

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park

905 Kennesaw Mountain Dr. NW

Kennesaw, Georgia 30152

ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE - NO HARD COPY TO FOLLOW

IN REPLY REFER TO: D46 (KEMO)

August 11, 2017

Dear Mr. Mackay:

The purpose of this letter contains two important proposals for visitor safety and the enhancement of Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park. The first proposal is to close the mountain road to vehicular traffic seven days a week making sole access to the mountain top via shuttle bus or on foot or bicycle. The second proposal is to introduce a parking fee which would not only support the shuttle bus operation seven days a week, it will also support the park's deferred maintenance and enhance visitor services. The proposed parking fee, \$5.00/daily or \$40/annual pass, will include shuttle service up and down the mountain to all visitors.

Access to the top of Kennesaw Mountain is considered a "mission critical" element of the park interpretive experience, helping visitors understand the strategic importance of Kennesaw Mountain during the Atlanta Campaign of the Civil War. The mountain road is steep (12% grade), winding (9 blind curves), and narrow (10 ft. wide driving lanes), with little or no shoulder. The 1.5-mile road has become a popular exercise and training location for walkers, joggers, and bicyclists, creating significant safety concerns. These activities have increased dramatically within the past ten years, amplifying safety issues and generating substantial conflicts between different user groups. Pedestrians (often 2-3 abreast and pushing baby strollers, walking dogs, wearing headphones, and some walking backwards) walk within the traffic lanes refusing to yield to approaching vehicles and forcing vehicles into the oncoming traffic lane. In 2015, there were 73 total calls for service on Kennesaw Mountain drive, which included visitor conflicts, traffic complaints/incidents, and medical calls. The implementation of a seven day a week shuttle service will enhance the visitor's safety and park experience by allowing them to walk or run up the mountain road by providing recreational foot traffic with their own designated section. That is not possible in the current space with the current volume of constant vehicular traffic.

The proposed parking fee would support the shuttle bus operation and allow for expansion of the service by increasing the fleet size and making enhancements to the mountain road. Signage will be improved and the roadway will be delineated for ease of use. Fee revenue will also support the \$2.8 million of deferred maintenance such as trail maintenance, preservation and stabilization of the 11 miles of earthworks throughout the park, and bridge replacement at John Ward Creek, to name a few. Generated revenue will support visitor services such as a youth programs, exhibits, and leveraging technology to better reach a more modern audience. The Interagency pass, Interagency Senior pass and the Interagency Access pass will be accepted in place of the daily and the annual pass. The proposed parking fee will be an on your honor system with iron rangers at each of the parking lots to provide consistency with the program.

I would appreciate your input on the proposed parking fee and closure of the mountain road to vehicular access seven days a week. **A public meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 12, 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm at the Marietta High School Performing Arts Center, 1171 Whitlock Rd, Marietta. Or you may send your comments by October 10, 2017 to:**

Email: kemo_superintendent@nps.gov

Write to: Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park

Civic Engagement

905 Kennesaw Mountain Drive

Kennesaw, GA 30152

Fax: 770-528-8399

Thank you for your continued support and interest in Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park.

Sincerely,

Nancy Walther

Superintendent