



January/February 2013 Newsletter

National Park Hospitality Association

In this issue:

- [Sally Jewell Named As Interior Secretary Choice](#)
- [Philadelphia: February 13 Regional NPS/NPHA Summit and Task Force Meeting](#)
- [NY Concessioners Face Continuing Challenges](#)
- [March Meeting Plans](#)
- [Bridgebuilder Event](#)
- [CMAB Plans](#)
- [NPS Gears Up For Cuts](#)
- [Cell and Internet Access Efforts Moving, Attacked By PEER](#)
- [Time to Act on 2013 NPHA Dues – Please!](#)
- [NPS Invites Nominations for DOI and NPS Awards](#)

SALLY JEWELL NAMED AS INTERIOR SECRETARY CHOICE

President Barack Obama will nominate Sally Jewell to serve as the next Secretary of the Interior. She is currently President and Chief Executive Officer of Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI), and an active leader of the recreation and conservation communities. She has been a strong supporter of President Obama's *America's Great Outdoors* initiative, and worked with former Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne on efforts to boost funding for our national parks in conjunction with the 2016 centennial of the National Park Service. The Senate is expected to take up her nomination in time for a March transition of departmental leadership from current Interior Secretary Ken Salazar. In a statement regarding the nomination on behalf of the American Recreation Coalition, Derrick Crandall said:

"The recreation community is delighted by the President's nomination of Sally Jewell to lead national conservation and recreation efforts as Secretary of the Interior. Sally is widely respected for her intelligence, her passion and her leadership skills. She has invested heavily with her time as a leader on the America's Great Outdoors initiative, has supported use of the outdoors as a tool for better health and for stronger, sustainable communities. And she has worked actively through REI, through recreation industry organizations and personally to connect younger, more urban and ethnically diverse Americans to our shared legacy of parks, forests, refuges and other outdoor treasures."

[Return to top](#)

PHILADELPHIA: FEBRUARY 13 REGIONAL NPS/NPHA SUMMIT AND TASK FORCE MEETING

NPHA members will meet on February 13 at the NPS Northeast Regional offices between 10:00 AM and noon to discuss topics ranging from NPS regional budgetary challenges to Healthy Food in Parks to expansion of concessioner services to meet changing visitor needs. NPS Regional Director Dennis Reidenbach will lead the agency team, expected to include both deputy regional directors and other key regional officials. NPHA members with operations at Acadia, the Statue of Liberty, Gettysburg, Shenandoah and other park units will participate. We are also delighted that NPS Associate Director for Business Operations Lena McDowall plans to participate. For an agenda and list of participants, click [here](#). If you would like to participate in the session, please contact Derrick Crandall no later than February 8 at dcrandall@funoutdoors.com.

Later on February 13, Terry MacRae will preside over the first meeting of a task force created at the NPHA meeting in October to discuss and develop recommendations for improving the NPS concessions program. The task force is asking all NPHA members to identify changes that would benefit visitors, NPS and concessioners. It is also likely to investigate the length of concessions contracts, concessions prospectus development and offer review processes, concessioner performance evaluations and responses to natural and governmental phenomena causing business changes and interruptions. ARAMARK is hosting this meeting from 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM at the Steinberg Conference Center at the Wharton School on the University of Pennsylvania campus, 255 South 38th Street in Philadelphia. Those unable to attend in person can participate by conference call. Please indicate your interest in participating no later than February 11 to Tom Georgevits at tgeorgevits@funoutdoors.com.

[Return to top](#)

NY CONCESSIONERS FACE CONTINUING CHALLENGES

In late October 2012, Hurricane Sandy hit the New York metropolitan area, causing billions of dollars in property damage and killing more than 100 people. More than a dozen concession operations were significantly impacted by the storm, and most remain closed. NPS put the cost of damage to its units in the region, and steps to safeguard units against future storms like Sandy, at nearly \$400 million. Funding for these projects was included in the two major Sandy emergency supplemental funding bills passed in January of this year.

The two largest operations shut down by the storm were Statue Cruises and Evelyn Hill, operating on and around Liberty and Ellis Islands. Together, the companies have been forced to lay off some 400 employees. Although much of New York City and the surrounding area has returned to business as usual, NPS continues to report that the two islands, visited by some four million persons each year and generating \$80 million in sales from souvenirs, food and transportation and \$16 million in franchise fees, are closed "indefinitely." The experience has been painful, with very limited communications

and use of measures like Directors Order 21 to prevent concessioners from being involved in damage assessment and recovery efforts.

A meeting involving NPS Director Jon Jarvis, the Northeast Regional Director, the Director of the Denver Service Center and other key agency personnel was held on January 31. We understand that the meeting produced a clear charge to expedite the reopening of the two islands. While ways to cut red tape are being employed – including use of USDOT contracting authorities – any target date for reopening could be weeks away.

U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer jumped into this issue on the morning of February 3, holding a news conference at the tip of Manhattan overlooking the Statue and making his feelings clear: a target date for reopening is needed immediately.

[Return to top](#)

MARCH MEETING PLANS

The 2013 annual meeting of the National Park Hospitality Association will be held in Washington beginning the evening of March 17 and concluding March 19. The meeting will include a session with top Interior and National Park Service leaders on the afternoon of March 18 and a CONPAC event honoring U.S. Senator Mark Udall (D-CO), Chair of the Senate Subcommittee on National Parks. The meeting will also include a March 19 session focusing on New Sustainable Supplementary Funding for America's National Parks, co-hosted by NPHA, the National Parks Conservation Association and the Bipartisan Policy Center and featuring VIPs including former Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne, former Members of Congress Jim Oberstar and Norm Dicks and political gurus Whit Ayres and Geoff Garin. See the Bridgebuilder event story in this newsletter for details. Full information on the meeting is available [here](#) – including registration materials. The deadline for making hotel reservations at the Hamilton Crowne Plaza is February 19: call (800) 263-9802 and identify yourself as a member of the National Park Hospitality Association when booking to assure the discounted rate of \$275 per night, plus taxes. Limited numbers of rooms are available both immediately prior and subsequent to our meeting at this rate.

[Return to top](#)

BRIDGEBUILDER EVENT

Support for America's national parks is widespread and unites the nation geographically, politically, demographically and economically. Yet many challenges face the National Park Service today, including a need to reach out to Americans who rarely benefit from park visits, deferred maintenance of infrastructure found in the current array of nearly 400 park units, rare integration of new technologies into park story-telling and more. Despite active support from elected and appointed officials at the national level in both parties, the financial resources of the National Park Service are in decline. Recent efforts to reduce large federal budgetary deficits put current levels of appropriations in jeopardy, even as the agency prepares for its 100th

anniversary and exciting new efforts to remain valued and relevant and to continue as a catalyst for strong local and regional economies, especially through domestic and international tourism activity.

On March 19, NPHA will join with NPCA and the Bipartisan Policy Center for a Bridgebuilder session to identify tools needed to aid America's national parks in the 21st century and to prepare well-crafted proposals to Congress and the Administration for making these tools available. Some of these tools will require new legislative authority – perhaps as part of legislation clarifying goals for the National Park Service in its second century of operation. Others may be achievable through new policies and regulations. Tools range from an earmarked penny in federal motorfuel taxes to revisions in park entrance fees, from increased use of historic tax credits to expanded volunteerism and philanthropy.

The half-day session will focus on more than a dozen white papers developed by parks community leaders. A VIP panel of former Members of Congress and Cabinet members, business executives, political gurus and others will discuss these ideas and strategies to add them to the national parks “tool box.” Following the session, the white papers will be revised, reviewed by a group of prominent Americans with business and political experience for efficacy and potential significance to aid America's parks and then delivered to Congress and the Administration for action by June 2013.

To register for the Bridgebuilder session, contact Tom Georgevits at tgeorgevits@funoutdoors.com.

[Return to top](#)

CMAB PLANS

The National Park Service Concessions Management Advisory Board will meet from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on March 20 in Washington at the Sheraton Four Points, 1201 K Street, NW, less than two blocks from the hotel used for the NPHA annual meeting. Among the topics on the agenda are strategies to encourage and recognize excellence by concessioners and identifying appropriate concessioner-provided visitor services in the 21st century. Further information on the meeting will be available soon at http://www.concessions.nps.gov/advisory_board.htm.

[Return to top](#)

NPS GEARS UP FOR CUTS

The Office of Management and Budget has directed all non-DOD federal departments to plan for a 5% mandatory spending reduction for the current fiscal year. This is the temporarily avoided "fiscal cliff" of January 1 returning, but tempered from the original mandatory 8.2% cut which would have occurred then. NPS Director Jon Jarvis sent Regional Directors instructions to be transmitted to park superintendents late in January. The instructions are contained in four documents, available [here](#):

- Memo from NPS Director Jarvis to Regional Directors, Associate and Assistant Directors, USPP
- Attachment 1 - Park-by-Park Program and Office Reduction Targets
- Attachment 2 - Instructions for Sequestration Planning
- Attachment 3 - Sequestration Reduction Planning Template

The documents outline priorities for superintendents in planning cuts:

- First, delay permanent hiring
- Next, eliminate nonessential travel and training costs
- Then eliminate seasonal staff not essential to protecting visitor and resource safety (which of course a lot of seasonal staff are) and avoid hiring seasonal staff not essential for this purpose
- Extend furlough periods for staff subject to furlough
- If more cuts are needed, furlough permanent and term employees
- Finally, identify examples such as reductions in visitor services, hours of operations, shortened seasons and possibly closing areas when there are insufficient staff to protect people and assets

Here is a quote from the document: ***"We expect that a cut of this magnitude, intensified by the lateness of the implementation, will result in reductions to visitor services, hours of operation, shortening of seasons, and possibly the closing of areas during periods when there is insufficient staff to ensure the protection of visitors, employees, resources, and government assets."***

We recommend that you meet with your park superintendent soon to help achieve a 5% budget reduction without significantly impacting visitors and your operations.

[Return to top](#)

CELL AND INTERNET ACCESS EFFORTS MOVING, ATTACKED BY PEER

Efforts to enhance cell and internet availability in national parks continue as a result of discussions at Grand Thoughts at the Grand Canyon. NPHA members submitted a list of candidate sites along with suggested goals for the effort (click [here](#) to see the NPHA suggested goals). NPS Intermountain Regional Director John Wessels and NPS Assistant Director for Communications Sue Waldron (lead for the NPS "Go Digital" component of **A Call to Action**) are leading NPS efforts and are briefing NPS Deputy Director Peggy O'Dell on the recommended parks and activity plan this month. The NPS leadership team is fully supportive of this initiative, as are many park allies.

But the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) has tried to distort this effort. PEER's news release dated January 31, 2013, proclaims, "PLANS TO WIRE ENTIRE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM: Concessionaires Would Control Visitor Cell and Internet Access and Content." As a result, NPS and NPHA received a flurry of media inquiries. In most cases, the reporters heard the facts and concluded there was no scandalous story – in fact, that this was a non-story. PEER's efforts seem to be confirming with NPS our contention that enhanced cell and internet access in parks will

be very popular.

[Return to top](#)

TIME TO ACT ON 2013 NPHA DUES – PLEASE!

This is the official notice that regular and associate member dues for 2013 should be paid by **March 1**. The dues schedule is unchanged from last year. A link to NPHA 2013 dues forms is [here](#). If you need an invoice or have questions, please contact Derrick Crandall (dcrandall@funoutdoors.com).

[Return to top](#)

NPS INVITES NOMINATIONS FOR DOI AND NPS AWARDS

Concessioners are eligible for a variety of NPS/DOI awards including NPS and DOI Environmental Achievement Awards and the DOI Partners in Conservation Award.

New in 2013 is the NPS Healthy Parks Healthy People (HP2) Award, developed jointly by the NPS Commercial Services Program and the NPS Public Health Service.

The new award covers multiple topic areas including Healthy Foods. Click [here](#) for award descriptions and details on the 2013 nomination process. Nominations are due by February 28 and MUST be submitted through an internal NPS Sharepoint site.

Because this site is only available to NPS personnel, concessioners seeking nominations must work with an NPS point of contact, preferably your park or regional NPS liaison. If you encounter problems, you should contact Kat Berry (Kat_Berry@nps.gov, 202-513-7153) or Kurt Rausch (Kurt_Rausch@nps.gov, 202-513-7202).

[Return to top](#)