

Get Ready to Contribute to the Recreation Idea Bank – and the Recreation Action Menu!

The first of five **Recreation Forums** convened by the National Forest Foundation and the American Recreation Coalition, in cooperation with the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and more than two dozen other agencies and leading national organizations, will be held in **Golden, Colorado, on March 1**. Details on that program and the other Forums are found at www.recreationforums.info. You can also contact Mindy Meade (mmeade@funoutdoors.com) or Dottie Shea (dshea@funoutdoors.com) at 202-682-9530.

The Forums are vital in assuring success in recreation community efforts for two reasons.

First, the Forums will bring us together to share our individual concerns and ideas – as hikers and anglers and campers and OHV enthusiasts and cyclists and climbers and equestrians and skiers and more – and to **hear about the ideas and concerns of our allies in the recreation, health, tourism, education and economic development fields.**

Second, it will build **an idea bank for recreation community leaders** and national public policy leaders alike to turn to over the next decade – just as listening sessions for the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission did in the 1960's and just as the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors did in the 1980's.

Add your ideas, your concerns that need solutions and your successes. Come to a Forum, and come prepared to contribute. These are not spectator events – they are participatory. Your 3-5 minute contributions can be submitted “live” – captured on DVD – on paper or electronically.

We know we will be hearing some GREAT ideas.

Here are twenty that are already scheduled to be “deposited” in the Recreation Idea Bank:

1) If we want to reach kids with an outdoors message, use libraries. Arrange for displays in libraries about fun ways to learn and be active in state parks – and then **let families check out park passes from the library** just like books and DVDs! It can be done – Connecticut is already doing it!

2) Don't let fees be a barrier for families living at or below the poverty level. **Waive entry fees and other charges for those displaying proof of public assistance.** Easy to implement and not very costly – and a dramatic signal to those often under-represented in our parks, according to the Director of the LA County Department of Parks and Recreation which has taken this step.

- 3) Let kids sample the technology and the fun of a modern mountain bike on **National Take a Kid Mountain Biking Day** – sponsored by IMBA each fall.
- 4) Use growing federal funding for trails under the Recreational Trails Program as a way to reward states that **earmark OHV registration and state non-highway recreation fuel taxes to trails development and maintenance** – a call from the Coalition for Recreational Trails.
- 5) Help meet the President’s call for reduction in gasoline use in a way that doesn’t discourage recreation and has additional environmental and safety benefits! Find ways for recreationists to **leave RVs, boats and other trailered recreation items behind during the season close to where those items are used repeatedly at public land and water sites each month** – an idea from the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association.
- 6) Create a **lifetime volunteer America the Beautiful pass** for those accumulating 4,000 hours of service on public lands – an idea from ARC.
- 7) Make exploring the outdoors an adventure – create a contest modeled after the TV show The Amazing Race and **invite families to visit eight state parks over eight weekends** – with those completing the tour getting rewards in the form of camping gear and other outdoors stuff. That is what Connecticut did – and found state parks visits soaring systemwide because of new publicity from the state’s TV stations and newspapers!
- 8) **Give recreationists the same timely and accurate information provided to pilots on weather, fires and restrictions** – downloadable at home and in a form enterable into hand-held and onboard GPS units – another idea from ARC.
- 9) Find a corporate sponsor who will **supply America the Beautiful Passes to all families caring for foster kids** – Connecticut recruited Bank of America to do that at the state park level!
- 10) **Manage concentrated areas of OHV use under a permit much as the Forest Service manages downhill skiing and snowboarding**, including use of volunteer patrollers – an idea from several OHV interests in California.
- 11) Assist scenic byways managers **identify, designate and manage places along the byways that will allow travelers to walk, run, bike, paddle or otherwise get 30 minutes of moderate physical activity** during their byways adventure – from the President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.
- 12) **Put the magic of music and drama outdoors enjoyed at Wolf Trap, a national park unit in northern Virginia, on the road** – an idea from The Coleman Company CEO Gary Kiedaisch.
- 13) Dramatically **expand current tourism community “check-off” campaigns**, including those at Snowbird and Lake Las Vegas, which assist federal recreation site

interpretation and visitor services – programs now involving several national non-profits including the National Forest Foundation.

14) **Provide national park unit and byways visitors with multi-lingual downloadable interpretive information** for iPods and MP3 players, starting with the George Washington Memorial Parkway – and idea already funded and underway by the National Tour Association.

15) Boost both public benefits and public agency resources by **allowing federal permittees and concessioners to utilize more widely demand-sensitive pricing to encourage non-peak visits** – now more practical under the NRRS contract with ReserveAmerica.

16) **Listen to kids and their attitudes about the outdoors – conduct sustained research** exploring such topics as use of technology to build awareness and add fun, fears and interests regarding the outdoors and the role of families, friends and other institutions in opening the door to outdoor fun. This research is already being begun by the Forest Service, the City of Los Angeles and ARC, starting March 17 in Griffith Park.

17) **Create a system of scenic waterways**, highlighting the reality that many of America's communities were accessed and developed from waterways. Candidate areas range from the Chesapeake Bay to the Atlantic Inter-Coastal Waterway to the Erie Canal to the San Juan Islands. Best of all, many of the scenic waterways can be tracked by land routes, too! An idea from ARC.

18) Give employees a day off from normal duties if they **join in a company-sponsored work project on public lands** – as PriceWaterhouseCoopers Washington, DC, office does each year.

19) Recruit leading physicians to help fund, and assist in additional fund-raising for, **an urban trail that features exercise stations and connects to additional trails and opportunities for physical activity** – as the Medical Mile Trail in Little Rock, Arkansas, has done.

20) **Dare to dream – and then make the dream come true**, as supporters of the Continental Divide Trail along the Rockies are doing, thanks to federal and state agencies and the dynamic Continental Divide Trail Alliance.