



**Topic:** Recreation fee proposal at Oronoco Campground and other sites across the national forest

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**Issue Summary:** The George Washington and Jefferson National Forest is seeking public comment on proposed fee increases at multiple recreation sites, including adding a new camping fee to Oronoco Campground of \$14 per site. In conjunction with implementing the recreation fee, the Forest Service would make several improvements at the site.

**Background:** The George Washington and Jefferson National Forests is seeking public comment on proposed fee increases at multiple recreation sites. The fee increases would bring recreation site fees into better alignment across forest locations and with prices of other nearby private and public recreation facilities. Forest recreation areas offer unique experiences for forest visitors that boost local economies and are not meant to compete with or undercut private businesses. Of the recreation fees collected, most of the funds remain on the forest to operate, maintain, and improve the facilities and programs at the recreation sites. The proposed fee changes would help the recreation sites be more financially sustainable.

At Oronoco Campground, the Forest Service is proposing to add a new \$14 per site recreation fee for overnight use. In conjunction with implementation of this recreation fee, the Forest Service would delineate approximately 8-10 campsites and add campfire rings, lantern posts and picnic tables to each campsite. Other improvements that could be considered include providing potable water or adding the campground to an online reservation system. Throughout this improvement process, considerations would be made to protect riparian areas along the Pedlar River to enhance water quality.

A decision has not been made on this proposal. The public comment period will be open until October 31, 2023. This proposal, including information obtained during the public comment period, will be presented before a citizen's advisory committee which helps ensure the Forest Service addresses public issues and concerns about recreation fees. If these fee proposals are approved, the increase would go into effect as early as spring 2025.

The Forest Service seeks to engage local communities, partners and the public to ensure that forest recreation contributes to the well-being and economies of local communities. The national forest will continue to offer numerous free outdoor recreation opportunities such as dispersed camping, interpretive sites, observation towers, a number of stocked fishing lakes, river and creek access for canoeing and kayaking, forest roads for scenic driving, numerous trailhead accesses for hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, birding, wildlife photography and more. We appreciate your input as we seek to improve the recreation experience at Oronoco Campground. Any comments or suggestions or letters of support about these proposals will help the Forest Service. Please send letters to [mailroom\\_R8\\_George\\_Washington\\_Jefferson@usda.gov](mailto:mailroom_R8_George_Washington_Jefferson@usda.gov)