

KEYS RANCH:

An intersection of history and technology

VISITORS TO KEYS RANCH NOW ENJOY A NEW MODERN DIGITAL PROCESS FOR PURCHASING THEIR TOUR TICKETS, HOWEVER UPON ARRIVAL THEY'LL FEEL LIKE THEY'VE STEPPED BACK IN TIME.



There are few U.S. national parks as recognizable as Joshua Tree National Park. The park features historically significant sites and structures such as Keys Ranch that help tell the story of the area.

Over the years, Keys Ranch has experienced a steady increase in the number of visitors interested in taking a guided tour of this early settlement. The surge in demand made it increasingly difficult to accommodate visitors. There were a couple of ways to make tour reservations, however the manual processes for making tour reservations had become cumbersome and frustrating for both the staff and visitors.

THE CHALLENGE: MANUAL PROCESSES KEPT STAFF TIED TO THE OFFICE AND VISITORS WAITING

PHONE RESERVATIONS: Keys Ranch had previously taken tour reservations via phone. This process had several challenges, with the greatest being around processing customer payments. Within the National Park Service (NPS), only certain staff are designated to run a fee register. Fee collectors were not always present to take payment at the time the reservation was taken. This often resulted in “phone tag” between the NPS fee collector and the visitor as they tried to collect payment. This was difficult for staff and became a point of contention for the public.

IN-PERSON PURCHASE: To eliminate the frustration from the call-in reservation process, the park moved to an in-person reservation process. Tour passes could be purchased through the Visitor Center on the day of the tour only. Requiring an in-person purchase had some unintended consequences. Tour space is limited, and tours would often sell out. Visitors started lining up outside the visitor center before opening in an effort to get their tickets. Sometimes visitors would be in line well before the visitor center opened and still be denied tickets as the tours sold out quickly.

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“Keys Ranch staff is committed to providing an enjoyable experience for visitors. The initial point of customer contact, the reservation process, had become an obstacle.”

David Larson
Park Ranger, Keys Ranch

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“Our numbers are up! We delivered more tours to more visitors when compared to the exact same period one year ago! The numbers suggest about a 10% increase in both tour numbers and tour guests.”



THE SOLUTION: TRANSITION FROM MANUAL OPERATIONS TO RECREATION.GOV FOR AN ONLINE RESERVATION SYSTEM

Keys Ranch made the switch to Recreation.gov allowing customers to purchase their tour tickets from their desktop, or mobile device while on the road. Recreation.gov provides a seamless reservation process for guests, and a virtually hands-off model for staff. Joshua Tree National Park has several campgrounds with reservable inventory on Recreation.gov, now visitors can reserve their campground and purchase their tour ticket at the same time.



RESULTS: VISITORS CAN PURCHASE TOUR TICKETS IN ADVANCE, AND STAFF IS FREED UP TO BE OUTDOORS DOING WHAT THEY LOVE.

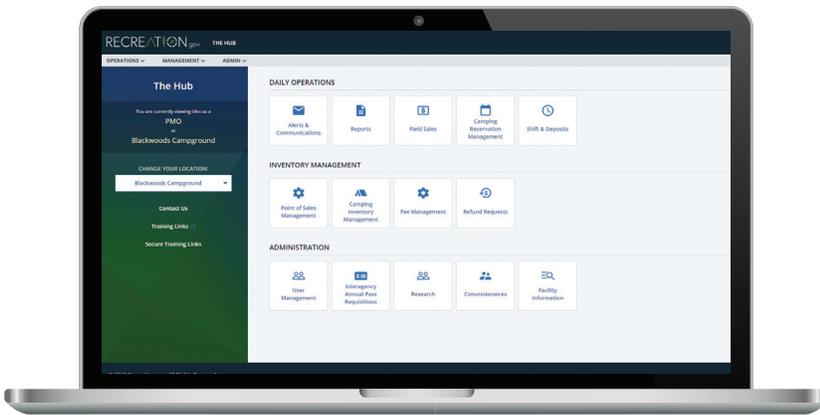
Recreation.gov provides a modern interface allowing the public to easily book their tour reservations and enabling the park to securely and quickly process payments. Park staff receives a daily list of tour participants and can reliably provide "need to know" information to visitors electronically. "The amount of staff hours that we are saving, and the improved customer service and convenience are a true testament to the many benefits of Recreation.gov. I am so grateful for the folks at Recreation.gov for working with us so closely during our transition to the system," says Park Ranger, David Larson.



"Transitioning the Keys Ranch tour to Recreation.gov has been one of the best decisions we have made. Better service to the public, savings in staff hours, and better communication of important "need to know" information."



"The administrative side is working flawlessly on Recreation.gov and I'm really pleased. I'm going in "The Hub" and seeing tours fill up and we don't have to process the paperwork and call visitors. We just have to conduct the tours and the system does all of the administrative work."



The Hub: Our easy to use, one-stop administration tool puts Facility Managers in control.

