



June 2012 Newsletter

National Park Hospitality Association

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Joint NPCA/NPHA Survey of Likely 2012 Voters Underway

The 2012 elections are important to recreation interests, and especially to national park partners. In November, voters will elect the President who will be in office on August 25, 2016 – the Centennial of the National Park Service – as well as 33 U.S. Senators, 435 Member of Congress, 12 governors and thousands of state and local officials with significant influence over recreational activities on public lands and waters, the budgets of public agencies managing those areas and hosting recreation visits, a variety of tax and credit policies which are important to parks, energy policies and more.

To help park and tourism interests participate effectively in the debates leading up to the elections, the National Park Hospitality Association is joining the National Parks Conservation Association in sponsoring a national survey of likely voters on park and Great Outdoors issues. The results will be reviewed by two leading political consulting firms, Peter Hart Research and North Star Opinion Research, and strategies will be offered separately to Republican and Democratic candidates and organizations, linking voters targeted by those two interests to specific messages and themes. The survey is likely to show deep and broad support for national parks, but different identify reasons for this support among key constituencies. The survey findings are also likely to be helpful to concessioners, gateway communities and even the National Park Service as efforts gear up to keep America's parks relevant to 21st Century Americans.

Survey results will be received by July 1, and the two political consulting firms will have their strategy memos done in time for discussion at the July 12 NPHA board meeting.

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Great Outdoors Month: Proclamations, Fee-Free Days and More

The President and nearly every governor have declared June 2012 as Great Outdoors Month. The proclamations are each unique, but certain themes are dominant. At least 40 proclamations emphasize the role outdoor recreation plays in mental and physical health. Support for conservation efforts is referenced in 37 of the documents, and the importance of the outdoors for kids and families is mentioned in 22. Volunteerism is praised in 19 – and virtually all urge people to go out and enjoy the Great Outdoors!

You can view President Obama's proclamation [here](#), and all Great Outdoors Month Proclamations [here](#). Additional proclamations will be posted as they are received.

Great Outdoors Month includes events ranging from National Trails Day® to National Fishing and Boating Week and the Great American Backyard Camp-Out. For the first time, June included a fee-free day in the national parks and on other federal lands celebrating National Get Outdoors Day and was also the first full month for availability of the new, free annual pass for active-duty military and their families. A number of key events were held recently in Washington, D.C., including:

Beacon Awards – These key awards were presented in the Rachel Carson Room of the Department of the Interior. The **Beacons** were first presented by the American Recreation Coalition in 2005, and recognize use of new technologies to improve visitor experiences and recreation program management. Federal agencies nominate candidates for the award each year, but an ARC panel selects recipients based on the award criteria: 1) innovation in the use of technology; 2) use of partnerships with for-profit and nonprofit organizations; 3) efforts to share news of creative solutions; and 4) community support.

The 2012 **Beacons** went to the Federal Interagency Fee Working Group, Carmen Leong-Minch of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service's Grand Teton National Park, and the Bureau of Land Management's nominee, the Colorado Responsible Recreation Foundation's "Stay The Trail" Campaign. For more information on each of the 2012 **Beacon Award** winners, click [here](#).

Ice Cream Social – Friends from federal agencies and the recreation community gathered in the Bison Bistro – the Department of the Interior's cafeteria – for the now-traditional ice cream social marking the start of Great Outdoors Week. Unilever, one of the week's sponsors, provided an array of delicious frozen treats that were enjoyed by senior Interior officials as well as visitors from at least two other departments and a wide array of recreation organizations. A video produced by the National Parks Promotion Council and used at the International Pow Wow played on overhead screens and Presidential and gubernatorial [proclamations](#) designating June as Great Outdoors Month and describing the important role of recreation in the U.S. economy, to our health and to conservation efforts were displayed.

Recreation Exchange and Legends Awards – Top federal agency representatives and recreation enthusiasts gathered on the USDA Whitten Building Patio for the June Recreation Exchange and the presentation of 2012 **Legends** Awards. Seven federal managers received 2012 **Legends** Awards in recognition of outstanding work to improve outdoor recreation experiences and opportunities for the American people. The awards were presented by the American Recreation Coalition (ARC) during Great Outdoors Week – the ARC-coordinated annual celebration in the Nation's Capital of the value and importance of outdoor recreation. **Legends** Awards have been presented annually since 1991.

The 2012 **Legends** Award recipient for the National Park Service was Don Briggs, Superintendent of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. For more information on the 2012 **Legends** Award winners, click [here](#).

Sheldon Coleman Great Outdoors Award – U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) received the 2012 Sheldon Coleman Great Outdoors Award, the recreation community's most prestigious award. The award is presented to individuals whose personal efforts have contributed substantially to enhancing outdoor experiences across America. The award was created in 1989 to honor the life-long efforts of Sheldon Coleman, whose engineering, marketing and advocacy talents made coolers, lanterns and tents bearing his name ubiquitous on America's public lands.

Senator Klobuchar's selection reflects widespread enthusiasm for her efforts supporting recreation. She has been especially active in supporting recreation programs aided by provisions of the nation's surface transportation program. The Minnesota Senator also was a key champion of the Travel Promotion Act, passed in 2010, which created the exciting Brand USA campaign. With \$100 million per annum in dedicated, matching federal funding, Brand USA efforts should exceed \$200 million annually and are expected to generate hundreds of thousands of new jobs and new sustainability for many communities near parks and other public and Tribal lands.

The award was presented at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, on the National Mall and was an original work entitled "Mountain Spirit" by Darrell Norman, a Blackfeet artist in Montana. Past award recipients include Forever Resorts' Rex Maughan, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, former President George H. W. Bush, National Geographic Society Chairman Gil Grosvenor, then-U.S. Senators John Breaux, Frank Murkowski and John Chafee, then-U.S. Representative Jim Oberstar, former Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater, Snowbird Chairman and CEO Dick Bass, and former Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne.

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New Report on Health in America: Lots to Lose

An extraordinary effort by respected, bipartisan national leaders, talented staff and creative volunteers completed a year of discussions and sharing of ideas on June 5 as the Bipartisan Policy Center issued its report entitled ***Lots to Lose: How America's Health and Obesity Crisis Threatens Our Economic Future***. The report is a frank and disturbing assessment of the impact America's poor eating habits and lowered physical activity are having on our economy and quality of life.

The effort was led by four talented former Presidential Cabinet members – two Democrats, two Republicans – former Secretaries of Agriculture Dan Glickman and Ann Veneman and former Secretaries of Health and Human Services Mike Leavitt and Donna Shalala. The report was delivered to a packed room of national media, health community experts, recreation community leaders and youth program organizations. And although the report was filled with information and recommendations, the quartet of national leaders announced that its work will continue – an announcement warmly received by the audience.

Dan Glickman called the situation associated with obesity and related health problems a "priority national challenge" that needs to transcend today's partisan environment. He labeled the problem a crisis, one which is largely responsible for today's federal deficit and threatens huge future costs. His co-leaders echoed these sentiments and outlined a series of actions which they believe could alter this path. The recommendations are organized in four clusters: Healthy Families; Healthy Schools; Healthy Workplaces; and Healthy Communities. The effort made clear that it was not seeking to promote a nanny-society role for government, yet made a good case that government policies on assistance to economically disadvantaged families and other programs needed to reflect new knowledge about the consequences of current trends which have seen a tripling of obesity among youth. Currently 35.7% of all American adults are obese, the highest rate in the world's 33 wealthiest countries, and obese individuals spend on average 36% more on healthcare annually than Americans with normal weights. Obesity, according to the report, is a major reason why nearly half of all Americans suffer from chronic illnesses – illnesses that are the cause of more than 70% of the nation's surging healthcare costs.

NPHA provided support for the study and praised the report for articulating the seriousness of the problem. Yet according to NPHA Counselor Derrick Crandall, ***Lots to Lose*** did not provide many suggestions for utilizing the fun of active outdoor activity as an intervention strategy. "The lure of urging government and major corporate actions to address the crisis we face in chronic illness costs is high, but we cannot afford to overlook the power of fun in the outdoors as a major tool to change the trajectory of this crisis. Fitness centers at work and nutritional guidance to those on federal assistance are useful steps. But early and frequent exposure of American kids to outdoor active fun is also a useful step – and perhaps the most powerful step of all because it can make appropriate levels of physical activity for families and friends the norm," according to Crandall.

To download a full copy of the report, go to <http://bipartisanpolicy.org/library/lotstolose>.

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Brand USA Eager to Move on Parks and the Great Outdoors

Brand USA executives and key park and tourism interests gathered in Washington for a session entitled “National Travel and Tourism Strategy: The Role of Public and Tribal Lands and Waters.” The meeting covered efforts now underway and highlighted partnership opportunities for recreation organizations. The session was held at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. Senior Brand USA staff, including Vice President for Strategic Outreach Joel Secundy and Director of Partner Programs Michael Carroll, were joined by Gail Adams, Director of Intergovernmental and External Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior, in presentations on key efforts underway. An audience of some 50 persons included federal natural resource agency representatives and key recreation community leaders.

Gail Adams noted President Barack Obama’s January 2012 announcement of a major initiative to regain traditional USA market share in international tourism. Success will mean large gains in U.S. employment and a substantial benefit in the U.S. balance of trade account. Timing of this effort is good, for the new public/private entity created in 2011 to lead U.S. tourism promotion, now called Brand USA, is just launching its efforts. The Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior led development of a new National Travel and Tourism Strategy, released in May, and a significant portion of the plan focuses on better utilization of national parks, especially in areas of the country where the benefits of international tourism are largely untapped. Download the new strategy [here](#).

Brand USA's business plan and marketing strategy were shared, including its sources of public and private funding and the exciting new TV spots featuring "Land of Dreams," an original song sung by Rosanne Cash. The song and video can be viewed at www.YouTube.com/DiscoverAmerica. Download the Brand USA presentation [here](#).

Special focus was put on how agencies and recreation/tourism businesses can participate in Brand USA marketing efforts, including unlocking the \$100 million per annum in available matching federal funds, and how all interests need to coordinate efforts to develop attractive itineraries for visitors and to prepare for the needs of more visitors unfamiliar with travel in the USA.

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Western Governors’ Association Touts Recreation and Parks

A year of meetings, discussions and brainstorming concluded when a diverse group of recreation and tourism experts reported to Western Governors their findings and

recommendations for creating more jobs and income through outdoor recreation and tourism and for encouraging more young people to explore the West's great outdoors.

The Get Out West! initiative was launched when Governor Chris Gregoire (D-WA) became Chair of the Western Governors' Association in 2011. She directed the association's staff and a new panel of two dozen national leaders, called the Get Out West! Advisory Group, to both examine and celebrate outdoor recreation and tourism across the West. The advisory group delivered three reports to the governors on June 11:

- The West's Competitive Advantage: Landscapes, Open Lands and Unique History
- Connecting Kids and Families to the West's Great Outdoors
- Managing the Region's Recreation Assets

The Advisory Group concluded that for the West to remain the best place for outdoor recreation and tourism, Western Governors should embrace policies that facilitate the growth of these industries and maintain and improve the lands and waters, trails and other infrastructure that make the West a great place to visit and play. The rationale for this recommendation is underscored by a report, A Snapshot of the Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation, released at the WGA meeting, which found the economic contribution of outdoor recreation in the nation in 2011 was \$645.6 billion, of which \$255.6 billion was in Western states.

Four reports released by WGA are available at <http://www.westgov.org/reports>. Derrick Crandall represented both the American Recreation Coalition and the National Park Hospitality Association on the Advisory Group.

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NPHA/NPS Regional Meeting Held in Omaha

The 2012 NPHA/NPS Midwest regional coordination session was held in Omaha on May 30, 2012 and was a productive and enjoyable experience. Participants discussed regional and national issues for three hours with NPS Midwest Regional Director Mike Reynolds, Deputy Regional Director Patty Trap, Sandy Poole, Regional Concessions Program Manager, and Tracy Simmons, Concessions Specialist. NPHA had a very strong concessioner delegation – Vice Chairman Jim McCaleb, Board member John Schoppmann, Russ Jobman of Xanterra (Rushmore), Derek Zwickey of Delaware North, Bill Butts of Forever Resorts and Derrick Crandall of NPHA. A copy of the agenda is available [here](#).

Mike Reynolds opened the meeting with an overview of key regional issues and priorities. He explained the organization of the region's nearly 60 units into clusters, primarily geographic, that will provide increased peer-to-peer exchanges of ideas and resources. Major emphasis was placed on the opportunity for the region to demonstrate national leadership in innovation, including new ways to meet needed investments in NPS visitor service infrastructure.

NPHA participants described concerns about the long delay in clarifying awarding of LSI and authorizing expenditures from various special concessioner-funded accounts for capital investments and asked for the regional director's assistance in getting the agency to look comprehensively at meeting future investment needs. Concessioners described the recently published guide to LSI as "too little, too late," and instead called for a broad review of strategies including use of historic tax credits, lengthened contracts, revenue bonds and more.

Marketing and promotion efforts were also discussed by the group. Concessioners and NPS seemed in strong agreement that keeping the parks relevant to 21st Century Americans will require new efforts and strategies. The concessioners praised the new free pass for active-duty military and offered to work with NPS on outreach to major military bases in the region to help military families plan visits to national parks, and to work with base MWR operations to assist in securing appropriate equipment for these visits. Concessioners urged consideration of improvements in and expansion of NPS campgrounds in the region, noting that overnight stays in campgrounds were both affordable and particularly effective in creating memorable park experiences. John Schoppmann described experiments with rental Airstreams at Lake Mead and near Big Bend, calling both experiments promising but just a small part of creating attractive 21st Century campgrounds – which also need redesigned campsites, dump stations for RVs, utility hook-ups and alternative choices like rentable tents, park trailers, yurts and RVs.

The group then discussed the new National Strategy on Travel and Tourism and the strong interest within the agency and the department regarding international visitation to the USA. Concessioners noted the importance of American Indian-linked themes and the need for multi-day itineraries linking multiple park units and related destinations, reflecting the interest of current and prospective guests from overseas – as well as Canada and Mexico.

Regional Director Reynolds praised the collaboration of NPHA with NPF and NPCA on the January 2012 America's Summit on National Parks. NPHA representatives shared plans for future cooperative endeavors, including a June 2012 survey of likely voters, designed to highlight broad public support for parks and the Centennial, and the October 2012 Grand Thoughts at the Grand Canyon program, a seven-day period of special meetings focusing on such topics as funding parks, harnessing technology to aid park visitors and park promotion and outreach efforts.

The concessioner delegation expressed thanks for great communications with the Midwest concessions team and for the regional leadership's treatment of the concessioner/NPS relationship as a partnership serving visitors seamlessly, rather than a contractual relationship between concessioners and the agency. The group agreed to meet at least annually and to investigate other ways to increase communications between superintendents in the region and concessioners, since many parks do not have concessioners in their units.

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August 25 Likely to Feature A Call to Action Update

On August 25, 2011 – on the 95th anniversary of the creation of the National Park Service (NPS) – NPS Director Jon Jarvis issued a strategy to ready the agency for the start of its second century. The strategy, **A Call to Action**, outlined 36 actions to link people to parks, expand the agency's role in education, protect special places and become an agile, successful agency. Since its release, NPS teams have been at work on each of the actions and organizations like NPHA have been invited to become partners in the efforts.

Planning is underway for Jon Jarvis to issue a progress report on August 25, 2012, as well as to outline modifications and additions to the 36 actions. Agency leaders have met with NPHA, the National Parks Conservation Association, the National Park Foundation and other park partners to invite support for agency efforts under the strategy and to discuss parallel and compatible efforts underway by NPS partners.

NPHA's board has identified the top actions of interest to concessioners and is working with the NPS leads on many of these, including #8 – “Eat Well and Prosper.” NPHA is sharing news on progress in offering healthy (and tasty!) food to park visitors and suggesting steps that can advance this initiative effectively. Among the plans are coordination meetings involving NPS, NPHA members, major food vendors and other interested parties – as well as providing better nutritional information at park food sites.

NPHA is also recommending new action – a thorough review of strategies available to increase non-appropriated funding for investment in needed park visitor infrastructure and to provide operating budgets robust enough to avoid large build-ups in deferred maintenance.

Look for news soon on where the August 25, 2012, Founders Day event will take place and how you can be part of this discussion.

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NPHA Member Evelyn Hill Inc. Honored

NPHA member Evelyn Hill Inc. (EHI) was honored with two awards by the National Restaurant Association (NRA) at its 2012 Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show. EHI, concessioner for Liberty and Ellis Islands in New York Harbor, received NRA's **Innovator of the Year Award** as well as its **Sustainability Award** for impressive conservation policies and achievements. EHI recently completed construction of a 7,000-square foot LEED Platinum-certified Gift Pavilion, and achieved remarkable successes in environmental operations. Landfill waste was cut by 22% in one year, water use was reduced by 44% and electric use dropped by 23%. The honors, the

most prestigious of the evening, were awarded to this third-generation, family-owned company by an independent jury panel from a pool of nominees which included many hospitality industry heavyweights. Congratulations have been flowing in to Brad Hill and team – and we are delighted to add ours!

Important Dues Notice Reminder

2012 NPHA dues have been submitted by a large majority of members – and are now past due. If you have not submitted your dues, please do so now. A link to the dues forms is [here](#). Questions? Contact Derrick Crandall dcrandall@funoutdoors.com.

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