



GreenLine

Our Call to Action

To mark Founders Day 2011, National Park Service (NPS) Director Jon Jarvis released a new plan for moving the Service forward as it approaches its 100th birthday in 2016 entitled, *Call to Action: Preparing for a Second Century of Stewardship and Engagement*. In Director Jarvis's words, the plan represents "a rededication to our traditional stewardship role but with an expanded and strategic focus that addresses our relevance in a changing world."

The *Call to Action* asks employees to advance a shared vision toward 2016 and beyond. NPS partners (concessioners, contractors, associations, etc.) are also asked to join the effort to help NPS meet the plan's many goals. The *Call to Action* makes specific reference to several issues which are already high priorities for park concessioners. For example, concessioners have supported increased physical activity during park visits for many years and are striving to provide park visitors with healthy food options.

The plan contains four broad themes – Connecting People to Parks, Advancing the NPS Education Mission, Preserving America's Special Places, and Enhancing Professional and Organizational Excellence. Each theme includes specific goals and measurable action items that will help integrate NPS community programs with the national parks and support the overall NPS mission to preserve the country's cultural, historic, and natural resources for the enjoyment of this and future generations.



While most of the *Call to Action* goals apply to concessioners, those of particular relevance include:

- **Step by Step:** Create a pathway to youth employment in the NPS to connect new generations to parks.
- **Go Digital:** Reach new audiences and engage in conversations with all Americans.
- **Ticket to Ride:** Provide transportation support for 100,000 students to visit national parks each year.
- **Eat Well and Prosper:** Encourage park visitors to make healthy lifestyle choices and position parks to support local economies by ensuring that all current and future food service concession contracts require multiple healthy, sustainably produced, and reasonably priced food options.

- **Next Generation Stewards:** Create a new generation of citizen scientists and future stewards with fun and educational biodiversity discovery activities in at least 100 parks.
- **Starry, Starry Night:** Create America's first Dark Sky Cooperative on the Colorado Plateau to protect natural darkness as a precious resource.
- **What's Old is New:** Show, with modern historic preservation techniques and technologies, how historic structures can be sustainable and part of the economic vitality of rural and urban communities.

Call to Action: Preparing for a Second Century of Stewardship and Engagement is available at www.nps.gov/calltoaction.



Stone of Hope, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial

Ask Dr. Ima Park



What can I do for my Park?



GreenLine

GreenLine is an official publication of NPS Commercial Services. The newsletter provides a forum in which the NPS can share information with NPS staff and concessioners about NPS Commercial Services, current environmental requirements, and best management practices. The newsletter also identifies resources available to improve concessioner environmental performance and highlights success stories.

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Dr. Ima Park: As an agency that is close to the environment, the NPS has been aware of, and interested in, addressing climate change for some time. More and more parks are joining the [Climate Friendly Parks \(CFP\) Program](#) to set goals and take action toward reducing carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions. The emission of greenhouse gases, such as CO2, can damage the earth's atmosphere and contribute to climate change. While reducing emissions can seem daunting, there are a few easy practices you can implement to help your park:

- **Commit to change.** Develop a written policy to reduce CO2 emissions and educate your staff on the plan. This policy could be mentioned as part of your visitor orientation as well to spread the message even further.
- **Use local suppliers.** Locally produced items do not need to be transported as far to reach your operation, and therefore do not contribute as much to CO2 emissions from vehicles. In addition to the environmental benefits,

purchasing local items also supports your local community and economy. **Avoid excessive packaging.** Packaging materials serve a limited purpose and are promptly disposed of after use. Whenever possible reduce the amount of waste generated, for example have reusable grocery bags available for purchase.

- **Energy-proof your facility.** Making sure windows close properly, insulating buildings, and regularly maintaining heating and cooling systems can save a lot of energy and utility costs!
- **Unplug equipment when not in use.** Electronics and appliances use energy when plugged in even when they are powered down. Try plugging these items into a power strip so you can cut off energy use with the flip of one switch.
- **Make every trip count.** Plan so that trips in close proximity are completed at one time rather than traveling back and forth from your location. Encourage carpooling.

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Protecting our “Natural Lightscape”

The NPS uses the term “natural lightscape” to describe resources and values that exist in the absence of human-caused light at night. Natural lightscapes are critical for nighttime scenery, such as viewing a starry sky, but are also critical for maintaining nocturnal habitat. Many wildlife species rely on natural patterns of light and dark for navigation, to cue behaviors, or to hide from predators. Lightscapes can be cultural as well, and may be integral to the historical fabric of a place. Human-caused light may be obtrusive in the same manner that noise can disrupt a contemplative or peaceful scene. Light that is undesirable in a natural or cultural landscape is often called “light pollution.”

Protecting natural lightscapes in national parks is important to the Service and has been identified as “Call to Action” Goal Twenty Seven: Starry, Starry Night” and as a key objective of the newly released Green Parks Plan (GPP). The GPP states that the “NPS will minimize the impact of facility operations on the external environment.” To help achieve these goals and prevent the loss of dark conditions and of natural night skies, the NPS seeks the cooperation of concessioners.

Light pollution is a relatively easy environmental problem to resolve. Solutions are immediate, effective, will most likely save your operation money. Protecting night skies only takes a bit of knowledge and effort in choosing night sky friendly outdoor lighting.

If every outdoor light across America was made to be night sky friendly, it would save between \$2 billion and \$10 billion dollars annually in electrical usage.

Use Light Only Where You Need It

- Reduce or eliminate the use of landscape lighting and wayfinding lighting as appropriate.
- Eliminate lights that do not enhance safety. Check for shadows caused by

security lights. Sometimes fewer, lower intensity security lights can enhance rather than reduce safety concerns.

- Use motion sensors to turn lights on and off as needed. This reduces costs and light pollution, and improves security. Also consider using timers for lights that are needed only in the evening or early morning.
- Consider lightscape impacts from illuminated signs and outside vending machines as well as other lighting.

Shield Your Lights

- Make sure the light you are using is directed most efficiently. Several types of full cut-off light fixtures are now available for commercial use. Existing lights can also be adjusted to point downward or retrofitted with simple metal shrouds. Shielded fixtures allow no light to shine above the horizon.
- To reduce negative impacts from interior lights, consider installing awnings, blinds, or shades that can be closed in the evening. Where it makes sense, even consider automatic shades.

Use Less Light

- Properly directed, an efficient, shielded light fixture can use less wattage and still be effective. In most cases it is better to have two, low output lights

with good glare control than one high output light. Replace incandescent bulbs with CFLs. Replace mercury, metal halide and first generation blue-light LED lights with sodium vapor lights.

Inform

- Share your appreciation of the night sky and ways to protect it with visitors and staff. Encourage them to make your park a better place to experience this natural resource.

Look for Yourself

- A good way to find opportunities to improve the natural lightscape at your property is to just get outside at night and see for yourself. Look for places where the ideas described above could be employed. Being careful not to impact safety, you can test the practices to see what works best. In some situations, you may have to balance interests in ambiance and natural lightscape protection. Talk to your park about such decisions and for additional help refer to the resources above.

RESOURCES

- [NPS Natural Sounds & Night Skies Division](#)
- [International Dark Sky Association](#)
- [McDonald Observatory Dark Skies Initiative](#)

(Right) Shielded or full cut-off fixtures, such as this, direct all light downward.



“Reduce the NPS carbon footprint...”

- Call to Action, Goal #23: Go Green

Water Bottles

In December 2011, NPS Director Jonathan Jarvis issued a policy memorandum outlining options for reducing the impact of disposable water bottles in national parks. In support of the NPS’s sustainability program, Parks are encouraged to have choices for visitors including water refill stations and reasonably-priced reusable bottles as an alternative to the sale of disposable bottles. With education on this alternative and a robust recycling program in place to collect disposables that are used, the Service hopes to reduce its carbon footprint in this area.

When considered on a life-cycle basis, the use of disposable water bottles has a significant environmental impact compared to the use of local tap water and refillable bottles. Americans use approximately 50 billion plastic water bottles yearly and about 38 billion of those bottles end up in landfills. The Director’s policy on disposable plastic water bottle reduction/recycling will allow the NPS and park concessioners to reduce their environmental impact, and further introduce visitors to reuse and the concept of environmentally responsible purchasing. The reduction and recycling policy is also consistent with the NPS goal of reducing its carbon footprint and meeting *Call to Action Goal #23, “Go Green”*.

While providing choice is the preferred approach to change buying practices, superintendents may also request approval from their regional director to eliminate disposable water bottles. The park must address a number of factors in a written application to the regional director, including: the amount of waste to be eliminated and the pros/cons to overall

park operations; infrastructure costs and funding sources for filling stations; effects to concessioners and contractual implications; visitor education; public health; and a system for annual evaluation. Approvals are granted based on the consideration of these factors.

Even before there was a water bottle policy, Xanterra, a concessioner at Zion National Park, offered to discontinue the sale of beverages in disposable containers as part of their new contract and worked with the park’s Green Team to implement the policy. The park worked with their concessioner to install several attractive water bottle filling stations with excellent educational messages and made sure reasonably priced refillable bottles were sold in the concessioner store. The success at Zion National Park has been a model for several other parks that have moved forward and obtained approval for similar efforts, the largest of these being at the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park.

As more parks implement strategies to reduce disposable water bottle use, the NPS will monitor the results of park-specific policies to determine the effects on the environment, visitor welfare, concessioners, and cooperating associations. As this information is collected, the strategy outlined in the Director’s policy memo will be revisited to determine if changes are necessary.

For more information visit:

<http://www.nps.gov/policy/plastic.pdf>

Padre Island National Seashore - Worldwinds Windsurfing, Inc.

On the shores of Padre Island National Seashore, a unique and innovative concessioner deals boards, windsurfing lessons, and fun to park visitors while collecting thousands of gallons of rainwater a year. Don Jackson, owner and operator of Worldwinds Windsurfing, Inc., adopted a rainwater harvesting system for his retail shop. Due to the remote location of Padre Island, the retail shop has limited access to water or electricity. Jackson invested less than \$1,000 to purchase a used 1,000-gallon tank, a 12 volt pump, and gutter materials to collect and provide sufficient water for the daily requirements of his business. Even last year, when Texas experienced one of the worst droughts in its history, the rainwater collecting system provided enough water for the shop to continue operations.

The system provides non-potable water for visitor showers and for rinsing equipment.

Before using this system, Jackson was transporting in water to the facility on a regular basis. The payback period for his investment has been less than one year. As stated by Jackson, “The system has exceeded our expectations. The system has not run out of water for the six years that it has been in operation at Padre Island.” Jackson is impressed with the maintenance-free aspects of the system and only wishes that he had two gutters feeding into the tank instead of one.

As a veteran rainwater harvester, Jackson recommends that interested concessioners:

- Purchase as large a tank as possible for the amount of space available;
- Paint the tank a dark color (blue, black, or green) to impede algae growth; and
- Utilize as much surface area of the roof to collect runoff for the tanks.

If you have further thoughts or questions about the rainwater harvesting system, please contact NPS Commercial Services.



Zion National Park Lodge



Xanterra Parks and Resorts, Inc. has operated Zion National Park Lodge at Zion National Park in Utah under concession contracts since 1984. Xanterra has a strong environmental focus as a company, and this is especially visible in their operations at Zion National Park Lodge. Xanterra proposed many environmental projects in their bid for the most recent contract, which began in 2009. These included

renewable energy projects, significant water and waste reductions, and environmental purchasing requirements, among others.

In the past few years, Xanterra has implemented several solar energy projects at the lodge. These high-visibility installations have helped reduce energy consumption by 180,000 kilowatt hours, or more than 10%, in 2011 compared to the first year of the contract, according to David Perkins, Director of Sustainability at Zion National Park Lodge. However, making sure that the right technology was installed in the right way was a challenge, Perkins noted, especially with changing technology. Guests also notice that existing furniture has been replaced with Utah-manufactured, FSC-certified wood furnishings in all hotel-style guest rooms, and Xanterra remodeled several cabins following a sustainable design plan.

Management staff has found that their high-profile environmental projects, such as purchasing carbon offsets, have provided

additional opportunities to educate visitors. All of these projects provide Xanterra staff with opportunities that allow them to educate visitors on travel impacts, efficient lighting, renewable energy, and purchasing choices and the framework for all of these efforts is either specified or outlined in the concession contract. Furthermore, Xanterra has found that their staff has a wealth of knowledge to provide to their guests.

Despite the challenges associated with implementing these and other environmental projects, which work to meet and exceed contract requirements, the process has been rewarding for Xanterra. In addition to the aforementioned successes, Xanterra has reduced gasoline usage by more than 40%, and has decreased water usage by 1.7 million gallons in 2011. Furthermore, Perkins and other management staff have found that, almost without any exception, completing contract environmental requirements has been something that has been easily achievable.

The Importance of an EMS

Do you find environmental regulations difficult to keep track of? Have you ever wished there was a way to better manage environmental requirements so that you can stay in compliance and even go above and beyond what is required?

An environmental management system (EMS), which may be referred to as an Environmental management Program (EMP) in your concession contract, can help track requirements. An EMS is a tool that helps a facility, whether park or concessioner, achieve its environmental compliance obligations and broaden its environmental performance goals by properly managing its operations and activities. A robust EMS ensures existing or new programs closely link an organization's environmental activities (including its energy footprint) with legal and other requirements. Activities include planning, training, monitoring and measuring, and reporting. In addition, senior management plays an active and necessary role in evaluating status and progress and making decisions towards continual improvement. Your concession contract language may list elements, or sections, your EMS should include. Each of these elements has specific requirements designed to provide consistency of approach and interpretation of EMS throughout the NPS:

- Policy
- Goals and Targets
- Responsibility and Accountability
- Documentation
- Document Control and Information Management System
- Reporting

- Communication
- Training
- Monitoring, Measurement, and Corrective Action

An EMS is meant to act as a system to manage all environmental programs that a park or concession operation has in place. By maintaining an EMS, your concession operation will be better prepared to manage the requirements set forth by the government and any voluntary environmental programs you undertake.

Before any of the nine elements are implemented, a concessioner should form an Environmental Management Team (EMT). An EMT is a group of dedicated individuals, representing the varied and diverse activities in your operation, who will guide the EMS efforts. They will be expected to meet regularly to understand, follow, and implement the elements of the EMS and to communicate with management regarding EMS progress. In short, the EMT will guide and manage the EMS.

Let's discuss an example of how implementing an EMS can help a concessioner meet its goals. Concessioner ABC manages a lodge in a medium-sized park and has committed to improving environmental management in its operations (Policy). The park has set goals to reduce energy use and join the Climate Friendly Parks (CFP) program (Goals and Targets). In order to support park goals and benefit concessioner operations, Concessioner ABC sets a goal in its EMS to reduce energy use. Under this goal, Concessioner ABC commits to a target of 3% energy use reduction within the next two years. To accomplish this, Concessioner ABC plans to install energy efficient lighting in the lodge and launch an education program

for staff and visitors regarding energy saving practices. Once the goal is set, Concessioner ABC's EMT meets with maintenance staff to explain lighting needs and human resources staff to arrange for company training on energy use (Responsibilities and Accountability). The EMT also assigns a member the responsibility of managing documentation related to the goal, including the written goal itself, baseline records, monitoring records, and changes to the goal based on EMT meetings (Document Control and Information Management System).

Over the next two years, Concessioner ABC provides training to staff and visitors about ways to save energy, including posting materials throughout the lodge and pointing out energy efficient lighting upgrades, and implements lighting upgrades (Training, Communication). Quarterly, the EMT meets to determine and document whether or not the plan is being effectively executed (Documentation, Reporting). If deficiencies are identified, for example, staff are not implementing energy efficient practices whenever possible, the EMT arranges for corrective action like additional training (Monitoring, Measurement, and Corrective Action). After two years, not only does Concessioner ABC see significant energy reductions that support the park goal, but money is also saved as a result of reduced utility costs. With additional funds available, Concessioner ABC can afford to implement other environmental management goals in the EMS or provide a reward to staff for assisting in the effort.

Even if an EMS is not required in your concession contract, it is still a good idea to develop and implement one to help with overall environmental management. It does not need to be overly detailed - it simply needs to work for you!



“Encourage park visitors to make healthy lifestyle choices and position parks to support local economies by ensuring that all current and future concession contracts require multiple healthy, sustainably produced, and reasonably priced food options at national park food service concessions.”

- Action 8: Eat Well and Prosper



Eat Well and Prosper

With roughly 50 percent of NPS concessioners running some type of food and beverage (F&B) operation in over 75 national park units, execution of Action 8 of the *Call to Action* – Eat Well and Prosper – is of great interest to concessioners and concession specialists alike.

Even prior to the release of the *Call to Action* in August 2011, the NPS Commercial Services Program has been collaborating with concessioners and other stakeholders on ways to foster healthy and sustainable food choices in F&B operations. Activities that have taken place include:

- **April 2011**, Healthy Parks Healthy People (HP2) U.S. Conference at Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco, California. NPS Director Jon Jarvis publicly stated the Service’s commitment to public health: “The food we eat plays a critical role in our health, and providing healthy food choices is one way the NPS is working to promote healthy lifestyles. The NPS’s new healthy food standard will ensure that our 281 million annual visitors have access to healthy, sustainable, and high-quality food at reasonable prices, while reducing our overall impact on the environment.” Breakout sessions were convened at the meeting to start a dialog with concessioners, NPS leaders, and other stakeholders.
- **April and November 2011**, *Food for the Parks* and *Food for the Parks: A Roadmap to Success*. The Institute at the Golden Gate released two reports: one with case studies of parks and concessioners that have already successfully improved the healthfulness and sustainability of food served to visitors, and another with specific

guidance on how to best implement healthy and sustainable food practices.

- **Summer 2011**, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Healthy Food Survey. The NPS partnered with the CDC to survey concessioner operations nationwide for access to healthy foods in F&B and retail operations. Forthcoming survey results will provide a baseline from which to measure current and future concessioner practices.
- **November 2011**, White House Meeting. The White House hosted and invited concessioners, NPS leaders, and other stakeholders to discuss an NPS healthy and sustainable food strategy.
- **February 2012**, Concession Management Advisory Board (CMAB) Subgroup Meeting. The CMAB gathered concessioner input on a Healthy Food Program Implementation Strategy (Strategy). Some key points discussed included establishing minimum healthy food standards and sustainable food guidelines. The Strategy will also address the idea of driving innovation through concessioner recognition and incentives, as well as the prospectus process.
- **March 2012**, The NPS will continue to circulate the Healthy Food Program Implementation Strategy, updated with stakeholder comments, for discussion.

The NPS recognizes that some concessioners are already progressive in providing healthy and sustainable food options to visitors. Through collaborative processes already taking place, concessioners are in the enviable position of taking the lead and helping the NPS meet *Call to Action* and HP2 goals.

Go Green & Save Green

Going “green” is not only beneficial to the environment; it can also be beneficial to your wallet. Here are a few quick tips on how a lodging operation might save money and be environmentally friendly at the same time.



1. Saving Energy Saves Money

To save on heating and cooling costs, set thermostats a few degrees lower in the winter and a few degrees higher in the summer. For more energy efficient lighting, install compact fluorescent bulbs. In addition, unplugging room appliances when not in use prevents unnecessary energy use.



2. Buy Smart

Purchase items, such as soaps and shampoo, in bulk. This saves money and reduces the amount of packaging waste that would end up being thrown away. Invest in high-quality, long-lasting furniture. You may pay more in the beginning, but you’ll reduce the need for replacing these items frequently, and save money in the long run, while reducing waste!

3. Use Green Cleaning Supplies

Contrary to popular belief, very effective, non-toxic cleaning products can come from a few common ingredients like baking soda, vinegar, and lemon. Using natural ingredients for housekeeping can save money and packaging – not to mention keeping toxic chemicals out of the environment.



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Branch Chief's Corner

2016 will mark the 100th anniversary of the NPS. This offers an opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments of the NPS and prepare for a new century of stewardship and engagement. With that in mind, this issue of the *GreenLine* Newsletter is focused on the Director's *Call to Action* and what parks and concessioners can do to support this initiative.

In the article *Our Call to Action*, we discuss the Director's *Call to Action* and what it entails, particularly as it relates to environmental programs. In *Protecting our 'Natural Lightscape'* we provide information about how concessioners can protect the night sky. In *Ask Dr. Ima Park*, we look at easily implemented BMPs that can be applied broadly to help concessioners reduce environmental impacts, and in *Go Green and Save Green*, we offer a few simple tips for implementing environmentally friendly practices in lodging operations that also help save money. In *Water Bottles*, we discuss recent activities to provide alternatives to disposable water bottle sales to help reduce our carbon footprint.

On a contract requirement note, this issue of the *GreenLine* covers *The Importance of an EMS*. The article describes an EMS and its elements, as well as how implementing an EMS helps concessioners ensure sound business environmental performance. In *Eat Well and Prosper*, we provide an overview of the Healthy and Sustainable Food Effort and how it is also related to our *Call to Action* and NPS's Healthy Parks, Healthy People Strategy.

Finally in *Concessioner Highlights*, we recognize the environmental innovations and recent activities at Zion National Park and Padre Island National Seashore. We are all working together to fulfill the *Call to Action*; let's continue our successes into the next century of our national parks!

Kurt Rausch

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