



American Recreation Coalition

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

NEWS

Contact: Derrick Crandall, 202-682-9530

GREAT OUTDOORS WEEK 2007: JUNE 11-15

Washington, D.C. (February 9, 2007) - Great Outdoors Week 2007, June 11-15, will highlight efforts underway to enhance outdoor recreation for all Americans in the 21st century. Topics to be addressed in a series of forums throughout the week include: improving health through recreation; children and the outdoors; declining visitorship and access to public land; public-private partnerships; ensuring strong recreational trails and scenic byways programs, and more.

Great Outdoors Week is coordinated by the American Recreation Coalition (ARC) and includes events hosted by more than a dozen federal agencies and national organizations. This year an exciting new effort to link National Physical Fitness and Sports Month (May) with Great Outdoors Month (June) will focus on the enormous potential of the Great Outdoors to be the country's "outdoor physical fitness center" for combating both childhood and adult obesity. This is a timely topic for Great Outdoors Week. Obesity, particularly childhood obesity, is the focus of a new national media campaign recently announced by President and Mrs. Bush. The campaign will enlist animated movie favorite Shrek to encourage children to eat better and get regular outdoor exercise.

Among the highlights of Great Outdoors Week are presentations of key awards, including the 19th annual Sheldon Coleman Great Outdoors Award, ARC's **Legends** Awards honoring outstanding federal recreation program officials, and best practices awards by the Coalition for Recreational Trails. The third annual **Beacon Awards**, recognizing innovative uses of technology in visitor services and recreation management on federal lands, will also be presented.

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National recreation leaders, from both the public and private sectors, gathering in Washington, D.C. for Great Outdoors Week will attend a full agenda of panel discussions and issue updates featuring key congressional leaders and land management agency officials. ARC's June Recreation Exchange will feature agency directors speaking about current and future recreation priorities. A special focus of Great Outdoors Week this year will be "**Byways 2021**," a year-long initiative celebrating the National Scenic Byways Program's 15 years of accomplishment and creating the blueprint for a vibrant future.

For the fourth year, the Washington-focused Great Outdoors Week will be a key component of Great Outdoors Month. First proclaimed by President George W. Bush in 2004 and supported by more than 60 national recreation organizations, Great Outdoors Month features a long list of events and meetings, including National Trails Day, National Fishing and Boating Week and the Great American Backyard Campout. Full details on the month will be available soon at www.greatoutdoorsmonth.org.

Additional details on Great Outdoors Week 2007, including opportunities to be part of the excitement, will be posted on www.funoutdoors.com, ARC's website.