



U.S. Forest Service  
Coconino National Forest  
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# News Release



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## Fossil Creek permit reservations open tomorrow for 2017 season

**Camp Verde, Ariz., Feb. 28, 2017, For Immediate Release** — The public can begin making reservations through a seasonal permit system to visit Fossil Creek starting tomorrow.

Seasonal reservations are required from April 1 through Oct. 1, 2017, for day-use visitation in the Fossil Creek Permit Area, located within the Coconino and the Tonto national forests.

Permits will now be available to reserve one month in advance on a monthly basis, which is a change from the 2016 season. For example, reservations for the month of April can be made beginning March 1, and reservations for the month of May can be made beginning April 1 with a limit of one permit per person per month. This change was made to provide people with a better chance of reserving a parking space at their preferred location and to reduce the number of unused reservations (“no-shows”).

The Forest Service created a Fossil Creek permit reservation system in 2016 to manage high recreational use. The permit system allows for 148 designated parking spots or approximately 740 visitors per day within the Fossil Creek Wild and Scenic River corridor. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from visitors using the first year’s permit system to plan a trip within Fossil Creek.

“The reservation system was very successful last summer. The amount of trash, the numbers of vehicles waiting to park, and the volume of law enforcement incidents all declined substantially, and visitors were very happy to know they had a guaranteed parking spot,” said Nicole Branton, district ranger for the Red Rock Ranger District. “By making a reservation in advance, people can avoid driving long distances to get to Fossil Creek, only to be turned around because the area is full.”

The public can access the reservation system online by searching “Fossil Creek Wild and Scenic River” at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) or by calling (877) 444-6777, beginning tomorrow. Permits cost \$6, entitling the permit holder to a single day pass that reserves a parking spot for the day in a specific parking lot.

Visitors may only park in the parking lot assigned on their parking pass for the day reserved. Parking permit locations within the main river corridor include Mazatzal, Purple Mountain, Sally May, Homestead, Fossil Creek Bridge, Tonto Bench, Irving, and the Waterfall Trailhead. To access these parking locations, visitors should enter through Camp Verde on Highway 260 to Forest Road 708 (aka Fossil Creek Rd).

In addition, permits can be reserved for the Fossil Springs Trailhead parking lot through a “park and hike” permit or a horse trailer parking permit. Visitors seeking to reserve the Fossil Springs Trailhead permit should be prepared to do an eight-mile roundtrip strenuous hike if seeking water access and should enter through Strawberry off of Highway 87.

#### Additional Key Information

- **VEHICLES:** High-clearance vehicles are recommended to travel from Highway 260 down a 14-mile rough dirt road on Forest Road 708 to the main entrance of the Fossil Creek corridor. It is not uncommon for standard passenger vehicles to incur flat tires on the rugged roadway.
- **COST:** The \$6 permit fee is a non-refundable fee (except when Forest Service closes the road due to weather). If you are not able to use your permit, please cancel it online to make your parking space available for others.
- **PERMIT TYPE:** Three permit types are available to reserve: 1. Vehicle Parking (includes Waterfall Trailhead, Irving, Tonto Bench, Fossil Creek Bridge, Homestead, Sally May, Purple Mountain, and Mazatzal parking lots), 2. Park and Hike (Fossil Springs Trailhead), and 3. Horse Trailer Parking (Fossil Springs Trailhead).
- **PERMIT DOCUMENTATION:** People reserving a permit must print their permit IN ADVANCE and must place on their permits on their dashboards upon entrance to Fossil Creek. Permits can be printed immediately upon making a reservation online. The confirmation email the customer receives is NOT the permit. Day-use permits are only required from April 1 to Oct. 1 in 2017, meaning the public can park on a first-come, first-served basis and without a permit from Oct. 2 to March 31.
- **AT THE GATE:** No permits are sold or able to be printed on site. Email confirmations or phone images of the permit will not suffice. Visitors must have a paper copy of their permit to enter.
- **CLOSED PORTION OF 708:** A four-mile section of Forest Road 708 from the Fossil Springs Trailhead to the Waterfall trailhead is closed for vehicle travel due to unsafe road conditions; therefore, it is not possible to drive in one entrance and out the other (from Camp Verde to Strawberry or vice versa). The only direct access to Fossil Creek by vehicle is from the Camp Verde side.
- **FOSSIL SPRING HIKE:** Those intending to hike the Fossil Springs Trail must drive in through the Strawberry entrance. The strenuous hike to Fossil Springs is four miles one way over an old, exposed jeep trail with an elevation change of approximately 1,500 feet. Summer daytime temperatures regularly exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit. No water is available along the trail, so hikers should carry one gallon of water per person and wear proper hiking shoes. This hike should not be used to access the Waterfall area or middle Fossil Creek.
- **CAMPING:** No camping is allowed within the Fossil Creek Permit Area during the April 1 to Oct. 1 permit reservation season. However, camping is allowed from Oct. 2 through March 31 downstream of Fossil Creek Bridge (at Mazatzal, Purple Mountain, Sally May and Homestead) and upstream of the historic dam site in the backcountry.

- **RULES and REGULATIONS:** There is no garbage service at Fossil Creek. Whatever a visitor brought to Fossil Creek must be taken out with them when they leave. If you pack it in, you must pack it out. Campfires, charcoal grills and all glass containers are prohibited year round. Gas operated grills and stoves are allowed.

For more information about visiting Fossil Creek, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/GoToFossilCreek>, where you can download a Fossil Spring map and brochure in English or Spanish. The Fossil Creek Hotline is also available at (928) 226-4611.

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