



## February 2015 Newsletter

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### NPHA 2015 ANNUAL MEETING IN WASHINGTON, D.C. MARCH 23-25

National Park Hospitality Association (NPHA) Chairman Terry MacRae invites all association members and those interested in park visitor services to take part in several days of discussion and action during the NPHA 2015 Annual Meeting. The sessions will be held in Washington, D.C. on March 23-25, 2015. The theme of the meeting is “**Concessioners and National Parks in 2016 and Beyond.**”

The meeting will include in-depth conversations with National Park Service (NPS) officials, key Members of Congress and their staffs, a U.S. General Accountability Office study team examining financial practices of the NPS, and others on such key issues as the 1998 Concessions Improvement Act, the challenge of meeting contemporary visitor services and understanding NPS Centennial opportunities and challenges.

The meeting will also include a discussion of concessioner efforts to promote park visitation, including a review of the October 2014 session entitled “**Marketing Parks and the Great Outdoors to All Americans,**” cooperation with Brand USA on a new IMAX film on exciting activities in national parks and support of Federal Row at IPW 2015. The October session, moderated by NPS Director Jon Jarvis and featuring top experts in tourism marketing, can be seen at <http://new.livestream.com/usinterior/events/3466566>.

The deadline for hotel reservations is **February 26**; the final day for meeting registration without a late fee is **March 13**. More information and registration materials are available at: <http://parkpartners.org>.

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## FEBRUARY 2015 NPHA BOARD MEETING REPORT

Members of the National Park Hospitality Association Board of Directors met by telephone February 12, 2015. The NPHA Board approved a 2015 dues structure and budget designed to allow the association to respond to both new Congressional interest in the National Park Service (NPS) Concessions Program and the NPS Centennial efforts.

The board learned that the President's FY2016 Budget included proposals for significant boosts in NPS operating and construction budgets, as well as provisions designed to leverage appropriated funding through expansion of the Centennial Challenge program. The **Every Kid in a Park** initiative (see related story) was discussed as an opportunity for concessioner partnerships with parks, schools and families. The board also discussed plans for a constructive dialogue with the new Commercial Services Chief during a session of the March 2015 meeting, including the development of a list of topics for that session.

The board also discussed the NPS financial operations review underway by the U.S. General Accountability Office (GAO), at the request of Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chair Lisa Murkowski (R-AK). The GAO study is expected to yield preliminary results in the late summer/early fall, although some recommendations may be offered at an earlier date. NPHA members will meet with the GAO team during the March meeting as well as with the Chairman and other members of the U.S. House of Representative Committee on Natural Resources Federal Lands Subcommittee. Also at the meeting, members will hear from the Interior Subcommittee of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Chairman MacRae has invited NPHA's Executive Committee to join him and NPHA staff in developing a presentation on the importance of concessioner-provided park visitor services, the long and successful history of concessioners in parks and the improvements in legislation and policies which would permit concessioners to serve visitors better. The board reviewed the presentation prepared by staff in early 2009 and available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2yYNvDc-cE&feature=youtu.be>. The board identified key topics for focus, including improvements in the quality of prospectuses, prospectuses which offer better potential for profitability, easier changes in services (including expansion of services) mid-contract, support for adoption of contemporary hospitality industry practices in parks, changes in allowable concessions contract length, and overall accountability and transparency for the concessions program. NPHA staff will also work with members to better coordinate involvement of additional NPHA member resources, including Washington representatives and corporate communications staff.

Chairman MacRae reported on the National Parks Promotion Council (NPPC) and its key coordinating role for Federal Row at IPW 2015, in Orlando on May 30-June 3. Federal Row has grown to more than 30 booths, and NPPC is cooperating closely with Brand USA and U.S. Travel Association. More information on Federal Row is available at <http://parkpartners.org/IPW-2015-Brochure.pdf>.

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## 4<sup>th</sup> GRADERS COMING TO YOUR PARK!

A screenshot of the White House website. The main headline reads "Introducing: Every Kid in a Park, and Three New National Monuments". Below the headline is a photo of a young boy and girl looking out over a forest. The text says: "Today, the President headed to Chicago to make some big announcements about our nation's unique outdoor spaces." There is a "READ MORE" button. Below the main content are sections for "POPULAR TOPICS" and "TOP NEWS". The "POPULAR TOPICS" section includes "Net Neutrality", "2015 State of the Union", and "Investigative Action". The "TOP NEWS" section includes "February 19, 2:50pm: President Obama on the Causes and Antidotes to Violent Extremism", "February 19, 4:48pm: The White House Names Dr. DJ Patil as the First U.S. Chief Data Scientist", and "February 19, 3:07pm: President Obama: 'Writing the Rules for 21st Century Trade'". At the bottom, there is a social media section for "@WHITEHOUSE" with a tweet: "Great news: President Obama's designating Broom Canyon".

President Obama officially announced the launch of the “**Every Kid in a Park**” initiative in Chicago on February 19. The initiative provides all 4<sup>th</sup> grade students and their families with free admission to National Parks and other federal lands and waters for a full year and helps underwrite trips to parks by 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes.

Every Kid in a Park is a call to action to get all children to visit and enjoy

America’s unparalleled outdoors. According to a White House press release, more than 80 percent of American families live in urban areas and many lack easy access to safe outdoor spaces – and America’s public lands and waters offer space to get outside and get active, and are living classrooms that provide opportunities to build critical skills through hands-on activities.

The President is using his FY2016 budget to request \$20 million annually to transport over a million urban youth to national parks and public lands, with dedicated youth coordinators to welcome them and their families, and a significant increase in the National Park Service (NPS) Centennial Challenge program, which leverages federal spending at least 1:1 with contributions and partner funding.

“The nation’s recreation community applauds the President’s action,” said Derrick Crandall, NPHA Counselor, President of the American Recreation Coalition and an active member of the National Park Service Centennial Advisory Committee. “We have stressed for two decades that there has been a decline in outdoor activity by America’s kids. We noted declines in kids’ bike sales and overall park visits, a surge in obesity among youth and dramatic increases in hours spent by kids staring at screens. We helped build partnerships to lure kids outdoors – offering ideas to parents and schools and youth organizations and park agencies. We have united groups around action

through Great Outdoors Month™, including efforts by governors of both political parties. The President's proposal will supplement and energize programs like these.”

The program is expected to put a special emphasis on the nation's Title I schools, schools with concentrations of low-income students. These same students often have limited exposure to America's shared legacy of parks, forests, refuges and other public lands and waters.

To see the video of President Obama's announcement, as well as his designation of three new national monuments, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QV6MowDIq4k>.

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### **TIME TO ACT ON 2015 NPHA DUES!**

This is the official notice that regular and associate member dues for 2015 should be paid by March 1. The dues schedule is changed from last year (in the over \$50,000,000 category only). A link to NPHA 2015 dues forms is [here](#). If you need an invoice or have questions, please contact Derrick Crandall ([dcrandall@funoutdoors.com](mailto:dcrandall@funoutdoors.com)).

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### **TIPS ON HOW TO STAY INFORMED:**

Read the Federal Parks and Recreation newsletter, provided as a member service

For information on upcoming prospectuses and other actions of the NPS Commercial Services Office, check regularly at <http://concessions.nps.gov/>  
To reach an NPS employee, use the NPS locator at <http://www.nps.gov/directory/>

For reports on park unit visitation, current year and historic, as well as information on overnight stays, go to <https://irma.nps.gov/Stats>.

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