

National Park Service

Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area

ACADEMIC FEE WAIVER CRITERIA for APPLICANTS

National Park Service (NPS) regulations allow school groups and other *bona fide* national and international academic institutions to obtain a waiver for park entrance fees, provided that the visit is for educational or scientific purposes, and the resources or facilities the group proposes to use support those purposes.

Academic fee waivers are not granted automatically. Applicant groups must show they qualify for the waiver. There are three criteria the group must meet to qualify for an academic fee waiver: **eligibility, educational purpose, and relevance of park resources or facilities**. These criteria are detailed below:

ACADEMIC FEE WAIVER CRITERIA

1. Eligibility

Applicants must prove they are affiliated with a *bona fide* academic institution by submitting one of the following:

- A statement confirming educational or scientific tax-exemption from the IRS or the applicant's national, state or local tax authority; or
- A statement, from a bona fide academic institution, confirming that the group is visiting for the purpose of providing transferable educational credit based on a curriculum; or
- A statement of accreditation, or recognition as an academic institution, from a recognized national, regional, state or local authority at the applicant's location.

2. Educational Purpose of the Visit

- Applicants must provide a written statement confirming that the visit supports a specific curriculum for which academic credit is offered. If the group is on a commercial tour, the applicant must state how the tour supports the curriculum.

3. Relevance of Park Resources or Facilities

Applicants must provide a written statement identifying the park resources and/or facilities that will be used to support the educational purpose of the visit, and how they are relevant to that purpose.

HOW TO APPLY FOR AN ACADEMIC FEE WAIVER AT BIGHORN CANYON NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

If you meet the criteria above, submit the following to the address below. Please allow 2 weeks for processing.

1. A cover letter, on official letterhead of the bona fide educational institution, explaining what the educational purpose is and how it is related to park resources. (A general statement that the visit is for “educational purposes” is insufficient.) If your group is using a commercial tour company, the group (not the company) must apply for the fee waiver, and must state how the tour supports the curriculum. *See Educational Purpose of Visit, above.*
2. Current, official documentation of eligibility such as described above. It is insufficient to merely state or imply this on the organizations letterhead. Your fee waiver request cannot be approved without one of these documents. *See Eligibility, above.*
3. Provide the name of the course and a brief description. The applicant must be providing educational credit hours based on a specific course of instruction. Please include a copy of course curriculum and itinerary for trip.
4. Please include the name and correspondence address of the institution; contact name(s) with telephone /fax number(s) and email address; approximate date and time of arrival and departure; approximate number of vehicles; areas you plan to visit; and approximate number of students and chaperones, including faculty.

Number of Chaperones allowed free entry under academic fee waiver:

Per 15 College students – 1 Chaperone

Per 10 High School students – 1 Chaperone

Per 5 Elementary students – 1 Chaperone

5. State in your letter that you understand fee waivers are allowed only for academic institutions that are using the park for educational purposes and the planned trip meets these requirements.
6. Mail or fax all documentation detailed in the “How to Apply for an Academic Fee Waiver “ section above to:

National Park Service, Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area

ATTN: Fee Coordinator, Christiann Tillman

Headquarters

5 Ave. B

PO Box 7458

Fort Smith, MT 59035-7458

Christiann_Tillman@nps.gov

Phone: 406-666-3321

Fax: 406-666-2415

7. Please provide a copy of the approved fee waiver for each vehicle in the group.
Please be aware.....

- Fee waivers are not available at entrance stations
- Academic fee waivers do not include camping or other activity fees.
- Academic fee waivers cannot be granted for hardship factors.
- Service, civic, or fraternal organizations, such as Scouting, Rotary, and Elks, do not qualify for an academic fee waiver unless the group meets the criteria above.
- “Blanket” academic fee waivers for all national parks are not issued or accepted. Groups must submit separate requests to individual parks for approval. A list of parks and contact addresses is at www.nps.gov.

If your request is approved, you will receive an academic fee waiver. Each vehicle must have a copy of the approved fee waiver.

If your request is denied, you will receive a letter from the park explaining why your group does not qualify. If required material is not submitted, the park will attempt to contact and assist you.

If you have any questions, please contact Christiann Tillman, Fee Supervisor .

Enjoy your visit!