Welcome

On behalf of the National Park Service men and women working here in southern West Virginia, I am proud to welcome you to three impressive and exciting units of your National Park System. New River Gorge National River, Gauley River National Recreation Area, and Bluestone National Scenic River offer spectacular scenery and a wealth of recreational opportunities. The diversity of natural and historical resources found in these national park areas is being preserved as part of a larger family of nationally significant places.

In 1916 President Woodrow Wilson signed the “Organic Act” which established the National Park Service to administer the country’s national parks and monuments, with the stated purpose “…to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” Today this mission is carried out in more than 380 units, which make up the National Park System. Visitors from across the country and from around the world can discover these national park lands in 49 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, Saipan and the Virgin Islands.

As new areas are added to the System, as development pressures continue to surround and encroach on park boundaries, and as concerns about our nation’s security reach new levels, it becomes increasingly important to all Americans that these reminders of our natural and cultural heritage are safeguarded. Despite the efforts of some 20,000 permanent and seasonal National Park Service employees, the 83 million acres of National Park lands require increased understanding and support from each citizen, no matter where they reside. These special places within our National Park System have become sanctuaries for national pride, a sense of place, and renewal of mind, body, and soul. Their preservation is important, not only for us living today, but for those generations unborn. Their preservation is a big responsibility, and one the National Park Service cannot do alone.

As one of nearly 300 million visitors to America’s national parks, we hope that you not only have a safe and enjoyable visit, but that you take away a deeper understanding and appreciation of your role as stewards of these special places. Please join the women and men of the National Park Service and approximately 90,000 volunteers, in teaching and practicing good environmental stewardship and respect for our cultural heritage, not only when visiting the parks, but wherever you live, work, or play. Only then can we hope to ensure that these same resources you and I enjoy today will be left unimpaired for future generations.

Welcome to New River Gorge National River.

Superintendent
Thunderstorms can be common. If caught outside during a storm, avoid high points, exposed
structures, water, and electrical equipment.

The weather can vary greatly from one part of the park to another. This is particularly true for
fall, which is generally the driest and most stable season, with cool mornings and mild days.
Summers are warm (hot?) and humid, with thunderstorms likely.
Spring is very unpredictable — generally mild and wet, it alternates between beautiful and
questionable conditions.
Winters are variable, ranging from mild to frigid. Expect 50 degrees and mild, or -10 degrees
and blizzard conditions.

Visitor Information
Weather and Climate
- Winters are variable, ranging from mild to frigid. Expect 50 degrees and mild, or -10 degrees
  and blizzard conditions.
- Spring is very unpredictable — generally mild and wet, it alternates between beautiful and
  questionable conditions.
- Summers are warm (hot?) and humid, with thunderstorms likely.
- Fall is generally the driest and most stable season, with cool mornings and mild days.
- Plan your trip to expect rain or thunderstorms, or snow during the winter months.
- The weather can vary greatly from one part of the park to another. This is particularly true
during the spring and summer thunderstorm season.
- Thunderstorms can be common. If caught outside during a storm, avoid high points, exposed
  locations, and open fields.

Getting Around
To Park: by personal vehicle via Interstate 64 & 77, U.S. Route 19. Airports in Beckley and Charles-
ton; AMTRAK stops at Montgomery, Thurmond ("flag" stop - reservations required), Prince, and
Hinton.
In Park: personal vehicle, by foot, or boat; bicycle and horseback on designated trails.

Accommodations
The park does not provide any lodging facilities, but surrounding towns and communities have a
variety of motel, bed&breakfast, and camping offerings. Hawks Nest and Pipetem State Parks
have lodges that are open to the public, and Babcock and Pipetem State parks have cabins. For a
listing of accommodations, call 1-800-CALLWVA or the New River CVB at 1-800-927-0263.

Camping
New River Gorge National River provides opportunities for primitive camping only. Camping areas
are located along the river. These primitive camping areas have no drinking water or hookups,
and limited restroom facilities. All sites are managed on a first-come, first-served basis. There are
no fees for camping, but campers are required to register with a ranger at the earliest opportu-
nity. Stays are limited to 14 days in the same area. Developed campgrounds are available at state
parks and private campgrounds throughout the surrounding area.

In Case of an Emergency
Call 911 from any phone in the park to report emergencies. Park rangers, as well as county sher-
iffs and state police, are on patrol throughout the park. Emergency care facilities and hospitals are
located in Summersville, Oak Hill, Beckley, and Hinton.

Fees and Permits
No entrance fees are charged at any of the three parks.
Special Use Permits are required for all commercial activities (guiding, filming, etc.).
Reservations are required for picnic shelters at Grandview, and group campsites at Burnwood and
Dunglen. Fees vary. For information on Special Use Permits and group campsites, call 304-465-
6517. Grandview Picnic Shelter reservations can be made by calling 304-465-0591.

Walks, Talks, and Tours
Ranger-led programs are offered from late spring through fall. They range from special programs
and demonstrations to short walks and all-day hikes. Information is available at the park, or on
the web at http://www.nps.gov/neri.
Park Attractions

CANYON RIM
Canyon Rim Visitor Center is located on U.S. Route 19, 1 mile north of Fayetteville. It offers spectacular scenery, and features an exhibit room filled with photographs and memories of living in the New River Gorge. Other exhibits feature the construction of the New River Gorge Bridge and the geology of the New River. In the auditorium, visitors can view a slide program that captures the history and scenic beauty of the gorge.

An observation deck at the rim of the gorge is fully accessible to all park visitors via a 435-foot walkway. A boardwalk descends into the gorge 100 feet via a wooden staircase. Both decks offer views of the bridge and the gorge.

Canyon Rim Visitor Center is open daily (closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s Day).

THURMONT HISTORIC DISTRICT
Once among the greatest railroad towns along the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway, Thurmond recaptures the days when steel rails, steam, and coal were the major themes in our nation’s history. The historic Thurmond Depot has been restored to serve as a visitor contact station. Exhibits and historic furnishings bring the golden days of railroading back to life. The Thurmond Depot is open seasonally.

To reach Thurmond, take U.S. Route 19 to the Glen Jean exit, north of Beckley. Follow the signs to Thurmond, seven miles down WV Route 25 (Route 25 is a narrow, winding road and is not recommended for RVs and trailers).

GRANDVIEW
Following 50 years as a popular day use state park, Grandview became a part of New River Gorge National River in 1990. Grandview definitely lives up to its name, offering unsurpassed views of the New River Gorge from overlooks and trails along the gorge rim, 1,400 feet above the New River. Grandview is also known for its beautiful rhododendron displays in May.

Facilities include a visitor contact station (open seasonally), ranger-led walks and talks, and picnic areas with playgrounds.

Grandview is home to Theatre West Virginia, where outdoor drama presentations are offered from June through August. Call 1-800-666-9142 for more information.

SANDSTONE VISITOR CENTER
Sandstone Visitor Center (scheduled to open July 4, 2003) will be open year-round except Thanksgiving, December 25, and January 1. The site has a picnic area and views of the gorge and the New River.

SANDSTONE FALLS
River Road offers a riverside drive, picnicking, fishing, and views of the largest waterfall on the New River, Sandstone Falls. Sandstone Falls has a fully accessible boardwalk that crosses two islands to views of the 1,500-foot-wide, 25-foot-high falls. This area also offers picnic sites and is noted as a fine fishing spot.

River Road provides access to Brooks Falls, Big Branch Trail, and other fishing and picnic sites along the New River. The road parallels the river for ten miles, beginning at the Route 20 bridge in Hinton. The paved portion ends just beyond Sandstone Falls.

Volunteers In Parks

The primary purpose of the Volunteer In Parks (VIP) program is to provide a vehicle through which the National Park Service can accept and utilize voluntary help and services from the public. The major objective of the program is to utilize this voluntary help in such a way that is mutually beneficial to the National Park Service and the volunteer.

Volunteering is an American tradition that over the years has made an immeasurable contribution to communities, organizations and individuals throughout the country.

Volunteers at New River Gorge National River have provided valuable service to the park and the environment through their work on resource management projects, trail construction and maintenance, interpretive activities, special events, and cleanup programs. Volunteers of all backgrounds and skills are encouraged to become involved and contribute their talent and enthusiasm towards helping the park.

For more information, contact the park at (304) 465-0508, and ask for information about the Volunteer In Parks program.
To travel down into the gorge and back up use WV 82; begin in Lansing. For most of the distance between Lansing and Fayetteville the road is one-way, narrow and winding.

The degree of difficulty will vary from rapid to rapid and with water level. River users should consult with an experienced river runner or ranger before attempting river running.

Much of the land within the National Park Service areas remains private property; please respect the owners' rights.

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Leave No Trace

Each of us has different reasons for visiting parks. Today more and more of us are taking the opportunity to explore these areas and the land often shows the results of this use. You can help minimize the impact of your visit to the park by following these basic Leave No Trace principles:

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimize campfire impacts
- Respect wildlife
- Be considerate of other visitors

http://www.lnt.org

Emergencies

All Emergencies
Dial 911

Park Dispatch
304-256-1700

Park Headquarters
304-465-0508

WV State Police
800-WVA-WVSP

Hospitals

Summersville Memorial
304-872 2891
400 Fairview Heights Road
Summersville, WV 26651

Plateau Medical Center
304-469-8600
430 Main Street
Oak Hill, WV 25901

Appalachian Regional
304-255-3000
306 Stanaford Road
Beckley, WV 25801

Raleigh General
304-356-4100
1710 Harper Road
Beckley, WV 25801

Summers County
304-466-1000
Terrace Street
Hinton, WV 25951

Ranger station

Picnic area

Campground

Amphitheater

Unpaved road

Ranger station

Public river access

Primitive campsite

Ranger station

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http://www.lnt.org
New River Auto Tour

Throughout every season of the year, New River Gorge offers some spectacular scenery. Although parks offer the opportunity for visitors to “park” their cars and enjoy an area without their vehicles, New River Gorge National River can also be enjoyed while driving. You can begin and end this tour at any point, but this guide begins and ends at the northernmost point in the park — Canyon Rim Visitor Center.

1. Canyon Rim Visitor Center
   Canyon Rim Visitor Center is located on U.S. Route 19, 24 miles north of Beckley and 22 miles south of Summersville. Canyon Rim Visitor Center is open year-round and has a museum, slide show, boardwalk, and views of the New River Gorge and New River Gorge Bridge.
   Drive — Upon leaving Canyon Rim, take U.S. Route 19 South to the Glen Jean and Thurmond exit. Immediately after exiting off Route 19, turn left at the gas station, drive one-half mile and turn right at the park headquarters sign.

2. Park Headquarters
   The park headquarters and library is located in the complex of buildings on the right. It is open Monday – Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Although the park headquarters does not offer extensive visitor services, it is a good place to stop if you need information, maps, or restrooms.
   Drive — After leaving park headquarters, follow the signs for Thurmond and travel State Route 25 beside Dunloup Creek. Upon reaching the New River and a Y intersection, bear left across the bridge into Thurmond.

3. Thurmond Historic District
   Thurmond Depot is open seven days a week in the summer and intermittently in the off-season. Discover the unique railroad history of this town through exhibits and informational programs.
   Drive — Return to U.S. Route 19 by retracing your route up State Route 25. Go left (south) on U.S. 19 traveling toward Beckley. U.S. Route 19 merges into Interstate 77 (West Virginia Turnpike). Take I-64/77 South (there is a 25 cent toll) to Interstate 64 East. Follow I-64 East to Exit 129, and take Route 9 north for six miles to Grandview.

4. Grandview
   The Grandview Visitor Contact Station is open seasonally. This is the highest point in the park, and offers excellent views of the New River Gorge and a spectacular display of rhododendron when in spring bloom. Theatre West Virginia offers outdoor theatre dramas here on summer evenings.
   Drive — Continue travelling east on I-64 to the Sandstone exit. Follow signs to the visitor center.

5. Sandstone Visitor Center
   The Sandstone Visitor Center is located just north of the exit ramp. This visitor center is scheduled to open in summer 2003.
   Drive — Travel south on Route 20 towards the town of Hinton.

6. Sandstone Falls Overlook
   Sandstone Falls Overlook is located on Route 20. Views of this river-wide falls are provided from an angle high above the falls.
   Drive — Continue south on Route 20 to the town of Hinton.

7. Sandstone Falls
   Sandstone Falls Boardwalk is a fully accessible walk providing excellent views of the largest waterfall on the New River. Short trails lead off the boardwalk to wildlife habitats and fishing beaches.
   Drive — Backtrack to Hinton on River Road, cross the bridge over the New River and travel north on Route 20 following signs for Meadow Bridge. At the community of Meadow Bridge, take U.S. Route 41 North to Danese. At Danese, continue north on Route 41 to Babcock State Park.

8. Grist Mill at Babcock
   Babcock State Park, one of the oldest parks in West Virginia, is located within the boundaries of New River Gorge National River. Highlights at Babcock include an old grist mill, horseback riding, and fishing.
   Drive — Continue North on Route 41 to U.S. Route 60 West. Follow Route 60 West for approximately 14 miles to U.S. Route 19. Take Route 19 South for five miles and you are back at Canyon Rim Visitor Center.

This driving tour is only one option for viewing the sights of New River Gorge National River. This loop may be altered to start at different points and include other popular area attractions. Take advantage of the visitor center stops and ask about the park and other sights to see. Enjoy your visit!

Out and About

These parks offer a great variety of outdoor activities for visitors — whether biking, fishing, hiking, paddling, rock climbing, or sightseeing. Please enjoy the parks, but also take steps to protect both yourself and the park environment. Always respect privately owned land!

Safety First

- ★ Railroad lines throughout the park are active and are private property. Do not cross railroad tracks or trespass on railroad rights-of-way.
- ★ Know the weather forecast and plan/dress accordingly.
- ★ Take plenty of drinking water, and do not drink water from streams or rivers.
- ★ Poison ivy is common. Leaves of three, let it be!
- ★ Be aware of the two species of poisonous snakes live here, the copperhead and timber rattlesnake.
- ★ Hunting is allowed within the park — wearing blaze orange is recommended during hunting season.
- ★ Many recreation activities (paddling, climbing, etc.) require special equipment, knowledge, and skills — contact a park ranger or qualified instructor for more information.
- ★ Always wear a life jacket/PFD (Personal Floatation Device).

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This is just a selection of the many park trails available. Complete information is available at park visitor centers, by writing the park, or on the internet at http://www.nps.gov/neri/trails.htm
Sandstone Visitor Center

The November 10, 2003 dedication of the Sandstone Visitor Center will mark the end of the year-long celebration of the 25th anniversary of New River Gorge National River. The new center, located just north of the I-64 and State Route 20 interchange (Exit 139), will open the summer of 2003. The 9,800 square-foot facility features sustainable (green) design concepts for energy efficiency and resource conservation. In addition to the energy conservation elements, water conserving native plants were selected for landscaping at the site.

Visitors to the new facility will learn about the natural and cultural history of the New River and its watershed through interactive interpretive exhibits. They can view the 10-minute video program on the New River and purchase books and educational materials from the bookstore.

The Sandstone Visitor Center will serve as a gateway to the southern portion of the New River Gorge National River where visitors traveling along I-64 can stop and learn about the park and southern West Virginia. Park Superintendent Calvin Hite stated, “we are very proud of this new facility which will serve the visitors to New River Gorge National River and we are looking forward to the opening of the Sandstone Visitor Center in this 25th Anniversary year of the park.”

Water, Water, Everywhere

New River Gorge National River, Gauley River National Recreation Area, and Bluestone National Scenic River are in the heart of the New River Watershed and contain some of the most significant water resources, and water-based recreational opportunities in the National Park System.

The New River watershed is blessed with naturally good water quality, but lack of sewage treatment, toxic spills, and sedimentation from development activities have seriously harmed water quality in many areas.

The New River watershed has a unique biota. Of 90 fish species, 46 are native and the rest were introduced. Eight species are endemic — living nowhere else in the world. The National Park Service recently completed a Water Resources Management Plan for the three parks. This plan addresses a number of water-related issues, identifies gaps in our knowledge of aquatic resources, and outlines steps to fill these gaps.

The New River begins on the western slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Carolina and flows 320 miles to the north. Along the way, many tributaries empty into the New River making up the drainage basin of the New River watershed. In West Virginia, the New and Gauley Rivers join to form the Kanawha River, which flows into the Ohio River.

No matter where you live, you live in a watershed. High points — hills and mountains — form the divide or boundary between watersheds. The New River watershed includes over 9,000 miles of rivers and streams, and travels through North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia. It encompasses 6,965 square miles (4,457,000 acres) and includes over 165 cities and towns.

“A watershed is that area of land... within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course and where, as humans settled, simple logic demanded that they become part of the community.” John Wesley Powell

Performing Long Term Ecological Monitoring (LTEM)
2003 Calendar of 25th Anniversary Events

APRIL
Sunday, April 6th, 2:00 pm. Baseball in the Coalfields.
Princess Theater, Mount Hope. Speaker: Paul Nyden. Movie clips of old games may be shown. Former players are encouraged to attend.

April 20th - 26th. National Parks Week.

April 27th - May 3rd. Neo-Tropical Bird Festival.
Learn about birds seen during spring migration. For program details, contact New River CVB at 1-800-927-0263, or www.newrivercvb.com/bird.

MAY
May 11th - 17th. River Cleanup Week.
Coordinated by the National Park Service and the WV Professional River Outfitters. Contact Greg Malcolm at 304-574-0165 for more information.

JUNE
River Safety Awareness Programs (Dates To Be Announced).
Call 304-466-0417 for details.

June 28th, 8:00 pm. Music in the Mountains.
Grandview Outdoor Amphitheater. An evening of music and story telling by Bil Lepp, winner of the WV Liar's Contest. Sponsored by Theatre West Virginia. Call 304-256-6800 for ticket information.

AUGUST
August 2nd - 3rd and 8th - 10th. Batteau Festival.
Virginia Canal and Navigation Society demonstrates batteau use and camps using period equipment. Details to be announced.

Monday, August 25th, 7:00 pm. NPS Founder's Day Program.

SEPTEMBER
Monday, September 1st, 7:00 pm West Virginia Sympony Concert.
Grandview Outdoor Amphitheater. Grant Cooper will conduct this Labor Day concert co-sponsored by the National Park Service and the Beckley Area Foundation.

Sunday, September 14th, 2:00 pm. Mapping the New River in 1812.
Sandstone Visitor Center (National Park Service). The Raleigh County Historical Society presents Jim Wood discussing early exploration and mapping of the New River.

Sunday, September 28th, 2:00 pm. Appalachian Quilt Patterns.
National Mine Safety and Health Academy, Airport Road, Beaver. Fawn Valentine will give a slide program and discussion of quilt patterns. Audience can bring quilts for discussion (one per person, please).

OCTOBER
October 11th – 12th and 18th - 19th. Railroad Days in Hinton.

October 10th - 11th, 17th - 19th, and 24th - 25th. Beyond the Mountains.
Historic Fayette Theater in Fayetteville. Theatrical presentation of Mary Ingles encounter with the Shawnees. Sponsored by the Fayetteville Historical Society. Call 304-574-4655 for ticket information.

October 26th, 2:00 pm. The History of Grandview.
Sandstone Visitor Center. Raleigh County Historical Society presentation by Margaret Sayre.

NOVEMBER
November 1st - 2nd. Follow The River.
Authors James A. Thom and DarkRain Thom speak about the Mary Ingles story and Shawnee culture. Saturday 2:00 pm at Carter Hall, Mountain State University in Beckley; Saturday, 7:00 pm at the Fayette Historic Theater in Fayetteville; Sunday, 2:00 pm at the Summers County High School in Hinton. All three events will be followed by book signings.

November 8th - 9th. 25th Anniversary Events.
A variety of hikes, programs, and events will be offered throughout the park.

November 10th, 2:00 pm. 25th Anniversary Ceremony.
Sandstone Visitor Center. Keynote Speaker - Senator Robert C. Byrd; Sandstone Visitor Center Dedication – Congressman Nick J. Rahall III; State of the Park – Superintendent Calvin F. Hite