



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 SERVICE CENTENNIAL ACT SIGNED INTO LAW

Washington, D.C. (December 19, 2016) – A bipartisan effort by the U.S. Congress to help the National Park Service meet the challenges of its second century of stewardship reached a long-awaited and successful conclusion on December 16, when President Barack Obama signed the National Park Service Centennial Act into law. The legislation provides the agency with new resources that will help it engage the country's growing and diverse population with their public lands and waters, embrace new technologies and address a \$12 billion maintenance backlog.

"The American Recreation Coalition applauds Congress's recognition of the natural, cultural and historic importance of the National Park System to our nation," said President Derrick Crandall. "This law creates valuable new tools that will help the National Park Service provide exceptional opportunities for healthy, active fun outdoors to diverse Americans for generations to come."

Key provisions of the legislation include:

- Creation of the National Park Centennial Challenge Fund, first proposed when Dirk Kempthorne was Secretary of the Interior in 2007, to use federal funding and matching donations to support projects and programs furthering the National Park Service's mission and enhancing visitor experiences;
- Creation of a National Park Foundation-managed Endowment to supplement Congressional appropriations for the National Park Service -- much as endowments are used by universities. There is evidence that this endowment could be attractive to bequests and major contributors;
- Improvements in the National Park Service's capabilities to use youth conservation corps and volunteers to aid national park operations;
- An amendment to the 1998 Concessions Act to allow the Secretary of the Interior to "amend the applicable terms of an existing concessions contract to provide new and additional services" to enhance public use and enjoyment of the units of the National Park System;
- A new Visitor Experience Improvements Authority, which could expand visitor services at units that are now under-visited.

Congress eliminated proposed new taxes on in-park concessioner-provided lodging (including campground stays) and other goods and services that would not have been used to support

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Centennial Act Add One

park operations in the units generating the funds. The provision would have undercut important provisions of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) and current concessions law.

The legislation also increases the price of a lifetime Senior Pass for people 62 and older from \$10 to \$80. Seniors who don't wish to purchase a lifetime pass can purchase an annual one for \$20.

To read both the Centennial Act one-pager and the full text of the bill, visit www.funoutdoors.com/CentennialAct.

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About the American Recreation Coalition:

AMERICAN RECREATION COALITION — is a nonprofit, Washington-based association providing a unified voice for recreation interests on issues such as public land management. ARC's membership is 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 1979, ARC has forged public-private partnerships to enhance and protect outdoor recreation opportunities and resources. ARC conducts research, organizes national meetings and disseminates information, including through its Web site www.funoutdoors.com. ARC plays a leading role in key coalitions, including the Coalition for Recreational Trails, and leads efforts to celebrate June as Great Outdoors Month® including National Get Outdoors Day, a national effort to invite children to enjoy healthy, active outdoor lives.