



American Recreation Coalition

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

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2014 NEWSLETTER

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GREAT OUTDOORS MONTH 2015 TO BE BIGGER, BETTER THAN EVER

Great Outdoors Month 2014 was the most successful one yet, and the entire Great Outdoors Month Coalition – a growing array of private and public partners – is dedicated to making 2015 bigger and better in every way.

The centerpieces of Great Outdoors Month are the fun and exciting events that take place from Memorial Day to the Fourth of July. Signature events include the American Hiking Society's **National Trails Day®**, the country's largest celebration of trails. More than 2,000 trail-related events in 2014 included hikes, biking and horseback rides, paddling trips, birdwatching, geocaching, gear demonstrations, stewardship projects and more in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico and in Canada as well. **National Trails Day® 2015 will take place on June 6.** For more information, visit www.americanhiking.org/national-trails-day/.

National Fishing and Boating Week is another signature event of Great Outdoors Month. National Fishing and Boating Week celebrates the importance of recreational boating and fishing in enhancing people's quality of life and preserving our country's natural beauty. Fishing is a gateway activity that brings people of all ages and backgrounds to the outdoors, and National Fishing and Boating Week plays a major role in encouraging more people to try fishing. Most states offer free fishing days during National Fishing and Boating Week, which are perfect opportunities for beginners to try out fishing for the first time. **National Fishing and Boating Week 2015 runs June 6-10.** For more information, visit takemefishing.org/nfbw/.

National Get Outdoors Day (GO Day) will return in 2015 with hundreds of events across the nation. GO Day is coordinated by the American Recreation Coalition and U.S. Forest Service

and links hundreds of local, state and federal agencies, diverse nonprofit organizations in the health and youth-service fields, the recreation industry and media interests. GO Day has grown by leaps and bounds since its inception in 2008 and 2014 was the largest GO Day yet, with 171 sites in 39 states and the District of Columbia. 2015 promises to be even better, with the addition of more “signature sites,” as well as involvement by numerous public and private partners. **National Get Outdoors Day 2015 will take place on June 13.** More information, including how to register or host an event, is at www.nationalgetoutdoorsday.com.

The Corps Network’s **Great Outdoors Month National Day of Service** is the newest of the Month’s signature programs. The Corps Network organized the inaugural Great Outdoors Month Day of Service in 2014 on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Innovative service projects across the nation were highlighted by key speakers, and then a crew of more than 100 volunteers and conservation corps members from across the country undertook projects on the National Mall and at Fort Dupont. In 2015, we invite all Americans and especially youth to undertake service projects in the Great Outdoors in Washington and at key sites across the nation. **The 2015 Great Outdoors Month National Day of Service will take place on June 19.** For more information on The Corps Network, visit www.corpsnetwork.org/.

The National Wildlife Federation’s **Great American Backyard Campout** is another signature program of Great Outdoors Month. The event is part of the National Wildlife Federation’s efforts to inspire Americans to protect wildlife, including a three-year campaign to get 10 million kids to spend more time outdoors. Since 2005, thousands of people from across the nation have come together on the fourth Saturday in June to participate in the Great American Backyard Campout in support of Great Outdoors Month, and in 2014, 200,000 campers at 12,000 locations in all 50 states participated. **2015's Great American Backyard Campout will take place on June 27.** For more information, visit www.nwf.org/great-american-backyard-campout.aspx.

Other great events taking place during and around Great Outdoors Month include the National Park Trust’s [Kids to Parks Day](#) (May 16) and Discover Boating’s [National Marina Day](#) (June 13). Another key event is the National Environmental Education Foundation’s [National Public Lands Day](#) (Sept. 26).

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PLANNING FOR PARTNERS OUTDOORS 2015 RAMPS UP

Planning for the 2015 Partners Outdoors conference is in full swing. The annual gathering of key recreation leaders from both the public and private sectors will be held in and around Washington, D.C. during June – Great Outdoors Month. The session is co-sponsored by the federal agencies managing our national parks, forests, refuges and other public spaces and ARC. On June 2-4, TED-style presentations by national experts will center on three topics key to the future of the recreation community. Those three areas are:

- Digital Strategies for the Great Outdoors
- Outreach and Promotion, 21st Century Style
- Youth and the Outdoors

The Partners Outdoors Steering Committee is currently in the process of finalizing important meeting details, such as program structure, site selection, and preliminary identification of desired speakers. Some new and exciting ideas have been proposed, including a Partners Outdoors Virtual Library, containing interesting and engaging articles, videos, pictures and more detailing successful strategies and important information from around the recreation community.

As in 2014, Partners Outdoors 2015 will feature several key events highlighting great work being done across the country, including the presentation of the Beacon Awards, Legends Awards, and the outdoor community's most prestigious award, the Sheldon Coleman Great Outdoors Award. Last year's Coleman Award recipient was Congressman Sam Farr (D-CA).

Partners Outdoors was first held in 1992 and has led to important actions benefitting access to the Great Outdoors. Partners Outdoors 2015 will continue that legacy. Participation is by invitation of the program sponsors, including federal agencies, ARC and the National Association of State Park Directors.

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RELEASES CENTENNIAL TOOLKIT



The National Park Service Centennial Campaign is gathering speed as it races towards its first benchmark – the launch of the Find Your Park Campaign in spring 2015. In preparation, the National Park Service has made available Phase 1 of the Find Your Park Campaign Toolkit. The toolkit contains a wealth of information, including the campaign overview, a planning calendar, logo usage guidelines, public relations information, digital and social media guides, contacts and more. The toolkit is available by registering at <http://nextcenturyforparks.org/>.

Find Your Park is a comprehensive, multi-faceted campaign that leverages every possible medium, channel and tactic to deliver the Park Service's message and drive action. It aims to ignite two-way communication between the Park Service and the American people, and invites people to discover parks near them and ultimately start a cultural movement. The campaign will include: digital media, social media, traditional media, advertising, public relations, national and local event marketing, talent partners and much more.



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ARC AT MISSOURI GOVERNOR'S NATURAL RESOURCES CONFERENCE

American Recreation Coalition President Derrick Crandall addressed some 400 state conservation and recreation leaders gathered at the Missouri Governor's Conference on Natural Resources in Springfield, Missouri, on November 12 and 13. Crandall spoke at two concurrent sessions held the first day on "Connecting People to Resources Through Recreation" and keynoted the second day's general session with a presentation titled "Now Is the Time: Action to Seize the Incredible Opportunities Offered by Missouri's Great Outdoors."

Other keynote sessions at the gathering featured Missouri Governor Jay Nixon, National Wildlife Federation President Collin O'Mara and Chad Pregracke, 2013 CNN Hero of the Year for his river clean-up efforts. The Conference was moderated by Missouri Department of Natural Resources Director Sara Parker Pauley. The sessions were held at the White River Conference Center, a marvelous Bass Pro Shops' facility featuring handmade iron and deerskin chandeliers, a three-story stone fireplace, a massive woodland habitat diorama with a waterfall, and the WOLF School. The school, a partnership with the Springfield Public School System, offers 46 lucky 5th graders the opportunity to come to the Wonders of Wildlife Museum and Aquarium for classroom studies every day as part of a conservation science based learning program. These students learn the entire 5th grade curriculum through the lens of science.

Crandall discussed the diverse partners involved in Great Outdoors Month and highlighted its success. His presentation urged participants to team up with governors, Members of Congress, corporate leaders and others to keep the Great Outdoors relevant to an increasingly urban population and younger Americans with limited outdoors traditions. He lauded Missouri's 30-year earmarking of a portion of state sales tax to conservation and noted additional funding ideas involving health, tourism and education. He called upon the conservation and recreation community to build champions by offering up good ideas – "public policy presents." In his presentation, he identified ten of these "presents:"

- Great Outdoors Month Public Service Announcements – like those done by Governors Mike Beebe (D-AR) and Butch Otter (R-ID) in 2014. To view these PSAs, go to www.funoutdoors.com/node?from=10
- Capital Campouts – like those hosted in 2014 by governors in Colorado, Washington, Kansas and Georgia, with urban kids camping out on the lawns of governors' residences or in nearby state parks
- Ranger for a Day – opportunities for state legislators and Members of Congress and others to spend a day with visitors, observed by local media
- Junior Fishing Licenses – to introduce kids to a lifetime of fun outdoors, with incentives from top fishing retailers
- Highlighting outdoor fun with technology – like selfies, games and more
- Free fishing and loans of fishing equipment in state parks
- Free park passes at your local library – in return libraries allocate wall space for state parks displays with monthly listings of special events
- Park passes for all foster families – sponsored by businesses
- Citizenship ceremonies held in state parks – with new Americans receiving "gifts" of fishing licenses and ceremonial park passes

- “Challenges” in the vein of the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge and Missouri Governor’s 100 Miles Challenge, highlighting its award-winning trail system – outreach to the public, inviting their active participation

To view the whole presentation in PDF form, visit

www.funoutdoors.com/files/MO%20General%20Session%20Presentation%20--%20Crandall.pdf.

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FICOR UNDERGOES LEADERSHIP TRANSITION, MEETS WITH GREAT OUTDOORS MONTH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation (FICOR) has a new chair. In October, National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis began a two-year leadership stint, following U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. Chief Tidwell did a remarkable job leading the Council, including serving as a Co-Chair for Great Outdoors Month 2014. Both Chief Tidwell and Director Jarvis are expected to serve as Co-Chairs of GOM 2015.

On November 5, the Great Outdoors Month Executive Committee met with FICOR, presenting the strategic plan for Great Outdoors Month 2015. The plan calls for an expanded role for governors, a more integrated social media presence, the inclusion of more youth organizations, the integration of the National Park Service Centennial Campaign and much more. FICOR principals, responsible for recreation on public lands and waters covering nearly one-third of the nation, responded to the strategy with enthusiasm.

FICOR’s Working Group is now working with the Great Outdoors Month Partnership to build in the role of federal agencies in Capital Campouts and other Great Outdoors Month events.

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ARC LOOKS FOR GREATER INVOLVEMENT IN GREAT OUTDOORS MONTH FROM GOVERNORS

Governors Mike Beebe (D-AR), Butch Otter (R-ID), John Hickenlooper (D-CO), Jay Inslee (D-WA), Nathan Deal (R-GA) and Sam Brownback (R-KS), and others undertook active personal roles in Great Outdoors Month 2014, and ARC anticipates even greater participation of governors in 2015 efforts.

In 2014, Governors Hickenlooper, Inslee, Deal and Brownback hosted Capital Campouts, events designed to bring non-traditional youth participants to the outdoors. Up to 50 youth camped on the lawns of governors’ residences, or in nearby state parks. The events were so successful, that in Washington, Governor Inslee has already announced plans to host an even

bigger Campout in 2015. With the great success and positive media attention garnered by the four pilot locations, the goal in 2015 is to achieve participation by at least 20 governors.

In addition to aiding a Great Outdoors Month kickoff event in Pea Ridge National Military Park, Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe issued a PSA urging people to get outdoors and enjoy Arkansas' natural wonders. Idaho Governor Butch Otter issued a similar PSA. Each video ended with a message urging people to visit the state's tourism website to discover the numerous outdoor activities available. Great Outdoors Month's 2015 strategy calls for at least 20 of these PSAs urging people to get outdoors and enjoy their state's natural wonders. To see the 2014 PSAs, visit <http://www.funoutdoors.com/node/view/3157> (Arkansas) and <http://www.funoutdoors.com/node/view/3156> (Idaho).

In addition to these opportunities, some new ideas are also providing governors the chance to get more involved. In Missouri in 2014, Governor Jay Nixon issued a challenge to everyone in the state to complete "100 Missouri Miles" on the state's award-winning trail system, and his 2015 challenge involves 100+ miles of paddling Missouri's waterways. Similar challenges could take place in other states, encouraging non-traditional participants to get out and enjoy their great outdoors.

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RECREATION.GOV'S FUTURE UNDER DISCUSSION

As the primary tool for booking campsites on federal lands, www.recreation.gov plays an important part in connecting Americans with their public lands. The website unified separate reservation programs serving federal lands and has substantially beefed up its role as a source of information about outdoors fun. New technologies and new insights about serving outdoors enthusiasts are being considered as the federal agencies prepare to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the next generation of the website.

The site allows users to book thousands of campsites, cabins, fire towers and more -- even the White House Easter Egg Roll, but many other activities key to visits to federal sites are not available on the site. These include rooms in national park lodges, lift tickets to ski resorts on national forests, lodging and tours linked to gateway communities and much more. In addition, operational restrictions on the current website operator, ARC-member Active Network, have limited outreach and promotion efforts. A growing number of interests are also calling for better access to www.recreation.gov by outside "booking engines" like Kayak and Hotwire, modeled after sales of hotel rooms and airline flights.

On November 13, the U.S. Forest Service – which manages Recreation.gov on behalf of all federal recreation providers – held an Industry Day at the American Mountaineering Center in Golden, Colorado to discuss the digital future of the nation's public lands. According to the [event editorial produced by USFS](#), roughly six dozen representatives attended the session. As a result of the feedback received, the public comment period on a draft of the Request for Proposals has been extended to November 30. Another draft RFP will be submitted for public comment in early 2015 prior to the release of the final RFP.

ARC supports several goals for www.recreation.gov, including: allowing the website to be nimble and responsive to changes in technology over the next decade; facilitating interaction between this website and the websites of state tourism agencies, gateway communities, airlines and other major players in domestic and international tourism promotion; and adding important features such as trip reports and peer-to-peer sharing.

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