The National Association of Recreation Resource Planners

National Park Service Selects Recreation Managers

WASHINGTON: National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis today announced the selection of two National Park Service officials to oversee community and recreation-based programs. Joel Lynch will head the State and Local Assistance Programs Division. Bob Ratcliffe will manage the Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Program.

Lynch will direct the Land and Water Conservation Fund State and Local Assistance Program, Federal Lands to Parks Program, and the Urban Park Lands Recovery Program. These three programs administer matching grants and transfers of Federal land to state and local governments to help create public parks and recreation areas.

Ratcliffe will coordinate the work of cooperative community conservation programs, including Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Trails System, Challenge Cost Share, and Hydropower Recreation Assistance.

“It is increasingly important to provide close to home recreational opportunities for all Americans,” said National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis. “These National Park Service programs work with partners to promote conservation and outdoor recreation beyond traditional park boundaries. They help communities establish and protect public resources such as parks, trails, waterways, and other green spaces that improve quality of life and economical, physical, mental, and social well-being.”

Lynch has worked for the National Park Service for ten years, most recently as the Acting Director of the Office of Strategic Planning. He has also served as the deputy director of the Office of Strategic Planning and as an outdoor recreation planner in charge of statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plans for the Land and Water Conservation Fund State and Local Assistance Program. He holds a PhD in Recreation Resource Planning and Management from Michigan State University.

Ratcliffe comes to the National Park Service from the Bureau of Land Management where he has been the Deputy Assistant Director of Resources and Planning. In that role, he supervised a range of natural and cultural resource programs. He previously served as the bureau’s chief for national recreation and visitor services, responsible for river and trails management, accessibility, stewardship education, scenic byways, and tourism. His 30-plus year career includes both extensive government and private sector experience in protected area conservation and resource restoration, recreation management and community engagement.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR: Congratulations to Joel and Bob, who have been NARRP
members for many years and have played important roles in NARRP’s success.

Webinar "Best Practices For Maintenance Programs"

Date: March 21, 2012, 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET

Presenters: Tom Huber, Toole Design Group; TBA

Host: Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP)

Cost: $50 APBP members/$75 non-APBP members

Contact: Debra Goeks <info@apbp.org>

FOR MORE INFORMATION: http://www.apbp.org/events/event_details.asp?id=198882

Coalition for Recreational Trails is accepting nominations for trail projects funded by the national Recreational Trails Program

The Coalition for Recreational Trails is pleased to announce its 2012 achievement awards to recognize outstanding trail projects funded by the national Recreational Trails Program (RTP). The awards will be presented during Great Outdoors Week (June 2-10, 2012) in Washington, D.C. as part of the Coalition’s ongoing effort to build awareness and appreciation of this highly successful program – an effort that is more important than ever as we work to protect the RTP during the ongoing reauthorization process. Award winners will be selected from projects nominated by public agencies, trail administrators or other project sponsors. Award categories include: construction and design; maintenance and rehabilitation; education and communications initiatives; accessibility enhancement; multiple-use management or “corridor sharing”; environment/wildlife compatibility; and use of youth conservation/service corps.

Click on the link below to access the announcement and a nomination form. Please note that, for the first time, we are encouraging those making nominations to solicit support from their Members of Congress – both U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators – to build awareness of excellent RTP-funded projects and the RTP program itself. Additional information can be found on the nomination form.

Please share this information with your members and other trail interests. The form and any supporting materials, including pictures, should be returned by March 31, 2012 to the Chair of the Coalition’s Awards Committee: Duane Taylor, Director of Federal Affairs, Motorcycle Industry Council, 1235 South Clark Street, Suite 600, Arlington, Virginia 22202. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call him at (703) 416-0444 or send him an e-mail at dtaylor@mic.org. Winners should be notified no later than April 30, 2012.

Many thanks for joining us in this important effort to recognize the significant contributions to trail-related recreation that the Recreational Trails Program is supporting all across the country.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: http://www.americantrails.org/rtp/crtawards.html
DOJ Issues Guidance on Means of Entry and Exit for Pools

Earlier this week, the U.S. Department of Justice issued a guidance document on means of entry and exit for swimming pools. The National Center on Accessibility encourages swimming pool owners/operators to become familiar with this document and the DOJ position. Many questions have emerged since DOJ issued the revised regulations for the Americans with Disabilities Act and subsequent 2010 Standards for Accessible Design. Is a pool lift required at every public pool? Can a pool lift be shared between pools? Can a pool lift be portable? DOJ attempts to address these questions in the new guidance document.


America’s Parks Call on Congress to Form U.S. Conservation Construction Corps

NRPA and NASPD Urge Nation’s Leaders to Create Jobs by Revitalizing Public Park and Recreation Facilities

ASHBURN, Va., July 12, 2011 – Last week, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD) issued a letter to every member of Congress proposing the creation of a Conservation Construction Corps—a national employment program to put Americans back to work and revitalize local, state and national parks in the U.S.

The proposal, “Real Jobs for Americans,” signed by Barbara Tulipane, CEO of NRPA, and Joe Elton, president of NASPD, discusses the many jobs lost in the country following the crash of the housing industry, as well as the importance of parks and recreation in improving the health and wellbeing of citizens, and stimulating local economies. Similar to the Civilian Conservation Corps launched during the Great Depression, the proposed corps would create jobs for skilled, out-of-work citizens, while providing needed repairs to the country’s aging public parks and recreation facilities, including sanitation systems, deteriorating building exteriors and access roads/bridges.

In the past several years, parks and recreation facilities in the U.S. have experienced severe funding cuts and maintenance backlogs due to hard hits to state and local budgets. In an industry survey administered by NRPA in the spring of 2011, more than 63 percent of responders indicated that they expect agency budget cuts for 2012, and almost 39 percent expect to be impacted by the economic downturn through 2015 or longer.

NRPA and NASPD put forth that a Conservation Construction Corps will provide jobs for Americans, and create “a new legacy of attractive, safe, and usable park and recreation resources for future generations.”

“Our parks were designed to conserve the nation’s natural and cultural treasures and provide outdoor recreation opportunities that address the health and well-being needs of our citizens,” the letter reads. “At the same time, they stimulate outdoor recreation and tourism spending that creates jobs and fuels our economy. They have proven to be a good investment.”
To view the letter, go to www.NRPA.org/media. For more information, e-mail Rich Dolesh at rdolesh@nrpa.org or Tom Wolfe at tom@naspd.org.

About the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)

The National Recreation and Park Association is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing park, recreation and conservation efforts that enhance quality of life for all people. Through its network of 20,000 recreation and park professionals and citizens, NRPA encourages the promotion of healthy lifestyles, recreation initiatives, and conservation of natural and cultural resources. For more information, visit www.NRPA.org. For digital access to NRPA’s flagship publication, Parks & Recreation, visit www.parksandrec-magazine.org.

About the National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD)

Comprised of fifty state park directors, the NASPD (www.naspd.org) was founded in 1962. The mission of the association is to promote and advance the state park systems of America for their own significance, as well as for their important contributions to the nation’s environment, heritage, health and economy. For more information, visit www.americasstateparks.org.

Calif. Board Opens Door to For-Profits in Parks

Courtesy of RV Business

A California state oversight board on Wednesday (Feb. 1) approved a controversial proposal that could lead to for-profit companies operating in 11 state parks, according to a report in the Santa Rosa Press Democrat.

Critics fear the action could allow these parks to be taken over by commercial interests or undermine nonprofits that are planning to submit their own bids to run the parks.

Despite earlier statements to the contrary, state parks officials on Wednesday said they will not seek to turn over the operations of entire parks to concessionaires.

“We’re not willing to say that we don’t have the authority to enter into an RFP (request for proposal) with a concessionaire to run an entire park. Are we doing it? No,” James Luscutoff, chief of the Concessions, Reservations and Fees Division for state parks said after Wednesday’s hearing at the state Capitol.

The two members of the state’s Public Works Board who were present for Wednesday’s hearing unanimously supported giving the state the authority to seek bids from concessionaires.

Among the possible concessions is operation of campgrounds, restaurants and day-use facilities, said state officials.

Parks representatives also said they are hoping to generate what they called hybrid proposals that would combine private concessionaires and non-profit groups as a way to keep parks open.

County Planning Commission suggests redefining recreation
By Nick Powell

County planners are beginning to get a clearer picture for how they should deal with a slew of outdoor activities that seem to have baffled most county officials.

On Jan. 26, the San Luis Obispo County Planning Commission voted 4-1 on a recommendation to allow county planners to make case-by-case decisions on such projects as zip lines, giant swings, and other recreational activities not currently defined by the county land-use ordinance.

A rash of recent permit applications from landowners seeking to jazz up their properties had staffers at the County Planning and Building Department stumped. The requests ranged from a zip-line in Santa Margarita to BMX racing trails, giant swings, and cable skiing on lakes.

“This is something we don’t come to lightly,” Planning Director Jason Gifford told commissioners. “Only when we’re completely stumped do we bring it up for interpretation.”

Assistant Director Kammi Griffin explained to commissioners that the problem arises from a clause that allows recreational structures to be built on land zoned for agriculture and open space for purposes “like” camping, hunting, hiking, and fishing. The wording suggests that those are only examples, but permit levels and standards have only been established for those specific activities.

The nonprofit group North County Watch wrote a letter to the commission that called the existing zip-line illegal. The group argued that zoning language is meant to be interpreted literally, and changing it would pave the way for amusement parks in open spaces.

“If amendments to the Land Use Ordinance and county policies are fashioned to accommodate the existing zip line, we have the classic tail wagging the dog—never a good basis for public policy,” the group wrote.

After more than two hours of discussion, commissioners approved a recommendation—Commissioner Dan O’Grady voted against it—that would allow staff at the Planning and Building Department to determine on a case-by-case basis what is allowed. Planners could also issue building permits that would be subject to appeal and safety standards. They recommended that BMX and downhill mountain bike courses be regulated by the same rules that apply to other off-road vehicles.

The recommendations are scheduled to go to the Board of Supervisors March 13.

“It’s still up in the air, but we’re happy with the way the county is moving on this,” Blake Rowan of Santa Margarita Adventures told New Times.

Environmental lawsuits: Bill would limit payouts when government loses cases

By Rob Chaney
In the coming battle over the Equal Access to Justice Act, the one thing everybody agrees on is nobody knows what's going on.

"EAJA was something I was involved in as a young, newly crafted congressional aide back in the late '70s and early '80s," said Rep. Denny Rehberg, one of 38 co-sponsors of the Government Litigation Savings Act that's intended to reform the law. "I came into Congress in 2000, and had no idea the accounting had changed since I was involved in it. I had no idea why. It doesn't make sense."

The Equal Access to Justice Act says any government agency that loses a lawsuit to a private individual, group or business must pay the legal costs of the winner. The money comes out of each agency's budget, rather than a central fund. And in the past couple of years, it's become the target of agriculture, sporting, energy and recreation groups as the "gravy train" that fuels environmental lawsuits.

"When I was a congressional aide for Ron Marlenee, it was one of the single biggest issues brought by the National Federation of Independent Businesses," Rehberg said. "It was always intended to help small businesses having some kind of problem with federal government, so they had equal access to the court system without putting them out of business."

"It's morphed into something entirely different that wasn't intended. It's become a cottage industry for lawsuits, especially in the environmental arena."


Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Busts Myth That “Nobody Walks” in Rural America

by Ben Goldman

One reason why Congress may be so willing to eliminate dedicated funding for bicycle and pedestrian programs is the persistent notion that biking and walking are limited to cities, and therefore of no concern to rural legislators. Setting aside for a moment the arguments supporting a federal interest in urban transportation, the notion that nobody bikes or walks in rural areas is outright false, as amply demonstrated in a new report from the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.

Yes, it may be true that “rural biking and walking rates are lower than national biking and walking rates,” said report contributor Tracy Hadden Loh, “but it's not that much lower — and it's not zero.”

The report, “Active Transportation Beyond Urban Centers,” shows that in large and small “rural cores” of 2,500 to 50,000 residents, the share of total trips made on foot or by bike is only 20 percent below the rate for larger urban cores. Furthermore, when it comes to work trips, rural areas fall right in line with the national rates of biking and walking to work.
Other surveys highlighted by the report show that rural residents rank pedestrian friendliness as being more important than major roads or long-distance transportation.

Rural communities do not often have the resources to amass and analyze data like the kind in RTC’s report, Hadden Loh explained. They may think biking and walking is a coastal, urban, New York/San Francisco thing, “but they don’t understand how much they have already.”

The misconception endures, said Hadden Loh, because of unfamiliarity. Although 80 percent of the nation’s counties are designated “rural” by U.S. DOT, they account for only 20 percent of the nation’s population. The result is a lack of awareness, not only on the part of policymakers unfamiliar with their own constituencies, but on the part of rural communities themselves who buy into the myth as well. “Some of the politicians most opposed to [bike/ped] programs represent the communities who benefit the most from programs like Transportation Enhancements,” said Kevin Mills, RTC’s Vice President of Policy.

Besides compiling numerical data on rural transportation, the report also includes testimonials from rural communities across the country, demonstrating the benefits of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Obviously, there are more stories out there than could possibly fit in the report, but RTC has launched an interactive mapping website that displays additional stories as well as illustrates the data in the report. There’s also an opportunity for users to submit their own stories.

And the stories are not just for the benefit of policymakers in need of an education, Hadden Loh said. “There are other people like you doing your bike/ped work in other rural areas. We want to help those rural areas connect with each other.”

**Sportsmen, Outdoor Industry ask Obama to Conserve Colorado Roadless Backcountry**

*Courtesy of the Outdoor Industry Association*

Outdoor Industry Association® (OIA) and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) published a three-quarter-page ad in the Denver Post yesterday, raising concerns about a proposal for Colorado’s 4.2 million acres of national forest roadless areas. The two groups are calling on President Obama to ensure Colorado roadless areas are at least as safeguarded as roadless areas in other states.

At issue is a state-based rule that would guide management of more than four million acres of valuable backcountry lands located in Colorado.

The appeal comes as a final version of a proposal that would replace the national roadless rule in Colorado is being formulated. It also follows a ruling by the federal Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals upholding the national Roadless Area Conservation Rule, which conserves roughly one-third of America’s national forests, along with the prime fish and wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation opportunities found on those lands.

The ad reads: “[Y]our proposed plan for Colorado’s roadless forests would open pristine habitat to commercial development, such as roads, drilling and power line construction. As drafted, it threatens the state’s best backcountry and multi-billion dollar outdoor recreation industry.”
OIA and TRCP maintain that standards for Colorado’s roadless national forests must be at least as strong as the Roadless Area Conservation Rule in order to gain support from the sportsmen’s and outdoor recreation communities and to ensure the responsible management of these important public lands.

Economics are an important consideration in managing Colorado’s public lands. According to a report published by OIA, outdoor recreation contributes $7.6 billion in annual retail sales and services, generates nearly $500 million in annual state tax revenue and supports 107,000 Colorado-based jobs.

Under the draft Colorado roadless rule, however, massive power line corridors and increased energy development would be allowed. Sportsmen and outdoor recreationists have been heavily invested in the years-long development of the Colorado rule and remain committed to resolving its shortfalls.

“Sportsmen across Colorado want to see our 4.2 million acres of backcountry national forests kept intact,” said TRCP Colorado Field Representative Nick Payne, “but as drafted, the Colorado roadless rule allows development that would fragment some of the finest fish and wildlife habitat in the country. Hunters and anglers are depending on the administration to fix the rule’s shortfalls for the benefit of fish, wildlife and our outdoor traditions. The rule must be as strong as or stronger than the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule — nothing less.”

Colorado’s roadless areas are the source of about one-third of the state’s surface water, which provides irreplaceable access to hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation. Elk and deer require Colorado’s backcountry to survive and thrive, and the headwaters of all the state’s major rivers are located in roadless lands.

“Colorado’s roadless areas provide world-class recreation experiences,” said Frank Hugelmeyer, president and CEO of OIA. “Protecting roadless values will drive Colorado’s recreation economy for generations to come.”

The national roadless rule conserves nearly 60 million acres of national forest lands in 38 states. It was the result of the largest public lands review process in U.S. history, with more than 1.2 million comments and 600 public hearings. The Oct. 2011 Tenth Circuit decision to uphold this policy followed a similar ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in 2009.

New England Outdoor Companies Urged to Support Conservation/Recreation Corridors
Courtesy of the Outdoor Industry Association

As early as this month, New England governors could approve a plan to invest nearly $180 million in state and federal money in seven conservation and recreation corridors that are home to four-fifths of New England’s residents. But first, the plan must make its way onto the agenda of the New England Governors’ Conference (NEGC) meeting scheduled for Washington, D.C., later this month. If outdoor companies speak up in favor of the plan, it will help the effort.

Last month the Commission on Land Conservation (CLC), which is appointed by the NEGC, unanimously recommended the region’s six governors approve seven corridor projects when
they meet in Washington. NEGC Executive John Shea said he is working to have a resolution on the agenda for the meeting. OIA intends to attend the meeting in order to show support for this pioneering initiative.

The plan, which is outlined in the report “Connect People to the Outdoors in New England (CPO),” recommends developing corridors in New England, New York and neighboring Canadian provinces in a bid to strengthen conservation, outdoor recreation and jobs in the region. The seven corridors would follow the:

- Androscoggin River – Develop a continuous network of water, biking, hiking and pedestrian trails to connect the river and public open space to underserved urban and rural communities from Umbagog Lake to Merrymeeting Bay.

- Blackstone River – Create the Blackstone River Way along the Blackstone River and the historic Blackstone Canal to connect Providence, R.I., and Worcester, Mass., by a multi-purpose trail and series of public opens spaces in 15 cities and towns, the birthplace of America’s Industrial Revolution.

- Champlain Valley – Address obstacles on the Island Line Rail Trail; enhance Crown Point (New York) and Chimney Point (Vermont) state historic sites, a bi-state park improvement effort at either end of the new Lake Champlain Bridge; further the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership; and plan an extension of the Heritage Partnership to the St. Lawrence River in the Province of Quebec.


- East Coast Greenway – Upgrade route-markers and East Coast Greenway routes in Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine, and add connection to the 10,000-mile Trans Canada Trail in New Brunswick to spur better public health, lower fuel costs, and improve environmental health benefits across the region.

- Merrimack River – Create the Merrimack River Trail, a long-distance, non-motorized, multi-modal scenic trail to celebrate the history of the Merrimack River and strengthen recreation, access, economic and stewardship opportunities in underserved former mill cities from Concord, N.H., to Newburyport, Mass.

- Northern Forest Canoe Trail – Improve community access along the 740-mile trail to ensure that it achieves its full potential and range of business development, youth engagement, and healthy lifestyle benefits. Extend the trail 200 miles downriver to Saint John, New Brunswick, as a destination for national and international users.

The CLC has recommended the resolution require Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine:

- Incorporate the CPO report’s recommendations into their Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and other relevant state plans.

- Call upon their congressional delegations to support the proposed goals, recommendations
and projects and call upon the Obama administration to apply all related federal programs, funding and staff to these projects as a national demonstration model under the America Great Outdoors Initiative

- Call upon the CLC to engage private and philanthropic partners to advance the report's goals, recommendations and projects, and to report on progress to the governors in 2013.

Approval of the resolution would mark significant progress toward the regional planning approach and other principles advocated in "America's Great Outdoors," the report issued by the Obama administration in February 2011 after considerable input from the outdoor industry. OIA worked closely with Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar to gather public comment from outdoor enthusiasts and companies to help shape many of the report’s proposals.

The CLC is working to arrange a meeting where NEGC Chairman and Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin can present the CPO report to Salazar and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. NEGC’s Shea is also working on securing an executive order that would facilitate cooperation among the federal government and the region’s state governments.

Shumlin opened the door to make the case for the importance of outdoor recreation to local economies when he attended Outdoor Retailer Winter Market last month in Salt Lake City. During a tour of the show floor, the governor met with New England companies to learn about their businesses and their importance to New England’s livelihood.

“Shumlin is proving himself a champion for the outdoor recreation economy,” said Craig Mackey, director of recreation policy for OIA. “With his influence as chair of the NEGC, and with vocalized support from New England outdoor industry companies, we have can make this progressive corridor plan a reality.”

OIA is now working with the NEGC to coordinate support for the CPO and encourages members to get involved in the effort. Those interested should contact Mackey at 303-327-3522.

Obama announces programs to increase travel, tourism

*Courtesy of the Hagstrom Report*

January 19, 2012

In an act that could have implications for the rural economy, President Barack Obama today signed an executive order and announced new initiatives to increase travel and tourism in the United States.

Although a major focus of the initiative will be to ease visa processes for Chinese and Brazilian tourists, a White House news release also said Commerce Secretary John Bryson and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar would create a task force whose tasks would include "increasing tourism and recreation jobs by promoting visits to our national treasures."

The White House announcement noted that the Interior Department manages “iconic destinations in our national parks, wildlife refuges, cultural and historic sites, monuments and other public lands that attract travelers from around the country and the globe.”
“In 2010, more than 400 million visits were made by American and international travelers to these lands, contributing nearly $50 billion in economic activity and 400,000 jobs,” the announcement said. “Eco-tourism and outdoor recreation also have an outsize impact on rural economies, particularly in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, Utah and Wyoming.”

Western Voters Across Political Spectrum Agree: Public Lands Are Essential To Our Economy

New survey finds voters in key western states believe US does not have to choose between environment & economy; support protections for air, water, and parks

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO – The results from the 2012 Colorado College State of the Rockies Conservation in the West poll find that western voters across the political spectrum – from Tea Party supporters to those who identify with the Occupy Wall Street movement and voters in-between – view parks and public lands as essential to their state’s economy, and support upholding and strengthening protections for clean air, clean water, natural areas and wildlife.

The survey, completed in Arizona, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming by Lori Weigel of Public Opinion Strategies (a Republican firm) and Dave Metz of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (a Democratic firm), found that swing voters across the west – who will be key to deciding the outcome of a number of U.S. Senate and governors’ races, and possibly the presidential race – nearly unanimously agree that public lands such as national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas are “an essential part” of the economies of these states. Four in five western voters view having a strong economy and protecting land and water as compatible.

Two-thirds of Western voters say America’s energy policy should prioritize expanding use of clean renewable energy and reducing our need for more coal, oil and gas. Even in states like Wyoming and Montana, which are more often associated with fossil fuels, voters view renewable energy as a local job creator.

Survey results are a sharp contrast to the energy and environmental debates currently happening in Washington, and in many state capitals. “Western voters consistently believe that conservation helps create and protect jobs for their states,” said Dave Metz. “In fact, by a 17 point margin, voters are more likely to say that environmental regulations have a positive impact on jobs in their state rather than a negative one.”

Seven in 10 Western voters support implementation of the Clean Air Act, and updating clean air standards. They see regulations designed to protect land, air, water and wildlife as having positive impact on public safety (70 percent), the natural beauty of their state (79 percent) and their quality of life (72 percent).

The survey also found strong approval ratings for most governors in the region, and an electorate divided in hotly-contested U.S. Senate races in Montana and New Mexico. Key swing voters in these contests often express pro-conservation views.

“What we read in the press and what politicians say about an ever-sharpening trade-off between
environment and jobs in a deep recession do not square with views of many western voters,” said Colorado College economist and State of the Rockies Project faculty director Walt Hecox, PhD. “Instead, those stubborn westerners continue to defy stereotypes, by arguing that a livable environment and well-managed public lands can be -- in fact must be -- compatible with a strong economy.”

The survey results echo the sentiments of more than 100 economists, including three Nobel Laureates and Dr. Hecox, who recently sent a letter to President Obama urging him to create and invest in new federal protected lands such as national parks, wilderness and monuments. Studies have shown that together with investment in education and access to markets, protected public lands are significant contributors to economic growth.

Similarly, western voters voiced support for continued funding of conservation, indicating that even with tight state budgets, they want to maintain investments in parks, water, and wildlife protection. When specific local issues were tested with voters in some states – such as increasing the state’s renewable energy standard in Montana, establishing national monument protections for the Arkansas River canyon in Colorado, and updating energy standards for new homes in Utah – voters want to actually strengthen protections.

While there are geographic and partisan distinctions on a number of key issues, such as energy development on public lands, the data show that the broad conservation values uniting westerners are much more prevalent than the occasional issues that divide them.

“The depth and breadth of the connection between westerners and the land is truly remarkable - - when people are telling us that public lands are essential to their economy, and that they support continued investments in conservation, even in these difficult economic times,” said Lori Weigel. “Westerners are telling us that we've got to find a way to protect clean air, clean water, and parks in their states.”

The 2012 Colorado College Conservation in the West survey is a bipartisan poll conducted by Republican pollster Lori Weigel of Public Opinion Strategies and Democratic pollster Dave Metz of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates. The poll surveyed 2,400 registered voters in six western states (AZ, CO, NM, UT, WY, MT) January 2 through 5 & 7, 2012, and yields a margin of error of + 2.0 percent nationwide and +4.9 statewide.

The full survey and individual state surveys are available on the Colorado College website: http://www2.coloradocollege.edu/stateoftherockies/conservationinthewestsurvey_e.html

About Colorado College

Colorado College is a nationally prominent, four-year liberal arts college that was founded in Colorado Springs in 1874. The college operates on the innovative Block Plan, in which its 2,000 undergraduate students study one course at a time in intensive 3½-week segments. For the past nine years, the college also has run the State of the Rockies Project, which seeks to increase public understanding of vital issues affecting the Rockies through annual report cards, free events, discussions and other activities.

Study: Kids in Green Neighborhoods Play Outside More

Courtesy of the National Wildlife Federation
By Max Greenberg

Sometimes it takes academia a while to catch up with things we ‘know’ at a gut level. Case in point: a recent study published in the International Journal of Health Geographics, Tweeted along by childhood researcher and “play advocate” Tim Gill, shows that pre-school kids who live in greener neighborhoods are more likely to play outside.

Take it away, Diana S Grigsby-Toussaint, Sang-Hyun Chi and Barbara H. Fiese (PDF):

“… [E]xposure to greener neighborhoods encourages children to spend more time outdoors where they may reap both physiological and cognitive benefits. Conversely, children with the lowest levels of neighborhood greenness were least likely to spend time playing outdoors, engaging in active or quiet play (rainy day kids).

In addition to their own research, the authors point to examples including “initiatives using landscape architecture to create green elementary school grounds in Canada, which found a 70% increase in light and moderate physical activity among children.”

Those of us lucky enough to grow up with backyards and trees get this, and a growing body of research shows why it’s especially important: children who play outside are healthier, more creative in their play and more likely (PDF) to have positive attitudes toward nature (and environmentally conscious behavior) when they grow up. Plus, all those “physiological and cognitive benefits.”

However, verdant parks and other spaces aren’t enough:

While neighborhood greenness influenced levels of physical activity among these preschool-aged children, as Cleland et al [35] observed, parental support factors such as engaging in physical activity with children also plays a role. This may explain why sporty kids were more likely to engage in much more active outdoor physical activity compared to rainy day kids, although both groups lived in areas with similar levels of neighborhood greenness.

As always, parents and other adults have an important role. The study underscores this along with the importance of giving non-green-neighborhood kids the opportunity to connect with the outdoors—refer back to this post on nature’s healing potential, where I linked to the story of an abuse survivor who spends time leading inner-city kids on hikes and backpacking trips. Bottom line: children sometimes need help to connect to nature.

To learn more, take a look at Kristy Myers’s five tips for spending time in nature with your family, see our Outdoors and Family Channel for easy winter outdoor activities or check out how you can get involved in NWF’s Be Out There campaign to connect kids with nature.

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Job Announcement – National Park Service

OUTDOOR RECREATION PLANNER

SALARY RANGE: $47,448.00 to $74,628.00 / Per Year
OPEN PERIOD: Monday, February 06, 2012 to Friday, February 17, 2012
Experience your America and build a fulfilling career by joining the National Park Service. Become a part of our mission to unite our past, our cultures and our special places, to establish important connections to the present and build a rich and lasting legacy for future generations. For more information about the National Park Service, click Grand Canyon National Park website.

WHO MAY BE CONSIDERED: Open to all qualified persons. You do not have to be a current or former government employee to be considered for this position.

This recruitment will be used to fill a TERM appointment. These appointments are for 13 months and may be extended in increments up to a total of 4 years.

This position is also career-seasonal in nature and does not provide employment on a year-round basis. You may work a minimum of 26 weeks but generally not more than 48 weeks a year. Actual work schedule and period of furlough is contingent upon funding and operational needs.

For position specific information contact Linda Jalbert (928) 638-7909.

DUTIES:
This position is located in the Division of Science and Resource Management (Wilderness & Recreation Planning Program) at Grand Canyon National Park. The incumbent serves as a technical specialist for recreation management of the park's backcountry wilderness areas. The position is interdisciplinary; backcountry management includes issues in visitor use, wilderness character, natural, cultural, and socioeconomic resources. Primary responsibilities include developing a visitor use plan and implementation of monitoring programs related to visitor use and associated impacts to backcountry resources and values. Two positions will be hired under this announcement. The incumbent(s) will play a key role in the implementation of the Colorado River Management Plan and/or development of Backcountry Development Plans and serve as the subject matter expert for visitor use and management in the park's backcountry.

Serves as a member on resource and recreation management interdisciplinary planning teams. Serves as a subject matter specialist on visitor use management issues for the Colorado River and Grand Canyon Backcountry. Compiles data, provides documentation, and prepares section of plans dealing with visitor experience and recreational use impacts on park resources, accomplished in coordination with the Office of Planning and Compliance, Division of Interpretation, and Division of Visitor and Resources Protection. Implements monitoring programs designed to evaluate the impact of recreational use and activities on both the visitor experience and natural and cultural resources in the undeveloped areas of the park, as well as sociological, aesthetic, economic and other aspects of visitor use. The incumbent carries out monitoring programs in coordination with other park work units.

Serves as a member of an interdisciplinary team to develop and implement visitor education
and outreach programs that address the effects of recreational use on resources, accomplished in coordination with the Division of Interpretation, Concessions Management and Division of Visitor and Resource Protection.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: https://my.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/307397000

Job Announcement - US Army Corps of Engineers

NATURAL RESOURCE SPECIALIST (RANGER)

SALARY RANGE: $38,790.00 to $61,678.00 / Per Year
OPEN PERIOD: Monday, February 06, 2012 to Tuesday, February 21, 2012
SERIES & GRADE: GS-0401-07/09
POSITION INFORMATION: Full Time - Permanent
PROMOTION POTENTIAL: 09
DUTY LOCATIONS: 1 vacancy(s) - Bridgeport, WA United States
WHO MAY BE CONSIDERED: United States Citizens
JOB ANNOUNCEMENT NUMBER: WTHF12354392600949D

JOB SUMMARY:
Civilian employees serve a vital role in supporting the Army mission. They provide the skills that are not readily available in the military, but crucial to support military operations. The Army integrates the talents and skills of its military and civilian members to form a Total Army.

ABOUT THE POSITION:
Chief Joseph Dam is the largest power plant in the Corps of Engineers. Applicants can expect to work in a team atmosphere where everyone is important and all ideas are considered. Visit the project web site at http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/PublicMenu/Menu.cfm?sitename= cjdam&amp;pagename=main page. Visit the Seattle District web site at http://www.nws.usace.army.mil. The web site for Bridgeport, Washington is http://www.bridgeportwashington.net Visit http://www.monstermoving.monster.com/Find_A_Place/Relosmart/rs.asp for cost of relocation information.

Other Advantages: The Bridgeport Douglas County area has one of the lowest electricity rates in the country. Bridgeport Schools are among the best in the country. Many employees of the dam also choose to live in the neighboring towns of Omak, Okanogan or Chelan. 10 hour work shifts available.

DUTIES:
At the full performance level (GS-09) you will serve as a Natural Resource Management Specialist for the Chief Joseph Dam Project responsible for planning, administration, coordination and management of various activities in the areas of fish and wildlife management, recreation, park administration, public relation, visitor assistance, public safety, historic properties management, real estate actions and other natural resource related fields. Perform work in areas with a diverse mix of management situations and a variety of intense uses. Use knowledge of policies, objectives and operating methods to develop plans to implement goals for assigned areas. Coordinate work programs internally with all office elements and externally with other impacted District elements, and impacted local, state, Tribal, Federal and
Congressional personnel to obtain cooperation in accomplishing program goals. Develop plans for supervisor's inclusion in the annual budget. Provide data to justify and support new developments and improvements to programs and facilities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: https://my.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/308318800

Outreach Notice – USDA Forest Service

NATURAL RESOURCE SPECIALIST (RECREATION)

DUTY STATION: Moab or Monticello, Utah
OUTREACH DEADLINE: March 9, 2012
NAME OF CONTACT: Brian Murdock
PHONE NUMBER: 435-636-3367
EMAIL ADDRESS: bmurdock@fs.fed.us
MAILING ADDRESS: Moab/Monticello Ranger District, Manti-LaSal N.F, P.O. Box 386, Moab, UT 84532

POSITION:
The Manti-La Sal National Forest, Moab/Monticello Ranger District will soon be filling a Permanent Full-Time Natural Resource Specialist (Recreation) GS-0401-7/9 position with a duty location of Moab or Monticello, Utah. This notification is being circulated to inform prospective applicants of the upcoming opportunity.

The position will be advertised through USA Jobs as a Natural Resource Specialist, GS-0401-07/09. This position will be advertised Government wide and DEMO. Applications must be made through the Avue Digital Services website: Find Federal Employment | Avue Central

The vacancy announcement number for this position has yet to be established. The vacancy announcement will be posted on the U.S. Government’s official website for employment opportunities at, www.usajobs.gov. Individuals that wish to be considered for this position must apply to the vacancy announcement on USAJOBS.gov website by the closing date of the vacancy announcement. The Referral List for this position will be issued to the selecting official upon closing of the vacancy announcement. All applicants found to be qualified, and in the quality group will be referred for consideration.

Once on USAJOBS.gov applicants will be directed to the AVUE Digital Services website to apply. Interested applicants can set up a profile at http://www.avuedigitalservices.com before the announcement is posted that will enable them to receive an e-mail when the announcement is posted. Applicants can also set up an alert on USAJOBS.gov citing the Series/Location and grade that will also notify them when the announcement is posted.

FOREST SERVICE EMPLOYEES ON THE WORKFORCE REDUCTION AND PLACEMENT LIST WILL RECEIVE PRIORITY CONSIDERATION AND CTAP/ICTAP ELIGIBLES WILL RECEIVE THE APPROPRIATE CONSIDERATION.

Individuals desiring further information should contact the person(s) listed below. Contact bmurdock@fs.fed.us to obtain an outreach form. Please send all outreach response forms to bmurdock@fs.fed.us by March 9th, 2012.
DUTIES:
GS- 0401-07. The incumbent serves as an advanced trainee in land management planning processes and decision alternative development while performing productive work and developing skills and knowledge for a higher level position. Program work areas are management of recreation, trails, and special uses programs for the district. As part of planned career development, works with and assists senior members of the staff in the performance of analytical and scientific assignments. Receives advanced training to provide a more thorough understanding of laws and regulations, administrative policies, production/validation processes, and the various methods employed in design, evaluation, research, or other analytical and scientific functions.

Functions in an assistant capacity, carrying out predetermined phases of the assignments designed to provide broad exposure to the work in the natural resources and recreation profession. Increases beneficial networks and contacts that lead to the success of assignments. Contacts require effective coordination and solicitation of cooperative efforts.

Researches and analyzes data, issues, and information that support project recommendations or the work assignments of higher-grade specialists. Prepares well-researched and logically organized presentations related to work assignments. Presents facts, issues, and positions that will convey the intended information with diplomacy and the appropriate emphasis.

GS- 0401-09. Makes or recommends recreation use planning and management decisions for conventional recreation projects of moderate difficulty. Assists with other resource management activities by analyzing the impact of those resources on the district recreation program. Plans and oversees construction of recreation trails, parking areas, trailhead facilities, and new access roads in consultation with engineering personnel. Assists in the development and administration of recreation special use programs in compliance with national guidelines and direction. Reviews and prepares draft recreation plans, implements recreation plan objectives, and inspects the full range of recreation uses, administration of special use authorization for recreation events. Recommends potential sites or areas for additional recreational use. Prepares environmental analysis reports including impact of proposed recreational sites, wilderness, trails, or OHV programs on other resources. Provides information to the public regarding USDA Forest Service management practices, rules, and regulations relating to the Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) areas.

Provides input for unit land management planning team, which includes coordinating with other natural resource disciplines, placing emphasis on resource coordination and specific project planning and execution. Provides input to the natural resources management program by gathering, compiling, and analyzing data to determine needs. Completes NEPA documentation and implements approved projects. Prepares contract specifications for assigned projects.

The incumbent supervises a small staff and exercises the minimum supervisory and managerial authorities and responsibilities less than 20% of the time. Plans and assigns work to be accomplished by subordinates, sets and adjusts short-term priorities, and prepares schedules for completion of work. Assigns work to subordinates based on priorities, selective consideration of the difficulty and requirements of assignments, and the capabilities of employees. Coordinates within the unit to ensure quality and quantity of work is met. Provides leadership, allocates resources, and implements activities to accomplish Forest Service multicultural organization direction and Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights requirements, goals, policies, and objectives.
FOR MORE INFORMATION:
For more information about the position, please contact Brian Murdock, Recreation Manager, at 435-636-3367 or Moab/Monticello District Ranger Michael Diem at 435-636-3341.

Job Announcement – Utah Division of Parks and Recreation

DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

This is a full-time, career service exempt position (Schedule AD), located in the Salt Lake Office. Replacing Mary Tullius who retired. Requisition #25625 CLOSES: 3/16/2012.

***This Is A Public Recruitment***

If you have any questions, please call the Human Resource Office at 801-538-7425.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: https://statejobs.utah.gov/JobAnnouncement.jsp?rid=25625