



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Delaware Water Gap
National Recreation Area

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Delaware Water Gap NRA News Release

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National Park Service Releases Draft Visitor Use Management Plan for Public Review and Comment

BUSHKILL, PA- The National Park Service announced today that the draft Visitor Use Management Plan (VUM Plan) for Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River is now available for public review and comment until December 6, 2019. The VUM Plan was developed with input from the public and park stakeholders and is designed to maximize the park's ability to provide recreational access and improve visitor experiences while protecting the parks' natural and cultural resources.

During the development of the draft plan, the NPS sought public feedback and input during two rounds of public meetings and public comment periods. "We are now asking our visitors, local residents, stakeholders, elected officials, and other interested parties to take one more look at the draft VUM Plan and the informational materials that we have provided and tell us what you think," said Superintendent Sula Jacobs. "Public involvement is essential to a successful planning effort. Our team really wants and needs to hear your thoughts and ideas in order to make this a useful plan. Your input helps ensure the park provides enhanced recreational access and improved experiences for our visitors, while also protecting the special places our visitors enjoy."

How to Participate

The draft VUM Plan is available for a 60-day public review and comment period that closes on December 6, 2019. All comments must be received by this date.

Come to a meeting. The NPS will host 2 public open house meetings to share information about the draft VUM Plan and seek public input. Comments can be submitted orally or in writing at the open house meetings.

- **Thursday, October 24, 6 - 8 pm**
Bushkill Volunteer Fire Company Hall, 124 Evergreen Drive, Bushkill, PA 18324
- **Saturday, October 26, 1-3 pm**
Sussex County Technical School Auditorium, 105 North Church Road, Sparta, NJ 07871

Review documents and comment online. The draft VUM Plan, a project newsletter, and all materials from the open house meetings will be available for review and written comments may be submitted at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=220&projectID=55912&documentID=99017>.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Send us a letter. Comments may be submitted by mail to Superintendent Sula Jacobs, ATTN: VUM Planning Team, 1978 River Road, Bushkill, PA, 18324.

Look for us at a Pop-up Meeting. A series of pop-up meetings will be held at various sites around the park and in local communities on weekends in October. Staff will be stationed at special events and at busy areas in the park to share information and answer questions about the draft VUM Plan and how to comment. Pop-up meetings will be announced on the park's Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/DelWaterGapNPS.

For those without internet access, hard copies of the draft VUM Plan may be obtained by calling (570) 426-2418. Emailed comments or comments made on social media will not be accepted.

Goals of the draft VUM Plan

The National Park Service seeks to identify ways to achieve the following goals and objectives through the development and implementation of the draft VUM Plan:

- Minimize impacts to the park's natural and cultural resources and visitor experiences caused by visitor use;
- Enhance opportunities for the park's key visitor experiences;
- Assess the appropriateness of current and new/evolving visitor opportunities while considering visitor safety and resource protection;
- Align public expectations for use with availability of resources or infrastructure;
- Increase understanding of existing and emerging visitor interests, use characteristics, patterns, and trends;
- Manage visitor demand and expectations throughout the park;
- Identify and evaluate and various visitor use management strategies; and
- Project financial requirements and economic strategies to pay for each proposed action.

Proposed Actions

The draft VUM Plan details numerous proposed actions that the park would take as funds are available or to generate additional revenue. These proposed actions include but are not limited to the following:

- Transition from the current practice of charging an amenity fee at 6 discrete areas to charging an entrance fee for all park users; the majority of the funds collected would remain in the park for use on deferred maintenance projects and to pay for the implementation of the strategies identified in the VUM Plan. Entrance passes would cost \$25/car, \$20/motorcycle, and \$15/person for a 7-day pass; annual passes would be available for \$45.
- Add up to 20 new river campsites, improve facilities at existing campsites, and implement a reservation and fee system for river campsite use; campsites would cost \$16 per night;
- Explore the possibility of developing a new river access on the New Jersey side of the park;
- Develop picnic sites that can accommodate large groups; implement a permit/reservation system to regulate use levels; and enhance and improve current picnic facilities;
- Improve the trail system by linking trail networks, enhancing accessibility, and diversifying experiences;
- Provide or improve universal access at key locations throughout the park to offer a range of recreational opportunities for a variety of users;
- Modernize delivery and strategically locate education and interpretation services including a mobile visitor center and increased partnerships.

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