



American Recreation Coalition

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

June 2009

In this issue:

- [President Obama proclaims June as Great Outdoors Month, governors join in](#)
 - [Great Outdoors Week: Washington, D.C., June 7-13, 2009](#)
 - [Celebrate National Get Outdoors Day](#)
 - [NPS to offer Fee-Free Weekends for Summer 2009](#)
 - [Interior Department to launch Outdoor Youth Mentoring Program](#)
 - [News](#)
-

President Obama proclaims June as Great Outdoors Month, governors join in

June has been officially designated Great Outdoors Month by President Barack Obama and more than half of America's governors. The proclamations were suggested by a coalition of dozens of recreation and conservation organizations, many of which coordinate special events held during June, including National Trails Day®, National Fishing and Boating Week, National Get Outdoors Day and the Great American Backyard Campout.

President Obama's proclamation states, "The United States is blessed with unparalleled natural beauty. From remote forests to urban parks, these spaces have inspired visitors for generations." It goes on to say, "Exploring the great outdoors can also help improve one's health. These spaces provide countless venues for walking, hiking, running, swimming, and boating, among other activities. Americans can combine the enjoyment of being outside with the exercise we all need to stay healthy."

The proclamation highlights important initiatives of the Administration, noting that it is "working to connect America's youth with our treasured landscapes, which should be viewed as classrooms for environmental education and gateways to careers in natural resources. These efforts will include outreach to those who typically lack representation in, and exposure to, these fields. The Department of the Interior is launching a summer mentoring initiative as part of this effort. This program invites families and friends to teach children about the joys and wonders of the outdoors. My Administration is also increasing the number of youth involved in national service on public lands." The President concludes, "I encourage all Americans to spend more time outside and to participate in the nationwide events marking this occasion."

Again in 2009, a majority of America's governors have also proclaimed June as Great Outdoors Month in their home states. The state proclamations differ in length and emphasis, but most praise volunteerism, environmental stewardship, and outdoor recreation as a means to happier, healthier lifestyles.

To read the full news release with highlights from the 2009 proclamations, [click here](#).

To read the full Presidential Proclamation of June as Great Outdoors Month, [click here](#).

We will continue to post state proclamations at <http://www.funoutdoors.com/node/view/2284> as they arrive.

[Return to top](#)

Great Outdoors Week: Washington, D.C., June 7-13, 2009

Hundreds of leaders of America's recreation community will gather in Washington, D.C. on June 7-13 to celebrate Great Outdoors Week 2009. Each June since 1996, recreation community leaders and allies have met in Washington to take part in meetings and events designed to:

- ◆ Increase the visibility of outdoor recreation on the national policy-making level
- ◆ Heighten the understanding and appreciation of recreation's importance to the nation's economy, health and quality of life
- ◆ Provide an opportunity to highlight key recreation policy initiatives and programs
- ◆ Recognize outstanding leadership on behalf of outdoor recreation
- ◆ Support the efforts of the American Recreation Coalition

Participants include:

- ◆ Corporate CEOs
- ◆ Volunteers for nonprofit organizations
- ◆ Federal and state agency officials
- ◆ Journalists
- ◆ Elected officials
- ◆ Recreation facility operators, drawn from across the nation

Topics of discussion range from the crucial upcoming transportation legislation and how it relates to recreation to the need for increased public-land volunteerism, from the link between recreation and health to how we can reconnect America's youth to the outdoors, from partnerships and other tools to enhance recreation resources to how the recreation community can aid in economic stimulus and recovery.

Among the week's core events for 2009 are:

- ◆ A special ice cream social kick-off event with top Interior Department officials
- ◆ The second annual National Get Outdoors Day
- ◆ The presentation of ARC's **Legends** Awards to outstanding federal agency officials
- ◆ National awards by the Coalition for Recreational Trails
- ◆ A special Recreation Exchange featuring Congressman Jim Oberstar
- ◆ A "State of the Byways" event
- ◆ The presentation of ARC's Beacon Awards for innovative uses of technology in visitor services and recreation management
- ◆ A fishing event for kids on the National Mall
- ◆ A cooperative educational event with the U.S. Forest Service featuring the artist Wyland

For the Great Outdoors Week 2009 Schedule, [click here](#).

[Return to top](#)

Celebrate National Get Outdoors Day on June 13!

Thousands of recreation partners are gearing up to host the second annual National Get Outdoors Day (GO Day) on Saturday, June 13, at over 50 sites across the nation. From Washington, D.C. to California and Tennessee to Texas, these diverse outdoor recreation partners will introduce thousands of families to fun, healthy outdoor activities. Exciting planned events include rock wall climbing, mountain biking, disc golf, fishing derbies, boating, geocaching, introductions to sustainable living villages and much more! Participants will be able to build upon their positive introductory outdoor experiences with local ECHO-events held at nearby outdoor recreation sites throughout the summer. We hope that non-traditional users of public lands will be inspired by these fun activities to make a commitment to spend more time in the great outdoors.

Find an event near you at www.nationalgetoutdoorsday.org!

[Return to top](#)

NPS to offer Fee-Free Weekends during Summer 2009

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced June 2 that the National Park Service (NPS) will offer three fee-free weekends this summer to encourage Americans seeking affordable vacations to visit these national treasures. "During these tough economic times, our national parks provide opportunities for affordable vacations for families," Secretary Salazar said. "I encourage everyone to visit one of our nation's crown jewels this summer and especially to take advantage of the three free-admission weekends." The 147 NPS sites across the country that charge fees for entry will waive these entrance fees during the weekends of June 20-21, July 18-19, and August 15-16, 2009.

National park concessioners are also taking important steps to promote the parks by offering special deals during the fee-free weekends. Many park partners, including tour operators, hotels, restaurants, gift shops, and other vendors, will offer additional discounts and special promotions on those dates. More information on the fees and discounts can be found at www.nps.gov/findapark/feefreeparks.htm and at www.parkpartners.org/~feefree2009.

To read the U.S. Department of the Interior's news release on the event, [click here](#).

[Return to top](#)

Interior Department to launch Outdoor Youth Mentoring Program

The U.S. Department of the Interior gathered key recreation and youth service organizations for a meeting June 1 to solicit involvement in a White House Summer Service Initiative – an Outdoor Youth Mentoring Program. The program intends to provide "youth a positive, personal experience in nature, [where] they will come to understand the threats posed by climate change and will be more able and willing to advocate for clean energy."

President Obama is expected to ask every adult to share with a youth the joy of America's public lands and to engage in environmental stewardship. Outdoor Youth Mentoring Program partners are encouraged to set a service goal for June 22 – September 11, and all participants will be invited to share opportunities and experiences through a new White House website, www.serve.gov. The Interior Department also will develop an "Outdoor Toolkit" to assist groups and individuals to respond to the call for mentoring. A major kick-off event to launch the program is currently scheduled for June 25 at Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Many key groups, including the National Wildlife Federation and The Corps Network, have had a hand in shaping the Summer Service Initiative through meetings at the White House and the Corporation for National and Community Service, where the effort is based. Others expected to play an active role in the initiative include the Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, National Park Service, No Child Left Inside Coalition, Living Classrooms, Student Conservation Association, YMCA and the American Recreation Coalition. The Interior Department expects high public response and is looking forward to recreation industry support.

[Return to top](#)

News

- [Popular GGNRA superintendent and dear ARC friend Brian O'Neill dies](#)
- [Family fun, great summer savings in ski country](#)
- [Economy not stopping boaters](#)
- [Go camping to cut vacation costs](#)
- [Teens panic as they're forced to unplug at camp](#)
- [National parks one of top five bargain destinations for summer 2009](#)
- [New books list hundreds of volunteer vacation opportunities](#)

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American Recreation Coalition
1225 New York Avenue, N.W., Suite 450
Washington, D.C. 20005
202-682-9530 Fax: 202-682-9529
www.funoutdoors.com

[Return to top](#)