



## American Recreation Coalition

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

### September 2009

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### **ARC reflects on accomplishments of 2009, looks ahead to 2010**

The American Recreation Coalition has made important progress in our work to promote, defend and enhance outdoor recreation this year, despite the substantial economic challenges impacting many segments of the recreation community. Living up to this year's Partners Outdoors meeting theme "Using the Transition to Thrive," recreation leaders have developed overtures to a new Congress and Administration to encourage more people, especially youth, to reap the benefits of time spent in the great outdoors. President Obama embraced the values of Great Outdoors Month, and a record 46 state governors joined the President in proclaiming June as Great Outdoors Month in their home states. ARC is also focused on protecting critical recreation infrastructure, particularly the recreational trails and scenic byways programs that will be included in the authorization of a new transportation bill this fall. ARC members will soon receive a letter detailing these efforts, accomplishments and more. Your prompt response to this letter will be appreciated.

ARC is already creating a busy and exciting agenda for 2010. Several programs will launch in the upcoming months, including a new partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to increase cooperation and communication between EPA and the recreation community, and a new pilot program with Prince William County Schools (Virginia) to put children outdoors in the last few days of the school year for a mix of learning and fun. Plans are also underway for Partners Outdoors 2010, Great Outdoors Month, Recreation Exchanges and the continued expansion of National Get Outdoors Day. We thank all of our members and partners for your continued support and we look forward to working with you in 2010!

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## **Transition continues at federal land management agencies**

The Administration transition continues for leaders of federal land management agencies who will have significant influence over the future of outdoor recreation in America. New agency leaders have been named at the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Forest Service, and we expect Senate confirmation of Jon Jarvis as Director of the National Park Service soon. We've known most of these new leaders through past roles in their agencies and look forward to inviting them to outline their goals and priorities at upcoming Recreation Exchange luncheons and other ARC events. Be certain that your Exchange sponsorship is current! Contact Mindy Meade at (202) 682-9530 or [mmeade@funoutdoors.com](mailto:mmeade@funoutdoors.com) for program info.

For more information on the new agency leaders, click the following links:

- [Bureau of Land Management Director Bob Abbey](#)
- [Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Michael Connor](#)
- [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Director Sam Hamilton](#)
- [U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell](#)

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## **Save the date for Partners Outdoors 2010!**

Partners Outdoors 2010 will be held on January 10-13 at Cavallo Point in Golden Gate National Recreation Area. This year's meeting – which is themed “Connecting People and Parks” – will feature a broad range of key recreation policy speakers as well as Action Teams that will focus on how to better connect people to the outdoors. The meeting will welcome a broad range of partners in promoting the importance of outdoor recreation, including gateway communities, public health officials, the criminal justice system and more. And it is being held in an area featuring some of the most successful public/private recreation and parks partnerships in the nation. You should plan to take part in this informative, energizing gathering!

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## **September 15 Gateways to Parks and Tribal Lands Forum planned at Interior**

The Interior Department will host an important event on September 15 focusing on cooperation between gateway communities and parks and tribal lands. The session involves a number of regional tourism-related organizations as well as at least three federal departments: Interior, Transportation and Commerce. In addition to Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood has agreed to participate – and other Cabinet members may join in too. Participation will be limited to about 125 persons, including a number of recreation industry leaders. ARC will be active in the meeting and is coordinating the display of a new “green” RV.

The session seeks to explore ways to make park and tribal lands important economic contributors to nearby communities while also securing local support for park protection efforts. ARC predicts that the meeting will include discussion of efforts which, like the fee-free park weekends of 2009, will encourage park visitations.

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## **ARC partnership with EPA to launch September 17**

The American Recreation Coalition has begun working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to find ways to increase cooperation and communication in order to meet common goals, including reconnecting America's youth with the great outdoors. To launch this effort, Gina McCarthy – EPA's Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation and former Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection – will be the guest speaker at ARC's Recreation Exchange on September 17. The group will then disperse into a series of breakout sessions on topics such as outreach to children and the public on environmental initiatives, air quality and emissions standards, certification programs, technology-assistance programs and more. Further details on this program will be sent out shortly.

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## **National Parks Second Century Commission to present report**

Coinciding with National Parks Week, the independent National Parks Second Century Commission will report its findings and recommendations after a year-long investigation and discussion about national parks, their value and their role in society. This report will be released September 21 in Washington, D.C. and will offer a vision and strategic path for the future of the national parks, including recommendations for actions on National Park Service policy, programs including resource preservation and education, funding, organizational issues and future growth of the National Park System.

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## **Jay Jensen presents vision for the Forest Service at August Recreation Exchange**

Jay Jensen, Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was the guest speaker at the August 2009 Recreation Exchange hosted by the American Recreation Coalition. Mr. Jensen spoke about Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's national vision for America's forests, the Forest Service's use of economic stimulus funds, the importance of concessioners and partnerships to the mission of the Forest Service and more. He told the group that Secretary Vilsack is committed to reconnecting the American public to the land, and is leading the Department of Agriculture with the vision "USDA: Every day, every way." The Secretary plans to reconnect people to the land through the frames of climate and water. People today, particularly children, largely lack an understanding of where their food and water originate, putting little thought into the source of their food other than the grocery store. It is vital to reconnect people to their public lands, Mr. Jensen said. "The key way to reconnect people to their lands is through recreation, and you all are a powerful part of this platform," Mr. Jensen told the group. He touted the importance of urban forests, especially those near city centers, noting that 75% of visitors to national forests travel less than 100 miles to the forests they visit. "These urban forests are the gateways to connecting people to the land," he said.

To read the full story, visit [www.funoutdoors.com](http://www.funoutdoors.com).

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## **Pilot effort of ED OUT program to connect students to nature during last weeks of school**

On August 13 ARC and key allies met with the leadership of Prince William County Schools – Virginia's second largest school system – to discuss a new pilot partnership to get student outdoors. During the last few weeks of school when standardized testing is completed and grades are already turned in, teachers seek help in offering students educationally valuable opportunities. ARC, national nonprofits including the National Wildlife Federation, and agencies led by the U.S. Forest Service are working with the school district to find ways to host students in the outdoors during the last few days of school for a mix of learning and fun. ARC anticipates ED OUT will grow into a nationwide effort following the 2010 launch in Virginia, and is also exploring other possible pilot school systems. ED OUT began on the roof of the U.S. Department of the Interior in June, when the system's superintendent accepted one of ARC's 2009 Beacon awards for its leading role in the MonarchLive! program.

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## **ARC, National Park Service launch cooperative research effort**

To help accelerate the implementation of the National Park Service's National Tourism Strategic Plan, ARC has offered to provide funding and donate services to collect case studies of NPS and partner actions and programs designed to increase public awareness and utilization of national park opportunities. The survey will especially focus on use of innovative communications channels to reach segments of the American public which are under-represented in the profile of current park visitors. Use of new social media, special events and other innovative outreach strategies is of special interest. The study will be done by ARC Senior Fellow Michael Sciulla and an NPS staffer detailed to the NPS National Tourism Office. Commencing in September, the project is scheduled to be completed by early 2010.

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## **National Park Foundation awards grants to 35 parks; lauds Ken Burns and "The National Parks: America's Best Idea"**

Inspired by the forthcoming Ken Burns documentary *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*, the National Park Foundation (NPF) has established a new grant program to connect underserved audiences, primarily people of color, to the national parks. NPF, in partnership with the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, has awarded "America's Best Idea Grants" totaling \$500,000 to 35 national parks across the country to develop outreach strategies and engagement programs for people who are traditionally under-represented in their local national parks.

"The point of America's Best Idea – both the documentary and the grants program – is that the country is strengthened by the deep and lasting bond between people and their parks," said Neil Mulholland, new president of the National Park Foundation. "Ken Burns has captured the amazing personal stories of men and women from all walks of life who helped form the parks because of their love for the natural and historical treasures they hold. We want to be sure to continue capturing those stories and building that legacy among audiences as diverse as the parks themselves."

For more information on the announcement of the "America's Best Idea" grants, [click here](#).

To see a list of grant recipients, [click here](#).

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## **Get your child in pictures: Kid's Life Jacket Program photo calendar contest ends soon**

Boaters heading out on the water this Labor Day weekend may need a properly fitted kid's life jacket for a young boating guest – and they are in luck! The nonprofit BoatU.S. Foundation offers a no-cost Kid's Life Jacket Loaner Program, which gives boaters and parents the opportunity to borrow a children's life jacket for the day or weekend. And when you stop by one of the 500 locations across the country to pick up a loaner jacket, have your camera ready. The Foundation is looking for photos of kids wearing Loaner Program life jackets, and the best photos will be featured in a 2010 calendar. The Foundation will also use some of the images to promote the popular program. Photos can be emailed to Life Jacket Program Manager Alanna Keating at [Akeating@BoatUS.com](mailto:Akeating@BoatUS.com). Entries submitted by September 30 will also be entered into a drawing to win a free custom photo book. In November, judges will select the best photos to be featured in the calendar that will be offered for sale on [www.BoatUS.com/foundation](http://www.BoatUS.com/foundation). Proceeds from the calendar sales will help keep this life-saving program afloat.

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## **News**

- ["Glamping" offers an upscale take on the great outdoors](#)
- [Birdwatching stays steady as an American hobby](#)

For more information or to address questions/comments, please email: [mmeade@funoutdoors.com](mailto:mmeade@funoutdoors.com)

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American Recreation Coalition  
1225 New York Avenue, N.W., Suite 450  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
202-682-9530 Fax: 202-682-9529  
[www.funoutdoors.com](http://www.funoutdoors.com)

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