



American Recreation Coalition

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

March 2011 Newsletter

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Forest Service Chief to Speak at March 2011 Recreation Exchange

Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell will be the special guest speaker at the American Recreation Coalition's March Recreation Exchange luncheon. The event is on Thursday, March 24th at 12:00 p.m. at Bobby Van's Grill (1201 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C.). Chief Tidwell will share his thoughts on the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative, the Forest Service's proposed Planning Rule and recently released Framework for Sustainable Recreation, as well as budgets, fees, and current and potential partnerships with the recreation community. Please RSVP by March 22nd to (202) 682-9530 or email cahern@funoutdoors.com.

For more details, [click here](#).

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Forest Service Publishes Draft Planning Rule, Announces National Forum and Regional Sessions

The Forest Service has proposed a new planning rule to guide land and resource management planning for all units of the National Forest System – more than 190 million acres generating hundreds of millions of recreation visits annually. A potent group of recreation and conservation organizations has formed the Coalition for

Recreation in the National Forests to address concerns that the rule would overlook the contributions of national forest recreation to regional and national economies and the health of the American public, as well as other benefits of forest recreation. The proposal will be addressed at a day-long National Forum in Washington on March 10, 2011, hosted by the Forest Service. The agency also plans a series of field listening sessions on the proposal. Information on the rule, the Forum and regional meetings is available [here](#).

Analysis of the proposal is underway by recreation interests. Initial reaction is that outdoor recreation is a visible component of the proposal but that more direction may be needed to adapt to changes in recreation participation and activities and to fully utilize the recreation resources of state and local governments, organized recreationists, recreation businesses and volunteers. Comments on the draft Planning Rule are due by May 16, 2011.

To receive information about the Coalition for Recreation in the National Forests position and efforts, contact Julia Mitchell (jmitchell@funoutdoors.com).

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Release of America's Great Outdoors Report: Important Day for Recreation

The release of the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) report by President Obama on February 16th marked a “very important day for recreation in America,” said American Recreation Coalition (ARC) President Derrick Crandall. “The Administration deserves praise for the report. It shows the fingerprints of traditional and new Great Outdoors constituents while offering a blueprint for conservation efforts in the 21st century and a new, concerted effort to connect people with the Great Outdoors,” he added. To read the ARC press release and comments, [click here](#). The AGO process commenced at an April 2010 White House Conference and included more than 50 listening sessions and other outreach efforts.

Key messages for the AGO report include:

- There is a need for a “public awareness initiative to show that experiencing America’s great outdoors is fun, easy and healthy”;
- Limited access to clean, safe, open spaces discourages many Americans from taking part in outdoor activities. Locally led conservation initiatives will work to protect outdoor spaces and make them accessible to American families;
- 80% of Americans live in/near cities and find it particularly difficult to connect with the outdoors;
- The outdoors has increasingly lost its relevance in the lives of our children, but more time in the outdoors can help reverse the obesity that has tripled among our children in the last generation;
- A 21st century conservation strategy must help us protect the places and the resources that we value and help us achieve greater health and well-being as individuals and as a nation.

ARC staff participated in the White House roll-out of AGO as well as in follow-up conference calls hosted by senior Administration staff on “Youth-Serving Organizations and Education” and “Sportsmen and Recreation.” To download or read either the executive summary or full AGO report, [click here](#).

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Great Outdoors Month 2011 Will Appeal to Governors for Active Involvement

June 2011 will again be Great Outdoors Month, an umbrella linking dozens of special days and efforts, including National Get Outdoors Day on Saturday, June 11, 2011. National partners will ask the President and all 50 governors to again issue proclamations and will also urge active involvement in the month’s events by the nation’s elected leaders. This is especially important to offset the focus on budget-driven state park closures and cutbacks – here is the chance to tout availability.

The prospect of combining special outdoor places, families with kids and the theme of fun ways to improve your health makes National Get Outdoors Day especially exciting for 2011. And it is not too late to become involved, either as a Go Day organizer or as a new partner in an existing GO Day site. Visit the [Get Outdoors Day website](#) now to check out planned locations and leads or to nominate a new site. *Nominations for 2011 locations are due by April 8th.*

Washington, D.C.’s “GO Day” will again take place on and near Kingman Island Park, in the Anacostia River and adjacent to Robert F. Kennedy Stadium. ARC and local host Living Classrooms are working to increase excitement by coordinating GO Day with a local bluegrass festival, the D.C. government’s Truck Touch Day and programs to earn Presidential physical activity certificates. To volunteer for DC’s Get Outdoors Day, contact Julia Mitchell at ARC at (202) 682-9530 or via email at jmitchell@funoutdoors.com.

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Surface Transportation Legislation Moving: High Stakes for Boating, Fishing, Trails and Scenic Byways

National field hearings and listening sessions on future surface transportation needs were held in February by the U.S. House of Representatives Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Surface transportation legislation is key to many recreation programs, and the stakes are high due to likely budget curbs. The American Recreation Coalition is playing a leadership role in coordinating support for the Recreational Trails Program, the National Scenic Byways Program and the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, which provide essential funding to trails, byways and boating and fishing programs across the country. Members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

have heard from members and advisors to the Coalition for Recreational Trails (CRT) supporting the continuation of the Recreational Trails Program. The CRT letters had almost 500 signatories and documented the results of the program nationally and in each Member's state. To read the letters to the committee leadership, [click here](#). Letters supporting the National Scenic Byways Program are also being prepared, while supporters of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund are developing an active strategy to demonstrate broad public support.

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NPS Director Jarvis to Convene Healthy Parks Healthy People U.S. 2011 April 5th - 6th

National Park Service (NPS) Director Jon Jarvis has invited 200 "innovators, experts and visionaries" from business, government, academic and nonprofit organizations to an April 5th and 6th session near San Francisco. Called Healthy Parks Healthy People U.S. 2011, the session is expected to lead to a new coalition effort to steer a path toward use of parks and open spaces to improve the health of all Americans – and reduce healthcare costs. The National Park Service has created a new Health and Wellness Steering Committee to plan this event and to undertake other activities. The committee is led by Captain Charles Higgins, Director of the NPS Office of Public Health. To review the NPS' description of the April meeting, [click here](#).

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Spending Crunch for Federal, State Agencies Will Last Several Years: Challenges and Opportunities

The Obama Administration has outlined its fiscal 2012 budget request and, not surprisingly, little, if any, funding for capital projects and flat operations spending were proposed for federal recreation programs. President Obama has committed to flat funding of domestic programs for several years – a scenario that will help stimulate new creativity and partnerships to avoid cut-backs and closures. The Congress is likely to erode even that scenario. And the situation in most states for recreation programs is even more limited. From coast to coast, governors are proposing state park closures and new fees.

“Public recreation programs – especially at the federal level – experienced a surge in economic stimulus funding in 2009 and 2010 that tempered the impact of the economic downturn,” said Derrick Crandall, ARC's President. “Although an economic recovery is underway, it is neither far enough along nor strong enough to allow public recreation programs to continue unchanged. I'm heartened by the response of federal and state recreation program leaders who are not content to wring hands and complain. Rather, they are out exploring new partnerships and seeking to find ways for public recreation programs to be rewarded for contributions to public health, sustainable communities through jobs and quality of life support and advances in education. America's public

park and recreation community leaders are at work to make the resources they manage and their programs relevant to America in the 21st Century.”

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Forest Service Offers Easy Access to National Visitor Data

The Forest Service has made access to its National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) program easier and more robust. NVUM reports contain information about national forest visits volume, satisfaction levels, activity participation, travel distances, visitor spending profiles, and more. The Forest Service offers the following description of the new access opportunity:

This message is for you if... you work in recreation, engineering, public affairs, the social sciences, economics or any other discipline that uses recreation data for planning and decision making. The new version of NRM NVUM Results (formerly NVUM Primary) is now available through your Web browser.

What's NVUM? National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) is a Forest Service recreation-monitoring program. The NVUM Results application delivers the program's data to Forest Service employees and the public via the Internet. This application provides over 70 reports, maps and graphics using NVUM data collected since 2005.

Highlights of this new version include:

- Easy access: No eAuth login. Just go to the website.
- Master report: Just one click generates a compilation of the most useful NVUM reports. The customized cover sheet contains background information about the NVUM program, survey methodology, terminology, and guidelines for using the data.
- Improved reports: We streamlined some reports and added new reports. We also redesigned the Reports menu to make it easier to use. You can now request access to raw data using our new online request form.
- More maps are available: We now use Google for display.

[Click here](#) for the link for "external users."

For more information, contact: Donald B.K. English, Ph.D., Visitor Use Monitoring Program Manager, USDA Forest Service, WO-RHR, (202) 205-9595; denglish@fs.fed.us.

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Partners Outdoors Action Team Efforts Continue

Last month's newsletter focused on the ideas and recommendations derived from the meeting of recreation community and federal agency leaders at Partners Outdoors

2011. Action team follow up is underway on three vital recreation initiatives: Making Great Outdoors Month a Vehicle for Action; Healthy People Healthy Places: Building the Link; and Capitalizing on the America's Great Outdoors Initiative report. To read the Action Teams' summaries on the Partners Outdoors blog, [click here](#). If you would like to get involved, please contact Cathy Ahern at cahern@funoutdoors.com.

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News:

[USA Today: Federal program gives families 'nature prescriptions'](#)

[International Year of Forests Website Launched](#)

[Roanoke, VA Cultivates Outdoor Brand; Results Include Above Average Job Growth](#)

[All-American Road Debuts Handheld Video Tour](#)

[Inflatable Life Jacket World Record Day "Ready, Set, Inflate!"](#)