

Grand Teton park to outshine bigger Yellowstone for eclipse

August 18 2017, by Bob Moen



In this Aug. 28, 2016 file photo, visitors watch the morning sun illuminate the Grand Tetons, partially-obscured by smoke from nearby wildfires, as seen from within the Great Room at the Jackson Lake Lodge, in Grand Teton National Park, north of Jackson Hole, Wyo. Grand Teton National Park, normally in the shadow of the neighboring and world-renowned Yellowstone National Park in northwest Wyoming, is set to get its day in the sun with next week's total solar eclipse passing directly over the park. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley, File)

Its jagged, soaring peaks rise high over northwest Wyoming, but Grand Teton National Park is always in the shadow of its world-renowned neighbor, Yellowstone National Park.

But thanks to the [total solar eclipse](#) Monday, Grand Teton is expected to outshine, and overshadow, one of the nation's most popular parks—at least for the day. Grand Teton is directly in the path of the eclipse—where the sun is completely blocked by the moon.

"We anticipate it to be the busiest day in the history of the park," Grand Teton spokeswoman Denise Germann said. "We're trying to create realistic expectations for visitors as well as our staff that there's going to be congestion, there's going to be traffic gridlock."

Yellowstone, the world's first national park that is famous for "bear jams," where motorists stop on roadways to watch grizzly bears, will see just a [partial eclipse](#).

"We are planning for an August day in Yellowstone, which is usually pretty busy anyway, and we anticipate that there will be a large influx of visitors that will be in the neighborhood for the eclipse," Yellowstone spokesman Jonathan Shafer said. "We don't know whether they're going to end up coming to see us or not."

Grand Teton, which counted 3.27 million visitors last year compared with Yellowstone's 4.26 million, is one of two U.S. national parks and 21 sites National Park Service-operated sites that the [total eclipse](#) will pass over. The other park is Great Smoky Mountains National Park spanning Tennessee and North Carolina.

It's not clear how many people will drive into Grand Teton on Monday, but the park has prepared detailed plans for the eclipse that include waiving vehicle entrance fees to help keep traffic moving.

Once inside, any rooms and campgrounds that take reservations will have long been taken.



In this Aug. 26, 2016 file photo, the morning sun illuminates the Grand Tetons in Grand Teton National Park, north of Jackson Hole, Wyo. Grand Teton National Park, normally in the shadow of the neighboring and world-renowned Yellowstone National Park in northwest Wyoming, is set to get its day in the sun with next week's total solar eclipse passing directly over the park. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley, File)

Those flying in to the area are facing a crowded airport. Grand Teton is unique in that it is the only [national park](#) with a commercial airport within its boundary.

It is always busy during the summer months, but the eclipse has increased traffic with additional commercial flights, said Jim Elwood, airport executive director.

The park has also brought in reinforcements. About 10 additional rangers, including some from Yellowstone, have been brought in to help the [park](#)'s normal contingent of about 160 permanent and 300 seasonal personnel.

"Everybody is focused on the eclipse," Germann said. "They'll be staffed at a trailhead, they'll be staffed at the pullouts or parking lots. They'll be staffed at the viewing areas. So it's an all hands-on-deck."

More information: Online: www.nps.gov/grte/index.htm

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Citation: Grand Teton park to outshine bigger Yellowstone for eclipse (2017, August 18)
retrieved 6 February 2023 from

<https://phys.org/news/2017-08-grand-teton-outshine-bigger-yellowstone.html>

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