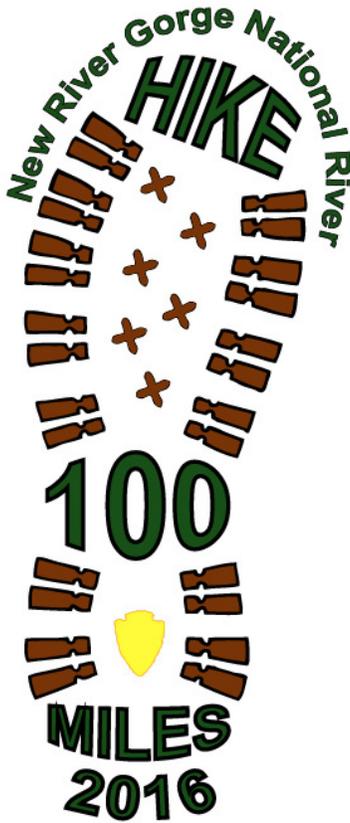




New River Gorge National River 100 Mile Challenge



Frequently asked questions

People have many questions about this program. Here are details that might help you on your way to completing this challenge. Happy hiking!

About this challenge

What is this challenge?

Get to know the local national parks by spending time hiking in New River Gorge National River and Bluestone National Scenic River. This challenge is a fun way to explore local national parks, plus maintain and improve health.

Why was the New River Gorge 100 Mile Challenge created?

This year the National Park Service is celebrating its 100th anniversary (1916 – 2016). With 410 parks in the United States and U.S. territories, each site preserves different parts of America’s story. These parks belong to all of us, preserving this heritage for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

To commemorate this centennial in the National Parks of Southern West Virginia, this program challenges anyone to hike 100 miles in New River Gorge National River and Bluestone National Scenic River in 2016. Through this challenge people can enjoy the rich natural and cultural heritage of these local sites as they explore their national parks, plus get some exercise too. This challenge is a celebration of parks and health!

Who is leading this challenge?

This celebration of parks and health is a partnership between:

- National Park Service – New River Gorge National River: www.nps.gov/neri
- Active Southern West Virginia: www.activeswv.com
- YMCA of Southern West Virginia: www.ymcaswv.com

Is there a fee to participate in this challenge?

There is no fee to take part in this challenge.

Who can participate in this challenge?

Any person can take part in this challenge, from beginners to advanced hikers. Each individual is challenged to hike 100 miles in New River Gorge National River and Bluestone National Scenic River. Youth can participate in this challenge too, but every participant must hike the 100 miles under their own power. Miles in a backpack carrier or stroller do not count toward challenge completion.

Can pet companions participate in this challenge?

Pets are great companions for enjoying the outdoors and are allowed in New River Gorge National River. By popular demand, pet companions can participate in this challenge. To complete this challenge, each participating pet must hike 100 miles in the park with their human companion, following park pet policies.

To register your pet companion, simply include your pet's name and animal type on your *Challenge Log Form* when you turn in your completed form. Keep track of the miles your pet hikes in the park along with your own miles. Pets who hike 100 miles with their human companion will receive a pet award.

Park pet policies: Respect all visitors to parks and protect site resources by following these park pet policies.

- Pets must be kept on a leash no longer than 6 feet at all times. Leashes protect pets from becoming lost, from hazardous wildlife encounters, and from scaring or threatening wildlife. Leashes also protect other visitors who may be afraid, allergic, or who do not want a pet approaching them.
- Pick up your pet's excrement. It is unpleasant to encounter and degrades the park's ecosystem.
- Bring extra water for your pet to drink on your hikes. Streams may contain bacteria or parasites such as *Giardia* that are harmful to you and your pet.
- Do not bring pets to public ranger programs; this avoids potential conflicts with other animals and respects other program participants.

Before you start this challenge

How do I register for this challenge?

To register, email your name and email address to: NewRiverGorge100MileChallenge@nps.gov. Every person participating in the challenge must register separately, even if a family or group uses the same email address.

The park will periodically send email messages with updates about this challenge, including news about upcoming hiking events in the park, hiking tips, and motivational thoughts. Your email address will not be shared with others.

Where do I get a copy of the *Challenge Log Form*?

Download the *Challenge Log Form* at: www.nps.gov/neri/planyourvisit/new-river-gorge-100-mile-challenge.htm. You can also pick up a copy of this form at the Canyon Rim Visitor Center in Lansing or the Sandstone Visitor Center in Sandstone. Each participant must keep track of their individual miles hiked in the national parks on a *Challenge Log Form*. Keep track of pet companion miles on your log form too.

When can I hike for this challenge?

Hike on trails in New River Gorge National River and/or Bluestone National Scenic River any time between January 1 and December 31, 2016. Keep track of the miles you hike on the *Challenge Log Form*.

ALWAYS THINK SAFETY FIRST and be sure to practice Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics (www.lnt.org 1-800-332-4100) whenever you are outdoors. This helps to protect both you and park resources. Here are easy to follow guiding principles of Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics:

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimize campfire impacts
- Respect wildlife
- Be considerate of other visitors

Where do I get a copy of the park trails map?

There are nearly 100 miles of trail in New River Gorge National River and Bluestone National Scenic River that can be hiked for this challenge. Pick up a copy of the park trails map at the Canyon Rim Visitor Center in Lansing or the Sandstone Visitor Center in Sandstone. You can also find trails details and a digital copy of the trails newsletter on the park website at: <http://www.nps.gov/neri/planyourvisit/hiking.htm>.

ALWAYS THINK SAFETY FIRST: be sure to check in with the park in advance of your hiking adventure for updates on current trail conditions. Any news on current trail conditions will be announced on the park's website and through social media.

During this challenge

What modes of transportation are accepted to reach the 100 mile goal of this challenge?

A main point of this challenge is to get people into their national parks, but this program does specifically focus on the activity of hiking. This would include the closely related trail activities of: walking, hiking, trail running, and snowshoeing (you're still walking when you're using this tool). This challenge does NOT include the following types of park recreation that are also popular activities at these local sites: cross-country skiing, mountain biking, rock climbing, or boating on the river.

What miles count toward the 100 mile tally for this challenge?

With 100 miles of trail in New River Gorge National River and Bluestone National Scenic River, there are many options to accumulate your challenge miles. You can hike as many park trails as you like or hike the same trail repeatedly to reach the 100 mile goal. Though hiking on established trails is recommended, making trailhead connections by walking on a road within park boundaries would also count toward your 100 mile goal. Keep track of miles hiked on your *Challenge Log Form*.

ALWAYS THINK SAFETY FIRST: if you walk a public road to make a trail connection, be sure to do so safely. Vehicular traffic has the right-of-way on all public roads. Walk to the side of the road against oncoming traffic and be sure to step clear of the road at the approach of any vehicle.

Here are several examples of walking connections that would count toward challenge miles:

- Hike the Endless Wall Trail starting at the Fern Creek Trailhead to the Nuttall Trailhead, then hike next to Lansing-Edmond Road to get back to the trailhead parking area at Fern Creek.
- Hike the Keeneys Creek Rail Trail then walk Keeneys Creek Road to get back to the trailhead parking area.
- Hike around the Grandview site, connecting one site trail to another.

Smart device tools and APPs can help you track your miles for this challenge

Many people use a smart device to keep track of their fitness activities. If you use one of these devices, remember you still need to log your trail miles on the *Challenge Log Form*.

One useful smart device APP that has a link to this challenge is Endomondo. Download this free APP from iTunes or Google Play and set up an account. Here is how you can find this challenge on Endomondo:

- Copy and paste this web address into your browser: <https://www.endomondo.com/challenges/26419813>
- Search for this challenge by typing New River Gorge NR 100 Mile Challenge. Leave the available list of sports as the default setting "All Sports."

How can I hike with others for this challenge?

Hundreds of people have registered for this challenge. You can choose to hike trails on your own or with others. Hiking with others can often help keep people motivated to reach their goals. Here are some ways to connect with other challenge participants:

- Join a National Park Service ranger or volunteer for a scheduled guided hike throughout the year. If you are a registered challenge participant, you will receive emails about scheduled programs. These free programs will also be announced through local media outlets and social media.
- Invite friends and family to join you in this challenge.
- The challenge event partners may have special groups leading trail hikes throughout the year, so link in to these organizations' social media outlets for updates on challenge news and activities.
 - National Park Service – New River Gorge National River: www.nps.gov/neri
 - Active Southern West Virginia: www.activeswv.com
 - YMCA of Southern West Virginia: www.ymcaswv.com
- See if your local community, church, school, or other organization has a walking club. If not, perhaps you could start a group to help keep hikers motivated.

How can I share my challenge experiences with others on social media?

Share photos, stories, and other reflections of your challenge experiences with others on social media. This is a fun way to stay motivated during this challenge, plus may inspire others as well.

- Facebook: <https://facebook.com/newrivergorgenps>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/NewRiverNPS>
- Instagram: <https://instagram.com/newrivernps>
- Hashtag through social media platforms above at: #NRG100mi. You can also catch up on National Park Service Centennial celebrations at: #findyourpark.
- Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/newrivergorgenps>
- Email photos and messages to: NewRiverGorge100MileChallenge@nps.gov
- Stop by a park visitor center to share stories of your Challenge experiences with a ranger.

After you hike 100 miles in the park for this challenge

What do I do when I complete 100 miles for this challenge?

Once you have completed your 100 miles of hiking in the park, turn your completed *Challenge Log Form* in at the Canyon Rim Visitor Center in Lansing or Sandstone Visitor Center in Sandstone. These visitor centers are open daily 9:00 am – 5:00 pm.

If you hiked with a pet companion, be sure to also mark the hikes completed by your pet companion on your *Challenge Log Form*. When your pet competes their 100 miles of hiking, they earn a separate pet award.

Are there awards for hiking 100 miles for this challenge?

Each participant that hikes 100 miles for this challenge during 2016 will receive an award for their achievement. The first 100 people to complete 100 hiking miles in the park will also receive an additional award. Pet companions that complete 100 miles will receive a pet award. But the real awards you'll get for completing this challenge are the new experiences and memories you'll gained while on these adventures in your national parks. Hopefully this challenge will inspire you to get out and explore more national parks!

Can I still hike in the local national parks once I've walked 100 miles for this challenge?

You can hike on these national park trails anytime, even after you've reached the 100 mile goal of this challenge. Park trails are there for everyone to enjoy, so continue this celebration of parks and health for a lifetime of experiences. Happy hiking!

Additional questions about this challenge

Who do I contact if I have more questions about this challenge?

Contact park staff at Canyon Rim Visitor Center in Lansing or Sandstone Visitor Center in Sandstone. Stop by either of these visitor centers (open daily 9:00 am – 5:00 pm) or call:

- Canyon Rim Visitor Center 304-574-2115
- Sandstone Visitor Center 304-466-0417