



December 2011 Newsletter

National Park Hospitality Association

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

In this issue:

- [Summit to Include Senators Udall, Alexander, Secretary Salazar](#)
- [NPHA Meeting Dates for 2012](#)
- [NPS Institutes New Disposable Plastic Water Bottle Policy](#)
- [Using Technology to Have Fun Outdoors](#)
- [NPPC and Brand USA Collaborate at NTA](#)
- [NPS Considers Healthy Food Program in Parks](#)
- [Western Governors to Support Tourism on Public Lands](#)
- [Weideman is NPS Assistant Director for Partnerships, Civic Engagement](#)

Summit to Include Senators Udall, Alexander, Secretary Salazar

[America's Summit on National Parks](#) will feature key speakers and offer the chance for important discussions about the future of national parks. NPHA members will play significant roles in the event. Confirmed speakers include: Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar; Tony Knowles, former governor of Alaska; Sally Jewell, CEO of REI; John Podesta, Chair and Counselor of the Center for American Progress; Dan Glickman, Senior Fellow at the Bipartisan Policy Center and former Secretary of Agriculture and Member of Congress; Senators Mark Udall (D-CO) and Lamar Alexander (R-TN). NPS leadership – including Director Jon Jarvis, both Deputy Directors and key Regional Directors – will also be heavily engaged.

NPHA members are important contributors to the Summit. Guest Services, Inc. will host the opening night reception for the Summit at the Indigo Landing Restaurant in Alexandria, Virginia, where a panel of past NPS directors will speak. Xanterra Parks & Resorts will host the Summit dinner on the night of January 25, demonstrating the sustainable, healthy menus it is pursuing at its park properties. Many NPHA concessioners are participating in the Summit's [poster sessions](#), which promise to be an engaging and memorable part of the event, and will be part of Summit break-out sessions.

The deadline for Summit registration is coming soon. If you didn't receive an invitation and want to participate, let us know IMMEDIATELY. And book your hotel room today by clicking [here](#).

[Return to top](#)

Ken Burns Encourages Park Tourism

[National Geographic Traveler](#) Editor Keith Bellows interviewed Ken Burns for its November-December issue. The following passage appears in the interview:

“Are we destroying the places we love when we travel?”
[Ken Burns:] **No. The national park and historic sites belong to us, and it's hugely important that they have a constituency. Do some sites have traffic jams? Yes, but the opposite possibility is more terrifying, because when nobody goes to the national parks, then the next person who looks at a river and thinks “dam” gets his way, and the person who looks at a beautiful stand of trees and thinks “lumber” gets his way. That’s the danger. The immediate antidote to crowding is to just get off the main trail.”**

NPHA Meeting Dates for 2012

NPHA’s traditional March meeting will not be held this year. The NPHA Board will meet instead in Washington, D.C. on January 24 between 1 pm and 4 pm before [America’s Summit on National Parks](#), a special event which will elevate the importance of concessioners in park policy and operations dramatically. NPHA is also planning a CONPAC gathering on the evening of January 26 with key Members of Congress. Please RSVP to Julia Mitchell at jmitchell@funoutdoors.com if you would like to attend the NPHA Board meeting or CONPAC meeting.

The fall NPHA 2012 meeting will be on October 16 - 19 at the Grand Canyon Lodge (North Rim). More details soon!

[Return to top](#)

NPS Institutes New Disposable Plastic Water Bottle Policy

The National Park Service issued a [policy on disposable plastic water bottles](#) December 14. The policy states that NPS believes the use of disposable plastic water bottles has a significant negative environmental impact compared to the use of local tap water and refillable bottles. The policy outlines the agency’s effort to reduce plastic water bottle waste in parks while recognizing that a total ban on such bottles could pose a challenge to visitor safety.

The policy will encourage parks to have a robust recycling program and reduce the sale of disposable plastic water bottles through various methods, including visitor education and making reusable bottles and water fountains available to visitors. NPS will also provide parks an option to eliminate sales of disposable plastic water bottles on a park-by-park basis following an extensive review of the park’s operations and with the prior approval of the regional director. NPS will also require parks to develop a proactive

visitor education strategy that addresses visitor expectations and explains the rationale for the park's plastic water bottle reduction, recycling or elimination strategy.

[Return to top](#)

Using Technology to Have Fun Outdoors

The Bipartisan Policy Center hosted an engaging session recently on how to use technology in the outdoors to increase physical activity by Americans. The meeting attracted some of the nation's best thinkers – and people who think that the key to solving obesity is having fun!

The Center invited a great mix of innovators and traditionalists to the event. Organizations like the Entertainment Software Association, AARP, Verizon, National Association of State Boards of Education, Active Network, Girl Scouts of the USA, Boy Scouts of America and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation joined techies like Hopelab, Shinobi Labs, Two Bulls and PreventObesity.net.

The discussion also attracted heavyweights like Director of the National Park Service Jon Jarvis, who was very engaged in the day's events. For more information on lessons learned, please contact Derrick Crandall at dcrandall@funoutdoors.com. The day's program and list of participants are available [here](#).

[Return to top](#)

Tech Tip: QR Codes

You've seen QR codes in ads and on products – they're the black and white pictures that allow smartphone users to connect directly to websites. Are you using QR codes to link users to your website? All you need to create a QR code is a web address and a free QR code generator. The [National Park Service explains how](#) here.

NPPC and Brand USA Collaborate at NTA

America's national parks were featured at a [major luncheon program](#) at the National Tour Association (NTA) convention in Las Vegas this month, marking a significant achievement for national parks as players in the nation's tour industry. The National Parks Promotion Council (NPPC) put together the luncheon presentation, and NPHA members Xanterra Parks & Resorts, Forever Resorts and Glacier Park Inc. helped to sponsor the event along with [Brand USA](#).

Brand USA (formerly the Corporation for Travel Promotion) encourages international tourism to the U.S. by working in close partnership with the travel industry. NPPC and Brand USA are working to establish a partnership that would work to promote the national parks within the travel industry at events like this month's NTA convention and International Pow Wow 2012.

The NTA luncheon program included inspirational video of the national parks edited by Xanterra Parks & Resorts. NPPC CEO John Poimiroo spoke at the luncheon, and his remarks recognized NTA initiatives to bring more youth and minorities to the national parks. Representatives from NPPC and the National Park Service were available throughout the week to field questions and provide guidance to the tour industry about how to best connect people to parks.

[Return to top](#)

Attracting International Visitors to Parks

NPHA members are doing their part to drum up international interest in touring our national parks. CIEE has added a section on National Parks to their [Culture Guide USA](#) newsletter. The newsletter is distributed monthly and explains key American cultural events and topics to international students interested in visiting the United States. The newsletter is expected to result in about a quarter of a million impressions a year.

NPS Considers Healthy Food Program in Parks

The National Park Service plans to institute a Healthy Food Program in its concession food and beverage operation. NPS Director Jon Jarvis, White House Associate Chef Sam Kass and 20 concessioners met at the White House [last month](#) for a discussion on how to pursue the healthy food in parks agenda. The NPS draft Food Guidelines and Implementation Strategy for Healthy Food in Parks and the meeting agenda and list of participants are [here](#). NPS hopes concessioners will lead the way in making the healthy, reasonably priced foods championed by Director Jarvis available in our parks. Further meetings coming up in early 2012 should help NPS and concessioners coordinate work on this issue.

The Institute at the Golden Gate's Food for the Parks initiative has released two reports in support of NPS food efforts. [Food for the Parks: Case Studies of Sustainable Food in America's Most Treasured Places](#) showcases parks and concessioners that have healthy and sustainable food programs in place and highlights a variety of best practices that can be adopted by other regional, local, and national parks. [Food for the Parks: A Roadmap to Success](#) works as a toolkit offering strategies and ideas to inspire collaboration among partners and encourage them to take steps to create new healthy, fresh, and sustainable food programs in parks and other industries across the country.

[Return to top](#)

Western Governors to Support Tourism on Public Lands

The [Western Governors' Association](#) (WGA), led by its Chair and Washington State Governor Chris Gregoire, announced its [Get Out West!](#) campaign earlier this year. The initiative highlights the connection of outdoor recreation and tourism to the health of local economies in the West as well as the health of American citizens. NPHA has

been working closely with WGA and the GOW advisory group to be sure concessioners can take advantage of the economic opportunities available on national parks and other public lands.

WGA met early this month to discuss ways to encourage American families to be active outdoors more frequently and take advantage of public lands available to them. Governors including Gregoire, Utah Governor Gary Herbert, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer and South Dakota Governor Dennis Daugaard participated in the event and were very vocal in their praise for recreation and tourism. Each volunteered to do more to be personally involved in using national and state parks and other outdoor assets to aid Western economies.

And participants in the meeting – particularly Governor Brewer – were receptive to becoming more involved in opportunities like Great Outdoors Month and National Get Outdoors Day. These celebrations take place during the month of June and focus on getting American families to explore the outdoors and have fun. Forty-nine state governors supported Great Outdoors Month last year by [proclaiming June as Great Outdoors Month](#).

[Return to top](#)

Weideman is NPS Assistant Director for Partnerships, Civic Engagement

National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis last month [announced the selection of Rich Weideman](#) as the agency's Assistant Director for Partnerships and Civic Engagement.

Weideman, who has been serving in the position in an acting capacity since last year, will oversee the National Park Service's partnerships, philanthropic stewardship, national trails, wild and scenic rivers, and hydropower assistance programs. He will also direct the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), which supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects across the country.

Another key NPS spot is now filled: the Associate Director for Business Services has been selected and should be announced very soon.

[Return to top](#)

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