



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL RIVER
GAULEY RIVER NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
BLUESTONE NATIONAL SCENIC RIVER
104 Main Street
P.O. Box 246
Glen Jean, West Virginia 25846



IN REPLY REFER TO:

August 9, 2019

An Open Letter to Gauley River Boaters

Dear Boaters,

The staff of the Gauley River National Recreation Area (NRA) welcome you to the 2019 boating season. National Park Service (NPS) employees are preparing the put-ins and take-outs, roads, and other public use spots for upcoming Gauley River NRA visitation. We hope that this season will prove to be a safe and spectacular one for everyone.

The put-ins and take-outs and the Tailwaters campground will operate much like in the past with few changes.

At Masons Branch, parking is limited and fills to capacity nearly every boating day. The access road will be closed when the parking lot fills up. American Whitewater continues to lease the Legg field above Mason's Branch. The field will be available throughout the Gauley season for private boater parking when the available parking below fills up. The walking trail from the river to the field has been checked and is clear of fallen trees and obstructions for those walking or carrying boats uphill to their car parked in the field. Like in the past, the rangers plan on opening Mason's Branch access road for unrestricted travel sometime in the afternoon, probably around 1 pm, or whenever the bulk of commercial bus traffic is through for the day.

Parking at Wood's Ferry will be managed like it has in the past with few restrictions. Boaters are asked to park close together in an organized fashion to take advantage of all the available space and to create parking opportunities for others. Wood's Ferry fills to capacity on some weekends. Boaters should be aware that this may happen again on particularly busy days and that parking is available but not unlimited. The upstream end of Wood's Ferry is used for dropping off and picking up boats and gear and not for parking during the day. Unattended vehicles parked at the upstream end will be towed.

The take-out at upper Swiss is the only lower Gauley public take-out within the recreation area. Parking is available to boaters in the field. The parcel, both the field and boat launch remain closed to camping. The park offers camping opportunities at the Tailwaters campground and there are other private and public campgrounds in the area.

A commercial shuttle service, operating under a permit from the NPS, will again be available this Gauley season for your shuttling needs on both the New and Gauley Rivers. If interested, contact Hills to Hills Tours and Shuttle at <https://www.hillstohills.com/> or call 681-220-1146. This is the only NPS permitted shuttle service authorized to operate commercially in the park.

Boaters should beware of unauthorized shuttle services that are operating and charging fees in violation of NPS regulations.

Camping at the Gauley Tailwaters Campground is free of charge and is on a first come, first served basis. There is a maximum of 8 people allowed in each campsite. There is a two (2) tent, two (2) vehicle maximum at each site. An RV or a travel trailer will be counted as one vehicle. Large vehicles that do not fit in the designated campsite parking area and equipment trailers will not be allowed to park in the campgrounds. These vehicles will be required to park outside of the campground in a designated area. Quiet hours are from 10:00 pm to 6:00 am in the campground. Rangers will provide patrols, will register each campsite, and will enforce camping regulations. Campers who bring their pets are asked to keep their pets on a leash.

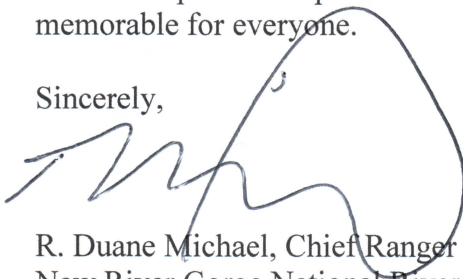
NPS river patrol operations will continue as in the past. The NPS provides daily river patrols during the scheduled releases with an emphasis on Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Search and Rescue (SAR). The NPS patrol boat carries an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) in addition to other medical supplies. They are available to provide both routine and emergency boater services as they arise. Additionally, the NPS continues to work with the US Army Corps of Engineers, the WV Division of Natural Resources, and all of our other partners to pre-plan and prepare for boater safety.

In the event of an emergency, the NPS and local emergency personnel may request a reduction in water released from the Summersville Dam. To help prevent boaters from being surprised by the sudden and unexpected drop in water level, NPS river rangers will implement a sign and signal flag program to provide visual aids along the river in the event of an emergency. The press release will be posted on the American Whitewater and Gauley River NRA website.

The Gauley River NRA continues to have large parcels of privately owned land within its boundaries. Boaters and other recreation area visitors are reminded to be aware of and respect the rights of private landowners. The gated road to Sweet's Falls upstream of Masons Branch on river right is private property with no vehicle or pedestrian access. Trespassers are subject to enforcement action by local law enforcement.

As our Gauley season planning efforts progress, we will post information on our web page at www.nps.gov/gari as well as continuing to communicate with private boaters through partnering organizations such as American Whitewater. For this season as in the past, we appreciate all of the boater public cooperation that helps to make the Gauley boating season safe, exciting, and memorable for everyone.

Sincerely,



R. Duane Michael, Chief Ranger
New River Gorge National River
Gauley River National Recreation Area
Bluestone National Scenic River

