

## **Passport to Parks - General FAQ**

**Q. What is Passport to Parks?**

**A.** *Connecticut wants to make state parks, forests, trails, historic sites and beaches more available to our residents so they can enjoy the many attractions and beauty they offer. Under this program parking fees are now eliminated at Connecticut State Parks for those with Connecticut registered vehicles. To make this possible, an increase in registration fees was passed by the General Assembly.*

**Q. How does the increase benefit Connecticut residents?**

**A.** *It goes toward operating our state parks and eliminating the day-use parking fee for all those entering in Connecticut-registered vehicles.*

**Q. What is the increased cost of the registration?**

**A.** *It is \$5 per year, which means \$10 for the customary two-year registration renewal for all non-commercial motor vehicles. It also will be assessed on all non-commercial motor vehicles obtaining plate transfers and new non-commercial registrations whether done at DMV or at a dealership. However, seniors 65 years old and older with a one-year registration renewal will have only an additional \$5 fee each year.*

**Q. What is a non-commercial vehicle?**

**A.** *These are passenger cars and vehicles with combination plates as well as motorcycles, campers/motor homes and vehicles with antique car plates. Combination plates are issued to a motor vehicle that is used for both private passenger and commercial purposes if that vehicle does not have a gross vehicle weight in excess of 12,500 pounds.*

**Q. When does the new fee start?**

**A.** *The state law authorizing the fee was passed in 2017 and the fee will be applied beginning in February 2018.*

**Q. Will all owners of non-commercial motor vehicles be billed right away?**

**A.** *No. They will see the fee in their renewal notices.*

**Q. Why am I being billed the Passport to Parks fee again? I paid this fee on another vehicle registered to my household?**

**A.** *The fee is applied to all non-commercial motor vehicle registrations and is not limited to one vehicle per household. It is charged on each non-commercial vehicle registration regardless of how many an owner possesses.*

**Q. What about out-of-state vehicles?**

**A.** *Vehicles with out of state plates will still be charged parking fees at state parks ranging from \$7 to \$22 depending on the park and time of day. Fees to reserve overnight campgrounds for both in-state and out-of-state visitors will still apply.*

**Q. Why is everyone being charged the fee?**

**A.** *Connecticut has many beautiful state parks, forests, trails, historic sites and beaches. These are all included in the new free parking for Connecticut-registered vehicles. Our residents should have equal access to these wonderful natural resources that are the economic driver for our state and the communities in which they are located. When people visit our state parks they also visit local restaurants, shops and local farms. This program brings many economic benefits for our state.*

**Q. I am a Connecticut resident who is a senior citizen (65+) – I had previously obtained a Charter Oak Pass from DEEP that provided me with free entry to parks. Do I still need to pay the \$10 (\$5 per year) Passport to Parks fee?**

**A.** *Yes, you do need to pay the Passport to Parks fee as the law does not provide exemptions for any groups. However, senior citizens are still eligible to obtain a Charter Oak Pass which provides free access to state museums, including Gillette Castle, Dinosaur and Fort Trumbull.*

**Q. I am a Connecticut resident and a disabled veteran – I had previously obtained a Disabled Veteran's Pass from DEEP that provided me with free entry to parks. Do I still need to pay the \$10 (\$5 per year) Passport to Parks fee?**

**A.** *Yes, you do need to pay the Passport to Parks fee as the law does not provide exemptions for any groups. However, Connecticut residents who are veterans with a service-connected disability are still eligible to obtain a Veteran's Pass which provides free access to state museums, including Gillette Castle, Dinosaur and Fort Trumbull.*

**Q. I am a part-time Connecticut resident, but register my vehicle in another state. Can I access the parks for free?**

**A.** *No – your vehicle must be registered in Connecticut to receive the benefit of free parking where a fee is charged. Out-of-state registered vehicles are welcome and would pay the daily parking fee that is in effect, or purchase a season pass.*

**Q. How many people use the parks each year?**

**A.** *Each year more than nine million people visit our state parks – this makes Connecticut state parks one of the top tourism destinations in the state.*

**Q. How will the fee be used to support the state parks and beaches?**

**A.** *The fee allows the State of Connecticut to give more to the public that has now invested in our park system: Increased lifeguards, improved park maintenance, shoulder season camping for opening day of fishing and into the fall foliage, and longer hours at our museums and nature centers.*

**Q. Where can I get more information on state parks and beaches?**

**A.** *For more information about state parks, visit <http://www.ct.gov/deep/stateparks>*

**For additional information or questions you can contact Connecticut State Parks at 860-424-3200 or email at [deep.stateparks@ct.gov](mailto:deep.stateparks@ct.gov)**