



November 2009 Newsletter

National Park Hospitality Association

www.parkpartners.org

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NPHA asks Director for improved guidance to units on concessions operations

NPHA has requested that NPS Director Jon Jarvis send out a national guidance memo on concessions operations before the year's end addressing several issues raised at NPHA's Park Partners Forum in Yosemite last month. The letter outlines many areas to be addressed in the memo in order "to reduce the burden on concessioners and NPS staff as they jointly pursue excellence in customer service and protection of park resources." NPHA has requested official guidance on the following topics: permission to publish anticipated rates and collect advance deposits in reliance on those anticipated rates; response time to requested rate approval; use of Core Menu and Competitive Market Declaration Options; uniform response to unexpected and major marketplace changes; use of a unique mark signifying status as official concessioner; direct access to concessioner offerings from NPS unit websites; and non-rate issues. The letter also made clear that NPHA members are committed to using the underway NPS Standards, Evaluation and Rate Approval study (SERA) as a vehicle to achieve significant concessions management improvements.

NPHA will discuss these issues and more at the upcoming meetings with NPS regional directors across the country prior to NPHA's Annual Meeting in Washington next March.

To read the letter to Director Jarvis, [click here](#).

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Creative park promotion ideas pour in from across the country!

A joint effort of the American Recreation Coalition (ARC) and the National Park Service to compile creative park promotion efforts connecting Americans to their national and state parks is uncovering exciting and innovative initiatives! From free fishing in Texas and Minnesota state parks to checking out state park passes in Connecticut and Massachusetts libraries to incentive trips for summer school students in the Twin Cities in the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, federal and state agencies are partnering with businesses and nonprofits to put healthy outdoor fun back on the radar screens of American families. We've found innovative uses of Facebook and YouTube – even Craig's List. And the efforts are making a difference, boosting visitation and delivering improvements in health and awareness of conservation efforts. More examples of these successful programs will soon be available on ARC's website – www.funoutdoors.com – so these programs can be easily replicated and aid in efforts to attract more visitors, generating a healthier, more environmentally aware population.

Concessioners have long been creative messengers for park offerings. At our recent meeting at Yosemite, we heard how concessioner support helped launch the Yosemite Institute – now part of NatureBridge operating in four parks – and continues today, as YI hosts tens of thousands of overnight youth annually. We know about Forever Earth in Lake Mead NRA and First Bloom, aided by ARAMARK. If you have an idea you would like to share, please complete the questionnaire [found here](#) or call or email Melissa Andersen at 202-682-9530/mandersen@funoutdoors.com.

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CONPAC hosts House Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee Chairman

CONPAC – NPHA's political action committee – hosted a successful fundraiser for U.S. Representative Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ) on November 2 and heard a clear message of support for partnerships and increasing the connection between the American public and the Great Outdoors. Congressman Grijalva chairs the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands, which has jurisdiction over a huge number of national recreation issues and programs. He told the group that a new paradigm of cooperation was needed in protecting and using the Great Outdoors, and he shared his personal passion for our parks and other special places. It was that passion that prompted him to pass up a chance to take a seat on the House Ways and Means Committee, he told the group. ***According to the Congressman, new outreach and marketing efforts are not only important but vital to maintain public passion for parks.*** He stressed the need for an agenda beyond conservation, saying that parks and other places also need the infrastructure of visitor services to meet the needs of today's Americans. Especially important, he said, is outreach to the many portions of the public who now gain little from our Great Outdoors. He told the group that the FY2010 Interior budget was a major improvement in providing resources for parks and other lands, but that creative solutions would be needed to meet the full set of needs.

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Concessioner input at NPCA-sponsored Second Century Commission Report strategy session

More than 125 leaders of the national parks community gathered in Knoxville, Tennessee, for intense discussions about the recommendations of the Second Century Commission and

a strategy for converting recommendations into accomplishments. Key NPS officials – including Director Jon Jarvis and Deputy Director Dan Wenk – participated, along with nearly half of the commission members, including both former U.S. Senators Howard Baker and J. Bennett Johnston, who co-chaired the commission. Key areas of focus were (1) the future shape of the park system (largely involving funding for park operations and additions and discussion about relations with lands and communities adjoining parks), (2) natural and cultural resource stewardship, (3) education and engagement (with engagement really meaning outreach and promotion), (4) sustainable funding (both for operations and acquisition), and (5) strengthening the capacity of the park service. NPHA Counselor Derrick Crandall represented NPHA at the sessions and was pleased by the frequent references to concessioners by Director Jarvis, commission members and others as vital parts of any second-century strategy, especially since the commission’s 52-page report failed to mention concessioners even once. One key issue at the session was the commission’s call for a new, blue ribbon fundraising body for parks – reflecting deep-seated concerns by several key commissioners about the track record of the National Park Foundation. Interest in concessioner efforts to promote parks and create a new award recognizing innovation and partnerships, perhaps in the name of the late Brian O’Neill, was high. The two strongest areas of consensus at the meeting involved full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and support for a new and major effort to bring more American youth into contact with parks.

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Pillars of Support: Acadia Corporation honored as 2009 Merchant of the Year by the Maine Merchants Association

NPHA is proud to highlight concessioners' contributions to parks and cooperation with the National Park Service. NPHA members provide contributions of goods, services and labor for the benefit of the American public and the national parks in parks across the nation. NPHA shares stories of concessioner achievements to underscore the partnership between NPHA members and the National Park Service, protecting parks and serving visitors.

The Acadia Corporation was recently honored as the 2009 Merchant of the Year by the Maine Merchants Association. Acadia Corporation was chosen because of its commitment to Maine, a mission to “serve visitors to Acadia National Park” and for outstanding work in the community. The Merchant of the Year Award has three main criteria: continued growth in employees or sales; commitment of company resources to community projects; and creation of a positive work environment for all employees. Acadia Corporation exceeded the criteria on all counts. David Woodside, Acadia Corporation president, remarked, “Acadia Corporation is very excited about being nominated as the 2009 Maine Merchant of the Year. Our employees work very hard to make the company a success and having the company recognized for its solid commitment to customers, to the community, the environment, and its employees is important, especially during challenging times. Acadia also gratefully recognizes and thanks its customers, for without them, winning awards like this wouldn’t be possible.” *Congratulations to the Acadia Corporation!*

Share information about your positive role in our parks with Mindy Meade at mmeade@funoutdoors.com!

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White House holds forums on clean energy

NPHA was among some 100 organizations invited to participate in an all-day forum on November 2 in the White House Complex to hear about Administration efforts on renewable energy – solar, wind, geothermal, biomass and more. Moderated by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and featuring presentations by virtually the entire Interior leadership team – Deputy Secretary David Hayes, Assistant Secretary Tom Strickland and other Assistant Secretaries, Bureau heads including National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis and Bureau of Land Management Director Bob Abbey – the session also allowed for substantial interaction and comments and concluded with a two hour reception in the Secretary’s office at Interior. The major and multifaceted effort being mounted by the Administration is driven by three forces: the economy and the need to buffer against energy-cost escalation; global climate change and its potential costs, both environmental and economic; and the long-term security consequences of energy purchases from unstable regions.

NPHA will also participate in a similar White House forum on the public health benefits of a clean energy economy on November 20. This forum is being convened by Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson and Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius.

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NPS honored with three environmental awards

The U.S. Department of Energy recently honored the National Park Service with three environmental awards, recognizing the agency’s new commitment to sustainability and “going green.” Lassen Volcanic National Park, Blue Ridge Parkway and Golden Gate National Recreation Area were all recognized for their buildings that contribute to the overall sustainability of NPS operations.

“We appreciate that people are taking notice of our efforts to be sustainable,” said National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis. “Making our buildings and operations as ‘green’ as the parks themselves is a top priority for us.”

Concessioners have long been ahead of the curve in sustainable business practices, as was demonstrated during the Park Partners Forum in Yosemite. Let us know how your company is leading the way in being green by contacting Mindy Meade at mmeade@funoutdoors.com.

For more information on NPS sustainable buildings, [click here](#).

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New publication offers strategies for serving culturally diverse visitors to public lands

Several well-respected social scientists in California (including Park Partners Forum speaker Dr. Emilyn Sheffield) have released a publication titled ***Serving Culturally Diverse Visitors to Forests in California*** that is now available for public use. While many of California’s national forests have recently seen an increase in new visitors, ethnic diversity among visitors lags. This new resource guide was compiled from comprehensive research reports, statewide program and service documents, outreach and civic-engagement plans, and Internet searches of other applicable resources in order to better serve the needs of culturally diverse visitors to public lands. Numerous materials are provided, best practices are noted, and tips on practical application (“tips worth trying”) are offered. Highlights of

research findings are included, along with strategies and possible management options relating to communication, services and facilities, developing partnerships, and ideas for community engagement and outreach.

The publication can be found at: www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/33055.

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Reminder: Submit your activities to NPS's Family Fun website!

The National Park Service Commercial Services Program, the Office of Tourism, and the Office of Public Affairs need concessioners' help to make their "Family Fun" website a success! This past summer, concessioners contributed to this cooperative effort to help build greater public awareness of park and concessioner activities and special events on a seasonal basis, and activity submissions by NPHA members were crucial to the success of the campaign.

NPS has again asked NPHA members for assistance in collecting information on any concessioner programs and special events that are planned for this fall and winter. The new information will be screened, consolidated and edited for posting on the Family Fun website and may also be distributed to magazines, newspapers, online travel sites and other media outlets. NPS plans on making this a dynamic site where information can be added throughout the season so submissions will be welcome at any time.

Please submit your written event summaries (with contact information) directly to NPS at Commercial_Services@nps.gov. NPS requests that the event summaries be limited to no more than 150 words; press releases and photos are also welcome.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Kurt Rausch at Kurt_Rausch@nps.gov.

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Federal Parks and Recreation Newsletter: Congress completes 2010 money bill; Obama signs into law

On October 29 Congress wrapped up a fiscal year 2010 Interior Department and related agencies appropriations bill (HR 2996) that provides a significant \$4.66 billion spending increase over fiscal year 2009. President Obama signed the bill into law on October 30 (PL 111-88). The law provides particularly large increases for the National Park System, with boosts for operations, maintenance, recreation and preservation, and almost every other line item.

In other areas the law provides a major increase for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), establishes a \$474 million emergency firefighting fund, and boosts spending across-the-board for the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A House-Senate conference committee put the final bill together in an October 27 meeting. Acting with unusual speed, on October 29 the House approved the conference bill by a 247-to-178 vote, and the Senate followed suit the same day with a 72-to-28 vote. The bill was given momentum because it also extended a temporary spending resolution for other agency appropriations bills.

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

- [TV viewing among kids at an eight-year high](#)
- [Parks wiring the woods to draw people used to ease](#)
- [A rain-or-shine exercise in exercise](#)
- [Obesity takes a toll on kids – it's not only a physical issue](#)

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

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