



# Great Smoky Mountains National Park

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

## PARKING TAG PROGRAM AND INCREASES IN CAMPING FEES WILL BEGIN MARCH 1, 2023

Over the past decade, park visitation has skyrocketed by 57%. Because the park's operational budget hasn't seen similar growth, the increase in visitors is starting to take its toll with wear and tear on aging facilities and undue strain on limited staff. The Parking Tag program will provide a new funding source to rehabilitate this national treasure and preserve the magic of the Smokies for future generations. So, it's time we Park It Forward.

"I have been incredibly encouraged by all the support, from across the country, and especially here in East Tennessee and Western North Carolina, for the opportunity to invest in the future care of this treasured park. We take great pride in being the country's most visited national park, but that distinction comes with tremendous strain on our infrastructure. Now we will have sustained resources to ensure this sacred place is protected for visitors to enjoy for generations to come."

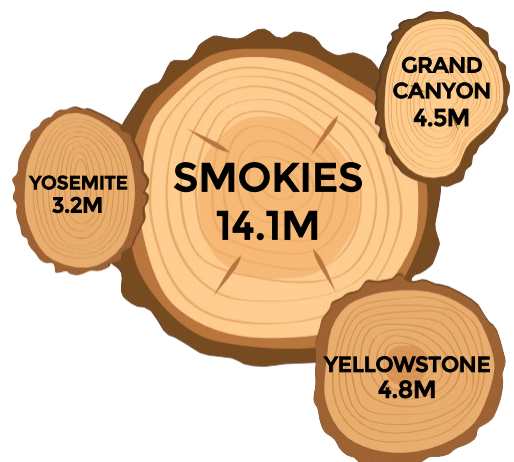
- Superintendent Cassius Cash

## Park It Forward

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS  
NATIONAL PARK

### WHY A CHANGE IN FEES?

The park's budget, appropriated by Congress, does not increase based on visitation. Over the last decade, the park's budget has remained relatively flat, in spite of increasing visitation. When adjusted for inflation, the buying power of those dollars has decreased significantly. In order to balance the park's budget each year, park managers have had to reduce visitor services and decrease staffing levels. All at a time when we need them more than ever. The implementation of the parking tag program as well as frontcountry and backcountry fee increases is crucial to the park's future.



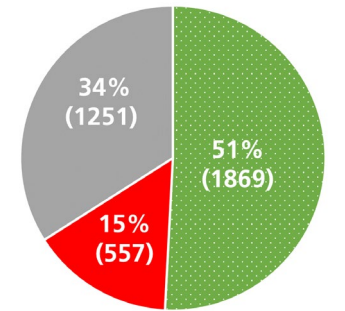
*2021 visitation for the Smokies, Yosemite, Grand Canyon and Yellowstone.*

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT RESULTS: PARKING TAG PROGRAM

The Park it Forward and camping fee proposal was initially announced in April, and the public was encouraged to formally submit its comments. This invitation generated **3,677 correspondences**, and a total of 15,512 independent comments were identified, categorized, and assessed as part of the review process. Correspondences were received from all 50 states.

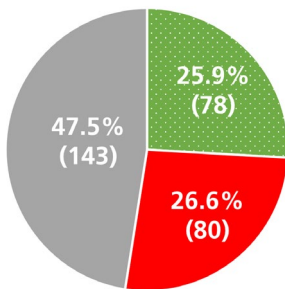
- Overall, **85% of correspondences** were either supportive or provided constructive ideas to make the parking tag program as effective as possible
- 41% and 16% of correspondences were from TN and NC residents, respectively

### Parking Tag Sentiment Analysis

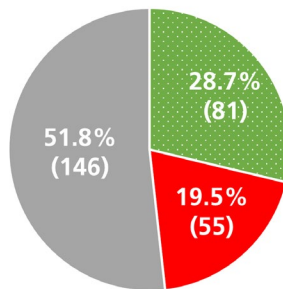


■ Support ■ Opposition ■ Neutral

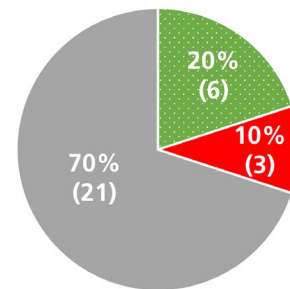
#### Sevier County, TN



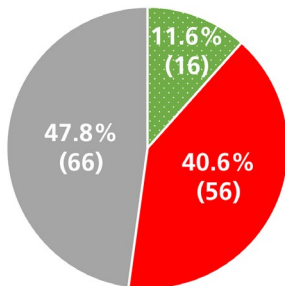
#### Blount County, TN



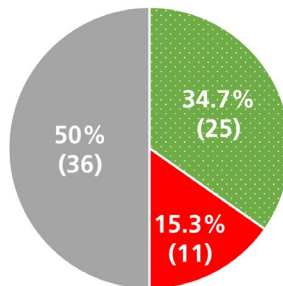
#### Cocke County, TN



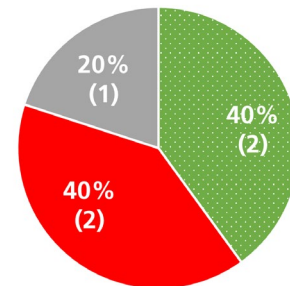
#### Swain County, NC



#### Haywood County, NC



#### Graham County, NC



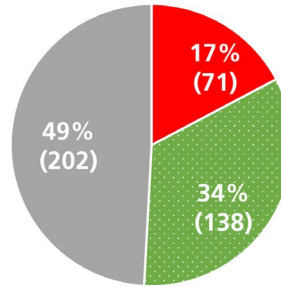
Above, parking tag sentiment analysis is reported for each of the six counties that border the park. The percent of the total correspondences received from the county as well as the count of correspondences is reported.

Overall, the most prevalent comment regarding tag duration was support for an annual tag. In response, the Director of the National Park Service has authorized permission for the park to offer an annual tag option. While any visitor may purchase an annual parking tag, the approval for this option was sought by park leadership specifically for local residents who are more likely to visit multiple times throughout the year. Park managers will continue to incorporate substantive feedback into the Park it Forward implementation plan.

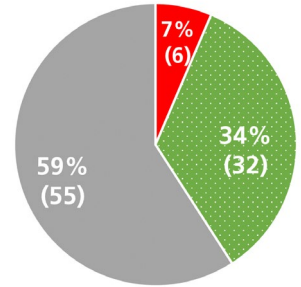
## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT RESULTS: PARKING TAG PROGRAM (continued)

Parking tag sentiment analysis is reported for the two counties with the highest population centers closest to the park; Knox County, TN, which includes the city of Knoxville, and Buncombe County, NC, which includes the city of Asheville. The percent of the total correspondences received from the county as well as the count of correspondences is reported.

Knox County, TN

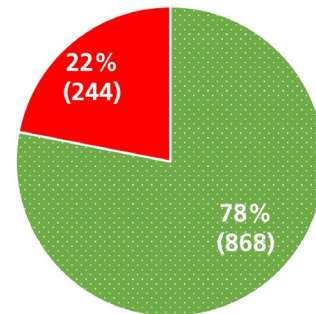


Buncombe County, NC



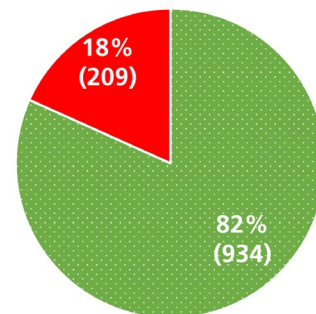
## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT RESULTS: BACKCOUNTRY FEE INCREASE

Of the 3,677 correspondences the park received about the fee proposal, 1,112 were specific to the backcountry fee increase. 78% of the correspondences specific to the backcountry fee increase were supportive.



## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT RESULTS: FRONTCOUNTRY FEE INCREASES

Of the 3,677 correspondences the park received about the fee proposal, 1,143 were specific to the frontcountry fee increases. 82% of the correspondences specific to the frontcountry fee increases were supportive.



# BACKCOUNTRY & FRONTCOUNTRY FEES – EFFECTIVE MARCH 1, 2023

## BACKCOUNTRY

| SITE                                           | CAPACITY                                                                                         | PRICE                                              |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Backcountry permit (for up to 8 days/7 nights) | 8 ppl<br><br>Special permits may be issued for a few sites that accommodate parties of up to 12. | \$8 per night<br><br>Max of \$40 per person/permit |
| Thru-hiker permit (for up to 8 days/7 nights)  | Per person                                                                                       | \$40 per permit                                    |

## CAMPGROUNDS

| SITE                                | CAPACITY | PRICE |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-------|
| Abrams Creek Campground             | 6 ppl    | \$30  |
| Balsam Mountain Campground          | 6 ppl    | \$30  |
| Big Creek Campground                | 6 ppl    | \$30  |
| Cosby Campground                    | 6 ppl    | \$30  |
| Cades Cove Campground               | 6 ppl    | \$30  |
| Cataloochee Campground              | 6 ppl    | \$30  |
| Deep Creek Campground               | 6 ppl    | \$30  |
| Elkmont Campground                  | 6 ppl    | \$30  |
| Look Rock Campground Standard Sites | 6 ppl    | \$30  |
| Look Rock Campground Electric Sites | 6 ppl    | \$36  |
| Smokemont Campground                | 6 ppl    | \$30  |

## GROUP CAMPS

| SITE                                                                    | CAPACITY                   | PRICE                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Big Creek Group Camp                                                    | 25 ppl                     | \$62                 |
| Cades Cove Group Camp without picnic pavilion                           | 20 ppl<br>30 ppl           | \$60<br>\$75         |
| Cades Cove Group Camp with picnic pavilion                              | 30 ppl                     | \$94                 |
| Cataloochee Group Camp (no flush toilets, all other have flush toilets) | 25 ppl                     | \$50                 |
| Cosby Group Camp                                                        | 20 ppl                     | \$50                 |
| Deep Creek Group Camp                                                   | 20 ppl                     | \$50                 |
| Elkmont Group Camp                                                      | 15 ppl<br>20 ppl<br>30 ppl | \$38<br>\$50<br>\$75 |
| Smokemont Group Camp                                                    | 20 ppl                     | \$50                 |

## HORSE CAMPS

| SITE                                                                         | CAPACITY        | PRICE |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| Anthony Creek Horse Camp                                                     | 6 ppl, 4 horses | \$30  |
| Big Creek Horse Camp (only site with flush toilets, rest have vault toilets) | 6 ppl, 4 horses | \$36  |
| Cataloochee Horse Camp                                                       | 6 ppl, 4 horses | \$30  |
| Round Bottom Horse Camp                                                      | 6 ppl, 4 horses | \$30  |
| Tow String Horse Camp                                                        | 6 ppl, 4 horses | \$30  |

## PICNIC PAVILIONS

| SITE                                                                            | CAPACITY | PRICE |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------|
| Collins Creek Picnic Pavilion                                                   | 70 ppl   | \$32  |
| Cosby Picnic Pavilion                                                           | 55 ppl   | \$32  |
| Deep Creek Picnic Pavilion                                                      | 70 ppl   | \$32  |
| Greenbrier Picnic Pavilion (only pavilion with vault toilets, no running water) | 70 ppl   | \$16  |
| Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Pavilion                                                 | 70 ppl   | \$32  |
| Twin Creeks Picnic Pavilion (only full day pavilion, others are half day)       | 150 ppl  | \$75  |

## DAY USE CABIN RENTALS

| SITE                  | CAPACITY | PRICE          |
|-----------------------|----------|----------------|
| Appalachian Clubhouse | 96 ppl   | \$300 everyday |
| Spence Cabin          | 40 ppl   | \$200 everyday |