



Free Speech *in a national park*

Congress shall make no law respecting religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. First Amendment to the United States Constitution (Bill of Rights)

Most Americans take for granted their right to freedom of speech. Yet even in the newly-forming United States, some states protested that the Constitution did not state these rights specifically enough and successfully agitated for the first 10 amendments, called the *Bill of Rights*, to be added to the U.S. Constitution. Ever since, the *scope* and *acceptable means of exercising* the First Amendment right to free speech in this country has been debated.

In conformity with the rights guaranteed in the *United States Constitution*, the National Park Service allows people to exercise freedom of speech, and groups to assemble in a peaceful manner, on park system land. However, to carry out its mission of preserving the cultural and natural resources of the parks, and *to protect the rights and safety of visitors*, the National Park Service does manage these activities *through a permit system*.

Permits regulate aspects of activity such as location, dates and times, and number of participants. Content is NOT regulated. The opinions expressed by persons with these permits may not conform to the vision and policy of the National Park Service. Indeed, the permit-holders may have requested a specific location to speak out because they are specifically *opposed* to National Park Service policy or plans.

You are welcome to consider their point of view. Please also avail yourself of the opportunity to learn the National Park Service's answer to such opposing views. You may contact the superintendent of the park with your questions and opinions at the address listed here and on the park map: *Superintendent, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Bushkill PA 18324*.

For those expressing their views: Please remember that *a permit is required* for first amendment activity in the park; those without a permit will be required to leave. Information on how to obtain a permit is available on the park website www.nps.gov/dewa (Select "*Fees & Reservations*" then "*Permits*" and "*First Amendment Free Speech*"), or by calling (570) 426-2440.

For those visiting the park: If you feel harassed or impeded from enjoying the park by a person exercising their First Amendment right to free speech, please notify a park ranger.