



American Recreation Coalition

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

SPRING 2014 NEWSLETTER

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CONGRESS HOLDS HEARING ON FLREA – FEDERAL FEE LEGISLATION

U.S. Representative Rob Bishop (R-UT) chaired a hearing on the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) on April 4th to receive comments on legislation which allows NPS and other federal agencies to charge entrance and recreation fees and to retain those fees at the collection sites for use without any Congressional action. Prior to 1996, very little of the fees paid by visitors to parks and other federal sites were available to provide needed services and facilities. These fees now provide five federal agencies with more than \$300 million in funding annually, mostly to NPS. Witnesses were generally very supportive of reauthorization of FLREA, although most argued for steps which would increase the transparency of the fee program, more effectively involve the public in discussions about where and how fees would be charged and used and called for new steps to make the fees convenient and less costly to collect.

Among the key witnesses at the hearing was American Recreation Coalition President Derrick Crandall, who has played an active role in federal recreation fee policies since his service on the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors in the mid-1980's. He called upon the Congress to fulfill the promise of the law's title – recreation enhancement. ARC included in its testimony a [letter](#) co-signed by more than 30 key recreation, conservation and tourism organizations outlining twelve consensus principles developed by the organizations on FLREA's reauthorization. The letter resulted from a series of meetings and calls co-chaired by former U.S. Senator Wayne Allard, now Vice President, Government Relations, for the American Motorcyclist Association and ARC's Crandall.

FLREA was originally slated to sunset in December 2014. Congress extended the program to December 2015 last October. The Administration strongly supports continuation of federal recreation fees. Action before the end of 2014 is likely, perhaps as a component of the FY15 budget. Copies of all testimony can be read and downloaded and an archived video of the full hearing can be watched at naturalresources.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=370652.

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PLAY A ROLE IN GREAT OUTDOORS MONTH 2014!

June is proclaimed Great Outdoors Month by the President and by each governor annually, and includes a large number of events designed to connect Americans with the Great Outdoors. Among the month's events are National Trails Day®, National Fishing and Boating Week, National Get Outdoors Day, National Marina Day, the Great American Backyard Campout and more. ARC founded and coordinates Great Outdoors Month.

Great Outdoors Month 2014 will be much more ambitious than ever before, with the sponsors of June events unified in efforts to cross-promote and to work with important new national sponsors and partners. The Federal Interagency Council on Recreation (FICOR) is now actively involved, with FICOR Chair Tom Tidwell, Chief of the US Forest Service, serving as a Co-Chair of Great Outdoors Month. The Coleman Company, Walmart, SC Johnson's OFF!® brand and more are also newly involved and will provide links to millions of Americans who are not now active in the outdoors. Also among the important new participants in Great Outdoors Month 2014 are the Boy Scouts of America and the Girl Scouts of the USA.

Planned events include Capital Campouts hosted by governors, special events at hundreds of Walmart stores, holding Partners Outdoors in June for the first time and a new portal to outdoor fun – www.greatoutdoorsmonth.org jointly developed by the month's key partners for cross-promotion and outreach. And even more is planned for 2015 and beyond.

Among the ways you can participate in Great Outdoors Month 2014 are: posting the colorful Presidential and Gubernatorial proclamations (available from ARC) on websites and displaying them at your locations and events in June; participating and even hosting June events locally, from National Get Outdoors Day to a Great American Backyard Campout; adding the Great Outdoors Month URL or QR code to your materials; promoting Great Outdoors Month with special offers – from an open house to membership discounts and added features, or with special offers for services and products. Here is the QR code – also available on request from dcrandall@funoutdoors.com:



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NATIONAL GET OUTDOORS DAY

National Get Outdoors Day (GO Day) began with a handful of events catalyzed by the shared vision of the Forest Service and ARC that we could bring outdoor fun to urban kids who need to get a taste of the Great Outdoors to combat sedentary lifestyles. The event has grown in popularity and in 2013 included 148 events and attracted at least 63,000 participants, all made possible by the efforts of hundreds of local and national partners.

GO Day 2014 should set new records. The Denver GO Day team has demonstrated how to grow a simple local event into a year-round effort. Denver's actual GO Day event may attract 20,000 participants – and extensive TV coverage will deliver the message that outdoor fun is close by to hundreds of thousands more. This year's local event will feature major support from UnitedHealth and The Coleman Company. The partnership also supports a very useful and year-round guide to fun outdoors in the state at www.getoutdoorscolorado.org.

We are especially excited by our progress in attracting major new national support for GO Day. An agreement to become a National Sponsor of GO Day is going through final approval by S.C. Johnson's OFF!® brand and should be in place very shortly. OFF!® will assist in promoting outdoor fun in many ways, including support of key GO Day events and assisting social media efforts designed to invite those not now actively involved with our Great Outdoors to get started at sites ranging from local parks to distant wildernesses. Details on the role of OFF!® will be posted soon on www.nationalgetoutdoorsday.org.

It is not too late to host a GO Day event. The [GO Day website](#) has lots of information and useful guides – as well as information on events which could really use your support.

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PARTNERS OUTDOORS 2014 WILL UNITE LEADERS IN DC JUNE 9-11

Partners Outdoors, an extraordinary annual gathering of key recreation community leaders from both the public and private sectors, will be held in Washington, D.C. during June – Great Outdoors Month. The session is co-sponsored by the federal agencies managing our national parks, forests, refuges and other public spaces and ARC. Over the course of three days – June 9-11 – keynote speakers, followed by panel presentations and brainstormer sessions, will be focusing on three key challenges:

- Funding Recreation in the Great Outdoors Sustainably;
- Hosting All Americans in Their Great Outdoors; and

- Working Effectively as Partners Outdoors.

Partners Outdoors was first held in 1992 and has led to important actions benefitting the access to the Great Outdoors. Partners Outdoors 2014 will add to that legacy. Among those already committed to roles at the event are U.S. Representative Raúl Grijalva, National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe; Assistant Secretary of Commerce and NOAA Deputy Administrator Mark Schaefer; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Chief of Operations Jim Hannon; and Vail Resorts Vice President for Natural Resources and Conservation Rick Cables.

Partners Outdoors participants are selected by sponsoring agencies and invited by ARC. Invitations to private sector leaders will be issued shortly. For more information, see www.funoutdoors.com or contact Cathy Ahern at cahern@funoutdoors.com.

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COALITION FOR RECREATIONAL TRAILS WORKS WITH CONGRESSIONAL CHAMPS TO KEEP RTP VISIBLE

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) has helped some 20,000 trail projects across the nation since its creation in the early 1990's. It has united trail interests – summer and winter, motorized and non-motorized, traditional and new – in every state. It has formed the core of the trails program in almost every state, typically channeling a small portion of the federal fuel tax collected on non-highway recreational activities from the Federal Highway Administration through state transportation agencies to state park trail programs. The program is a proven success and has support from all major national trail organizations as well as countless local governments and businesses – and the trails community.

The Coalition for Recreational Trails (CRT), comprised of more than 30 key national organizations, works closely with bipartisan Congressional supporters to keep the program alive during a time of federal spending restrictions and program consolidations. RTP enjoyed success during the crafting of MAP-21, the current federal surface transportation law, and astonished many with its continuation without any reductions and no changes to its guidelines. Especially key was the support of leaders including U.S. Representatives Tom Petri (R-WI) and Mike Michaud (D-ME) and U.S. Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Jim Risch (R-ID) and hundreds of CRT Advisory Council members from across the nation.

RTP's future is promising but by no means assured. MAP-21 sunsets on September 30th, 2014, and a simple extension is made challenging by the fiscal complications. Federal fuel tax receipts cannot sustain current spending for the program – an annual subsidy of more than \$10 billion per annum will be required beyond the funding provided by federal gas tax, frozen at 18.3 cents per gallon for two decades.

There are important efforts to keep RTP's success visible. CRT is reaching out to new Members of Congress to explain the "user pay" background of the program, and using an improved RTP projects data base to show the benefits of the program in every state and every Congressional district – see www.recreationaltrailsinfo.org. CRT will soon announce its 2014 award winners for projects in nine categories. And CRT has written to the House and Senate leaders who will be deciding on next steps in the federal surface transportation program underscoring the value of RTP to the nation's economy, to the health of the American public, to safety and to providing access to our public lands and waters.

And RTP's Congressional champions are taking action, too. A key and sizeable group of U.S. Senators will be writing to transportation program leaders in the Senate about RTP's benefits in advance of possible late-April action. And House champions are gearing up for similar action in that chamber.

Updates on RTP, including an explanation of CRT requests for revisions to MAP-21 provisions (including the elimination of an opt-out provision by governors), are available at www.funoutdoors.com.

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

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