



American Recreation Coalition

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

November 2011 Newsletter

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National Park Partners Hold Meetings, Plan Joint Efforts

Three key national park partners organizations joined to hold a first-ever Strategic Planning Session on November 1-2 which attracted more than 125 top National Park Service (NPS) leaders, conservationists, concessioners and park friends and fundraisers. The planning session was the first of two jointly hosted meetings. The second is the initial America's Summit on National Parks, scheduled for January 24-26, 2012, in Washington, D.C. Both meetings focus on NPS' *A Call to Action* and planning for the 100th anniversary of the agency in 2016.

The three organizations are the National Park Foundation, the National Parks Conservation Association and the National Park Hospitality Association. In addition to key members and staff from the groups, the Strategic Planning Session participants included leaders from top national park friends organizations and nearly 30 NPS officials including Director Jon Jarvis, Deputy Director Mickey Fearn and other members of the agency's National Leadership Council. The Session charged the three hosting organizations with several tasks prior to the January Summit, including preparation of a Statement of Principles for adoption by all park supporters, planning for a campaign to help all Americans see the personal value of parks, and a strategy for moving beyond conversations about the limited diversity of park visitors to actions. For a more in-depth report on the Strategic Planning Session, click [here](#).

The Session took place during a busy and encouraging week. Just prior to the start of the Session, President Barack Obama used his Antiquities Act authority to designate a

new unit of the national park system – number 396 – Fort Monroe in the Tidewater area of Virginia. While use of the Antiquities Act is normally politically contentious, this action drew the strong support of Republican Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell and the state's bipartisan Congressional delegation. The former military base will rely on partnership efforts for development and operation. Also just prior to the Session, the White House invited some 50 persons to the White House Summit on Healthy Food in Parks. White House Associate Chef Sam Kass, key Domestic Policy Council staff, 20 concessioner representatives, NPS Director Jarvis and others spent the afternoon talking about strategies for offering park visitors healthy, locally sourced and affordable meals – and information about healthier eating that could be a serendipity of their visits.

America's Summit on National Parks is an invitation-only event that will unite traditional park champions with new health, education and tourism supporters. The Summit will include top national and bipartisan political figures from the Congress, from the current and past Administrations, and other national leaders. A major theme will be the role of parks in the nation's economy. For more information on the Summit, [click here](#) and contact Julia Mitchell at jmitchell@funoutdoors.com.

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Partners Outdoors 2012 to Focus on Federal Recreation Funding

Partners Outdoors meetings have been held annually since 1992 and draw recreation leaders from the public, private and nonprofit sectors to discuss relevant issues and challenges. The 2012 session will focus on delivering quality recreation experiences on public lands and waters during a period of budgetary constraint. The meeting will be held in Williamsburg, Virginia on January 8-11, 2012. Among the topics of discussion will be the role of recreation fees for federal agencies – especially in light of the expiration of Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) in late 2014. FLREA provides recreation fee retention authority for most federal agencies. Participants will also review and assess innovative partnership efforts underway involving federal, state and local agencies and private sector partners – both for-profit and nonprofit.

Dan Ashe, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will be among the federal leaders participating. The meeting will feature a presentation by the Federal Recreation Fee Interagency Working Group on the current recreational fee program – and lessons learned. Participation in the event is limited to 125 persons and is by invitation only. For more information, please contact Catherine Ahern at cahern@funoutdoors.com.

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Gallup Poll Shows Americans Choose Economy Over Environment

Americans have dramatically changed their priorities since 2008 when considering the trade-offs between economic growth and environmental protection. Americans showed a strong preference for environmental protection as recently as 2007 in Gallup's national surveys. But those priorities flipped in 2009, and pro-economy attitudes have soared.

Gallup found the widest margin in nearly 30 years between Americans' prioritizing economic growth or environmental protection in its 2011 polling. Americans have given the environment higher priority since 1984, when Gallup first asked respondents to prioritize either economic growth or environmental protection. Americans overall favored the environment over the economy by a better than 2-to-1 margin (67% to 28%) in Gallup's 2000 Environment poll. All major demographic subgroups – which distinguish characteristics like age, race, gender, political affiliation, education and socio-economic background – were strongly pro-environment at that time. Americans began prioritizing the economy over the environment when the economic downturn began in 2008, and the Gallup poll in 2009 was the first to show a preference for economic growth.

The 2011 poll emphasized a dramatic shift towards a pro-economy position in all major demographic subgroups, but the greatest shifts have come from those on the political right. Conservatives prioritized the environment over the economy by a 29 point margin in 2000, but prioritized the economy over the environment by 48 points in 2011 – a total shift of 77 points in 11 years. Liberals prioritized the environment by 52 points in 2000, and by 20 points in 2011, a shift of 32 points in the same time frame. While the shift varies with political ideology, the trend toward favoring the importance of the economy is marked for all Americans. There is a much larger political difference on the issues of the environment and the economy in the public today than in 2000.

Click [here](#) to see Gallup data from 2011. Data from 2010 and 2009 are [here](#) and [here](#).

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New Study Reveals Even Young Children Using Digital Media

A new Common Sense Media study shows media devices have an increasingly large impact on the way even young children experience the world and receive information. The study, titled "Zero to Eight: Children's Media Use in America" continues and expands upon a series of studies originated by the Kaiser Family Foundation in 2003.

The report has some startling information. Half of all children 0-8 years old have access to mobile devices at home, and 68% of children in that age demographic use a computer at least once a week. Almost all children (93%) have at least one TV set at home, 72% have a computer and two-thirds have a video game player.

And while TV continues to dominate children's media use, digital media use in children is on the rise. About half of all children ages 0-8 live in homes where there is access to some type of new media device, and 38% of children have used a cell phone, iPod, or tablet to play games or watch videos. But once children are in the 5- to 8-year-old range, the study shows that half (52%) have used these devices at one time or another.

The study shows that media are a critical and growing presence in young children's lives, and that media use starts young and grows quickly. Recreation interests must explore ways to use this media link to encourage young children and their families to explore the outdoors.

Click [here](#) to download the research study.

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2012 Political and Recreation Event Calendar Now Available

ARC has developed a calendar integrating key political and recreational events for 2012. Primaries and party convention dates are shown along with trade shows, major conferences and other meetings of recreation associations and outdoor enthusiasts. ARC expects the calendar to be useful to recreation leaders and to the political community during a very important year of campaigns and elections.

View and download the calendar by clicking [here](#). To add an event for the calendar, please contact Tom Georgevits at tgeorgevits@funoutdoors.com.

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Key Recreation Association Leaders Gather

Richard Coon of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association and Thom Dammrich of the National Marine Manufacturers Association recently hosted a gathering of recreation trade association leaders in Washington to share information and insights on topics ranging from trade and consumer shows to industry trends, from government relations priorities and strategies to industry promotion and marketing efforts. The discussions were animated and prompted a unanimous decision to plan a series of additional meetings.

One of the top discussions involved communications to government and the public of the economic importance of recreation in America. Although most of the associations have prepared economic "snapshots," the information cannot be readily aggregated. After discussing current and proposed strategies for describing the economic importance of recreation, the group agreed to explore a strategy for enlisting federal involvement in a new and comprehensive effort – reflecting a belief that federal actions

to actually reflect the value of recreation in decision-making are more likely if the agencies feel “ownership” of the data.

An early 2012 follow-up meeting in Washington is planned.

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National Park Service Launches Diverse Cultures Travel Itinerary

Places such as Jamestown, Ellis Island, and Little Rock Central High School remind us that the American story reflects the contributions of many diverse peoples and the interaction and blending of cultures. The National Park Service's newest online travel itinerary, [*Places Reflecting America's Diverse Cultures*](#), takes you to more than 150 sites that have played a role in the nation's development. The itinerary, loaded with maps, information, images, and essays from prominent historians, is available at www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/cultural_diversity.

"Each place in this itinerary has had a role in shaping our national identity," said National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis. "This website is a great tool to use to learn about, or plan a visit to, sites important to our collective history. The stories of these places will resonate with everyone, regardless of individual background."

To read the NPS news release on the launch of the new travel itinerary, please [click here](#).

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Surface Transportation Action Heats Up

A combination of factors, including Congressional interest in spurring employment, has given new momentum to legislative efforts to enact a new national surface transportation law. Although many details remain unclear – and may be shaped by the recommendations of the "budget supercommittee" expected about November 18 – it now appears that funding for at least two years will be at or above SAFETEA-LU levels and that passage of a new two- or six- year bill could occur by Christmas and prior to the expiration of SAFETEA-LU in March 2012. While the higher funding decision is good news for recreation programs funded from the Highway Trust Fund, including scenic byways and recreational trails, another major hurdle exists as the Congress and the Administration both seek to reduce the number of distinct programs under the new multi-year law. Coalitions of byways and trails groups are working hard to assess how those programs can be integrated with other programs as diverse as Transportation Enhancements, the Federal Lands Highway Program and the Administration's Livability initiative. Highway Trust Fund support for the Sportfish and Boating Safety Trust Fund appears strong in the Congress, although fiscal pressures make vigilance and championship essential during this key time.

Information on the trails and byways efforts will be posted on the ARC website – so check back at www.funoutdoors.com.

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Federal Fee-Free Dates Announced for 2012

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar has announced the Fee-Free Days for 2012. The National Park Service and other Interior agencies will waive admission fees on 17 days in 2012. The Fee-Free dates for 2012 are January 14 to 16 (Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend), April 21 to 29 (National Park Week), June 9 (National Get Outdoors Day), September 29 (National Public Lands Day), and November 10 to 12 (Veterans Day weekend). Other federal agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service, will follow the Interior lead except for National Park Week.

To see the Interior news release announcing the 2012 Fee-Free Days, please click [here](#). To see the U.S. Forest Service news release, please click [here](#).

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