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National Park Service News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – FEBRUARY 11, 2008
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Junior Ranger Essay Contest Announced

Winner to Receive Family Vacation and Other Prizes

(Washington, DC) – The winner of this year's 2008 Junior Ranger essay contest will receive an all expense paid family vacation to one of the country's most remarkable national parks and a starring role in an electronic field trip seen by millions of school children across the country.

The essay contest is open to children between 9 and 12 years old. Each person must express his or her thoughts on "What can you do now to turn over a new leaf for the environment and help preserve our national parks?"

National Park Service Director Mary A. Bomar, First Lady Laura Bush, and National Park Foundation President and CEO Vin Cipolla announced the details of this year's contest during a recent visit to Everglades National Park in Florida. A group of local 5th graders joined them to help plant native trees in a park restoration project prior to the announcement. "Children throughout the country, like those here today, are more interested and involved in environmental issues than ever before," said Bomar. "They can make a difference, both now and in the future, on the impact of humans on the land. I can't wait to hear all of the wonderful ideas that will come from this essay contest."

The grand prize winner will receive a trip for four to Everglades National Park where he or she will appear in an electronic field trip about invasive species in national parks. The prize includes round trip air transportation, car rental, hotel accommodations, meal expenses, a $1,000 Macy's shopping spree, and an America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands Pass.

Essays must be 500 words or less and received on-line or by mail by March 14, 2008. Each entry will be judged on originality, clarity, and understanding of the issue. Additional contest information is available at www.nps.gov.

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