



NRA-ILA

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Political Report: RTC In Our National Parks



Chris W. Cox NRA-ILA Executive Director

TIME FOR PUBLIC TO COMMENT ON NEW RULES FOR GUNS IN NATIONAL PARKS

On April 30, the U.S. Department of Interior, through the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, issued a proposed rule to ease the current strict regulations on firearms in national parks and wildlife refuges. NRA-ILA led the effort to amend the existing policy regarding the carrying and transportation of firearms on these federal lands. The public has until June 30 to comment on the proposal, and NRA strongly urges members to file comments in support.

“Law-abiding citizens should not be prohibited from protecting themselves and their families while enjoying America’s national parks and wildlife refuges,” said Chris W. Cox, NRA-ILA executive director. “Under this proposal, federal parks and wildlife refuges will mirror the state carry laws for state parks. This is an important step in the right direction, and we applaud efforts to amend the out-of-date regulations.”

These new regulations, if approved, will provide uniformity across our nation’s federal lands and put an end to the patchwork of regulations that governed different lands managed by different federal agencies. In the past, Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service lands allowed the carrying of firearms, while Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service lands did not.

The current regulations on possession, carry or transportation of loaded or uncased firearms in national parks were proposed in 1982 and finalized in 1983. Similar restrictions apply in national wildlife refuges.

The NRA has long held that amendments to those regulations were needed to reflect changes in state laws on carrying firearms. As of the end of 1982, only six states routinely allowed citizens to carry handguns for self-defense. Now, there are 40 states that respect the Right-to-Carry, via “shall issue” laws or otherwise. Fifty-one U.S. Senators sent a bipartisan letter to the Department of Interior supporting the move to make state firearm laws applicable to National Park lands and wildlife refuges

This proposed rule will restore the rights of law-abiding gun owners who wish to carry concealed firearms for self-protection on most Interior Department lands, and will make federal law consistent with the state carry law in which these lands are located.

Anti-gun groups have already geared up a massive propaganda campaign, with Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., calling the proposal “appalling” and others suggesting there will be carnage among both park visitors and wildlife if the proposal is adopted. These predictions, of course, have not come true in any state that has adopted a Right-to-Carry law, or on other federal lands where firearms possession is already allowed

The NRA will file comments, including suggestions that the final regulation should mirror state law in all respects (not just for concealed carry), and that the proposal's reference to state laws on parks or "any similar unit of state land" is vague, and in some states could lead to the type of patchwork regulation the proposal was meant to eliminate

Again, NRA members should take this opportunity to help write our nation's laws by submitting comments by June 30. Members should submit comments online at <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=SubmitComment&o=090000648053d497> (search for "rin 1024-ad70"), or mail comments to:

**Public Comments Processing
Attn: 1024-ad70
Division of Policy and
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222
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