



American Recreation Coalition

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

February 19, 2010

The Honorable Jonathan B. Jarvis
Director
National Park Service
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Jon:

A truly exciting opportunity will be available to the National Park Service this coming June in Prince William County, Virginia. This opportunity will then expand quickly across the country to involve millions of America's youth – and connect them with your agency and your mission.

The opportunity is called "ED OUT." It's a program designed to achieve a number of important objectives including:

- 1) **providing an exciting learning experience in the final days of the school year**, after most of the traditional teaching has been completed;
- 2) **introducing students to careers – including careers in your agency – and building an appreciation for how those careers are important to the nation**;
- 3) **challenging the trend toward sedentary, indoor lifestyles** – a trend that has major negative implications for public health and understanding of the environment; and
- 4) **offering students concrete and stimulating ways to keep learning during the summer months** and gain knowledge directly tied to the subsequent academic year's curriculum.

And the program is affordable and scalable. We invite you to join us in this important initiative.

The Prince William County School District has some 80,000 students – it is the **second largest**, the **fastest growing** and **one of the most technologically advanced school systems** in Virginia. The school district's leadership has approached a consortium of federal agencies, national nonprofits and leading corporations with the exciting ED OUT concept.

ED OUT will launch in June 2010 and involve thousands of students in its initial, pilot year – and eventually millions of students in later years – in a day of learning and fun at key nearby public parks, refuges and forests. Children in grades K-11 will spend a day focused on the outdoors and experiential learning. For grades K-2, the day will involve enjoyable outdoor activities on and immediately around the school campus. For grades 3-11, the day will be spent at a nearby public recreation site, where "adjunct faculty" from corporations and agencies will offer curriculum tied to programs in the physical sciences, history, art and more. While at these outdoor "classrooms," students will also enjoy a nutritious lunch and learn about good eating practices and their link to good health from experts at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and public health agencies.



The Honorable Jonathan B. Jarvis
February 19, 2010
Page Two

In addition, each participating student will be provided with a flash drive filled with information, including:

- 1) suggestions for summer break activities, readings and trips specifically addressing the academic program of the next grade, including family trips and activities;
- 2) information about nearby summer fun at federal, state and local sites; and
- 3) links to age-appropriate websites of supporting organizations.

Supporters of ED OUT will assist with development of the flash drive content on a parallel website. They will also help with transportation, meal costs and more. And while the June 2010 pilot will make use of a single primary site, we will also schedule visits by our "adjunct faculty" to additional, traditional classrooms on that day and test a few more concepts of interest to the school system and supporting organizations.

In subsequent years, ED OUT will utilize such nearby sites as Prince William Forest Park, Manassas National Battlefield Park, Leesylvania State Park, Occoquan Bay and Featherstone National Wildlife Refuges, and Quantico Marine Base. And by 2011, we also anticipate expansion of the program to at least three additional school districts in other regions of the country.

We invite you to join Prince William County Schools, ARC, the Forest Service, the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, the National Wildlife Federation and others in becoming a Founding Partner in ED OUT by making three specific contributions to the program:

- 1) identify a cadre of 5-20 agency staffers to be trained as "adjunct faculty" for 2010, and to stay involved to guide recruitment and training of additional agency staffers as the program expands in Virginia and elsewhere;
- 2) name an appropriate official from your agency to serve on the ED OUT National Leadership Council; and
- 3) provide a 2010 contribution of \$5,000 to a federal Challenge Cost Share Account maintained by the USDA Forest Service and requiring matching non-federal contributions for ED OUT efforts.

We believe that ED OUT is especially appropriate and valuable for the National Park Service. Here is why:

The National Park Service and the parks, monuments, and battlefields that you administer are all a vital part of our nation's history, culture, landscapes and heritage. The ED OUT program will expose students to the wonderful NPS sites – including some that are underutilized, like Prince William Forest Park – in their own backyards. As the National Park Service Centennial approaches, ***ED OUT is a perfect opportunity to help the next generation of conservation leaders see the unique role that NPS plays*** in connecting people to these special places and the opportunities associated with becoming part of NPS. ***ED OUT can help NPS reach large numbers of diverse youth*** at a point in their lives when they are contemplating careers and provide them with information about National Park Service opportunities.

The Honorable Jonathan B. Jarvis
February 19, 2010
Page Three

We invite your prompt consideration. We plan a media event announcing ED OUT in early March 2010 in Washington, D.C. and would be delighted to include the National Park Service in that event.

We will be contacting you to schedule a presentation on this exciting initiative. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D.A. Crandall', written in a cursive style.

Derrick A. Crandall
Co-Chair, ED OUT Organizing Committee

cc: Mickey Fearn