

National Parks – Access, Fees and Ticket Distribution

The National Tour Association advocates the following philosophies so future generations can enjoy the natural beauty of U.S. and Canadian parks.

1. Entrance and user fees

- All entrance/user fees should be equitable and reasonable, ensuring that all visitors, whether traveling individually or with a tour group, have equal access to the national parks. NTA worked with NPS officials at Alcatraz to restore group tour industry access to Alcatraz Island in January 2005.
- There should be sufficient notice (at least 12 months) to the commercial tourism industry for any fee increases. In recognition of group travel marketing and planning realities, a 12-month notice is critical to factor in the additional costs when pricing the tour package. Parks Canada has promised NTA 18 months notice of fee increases and the association applauds their consideration of the packaged travel industry.
- All or most of the new revenues generated by national parks should be reinvested in the parks. For many years, NTA advocated that a significant portion of entry fees be retained in the parks where collected for resource protection, preservation, research, operations, infrastructure development and visitor services.

2. Equal access

- Commercial tour operators should not be singled out for participating in reservation systems while no such requirement is asked of the individual park visitor. Congestion problems are not primarily caused by group tours, but rather are the result of the individual tourist. It is important to remember that the majority of group tour passengers are senior citizens, individuals with disabilities and others who might not otherwise have an opportunity to visit our national treasures.
- This access issue extends to nontraditional modes of enjoying our national parks. For many disabled tourists, a flight over the Grand Canyon or other natural attractions may be their only way to experience their beauty and grandeur. NTA believes that strict controls on aerial sightseeing at national parks should be discouraged so everyone can partake of the experience.

3. Environmental program

NTA encourages earth-friendly practices so national parks can be maintained and preserved. NTA has been represented on the Tourism Industry Association of Canada - Parks Canada collaborative accord committee, which serves to encourage sustainable tourism practices within the Parks Canada system.

