



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
National Capital Region
1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20242

September 9, 2016

Dear Park Visitor:

For decades, the National Park Service (NPS) picnic areas in Rock Creek Park and Fort Dupont Park have served as spots where groups have met for celebrations and gatherings. As someone who has enjoyed these sites, we wanted to reach out with information regarding upcoming changes in the reservation system and inform you of our proposal to increase fees. Since 1949, the NPS had an agreement with the District of Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to manage the group picnic area reservations on NPS property at Rock Creek Park and Fort Dupont Park. DPR asked the NPS to assume the management of the reservation process for these NPS sites. March 1, 2014, the NPS transferred the reservation process to Recreation.gov, a convenient website used by many national parks and thousands of park visitors across the country. We worked with DPR to ensure that the transition was a smooth one for all park visitors and Washington Area residents.

The reservation fee for a group picnic area had not changed since the early 1990's. In 2013, the National Service solicited public engagement and comment regarding the need to bring its fee in line with the price for similar group picnic areas in the Washington Metropolitan Area, and providing options for full-day and half-day rentals. As proposed to the public in 2013, we began phasing in this increase over 3 years starting in the summer of 2014 with an increase to \$25/half day and in 2015 with an increase to \$45/half day. Anticipating an increase in park visitation resulting from the NPS Centennial, the NPS decided to delay implementation of the third phase, originally planned for 2016 until 2017. We are now preparing to implement the third phase of the increase to \$65/half day beginning January 1, 2017. The additional revenue will improve the condition of the picnic areas and the level of service provided to visitors.

The National Park Service hosted two opportunities in late 2013 for the public to learn more about the new permitting system and the proposed fee increase. This letter serves as a reminder of the planned implementation of phase three of the proposal in 2017. The National Park Service is inviting comments during a 21-day public comment period through September 29, 2016, via the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/picnic> or submit written comments to:

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

If you require additional information, please contact for Fort Dupont, Vicky Gammon at 202-690-5193, and for Rock Creek Park, Frank Young, Deputy Superintendent at 202-895-6002. Thank you for your interest and participation in this process.

Sincerely,

Tara Morrison
Superintendent
Rock Creek Park

Gopaul Noojibail
Superintendent
National Capital Parks-East