

Canton (Ohio)Repository

# Gary Brown: Something disconcerting about selling the sunrise

**It's getting harder and harder to see the sunrise in Hawaii.**

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By Gary Brown Repository editor at-large

Want to see the sunrise in Hawaii?

Get in line folks.

And that line forms at the office of Haleakalā National Park.

"Beginning on Feb. 1, 2017, visitors in personal or rental vehicles wishing to view sunrise at Haleakalā National Park will need to make sunrise viewing reservations ahead of time at [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov)," said a media release I received by email. "The online reservation system is being implemented to ensure visitor and employee safety, protect natural and cultural resources, and provide a quality visitor experience at the summit during sunrise hours (3 a.m. to 7 a.m.). The reservation system will go live on Dec. 1, 2016. The cost is \$1.50 per car."

So, the National Park Service has started selling the sunrise.

"The cost is \$1.50 per car," the media release said, adding that, "Before Feb. 1, 2017, sunrise viewing parking spaces will continue to be available without advanced reservation, on a first-come, first-served basis."

So, now we have a deadline. If we want to see the sun rise over Hawaii for free — just showing up and looking, without any complicated yet admittedly more efficient planning involved -- we've got about eight weeks. Better not sleep in. No late luaus on your next Hawaii trip.

## Rules and Regs

To make sure you don't miss any dramatic Hawaiian dawns after Feb. 1, allow me to lay out the rules and regulations of the new "Sale of the Sunrise." That's my special name for the program. The National Park people are merely taking the reservations for early risers, and not making a big deal about it.

"The one-day sunrise reservation will not be sold at the park but is available online, up to 60 days ahead of the date of the sunrise visit," said the National Parks release. "The reservation is only available via [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov) and cannot be transferred. To enter the Summit District between 3 a.m. and 7 a.m., the reservation holder must be present and show both the one-day sunrise reservation receipt (for that day) and a photo ID.

"Due to limited parking, visitors without a sunrise viewing reservation will have to wait until after 7 a.m. to enter the park."

For those of you not at this moment checking some "Sunrise App" on your phone, it's light after 7 a.m. The sun has risen and the photos are taken. Your moment has passed. Next time, make a reservation to

experience the wonder of God's creation.

"There is no refund or exchange of the reservation due to inclement weather or change of plans," the release said, so, apparently, Mother Nature still could turn on you.

And, yes, native Hawaiians are covered by a "grandfather clause."

"There is no change to the National Park Service's current policy regarding Kanaka Maoli who wish to conduct traditional practices in the park."

You also can book an alternate reservation for seeing the sunrise.

"There is no change to the park's current Commercial Use Authorization policy regarding sunrise tours."

Still, if you want to see the break of dawn Haleakalā National Park in Hawaii, you are going to have to put up the money.

### **Reason Explained**

The park people stressed again at the end of the release that safety is the focus of the new sunrise reservation policy, the park explained.

"Crowds at sunrise viewpoints often number over 1,000, with accidents resulting from visitors moving off trail and climbing cliff sides in the dark," said the media release. "Recreation.gov is easy to use and will ensure that reservation holders can access the summit and safely view sunrise."

Safety is a good reason for selling the sunrise. It's difficult to argue against a safe early-morning National Park experience. Nobody would force somebody to watch a sunrise while falling off a cliff, any more than they would say, "Hey, once the sun is up, why don't you stare at it as long as you can until it starts to hurt."

And, when it comes right down to it, \$1.50 per carload isn't a lot. If you have five people in the car, it's only 30 cents apiece. You probably won't even ask your passengers to pay.

That having been said, the new pay-per-view system for watching the sunrise fosters another important question.

Can hawking the sunset be far behind?