

NPHA Communications Strategy for 2020

Status

Action is anticipated soon on formal announcements of rulemaking on the Visitor Experience Improvement Act (VEIA) and updated regulations for the NPS concessions program. Key developments including emergence of coronavirus as a major concern, as well as FY2021 budget issues, have delayed action on both issues – which are logically interconnected. NPS' growing interest in Second Century Campgrounds and continuing discussions about the urgency of overcoming persistent problems with meeting the park system's maintenance needs add new importance to the rulemaking efforts.

Recommendations

At NPHA's January 2020 board meeting, the 2020 budget was approved unanimously with a special account for communications efforts connected with the rule-making efforts. NPHA staff was directed to develop a program for achieving success in efforts to improve visitor services in parks through enhanced concessioner efforts.

Discussions with several entities interested in working with NPHA occurred. The final outcome is a dual program utilizing a communications expert based in Denver for strategy and coordination of media efforts and Kevin Garden as NPHA's external expert on concessions law and regulations and NPHA's suggested improvements.

In addition, the NPHA Communications Strategy has these important new developments.

- 1) While Kevin will be our lead spokesperson with media to discuss details of our suggestions and explanation of the benefits of more nimble and updated concessioner agreements, wherever possible he will work jointly with NPHA Ambassadors from NPHA member companies able to communicate the commitment to mission by concessioners, able to offer tangible examples of this commitment benefitting parks and park visitors while conveying the diversity of concessioner workforces.
- 2) We will aggressively seek to explain the role and commitment of concessioners starting now. Examples include outreach to key park partners (NPF, NPT, TCN, US Travel and more) and through use of available forums (like the National Park System Advisory Board meeting in Sausalito on March 11).
- 3) We will use the NPHA March annual meeting to roll out resources for NPHA members (and especially member CEOs and Ambassadors) and to boost participation in the public comments process for VEIA and regulatory reform).
- 4) We will rely on NPHA members to upgrade communications with key Members of Congress on reform and preparedness for emergencies including coronavirus, wildfires and more).
- 5) We will create a key communications task force team that will start each week with a videoconference and develop actions priorities for the week.
- 6) Throughout the effort, we will coordinate with department and agency leadership and communications officials.

TIMELINE

Month	Key Actions	Lead Roles	New Budget Provisions
March			BHFS TBD Garden TBD
April			BHFS TBD Garden TBD
May			BHFS TBD Garden TBD
June			BHFS TBD Garden TBD
July			BHFS TBD Garden TBD
August			TBD
September			TBD
5-month commitment			\$65,000

3/2/2020

NPHA 2020 COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM – v.2-21

Task	Lead, Key Actions	Timing	Status
Select and Train Spokesperson on Responding to Technical Issues and Integration with Ambassadors	NPHA executive committee, NPHA communications advisor	Select by March 4; training by 3/18	Kevin Garden is willing and details of his engagement as the spokesperson on the details of changes will proceed.
Recruit, Train and Utilize Ambassadors	NPHA communications strategist	Initial list by 2/28; ongoing	Survey of potential ambassadors has been initiated by NPHA staff
Prepare and Post on NPHA Website Examples of Corporate Mission and Commitment (Text and Video)	NPHA staff	By 2/28, updated continuously	Approximately 5 examples are ready for posting – news stories and video clips. Additional elements are in development
Research Likely Adverse Media Sources and Topics and Develop Strategy for Mitigation	NPHA communications advisor	By 3/13	TBA
Prepare and Update NPHA Position Statements on VEIA, 1998 Act Regs and Policies	NPHA staff through the Communications Task Force, with advice from NPHA communications advisor	By 3/6; living document	Drafts of 1998 Reg Change Statement and Q&A completed. VEIA and positive-focused case for action in development
Plan and Manage Outreach Campaigns: NPHA Member Employees and Vendors; Allied Organizations and Agencies	NPHA communications advisor, with assistance from NPHA staff	By 3/29	Discussed between NPHA staff and proposed NPHA communications advisor
Ongoing Liaison with Interior, NPS	NPHA staff	Ongoing	Ongoing with Secretary's staff, NPS
Proactive Media Outreach: ID Targets and Deliver Op Eds, Offer Interviews and More, with Focus on Park Gateways and Business-Focused Media	NPHA communications advisor, with assistance from NPHA staff	Plan by 4/3; action in April and May	TBA
Monitor Submissions to Public Records to Respond as Needed	NPHA staff	Ongoing	Commence following FR publication
Brief Key Congressional Offices and Keep Informed	NPHA staff and NPHA members	Ongoing	Commenced and continuing
Use of NPHA Annual Meeting as a Forum for Discussion, Training and Action	NPHA staff, NPHA Communications Task Force and NPHA communications advisor	March 15-18	Planning underway
Develop Social Media Plan	NPHA communications advisor	By 3/13	TBA