



American Recreation Coalition

Dedicated to the protection and enhancement of everyone's right to health and happiness through recreation.

NEWS

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NATIONAL PARK CAMPGROUNDS OF THE FUTURE WILL BE FOCUS OF WYOMING MEETING

Washington, D.C. (April 27, 2016) – Camping in America's national parks and at other federal recreation sites has created indelible memories for generations of Americans. Yet as the nation's demography and lifestyles change, overnight stays in our parks and other federal lands have declined even as sales of outdoor equipment and recreation vehicles have grown. Top recreation leaders from the public and private sectors will meet during Great Outdoors Month® to discuss ways to sustain the role of these campgrounds as a gateway to life-long experiences in the outdoors.

"National Park Campgrounds of the Future" is being organized by two companies taking an active part in the Centennial of the National Park Service as well as the Great Outdoors Western Campout: The Coleman Company USA and Airstream, Inc.

Bob Wheeler, President of Airstream, Inc., will host the session on June 13 at Jackson Lake Lodge in Wyoming. According to Wheeler, "Two thoughtful and experienced recreation leaders will moderate the meeting. Mike Schneider has been a leader in the RV and camping community for more than 30 years involved in publishing and membership organizations and more. And David Vela, currently Superintendent of Grand Teton National Park, has been an innovator and advocate for outreach to segments of the American public largely unconnected to our legacy of parks in key roles for the National Park Service at the local, regional and national levels."

The meeting will include presentations on key studies and marketing reports. Pat Hittmeier, President and CEO of Kampgrounds of America, Inc., will share findings of its **2016 North American Camping Report**. The report showed that more than one million households in North America started camping in 2015 and that African-American, Hispanic and Asian-American representation among new campers closely matches overall population percentages. The KOA report is available at <http://koa.uberflip.com/i/654141-2016-north-american-camper-report>.

The Recreation Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA) will share its new report showing that use of state and private-sector campgrounds has grown in recent years, in contrast to the trend at federal sites. According to RVIA, the discrepancy is attributable to campground design, management and marketing. Even where national park campground occupancy is high, according to RVIA, guest satisfaction is harmed by campgrounds built to 1960s standards.

(more)

National Park Campgrounds of Tomorrow Add One

Many park campgrounds lack showers, Wi-Fi, utility hook-ups for RVs and “pull-through” sites, food and stores for basic camper needs.

According to American Recreation Coalition President Derrick Crandall, utilizing existing public investment in campgrounds at federally-managed sites makes great sense. He noted that participants in the Wyoming session will include state park directors that rely on campgrounds to generate substantial portions of their operating budgets.

“There are lessons to be learned and experiences to be shared. National park campgrounds can be a very important gateway to the Great Outdoors for 21st Century Americans – offering economical, inspirational and bonding experiences. Existing legislation keeps campground fees in the collecting parks, whether they are operated by the agency or a concessioner, so as use increases, park budgets will benefit,” according to Crandall.

Crandall explained that many of those who will take part in the June 13 session will be in the area to support the Great Outdoors Western Campout, which will provide up to 20 families selected by western Governors the opportunity to enjoy a four day experience in Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks, Bridger-Teton National Forest and other locations in the Jackson, Wyoming, area. The Campout was conceived by Wyoming Governor Matt Mead, co-winner of the 2015 Sheldon Coleman Great Outdoors Award and chairman of the Western Governors’ Association, which will be holding its summer meeting simultaneously with the Campout. Information on the Great Outdoors Western Campout and Governor’s Campouts scheduled for June in some 20 states is available at www.greatoutdoorsmonth.org.

Airstream and Coleman will issue a report on the discussions at the session and anticipate that additional meetings on this topic will be held. Interested organizations may make recommendations for consideration by the next Administration, taking office in January 2017.

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AMERICAN RECREATION COALITION — is a nonprofit, Washington-based federation founded in 1979. The association provides a unified voice for recreation interests to ensure their full and active participation in government policy-making on issues such as public land management. ARC membership consists of more than 100 organizations, including national and regional associations and corporations that represent a major share of the \$650 billion a year recreation/leisure industry and enthusiast groups representing millions of recreationists. Since its inception, ARC has sought to catalyze public-private partnerships to enhance and protect outdoor recreation opportunities and resources. ARC conducts research, organizes national conferences, and disseminates information through a variety of means, including its Web site www.funoutdoors.com. ARC plays a leading role in several key coalitions and organizations, including the Coalition for Recreational Trails, Scenic Byways Coalition and Coalition for Recreation in the National Forests. ARC is leading the effort to expand activities across the country associated with the celebration of June as Great Outdoors Month®. ARC was also instrumental in launching National Get Outdoors Day, a national effort dedicated to helping children enjoy healthy, active outdoor lives.