

CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CENTENNIAL NEWSLETTER

2016
National Park Service
CENTENNIAL



April 2016

Your Park is Out there... Go Find It!

By Andrea Walton



Great Smoky Mountains National Park, NC and TN

Although the Find Your Park campaign is new for the National Park Service's 2016 Centennial, I found my park a long time ago: [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#) in Tennessee and North Carolina. You could say the Smokies are in my blood; my dad grew up visiting, and after he introduced my mom to the park on their honeymoon in 1980, they kept coming back year after year. Great Smoky Mountains National Park has always been my park, a place filled not only with abundant natural beauty and rich cultural history, but also with many happy memories of my countless visits there. The natural next step for me was to give back by helping others discover the Smokies as their park.

As a Student Conservation Association (SCA) intern last summer, I worked at Sugarlands Visitor Center near park headquarters, interacting with thousands of the 5-6,000 visitors we saw each day. SCA offers opportunities for young people to work to solve environmental challenges across the country—whether it's through internships, team-based corps projects, or special programs like [NPS Centennial Volunteer Ambassadors](#). Everything about my own SCA internship reflected the mission of the [Find Your Park](#) campaign. Whether I was helping visitors plan their trips at the visitor center, answering hikers' questions while roving on trails, or interpreting park history through one of my formal programs, the common goal of each task was to ensure that visitors had the best experience possible, inspiring stewardship and maybe even causing them to decide that the Smokies was *their* park, too.

Smokies continued on page 6

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL 2016

This April we celebrate National Park Week. Check your local park for events or visit www.FindYourPark.com and search through the nationwide schedule. The [Find Your Park calendar](#) is continually being updated so keep checking back as new events are added every week.

APRIL 16-24

NATIONAL PARK WEEK

NATIONWIDE

SEE PAGE 3 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

WWW.NPS.GOV/FINDAPARK/NATIONAL-PARK-WEEK

APRIL 8-10

CELESTIAL CENTENNIAL

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

DEATH VALLEY, CA

A NIGHT SKY AND SPACE FESTIVAL WILL INCLUDE TALKS, FIELD TRIPS, PROGRAMS, AND EXPOSITIONS WITH EXPERTS, RANGERS, AND NADA SCIENTISTS.

WWW.NPS.GOV/DEVA/PLANYOURVISIT/CELESTIAL-CENTENNIAL

APRIL 16-24

FIND YOUR PARK FROM VEGAS

LAKE MEAD NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

ARIZONA/NEVADA

THROUGHOUT THE WEEK, A SPECIAL FIND YOUR PARK FROM VEGAS FILM WILL AIR AT THE FREMONT STREET EXPERIENCE IN DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS.

WWW.FINDYOURPARK.VEGAS

APRIL 16-24

BADLANDS YOUTH CAMP

BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK

SOUTH DAKOTA

A CAMP SUPPORTING THE CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF MEANINGFUL AND CULTURALLY RICH PARK EXPERIENCES FOR UNDERSERVED AND DIVERSE YOUTH.

WWW.NPS.GOV/BADL/LEARN/KIDSYOUTH/YOUTHCAMP

APRIL 17

ANACOSTIA RIVER FESTIVAL

NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS - EAST

WASHINGTON, DC

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE: KAYAKING, BOATING, FISHING WORKSHOPS, HANDS-ON ART PROJECTS, MUSICAL PERFORMANCES, BIKE PARADES, AND OTHER UNIQUE PROGRAMS ENGAGING FAMILIES WITH THE RIVER, ITS HISTORY AND ECOLOGY.

WWW.BRIDGEPARK.ORG/EVENT/2016-ANACOSTIA-RIVER-FESTIVAL

APRIL 23

TOMA VILLA EXHIBIT OPENING

FORT VANCOUVER NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

VANCOUVER, WA

YAKAMA ARTIST TOMA VILLA HAS CREATED A MONUMENTAL, SITE-SPECIFIC ARTWORK THAT WILL DEBUT AT THIS SPECIAL EVENT.

WWW.NPS.GOV/FOVA

APRIL 30

SPRING PLANTING & MUSIC FESTIVAL

BIG SOUTH FORK NATIONAL RIVER & RECREATION AREA

BANDY CREEK VISITOR'S CENTER, ONEIDA, TN

A CELEBRATION OF SPRING AND TRADITIONAL MOUNTAIN WAYS.

WWW.NPS.GOV/BISO/PLANYOURVISIT/SPRINGPLANTING

FIND YOUR PARK

FINDYOURPARK.COM

National Park Week

Discover national parks and the wonders they contain. Find your park!



Click to view the video or visit: <https://www.nps.gov/media/video/view.htm?id=FBF4EE30-1DD8-B71B-0B28CF2D2E09DA4D>
Spanish: <https://www.nps.gov/media/video/view.htm?id=FC443549-1DD8-B71B-0B40114CE981BA78>

National Park Week, April 16 to 24, 2016, is America's largest celebration of national heritage. It's about making great connections, exploring amazing places, discovering open spaces, enjoying affordable vacations, and enhancing America's best idea—the national parks!

Now's the Time!

Here are some highlights during National Park Week:

- **April 16–24: Visit for free!**
Throughout National Park Week in 2016, every national park will give you [free admission](#)!
- **April 16: National Junior Ranger Day**
Explore, Learn, Protect! Kids can take part in fun programs and earn a junior ranger badge or become a Centennial Junior Ranger.
- **April 22: Earth Day**
On Earth Day, if you want to roll up your sleeves and pitch in with a project, look for a [park where you can help out](#).
- **April 23: National Park Instameet**
Join an [InstaMeet](#) in a park. Gather in a designated place at a specific time to take photos and short videos to post on Instagram (and other social media) with the same hashtag: [#FindYourParkInstaMeet](#), [#FindYourPark](#), [#EncuentraTuParque](#), [#NPS100](#)
- **April 24: Park Rx Day**
Parks will host fun recreational activities that encourage healthy lifestyles and promote physical and mental well-being. (Looking to host your own event? Download [A Guide to Planning Your Own National Park Rx Day Celebration](#)).

Find Your Park GeoTour

Go on a hunt for adventure!

Geocaching is a real-world, outdoor game using GPS-enabled devices. For a “traditional geocache” participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the geocache container hidden at that location. For an “EarthCache” there is no container. Instead, the participant searches for an interesting or unique geographical or geological feature, and completes an educational component.

On April 19, during National Park Week, the National Park Service, in partnership with [Geocaching HQ](#), will launch the [Find Your Park GeoTour](#) (FYP Geotour). The FYP GeoTour is a collection of geocache sites either in or related to national parks through our NPS



Rangers introducing ParkCaching to kids.

ParkCaching program. ParkCaching is a NPS-directed visitor experience similar to geocaching. The program uses handheld GPS devices to locate either traditional geocaches and/or EarthCaches with interpretive and educational content creating rewarding interpretive outdoor experiences at national park and/or partner sites.

You can check out the FYP GeoTour at <http://www.geocaching.com/play/geotours/findyourpark>. This website is an easy way for individuals and families to navigate through approved ParkCaches for all national parks and partner sites.

Centennial to be Celebrated on Forever Stamps

16 Parks to be Previewed

The U.S. Postal Service will begin celebrating the National Park Service’s Aug. 25 centennial just in time for summer vacation letter writing by issuing a pane of stunning Forever stamps depicting 16 examples of our national treasures on June 2.



To create buzz and excitement among national park fans, each stamp will be previewed alphabetically over the next three weeks, with the first previewed Monday, April 4, featuring a stunning photograph of Acadia National Park’s Bass Harbor Head Light.

The June 2nd first-day-of-issue ceremony will take place at New York City’s [Javits Center](#) at 11 a.m. as part of [World Stamp Show NY-2016](#). Dedication ceremonies also will take place at or near each of the national parks depicted on the stamps.

Centennial Event of the Month

Each month this section highlights a park or program Centennial event. Centennial events can be small and intimate, such as a kids program in the local community, or grand, such as a concert or a naturalization ceremony. Either way, the options are endless with more events being added to the calendar every day. Check the [Find Your Park website calendar](#) or your [local park calendar](#) for events near you.

“The America I Am” Youth Film Project

Engaging the Next Generation of Storytellers

By Jerry Willis
Public Affairs Officer,
Statue of Liberty National Monument



The National Park Service has served as “America’s Storyteller” for a century now. But are the stories being told inclusive of all Americans? Are they relevant to everyone, especially young people? Is there a better way to engage students, maybe by asking them to craft and share their own stories that resonate with their American experience?

Those questions were the driving force behind the creation of [The America I Am](#), a national short film competition for young people, ages 13 to 18. The project is a partnership between the [Statue of Liberty National Monument](#) and the New York City-based Tribeca Film Institute (TFI).

High school aged youth were invited to submit short films about their “American experience” and *The America I Am* film competition became a keystone project in the park’s effort to connect with America’s youth. “We have fully embraced the notion that to remain relevant to all Americans in our second century we must do a better job of cultivating and engaging the next generation,” said Deputy Superintendent Cherie Butler. The 2016 Centennial serves as a catalyst to reach out to students across the nation and invite them to connect with us.

NPS and TFI staff curated a roster of film submissions from across the nation (even a few from around the globe). A jury of film professionals and NPS staff selected five finalists for a production award and an exciting distance-learning program with Tribeca—including mentorship from professional filmmakers to help craft and polish a final cut of each short film. The five finalists will travel to New York City for a Red Carpet World Premiere of all five films on April 21, 2016, at the Tribeca Film Festival. A jury will select the grand-prize winner, and the winner will be announced that evening at a Centennial Celebration event on Ellis Island with the Statue of Liberty serving as a dramatic backdrop. The grand-prize winner will receive a \$10,000 award from The National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations and a scholarship for post-production services and film education. Additional support for the project was provided by the park’s partner, Eastern National.

The five film finalists are: “*Fire*” from Katie Ajemian, Felicity Petruzzi and Eliza Price (The Taft School - Watertown, CT); “*American Seoul*” from Jeeyoon Lee (Alexandria, VA); “*Of Gods and Bells*” from Alexia Salingaros (San Antonio, TX); “*Free Running through Baltimore*” from Tyson Sanford-Griffin (Wide Angle Media - Baltimore, MD); and “*Make it Float*” from Aden Suchak and Taofeek Abijako (Youth FX - Albany, NY).

FIND YOUR PARK

FINDYOURPARK.COM

I was just one of many people playing a role in protecting the park and helping others to enjoy it, though. The countless rangers, volunteers, and other NPS employees I worked with were some of the most dedicated and enthusiastic people I have ever met. They care deeply for Great Smoky Mountains National Park and its visitors and work tirelessly each day to serve them. I have no doubt that *all* National Park Service sites have people like these who are passionate about their park and want others to feel the same way.

If you haven't found your park yet, this is the year to do it. Take a summer road trip to the national park you've always wanted to see. Check out the national historic site in your city. Re-visit the national seashore you vacationed at as a kid and always loved. No matter where you live or where you choose to go, there's a park out there waiting for you, and it's full of people who love it and can't wait for you to love it, too.



The author (left) during her internship with Park Ranger Jennifer Hale Goad.

Andrea Walton is a student at American University and an Intern in the NPS Office of Legislative and Congressional Affairs. Andrea will be working at Great Smoky Mountains National Park again this summer, but this year she will serve as a Park Ranger instead of an intern. Look for her at the Sugarlands Visitor Center or out on the trails wearing her flat hat and green and gray uniform.

To learn more about the Student Conservation Association visit: www.thesca.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

Who else is a Congressional Friend of the National Park Service Centennial? You can find a full list of Friends on the [NPS Office of Legislative and Congressional Affairs](#) and the [NPS Centennial](#) websites. Know a colleague who may be interested? See our contact below:

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