

STATEMENT OF JONATHAN B. JARVIS, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS OF THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE CONCERNING A CALL TO ACTION FOR A SECOND CENTURY OF STEWARDSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT.

September 21, 2011

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss “*A Call to Action—Preparing for a Second Century of Stewardship and Engagement.*”

A Call to Action was announced at a Town Hall meeting at historic Ford’s Theatre and broadcast to National Park Service employees Servicewide on August 25, 2011 – our 95th anniversary. It was developed by National Park Service career employees as a roadmap to help us – and our partners – prepare for our second hundred years of service to the American people. It is online at www.nps.gov/CallToAction.

A Call to Action is both a rededication to our mission and a recognition that we need to strategically integrate what we do in parks with our programs that offer historic preservation, recreation, and conservation assistance to communities. The plan builds on three previous reports—*America’s Great Outdoors: A Promise to Future Generations* (2011); the National Parks Second Century Commission Report, *Advancing the National Park Idea* (2009); and *The Future of America’s National Parks* (the Centennial Report, 2007).

A Call to Action is built around four themes. **Connecting People to Parks** involves a continuum of engaging recreational, educational, volunteer, and work experiences and outdoor activities to engage diverse communities. **Advancing the NPS Education Mission** through collaborative means will develop American values, civic engagement, and citizen stewardship. We will do this, in part, through use of social media and leading-edge technologies to capture public interest. Environmental literacy programs offered by organizations such as NatureBridge further this theme. Nine actions are identified to achieve thematic goals for **Preserving America’s Special Places**. These include modernization of historic preservation technologies and engaging the power of philanthropy to provide legacy support for the NPS both nationwide and at the individual park level. Finally, the theme of **Enhancing Professional and Organizational Excellence** will be accomplished by meeting goals such as recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce and development of an innovative, collaborative and creative workforce.

Across the themes, *A Call to Action* lays out 36 specific action items that NPS employees and partners will undertake. For instance, one action calls for expanding opportunities for 100,000 students to directly experience national parks through transportation support provided by the National Park Foundation and other park partners. Another action will encourage park visitors to make healthy lifestyle choices through choices of healthy, sustainably produced, and reasonably priced food options in parks.

Additional actions are called for that will connect people to parks, including the local ones in their own communities. These actions will advance the educational mission of the NPS and continue our efforts to preserve and interpret America's special places. *A Call to Action* challenges us to:

- Create a pathway to youth employment in the NPS to connect new, diverse generations to parks.
- Reach 25 percent of the nation's K-12 school population annually through virtual field trips, teacher training, online resources, and visits to parks.
- Reach new audiences with digital media and engage in conversations with all Americans.
- Create a new generation of citizen scientists and future stewards with fun and educational biodiversity discovery activities in at least 100 parks.
- Foster civic dialogue about the stories of the civil rights movement found within the parks through a series of special events to commemorate significant 50th anniversaries of the civil rights movement.
- Demonstrate, using modern historic preservation techniques and technologies, how historic structures can be sustainable and part of the economic vitality of rural and urban communities.
- Develop a \$1 billion second-century endowment campaign with the National Park Foundation and other NPS partners.

Each of our Senior Executives have stepped up to champion an action item and I have asked every park, program, and office to identify those action items that they will work on, and encouraged them to engage local and national partners like the National Park Foundation, friends groups, cooperating associations, and concessioners in this effort.

We have also created an intranet site that allows employees across the Service to learn from each other, share great ideas, and collaborate on success using tools like discussion forums and a blog.

It is also important to note that *A Call to Action* assumes no new funding. We are committed to focusing our efforts to accomplish our objectives within our budget, or in some cases, with the help of our amazing partners.

With so many things that divide us as a nation, we see the national parks as a rallying point that can unite every American in a sense of wonder and pride in our country. One of the National Park Service's most important responsibilities is to invite our 307 million fellow citizens to get to know these places that they own, discover how the National Park Service can help them revitalize their neighborhoods, and to join in the stewardship of America's greatest places. *A Call to Action* challenges our employees and partners to commit to concrete actions that advance the mission of the Service.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to respond to any questions you or the other members of the subcommittee may have.