



August 2011 Newsletter

National Park Hospitality Association

This newsletter is also available in PDF format on www.parkpartners.org

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NPHA Fall Meeting in Washington, D.C., November 1-3

The annual fall NPHA meeting will be held in Washington, D.C. on November 1-3. The meeting will begin on the afternoon of November 1 with an Executive Committee meeting. We will be joined at our very special reception on the evening of November 1 by other participants in the National Park Partners Strategic Planning Session. The Strategic Planning Session will continue on November 2 – more information is below. The NPHA meeting will conclude with our Board of Directors and members meetings on the morning of November 3.

NPHA will have a room block available at The Madison Hotel at 1177 15th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. More information will be available soon at our [members-only events page](#) (password: nphaonly) – and while you're there, bookmark us to stay updated on the Strategic Planning Session, the Summit and more!

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Excitement About First-Ever National Parks Summit Prompts Shift in Dates

Organizers of the America's Summit on National Parks – NPHA, the National Park Foundation and the National Parks Conservation Association – have found so much enthusiasm for the first-ever Summit that the reserved space in November 2011 was simply inadequate, and other Washington events on the original dates have alternative space booked. So new early-2012 dates will be announced shortly. But a National Park Partners Strategic Planning Session has been added on the original date. The Summit will draw 300+ leaders from across the nation to Washington to review the

soon-to-be-issued Five Year Action Plan of the National Park Service (NPS) and unite park partners around supplemental actions designed to make national parks relevant and valued to all Americans for generations to come.

The National Park Partners Strategic Planning Session will play a key role in planning for the Summit and other partnership efforts, including a possible parks promotional campaign. NPS Director Jon Jarvis and key NPS leaders will participate actively in both the Summit and the November Strategic Planning Session. NPHA board members, as well as key members, will be joined by volunteer leaders and key staffers of NPCA and NPF.

More details on the summit and the strategic planning session will be available shortly. Please check our [members-only events page](#) (password: nphaonly) after September 1 for more information.

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NPS Invites Concessioners to Partner on 2012 Fee-Free Plans

The National Park Service (NPS) will announce sometime in the fall – perhaps on National Public Lands Day in late September – that federal agencies including the NPS will waive entrance fees again for some dates in 2012. The tentative dates will most likely be similar to the 2011 dates. Please contact Derrick Crandall at dcrandall@funoutdoors.com for information about specific dates.

NPS is eager to tie its announcement to special offers from park concessioners and wanted to get your thinking underway. You are free to simply offer discounts – or to add value in other ways to visits to parks. Art shows, family photographs, wildlife walks, special meals – the sky is the limit!

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A Decline in Park Visits

NPS reports a 0.96% decline in park visitation this year through July compared with 2010 numbers. [Click here](#) for more.

NPS Releases National Survey Data on Visitors, Non-Visitors

The National Park Service has released initial information from a new national survey of the American public. "The National Park System Comprehensive Survey of the American Public," conducted by the Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center at the University of Wyoming in 2009, is a follow-up to a much-cited report on park visitors conducted in 2000. The report provides crucial information that will help find ways to encourage new demographic groups to visit parks.

The report examines the racial and ethnic diversity of both visitors and non-visitors to parks. It also explores the differences between current park visitation and non-visitation data and data from the last survey in 2000. The findings show that national park usage

among minorities remains low. The survey involved more than 4,000 households – both those reporting park visits and those not visiting parks.

The report provides suggestions for ways to increase visitation among demographic groups that do not currently take advantage of national parks. The report recommends a focus on increasing awareness of parks by minority groups, and turning that awareness into increased visitation by developing interpretive programming. Parks must also focus on providing desirable experiences to park goers – the report suggests trail running, mountain biking and fishing as some of the most popular park activities.

[Click here](#) to see the reports (listed under “NPS 2008-2009 Comprehensive Survey of the American Public Reports”). [Click here](#) to see the MSNBC article on the reports.

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Tech Tip: Do You Have a Weather Bug on Your Website?

Take Me Fishing™ is a leader in using digital communication to encourage Americans to head outdoors. Last week, the campaign launched a new weather widget powered by AccuWeather.com on [TakeMeFishing.org](#). It's an easy way to help anglers plan their trips to deal with whatever nature offers! If you are interested in helping guests prepare for visits with a bug – check it out!

For more information on the Take Me Fishing™ Weather Bug, [click here](#).

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New Design Competition Seeks to Enhance Future Visitor Experiences

The National Park Service and the Van Alen Institute are inviting colleges of architecture, landscape architecture and related disciplines to participate in a design competition geared toward redesigning future visitor experiences. The launch of the competition shows the agency's commitment to understanding the role of new media and innovation in increasing park visitation.

"The iconic national park visitor centers born in the 1950s and envisioned as the park gateway may not serve that purpose for today's visitors," said National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis. "Many people – and not just those under 30 – plan their visits online, downloading information to iPhones, iPads, or Droids," Jarvis said. "There is no question that people should be able to talk to a real park ranger but is the visitor center in its current form the best way to achieve this? My hope is that the competitors will closely examine national parks, even the very concept of the visitor center."

To read the NPS news release, [click here](#).

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NPS Director to Roll Out Five-Year Action Plan for 2016 Centennial

On August 25, National Park Service (NPS) Director Jon Jarvis will announce the Five-Year Action Plan for the NPS Centennial, which will take place in 2016. The Five-Year Action Plan will detail NPS strategy to take advantage of the celebration as a way to stir

excitement about our national parks. The NPS Centennial promises to be a wonderful opportunity for parks and their partners to work together to get more Americans into our national parks.

At 3:00 PM EDT on August 25, agency leaders and national partners will gather at Ford's Theater for the announcement. Director Jarvis will speak on live broadcast to all 22,000 NPS employees as well as key partners – including concessioners. Superintendents and other regional NPS offices have been asked to invite in key partners – call your local superintendent if you have not yet received an invitation. Or better yet, call and offer to host a gathering to watch Jon!

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Richard Louv Releases New Book

Richard Louv, the best-selling author of “Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder,” has released a new book called “The Nature Principle.” His latest book is featured on Oprah’s 2011 Summer Reading List. [Click here](#) for more information.

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*For more information or to send questions/comments, please email jmitchell@funoutdoors.com
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