



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mesa Verde National  
Park

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## Mesa Verde News Release 09-12

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### **Mesa Verde Will Waive Entrance Fees On Three Summer Weekends** **June 20 & 21** **July 18 & 19** **August 15 & 16**

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced that the National Park Service will offer three fee-free weekends this summer to encourage Americans seeking affordable vacations to visit these national treasures. "During these tough economic times, our national parks provide opportunities for affordable vacations for families," Salazar said at a recent press conference. "I encourage everyone to visit one of our nation's crown jewels this summer and especially to take advantage of the three free-admission weekends."

"Tourism income helps America's economic recovery," Salazar said. Most Americans live less than a day's drive from a park, the Secretary noted. Nationwide, parks last year attracted more than 275 million recreation visits. Spending by non-local visitors provided \$10.6 billion for local economies, supporting more than 213,000 jobs, not counting National Park Service jobs.

There are 391 national park units across the country in 49 states, 147 of them charge an entry fee. During the peak summer season in Mesa Verde National Park, the entrance fee is \$15.00 per vehicle and \$8.00 per motorcycle. These entrance fees will be waived during the three fee-free weekends this summer. Superintendent Wiese stated, "I am very pleased to support the Secretary's initiative. There are many people in the surrounding communities, through no fault of their own, that are simply unable to pay the entrance fee to the park or have taken the opportunity to visit this National and International treasure. The entire park staff hopes that our local residents will take advantage of these fee-free weekends, and get to know their backyard national park. It would be a great time to start by bringing dads out for Father's Day, which is the first fee free weekend."

While visitors will still need to purchase the \$3.00 ticket for ranger-led tours of Balcony House, Cliff Palace and Long House, there are several free sites including Spruce Tree House, Step House and the Mesa Top Loop sites. Tour tickets may be purchased at the Far View Visitor Center from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm daily.

Mesa Verde's park partners will also be offering special promotions and discounts on those dates. The Mesa Verde Museum Association, the park's non-profit partner, will give away one artifact postcard with every purchase in their Visitor Center and Museum book stores. Aramark, the park's concessionaire, will give a free kids water bottle with any retail purchase of \$35.00 or more in any of their retail outlets in the park. Also, for their half-day ranger-led bus tours, with the purchase of two adult tickets, they will donate a free child's ticket. Stay tuned for other special offerings.