



American Recreation Coalition

Dedicated to the protection and enhancement of everyone's right to health and happiness through recreation.

NEWS

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ARC Salutes 2011 *Legends* Award Winners

Washington, D.C. – The American Recreation Coalition (ARC) will present its 2011 **Legends** Awards to seven federal managers in recognition of their outstanding work to improve outdoor recreation experiences and opportunities for the American people. The awards will be presented on June 16, 2011, during Great Outdoors Week – ARC's celebration of the value and importance of outdoor recreation. Initiated by ARC in 1991, the **Legends** Award program calls on federal land management agencies to nominate an individual whose extraordinary personal efforts have made a real difference in enhancing outdoor recreation programs and resources. The 2011 **Legends** Award recipients represent the Bureau of Land Management, Federal Highway Administration, National Park Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Reclamation, agencies together hosting more than a billion recreation visits annually.

Winners of the 2011 **Legends** Awards are: Tracy N. Fancher, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; William Kuntz, Bureau of Land Management; Rita Hennessy, National Park Service; Mark Hoines, Federal Highway Administration; Lynne Beeson, U.S. Forest Service; Jennifer Jewett, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and Peggi Brooks, Bureau of Reclamation.

Tracy N. Fancher is the Operations Project Manager at the Mountain Home Project Office in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Little Rock District. He is responsible for the most comprehensive operations and maintenance project in the Southwestern Division, including 22 parks encompassing over 160,000 acres of public land and water. In his nearly 40 years of inspired public service, he has been a leading advocate for natural resources and outdoor recreation management within both the Corps and his community. His remarkable foresight has led to Bull Shoals and Norfolk Lakes being recognized as exceptional water resources, hosting several million visitors annually. He initiated the District's first hunt for mobility-impaired sportsmen at Ozark Isle Park on Bull Shoals Lake. Following the enormous success of that effort, the first youth hunt for wild turkeys was held at Norfolk Lake. These extremely popular programs have steadily grown and been widely expanded throughout the entire District. Recognizing the importance of the world renowned fishing opportunities in the tail waters of Bull Shoals and Norfolk Dams, he has taken an active role in a local nonprofit organization devoted to creating an ongoing dialogue where individuals, groups, and government agencies can work together to restore, enhance and conserve the rivers. He actively serves as a successful and

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highly respected mentor to all recreation-resource management professionals who aspire to similar goals and future career ambitions. He exemplifies all that is the best about the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and public servants who consistently excel in mission accomplishment.

William Kuntz is the Supervisory Outdoor Recreation Planner with the Bureau of Land Management's field office in Redding, California. He has over 27 years of service working to improve or establish recreation facilities for the public. Bill is also responsible for the nomination and establishment of the National Sacramento River Rail Trail (NSRRT), which now extends over 40 miles. He invested over 12 years in the planning, coordination and implementation that resulted in the NSRRT and his dedication to finding partners to help fund it is a testimony to his determination and skills. The resulting trail development in the greater Redding area has led to a network of more than 130 miles of well connected and signed trails with well spaced trailheads and related facilities that continue to attract substantial support from local groups like the Rotary Club and the Boy Scouts. His steady work has led to improvements at somewhat neglected campgrounds and the development of facilities for non-motorized boating. He is presently working with partners to help develop apps for smart phones and other social media to reach the public. Bill looks for creative approaches to management problems like the control of vandalism, where his solutions have ranged from keeping areas well signed and clean to placing American flag decals on signs and deploying volunteers effectively. He works with local media, including recreation bloggers, to share news and keep the public involved and has been recognized by the local community for his efforts to improve public health. Over the course of his career, Bill has cultivated a long list of public and private partners who have helped shape the future of recreation in northern California.

Rita Hennessy currently serves as the Assistant Park Manager for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, where she has spent 14 of her 22 years with the National Park Service. From the beginning of her time on the Trail, Rita understood the importance of its volunteer-stewardship tradition. But even beyond an interest in sustaining volunteerism on the Trail, she recognized the power of the Appalachian Trail to engage young people in an appreciation of the outdoors and to enhance their understanding of their own special places. To help achieve the goals of sustaining volunteerism and engaging young people, Rita launched the Trail To Every Classroom (TTEC) program in 2006. TTEC is a professional development program for K-12 teachers that uses the Appalachian Trail as an educational resource and focuses on place-based service learning and the promotion of a conservation ethic, civic participation and healthy lifestyles. To date, TTEC has trained 275 teachers and engaged more than 15,000 students. However, the real outcomes are that teachers have been able to document improved teaching practices and demonstrate that they have positively impacted student learning and enhanced the civic responsibility, volunteerism and environmental stewardship of their students. Rita has shared this program model with other national trails, including the Iditarod National Historic Trail, which launched its own TTEC program in 2010. The program continues to grow, with alumni opportunities in hike leadership and wilderness first aid and – Rita's most recent idea – the creation of Appalachian Trail Master Naturalists. Rita's leadership with TTEC has been inspirational and her legacy will surely be long-lasting.

Mark Hoines is the Planning and Research Engineer for the Federal Highway Administration's South Dakota Division. He began working for the FHWA in 1990 and has spent most of his career in South Dakota, where he has provided long-term support to the development of the

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National Scenic Byways Program and to the development of numerous trail programs and projects. Mark has provided substantial coordination with Indian Tribes and has been instrumental in shaping a national dialogue on the direct relationship between FHWA and Indian Tribes. He has coordinated with nearly all the Tribes in South Dakota, as well as some Tribes outside the state, concerning the National Scenic Byways Program. He has educated Tribes about opportunities available within the program, assisted in developing grant applications, provided guidance on funding eligibility, and coordinated funding with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He has worked with the state government to leverage funding opportunities on Reservations to provide safe, non-motorized transportation options. He has also been very involved in bicycle and pedestrian planning and serves as an advisor to the state's Recreational Trails Advisory Board, developing close working relationships with both the South Dakota Department of Transportation and the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks. He helped shape the state's Recreational Trails Program, supporting the development of program policy, and providing guidance and advice to a series of program coordinators. An avid recreationist who enjoys hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, skiing and scuba diving, Mark has made a significant contribution to enhancing outdoor recreation experiences throughout South Dakota.

Lynne Beeson serves as the U.S. Forest Service's Program Manager for Recreation One-Stop and the National Recreation Reservation Service (NRRS), making significant contributions to the implementation and dynamic growth of these e-government initiatives over the last decade. Her work includes leading database and financial-management programs and launching and maintaining the portal Web site Recreation.gov. Her efforts to provide Internet access to high-quality information and easy online reservations are an important and critical first step toward attracting new audiences, like young people and their families, to the public lands. Under her leadership, site inventory on NRRS has increased by 11 percent while the volume of reservations has grown from \$1 million to \$80 million. She has brought in new partners like the National Archives and concessioners, and is working to bring in more, including the White House, which used the NRRS to conduct its first Easter Egg Roll lottery this year, leading to significant improvements in customer satisfaction, public relations, and event planning. She is leading her interagency team to take the next step in creating a one-stop trip-planning resource as part of the Recreation.gov portal page, with plans to use contemporary Web technology and tap private-sector expertise to ensure a convenient, flexible and responsive Web site that meets public expectations and industry standards. The citation of Recreation.gov in the report on the America's Great Outdoors initiative speaks to Lynne's many successes in leading the interagency team and advancing the one-stop portal page as the "gold standard" for information and resources about federal outdoor recreation opportunities.

Jennifer Jewett is the Education and Outreach Coordinator for the Souris River Basin National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which includes the Des Lacs, J. Clark Saylor, and Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuges in north central North Dakota. There she has undertaken many projects with minimal guidance and supervision, resulting in the improvement of and increases in recreational opportunities for visitors at the refuge complex. She has developed, and continues to develop, environmental-education projects that connect people – especially young people – with nature while building strong working partnerships with many nonprofit organizations to the long-term benefit of everyone involved. She has secured funding for visitor-service projects as well as for efforts to address invasive species. Recognizing the win-win aspects of utilizing youth service corps to take on projects within the refuge complex,

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she has overseen multi-week work sessions for crews from AmeriCorps' National Civilian Community Corps that undertook numerous major improvement projects, including renovating an accessible nature trail, removing hazardous trees, and prepping and assisting with prescribed fires on native prairie units. In addition, the young people participated in other activities like Christmas bird counts, open houses, the North Dakota Junior Duck Stamp display, and an endangered species day of outreach at a community zoo. Jennifer continues to develop innovative programs to inspire and educate youth about wildlife and habitat and to create community partnerships.

Peggi Brooks is Chief of the Recreation Resources Division of the Bureau of Reclamation's Central California Area Office, which manages water and land resources in 12 counties. Peggi has worked in natural resource and recreation management for over 28 years, beginning her government career – at the age of 15 – as a member of Reclamation's Youth Conservation Corps. Following college, she joined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, where she distinguished herself as a recreation and resource manager for almost two decades and graduated from both the Emerging Leaders Project and the Leadership Development Program. In 2001, she returned to Reclamation as the Resource Manager for New Melones Lake in Sonora, California. There, for close to 10 years, she was responsible for management of the field office, as well as stewardship of natural and cultural resources, facility operations, recreation and visitor services. Peggi was also instrumental in implementing the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) at New Melones Lake, allowing the collection of fees and the retention and on-site use of fee revenues. New Melones Lake is the only Reclamation facility participating in FLREA. Recently named to her current position, Peggi provides the leadership, coordination and oversight of recreation-management and visitor-service activities for four federal water projects that include Folsom Lake-Natoma Lake, New Melones Lake, the Auburn Recreation Area, and Lake Berryessa. Her new challenge is substantial because these sites welcome a combined annual visitation of over six million people to enjoy boating, fishing and camping year round.

For more information on the 2011 *Legends Awards* or other aspects of Great Outdoors Week, contact the American Recreation Coalition at 202-682-9530 or cahern@funoutdoors.com.

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About the American Recreation Coalition

AMERICAN RECREATION COALITION — is a nonprofit, Washington-based federation founded in 1979. The association provides a unified voice for recreation interests to ensure their full and active participation in government policy-making on issues such as public land management. ARC membership consists of more than 100 organizations, including national and regional associations and corporations that represent a major share of the \$400 billion a year recreation/leisure industry and enthusiast groups representing millions of recreationists. Since its inception, ARC has sought to catalyze public-private partnerships to enhance and protect outdoor recreation opportunities and resources. ARC conducts research, organizes national conferences, and disseminates information through a variety of means, including its Web site www.funoutdoors.com. ARC plays a leading role in several key coalitions and organizations, including the Coalition for Recreational Trails, Scenic Byways Coalition and Coalition for Recreation in the National Forests. ARC also supports and promotes the WOW - Wonderful Outdoor World outreach to urban children and was instrumental in the re-launch of Take Pride in America. ARC was also instrumental in launching National Get Outdoors Day, a national effort dedicated to helping children enjoy healthy, active outdoor lives.