



December 2008 Newsletter

National Park Hospitality Association

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In this issue:

- [Mark your calendars for the 2009 NPHA Annual Meeting: March 8 - 10](#)
- [Ken Salazar, U.S. Senator from Colorado, to be next Interior Secretary](#)
- [Departments of Energy and Interior team up to make national parks green](#)
- [Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources holds hearing to create green jobs, stimulate economy](#)
- [New National Park Service visitation data](#)
- [Visitor spending in national parks means green to local economies](#)
- [Federal Parks and Recreation Newsletter: Obama, Hill shoot for fast action on economic stimulus](#)
- [News](#)

Mark your calendars for the 2009 NPHA Annual Meeting: March 8 - 10

The National Park Hospitality Association (NPHA) will gather at the Madison Hotel in Washington, D.C., on March 8 - 10, 2009, for an extremely important annual meeting. This meeting will provide NPHA members with critical opportunities to outline the vital, long-term role of concessioners in our national parks and to voice our concerns about the current economic and legislative conditions to key members of the new Congress. Special events include meetings with Department of the Interior and National Park Service officials at the Main Interior Building and with the Congressional Travel and Tourism Caucus on Capitol Hill. Please plan to attend this important meeting.

Overnight accommodations and most meetings will be at the Madison Hotel. A block of rooms has been reserved for NPHA members. Please call the Madison Hotel at 1-800-424-8577 to reserve your room. Specify you are attending the NPHA 2009 Annual Meeting or use the room block code NPH93A to receive the special room rate of \$264.00 (Single/Double) plus tax per night. You *must* make your reservations by Friday, February 6!

Registration information will be available in the January issue of the NPHA Newsletter.

[Return to top](#)

Ken Salazar, U.S. Senator from Colorado, to be next Interior Secretary

President-elect Barack Obama will nominate Ken Salazar, who has served Colorado in the United States Senate since 2005, to be his Secretary of the Interior. Mr. Salazar served as Secretary of Colorado's Department of Natural Resources under Governor Roy Romer where he played a key role in that state's campaign to create the Great Outdoors Colorado Fund using lottery receipts and participated in a number of scenic byways and byways kiosk dedications. He has been a centrist in the Senate, opposing some of the oil and gas leasing initiatives on public lands that had adverse recreation and wildlife impacts but working with Senators of both parties to open up new offshore oil and gas leasing opportunities. He has a long and strong relationship with current Assistant Secretary of the Interior Lyle Laverty. Sen. Salazar's nomination came despite active efforts of the "green community" to support the nomination of U.S.

Representative Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ).

Sen. Salazar's name was mentioned early in the appointments process but had not been highlighted recently because, among other reasons, of the anticipated interest in a strategy to retain Democratic Senate seats in 2010, when he would have been up for reelection. He is the fourth Democratic Senator in the current Congress who will be part of the new Administration. Some of those recently noted as candidates for the top Interior job, including John Berry (who now heads the National Zoo, part of the Smithsonian) and Jim Lyons (former Under Secretary of Natural Resources and Environment in the Department of Agriculture under President Clinton), may now emerge as top candidates for the Deputy Secretary spot.

[Return to top](#)

Departments of Energy and the Interior team up to make national parks green

The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on November 17 that will help the National Park Service (NPS) showcase sustainable energy practices and fulfill its mission of environmental stewardship. With equal amounts of initial seed money from DOI and DOE totaling \$1 million for 2009, the Energy SmartPARKS program hopes to eventually draw private sector support to spark a green energy future in the United States.

"The Energy SmartPARKS program will make positive, tangible advancements by greening the parks and by reducing energy costs and carbon emissions," said Mary A. Bomar, Director of the NPS. "This is a great way to demonstrate our environmental leadership as we approach the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service in 2016."

On the ground, parks will use funding from Energy SmartPARKS to deploy cutting-edge technology as well as traditional solutions, including projects that retrofit lighting systems, purchase electric utility vehicles, install solar panel systems, upgrade meters and thermostats, replace windows and furnaces, study the feasibility of wind power, and conduct energy audits. Lessons learned from these projects can be used in other national parks and in the homes of every American.

To read the full story, [click here](#).

To learn more about the Energy SmartPARKS partnership and to see a list of proposed 2009 projects, [click here](#).

[Return to top](#)

Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources holds hearing to create green jobs, stimulate economy

On December 10, the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing "to receive testimony regarding investments in clean energy and natural resources projects and programs to create green jobs and to stimulate the economy." Committee Chairman Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) spoke highly of the opportunities presented by incorporating green jobs and programs into the economic stimulus package that is set to be taken up early in the new Congress, and which will help to build new infrastructure and create jobs. Referring to green stimulus spending proposals to move America towards a clean energy economy, Sen. Bingaman said, "Those, in my view, should be an essential part of any stimulus package." Witnesses included Denis Galvin, former Deputy Director of the National Park Service, and Mark Limbaugh, former Assistant Secretary for Water and Science at the U.S. Department of the Interior. The hearing record remains open, and key recreation interests will be submitting a proposal for a new Green Corps, which could put 500,000 young Americans a year to work in the outdoors.

To review testimony or to watch the committee hearing, [click here](#). For information on the Green Corps proposal, [click here](#).

[Return to top](#)

New National Park Service visitation data

The Public Use Statistics Office of the National Park Service has released data on recreation visits for January – September 2008. Units of the National Park System received 221.6 million recreation visits during this period. This represents a 1.0% decrease in recreation visits, or 2.2 million fewer visits than in 2007. The Midwest Region reported a year-to-date decrease of 7% from last year, or 1.1 million fewer visits, while the Southeast Region reported a year-to-date decrease of 4% from last year, or 2.0 million fewer visits. Meanwhile, the National Capital Region reported 1.6 million more visits this year, a 4% increase.

To view the Public Use Statistics Office's data on recreation visits, [click here](#).

[Return to top](#)

Visitor spending in national parks means green to local economies

Whether stunning landscapes or the historic and cultural sites that trace man's impact on the land and each other, America's national parks mean many things to many people. For those living in the hundreds of nearby communities, national parks also represent healthy contributions to local economies. "Every tax dollar spent on national parks resulted in more than \$4 in visitor spending in communities within 50 miles of a national park site," said National Park Service Director Mary A. Bomar. "Our total budget, including taxpayer financing through Congressional appropriations, park entry and camping fees, and donations came to \$2.65 billion in 2007. Visitors that same year spent \$11.79 billion – mostly in travel, food, lodging and souvenirs – in national parks and nearby communities." According to Bomar, 275.6 million people visited national parks in 2007. "Most of them needed a place to stay overnight. They all needed meals each day and most of them bought something to take home and remind them of their experience. When you add that up, you get a sense of the economic impact national parks have across the country – and it's significant," she said.

To read the full story, [click here](#).

[Return to top](#)

Federal Parks and Recreation Newsletter: Obama, Hill shoot for fast action on economic stimulus

President-elect Barack Obama and Congressional Democrats hope to put together by January 20 a mammoth economic stimulus bill with major investments for park and recreation initiatives. If the legislation follows the outline of a previous economic stimulus bill considered by the Senate in October, it will include money for a \$2 billion National Park Service Centennial Challenge bill, billions of dollars for rehabilitating federal lands and billions of dollars for road construction, including trails. Representative Raúl M Grijalva (D-AZ), Chairman of the House subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands, is all for it. "If there is an opportunity to attach it, I think that would be good," he told *Federal Parks and Recreation* on November 28. "We are still talking about a recovery package."

To read the rest of this story, progress of key legislation and more, go to your member-benefit copy of the *Federal Parks & Recreation Newsletter* on the NPHA website and use your password: **nphaonly** [[Click here](#)].

***Federal Parks & Recreation Newsletter* – a free service for NPHA members – provides biweekly, up-to-date information on park and outdoor recreation policy developments.**

[Return to top](#)

News

- [NPS Concessions: News on prospectuses](#)
- [Two years, one amazing race for Dirk Kempthorne](#)
- [Celebrate the holidays in America's national parks – 2008](#)
- [New book encourages children to discover national parks](#)

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[Return to top](#)