



## October 2009 Newsletter

National Park Hospitality Association

[www.parkpartners.org](http://www.parkpartners.org)

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### **2009 Park Partners Forum right around the corner!**

NPHA members, friends and allies will soon gather in Yosemite National Park to discuss trends affecting the concessions industry, activities of NPHA's Task Forces on Rate Approval and Marketing, new technology opportunities and much more. Concessioners will meet October 18-20 at the Tenaya Lodge – a Delaware North Companies property – with special meetings and events at the Ahwahnee Hotel.

NPHA is pleased to confirm our keynote speaker, Bob Stanton, Interior Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget. Mr. Stanton will discuss Interior's Youth and National Service Initiatives and how concessioners can aid in these efforts. Joining Deputy Assistant Secretary Stanton will be key NPS officials including Jo Pendry, Chief of the NPS Commercial Services Program.

The NPS Concessions Management Advisory Board, chaired by Dr. James J. Eyster, will meet at the Ahwahnee Hotel on Wednesday, October 21, following the Park Partners Forum. NPHA Chairman Joe Fassler and NPHA Counselor Derrick Crandall have been asked to participate in a panel on concessioners at the gathering. This meeting is open to the public and free of charge, so no RSVP is required if Park Partners Forum participants would like to stay for the meeting.

- [2009 Park Partners Forum Schedule](#)
- [NPS Concessions Management Advisory Board Meeting Agenda](#)

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## **Jonathan Jarvis moves in as National Park Service Director, makes key appointments**

Jonathan B. Jarvis was confirmed on September 24 by the U.S. Senate as the 18th director of the National Park Service and will be in Washington full-time as of October 19 – but he is already taking action. Mr. Jarvis, a 30+ year NPS veteran, has served as regional director of the agency's Pacific West Region since 2002 . His appointment came just as the new Ken Burns PBS film on national parks launched, and both stories attracted significant positive media attention.

"America's National Park System is a gift from past generations to this and succeeding generations. I look forward to working with Secretary Salazar, the Congress, our partners, and the extraordinary employees of the National Park Service as we prepare for the next century of stewardship and excellent visitor experiences," Mr. Jarvis remarked.

Soon after being confirmed, the new Director joined Interior Secretary Ken Salazar in Yosemite National Park and met with Shelton Johnson, one of NPS's new "stars" from the Burns movie. Mr. Johnson helps share the story of the Buffalo Soldiers who were, in fact, some of the first "park rangers" in the early days of our national parks.

There are a number of other personnel changes at the National Park Service, including new Deputy Director for Communications and Community Assistance Mickey Fearn and Director of Communications Cindy Pena. Both are new to the agency. And Director Jarvis appointed Dr. Gary Machlis as the first-ever Science Advisor to the Director. The Science Advisor will play a key role in advancing science within the NPS and advising the NPS director on science policy and programs.

"Applying the very best science and scholarly research to management of national parks is critical," said Mr. Jarvis. "The appointment of Dr. Machlis to this new and important position will advance the role of science within our agency as we meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century."

Dr. Machlis will provide advice on matters of science and will help in the effective delivery of scientific information to NPS managers, decision makers, the Interior Department, Congress, stakeholders, park visitors, and citizens. He will help assure that NPS uses the best available science to address the complex natural and cultural resource challenges facing NPS, from climate change to science education for youth. Many involved with parks know Gary Machlis well. A graduate of the University of Washington with a Ph.D. in human ecology from Yale University, he now teaches at the University of Idaho and has served as the NPS Visiting Chief Social Scientist.

In addition, there are a number of key senior posts open in the field, including the Pacific West regional directorship and superintendent posts at Yosemite and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. There are strong signals that the new Director may make a number of reassignments in the near future for senior agency personnel who are part of the SES program – a group that includes Associate Directors, Regional Directors and key Superintendents.

For more details on Mr. Jarvis' confirmation, [click here](#).

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## **Director Jarvis: Media fave**

New NPS Director Jon Jarvis is issuing messages to all NPS employees and talking to the media to help establish his priorities and highlight his philosophy. An October 14 story in the *Jackson Hole News and Gazette* had this to say:

*As director, Jarvis said one of his top priorities will be to reach out to minorities and to young people who are more comfortable with video games than nature. He told a story about a woman who bought her daughter a compact disk of nature sounds.*

*"This kid listened to the sounds on her headset and her first question to her mother was 'Are these sounds real? I want to go hear them myself,' " he said. "It's that kind of opportunity that we need to capitalize on. There are real experiences. Seeing the Milky Way yourself is a lot better than seeing it on iPods.*

*"The need is real," he said. "We're not seeing in the demographics of our visitors a reflection of the demographics of this country. That is a concern. It's just because of a lack of exposure."*

*Jarvis said he is "wide open" to the use of technology to help make parks relevant to more people. Also, he wants to put park rangers back into classrooms and wants to get students out into parks and historical sites.*

*"Getting those sites alive with kids, it's been powerful," he said. "[One teacher said] the park rangers are rock stars to the kids. Where we can [get rangers back into classrooms], we should do that."*

To read the entire article, [click here](#).

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## **Pillars of Support: Rex Maughan of Forever Resorts to Receive 2009 Sheldon Coleman Great Outdoors Award**

Rex Maughan, Chairman, President, and Director of Forever Living Products International, Inc. and its affiliate Forever Resorts, has been chosen to receive the 21st Sheldon Coleman Great Outdoors Award, the recreation community's most prestigious award. The award is presented annually to an individual whose personal efforts have contributed substantially to enhancing outdoor experiences across America. The award will be presented on October 20 in Yosemite National Park as a featured event of the 2009 Park Partners Forum.

Mr. Maughan is one of the recreation community's most dynamic and influential leaders, and he has long played a active role in building public/private partnerships, fostering environmentally responsible development, connecting children to the outdoors and encouraging healthy outdoor activity. "Rex Maughan is a visionary leader for the recreation and concessions industries. His companies lead the way for others, showing how business should be done to enhance recreation experiences for generations to come," said Derrick Crandall, American Recreation Coalition (ARC) President, as he announced the award.

The award was established in 1989 in honor of Sheldon Coleman (1901-1988), longtime Chairman of The Coleman Company and a visionary champion of outdoor recreation and conservation. Past recipients of the award include former President George H.W. Bush, National Geographic Society Chairman Gil Grosvenor, then-U.S. Senators John Breaux, Frank Murkowski and John Chafee, U.S. Representatives Jim Oberstar, Ralph Regula and Thomas Petri, former Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta, Snowbird Ski and Summer Resort Chairman and CEO Dick Bass, and former Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne.

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## **New park visitor websites**

There are many new developments in websites focusing on national parks. Expedia recently announced that it is partnering with the National Park Foundation on a new website to help travelers plan trips to national parks. The website launch was set to coincide with the airing of Ken Burns's new documentary on PBS, "The National Parks: America's Best Idea." The site – [www.expedia.com/nationalparks](http://www.expedia.com/nationalparks) – features downloadable park maps and other content from the National Park Foundation, as well as information about lodging options outside the parks.

Also triggered by the Ken Burns film is [www.feelfree.org](http://www.feelfree.org), a website created by the National Parks Conservation Association, but envisioned as a comprehensive gateway effort for those seeking park information, or those wanting to contribute to parks causes, volunteer, or learn more about the issues facing national parks today.

And [www.OhRanger.com](http://www.OhRanger.com) recently received good reviews from *USA Today* for its use in activity planning for parks and public lands. Said *USA Today*: "Wondering where to go fishing in Florida or camping in Idaho? Start at OhRanger.com, enter your activity and location, and be wowed by all the options. With a database spanning national and state parks, wildlife refuges, recreation areas and other public lands, this site serves up detailed listings for 20 outdoor activities in all 50 states. Using the 'Where to Go' section, you can choose an activity and see which states offer the most options. 'What to Do' lets you choose an activity and state, and then drill down into detailed listings. You can also enter a combination of activities, allowing a family with a birder and a bicyclist find a suitable place for both. Park listings provide great depth and detail. A well designed forum puts reader questions front and center. Content comes from the American Park Network [an NPHA Associate Member], which publishes park and campground guides." And further improvements for the site are just days away. The American Park Network will highlight OhRanger.com at the 2009 Park Partners Forum.

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## **Submit your activities to NPS's Family Fun website!**

This past summer, the National Park Service Commercial Services Program, the Office of Tourism, and the Office of Public Affairs launched the "Family Fun" website as a cooperative effort to help build greater public awareness of park and concessioner activities and special events on a seasonal basis. Activity submissions by NPHA members were crucial to the success of the summer campaign. NPS has received much positive feedback on the summer project and is continuing the Family Fun program.

NPS is again asking concessioners 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. The website update is planned for October, so please send materials as soon as possible. However, 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](mailto: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](mailto:Kurt_Rausch@nps.gov).

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## **NPHA National Parks Marketing Council meets in New York**

NPHA's National Parks Marketing Council met in New York City on September 23 to review the progress on many important marketing council initiatives and to discuss upcoming opportunities for park promotion. The group discussed recent conversations with the Interior Department and the National Park Service regarding website creation and updates, the possibility of a new concessioner mark to designate official concessioner products, outcomes of the recent forum on economic stimulation through visitation growth, international marketing efforts and more.

The council will present the results of these discussions and possible action items at the 2009 Park Partners Forum in Yosemite National Park on Monday, October 19.

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## **Park outreach and marketing gems uncovered by ARC**

Park professionals across the country are using innovative communication channels, partnerships and out-of-the box thinking to attract people to parks and connect kids with nature according to preliminary findings of a study being conducted jointly by the American Recreation Coalition (ARC) and the National Park Service. New social media tools including websites, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are being employed to reach underserved audiences and build communities.

The study is being conducted by ARC Senior Fellow Michael Sciulla and an NPS staffer detailed to the NPS National Tourism Office and is scheduled to be completed by early 2010. ARC will post the best of these outreaching and marketing ideas on its website ([www.funoutdoors.com](http://www.funoutdoors.com)). ARC also plans to honor the best and most successful of these initiatives with a new award that will be presented next summer. Among the gems uncovered so far:

- ◆ In Virginia, starting with an existing electronic newsletter and database of state park events and programs, the state has added a blog, Facebook, My Space and Twitter pages. The database and blog posts feed automatically into the social media channels.
- ◆ In Maryland, the state Park Service has partnered with Maryland Public Television to document and promote Park Quest – Adventures from Mountain to Sea, which has attracted 305 teams and 1507 team members
- ◆ In Texas, the Parks and Wildlife Department has used Facebook and YouTube to launch 40 workshops throughout the state to make it easy for families to learn basic recreation skills like how to start a fire, cook outdoors and use a GPS for geocaching.

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## **New NPS statistics report rise in visitation, decline in overnight stays**

The National Park Service has released the latest park visitation report with data through July 1, 2009. While the report shows a year-to-date 3.6% increase in visitors, the numbers for overnight stays are not as promising. The concessioner lodging overnight stays reported were down 7% through July 1, although concessioner camping stays were up as much as 18%. More recent data suggest a late summer improvement in overnight lodging numbers. To track the numbers, go to [www.nature.nps.gov/stats/index.cfm](http://www.nature.nps.gov/stats/index.cfm) and click on "Reports," then build your choice of reports by park, by type of park or by the entire system.

Concessioner lodging trends and their potential impact on concessioner operations will be discussed at the upcoming 2009 Park Partners Forum.

To read the full six-month report, [click here](#).

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## **Federal Parks and Recreation Newsletter: Congress buys some time to complete DOI money bill**

President Obama signed a law October 1 (PL 111-68) that extends all remaining appropriations bills through the end of the month, ostensibly to give Congress time to complete remaining money bills. The extension applies to a fiscal year 2010 Interior and related agencies appropriations bill (HR 2996), among other spending measures. Both the Senate and House have passed versions of HR 2996. The bill is now waiting for a conference committee to begin. "I don't see anything that is going to block it," said one lobbyist. "The thing that may trip it up is the distraction of senators by other legislation, such as health care and climate control. A lot of the senators on the appropriations subcommittee are involved with those debates."

Three other appropriations bills with outdoor connotations are moving along as fast or faster than the Interior bill: Conferees have completed an Energy and Water bill and the House approved it October 1; conferees have also completed an Agriculture bill and the House approved it October 7; and a Transportation bill is awaiting a House-Senate conference. The breakthrough that set up a House-Senate conference on the Interior bill came September 24 when the Senate approved the measure 77-to-21.

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**

- Interior enters [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#), and [Twitter](#) age
- [National parks headed for banner year](#)
- [With his new documentary, Ken Burns is the voice of the wilderness](#)
- [10 national parks Ken Burns doesn't want you to miss](#)

For more information or to send questions/comments, please email: [mmeade@funoutdoors.com](mailto:mmeade@funoutdoors.com)

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