



## May 2011 Newsletter

National Park Hospitality Association

This newsletter is also available in PDF format on [www.parkpartners.org](http://www.parkpartners.org)

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### NPS Budget for Fiscal Year 2012 Will Likely Drop

U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers (R-KY) has released subcommittee allocations for Fiscal Year 2012. The 12 subcommittees will have \$30 billion less than in the current fiscal year, about a 3% drop overall. For the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Subcommittee headed by U.S. Representative Mike Simpson (R-ID), the FY12 ceiling will be 7% below the current year. While it is too early to predict precisely how the National Park Service (NPS) will fare, a difficult budget situation is very likely. Travel and construction have already been curtailed in the FY11 budget.

Even before the exact budget numbers were released, NPS Director Jon Jarvis remained positive about the situation, telling NPHA representatives, "NPS will still have a very large budget, one that will allow us to do many things. The challenge will be for us to use our resources to do the right things, and to find ways to augment our appropriations." He went on to say that since he could not deliver the full resources needed by NPS field operations, he would be concentrating on providing park units with the tools to find and use alternative resources.

The NPS FY12 budget year begins on October 1, 2011. Initial hearings on the FY12 budget are complete, and subcommittee mark up is now commencing. To see the full list of subcommittee allocations for FY12, [click here](#).

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## **Great Outdoors Month 2011 Focuses on Benefits of Active Time Outdoors**

Excitement is growing in Washington, D.C. as the nation gears up for Great Outdoors Month 2011. A coalition of outdoor recreation leaders has asked the President, the 50 state governors and the Mayor of the District of Columbia to proclaim June as Great Outdoors Month. All 50 governors signed proclamations in 2010 and we have 30 proclamations already for 2011 – we are well on our way to 100% participation again this year! To see if your state has submitted its proclamation for 2011, [click here](#).

The proclamations of June as Great Outdoors Month are especially appropriate this year, since the America's Great Outdoors Initiative (AGO) has raised awareness of the benefits of activity in the Great Outdoors and ways to connect 21<sup>st</sup> century Americans to their outdoor legacy.

Signature events of Great Outdoors Month will include Great Outdoors Week special activities in Washington, D.C. and National Get Outdoors Day (GO Day), which will be celebrated at more than 100 sites on Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup> and will connect American families to outdoor fun.

### *At-A-Glance Schedule: Great Outdoors Month Activities*

June 1-25	Go Camping America promotion
June 4	National Trails Day®
June 4-12	National Fishing and Boating Week
June 11-17	Great Outdoors Week
June 11	National Get Outdoors Day (GO Day)
June 11	Fee-Free Day in National Forests
June 11	National Marina Day
June 14	ED OUT
June 21	Fee-Free Day for all national parks, the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Reclamation
June 25	Great American Backyard Campout

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## **National Park Service and Partners Prepare for Centennial**

National Park Service (NPS) Director Jon Jarvis has assembled a team to develop a five-year plan for preparing the NPS for its next century. The senior NPS staff team is headed by Vic Knox, who is the Deputy Regional Director in Alaska, and will be working full time for about four months. The plan is scheduled for release on August 25, 2011,

in a national park – five years prior to the actual 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the agency. NPS and Interior officials hope for Presidential and Secretarial involvement in the plan's release.

We are told that the planning team has been given clear direction. First, Director Jarvis has told them that there is an abundance of “vision” documents recently prepared for national parks, ranging from the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors to the Vail Agenda, the Second Century Commission, and the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) report. The team has been told to review these documents for ideas and themes and produce an action plan, not another vision document. Instead, the action plan should contain “executable ideas” for the next five years, ideas that can be achieved and which will make a difference. The second directive is that the action-plan strategy has to transcend any possible changes in Administration, or even in key players within the Administration, or the Congress. This directive largely means that the strategy must be accomplishable without any new laws or special funding. And the additional instruction given to the team is that quality should prevail over quantity. The team has been told that its work is not a public effort – that AGO and other recent efforts provided sufficient public involvement. But the team has also been told to engage fully with key NPS partners – partners like the National Park Foundation, the National Parks Conservation Association, NPHA and the Friends Alliance.

The team has completed an outline for its plan. It has identified five themes, and goals for each. The themes are:

- 1) Connecting People to Parks
- 2) Telling America's Story
- 3) Conserving and Restoring America's National Parks
- 4) Supporting Community-Based Conservation and Recreational Access
- 5) Enhancing Professional Excellence

The NPS Director wants the plan to highlight what the agency is already doing and to focus on ways to showcase those efforts and to help it do those things better. He sees the plan as partnership-based. And he sees the need to expand the base of park partners, adding supporters from the health, education and tourism communities in sustained and more robust ways.

NPHA will meet with the planning team on May 24<sup>th</sup> in Washington to discuss the Better Visitor Services Initiative adopted at NPHA's annual meeting in March, which contains ideas for both improving visitor experiences and increasing NPS resources.

NPHA also serves on a National Park Centennial Steering Committee, along with the National Park Foundation and the National Parks Conservation Association, which has developed a proposed campaign to build awareness of parks, boost visitation, volunteerism and service and add new resources through increased park philanthropy by individuals and organizations. The campaign concept is being shared with a variety of partners and allies, with Congressional figures, and with NPS officials.

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## **Corporation for Travel Promotion Selects First CEO**

The new Corporation for Travel Promotion (CTP) has selected travel industry veteran Jim Evans to serve as its first CEO. A veteran of Hyatt and Best Western hotel chains, Mr. Evans has a reputation for creativity and energy.

CTP will soon launch the United States' first major international tourism marketing campaign in a generation, funded by a combination of industry dollars and a federal fee on inbound visitors. Total resources available for the campaign may exceed \$200 million annually. For information on Mr. Evans, [click here](#).

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## **Budget Pain Strong for California Parks**

California State Parks has released the list of state parks to be closed as a direct result of the budget cuts proposed by Governor Jerry Brown and adopted by the California state legislature. The list contains 70 parks to be closed – 25 percent of the entire system.

Thirty-six of California's 58 counties will see park closures, and more than 40 percent of the state's Historic Parks – destinations for students and field trips about California's history and statehood – are slated to close. The closure list contains some of the most unique, historic, culturally important and iconic state parks in California, including:

- Henry W. Coe State Park, the second largest state park in the entire state park system, and largest in Northern California;
- Jack London State Historic Park, the home of the famous author, adventurer, and California native, and
- Railtown 1897 State Historic Park, the state park that has served as a backdrop for more than 200 films and still draws the film industry today.

Although other closure lists have been drawn up in the past by State Parks in response to previous budget cut proposals, this is the first comprehensive list of closures that will be fully implemented. State Parks were cut by \$22 million in the fiscal year 2011- 2012 budget adopted by the California state legislature in late March and included in the bills signed by the governor on March 24<sup>th</sup>.

The ability of the state to fully and effectively close parks on the list is unclear. Many of the parks on the list have multiple and varied entry points. Even those facilities that can have gates locked or doors closed are at risk. Vandalism, theft and other illegal activities have already occurred in parks that have nominal staffing. More information about the park closure list can be found [here](#).

Several other states face budget challenges, prompting additional discussion of closures and new fees.

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## **National Park Service Commercial Services Office Clarifies Policy on Native Handicrafts**

The National Park Service (NPS) Commercial Services Office has issued new guidance to concessioners and NPS staff on sales of Native American arts and crafts, a direct result of the joint session at NPHA's annual meeting involving the Indian Arts and Crafts Board and the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association. The guidance is on a new NPS website page ([here](#)). The page states, "It is the policy of the National Park Service to encourage concessioners to sell native handicrafts to park area visitors ..." and notes that revenues from sales of qualifying handicrafts are exempt from franchise fees. The guidance reminds concessioners that qualifying items must be labeled and sales receipts must be maintained, and it reiterates that NPS must approve of "the nature, type and quantity of merchandise to be offered by concessioners, including handicrafts."

At the March session the NPS Commercial Services Office also made clear that there was not a requirement for Native American items to be produced within the region, if the items were judged appropriate.

Some concessioners have expressed concerns about being able to find legitimate and quality handicrafts that could be sold profitably. In March, the Indian Arts and Crafts Board demonstrated use of its **Source Directory of American Indian and Alaska Native Owned and Operated Arts and Crafts Businesses**, which identifies: American Indian or Alaska Native arts and crafts cooperatives and Tribal arts and crafts enterprises; businesses and galleries privately owned and operated by individuals, designers, craftspeople, and artists who are enrolled members of federally recognized Tribes; and a few nonprofit organizations, managed by enrolled members of federally recognized Tribes, that develop and market arts and crafts products. The directory is linked from the new NPS page or directly [here](#).

Bob Stanton, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the Interior, held a follow-up meeting on concessioner/American Indian cooperation on May 19<sup>th</sup> and plans additional sessions and actions.

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## **NPHA Welcomes New Preferred Member CIEE**

*By Phil Simon, Vice President of Employer Relations at CIEE*

J-1 student workers have been a staple of the national park hospitality industry for many years. The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), NPHA's

newest preferred member, has been designated as a J-1 Visa Sponsor by the U.S. State Department since 1965. CIEE, a nonprofit education company, is the largest J-1 Sponsor in the United States and brings more than 20,000 seasonal workers into the country every year.

The majority of J-1 visa holders work in hospitality – partly because of the seasonal nature of the business, and partly because the work is enjoyable and affords the participant the opportunity to engage with a wide variety of people. Employers who have a seasonal labor need take advantage of the flexibility that J-1 student workers offer. Businesses in national parks are particularly popular employers for J-1 visa holders. CIEE currently works with many national park concessionaires, placing hundreds of J-1 student workers in hard-to-fill, entry-level positions. J-1 student workers typically arrive in December, March, and May or June (dates and sending countries vary according to university vacation schedules). J-1 interns arrive year round.

J-1 work visas are part of a non-immigrant visa category that is overseen by the State Department. J-1 visas allow foreign nationals to visit the United States in order to experience life and work here. J-1 Summer Work & Travel is for university students who are in the U.S. during their summer vacation (typically for 3-4 months). J-1 interns are foreign students or professionals undergoing structured, on-the-job training (in hospitality fields the maximum duration of such training is usually 12 months). J-1 visas came into existence as a part of U.S. public diplomacy – an approach that might be summarized as “to know us is to love us.”

CIEE provides its participants with the documents, information, insurance and support needed to enter the U.S. and to be successful here. If you work with CIEE, you can be sure of help throughout the whole process – covering recruitment and the period when your workers are on the job. CIEE offers several free recruitment options for employers – including face-to-face job fairs (internationally and online).

The regulations governing J-1 student workers are changing. CIEE can give you the latest information – ensuring that your Human Resources staff is up-to-date.

*Phil Simon is Vice President, Employer Relations at CIEE. Phil is based in Portland, Maine and can be reached at 207-553-4007 or [psimon@ciee.org](mailto:psimon@ciee.org). Visit [www.ciee.org/hire](http://www.ciee.org/hire) for more information about CIEE services.*

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## **Creole Nature Trail Launches Free Multimedia Tour and Smartphone App for Visitors**

The Creole Nature Trail All-American Road, also known as Louisiana's Outback, has now been brought to life with the GPS Ranger™ Handheld Video Solution and Smartphone application for visitors. The free app can currently be downloaded at the

iTunes App Store or Android Market, and the GPS Ranger™ Handheld Unit can be rented at the Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau free of charge beginning May 7<sup>th</sup> at the start of National Tourism Week.

The Creole Nature Trail All-American Road is a 180-mile driving tour through fertile marshlands, several wildlife refuges and along Louisiana's Gulf Coast. Here, outdoor adventure and abundant wildlife are waiting for you in their natural habitat. Using cutting-edge technology, the multi-media self-paced tour guide system delivers content based on where you are located on the trail.

The history, culture, industry and abundant wildlife of the area come alive right before your eyes... it's like having your own personal tour guide of the Creole Nature Trail right in the palm of your hand! Some highlights of the tour include nature walks, Gulf beaches and shelling, recreational crabbing and birding opportunities at every turn. As soon as you step outside, the Ranger begins using the Global Positioning System (GPS) to determine your location. Once you get on the road, GPS detects which direction you are traveling. Whenever you enter the satellite radius of a point of interest along the Creole Nature Trail, video about what you are viewing automatically plays, providing information in an entertaining manner.

To read the rest of the Creole Nature Trail's news release about its recently launched GPS touring system, please [click here](#).

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### **NPHA Members Meet with NPS Intermountain Regional Director**

Many NPHA key members met for a productive discussion with NPS Regional Director John Wessels and his team in Colorado at the end of April. The agenda included discussion of the Better Visitor Services Initiative – developed at the annual NPHA meeting in March – as well as the possible consequences of higher fuel prices this summer, opportunities for closer cooperation with Indian tourism and arts and crafts and many other topics.

For details on the conversation, [click here](#).

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### **Interior Secretary Salazar Assembles Diverse Conservation Leaders to Act on AGO**

Department of the Interior Secretary Ken Salazar invited more than 100 top national conservation leaders to a gathering in Washington to urge bipartisan action on the recommendations of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative (AGO). He had key Interior leaders, including Deputy Secretary David Hayes, Bureau of Land Management Director Bob Abbey and NPS Director Jon Jarvis, outline significant actions underway

on landscape-level conservation, river protection and access enhancement, and urban parks and health. He also invited leading Republican conservation champions to share ideas for championing conservation during a period of fiscal austerity. Among those applauding the Secretary's AGO efforts were Bush 41 Counsel Boyden Gray, Bush 43 friend and Texas businessman John Nau, and former Congressman Sherwood Boehlert.

Participants in the meeting, which stretched into the evening hours, included a Who's Who of the conservation community, from Pat Noonan and Larry Rockefeller to Gil Grosvenor, Lili Pew, and CEOs of national organizations like Bill Meadows (Wilderness Society) and William Rogers (Trust for Public Lands). Noteworthy was the significant proportion of participants drawn from the private sector.

The Secretary announced that Will Shafroth, now Acting Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, will segue into a role of guiding Interior efforts to achieve AGO's recommendations. Those joining in the meeting were urged to form a committee to work quickly on AGO issues, noting that key budgetary issues will be decided by August and could either assist or undermine AGO efforts.

Concessioners were represented at the meeting by both NPHA Counselor Derrick Crandall and Xanterra Vice President Dave Hartvigsen. Both had important conversations with the Secretary, Will Shafroth and Jon Jarvis and found real interest in sharing news of AGO efforts with park visitors through concessioners.

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