



## February 2012 Newsletter: Special Report on America's Summit on National Parks

National Park Hospitality Association

This newsletter is also available in PDF format [here](#).

In this issue:

- [America's Summit a Great Success](#)
- [Lessons Learned for the Next Century](#)
- [Crafting a Common Agenda](#)
- [National Parks: Our Best Idea](#)
- [Building on Past Efforts for the Future](#)
- [The Effect of Changing American Demographics on Parks](#)
- [National Parks and the Next Century](#)
- [The Economic Value of National Parks](#)
- [Exploring Partnerships, Protecting Parks](#)
- [Making Parks Relevant in Today's Political Environment](#)
- [Wednesday Breakout Session: Education, Economics, New Park Models, Urban Communities and Organizational Excellence](#)
- [Showcasing Park Partners](#)
- [Advice on Working With a Bipartisan Congress](#)
- [U.S. Senator Mark Udall, Park Ally](#)
- [Youth Panel Offers Advice to NPS](#)
- [Thursday Breakout Sessions: Visitation, Health, Conservation, and Connecting People to Parks](#)
- [Congressional Counsel](#)
- [Summit Concludes with Panel of Partners, Including NPS Director](#)

---

### America's Summit a Great Success

Leaders from the conservation, philanthropy, recreation, tourism, education, health, and economic development communities gathered in Washington, D.C. on January 24-26, 2012, for [America's Summit on National Parks: Taking Action for a New Century](#). This historic event attracted more than 350 participants who engaged in dynamic discussions around a variety of important topics vital to the future of our national parks, including connecting youth and urban communities with the national parks, conserving natural and cultural landscapes, and expanding the diversity of national park visitors.

NPHA members played significant roles in the event. Guest Services, Inc. hosted a memorable opening night reception at the Indigo Landing Restaurant in Alexandria, Virginia. Xanterra Parks & Resorts demonstrated its sustainable, healthy menus by crafting a special meal for participants on Wednesday night. And NPHA was one of the three hosting organizations.

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, U.S. Senator Mark Udall and others joined Director of the National Park Service Jon Jarvis in lauding the Summit as “a timely and historic event,” focusing on the 2016 centennial of the NPS and marking a first-ever partnership effort of the National Parks Conservation Association, National Park Foundation and National Park Hospitality Association.

Videos from Summit general sessions, PowerPoint presentations and more information are available at the official Summit website: [www.2016parksummit.org](http://www.2016parksummit.org).

[Return to top](#)

---

## **Lessons Learned for the Next Century**

Guest Services, Inc. (GSI) hosted a spectacular opening reception on Tuesday night. The event included a Farmer's Market, with local purveyors and chefs from GSI locations around the nation, a Virginia wine area with top vintners, an extensive seafood buffet and much more. NPS's *A Call to Action* includes an action item “Eat Well and Prosper,” calling on food served in national parks to be healthy, local and sustainable. Tuesday's event demonstrated these goals plus two more: serving food that is fun and delicious.

The Summit's opening event featured a panel of former NPS Directors, who shared *Lessons Learned for the Next Century*, and the CEO of Parks Canada. Jackie Lowey, former NPS Deputy Director, moderated the panel. Former Directors Fran Mainella and Bob Stanton offered advice on galvanizing excitement regarding the upcoming centennial in 2016, increasing diversity in NPS staff and park visitors, harnessing new technologies and creating new generations of park champions.

Fran Mainella emphasized the effect technology will have in getting children into our national parks. NPS can't treat technology as the enemy, she said. Ms. Mainella made note of the Web Ranger program developed by NPS while she was Director. She urged the adoption of a goal to get every American child into the national parks by 2016, and told the group that we can use technology to entice them.

Bob Stanton spoke about the importance of encouraging visitation to national parks by an increasingly diverse America. He noted that part of this effort involves telling America about the richly diverse national history in our parks. Progress has been made but much remains to be done and the centennial of NPS should be the catalyst for reaching this goal, he told participants. He reminded them that national parks were not fully integrated until 1964. Many seniors in America today were denied access to parks as youths. Mr. Stanton said that we have moved mountains as a nation in a short amount of time, but that establishing a tradition of visiting parks for all Americans will take time and special efforts.

Alan Latourelle, CEO of Parks Canada, offered insight into Parks Canada's recently completed centennial celebration. The Parks Canada centennial increased the diversity of park visitors by placing an emphasis on youth and “new Canadians” in park programming. Parks Canada has also focused on creating opportunities for young Canadians to experience parks on their own terms. Technology itself does not connect the hearts and minds of Canadians to parks, he said, but park employees can use technology to do just that. He noted that a special objective of Parks Canada's centennial was to build awareness of national parks and use them as a connecting link for Canadians, wherever they live in the nation. He also described changes in

operation and facilities to encourage Canadians, especially youth and minorities, to go out and experience parks for themselves.

[Return to top](#)

---

## **Crafting a Common Agenda**

America's Summit on National Parks co-organizers Tom Kiernan, President of the National Parks Conservation Association, Neil Mulholland, President of the National Park Foundation, and Derrick Crandall, Counselor to the National Park Hospitality Association, welcomed participants to the Summit on Wednesday morning. Each of them noted the unique nature of Summit participants – conservation, philanthropic, recreation, education, health and tourism interests, all united in support of the national parks – and the challenges and opportunities facing America's national parks and park programs.

The co-organizers challenged Summiteers to craft a common agenda to prepare NPS for its centennial through dialogue and contributing to the crafting of a Statement of Park Principles for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The trio noted that the Summit must be viewed not as an event but as the first step in a movement to ensure that parks remain relevant and cherished long into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

[Return to top](#)

---

## **National Parks: Our Best Idea**

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar gave the Summit's keynote speech entitled *The National Park Service Centennial and the Opportunity for Action*. He pointed to the importance of new park units like the Flight 93 National Memorial and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial in telling the story of Americans. The King memorial tells a story about our nation's journey to become a more just and perfect nation, he said. Only 3% of U.S. historic landmarks today reflect the contributions of women, African Americans, Native Americans and Latinos. Yet their contributions are part of America's history, which NPS has a duty and a responsibility to recognize.

Telling stories is only a small part of what NPS does for Americans, Secretary Salazar said. He encouraged participants to tout the economic importance of parks. Outdoor recreation is the second most promising job-creating industry according to a recent McKinsey survey, he said. He called the National Park Service a "job creating agency," one that is relevant to Americans.

Secretary Salazar said that national parks are America's best idea for three reasons: 1) The National Park System is uniquely democratic – open to all; 2) Parks have a unique opportunity to educate Americans about who we are, where we've come from, and where we're going; and 3) Parks can provide opportunities for all Americans to be healthy Americans.

[Return to top](#)

---

## **Building on Past Efforts for the Future**

The Honorable Tony Knowles, former Governor of Alaska and current Chairman of the National Park System Advisory Board, offered *Visions for America's National Parks and*

*the National Park Service.* He highlighted two decades of debate about park needs and opportunities and said that America is hungry for action supporting national parks, actions which will span geographical and political differences, conserve our natural places, and provide for their enjoyment. Governor Knowles encouraged those assembled to work together as park advocates to prepare the National Park Service for its second century.

[Return to top](#)

---

## **The Effect of Changing American Demographics on Parks**

Wednesday's first panel – *America's National Parks and 21st Century Trends, Priorities and Values: Gaining Broad Support* – was moderated by Carlos Alcazar, President and CEO of the Hispanic Communications Network. Mr. Alcazar described what he called a seismic shift in our cultural makeup. The Hispanic population in America is booming, he said, and the National Park Service needs to respond to this shift. Forty-six percent of the population of youth under the age of 18 are of a multi-cultural background, he said, and Hispanics represent 76% of that growth. The Hispanic Communications Network offered an actionable plan to NPS to increase its marketing to Hispanics. The plan has four parts: 1) Organizational Diversity; 2) Programming; 3) Marketing Communications; and 4) Partnerships. The Boy Scouts of America doubled their Hispanic enrollment in the last few years by following this plan, said Mr. Alcazar, and he is optimistic that NPS will find similar success.

Erik Huey, Senior Vice President of the Entertainment Software Association, acknowledged that his appearance at the Summit had generated some surprise and offered insights into how and why the gaming industry could help get Americans outdoors. The catalyst, he told the group, was the migration of games to mobile devices. Gamers comprise an increasingly large segment of the population, he said. Ninety-eight percent of American children today play video games, and 72% of homes have computer or video games. Members of the Entertainment Software Association understand how to market and appeal to children for leisure time use, and his organization offered to explore use of the NPS centennial as an opportunity to collaborate and engage with the agency and park partners. Meeting kids where they are is imperative, he said, and technology is evolving very quickly. He demonstrated use of NASA satellite imagery to create a video game for realistic snowboarding on any mountain in the world, and challenged park advocates to explore ways to partner with his members to use technology to get people outdoors and active.

Angelou Ezeilo, Executive Director of the Greening Youth Foundation and a lawyer from the land conservation movement, explained her founding of an organization to connect urban, minority children with the outdoors. The Greening Youth Foundation works in partnership with NPS to provide both volunteer and paid internships to youth across the country. The foundation works to give youth role models – like park rangers – who look like them and are concerned with their success, through a Green Speaker series and wilderness training programs.

Dan Witters, Principal and Research Director of the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, spoke about the statistical correlation between well-being and a healthier environment. The Well-Being Index was launched in 2008, and contains data from a daily nationwide poll, including questions asked about physical health and happiness, emotional well-being, happiness at work, availability of safe places to exercise and more. The index correlates answers to these questions with geographical data,

including proximity to open space and parks. Mr. Witters showed that areas in the U.S. with more green space have citizens with lower blood pressure, 15% fewer headaches and 25% fewer heart attacks. The Well-Being Index is available at [www.well-beingindex.com](http://www.well-beingindex.com).

[Return to top](#)

---

## National Parks and the Next Century

The presentation by National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis was entitled *From Vision to Action: A Call to Action for a New Century of Success*. He called America's Summit on National Parks historic, congratulating the three co-hosting organizations on coming together to find common ground and use the NPS centennial in 2016 as a unifying concept. He urged participants to follow this example, to make commitments and to be emboldened by the idea that a unified parks community is supporting the centennial as an opportunity for long-term progress.

Director Jarvis said that it is imperative that NPS focus well beyond the boundaries of national parks in its second century. The agency's role in historic preservation helps revitalize communities and its Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program contributes to community health and economic sustainability, he said. He called on all park interests to help build awareness of the agency's economic influence. He applauded President Obama's January 19 Executive Order, which announced new efforts to draw international tourists to America, and made special note of national parks as a centerpiece of this plan.

And Director Jarvis gave special recognition to the contribution of concessioners to the Healthy Parks Healthy People movement. Concessioners play a vital role in encouraging and helping to reward healthy food choices and more physical activity during park stays, he told the group. He recognized the efforts of Delaware North Companies, Guest Services, Inc. and Xanterra Parks & Resorts to support the joint NPF/NPCA/NPHA efforts in November and at the Summit and told Summiteers he looks forward to both partnerships with and healthy competition among concessioners.

[Return to top](#)

---

## The Economic Value of National Parks

Sally Jewell, President and CEO of REI, moderated the panel on *The Economic Benefits of the National Parks and Park Programs*. She called the outdoors non-partisan, and noted that its advocates include Americans who are committed to parks regardless of their political affiliations. Advocating for parks as economic engines will be crucial in today's political climate, she told the group, and then led members of the panel in an effort to lay out economic arguments for parks.

Doug Domenech, Secretary of Natural Resources for the Commonwealth of Virginia, offered a state leader's perspective on the importance of economics. He noted that fiscally conservative politicians respond to what he labeled "the other green" when making conservation decisions. Outdoor recreation on public land is a potent economic driver, and advocates can use this argument to garner support, especially during a period of economic duress. Tourism is Virginia's third largest industry, generating \$19 billion in spending annually and 200,000 jobs, Secretary Domenech reported. And a great deal of this activity is tied to parks and the Great Outdoors. The Virginia leader

applauded the addition of Fort Monroe as a National Monument in the National Park System last fall with strong bipartisan support – and Mr. Domenech expects the monument to become a major economic driver for the state.

Linda Bilmes, Daniel Patrick Moynihan Senior Lecturer in Public Policy at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, discussed models of measuring the total economic value of the national parks. She argued that the annual appropriations process for funding parks, with a mission to protect special areas in perpetuity, is a mismatch. Ms. Bilmes also pointed out that studies done today to calculate the value of national parks examine economic drivers like jobs and tourism – which only represent a narrow slice of the value of parks. She and her team are working on also calculating what she called the “existence” and “bequest” values of parks. Americans value the protection of places, scenic wonders and historical sites – even if they never use or visit these sites. And Americans want to know that these natural wonders will be available to their grandchildren. She endorsed calls for a parks endowment of at least one billion dollars by 2016, independent of appropriation dollars and a first step to create a funding model that better reflects a commitment to permanently sustain national parks.

Joel Secundy, Vice President of Strategic Outreach for Brand USA, spoke about his organization, a public/private hybrid created by Congress with the mission of promoting increased international travel to the United States. Brand USA (originally created as the Corporation for Travel Promotion) was begun in March 2010 and is now readying the launch of its campaign, using a mix of private sector contributions and a \$100 million+ per annum federal funding stream. And he told the group that national parks will be a centerpiece of the campaign to increase international tourism and create hundreds of thousands of new, sustainable jobs.

[Return to top](#)

---

## Exploring Partnerships, Protecting Parks

The Honorable Fran Ulmer, former Lieutenant Governor of Alaska, moderated the panel on *New Dimensions in Park Protection*. She set the stage for the discussion by noting that we don't inherit America's parks from our parents, we borrow them from our children.

Stephanie Meeks, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, encouraged efforts to bring conservation and historic preservation together as part of the National Park Service centennial. She said that a growing cultural diversity in America and a growing base of local preservationists are creating new opportunities for partnerships. Research shows 15 million adults are actively doing preservation in their lives now, she reported, and added that Americans who care about preservation also care deeply about conserving natural resources. She called for Summiteers to champion both cultural and natural resources.

Gary Machlis, Science Advisor to the Director of the National Park Service, told participants that centennials are inspiring to Americans and that 2016 is a wonderful time to remind Americans of the importance of conserving and protecting parks. He said that Americans all draw benefit, purpose and prosperity from the parks because they are distinctive and irreplaceable. He urged participants to treat parks as resources and culture together – that effective park conservation in the future will require the creative expansion of partnerships. And he urged the Summiteers to be strategic,

reminding them of the advice of hockey star Wayne Gretzky: “Winning is about skating to where the puck will be.”

The Honorable Bill Richardson, former Governor of New Mexico, offered advice on enlisting the support of politicians for natural resource issues. He called for a broad new movement, one that utilizes social media and targets a new generation of youth. He urged NPS to be bolder in responding to climate change and to establish low carbon emissions goals. He also urged participants to pursue partnerships with Native American groups, landowners and other local advocates for the protection of natural resources.

[Return to top](#)

---

## **Making Parks Relevant in Today’s Political Environment**

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne moderated a remarkable discussion titled *How Can National Parks Succeed in Today’s Fiscal and Political Climate?* The former mayor, U.S. Senator, Governor and Secretary of the Interior stressed that today’s national parks are the product of bipartisan leadership. He noted that the NPS centennial is four years away – and that the U.S. political world deals in four-year increments, making 2012 the ideal time to prepare efforts for the centennial. He asked the group to unite around efforts that would make the President of the United States elected in November 2012 eager to be at the center of the August 2016 NPS centennial celebration.

John Podesta, Chair and Counselor for the Center for American Progress, offered insight into views on park issues from the perspective of his time as Chief of Staff under President Bill Clinton and his major role in Democratic policy development. He reminded the group that the Congress was as divided during the Clinton Administration as it is now – but also that a divided Congress was able to rally around parks. He said Summiteers must remind politicians that investing in parks will create jobs and help drive the economy. Asking political candidates to go on record during campaigns puts park advocates in a good leveraging position if that candidate makes it to office, he said, so target all candidates. Mr. Podesta ended his remarks with a reminder to drive home the local argument – when an issue hits close to home, it really starts to matter to people, and to those they elect.

Michael Gerson, Opinion Writer for the *Washington Post* and former chief speech writer for President George W. Bush, responded with a conservative viewpoint. He said that legacy is something presidents don’t talk about when entering office, but that legacy becomes very important when they prepare to leave office. He urged park interests to consider initiatives that will provide politicians something to tout from their years in office. Mr. Gerson recommended that overtures to conservative politicians emphasize values (like patriotism and history) first before moving on to other cases (like economics or conservation).

Geoff Garin, President of Peter D. Hart Research Associates, urged participants to think of 2016 as a “do-or-die” date, saying that the NPS centennial is an opportunity to accomplish something very important for parks, and one not likely to arise again in the near future. He shared polling data which shows that parks are a unifying issue for Americans, bridging political views. When asked how important it is for the federal government to preserve and protect parks, Americans answer affirmatively across party lines. And as the 2008 recession deepened, this commitment increased. Parks are a symbol of national unity in a time when Americans feel they are too divided, said Mr.

Garin. Parks are places that people feel should be honored and cherished, and he said Americans attribute patriotic characteristics to a president who prioritizes parks. He urged Summit attendees to use the centennial as an opportunity to engage people in parks, and rally around the idea of preserving America's story and best places.

[Return to top](#)

---

### **Wednesday Breakout Sessions: Education, Economics, New Park Models, Urban Communities and Organizational Excellence**

Attendees spent the afternoon in discussions during two of five possible breakout sessions. The first session focused on *Education: Connecting Youth Through Education*. Milton Chen, Senior Fellow and Executive Director Emeritus of the George Lucas Educational Foundation and member of the NPS Advisory Board, moderated a panel featuring: James Percoco, History Teacher at West Springfield High School in Virginia and Director of Education, Friends of the National WWII Memorial; Jason Morris, Executive Vice President of NatureBridge; Danny Edelson, Vice President for Education at the National Geographic Society and Executive Director of the National Geographic Education Foundation; and Shelby Locke, Student at West Springfield High School. Participants in this session discussed innovative approaches to increasing student visitation in parks that are already occurring, barriers to greater collaboration, and actions to enable our nation to more fully leverage the tremendous educational power of our national parks.

The second session explored *The Economic Value of Our National Parks and Park Programs*. Ray Rasker, Executive Director of Headwaters Economics, moderated panelists Mark Barron, Mayor of Jackson, Wyoming, and Lynn Scarlett, Senior Visiting Scholar at Resources for the Future and former Deputy Secretary of the Interior. Participants in this section explored the nexus between well funded and well maintained national parks, a stronger economy, and increased job opportunities.

The third session focused on *The Next Generation of America's Parks: New Models and Opportunities*. Denis Galvin, Retired NPS Deputy Director, facilitated a panel with Robert Garcia, Executive Director of The City Project, Barb Pahl, Regional Director of the Mountains/Plains Office at National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Mike Scott, Distinguished Professor Emeritus for the Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources at the University of Idaho. Participants discussed how to look into the future to ensure the National Park System represents all Americans and addresses our concerns about preserving our ecology and culture.

The fourth session explored *Connecting with Urban Communities and New Populations*. Facilitator Nina Roberts, Associate Professor at San Francisco State University and Director of the Pacific Leadership Institute, moderated the discussion among panelists including: Juan Martinez, Network Coordinator of the Children & Nature Network; John Bridgeland, former Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council and USA Freedom Corps; Corita Waters, Partnerships and Communications Specialist, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program at the National Park Service; and Mary Margaret Jones, Senior Principal & President at Hargreaves Associates. Participants in this session discussed the current landscape and NPS priorities within urban areas, barriers to greater collaboration and coordination, and opportunities ripe for action that advance the role that NPS plays in urban areas.

The fifth session choice focused on *Organizational Excellence*. Michael Creasey, Superintendent of Lowell National Historical Park, moderated a panel featuring: Tina Sung, Vice President of Government Transformation and Agency Partnerships at The Partnership for Public Service; Fred Dust, Partner at IDEO; Willa Seldon, Partner at The Bridgespan Group; and Peggy O'Dell, Deputy Director of the National Park Service. Participants in this session discussed innovative approaches from within and outside NPS that are already happening, barriers to successful adoption of new ideas to NPS, and actions that will enable the NPS to use the opportunity of the centennial to lay the ground for professional excellence into the second century of NPS.

Summaries and reference materials for each breakout session are available at [www.2016parksummit.org](http://www.2016parksummit.org).

[Return to top](#)

---

### **Showcasing Park Partners**

Dinner Wednesday night started with First Lady Michelle Obama appearing in a video specifically complimenting the Summit and encouraging participants to continue their good work to get kids healthy outside in our national parks.

Summiteers then enjoyed a delicious, locally sourced and sustainable meal designed by Xanterra Parks & Resorts. Andy Todd, Xanterra's President and CEO, spoke about the company's efforts to provide more sustainable and greener hospitality. Xanterra recently changed its mission to read, "Legendary hospitality with a softer footprint," highlighting its 100-year-plus commitment to hospitality and its strong commitment to its environmental initiative.

Terre Jones, President of the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, showed a video of the latest installment of the *Face of America* series. *Face of America 2012: Spirit of South Florida* showcases Big Cypress National Preserve, Biscayne National Park, Dry Tortugas National Park, and the Everglades National Park. The live version will be premiered at the Filene Center in Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts in September 2012 and features newly commissioned dances interpreting key themes of South Florida's National Parks. Spirit of South Florida is the first of a three-part series of Wolf Trap performances in celebration of the National Park Service's centennial in 2016.

The session also featured a video from Former First Lady Laura Bush, who thanked everyone present for their commitment to the long-term welfare of the national parks.

[Return to top](#)

---

### **Advice on Working With a Bipartisan Congress**

The Thursday morning session began with The Honorable Dan Glickman, Senior Fellow at the Bipartisan Policy Center and former Secretary of Agriculture, who recapped Wednesday's discussions, urged that the diversity of this country should be reflected in the diversity of the parks, commented that educating youth is a crucial role for parks and stressed the use of technology to attract youth. He predicted that funding will continue to be a serious problem and encouraged creative solutions including alliances with the health industry and the entertainment community.

He also cited the parks as a proven tool for resolving bitter partisanship now and in the future. Parks are a beautiful way to get people together and work through ideological frustration, he said.

[Return to top](#)

---

## **U.S. Senator Mark Udall, Park Ally**

U.S. Senator Mark Udall of Colorado discussed *An Agenda to Protect America's Parks and Engage the Next Generation* with participants. He described himself as a great park supporter in the Congress.

He reminded participants that the fiscal environment in Congress is difficult now – and could get worse before it gets better. Crafting recommendations into viable legislative proposals, he said, will be particularly difficult in such a divided Congress. Senator Udall asked for the support of those assembled to draft recommendations to support parks from the bottom up.

Senator Udall also advised participants to seek support for parks during the election season. This election will be all about the economy and jobs, as it should be, he said. Senator Udall urged advocates to talk about parks and park activities under the framework of the economy – and to have the numbers that prove parks' importance to the economy at their fingertips.

[Return to top](#)

---

## **Youth Panel Offers Advice to NPS**

A panel of youth, including a number of new National Park Service employees, made for an exciting discussion Thursday morning on the subject of *Youth and Our National Parks*. Park Ranger Nick Clemons, a former member of the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) and now full-time park employee, moderated the panel. He offered suggestions to NPS and park partners, saying that allowing students to experience different departments within the agency as they begin their careers will allow them a broader understanding of NPS operations down the road.

Katie Thomas Canfield, a student and summer NPS employee, advised NPS to market career opportunities within the agency to students. "We don't know what's available to us," she said. She also emphasized the importance of social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr when reaching out to students.

John Culhane, another student, suggested a celebrity spokesperson as a way to help advertise careers in NPS. He said as long as the spokesperson has a genuine passion for parks, it could help draw young people to pursue careers in NPS. Many youth don't know that NPS is a way to get a job doing something you love, he said.

Other students on the panel also spoke up to talk about their passion for parks and NPS. One young woman said she loved talking to visitors about her park, while another said working for NPS was a great way to pursue her passion: to conserve and protect natural resources. A former member of the Youth Conservation Corps said he admired the diversity in parks and has learned that many kinds of people want to be involved in the park system. Finally, the panelists were asked what recommendations they would make to Park Service leadership. One young ranger summed up the sentiments of her

colleagues by saying that, for the Park Service to remain relevant, it needs to change as fast as the world around it does.

[Return to top](#)

---

### **Thursday Breakout Sessions: Visitation, Health, Conservation, and Connecting People to Parks**

Summit attendees finished the morning by choosing from another series of breakout sessions. The first panel on *Visitation and Experiences* featured Dan Jensen, President of Delaware North Companies Parks & Resorts at Yosemite, as moderator. Panelists were: Beth Stevens, Senior Vice President of Environmental Affairs at The Walt Disney Company; Mike Tollefson, President of The Yosemite Conservancy; Jim Gramann, Professor in the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences at Texas A & M University; and Tony DeFalco, Chair of the Center for Diversity and the Environment. Participants discussed how to reach out to the public, especially those with limited park traditions, in new ways and offer them experiences that are attractive and relevant.

The second session was on *Health and Wellness, including Healthy Foods and Green Management*. Chris Lane, Vice President of Environmental Affairs at Xanterra, moderated a panel featuring: Kevin Coyle, Vice President of Education Programs at the National Wildlife Federation; Carolyn Ward, CEO of the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation; Susan Polan, Associate Executive Director of the American Public Health Association; and Ali Kelley, Deputy Associate Director for Let's Move Outside! at the Council on Environmental Quality. Participants in the session discussed: expanding cooperative efforts with medical and public health communities; identifying effective methods of organizing communities to support and expand such efforts; and coordinating efforts to increase the physical activity of NPS employees and partners, at work and at play, with the Office of Personnel Management.

The third session, on *Connecting and Conserving Landscapes*, featured Robert Keiter, Director of the Wallace Stegner Center for Land, Resources, and the Environment at the University of Utah, as moderator. Panelists included: David Lamfrom, Desert Field Representative at the National Parks Conservation Association; Laura Belleville, Director of Conservation at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy; and Jad Daley, Director of Climate Conservation Program for the Trust for Public Land. The session focused on identifying actions in the larger landscapes surrounding national parks that will protect the parks' natural resources, promote healthier communities of plants, fish, and wildlife, and build resilience to climate change.

The fourth session explored *Connecting People to Parks*. Eric Friedenwald-Fishman, Creative Director & President of the Metropolitan Group, moderated a panel featuring: Amy Gibson-Grant, Vice President and Campaign Director at The Ad Council; James Ashurst, Vice President of Public Relations and Advertising at the Recreational Vehicle Industry Association; Elizabeth Ward, Director of Marketing Communication at The Nature Conservancy; Sue Waldron, Assistant Director of Communications at the National Park Service; and Marva Smalls, Executive Vice President at Global Inclusion Strategy Viacom and Executive Vice President of Public Affairs and Chief of Staff at Nickelodeon Networks Group. The session explored how the national park community can use traditional and new outreach and communications techniques to strengthen and diversify the constituency for national parks, building awareness, visitation, and engagement.

Summaries and reference materials for each breakout session are available at [www.2016parksummit.org](http://www.2016parksummit.org).

[Return to top](#)

---

## **Congressional Counsel**

Stephen Lockhart, Chair of the Board of Directors for NatureBridge, hosted a session on *Realizing the Full Potential of Parks as Educational and Health Resources*. National parks have the opportunity to support lifelong, place-based learning, he said. He also pointed to increasing environmental literacy as a way to show children the importance of outdoor physical activity in improving their health.

Senator Lamar Alexander also sees value in improving environmental literacy. He suggested focusing on states and local communities as the most effective way to make a difference in improving a natural education. The problem impacting environmental education is a lack of experience, he said, because parents who are unfamiliar with parks won't take their children to parks.

Senator Michael Bennet of Colorado also advocated for a local focus on education improvement. He says he would not support a federal mandate that schools do something better with national parks, but he thinks allowing teachers to develop lesson plans that make sense in the local environment would lead to great strides in teaching children about the environment. You can make a huge difference at the local level with some modest but well targeted incremental changes, he said. Senator Bennet ended his remarks by saying that all Members of Congress in the House and Senate should sponsor an event in their home districts and states to celebrate the centennial with school kids, and he offered to be the first.

[Return to top](#)

---

## **Summit Concludes with Panel of Partners, Including NPS Director**

Broadcast journalist Cheryl Martin moderated the final panel with co-organizers Tom Kiernan, President of the National Parks Conservation Association, Neil Mulholland, President of the National Park Foundation, Derrick Crandall, Counselor to the National Park Hospitality Association, and National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis offering *Commitments to Action* and the opportunity for a question-and-answer discussion. Ms. Martin asked the panelists to offer participants a look back on the conversation at the Summit and share plans to move forward.

Director Jarvis praised the organizations and groups present who have already adopted *A Call to Action* into their framework. He made particular note of concessioners, who have made significant efforts to showcase their healthy food initiatives. Director Jarvis also reminded participants of the importance of showing the valuable impact parks have on the economy as job creators and economic engines. He encouraged participants to get Members of Congress involved in advocating for parks.

Mr. Keirnan noted the remarkable energy and enthusiasm that pervaded the conference. He reminded participants to submit their comments on the Summit Statement of Principles to take advantage of the excitement at the Summit and move forward to create an actionable plan for the centennial.

Mr. Mulholland remarked on the collaborative effort of the participants at the Summit – Washington D.C. can be divisive, he said, but everyone here wants to work together. He said local friends groups are really going to be the hallmark of any philanthropic effort going forward. A National Parks Endowment is necessary, he said.

Mr. Crandall urged participants to continue their enthusiasm and commitment to partnerships past the Summit and also urged prompt endorsement of the Statement of Principles. He said conversations at the Summit need to continue at the local level – and he volunteered concessioners to lead local conversations on the importance of parks. Park advocates need to take the Statement of Principles to legislators and the media, he said, and gain public support for the NPS centennial – and for America's National Parks.

[Return to top](#)

---

*For more information or to send questions/comments, please email*

*[tgeorgevits@funoutdoors.com](mailto:tgeorgevits@funoutdoors.com).*

*To unsubscribe, please send an email to [tgeorgevits@funoutdoors.com](mailto:tgeorgevits@funoutdoors.com) with the subject "NPHA Unsubscribe."*

*National Park Hospitality Association*

*1225 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 450, Washington, D.C. 20005*

*Phone: 202-682-9530/Fax: 202-682-9529 [www.parkpartners.org](http://www.parkpartners.org)*

*Follow us on Twitter [@NPHA](#)*