

Mammoth Cave National Park

Proposed Recreational Fee Changes for 2021

General Information

The authority to charge recreational fees at national parks stems from the 2004 Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.

Expanded amenity fee (campground, tours, day use, etc.) increases require annual comparability studies and are determined by comparing the cost of Mammoth Cave tours and campsites with the cost of privately operated businesses of similar duration and visitor experience. The park keeps fees in line with private operators and must not over or under charge for tours and visitor amenities.

Current rates have been in effect since 2018, and the proposed fees would remain in place until at least 2024.

Proposed Rates

Cave Tours

Existing Cave Tour	Current Rate Adult	Current Rate Youth ¹	Proposed Rate Adult	Proposed Rate Youth
Accessible Tour	\$20.00	\$14.00	\$22.00	\$16.00
Broadway	\$11.00	\$8.00	\$18.00	\$13.00
Cleveland Tour	\$20.00	\$14.00	\$22.00	\$16.00
Discovery Tour	\$6.00	\$4.00	\$8.00	\$6.00
Domes & Driestone	\$17.00	\$12.00	\$21.00	\$16.00
Extended Historic	\$18.00	\$13.00	\$23.00	\$17.00
Focus on Frozen Niagara	\$16.00	\$12.00	\$16.00	\$12.00
Frozen Niagara	\$14.00	\$10.00	\$18.00	\$14.00
Gothic	\$15.00	\$10.00	\$19.00	\$15.00
Grand Ave	\$30.00	\$23.00	\$35.00	\$27.00
Great Onyx	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$23.00	\$18.00
Historic	\$17.00	\$12.00	\$20.00	\$15.00
Intro to Caving	\$30.00	\$24.00	\$35.00	\$28.00
Mammoth Passage	\$8.00	\$6.00	\$11.00	\$9.00
River Styx	\$18.00	\$13.00	\$22.00	\$16.00
Star Chamber	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$25.00	\$20.00
Trog (ages 8 - 12)	N/A	\$20.00	N/A	\$25.00
Violet City	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$25.00	\$20.00
Wild Cave (age 16+)	\$60.00	\$30.00	\$66.00	\$33.00

¹ Youth is considered ages 6-12 unless noted otherwise. Children 5 years and younger are free.

Educational Tours	Current Rate	Proposed Rate
Historic Tour School Group (age 18-)	\$11.00	\$14.00
Environmental Education Groups	\$6.00	\$6.00

New Cave Tours	Current Rate Adult	Current Rate Youth	Proposed Rate Adult	Proposed Rate Youth
Specialty Tour	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$65 per hour	\$65 per hour
Wondering Woods	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$18.00	\$14.00
Grand Historic	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$35.00	\$27.00

Camping

Campsite Type²	Mammoth Cave Campground	Maple Springs Group Campground³	Houchin Ferry Campground
Current Rate Electric	\$50.00	\$35.00	\$0.00
Current Rate Non-Electric	\$20.00	\$25.00	\$15.00
Current Rate Group Sites	\$25.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Proposed Rate Electric	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$0.00
Proposed Rate Non-Electric	\$25.00	\$30.00	\$20.00
Proposed Rate Group Sites	\$40.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

New Camping Fees⁴	Current Rate	Proposed Rate
Backcountry Camping	\$0.00	\$10.00
Riverside Camping	\$0.00	\$10.00

Day Use Fee

Picnic Shelters	Current Rate	Proposed Rate
Enclosed Shelter	\$75.00	\$80.00
Open Shelter	\$50.00	\$55.00

America the Beautiful Interagency Senior/Access pass holders will continue to receive a 50% discount off the regular ticket price for the pass-holder only, as well as 50% off campground fees. Reservation for groups campsites, picnic shelters or backcountry camping do not receive a 50% discount.

Use of Fees

At Mammoth Cave, 80 percent of the fees collected are used in the park to fund projects that address deferred maintenance needs, enhance visitor programs and services, protect resources,

² Nightly fee for overnight camping

³ All sites at Maple Springs are group campgrounds. There are no individual campsites.

⁴ One-time permit fee per backcountry or riverside camping reservation

improve and rehabilitate facilities for visitors. The remaining 20 percent helps support projects in the 270 national park units that do not charge entrance fees, like nearby Abraham Lincoln Birthplace NHP in Hodgenville, Ky.

Some examples of past projects and programs funded from recreation fees at Mammoth Cave National Park:

- Construction of the Mammoth Cave Visitor Center
- Expansion of parking at Maple Springs Campground
- Funding of staff for cave tour and campground operations
- Replacement of pedestrian bridge at visitor center
- Funding of Youth Citizen Science program
- Rehabilitation of Wondering Woods surface and cave trail

Some examples of upcoming projects planned using recreation fees:

- Roof replacement and major renovations of the main Mammoth Cave Hotel building
- Mammoth Cave Campground improvements
- Renovation of historically toured caves for new tour opportunities
- Funding staff for cave tour and campground operations

Proposed Changes to Fees

In addition to the fee increases on the existing cave tours, campsites, and day use picnic shelters, new fees are being proposed for the forthcoming Wondering Woods Tour, Grand Historic Tour, backcountry camping and riverside camping reservations, and for a “Specialty Tour” option which would allow the park to offer limited time cave tour opportunities that may not be included in a standard tour operating schedule.

The park is also proposing to eliminate the group discount of \$1.00 that is offered to parties of twelve or more. This option is underutilized and does not attract additional groups to the park. A special rate for school groups not associated with the park’s Environmental Education program will continue as an option for the Historic Tour.

Public Comments

The park is accepting written comments on the proposed rate increase during an open public comment period from Monday, August 24 to Tuesday, September 22. Comments are preferred to be submitted through the National Park Service (NPS) planning website at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/parkHome.cfm?parkID=392>.

Comments may also be mailed to: Mammoth Cave National Park, Proposed Fee Increase, PO

Box 7, Mammoth Cave, KY 42259. All mail-in comments must be postmarked by September 22.

Anonymous comments and comments submitted by e-mail will not be accepted. Bulk comments in any format submitted on behalf of others will not be accepted.