



American Recreation Coalition

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

January 2011

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ARC Briefs Forest Service on Future of Federal Recreation Fees

ARC President Derrick Crandall briefed key Forest Service officials about concerns of the recreation community regarding implementation and operation of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), which authorizes recreation fees and retention for five federal agencies. FLREA is now scheduled to expire in 2014, but there is already interest in Congress in reducing or eliminating many of the law's provisions because of public controversy. Among those receiving the briefing were the Forest Service's Washington, D.C., recreation staff and the agency's Regional Recreation Directors. Mr. Crandall told the group that FLREA must be convenient, coherent and flexible for its reauthorization to gain the support of recreation community leaders. FLREA, based on the fee demo program begun in 1996, presumed a return of fees to the activities that generated the fees and substantial public involvement in fee program establishment. It also sought to enhance public recreation experiences – not simply replace existing general revenue funding for recreation programs. Recreation community concerns include delayed expenditure of collected fees, poor accounting for fee revenues, overly-zealous enforcement efforts, lack of coordination with other strategies for meeting recreation program needs – including volunteer efforts – and poor communications with recreation interests. The Forest Service expressed a

willingness to review some of the most contentious fee program initiatives and to meet with recreation community leaders and Hill interests to explore ways to reduce public criticism of the fee program. ARC is joining other recreation interests in a working group to provide a unified recommendation to the Administration and the Congress on future recreation fee program design.

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National Park Service to Extend Fee-Free Days in 2011

The National Park Service has announced preliminary Fee-Free days for 2011. The Fee-Free Days program was launched in 2009 by U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar to help mitigate the concerns and duress of the economic downturn, and to make sure all Americans know they are welcome to visit and benefit from America's national parks and public lands. The dates are:

January 15 -17	Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday weekend (<i>new</i>)
April 16 - 24	National Park Week
June 21	First day of summer (<i>new</i>)
September 24	Public Lands Day
November 11	Veterans Day

Park visitation remains at or below levels of the late 1980's - and the total number of hours spent by the public in national parks is down an astonishing 13%. The drop in hours is mostly due to lower numbers of campers and guests at concessioner-operated lodging. In some parks, the number of guest rooms and campsites has been reduced significantly since the 1980's. More dates and outreach initiatives will be added as the information becomes available. For National Park Service information, [click here](#).

For a preliminary list of special offers provided by park concessioners, [click here](#).

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Outreach to Western Governors, Counties on Forest Planning Rule

The Coalition for Recreation in the National Forests (CRNF) is disseminating a position summary on the Forest Service Planning Rule's importance to recreation to the Western Governors' Association, the National Association of Counties, new Members of Congress, other elected officials and the news media. It was drafted by ARC President Derrick Crandall, Motorcycle Industry Council Director of Federal Affairs Duane Taylor and BlueRibbon Coalition Executive Director Greg Mumm and approved by the full coalition. To read the summary, [click here](#). The draft Planning Rule is now under review by top Department of Agriculture officials prior to publication in the **Federal Register**. Coalition efforts on the draft rule were significantly aided by a [November 18th letter](#) signed by 41 Members of Congress. "The unity among recreation organizations cooperating on the issue of the Planning Rule is perhaps the best I have seen in 30 years," Mr. Crandall said.

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Tourism Organizations Meet on Federal Highway Reauthorization Issue

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) invited recreation and tourism representatives to a December 6th meeting to review and discuss the status of federal surface transportation legislation reauthorization. “It is vitally important for the recreation community to be involved with this discussion. It affects a number of key programs, including Scenic Byways, Recreational Trails, the Aquatic Resources Trust Fund and Transportation Enhancements,” according to ARC President Derrick Crandall. At the meeting, AASHTO President John Horsley said, “Severe funding pressures on the Highway Trust Fund mean that the scope and parameters of the program are likely to be rigorously challenged. Few federal programs are as important to tourism as the highway program and the industry will have a very large stake in the next reauthorization legislation.” He told the group that AASHTO supports the recommendation of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform to gradually increase the federal motorfuel tax by 15 cents per gallon between 2013 and 2015 to support essential transportation infrastructure improvements. Without new Highway Trust Fund revenue, the Commission’s report states, policymakers will be forced to impose highway and transit program cuts that would reduce payrolls and impede economic growth.

The meeting also addressed extension of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) – now more than a full year past its initial term. Mr. Crandall said, “There are various interests, including AASHTO, supporting a two to three-year extension rather than a new six-year reauthorization bill. These groups are concerned that the multi-year reauthorization bill developed by incoming House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica (R-FL) only provides \$35 billion in annual funding – the amount generated by the federal gas tax – versus the minimum \$45 billion that the groups believed was needed.” For more information on SAFETEA-LU, [click here](#)
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Transit and Trail Connections Will Boost Public Access to Wildlife Refuges

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has just released a national study on how to access more than 100 National Wildlife Refuges by public transit and trails. The concept of using public transportation to link parks and other public land sites to population centers was showcased at Partners Outdoors 2010 for the San Francisco Bay Area, and served as the catalyst for the FWS initiative. The agency worked with the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Volpe Center to evaluate 142 National Wildlife Refuges – mostly urban and suburban – for connections to existing or potential transit and trail resources. The program “will be a new tool for Fish and Wildlife staff, partner agencies, and friends groups to recognize potential connections, set priorities for future planning, and ultimately enhance alternative transportation access to National Wildlife Refuges,” according to the report summary. The report, entitled **Transit and Trail Connections: Assessment of Visitor Access to National Wildlife Refuges**, was prepared with Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in the Parks Program funds authorized under

the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Phase Two of the initiative, also funded through SAFETEA-LU, will be a communications and promotions effort this year that will include an online guide. A copy of the complete 42-page report is available by [clicking here](#).

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National Prevention Strategy: Surgeon General Urges Physical Activity Outdoors

Surgeon General Regina Benjamin gave the keynote address at the National Prevention Strategy Stakeholders Conference organized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in Washington, D.C. last month. She stated that in order to truly reform health care, we must first prevent illness. She referred to prevention initiatives including the First Lady's **Let's Move!** program as well as the President's America's Great Outdoors Initiative which encourage people to get outside and stay active, leading to healthier lifestyles. A council of 17 Cabinet level departments and federal agency heads will develop the National Prevention Strategy with input by many public and private organizations. ARC Vice President Catherine Ahern said the meeting focused primarily on exercise and nutrition with less emphasis on parks or outdoor recreation. However, in her remarks, she encouraged the council "to promote a broader understanding of the health value of active time spent outdoors."

She also noted that, "the federal land management agencies and their partners in the recreation community need to be a part of this strategy to prevent disease and improve our health." ARC will continue to connect with this HHS initiative and work with the National Park Service, a key agency participant. To give your own input on the development of the National Prevention Strategy, [click here](#).

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White House Invites Private-Sector Support for Let's Move!

ARC President Derrick Crandall participated in a White House briefing December 1st on the **Let's Move!** initiative by the Office of the First Lady. The high-level meeting drew approximately 125 private-sector organizations representing the recreation, fitness and health industries. **Let's Move!** Executive Director Robin Schepper focused on how the private sector can help young people be more physically active. According to Mr. Crandall, "Let's Move is a high priority for the White House. The program has some \$28 million in campaign funding and the support of the Ad Council. It plans several very ambitious events with youth throughout the country. It will focus on parents, too, to encourage them to take their kids outdoors." The White House is also interested in linking 2011's Great Outdoors Month proclamation to youth and health-related issues. ARC plans to ask state governors – 30 of whom are new – to encourage outdoor activity in conjunction with their proclamation of the Great Outdoors Month. Share your ideas with dcrandall@funoutdoors.com. For access to the website, go to www.letsmove.gov

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International Visitation to U.S. Up 11%

The U.S. Department of Commerce announced December 1st that, for the first nine months of 2010, 45.3 million international visitors traveled to the United States, an 11 percent increase over the same period in 2009. September 2010 registered the 12th straight month of increases in U.S. arrivals. International visitors spent \$100 billion during the first nine months of 2010, 11 percent more than the same period in 2009. In September 2010, international visitors spent \$11.7 billion, 17 percent more than in September 2009. September 2010 marks the ninth consecutive month of growth in U.S. travel and tourism-related exports. For more highlights, [click here](#).

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President Obama Will Promote Travel to the U.S.

The Corporation for Travel Promotion (CTP) is moving quickly to create a TV public service announcement (PSA) campaign featuring President Obama. He will promote international travel to the U.S. The video is planned to premiere at the U.S. Travel Association's 2011 International Pow Wow May 21st to 25th in San Francisco. Industry resources helping to create the PSA include Disney, the California Travel and Tourism Commission and New York City & Company, among others. The CTP was created in March by the Travel Promotion Act, putting into place a new public-private partnership between the U.S. government and the nation's travel and tourism industry. The private sector will be responsible for raising 50 percent of the CTP's budget. Up to \$100 million in federal funding will be available each year from fees on visitors to the U.S. Inbound travelers to the U.S. from visa waiver countries will be charged a \$14 fee when accessing the Electronic System for Travel Authorization. Travel resulting from the Travel Promotion Act is projected to generate \$4 billion in new visitor spending and 40,000 new jobs.

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Partners Outdoors 2011: Focus on Shaping the Future of Recreation

Partners Outdoors 2011 is just weeks away, from January 23rd through the 26th, at the Gaylord Texan in Grapevine, Texas. An excellent mix of private and public attendees are bringing energy and vision to the meeting, including keynote speaker John Crompton, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor at the Department of Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences of Texas A&M University. Action Teams will work on three key 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. For more information, please contact Cathy Ahern at ARC via email at

cahern@funoutdoors.com

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ARC Joins Twitter

ARC launched its Twitter page [@AmerRecreation](#) recently to instantly communicate about and promote ARC, share news on events and newsworthy items at ARC member companies, follow member news, and reach more youth. Twitter will also be used to follow recreation news and promote ARC to the media. Many government agencies and Congressional offices use Twitter now as well, and ARC is following their timely news. ARC looks forward to broadening awareness of the organization through Twitter, with 106 million accounts worldwide, and other social media tools.

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ARC Outdoor Recreation Idea Shared Daily on Twitter and Website

ARC is featuring an [Outdoor Idea of the Day](#) on its website and posting it on Twitter daily. Outdoor Idea of the Day is inspired by the President's America's Great Outdoors Initiative to connect Americans to the outdoors and its IdeaJam blog. For ARC's submissions to the blog, [click here](#). ARC's latest submission to the IdeaJam is entitled ***"Offer returning troops a chance to reenter civilian life in the Great Outdoors."***

[Click here](#) to read past ideas listed in the September 2010 ARC newsletter.

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News:

[Report: Sale of Leisure Products Rebounding](#)

[USA Today - Hitting New Highs: Adventures Out of the Ordinary](#)

[RecreatingWithKids.com Launched to Connect Kids, Parents with the Great Outdoors](#)

[MVP Builds All-Electric RV. Luxury High-End Not Yet for Sale](#)

[Jellystone Park Camp-Resorts Plan Promotions Related to New Yogi Bear Movie](#)

[Coast Guard Plans Recreational Boating Safety Survey](#)

[RV Parks & Campgrounds \(ARVC\) Names Paul Bambei New President and CEO](#)

[FMCA Names Koshland New Executive Director](#)

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