



September 2011 Newsletter

National Park Hospitality Association

This newsletter is also available in PDF format on www.parkpartners.org

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NPHA Fall Meeting in Washington, D.C., November 1-3 – Update

NPHA's fall meeting will be November 1-3 at The Madison Hotel, 1177 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. This is going to be a very important meeting – and fun as well! In addition to lots of contact with Director Jon Jarvis and other NPS leaders, we'll enjoy evenings at two special places: 101 Constitution Avenue, NW, and Indigo Landing on the Potomac.

Room reservations should be made through NPHA. To reserve a room at The Madison for November 1-2, please contact Julia Mitchell at 202-682-9530 or jmitchell@funoutdoors.com.

And be sure to bookmark our [members-only events page](#) (password: nphaonly) to stay updated on the November Strategic Planning Session, the January America's Summit on National Parks and more!

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National Park Service Prepares for a New Century

The National Park Service unveiled **A Call to Action** last month, identifying four key themes and 36 actions to ready the agency for its 100th anniversary in 2016. The plan

commits the agency to connecting people to parks, strengthening local economies and encouraging organizational innovation within the NPS. The release came on Founder's Day – August 25 – on the 95th anniversary of the creation of the agency.

The four key themes of ***A Call to Action*** are: (1) "Connecting People to Parks"; (2) "Advancing the Education Mission"; (3) "Preserving America's Special Places"; and (4) "Enhancing Professional and Organizational Excellence." NPS Director Jon Jarvis outlined the plan and a new emphasis on communications internally and with the agency's key partners at a national town hall held in the historic Ford's Theater in downtown Washington, D.C. The broadcast went nationwide to NPS employees and partners. Joining Director Jarvis on stage were National Park Foundation President Neil Mulholland and three agency employees: Corita Waters, Outdoor Recreation Planner with the Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program; Lizette Richardson, Chief of Maintenance, Lake Mead National Recreation Area; and Dave Moore, Assistant Regional Director for the Northeast Region.

In his opening remarks, Director Jarvis told the employees and partners that the mission of the agency is both unique and centered on the core documents of the nation: the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. He stressed the mission to provide the American public with enjoyment of special places that are the nation's natural and historic best places. And he also noted the agency's major economic importance to the nation, reminding the group that visitors to parks create more than \$12 billion in economic activity annually and that other agency programs, including historic preservation, also contribute significantly to local and national economies. The Director emphasized that ***A Call to Action*** does not depend upon new funding or new authorities. Instead, he told the group, the plan is based on flexibility, creativity and partnerships.

As park partners, concessioners join NPS in caring for park visitors and can be a part of promoting better health for Americans. Commenting on the report and its release, National Park Hospitality Association Counselor Derrick Crandall said, "The focus and the themes of ***A Call to Action*** are appropriate and strategic. And many of the action steps are exciting – the focus on parks as a contributor to health, the call to expand access for water-based recreation, the link to sustainable economic activity in gateways and more. Concessioners can play a key role in the implementation of ***A Call to Action*** by leading the way in solving environmental and health issues in many national parks." Crandall added, "I saw a roomful of younger NPS employees become energized – and that is what the agency needs today more than anything: passionate, on-the-ground staff who want to be in contact with park visitors."

NPHA Executive Committee Member Gerry Gabrys, President of GSI, also participated in the Washington roll-out and commented, "National Park Foundation President Neil Mulholland underscored the vital role of partners in implementing the action steps of the new plan from the stage. He specifically noted the resources of concessioners, and stressed the commitment of concessioners to the agency's mission. His positive comments about concessioners were echoed by Lizette Richardson of Lake Mead National Recreation Area and, during the town hall portion of the program following the national telecast, by NPS Director Jon Jarvis."

Crandall added that concessioners look forward to working closely with the National Park Service on action steps. A key opportunity for action will come January 24-26 at the first-ever America's Summit on National Parks. More than 300 NPS officials and partners will gather to coordinate efforts linked to the 2016 centennial of the agency.

For more information on **A Call to Action**, go to www.nps.gov/calltoaction. For more information on participation in the America's Summit on National Parks, email jmitchell@funoutdoors.com.

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NPHA Concessioner Evelyn Hill Inc. Earns LEED Platinum Certification

The new Gift Pavilion on Liberty Island – operated by Evelyn Hill, Inc. – has become the fourth building in the National Park Service and the fifth building in New York City to earn a LEED Platinum Certification.

The certification recognizes the building's superlative achievements in sustainability. Major highlights include: the 43% recycled materials content of the building; LED lighting, which reduces the building's electric demand by 65%; a 40% reduction in water usage; and an Indoor Air Quality that exceeds all current building standards. Evelyn Hill Inc. was awarded the contract in May 2009, and took the initiative throughout the design process to pursue the lowest environmental impact possible. The building opened in June 2010.

Congratulations, Evelyn Hill Inc.! To read the news release, [click here](#).

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Did You Know?

NPS Stats, operated by the National Park Service Public Use Statistics Office, provides park visitation numbers by individual unit. Some data goes back as far as 1904!

[Click here](#) to visit the website.

Reminder: National Park Service Will Soon Announce 2012 Fee-Free Dates

The National Park Service will soon announce fee-free dates for 2012. The announcement is expected to come in late September, and many other federal agencies will join NPS in waiving entrance fees for special days in 2012. The tentative dates will most likely be similar to the 2011 fee-free dates. Please contact Derrick Crandall at dcrandall@funoutdoors.com for information about specific dates.

NPS is willing to include links to concessioner offers which supplement its 2012 fee-free dates. We've heard from a few of you – thanks, Shark Valley Tram Tours in the Everglades National Park, for telling us that you will renew your 2011 special offers for 2012 fee-free days! Follow their lead and take advantage of a wonderful opportunity to encourage park visitors to explore all their parks have to offer. You are free to simply

offer discounts – or to add value in other ways to park visits. Art shows, family photographs, wildlife walks, special meals – the sky is the limit!

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NPHA Partners with NPF and Park Units to Respond to *A Call to Action*

The new National Park Service ***A Call to Action*** urges creativity, flexibility and partnerships by NPS employees and partners. And NPHA is responding to this call. NPHA and the National Park Foundation have now created a special Centennial Fund that will support projects and programs specially linked to the NPS 2016 Centennial. Funding could go to projects like the upcoming America's Summit on National Parks or perhaps for special outreach efforts to youth. And revenues can come from special activities in park units involving concessioners, including a planned October 2012 event on the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park.

This project, plus a joint campaign by concessioners in Grand Canyon National Park to boost sales of America the Beautiful passes in conjunction with booking rooms and campsites and significantly expand the Guest Donation Program in the park, will be discussed at a November 4 meeting between Grand Canyon Park Superintendent Dave Uberuaga and the park's three "on-land" concessioners.

And speaking of the Guest Donation Program – NPF has provided a preliminary accounting of concessioner-collected Guest Donations in 2011. The report indicates a 60% increase over 2010. The most comprehensive picture yet of the Guest Donation Program is being prepared for delivery at NPHA's fall meeting. NPHA leaders have told the NPS that this program is ripe for expansion and improvements – improvements that will tell guests more about how the contributions will be used, offer them information on how they can become more involved in aiding national parks and expand the program to non-lodging and gateway community operations.

For more information, contact Derrick Crandall at dcrandall@funoutdoors.com.

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Obesity May Reach 1 in 2 Adults by 2030 – But National Parks and the Great Outdoors Can Help Fight This Increase

A study published this summer by the scientific journal *The Lancet* shows that obesity trends in the United States and the United Kingdom are on the rise – and are driving up healthcare costs. Based on data from the past 20 years, researchers projected an alarming view of what our country might look like by 2030. Obesity could increase among male adults from a 32% rate in 2007 to 50%, and might reach 52% in adult women, up from 35%. The increase in obesity would likely cause increases in diabetes, cancer, coronary heart disease and osteoarthritis – all of which reduce a person's

lifespan and increase medical costs.

Healthier eating habits and more exercise could combat this rise. According to the study, if the overall U.S. Body Mass Index (BMI) dropped by just 1% – instead of continuing to climb – it could prevent some two million cases of diabetes, between 73,000 and 127,000 cases of cancer and 1.4 to 1.7 million cases of heart disease. And that's where organizations like NPS and NPHA can step in to help.

The National Park Service, with the help of NPHA, has been increasingly active in encouraging healthy lifestyles. NPS Director Jon Jarvis convened a Healthy People, Healthy Parks conference last April that focused on encouraging more physical activity and healthy eating in our national parks – including “park prescriptions” by physicians. And NPS’ recently released ***A Call to Action*** furthers these efforts. One of the action steps is to work with the medical community to use parks as a healing tool: “Take a Hike and Call Me in the Morning.” Another action step involves joint efforts by NPS and concessioners to encourage park visitors to make healthy food choices by offering multiple healthy, sustainably produced, and reasonably priced food options at national park food service concessions. Together, these efforts help make our parks even more important to Americans’ well-being.

And other parts of the Great Outdoors can help, too. A Forest Service research report estimates that 290 billion calories are burned each year by the nearly 200 million recreation visits to national forests – to ski and hike and fish and camp and boat and more. How about this as a visual: 290 billion calories worth of french fries placed end to end could reach the moon and back, twice!

The four-part study is available from *The Lancet* [here](#). To see the summary of the study’s paper on the health and economic burden of obesity, [click here](#). An article reporting on the survey is available [here](#). The Forest Service research report is [here](#).

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NPHA Strengthens American Indian Art and Tourism Links

NPHA Counselor Derrick Crandall participated in the 13th American Indian Tourism Conference in Fort McDowell, Arizona, working closely with organizations including the Bureau of Indian Affairs, American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA), Department of the Interior’s Indian Arts and Crafts Board and the byways community. NPHA and the NPS Intermountain Region American Indian Programs Coordinator John Keck put on an educational session attended by a number of tribal chiefs and tribal tourism directors and focused on opportunities to showcase American Indian art in park gift shops and visitor centers.

One of the serendipities of participation in the meeting was the discovery that many tribes are interested in developing cooperative programs with concessioners to boost interpretation and other visitor services. Sun Tours, operated by a Blackfoot

businessman in Glacier, has worked closely for years with Glacier Park Inc., and a number of tribal interests sought help in designing similar, supplemental visitor services tied to telling American Indian stories or visiting nearby American Indian sites.

The Intermountain Region of NPS and AIANTA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at the conference, identifying key projects and programs warranting cooperative efforts, and both parties expressed interest in involving NPHA – perhaps even adding NPHA as a signatory to the MOU. For a link to the conference website, [click here](#).

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NPHA Board Members Visit New NPS National Capital Regional Director and Regional Superintendents

NPHA Directors Gerry Gabrys of Guest Services, Inc. and Chris Belland of Historic Tours of America recently met with the new NPS National Capital Regional Director, Steve Whitesell, and with two of the key superintendents in the region. They discussed **A Call to Action**, regional priorities and partnerships and a range of issues that included earthquake damage to monuments, flooding associated with hurricanes and other storms and changes in transportation in the National Mall area catalyzed in part by Tourmobile's announcement that it planned to terminate its operations in October.

In both cases, the NPHA leaders included colleagues from their companies, and the meeting with the Regional Director also involved Terre Jones, President and CEO of the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts and a leader of the National Park Friends Alliance. The meetings proved to be both timely and positive, with the NPHA leaders learning about important opportunities to expand cooperation with the NPS in serving visitors and the NPS officials feeling very positive about concessioner interest in the 2016 Centennial and **A Call to Action**.

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