



American Recreation Coalition

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

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Momentum builds for Great Outdoors Week and Month

The countdown to June is on! Excitement is growing in Washington as plans for Great Outdoors Week continue to develop. This year will offer exciting changes from past Great Outdoors Weeks, including a kick-off ice cream social at the Department of the Interior featuring Interior "celebrities" as ice cream scoopers. The week will include important meetings on topics including the Scenic Byways Program and the Recreational Trails Program, and the Beacon Awards and *Legends* Awards will be presented, showcasing technological innovations and outstanding public land managers. Great Outdoors Week will also tie into partnership efforts at the Forest Service with artist Wyland and with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Kids Fishing Day and conclude with a flourish: National Get Outdoors Day!

Additionally, 12 governors have already proclaimed June as Great Outdoors Month in their states. More than ever, we are seeing proclamations that promote the need to connect children to the outdoors. Here are some highlights from the latest arrivals:

"As acknowledged in the No Child Left Inside Initiative in the State of Connecticut, June is the perfect month to spend time outdoors and appreciate the natural beauty we are lucky to live in." Governor M. Jodi Rell (CT)

"We must take time to recognize the majestic beauty of the Lone Star State and teach Texas youth all the benefits of spending time in nature." Governor Rick Perry (TX)

"As a father, I am proud to have the opportunity to share my love for hunting, fishing and camping with my children." Governor Brian Schweitzer (MT)

Proclamations will all be posted at: www.funoutdoors.com/taxonomy/view/or/115. Check for the latest and share the news!

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Outdoor Resources Review Group and Second Century Commission wrapping up

There are two important “big picture” policy reviews underway, both involving impressive groups of national leaders. The Outdoor Resources Review Group (ORRG) was sparked by U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN), who urged consideration of a third national recreation commission in mid-2007 and got the attention of seasoned national figures including Henry Diamond, editor of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission reports in the 1960s, Gil Grosvenor, National Geographic Society Chair and Vice Chairman of the President’s Commission on Americans Outdoors (PCAO), and Pat Noonan, PCAO member and founder of the Conservation Fund. ORRG membership includes: Senator Alexander, now Ranking Member of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, and Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; two prominent governors (Tennessee and South Carolina); conservation leaders; state park officials and more – as well as ARC’s Derrick Crandall, another key PCAO member. After nine months of meetings and reports, ORRG is slated to offer the Congress and the Administration important advice in June – perhaps suggesting ways to leapfrog another national commission and still garner broad national support for action on recreation and conservation and to enlist health, education and tourism interests as new advocates of park and recreation programs – because of the effective ways these programs advance core societal needs like containing health care costs.

The Second Century Commission is focused on the national park system and its 2016 100th anniversary. Staffed through the National Park Conservation Association, the commission is led by former U.S. Senators Howard Baker and Bennett Johnston (another former PCAO member) with nearly 30 prominent Americans as members– including a former astronaut, REI chair Sally Jewell and more. The group has one more meeting and is tackling such important topics as outreach to diverse Americans, park funding and institutional barriers to partnerships. Its report is expected in September 2009.

Perhaps most encouraging is the discussion underway among the leaders of these two efforts, the Obama Administration and Congressional leaders – all seeking ways to use the potency of the assembled groups to advance conservation and recreation causes over the next several decades. In addition to following progress on ARC’s website, we suggest you visit the Second Century Commission’s site at www.visionfortheparks.org and ORRG’s website: www.rff.org/News/Features/Pages/Outdoor-Resources-Review-Group.aspx.

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GO Day sites spread coast to coast!

We are thrilled to report that National Get Outdoors Day (GO Day) celebrations will officially cover sites coast to coast in its second exciting year! On Saturday, June 13, sites from Vancouver to Texas and Los Angeles to Washington, D.C. will offer opportunities for American families to experience traditional and non-traditional types of outdoor activities. Prime goals of the day are reaching currently underserved populations and first-time visitors to public lands, and reconnecting our youth to the great outdoors. A new component of GO Day will be EChO events: opportunities for GO Day participants to have more fun experiences later in the summer hosted by GO Day partners, including the National Wildlife Federation’s Great American Backyard Campout on June 27. We expect that high-profile figures like Agriculture Secretary Vilsack, governors and mayors will participate in GO Day events.

GO Day sponsor Scholastic will launch its promotion of GO Day and its related outdoor

memories sweepstake during the month of May and the promotion will continue throughout the summer. Kids will be invited to share their favorite outdoor memories with Scholastic and others in exchange for an entry into the contest. Great outdoor prizes include camping gear and outdoor publications, and the grand prize will be a week-long stay at Snowmass in Colorado. Scholastic's GO Day website will be available shortly.

Be sure to check the website – www.nationalgetoutdoorsday.org – frequently, as site updates are happening daily. If your organization is interested in hosting a GO Day site or would like to partner with an existing GO Day event, contact mmeade@funoutdoors.com.

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Strickland confirmed as Interior Assistant Secretary

Tom Strickland, a Coloradan who served on the National Recreation Lakes Study Commission in the late 1990s, was confirmed April 30 as the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, a job he'll add to his current role as the department's Chief of Staff. The confirmation represents a breakthrough of sorts for Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, who has had confirmation of his key lieutenants delayed by Senate Republicans. A hold on Strickland's nomination by Senator Jim Bunning (R-KY) was removed April 29, and he was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on a vote of 89-2.

"I have worked closely with Tom for many years on natural resource initiatives and know that his vision, his experience, and his wisdom will be invaluable in the years ahead," Salazar said in a release. "I am hopeful that other presidential nominees for Interior leadership posts will soon be confirmed."

A spokeswoman for Senator Bob Bennett (R-UT) said he will continue to keep a hold on David Hayes, President Obama's nominee for Deputy Interior Secretary, and on April 30, Senator Bennett put a hold on Hilary Tomkins, nominated to be the Department's Solicitor.

To read the Department of the Interior's news release on the confirmation, [click here](#). Word is that with Strickland in place, a new National Park Service Director will be nominated shortly. This post, too, is subject to Senate confirmation.

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CRT urges Congress to protect Recreational Trails Program

The Coalition for Recreational Trails (CRT) has asked Congress to continue to support the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), which plays an essential role in funding state and local trails across the country. In an April 22 letter to Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Jim Oberstar and Ranking Member John Mica, the CRT urged Congress to reauthorize the RTP in the upcoming multi-year surface transportation legislation and to include funding for this important program in the amount of \$550 million over a five-year period. The letter was signed by 30 national and international organizations as well as 116 regional, state and local groups from across the nation, and support continues to grow daily.

Administered by the Federal Highway Administration, the RTP is funded from the federal taxes paid on gasoline used in nonhighway recreation. Funds are distributed to the states based on a formula that recognizes the user-pay/user-benefit character of the program. Since 1993, \$730 million has been provided to the states and has funded in excess of 20,000 projects for motorized and non-motorized enthusiasts alike. Funding is leveraged by partners with cash and in-kind support. The CRT highlights the fact that this money, which is used to create healthy trail systems, in turn promotes healthy lifestyles for the communities of which they are a part. In addition, the economic impact of projects funded

under the RTP is magnified because they improve access to public lands and waters to support both local tourism and recreation businesses.

If you would like to sign on to the letter, please contact the American Recreation Coalition at cahern@funoutdoors.com or call 202-682-9530.

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ARC discusses exciting summer plans with Interior leadership

The American Recreation Coalition recently met with Department of the Interior officials to discuss many exciting plans and partnerships for the coming months. Among the topics discussed were upcoming national park visits by Secretary Salazar that could both encourage visits by the public and demonstrate how new technology can help make outdoor fun "green." A new "green RV" getting high MPG and using energy- and water-efficient components could play a role in these visits. The visits could also focus on gateway communities and job creation, and proposed activities could include town hall meetings with concessioners and other local businesses and stops at projects funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act enacted in early 2009. Interior and ARC trip planners are also eager to help realize the hope expressed by President Obama in March that his daughters could see the special beauty of the parks – as he vividly remembered doing so at age 11.

Discussions also focused on how the Obama Administration can take an active role in Great Outdoors Month. Suggestions included convening a White House Conference on Children and Health, inviting top Administration members to participate in National Get Outdoors Day events and hosting a campout for children of military families on the South Lawn of the White House. The Interior Department is working with the White House on the requested proclamation of June as Great Outdoors Month.

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Salazar announces \$750 million in stimulus funding for NPS

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced April 22 that more than 750 park projects will receive \$750 million in stimulus funding to create jobs, to restore and protect America's national parks and to preserve our history and heritage for future generations. The funding is part of more than \$3 billion the Department of the Interior is investing in the nation's economy under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

"From the Civil War to the Great Depression, America's best ideas for protecting our national parks and open spaces have often come when our nation has faced its greatest challenges," said Secretary Salazar. "Today, by investing \$750 million to restore and protect America's most special places, we are creating a new legacy of stewardship for our national park system while helping our economy stand up again. These projects – at places like Ellis Island in New York and Dinosaur National Monument in Utah – are ready to go and will create jobs in communities across the country."

All of the announced projects are long-standing priorities of the National Park Service (NPS) based on its capital planning process. With an array of projects identified as critical by stakeholders, the NPS worked through a rigorous merit-based process to identify investments that met the criteria put forth in the Recovery Act: namely, that a project addresses the Department's highest priority mission needs, generates the largest number of jobs in the shortest period of time, and creates lasting value for the American public.

To read the full release, [click here](#).

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Angling & Boating Alliance submits Wallop-Breaux modifications to Congress

The Angling & Boating Alliance has submitted to Congress its consensus agreement on reauthorization priorities and recommended changes to the Sportfish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund, which is up for reauthorization as part of the 2009 surface transportation bill. This highly successful program, commonly known as the Wallop-Breaux Fund, is funded through a "user tax" system in which excise taxes on fishing tackle and equipment, motorboat fuel, and import duties on recreational boats and fishing equipment are collected for the various Sportfish Restoration programs. These taxes and duties generate \$700 million annually to support boating and fishing opportunities across the nation – provided under an automatic appropriations authority.

The Alliance has proposed 16 statutory amendments to the Trust Fund. The amendments cover a broad range of issues, including: protection of administrative financing in the likely condition that less money is brought in by the Fund due to the economic climate; identification of a direct funding stream for the U.S. Coast Guard National Recreational Boating Survey; and prohibition against using any Trust Fund dollars for the closure of recreational water bodies and fisheries to recreational angling and boating access in a manner inconsistent with scientific evidence. The Alliance also recommends increasing funding for the Outreach & Participation component of the Fund, an area that is critically important in the current economic climate.

The Angling & Boating Alliance is an ad hoc coalition of national recreational boating, angling, and outdoor recreation organizations, conservation groups, and state boating safety and natural resources agencies (including the American Recreation Coalition) committed to the sustainable future of the Sportfish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund.

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Fish and Wildlife Service hands out millions in boating grants

More than \$12.5 million in grants was recently awarded through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program. The grants will help fund 14 projects across 11 states, from California to Maine, including construction of docks, boat slips and other facilities to support recreational boating.

"Boating is one of our country's favorite pastimes, and the Boating Infrastructure Grant program greatly enhances recreational opportunities while conserving America's aquatic natural resources," Interior Secretary Ken Salazar said in a statement. "Spending by boaters provides significant revenues for business owners and employees in every state," he continued. "This program, funded by boaters, is a prime example of the direct economic benefits boating can bring to local economies."

Funding for the program comes from the Sportfish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, formerly known as the Aquatic Resources Trust Fund, which is supported by excise taxes on certain fishing and boating equipment, and boat fuels. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will also release about \$3 million to 40 states willing to match a smaller, non-competitive grant program known as BIG Tier One funding.

For more information and for a list of the 14 winning grant proposals, [click here](#).

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- [Secretary Salazar creates new Office of Youth at Interior](#)
- [Wounded warriors go fishing for recovery](#)
- [It's not baby fat: Among 4-year olds, nearly 1 in 5 is obese](#)
- [PA state parks' Urban Youth Adventure Camps to benefit from Macy's promotion](#)

For more information or to address questions/comments, please email: mmeade@funoutdoors.com

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