



## June 2011 Newsletter

National Park Hospitality Association

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### NPHA, NPCA Find Much Common Ground

NPHA's Board of Directors adopted a package of recommendations in March designed to improve visitor experiences, especially in the tough budget climate of 2011. Those recommendations have been presented to key NPS officials, including Deputy Director Peggy O'Dell and the team led by Vic Knox working on the NPS 5-Year Action Plan which will be released on August 25, 2011. Capitol Hill staff also received the package and a briefing. [Click here](#) to review those recommendations.

NPHA staff also shared the recommendations with the National Parks Conservation Association and invited NPCA to comment and join NPHA in recommending changes to existing programs and policies. NPCA responded positively, and NPHA and NPCA staff have met several times and exchanged drafts of proposed joint policy statements – and the results are likely to be released by July 1.

Among the areas of strong agreement are:

- 1) support for changes to IRS regulations to **allow concessioners to qualify for historic tax credits** for rehabilitation of NPS-owned structures;
- 2) support for an **expedited study of NPS campgrounds to determine why usage has declined and to recommend steps which will deal with needed capital investments, better communications about camping opportunities in parks and improvements to reflect current camper preferences;**
- 3) support for **improvements in the guest donation program** designed to improve contributor and concessioner linkage to funded projects;
- 4) **support for changes to concessioner evaluations, including the addition of**

**either a “superior” or both “superior” and “outstanding” ratings, and the addition of a reward for achieving such ratings:** a 50% extension of initial concessioner contracts;

5) support for a thorough **study of park fees designed to increase annual pass sales and increase public understanding and valuation of fees.**

NPHA’s Board of Directors is now reviewing the proposed joint recommendations.

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***Good to Know***

The National Park Service reports that concessions revenues nationwide were \$1,009,517,485 in 2009. NPHA members accounted for almost 80% of that total.

To see data provided by NPS, [click here](#).

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**NPCA, NPF and NPHA Plan First-Ever National Park Summit in Washington  
November 2-3**

Staff leadership of the National Park Foundation (NPF), National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) and NPHA have been meeting regularly in 2011, working on such joint interests as a campaign to boost national park visitation and prepare the national park system for the future. The meetings have also included planning sessions with NPS Director Jon Jarvis and other senior NPS officials.

One exciting new idea is a jointly hosted Summit on National Parks, gathering and uniting traditional national park supporters, as well as new partners interested in the benefits of parks to the economy, to health and education and to a stronger and more unified nation. The Summit is planned for November 2 and 3 in Washington’s Ronald Reagan Building on Pennsylvania Avenue and will be invitation-only. The Summit will focus on the NPS 5-Year Action Plan, and will unite the diverse and bipartisan supporters of national parks around specific actions.

Concessioners and allies in the travel and tourism industries will play a central role in the Summit. Put the November 2-3 dates on your calendar now – NPS Director Jon Jarvis has already done so!

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## **Great Outdoors Week Celebrations Recognize Park Achievements**

Leaders in the recreation community gathered last week to celebrate the contribution of various individuals to promoting and enhancing access to America's Great Outdoors. Signature events of the week included presentations of the Beacon Awards, the Sheldon Coleman Great Outdoors Award and Legends Awards. National Park Service employees were among those honored for their lasting contributions to the great outdoors.

### ***Beacon Awards Presentations***

Beacon Awards recognize outstanding efforts by federal agencies and partners in harnessing the power of technology to improve public recreation experiences and federal recreation program management. Nominations are made by federal agencies and are judged against the award criteria – which are:

- 1) Innovative use of technology for visitor services or recreation management;
- 2) Use of partnerships with for-profit and nonprofit organizations;
- 3) Efforts to share news of creative solutions within the agency; and
- 4) Community support for the work of this initiative.

Frank Barrows of the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park accepted the National Park Service Beacon Award on behalf of the Youth Ambassador Program (YAP!). YAP! helps teens communicate national park themes through hip-hop culture and social media. Music and videos are created and shared through YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Soundcloud and other channels. A special event – Third Eye Open – is held. It is a hip-hop festival with YAP! performances and a graffiti artist who creates a mural inspired by national park themes. Posters of the mural are printed and offered free to those who show a festival flyer. The performances include original songs and videos, and one of these, "Get Outside and Move," has been featured on the front page of the First Lady's Let's Move website.

Now YAP! is moving to connect with youth regionally and nationally, collaborating with NPS sites throughout the northeast in efforts to increase park visitation by diverse and young Americans. YAP! performances included the National Park Youth Summit in 2010 and will include the 2011 Outdoor Nation event in New York City. YAP! will also coordinate a campout event in July to attract young and diverse Americans to camping and outdoor cooking – and yes, the event will be captured for viewing on the internet!

For more on the Beacon Awards, [click here](#).

### ***The Sheldon Coleman Great Outdoors Award***

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Nancy Sutley and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson were presented on June 15<sup>th</sup> with the 2011 Sheldon Coleman Great Outdoors Award, the recreation community's

most prestigious award. The award is presented to individuals whose personal efforts have contributed substantially to enhancing outdoor experiences across America.

The selection of shared recipients for the award, created in 1989, is unprecedented and reflects widespread enthusiasm within the recreation community for the unity and focus the four Cabinet-rank officials of the Obama Administration have provided to national recreation policy through the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. "These four national leaders have worked to stimulate broad and open public debate, to collect best practices, to explore new ideas, including the linkage between health and the Great Outdoors, and to relate America's Great Outdoors to 21st century lifestyles and issues," said the American Recreation Coalition.

For the first time this year, award recipients were given pieces of tradition-inspired Native American art to commemorate their efforts encouraging Americans to spend their time in the outdoors. Darrell Norman, a Blackfeet artist from Montana, created four individual sculptures especially for the Coleman Award recipients. Mr. Norman used traditional Blackfeet symbolism to convey an American tradition of commitment to the Great Outdoors, a tradition honored by Secretaries Salazar and Vilsack, Chair Sutley and Administrator Jackson in their America's Great Outdoors Initiative efforts.

The award was established in honor of Sheldon Coleman (1901-1988), longtime Chairman of The Coleman Company and a visionary champion of outdoor recreation and conservation. Past recipients include former President George H. W. Bush, National Geographic Society Chairman Gil Grosvenor, former Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne, key Members of Congress and Cabinet members.

For more on the Sheldon Coleman Great Outdoors Award, [click here](#).

### ***Legends Awards***

Legends Awards are presented to federal managers in recognition of their outstanding work to improve outdoor recreation experiences and opportunities for the American people. Initiated in 1991, the Legends Award program calls on federal land management agencies to nominate an individual whose extraordinary personal efforts have made a real difference in enhancing outdoor recreation programs and resources.

The 2011 National Park Service award went to Rita Hennessy. Rita currently serves as the Assistant Park Manager for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, where she has spent 14 of her 22 years with the National Park Service. From the beginning of her time on the Trail, Rita understood the importance of its volunteer-stewardship tradition. But even beyond an interest in sustaining volunteerism on the Trail, she recognized the power of the Appalachian Trail to engage young people in an appreciation of the outdoors and to enhance their understanding of their own special places.

To help achieve the goals of sustaining volunteerism and engaging young people, Rita launched the Trail To Every Classroom (TTEC) program in 2006. TTEC is a

professional development program for K-12 teachers that uses the Appalachian Trail as an educational resource and focuses on place-based service learning and the promotion of a conservation ethic, civic participation and healthy lifestyles. To date, TTEC has trained 275 teachers and engaged more than 15,000 students. However, the real outcomes are that teachers have been able to document improved teaching practices and demonstrate that they have positively impacted student learning and enhanced the civic responsibility, volunteerism and environmental stewardship of their students. Rita has shared this program model with other national trails, including the Iditarod National Historic Trail, which launched its own TTEC program in 2010. The program continues to grow, with alumni opportunities in hike leadership and wilderness first aid and – Rita's most recent idea – the creation of Appalachian Trail Master Naturalists. Rita's leadership with TTEC has been inspirational and her legacy will surely be long-lasting.

For more on the Legends Awards, [click here](#).

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#### ***Good to Know***

The Department of the Interior (DOI) reports that public lands managed by DOI were responsible for more than two million jobs and contributed about \$363 billion to the economy in 2010. The 437 million recreational visits to Interior-managed lands in 2010 supported more than 388,000 jobs nationwide and contributed over \$44 billion in economic activity.

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

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#### **AIANTA Honors NPHA Partnership Efforts**

Tina Osceola, President of the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association, and Edward Hall of the Bureau of Indian Affairs recognized NPHA efforts to promote partnerships among concessioners, national parks and promoters of American Indian tourism last week. On June 15<sup>th</sup>, they presented NPHA Counselor Derrick Crandall with a print of Native American art to honor his efforts on behalf of NPHA to work with American Indian tourism groups.

The artwork is a mixed-media piece, with traditional Native American images painted on antique Western Union telegrams, mercantile checks and maps detailing the explorations of Lewis and Clark. The work symbolizes and celebrates partnerships that can be developed today between the Native American people and the European

Americans who brought their culture and commerce to native lands over the last 200 years.

In her remarks, Ms. Osceola noted a commitment on behalf of native peoples to work with other tourism groups – including national parks and their concessioners – to encourage all Americans to access and enjoy the outdoors. NPHA has invited AIANTA to participate in recent NPHA conversations, including the annual NPHA member meeting in March 2011. NPHA has also demonstrated a commitment to working with the Indian Arts and Crafts Board in order to ensure the authenticity of Native American art sold by national park concessioners. The concessioner/Indian tourism partnership is burgeoning and Ms. Osceola and Mr. Hall are key contributors to this effort.

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