

**PARTNERS OUTDOORS 2013:  
IMPROVING RECREATION ON FEDERAL LANDS AND HARNESSING THE POWER OF  
PARTNERSHIPS IN AN ERA OF TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS AND CONSTRAINED  
CAPITAL BUDGETS**

**Date:** **February 19-21, 2013** (Tuesday, beginning at 5:30 p.m. with dinner and an opening gathering, followed by two full days of meetings and discussions on Wednesday and Thursday, with the closing session ending at 3:00 p.m.)

**Location:** **National Conservation Training Center** (<http://nctc.fws.gov>)  
698 Conservation Way, Shepherdstown, West Virginia 25443; (877) 706-NCTC (6282)/  
(304) 876-7900

**Theme:** While our crystal ball is a bit hazy on specific details regarding the future of appropriated funds for federal recreation programs, the general direction is very clear: Cuts and restrictions. Capital spending and seasonal workforces are likely to be especially hard-hit, along with very strict control of travel and meetings. And yet the need for modernized and expanded facilities and better communications is acute. Partners Outdoors 2013 will address these needs and also experiment with a creative response to today's constraints. We will focus on new strategies to boost resources available to create and operate recreation sites – and we'll conduct our presentations and discussions in a way that uses new technology to address restrictions on travel – working to maintain and improve the exchange of ideas and build relationships between agencies and between agencies and the private sector.

The danger that travel restrictions will inadvertently jeopardize creative, partnership responses to current federal recreation program needs is very real. Controls on federal travel threaten the very continuation of Partners Outdoors – a program which has produced partnership successes since 1992 – and countless other opportunities for constructive dialogue among federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, recreation businesses and the public. Each agency is putting in place systems which will allow them to communicate internally through videoconferencing – but the past has taught us that many dollars will be invested in systems that serve internal needs but fail to facilitate the exchange of information among agencies – and which may completely block easy communications with key partners outside government.

Partners Outdoors 2013 will make a significant shift in its structure, perhaps in preparation for more radical shifts in the future. It will still take up relevant, urgent issues facing partners seeking to enhance recreation on public lands and waters – issues like fees and investments and technologies to enhance visits. But it will do so in a shorter amount of time and in a way that promotes meaningful discussions while accommodating off-site speakers, pre-recorded presentations and multiple-site discussions. While still aggregating up to 100 persons in one location to facilitate very valuable face-to-face discussions and networking, Partners Outdoors will use today's technology to bring in off-site expertise and conduct discussions among two or possibly more sites.

Participants at the primary site will be asked to consider three general topics: (1) innovative funding for recreation investments and operations, including utilization of conservation corps; (2) serving international visitors to America's Great Outdoors; and (3) integrating recreation and transportation programs within the MAP-21 structure and beyond. The stage will be set for each topic by a keynote presentation, followed by a panel of experts, followed by a Q&A session. Keynoters and panelists may be on site or

accessed remotely, or even pre-recorded. Following these three presentations, participants will be broken down into three teams to develop recommended strategies for action in the three topic areas. The recommended strategies will be presented to FICOR principals in a closing session that ties Partners Outdoors to a FICOR meeting.

**Participation:** Participation in Partners Outdoors is by invitation only and will be restricted to approximately 100 persons. Invitations are extended by sponsoring organizations, including seven federal agencies, the National Association of State Park Directors, the American Recreation Coalition and, perhaps, other groups. Attendees hold senior management positions in the recreation and resources fields or are identified as candidates for such posts. Confirmation of attendance is required by January 15, 2013.

**Accommodations:** Overnight accommodations will be available at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC). Each participant will be responsible for paying the NCTC meal and lodging package charge of \$129.00/day (federal per diem) plus a \$15.00/day sustainability fee. *Each federal agency partner will compile a list of its participants and forward that list to the American Recreation Coalition. Non-federal participants will fill out a registration form and send it to ARC. ARC will make all initial room reservations and then let all the participants know that they should call and **provide credit-card information to finalize the reservation.***

**Transportation:** NCTC is within driving distance of all three airports serving the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area: Washington Dulles International Airport (approximately 50 miles); Reagan National Airport (approximately 75 miles); and Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (approximately 70 miles). Driving directions are available on the NCTC website at <http://nctc.fws.gov/meet/gettinghere.html> and information about shuttle service and cost is available at <http://rideflyreservations.com>.

**Tuition/Event Costs:** Each participant will be charged a registration fee of \$195.00 for all materials, non-package food costs, and conference and other services offered in conjunction with the Partners Outdoors 2013 conference. Fees should be sent to the American Recreation Coalition (1225 New York Avenue, N.W., Suite 450, Washington, D.C. 20005) before the conference or may be paid on site at the time of registration. **No refunds for cancellations will be honored after January 15, 2013.** Checks should be made payable to the American Recreation Coalition.

**Displays:** There will be limited opportunities for the display of materials relating to partnership activities between federal agencies and for-profit enterprises and for playing short videos on this topic. Arrangements should be made through the American Recreation Coalition at (202) 682-9530.

**Expected Outcomes:** Central objectives of Partners Outdoors 2013 are: (1) increase understanding about use of videoconferencing and other technology to overcome barriers to traditional dissemination of information at meetings; (2) assess opportunities for utilizing non-traditional business models for recreation programs on federal lands and waters; (3) increase understanding about current and potential resources available through conservation corps to aid recreation programs on federally managed lands and waters; (4) understand the expectations of international visitors to federally managed lands and waters and develop strategies for meeting those expectations; and (5) review the role of MAP-21 programs on federal lands and waters and consider ways to improve those programs post-2014.

**Attire:** Dress during the meetings at Partners Outdoors 2013 will be "business casual," but recreational attire will also be appropriate at most sessions.