



## Fall 2015 Newsletter

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### NPHA FALL 2015 MEETING IN COLORADO SPRINGS, NOVEMBER 8-11

The National Park Hospitality Association's 2015 Fall Meeting – *Peak Thinking for Our Parks Post-Centennial* – is scheduled for November 8-11 at The Broadmoor located at 1 Lake Avenue, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

NPHA will combine its own fall meeting with a session co-hosted with other leading national park proponents in the tradition of the **America's Summit on National Parks** and **Grand Thoughts at the Grand Canyon**. NPHA's own meetings on Sunday and Wednesday will focus on actions which would revise and improve the national park concessions program and better serve park visitors, both Americans and those from other nations.

On Monday and Tuesday, NPHA members will join an elite group of national leaders from the National Park Foundation, the National Park Conservation Association and other key park-related organizations to re-energize national park partnerships and discuss:

- sustainable funding strategies for the protection and operation of our national parks as a new Administration and Congress take office in January 2017;
- strategic marketing of our national parks domestically and internationally; and
- keeping national parks issues visible after the Centennial celebrations conclude.

Lodging is available to members and meeting participants at a special meeting rate of \$159 single or double plus taxes and fees. The special rate is also available for several days before and after the NPHA meeting.

Reservations must be made by **October 7** and can be made by phone at (800) 634-7711. Please identify yourself as a member of the National Park Hospitality Association when booking to assure the discounted rate.

For more information, including information on “Early Bird” registration, fees and displays, as well as access to the meeting schedule and registration form, please click [here](#) or call/email Ben Nasta at (202) 682-9530 or [bnasta@funoutdoors.com](mailto:bnasta@funoutdoors.com).

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## EVERY KID IN A PARK INITIATIVE LAUNCHES



The White House and partner federal agencies officially launched ***Every Kid in a Park*** on September 1. The initiative’s goal is to have every 4<sup>th</sup> grade student – more than four million kids – visit their public lands and waters for learning and fun throughout the 2015-2016 school year. In addition, each 4<sup>th</sup> grader is eligible for a one-year pass allowing free access for the 4<sup>th</sup> graders and accompanying family members and friends.

Fourth graders were selected for a number of reasons:

- Children who interact with nature and natural areas before age 11 are more likely to have positive attitudes toward nature and the environment
- 4<sup>th</sup> grade is often the last opportunity to capture “one teacher” classrooms
- Federal lands and waters have educational programs that support many 4<sup>th</sup> grade curricula
- The initiative is compatible with elementary and afterschool programs
- This age bracket reflects the demographic diversity of the nation

***Every Kid in a Park*** will have the greatest success if 4<sup>th</sup> graders return for more outdoor visits with their families and youth service organizations. NPHA members and other park partners will play key roles in these return visits through outreach efforts to families and by providing services and activities enjoyable by people of all ages and outdoor experience levels.

Keep up to date at [www.everykidinapark.gov](http://www.everykidinapark.gov), [www.greatoutdoorsmonth.org](http://www.greatoutdoorsmonth.org) and [www.funoutdoors.com](http://www.funoutdoors.com).

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## NPHA MEMBERS HELP CONGRESS FOCUS ON PEOPLE IN PARKS

National park concessioners appeared at a recent hearing held by the U.S. House of Representatives focusing on the National Park Service (NPS) concessions program. The Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Interior held a hearing titled ***Modernizing the National Park Service Concession Program*** on July 23.

Rep. Cynthia Lummis (R-WY), chair of the Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Interior, opened the hearing by lauding national parks for leading the way on public/private partnerships to serve visitors, with private funds building many of the park structures providing lodging and food services to visitors since the late 1800s. She noted that public/private partnerships are now emerging as key elements in the nation's surface transportation and water policies.



Witnesses at the hearing included NPHA Chairman **Terry MacRae** (CEO of Hornblower Cruises), Grand Teton Lodge Company and Flagg Ranch Company Vice President and General Manager **Alex Klein** and Historic Tours of America CEO **Chris Belland**. MacRae, Klein and Belland offered expert testimony about the challenges and opportunities that

face concessioners operating in national parks, including constraints on responding to opportunities for enhancing park experiences, especially mid-contract.

Mr. Belland spoke on the future of national park concessions, saying, "While I realize the National Park Service is not a business per se, it is in business and its future is likely to depend more than ever on the marketplace and its ability to be relevant to the leisure industry." He noted that tourism and recreation are a trillion+ dollar economic sector. He noted that a delay of nearly two years in approving an increase in the passengers allowed on the Dry Tortugas National Park concessions ferry deprived some 10,000 visitors of an experience in the park and caused a substantial loss of NPS revenues.

Mr. Klein called for key changes in concession operations, saying, "A system designed to reward those that provide excellence in concession operations would benefit both incumbent concessioners as well as the National Park Service. Rather than challenging ourselves to innovate every time a concession contract comes up, it would encourage constant innovation and excellence in the performance of a contract."

NPHA Chairman MacRae applauded agency efforts to encourage all Americans to visit parks. He noted, though, “Stagnant park visitation over the past two decades reflects more competing leisure choices today and reduced in-park visitor activity choices – potential visitors are choosing other destinations. There are fewer park campsites, fewer lodging rooms, fewer restaurant seats, fewer ranger-led walks, fewer tours and outings. Visitor services eliminated by NPS have not been offset by new outdoor activities and special events.”

Other NPHA members including Forever Resorts, The California Parks Company, Gettysburg Tours and TRF Concessions Specialists of Florida submitted informative written statements, as did former NPHA member Acadia Corporation and Dyno Ventures, a communications technology company.

To read more excerpts and full testimony from the hearing, and to watch the archived footage, visit <http://parkpartners.org/July-2015-Hearings.html>. Additional witnesses included NPS CFO Lena McDowell. Legislation reflecting NPHA suggestions is now being drafted by House Committee staffers. Testimony is available at <http://parkpartners.org/July-2015-Hearings.html>.

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## HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL LANDS LOOKS FOR NEW AND INNOVATIVE IDEAS TO IMPROVE VISITOR EXPERIENCES



The Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing titled ***New and Innovative Ideas for the Next Century of Our National Parks*** July 23.

Rep. Tom McClintock (R-CA), chair of the Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands, opened the hearing with a reference to pending reauthorization of

FLREA (Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act) and the potential to expand the bill beyond fees to other tools like the Centennial Challenge and NAFI authority.

NPHA Counselor **Derrick Crandall** testified before the Subcommittee regarding new ideas for the next century of national parks. In his testimony, Mr. Crandall offered ideas for how public/private partnerships can offer world class experiences in national parks by citing Forest Service policy, saying, “Sixty percent of our nation’s downhill skiing activity is provided at world class facilities under agreements between business partners and the Forest Service that extend 40 years or more. All investments are made by the

private sector. Similar length terms for park concessions contracts would produce needed investment in our lodges and other structures and open the door to another tool: historic investment tax credits.”

Mr. Crandall’s full testimony and video from the hearing are available at <http://parkpartners.org/July-2015-Hearings.html>. Additional witnesses included: President and CEO of Silver Eagle Distributors, L.P. John Nau (on behalf of the National Park Foundation); Hot Springs, Arkansas Chamber of Commerce President Jim Fram; and National Parks Conservation Association Senior Vice President Craig Obey.

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## DELAWARE NORTH HELPS CONNECT KIDS WITH THEIR OUTDOORS AT CAPITAL CAMPOUTS

NPHA member Delaware North Companies continued its legacy of introducing people of all ages to their great outdoors by playing a key role in many of the Great Outdoors Month Capital Campouts.



To support the effort and to reinforce the healthy aspects of being outdoors, executive chefs from three locations where Delaware North has operations – **Park Gates Lodges at Yellowstone, Shenandoah National Park and Kalaloch Lodge** in Olympic National Park – were onsite at the campouts in Montana, Virginia

and Washington and prepared locally sourced meals in an interactive setting – allowing the Capital Campout participants to learn how to cook healthy meals while enjoying the outdoors.

With so many options for quick, healthy meals, each chef prepared a different menu for the occasion:

- Jacob Tew, Delaware North’s executive chef at the Park Gates Lodges at Yellowstone in West Yellowstone, Montana, on June 13-14 served seven-grain flapjacks and bison chili with cornbread muffins during the state’s campout.

- Heather Cash, a sous chef for Delaware North's Shenandoah National Park operations in Virginia, on June 25 had campers help prepare fluffy pancakes with bacon and fresh blackberry syrup.
- Ashley Miller, Delaware North's executive chef at Kalaloch Lodge in Olympic National Park in Washington State, enlisted campers to help prepare a June 26 feast of grilled marinated organic chicken breast, garden-fresh vegetables and brown rice pilaf.



Capital Campouts began in 2014 with five governors and have since grown to 13 governor-hosted events across the country. Many of the 2015 Capital Campouts were focused on fourth graders, helping states prepare for the new ***Every Kid in a Park*** initiative described above.

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## GREAT OUTDOORS MONTH™ 2015 LURES PEOPLE OUTDOORS



Great Outdoors Month™ kicked off early in 2015 when almost 600,000 children, families, teachers and more participated in this year's [Kids to Parks Day](#), a nationwide day of outdoor play organized by the National Park Trust in cooperation with a host of local and national collaborators. This year's Kids to Parks Day was held on Saturday, May 16, the week before the official start of summer.

June 6 was the American Hiking Society's [National Trails Day](#)®, the country's largest celebration of trails. National Trails Day events took place in every state across the country and included hikes, biking and horseback rides, paddling trips, birdwatching, geocaching, gear demonstrations, stewardship projects and more.



The first weekend in June also marked the beginning of [National Fishing and Boating Week](#), coordinated by the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation. National Fishing and Boating Week celebrates the importance of recreational boating and fishing in enhancing people's quality of life and preserving our country's natural beauty. Most states offered free fishing days during

National Fishing and Boating Week, which are perfect opportunities for beginners to try out fishing for the first time.

The second weekend in June brought two more great events. The eighth annual [National Get Outdoors Day](#) took place on June 13. More than 200 events linked hundreds of local, state and federal agencies, diverse non-profit organizations in the health and youth-service fields, the recreation industry and media interests with tens of thousands of people in 39 states. And [National Marina Day](#) encouraged people to get outdoors by highlighting recreation opportunities on the water.



The Corps Network hosted the second annual [Great Outdoors Month Day of Service](#) in the Nation's Capital June 19. The event brought together Corps from across the country, as well as friends and supporters of The Corps Network to participate in projects on the National Mall, Theodore Roosevelt Island, Dangerfield Island and in Rock Creek Park. NPHA Member Guest Services, Inc. provided box lunches for all the volunteers and CEO

Gerry Gabrys addressed the assembled crowd, which included **National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis, The Corps Network President and CEO Mary Ellen Sprenkel, NPHA Counselor Derrick Crandall** and more.

The final weekend of Great Outdoors Month wrapped up with two events. The National Wildlife Federation kicked off its annual [Great American Campout](#), with more than 100,000 people pledging to camp out over the course of the summer. And the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) held its very first ["Get Into Your Sanctuary"](#) days celebrating marine sanctuaries across the country and the recreation opportunities available in them such as hiking, kayaking, snorkeling, boating, whale watches and more.



For more information on these and other Great Outdoors Month™ events, visit [www.greatoutdoorsmonth.org](http://www.greatoutdoorsmonth.org).

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## TIPS ON HOW TO STAY INFORMED:

Read the Federal Parks and Recreation newsletter, provided as a member service

For information on upcoming prospectuses and other actions of the NPS Commercial Services Office, check regularly at <http://concessions.nps.gov/>

To reach an NPS employee, use the NPS locator at <http://www.nps.gov/directory/>

For reports on park unit visitation, current year and historic, as well as information on overnight stays, go to <https://irma.nps.gov/Stats>.

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