



# September 2010 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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## Message from Chairman Joe Fassler on Park Partners Forum

As we look ahead to the *Park Partners Forum* next month, we have many vital issues to talk about and work on together. We'll have several key National Park Service Regional Directors and national staff in attendance and we'll discuss DO 35B, SERA, the pending AGO report to the President and the NPS 2016 Campaign. The last two items are truly important efforts that can help our parks for years to come. In addition, we'll share important information from the September meetings of the National Park System Advisory Board in Washington, DC, attended by Derrick Crandall, and the NPS Concessions Management Advisory Board in Glacier. I am speaking at the latter, along with NPHA Vice Chairs Steve Tedder and Bruce Fears, and several other NPHA members will attend. Along with Jo Pendry, Chief, Commercial Services, National Park Service, we will report highlights to Forum meeting participants. I appreciate the time you will take to attend.

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## **October Park Partners Forum Approaches Fast**

Gerry Gabrys, the Guest Services, Inc. company, and hotel staff at the DoubleTree Naples Guest Suites look forward to welcoming you to Naples, Florida for the 2010 NPHA Park Partners meeting, October 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>. Registration to NPHA is due **Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup>** (A 25% late fee will be assessed after this date). Your guest room reservation deadline is **September 20<sup>th</sup>**. Please call (800) 222-TREE or (239) 593-8733 or go online at [www.doubletreenaples.com](http://www.doubletreenaples.com). Our group code is PSF to receive the discounted rate of **\$99** (plus taxes) for a room at this lovely all-suite hotel.

### **Forum Schedule Highlights:**

This year's action-packed meeting begins with an outdoor opening reception followed by a kick-off meeting Sunday, October 17<sup>th</sup> with departures on Wednesday morning, October 20<sup>th</sup>. A representative from the office of the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks will speak. On Monday and Tuesday, general session panels include: Linking our Legacy of Parks to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Americans; Green Operations Crisis Action – on oil spills, for example; NPS/NPHA Cooperation; NPHA Outreach Efforts, including premiere of the new NPHA Smartphone "Parks App" and a marketing update by the National Parks Promotion Council (NPPC); and Growing and Improving Visitor Services in National Parks. There will also be an Operational Exchange with NPS staff (DO 35B, SERA process, alternative LSI treatment) and a Lunch and Learn Session. In addition, there is a Mobile Seminar to Big Cypress Preserve. You'll also have a chance to drive a Segway and learn more about their company, NPHA's newest member. The inventive company is a Forum sponsor and will be on hand to provide test drives on Tuesday the 19<sup>th</sup>.

To download the Forum details, click on:

[Registration Form](#)

[Schedule](#)

[Overview](#)

[Key West Details](#)

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## **MyParkGuru Smartphone App To Be Showcased at October Forum**

As you've been hearing, to help build park visit interest from young adults and share trip planning details, the NPHA will launch a Smartphone App, tentatively named MyParkGuru. Five NPHA members have provided financial support for the App. As sponsors, they will be offering the App free to guests and customers. You can still join in and get this benefit. And all NPHA members will be able to use the App to send news of special events, offers and provide travel tips. The product will be showcased at next month's *Park Partners Forum*, another key reason to attend. Concessioners in the National Park System will be the focus, along with all units. Your content, provided by NPHA, should be reviewed for accuracy. The Apple App Store will sell the product. For more details, please contact Derrick Crandall [dcrandall@funoutdoors.com](mailto:dcrandall@funoutdoors.com) or Tracey Simmons [tsimmons@funoutdoors.com](mailto:tsimmons@funoutdoors.com) or call (202) 682-9530.

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## **House Parks Subcommittee Hearing on Partnerships and Investment**

On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests & Public Lands will convene to look at partnerships in parks and especially ways to encourage needed investments of non-appropriated funds in parks. NPHA Counselor Derrick Crandall has been invited to be a witness, serving on one of two panels that will also include key representatives of NPS, the National Park Foundation, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, NatureBridge and other prominent park partners. The NPHA continues to

stress and pursue innovative and sound ideas for encouraging concessioner-led investments in parks. (Also see Federal Parks & Recreation newsletter)

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## **AGO Update: Chicago Session Helps Shape November Report to the President**

The America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative is the Obama Administration's central effort for park and resource issues. Interior's Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Will Shafroth, National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis, Agriculture Under Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment Harris Sherman and other key government officials attended a highly focused AGO listening session in Chicago last month to discuss **Health and the Great Outdoors**. The Chicago meeting was one of the last of more than two dozen listening sessions since AGO was kicked off by the President at an April White House Conference in Washington. The listening sessions have attracted 10,000 people, and the AGO website has generated more than 2,000 ideas. "The recreation community has long cited the outdoors as natural health and fitness centers and the Chicago meeting is a perfect example of the medical profession and the federal government recognizing the impact getting outdoors has on health," said Derrick Crandall. The \$2.7 trillion annual national healthcare tab "should include perhaps two to five percent in funding to support park improvement. The impact would be amazing," he said. How to work with health entities at the federal and state levels through efforts incorporating metrics and measurement as well as participation statistics was discussed. The information will be part of a draft report due to the President by November 15<sup>th</sup>.

Speakers and organizers included: Drs. Michael Suk and Daphne Miller; Chicago Parks District CEO Tim Mitchell; Building Healthier Communities CEO John Knoebel; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary Dr. Howard Koh; USDA Under Secretary Harris Sherman; White House Council on Environmental Quality Associate Director Amy Salzman; US EPA Regional Administrator Susan Hedman; and President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition Executive Director Shellie Pfohl. Recreation community involvement was significant as well: ARC Chairman and National Marine Manufacturers Association President Thom Dammrich; International Mountain Bicycling Association President Mike Van Abel; Camp Fire USA President Cathy Tisdale; The Corps Network President Sally Prouty; Americans for Responsible Recreational Access President Larry Smith; and Choose Outdoors President Bruce Ward.

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## **Travel Promotion Act (TPA) Launched; Future Funds for National Parks**

Earlier this month, the Travel Promotion Act (TPA) went into effect. Inbound travelers to the US from visa waiver countries will be charged a \$14 fee when accessing the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). National Parks and other public lands will benefit from these fees. Efforts by the Corporation for Tourism Promotion (CTP) are estimated to create a marketing budget of up to \$200 million per year to attract millions of new visitors to the United States, market the U.S.A. brand, and explain changing travel security policies. The private sector is responsible for raising 50 percent of the Corporation's budget. The CTP announced the new board this month, comprised of various segments of the travel community:

State Tourism: (2)

Caroline Beteta, California Travel and Tourism Commission and Diane Shoher, Wyoming Office of Travel and Tourism

Convention & Visitor Bureaus:

George Fertitta - NYC & Company

Hotel:

Stephen Cloobek - Diamond Resorts International

Travel Distribution:

Tom Klein - Sabre Holdings

Attractions:	Al Weiss - Walt Disney Parks and Resorts
Rail:	David Lim - Amtrak
Visa Immigration:	Lynda Zengerle - Steptoe & Johnson
Airline:	Mark Schwab - United Airlines
Restaurant:	Roy Yamaguchi - Roy's Restaurants
Small Business:	Daniel Halpern - Jackmont Hospitality

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## National Park Service Commercial Services Updates

**Concession Management Advisory Board (CMAB) To Meet in Glacier** - NPHA Chair and Glacier Park Inc. Chairman Joe Fassler will lead a delegation of NPHA members participating in the NPS CMAB meeting September 20-21 in Montana's Glacier National Park. As mentioned in his Chairman comments above, Joe will speak at the meeting and report at the *Park Partners Forum* next month, asking for board assistance on near-term operational issues raised in Fall 2009 letters to NPS and long-term strategies to serve park visitors well for many years to come.

**Alternative LSI for Signal Mountain contract** - The National Park Service announced in the *Federal Register* that it will adopt an alternative LSI (Leasehold Surrender Interest) schedule in the new concessions contract for Signal Mountain Lodge and Marina in Grand Teton National Park. The notice reported that the agency had reviewed the strong opposition expressed in public comments but will not change its announced intent to exercise an alternative permitted under the 1998 concessions reform act. The announcement did include a minor revision, allowing new investments by the selected concessioner in fixtures to be added to the LSI. Under the amended LSI treatment, which became available nine years after the passage of the act, concessioner LSI would be subject to a 40-year straight-line depreciation without any adjustment for CPI. By law, this alternative LSI treatment is only applicable to concessions contracts with LSI exceeding \$10 million. The revised LSI treatment is also restricted to situations where it is found to be in the best interest of the NPS, something NPHA questioned in its comments. NPS receipts will be reduced, NPS admits, but the result will be added competition at future concessions offerings. NPHA noted that the reduction in franchise fee income is almost certain to add to deferred maintenance problems in parks. This revised LSI schedule may or may not be applied to other concessions contracts in the future, although it appears likely. Any use of the alternative schedule requires opportunity for public comment.

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## 2016 Campaign Focus on Preservation, Education and Recreation

The 2016 Campaign is truly an important opportunity to assist our parks. NPHA is at the center of this project, helping to plan meetings in Washington and beyond. The anniversary initiative will prepare parks for the next century, responding to new trends reshaping our society and creating extraordinary demands on park resources and related education and recreation programs. The new efforts will use lessons from the partially successful Centennial Challenge Fund initiative of the previous Administration but will focus on a broader constituency and strategy. You'll hear more about this at the *Park Partners Forum*. Check the October newsletter for reports as well.

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## Rumblings on the Hill in support of NPS Centennial

**The following is from the Federal Parks & Recreation newsletter** - Despite the giant fissure separating Republicans and Democrats, there is a chance, however slim, the two sides will come together on a new program to prepare the national parks for their 100th birthday in

2016. As an opener Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.), chairman of the House subcommittee on National Parks, intends to hold a hearing this fall on new investment opportunities for the parks, perhaps outside federal appropriations. An aide to Grijalva confirmed this week the subcommittee plans to hold at least one hearing on the issue. The office of the ranking Republican on the subcommittee, Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), is also reportedly interested, did not respond to our queries. But said one source who has talked to both Congressmen, "They want to look into what kinds of things friends groups can do, not just philanthropy. They want to look at the benefits contributors have made to places like Fort Monroe and Presidio." To read the full story on the NPS Centennial and other relevant news from the latest issue of **Federal Parks & Recreation newsletter, a free benefit of NPHA membership, go to the members-only section of the NPHA website and use log-in code *nphaonly*.** [\[Click here\]](#).

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## News at National Parks

- **Free Admission Days**  
September 25<sup>th</sup>, National Public Lands Day, and November 11<sup>th</sup>, Veterans Day, are the additional two Free Admission days at America's National Parks this year. NPHA will be promoting these via the website and social media.
  - **National Parks Site of Citizenship Ceremonies for 1,000**  
The National Park Service and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service recently renewed a formal partnership to enhance citizenship ceremonies by holding them in National Parks. Now until September 24<sup>th</sup> nearly 1,000 candidates will take the oath of citizenship at naturalization ceremonies in Kings Canyon, the Grand Canyon, the Civil War battlefield at Vicksburg Military Park and the Lincoln Memorial. The theme is "Embrace Citizenship – Experience America through Your National Parks."
  - **Blue Ridge Parkway Promotes 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**  
Established in 1935, the Blue Ridge Parkway celebrates this remarkable route and the region through which it passes. For ideas on its promotion or to perhaps tie in, visit its website: <http://blueridgeparkway75.org/>
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## New Communications Director Joins NPHA

NPHA is pleased to welcome Tracey Simmons as Director of Communications replacing Mindy Meade. Tracey joins us after 12 years with the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Historic Hotels of America® (HHA) program where she served as Director, Membership Services/Brand Development. Prior, she worked in public relations for the United Motor Coach Association and Hyatt Hotels on Capitol Hill and Monterey, California. She also worked in tourism in Honolulu and graduated from the University of Hawai'i. For more information or to send questions/comments, please email her at [tsimmons@funoutdoors.com](mailto:tsimmons@funoutdoors.com)

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