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## MARKETING PARKS AND THE GREAT OUTDOORS SESSION A HUGE SUCCESS



*Brand USA President Chris Thompson presents **Why the Great Outdoors Sells to Today's Travelers***

Leading travel, tourism and recreation leaders gathered at the U.S. Department of the Interior during the NPHA Fall Meeting and used an unusual format to share and discuss information about how America's parks and Great Outdoors can be marketed effectively internationally and to younger and more diverse population segments. The 90-minute session was moderated by National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis and included three data-rich presentations delivered TED-style followed by discussions with four expert responders.

The program – **Marketing Parks and the Great Outdoors to All Americans and More International Visitors, Too!** – was produced jointly by the National Park Hospitality Association and the National Parks Promotion Council. The session had a live audience of national leaders in recreation, conservation, historic preservation and tourism, and was livestreamed nationwide. It is available at <http://parkpartners.org/October-2014-Meeting.html>.



*Destination Analysts Managing Director Dave Bratton presents **Millennials and the Outdoors***

Brand USA President Chris Thompson began the session with a presentation on **Why the Great Outdoors Sells to Today's Travelers**, noting that research on messages most capable of delivering the ambitious goal of the National



*Tombras Group Managing Director Carlos Alcazar presents **Fortifying the Outdoor Legacy for Latino Americans***

Strategy on Travel and Tourism to return the USA to prominence in the international tourism market yielded a clear indication that America's outdoors is both attractive and a fresh topic. He also highlighted a new large-format feature film now being shot. **Millennials and the Outdoors** was the focus of a second presenter, David Bratton of Destination Analysts, a leading consultant to destination-area marketers. He related the outdoors message to five key Millennial "drivers," and emphasized that Millennials could be attracted once outdoors awareness is achieved. A third presentation, **Fortifying the Outdoor Legacy for Latino Americans**, was delivered by Carlos Alcazar,

Managing Director of The Tombras Group. Carlos emphasized that Latinos are already big outdoors users, but often seek different experiences from more traditional visitors to the outdoors and also want to be invited to and made welcome in parks.

Discussions on the three topics involved the presenters, moderator Jarvis and four expert responders: Jerry Jacobs Jr., Principal, Delaware North Companies, and Member, U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board; John Peters, President, USA TODAY Travel Media Group; Ken Dowling, Partner, GREYnyc; and Stephanie Meeks, President, National Trust for Historic Preservation.



*A panel of industry experts responded to each presentation*

The session was designed to complement and support efforts of the National Park Service to prepare for its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016 and to use the anniversary to ensure the relevancy of parks, and their widespread benefits, to the nation's changing lifestyles and demographics. The presenters and responders supported increased connectivity as a vital ingredient for the future of parks and the outdoors, and also agreed on the importance of storytelling as a feature of parks.



*The session was moderated by National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis*

The session concluded with a very positive tone. Despite fiscal and other challenges, the assembled experts were optimistic that inclusion in Centennial discussions of populations now underserved by parks and the Great Outdoors would help ignite social media and peer-to-peer networks which would complement traditional family efforts and recreation community outreach efforts.

NPHA Chairman Terry MacRae, whose company transports visitors to the Statue of Liberty, Alcatraz and other park locations each year, praised the active involvement of the National Park Service in the program and in efforts to invite all Americans to enjoy their legacy of parks. "America's

parks are cherished today and will remain that way if NPS and its partners work seamlessly and reach out to those who are not now directly benefitting from our parks. Increased visitation will bring new resources allowing for better care for our parks. A key message of the session was that we have discussed changes affecting parks. Now it is time for action to respond to change.”

The NPHA leader also noted that NPHA plans additional public forums to discuss key park issues, including a focus on the role of parks in helping Americans be healthier and improved operational coordination between key tourism, recreation, conservation and cultural interests.

Photos of the presenters and responders are available at <http://www.parkpartners.org/Marketing-Parks-and-the-Great-Outdoors-Photos.html>

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## **PARK CONCESSIONERS GATHER IN WASHINGTON, D.C. FOR 2014 NPHA FALL MEETING**

National park concessioners from around the country gathered in Washington, D.C. October 20-22 for the NPHA 2014 Fall Meeting: **Supporting America’s Parks for the Next 100 Years**. The three-day meeting kicked off on Monday, October 20 with a Board of Directors meeting, followed by a reception and dinner at the Georgetown University Hotel and Conference Center.

Tuesday began with another Board of Directors meeting, followed by a General Session. Topics included: NPHA Strategic Plan; NPHA Membership Committee Report; NPHA Dues Committee Report; Healthy Parks, Healthy People; and other key issues. Mark Preston, representing new NPHA member TripAdvisor, shared insights on how concessioners could capitalize on the company’s 280 million unique monthly visitors and the peer-to-peer sharing of trip experiences that takes place at its site – now boasting 170+ million reviews, including reviews of park visits. A copy of the presentation is available in the members-only section of [www.parkpartners.org](http://www.parkpartners.org).

From there the action moved to the U.S. Department of the Interior’s South Building, where exciting and informative sessions were held on a variety of topics, including: **Why the Outdoors Sells to Today’s Travelers; Millennials and the Outdoors; Fortifying the Outdoor Legacy for Latino Americans; Centennial Actions: Logos, Events and More**; as well as a presentation on the results of the NPHA member survey on Enhanced Visitor Services.

The presentations were followed by a reception at the U.S. Department of the Interior’s South Penthouse. The reception offered NPHA members the opportunity to discuss informally the NPS Centennial campaign with top officials from NPS, NPF and Grey and interact with top Interior executives.

Wednesday featured roundtable discussions with NPS officials and a Legal Issues Roundtable with Kevin Garden, Managing Director, The Garden Law Firm PC; and Alan Saltman, Partner, Smith, Currie & Hancock LLP. The meeting also included spotlights on new NPHA Associate

Members Dowdle Folk Art, Thompson & Little, Inc., TripAdvisor and Old Hickory Furniture Company. To see PDF versions of the presentations given by TripAdvisor and Thompson & Little Inc., go to <http://parkpartners.org/Members-Only.html>.

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## CENTENNIAL CAMPAIGN SESSION SHEDS LIGHT ON KEY ACTIONS



One of the most important features of the 2014 NPHA Fall Meeting was the session held Tuesday, October 21 titled: **Centennial Actions: Logos, Events and More.**

Representatives from the National Park Service, GREYnyc, and marketing firm M Style were on hand to give concessioners some insight into what they could expect when the campaign begins in FY2015.

NPS Centennial Office Chief Alexa Viets kicked things off with a description of the NPS' efforts to improve its digital engagement with potential visitors, including a retrofit of [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov) to make it more mobile-friendly, and greater efforts to connect visitors with the stories and themes contained in their national parks.

The team from GREYnyc – led by Partner Ken Dowling – then took center stage. Dowling showcased GREYnyc's efforts to boost the level of recognition the Centennial, and the Park Service as a whole, have in the consciousness of every day Americans. They began with the reveal of new, updated logos for both the National Park Service and the National Park Foundation that keep the traditional "arrowhead" logo, but are more contemporary and show the connection between the Park Service and the Park Foundation.



The team then described the crux of their campaign efforts, dubbed "Find Your Park." Find Your Park is a comprehensive, multi-faceted campaign that leverages every possible medium, channel and tactic to deliver the Park Service's message and drive action. It aims to ignite two-

way communication between the Park Service and the American people, and invites people to discover parks near them and ultimately start a cultural movement. The campaign will include: digital media, social media, traditional media, advertising, public relations, national and local event marketing, talent partners and much, much more.

Officials from M Style Marketing then stepped up to describe the licensing portion of the campaign. M Style will provide graphics, assets and designs that are customizable for

individual organizations. A specific licensing guide will be available online in a brand managing system that will be available for download as the campaign draws closer.

Much of the session is available “on demand” in the “Members Only” section of NPHA’s website at <http://parkpartners.org/Members-Only.html>.

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## ENHANCED VISITOR SERVICES SURVEY RESULTS REVEALED

At the 2014 NPHA Fall Meeting, NPHA Chairman Terry MacRae delivered the results of a survey among NPHA members cataloguing current visitor services, strategies to increase visitation, current factors that limit visitation, market demand for increased services, as well as improvements parks can benefit from and the level of support for increased services.



*NPHA Chairman Terry MacRae speaks at 2014 Fall Meeting*

He summarized the survey in four points:

- Current and future visitors require and expect enhanced services
- There are specific opportunities to increase visitation and services, some with no capital or budget impact
- Benefits of enhanced services abound to visitors, NPS, stakeholders and taxpayers
- NPHA members are ready, willing and able to partner with NPS to provide enhanced visitor services and activities

Key survey results include:

- 87% of respondents support dynamic pricing as a strategy to increase visitation
- 87% of respondents say there is opportunity and demand for technology, Wi-Fi, apps and camera classes
- 58% of respondents say lack of awareness by potential visitors is a current limit to increased visitation
- 88% say there is market demand for increased visitation at peak periods
- 93% say their park would benefit from improved connectivity, including cell phone and Wi-Fi
- 96% say new and enhanced services will contribute to the overall visitor experiences and not detract from the quality of the experience

The full presentation is available in PDF form at <http://parkpartners.org/Enhanced-Visitor-Services-Survey.html>

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## ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS BRING NPS OFFICIALS, CONCESSIONERS TOGETHER

Wednesday's portion of the Fall Meeting featured several roundtable sessions, both at Georgetown University and the Department of the Interior's South Building. The first of the Department of the Interior sessions featured key members of the National Park Service Commercial Services Staff, including Acting Chief Jo Pendry and Senior Operations Analyst Kurt Rausch.

NPHA Chairman Terry MacRae moderated the session, in which concessioners were able to participate in a frank exchange with NPS officials. A number of key issues were discussed, including implementation of new minimum wage requirements, the complexity of the current prospectus process, expansion of services under existing contracts, use of dynamic pricing, and the need for a NPS "Chief Awareness Officer" or "Brand Manager" to enhance understanding and appreciation of our national park treasures, especially among young people and nontraditional visitors.

NPHA appreciated the interest Pendry and Rausch expressed in receiving feedback, in finding ways to be flexible and encourage big-picture thinking among the Commercial Services staff, and in helping concessioners reach the common goal of providing great visitor services.

The second session focused on Education and the Workforce and featured Mary Ellen Sprengel, President and CEO, The Corps Network; Don Wollenhaupt, NPS Acting Deputy Associate Director, Interpretation, Education and Volunteers; Mike Reynolds, NPS Associate Director, Workforce, Relevancy and Inclusion Management; and George McDonald, NPS Youth Programs Manager. The session was moderated by NPHA Consultant Celinda Peña.

Topics discussed included rebuilding a young, diverse American workforce, Hands on Preservation Experience (HOPE) Projects, and Service Corps as a resource for concessioners and as a way to bring more youth to the outdoors.

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## SPOTLIGHT ON A NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBER



*Old Hickory furniture at the Crater Lake Lodge in Crater Lake National Park*

*Incorporated in 1899, Old Hickory Furniture Company is America's oldest and largest rustic furniture manufacturer. In the early days, Old Hickory was best known for furnishing many the National Parks' iconic lodges including the Old Faithful Inn, Glacier Park Lodge, Crater Lake Lodge and Paradise Inn. The company also furnished many of the Adirondack Great Camps and other grand resorts that were drawing visitors away from the large bustling cities at that time. Today Old Hickory Furniture can still be seen in these*

same great locations as well as some of the newer family resorts (Disney, Great Wolf Lodge, Vail Resorts, etc.).

*Old Hickory furniture features the remarkable hickory sapling that was first discovered by pioneers traveling across the Midwest. Hickory is America's hardest wood (30% harder than oak) and was originally used for ax and tool handles, wagon wheel spokes, golf club shafts, baseball bats and furniture. Not only is hickory dense and durable, but it is naturally renewable with saplings re-sprouting from the same stump. Old Hickory furniture is noted for its strength, durability, rustic style, and extreme comfort. Over the past 115 years, Old Hickory has expanded the line into beds, casegoods, upholstery, mirrors, desks, kitchen and bath cabinetry, and even lighting. Today, Old Hickory has the capabilities to make custom products for just the right look and feel, within the right budget.*



*Old Hickory furniture at Yosemite Lodge in Yosemite National Park*

*People still recognize the benefits of being close to nature and enjoying the three key features of Old Hickory furniture: comfort, style and durability. Old Hickory furniture is still handcrafted and made-to-order in much the same way as it was when it started. Old Hickory furniture is a slice of American history that has played a major role in the home furnishings and hospitality industry. Old Hickory is proud to be Made in America!*

For more information on Old Hickory Furniture Company, visit [www.OLDHICKORY.COM](http://www.OLDHICKORY.COM), or contact them at:

Old Hickory Furniture Company  
403 S. Noble Street  
Shelbyville, IN 46176  
800-232-BARK (2275)

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## TIPS ON HOW TO STAY INFORMED:

Read the Federal Parks and Recreation newsletter, provided as a member service

For information on upcoming prospectuses and other actions of the NPS Commercial Services Office, check regularly at <http://concessions.nps.gov/>  
To reach an NPS employee, use the NPS locator at <http://www.nps.gov/directory/>

For reports on park unit visitation, current year and historic, as well as information on overnight stays, go to <https://irma.nps.gov/Stats>.

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