Frequently Asked Questions about the Firefly Lottery

The dates of the 2016 Synchronous Firefly shuttle operating period will be Tuesday, May 31 through Tuesday, June 7. During the shuttle operating period, a parking pass is required for evening access to the Sugarlands Visitor Center parking area and the firefly shuttle to the Elkmont viewing area. Access to the Elkmont area is closed at night to all but the shuttle system and campers.

In 2016, all parking passes will be distributed via a lottery system on Recreation.gov – Firefly Event page.

The lottery uses a randomized computer drawing, known as the Firefly Event Lottery, to assign parking passes.

Where can I find information about the lottery?

- Please visit the Firefly Event webpage at recreation.gov

When should I submit my application?

- The lottery will open Friday, April 29, 2016 at 12:00 p.m. (Noon) ET
- The lottery will close Monday, May 2, 2016 at 8 p.m. ET

All applications must be submitted while the lottery is open; however, no preference is given to the order in which applications are received.

Where will I find the lottery application?

- **A link to APPLY FOR THE LOTTERY will be added to the Recreation.gov – Firefly Event page when the lottery opens on Friday, April 29, 2016 at 12:00 p.m. (Noon) ET. The link will remain active until the lottery closes on Monday, May 2, 2016 at 8:00 p.m. ET. The link is not visible at this time because the lottery is not open.**

Is the parking pass for a specific date and how many date choices do I have?

- Yes. A parking pass is only valid for one specific date.
- You may enter two choices of dates during the lottery application – your preferred choice and an alternate choice.

How much does it cost to enter the lottery?

- There is no cost to enter the lottery.
- Successful lottery applicants will be charged $1.50 for the parking pass reservation fee and they will be awarded a parking pass.

How does the park choose the dates of the shuttle operating period?

- Park biologists monitor environmental conditions, mostly temperature, in an effort to predict when the display will peak; however, it is impossible to predict accurately in advance and conditions which affect the intensity of the "show" from year to year are beyond the control of the National Park Service.

When will I know the lottery results and whether I have been awarded a parking pass?

- The results of the lottery will be announced on Tuesday, May 10, 2016.
- All online lottery applicants will receive an e-mail notice that their application was "successful" or "unsuccessful." Successful lottery applicants will be given instructions to print a parking pass.
- Please add Recreation.gov to your e-mail address book or safe senders list and check your "spam" or "junk mail" folder for notifications.
- You mail also log into your Recreation.gov account on or after May 10 to see the lottery results. Successful applicants may print a parking pass from their account.

How many applications may I submit?

- You may only submit one lottery application per household per season.

Is the shuttle and the viewing area accessible?

- A handicapped accessible trolley will be available. Please alert a Ranger upon arrival at the Sugarlands Visitor Center if someone in your vehicle will need an accessible trolley.
- The viewing area and shuttle stop is a natural, outdoor environment with minimal shelter. There are several small paved areas at the Elkmont shuttle stop where fireflies can be viewed.

May I submit an application by telephone?

- Parking passes may also be obtained by calling 1-877-444-6777. The call center will complete an application for the caller and results will be mailed on May 10.

How does the lottery work?

- The lottery system uses a randomized computer drawing to select applications. There is no fee to enter the lottery. If selected, the lottery winner will be charged a $1.50 reservation fee and awarded a parking pass.

Why must I obtain a parking pass to view the Synchronous Fireflies at Elkmont during their peak display?

- Access to the Elkmont area has been limited to shuttle service since 2006 in order to reduce traffic congestion and provide a safe viewing experience for visitors that minimizes disturbance to the fireflies during this critical 2-week mating period.

Are there other places to view synchronous fireflies in the park?

- We receive reports each year from people who have seen synchronous fireflies in areas in and around the park. There are likely many places of similar habitats, low to mid elevations with rich, alluvial forests, where people may find fireflies displaying. Unfortunately, we are not aware of another location in the park with adequate parking to sustain visitation associated with firefly viewing.