

ARC PRESIDENT DERRICK CRANDALL SALUTES SECRETARY NORTON'S MANY CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION

(Washington, D.C.) - Gale A. Norton tendered her resignation to President Bush on March 10, 2006 after five years of service to the nation as Secretary of the Interior. In response, American Recreation Coalition President Derrick Crandall issued this statement commenting on Secretary Norton's involvement with the recreation community.

"Secretary Norton's interest in and support for outdoor recreation have come in many ways. She understands that our public lands are both a great shared legacy and a valuable tool to deal with the mental and



Gale Norton crews for WOW On the Water on the Anacostia River

physical stresses of life. She has embraced the **WOW – Wonderful Outdoor World** program, participating in WOW activities in Washington, D.C. and California – including riding in the Tournament of Roses Parade with WOW children in January 2004.

"She invited Americans to 'lend a hand' in caring for our public lands and waters by relaunching **Take Pride in America** in 2003, creating a public/private partnership to support this important volunteer stewardship program with innovative new projects like the *Take Pride Volunteer Guide*, the Friends of Take Pride database and the news *Take Pride in America* television and print public service announcements. The TV PSAs have now been seen over 17 million times, a campaign that is valued at over \$3.2 million and accomplished for less than \$200,000. She played a personal role in recruiting spokesperson Clint Eastwood. She personally participated in numerous events, and provided the program with full departmental

support. She was instrumental in recruiting Girl Scouts and Good Sam Club members and others to respond to the damage caused by fires in Southern California and hurricanes in Florida.

“Ms. Norton has given her personal support to reforming and improving federal recreation fees, advocating for improved accountability and sensitivity to visitor preferences to enhance outdoor experiences. She has overseen the implementation of the **Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act**, replacing the fee demonstration program with a ten-year fee authorization that requires the retention of at least 80% of fees collected at local sites. She has also been a strong advocate for improving information available to the public regarding recreation opportunities through the www.recreation.gov “E-gov” initiative, and has acted to unify federal campground and recreation site reservation systems.



“Secretary Norton has championed a new role for public lands as a key element in President Bush’s **HealthierUS** initiative. She provided personal support to ARC efforts to highlight the link between recreation and health, joining us on the South Lawn of the White House in 2002 as President Bush helped us promote unlocking America’s public lands to disadvantaged urban youth.

Gale Norton belays a child on a climbing wall set up on the National Mall during Great Outdoors Week.

She advocated the first-ever Presidential designation of June as **Great Outdoors Month** in 2004.



2004 Coleman Award - Gale Norton, David Humphreys and Derrick Crandall

"We always knew that Gale Norton was interested in our views and supported working in partnership with us. And that is why we were so delighted to honor her in 2004 with the **Sheldon Coleman Great Outdoors Award**. We will miss her, but her actions will continue to benefit the recreation community and visitors to federal recreation sites for many years to come."