



## March 2011 Newsletter

National Park Hospitality Association

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### Special Report on the National Park Hospitality Association 2011 Annual Meeting

*This special issue of the March National Park Hospitality Association newsletter is an overview of the mid-March 2011 NPHA Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C.*

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#### Overview of the National Park Hospitality Association 2011 Annual Meeting

The National Park Hospitality Association held its Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. on March 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>, with special sessions at the U.S. Department of the Interior, on Capitol Hill and at the National Museum of the American Indian. Members took their message to a very powerful group that influences park policies and the future of park concessions. They made their message clear and persuasive: concessioners are key to delivering more and better park experiences.

Concessioners delivered the message that the time has never been better to advance its partnership with and support of the National Park Service. Concessioners met with allies, National Park Service officials, top Interior Department officials and key Members of the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. The concessioners' discussion with the leadership of the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands was especially noteworthy, as senior Congressmen of both parties voiced full support for concessioner issues and initiatives. Allies such as the National Parks Conservation Association also supported concessioner ideas.

Highlights of the meeting included a session with U.S. Department of the Interior Deputy Secretary David Hayes and leadership of the National Park Service and meetings on Capitol Hill with members of the U.S. House of Representatives and key Congressional staff. A new proposal was unveiled at the meeting by NPHA's Board of Directors: NPS should launch a Better Visitor Services Initiative to provide action items for its now-under-development five-year plan. The National Park Hospitality Association outlined key opportunities to improve services to visitors, increase the quality and sustainability of NPS programs and activities and create a framework for supporting outstanding and memorable park experiences. Highlights of the meeting follow.



NPHA members gather on the steps of the U.S. Department of the Interior (south) before meeting with leadership of the Interior Department, including the National Park Service, during the NPHA annual meeting in March in Washington, D.C.

***View the slide show on the [What's New](#) section of the NPHA website.***

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**Monday, March 14, 2011**

### **NPHA Board of Directors Meetings**

The NPHA Board of Directors met twice in conjunction with the 2011 Annual Meeting, on March 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. It approved a proposal to the National Park Service called the Better Visitor Services Initiative, elected officers for 2011-2012, and outlined the association's work plan for 2011.

## **Opening Reception Sets Tone for Action-Packed Conference**

The opening reception Monday evening, March 14<sup>th</sup>, at the Holiday Inn Capitol was lively and upbeat. NPHA Counselor Derrick Crandall welcomed the group to the city and introduced special guest Toysmith and its innovative and fun toys, many of which encourage outdoor play and learning. He shared the agenda for action-packed sessions to follow during the three-day meeting.

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## **Tuesday, March 15, 2011**

### **Invocation**

Tuesday's meeting began with an invocation by Rev. Spencer Lundgaard, Executive Director of A Christian Ministry in the National Parks – an honorary member of NPHA. He remembered several association members and park supporters who have passed away or were unable to participate because of illness and concluded with a prayer of hope and healing, especially given the recent disastrous events in Japan.

### **Annual Membership Meeting, Interior Session and Capitol Hill Briefings**

The NPHA annual meeting began Tuesday, March 15<sup>th</sup> with a report to members by Chairman of the NPHA Board of Directors Joe Fassler. He presented an update on NPHA initiatives and accomplishments since October 2010. He stressed that the purpose of the NPHA annual meeting is to exchange ideas and to learn from each other. "We achieve more when we cooperate on efforts," he said. To view the presentation, [click here](#).

Mr. Fassler introduced NPHA Counselor Derrick Crandall who provided the staff report and unveiled a new NPHA proposal entitled Better Visitor Services Initiative (BVSI). The proposal called for an expedited review of opportunities to improve services to visitors, increase the quality and sustainability of NPS programs and activities and create a framework for supporting outstanding and memorable park experiences over the next century. The five key areas are:

- A) Improve Visitor Infrastructure to Attract More Visitors
- B) Revitalize NPS Campgrounds
- C) Encourage Concessioner Investment in the Parks
- D) Rethink Park Fees
- E) Outreach Efforts to Boost Visitation

He recommended using the BVSI as a tool for change and setting the NPHA agenda for years to come. Mr. Fassler agreed with the initiative saying, "Going forward, our focus should be on better visitor services at the parks."

If we are able to achieve agreement to do these types of things with the National Park Service, this would be the greatest NPHA meeting ever.” The next step is to gather examples of successful new projects that are scalable and replicable. To read the full BVSJ plan, [click here](#).

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### **National Park Service Centennial Steering Committee Update**

The next agenda item was a progress report by the National Park Service Centennial Steering Committee provided by Mr. Crandall. He discussed the National Park Public Engagement Campaign Summary, developed by a consortium of park community leaders including NPHA ([click here](#)).

He noted that the committee had recommended a campaign designed to create more awareness of parks, to increase visitation by both traditional visitors and a broader base of Americans, and to promote both volunteerism/service and support of parks through philanthropy and advocacy. He also noted the sense of timeliness, and the need to include this initiative in NPS' five-year plan for its centennial in 2016. He said that NPS Director Jon Jarvis and Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior Ken Salazar are expected to roll out the plan on August 25, 2011.

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### **Healthy Parks Healthy People U.S. 2011 Preparation**

Mr. Crandall updated the group on the upcoming Healthy Parks Healthy People U.S. 2011 meeting, to be held April 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> in San Francisco. It is a significant event being convened by NPS Director Jon Jarvis. Four representatives of NPHA will attend. Director Jarvis has invited 100 "innovators, experts and visionaries" from business, government, academic and nonprofit organizations to participate. The session is expected to lead to a new coalition effort to steer a path toward use of parks and open spaces to improve the health of all Americans – and reduce healthcare costs. The National Park Service has created a new Health and Wellness Steering Committee to plan this event and to undertake other activities, led by Captain Charles Higgins, Director of the NPS Office of Public Health. To review the NPS' description of the April meeting, [click here](#). Look for a report soon after the meeting.

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### **CONPac Update: A New Climate of Opportunity**

Next on the agenda, Jim Santini, NPHA Advisor, provided an update on CONPac. He referenced an overview of the goals for the group's Capitol Hill outreach to the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. He said there is a new climate of opportunity and a very good chance for NPHA to state its case on Capitol Hill. He said CONPac donations are a key to NPHA's success.

He then appealed for CONPac support and distributed the personal donation form ([click here](#)). Within five minutes, over \$7,000 was pledged by NPHA members. Contact Jim Santini for information via email at [jdsantini1@verizon.net](mailto:jdsantini1@verizon.net) or by telephone at 703-684-0755.

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### **“Interior Politics, 2011-12” by Tom Collier**

Tom Collier was Tuesday’s next speaker. He is a partner in the Washington, D.C. law firm of Steptoe and Johnson and a former Chief of Staff at the U. S. Department of the Interior. His topic was “Interior Politics, 2011-12,” and he shared an overview of the current federal budget negotiations and possible outcomes, including park closures. He said spending reduction is the only issue in Washington today and that the “mood in America is a government closure may be good.” He advised concessioners to develop a contingency plan for a government shutdown that would result in park closures. “It could last for days, weeks or months,” he said. The timing is unknown, but Tom Collier outlined three challenging hurdles: agreement on spending for the remainder of FY2011, the debt limit increase vote slated for this spring and decisions on the FY2012 budget this fall. Contact Tom Collier [tcollier@steptoe.com](mailto:tcollier@steptoe.com)



NPHA Board of Directors Chairman, Joe Fassler, right, with guest speaker Tom Collier, center, Steptoe and Johnson, and new NPHA member Chris Belland, Old Town Trolley Tours.

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### **Wounded Warrior Family Support Founder Calls for NPHA Support**

Colonel John Folsom (USMCR, Retired), founder and president of the [Wounded Warrior Family Support \(WWFS\)](#) program, spoke next. The mission of the program is to provide assistance to combat-wounded veterans and to the families of those killed in combat, and focuses on enlisted veterans with dependent children. NPHA was approached by WWFS early this year in cooperation with the U.S. Department of the Interior and in conjunction with a White House initiative to better serve America’s military families. Col. Folsom discussed the successes of his Orlando-focused efforts in re-establishing family ties and invited concessioners to make overnight facilities and other in-park opportunities available for qualifying military families for stays of two to seven nights. WWFS can reach the families and arrange for transportation and other costs of the stays. He invited concessioners to join his organization and the NPS in an outreach to wounded warriors, possibly through visits to key military hospitals, to help them sign up for park passes available free to those who are handicapped and to make presentations on nearby park opportunities.



Col. John Folsom and Craig Pirtle with Wounded Warriors Family Support.

He proposed that rooms offered to WWFS but unassigned would be released for sale to the general public approximately 30 days out.

Several NPHA members are already involved in wounded-warrior efforts and expressed enthusiasm for aiding WWFS. “National Parks are places of healing. That is what these wounded servicemen, women and families really need the most,” Col. Folsom said, and made a special request for help at Shenandoah, Yellowstone and Grand Teton

National Parks, based upon links to military bases and hospitals. NPHA members volunteered non-lodging services as well, such as tours of Gettysburg and the use of camping facilities during the shoulder season. NPHA Board member Terry MacRae praised the effort and noted that WWFS can also help national parks reach out to today’s more diverse population, telling NPHA members that military families are younger, more urban and more racially diverse than traditional park visitors. NPHA is organizing a task force to work with WWFS. To view the WWFS presentation, [click here](#). Contact Col. Folsom via email at [JohnFolsom@wwfs.org](mailto:JohnFolsom@wwfs.org) or by telephone at 402-490-7875.

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### **Meeting with National Park Service, Interior Leadership**

NPHA members moved to the U.S. Department of the Interior for lunch and meetings shortly before noon on Tuesday, transported aboard trolleys provided by NPHA member Old Town Trolley Tours.

The session included a roundtable discussion with NPHA’s Board of Directors and key NPS officials including; Kate Stevenson, Assistant Director, Business Services; Celinda Pena, Assistant Director, Communications; Jo Pendry, Chief, Commercial Services; Sue Waldron, Director of Communications; and Dr. James J. Eyster, Concessions Management Advisory Board Chairman.



NPHA’s Board of Directors distributed the Better Visitor Services Initiative proposal and several board members, including Chairman Joe Fassler, Gerry Gabrys, President and CEO of Guest Services, Inc., Kevin Kelly, President of DNC Parks & Resorts, and Bruce Fears, President of ARAMARK Parks & Destinations, presented key points in the plan. Discussion followed with the National Park Service.

NPHA Board of Directors and Interior officials exchange ideas and discuss issues at the NPHA annual meeting.

The NPS leadership staff offered the following comments:

- **Jo Pendry focused on the priority established by NPS Director Jon Jarvis to attract a more diverse audience to parks.** She said there was no doubt the face of America is changing. “NPHA members have a big role in helping us achieve this goal,” she said.
- **Celinda Peña shared information on NPS Road Shows and outreach efforts designed to engage more ethnically diverse new audiences.** Road Shows have been conducted with schools in Baltimore, Maryland, and the Miami Dade/Biscayne area in Florida, and in San Antonio, Texas. These efforts have involved the League of United Latin American Citizens and Youth and other organizations. Ms. Peña said NPS plans to convene a Hispanic Experience Roundtable soon. In addition, a program is planned with the University of California, Merced in July to reach urban youth and a joint NPS/ National Park Foundation initiative is underway focusing on African Americans. Ms. Peña encouraged concessioners to use these NPS efforts as models and offered four goals: reach under-served populations; develop outreach programs; offer incentives for overnight stays; and develop partnerships with non-traditional groups. To view her presentation, [click here](#).
- **NPS Communications Director Sue Waldron** said her department now includes portions of the agency tourism effort, the NPS 2016 Centennial program and NPS websites. She said that extensive NPS website redesign is underway and will be completed later this year. The site will be easier to use and improve awareness of the NPS – and deliver better, more relevant and more consistent information to the public. The “plan a visit” search function will be enhanced and will provide improved information on concessioner lodging and services. The “pick a state” search function will also be more robust with nine content-rich layers to integrate NPS’s vast pool of visitor information in a consistent manner: 1) park locations, 2) sites on the NPS National Register of Historic Places, 3) trails, 4) free events, 5) tax credit projects, 6) a state Google search function, 7) Save America’s Treasures grant sites, 8) Land and Water Conservation Funds grant sites, and 9) economic benefits of parks to the community. **Ms. Waldron also highlighted the NPS “Park of the Week” promotion** and a new smart phone “app” on the Civil War 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In addition, NPS is using Twitter to share facts daily. The next “app” will link parks with civil rights. Through a new uniform content management system, “trip planning” functionality is being planned for 2012. Terry MacRae, Chairman of the National Parks Promotion Council (NPPC), said the NPHA and NPPC have “lots of resources and we can learn from each other.” NPHA and NPS agreed to discuss web-related efforts and collaborate on marketing ideas. The idea of a communications summit was discussed.
- **Kate Stevenson and Jo Penry focused chiefly on the NPS National Tourism Council and Plan.** They reported on a recent meeting of the council, noting that concessioner representatives had been invited to this otherwise internal group. Ms. Pendry advised that a new NPS national survey of the public is nearing release and will be shared. Ms. Stevenson said the National Tourism Plan is

being reviewed to make it consistent with Director Jarvis' four pillars, and to help meet the goal of bringing more visitors to parks.

**U.S. Department of the Interior Deputy Secretary David Hayes joined the group and delivered comments recognizing the role of concessioners in serving visitors and creating jobs in and near parks.** “You are central to the mission of the National Park Service. You define the experience for the visitor,” he said. The NPHA Board shared the Better Visitor Service Initiative and Secretary Hayes responded that he was very interested and supportive of concessioner investments in park facilities. Deputy Hayes also said it was a “very special time now” with the upcoming NPS Centennial and the new America’s Great Outdoors (AGO) report, which is guiding policy efforts he said. “Americans feel very strongly about their parks and the outdoors,” he said.



Interior Deputy Secretary David Hayes, center, with NPHA members, from left, Cindy Ognjanov, Glacier Park Inc.; Rex Maughan, Forever Resorts; and Michael Burke and Terry McRae, Hornblower Cruises & Events.

He continued with a summary of the Interior’s three priorities based on the AGO report: urban parks; preserving important landscapes; and restoring rivers and lakes. “We can do great things together to make the outdoors accessible and desirable in order to benefit us all,” he said. NPHA Counselor Derrick Crandall noted that concessioners can help with services in urban parks, too, and offered an example of how concessioners could help in experiencing the Capt. John Smith's Trail, a 40-site water trail loop in

the Jamestown and Richmond regions of Virginia. The current General Management Plan, however, fails to include any concessioner services.

Mr. Hayes responded, saying that with the fiscal budget challenges, “I’m open to your ideas.” He emphasized that Jon Jarvis and Peggy O’Dell, the newly-named NPS Deputy Director for Operations, are “leaders who want to get things done. They are very in line with your thinking.” He also said the entire NPS team knows concessioners are on the front line as partners to help move things forward. “We want your ideas,” he said. NPHA members reacted with enthusiasm to the Deputy Secretary’s remarks.

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**Capitol Hill Meetings with Key Leaders of U.S. House of Representatives**

NPHA members went to Capitol Hill Tuesday afternoon for meetings with the leaders of the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands at the Longworth House Office Building.

Concessioners were delighted that both Subcommittee Chairman Rob Bishop (R-UT) and Ranking Member Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), who chaired the subcommittee in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, appeared jointly and showed noteworthy agreements on key subjects — ranging from a goal of increasing park visitation to the value of 20-year leases in encouraging private investment in visitor facilities, and from the logic of concessioner operation of more NPS campsites to adding additional concessioner services. Highlights include:

- **Concessioners shared the Better Visitor Services Initiative** with the leadership and expressed real enthusiasm for using the 2016 Centennial of the NPS and the debate underway on federal spending priorities to prompt new ideas and new ways to keep national parks relevant and loved for another 100 years.
- **Chairman Bishop** told the concessioners, “The mission of the national parks is for people to see them.” He said the law requires that parks provide visitor services and he is in full support of NPHA’s efforts.
- **Representative Grijalva** said there was a great opportunity right now for partnerships to help improve visitation. “It must rise and we must do a better job on outreach to the next generation,” he said. “The mentality must change and is changing at the National Park Service. Visitation must improve in order for the parks to survive,” he said. He declared himself open to the issues outlined in NPHA’s Better Visitor Services Initiative, including 20-year contracts. “It would help with the park’s maintenance backlog, which is now \$10.8 billion,” he said. NPHA members asked about oversight hearings on the 1998 Concessions Act amendments, noting that the hoped-for reduction in burden had not occurred, and that was limiting job creation. Congressman Grijalva expressed openness to a review.



Rob Bishop (R-UT), left, and Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ) meet together with NPHA members on Capitol Hill.

**Casey Hammond, Professional Staff with the U.S. House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee**, spoke next, advising NPHA members on how to best reach out to the new 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. “Focus on your representatives, especially new Members of Congress. Visit them in person here and in their district offices for the best results,” he advised. “It’s up to you to educate the new freshmen,” he said, adding, “Let them know how you can make a difference in current and future park facilities.”



From left, Casey Hammonds, Natural Resources Committee Professional Staff with the U.S. House of Representatives, with NPHA members Terry McRae and Michael Burke, Hornblower Cruises & Events, and Melvin Schoppman with Desert Marina Management, incoming new member.

Let them know you can improve and maintain visitor facilities at a significantly lower cost than the NPS.” NPHA leaders recommended that key Congressional leaders visit selected parks and meet with concessioners before the new NPS five-year plan is announced in August. Mr. Hammond said it might be a very good idea. As for the Senate, Mr. Hammond said there would probably be more stalemate for the next two years and that a shift to a Republican majority was quite possible in 2013.

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### **President of the National Parks Conservation Association Meets with NPHA**

Tuesday afternoon’s final speaker was Tom Kiernan, President of the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA). The NPCA is a leading force on national park policies and shapes key policies that affect concessioners. So NPHA members were delighted to hear Mr. Kiernan say, “It is a key time to work together because of the America’s Great Outdoors initiative and the National Park Service Centennial planning for 2016.” He told NPHA members that he had first addressed the organization three years ago and had agreed then that NPCA and NPHA needed to work more closely and identify shared goals. He told the group that both NPCA and NPHA had committed to this goal, and that real discussions and cooperation had occurred.



National Parks Conservation Association President Tom Kiernan, in red tie, meets with NPHA members, from left, Bob Concienne and Bruce Fears of ARAMARK Parks and Destinations, and NPHA Counselor Derrick Crandall.

The results are apparent in the proposed Centennial public awareness campaign and in consultation now underway on the NPHA Better Visitor Services Initiative.

The NPCA head put agreement between the organizations at the 85 percent level — and told the group that NPCA was willing to talk honestly about those areas of disagreement, including a past focus on moving concessioner services out of parks.

NPHA shared information about the bipartisan leadership group of the House parks subcommittee, including discussions about 20-year leases and a trip with freshmen members of the House Committee on Natural Resources to see parks with newer and innovative facilities, as well as those in need of upgrading. Mr. Kiernan commented that these ideas had value and applauded the NPHA effort to unite leaders from the two parties.

NPHA Counselor Derrick Crandall summarized the Tuesday meetings for Mr. Kiernan and the NPHA members, and said the AGO and the Centennial provide a chance to “collaborate effectively on recommendations to the National Park Service.” He recapped the five areas of focus: increasing park visitation by families; revising and restructuring fees to support policy goals; upgrading visitor infrastructure, including lodging; campground upgrading; and using 20-year agreements to spur private investments to attack the maintenance backlog in parks. The group agreed to establish work teams to advance the issues.

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### **Congressional Friends of Parks Honored at Tuesday Reception**



John Duncan (R-TN), center, with NPHA members Dave Woodside, left, Acadia Corp., and Jim McCaleb, Xanterra Parks & Resorts.

CONPac hosted a reception on Capitol Hill Tuesday evening for Friends of Parks at the nearby home of Julie Hanson Gackenbach. Honored guests included U.S. Representatives Mike Simpson (R-ID), John Duncan (R-TN), Howard McKeon (R-CA), and Sam Farr (D-CA). NPHA members enjoyed the opportunity to speak with the Congressmen informally and used the time to explain NPHA park policy recommendations and strengthen relationships.

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### **Wednesday, March 16, 2011**

#### **NPHA Meets at U.S. Capitol on Key Legislation and Issues**

On Wednesday morning, March 16<sup>th</sup>, a breakfast and membership discussion session took place at the hotel. The group provided feedback on Tuesday’s meetings at Interior and on the Hill and continued discussion on the Better Visitor Services Initiative. Members agreed that the annual meeting serves as a way to unite concessioners and gain access to National Park Service and Interior leadership. The members also supported continuation of summits with National Park Service regional leaders, begun in 2010. NPHA will announce dates for at least six regional sessions in 2011.

Members expressed consensus on two key issues: the opportunity to improve and then manage and promote more campgrounds in national parks and the use of 20-year concessions contracts to cut park staff costs and encourage concessioner investments. Members also supported a half-day meeting to finalize recommendations regarding the National Park Service Concessions Management Improvement Act of 1998 to be submitted to the bipartisan leadership of the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands.

The group moved to Capitol Hill for the next three sessions, held at the U.S. Capitol Visitors Center, for meetings with key Congressional staffers and briefings on key legislative issues, including budget and tourism-related initiatives. NPHA members then used several hours on the Hill to visit Members of Congress representing states and districts with concessions operations.



At the U.S. Capitol, from left, Sara Strachan, NPHA guest, Jim McCaleb, Xanterra Parks & Resorts, and Barbara Lang, guest speaker with RTR Ideas.

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### **Cross-Generational Employee Network Initiative**

Wednesday also featured a presentation by Barbara Lang, Founder of RTR Ideas and until recently a professor at Cornell University, who described her Cross-Generational Employee Network Initiative (CENI), an internal mentoring program that honors and acknowledges previous career and life experiences of more senior workforce members while adding value and depth to the younger seasonal employees' work experience on a peer basis. The 10 benefits are:

1. Honor life experiences of older workers.
2. Deliver what Millennials value (attention, support, vision of how job fits into bigger picture of their lives).
3. Provide support for international employees (lessen culture shock, avoid isolation).
4. Increase job satisfaction and work performance (reduce absenteeism, improve customer service, increase work ethic).
5. Discover staffs' hidden talents (e.g., tech savvy 20+ year olds).
6. Reveal potential high performers through self-selection of program (program is voluntary).
7. Recruit "gap year" graduating seniors; tap into university career service offices.
8. Pioneer "Best Management Practices."
9. Create human-interest story - maximize public relation opportunity.
10. Customize flexible program to be modest or ambitious.

Contact Ms. Lang via email at [barbaralang55@gmail.com](mailto:barbaralang55@gmail.com) or by telephone at 607-342-7050. For her overview, [click here](#).

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### **National Parks Marketing Cooperative Outlines Pow Wow Plans**

National Parks Marketing Cooperative (NPMC) Executive Director Susan E. Cronin also addressed NPHA members. She said the NPMC will play an important role in the 2011 International Pow Wow (May 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> in San Francisco) as an opening day sponsor. Several NPHA members and allies are already committed to partnering in the program under the umbrella of "America's National Parks." Contact Ms. Cronin for sponsorship information via email at [secronin@optonline.net](mailto:secronin@optonline.net) or by telephone at 203-256-8402.

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### **National Parks, Tribal Tourism and Indian Arts and Crafts**

The Wednesday afternoon session took place at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian on the National Mall. The session entitled "*National Parks, Tribal Tourism and Indian Arts and Crafts: Opportunities for Progress*" was jointly sponsored by NPHA, the Indian Arts and Crafts Board within the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA).

AIANTA is a nonprofit association of Native American tribes and tribal businesses organized in 1999 to promote Indian Country tourism. It serves as the liaison between Indian Country and governmental and private entities for the development, growth, and sustenance of Indian Country tourism.

The session highlighted current and potential cooperative efforts, made possible by a very strong overlap in visitors – domestic and international – who are seeking both park and Native American experiences.

NPHA Counselor Derrick Crandall opened the session by crediting former NPS Director Bob Stanton, now Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the Interior, with bringing together the three organizations and challenging them to do more than simply exchange information. The initial conversations excited all of the participants, Mr. Crandall told the group, and prompted plans for collaboration on two issues. The first was linking the promotion of national parks with promotion of tourism opportunities



Speakers and organizers at the National Museum of the American Indian meeting with NPHA are, from left, Robert Stanton, U.S. Department of the Interior; Meridith Stanton; Dennis Zoligh, Indian Arts and Crafts Board; Charles Harwood, FTC Bureau of Consumer Protection, and Indian artist Ruthe Blalock Jones.

on nearby tribal lands, including special programs and presentations on tribal tourism offerings at concessioner sites in parks and on concessioner websites. The second issue focused on adding value to genuine American Indian arts and crafts by linking these items with park visits, improving the labeling of such items, and making concessioner-operated retail sites a visible and trusted channel for purchases of American Indian arts and crafts.

He then introduced Kevin Gover, Director of the National Museum of the American Indian. Mr. Gover said, “National parks, American Indians and cities are the top three things international visitors want to see and experience when they come to the U.S.” The Museum will promote this effort, he added, because “it’s an obvious partnership and fabulous idea.” Mr. Gover added that his prior service as Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs had given him even more reason to cheer the linkage of national parks and American Indian efforts.

Bob Stanton also provided introductory remarks, saying, “We must preserve the richness and diversity of America. We are one nation and one people. Together, part of our mission is to foster and promote the American Indian culture including authentic American Indian arts and crafts.”

The session included two wonderful panels. The first addressed ways to deliver outstanding visitor experiences linked to both parks and tribal offerings. The moderator

of the first panel was Don Chapman, Senior Advisor on Native American Affairs to the Secretary of Commerce. Panelists were Edward Hall, Bureau of Indian Affairs Transportation Specialist and Tourism Coordinator; Sammye Meadows, AIANTA Public Lands Outreach Coordinator; Cindy Ognjanov, President of Glacier Park, Inc.; and NPS Montana/Wyoming State Coordinator John Keck.

The second panel explored building visitor interest in and understanding of genuine Indian art through national parks. Moderator John Keck led the discussion with Bob Stanton, Senior Advisor to the Secretary, Department of the Interior, Charles Harwood, Deputy Director, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, and artist Ruthe Blalock Jones. Both Mr. Harwood and Ms. Jones are Commissioners on the Indian Arts and Crafts Board. For more information on these informative panels, [click here](#).



Panelist spoke about visitor experiences linked to both parks and tribal offerings. From left, Edward Hall, Bureau of Indian Affairs; Sammye Meadows, American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association; Cindy Ognjanov, Glacier Park, Inc., and John Keck with the National Park Service.

## Finale at Museum of the American Indian

A reception followed the panels in the Museum's Patrons Lounge, offering a sweeping view of the U.S. Capitol and the National Mall. Guests enjoyed a special menu of cuisine items based on native American ingredients especially prepared by the museum's "Mitsitam" café Executive Chef Richard Hetzler.

The name means "Let's eat!" in the Native language of the Delaware and Piscataway peoples. The ambiance, view and cuisine were a perfect finale to a great annual meeting.

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At the reception, from left, Derrick Crandall, NPHA, Elaine Hackett, National Park Service and Gail Adams, U.S. Department of the Interior.

## Thursday, March 17, 2011

### Concessions Management Advisory Board Meeting Overview

The National Park Service Concessions Management Advisory Board (CMAB) met March 17<sup>th</sup> in Arlington, Va. NPHA Board of Directors Chairman Joe Fassler, NPHA Counselor Derrick Crandall and a substantial number of NPHA members attended. Jo Pendry, who serves as NPS liaison to the board, briefed the CMAB on Directors Order 35B, regarding pass-through of utility capital and operational costs, and on the development of a mark including the NPS arrowhead which would be uniquely available for concessioner use. In addition to reports on concessions program administration and SERA, the board agenda put an emphasis on environmental leadership by concessions and the NPS. NPHA Board member Terry MacRae presented the Better Park Visitors Initiative proposal to the CMAB and several of the board members showed interest in the initiative.

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### Save the Dates!

Mark your calendar now for upcoming NPHA meetings. **Park Partners 2011** is planned for October 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> at the ARAMARK-operated Asilomar Conference Center, on California's Monterey Peninsula. Plans include linking the meeting to a regional summit with NPS Pacific West leaders staff and/or a one-day forum on "Helping Kids Have Great Outdoor Experiences," highlighting use of new technologies and strategies for making the outdoors fun for children.

The **2012 NPHA Annual Meeting** is planned for March 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> in Washington, D.C. More details and registration information on each will be announced.

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