

We used this process last year and found it very user friendly and importantly- it felt fair. It might be worthwhile to ask YNP about how they think it works? (Maybe you have).

You have a hard task and I agree you need to do something! We have backpacked for many many years in GNP - that trip is always a highlight and the mark of a great summer! I'm very worried that, as proposed, we will be penalized for slower internet connection and/or on the basis of our technological savvy.

Thank you for your public service and for consideration of these comments.

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Correspondence ID: 103Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,12 2023 14:27:07

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The new permit sounds promising only if certain changes are made via Recreation.gov. The reservation system on Recreation.gov needs to be simple and accessible. Currently, this website is stuck in the early 2000s with portions of the website hard to access. I do like that thirty percent of permits are still available for walk-up purchasing. The downfall of the new system is the difficulty for groups larger than four. If these groups need to purchase sometimes two or more permits at one time, will there be an option to purchase them on the same webpage or will the permit buyer need to open a new session for every permit bought and needed. The latter could cause some grief for a potential buyer of multiple permits and prohibit them from fulfilling their recreation needs. It seems some more information needs to be published before this new permit system is put into action.

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Correspondence ID: 104Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,12 2023 17:39:53

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: YES - Please move the Glacier reservation system to Recreation.Gov. It is much easier for all parties involved and you can have much more automation/control over how people are permitted into Glacier. I will be applying for a permit for my second year in a row, after having to book a different trip through rec.gov last year. Thanks for reading and best of luck in the transition!

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Correspondence ID: 105Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,13 2023 08:30:04

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: 2 concerns:

- is Recreation.gov robust enough to handle the volume of permit seekers on March 15th?
- it seems there's a bias towards larger groups beginning on March 1st and also an opportunity for the system to be gamed by folks applying for larger than needed permits in order to compete early for the permit of their choosing

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Correspondence ID: 106Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,13 2023 10:27:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: To Whom It May Concern;

The current system has been very difficult for all to utilize. (Park Service included).

In my last two years experience, none of the notifications that I received, whether they were denied or accepted, ever stated which permit they were for, as I put in 2-3 applications each year. I could never get ahold of anyone via phone to check to see which permit I got and which one I didn't. I would have to drive over to the permit office to confirm. I might add, last year, one lady ranger was extremely rude about it. I was told to "read my emails". When I showed her a printed copy of the email, she backed off. The other ones however, were very helpful and understanding and said that the system was having issues. They were able to confirm which permit I received and which I didn't. I have all the sympathy in the world for rangers in the permit office.

I would absolutely welcome a new approach...IF IT WORKS PROPERLY.....

I am a long time local, and personally am not "picky" and am willing to take what I can get when I can get it.

I realize this is a comment forum for issuance of permits, however, I would be remiss if I didn't ask that you very seriously consider REQUIRING permits to hang on backpacks as years ago. It holds weight in having to "show" you have a permit. Every trip I have been on in the last two years, I have experienced people staying in the campground without a permit. Never understood why it stopped.

Even when day hiking, I have ran into people who just think it is a "free for all" and bragging that they are "sneaking in". One person told me "...what are they going to do about it ?" Of course I have reported all incidents, but there is no way to catch them.

At least when we hung the permit on our pack, there is a little bit of a "license/permission" and everyone will know "who does and who doesn't". People even ask, "what is that". A little bit of "self policing" if you will.

I am aware that it is all over the website that permits are required, but people don't read. These are the same people that are going into the backcountry and causing problems and issues for all. One couple carried 2 large hard sided coolers into Bowman thinking they could camp anytime, anywhere. Everyone made them hang them, per backpackers I saw on trail that were there.

I implore you to start requiring the hanging of permits on a pack for the safety and enjoyment of all.

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Correspondence ID: 107Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,13 2023 10:48:09

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I believe that taking the reservation system off the lottery program will make it very stressful to make a reservation as it is likely that all the popular sites will fill in the first few minutes. If your first choice is full by the time you select another one they will likely all be full. A person with slow internet or bad internet skills will be unlikely able to make a reservation. Even currently booking day passes to the park or sperry chalet the website often gets overloaded/crashes and by the time you are able to log in all the spots/tickets are gone. Any service that fills or books in the first 5 minutes should be done with a lottery otherwise the system is unfair to all users. Even if the park no longer wants to handle reservations a digital lottery system could and should be utilized.

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Correspondence ID: 108Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,13 2023 12:09:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Thank you for this proposal. Regarding the March 15 opening date for advance reservations for four or fewer people....The proposal is silent on whether requesting a reservation is: 1) on a "first-come, first-served basis; or 2) continues to be a "lottery" type of system in which all applicants who make a request on March 15 receive equal odds of obtaining their preferred itinerary; or 3) is a system on which sites are released day-by-day for start dates that begin XX days after the release date (similar to the system for reserving frontcountry campground sites). Without knowing which of the above systems ( 1), 2), or 3)) will be used, it is difficult to comment. So, is the new system one that rewards those who are able to push the button the fastest at 8:00 a.m. on March 15?

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Correspondence ID: 109Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,13 2023 14:55:29

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am not a fan of this switch. What happens when you have a 3-5 day trip planned and you need to make reservations at different sites for different days? With the current rec.gov website, it would seem I would have to book night #1, then try and book night #2, and then try and book night #3. However, it seems like highly sought after sites are all taken up within minutes of them being open. I have been on the computer ready to go at 6:55am, just waiting for 7am to hit so I can book. As soon as it hits 7am, I hit book, it spins and thinks for a minute, and then lets me know someone else booked what I wanted.

With the way it is now, if I 'win' and get selected for my trip, I know I have all my nights. Or if I click for being flexible with my trip, if I am selected I can still do my trip but may have to stay at a nearby spot instead.

With the proposed change, I worry I would get night #1 but then miss out and not get night #2 or #3. Which would then make the trip kind of pointless.

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Correspondence ID: 110Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,14 2023 11:45:21

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I encourage GNP to consider one of two similar permit application systems:

1. Establish a rolling lottery, similar to Yosemite NP's, where permits for trips beginning within a weeklong period of dates in summer are issued about six months ahead of the trip start date; and allowing applicants to apply anytime during the weeklong application period for a rolling lottery. (You can see the model used by Yosemite NP.) This eliminates a mad rush of tens of thousands of people at 8am MT on March 15, which is inevitable and can gum up the system. Grand Teton NP experiences that when they open permit reservations on recreation.gov at 8am MT on one day every January; reservations book up within minutes for the entire backpacking season and applicants often find that they have availability but it disappears while they are going through the cart checkout process. This creates frustration for many users. I know this from hearing from many readers of my backpacking blog, <https://thebigoutside.com/>, who contact me for advice on getting a permit for many national parks. Glacier's has, unfortunately, been one of the slowest for response time. I realize moving to rec.gov will result in a much shorter time for finding results and that's good. But I fear Glacier NP will have and create an experience similar to GTNP.

I realize it may be too late for Glacier to launch a rolling lottery for 2023, though not necessarily too late if the window is simply shortened to accepting reservations three months in advance, starting March 15. If this isn't possible for 2023, I hope you consider it for 2024.

2. Another option is simply opening reservations precisely three months in advance of a trip start date, which would also spread out the user pressure on the system.

I understand why standard permits at Glacier must be limited to four people: campsite capacity in many backcountry camps. Perhaps it would work well to allow applicants to apply for a standard permit for up to eight people, with the caveat that this decreases their odds of success because each night's reservation would require two campsites being available at their chosen location.

I support the proposal to make 70 percent of backcountry camps available for advance reservation and leaving 30 percent for walk-ins. The vast majority of people seeking Glacier permits are undoubtedly traveling a substantial distance for their trip. A walk-in permit is impractical for many. It just makes sense to enable more people to reserve a permit in advance rather than encouraging high numbers of people to show up at a random date hoping for a permit. One of GTNP's problems is making such a low percentage of permits available for advance reservation.

Thanks for updating and hopefully improving Glacier's permit system. I look forward to getting one for 2023 or in a summer soon.

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Correspondence ID: 111Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,14 2023 11:47:17

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: while understanding the burden on GNP wilderness rangers organizing advanced wilderness permits, I am concerned of the ability for hikers planning longer trips through glacier. Hikers planning CDT or PNT hikes will likely struggle to make a full itinerary submission on recreation.gov quick enough to have a chance of making an itinerary.

For example:

Person 1 wants to spend 1 night at REH on 7/15. They would be able to create an itinerary of the overnight quite quickly and place into cart.

Person 2 is attempting a CDT hike, and needs to place GAB 7/11, POI 7/12, MAN 7/13, REY 7/14, REH 7/15, MOR 7/16, TMC 7/17 into their cart in the same amount of time to possibly build an itinerary.

I feel a lottery of some sort is needed to allow for longer itineraries to be created.

Thank you.

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Correspondence ID: 112Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,14 2023 13:40:41

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: While reviewing the proposed changes it occurred to me an area of improvement would include provisions for long distance backpackers completing or starting the Continental Divide Trail (CDT) as part of a complete hike (thruhike). These hikers are typically unable to predict well in advance their dates as a result of the unpredictable nature of wilderness backpacking. While there are means for their goals to be reached, lack of flexible and reliable permits may cause backpackers to grapple the prospect of going through without a permit or risking injury or death to meet permit requirements. This would result in unaccounted for backpackers in the national park or undue risk to backpackers and park personal.

Perhaps working with the Continental Divide Trail Coalition to issue an allotment of available permits would alleviate this risk and lessen the burden placed on backpackers who may risk injury in order to meet any permit requirements or deadlines. Working with the other national parks along the CDT could also support this. Using the Pacific Crest Trail or Appalachian Trail as an example of how to successfully navigate the burdens these thruhikers place on national parks would be astute. The PCTA's permit system seems the ideal framework as it passes through a similar number of restricted wildernesses and national parks. Until that can be accommodated, Great Smokey Mountain National Park (GSMNP) appears to have a frame work that may work.

Reinventing the wheel created by GSMNP may not be necessary, but perhaps adapting it for the unique challenges of Glacier National Park is possible.

Thank you for your time. And maybwe all follow LNP principles.

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Correspondence ID: 113Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,14 2023 13:57:10  
Correspondence Type: Web Form  
Correspondence: To whom it may concern:

While these changes do seem to help the end hiker, I do not agree with the further advancement of the use of recreation.gov and it's parent company Booz-Allen-Hamilton. The system of recreation.gov is systematically not incentivized to protect the very thing the NPS represents. It is powered by profits that have no concern for the advancement of the systems that brought it that profit. This private company that this profit goes towards has no incentive to help the infrastructure such as the roads, campsites, and visitor centers. Not to mention their profit off the many, many volunteer hours that really built the trails that this company profits off of. Parks do need a website that can give permits, but the way it has been implemented needs to be reconsidered from the ground up. More percentage of permits needs to be for walk up permits. There needs to be more infrastructure to encourage spontaneous backcountry trips ran by people who actually use these services rather than a bureaucrat. The main NPS website that hands out backcountry permits has no map connected to it. The end user interface is confusing and vague in anything backcountry related further showing the disinterest in this huge company to help the average hiker. It is very difficult to connect different sections of parks while doing long hikes because this system has no idea that people could hike over 20 miles a day. I would rather pay an extra 10 dollars for an online fee if I knew the fee was going towards a national park employee or conservation.

Thank you.

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Correspondence ID: 114Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,14 2023 14:27:03  
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Regarding the proposed changes, I believe this system could benefit overnight backpackers but severely hamper people trying to plan a multi-night trip. With so many people grabbing campsites at the same time, it will be almost impossible to secure a multiple campsite itinerary before it is taken away by someone reserving a single site.

More generally, the thru-hiking community is particularly affected by the GNP reservation system. For both CDT and PNT thru-hikers, our start or finish terminus lies within the park, and we must pass through to complete our journey, either from Canada to Mexico, Mexico to Canada, or the path of a raindrop from the Continental Divide to the Pacific Ocean. On an adventure of this scale, hiking over a thousand miles through brutal conditions...endings and beginnings are symbolically and crucially important. With the current system, many thru-hikers are unable to reach these locations.

One possible solution would be to reserve a campsite itinerary for CDT thru-hiker use over a period of 2.5 weeks. Most southbound hikers start early June to mid-July and take the same route. Set aside one campsite at Elizabeth Lake, Poia Lake, Reynolds Creek, Red Eagle Creek, and Atlantic Creek during this time. Let all CDT thru-hikers use this itinerary. Thru-hikers are often solo, but willing to share space with other thru-hikers. We are well-versed in food and bear safety. We follow leave no trace principals. Many of us have small tents or can cowboy camp, and thus multiple hikers can share one small site easily.

By channeling the thru-hikers into a planned itinerary, you can ease the load that thru-hikers put on the permit system. This approach can also be applied to northbound CDT thru-hikers and PNT thru-hikers. This suggestion will reduce the numbers of solo thru-hikers reserving an entire site that could accommodate 4 people. And it will reduce the number of un-used reservations, which are often made in desperation.

Thank you.

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Correspondence ID: 115Project:114545Document:126169

Public Comments – Migration of Wilderness Permit Reservation System to Recreation.gov  
Glacier National Park

Received: Feb,14 2023 14:33:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Why should we be giving more money to the defense contractor running Rec.gov? Rec.gov site does NOT work very well for standard campsites, why would we think it will work for Glacier's backcountry campsites?

There is nothing on rec.gov to prevent anyone from making as many reservations as they want, what will prevent someone reserving many Glacier backcountry spots and then just cancelling when they decide which trips they are actually going to use?

Without any kind of a lottery or randomization of application numbers all the Glacier backcountry sites will just go to the people with the best internet access and can get mutiple permit applications submitted the fastest.

If rec.gov is going to be giving a monopoly on campground reservations on all federal land, then we should at least get a system that works fairly for everyone.

Why give more money to a giant government contractor for a sub-par service? Why not just hire more NPS staff?

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Correspondence ID: 116Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,14 2023 15:21:25

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The changes to advance reservation of wilderness camping permits for Glacier National Park make sense to me. It is important for park staff to be able to complete the variety of management tasks that are expected of them. Automating the reservation process should free up time for the staff to do other important things. However, to maintain visitor satisfaction with the process, and maintain access to public lands, it is important that the reservation on the website operate efficiently and fairly. It is also important to maintain the availability of some permits to be purchased through walk-up visitors.

I also think that the online reservation system should be available for groups of 5-8 as well as 1-4. These are larger groups, but not as large as group sizes of 9-12. A group of 5-8 could be led with one trip leader, and I think they should be able to have one permit. Perhaps available permits should be divided into different group sizes, but both permits should be available through the online reservation system.

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Correspondence ID: 117Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,14 2023 15:57:30

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: This system would make it almost impossible for someone starting the CDT SOBO to string together a proper itinerary. It would be nice if there was a genral thru hiker permit that would let thruhikers do there thing without running afoul of yall at the parks service or having to gamble on walk up permits

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Correspondence ID: 118Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,14 2023 17:44:18

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Totally understand the need for more stringent policies and limiting the amount of people. One suggestion and ask would be for special permits for thru hikers doing the Continental Divide Trail. Great Smoky Mountains National Park does this and it works very well there. Because thru hikers have less flexibility but can do higher mileage usually, they will be through the park in a timely manner. In addition, thru hikers are experienced and generally respectful to rules and regulations, including LNT.

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Correspondence ID: 119Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,14 2023 18:03:23

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Public Comments – Migration of Wilderness Permit Reservation System to Recreation.gov  
Glacier National Park

Correspondence: While I think these changes might be helpful to those planning shorter trips, for people planning long hikes (e.g., a southbound thru hike of the CDT), it will be nearly impossible to secure an itinerary under the new system. I'm assuming some type of thru-hike specific permit that would help CDT hikers navigate Glacier more easily is out of the question. But, perhaps, some sort of lottery system could remain in place for people planning longer hikes. I was lucky enough to complete a section hike of the CDT through Glacier in 2021 through the lottery system and flexibility on my permit application. I fear that others hoping to hike across Glacier under this new system will no longer have that possibility.

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Correspondence ID: 120Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,14 2023 19:58:59

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I realize that the previous system had its shortcomings and flaws. However, this new system is going to make it extraordinarily difficult for anyone who can't navigate a website very quickly, doesn't have a fast internet connection, or can't take the very short window when the campsites are opened for reservation to when they will be claimed off of work to access the Glacier backcountry. Moreover, from the sounds of it the website will simply give an error when an itinerary includes an unavailable campsite, rather than tell you which campsites are unavailable, offer alternatives, or anything. This is a recipe for a nightmarish user experience. Finally, it shovels more money into the private pockets of Booz Allen which defeats the entire purpose of public lands.

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Correspondence ID: 121Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,14 2023 20:51:10

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please consider the needs of hikers thru-hiking the entire Continental Divide Trail in stringing together consecutive nights of campsites. There should still be walk up reservations for thru hikers, as their dates of arrival to and through and departure from Glacier National Park. Thru hikers should be afforded some flexibility in their itineraries. I hope to thru hike the Continental Divide Trail one day and will appreciate the flexibility in planning my transit with the help of park rangers. Thank you.

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Correspondence ID: 122Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,14 2023 21:07:40

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Will there be a way to have a set itinerary in place and ready to upload at 8:00a.m.on March 15th or will we have to set the itinerary up manual on recreation.gov at the day and time?

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Correspondence ID: 123Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,15 2023 06:05:15

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hi- FYI, there is a typo on the Rec.gov site in the Notifications area. It currently reads: "ROU, KIN, UPK, BOU, HOL, GRO, BOW, and AKO campgrounds will be closed from 9/1/23 - 11/18/23 due to a bridge replacement project near the Polebridge ranger station." GRO should be BRO.

I hope the new system works well- i hope to be one of the first ones trying for a small group permit!!!

Thanks.

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Correspondence ID: 124Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,15 2023 07:16:58

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have reviewed the proposed changes to Glacier's reservation system for backcountry camping and have grave reservations. The use of recreation.gov will create a free-for-all situation that degrades the permit experience for all users. Because rec.gov "checks out" a camping site while the user has it in their cart, it will become close to impossible to string together an end-to-end backpacking itinerary through the park without an overnight hiker holding one or more spots in their cart. No-shows and people reserving sites "just in case they need them" are a serious problem with recreation.gov as it currently works. There's been multiple analyses showing this problem such as this one <https://www.outsideonline.com/adventure-travel/news-analysis/camping-reservations-no-shows/> and I've experienced this problem directly at Glacier's National Parks front country campsites, so the park management should have their own data to support this. If you introduce this problem into the backcountry camping "ecosystem" at Glacier you'll ruin it. A serious wilderness like Glacier requires careful planning, if sites are checked out throughout the backcountry in a free-for-all manner, you will rob visitors of their ability to plan any itinerary more than an overnight. Which would be a complete tragedy in one of the most important backpacking destinations in the united states.

Lotteried reservations are required to allow visitors to plan itineraries that take more than a single night. A system mirroring Rainier's lottery for wonderland permits, where the lottery determines the day/time window you get for being able to go online and pick your campsites, is much better suited for a park where complex multi-day routes are the norm. You can still leverage a website to reduce administrative burden on staff, and visitors still have some ability to plan ahead and work out a complicated itinerary without the added pressure of individual sites disappearing as they attempt to add them to their cart.

To really be effective, this system also needs to have some mechanism for re-uptake of cancellations and noshows, and it needs to preserve some ability for folks to walk up to a permit counter and work out plans last minute. The phenomenon of folks reserving rec.gov campsites six months ahead of time "just in case they need them" and then no-showing when plans and PTO don't work out, is starting to become a major and serious problem that a website alone cannot solve. We're in a rat race where everyone is scrambling to reserve permits way ahead of time because by the time you actually work out your time off, its way too late to make plans. As more permit systems have moved to a six month ahead reservation schedule, folks with money have started making multiple reservations just to preserve some degree of spontaneity. This is an inequitable system that favors people with money to tie multiple reservation and control over their schedule to be sat at their computer at the designated time windows in January and February. Although I know staffing a permit counter and working with (potentially irate) members of the public is no ranger's favorite assignment, and so pushing things onto the computer is tempting, I would hope the NPS has more lofty ideals when it comes to fairness of access and optimizing availability and utilization of public resources. A system like Zion's, where the "permit" is only a reservation and the visitor needs to come to a visitor center 24 hours ahead of the reservation to get an actual permit, otherwise the campsite gets returned to the pool of available walk-up permits, would strike a better balance between leveraging a website to reduce some of the pre-season administrative burden, while preserving some degree of access for last-minute visitors and maximizing utilization of available resources.

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Correspondence ID: 125Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,15 2023 08:47:10

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Good morning ! I would like to say thank you for the previous system. Having rangers who were knowledgeable about the submitted itineraries was a professional way to handle organization in the back country. I can only imagine many people that are submitting and booking itineraries really have no idea of the viability of them. I know using the previous system people in the same party would submit the same itinerary hoping to get it. (I have never done this but saw it as a viable strategy. ) This new system will likely encourage the same people to try and get the same itinerary in the minutes it will take for them to disappear. This could result in one party getting awarded the same itinerary 2-3

times!

Although the last system was cumbersome not only for the rangers who worked through it ,it was also hard for planning for the potential backcountry hikers. I would propose several more rangers to work on the project so it could be finished quickly and not so burdensome for one. I might suggest too, that the submitting party puts down all the potential names for that itinerary and if the same route , same itinerary has the same names it gets eliminated, if it's submitted twice. Just an idea ( sorry, not well thought out...they could change all the names of course) to get less submissions to work through. Again thank you for all you time and effort and know I am appreciative of the expertise that goes into making decisions Re back country permits.

Just suggestions: Also last year I observed hikers leaving food bags on-the ground in the back country behind many glacier. People need to be read the riot act about proper bear Safe procedures in the back country for the protection of the wild life. Also people on eastern schedules would get up very early and start talking very loudly waking up all other hikers. They also need to be educated about basic consideration.

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Correspondence ID: 126Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,15 2023 10:47:39

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I understand the desire to utilize recreation.gov for processing applications for backcountry backpacking sites in Glacier NP this year due to the increasing demand for backcountry permits in the Summer months. As an avid backpacker that has been fortunate to secure backcountry permits almost every summer for the past 20 years I am concerned that my experiences with the proposed approach will be identical to those experiences in securing Teton Crest Trail permits and campsite reservations at other national parks.

My experience is that even when having flexibility and being prepared and signed into my recreation.gov account before the start time of 8:00:00 AM mountain time, that the site has so many users attempting to acquire permits that the site sends a 'busy' message. By the time you refresh the screen and start selecting again ( maybe 10 seconds), the number of sites and dates is decreasing since some users re able to get through. Within seconds to a couple of minutes the most desirable sites needed to build an itinerary are already booked. Even when you think, ok I got my sites for a multi-day itinerary, then go to checkout the message back is that some or all of your selections are no longer available.

Not sure if the persons proposing this approach have ever tried to reserve a multi-day itinerary on Grand Teton at opening day and experienced the stress of trying to secure permits. I hope for the best but remember what happened years ago when the site crashed on opening day March 15 which is why the previous lottery system was implemented.

Glacier National park is my favorite place to hike, bike and backpack and I hope to be able to backpack there again this year. I'm also hoping the this proposed system works well but from my experience I am already looking to alternatives in the likely event that I do not secure permits. Yes walk-ins are a possibility but even when the number was 50% advanced it was difficult to secure a decent hike even waiting in line at Apgar at 5:00AM with the office to open.

Thank you for considering this input and I do very much appreciate the fine folks at the backcountry offices that I have interacted with for the past 20 years. They have always been helpful, knowledgeable and professional.

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Correspondence ID: 127Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,15 2023 11:01:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Lotteries are better. Releasing all openings at once is difficult for anyone who is busy at that particular minute, and way more stressful. Not in line with camping vibes. Lottery allows everyone a chance to enter in a non-stressful environment, and if you win a permit then cool.

Correspondence ID: 128Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,15 2023 11:03:55

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Recreation.gov is one of the worst things to happen to the parks. We need far less of it, not more. I'm all for an advance reservation system, but not if it has anything to do with that deliberately clunky and terrible website.

Aside from the rampant issues with bots and scripts, you're talking about booking 70% of all the campsites for the season within a few seconds on one day in March. I don't want to see outrageous fees denying public access, but the fee structure does absolutely nothing to mitigate no-shows. Last time I hiked GNP end to end, over half of the sites were left empty despite being fully booked. Anyone claiming a permit and failing to release that permit in advance of the no-show should be banned from making any reservations on recreation.gov for any destination, for the remainder of the year, and all of the next year. A second no-show should permanently ban that person from the system and relegate them to walk-up permits for the rest of their life.

It's a very, very simple and obvious solution. It's far from perfect, but it's far better than the &quot;absolutely nothing&quot; that you do now. You're trying to address the wrong problems, and you're even proposing to make things worse.

30% of sites saved for walk-ups simply isn't enough. When I visited the park, I had to wait almost a week to get permits to hike through on the CDT. All that time wasted, and there were vacant sites all over the place. Since this proposal would make it offensively difficult to string together a multi night itinerary, you must consider what to do with those vacant sites from no-shows. Doctors, restaurants, studio photographers, and many other professionals use a simple, automated confirmation system as the appointment draws near. Send an automated message to the provided contact info one week in advance and again three days in advance. Anyone who fails to confirm their intention to show up should have their permits released automatically. Anyone who confirms and still fails to show up should be banned from future participation since they are only degrading the very concept of &quot;for the enjoyment of the people.&quot;

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Correspondence ID: 129Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,15 2023 11:08:54

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I like the new process in general, seems reasonable to limit most groups to 4 or less to minimize impact and overcrowding.

Seems great that we can access the reservation system in advance and get familiar with how/what to book before it opens.

Regarding the one-day lottery for larger groups... is there any way of enforcing that those groups are spread out evenly on different days? Or do they submit their application and just drawn at random so that (in theory) you could have 30 large groups all chose on the same weekend (unlikely, but you get my point).

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Correspondence ID: 130Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,15 2023 11:31:46

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Changing to recreation.gov would be so much worse of a system for a place as special and unique as glacier. The prior lottery system was thoughtful, fair, and preserved the area better than a free for all online approach would ever be. Don't make this change that will make glacier worse for all of us!

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Public Comments – Migration of Wilderness Permit Reservation System to Recreation.gov  
Glacier National Park

Correspondence ID: 131Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,15 2023 11:48:33

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I do not think moving to a first-come first-served system for backcountry permits is the right move. As a result of this change, March 15th will just be a contest to see who can type the fastest while also having the fastest internet with the least latency.

I will admit that lotteries aren't always my favorite answer, but they do give everyone an equal chance at acquiring the itinerary they want. Reservation.gov supports lotteries so they could continue to be used.

As an alternative, why have advance reservations at all? What if they were done away with completely. If a group wants to have a backcountry itinerary, they can arrive at the park in person three days (or some other predetermined time) before the start of their hike and book their campsites as available then and there. This makes the backcountry more available to those already at the park and allows the entire capacity of the backcountry to be available by not holding back portions for walkup permits since everything would be a walkup permit.

Thank you.

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Correspondence ID: 132Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,15 2023 13:24:49

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Great system! I approve.

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Correspondence ID: 133Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,15 2023 14:57:44

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have struck out several times with the advanced reservation lottery system through pay.gov, however, I am also experienced with booking campsites through recreation.gov which can be equally challenging. Are there any safe guards in place to prevent bots from overtaking the reservation system to ensure the campsites will go directly to the person who reserves the campsite?

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Correspondence ID: 134Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,15 2023 16:24:40

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: This is a terrible idea. The lottery system, although in itself flawed, is far better than people using clickbots to snatch up coveted permits. This will be a disaster and people will be worse off for it.

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Correspondence ID: 135Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,15 2023 17:27:09

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Thus far, the system is either not set up or is not working. Have done this for decades, (obviously not online years ago), how can we preset our requests if not functioning. Should be USER FRIENDLY, NOT!

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Correspondence ID: 136Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,15 2023 18:15:46

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not implement a first-come, first-served reservation system through recreation.gov for Glacier NP. The website cannot accommodate the volume of traffic it receives at 7am when the reservation window opens. (Try reserving a site at Yosemite or SEKI through recreation.gov.) Because Glacier requires backcountry itineraries with consecutive available backcountry campsites, it's especially ill-suited to the first-come, first-served model on recreation.gov. Just use a lottery system to ensure a more equitable outcome than giving only those available at 7am PST on 3/15 with high-speed connection (and maybe some bots) a chance to secure their itinerary. And run the site in the public interest--the President has declared war on junk fees, so ditch Booz Allen Hamilton.

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Correspondence ID: 137Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,15 2023 19:41:35

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: More information is needed for us to understand the full impact of this proposed change in reservation systems. For instance, what is the net change in revenue GLAC will incur through this change in reservation systems? Is that change in revenue net positive or net negative? If it is net negative, where will the previously-generated revenue used to help fund wilderness operations be backfilled from? How will this change (if there is, in fact, a net change in revenue produced through the sale of permits) impact operations?

Not knowing the answers to these questions makes it difficult to assess the impact of this change.

Furthermore, how will the \$10 permit fee be shared between GLAC and Recreation.gov? What portion of the \$10 will be retained within GLAC? And finally, what portion of the \$10 (not retained within GLAC) will be retained by the federal land management agencies which publicly administer Recreation.gov, and what portion (if any) will be retained by the contractor administering Recreation.gov? The statement, "The \$10.00 permit fee would be shared between the park and Recreation.gov," does not provide the public with sufficient information concerning where their fee dollars are going.

I request that GLAC make the answers to the questions asked above available to the public, as this can help GLAC visitors make informed decision-making concerning their support for this change and, if the change occurs, decision-making during the permit-purchasing process. Further, if the change is enacted, I recommend transparent messaging on Recreation.gov concerning: 1) how fees are distributed between GLAC, the federal land management agencies publicly administering Recreation.gov, and the contractor administering Recreation.gov, 2) how many people have entered the early access lottery at any given time, and 3) the likelihood of successfully gaining early access based on the amount of lottery entrees already purchased.

I ask that the answers to the questions asked above be released publicly through a news release by GLAC and information related to fee allocation be made clearly available on Recreation.gov. I ask that this information be made available prior to any future transition to Recreation.gov.

Please email me with a response to this public comment.

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Correspondence ID: 138Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,16 2023 05:40:28

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I personally really like the current system. It is good to know that a ranger who is more familiar with the park has reviewed my trip and signed off on it. I also like how other site accommodations can be made if your proposed trip doesn't work. Under this system it seems like it will be a free for all with no oversight. I also find this site very frustrating when trying to book popular things like campgrounds or backback sites. Thousands of people sign on at 8am MST and you're lucky to get a site even if you have one selected and add to cart exactly at 8am. I do understand that this process is much less labor intensive for the limited parks staff.

Correspondence ID: 139Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,16 2023 08:01:28

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: While I am not opposed to updating or streamlining reservation systems, particularly if they relieve admin burden on NPS staff, I think that this change to rec.gov should be considered carefully to be sure it's in the best interest of the American public (i.e. ensuring as fair and equitable of a system as possible for all users) and the individual parks that administer permits (e.g. generating internal funding).

Is it estimated that this change would results in an increase in fee revenue, or decrease? If decrease, is there adequate funding allocated to cover the shortfall - particularly for onsite maintenance, seasonal staff, and user experience at GNP wilderness?

Will it change the way that fee money is distributed? Will the cost of administering the system, previously wrapped up with onsite staff that can contribute to secondary services while they are employed by NPS, instead be spent on a contractor with no obligation or presence on site?

Changes should fully consider the impacts to on-site staff, revenue and funding for GNP, and the equitable distribution of opportunity among park users.

Thank you,

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Correspondence ID: 140Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,16 2023 09:44:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Both methods of registration for groups larger than 4 (one-day application period via pay.gov and requiring multiple permits via recreation.gov) prioritize registration for larger groups as they are able to:

1. Register for advance permits via pay.gov before all other smaller groups, thereby reducing the number of permits available for smaller groups during their later registration period.
2. Acquire multiple permits for the same campground during the same period. While this may be a more equitable system for registration of larger groups, it creates a complicated and cumbersome process during registration in which groups must secure multiple permits at the same campgrounds for the same nights in order to maintain their itinerary. This will no doubt frustrate large and small groups as each compete for permits during the hectic minutes following the release of advance reservations.

I assert that a more fair method for advance reservations would be to allow both large and small groups to enter an early-access lottery (or similar) that would allow winners of the lottery to make their reservations before the general advance reservation period. Additionally, each campground should have group size limits as appropriate for the size of the campground. Following the early-access lottery, the general advance reservation system could proceed as proposed without any special accommodations for larger groups. Larger groups would therefore be required to plan their itineraries such that they include only campgrounds that are able to accommodate their numbers while still being afforded all the same opportunities as smaller groups to secure their reservation. This would shift the necessary burden of acquiring permits for larger groups onto the community of larger groups without interfering with the reservation process for smaller groups.

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Correspondence ID: 141Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,16 2023 11:29:08

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Public Comments – Migration of Wilderness Permit Reservation System to Recreation.gov  
Glacier National Park

Correspondence: I am in favor of this proposal for the added convenience of not having to wait for months to find out if you got a permit or not. I also think this is a more fair option than the previous day 1 lottery method. I think the park should receive more of the fees than what is stated for the park vs. recreation.gov split.

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Correspondence ID: 142Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,16 2023 11:29:26

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I believe this is the same system used by Grand Teton National Park, and I have used that system in the past, and I believe that, overall, it is a good system. However, I think it can be improved. On the day and time the permit reservation system opens, the system is extremely busy with many people trying to reserve campsites for their dream outing. Because the system does not continually refresh each users computer screen, multiple users can select a single campsite and by the time they attempt to checkout, that campsite has been reserved by a different user and the system informs the user that their reservation cannot be filled without informing them which campsite (or campsites) has already been reserved. This forces the user to refresh their screen and start over, with a high likelihood that they will experience the same issue when they attempt to checkout the next time. Based on my experience on January 10, 2023 using Grand Teton permit reservation system, this can be extremely frustrating.

In my opinion, the system would be much less frustrating if the site held each campsite as it is selected in a temporary itinerary, not letting other users select the temporarily held campsites. By temporary, I mean long enough for a user to select a full itinerary and begin the checkout procedure, maybe 2 or 3 minutes. If a site has been selected by a different user since the last screen refresh, the system would give immediate feedback that the site is held by a different user. Another option would be to have the website refresh each users screen a couple of times per second. I hope this is clear. If not, please email me at the address above. I hope that you use this opportunity to improve the users experience with the website that represents your beautiful national park.

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Correspondence ID: 143Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,16 2023 14:05:40

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I was dismayed to see the update on <https://www.nps.gov/glac/planyourvisit/backcountry-reservations.htm> re: changes to the wilderness permit reservation system. I was thankfully able to secure a permit in 2019 and I loved my time in Glacier. I am sure the old process created a lot of trouble for wilderness rangers to design itineraries for each applicant, but I liked these features of the system:

1. It was mediated by a lottery such that it did not require people to be sitting right at their computers at a specific time to gain access to the permits.
2. It allowed for some flexibility in itineraries to be accommodated based on site availability once someone's application came through.

I am hopeful that whatever system Glacier comes up with will maintain these features.

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Correspondence ID: 144Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,16 2023 14:22:50

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am really dismayed to see that Glacier is transitioning to a release of all permits for the backpacking season on a single day for smaller groups. While I appreciate that Glacier will preview the interface for a month prior, this will just create a crazy scramble for permits at 8 AM on 3/15. It is an extremely stressful experience as a trip planner and severely limits participation for people who are not able to take the time to be present in front of their computers at the appointed day and time.

I would much prefer that Glacier adopt either of the following systems:

1. Applicants apply in December or January to a lottery to be able to book their itineraries. In February, the applicants are randomized and the booking window begins. When their number comes up, applicants have access to the booking interface where they can build their itineraries without having to compete with thousands of other people at the same time. Applicants have just a day or two to build their itineraries before other applicants are given a chance.
2. Open permits for campsite-days on a rolling basis. This is the system that Inyo National Forest does for its wilderness permits. I think this alternative is worse than the previous one because it would require applicants to return to rec.gov multiple days in a row to build an itinerary visiting multiple campsites. But it would at least people multiple chances to build a backpacking itinerary.

Either of these alternatives would be much preferred to having just 1 minute to secure an advance reservation to Glacier.

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Correspondence ID: 145Project:114545Document:126169  
Received: Feb,16 2023 15:40:54  
Correspondence Type: Web Form  
Correspondence: Superintendent Dave Roemer, Glacier National Park  
Attn: Wilderness Camping Permits  
PO Box 1  
West Glacier, MT 59936

February 17, 2023

Superintendent Roemer:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Wilderness Camping Permits planning process that is currently underway. NPCA was formed in 1919 to be an independent voice for and a watchdog of our national parks. We have long been involved in planning in Glacier (GLAC) and in the responsible management of our backcountry wilderness and have long supported the backcountry camping permit system in GLAC. On behalf of our 1.6 million members and supporters nationwide, I submit the following comments.

The moving of the backcountry permit system from the lottery at pay.gov to online reservations at recreation.gov leaves us with many questions, especially given the timeline of this NEPA process. It feels as though the decision to move has already been made, so this public involvement is just box-checking. A real public process, that is planning to take concerns and questions raised into account, would not occur with a 15-day comment period that ends a month before the proposed change is going to happen. If GLAC were serious about this, either the comment period should have been done in summer/fall of 2022, or this open period should be for the changes to take place for the summer 2024 season.

That said, we have many concerns about how the change to recreation.gov will impact the backcountry permitting system. As has been noted with the managed access system for entry tickets, recreation.gov is not a platform that allows for equitable access to getting backcountry permits. In order to do so, you need 1) reliable and fast internet service, 2) to be able to be online at 8am MST to truly have a chance at getting a permit (not possible for many who work) and 3) be able to read & understand complicated processes in English.

If you meet all these requirements, then there is the concern that people, if they are not able get their first-choice trip, will just grab campground permits that are open. This could lead people to either have backcountry itineraries that make no sense or are not feasible, which would put backcountry users in danger because they didn't understand the distance/difficulty of the trips they booked. It will certainly lead to more frustration on behalf of users, who are now competing to get their trips in an online and live space, as opposed to the lottery as it's currently run.

As part of the directions on GLAC's backcountry reservations page, it states that if you receive a "error" when the "book now" button is pressed, that means that one/or all of your chosen campgrounds is no longer available...but does it tell you which one? Or will users have to change entire trips? Or change one campground at a time to find out which was not available? This will lead many users to lose the portions of their trips that they could have done, with one or two minor changes, while they try to figure out what was already booked.

Because the timeline to change this process is so short now, we suggest that GLAC continue with the backcountry reservation lottery on pay.gov as in previous years and take a year to answer the above questions and role out a new reservation system that is equitable to everyone. We would also suggest that a website that allowed people to "test drive" the system, not just look at the website with no way to look at the map platform or how you would pick campgrounds (is it a list? A map?), be produced so that people understand how the reservation process will really work.

It was pointed out in a conversation with Brian McKeon that North Cascades has the same permitting system, and that they have created a video of how to reserve a backcountry permit through recreation.gov. We would encourage the park leadership and staff to make creating a video for GLAC a priority, hopefully to have something available prior to the launch of the new permit system.

As stated above, this public comment period feels as though the park is just checking the "public involvement" box and is not prepared to address the comments and concerns that are revealed. Please slow this process down and look at ways to make this process more equitable and clearer to everyone.

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Correspondence ID: 146Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,16 2023 15:46:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have been backpacking in Glacier National Park for over 20 years and have utilized the advance reservation process many times. The process has included submitting applications via mail, fax and pay.gov. I also participated in the pay.gov lottery the first year when the applications were processed in the order they were received and the system crashed. I understand the need for a revised process and do like the change that I will know quickly if I have a permit instead of waiting months for something. I also have used the system for a permit in Grand Teton and found it fairly easy to use. However, I have some concerns with the proposed new process.

1. The quantity of 30 group applications for 5-8 hikers that are being processed prior to smaller group applications seems a bit large. This feels like an advantage for groups to get the prime trips prior to the small groups even getting an opportunity. In an extreme case, a prime route such as in the Bowman/Kintla area could be taken for the entire season before small groups can book an itinerary. Especially this year since that area will be closed starting 9/1/23. It seems more equitable for everyone if a smaller quantity of permits, such as 10 groups of 5-8 and 5 groups of greater than 9 would be processed first in that lottery. This just has a feel that you are trying to accommodate the commercial guided trips that would have only one trip leader over the smaller, independent non-commercial hikers.

2. I have concerns that recreation.gov cannot handle the volume that will be seen on March 15. Many people do not have access to fast/reliable internet or many not be sure on how to use recreation.gov quickly. I have logged on this season to book permits for Grand Teton and also for Many Glacier campground and found the system very sluggish. I also happened to be on at 10am one morning looking at something else and the system totally stopped. This was on a random day with no big event that I know of. I understand that recreation.gov is the standard now for permits/campgrounds/tickets, etc. and have no issue with that. My concern is the volume that will be received at one time. Has recreation.gov done testing to ensure it can handle the volume of users? Did you consider the system that Yellowstone has in place? First a lottery, then smaller groups logging on to book itineraries. I'm sure Yellowstone went to this system for a purpose of handling the large

volume and in fairness to all users. Perhaps I am just getting fatigue from having to log onto recreation.gov at a very exact time in order to compete for permits/sites/tickets.

3. Another concern is that this process was communicated very late in the planning process for applicants. Many may have not yet used recreation.gov to book a trip and be unfamiliar with the process. To date there is nothing on recreation.gov to try to “dry run” and application. All that is there is the basic information on the process. Also, the comment period extends past the information being added to recreation.gov. Will the comments be evaluated before the process is formally approved or has it been approved? It seems like a short time frame to process all comments and make any changes to the process prior to March 1.

4. I would not be as concerned on the difficulty in securing an itinerary and would just do a walk up permit. However, the switch last year from 50/50 reserved vs walk up to 70/30 makes the walk up process much more difficult. If you continue with the recreation.gov process, perhaps you will consider going back to 50/50 to accommodate those that do not have good internet access.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I appreciate the work being done to allow backpacking and advance permits in the park and the effort to find a system that is easy to use and equitable. I realize the previous processes were very labor intensive and took a very long time to process. I think recreation.gov has great potential. No process or system will be perfect. I believe most users just want it to be as equitable as possible.

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Correspondence ID: 147Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,17 2023 08:49:10

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I think the new system is overall a well thought-out way of approaching the existing shortcomings of the GNP campsite rental system. I think it's nice and streamlined for them to transfer their rental system onto the Recreation.gov system which is already universal for most public lands in America. I think the \$10 fee payable, plus \$7 each head per night, seems not too unreasonable when compared to the original 30\$ booking fee that existed. I also think that limiting people to groups of 4, before they need to take additional steps or fees to increase their group size, is also okay in my personal opinion. However, I think one critique I have is that this may limit cultural demographics which usually stick in bigger groups of family/friends when travelling or visiting areas. This might dissuade those very groups from visiting due to the barriers placed on large groups trying to acquire reservations.

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Correspondence ID: 148Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,17 2023 10:25:55

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As a student studying Parks, Tourism, and Recreation Management at the University of Montana, I am concerned about Recreation.gov. The newsletter talks about how various groups will have to have various amount of permits and there will be time slots of when they come available. The way Recreation.gov is set up, it has become an unfair and challenging way to book campsites. I recently listened to a podcast featuring my professor, where he explained that some people will book a campsite for 2 weeks, but only stay there for 1-2 nights. Or, they will want some kind of seclusion, and booked both campsites on each side of the one they will stay at. How is that fair? Those recreation behaviors will take away from others visitor experiences. If people book a campsite but don't stay in it the whole time is not only unfair, but immoral. All people should have equal ability to go visit the national parks that were made for everyone, and recreation.gov will not fulfill that moral requirement.

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Correspondence ID: 149Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,17 2023 14:45:17

Public Comments – Migration of Wilderness Permit Reservation System to Recreation.gov  
Glacier National Park

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The pay.gov system is confusing, not intuitive, and challenging to navigate! Shifting to recreation.gov would be an improvement.

However, the proposed permitting system will incentivize permit hoarding just as the online campsite reservation and vehicle reservation systems have. Would be visitors will simply &quot;book it in case I want it.&quot; By the end of the first day, and likely not far into the day, every campsite will be reserved for the entire season, with many &quot;no shows&quot; throughout the summer. This is a disservice to everyone.

A certain percentage of permits should be made available for walk up - NOT 100% online!

Isn't this system shift to provide better access to the park while addressing use concerns? This proposed system will NOT accomplish that.

Thank you.

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Correspondence ID: 150Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,17 2023 16:11:13

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It is unclear from the proposal how the \$10 permit fee will be shared between GLAC and Recreation.gov, and does not provide the public with sufficient information regarding where their fee dollars will go. What portion of the fee will be retained by the contractor administering Recreation.gov? This information is important as far as visitors making informed decisions.

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Correspondence ID: 151Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,17 2023 16:26:29

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I strongly disagree with the proposal to move to use the Recreation.gov system. It costs excessively for merely a chance to get into the park. It is extremely profitable for a greedy and corrupt corporation and owner.

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Correspondence ID: 152Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,17 2023 19:53:28

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Dear NPS-

While I'm glad to see the switch to recreation.gov, I do have some concerns. Because of the increased volume of applications for permits across all parks, like many people I have applied for multiple permits across multiple parks and multiple days.

The pay.gov system is my least favorite.

1. Releasing all the permits at once is problematic. A better solution would be like the North Cascades (also on recreation.gov) where you get a staggered entry to pick your available sites and routes, or like The Enchantments where it's all or nothing. The pay.gov system has given me crazy itineraries....14 miles one day, 2 the next. Recreation will be better.

2. The other problem is one I don't see addressed in your proposal is front country camping. The dates for backcountry permits mean by the time the permits are awarded, all the front-country camping is full. This has led me to stay in crazy places. Also, for permits that start on the east side, access to the GTTS road should be allowed the day before, before 5pm.

Please consider both these points moving forward so everyone can have a good time in the park.

Thank you.

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Correspondence ID: 153Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,17 2023 20:01:38

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I do not like the removal of the human element. For instance, what will prevent a person from booking a campsite 15 miles into the backcountry? Then when they find out it's harder than they thought and they can't make it, they either need rescue or they "squat" at a campsite that is not their own but on their way. At least with the human element in the reservation process a ranger could prevent someone from booking so far in the backcountry. Will the new system have a limit on mileage allowed between trailhead and first campsite? Between campsites? It needs to.

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Correspondence ID: 154Project:114545Document:126169

Received: Feb,17 2023 21:44:14

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I submitted a previous comment indicating my dismay that Glacier is planning to adopt a one-day-release plan for distributing wilderness permits. Whereas before I was fairly prescriptive in what I thought the park should do, I want to instead describe some high-level requirements for what I think a fair permit distribution system should be and hopefully give you all the freedom to decide on a better system if you don't like what I said before.

I think a fair permit distribution system will:

1. Give people more than one day to apply for their itinerary to be considered.
1. Not privilege those who have faster Internet access or have a schedule more aligned with when permits are released.
2. Rely primarily on lotteries to allocate opportunities to book permits.
3. Avoid "race conditions" where a large number of others compete to procure the same limited supply
4. Allow planners to book all sites needed for their itinerary in one sitting when they have their opportunity to book.

It seems like Mt Rainier's early access system for distributing permits fulfills a number of these requirements:

<https://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/wilderness-permit.htm>

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From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2023 11:49 AM

To: GLAC Questions, NPS <GLAC\_Questions@nps.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Backcountry permit concerns/ideas

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Dear Glacier Park Rangers:

My husband and I stopped into the station at West Glacier a week ago to ask some question about walk-up backcountry permits. Mr. Stanton wasn't sure of the answers, so he asked us to submit to this email address.

Here is our story:

We and some of our friends like to get last-minute permits at Two Medicine, which is 2 hours 15 minutes or 1.5 hours away for us. We can get there by 8 a.m. to get the permits; however, since Two Med now required a car permit, we would have to enter before 6 a.m., which just won't work for us to get up that early. The other option is to enter at 3 p.m., but that is too late to start hiking, so we would have to spend an overnight somewhere, which is pricey for retirees.

Mr. Stanton suggested driving to St. Mary, but you can understand that would require even more driving time.

So what could be solutions to this? We thought of a few.

1. Have permitting done at the entrance station
2. Allow last-minute permitting online or call-in the day before
3. Set up a station in East Glacier--the old bus barn? The Lodge?
4. Open Two Med to non-permits until 8 a.m.

Other ideas?

As you know, locals are already frustrated with the permitting system and now backcountry seems out of our reach as well. While we agree with the permitting system in general, we hope you can help find solutions that are more manageable for us. We realize that people travel a long way to see the park and we want them to have a positive experience as well. We, too, want the numbers limited on the trails and to find parking when we go—so we get it.

And an idea for locals and the car passes: Could one day a week be designated "locals" day and give up to 50% of the passes to locals on that day before they are offered to the general public, with the requirement that the address and MT drivers license be a Montana resident? Maybe Mondays?

Thank you for listening.

February 12, 2023

Superintendent, Glacier National Park  
Attn: Wilderness Camping Permits  
PO Box 1  
West Glacier, MT 59936

Superintendent Roemer:

I live directly across the North Fork from the park, and am a lifelong resident of the Flathead valley. Members of my family have lived in, owned property in, worked for and recreated in Glacier National Park going back to before it was created. I and my siblings and families have backpacked, hiked, biked, paddled, fished, skied, as well as climbed scores if not more of Glacier's Peaks. Unfortunately, under the "leadership" of the last couple of your predecessors, the park has become unwelcoming to us, and we have more or less been forced to carry out these activities elsewhere.

We started by avoiding the "silly season", and were heavy users of the shoulder seasons. You, however, continue to close more areas of the park, restricting reasonable access, and making it harder and harder for us to enjoy. Your actions have succeeded in driving many locals away, ourselves included. My grandsons still enjoy the park, but you will succeed in driving them away as well, which is perhaps the plan in favoring tourists.

The park reservation system is a joke. Read the Hungry Horse News, reservations sold out in 12 minutes and the website "doesn't always work very well" to quote Chris Peterson, which is a bit of an understatement. The recreation.gov website is a disaster, particularly for those of us in rural Montana whom have marginal internet access!

Increasingly, I have been forced to try to use recreation.gov to try to recreate on federal lands, and the experience has been error prone, time consuming, and the hassle has driven me away. And now, you are going to put the backcountry permit system on it? I vehemently object! It's a bad idea and will not work.

Meanwhile, I would like to see an effort to welcome more locals, and an acknowledgement of those of us that have been long time users and supporters of the park.

Sincerely,

