

CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CENTENNIAL NEWSLETTER

2016
National Park Service
CENTENNIAL



June 2016

Find Your Park and Find Yourself

By Gary A. Bremen, Park Ranger, Biscayne National Park

It was April on the south rim of the Grand Canyon. I woke up early to find a blanket of snow covering everything, so I walked in darkness to take in the sunrise and the unfolding of a truly spectacular sight. The Canyon's pinnacles, ledges, cracks and crevices were dusted with snow, creating beautiful contrast between icy white and golden stone. At first I was alone, but soon lots of other people were out too, so I walked down the South Kaibab trail a couple hundred yards. That was all it took to get away from people, most of whom only gaze into the Canyon from above. I stepped to the side of the trail and sat down, elevated above the occasional hikers passing by. I was out of the wind and I was comfortable just watching the constantly changing light show before me.



Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona

I sat there for hours as long shadows became shorter and snow-filled crevices melted. After 32 years, I was coming to terms with who I really was. I began to look at the Canyon as a metaphor for my life. It was dark and coming out into the light. All the rough, craggy edges were smoothed out by the snow...like it was a brand new beginning. For over twenty years, I too had been lurking in the shadows; ashamed of whom I was because so many around me told me I should be. I had never doubted that I was gay; I just never thought I would say those words aloud. But there, just below the rim of this incredibly beautiful place, I saw an opportunity for a new beginning. I was no different than I was a few hours earlier, and yet at the same time, I was entirely different. I pledged that when I got home, I would be honest with those I loved about who I really was.

It was tough at first, but surprisingly, it got better, and my life was richer and happier.

Canyon continued on page 6

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JUNE 2016

This June we celebrate **American Great Outdoors Month** and **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month**. 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.

JUNE 2

FIRST DAY OF ISSUE / WORLD STAMP SHOW

NEW YORK, NY

THE FIRST DAY OF ISSUE OF THE NATIONAL PARKS CENTENNIAL USPS STAMPS. EVENTS WILL ALSO TAKE PLACE IN PARKS THAT ARE FEATURED ON THE STAMPS.

WWW.NPS.GOV/SUBJECTS/CENTENNIAL/POSTAGE-STAMPS.HTM

JUNE 4

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

NATIONWIDE

EVENTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY INCLUDING GREENBELT PARK, MARYLAND; GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER NATIONAL MONUMENT, MISSOURI; SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK, VIRGINIA; AND NORTH CASCADES NATIONAL PARK, WASHINGTON.

WWW.NPS.GOV/GREE/GETINVOLVED/NATIONAL-TRAILS-DAY.HTM

WWW.NPS.GOV/GWCA/LEARN/NEWS/NATIONAL-TRAILS-DAY.HTM

WWW.NPS.GOV/SHEN/PLANYOURVISIT/NATIONAL_TRAILS_DAY.HTM

WWW.NATIONALTRAILSDAY.AMERICANHIKING.ORG/NTD-EVENTS

JUNE 7-9

CAPITOL HILL OCEAN WEEK

WASHINGTON, DC

LEARN ABOUT THE NATION'S OCEAN POLICY FROM POLICYMAKERS, SCIENTISTS, SCHOLARS, BUSINESS AND CONSERVATION LEADERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD.

WWW.MARINESANCTUARY.ORG/CHOW/2016-AGENDA

JUNE 8

WORLD OCEANS DAY LIVE DIVE

CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK

CALIFORNIA

LEARN ABOUT THE NATION'S OCEAN POLICY FROM POLICYMAKERS, SCIENTISTS, SCHOLARS, BUSINESS AND CONSERVATION LEADERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD.

WWW.NPS.GOV/CHIS/PLANYOURVISIT/EVENT-DETAILS.HTM?EVENTID=877206-307230

JUNE 11

FIND YOUR PARK EXCHANGE

NEW ORLEANS JAZZ NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

NEW ORLEANS, LA COMING TO CHICAGO, IL

EXPERIENCE THE RICH MUSICAL TRADITION AND HERITAGE OF NEW ORLEANS IN CHICAGO.

WWW.NATIONALPARKS.ORG/CONNECT/BLOG/PARK-EXCHANGE-EVENTS-UNIQUE-WAY-FINDYOURPARK

JUNE 18

PICNIC IN A PARK

NATIONWIDE

GIVE YOURSELF THE GIFT OF GOOD HEALTH BY ENJOYING A PICNIC IN A PARK NEAR YOU ON INTERNATIONAL PICNIC DAY. SEE PAGE 4 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

WWW.NPS.GOV/PLANYOURVISIT/HEALTHY-PARKS.HTM

JUNE 25

PARK SCIENCE DAY: NATURE CENTER RIBBON CUTTING

ACADIA NATIONAL PARK

A DAY DEDICATED TO CELEBRATING ACADIA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCIENCE.

WWW.ACADIACENTENNIAL2016.ORG/OUR-EVENTS/ACADIA-SCIENCE-DAY

FIND YOUR PARK

FINDYOURPARK.COM

America's Great Outdoors

Leaving a Legacy for Generations to Come



Sandboarding in Great Sand Dunes National Park, Colorado.

Great Outdoors Week started in 1996 and expanded to Great Outdoors Month in 2004. It aims to encourage more people to get out and enjoy the world around them. With nearly eighty percent of Americans now living in urban areas, getting into the outdoors is much more difficult than in the past. Children spend half the amount of time outdoors that their parents did, and average seven hours daily using electronic devices. Nature is increasingly becoming something the typical person sees only on their calendars.

The month of June has also been designated each year as Great Outdoors Month through a Presidential Proclamation, along with almost every state governor, to highlight the numerous benefits of having fun outdoors and the magnificent shared resources of our parks, forest, refuges, and other public lands and waters. President Obama's proclamation in 2012 stated, "Great Outdoors Month is a time for all Americans to share in the natural splendor of which we are all proud inheritors. Whether camping, fishing, rock climbing, or playing in a neighborhood park, nature offers each of us the opportunity to get active, explore, and strengthen our bonds with family and friends. This month, let us celebrate our natural heritage by experiencing it together."

There are numerous opportunities for families and friends to explore, play, and grow together from hiking and wildlife watching to canoeing, hunting, fishing and playing in the neighborhood park, all activities that can help kids stay healthy, active and energized. So this month, reconnect with your friends and family outside on a trail or in a park and uphold our nation's legacy of conserving our public lands for future generations.

There are plenty of recreational opportunities available: [National Trails Day](#) is June 16, [National Fishing & Boating Week](#) is June 6-14, [National Get Outdoors Day](#) is June 13, [National Marina Day](#) is June 13, [Great Outdoors Day of Service](#) is June 19, and the [Great American Campout](#) is June 27.

For more information visit: www.greatoutdoorsmonth.org.



With more than 400 national parks across the country, there are many great ways that you can enjoy Picnic in a Park Day. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Join a ranger-led hike, talk, or a sled dog demonstration at [Denali National Park and Preserve](#).
- Enjoy a prairie walk at [Pipestone National Monument](#) or [Homestead National Monument](#), a nature discovery walk at [Congaree National Park](#), or enjoy sunset yoga at [Cabrillo National Monument](#).
- Climb the stairs on a house tour at [James A. Garfield National Historic Site](#).
- Take part in a morning walk or run in [Greenbelt Park](#) with Prince George's County Running Club, enjoy a leisurely-paced, four-mile bike ride at [Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park](#), or a two-mile walk along the [Bluestone National Scenic River](#).
- Listen to a waterfall talk at [Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area](#).
- Join the [Centennial Iron Ranger Challenge](#) by logging healthy recreational activities at Pea Ridge National Park, or any of the [national parks in Arkansas](#).
- Walk up to the pier and get paddling for all skills and abilities at [Gateway National Recreation Area](#).

[Learn more about how parks are a "go-to resource for healthy living" and the Healthy Park Healthy People movement.](#)

[Find Your Park](#) for a healthier you! It might be closer than you think.

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 LGBTQ Heritage Initiative in Philadelphia

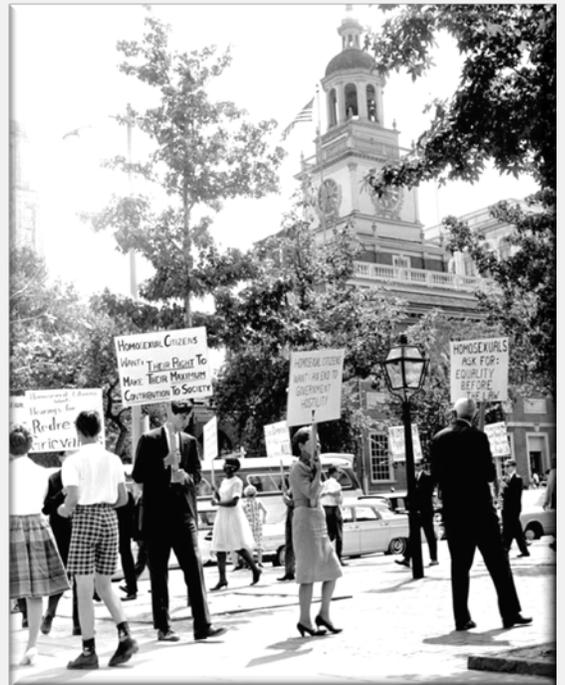
By Mike Doveton, Park Ranger, Independence National Historical Park

In 2014 Secretary Sally Jewell and NPS Director Jon Jarvis launched the [NPS Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer \(LGBTQ\) Heritage Initiative](#). Included in this initiative is a theme study to identify places and events associated with LGBTQ histories and cultures for inclusion in the parks and programs of the National Park Service.

Prompted by this initiative, the NPS in Philadelphia is actively reaching out to local LGBTQ communities. Led by Helen Mahan, Philadelphia Urban Fellow of the [NPS Urban Agenda](#) and staff at [Independence National Historical Park](#), the NPS has conducted interviews with LGBTQ organization leaders and representatives to engage the community and to identify sites and stories of LGBTQ significance in the Philadelphia area for possible nomination to the [National Register of Historic Places](#) or designation as a [National Historic Landmark](#).

In addition to identifying physical sites, in 2013 Independence NHP began offering annual interpretive programs in June on LGBTQ civil rights history. In 2015, the park participated with a host of Philadelphia museums and organizations such as the National Constitution Center, the African American Museum in Philadelphia, the National Museum of Jewish American History, Equality Forum, the William Way LGBT Center, and Taller Puertorriqueño to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the “Annual Reminders”, one of the earliest gay and lesbian civil rights protests in the nation that took place July 4, 1965 through 1969 across the street from Independence Hall. The anniversary programs included a number of highly attended events including a panel discussion in Congress Hall, exhibits, and a final program in front of Independence Hall.

The NPS Philadelphia LGBTQ initiative is currently working with partners to establish LGBTQ-themed walking tours, interpretive programs in the park and other locations, exhibit displays interpreting LGBTQ history throughout the city, and a GIS-



Courtesy, John J. Wilcox, Jr. LGBT Archives of Philadelphia

based mapping project to allow the public to document sites of local, state, and national significance.

This year on June 12, park rangers and staff will represent the NPS for outreach at Philadelphia Pride. The NPS booth will promote the NPS Centennial Find Your Park Campaign, the NPS LGBTQ Heritage Initiative, and will include displays about the historic Annual Reminders at Independence Hall.

For more information visit: www.nps.gov/inde or www.phillygaypride.org/events/philly-pride-parade-and-festival.

Fast forward 14 months. Again I found myself on the rim of the Grand Canyon. It was before dawn, and snow was again on the ground. This time, though, it was the North Rim, and I was not alone. I told Roger to close his eyes as I led him to the edge for his first view of the place that got me to this moment...this perfect moment when every pinnacle, ledge, crack and crevice of this perfectly imperfect place was revealed in the growing light. We sat, hand-in-hand, on the opposite side of this miles-wide gash in the earth, and watched the sun rise together.

Eighteen years later, our favorite destinations are still national parks.



Clockwise from upper left: Roger (left) and Gary (right) at Grand Canyon National Park from their first trip; San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park; and Bryce Canyon National Park.

FIND YOUR PARK

Have a great Find Your Park story?

Take a picture, write a story, or make a video and share it on social media with the hashtag #FindYourPark and it will be included on www.FindYourPark.com.

Summer is here and you never know what you will find when you get up, get out there, and find your park!

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:

Susan Farinelli
NPS Office of Legislative and Congressional Affairs
susan_farinelli@nps.gov
202-208-7676
www.nps.gov/legal

Follow Us!

