

Recreation Fee Changes in State Parks, Reservoirs and State Forests

Why are you changing some fees for 2013?

Approximately two-thirds of our operating budget is covered by user fees. When costs of utilities, supplies and equipment increase for you at home, they increase for us too. We increase fees to maintain the services you expect and enjoy as a user of a state park or reservoir.

These fee adjustments are small, especially considering that we have limited fee changes since 2006 because of economic conditions faced by Hoosier families.

Will the cost of entering a state park or reservoir go up?

Daily entrance rates will not increase in 2013. We do everything we can to keep the cost of visiting one of our state properties at a reasonable cost. The daily entrance fee for Hoosiers was just \$2 from 1987 to 2000 and was increased to \$4/day on weekdays and \$5/day on weekends in 2006. In 2011, it was changed to \$5/day on both weekdays and weekends.

You can still enter a state park, a reservoir or a state forest with an entrance gate for \$5/day, and there are many activities that have no additional fees. A few of these include visiting nature centers, hiking, birding, most interpretive programs, picnicking, biking and playground use.



Fees That Remain the Same in 2013*

- In-state remains \$5/daily entrance. (\$6 at Prophetstown, which includes entrance to Historic Prophetstown).
- Out-of-state remains \$7/daily entrance. (\$10 at Indiana Dunes and \$8 at Prophetstown, which includes admission to Historic Prophetstown).
- Daily pedestrian remains \$2/person; annual pedestrian/bicycle pass remains \$10.
- Commercial buses remain \$2/person.
- Interpretive program fees for field trips remain \$1/person. Off site rates vary.
- Daily horse tag remains \$5/person; annual horse tag remains \$20.
- Rental picnic shelter pricing remains the same (\$25-\$75).
- State boat mooring fees and boat rental fees remain unchanged.
- Recreation buildings remain unchanged except at Mounds and Ouabache State Parks.
- Special event fees and commercial photography fees remain unchanged.

Fees that Change in 2013*

Entrance Permits

- Annual in-state changes from \$36 to \$40.
- Annual out-of-state changes from \$46 to \$60.
- Golden Hoosier permit for age 65 and over changes from \$18 to \$20.

Camping and Cabins**

- Nightly rates for full hookup sites increase from \$22.88 to \$26 Sun-Wed. On weekends, full hookups increase from \$32.41 to \$36. Holiday rates increase from \$36.22 to \$40.
- Nightly rates for electric sites increase from \$16.21 to \$19 Sun-Wed. On weekends, electric sites move from \$23.83 to \$26. Holiday rates go from \$26.69 to \$29.
- Nightly rates for nonelectric sites increase from \$9.53 to \$12 Sun-Wed, and from \$12.39 to \$15 Thurs-Sat. Holiday rates go from \$15.25 to \$18.
- Primitive, backpacking and canoe campsites will be \$10/night; fees currently range from \$5.72 - \$9.35/night.
- Some cabin rentals increase by \$5/night.

Horse Camping and Fees**

- Nightly rates for electric sites increase from \$19.07 to \$22 Sun-Wed and from \$26.69 to \$29 on weekends. Holiday rates go from \$29.55 to \$32.
- Nightly rates for nonelectric sites increase from \$12.39 to \$15 Sun-Wed and from \$15.25 to \$18 on weekends. Holiday rates increase from \$18.11 to \$21.
- Primitive sites will be \$13/night. Current prices range from \$8.58-\$12.39/night.

Swimming and Boating

- Daily swim rate changes from \$2/day/person to \$3/day/person.
- Swim pass for 25 visits changes from \$35 to \$50. (No expiration date.)
- Motorized lake permit changes from \$20 to \$22.

Others**

- Rental of Mounds State Park Pavilion or Ouabache State Park Lodge Recreation Building increases from \$100 to \$150.
- State park inn rooms increase from \$.99 - \$4.99/night (varies by inn/room type).
- Pokagon toboggan rental changes from \$10/sled to \$12/sled.
- Shakamak Group Camp Rental changes from \$540 to \$600/night, and individual group camp cottage rentals change from \$60 to \$100/night.

* For a complete listing of fees, visit the DNR website at www.stateparks.IN.gov.

**Rates do not include state and local taxes.

What about camping?

Campers will see increases between 65 cents and \$4.42/night, depending on the type of site used.

We've raised camping rates a limited number of times in the last two decades. Camping rates did not change from 1993-2001, and they did not change from 2006-2012 other than an adjustment in sales tax.

If you compare our fees to other items you purchase, it becomes more evident that we continue to play "catch-up" after several years with no adjustments. A first class stamp cost 22 cents in 1987. It has gradually risen in price to the current 45 cents. A dozen eggs cost about 78 cents in 1987; today the same eggs cost \$2.

A visit to a state park or reservoir is still a great bargain. Campers find themselves wrapped in several thousand acres of forests, meadows, wetlands and prairies. A family of four can hike, swim and enjoy nature exhibits and programs for much less than the cost of dinner and a movie!

My taxes support the DNR—why do I have to pay more for services?

Every tax dollar that you pay is divided many ways to support a wide variety of state services. Only a small percentage of each tax dollar is appropriated to the Department of Natural Resources. User fees currently pay for about two-thirds of state park and reservoir operational costs. Appropriations from the State's General Fund pay the other one-third.

Where does the money actually go when I pay for services at state parks and reservoirs?

All of the revenue collected from entrance fees, camping, programs and permits is placed in a dedicated account used only to fund the operations at state parks and reservoirs.

Why doesn't money collected from horse riders get used just on horse trails, or money from campers get used just on campgrounds?

There is no one particular user group that generates enough revenue

through fees to be completely self-supporting. There are also basic services that we provide at little or no cost, including such features as hiking, biking, interpretive and educational programs for children and adults, security staff, brochures and property maps and many others. Pooling all user fees allows us to provide a wide range of services to meet the needs of Hoosiers and guests from other states as well.

What can you say that you've done with the dollars from fee increases in the last few years?

The dollars have been used to offset increases in utility, fuel and supply costs. Funds are also used to manage new properties that bring Indiana's resources closer to Hoosiers. Since 1988, the number of properties we manage has increased from 27 to 32, so operational dollars must stretch further. It is important to note, however, that we have not increased staff. In fact, while the number of sites we manage has increased, the number of full-time staff in the division has actually dropped from 385 to 352. The average number of full-time staff per property has decreased from 14.2 in 1988 to 11 today.

How are new fees decided?

We consider many factors when determining fees. We look at such things as the needs of our users, when fees were last raised, fees in other states and at private facilities, occupancy rates, our budget and the revenue needed to support staff and services.

In 2005, the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) approved a range of fees and authorized DNR to make appropriate fee adjustments within that range. We are still accountable to the NRC and must manage fee adjustments responsibly, but this allows us to vary rates.

When do the changes take effect?

Inn room rate changes take effect immediately. Toboggan rate increases take effect when the toboggan opens on November 23, 2013. All other new fees take effect on January 1, 2013.

All annual passes purchased for 2013 prior to January 1 will be sold at the new rates, and campground reservations made prior to January 1 for 2013 will be at the new rates. Any inn or campground reservations made prior to the rate changes will be honored.

Will this affect SPR Go! Value Packs and Holiday Gift Packs?

Not this year. You can purchase 2013 SPRGo! Value Packs and Holiday Gift Packs at 2012 rates and get great savings! Either of these purchases is a great way to save even more on annual passes, boat permits, pool passes and camping for 2013. These packages are available online at www.innsgifts.com. You can read details of the SPR Go! Value Package now at www.stateparks.IN.gov/7313.htm.

Other Questions?

E-mail us from our website at www.stateparks.IN.gov.

Your State Parks and Reservoirs at a Glance

- We maintain approximately 2080 buildings.
- State Park Inns, with 631 rooms, is the 4th largest state park inn system in the country.
- We have more than 560 miles of hiking, biking and horseback riding trails.
- Reservoir properties offer approximately 69,000 acres of public hunting land.
- We have over 39,000 acres of lakes, accessed by 75 boat ramps and 17 marinas.
- We have 8,273 campsites and 149 cabins.
- We have 17,000 picnic tables, 174 picnic shelters and 163 playgrounds.
- Reservoir properties maintain over 350 wood duck nesting boxes.
- We manage 15 year-round nature centers and eight seasonal centers visited by a half-million people each year. Educational programs are attended by a quarter of a million students, teachers and families.
- Approximately 15.5 million visitors use and enjoy the 171,441 acres managed by the Division of State Parks and Reservoirs each year.