

Supplemental Information:

The content below was posted on Vermont State Parks' Blog Site and includes additional detail about proposed fee changes and comparisons to other states.

Vermont State Parks are Seeking Public Input on 2022 Proposed Rule & Fee Changes



By rochelle - May 10, 2022

Visitors to Vermont State Parks come to recreate in a safe and welcoming environment. During their stay they count on a clean, friendly and relaxing experience. To help guide that experience rules are established for visitor behavior and to help protect these amazing places for the long term. Even though managing Vermont State Parks and hosting well over 1 million visitors each year is a complex operation, our aim is to keep the associated rules as simple as possible and to maintain an environment where expectations are clear and opportunities are available to all.

The establishment of rules and fees for Vermont State Parks is governed through legislative authority, State Statute Title Ten Section 2603c, and there is a lengthy process set in place for changing rules and setting fees.

Periodically we consider changes and must follow the rule making process to do so. An important piece of this process is the opportunity for elected officials and the general public to weigh in. Proposed changes are carefully considered by agency professionals and our goal is to remain as affordable as possible while ensuring that the majority of the costs to operate the state park system are covered. 100% of fees collected go directly back into operating the parks system.

We are at our best when we hear from you. If you have any concerns, questions or specific feedback on the proposed rule and fee changes summarized below, please send them prior to June 14, 2022.

PROPOSED DAY USE POLICY CHANGES

Pass Replacement

Vehicle and Individual Passes can now be replaced if lost or stolen. Our new reservation system allows us to cancel, and re-issue lost or stolen passes.

New Organization Pass

We've created new season pass that will allow up to 17 people in one vehicle free entry into all Vermont State Park Day Use areas for the season. Cost of new pass is \$180.00. Regular household Vehicle Passes will remain at \$90.00.

Simplified Municipal Rate

Municipal Recreation Groups

1 – 25 persons including staff and drivers = \$250.00 per month.

Each additional group of 25 persons or parts thereof, additional \$250.00 per month.

PROPOSED DAY USE FEE CHANGES

DAY USE FEES

FEE	NEW RATE	OLD RATE	INCREASE
Adult Day Use	\$5.00	\$4.00	\$1.00
Branbury Pavilions	\$50.00	\$25.00	\$25.00
Pavilions - Open Air	\$125.00	\$100.00	\$25.00

PROPOSED CAMPING POLICY CHANGES

New 1-night Minimum Stay Policy

1-night reservations are now permitted Sunday – Thursday nights beginning March 1 for current season reservations. Applies only to tent/RV sites and lean-to's.

No Show Policy

Visitors must occupy their sites no later than 2PM the second day after their reservation begins or must contact the park staff to notify them of their late arrival. Visitors failing to do so will forfeit their site and will not be entitled to any refund.

Green River Reservoir

Campsites at Green River Reservoir will now be charged the same camping fees as other Vermont State Park campgrounds.

PROPOSED CAMPING FEES

CAMPING FEES	NEW FEE PER NIGHT	OLD FEE PER NIGHT	CHANGE PER NIGHT
Standard Tent or RV Site			
Vermont Residents	\$20.00	\$19.00	\$1.00
Non-Residents	\$28.00	\$21.00	\$7.00
Prime Tent or RV Site			
Vermont Residents	\$22.00	\$21.00	\$1.00
Non-Residents	\$30.00	\$23.00	\$7.00
Standard Lean-to Site			
Vermont Resident	\$30.00	\$28.00	\$2.00
Non-Residents	\$38.00	\$30.00	\$8.00
Prime Lean-to Site			
Vermont Residents	\$32.00	\$30.00	\$2.00
Non-Residents	\$40.00	\$32.00	\$8.00
Burton Island Lean-to Site			
Vermont Residents	\$40.00	\$38.00	\$2.00
Non-Residents	\$50.00	\$40.00	\$8.00
Regular Cabin Fees			
Vermont Residents	\$60.00	\$51.00	\$9.00
Non-Residents	\$68.00	\$53.00	\$15.00
Pet Fees	\$2.00	\$1.00	\$1.00
Stone Hut	\$300.00	\$225.00	\$75.00

Vermont Proposed Fee Increases Compared to Other States

	Tent Camping		TENTS	Lean-to Camping	
	In-State Rate	Out-of-State Rate	Non-Resident Surcharge	In-State Rate	Out-of-State Rate
VT PROPOSED	\$20 - \$22	\$28 - \$30	\$8 add-on	\$30 - \$40	\$38 - \$48
MASS	\$14 - \$17	\$40 - \$55	\$26 - \$38 add-on	n/a	n/a
NH	\$23 - \$25	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
NY	\$15 - \$70	\$20 - \$75	\$5 add-on	n/a	n/a
CT	\$14 - \$20	\$24 - \$45	\$10 - \$25 add-on	n/a	n/a
PA	\$15 - \$25	\$20 - \$30	\$5 add-on	\$17 - \$27	\$22 - \$32
RI	\$18 - \$28	\$36 - \$55	\$18 - \$27 add-on	n/a	n/a
NJ	\$17 - \$20	\$22 - \$25	\$5 add-on	35	40
DE	\$15 - \$37	\$20 - \$43	\$5-\$6 add-on	n/a	n/a
MD	\$15 - \$28	n/a	n/a	37	n/a
OH	\$17 - \$27	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

PROPOSED BURTON ISLAND FEES

BURTON ISLAND FEES

FEE	NEW RATE
Docking	\$2.25/per foot/day or part day
Moorings or Anchoring	\$1.00/per foot/day or part day
Seasonal Slips	\$65.00/foot; 18-foot minimum vessel length Each slip includes 4 Island Runner Season Passes \$100.00/per day penalty if boat is not removed by final day of operating season
Island Runner Ferry	
School Group Rate	\$2.00/per person for K-12 Schools during regular school year
Island Runner Season Pass	\$70.00/per season
Charter Rate	\$425.00/for two-hour trip

6/21/22, 2:00 PM

Vermont State Parks are Seeking Public Input on 2022 Proposed Rule & Fee Changes

Tuesday, June 7, 2022, 5:00 PM

Catamount Room

1 National Life Drive, Davis 2

Montpelier, VT 05620

Virtually:

Tuesday, June 7, 2022, 5:00 PM

Microsoft Teams Meeting Link

PLEASE SUBMIT FEEDBACK NO LATER THAN 4:00 PM TUESDAY, JUNE 14.



2022 Rule, Fee & Policy Changes - Public Input Comments Received

DAY USE FEE CHANGES

Adult day use:* to \$5 (\$1 increase)

Pavilion Rates:*

Branbury to \$50.00/per day (\$25/per day increase)

\$100.00/per day pavilions to \$125.00/per day (\$25/per day increase)

Organizational Pass:* (New Pass)

\$180.00 for up to 17 persons in one vehicle

Municipal Rate:*

Municipal Recreation Groups

1 – 25 persons including staff and drivers = \$250.00 per month.

Each additional group of 25 persons or parts thereof, additional \$250.00 per month

DAY USE POLICY CHANGES

Vehicle Pass & Individual Pass Replacement*:

Can replace Vehicle & Individual passes, since it can now be done in Aspira

PUBLIC COMMENT (VEHICLE PASS):

I assume the \$90 annual vehicle pass is unchanged? (VSP reply: YES)

I wish there was a deep discount for a 2nd vehicle pass by the same owner. – Paul Bremel

(VSP reply: There is; 2nd pass same household is \$50).

CAMPING FEE INCREASES

Standard Tent or RV Site:*

Vermont Residents = \$20.00 per night; (\$1/per night increase)

Non-Vermont Residents = \$28.00 (\$7/per night increase)

Prime Tent or RV Site:*

Vermont Residents = \$22.00 per night; (\$1/per night increase)

Non-Vermont Residents = \$30.00 per night; (\$7/per night increase)

Standard Lean-to Site: *

Vermont Residents = \$30.00 per night including VT Meals and Rooms Tax; (\$2/per night increase)

Non-Vermont Residents = \$38.00 per night including VT Meals and Rooms tax; (\$8/per night increase)

Prime Lean-to Site:*

Vermont Resident = \$32.00 per night including VT Meals and Rooms Tax; (\$2/per night increase)

Non-Vermont Resident = \$40.00 per night including VT Meals and Rooms Tax; (\$8/per night increase)

Cabin Fees:

VT Resident = \$51/night to \$60/per night (\$9/per night increase)

VT Non-Resident = \$53/night to \$68/night (\$11/per night increase)

Burton Island Cabins VT = keep the same

PUBLIC COMMENT (CABIN FEES):

That's a hefty (almost 20% hike) for Vermonters - my vote is for \$55 (from \$51) and \$60-\$65 for out of staters. Everything else looks fine – VT State Parks are awesome, thank you park rangers for all you do!
– Jake Urato of Brattleboro VT (additional comment under No-Show Policy)

Pet Fees:* to \$2.00 per night (\$1/per night increase)

PUBLIC COMMENTS (PET FEES):

How is it that I can bring an extra person and it doesn't cost me anything, but if I bring my dog it does? She doesn't even use any of the facilities. What is the logic in that? – Anna (additional comment under No-Show Policy)

I wanted to say that I support the fee increases except for the pet fee. Why should I pay more when it is just my dog and I then when someone stays in a site with 4 people. I saw your justification on facebook, but 1 dog is surely less impactful than 3 additional people. Maybe punish/prohibit the behaviour instead of charging a fee that doesn't reflect the impact. – Maddie D (additional comment under 1-Night Reservation)

I feel like the pet fee penalizes people with dogs unfairly. 4 people occupying a campsite pay less for it then my wife, myself and our two dogs. How about counting dogs the same way you do people. If the number exceeds 4 combined charge for each of them? I don't know how you can justify a site costing more for us with our dogs. Seems unfair. I never spoke up before as it was only a dollar but I would love an explanation of the logic that means a dog deserves to cost more than a person.
-Stewart Vaughn

I see an increase in per night pet fees proposed. That a pet fee is charged at all is disappointing, never mind an increase, in addition to increases everywhere else. Pets, as part of the family, should be included in the site fee. Please don't penalize people whose family happens to be canine.
-Krista Cheney

We have traveled across country twice a year for 15+ years in a small motorhome and, as a rule, only stay in state parks, national parks, federal lands, etc. . . No private campgrounds, if we can avoid it. These parks have electricity and no fees for showers and most have no fees for dogs(although some parks are changing that policy. . .too many " bad parents"). But \$2 a night? That's a bit extravagant. Your fees are high for "boon-docking" campsites.

Joanne Fedele

Changes look ok to me as a VT resident user of the parks. Just wondering about the increase for pets. Why so? I have two small dogs and always pick up after them and dispose properly. They are quiet little pups. Just wondering why.

Like Reply 4w



Author

Vermont State Parks

Joanne Fedele Hi Joanne, we've raised the pet fees because many dogs do make an impact on the campsites in terms of digging, etc. and despite the many responsible dog owners, it does take additional staff time to pick up after them.

Like Reply 4w

Stone Hut:* to \$300.00/per night (\$75/per night increase)

PUBLIC COMMENTS (STONE HUT):

The bulk of the changes seem reasonable, and I understand the need to increase fees, but **the proposed fee increase for the Stone Hut from \$225 to \$300 per night is excessive, and at over 33% it is out of step with the other fee increases being proposed for VT residents.**

When the Stone Hut lottery was modified several years ago, it went a long way to promoting transparent, fair, and equitable access to this crown jewel of a public facility, but I fear with such a large increase in fees many will no longer be able to afford to take advantage of this historic and one-of-a-kind space.

A previous version of the blog post mistakenly showed the existing fee as \$275 not \$225 and I wonder if this mistake is what led to the new proposed nightly rate, as that (~9%) increase would have been much more reasonable.

I hope you will reconsider the magnitude of this increase, or consider offering a discounted rate for VT residents as you do for other facilities in order to maintain equitable access to this public resource.

-Josh Auerbach

(VSP Reply: Thank you Josh, for your feedback, it will be shared with all others during our rule change process. The change to the Stone Hut fee was a typo and was subsequently fixed.)

PUBLIC COMMENTS (CAMPING FEE INCREASES):

Get rid of prime sites - just make everything the prime site cost (for in state and out of state respectively). This should get you a few extra bucks and gets rid of the seemingly random nature of prime sites or that some parks are basically all prime sites. It isn't like if you get a prime site you get a turndown service. – Scott Davies

(VSP reply: Thanks for sharing your thoughts with us. You might be on to something with removing the prime site designation. While it fits industry standards – the better spaces command more money – it

can be confusing, so I hear you there. (Also, thanks for the turn-down reference, that made me laugh out loud). (Rochelle Skinner))

The new state park rates published on <http://vtstateparks.blogspot.com/2022/05/seeking-public-input-on-2022-rule-fee.html> look fine to me, a resident of Vermont. – Kristen Talmage of Starksboro, VT

I have reviewed the fee changes and think that all are appropriate. I am a simple old-fashioned tent camper and I appreciate the outstanding work of your department. I am thankful that the parks do not provide hook-ups. I feel it helps to keep the spirit of "roughing it" alive, even though I know the campers/RV's have propane/generator back-ups. Thank you! – Connie Moser of West Windsor, VT

As a Vermont resident that uses the Vermont State Park system regularly from May through September and has for decades, I find the proposed increase in rates extremely reasonable. ❤️ Camping at the State Parks. It is a great value for the price. Extremely well kept grounds, clean bathrooms and showers, enforced quiet time, friendly & helpful staff....I can't recommend our Parks enough! Thank you all! – Lou Wittmer of Vernon, VT

Liam Bonerman Gentry
Make nightly stays more affordable. I've been rough camping for years cause y'all want to much \$.
Like Reply 4w

Angela Scavo
As a camper across the nation, these rates are very reasonable. You people do an amazing job maintaining VT state parks. I do think it would be great if you did a discount for camping for green mountain pass holders.
Like Reply 4w 5

Vincent StAmour
Vermont state parks are very affordable . We do 90% of our camping at Vermont state parks 👍
Like Reply 4w

Debra Thompson
Did the cost of prime sites for residents go down a dollar or is that a misprint?
Like Reply 4w

Vermont State Parks (Author)
Debra Thompson We had the numbers reversed -- now fixed. Thanks for noticing!
Like Reply 4w Edited 2

(Below comment in reference to fee increases)

James Button
For only getting a site and having to buy your campfire wood. That's ridiculous. Rather pay extra and go to a campground that offered Wes and can bring in own firewood. And cant get into many sites with an rv without hitting the sides and roof of your rv
Like Reply 4w



Lizzy Liz

As a Vermont Fan and once a year visitor, this year I will be watching every penny. How about senior rates, military discounts, maybe offer a day or week to buy the yearly pass cheaper. NY does that. Good Luck

Like Reply 4w



8



Caroline Bradley

Lizzy Liz Military discount should be a definite

Like Reply 4w



2



Agnes Barsalow

Lizzy Liz the green mountain passport offers free entry to Vermont seniors and veterans!

https://www.healthvermont.gov/.../YF_Green%20Mountain...

Like Reply 4w



3



Reply to Lizzy Liz...



Amanda Eynon

I think the fees are decent. I do think that maybe offering a reservation/camping discount for the Green Mountain Passport would be nice for our seniors and veterans.

Like Reply 4w



20



Top fan

Carolyn Kittell

Amanda Eynon that would be a great idea!

Like Reply 4w



Mary Bradley

Amanda Eynon good idea

Like Reply 4w



Caroline Bradley

Amanda Eynon Great idea

Like Reply 4w

Laura DeGray

As a 21 year camper of Branbury, there have been no bathroom or facility upgrades other than the playground a few years ago. With the lack of care that the park crew shows and the poor conditions of the bathrooms it is not worth paying an increase.

Like Reply 4w

3



Author

Vermont State Parks

Good news -- a complete bathroom renovation is almost done, should be ready in a week or two.

Like Reply 4w

10



Laura DeGray

Vermont State Parks is that on both sides? We always stay on the beach side in that was in desperate need of refurbishment

Like Reply 4w



Author

Vermont State Parks

It's the one on the beach side that's being replaced 😊😊😊

Like Reply 4w

2



Tracy Dutton Gauthier

Vermont State Parks what about the other side? I swear the same spiders have been living in the woman's shower stall since I was a toddler. 😬

As for the rates, I won't mind paying the new ones. I think it's still a bargain. It definitely won't stop me from camping in the VT State Parks!!

Like Reply 4w

1

Lael Hope Daigle

Looks great! More than willing to pay a few extra dollars to support

Like Reply 4w

3

Aurora B Ahamundi

Not offering a military discount is disgraceful. 😡

Like Reply 4w

Shelley Sparks

I wish there could be a lower resident SENIOR camp site fee for tent and lean-to sites....

Like Reply 4w

6

Stephen F Fonash

I have no problem with the fees. What I do have a MAJOR problem with is the fact that you charge large RVs the same price as tent campers. These large RVs have been increasingly taking advantage of your low cost, at your expense. They destroy trees and foliage, pollute the air, and ruin the peacefulness of camping with their generators. State parks should be reserved for true "campers." We have been very disappointed in this trend over the last several years. RVs belong in RV parks not in state forests and campgrounds.

Like Reply 4w



7



Joanne Tobey

Stephen F Fonash I do agree that generators decrease the quality of the camping experience. Perhaps having a small area set aside for RVs with generators (a LIMITED number) would be a solution? And also enforcing the hours they're allowed to be used -- last year I endured generators for HOURS after dark in a State Park. Not exactly the peaceful camping experience I was looking for.

Like Reply 4w



Top fan

Anne Weisbeck

Stephen F Fonash what about small travel trailers that don't use generators (we only use solar)? I was a ten camper for many years, and I don't believe our little camper has any more impact on the parks. But I would welcome your opinion

Like Reply 3w

Suzanne Bennett Coddling

As a Vermont resident, I do not agree with any of the fee increases. Considering the difficult year with Covid and the windfall of federal money and state surplus monies, these fees should not be going up this year. Frankly this would be a good year to discount the price.

Like Reply 3w

Mary Bradley

We are so fortunate to have these beautiful parks. A couple more dollars is well worth it.

Like Reply 4w



3

Gary Ernest Ricard

Not too long ago, it would cost \$12.50 for a 5 gallon can of gas for mowing... today, that cost is \$23.95. I'm thinking all of the parks are mowing like crazy, and probably burning \$100 dollars a day on gas for their machines. So that's an expense that was not budgeted for. Likewise, bumping all wages up to \$15 bucks per hour would solve the staff shortages we are seeing across the job market. \$20-25 for senior staff (manager and assistant)... same \$20 for life guard manager and \$15 for life guards. Day use fees: \$10 for a car with 1 adult and \$5 per extra adult or child (which includes swimming). Group entre fee: flat rate of \$5 bucks per person. School fee: Same if no swimming. If the group is going to use the swimming pool \$2 bucks per student (teachers free).

Like Reply 4w Edited



2

Jenna Hayward

I think the \$180 park pass is too much, otherwise camping prices look ok at increased prices. Does the change already affect previously paid sites ?

Like Reply 4w



Author

Vermont State Parks

Jenna Hayward The \$180 park pass is for busses of up to 17 people. Regular family vehicle passes are still \$90. And no, if you already have reservations the old prices will be honored as long as you don't change the reservation.

Like Reply 4w



Jenna Hayward

Vermont State Parks ty for the clarification !

Like Reply 4w



Jeremiah Nichols

Vermont State Parks keep this price. Anymore and ill be wasting money.

Like Reply 4w

Kelly Goss

I haven't bought a park pass since the pandemic but I believe I used to pay \$100 but i may be wrong.

What is the price increase for the pass?

\$100 is worth it I don't think \$180 is doable as a single-mom with my rent up, gas up, food up and pay the same 😞

Like Reply 4w



James Button

Kelly Goss it's ridiculous.

Like Reply 4w



Author

Vermont State Parks

Hi, the \$180 pass is designed for organizations that travel to the park in a bus and will allow 17 people into the park with the pass. The regular family vehicle pass is still \$90.00 and will remain that price.

Like Reply 4w



Kelly Goss

Vermont State Parks thank you for the clarification

Like Reply 4w



Lisa Valley

Kelly Goss yeah it's \$90 for vehicle state park pass. We get one every year and they price hasn't changed in a long time. It's definitely worth it and we always get double it's value out of it.

Like Reply 4w



Kelly Goss

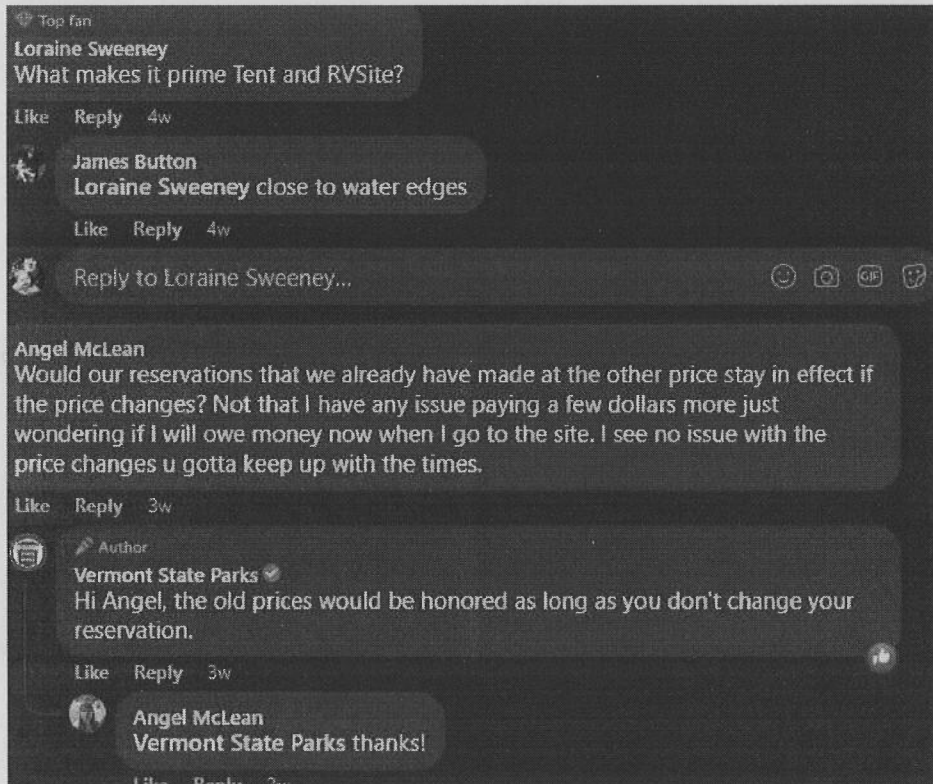
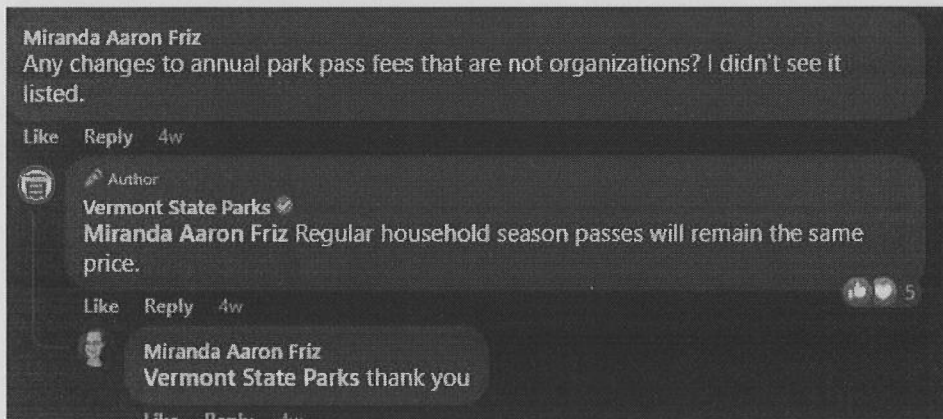
Lisa Valley I misunderstood and thought the 180 fee was the same pass.

Like Reply 4w



Lisa Valley

Kelly Goss oh



I live in Jamaica Vermont where we have a state park. I think a town resident should be able to walk through the park without being charged! – francisjanik (Instagram)

PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-RESIDENT/RESIDENT FEE INCREASES):

Thank you for proposing an increase in camping rates paid by non-residents. I support this change which will bring Vermont fees more in line with other states. We no longer camp in Massachusetts due to their outrageous fees. Also, your data may be old for MA camping rates. Nickerson SP charges \$22 for residents and \$70 (plus \$5 add on) for non-residents, much higher than the amounts in your comparison chart.

I would suggest that the fee for non- residents be increased by \$8 for both tent and lean-to sites, not \$7 for tents as proposed. We camp quite frequently in our state parks and continue to support them and their employees. – Patti Fischer (additional comment under No Show Policy)

I strongly feel that fees should remain the same or a few dollars less per night for in-state campers. As a retired teacher I would like low income families to have the opportunity to recreate outdoors. Compared to other New England states Vermonters pay more. Non residents should pay at least ten dollars more per night. Our parks are beautiful and I would like to see more Vermonters using them.
- Donna Wilson of Pittsford, VT

(VSP reply: Thank you for taking the time to comment, we really appreciate that. In our proposed fee changes, we plan to charge significantly more for out-of-state campers, which is consistent throughout state park systems in the East. I've attached a couple of charts below that illustrate the proposed changes. Hope that provides a little more information. Thanks again! (chart provided) (Rochelle Skinner))

Fee Changes – all sound reasonable, though I wonder if the increase in non-resident rates should have been a little less (to help avoiding alienating any non-residents). Maybe half the increase this year and another small increase in 2 years? Just thinking out loud. – Jeff Mullen of Richmond, VT (additional comments under General Comments)

I am happy that the majority of increases are being passed to tourists and that you have attempted to keep fees reasonable for VT residents. Not sure why that same line of thinking was not applied to cabin rentals? - Paul Bremel

My family and I camp in Vermont State Parks numerous times during the course of a season. We are non-residents. Regarding your fee changes for non-residents (speaking primarily to the tent/RV and lean-to sites, both prime and standard), we feel that the increase of 33% is a rather steep increase. We realize that it costs money to run the parks, and that not all costs are covered by the fees. However, an increase to the non-resident fees of \$3-4 would be more reasonable than the \$7-8 increase. We greatly enjoy our trips to Vermont every summer, and would appreciate it if you could continue to keep the rates reasonable for families. – Karen DeWolf Ricard of Enfield, NH

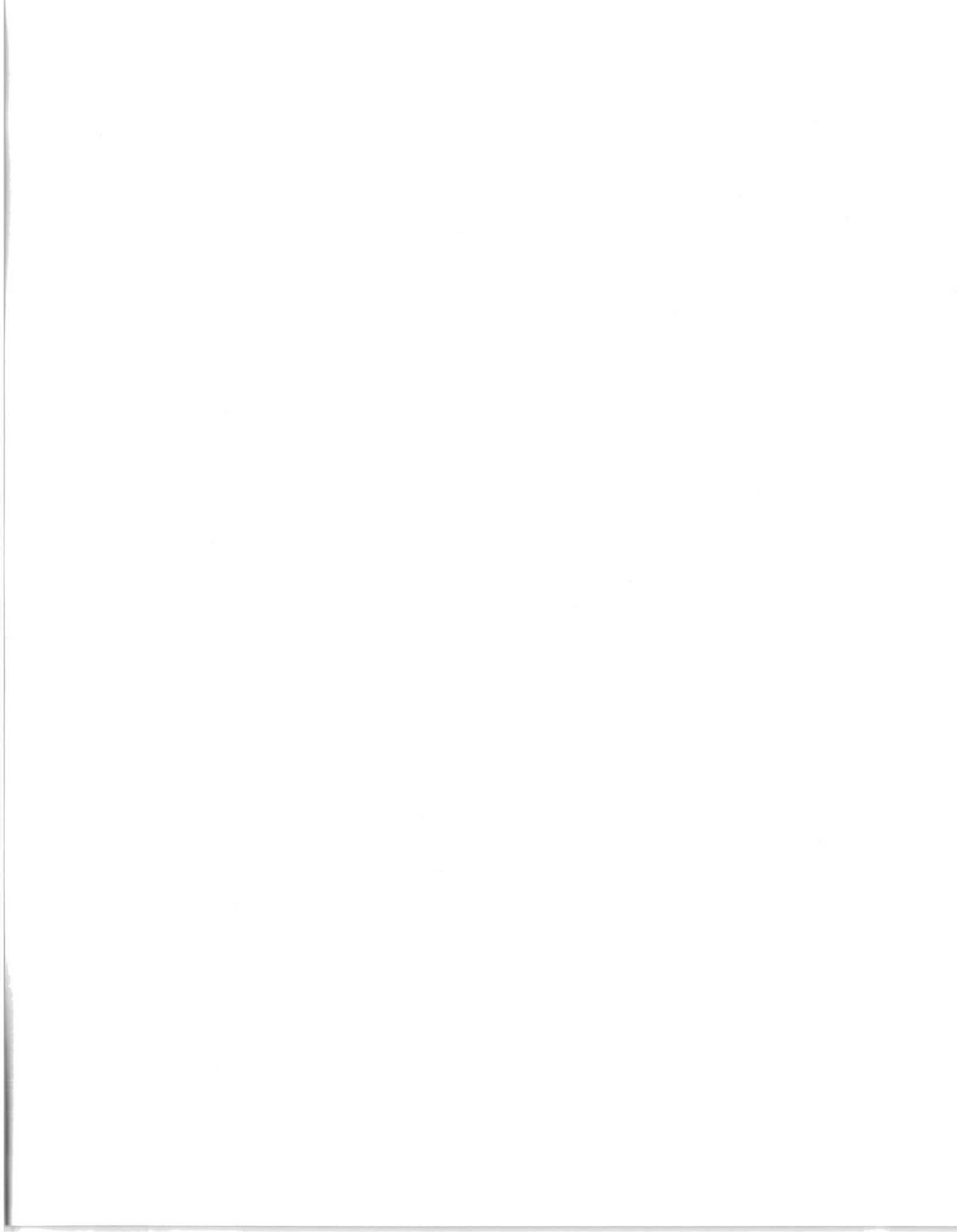
I am an out of state camper, I have been going to Emerald Lake state park since 1974 camping alone, with my daughters and their friends ,now with my grandchildren-I don't think I will be able to enjoy camping with this increase a \$7.00 increase along with an increase in per person fee plus the price of gas will make this yearly camping trip unattainable -the end of many fond memories in the future

This was the one thing I always looked forward to even during Covid Camping at Emerald Lake.
-Dawn Turner

I am writing to voice my opposition to the non resident fee increase for camping sites. I live in New York State. My state charges an extra five dollars for out of state residents. That is what the Vermont non resident fee is now.

I hope that Vermont leaves the fee at five dollars. If New York State raises the non resident fee, then maybe reciprocate and raise the Vermont fees.

But for now, please leave it the way it is. Gas and other prices have risen sharply, making the cost of traveling more expensive than in past years.



I've been camping at Vermont State Parks since the late seventies. They are my favorite places to camp. – Terri Coleman of Branchport, NY

New fees put it to out of staters just like snowmobiling just seems wrong to me bet the help didn't get a raise – Rebecca Faryniarz

I am a Vermont resident who camps every summer and naturally over the last two years have noticed a drastic change in the campgrounds in the people that visit. I'm in favor of the increase to out of state residents. I feel the RV fees should be much higher than the proposed. Also I request that VT residents should be given at least a one day advance in reservation queue. It is really tragic now to try to make a reservation. Super stressful. Thank you! Love our parks. They are always kept clean and well maintained. – Zenaida Brooks

30% increase in USD for non residents, thats almost 40% in CDN Dollar, no thanks, my kids and I will spend our money in Canada, it's been fun, bye bye!

That is a fairly hefty increase proposed for out of state folks making the drive. We do so every year from PA and this jump in price (4 times higher compared to \$2 increase for VT residents), would probably cause us to look elsewhere for our summer camping vacation. We only book prime (lean-to) FYI. – Tom, Marth and Katie Lillard of Phoenixville, PA

I understand that you need to increase fees. I an out of state camper. We paid 1 or 2 dollars over residents rates. I feel an 8 and 9 dollar jump is steep in one year. I camp 4 to 5 times a year. If you do that increase, and I do understand but will be looking at less reservations in Vermont.- Donna A

Finally the out of staters have to pay more for using our state parks. Thank you.
-Louise Clarino of Rutland, VT

As a long time visitor my family has always enjoyed our visits to your campgrounds over the years. I am disappointed to read that the fee schedule for out of state residents is proposed to increase 33% over the current fee. This increase is not only absorbent but also creates a hardship for those of us that are retired and on a fixed income. I urge you all to reconsider this steep increase in fees on those of us who camp as a way to explore the world as simply as possible without the additional burden to our fixed budget. – John Roy of Acushnet, MA

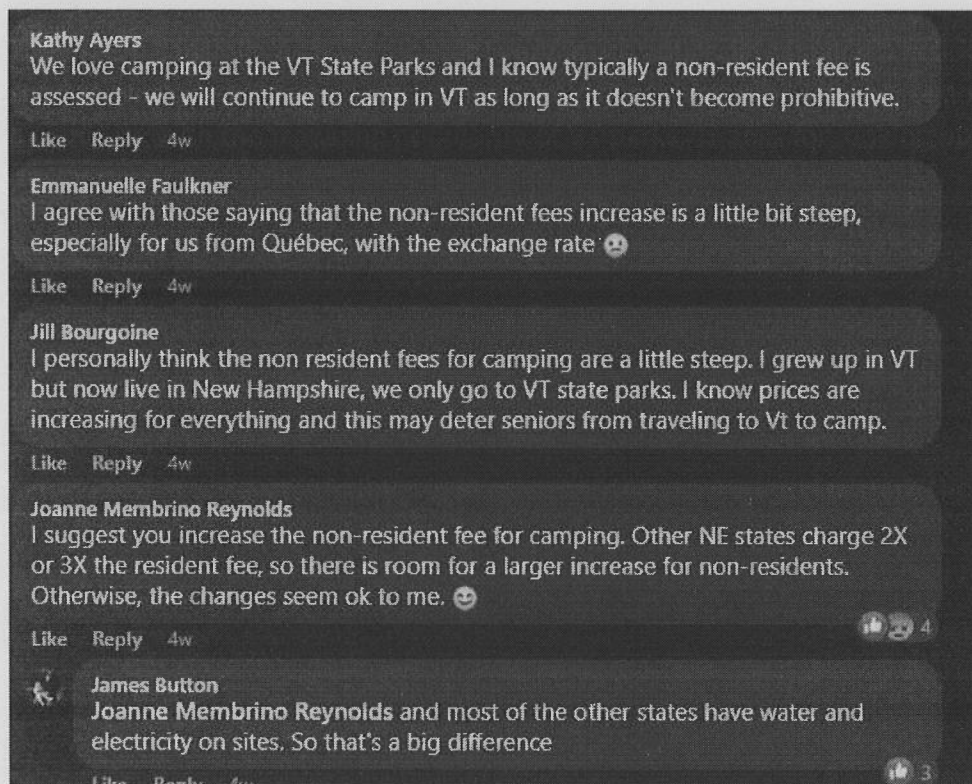
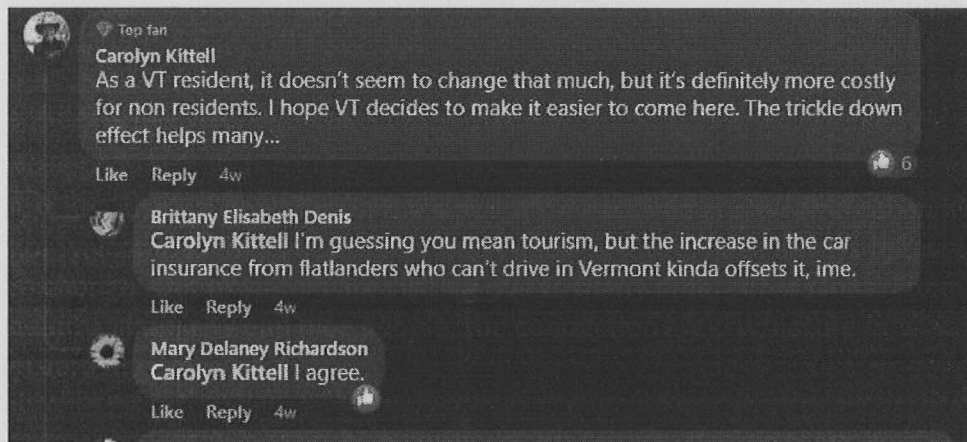
Oh my goodness, where do I start? I have been coming to VT state parks for 44 years. I absolutely love VT & the parks - camping since I was a kid traveling from MA. Over the years, I have seen the rates climb and thankfully the campsites have remained about the same general feeling. Most specifically Burton Island & Woods. The parks have always been my happy, escape from the MA life. There is such a difference in the two states, as you know.

The new rates are very discouraging. I camp often from beginning to end of season, not just the once or twice visit. Please, don't raise the rates as proposed. The out of state fee hikes are just too much. People don't go to a hotel, grocery store, restaurant, store, farmers markets etc and pay different prices due to where they come from. So, why such the difference in the camping prices for out of staters? We are getting the same thing but are paying so much more. We are already paying more by traveling a distance w/gas money and time to travel. Then you add in the amount of money we are spending at the local restaurants, shops, etc. Then, we are paying so much more for the same campsite

just because we don't live in the state. It's a hardship and by doing such it's a statement that we are not welcomed. That's not the VT that I know & love. I have always felt welcomed & now that is about to change. Out of staters are visiting due to many different reasons. For me overall it's b/c of the beauty, simplicity and nice people, the connection I feel w/nature in VT is unexplainable.
- Laurie Bloom

30% increase for non-residents, I'll pass, it's been fun, bye bye! -rickydxyyhu (Instagram)

They seem sensible. As a Vermonter I very much appreciate having a resident and non-resident fee. I sued to work in the parks. I also spend a lot of time on parks. The last couple years it's been hard to get a campsite with the frowning popularity of VT parks. Thanks for looking out for VT residents! -sv_clarat (Instagram)





Dawn Morris

I live in NY just over the VT border. We use the parks quite often throughout the year. The increase in non resident fees may limit our visits. Money is tight for everyone, and gas prices aren't helping.

Tony Franchise

That's going to force out of staters to go to another state. Not a fan of the increase.

Joanne Tobey

Why such a disproportionate increase for non-residents? Are you hoping to keep them away?

Like Reply 4w



Author

Vermont State Parks

Joanne Tobey Not at all. If you look at the comparison chart, we're bringing our non-resident fees in line with other northeast states.

Like Reply 4w



Joanne Tobey

I'm not trying to imply that your campgrounds are worth less than those in other NE states, but an increase in rates for non-residents that is 7x the increase for residents does seem to indicate a desire to decrease the non-resident use.

Like Reply 4w



Top fan

Anne Weisbeck

Joanne Tobey I have to agree. In general, all my interactions with Vermont State Parks, in person and online, have been very pleasant and welcoming. But such a big difference in the cost increase does feel unwelcoming.

Like Reply 3w

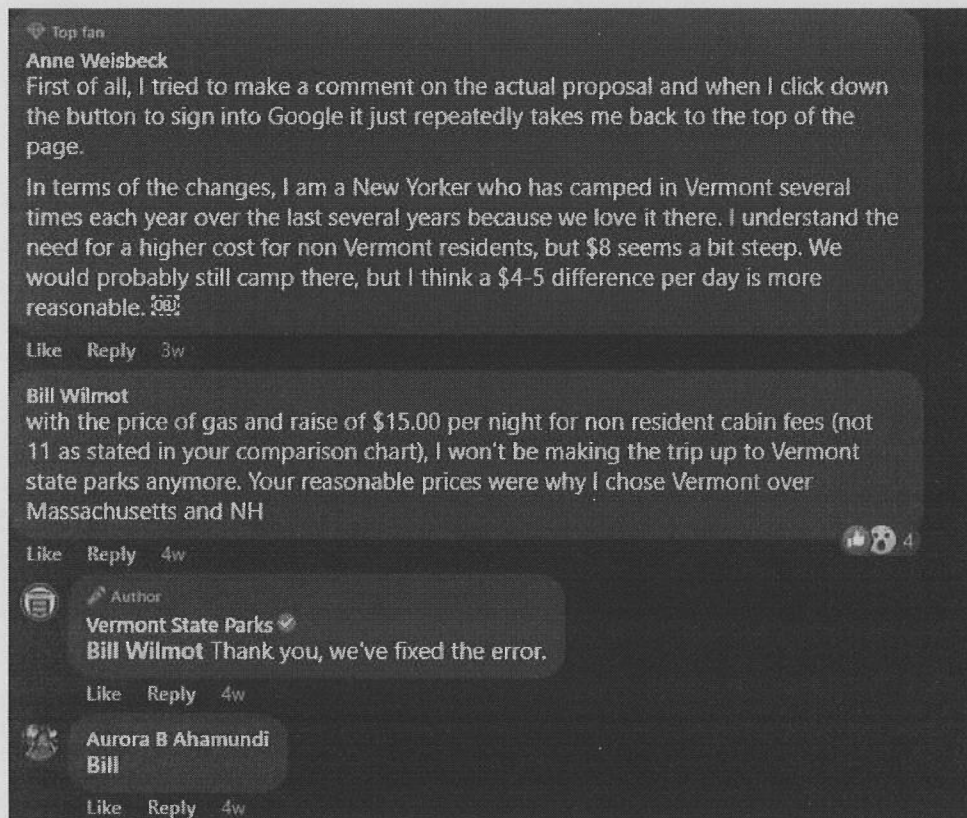
Joanne Tobey

Joanne Membrino Reynolds Not all other NE states charge non-residents that much more. NH charges both exactly the same, NY charges \$5 more, ME and CT charge \$7 more. MA and RI are the only two states that double or charge 2.5 as much. (and who wants to camp there, anyway?! 😊) No NE state charges 3x as much.

Lisa King Leavitt

Can't go camping in Mass for under 54.00 or 70.00 a night so these prices seem more than fair to me .

Like Reply 4w



Yesterday I did some brief market research to see how other New England states handle state park fees. Please see the attached spreadsheet, which compares day use and camping fees across Massachusetts, Maine, and Vermont. I would have also included New Hampshire, but it was harder to find standardized fees. The three states here nonetheless seem to provide some helpful insights: **Day Use Fees:** Highlighted in green. Massachusetts charges by *car* rather than by *person*. For the sake of comparison, I've used a "family of four":

- The "standard" resident day use fee in MA and ME is just \$5-\$8. Compare this to Vermont, where a family of four would have to pay \$14 to have a picnic. This amounts to Vermont charging its own residents 130% - 180% *more* than other states charge their own residents.
- The exception to this is a handful of MA and ME waterfront/beach state parks, which charge \$14 for residents, equal to what VT would charge for *all* state parks, no matter whether they're "standard" or "prime" (as VT has distinguished its campgrounds).
- **Vermont state parks should be made more accessible to Vermont state residents. Please lower fees for Vermont residents to just \$5-8 per car to match the majority of Massachusetts state parks.**
- ME charges out-of-state visitors 25% - 33% more than residents. MA charges out-of-state visitors 185% - 300% more than residents.
- The VT proposal would have *no* difference in fees for in-state or out-of-state visitors. This is unconscionable. Why would Vermont residents pay the same high fees as non-residents? All other area states charge more for out-of-state visitors.
- **Again, Vermont state parks should be made more accessible to Vermont state residents. Please increase fees for non-residents to at least \$15 - \$20 per car to match the majority of Massachusetts state parks.**

Camping Fees: Highlighted in blue.

- If I were to reserve a "Prime" Massachusetts campsite, I would be charged \$75 per night, a 240% increase over in-state fees. A Massachusetts resident could reserve the same campsite for just \$20. This fee system makes campsites very affordable for state residents, and out-of-state visitors have to pay a premium. This seems quite sensible. Afterall, it's *their* state park, not mine.
- Compare this to the VT proposal. For equivalent prime campsites/lean-tos, VT residents would be charged \$22 - \$32. This is *more* than the very highest fee a MA resident would ever pay to camp for any campsite.
- The non-resident increase in the VT proposal is only 25% - 36%. This is lower than either MA or ME, and is a whopping *10-times less* than the MA out-of-state increase.
- **Please decrease all VT resident camping/lean-to/cabin fees, and balance this with significant increases for out-of-state visitors. Non-residents should be paying *at least 50% - 100% more across all overnight fee levels.***
- While the VT proposal does have a slim increase for out-of-state residents, the better the accommodations are, the lower the out-of-state increase. For example, the proposed out-of-state increase for a standard campsite is 40%, while the proposed out-of-state increase for a prime lean-to is 25%, and the out-of-state increase for a cabin is just 13%. This is backwards. Reference Massachusetts, where the most rustic campgrounds have an out-of-state increase of 185% and the very nicest camping locations have an out-of-state increase of 240%.
- **Please modify the VT proposal to ensure that -- as accommodations improve from "standard" to "prime" to "cabin" and so forth -- the out-of-state increase is *more* for better accommodations, not less.**

Across the day use and camping system, Vermont State Parks are losing significant revenue by not charging more for out-of-state visitors. Please increase all out-of-state fees, and balance this with a *decrease* in all fees for Vermont residents. These are *Vermont* state parks. Please make them affordable for *Vermont* residents. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to seeing Vermont's

Vermont State Park Fee Proposal						
As Compared to Massachusetts and Maine State Park Fees						
State	Location	Use	In-State	Out-of-State	Percent increase for out-of-state	Reference
MA	Salisbury State Park (equivalent to VT "Prime" State Park)	Day Use Parking	\$14	\$40	185.71%	https://www.mass.gov/doc/parking-fee-locations-schedule-updated-52720/download
	Skinner State Park (equivalent to VT "standard" State Park)	Day Use Parking	\$5	\$20	300.00%	Per carload, not per person
	Salisbury State Park (Beach/Prime)	Camp	\$22	\$70	218.18%	https://www.mass.gov/service-details/camping-fees
	Nickerson State Park (Beach/Prime)	Camp	\$22	\$75	240.91%	
	Clarksburg State Park (Standard)	Camp	\$17	\$54	217.65%	
	Beartown State Forest	Camp	\$14	\$40	185.71%	
	Mohawk State Forest	Cabin	\$75	\$170	126.67%	
	Savoy Mountain State Forest	Cabin	\$50	\$130	160.00%	
ME	Arroostock State Park (most state parks)	Day Use Parking (Family of 4: 2 adults, 2 kids)	\$8	\$10	25.00%	https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/park_passes_fees_rules/park_day_use_fees.shtml
	Lake St. George (single highest state park)	Day Use Parking (Family of 4: 2 adults, 2 kids)	\$12	\$16	33.33%	
	Bradbury Mountain	Camp	\$15	\$25	66.67%	https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/docs/fee-schedule.pdf
	Lily Bay	Camp	\$20	\$30	50.00%	
	Sebago Lake (no hook-up)	Camp	\$25	\$35	40.00%	https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/docs/fee-schedule.pdf
VT	Any State Park	Day Use (Family of 4: 2 adults, 2 kids)	\$14	\$14	0.00%	
	Any State Park (standard)	Camp	\$20	\$28	40.00%	
	Any State Park (prime)	Camp	\$22	\$30	36.36%	
	Any State Park (standard lean-to)	Camp	\$30	\$38	26.67%	
	Any State Park (prime lean-to)	Camp	\$32	\$40	25.00%	
	Any State Park	Cabin	\$60	\$68	13.33%	

additional market research, and an updated proposal for further public review and comment.

– Kassia Randzio and Zack Porter of Montpelier, VT

CAMPING POLICY CHANGES

1-night minimum: Sunday – Thursday nights beginning March 1 for current season reservations. Applies only to tent/RV sites and lean-to's.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (1-NIGHT MINIMUM):

I am concerned with the change to allow one night reservations. Parks will now be booked solid months in advance. If you are going to do that please set aside some sites for first come first serve. I agree with the others that have been posting on Facebook. It seems only fair to hold some back.

- Maddie D

Vermont State Parks are wonderful, I am a frequent user but as a local, I often choose to stay on a whim. Many states have a section of the campground they hold and don't reserve. We haven't had that in Vermont as I know. Instead, there was the two night minimum which often left gaps between longer stays. Your parks are getting so busy now and so hard to get a spot but I loved being able to call around to the various Groton parks on a random Wednesday when the heat got too much or I just wanted to escape internet access with the family. Generally I could find a spot at Ricker or Stillwater and we would have a great night with the kids. I also think about all the RVers and van campers I am seeing all over the state. I would think many are traveling without a set plan, will they now be relegated to the Berlin Wal-Mark parking lot? If you are going to allow one night reservations, I sincerely hope you put away a 10% of the sites at each park for the people who are spontaneous or traveling without a plan. - Hailey of Barre, VT

I really like that there are one day (weekday) stays and that regular rates remain the same (\$90)

- Barbara Dunn of Newport, VT

Please reconsider your new one night reservation policy. Being able to spontaneously go to a park is so important. Surely this doesn't effect occupancy rate. Everything will be blocked out, I don't plan 3-4 day stays in the parks months out but me and my partner stay 4-5 times a year. Often at last minute, we call around until some park (usually have our fingers crossed for Half Moon) can squeeze us in. These multiple mini vacations our essential to allow me to recharge and refresh and aren't something I can plan out months in advance to compete with all the #vanlife people. – Maddie Schober

What is this stuff I am seeing on Facebook. Is it true you are going to allow one night reservations? What a terrible idea! How is an average guy supposed to get a spot with his kids when out of staters book everything up months in advance? Please reconsider. Vermonters should have a chance to get a spot. How many signatures do I need to collect to stop this crap? – Harvey Rogers

(VSP reply: It is unlikely out-of-state campers will travel for a one-night reservation. We are only opening 1-night reservations for Sunday – Thursday nights, which have an abundance of open sites)

I saw in the Vermont camping Facebook group your proposed rule changes. Please do not allow one night reservations. What is to be gained? They get booked out anyway, it isn't like you are going to make more money. All this means is the spots will be booked out in advance and I will never have a chance to get one. First you screwed up Green River, then the Waterbury Rez, not this. Do you think to maybe poll Vermonters before proposing such a dumb change? Are you not a public service? You used to be responsive to the public, I camped here my whole life, now you are squeezing us out in favor of out of staters.

Please don't change the rules to allow one night reservations. How will anyone get a spot? Please consider consulting state park users before making a change like that. What is to be gained, the spots are still going to get filled up and you are still going to get the money? If you are going to do this please set aside some sites for first come first serve. - Cindy

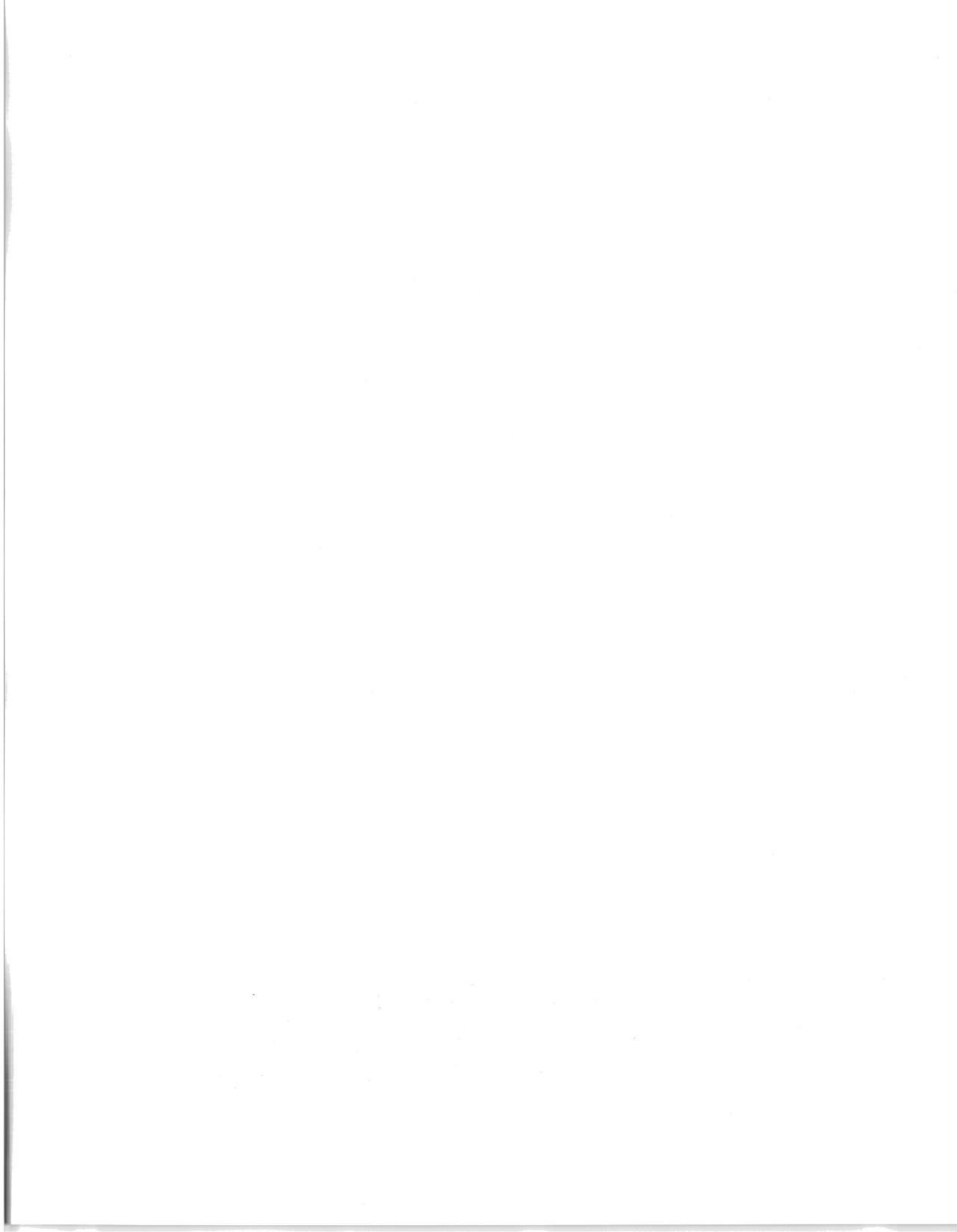
You asked for public comment on your social media posts about the proposed rule changes. I am asking you not to allow one night reservations. I have camped all across the country, each summer with the family and more so now that we are retired. Many many states hold back a few spots, or one loop to allow people to show up off the street. When Vermont moved to allowing reservations, it chose not to do that but there was always one night gap's for the spontaneous traveler. Camping is a large part is about that relaxed pace, spontaneous adventure and being carefree. Having to plan months out takes away from that. Whatever money is gained with the reservation fee, isn't worth the disappointment you are creating for your campers. – Pamela Reardon

Don't allow one night reservations! This is a policy that drastically favors out of staters over Vermonters. People planning longer trips as opposed to people who just want a chance to stay in their local park. Vermonters are the ones who respond to the park if there is an emergency through fire and rescue, Vermonters are the ones who make up the difference when your department doesn't pay sales tax, Vermonters are the ones who make up the difference when you make a payment in lieu of taxes for local property taxes - policies should favor Vermonters when possible. I know that tourism is important, I work in that industry. But this is a policy that doubtfully will gain you more revenue so I can't imagine what the justification is to let all the spots get booked up months in advance instead of being filled at the last minute. What is the covid protocol for the public meeting? – Scott Davies

(VSP reply: Regarding one-night reservations, let me clarify some points. First, you can only make one-night reservations after March 1 of the current season. So that gives people up to nine months to make longer reservations. Also, one-night reservations can only be made for Sunday – Thursday nights. Our parks are relatively empty mid-week, so this makes sense to us. Out-of-state visitors are unlikely to travel to Vermont to stay only one night so I really don't think that's a concern. And we do pay taxes – both sales taxes and room and meals taxes. As far as COVID protocol for the public hearing – there is no longer a mask mandate, so we won't be requiring those to attend in person. You are also able to attend virtually if you like.

(Rochelle Skinner)

One Night reservations are a terrible idea. What could possibly make you think they are a good one?
– Charlie Currier



(VSP reply: Let me elaborate on the policy. One-night reservations can only be made after March 1 of the current season. So, folks that want longer stays will have many months before then to make longer reservations. Also, one-night reservations will only be available on Sunday – Thursday nights. Our parks are largely empty during mid-week so allowing a shorter reservation period for these days makes sense to us. For years, people have been requesting one-night reservations – either because they are new to camping and just want to try it out, or they have young children, or they're on a road trip and only need a one-night stay. Hope that adds more context. Thank you again and happy camping! (Rochelle Skinner))

I am at Half Moon Pond right now, enjoying my morning coffee as most of the campground continues to sleep. The only noise is the birds and the occasional sound of the bathroom door. My sister-in-law has joined me at my rekindled campfire and informed me of the changes that are coming to State Parks. I want to join her in expressing my disappointment in every campsite being able to be booked out months in advance. State Parks are special place and it shouldn't always require planning a year in advance to get a spot. If you allow 1 night reservations where will a young family who is just getting into camping go? If they are all locked out a year in advance - you will get no new campers and only old pros who know the system. Please reconsider. – Todd Dunkleberger

(VSP reply: Thanks for writing, we appreciate your feedback. Let me clarify a few things that might ease your mind some. One-night reservations will only be available beginning March 1 of the current season, so they can't be made many months in advance. Also, one-night reservations are only available Sunday – Thursday nights, and we have tons of space on weeknights, so much so that I can't imagine any park getting full during the week. Hope that helps explain the policy better. Thanks for being a supporter of the parks! (Rochelle Skinner))

I read over your rule changes a couple weeks ago and didn't think anything of them. That is until I tried to make a reservation. Several places I like to go have one night booking on the spots that I can fit my trailer. Things like I could book Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday but not book Tuesday. This is going to result in less people being able to get a spot. Who wants to move their trailer around all week? I have to go to NH instead and I am from Vermont. Why let someone who wants to stay only a day, screw up the ability for someone who wants to stay for the week? Please rethink this. – Victor Sanchez

(VSP reply: Thanks for taking time to write, we really appreciate it. I did want to let you know though, that you can make reservations up to 11 months in advance, which means you have up to nine months to make reservations before the 1-night reservations begin in March of the year. Have a great day! – Rochelle Skinner)

Lisa Kathleen Wilkins

I love the ability to reserve campsites for one night! I have young children no sometimes one night is perfect.

Like Reply 4w





Chara Lee

So excited about the 1 night stay option being added as well as the new No Show policy! It's been so discouraging at Burton Island bc the sites are booked up long before the season starts but then when we go out on day trips, there are almost always multiple sites that remain reserved even though no one ever shows up to camp.

Like Reply 3w

No show policy*: Visitors must occupy their sites no later than 2PM the second day after their reservation begins or must contact the park staff to notify them of their late arrival. Visitors failing to do so will forfeit their site and will not be entitled to any refund.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (No Show Policy):

I don't think you have fully thought about the ill will cancelling people delayed in showing up is going to bring. Imagine the anger you would have if you drove hours with a car load of kids and dogs, with all the advance prep required for groceries and packing and you are delayed a day for whatever reason. You didn't catch the fact that the park would cancel you or were too busy with whatever got you delayed to call. Now you are at the park and find out the kid behind the counter gave your spot away an hour ago. There goes one of the few vacation days they get a year. There isn't any place else to go. All the campgrounds are booked. The abuse that poor kid is going to suffer behind that counter will make him/her question why they took the job. But this will never happen right? All your guests read every rule before they show up. Right? Or maybe they thought they were entitled to what they paid for. It is just plain greedy. I can fathom anything to be gained other than renting the spot twice and the expense of guests who are the one to get shafted. Not your guys best work. – Tom Welsh

(VSP reply: Hi Tom, Thanks for sharing your thoughts with us. Let me clarify a couple of things that might ease your mind some. If you didn't show up or call the first night, our staff would make every attempt to contact you. If you still did not show up the SECOND night and did not contact the park, only then would your reservation be cancelled. Before advancing this, we talked with many different state park systems. Most all of them have a no-show policy but will cancel your reservation after the first night, so we are being more generous than most state park systems. We'll be educating visitors this year and won't enforce it until next year. We're doing this because we get many, many complaints from people who try to book a prime site, but they were all filled, only to show up for a lesser site at the park to find there is no one in the site they had originally wanted. It's not a matter of greed at all, it's a matter of competition for popular sites. Thanks again, we do appreciate you taking the time to comment. (Rochelle Skinner))

If it isn't about greed, why not refund the portion you cancel?

I would like to make a records request for all recordings of meeting, data, emails, notes and drafts related to this series of rule changes including data that was used to make these decisions and responses you have received since announcing them. – Tom Welsh

(VSP reply: Sure, Tom. We're collecting public comments through June 14. I'll wait until all the info is collected and compiled before we send it your way.)



If I've paid for 3 nights Fri-Sun and it rains until 4 p.m. Sat., I want to be able to set up late afternoon on Sat. (I have RESERVED/PAID FOR THE THREE NIGHTS!) – Jake Urato of Brattleboro VT

Your current cancelation policy is already crappy (I was going to shorten my stay last year so I could arrive a day later and the website was going to charge me more money than I had already paid for the privilege of staying one less day so I just left it and showed up a day late). Under this new plan you are going to cancel me all together if something like that comes up? So pay more money to stay fewer days or loose my reservation and my money? How can that be fair? - Anna

Very happy with the proposal that no-shows will forfeit their entire camping fee as so many sites go unused. The current penalty doesn't change the behavior of selfish campers who can't be bothered with making a call to cancel. - Patti Fischer

I am writing in opposition to the proposed no-show policy proposed by Vermont State Parks. As the owner of an Inn and small business, I use state parks as an escape. My schedule often results in last minute changes and delays. While I understand notification of late arrival is not a significant burden, it is not one I should have to endure. It is unVermont like to deprive someone of something they have paid for in full. Personal feelings aside, as I am just one person, it is universally in violation of every credit card agreement and therefore processor agreement. You are opening yourself up to chargebacks and the associated penalties and fees. Visa for example allows you to retain a max of 1 day in the event of a no show. <https://www.belizebank.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Prevent-and-Handle-No-Shows-A-guide-for-Hotel-Owners-and-Managers.pdf> Mastercard, Amex and Discover are similar but you can do your own research. No showing a guest and keeping their entire payment is unconscionable, and for good reason the guests are protected by their credit card issuer.
-Tom Bradley

Leaving a message on the parks system should count as notification for the no show policy as getting a real person to pick up the phone can be difficult!

My friends and I would like to express our disappointment in the proposed policy changes for State Parks. We travel around the state during the park season, staying at state parks to compete almost weekly in various foot races. We are all Vermonters and use the parks so that we do not have to commute on the morning of the race (often Sundays). Currently we book Friday and Saturdays all around the state, I think our organizers have 11 reservations for this year already. Sometimes we show up Friday, sometimes not until Saturday. With your new policy, I may find that our spot has been cancelled even though we have paid for it if we don't show up Friday night. I can't book a one night stay on the weekend and I wouldn't want to because sometimes we do come on Friday (depending on how far the race is from home). The only way to get one night on the weekend is to book two nights and not show up for one.

How would it be fair to take away something that we have paid for, especially when this wasn't the policy, nor were we informed of it, last year, when we made the reservation?

It is greedy to try and double dip and sell a camping spot twice. You are going to have a lot of people extremely upset. It is unwise to change the policy and unconscionable to change the policy after they

made the reservation. People who have had plans for a year and you will be cancelling their stay. I see that we can notify you - will there be a check box when you make a reservation that says "don't cancel my reservation no matter what." Can I notify at the time I make the reservation? Have you tried calling Branbury on a Friday in July for anything (much less trying desperately to make sure they don't give away the site you already paid for)?

(VSP reply: we plan on educating visitors this year and not enforcing rule until 2023 season)

I don't think you have considered how upset a person who has a paid for confirmed reservation pulled out from under them will be. It isn't about the no refund part either. What are they supposed to do when they show up a day late with kids and dogs piled in the car ready for their once a year vacation and you say - sorry we gave your spot away because you got held up in a park with no cell reception. Where are they supposed to go? We have to book for these events a year out because you are always full. They are not going to be able to find a campsite somewhere else. Please reconsider! Why collect an extra few bucks at the expense of upsetting your customers. I know this is government, but it is a short-sighted business decision.

-Kirby Turner

Depriving people of something they paid for by cancelling their reservation when they have paid for it is criminal. Who do you think you are?

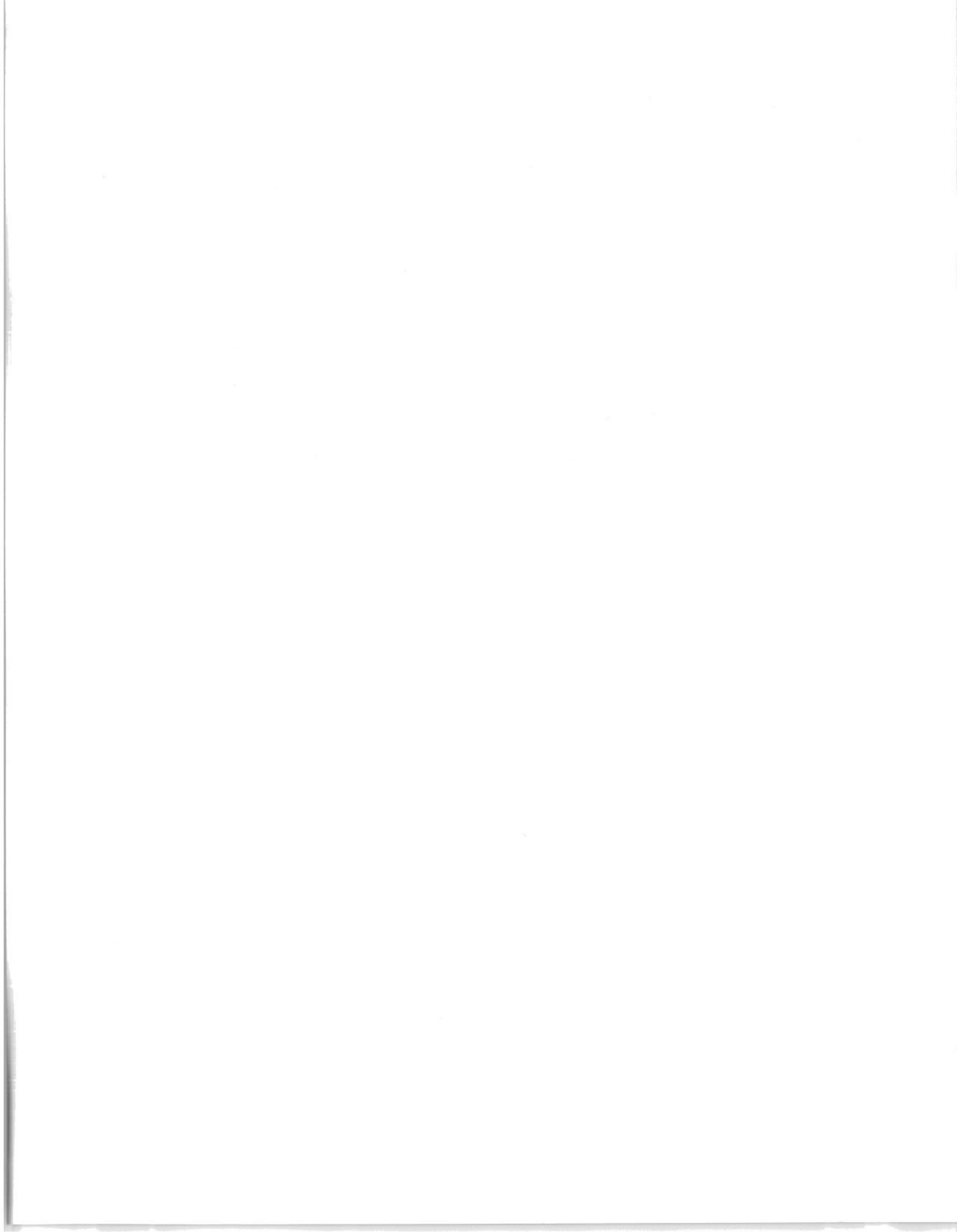
I am a small business owner, whose business is recovering from COVID. As part of my photography business, I travel across the state taking wedding photos. I often stay in state parks so I don't have to travel home after the receptions. I am already forced to make a two night reservation so that I can secure a spot. I understand your desire to do so for occupancy. With this new policy though you are going to cancel if I don't show up for the night I didn't want to book anyway. How can you justify having both policies? Minimum nights is one thing, but canceling because I was forced to book for nights I didn't want anyway is incompatible. You need to pick one or the other.

I saw some people on Reddit saying that all I had to do is call. Why should the burden be on me? With any wedding there is a lot going on, and now I am expected to call to say "Yes, I want the space I paid for." Of course I want it, that is why I paid for it. How about you call the people who don't show up instead and get their permission to resell the spot?

Also how can you change the agreement after you have been paid? I made some reservations already and if I hadn't seen this I would have shown up to a spot you had already rented to someone else. If this is going to be the policy it should only apply to new reservations not ones before the new policy was made.

I understand the need to maximize occupancy/revenue by making a minimum stay, I don't know how you can possibly justify depriving people of something they paid for. -Andy

(VSP reply: Hi Andy, Thanks for taking the time to write us, we really appreciate it.)



I want to clarify a couple of things that may ease your mind some. First, we will be allowing 1-night reservations Sunday – Thursday nights beginning March 1 for the remainder of the season, so that would help you if you're looking for just one night on those days.

Also, in the scenario you outlined, you wouldn't lose your site. Let's say you had a reservation for Friday and Saturday nights. If you didn't check in Friday evening, park staff would make every attempt to contact you to inquire about your plans. If they couldn't get a hold of you, and you didn't call the park, and (this is the part I want to make clear), if you didn't show up Saturday night, then we would cancel the remainder of your reservation. So, we're actually giving visitors a 48-hour grace period, not a 24-hour period.

We've adopted this policy because we have received many, many complaints from visitors who have tried to book their favorite sites, but someone else has already reserved them. So, they book a different site. When they go to the park, that site that they really wanted, is vacant, and remains so for days. We also talked with other state park systems, almost all of which have no-show policies. Most park systems will cancel a reservation if you don't show up the first night. We're trying to be more liberal by allowing for two nights of no-show before we release the site.

This season, our plan is to educate park visitors about this policy, but we're not planning on enforcing it until next season.

I hope this helps, and please let me know if I can provide further information. All feedback will be presented as we work through the approval process. (Rochelle Skinner)

I find all your proposed rule changes acceptable but especially want you to go for the no show policy change. I spend a fair amount of time in Brighton State Parks and my family has "favorite" sites that are empty the whole time we're camping because someone reserved them for weeks but doesn't bother to show up. Please, please pass this rule. – Ed Chase

I particularly appreciate the new rule if you do not check in by 2pm of the second day someone else can have that site. Far too many times I've seen my favorite site sit empty but was reserved while I am in another site. – Tammy Brown

I wanted to offer some feedback and perhaps ask for assistance in what continues to be an endless frustration in my experience of the VT state parks, and particularly in camping at VT state parks.

My experience is that for many of the VT State campgrounds, unless you are poised and ready to make a reservation 11 months in advance for your desired date, there are rarely available spots. I was just looking at Green River Reservoir, and granted, I know that it is a very popular site, but there are hardly any openings for the entire season.

And yet, when you arrive at those campgrounds, there are unused camping spots throughout the park! I had that experience at Stillwater Campground last June, and at Burton Island campground in 2020-



both campgrounds seemed to be at 60% capacity despite the reservations systems saying that they were "FULL".

I know that because of the rather generous cancellation policy, many of my friends simply book up more sites than they actually need, for more dates that they will actually use. When they get to the park, they get a refund for the unused portion of their reservation, and "eat" the small cancellation fees.

This is such a frustrating experience for those of us that really cannot plan 11 months in advance, nor sit at the computer, refreshing the reservation button, and pouncing on reserving sites. So, as a result, my family has had way fewer experiences in Vermont State parks than we'd like - I've given up several times because the reservations are too frustrating and there is NOTHING available!

My sense is that a more firm cancellation policy or a less generous refund policy would at least limit the "spot grabbing" that seems to take place. Or if the refund policy was that you get a full refund 2 weeks in advance and then the site was released into the system again and marked available, at least the State of Vermont would be able to rebook those sites and make money on them, rather than let them sit open. I have seen other states use this method with success.

I can't imagine that I'm the first person to have this experience, and I'd love to hear what your recommendations are. Unfortunately, waiting until the day of and calling to see if there is availability is not really a valid recommendation for a family that has to take time off work, pack up gear, find house and animal sitters, etc.

Thank you for any thoughts you might be able to share. My sincere desire is to get out and go camping with my kids, and it's so sad to keep bumping into this same problem again and again.

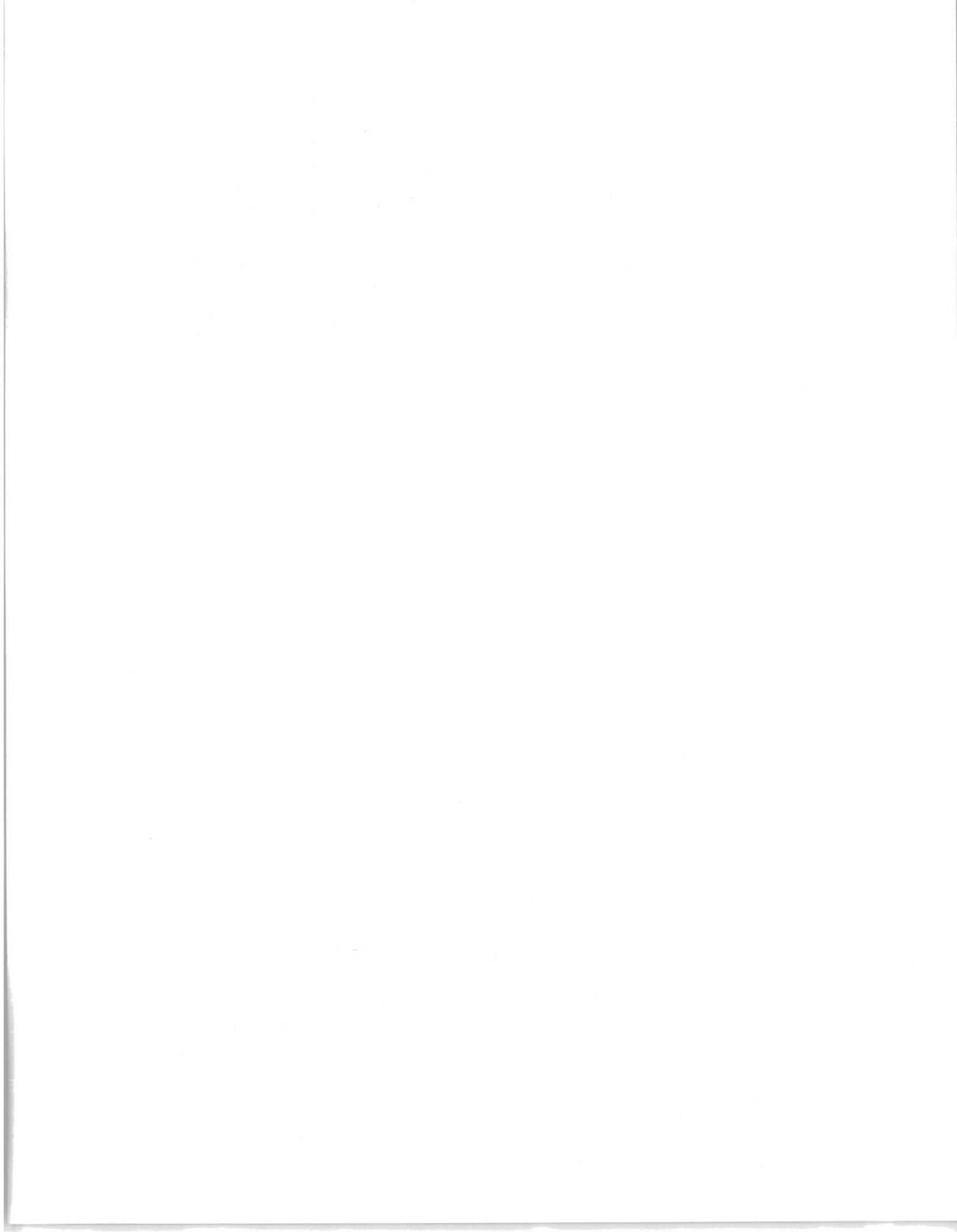
-Teri Page of Calais, VT

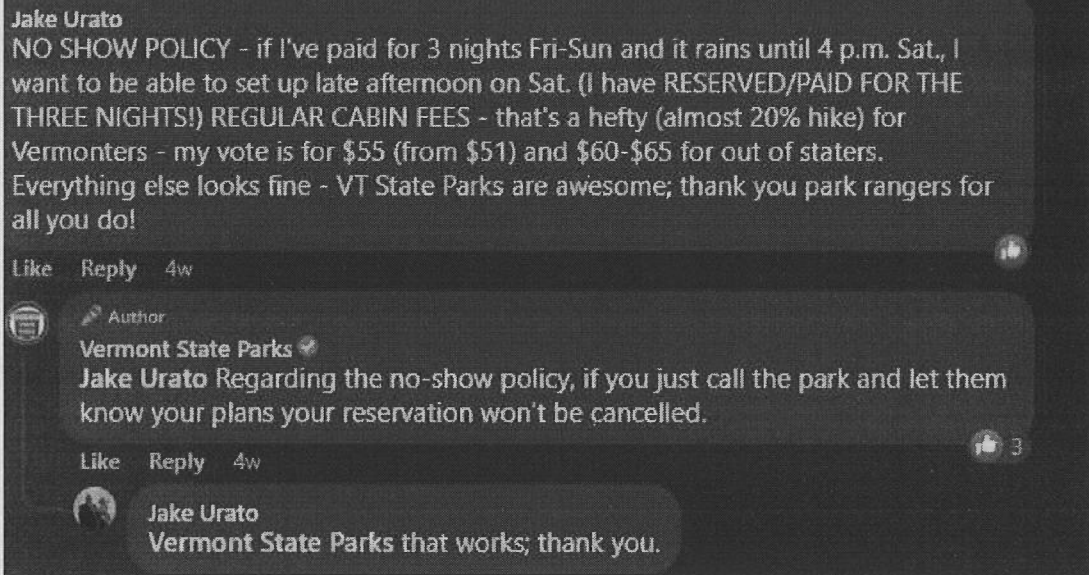
Tanya Love-Forrest

Kudos on the No Show policy!! Too many empty sites last there that were "reserved" but never used.

Like Reply 4w







Green River*: changing fees to equal other parks; All sites prime; group site from \$5.00 to \$6.00 per person/minimum \$48.00 (\$1/per increase)

PUBLIC COMMENT (Green River):

As a regular camper at Green River Reservoir, I'm wondering what the rationale is for raising rates to equal other state parks. A few questions:

- Will the rate increase to "prime" site rates since they are all waterfront sites at GRR?
 - What new amenities will be provided at the sites or in the park? Currently, there are no tables at the sites and no potable water in the park. Sites are not cleaned or raked in-between camper use and no toilet paper is provided. Other Vermont State Parks offer all of these amenities plus running water and flush toilets in the restrooms.
 - Could some of the new fees be used to improve the boat launching area? It is currently a nightmare on busy summer afternoons with canoes, kayaks, sailboats, SUPS and trolling boats all with many, many people and dogs vying for a way to enter or exit the water.
 - Would it be possible to use some of these funds to actually enforce some rules, like dogs on leashes at the boat launching area?
- Carol Vallett

(VSP reply: Hi Carol, Thanks for writing and providing feedback. Yes, the sites at Green River Reservoir will be going up to the prime site camping fees. The reason for this change is multi-faceted. One is, it's just simpler for everyone – the public, park staff, park management to follow one set of fees throughout all our parks. Second, while there aren't the typical amenities at Green River, it does take extra staff time to patrol and clean the sites (yes, they do clean the sites) and maintaining the privies. Also, it's a matter of economics – supply and demand. The demand is very high at Green River and the additional fees will help us cover maintenance costs to accommodate the demand. And yes, increased fees will allow us to increase our staff presence to manage park visitors. (Rochelle Skinner))

Waterbury Remotes: changing fees, minimum stay and reservation policy to equal other parks.

Burton Island

Burton Island State Park waterfront lean-to sites:*

Vermont Residents = \$40.00 per night including VT Meals and Rooms Tax; (\$2/per night increase)

Non-Vermont Residents = \$48.00 per night including VT Meals and Rooms Tax; (\$2/per night increase)

Docking & Mooring:*

Docking to \$2.25 per foot per day or any part thereof. (\$.50/per foot increase)

Mooring or Anchorings = 1\$1.00 per foot per day or any part thereof. (\$.25/per foot increase)

Seasonal Slips at Burton Island Marina:* (New)

\$65.00/per foot; 18-foot minimum vessel length;

Each slip includes four (4) Island Runner Season Passes and one (1) Vehicle Pass;

\$100.00/per day penalty if boat is not removed by final day of operating season.

Island Runner:

Add new School Group Day Use fee of \$2.00/per person for K-12 schools during the regular school year

Add new Island Runner Season Pass = \$70.00/per season

Add new charter rate of \$425.00/per 2-hour trip

Burton Island Firewood:

To \$8.00/per armload (\$6/per armload increase)

Seyon Lodge:*

Half-day boat rental to \$25.00 (\$5/increase)

Conference fees to \$400.00 (\$100/increase); \$300.00 for non-profits (\$100/increase)

Weddings \$500.00/day up to 50 persons; \$1,500.00/per day 51-150 persons

Overnight Lodge rental \$750.00 (Monday-Thursday) \$800.00 Friday – Sunday (\$100/increase)

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS:

All Day Use and Camping policy changes sound good to me. And I particularly like the change to allow 1 night reservations! I would also like to lobby for the consideration of hiker/biker/boater sites in the future (with a lower fee). Maybe just a patch of grass with a couple picnic tables or small distinct sites tucked into the woods someplace (with maybe a picnic table at each site).

Maybe only at campgrounds where space is easily made available and they are more likely to be used? Hiker/biker sites are often seen in the western US and Canada (at national parks, state parks, county parks, etc.) and are very popular. Vermont Bikepackers (a VMBA chapter of which I'm a member) is continually developing new bikepacking routes in Vermont (as are the folks at bikepacking.com) and the activity is becoming more and more popular. Having more guaranteed (and less expensive) camping spots specifically for cyclists might encourage more cyclists to travel to Vermont and would also discourage "stealth" camping. Thank you for all you do and thanks for considering my feedback!

– Jeff Mullen of Richmond, VT

It would be amazing if the free toddler admission could be raised to age 5 to coordinate with school attendance. I know the daily admission price for residents has barely increased, but as someone who uses the parks as often as humanly possible and has had to rely on library rental passes in the past just to even visit, that small increase could impact a lot of young families like mine. I have 3 children, 2 of them are under 3. They've all experienced a lot of trauma but getting them into nature not only to appreciate it for what it is but also to be therapeutic is truly irreplaceable. I would love to know I can continue to make as much use as often as possible, even with hiking fuel expenses adding on more pressure, as well as other reach up and early head start families like mine. Please consider a proposal to increase the free admission to all children under age 5 and I for one will be incredibly grateful, and blessed! – Korinne Harvey of Corinth, VT

I find that Vermont State Parks have not kept up with updating their parks. The population is older in Vermont and many of us are traveling in RVS instead of tents. It is no longer an option to sleep in shelters/ tents with no toilet facilities, etc.

We have traveled across country twice a year for 15+ years in a small motorhome and, as a rule, only stay in state parks, national parks, federal lands, etc. . . No private campgrounds, if we can avoid it. These parks have electricity and no fees for showers and most have no fees for dogs(although some parks are changing that policy. . .too many " bad parents"). But \$2 a night? That's a bit extravagant. Your fees are high for "boon-docking" campsites.

I have camped in VT state parks for many years. . .and even installed solar panels to help the RV retain electricity. At one time I remember there was a thought about trying electricity at one or two campgrounds? Any idea what happened to that? Have loved the campsites and staff. Sadly, this will probably be my last year camping in VT parks, as there are parks in neighboring states with better accommodations. Remember, there are folks who cannot do the "more primitive " camping.

-Jeanette Dickson

I'm writing to support the rule and fee changes for State Parks in 2022. As someone who is getting into bike touring I'm particularly excited about the 1-night minimum stay change, although previously bikes had been allowed to do this by calling the success rate that I had in actually getting someone at a park who knew that there was an exception for bikes was low. I also support the rate increase, which will help keep our beloved VT State Parks a high quality destination for in-state and out of state residents alike. – Kathryn Wrigley of South Burlington, VT

I would like you to consider other options for our elderly population to obtain their lifetime park pass, such as maybe an online purchase. I work with mentally handicapped individuals, whom many of them have anxiety of going into public buildings due to ongoing COVID outbreaks. I am sure this is also true for many others without such handicaps. It seems cruel to deny these people the benefit of enjoying the beautiful parks in this state, due to it being cost-prohibited without such pass. Thank you for taking into consideration, - Margaret Hanson

Sarah Gregory

Vt resident. I've been to all the state parks except NEK & the small islands, they are on the "soon to do" list. I have also been to state parks in many other states. I love VT state parks. I'm content with the changes.

Like Reply 4w

Bonnie Poirier

I am a Vermont resident and have been going to quite a few parks for years. I don't have a problem with the changes.

Like Reply 4w

Barbara Cavalla Rosenberg

Would. Fee changes affect 2022 camping already booked?

Like Reply 4w



Author

Vermont State Parks ✓

Barbara Cavalla Rosenberg No, the old fees will apply as long as you don't change your reservation.

Like Reply 3w

Loren Blaisdell

In NH we have a park plate through the dmv, great way to support raise awareness and generate likely more cash flow

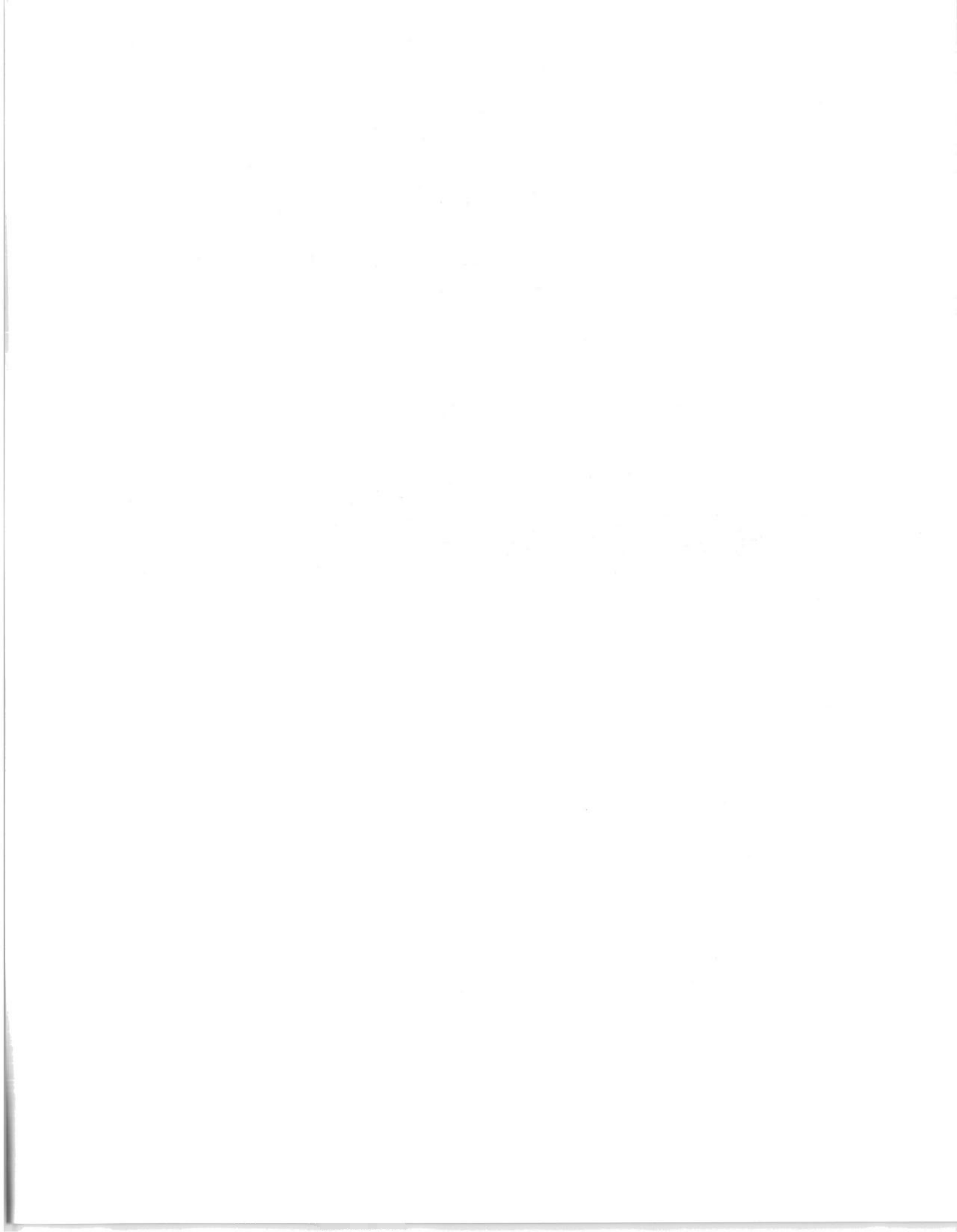
Like Reply 4w



Mary Delaney Richardson

Loren Blaisdell NY also has this.

Like Reply 4w



Nicole Cook Stetson

I would love to see a day pass/5 day pass gift card. We would give a bunch of those out as gifts!

Like Reply 4w

Garecht Brunner

Nicole Cook Stetson there's a 10 punch pass that's good for day use at any state park available.

Like Reply 4w



Nicole Cook Stetson

Garecht Brunner Yes, we wanted to give them out as party favors. But \$30 a person would get expensive fast. Hence, the day passes.

Like Reply 4w



Jessica Esposito

Garecht Brunner, camping credit is a great gift idea! You can purchase gift cards and gift certificates through VT State Parks!

Like Reply 4w

Carol Ann Jones

I think these changes are fair.

Like Reply 4w

Sean Brock

Time to add power to some parks and sites. There are thousands of RVers that would utilize the parks if this was available. More revenue for the state via tourism

Like Reply 4w

Kylie Brown

Looks great!

Like Reply 4w

2022 Rule Change

Public Comment Responsive Summary

We received close to 100 comments and were pleased with the level of engagement on the proposed rule changes. The parks leadership team has carefully considered all the comments.

In summary the feedback was a mixture of favorable, unfavorable, or a misunderstanding needing clarification. In the instances of misunderstandings regarding the intent or impact of a rule change we were able to respond and provide clarity or answer questions. Given the nature of social media some of the comments resulted in a civil dialogue representing opposing views and support for the park system and rule changes. The intent of this summary is to provide a response to comments that were opposed to a rule change.

Pet fee increase from \$1 per night to \$2 per night:

Many Vermont State Parks are dog friendly, and this increase elicited some negative responses. Pets often figure heavily into family vacations and outdoor recreation. We understand that accommodating them is important to many Vermonters and visitors to the state. The reality is that accommodating pets, working to make sure they do not impact other visitors experience, protecting and maintaining the park, resolving conflict and complaints, and cleaning up after them requires significant staff time. A nominal pet fee helps to cover these costs and the expense of providing dog waste and baggy stations. This \$1 increase helps ensure that pet owners offset some of the cost of accommodating pets in the parks.

Stone Hut fee increase from \$225 to \$300 per night:

A comment stated that the \$75 per night increase is excessive.

The operation of the stone hut requires a full-time staff person and is a management challenge, given our only winter access is via chairlift or snowmobile. This is a unique experience that requires substantial effort and overhead, including the firewood provided to heat the building. It should also be noted that the occupancy rate for the stone hut is 100 percent. The hut sleeps 12 so the cost per person is \$25 per night which means the increase will amount to \$6.25 per person per night over last year. This recommended increase is well in line with the visitor accommodations and the resources required to operate and maintain the hut.

Adult Day Use Fee increasing from \$4 per person to \$5 per person:

There was one comment against the \$1 per person increase. Frequent visitors will not be affected by this increase. The rate for children is not changing and we also have three unique pass options which are embraced by Vermonters. Each gives a significant discount per visit. The Green Mountain Passport provides free access for Vermonters over the age of 62 and for Veterans of the uniformed services. Other discounted or free options available include the library pass program, the park prescription



program, and the Vermont Parks Forever Foundation which partners with us to help fund passes for foster children and underprivileged youth through their park access fund.

Camping fees increase of \$1 per night for Vermonters and \$7 per night for out of state visitors

The comments submitted opposed to the camping fee increase are regarding the nonresident rate hike. All but two of the comments were from out of state locations. Charging a premium for nonresident state park visitors is an industry standard around the country. In Vermont, this extra charge has remained lower than most states for years. This increase puts us in the middle range of other states in the Northeast region. The fees paid by nonresidents allow us to maintain a lower rate for Vermont residents.

Cabin rental fee increase of \$9 per night for residents and \$11 per night for nonresidents:

We received one comment stating that this was too much of an increase. It is important to note that instead of an incremental fee increase each year, it is normally 2-4 years between individual fee changes. Though significant, the \$9 and \$11 increases remain below market rate. Vermont has made a significant capital investment in this cabin program, and the cabins require ongoing maintenance, as well as care and cleaning well beyond what is required for regular campsites. Another consideration is that the furnishings and fixtures must be replaced on a regular basis because of wear and tear. We feel this proposed increase is reasonable and fair. A good point was raised stating that the increase for Vermonters was almost as high as the increase for non-residents, whereas in the other camping categories, the relative increase for nonresidents was much greater. The next time we propose a fee increase for cabins we will aim to hold the line on rates for Vermonters. In the meantime, our cabin rates remain a good deal.

