

*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

The Palisades Interstate Park Commission will adopt a metered parking system for its busy riverfront picnic areas in New Jersey commencing in April 2022. The new fee system will then be in effect annually from April through October. There will be no parking fees charged from November through March. Under a new fee schedule, weekday rates will be reduced. Free parking days will be offered every Wednesdays and on Earth Day, Juneteenth, and Indigenous Peoples/Columbus Day.

This will be the first major change in almost a century in how the Park has collected fees for parking at these picnic areas. Beginning in the mid-1920s, as automobile ownership in the United States became more common, the Commission instituted parking fees at the busiest park areas. This was done both to generate revenue to help maintain the park and to help manage the number of cars in the park. Park employees stationed at the entrance to each lot collected these fees from drivers. Rates were often increased on weekends and Holidays, to help regulate the limited spaces available during these times of peak park use.

Over the following decades, fees were increased periodically. Most recently, entrance rates were \$5.00 per vehicle in most areas, with the daily fee at Ross Dock – by far the busiest picnic area in the park — set at \$10.00 on weekends and holidays.

The Commission's decision to switch to a metered system was based in large part upon the success of a metered system installed in 2015 at Fort Lee Historic Park. In the six years since, this system has provided a much needed, fairly steady revenue stream for improvement projects and similar purposes at the Historic Park, while helping regulate use of this parking area, set in a busy, semi-urban location.

Unlike the old parking fee structure in use in the riverfront areas, where visitors paid a single daily vehicle entrance fee regardless of how long or short they stayed — whether for 15 minutes or for 8 hours — the new system will allow visitors to pay on an hourly basis.

Weekday rates will be \$1.50 per hour for the first four hours, then \$1.00 per hour for each additional hour up to \$12.00 maximum per day. Weekend and holiday rates will be \$2.50 per

hour for the first four hours, then reduced hourly rates up to a \$20.00 maximum per day. Parking at the Hazard's Ramp boat launch will be \$30 per day, on all days.

The new system will not accept cash, but visitors will be able to enter their license plate number and pay with a credit or with debit card at pay stations located in the parking areas, or through an app that can be downloaded to their smartphone. These apps will have the added advantage of allowing for contactless payment and extension. From anywhere in the park, visitors will be able to extend their meter time, allowing them to focus on their hike, picnic, or kayak adventure, without worrying about the time on the meter running out.

Beyond providing a faster and more equitable way for visitors to park and get started on their recreation, the metered system will also provide a safer and more productive work environment for park staff. Because the new system is automated and cashless, employees who once spent their days collecting parking fees will instead put their time toward providing visitor services and information, cleaning and maintaining facilities, and on caring for the park landscape.

The most up-to-date information on parking regulations and fees at the Park can be found at njpalisades.org/parking.

The Palisades Interstate Park Commission (PIPC) was formed under an interstate compact in 1900 to protect the Palisades from destruction by stone and gravel quarries operating along the western banks of the Lower Hudson River. As the nation's first bi-state partnership established to protect and conserve natural lands, the Commission's role expanded through the years to incorporate more state parks and the creation of the Palisades Interstate Parkway.

Today, PIPC manages 30 parks and historic sites in New York and New Jersey spanning over 125,000 acres and nine million annual visitors. The Commission's early work helped inspire the emerging fields of environmental stewardship and education, pioneered the goal of exposing children to nature through its group campgrounds, and served as a model for the growth of the national park system. The Commission's maple and oak leaf logo represents the official state trees of New York and New Jersey.

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