



November 2010 Newsletter

National Park Hospitality Association

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The Elections

The November 2nd elections will have a significant impact on the park concessions industry. New players will be in control of House authorizing and appropriations committees and a much closer D/R ratio in the Senate will make minority voices more important. But the real impact is on the agenda. The politics surrounding the America's Great Outdoors initiative have changed greatly – especially regarding any significant "landscape protection" initiatives such as national monuments. And prospects for full-funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund have also declined markedly.

Yet with change come opportunities. A more pragmatic and opportunistic Administration is likely to put the Health and the Great Outdoors option higher on the AGO priority list. People count more as eyes turn to 2012. The co-chairs of the Deficit Reduction Commission included higher park fees as a preliminary recommendation – to reduce discretionary spending, not support more NPS funding. A scarcity of

appropriated funds and the strong interest in growing jobs make concessioner investments in lodging and transportation as well as other creative funding strategies more attractive. The idea of expanded and improved visitor services has soared in appeal. And let there be no doubt: concessioners are much, much more central to a successful 2016 NPS 100th anniversary effort in the eyes of NPS than you were just a month ago.

The NPS leadership knows it needs to look beyond appropriations to sustain current efforts – and any new outreach and interpretation efforts, and any significant visitor services expansion, will rely on partnerships. Congress and the NPS are receptive to revisiting recent concessions program direction and putting a new premium on visitor satisfaction and investment. There is also a sense of urgency. Current park leadership is less confident of its continuity beyond the elections of 2012 – and this park leadership, more than any other I have observed in the past two decades – has a passionate desire to leave its mark on the national park system.

This is a time of opportunity. A recovering economy will bolster discretionary spending. Parks and the Great Outdoors have new stature as high value places for leisure time. Concessioners are already leading efforts to put the welcome mat out – time to ratchet up our efforts.

Derrick Crandall, NPHA Counselor
National Park Hospitality Association

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Director Jarvis Discusses Redefining NPS-Concessioner Relationships

Four key leaders of the NPHA took the time to come to Washington last week to meet with National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis and Assistant Director for Business Services Kate Stevenson. The highly productive meeting was requested by NPHA to discuss how to improve the relationship between the agency and concessioners and focus new energies on visitor experiences and outreach. “We want to agree on shared goals and address the challenges facing park concessioners,” the NPHA leadership group told the Director. Director Jarvis was vocal and clear in his response. “We want to redefine the concessioner/NPS relationship. The previous Administration had moved to treating concessioners only as contractors, and we are now pushing the pendulum back the other way, treating you as essential partners with whom we have business agreements,” he said, and he called for frequent and on-going follow-up conversations.

The meeting included topics ranging from keeping parks relevant, jobs, promotion, and visitor research, to health and various regulations and policies. Delaware North Companies Parks and Resorts President Kevin Kelley, ARAMARK Parks and Destinations President Bruce Fears, Guest Services, Inc. President and CEO Gerry Gabrys and Forever Resorts Senior Vice President John Schoppmann participated, along with NPHA Counselor Derrick Crandall. The group was highly enthusiastic about

the outlook for concessioner/NPS relations. To read the report on the meeting, [click here.](#)

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2010 Concessionaires and Public Lands Partnership Symposium - Asilomar, California - November 16th and 17th

NPHA Counselor Derrick Crandall will be a guest speaker addressing trends and initiatives at the Concessionaires and Public Lands Partnership Symposium November 16th and 17th co-organized by Ray Murray, Partnerships Program Chief of the Pacific West Region of the National Park Service. Other participating NPHA leaders include Bruce Fears, Pam Pitts, Terry MacRae and NPPC Interim Director John Poimiroo. Mr. Crandall will also meet with the board of the California Parks Hospitality Association to share association news and explore collaboration opportunities with the California Parks Hospitality Association as well as meet with California State Parks Director Ruth Coleman, who is also chair of the National Association of State Park Directors. The meetings are being held at the Asilomar Conference Center, Pacific Grove, California, a California State Parks unit. Look for updates on both in the next newsletter.

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2010 NPS Western Regional Summit - Oakland, California - December 15th

The sixth and final meeting this year between concessioners and NPS regional directors will be held December 15th in Oakland, California, with NPS Pacific West Regional Director Chris Lehnertz and her team. Concessioners active in the region, or with an interest in the concessioner opportunities in the region, are invited to participate. The meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m. in the NPS offices. NPHA's board asked its staff to help increase communications between concessioners and key NPS officials and regional meetings have already occurred in 2010 in Denver, Philadelphia, Omaha, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C. Follow-up meetings will be scheduled in 2011.

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2011 NPPC Research Summit - Yosemite - January 6th to 8th

The National Parks Promotion Council (NPPC) Research Summit will take place January 6th to January 8th at the Yosemite Lodge at the Falls with the NPPC board, committee members and invited guests. Topics include: the comprehensive study of the American public by Jim Gramman, Texas A&M; state-driven market research by Eileen Hook, California State Parks; and the state of the art of market research technologies by Terry MacRae, Hornblower Cruises & Events, among other items. The meeting will conclude with a discussion session on research gaps, action plans, and NPPC financing plans. Speakers from the University of Vermont and the University of Idaho have also been invited. For more information, contact NPPC Interim Executive

Director, John Poimiroo john@poimiroo.com

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2011 NPHA Annual Meeting - Washington, D.C. - March 14th to 17th

NPHA's key focus in 2011 will be to increase contact between NPHA concessioners and new members of Congress. The March 2011 NPHA Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. will put members into action for this purpose. The dates are March 14th to March 17th (hotel to be announced). Be prepared to make the rounds visiting offices of members of the U.S. House of Representative and U.S. Senate for states in which you operate. Your participation will be essential to help us carry our message to the new and returning leaders in Congress. We will continue to stress and pursue innovative and sound ideas for encouraging concessioner-led investments in parks.

The tentative schedule is:

- Monday, March 14th - NPHA Board of Directors meeting, 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.
- Monday, March 14th - Membership Opening Reception, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 15th - Morning General Session followed by meetings at the Department of the Interior with Department and National Park Service officials. Afternoon plans include office visits to the U.S. House of Representatives following by a reception on Capitol Hill.
- Wednesday, March 16th - Morning General Session with leaders of other national NPS partners followed by afternoon Capitol Hill visits and a reception on Capitol Hill.

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National Park Service National Leadership Council and Advisory Board Meetings

The National Park Service National Leadership Council meetings in Washington, D.C. for 2011 are:

- February 17th to 20th
- May 2nd to 5th
- August 15th to 18th
- November 14th to 17th

The National Park Service Advisory Board meeting is April 11th to 14th in San Francisco.

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Corporation for Travel Promotion Elects CEO

The 11 directors of the Corporation for Travel Promotion (CTP) met November 11th in Washington, D.C. and elected Stephen J. Cloobek, Chairman and Chief Executive

Officer, Diamond Resorts International, as Chairman and Caroline Beteta, President and Chief Executive Officer, California Travel and Tourism Commission, and George Fertitta, Chief Executive Officer, NYC & Company, as Vice Chairs upon incorporation.

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NPS 100th Anniversary Campaign Under Development

Key park champions took part in a late October meeting on themes, actions and roles to unite efforts around a major awareness campaign for the 2016 NPS 100th Anniversary. The 12-person group met with NPS Director Jon Jarvis and other key NPS officials to share ideas and receive input. There was strong unanimity that park visitations need to rise – and rise substantially. The NPS anniversary is playing an important role in catalyzing this initiative, and will build upon the lessons learned from and partial successes of the Centennial Challenge launched in 2007-2008. The meeting took place at Indigo Landing, a Guest Services, Inc.-operated restaurant and meeting concessions facility on the banks of the Potomac River. In addition to NPHA, key organizations in attendance included the National Park Foundation, the National Parks Conservation Association, the Student Conservation Association and key park friends groups. A preliminary primary message has been developed: *National Parks Build a Better America*. The campaign will seek to increase the sense of “ownership” of national parks reflected in four measures:

- (1) Visitation: increasing the percentage of Americans who have a national park experience each year;
- (2) Volunteerism: doubling the number of volunteers and volunteer hours in national parks by 2016;
- (3) Philanthropy: increasing the number of Americans who contribute, and the amounts they contribute to the NPF and local "park friends" organizations; and
- (4) Advocacy: increasing the involvement of Americans in public policy discussions regarding parks.

NPHA will keep members updated as news develops on this exciting and important public engagement effort. The task force will meet by conference call this month and anticipates a second multi-day meeting in January. NPHA has suggested several additions to the group.

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Public Health Promotion: NPS Meets with Health & Human Services

The National Park Service Office of Public Health met recently with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) officials to discuss several opportunities to promote physical activity and public health. One exciting new topic was the involvement of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). According to Commander David Wong, MD, Chief, Epidemiology and Health Promotion Branch of the National Park Service Office of Public Health, "MRC was started after 9/11 to train emergency medical volunteers and

now has 210,000 volunteers in all 50 states. We believe we can tap into this health group for possible national park opportunities and it could be a win-win for the parks and the public." HHS plans to work with geographic information systems to create a new cross reference list of NPS and medical reserve corps units. Ali Kelley, Special Assistant to the NPS Director also took part in the meeting. The group also discussed the Let's Move Outside initiative by the White House and the [Junior Park Rangers](#) program and ways to enlist Public Health educators' active involvement.

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Oprah's National Park Camping Trip Had Mixed Reviews

International celebrity Oprah Winfrey camped out in Yosemite National Park earlier this fall and subsequently aired two episodes on her television show about her first visit to any national park. NPHA's hope was that Oprah's shows would help encourage a more diverse group of visitors to national parks. Reaction has been mostly good, but there is concern that the impression left with many viewers might not have been as inviting as hoped. The National Parks Promotion Council's new YouTube effort, *NP Adventures*, captured NPS Ranger Sheldon Johnson's explanation about his invitation to her to visit the park, saying, "No one of her stature within the African American community has ever spoken about a wilderness experience or a national park experience to national television." Before Oprah's two episodes aired, there were approximately 400 views of his YouTube interview. Ranger Johnson was in the audience for the shows and was introduced on air. Following the shows, views of the YouTube segment featuring him jumped to nearly 40,000. The new NP Adventures videos are aimed at youth under age 30. Total views for the NP Adventure series, which will include more than 100 short segments filmed this summer and fall, is approaching 200,000. See the videos:

www.youtube.com/npadventure

Let us know what you think. Email your comment to info@npha.com

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New Member Profile: Conestoga Log Homes

NPHA is pleased to welcome new associate member Conestoga Log Cabins & Homes of Lebanon, Pennsylvania, the leading supplier of commercial log cabins ideal for concessioner gateway lodging. The company is GSA-approved (GS-07F-0549W). They are committed to providing rental cabins that are attractive yet affordable and have low maintenance costs. Recently, Conestoga introduced a new timber frame model. This style would traditionally be seen in larger, more expensive homes, but Conestoga's version is affordable and easy to assemble. The cabins have proved extremely popular for vacationers who want to experience a natural setting.



Timber frame model.

For more information contact, Paget Rhee prhee@conestogalogcabins.com or email: info@conestogalogcabins.com. The company's website is: www.conestogalogcabins.com

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