



December 2009 Newsletter

National Park Hospitality Association

www.parkpartners.org

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Mark your calendars for the 2010 NPHA Annual Meeting: March 7-10

The National Park Hospitality Association will gather at The Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City in Arlington, Virginia (just outside Washington, D.C.), on March 7-10, 2010, for an extremely important annual meeting. This meeting will cover topics such as the new National Parks Promotion Council, the work of NPHA's Task Force on Rate Approvals and the results of the meetings with NPS regional directors. The meeting will also provide NPHA members with critical opportunities to meet with Interior Department and National Park Service officials at the Main Interior Building and with key Members of Congress on Capitol Hill. Please plan to attend this important meeting.

Overnight accommodations and most meetings will be at The Ritz-Carlton. A block of rooms has been reserved for NPHA members, and it will be open for NPHA members to start booking their rooms on Monday, December 21. Please call The Ritz-Carlton at 703-415-5000 or 800-241-3333 and reference the National Park Hospitality Association Meeting to receive the special nightly rate of \$249.00 plus tax. You must make your reservations by February 17!

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

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Director's Order 35B proposes pass through of full utility costs to concessioners

The National Park Service has proposed a new policy of passing through to concessioners in national park units the full capital and operating costs of providing utilities. The proposal is incorporated into a draft Director's Order 35B. If adopted, the proposal has serious potential impacts for concessioners and park visitors.

Many concessions are in remote locations, where both investments in utilities and operating costs are high, and the demand for water, electricity and other services is limited. If full utility costs are imposed, costs of services ranging from overnight accommodations to meals, groceries and souvenirs could rise – in some cases dramatically. Although the proposed policy suggests that NPS would normally permit the new and higher costs to be passed through to the public, price sensitivity and weak demand – especially in remote park areas – might instead make the increased costs a new and unplanned burden on concessioners. Concessioners also note that they have little influence on key decisions regarding utility investments in parks and are at a disadvantage on utility costs when compared to visitor facilities operating outside parks, where public agencies providing utilities typically receive federal grants and subsidies for water treatment plants and other utilities.

NPHA is in the process of compiling a list of issues and concerns to address in its formal response to the proposal, [found here](#). If you would like to add your comments, please send them to mmeade@funoutdoors.com as soon as possible. Concessioners are also encouraged to submit their own comments directly to NPS. NPHA has secured a 60-day extension on the original comment deadline of January 4, 2010. Comments are now expected to be due the first week in March, preceding NPHA's Annual Meeting in Washington. A copy of the proposed policy is available at: www.nps.gov/policy/DO-35Bdraft.htm.

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Jon Jarvis thanks NPHA for support, outlines goals for directorship

New NPS Director Jon Jarvis expressed his sincere appreciation for NPHA's support during his nomination and confirmation process this past fall in a recent letter to NPHA Chairman Joe Fassler. In the letter, Mr. Jarvis outlined agency goals of environmental sustainability and diverse partnerships, goals that NPHA members share with NPS. Mr. Jarvis made clear his passion for providing quality visitor experiences and facilities in the parks, and added, "The smiles and chatter of families and children in parks fuel me to work hard each day." While admitting the national parks are facing serious challenges such as global warming and a growing disconnect between Americans and their public lands, Mr. Jarvis is optimistic for the future. Opportunities for the parks provided by a supportive Administration, the Ken Burns film and the Second Century Commission report are greater than the challenges, he said.

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

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NPHA hosts successful webinar on National Parks Promotion Council

NPHA hosted a very successful webinar outlining the goals of the new National Parks Promotion Council (NPPC) to a high-level group of state tourism directors, gateway community officials, outdoor industry leaders and others on December 17. Participants included National Parks Conservation Association President Tom Kiernan, National Park Foundation President and CEO Neil Mulholland, and several leading state tourism directors. NPHA's Board of Directors authorized the NPPC during its meeting at the Park Partners Forum in Yosemite this past October. The NPPC will unite diverse organizations, public and private, that support strengthening the relationship between Americans and their national parks, including through increasing visitation to park units. The NPPC will not replicate promotional efforts now underway about specific parks and park opportunities, but will help build awareness of systemic park opportunities and use new communications to reach those

beyond core markets for our parks. Plans for incorporation of the NPPC are underway, and an organizational meeting is planned for January 13 in San Francisco.

The NPPC will support the leadership of Secretary Salazar in promoting our parks, demonstrated, for example, by his decision to create fee-free weekends in national parks during the summer of 2009. The NPPC will be a new and independent organization which will strengthen communications about park opportunities to the American public and others. Park concessioners are demonstrating their commitment to the new organization by providing initial, six-digit funding to the effort, but are encouraging other groups with a vested interest in connecting the American public with parks to join in the shaping of NPPC efforts.

To see a copy of the webinar's PowerPoint presentation, [click here](#).

Those interested in participating in a repeat offering of the webinar at a later date or in the planning meeting in San Francisco on January 13 should contact Mindy Meade at mmeade@funoutdoors.com.

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NPHA members to meet with NPS regional directors

To support NPHA's goal of maintaining and enhancing a robust, open line of communication between NPHA and NPS, the NPHA Board of Directors has strongly endorsed regular meetings between NPS officials and concessioners at the national, regional and local levels. NPHA plans to meet with the majority of NPS regional directors in advance of the March NPHA Annual Meeting in Washington. Many of the regional directors have echoed the desire to meet with concessioners operating in their regions to discuss 2010 opportunities and challenges for NPS and concessioners, and several meeting dates have been set.

The meetings will cover such topics as capitalizing on the second showing of the Ken Burns special (six Sundays beginning in late January), improved websites, cooperative efforts to share information with visitors, efforts to connect all Americans to our parks for generations to come, working together to make park operations outstanding examples of "green" practices, using park visits to encourage healthy lifestyles (following up on the NPS recreation and health task force), facilitating transportation to and within our parks and more.

Meetings in Denver and Philadelphia are already scheduled for late January. Meetings in Atlanta, Washington and Omaha are planned in February. If you would like to participate in the meeting for your region, please contact Mindy Meade at mmeade@funoutdoors.com.

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Interested in participating in a music-licensing webinar?

Are you confused or frustrated about music licensing? And why you have to pay three different companies? Not sure if the music you play is covered? Would your company benefit from a music-licensing webinar? If there is sufficient interest, NPHA will be happy to organize a free webinar on music licensing in the spring.

Send your thoughts to Mindy Meade at mmeade@funoutdoors.com.

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NPHA loses member and friend Ron Felty

NPHA regrets to report that longtime member and friend Ron Felty passed away on November 2. Ron was an owner and president of a group of hospitality and tourist-related companies in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and Everglades National Park in Florida. Ron's friends and family wish to express their deep gratitude for all of the love and support that NPHA members have shown in the weeks following Ron's death. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Gettysburg National Military Park, Gettysburg Foundation, 1195 Baltimore Pike, Gettysburg, PA 17325. We have been informed that the Gettysburg Foundation will track donations made in Ron's name and, if a sizeable amount is received, Ron's family will participate in determining how the funds are spent.

Our thoughts continue to be with Ron's family and friends during this difficult time.

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Federal Parks and Recreation Newsletter: Jarvis to begin "relevance" campaign by naming new aide

New National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis is expected to take an initial step shortly in his campaign to make the national parks "relevant" by appointing a new associate director for Education. The new associate director position will replace the old associate director for Partnerships and Visitor Experience. By relevance Jarvis means, simply, making the National Park System meaningful to Americans and foreign visitors. As he told park employees in an email in September after assuming office, "There is deep concern out there that national parks will become irrelevant to a society that is disconnected from nature and history. We need to help all Americans discover a personal connection to their national parks."

Jarvis's concerns about relevancy surface just as visitation to the parks appears to be emerging from a decades-long slump. Still, the National Park Service is concerned about the slump. "The population has increased and the number of parks keeps going up," said David Barna, chief spokesman for NPS, "but visitation had been going down. That's why you are going to see a lot of talk about relevancy of the National Park System to the American people. That's why the policy emphasis on relevancy."

To read the rest of this story, learn about 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

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- [Studies suggest overweight kids are coronary time bombs](#)
- [Obesity, poor education make many younger people unfit for military](#)
- [Dirty kids may avoid food allergies](#)
- [Soldiers look to ATV rides to beat stress of returning](#)

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

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