



National Park Service
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Shenandoah National Park News Release

Shenandoah National Park extends Old Rag pilot program for 2023

LURAY, VA - Shenandoah National Park will reinstate its Old Rag pilot program March 1, 2023. Shenandoah began the program last year to test a ticketing system intended to address crowding and congestion. The goals are to improve the visitor experience and safety, as well as to protect fragile natural resources at Old Rag. The proposal included a public comment period prior to the pilot which ran from March 1, 2022 to November 30, 2022.

During the pilot, hikers who used trails in the Old Rag area (Saddle, Ridge, and Ridge Access) were required to purchase day-use tickets which were capped at 800 per day. Park staff collected data to be used to determine if the system was contributing toward relieving congestion. The park planned to share the data and evaluate the pilot in early January. However, two winter storms in December caused widespread damage, closing Skyline Drive. "Reopening Skyline Drive was our top priority in January, which did not allow us the time needed for evaluating the pilot program" explained Superintendent Pat Kenney. "We have decided to reinstate the pilot for 2023 to gather more information and to be able to devote time for careful consideration of a longer-term solution to address our concerns at Old Rag." Within the next few months park staff will share the data and provide an opportunity for additional public input.

The pilot program will resume March 1, 2023. A total of 800 tickets will be available for each day from March 1 to November 30; 400 will be available 30 days prior to the date of arrival, and the remaining 400 will be released five days in advance. Hikers must purchase their tickets online at recreation.gov before their arrival. Tickets are valid for the day of arrival only. A day-use ticket does not guarantee a parking spot, and entrance fees still apply in addition to the day-use ticket fee of \$1.00.

For more information about the pilot, specifics about where tickets are required, and details on obtaining tickets, go to <https://go.nps.gov/oldragticket>.

- www.nps.gov/shen -

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