



November 2008 Newsletter

National Park Hospitality Association

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Four top natural resource and recreation figures share views on Obama Administration and recreation program prospects

A panel of seasoned natural resource and conservation leaders with experience in and out of top government posts told recreation community leaders during a special November Recreation Exchange what they expect to see as the new Obama Administration takes shape. The session was held in the venerable Occidental Restaurant, just a block from the White House as President George W. Bush and President-elect Barack Obama met in the Oval Office to discuss Transition efforts. The panel addressed both opportunities and challenges but reached a consensus that recreation and conservation issues could do well if the recreation community organizes promptly and relates recreation to Obama Administration priorities, including economic recovery and healthcare improvements. Prospects for linking National Park Service Centennial Challenge funding to the economic stimulus package, connecting recreation to the new Administration's plan for infrastructure improvements and job creation, and the increased need for interagency cooperation were also hot discussion topics.

The guests included: Tom Kiernan, President of the National Parks Conservation Association; Jim Lyons, Lecturer and Research Scholar at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and Vice President with Oxfam America; Tom Fry, President of the National Ocean Industries Association; and Doug Wheeler, a partner with Hogan & Hartson in Washington. American Recreation Coalition Chairman Thom Dammrich moderated the session.

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

Concessioners propose initiative to boost volunteerism, thank the troops

At its October meeting, the National Park Hospitality Association (NPHA) developed a proposal to promote volunteer efforts in parks by visitors and staff under a program that would also provide fee-free access to

national parks and other areas for thousands of servicemen and servicewomen returning from combat zones. Called HEART– Honoring the Efforts of America’s Returning Troops – concessioners in national parks and other sponsors would encourage and help manage volunteer work by park visitors, concessioner employees and residents of gateway communities. Donated hours would be deposited into a new “volunteer bank.” For every 100 hours deposited into this bank, concessioners propose that an “honor coin” be “minted” and presented to a returning member of the military, entitling them to free entrance at any national park or nationally managed recreation site for a year. Honor coins are widely used within the military. These honor coins would have particular significance because they would not be another government program but rather gifts from appreciative fellow citizens. NPHA is currently soliciting partners to launch the program and developing a website to help troops plan visits to fee sites.

Details of the plan are still in development, but a concessioner spokesperson explained that the coins might be presented to returning servicemen and women by park superintendents and forest supervisors, as well as by Members of Congress, at unit homecomings, along with an invitation to use the coins for great experiences in the outdoors at the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Gettysburg and more – places that reflect American history and values. The proposal has been outlined to Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne, Director of the National Park Service Mary Bomar and others. NPHA hopes to launch the effort in 2009. Preparations to brief the new Administration are also underway.

To read more about HEART, [click here](#).

NPHA Executive Committee meets, takes several important actions

The National Park Hospitality Association’s Executive Committee met November 14 via conference call and acted on several important items. First, the 2009 NPHA annual meeting in Washington will feature sessions which share information about current and planned concessioner efforts aiding visitors and park stewardship with new leaders at the Department of the Interior and with Congress. These meetings will provide NPHA members an opportunity to discuss issues with new national leaders, including the NPS Centennial, the role of national parks in aiding economic recovery and improving health, and more. Second, the Executive Committee approved an exciting new initiative to help fund NPHA’s new 501(c)(3), the Park Partners Foundation: NPHA members will work with Igloo to market special edition coolers and other products to fund projects promoting the parks and aiding visitors. NPHA Preferred Vendor Unilever will also assist NPHA’s funding of park-related projects, making a contribution for each case of Unilever ice cream products sold by concessioners. Next, the Executive Committee agreed to continue work on HEART (see above story) to benefit our returning veterans through volunteer services on public lands. Finally, the Executive Committee created a process for inviting NPHA members to serve on the 2009-2010 Board of Directors and committees. The Executive Committee will meet again via conference call on December 17.

Secretary of the Interior signs order to continue Take Pride in America®

On October 28, Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne signed an order extending the authorization of Take Pride in America within the Department of the Interior through the year 2010. The program, designed to encourage volunteerism on public lands, had been set to expire on November 1, 2008. The Secretarial order further solidifies three strategic Take Pride in America priorities: engaging youth in service, promoting voluntourism and supporting beautification as an economic development strategy.

Secretary Kempthorne signed the order at a ceremony recognizing the volunteer efforts of students from Hyattsville Elementary in Hyattsville, Maryland, and others from across the country. “These young people know what it’s like to feel pride in a job well done and just as important, they were outdoors the whole time,” said Secretary Kempthorne of the students from Hyattsville Elementary, a Take Pride in America school. The students recently participated in “Gorgeous Prince George’s Day,” beautifying their school grounds.

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

Pillars of Support: Delaware North, Forever Resorts and Guest Services, Inc. receive honorable mentions in Department of the Interior's 2008 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, protecting parks and serving visitors.

Delaware North Companies Parks & Resorts, Yosemite and Yellowstone National Parks, Forever Resorts' Big Bend Resorts and Guest Services, Inc.



National Park Hospitality Association members Delaware North, Forever Resorts and Guest Services, Inc. all received honorable mentions in the Department of the Interior's 2008 Environmental Achievement Awards. These awards recognize Interior Department employees and teams, as well as contractors and outside partners who have attained exceptional environmental achievements under the following directives: Executive Order 13423, *Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy and Transportation Management*; Departmental Manual Policy 518 DM 2, *Compliance with Waste Management Requirements*; the *Energy Policy Act of 2007*; and the *Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007*. Delaware North received recognition

for its recycling programs and diversion of waste from the solid waste streams at both Yellowstone and Yosemite. Big Bend Resorts, a Forever Resorts property, was honored for its aggressive recycling program, which will extend the life of the park's landfill by 30 years. Guest Services, Inc. was acknowledged for its substantial energy conservation achievements with the construction of the food kiosks at the Lincoln Memorial. NPHA congratulates its members for many jobs well done. Keep up the good green work!

Do you have a contribution story to highlight the positive role of concessioners in our parks? Send your story to Mindy Meade at mmeade@parkpartners.org or call 202-682-9530.

Concessioners form advisory committee on NPS rate approvals

Participants in NPHA's 2008 Park Services Forum's breakout session on *Strategies for Successful Rate Increases* have formed an advisory committee to analyze and recommend improvements in National Park Service (NPS) rate approvals. The group is led by NPHA board member John Rutter of Grand Teton Lodge Company and will be working on several topics, including:

- The development of a short briefing paper on the current pricing principles NPS uses to establish rates and pricing and when those principles are appropriate to use for NPS concessioners. This paper will be an educational piece for NPHA members and NPS concessions management and will be based on a review of the current regulations and concessioner experiences. The advisory committee will coordinate efforts with Jo Pendry, Chief of the NPS Commercial Services Program, and her staff.
- A review of the current regulations and consideration of a proposal for changes to the regulations to be presented to the NPS Concessions Advisory Board and the NPS concessions management team.

Any suggestions for the advisory committee can be emailed to John Rutter at jrutter@gtlc.com. NPHA will be providing updates on the committee's work.

Yellowstone Winter Management Plans likely to include snowmobile use

Winter travel in Yellowstone for the 2008-2009 winter season has been the focus of two federal district court decisions and National Park Service (NPS) rulemaking, but it now appears that access to the park –

and to limited areas of Grand Teton National Park and the John D. Rockefeller Parkway – will continue to be available this winter by both snowmobile and snowcoach. The initial NPS rule was rejected in September by Judge Emmet Sullivan, who generated great concern within the NPS and among recreation and tourism interests by creating a new test of “necessity” for any visitor action causing an adverse environmental impact and also extending the court’s review beyond compliance with NEPA process requirements into evaluation of the data contained in the environmental review. To deal with the decision, NPS initiated an expedited rulemaking process and issued a proposed rule in early November. The NPS rulemaking appears to now be moot, as a federal district judge in Wyoming has reinstated an earlier rule providing higher levels of winter use and enjoyment. While snowmobile access is now very likely for the winter of 2008-2009, a longer-term resolution is likely to be a priority for the next Interior Secretary and NPS Director.

To review Judge Sullivan’s decision, [click here](#).

To review the Wyoming District Court decision, [click here](#).

To review the NPS 2008 Winter Use Plans Environmental Assessment, [click here](#).

Interagency partnership launched to encourage kids to “Get Outdoors, It's Yours!”

On October 14, Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne, Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer and Deputy Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Major General Don T. Riley announced the new interagency "Get Outdoors, It's Yours!" campaign to reconnect children with nature. The campaign, described at <http://www.getoutdoorsitsyours.gov>, encourages children, educators and families to experience nature firsthand. The initiative, supported by an interagency Pledge of Cooperation, will unite federal land agencies under one comprehensive platform and encourage the participation of nonprofit partners to develop a seamless portal for information on destinations, programs, special events and opportunities for educational adventures throughout the year. Federal leaders from eight agencies and bureaus expect that "Get Outdoors, It's Yours!" will provide more information for America's young people about opportunities to get outdoors in our national parks, forests, refuges, other public lands and waterways. The campaign will address what Secretary Kempthorne described at the announcement as the “crisis in America in which our kids are increasingly disconnected from nature.” He added, "We must get children off the couch and outdoors. We must get them to turn off the computers and televisions and turn on to the power of wild places and wild creatures to lift them up – to rejuvenate body, soul and spirit."

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

Federal Parks and Recreation Newsletter: Obama will be hard put to change park and recreation policies

Although President-elect Barack Obama promised the nation change, circumstances may limit how much change he can bring about in the park and recreation world. In his lead promise, Obama would provide “strengthening” of the Land and Water Conservation Fund to acquire open space and green corridors. However, he has not said how much money he would seek. In addition, Obama promised to repair damage to national parks and forests from “inadequate funding,” but did not define additional funding.

Obama will have limited opportunities to increase conservation spending through conventional appropriations. The financial institution bailout, coupled with economic stimulus legislation and war costs, could push the deficit to \$1 trillion in fiscal year 2009, experts say. As grim as the money situation may at first appear, there are two possible unconventional sources of revenues for conservation programs – new royalties from offshore oil and gas leasing, a reasonable possibility, and new fees from climate change legislation, a longer shot.

To read the rest of this story and reports on the Outdoor Resources Review Group, 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.

News

- [NPS Concessions: News on prospectuses](#)
- [A holiday gift you can't "pass" up from the National Park Service](#)
- [Bush to open national parks to mountain bikes](#)
- [Xanterra Parks & Resorts enhances snowcoach fleet in Yellowstone](#)

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

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