



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Assateague Island
National Seashore

7206 National Seashore Lane
Berlin, Maryland 21811

410-641-1443 phone
410-641-1099 fax
www.nps.gov/asis

Assateague Island National Seashore

News Release

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Regina Jones-Brake (410) 640-1443 x202

Proposed Fee Changes to be Implemented in 2008

Assateague Island National Seashore's Superintendent, Scott Bentley, announced today that Seashore staff have completed the evaluation of public comments received on the proposed 2008 fee schedule for the National Seashore. In accordance with the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004 (REA) and National Park Service Policy, Assateague Island National Seashore (hereinafter referred to as the Seashore) solicited public participation to determine appropriate rates for recreation and use fees. Superintendent Bentley said "a total of 121 recommendations were reviewed from the 117 official comments received during the public comment period in February and March. The majority of comments were very constructive and provided the Seashore with viable approaches to ensuring high quality services could continue to be provided at a reasonable cost."

The majority of comments (77 comments or 63%) received by the Seashore pertained to the proposed beach parking fee for the Virginia area of the Seashore within Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. The Virginia daily beach parking fee was proposed to ensure beach recreational services continue to be provided within the Refuge including covering the annual costs associated with rebuilding the beach parking lots and providing lifeguard services. 61% of the comments supported fees at the entrance station, 30% opposed any fee increase and 9% expressed no opinion of fee increases. The overwhelming majority of comments indicated that any fee increase in the Virginia area of the Seashore should be charged as a part of the existing entrance fee and not as a separate daily parking fee. In addition, comments strongly voiced that any new fees should be earmarked to help pay for beach parking and lifeguards.

In response to the public comment on the proposed Virginia daily beach parking fee, the National Park Service will not propose charging a daily beach parking fee in Virginia areas of the Seashore at this time. However, in order to provide needed funding for the maintenance of beach parking lots, facilities, and services, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service will now review its current fee program to determine if fee increases at the Virginia portion of Assateague Island are necessary. If changes are deemed necessary the public will again have an opportunity to comment on those proposed fee changes. Residents will have an opportunity to learn more about the need for increased fees in the Virginia portion of Assateague Island at a public meeting on Monday, May 14, 2007, in Chincoteague, VA. Anyone interested in, or having questions about, the 2008 fee structure for the Virginia areas of Assateague Island are encouraged to attend this meeting. Details on the location of this meeting will be released a minimum of one week prior to the meeting.

23 comments (19% of the total received) were received concerning the proposed new Oversand Vehicle fees. Of the 23 comments, the majority (65%) supported the new fees. The majority of the comments concerned the management of overnight use of the oversand vehicle route and how it impacts use limits on busy weekends and holidays.

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In response to the public comment on the proposed Oversand Vehicle Permit fees, the National Park Service will implement the proposed new fee structure in 2008. The National Park Service will also conduct a study of the Oversand Vehicle Zone to better understand the expectations of visitors in the Oversand Vehicle area of the Seashore and will continue to evaluate other fee structures to better address use concerns voiced by the public. 100% of the Oversand Vehicle Permit Fee collected by the National Park Service remains at the Seashore.

The other proposed 2008 fee changes included the Maryland Entrance Fees, Camping Fees, and Waterfowl Hunting Permit Fees. Very few comments were received on these fees. In general, 54% of the public opposed increases to fees, while 46% supported the increases.

In response to public comment, the National Park Service will increase the Maryland Entrance Fees and Camping Fees in 2008. The Seashore will only charge \$10.00 per 7-days for motorcycles instead of the proposed \$15.00 per 7-days. In addition, the National Park Service will begin charging an annual Waterfowl Hunting Permit Fee to offset the costs associated with this activity. 80% of the Maryland Entrance and Camping Fees remain at the Seashore and 20% of these fees go to benefit other National Parks throughout the country. 100% of the Waterfowl Hunting Permit Fee will remain at the Seashore.

Assateague Island National Seashore's fee scheduled is compatible with other similar national parks. The following fee changes will take place on January 1, 2008.

Entrance Fee:	When Valid:	Current Cost:	Proposed Change:
7 day individual entrance	7 days	\$ 3 Age 17-62	\$3 Age 16-62
7 day motorcycle entrance (Includes mopeds)	7 days	\$ 3 Age 17-62	\$10 Age 16-62
7 day vehicle entrance	7 days	\$10 Age 17-62	\$15 Age 16-62
Assateague Annual Entrance Pass	January 1 – December 31	\$ 20	\$30
Commercial Tour (26+ people)	1 day	\$100	\$100
Commercial Tour (7-25 people)	1 day	\$ 40	\$40
Commercial Tour (1-6 people)	1 day	\$ 25	\$25
Chincoteague NWR Annual Pass	1 year from purchase	Honored by ASIS	Payment of difference to ASIS Annual Pass
Chincoteague NWR Weekly Pass	7 days	Honored by ASIS	Payment of difference to ASIS 7-day Pass
Federal Duck Stamp	July 1 to June 30 of following year	Honored by ASIS	Payment of difference to ASIS Annual Pass

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Expanded Amenity Fees:	When Valid:	Current Cost:	Proposed Change:
Virginia Beach Services	Year-around	No Fee	To Be Determined
Reservation Camping	April 15 through October 15	\$20/night	\$22/night
First Come, First Served Camping	October 16 through April 14	\$16/night	\$18/night
Group Camping	Year-round	\$30/night	\$50/night
Horse Camping	October 16 through April 14	\$25/night	\$50/night
Backcountry Camping	Year-round	\$5/group	\$5/adult Age 16 and older

Special Use Permit Fees:	When Valid:	Current Cost:	Proposed Change:
VA Only Oversand Vehicle Day Use Permit	1 year from purchase, Refuge hours, No summer access	Previously allowed by \$70 OSV permit	\$70
Island-wide (MD & VA) Oversand Vehicle Day Use Permit	1 year from purchase, 5 AM – Midnight only	Previously allowed by \$70 OSV permit	\$90
Overnight Oversand Vehicle Permit (Includes Island-wide Day Use) Must be awake/no camping	1 year from purchase, 24hrs/day except in Refuge	Previously allowed by \$70 OSV permit	\$110
Bull Pen Overnight Parking Permit (Includes Island-wide Day Use and Overnight)	1 year from purchase 24hrs/day except in Refuge	Previously allowed by \$70 OSV permit	\$150
Waterfowl Hunting Permits	Per Season	No Fee	\$20/Season

Assateague Island National Seashore was authorized by act of Congress (Public Law 89-195) on September 21, 1965, to preserve and protect the unique Mid-Atlantic coastal resources and the natural ecosystem conditions and processes upon which they depend, while providing high quality resource-based recreational and educational opportunities. The authorized boundary includes approximately 48,700 acres of land and water in Maryland and Virginia. Located within an easy three hour drive of Washington D.C., Baltimore and Philadelphia metropolitan areas, Assateague Island offers visitors an unspoiled setting to experience the ambiance of a dynamic barrier island with its legendary wild horses and a multitude of exceptional recreational opportunities.

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