

National Park Service Sites in Washington County Celebrate National Park Week With Free Admission

(HAGERSTOWN, Md.) – National Parks in Washington County, Maryland, will offer free admission during National Park Week, April 17-25. Antietam National Battlefield is located entirely in Washington County, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail go through Washington County, and portions of Catoctin Mountain Park, C& O Canal National Historical Park, and Harpers Ferry National Historical Park are located in Washington County.

“We are rolling out the red carpet and inviting everyone to visit a national park and help celebrate National Park Week,” said Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, who recently announced the fee-free week. “Parks are fun and affordable destinations and great places to engage in healthy, outdoor activities, whether for a few hours or a few days.”

National Park Week, a program of the National Park Service, is an opportunity to engage families and communities in America’s Great Outdoors, reconnecting them with nature and creating close to home opportunities for people to get outside, be active, and have fun.

“National parks preserve our heritage, promote recreational experiences, and provide places of quiet refuge,” said National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis. “Most people live within a short drive of a national park so I encourage everyone to spend some time enjoying America’s Great Outdoors during National Park Week.”

One highlight of National Park Week will be National Junior Ranger Day on Saturday, April 24. Both Antietam National Battlefield and Catoctin Mountain Park are offering special programs for youth to become Junior Rangers that day.

Other National Park Week highlights include the 40th anniversary of Earth Day on Thursday, April 22, and the 75th anniversary of the nation’s most visited National Park – the Blue Ridge Parkway. Antietam National Battlefield is the most visited historical attraction in Western Maryland; and the C&O Canal National Historical Park is the most visited and largest National Park in Maryland. Both are head-quartered in Washington County.

According to the President and CEO of the Hagerstown-Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau, “With all or part of six National Parks, or National Park units, Washington County has more parks per capita than any other jurisdiction in Maryland. We welcome visitors to come and explore our national parks, and our eight state parks, as well!”

Normally, 146 of 392 National Park Service units charge entrance fees ranging from \$3 to \$25, including Antietam and Harpers Ferry. The other 246 do not charge for admission. The fee free waiver for National Park Week does not include other fees

collected in advance or by contractors – such as fees charged for camping, reservations and use of concessions.

To find out more about the National and State Parks in Washington County, see: www.marylandmemories.com. The Hagerstown-Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau is a 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization whose mission is to help attract visitors to Hagerstown and Washington County. The CVB helps to create vibrant growth for the local economy by promoting, developing, and expanding the local visitor industry. Washington County is part of the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area (www.heartofthecivilwar.org), and the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area (<http://hallowedground.org>). Washington County is also part of the Quad-State Tourism Coalition, a four-state tourism group along I-81. For more information, see: www.quadstate81.com. The Hagerstown-Washington County CVB was recently awarded the Maryland Cultural Heritage Tourism Award by Governor Martin O'Malley.

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