

PARK FUNDING



Public Opinion

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NATIONAL
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COALITION

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Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act Augments Recreational Experiences by Providing Needed Funds for National Parks, but is Set to Expire.

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) authorizes five federal land management agencies (the National Park Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Forest Service) to collect fees to enhance recreational opportunities for visitors at managed sites. **However, FLREA is scheduled to expire in September 2017 unless reauthorized by Congress. It must be authorized in 2016 to ensure the parks have annual fee authority going into fiscal year 2017.**

The National Park Service (NPS) charges entrance and/or recreation fees on less than half of their over 400 managed units. The collected fees are used to repair, maintain, and improve facilities; restore wildlife habitat for visitor recreation; offer educational materials and services; and provide law enforcement. Since FLREA enactment in 2005, the NPS has obligated approximately \$2.5 billion in recreation fee revenues which have funded over 11,200 projects and services within the National Park Service.

Recent surveys at NPS sites show that 95% of visitors (n=13,969) believe that the value for the entrance fee paid is “very good” or “good,” while only 1% believe that the value is less than average.

Congress is currently reviewing FLREA and beginning the process to reauthorize the law before October 1, 2016.

Should FLREA expire, the NPS stands to lose a significant source of funding—about \$180 million per year— used to enhance visitor experiences.

The National Parks Second Century Action Coalition, a national coalition dedicated to promoting the protection, restoration, and operation of the National Park System to benefit the health and well-being of current and future generations, provided the following recommendations for Congress to consider as it sets to modify and reauthorize FLREA:

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Recommendations of the Coalition:

- Require the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of the Agriculture to reevaluate the price of the America the Beautiful (ATB) Pass every three years with the first evaluation occurring within a year of FLREA reauthorization.
- Require the Secretary of the Interior to investigate and experiment with differential pricing to encourage non-peak visitation to parks.
- Allow for recipients of a Purple Heart to qualify for a disability pass.
- Encourage the Secretary of the Interior to investigate the use of new technologies and marketing partnerships, including international pass sales, by consulting with technology and marketing industry leaders.
- Direct the National Park Service to establish pilot projects investigating efficient, visitor-friendly pass sales and collection.
- Specify an increase in the cost of the senior pass through one of the following ways:
 1. Provide a 50% discount off the America the Beautiful (ATB) Pass annually
 2. Increase the cost to \$20 annually
 3. Maintain the current price, \$10, but make it an annual pass instead of a lifetime pass, and adjust the cost every three years according to the Consumer Price Index.
- Encourage federal agencies that participate in FLREA to expand opportunities for sale of passes and reservations through tourism and recreation-related outlets.
- Require the National Park Service to reevaluate and increase the commercial tour pricing structure. Announcement of a new pricing structure should be made no less than one year prior to implementation.

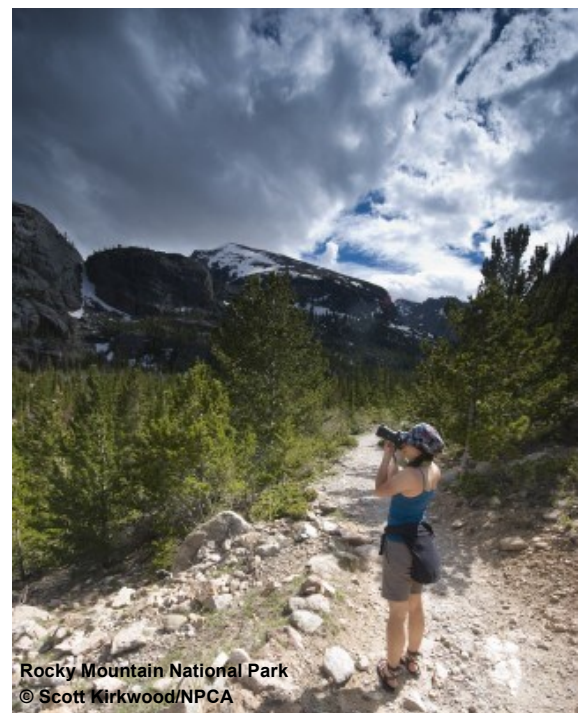
Should FLREA expire, the NPS stands to lose a significant source of funding—about \$180 million per year—that supplements an already strained budget and the NPS’ ability to enhance visitor experiences would be diminished significantly.

Examples of Projects:

Cedar Breaks National Monument (Utah): In 2016, the recreation fee revenue will fund the construction of interpretive trail and history exhibits to engage young visitors with “Stories from the Past” along Spectra Point trail.

Death Valley National Park (California): In 2016, the recreation fee revenue will design and construct an overlook at Dantes View in Death Valley National Park that will increase visitor safety and accessibility to those with limited mobility.

Denali National Park (Alaska): In 2015, the recreation fee revenue funded the repair/ replacement of the Eielson visitor center roof. Though the building was remodeled in 2008 and received recognition for its innovative, and sustainable design and construction, harsh weathering damaged the roof.



Rocky Mountain National Park
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For more information: visit npca.org/secondcenturyaction

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