

NPS National Tourism Strategic Plan Supporters

July 30, 2007

The Honorable Mary Bomar, Director
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Bomar:

America's national park system is a great legacy and a wonderfully positive force in the lives of those who visit and derive mental and physical benefits, learning and more. Yet there is a challenge facing us – to make these benefits widespread among the public. You and others have expressed interest in recent months in efforts to connect Americans to their parks – and we fully support this vision.

One of the most vital elements in connecting the American people to their parks is creating awareness. Today's Americans have more leisure time choices than any previous generation. And many of those choices are promoted with advertising and other messaging that renders simple activities like taking a hike, going on a picnic, camping or going fishing nearly forgotten.

It is in the best interests of the National Park Service, this letter's signers and the public to help make opportunities for healthy outdoor fun, nearby and distant alike, readily apparent. Current efforts to do so lack resources and direction, and we urge you to take action immediately to help achieve shared goals including ***increased awareness and use of lesser-known park units, increased use of well-known national park system units during non-peak periods and increased awareness and use of the entire national park system by America's youth***, especially urban and minority youth.

We have reviewed the proposed NPS National Tourism Strategic Plan entitled "Developing Relevance and Connections Through Tourism." We believe the strategies and actions it outlines have great potential to strengthen cooperative relations between the NPS and its tourism partners, raise park staff understanding of the needs and expectations of actual and potential visitors, enhance the visitor experience in the national parks, introduce a more diverse population to the parks and promote more responsible visitor use. ***We urge you to adopt the plan promptly.*** We pledge our cooperation in implementing this plan and further ask that you convene a session to commence implementation of that plan, through a broad and committed partnership involving us and others.

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Thank you for your interest and action on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Joe Fassler, President, National Park Hospitality Association

Dennis Szefel, President, Hospitality Group, Delaware North Companies

Bruce Fears, President, ARAMARK Harrison Lodging

Rex Maughan, Chairman, Forever Resorts

Andrew Todd, President, Xanterra Parks and Resorts

Bob Warren, Chairman, National Alliance of Gateway Communities

Randy Julian, Chair, National Tour Association

Caroline Beteta, Chair, Western States Tourism Policy Council

Linda Profaizer, President, National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds

Peter Pantuso, President, American Bus Association

William Hardman, President, Southeast Tourism Society

Derrick Crandall, President, American Recreation Coalition