



## White Sands National Monument News Release

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### White Sands National Monument Proposes Entrance Fee Increase

Alamogordo, NM - White Sands National Monument is proposing a change in its current entrance fees. Beginning in 2015, White Sands, one of 131 national park units that currently charges entrance fees, is authorized to change its fee rates to align with the new National Park Service rate schedule. The tentative implementation date is October 2015. The monument invites and is accepting public comments from January 15, 2015 through February 13, 2015.

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) is the legislation under which White Sands collects entrance and user amenity fees. The proposed fees include an increase in the price the annual park pass and a change from a per-person to a per-vehicle fee. These changes will also establish a per person fee for pedestrians and bicyclist and a motorcycle fee. Entrance fees are not charged to persons 15 years and younger or holders of the America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Senior, Access, or Military Passes. These passes may be obtained at the monument. Below is a table of the current fees and the proposed fee increases.

Current Fee Rate	Proposed Increased Fee Rate
Weekly Per Person - \$3.00	Weekly Per Vehicle - \$20.00
n/a	Individual (pedestrian, bicycle) \$10/person
n/a	Motorcycle - \$15.00
Park Specific Annual Pass - \$20.00	Park Specific Annual Pass - \$40.00

In accordance with FLREA, the National Park Service is requesting comments from the public regarding proposed entrance fee increases for White Sands. Such fee increases are being considered nationwide as a way to bring similar-sized parks into consistent fee structures.

FLREA allows the monument to retain 80 percent of the fees collected for use on maintenance and infrastructure improvements, and interpretive services projects that directly benefit visitors. Beginning October 1, 2015, 100% of the entrance fees will be available for such projects and services. Since the beginning of FLREA in 2004, White Sands has spent over \$4,020,000 to enhance visitor services at the park, funding facility repair and maintenance, provide expanded visitor amenities, and visitor programs and services. Projects funded and/or planned for the future using fees dollars include: <http://www.nps.gov/whsa/parkmgmt/yourdollarsatwork.htm>.

- **New Visitor Center exhibits:** \$581,196 from the FLREA Program were used in 2010-2011 to plan, design, fabricate, and install new interactive exhibits in the visitor center. These exhibits provide visitors with opportunities to learn about the unique geology, plants, animals, and human history of the monument.
- **New wayfinding signs along Dunes Drive:** Directional and informational road signs were designed, fabricated, and will be installed in 2015 using over \$100,000 in park entrance fee funds.
- **Monument newspapers and maps:** More than 100,000 copies of the monument's newspaper, *Footprints* is printed each year for \$5,000 using FLREA funds. These publications provide critical safety and visitor information and are provided to every visitor.
- **New wayside exhibits along Dunes Drive:** In late 2015 more than 30 new interpretive panels, for more than \$200,000 in park entrance fee funds, will be installed along Dunes Drive to enhance the visitor experience. These panels will highlight key safety messages for hiking, backcountry camping, and visiting the monument. In addition they will share information about the monument that will help visitors understand more about the world's largest gypsum dunefield.

"We are committed to keeping White Sands affordable and we want to provide visitors with the best possible experience," stated Superintendent Marie Frías Sauter. "We believe that our proposed fee changes are still an incredible value when considering other family and recreational experiences one can enjoy. Plus, 100 percent of these funds will stay right here in White Sands to benefit visitors. In 2016, the National Park Service will celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Fee funds have been and will continue to be a critical source of funding for visitor services and facilities as we move forward into the next one hundred years."

In addition, White Sands National Monument is a strong economic engine for the surrounding area. In 2013 visitors to White Sands National Monument spent \$24.5 million in communities near the monument. That spending supported 307 jobs in the local area.

(<http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/economics.cfm>).

We want to hear from you and we value your input about the proposed entrance fee schedule. The public feedback the monument receives will help determine how and when a fee increase may be implemented. Please email comments to [whsa\\_interpretation@nps.gov](mailto:whsa_interpretation@nps.gov) and include in the subject line "WHSa Fee Increase"; mail your comments to Superintendent, White Sands National Monument PO Box 1086 Holloman AFB, NM 88330; or stop by the monument visitor center between the hours of 9 am and 5:00 pm to fill out a visitor comment form. Comments will be accepted through February 13, 2015.

Please visit the monument's website for information about the federal land pass program at <http://www.nps.gov/whsa/planyourvisit/feesandreservations.htm>. For additional information about park hours and events please visit [www.nps.gov/whsa](http://www.nps.gov/whsa) or call 575-479-6124 ex. 236.

*About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 401 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Visit us at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov), on Facebook [www.facebook.com/nationalparkservice](http://www.facebook.com/nationalparkservice), Twitter [www.twitter.com/natlparkservice](http://www.twitter.com/natlparkservice), and YouTube [www.youtube.com/nationalparkservice](http://www.youtube.com/nationalparkservice).*