



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications
and Public Affairs

1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

202 208-6843 phone
202 219-0910 fax

National Park Service News Release

For Immediate Release: July 08, 2008

Contact(s): David Barna, 202-208-6843
Gerry Gaumer, 202-208-6843

National Park Service Director Speaks with Newly Naturalized Citizens at Ellis Island Event

WASHINGTON, DC – National Park Service (NPS) Director, Mary A. Bomar, the first naturalized citizen to hold that position, delivered keynote remarks today at Ellis Island where she told newly naturalized citizens that, “I was born in England and like many of you today, I am an American by choice.”

At today’s event, the National Park Service, USA Freedom Corps, American Recreation Coalition and Task Force on New Americans announced a new public/private task force, This Land is Your Land, to engage new Americans in volunteering at national parks. Director Bomar said, “There are special places that unite us all as Americans. National Parks are those special places, and by visiting them, I hope you will be as inspired as I was when I first came to this country.”

Director Bomar was born and raised in Leicestershire, England. As a young girl, she traveled with her family and lived for a time in the United States, where her family visited many national parks, including the Grand Canyon, Petrified Forest and the Statue of Liberty. “One of my earliest memories is sailing into the New York Harbor and watching the Statue of Liberty seem to rise from the water, little knowing I would one day have a role in her stewardship.”

During today’s event at Ellis Island, one of the 391 NPS sites, 20 individuals took the Oath of Allegiance to become naturalized American citizens. Upon naturalization, new citizens are granted the right to ownership of these federally managed lands and the shared responsibility to preserve these national treasures for generations to come.

Director Bomar reiterated the words of U.S. Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne’s July 4th announcement that citizens naturalized between now and National Public Lands Day on September home.nps.gov/.../Detail.cfm?ID=808

1/22/2009

National Park Service Director Speaks ...

announcement that citizens naturalized between now and National Public Lands Day on September 27, 2008, will receive free entrance to a NPS site during the weekend of September 27-28, 2008.

The entrance fee waiver has been created in conjunction with National Public Lands Day, September 27, 2008, on which all national public lands are open free of charge to the public. This new fee waiver, just for entrance to National Parks, will create a weekend where new citizens can come and enjoy the beauty, culture and history of their new country free of charge.

In addition to NPS Director Bomar, participating in today's event, was Cokie Roberts, member of the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation; Alison Young, Special Assistant to the President for USA Freedom Corps; Sam Solomon, President & CEO, Coleman Co., and other public- and private-sector leaders encouraging civic engagement among America's newest citizens to help foster a greater sense of ownership in our Nation's public lands.

[Back to Press Releases](#)