



## September 2009 Newsletter

National Park Hospitality Association

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

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

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### Last chance to register for NPHA's Park Partners Forum in Yosemite: October 18-20

NPHA has extended the deadline to submit registrations for its 2009 Park Partners Forum at Tenaya Lodge in Yosemite National Park on October 18-20, 2009 (Sunday meeting start, with departure on Wednesday by 10 AM). **Please submit your registration forms to NPHA by Friday, September 18!** The Park Partners Forum will include general sessions addressing topics key to the future of the concessions industry, educational sessions, appearances by important industry allies and an opportunity to observe partnership opportunities underway at Yosemite involving park concessioners. The general sessions will highlight current efforts at outreach and marketing – and opportunities for even greater efforts in the days ahead. **Special guests include Tom Strickland, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, and Bob Stanton, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget.** The NPS Commercial Services Program will help with educational programs and join in a roundtable discussion with participants. Other planned events include a trip into Yosemite National Park for an educational and fun afternoon and an evening at The Ahwahnee and Wawona Hotels. An agenda will be sent out shortly.

Rates are \$176 per night, single or double occupancy. Reservations can be made by phone at (800) 635-5807 or online at [www.tenayalodge.com](http://www.tenayalodge.com), using group code **30F5A3**. If you are an NPS employee, please use the code **30F8T8** to receive the federal per diem rate of \$126 per night. The NPS Concessions Management Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for October 21-22 at the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite National Park, but the meeting is tentative, pending the approval of the Advisory Board Member appointments. More details on this meeting will be sent to you as soon as they are available.

**EXTENDED: Room reservations must be completed by Friday, September 18!**

- [Park Partners Forum Registration Form](#)
- [Overview of the Park Partners Forum including all relevant travel and lodging information](#)

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## **September 15 Gateways to Parks and Tribal Lands Forum held at Interior**

The Interior Department hosted an important event on September 15 focusing on cooperation between gateway communities and parks and tribal lands. The session involved a number of regional tourism-related organizations as well as four federal departments: Interior, Transportation, Agriculture and Commerce. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood delivered keynote addresses at the opening of the session, and the Federal Perspectives panel that followed, which included Interior Assistant Secretary Tom Strickland, was moderated by NPHA Executive Committee member Terry MacRae. NPHA was an active player in the meeting, hosting the welcoming breakfast, participating in panels during the day, distributing our video "Partners in Parks, United for America" and assisting in bringing in a state-of-the-art "Green RV." Xanterra's Jim McCaleb also played an active role in the session.

The day was notable for several reasons. First, Secretary Salazar and others clearly identified declines in park visitation as a problem and applauded marketing efforts, including the fee-free weekends, as important steps in reversing this trend. Second, the state tourism directors and others at the session were very enthusiastic about cooperation with concessioners in promoting parks overall rather than only specific park offerings.



*Secretaries LaHood and Salazar gather with top tourism and recreation leaders during a tour of a new "Green RV" prior to the opening of the Gateways forum*

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## **Concessioners aid NYC premiere of Ken Burns's documentary**

Concessioners will play a prominent role at the debut of Ken Burns's "The National Parks: America's Best Idea." While the first episode of the documentary will not air on PBS until September 27, a special kick-off event hosted by PBS, the National Parks Conservation Association and the National Park Foundation will be held in New York City's Central Park on September 23. Expected guests include Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and musical performers Eric Benet, Gavin DeGraw, Jose Feliciano, Carole King, Alison Krauss and Union Station.

NPHA members have added to the premiere's excitement by donating national park-themed prizes to the event valued at over \$30,000. Prizes range from stays in the lodges of Glacier National Park and week-long houseboat rentals on Lake Mead to paddle boat rides on the National Mall. The event is an excellent opportunity to publicize concessioner offerings in the parks as well as to demonstrate a commitment to working with the National Park Service to increase visitation to our nation's special outdoor places.

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## **National Parks Second Century Commission to present report**

Coinciding with National Parks Week, the independent National Parks Second Century Commission will report its findings and recommendations after a year-long investigation and discussion about national parks, their value and their role in society. This report will be released September 21 in Washington, D.C. and will offer a vision and strategic path for the future of the national parks, including recommendations for actions on National Park Service policy, programs including resource preservation and education, funding, organizational issues and future growth of the National Park System.

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## **Pillars of Support: NPHA members Delaware North and Xanterra receive NPS 2009 Environmental Achievement Awards**

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 (NPS), protecting parks and serving visitors.

NPS recently presented its 2009 Environmental Achievement Awards to parks and concessioners that incorporated high environmental standards into their operations. Acting NPS Director Dan Wenk praised this year's winners for "setting an example by protecting not only NPS sites but also the land and environment beyond their borders." Winners included two NPHA members. Delaware North Companies Parks and Resorts was recognized for its GreenPath® Environmental Management System at Grand Canyon, Sequoia and Kings Canyon, Yellowstone, and Yosemite National Parks. Xanterra Parks & Resorts was honored for cutting emissions of greenhouse gases and conserving energy at Yellowstone by supplying used cooking oil from the company's eateries to run boilers at its hotels, which replaced petroleum-based diesel fuel in the heating of the hotels. Xanterra also received an award for reducing waste in Grand Canyon National Park at the hotel Phantom Ranch through efforts such as beginning a composting program, giving guests duffel packs made from used feed bags, and selling only postcards from Mosaic, a zero-emissions printing company. Bryce Canyon National Park/Xanterra Parks & Resorts received an honorable mention for partnering with Garfield County, Utah, to transport recyclables more efficiently.

Share your positive role in our parks with Mindy Meade at [mmeade@funoutdoors.com](mailto:mmeade@funoutdoors.com)!

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## **Be sure to check out NPS Digest online!**

Do you want to keep up with the latest news from the National Park Service? Be sure to check out NPS Digest online. The Digest – the "NPS Gateway for Partners, Friends and Alumni" – is a central site for the most up-to-date news from the parks, including news releases, incident reports, personnel changes, training information, event calendars, ParkTips and more! NPS Digest can be accessed at <http://home.nps.gov/applications/digest/>.

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## **National Park Foundation awards grants to 35 parks; lauds Ken Burns and "The National Parks: America's Best Idea"**

Inspired by the forthcoming Ken Burns documentary *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*, the National Park Foundation (NPF) has established a new grant program to connect underserved audiences, primarily people of color, to the national parks. NPF, in partnership with the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, has awarded "America's Best Idea" Grants, totaling \$500,000, to 35 national parks across the country to develop outreach strategies and engagement programs for people who are traditionally under-represented in their local national parks.

"The point of America's Best Idea – both the documentary and the grants program – is that the country is strengthened by the deep and lasting bond between people and their parks," said Neil Mulholland, new president of NPF. "Ken Burns has captured the amazing personal stories of men and women from all walks of life who helped form the parks because of their love for the natural and historical treasures they hold. We want to be sure to continue capturing those stories and building that legacy among audiences as diverse as the parks themselves."

For more information on the announcement of the "America's Best Idea" Grants, [click here](#).

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## **Federal Parks and Recreation Newsletter: Salazar onboard with efforts to increase National Park Service visitation**

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar has raised the banner to encourage people to visit the national parks. Citing data first reported by *Federal Parks and Recreation* in mid-August, Salazar last month announced a substantial increase of 4.5 million visits to the national parks over the first six months of the year, compared to 2008. Salazar didn't attribute the increase to fee-free weekends, as others have, but they were on his mind. "I am hopeful that the fee-free weekends are making it even easier for Americans to enjoy the special places that belong to all of us," he said. Salazar's interest in the national parks was complemented by visits by President Obama and his family in mid-August to Yellowstone National Park and Grand Canyon National Park. Salazar said, "It is great to see so many Americans, including the First Family, take advantage of the incredible natural, cultural, and historic resources that we have here at home. Especially when times are tough, our parks and public lands refuel the spirit and help energize local economies."

Gateway communities and national park concessioners have for the last eight years asked the Bush administration, the Obama administration, the National Park Service and Congress to act to reverse a decline in visits to the national parks. That decline has, according to various interpretations, been caused by the terrorist attacks of 9/11, competition from resorts, an increase in the use of computer games by the young, a disinterest in parks among minorities or all of the above. Most everyone agrees the uptick in visitation this year has, in large part, stemmed from the distressed economy. Americans and foreign visitors alike are strapped for cash and the national parks and state and local parks make for a comparatively less expensive vacation than theme parks or resorts. "The Interior Department is really being reminded by the White House that a revitalized economy is the responsibility of every cabinet officer," said Derrick Crandall, Counselor to the National Park Hospitality Association. "Salazar understands the public lands can play a significant role in rebuilding regional economies and in rebuilding the national economy." Mr. Crandall added, "So when the secretary puts out a press release on increased visitation and news releases

on projects created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, he is offering incentives to help grow jobs.”

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**

- [Jarvis nomination on hold](#)
- [U.S. Senate passes Travel Promotion Act](#)
- [Blazing new trails in Native American lands](#)
- [“Glamping” offers an upscale take on the great outdoors](#)

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