



OCTOBER 2009 SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER

National Park Hospitality Association

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2009 NPHA Park Partners Forum report



The National Park Hospitality Association's 2009 Park Partners Forum brought together concessioners, National Park Service employees, Interior Department officials, allies and friends groups to discuss the future of recreation, travel and tourism trends affecting the concessions industry in 2010 and beyond. The productive gathering, which convened October 18-20, 2009, at the Tenaya Lodge – a Delaware North Companies property – adjacent to Yosemite National Park, also included a session in the park and a dinner at the historic Ahwahnee Hotel – and delightful weather.

To read the full report on the 2009 Park Partners Forum, [click here](#).

Mark your calendars! NPHA Annual Meeting, March 7-9, 2010, Washington, D.C.

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NPHA rolls out plan for new National Parks Promotion Council

At NPHA's 2009 Park Partners Forum, Terry MacRae, Chairman of NPHA's Marketing Committee, outlined a plan for the creation of the National Parks Promotion Council (NPPC), a broad stakeholders group tasked with increasing awareness of and interest in national parks. Mr. MacRae reminded the group that the word "promote" is a key element of the National Park Service's mission statement, and that it is especially appropriate to market

the parks in a time when visitation to these special places continues to fall, even while the American population is growing. He explained that, currently, there is no organization that works to promote all of the national parks, and the fact that NPS does not have the flexibility to market that concessioners and others do is further reason for the creation of a separate group. The NPPC could leverage cooperative strategies of interested parties to create a unified website, audience-targeting plans, joint promotions, welcome centers, coordinated media outreach, and more. Many successful models for the plan already exist, such as Go RVing and the California Travel & Tourism Commission. Mr. MacRae reported that the NPHA board had approved start-up funding for NPPC, although investments will be sought from a wide range of partners and securing sustainable funding for the effort will be a core goal for the new organization.

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NPHA members and allies discuss recreation, travel, tourism and technology trends affecting the concessions industry in 2010 and beyond

NPHA's 2009 Park Partners Forum included several exciting panel discussions on trends affecting the concessions industry in the areas of recreation, travel, tourism and technology. The following special guests were featured in the panel discussions: Dr. Emilyn Sheffield, Professor at California State University at Chico; Jim Lyons, Lecturer and Research Scholar at Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies; Dennis Biela of LightSpeed Media; Mark Finley of Finley-Holiday Film Corporation; Alan O'Neill of the Outside Las Vegas Foundation; and Mark Saferstein of the American Park Network/OhRanger.com.

For full descriptions of these sessions, see the full report on the 2009 Park Partners Forum [here](#).

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Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior Bob Stanton discusses youth initiatives with Park Partners Forum participants

Robert Stanton, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Policy and Program Management and former Director of the National Park Service (1997-2001), joined NPHA's 2009 Park Partners Forum for a discussion on the Interior Department's youth initiatives. He noted that Interior has a long history of reaching out to young people. In 1933, the Civilian Conservation Corps put 2.5 million young men to work on public lands across the nation. Building on that tradition, he explained, Secretary Salazar wants to capture the spirit of the CCC to increase the connectivity between young people and their lands. Mr. Stanton mentioned how Richard Louv's book *Last Child in the Woods* drew much-needed attention to serious issues regarding our young people and the outdoors, including decreased time spent outdoors and increased time spent in front of screens, reduction of recess at school, and problems associated with increasing childhood obesity. On June 6, the Secretary created a youth office to carry out Department-wide activities to engage youth on public lands through employment, services and recreation programs. Mr. Stanton described the office as practical and self-serving for the Interior Department as well. The current workforce is aging and the demographics of the nation are changing, he noted, and Interior needs to attract a diverse workforce that represents the face of America. "There is no more compelling obligation than the one we have to our youth," Mr. Stanton said.

To read the full story, see the report on the 2009 Park Partners Forum [here](#).

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NPS Commercial Services leads Q&A session with concessioners at Park Partners Forum

Jo Pendry, Chief of the NPS Commercial Services Program, led an Exchange with NPS Commercial Services session for concessioners on the Concessions Management Advisory Board Meeting to be held following the Park Partners Forum and more. She informed the group about a new set of quarters coming out featuring America's public lands that will replace the former state quarters program. Five coins will be released each year over the next 10 years. Ms. Pendry was pleased to report that NPS is making progress on revamping its website and is utilizing new social media through channels like Facebook to reach out to new audiences. Concessioners also shared information with the commercial services staff on their sales trends for summer 2009, reporting that while visitation may be slightly up, visitors are having shorter stays (often not sleeping in the parks) and spending far less on things like souvenirs. Ms. Pendry also stated her support for the concessioners' idea of an official "concessioner mark" to be used to designate official NPS concessioners.

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Rex Maughan honored with 21st Annual Sheldon Coleman Great Outdoors Award

The 2009 Park Partners Forum featured a special presentation of the 21st Annual Sheldon Coleman Great Outdoors Award to Rex Maughan of Forever Resorts. The Coleman Award is the recreation community's most prestigious award, and it is presented annually to an individual whose personal efforts have contributed substantially to enhancing outdoor experiences across America. Mr. Maughan is one of the recreation community's most dynamic and influential leaders, and he has long played an 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," said American Recreation Coalition President Derrick Crandall. "His companies lead the way for others, showing how business should be done to enhance recreation experiences for generations to come."

To read the full story, [click here](#).

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Concessioners participate in Concessions Management Advisory Board meeting and set follow-up goals

Many concessioners attended the NPS Concessions Management Advisory Board (CMAB) meeting at the Ahwahnee Hotel following the Park Partners Forum, hearing from the NPS commercial services staff on subjects ranging from its training efforts for the 300 people involved in concessions management to projections of future concessioner contract prospectuses and awards. Prior to the conclusion of the meeting of the newly-reconstituted board – which presently has just four of its seven authorized members – a panel of concessioners reported to the board on current business conditions, discussed concerns about the delay in resolving Leasehold Surrender Interest guidelines, and sought CMAB support for more uniformity and less burden in NPS concessions management practices.

Following the meeting, NPHA Chairman Joe Fassler sent a letter to CMAB Chair Dr. James Eyster expressing appreciation for the board's contribution to the concessions industry and outlining the following steps for further action: finalizing LSI regulations and related issues, standardizing key business practices that now necessitate substantial needless burden on

concessioners and NPS staff, encouraging and rewarding outstanding concessioners, using SERA to produce important systemic changes, protecting the public while also allowing innovation and use of marketing and operational practices which mitigate risks now facing concessioners in parks, and reversing the decline in visitation to our national parks – especially regarding overnight stays – by aiding outreach and promotion efforts.

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Share your successful marketing and outreach programs!

The American Recreation Coalition and the National Park Service are collecting creative park marketing efforts – innovative means to connect Americans to their national and state parks. And they have unearthed some gems! [Click here](#) to learn more about how one NPS unit teamed up with a local friends group to take more than 4,500 summer school students out on the Mississippi River in big “war canoes” this summer and plans to boost participation to 15,000 youth in 2010! 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.

We know many NPHA members and friends are involved in efforts like these, and we want to hear from you! If you have an idea you would like to share, please fill out the program questionnaire [found here](#). Please call or email Melissa Andersen at 202-682-9530 or mandersen@funoutdoors.com with any questions.

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

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