

A 2025 story – The story below is a scenario set in 2025 that imagines some of the changes possible for parks and park-goers prepared for the 2015 Reservation Program Management Conference, Rehoboth, Delaware. The scenario helps flesh out of our view of possibilities with technology for the future parkgoer. This is not the "last word" on the future parkgoer. Other, contrasting scenarios for parks are possible too. For a little more about scenarios, see: [“Why I love introducing scenario thinking to people”](#) and [“Story learning—the power of stories in getting through to people.”](#)

Gavin and Tess go camping—2025

Gavin sent Tess a virtual view at 2:30 on Thursday. "Tent site at the Glades Friday-Saturday?"

She touched her eyepiece and watched the VR on the AllParks™ app and then shot back, "Yes! Lemme ask Aidan if they wanna go too."

"Book in 15 to hold & get points," Gavin texted. "Yo! Also, points and fee waiver for 2 hrs service."

Gavin had swiped through about 12 sites which fit their profile. No pine (Gavin's allergies), near water (Tess insists), solar grill (for sure), WiMax (have to have it), under \$30 (essential), ecoservice available (maybe), share gear on site (preferred), no no-show penalty (if possible).

You could just speak into the AllParks™ app and tell it what you had in mind. And the app would ask you a few questions back. Or you could set it for "Match Me". And no endless screen tapping!

When Gavin was a kid, his Dad always waited until Friday afternoon or even when they were in the car to think about where they could camp. The call center would already be closed, so they'd just drive around. Or maybe sometimes Mom would call or check online. She had to pretty well blow off work for the afternoon to try to get a site. Usually, Mom and Dad just got mad at each other, and they'd all stay home.

The AllParks™ app covered almost everything, it pulled in national, state, or local choices from everywhere. It had pop-ups and private home sites too.

Tess didn't like to do privates because there were usually dogs around. But some allowed fires--actual fires—their guilty pleasure, and usually you were the only ones there. And you could get drone-delivered takeout.

It's too bad there's no one at most of the parks anymore that Gavin and Tess can chat up. There used to always be a ranger around. At least someone was at the gate with maybe a map or information on what's going on. You can still message a park attendant, but they could be anywhere. Some of them are in the Philippines, Tess insists. No, they don't know if that could be a bobcat you saw.

The social apps don't quite get it done either. You can look at geo-specific posts and see wildlife spotting. But as Tess says, "you don't know if it's true, or what the hell it means," half of the time.

A few weeks ago, though, they'd seen a RoveRanger™, a mobile robot that greets you at the park. You could show it pictures and ask it almost anything. Tess thought that showed promise, but Gavin thought it was creepy in a park setting.

But hey. The Glades this weekend was going to be great. And who knows, they might even turn off their mobiles for a little while (Tess--"yes" Aidan--"God no").

