



American Recreation Coalition

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

March 31, 2005

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Members of the American Recreation Coalition, representing millions of Americans and a large portion of the \$250 billion per annum outdoor recreation industry, are pleased and honored to offer you our counsel and active support in enhancing both the health and happiness of the American people and the careful management of this nation's wonderful Great Outdoors.

The recreation community recognizes and appreciates the significant recreation advances which have taken place during the first four years of your Administration. These include:

- reestablishment of Take Pride in America and the encouragement of volunteerism;
- enactment of new fee legislation that assures local retention of collected fees and provides other positive provisions;
- new cooperation initiatives in conservation;
- Recreation One Stop, which enhances the public's ability to find special opportunities for recreation on public lands;
- Executive Order 13266, which directs federal land managing agencies to increase efforts to provide the public with opportunities for physical activity on public lands to combat obesity;
- the first declaration of Great Outdoors Month in 2004, highlighting the contributions of recreation to health and happiness, education and the economy;
- steps to protect and enhance recreational access to public lands; and
- attention to deferred maintenance at recreation sites in the national park system.

Even with these important accomplishments in place, budget constraints have had a significant impact on recreation opportunities. These constraints have curtailed traditional means to enhance and expand recreation capabilities, that is, through significant increases in appropriated funding. The next four years seem likely to present similar obstacles to significant appropriations increases. This condition strongly argues for innovative approaches.

Letter to The President
March 31, 2005
Page Two

Moreover, recreation efforts at the federal level have not undergone a recent review to ensure that they are strategic, that is, that they assign priority to recreation programs providing the most benefit to the nation and most effectively leveraging available resources, including land and water, the federal workforce and available funding.

Based on our support for innovative and strategic thinking about recreation programs and policies, the nation's recreation community leadership offers two recommendations to you, to those in your Administration whose actions shape recreation opportunities and to the Congress:

- enactment of a National Outdoor Recreation Policy Act; and
- development of a new National Recreation Strategy.

Details on these recommendations follow, including draft legislation. The legislation identifies some of the issues that we believe can be considered in the development of the Strategy. Addressing such issues can yield helpful new partnerships that will serve the nation well and enhance recreation's contribution to the nation's health and happiness. Also attached is a listing of the organizations that have specifically endorsed this initiative.

Thank you for your past and continuing interest in enhancing opportunities for outdoor recreation for all Americans. We look forward to working with you and your Administration to make this great nation still greater.

Sincerely,

Derrick A. Crandall
President

Attachments