



July 2010 Newsletter

National Park Hospitality Association

www.parkpartners.org

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Make your reservations for Park Partners Forum: October 17-20 in Naples, FL

The NPHA's Park Partners Forum is only a few months away, so please make plans to join us in Naples, Florida, now! The meeting will be at the DoubleTree Guest Suites Naples – an award-winning Guest Services, Inc. property – on October 17-20, 2010 (a Sunday evening meeting start, with departures on Wednesday morning). The agenda will include: action on discussions at regional director meetings, unveiling of the new NPHA "parks app," a presentation by the National Parks Promotion Council, updates on Director's Order 35B and the SERA process, discussions with NPS leaders on shared goals including "green" operations and preparations for the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service and on reaction to crises like the oil spill, and much more. The trip will include a mid-meeting excursion to a nearby National Park unit, and the option of a post-meeting trip to Key West and the Dry Tortugas!

King rooms/suites are available at the DoubleTree Guest Suites for the special nightly rate of \$99.00 (plus state and local taxes, currently 10%) – and available both before and after our meeting. For reservations, call 800-222-TREE, 239-593-8733 (direct line) or visit www.doubletreenaples.com. You must use the group code **PSF** when booking to receive this rate, which is within government per diem. Reservations must be made by September 20 to receive the NPHA room rate!

[Click here](#) to download your Park Partners Forum registration form. *Registration must be completed by Tuesday, September 15 to avoid a 25% penalty.*

More details on this meeting will be sent to you as soon as they are available.

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SERA effort seeks ways to serve the public, reduce burden on NPS and concessioners

The National Park Service continues to develop a new concessions management tool under its SERA (Standards, Evaluation and Rate Approval) initiative, using input from a committee, which includes concessioners, created by the National Park Concessions Management Advisory Board (CMAB). CMAB Chair Dr. James Eyster has joined NPS staff in overseeing discussions at meetings in Denver and Washington, D.C. The agency, working through both Commercial Services Office staff and contractors, has developed draft materials for comprehensive standards applying to lodging, retail operations and food and beverage. The standards are largely based upon industry practices – for example, the standards applied by national chains to local properties. Active and fruitful discussions have been underway since February, augmented by in-the-field investigations by NPS staff as they consider application of the standards to real-world park situations. A key area of discussion has been classification of concessioner operations by level of quality and amenities – a challenge with historic properties and the complexities of LSI and PI involved. Discussions have also begun on effective and less burdensome means to establish rates charged by concessioners, aimed at better assessing comparability and expansion of the largely successful use of “core menus” and “competitive market declarations.” Additional field efforts are planned for this month, and public comments will be sought later this year. Eventually, the SERA effort will replace the NPS 48 – which was last revised in 1988. A full report on the work of the SERA Concessioner Workgroup will be on the agenda for the NPHA October meeting.

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NPS Commercial Services Office acts on “advance rates”

NPHA members have made clear that key marketing and promotion channels require the posting of rates for accommodations, transportation and other services more than a year in advance – well before NPS rate approvals can be secured. Policies on publishing such anticipated rates have varied from park to park, and in some cases concessioners have been denied the ability to post rates not yet approved or to accept deposits prior to rate approval. In April, NPS issued an advisory to Delaware North Companies Parks and Resorts at Yosemite permitting “advance rate request approvals” and “advance deposit practices.” The same communication noted that a parallel, national policy would be issued shortly. Copies of the Yosemite letter are available from NPHA’s office and we hope to be able to share the national policy communication shortly.

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AGO session likely to focus on outdoor recreation and health

Planning for an America’s Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative listening session focusing on health and outdoor recreation is well underway. During Great Outdoors Month, representatives from Healthy Measures: Physicians for Healthier Americans Through Fun Outdoors (PHATFOs) laid the groundwork in Washington for holding an AGO listening session, designed to enhance ways that outdoor recreation and America’s public lands can improve the health and quality of life for all Americans, and for finding ways to redirect healthcare dollars into park and public lands operational budgets. A draft of the program – with an impressive list of supporting organizations – is under consideration, and final plans

for the gathering should be announced shortly. Concessioners are expected to play an important role in the listening session. The AGO report, which is due to the President in mid-November, is expected to be a 21st Century Conservation Strategy and a means to reconnect the American people to parks and the Great Outdoors. This is a great goal, and we anticipate that the report will be reflected in the President's FY 2012 budget and related initiatives.

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NPPC to host first Market Research Summit

The National Parks Promotion Council's Research Committee will host its first National Park Market Research Summit on January 6-7, 2011, at the Yosemite Lodge at the Falls in Yosemite National Park. The Summit will unite social science research specialists from across the United States to address gaps in market research on national parks and discuss means of developing research that helps form a better understanding of national park visitors. Professor Emilyn Sheffield, Ph.D., of California State University, Chico and Associate Professor Nina Roberts, Ph.D., of San Francisco State University are acting co-chairs of the NPPC's Research Committee, which is comprised of 33 distinguished observers of national park social science trends and statistics.

This summer, the NPPC – with the assistance of San Francisco State University, Hornblower Cruises and Events and NPHA – is utilizing student assistants and interns to compile an annotated bibliography of national park social research, which will be presented at the Summit.

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More exciting progress on concessioner "app"

Exciting progress has been made on the concessioner smartphone "app." LightSpeed Media and NPHA staff convened a very successful focus group of "20-somethings" to discuss potential app features. The group provided valuable feedback about what younger Americans would most like to see in the app to help build interest in park visits. In addition to information about unique park lodging and activities, the focus group expressed interest in video clips of celebrities discussing what they most enjoyed in the park. Other ideas included providing directions to the best places to take iconic park photos (much like the signs Kodak has used at Walt Disney World) and showing interesting things to do in gateway communities. The app concept is appealing to the younger generation because of widespread use of iPhones, Droids and other smartphones – and because apps are convenient and environmentally friendly, with a much smaller carbon footprint than a printed guidebook. LightSpeed Media is currently compiling the focus group's findings to create a more exact model for the app.

If your company would like to join DNC, ARAMARK, Forever Resorts, Glacier Park Inc. and GSI in developing the NPHA app, contact Derrick Crandall at dcrandall@funoutdoors.com.

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Submit your offers for new fee-free periods!

The next free-admission days at the national parks are approaching and we invite concessioners to submit their special offers to NPHA as soon as possible! All national parks, national wildlife refuges, and many areas managed by the Bureau of Land Management will offer free admission on **August 14-15, September 25** (National Public Lands Day) and

November 11 (Veterans Day). These dates are in addition to the previous fee-free periods coinciding with National Park Week 2010 (April 17-25) and on June 5-6.

Concessioners were proud to join the National Park Service this year in the fee-free National Park Week promotion, enhancing the period by offering valued-added experiences at their operations. Examples of special opportunities offered included free photographs at iconic park locations, reduced rates on day trip packages, vouchers for items purchased at retail shops, and more.

We encourage concessioners to once again join in this effort by offering value-added experiences during these fee-free periods. Your participation reminds the National Park Service and the American public that concessioners are valuable partners in providing quality visitor services and experiences in the national parks. Please submit your company's special offers to Mindy Meade (mmeade@funoutdoors.com) as soon as possible. NPHA will once again compile the special offers and seek to obtain a link to them on official NPS sites promoting the fee-free periods.

To see the deals offered by concessioners for National Park Week and the June fee-free weekend, visit: www.parkpartners.org/Special-Offers-for-2010.html.

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First Lady asks junior rangers to “take it outside” at national parks

First Lady Michelle Obama is making her campaign against childhood obesity relevant to parks and the Great Outdoors with her challenge to kids – “Let’s Move Outside, Junior Rangers!” In June, the National Park Service kicked off *Let’s Move Outside Junior Ranger* in 20 parks. National Park Junior Rangers not only have fun and get exercise but also receive an extra reward for being active – young people who complete at least one physical activity in pursuit of their badge receive a special sticker that designates them as a *Let’s Move Outside Junior Ranger*. The activities range from adventures like hiking with a ranger at Grand Canyon National Park to body surfing at Canaveral National Seashore and canoeing at Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.

Let’s Move Outside!, led by the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, provides tools and information to parents to make it easy to enjoy the outdoors and be active. The effort is part of the First Lady’s nationwide campaign to end childhood obesity within a generation. Throughout the summer, *Let’s Move Outside!* programs and events will be held in partnership with schools, community organizations, and other groups.

For more information, [click here](#).

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Dues reminder from NPHA Treasurer

NPHA Treasurer Carol Metzler would like to remind all NPHA members again that annual dues for Associate Members were due on May 31, and dues for Regular Members were due on June 30. If you have not paid, please do so at your earliest convenience! If you have any questions regarding your dues, please contact Carol at feltyco@mindspring.com.

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Federal Parks and Recreation Newsletter: Landscapes still a Salazar goal in outdoors initiative

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar said once again on June 25 that protecting treasured landscapes is one of his goals for an Obama Administration America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Before a listening session on the initiative in Annapolis, Maryland, the Secretary told the press, "I hope in the months ahead we will prepare a report for the President and Congress relative to a Great Outdoors agenda. Included in that agenda I hope that we will identify landscapes of national significance across the country." As significant landscapes, he mentioned the Chesapeake Bay (where the press availability took place), and the "Great Lakes, San Francisco Bay Delta, the Colorado Plateau and many others."

In response to a question from *Federal Parks & Recreation* about what he personally would like to see the initiative accomplish, Secretary Salazar said "some additional wildlife refuges and potentially some additional national parks." But he made sure to add, "We would listen to the people and obviously work with the governors and Congressional delegations." That last phrase on consultation addresses perhaps an ongoing dispute between House Natural Resources Committee Republicans and the Interior Department over alleged Administration plans to designative unilaterally national monuments. Secretary Salazar has repeatedly said the Administration will not unilaterally designate monuments, but will consult with the public and local governments first.

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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News

- [Obamas enjoy family vacation in the great outdoors](#)
- [Yellowstone sets visitation record for June](#)
- [F as in Fat: How obesity threatens America's future 2010](#)
- [Six ways that play can help solve childhood obesity](#)

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