



February 2011 Newsletter

National Park Hospitality Association

This newsletter is also available in PDF format on www.parkpartners.org

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NPHA 2011 Annual Meeting Starts on March 14th

The National Park Hospitality Association's Annual Meeting will take place March 14th to 17th in Washington, D.C. at the Holiday Inn Capitol, located within walking distance of Congressional offices. The meeting will focus on building a relationship with the new Congress and strengthening our relationship with the U.S. Department of the Interior. National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis and Intermountain Regional Director John Wessels have confirmed participation. The National Park Centennial Steering Committee will share its plans and Wounded Warriors Family Support will make a presentation. A special highlight will be meetings with the American Indian Alaska

Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) and the Indian Arts and Crafts Board of the U.S. Department of the Interior at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. Our room block is gone and the hotel is sold-out for key nights, but meeting registration remains open and we'll be glad to help you find lodging.

For the registration form, [click here](#).

For the schedule, [click here](#).

For hotel directions and information, [click here](#).

Note - The Concessions Management Advisory Board will meet on March 17th at 9 a.m. at the Marriott Crystal City in Arlington, VA. The contact is Erica_Chavis@nps.gov

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America's Great Outdoors Report Released by the President

February 16th was a very important day for recreation in America. The signature event was President Obama's release of ***America's Great Outdoors: A Promise to Future Generations***. Derrick Crandall, NPHA Counsel, participated in the White House event and said, "The Administration deserves praise for the report. The America's Great Outdoors (AGO) process activated a broad coalition of interests, and Administration officials worked hard to produce a report and recommendations that show the fingerprints of traditional and new Great Outdoors constituents." The President announced his commitment to full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (\$900 million annually, chiefly for federal land acquisition but also including \$200 million for matching grants to states for recreation projects). The tenor was markedly optimistic although full funding of the LWCF will be a very heavy lift. However, much of the report is adoptable by today's Congress. The Administration will take the message of AGO to the American people, with a new round of public meetings and with the involvement of the Let's Move Outside initiative.

NPHA also took part in an invitation-only meeting earlier in the day of 150 national leaders from the recreation and conservation communities at the U.S. Department of the Interior with Interior Ken Secretary Salazar and National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis, among others.

Release of the report has been a key consideration in planning for the 2016 Centennial of the National Park Service. The report states, "Americans envision a future in which our national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, and other public lands and waters are managed with a renewed commitment to sound stewardship and resilience." It also includes the recommendation to "raise awareness of the value and benefits of America's Great Outdoors," including health benefits. NPHA Counselor Derrick Crandall serves on the National Park Centennial Steering Committee, which will provide an update during the March NPHA Annual Meeting.

To read the full AGO report, [click here](#)

To read the AGO executive summary, [click here](#).

To read the AGO two-page recreation summary, [click here](#).

To read the AGO budget, [click here](#)

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White House Pledges Support to Military Families, Seeks Park Involvement

The White House recently released a new, government-wide approach to supporting military families, including those impacted by injuries sustained in Iraq and Afghanistan. Bob Stanton, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the Interior and former Director of the National Park Service, was Interior's representative on the year-long effort which generated the new plan. Early this year, Bob approached NPHA and invited its participation through support of the Wounded Warriors Family Support (WWFS) – an organization focusing on the needs of enlisted wounded warriors with dependent children. WWFS is run by a dynamic USMC Colonel (Retired), John Folsom, from Nebraska. Bob's idea was to expand the program from its current operation in Orlando, where families are housed and enjoy area theme parks, to key national parks. He set up a meeting between Colonel Folsom and NPHA staff and the discussions were exciting and encouraging.

NPHA contacted several members and found that many NPHA members are already involved in wounded warrior programs and willing to assist the WWFS expansion. Colonel Folsom plans to be with us at the March meeting and to outline a plan to utilize concessioner overnight facilities, during non-peak periods, for qualifying military families for stays of 2 to 7 nights. WWFS will undertake the outreach to the families and arrange for transportation and other costs of the stays. Rooms offered to WWFS but unassigned would be released for sale to the general public approximately 30 days out.

Bob has offered to arrange a true partnership among NPHA, WWFS, and the National Park Service. Options include visits by NPS and NPHA representatives to key military bases and hospitals to describe park opportunities and to arrange for sales of America the Beautiful Passes and the issuance of America the Beautiful Access Passes (for handicapped Americans, including qualifying wounded warriors) during these visits. Bob is also seeking NPS agreement to the deduction of certain expenses associated with support of WWFS visitors from revenues subject to franchise fees. We are excited about this partnership and the opportunity to open new communications channels with all military families!

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NPS Director Jarvis to Convene *Healthy Parks Healthy People 2011* April 5th, 6th

National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis has invited 200 “innovators, experts and visionaries” from business, government, academic and nonprofit organizations to an April 5th - 6th session in San Francisco. Called ***Healthy Parks Healthy People U.S. 2011***, the session is expected to lead to a new coalition effort to steer a path toward use of parks and open spaces to improve the health of all Americans – and reduce healthcare costs. The National Park Service has created a new Health and Wellness Steering Committee to plan this event and to undertake other activities, led by Captain

Charles Higgins, Director of the NPS Office of Public Health. A number of concessions industry representatives will participate. To review the NPS' description of the April meeting, [click here](#).

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Messages on Health Benefits of Travel Resonate with Public

Stronger-than-expected economic growth, reflecting a pick-up in consumer spending and travel demand, sets the stage for improved performance for the U.S. travel industry in 2011, according to the February report by Suzanne Cook's office of research at the U.S. Travel Association. "Our potential traveler market might be particularly open to messages about the physical and psychological benefits of travel this year," the report said. The recovery is increasingly viewed as sustainable and there is renewed optimism for the economy and for the travel industry. To read the full U.S. Travel Outlook, [click here](#).

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National Park Service 2011 Fee-Free Days: Send In Your Offers Today

The next round of NPS Fee-Free Days is drawing near: **April 16th to 24th**. Please provide NPS with your complementary Fee-Free 2011 offers now for inclusion on our website. We need three things to post your offer:

1. Name of the unit where the offer is being made, including state.
2. A description of the offer (discount/special service, who is providing it, where the offer occurs, when it is available, and any restrictions).
3. How to redeem the offer (offer code, website, email, phone number).

Please send your offers to tsimmons@funoutdoors.com or call (202) 682-9530 ext. 204

[Announcement from Secretary Salazar](#)

[NPS Fee-Free Website](#)

[NPS Fee-Free Website](#)

[The National Parks Promotion Council - Gateway Community Offers](#)

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Commercial Services Program News

The following is an update from Kurt Rausch, our liaison with the National Park Service Commercial Services program:

- Disposable Water Bottle Initiative: on January 25, the NPS hosted a meeting of bottled water suppliers to discuss the sale of disposable water bottles in parks as a sustainability practice. Representatives from Nestle, Coke and Pepsi, The

International Water Bottlers Association and The American Beverage Association participated. Discussions covered NPS sustainability goals, water bottler environmental efforts, disposable water bottle management efforts and park recycling programs and opportunities. Follow up discussions with concessioners and cooperating associations are also anticipated as the NPS continues to gather information on the subject.

- Standards, Evaluation and Rate Administration (SERA) Project: the next SERA Concessioner Workgroup teleconference meeting is planned for some time during the week of February 21. The NPS will be contacting Workgroup members to determine the best available date and time during that week.
- Prospectuses. New prospectus opportunities can be found at [NPS Commercial Services](#) web site and on [FedBusOps](#).

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New Study of the African American Traveler Released

A new study segments African-American travelers as to their participation in family reunions, seeking black history and culture, and their business travel trends. Released by Mandala Research, the study details media usage, technology, trip planning and booking behaviors of black travelers. [Click here](#) to order the report or call (703) 798-5452.

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National Parks at International Pow Wow: Sponsor Invitation

The National Parks Marketing Cooperative returns to International Pow Wow this May 21st to 25th in San Francisco as an opening day sponsor. NPHA members are invited to join the sponsor partner program which will prominently position each brand alongside that of "America's National Parks." Please contact Sue Cronin, Executive Director, for sponsorship information: secronin@optonline.net or (203) 256-8402. For general Pow Wow registration, [click here](#).

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Essay Contest for Youth Launched by *National Parks Traveler*

"What National Parks Mean to Me" is a new essay contest for youth ages 8 to 18 by the *National Parks Traveler* online publication. Three grand-prize winners will enjoy a national park vacation with lodging provided by NPHA concessioners (Forever Resorts, ARAMARK and Xanterra Parks & Resorts), plus outdoor gear to help to help them enjoy the trip. "Today's younger generations will become tomorrow's park stewards," according to the publication. They want to hear from youngsters in elementary, middle, and high school on how they view the national parks. Essay requirements: entries must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on March 1, 2011. There are three age brackets: 8 to 11,

12 to 15, and 16 to 18. Essays must be solely the work of the participant. The winning essays will be selected by National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis and announced during National Parks Week in mid-April. A list of the grand-prize winners and runners up, and their essays, will be posted on National Parks Traveler. To share more details on the contest in your parks community, [click here](#).

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All-American Road Debuts Handheld Video Tour

The Creole Nature Trail All-American Road in Southwest Louisiana debuted a video tour using a handheld GPS unit this month. The GPS unit enables visitors to take a self-guided tour of the trail while driving or walking along. Using authentic Cajun dialect and music, the narrator shares information about the history, culture and wildlife along the route. Visitors may checkout the GPS unit free of charge from the Lake Charles Convention and Visitors Bureau office. The tour is also available free as an app for smartphones through the iTunes store or Android Marketplace. The interactive tour was a response to a drastic decline in tourism following hurricanes in 2005 and 2008. The Creole Nature Trail Board of Directors spearheaded the \$298,000 project, obtaining grants from the Federal Highway Administration (80%) and the Convention and Visitors Bureau (20%). The project took 15 months to complete. BarZ Adventures developed the program, installed the hardware and equipment at the bureau and trained its staff. To learn more, [click here](#).

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Park Fees Dip in 2010, Still Fund 1,700 Projects: Fee-Free Days to Blame?

National Park Service revenues from daily entrance fees, annual park-specific and interagency passes and commercial use fees totaled \$125,776,233 last year, down from \$129,640,672 in 2009. Only 139 of the 394 units of the National Park System actually charge entrance fees.

While 2010 fee collections were down, the National Park Service used a combination of new collections and carry-over fee income to underwrite 1,700 projects in 2010 at nearly 300 units and costing \$195 million in park funds. The impact of the federal funding was actually higher. "Many parks are able to engage youth, enhance volunteer programs, take advantage of partnerships and often partner dollars to accomplish work," according to National Park Service Fee Program Manager Jane Moore. The category and number of projects funded last year were (most projects involve several categories):

Deferred maintenance	673
Health and safety	654
Education	314
Accessibility	288

Partnerships	274
Youth work programs	248
Sustainability	203
Volunteerism	174
Disturbed land restoration	98

Were fee-free periods the cause of the drop? According to Ms. Moore, quoted in a *National Parks Traveler* article, “Whether the three fee-free weekends last year accounted for the lion's share of that decline is impossible to say. It's really hard to quantify revenue loss with fee-free days. Yes, we know there are some losses, but the things that affect visitation are so variable: weather, gas prices, competing recreation and leisure activities, overall travel and trip expenses, park closures, etc. Also, our revenue is reported monthly. We don't have a good way to monitor revenue by the day, so we do our best to compare monthly revenue reports/statistics to look at overall trends.”

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RV Overnight Stays in National Parks Up 5% in 2010

Overnight RV visits to national parks totaled 2,258,903 in 2010, up 5.06% over the 2,150,170 RVers who stayed overnight in 2009.

Park Report Summary			
Total for DEC 2009:	37,099	Total for YTD 2009:	2,150,170
Total for DEC 2010:	39,830	Total for YTD 2010:	2,258,903
Difference	2,731	Difference	108,733
Percentage Difference	7.36%	Percentage Difference	5.06%

Here are the parks with the most overnight RV stays in 2010:

Yellowstone	512,665
Grand Teton	276,208
Glen Canyon	98,997

For the National Park Service Visitor Summary Report on Total Recreational Vehicle Campers, [click here.](#)

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The Corporation for Travel Promotion Developing Research Plan

The Corporation for Travel Promotion's Board of Directors established committees at its February conference call meeting but noted that its real work would begin once the executive director is selected within the next month or two. George Fertitta with NYC & Co. heads the marketing committee, which is cataloging research and developing a research plan and proposed marketing strategy. The next Board of Directors meetings

are March 9th (Washington, D.C.) and May 23rd (San Francisco, during Pow Wow). NPHA participates in the meetings by telephone and will continue to keep NPHA members updated.

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Academic Leader Shares Vision of Future of Recreation

More than 100 creative recreation industry and federal agency leaders participated in Partners Outdoors 2011 late last month in Grapevine, Texas, including several officials from the National Park Service. The dual themes were Health and the Great Outdoors and Getting More Americans into Their Great Outdoors. At the conference, Texas A&M University Distinguished Professor John Crompton spoke about the “Future of Recreation.” He discussed the interconnection between travel and parks, and how parks serve as “economic engines.” He said recreation meets basic human needs but warned that people who do not use park and recreation services are less likely to value them and, if not valued, they are less likely to be supported. He advised looking at recreation through a “transformational lens,” repositioning recreation and park services so that they are perceived to be a central contribution to alleviating the major community problems identified by taxpayers and decision-makers. The “big idea” associated with repositioning is that funds are invested in solutions to a community's most pressing problems, like health and the economy. View his presentation on the [Partners Outdoors blog](#).

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Let's Move Marks First Year

First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative celebrated its first anniversary this month. The program includes a Let's Move Outside component that is being led by Ali Kelley, on temporary detail from her NPS post. To read the First Lady's "Anniversary Speech to Parents" in Georgia, [click here](#). For the Let's Move! fact sheets, [click here](#).

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Peggy O'Dell Named Deputy Director for Operations, National Park Service

National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis has named Peggy O'Dell as the agency's Deputy Director for Operations, replacing Dan Wenk who has become Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park. Peggy was appointed National Capital Regional Director in October of 2008 and, prior to that served as Superintendent of the National Mall and Memorial Parks in Washington, D.C. She was a participant in NPHA's October 2010 meeting, and has been with the National Park Service for more than 30 years. To read the press release, [click here](#). Woody Smeck, Superintendent of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, will serve as Acting Regional Director for the National Capital Region.

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Congressional Travel & Tourism Caucus Selects Co-Chairs

U.S. Representatives Sam Farr (D-CA) and Jo Bonner (R-AL) will serve as Co-Chairs of the Congressional Travel & Tourism Caucus (CTTC) for the 112th Congress. The Congressional Travel & Tourism Caucus' mission is to support and develop national policy that promotes domestic and international travel to the United States. Long one of the Congress' largest and most successful caucuses, the CTTC has a bipartisan membership of more than 100 U.S. Representatives and played a key role in last year's passage of the Travel Promotion Act of 2010. The travel industry contributes \$704.4 billion to the country's economy and employs 7.7 million Americans.

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Dues Renewal for 2011: Please Self-Calculate and Remit

Thank you for your membership and continued dedication to the National Park Hospitality Association, your voice in Washington. To expedite dues payments, concessioner members are asked to calculate their company's 2011 dues amount based on its revenue. Please calculate your amount by using the [Dues Notice](#) and [Dues Worksheet](#). Should you require an invoice, please call (202) 682-9530 or email tsimmons@funoutdoors.com. A receipt will be provided for your records.

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News:

[USA Today - Digital Traveler: Social-media sites give travelers local insights](#)

[Adventuradio premieres on Clear Channel's FM News Talk for Allegheny area](#)

[Raising the stature of American Indian artists](#)

[Ken Salazar, Jon Jarvis, Mayor Bloomberg Use Central Park as Backdrop for AGO](#)