



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton  
National Park

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## Grand Teton National Park News Release - Updated at 3:45 p.m.

### **New Park Visitor Center Officially Named For Senator Craig Thomas**

A new visitor center in Grand Teton National Park will be named the “Craig Thomas Discovery and Visitor Center” in honor of United States Senator Craig Thomas (R-Wyoming) who recently passed away. This announcement comes after President George W. Bush signed congressional bill S. 277—containing language for the designation—this morning, July 13, 2007, with Thomas’s wife, Susan, and Senators Mike Enzi and John Barrasso of Wyoming in attendance.

During his 18 years in Congress, Thomas was a steadfast champion for America’s public lands—especially Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks in his home state of Wyoming. Thomas will be remembered for his investment in national parks and his dedication toward ensuring their long-term health. As chairman, and ranking member, of the Senate subcommittee for the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, he became an effective “voice” for public lands and served as a staunch advocate for the National Park System. Among his many accomplishments—and one specific to Grand Teton National Park—was the recent passage of a bill he sponsored to expand the eastern boundary of the park to accept a 50-acre parcel of land donated by private landowners. Although Thomas introduced legislation for the land addition in 2006, the bill did not pass the House before Congress adjourned in December. Thomas reintroduced the bill this year, but it was not voted on before he passed away on June 4, 2007. Senator Mike Enzi ushered the bill through the Senate to complete what Thomas could not because of his untimely death.

Enzi also amended the bill to include a caveat to name Grand Teton National Park’s new visitor center at Moose, Wyoming after Thomas. Grand Teton National Park Superintendent Mary Gibson Scott said, “It is entirely appropriate and quite fitting that this soon-to-open park facility be named the Craig Thomas Discovery and Visitor Center because the Senator was such a critical player in securing federal appropriations necessary for construction of this building. By naming Grand Teton’s new visitor center after Senator Thomas, we honor his legacy and bring attention to his unwavering dedication and personal commitment to this and other national parks.”

Thomas was a strong supporter of public-private partnerships between the National Park Service and other organizations. He saw partnering as a way to foster new opportunities for providing visitor services while encouraging greater citizen involvement in the stewardship of parks. Thomas’s influence in Grand Teton National Park has been significant: he was responsible for legislation that reduced the impacts of aircraft noise, and for obtaining \$8 million to begin construction of a multi-use pathways system that will enable visitors to safely enjoy the park on foot or on bicycle. Thomas was also the author of landmark legislation to provide reforms to the National Park Service’s concessions management program. In addition, he was working toward ensuring that the Snake River, within Grand Teton and beyond, be classified as a Wild and Scenic River to protect this valuable Wyoming watershed for the future.

“Senator Thomas’s work on behalf of Grand Teton National Park and other parks throughout the National Park System will benefit visitors for years to come, and may serve as inspiration for others to follow in his footsteps of public service for the greater good of the American people,” stated Superintendent Scott.

The new Craig Thomas Discovery and Visitor Center will be dedicated and opened to the public during a special ceremony on August 11, 2007, at Moose, Wyoming.

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