

**AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL: PROMOTING OUR
NATIONAL PARKS AS TRAVEL DESTINATIONS**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMPETITIVENESS,
INNOVATION, AND EXPORT PROMOTION

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,
SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

APRIL 27, 2010

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ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL: PROMOTING OUR NATIONAL PARKS AS TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

TUESDAY, APRIL 27, 2010

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMPETITIVENESS, INNOVATION, AND
EXPORT PROMOTION,
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m. in room SR-253, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Amy Klobuchar, Chairman of the Subcommittee, presiding.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Senator Barrasso, would you like to say a few words about your guest?

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN BARRASSO, U.S. SENATOR FROM WYOMING

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

And it is a special delight to have, visiting here in the Senate, from the State of Wyoming, Diane Shober. Diane is incredible. She is the Director of Travel and Tourism for the State of Wyoming, and she does a magnificent job. I think all of America knows what a wonderful and beautiful State Wyoming is, and why we welcome our visitors. We're so happy that Diane is out there, continuing to share the wonderful story and the invitation, for all of America and all the world, to come to Wyoming.

So, thank you, Madam Chairman, Ranking Member, I appreciate your time and your courtesy. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF HON. AMY KLOBUCHAR, U.S. SENATOR FROM MINNESOTA

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Well, thank you so much.

And as Senator Barrasso knows, every vacation I took, growing up, was to—first the Black Hills and then the Tetons and Yellowstone. And my most memorable one was when we brought the family camper—we didn't have one, we rented it—we pulled out of the driveway and our car went this way and the camper went down the hill.

[Laughter.]

Senator KLOBUCHAR. And my mom was really not mad at my dad all. At all.

[Laughter.]

Senator KLOBUCHAR. But, in any case, I have many fond memories of the beautiful parks in Wyoming.

So, thank you, Senator Barrasso.

Thank you all for coming today.

Senator LeMieux and I are very excited about this hearing. I'm going to say a few words, then he is, and then we will turn to our witnesses.

We're here today to examine the value of national parks as tourist destinations. We will consider the economic impact that national parks have on States and local communities, and look at ways to improve the promotion of national parks so we can get even more visitors and more people to experience the great beauties of our parks.

As school winds down and families begin planning summer vacations, they have to remember the opportunities for affordable travel in our own country.

We're all looking closely at our budgets right now, and national parks are one of the most economical travel options for Americans and travelers from other countries.

As I mentioned, I spent most of my time, growing up, going to the Badlands and the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone. The national parks was part of my life. It is woven into our country's culture. They are on "must see" lists for domestic and international travelers, and have become American icons, part of the fabric of our country. The Grand Canyon, Voyageurs, Joshua Tree, Yosemite; each park is a powerful symbol of America.

Of course, these parks are not simply natural resources; they are also one of our greatest economic assets. The dual mission of the National Park Service recognizes the roles that parks play in promoting tourism in America. The Park Service both protects the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the Nation, but it also provides for their use and enjoyment. These missions work hand in hand, because tourists who experience the parks, appreciate them more, and are more likely to support the conservation mission of the National Park Service.

The statistics are huge. National parks receive nearly 275 million recreational visits each year, and these visitors spend \$11-and-a-half billion in the communities surrounding the parks. These "gateway" communities, large and small, have discovered and successfully developed the economic potential of national parks.

A wide variety of businesses benefit. Just over half of park tourism dollars are spent on lodging and meals, with 17 percent going for gas and transportation, 9 percent for groceries, and 14 percent for souvenirs. And many of these businesses are small and family-owned.

Not only are these tourist dollars spent in and around national parks, they ripple through the local economy. In fact, for every dollar spent in the parks, another fifty cents is generated in the region. This is good for the economy and it helps create jobs.

As we know from the recent debate over the Travel Promotion Act, one of eight Americans is employed in the travel industry. All told, national parks create over 230,000 jobs. These are good jobs that cannot be outsourced.

In my State of Minnesota, over 640,000 people visit six national park units each year. These visits add nearly \$30 million to the economy and create over 800 local jobs. From the cabins near

Grand Portage on the north shore of Lake Superior, to the outfitters along the Saint Croix Scenic River, from the gas stations outside Pipestone National Monument, to the grocery store on the way to Voyageurs, the national parks in Minnesota means jobs and an improved quality of life.

Yet, despite their prominence, the parks face many challenges, which lead to innovation solutions. One way is to increase partnerships with State and local governments and businesses surrounding the parks. This is already happening; State tourism offices play a large role in promoting the parks in their States, which I'm sure we will hear from Wyoming.

But, more can be done. Working together with tourism providers and local businesses, the Park Service can better encourage visits to lesser-known parks—we have one of those—it's great, but lesser-known, right, Mr. Ward?—and underutilized areas, as well as visits to local sites. Another idea is to encourage visits to other nearby parks and attractions. By networking our parks, we can turn day trips into weekend vacations, and weekends into week-long adventures.

We also need to do more to promote our national parks to international visitors. The bill that we all supported with Senator Dorgan, we're very hopeful that that idea of finally marketing our country internationally will bring in loads of tourists; and specifically, we should be marketing our national parks.

In economic terms, tourism counts as an export. Instead of shipping our product to customers overseas, the customer is coming here to spend money.

Finally, we should also encourage close-to-home trips and make sure people know the national parks are an affordable travel option. You can tent in Glacier, Yellowstone, or Yosemite for 10 or 20 bucks. Many parks, like Voyageurs in Minnesota, allow you to camp for free. That's right, for free.

We can also improve how our parks are promoted, within the United States, to Americans who may not know about the parks or have the opportunity to visit them.

I look forward to hearing from our panelists today, and I will introduce them after Senator LeMieux is here. We've also been joined by Senator Udall, and it's very special for us to have him here. We all miss his father very much, but, as you know, his father was really the spirit and heart of our national parks. And maybe when Senator LeMieux finishes, if you want to say a few words.

Senator LeMieux.

**STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE LEMIEUX,
U.S. SENATOR FROM FLORIDA**

Senator LEMIEUX. Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you for your leadership on this issue.

This is really an issue that every Senator can get behind. I look forward to working with you and our other colleagues to promote travel to our national parks, and look forward to hearing the testimony from our witnesses today.

You know, with 285 million visitors in 2009, it was nearly a record year for visitors to our national parks.

And I think, Mr. Burns, you might have had something to do with that, so thank you.

Florida is home to many State and national parks; most prominently, Everglades National Park, which is the largest subtropical wilderness in the United States. In Florida, we have an abundance of riches, in terms of destinations that people come to. They come for the beach, they come for golf, they come for Disney World, but they also come—and they should come more—for our national parks; especially Everglades National Parks, 1,509,000 acres, a beautiful place. It covers 25 percent of the original 11,000-square-mile watershed that slowly flowed from the Kissimmee River to Lake Okeechobee, south to the estuaries of Biscayne Bay, the Ten Thousand Islands, and Florida Bay.

According to a November 2008 National Park Service visitor study, between 20 and 46 percent of our visitors to Everglades National Park are foreign travelers from 19 countries. They understand—in some ways, Madam Chair, better than we do—the jewel that the Everglades National Park is. In fact, I'm a resident and a native of South Florida, and know that many of my friends, growing up, had never been to Everglades National Park. Like so many national parks, the Everglades plays an integral role in our surrounding economy.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses how we can best protect and preserve our national parks. And it gives me great pleasure to welcome, today, one of our witnesses, who is really a hero to me, and that's Clyde Butcher. He's joined by his wife Nikki, who is also here. He is an acclaimed photographer, an adopted Florida son, and his photography of the Everglades, and, really, places all around the world, is nothing short of spectacular. I visited his studio in the Big Cypress National Preserve, and it was a wonderful experience. His latest exhibition is entitled "America the Beautiful: The Monumental Landscape of Clyde Butcher," and includes 50 large-scale, stunning black-and-white photographs of the American landscape, spanning the United States from Maine to Hawaii to our own Everglades. He has been recognized by numerous organizations for his work, been featured in winning documentaries, including, Ken Burns' documentary about the national parks.

So, welcome, to all of our folks here, who are here to testify. Thank you for making the trip, and thank you for your dedication to our national parks.

[The prepared statement of Senator LeMieux follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE S. LEMIEUX, U.S. SENATOR FROM FLORIDA

I look forward to working with my colleagues to promote travel to our national parks and I look forward to hearing about the importance of our national parks from today's witnesses.

Florida is home to Everglades National Park, which is the largest subtropical wilderness in the United States.

The park covers about 25 percent of the original 11,000 square miles watershed that slowly flowed from the Kissimmee River to Lake Okeechobee south to the estuaries of Biscayne Bay, the Ten Thousand Islands, and Florida Bay.

According to a November 2008 National Park Service Visitor's Study, between 20 and 46 percent of visitors to the Everglades national park are foreign travelers from 19 countries, with the majority of them from Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Like so many national parks, the Everglades play an integral role in the surrounding economies.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about how we can best protect and preserve our national parks.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome one of today's witnesses who is from Florida, Clyde Butcher. He is joined by his wife Nikki. Clyde is an acclaimed photographer and adopted Florida sun and his photography is nothing short of spectacular.

His latest exhibition is entitled "America the Beautiful: The Monumental Landscape of Clyde Butcher" and it includes 50 large-scale stunning black and white photographs of the American landscape, spanning the United States, from Maine to Hawaii to the Everglades in South Florida.

Clyde has been recognized by numerous organizations and his work has been featured in award-winning documentaries, including Ken Burns's documentary, "The National Parks: America's Best Idea."

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Senator Udall, if you want to say a few words.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TOM UDALL,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW MEXICO**

Senator UDALL. Sure, I'll try to be brief here, Senator Klobuchar.

Let me thank the Chairman very much for holding this important hearing.

And I'd like to welcome each of the witnesses joining us here today. I'd especially like to thank Scott Bacher, for his willingness to come and speak about his interactions with the Carlsbad Caverns National Park.

Scott—and I apologize for the baby table there. Senators also get that baby table, actually.

[Laughter.]

Senator UDALL. It's hooked at the end, and a couple of us freshmen, we are down there. So, you should know that we treat everybody equal-handedly.

But, Mr. Bacher runs, reportedly, the best KOA in my State of New Mexico. His high-end campground and RV park accommodates tens of thousands of visitors to Carlsbad Caverns National Park every year. And Mr. Bacher represents thousands of small-business owners across the country who depend on the visitation to national parks. And I appreciate his willingness to represent these individuals.

And I thank the Chair for her interest in the economic impacts of the parks.

New Mexico is home to 17 units of the National Park Service. These parks, monuments, historic trails celebrate New Mexico's proud heritage and help preserve its remarkable landscapes. They're important educational tools for local schools and traveling visitors; they're essential to biological, geological and archeological research; they protect irreplaceable natural resources; and finally, it is the focus of this hearing, that, these units of the National Park Service are economic engines, especially in times of economic difficulty, when families are looking for destinations closer to home.

And just to say a word about Ken Burns—the Chair mentioned my father. I know that you came out to his home in Sante Fe, spent a number of hours filming him. It was one of the real delights of his life, near the end of his life, to spend time with you. He was able to see your National Park Service series. And, believe me, he saw it once, and then he wanted to watch it again, and he

just kept watching it. And I can't think of a better promotional tool, is one way to say it, but it's a true work of art.

And so, thank you for what you're doing.

And I look forward to hearing from all the witnesses.

Thank you, Amy.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you.

Senator Nelson?

**STATEMENT OF HON. BILL NELSON,
U.S. SENATOR FROM FLORIDA**

Senator NELSON. And, you know, it's so true. Your dad was quite a national asset, and was just revered as the Secretary of the Interior. And I think it's wonderful that the family is continuing in public service.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, I got the defective gene.

[Laughter.]

Senator NELSON. Well, we have those wonderful national parks in our State of Florida. It's very interesting how we combine parks with other purposes. For example, back in the 1950s, the government had to acquire so much land for the Kennedy Space Center, and a good part of the Kennedy Space Center is the Canaveral National Seashore Park. And the rest of the land that's set aside is the wildlife refuge. And Everglades is, just, this extraordinary treasure, only to be threatened by Burmese pythons.

[Laughter.]

Senator KLOBUCHAR. I somehow knew you'd bring up space and snakes.

[Laughter.]

Senator NELSON. Hopefully not snakes on a spacecraft.

[Laughter.]

Senator NELSON. But, Mr. Butcher has dedicated all these decades of his life to capturing these exquisite landscapes in the Florida Everglades, and making, as a result, significant efforts to conservation. His gallery and studio are located on 13 acres in the center of the Everglades.

And we're privileged to have you here, today.

Now, the subject matter here today, about how we can promote travel to our parks—that ties in, Madam Chairman, with what we just passed a couple of months ago, the Travel Promotion Act. It was signed into law last month, and it recognizes the foreign guest, the importance of that tourism to our Nation and economy, and makes the necessary investments to increase those foreign visitors coming to this country. And the national parks are certainly one of those attractions. And this committee not only has the obligation to boost tourism, but it has the obligation to make sure that our national parks, which include some coastlines and oceans and waterways, are available to the future generations for their enjoyment.

And so, as we sit here today, there is a 40-mile-wide oil slick that is headed in the direction of Mobile Bay and Pensacola Beach; and if the wind shoots it the other way, it will head toward the coast of Louisiana. And we've got to continually remind ourselves of the containment and the safety of those offshore oil platforms.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you very much, Senator Nelson.

And I'm going to just quickly introduce our panelists today. We have, as been mentioned, award-winning documentary filmmaker Ken Burns. Many of you have seen his ground-breaking film series, "The National Parks: America's Best Ideas"—we're going to actually see a clip before everyone starts here; Michael Ward, who is the Superintendent of Voyageurs National Park in northern Minnesota; Diane Shoher, from Wyoming, who was already introduced by Senator Barrasso; William Shafroth, who's the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks in the Department of Interior; Scott Bacher, who is the Owner and Operator of the Carlsbad KOA, and was introduced by Senator Udall.

And then finally, Mr. Butcher, we're very honored to have you here, today.

And as was mentioned—he was mentioned by—introduced by two Senators. So, my prediction is that we hope to have as many Senators here as at the Goldman Sachs hearing that's also going on today.

[Laughter.]

Senator KLOBUCHAR. But, you should be very impressed. And I think it's a testament to our good panelists and the importance of this work.

So, why don't we show Mr. Burns' clip, and then we will start with Mr. Burns, who, I know has to leave at 11:15.

[Video presentation.]

Senator KLOBUCHAR. OK, that was quite an introduction, Mr. Burns. Please go ahead.

STATEMENT OF KEN BURNS, FILMMAKER, FLORENTINE FILMS

Mr. BURNS. Madam Chair and members of the Committee, it's an honor to speak before you today.

I wanted to say, first, to Senators Nelson and LeMieux, that I just took my 5-year-old youngest daughter into the Everglades and spent a weekend there, 10 days ago.

And, Senator Udall, the very first interview, roll one out of more than 800 rolls of film, was with your father. He spoke about Theodore Roosevelt, and said that Theodore Roosevelt had "distance in his eyes," and I think there is not a person in this room that doesn't recognize that your father also had "distance in his eyes." And we've benefited from that wisdom. And we miss him terribly.

Nearly 150 years ago, Madam Chairman, in the midst of the Civil War, when the Nation's very existence hung in the balance, Congress and President Abraham Lincoln, nonetheless, enacted legislation that reverberates to the most distant generation. They set aside the exquisite Yosemite Valley and magnificent Mariposa Grove of sequoias in California, instructing that State to protect it from commercial development forever. For the first time in human history, a large tract of natural land was preserved, not for the exclusive enjoyment of royalty or the rich, but for everyone.

Eight years later, in 1872, a wonderland of geysers in Wyoming territory, at the headwaters of the Yellowstone River, was likewise set aside, but since there was no State to entrust it to, Congress instead designated it a national park. This, too, was something new in the history of the world. And it set in motion an idea that has

now been copied by virtually every other country on the globe, becoming, like the idea of liberty itself, one of our greatest exports.

In titling our PBS documentary film “The National Parks: America’s Best Idea,” we borrowed from writer and historian Wallace Stegner, who said that the national parks were “the best idea we’ve ever had.” We acknowledge some hyperbole in this. The idea, embedded in our Declaration of Independence, that all human beings are created equal, unquestionably ranks higher. But, that idea was what created our Nation. Once the Nation was formed, it’s hard to think of an idea that came from our government any better than the national parks.

The parks, in fact, spring from the very same source. They are the Declaration of Independence applied to the landscape. Theodore Roosevelt, the greatest President in our history for the cause of conservation, noted what he called their “essential democracy.” A generation later, another President named Roosevelt, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, said, “There is nothing so American as our national parks,” that they are “the outward symbol of this great human principle, that the country belongs to the people.”

At this particular moment in history, it’s worth noting that, during FDR’s time in office, the Nation was facing the worst economic crisis of the 20th century, and yet, under his leadership, the national parks prospered. The Civilian Conservation Corps made improvements at virtually every park. New parks were created, and park attendance went up, not down.

Roosevelt himself made a number of well-publicized visits to the parks, which, because of his handicap, he had to enjoy from the back of his touring car. But, he constantly encouraged other Americans to follow his example, to see for themselves these spectacular treasures that belong to them. He declared 1934 the “Year of the Parks,” had the Postal Service create special stamps with park scenes on them, funded WPA artists to make posters promoting park tourism, and he hired the photographer Ansel Adams, for \$22.22-a-day, to tour the parks and capture pictures that would inspire Americans to appreciate and visit the legacy they had inherited.

Like the two Roosevelts, the first director of the National Park Service, Stephen Mather, understood how the parks reflected the core promise of America. In fact, he called them “vast schoolrooms of Americanism, where people are learning to love more deeply this land in which they live.” Inspired by the naturalist John Muir, Mather also understood that parks are, as Muir said, “places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul alike.” In his darkest moments, Mather had always found solace and renewed energy from visiting a national park.

But, Mather was also a businessman, a tireless promoter, who had previously made “20 Mule Team Borax” a household name. He recognized that the parks could be a powerful economic engine for the Nation, and for the States and towns near them, and he made the most of it. He worked with the railroad companies to encourage Americans to “See America First.” He joined with automobile clubs and good-roads associations to lobby for improved highways to the parks that would unleash what he called the “great flow of tourist gold” into every community along the routes. He invited publishers

and journalists to accompany him on camping trips, where he preached his gospel of the parks around the campfire, and urged them to spread that gospel in their newspapers and magazines.

The United States, Mather said, “possesses an empire of grandeur and beauty, the most inspiring playgrounds and the best-equipped nature schools in the world.” And they constituted, he said, “an economic asset of incalculable value.”

Madam Chair, members of this committee, we should listen to these voices from our history. As Stephen Mather reminds us, national parks are an economic asset, and therefore deserve all the investment and support they can get, if only for the sake of boosting the balance of trade or the bottom line of the Nation’s finances.

As Franklin Roosevelt tells us, even in times of economic distress, the parks are worth promoting, defending, and expanding. They are good for business, but equally good at providing much-needed affordable recreation during hard times.

And as Theodore Roosevelt urges us, national parks are a part of our “essential democracy.” “Our people,” he added, “should see to it that they are preserved for their children, and their children’s children, forever, with their majestic beauty all unmarred.” “We are not building this country of ours for a day,” Roosevelt said, “it is to last through the ages.”

National parks are not only America’s best idea, they are the best investment this Congress can make.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Burns follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KEN BURNS, FILMMAKER, FLORENTINE FILMS

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, it’s an honor to speak before you today.

Nearly a hundred and fifty years ago, in the midst of the Civil War, when the Nation’s very existence hung in the balance, Congress and President Abraham Lincoln nonetheless enacted legislation that would reverberate to the most distant generation. They set aside the exquisite Yosemite Valley and magnificent Mariposa Grove of sequoias in California, instructing the state to protect it from commercial development forever.

For the first time in human history, a large tract of natural land was preserved, not for the exclusive enjoyment of royalty or the rich, but for *everyone*.

Eight years later, in 1872, a wonderland of geysers in Wyoming Territory, at the headwaters of the Yellowstone River, was likewise set aside—but since there was no state to entrust it to, Congress instead designated it as a “national” park.

This, too, was something new in the history of the world. And it set in motion an idea that has now been copied by virtually every other country on the globe, becoming, like the idea of liberty, one of our greatest exports. (I should note that the idea spread quickly to California, as well, where Yosemite was soon transferred back to the Federal Government for better protection as a national park.)

In titling our PBS documentary film, *The National Parks: America’s Best Idea*, we borrowed from writer and historian Wallace Stegner, who said that national parks are “the best idea we ever had.” We acknowledge some hyperbole in this. The idea imbedded in our Declaration of Independence—that all human beings are “created equal” and possess the inalienable rights of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”—unquestionably ranks higher. But that idea is what *created* our nation. Once the Nation was formed, it’s hard to think of an idea that came from our government any better than the national parks.

The parks, in fact, spring from the same source. They *are* the Declaration of Independence applied to the landscape. Theodore Roosevelt, the greatest president in our history for the cause of conservation, noted what he called their “essential democracy . . . the preservation of the scenery, of the forests . . . and the wilderness game for the people as a whole instead of leaving the enjoyment thereof to be confined to the very rich.”

A generation later, another President named Roosevelt, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, said "there is nothing so American as our national parks," that they are "the outward symbol of this great human principle . . . that the country belongs to the people."

At this particular moment in history, it's worth noting that during Roosevelt's time in office, the Nation was facing the worst economic crisis of the 20th century—and yet, under his leadership, the national parks prospered. The Civilian Conservation Corps made improvements at virtually every park. New parks were created. And park attendance went up, not down.

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Like the two Roosevelts, the first director of the National Park Service, Stephen Mather, understood how the parks reflected the core promise of America. In fact, he called them "vast schoolrooms of America, where people are . . . learning to love more deeply this land in which they live." Inspired by John Muir, Mather also understood that parks are, as Muir said, "places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul alike." In his darkest moments, Mather had always found solace and renewed energy from visiting a national park.

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As Stephen Mather reminds us, national parks are an economic asset—and therefore deserve all the investment and support they can get, if only for the sake of boosting the balance of trade or the bottom line of the Nation's finances.

As Franklin Roosevelt tells us, even in times of economic distress, the parks are worth promoting, defending—and expanding. They are good for business, but equally good at providing much-needed, affordable recreation during hard times.

And as Theodore Roosevelt urges us, national parks are part of our "essential democracy." "Our people," he added, "should see to it that they are preserved for their children and their children's children forever, with their majestic beauty all unmarred."

"We are not building this country of ours for a day," Roosevelt said. "It is to last through the ages."

National parks are not only America's best idea. They are the best investment this Congress can make.

Thank you.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you very much.
Mr. Shafroth.

**STATEMENT OF WILL SHAFROTH, DEPUTY ASSISTANT
SECRETARY FOR FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

Mr. SHAFROTH. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I also want to, if I could, just acknowledge Senator Udall's father, who did so much for this country, but a personal inspirational for me. As an 18-year-old freshman at the University of California at Santa Barbara, I read his book, "The Quiet Crisis," and it helped turn me into what now is a 30-year career in conservation. So, many, many people like me out there are his foot-soldiers that carry on his work.

So, thank you, for all you're doing as well, Senator.

Madam Chair, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present the Department of Interior's views on tourism and national parks.

If I may, I'd like to submit my entire statement for the record, and summarize my remarks here.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. It'll be included.

Mr. SHAFROTH. Thank you.

Visitation levels for the National Park System demonstrate the public's great interest in these national treasures as tourism destinations. In 2009, there were over 285 million visits to national parks, recreation areas, historic sites, and other units; a 3.9-percent increase over the previous year. We're assuming that, because of the movie that Mr. Burns created, that that's going to go up in 2010, because it didn't come out until the end of September, so not many people had a chance to book their reservations at that point.

So, our national parks are important to local and regional economies. In 2008, visitors spent \$11.6 billion in communities surrounding national park units, and supported 205,000 local jobs.

The levels of visitation and economic impact vary significantly by park. Yellowstone National Park, premier tourist destination, attracted almost 3.3 million visitors in 2009. Voyageurs National Park—less—somewhat less known, attracted about 220,000. I told Mr. Ward that I intend to be a visitor to his national park in 2010, the second week in August.

So, I will look forward to seeing you there.

One study found that communities surrounding the largest units of the National Park System, had, on average, almost four times faster population growths, almost three times faster job growth, and two times faster growth in real income than the Nation, overall.

We have no estimates of international visitation for the park system as a whole, but we do—estimates do exist for certain parks. We've already heard about the importance of international visitation to Everglades, but Yellowstone National Park, with over two-thirds of international visits—visitors coming from Canada, Netherlands, Germany, and United Kingdom, and Italy. At Voyageurs, on the other hand, internationally tourism accounts for only about 1 percent of all visitation, with almost two-thirds of international visitors from Canada, Germany, and United Kingdom.

In 2008, the National Park Service approved a national tourism plan, titled "Strategic Alliances for Sustainable Visitation." The plan addresses the need for national park experiences to be as relevant to our new audiences in the 21st century as in the past. The National Park Service is encouraged to take advantage of the significant partnership capacity available among people and organizations in the tourism community.

National Park Service manages 17 of the 20 World Heritage Sites, Everglades being one of them, that have been designated United States. The significance placed on a World Heritage Site experience is a strong factor in influencing destination decision by making prospective international—made by prospective international visitors. The National Park Service sites include the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Everglades, and State of Liberty, but also some lesser-known destinations as Chaco Culture National Historic Park and San Juan National Historic Site. Promotional campaigns based on National Park Service-managed World Heritage Sites geared toward international tourists could help increase international tourism in the United States.

Two current activities may have implications for promotion of national parks to international travelers. One is the U.S. Travel Association's annual business-to-business marketplace, known as International Pow Wow. This year, during the 4-day event in May, the Association will use one day to celebrate America's national parks. I think it's the first time that that's happened.

The other undertaking of the National Park Service's involvement in commemorative activities related to the sesquicentennial of the U.S. Civil War, over the last 5—or, over the next 5 years, the Service and its tourism partners intend to encourage Americans and international visitors to visit our more than 75 park units that interpret Civil War battles, the Civil Rights struggle for freedom and equality, and home-front stories emanating from the era, such as expansion to the West.

The recent passage of the Travel Promotion Act could provide greater opportunities for attracting more international visitors to national parks. International visitors typically spend at least \$4,000 per visit, contributing \$4 billion to the U.S. economy. These visitors have a large role now, and could have an even larger role in the future, in the economic support of national park gateway communities.

The new Corporation for Travel Promotion could potentially contribute to the growth by showcasing the units of the National Park System.

Madam Chairwoman, this concludes my testimony. I'd be happy to answer any questions that you or other members of the Committee may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Shafroth follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WILL SHAFROTH, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Madam Chairwoman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present the Department of the Interior's views on tourism and national parks. The National Park Service is proud to be a steward of our Nation's most revered natural, historical, and cultural sites and to welcome visitors from across the Nation and all over the world to enjoy these special places.

Visitation levels for the National Park System demonstrate the public's great interest in these national treasures as tourism destinations. In 2009, there were over 285 million visits to national parks, recreation areas, historic sites, and other units—a 3.9 per cent increase over the previous year. Our national parks are important to local and regional economies. In 2008, visitors spent \$11.6 billion in commu-

nities surrounding national park units and supported 205,000 local jobs.¹ The economic sectors most directly affected by this visitor spending include lodging, restaurants, retail trade, transportation, and amusements.

The levels of visitation and economic impact vary significantly by park. Yellowstone National Park, a premier tourist destination, attracted almost 3.3 million visitors in 2009; Voyageurs National Park, which is less well-known, attracted about 222,000 visitors. In between, to give a few examples, were Mount Rushmore National Memorial, with 2,260,192 visitors; Shenandoah National Park, with 1,120,981 visitors; Everglades National Park, with 900,882 visitors; Castillo de San Marcos National Monument, with 667,783 visitors; and Carlsbad Caverns National Park, with 432,639 visitors.

Generally, the more visitors a park has, the greater the economic impact. Economic analyses from 2008 show that those same parks mentioned had economic impacts as follows: Yellowstone, \$345 million in visitor spending and 6,300 jobs; Everglades \$84.7 million in spending and 1,551 jobs; Shenandoah, \$65.7 million in spending and 1,170 jobs; Mount Rushmore, \$60.4 million in spending and 1,146 jobs; Castillo de San Marcos, \$41 million in spending and 719 jobs; Carlsbad Caverns, \$22.3 million in spending and 437 jobs; and Voyageurs, \$11 million in spending and 200 jobs.² One study found that communities surrounding the largest units of the National Park System had, on average, almost four times faster population growth, almost three times faster job growth, and two times faster growth in real income than the Nation overall.³

Within overall levels we have no estimates of international visitation for the National Park System as a whole. However, estimates do exist for certain parks. For example, international tourism accounts for approximately 10 percent of all visitation at Yellowstone National Park, with over two-thirds of the international visitors coming from Canada, the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Italy. At Voyageurs National Park, on the other hand, international tourism accounts for only about 1 percent of all visitation, with almost two-thirds of the international visitors coming from Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

In 2008, the National Park Service approved a national tourism plan titled “Strategic Alliances for Sustainable Visitation.” The plan addresses the need for national park experiences to be as relevant to our new audiences in the 21st century as in the past. To accomplish this goal, individual parks and the National Park Service as a whole are encouraged to take advantage of the significant partnership capacity available among people and organizations in the tourism community.

When we engage our tourism partners to invite Americans and overseas travelers, we expand our capacity to inform audiences about a myriad of enjoyable experiences and environmental stewardship which are the cornerstones of the National Park Service mission. We analyze and leverage common interests through tourism partnerships. Common interests include a desire to reach target audiences such as families who travel with children, diverse demographic groups that travel more often if their awareness is increased, and travelers who may prefer to visit during off-peak periods. In this way, we can highlight the special experiences and opportunities in visiting some of the “hidden gems” in our collection of lesser-known park units. Working in concert with our tourism partners, we can also leverage our communications resources to expand the reach of our conservation messages.

The National Park Service also promotes a sustainable tourism project, referred to as GeoTourism, which is compatible with the National Park Service mission of preservation and education. An example of this can be found in a new and innovative marketing project in the “Crown of the Continent” GeoRegion, where Glacier National Park is located. In an effort that began with the formation of a local stewardship council, the gateway communities and state tourism office in Montana and the provincial tourism office in Alberta tell stories about visitor experiences that include cultural, historical, tribal, and recreational activities in a way that respects conservation and community values and asks the visitors to do the same. While the impetus and communications concept came from the community, the Federal land management agencies, including the National Park Service tourism program and Glacier National Park staff, played an important role in facilitating the project. Another key partner in GeoTourism projects is the National Geographic Society’s Center for Sustainable Destinations.

The National Park Service manages 17 World Heritage Sites, which hold special appeal with international travelers. The significance placed on a World Heritage

¹Stynes, D.J. “National Park Visitor Spending and Payroll Impacts: 2008.” National Park Service, 2009.

²*Ibid.*

³Power, T.M. “The Economic Foundations of Public Parks.” *The George Wright Forum*, 2002.

Site experience is a strong factor in influencing destination decisionmaking by prospective international visitors. The United States is fortunate to have 20 U.S. sites included on the UNESCO World Heritage List, which includes almost 900 important cultural and natural treasures around the globe. World Heritage Sites such as the Great Barrier Reef, the Serengeti plains, and the Taj Mahal give the World Heritage List great prestige and make the designation greatly sought after by many countries. The National Park System sites include the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, the Everglades, and the Statue of Liberty, but also some lesser-known destinations such as Chaco Culture National Historical Park in New Mexico and San Juan Historic Site in Puerto Rico. Many countries, particularly those in Europe, Latin America, and Asia, have taken advantage of the World Heritage designation to market and promote their heritage to the global community. Promotional campaigns based on National Park Service-managed World Heritage Sites geared toward international tourists could help increase international tourism to the U.S.

Two current activities may have implications for promotion of national parks to international travelers. One is the U.S. Travel Association's annual business-to-business marketplace known as the International Pow Wow. This year, during the four-day event in May 2010, the association will use one day to celebrate "America's National Parks." It will be an opportunity for 5,000 buyers and suppliers of U.S. package tours, as well as over 100 members of the international media, to focus on national parks. Several park professionals will be on hand during the event to meet with members of this influential group.

The other undertaking is the National Park Service's involvement in commemorative activities related to the sesquicentennial of the U.S. Civil War, and its causes and consequences for our Nation's development. A Servicewide working group has completed a vision statement for the commemoration as well as a set of public events covering all facets of historical consideration—battlefields and beyond. Over the next 5 years, the Service, along with tourism partners, intends to encourage Americans and international visitors to visit our more than 75 park units that interpret the Civil War battles, the Civil Rights struggle for freedom and equality, and home front stories emanating from the era such as the expansion of the west. Most of the national park units involved in this effort are among the lesser-known parks, but include well-known parks, such as Gettysburg National Military Park.

The recent passage of the Travel Promotion Act could provide greater opportunities for attracting more international visitors to national parks. International visitors typically spend at least \$4,000 per visit, contributing \$4 billion to the U.S. economy. According to a recent survey compiled by the Commerce Department's Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, of the estimated 23.8 million overseas travelers to the United States, approximately 4.5 million, or 19 percent, are said to have visited a national park. These visitors have a large role now, and could have an even larger role in the future, in the economic support of national park gateway communities. The new Corporation for Travel Promotion could potentially contribute to the growth by showcasing the units of the National Park System—the icons and hidden gems alike—in its efforts to attract visitors from abroad.

Madam Chairwoman, this concludes my prepared statement. I would be happy to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you very much.

Next, we have Mr. Ward, who heads up Voyageur Park in Minnesota.

I note, Mr. Ward, thank you so much, for accepting my personal invitation to be here today. And you'd better watch out, now that Senator Begich from Alaska has joined us. We can't start claiming, like, Minnesota is the "Moose Capital of the World," you know, things that we might almost—

[Laughter.]

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Anyway, continue on, Mr. Ward.

**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL M. WARD, SUPERINTENDENT,
VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

Mr. WARD. Thank you. Madam Chairwoman, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on an issue that is vital to Voya-

geurs National Park and the gateway communities that support the park.

It's fitting that Voyageurs National Park is represented here today. This subcommittee, with responsibilities related to trade, has a subject matter tied to the history that is commemorated at Voyageurs National Park. The original voyageurs, French-Canadian canoemen, carried various trade goods and bartered them for furs trapped by the Ojibwa Indians. They canoed the waters, in a customary route that became the international border between the United States and Canada. I think it's also fitting that the discussion today covers tourism that crosses international borders, including the original boundary established by the voyageurs.

Voyageurs National Park is a 218,000-acre water-based park located in northern Minnesota. The park was established in April 1975, and this year we celebrate our 35th anniversary. The park was created to preserve the outstanding scenery, geological conditions, and waterway system that comprised part of the historic route of the voyageurs, who contributed significantly to the opening of the Northwest Territories.

The park, and its diverse resources, provide outstanding opportunities for scientific and artistic study, environmental education, exploring indigenous and historic cultures, a wide array of outdoor activities, and an appreciation of the Northwoods lake-country setting.

There are five gateway communities that support our park. They are the City of Orr, the communities of Ash River, Kabetogama, Crane Lake, and the City of International Falls. The park provides an estimated economic impact of approximately \$11 million and 200 jobs to the regional economy. In these small communities, the park serves as one of the primary employers and the reason for which most private businesses exist. These businesses offer gas, lodging, food, fishing guides, and other amenities. Within three of the gateway communities, the livelihood of these people is completely dependent on tourism receipts associated with park visitors. Over the years, services in these communities have declined substantially. The decline may be a result of the closure and sale of resorts near the park, or perhaps it's associated with the downturn in economy.

Over the last few years, the park has worked with its partners and our gateway communities to increase tourism. We have completed several projects, including creating a national—a public television film of all the National Park Service units in Minnesota, to link to Ken Burns' film about national parks; constructing a new 49-passenger tour boat to serve visitors without a boat and to increase access into the park; expanding winter activities to increase visitation, seasonally; and partnering with Destination Voyageurs National Park, a non-for-profit 501(c)(6) organization which works to increase and support park tourism.

Visitation at the park in 2009 was slightly lower than previous years, at 222,000. Only about 1 percent of these visitors were international tourists. Two-thirds of the international visitors to Voyageurs travel from Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom. For a park that shares an international border, we would expect a higher rate of international tourists.

The new Corporation for Travel Promotion could potentially help market and share America's great outdoors with more international travelers. Voyageurs National Park and its gateway communities offer recreation, history, culture, and scenic beauty that we believe visitors from abroad would enjoy immensely, if only they knew enough about the park to plan a visit there.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ward follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL M. WARD, SUPERINTENDENT, VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Madam Chairwoman, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on an issue that is vital to Voyageurs National Park and the gateway communities that support the park.

It is fitting that Voyageurs National Park is represented here today. This subcommittee, with responsibilities related to trade, has a subject matter tie to the history that is commemorated at Voyageurs National Park. The original voyageurs, French-Canadian canoeists, carried various trade goods and bartered them for furs trapped by the Ojibwa Indians. They canoed the waters in a customary route that became the international border between the United States and Canada. I think it is also fitting that the discussion today covers tourism that crosses international boundaries, including the original boundary established by the voyageurs.

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Over the last few years the park has worked with its partners and our gateway communities to increase tourism. We have completed several projects including: creating a public television film of all of the National Park Service units in Minnesota to link to Ken Burns' film about national parks, constructing a new 49-passenger tour boat to serve visitors without a boat and to increase access into the park, expanding winter activities to increase visitation seasonally, and partnering with Destination Voyageurs National Park, a non-profit 501(c)6 organization, which works to support and increase park tourism.

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The new Corporation for Travel Promotion could potentially help market and share America's great outdoors with more international travelers. Voyageurs National Park and its gateway communities offer recreation, history, culture, and scenic beauty that we believe visitors from abroad would enjoy immensely, if only they knew enough about the park to plan a visit there.

¹Stynes, D.J. "National Park Visitor Spending and Payroll Impacts: 2008." National Park Service, 2009.

Madam Chairwoman, this concludes my prepared statement. I would be happy to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you very much, Mr. Ward.
Ms. Shober.

**STATEMENT OF DIANE SHOBER, DIRECTOR OF TOURISM,
STATE OF WYOMING**

Ms. SHOBER. Thank you, Madam Chair Klobuchar, Ranking Member LeMieux, and other distinguished members of the Subcommittee, for inviting me to testify before you today.

As you know, I'm Diane Shober. I'm the Director of Tourism for the State of Wyoming, a position that I've held since 2003. I'm also on the Board of the U.S. Travel Association, and a member of the Western States Tourism Policy Council. So, the interest that this committee shares in this industry, and specifically the value of our national parks as part of the American travel experience, is greatly appreciated.

It is no doubt that tourism is big business in Wyoming. Our annual advertising budget is \$6 million a year. And we hang our hats on the fact that traveling consumers associate Yellowstone, Grand Teton, and Devils Tower National Monument with Wyoming. And you will always see one of these national icons featured in our national advertising campaign.

I brought, today, two examples of our print campaign. One features Grand Teton National Park, the sub-line there, with the—below the couple—“For generations, finding yourself has come right after discovering your insignificance.” And then, in Yellowstone National Park, “You've passed down your love of cars, your record collection, but a Yellowstone tradition is something they'll always treasure.” And so, clearly we're using our national parks to drive tourism in Wyoming.

And thanks to our sound marketing efforts, visitors still came to Wyoming, even during the recession last year. While national leisure travel declined by 2 percent, Wyoming's visitation actually grew. As you heard, Yellowstone recorded a 3.2-million record—recreation visits last year. That was the highest since 1999, 10 years ago.

So, the correlation between tourism marketing and increased visitation to our parks is no coincidence. We spend millions to invite consumers to visit our national parks and immerse themselves in this unique experience. While other States were forced to cut back in 2009, we were broadening the Wyoming footprint.

And the value of national parks to gateway communities, and vice versa, is also an important component in the tourism equation. National parks serve as a lure for visitors, and, in turn, gateway communities provide much of the necessary visitor services. It's an effective partnership to both, as the national parks serve as an economic engine for gateway communities, and the cities relieve some of the pressure of the resource, helping to enhance the sustainability of the park.

Our office has a good working relationship with our national parks in Wyoming. However, due to our role as a marketing agency, most collaboration is done in conjunction with the parks' concessionaires, who have a vested interest in marketing their parks and

also have the marketing budgets with which to do so. We've had a great relationship with Xanterra Parks and Resorts and Grand Teton Lodge Company.

And although the National Park Service adopted a very good tourism strategy in 2008, its implementation and effectiveness have been limited; in part, due to lack of funding, but also due, in part, to acceptance at the local park level. If the budget for the National Park Tourism Office were increased to one million, from the no-more-than 200,000 at present, that office could work more closely with the travel industry and the gateway communities—for example, by implementing cooperative marketing programs and pilot projects to educate visitors and park staff on their mutual interest.

It's my belief that, when visitors come and they personally experience these natural wonders, they are much more likely to have a deeper understanding about the resource and its importance to the world. By effectively implementing their national tourism strategy, the National Park Service could be more proactive in shaping tourism development and the associated impacts.

Filming in the park also remains an issue. While we fully support the fees assessed for commercial projects, and understand the need for an application process and a system of rules to protect the resource, we also know that the required wait time for the permit, and the lack of priority that these requests receive, results in a disincentive for commercial use of the parks, and an economic loss for the national parks and our State.

Thanks to the support and work of this committee, and particularly Senators Rockefeller, Klobuchar, Dorgan, and Ensign, the Travel Promotion Act was approved by Congress and signed into law—March of this year. As you know, the bill creates a not-for-profit Corporation for Travel Promotion to better communicate our security policies and promote America as a premier travel destination. This new Travel Promotion Act will go a long way to ensure that visitors see us for who we really are, want to visit us, and tour our national parks. By attracting millions of new international travelers, it will help generate \$4 billion annually in new revenue, create 40,000 new jobs, and generate \$321 million in new tax revenue each year, for the U.S. economy.

As the Federal Government moves to implement the Travel Promotion Act, it's critical that two issues receive immediate attention. First, funding for the new Corporation for Travel Promotion must be secured as quickly as possible. This year, the Corporation is eligible to receive 10 million in startup funds from the U.S. Treasury. The funds are needed to form the Corporation, hire staff, develop marketing plans, and successfully secure the voluntary industry financial investments in year two. Without this initial transfer of funds, there is great risk that the Corporation's efforts will be undermined from the outset.

I know the Committee is aware of this concern and is working with the Departments of Commerce and Homeland Security to determine the best path forward, and I thank you for your work on that.

Second, a new effort is needed to provide the new Corporation for Travel Promotion, and actually every State in America, more reliable and valid data on where internationals visit when they're com-

ing to the United States. Unfortunately, States like Wyoming are considered statistically insignificant, and we do not receive reliable data on the volume of our international visitors, their country of origin, or their estimated economic impact. This information is fundamental to any ongoing international marketing efforts, going forward.

Like many others, we are encouraged by this Administration's interest in the industry as an economic driver for America. The recent America's Great Outdoors Initiative and the National Export Initiative are of particular interest to Wyoming. We fully understand the value of travel as a means to provide economic stimulus, and look forward to doing what we can to support the efforts to assure a healthy and prosperous future for Wyoming and the United States.

Madam Chair and members of the Subcommittee, thank you again for inviting me here today. Your interest in learning more about the benefits of national parks and tourism provide to Wyoming and the rest of America is commendable and greatly appreciated.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Shober follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DIANE SHOBER, DIRECTOR OF TOURISM,
STATE OF WYOMING

Importance of the National Parks to Wyoming

To say the national parks are important to Wyoming would be an understatement. Fortunately, we are home to America's first national park, Yellowstone, and the majestic Grand Teton National Park and as well as our first national monument, Devils Tower. Without a doubt, Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks are clearly the destination drivers for Wyoming's tourism economy. But it is also important to note the entire greater Yellowstone ecosystem is essential to the very fiber of Wyoming and the west. This ecosystem includes the head waters of major river systems, is home to multiple species of wildlife and water fowl, abundant outdoor recreation opportunities, learning and education in a unique outdoor laboratory, the source of thousands of jobs, provides quality of life for residents and visitors and so much more.

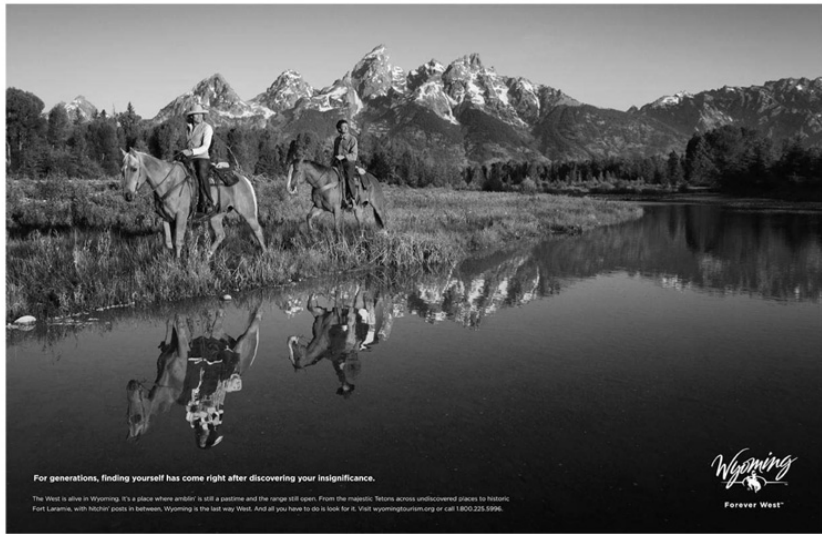
Marketing Wyoming

Tourism is big business in Wyoming. And our national parks are at the epicenter of our tourism industry. In fact, tourists were visiting Yellowstone long before Wyoming was even a state. And today we continue to build on that love affair that travelers from all around the world have with America's national parks.

In 2005, we conducted a branding audit to shape the strategic vision for how we market Wyoming and what our marketing message should be. The outcomes clearly identified Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and Devils Tower National Monument as unique differentiators for our state, along with the authenticity of the west. Since then, we have conducted our tourism marketing under the brand, Wyoming Forever West. Forever West embodies Wyoming's finest attributes, including wide open spaces, unobstructed views sheds, mountains and wildlife and the western way of life.

Each year we spend millions of dollars on advertising Wyoming as a destination. Our advertising budget averages right at \$6 million annually and we deploy marketing messages via television, magazine, online, outdoor, direct mail and through social media campaigns. We hang our hat on the fact that traveling consumers associate Yellowstone, Grand Teton and Devils Tower as differentiators for Wyoming and you will always see one of them featured in our national advertising campaign.

Two examples of our print campaign are included:



While these are only two examples of our overall campaign, the essence of our message is carried throughout everything we do. And the good news is, it's working!

Economic Impact of Tourism

The year 2009 brought more than its share of economic challenges to consumers and businesses around the world. While the Wyoming tourism industry was challenged as well, tourism remains a key part of our state's economy. For the first time in 12 years, though, we saw declines across all but one segment of the travel industry. Fortunately, the economy increasingly shows signs of life, which should give all of us hope for brighter days in the year to come.

Despite the challenges in 2009, leisure travel remained a high priority for many. Consumers adapted their travel plans to fit the times. They spent less during their travels yet, the impact numbers are still impressive, with over \$2.5 billion in direct travel spending generated for the state, which in turn generated \$111 million in local and state tax receipts.¹

And the good news for us is that visitors still came. While national leisure travel declined by 2 percent, Wyoming's visitation actually grew slightly in 2009 from 7.31 million overnights to 7.33 million.² National park visitation was at an all time high; Yellowstone National Park recorded 3,295,187 recreation visits last year, resulting in a 5 percent increase over the previously recorded high 10 years prior in 1999 when visitation was 3,131,381.³ And, Grand Teton National Park experienced a 4 percent growth in recreation visits over 2008.⁴ The correlation between tourism marketing and increased visitation to our parks is no coincidence. We spend millions to invite consumers to visit our national parks and immerse themselves in this unique experience. While other states were forced to cut back, we were broadening the Wyoming footprint.

As I mentioned earlier, I am also a member (treasurer) of the Western States Tourism Policy Council (WSTPC)—a consortium of 13 western state tourism offices. The mission of the WSTPC is to support public policies that enhance the capability of travel and tourism to have a positive impact on states and communities in the West. Visitors to the national parks are a vital part of the tourism economy of each of these 13 WSTPC member states.

The value of national parks to gateway communities, and vice versa, is also an important component in the tourism equation. National parks provide a product offering that serves as a lure for visitors and by accessing the parks through gateway communities, the economic value of tourism is boosted by the proximity of the national park. In turn, gateway communities provide much of the necessary visitor services such as accommodations, entertainment, shopping, outfitters and transportation, thereby relieving some of the pressure on the resource and thus enhancing the sustainability of the park itself.

A 2006 study conducted by the National Park Service Social Science Program and Michigan State University Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies further corroborates this important reciprocal relationship. Out of 1.15 million person trips to the area in 2006, key research results⁵ include:

- 78 percent included an overnight stay, either in a motel, lodge or cabin (54 percent) or camping (24 percent).
- 16 percent of the campers stayed within the park while 7 percent camped within 150 miles of the park.
- 30 percent of the motel, lodge or cabin overnights stayed inside the park, 70 percent within the 150 mile region.
- Total visitor spending within 150 miles of the park was \$271 million of which one third was spent inside the park.
- Over 90 percent of visitors indicated the park visit was the primary reason for the trip to the area.
- Including direct and secondary effects, the \$271 million spent by park visitors supported 4,952 jobs in the area and generated \$336 million in sales, \$133 million in labor income and \$201 million in value added.

Although this research was conducted 4 summers ago, the magnitude of the impact remains notable and is applicable to park visitors today.

¹Source Dean Runyan and Associates, The Economic Impact of Travel on Wyoming, 1997–2008 Detailed State and County Estimates.

²Strategic Marketing and Research, Inc. 2009 Wyoming Overnight Visitor Profile.

³National Park Service Public Use Statistics Office.

⁴National Park Service Public Use Statistics Office.

⁵Impacts of Visitor Spending on the Local Economy: Yellowstone National Park 2006, Michigan State University Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies.

Last year, 68 percent of all summer airport travelers into Jackson Hole were Grand Teton and Yellowstone bound. Repeat visitation is high with 77 percent stating they will probably or definitely return for a future visit.⁶

Seeming somewhat recession proof, Cody, Wyoming near Yellowstone's East Gate, remained a viable community despite economic challenges elsewhere. Sales tax collection on accommodations actually increased by 2 percent over 2008,⁷ attributed to the increase in visitation experienced in the park in 2009.

Throughout their entire system, Taco John's restaurants, a quick service Mexican chain headquartered in Cheyenne, Wyoming, experience seasonality of sales impacted by location and geography. The gateway markets in an around national parks and monuments, particularly in the Wyoming restaurants experience huge impacts on seasonality of sales. The Taco John's in Cody, Wyoming does 46 percent⁸ more business in the summer months than it does in the winter months. The Taco John's markets that pool their advertising dollars for publications like the Sweet 16 which focuses on U.S. Hwy 16 out of South Dakota to Yellowstone find it extremely beneficial to publicize the route to the Park.

These spikes in sales obviously provide jobs in these communities, provide the independent Taco John's franchisee his livelihood, and help to build chains like Taco John's into a 400+ regional business entity, which located in Wyoming helps the overall business diversity of our state.

Working with the National Park Service

The Wyoming Office of Tourism has a good working relationship with the national parks within our state. I personally believe it is in our best interest to be proactive in cultivating a relationship with each park and its leaders. I enjoy working with both Yellowstone Supt. Suzanne Lewis and Grand Teton Supt. Mary Gibson Scott. However, due to our role as a marketing agency, most collaboration is done in conjunction with the park's concessionaires who have marketing budgets and a vested interest in marketing their particular park. Both Xanterra Parks & Resorts and Grand Teton Lodge Company have been proactive partners in marketing our national parks and the state of Wyoming. Our collaboration includes co-operative advertising, hosting travel trade and media fams (familiarization tours), providing product for sweepstakes and promotion efforts. Their executives serve in leadership roles at both the state and local level.

Although the National Park Service adopted a very good national tourism strategy, its implementation and effectiveness have been limited, in part due to lack of funding but also due to lack of acceptance at the individual park level. If the budget for the National Park Service Tourism Office were increased to \$1 million from no more than \$200,000 at present, the office could work more closely with the travel and tourism industry and with gateway communities, and also to promote lesser known national parks. While the National Park Service was created to manage these public lands and provide responsible stewardship over their use, there often times appears to be an imbalance between protection and access and visitor services. It is my belief that visitors who personally experience these natural wonders are much more likely to have a deeper understanding about the resource and its importance to our world. Tourism provides a means of education to the greater public and plays an important role in the economic sustainability of parks and their surrounding regions. By effectively implementing their national tourism strategy, the National Park Service could be more proactive in shaping tourism development and associated impacts.

Film projects are an integral part of tourism development. One of the challenges we face is access to the park or park resources. While the discrepancies in rules, applications and fees vary from park to park, the challenge stems more from the response to these requests. We fully understand/support fees being assessed for commercial projects and agree that their needs to be a process and system to protect the resource. However, the required wait time for a permit and the low priority in which these requests are given are counterproductive to customer service and the accessibility of public lands.

In a proactive effort to rectify this situation, I am pleased to report that the Wyoming and Montana Film Offices are conducting a training session in West Yellowstone next month for Federal employees. We are bringing in a third party producer from Los Angeles to discuss how Federal land management agencies and film companies can work more cooperatively together. Film permitting staff from both Yel-

⁶Jackson Hole Airport Board.

⁷State of Wyoming, Department of Revenue and Taxation.

⁸Marketing/Franchise Operations, Taco John's International, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

lowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and the Shoshone and Bridger-Teton National Forests will be in attendance.

Travel Promotion Act

It is true that our national parks are beloved by Americans but Yellowstone is clearly recognizable around the world. It is an American icon. It was most obvious in the summer of 1988 when wildfires raged and were the top news stories everywhere. The worldwide concern over the health, wellbeing and future of Yellowstone was paramount. In fact, it was so profound that in September 1988 the Federal Government, under the then Dept of Commerce USTTA, organized and paid for a coalition to travel to Europe to meet with travel agents, wholesalers, operators and media in London, Frankfurt and Paris to address their questions and concerns and assure them that Yellowstone was intact and visitors could indeed still experience the wonders of this national park.

Just spend an afternoon at Old Faithful or hang out in the lobby of Jackson Lake Lodge and you will personally know that these parks are revered by cultures from around the world. Clearly a tourism opportunity to promote our national parks as travel destinations to international visitors.

Thanks to the support and work of this committee particularly, Senators Rockefeller, Klobuchar, Dorgan and Ensign, the Travel Promotion Act was approved by Congress and signed into law on March 4th of this year.

The bill creates a nonprofit Corporation for Travel Promotion to better communicate our security policies and promote America as a premier travel destination. It will help address the sharp decline in the number of international visitors the United States has experienced since 2000.

The fact is that the world travel market is expanding but our share is shrinking. According to the U.S. Travel Association, of which I am a member, the U.S. welcomed 2.4 million fewer overseas visitors in 2009 than in 2000. Had we kept pace with the growth in international long-haul travel since 2000, the U.S. economy could have gained an additional \$509 billion in spending.

Yet, overseas tourists are going elsewhere and the reason is painfully simple; we haven't made a coherent effort to tell America's story—to say to legitimate foreign visitors that they are welcome here and that we are working every day to improve the entry experience for them.

We need look no further than last year's selection process for the 2016 Olympics. In explaining his vote against Chicago, an IOC member from Pakistan went out of his way to note that going through the entry process in the U.S. can be a harrowing experience. President Obama responded by offering "a reminder that America at its best is open to the world." The President was right.

The new Travel Promotion Act will go a long way to ensuring that the world views us as we really are, ready to welcome those who want to visit us and tour our national parks. And by attracting millions of new international travelers, the public-private partnership established under the new law will help generate \$4 billion annually in new revenue, create 40,000 new jobs and generate \$321 million in new tax revenue each year for the U.S. economy.

As the Federal Government moves to implement the Travel Promotion Act, it's critical that two issues receive immediate attention. First, funding for the new Corporation for Travel Promotion must be secured as quickly as possible. This year, the Corporation is eligible to receive \$10 million in startup funds from the U.S. Treasury. The funds are needed to form the Corporation, hire staff, develop marketing plans, lease office space and conduct activities that will allow the Corporation to credibly and successfully secure voluntary industry financial investments in year two. Without this initial transfer of funds, there is a great risk that the Corporation's efforts will be undermined from the outset.

I know the Committee is aware of this concern and is working with the Departments of Commerce and Homeland Security to determine the best path forward to provide the \$10 million transfer to the Corporation before Oct. 1. I thank you for your efforts to date and urge you to continue to work toward a successful resolution to this issue.

Second, a new effort is needed to provide the new Corporation for Travel Promotion and every state in America more reliable and valid data on where international visitors travel when they visit the U.S. Unfortunately, today, states like Wyoming are considered statistically insignificant and therefore we have no reliable data on the volume of our international visitors, their country of origin or the estimated economic impact to our state. This information is a fundamental component necessary for any international marketing campaign.

Without more reliable and valid data, the new Corporation for Travel Promotion will be unable to successfully target its marketing resources to attract more visitors,

and states like Wyoming—which will be asked to provide matching in-kind and cash fund—will be unable to justify additional investment in the overseas markets as they cannot justify their existing investment based on the current lack of critical volume and spending data.

It is my hope that this committee will work together with the Commerce Department and the states to achieve the collection of international traveler data that provides valid and reliable data for each of the 50 U.S. states and the five U.S. territories.

Presidents Initiatives on Travel and Tourism

Like many others, we are very encouraged by this Administration's interest in this industry as an economic driver for America. The recent "America's Great Outdoors Initiative" is of particular interest to Wyoming, as was the passage of the Travel Promotion Act. We fully understand the value of travel as a means to provide immediate economic stimulus and look forward to doing what we can to support efforts to assure a healthy and prosperous future for Wyoming and the United States.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you very much.
Mr. Butcher.

STATEMENT OF CLYDE BUTCHER, PHOTOGRAPHER

Mr. BUTCHER. Is that turned on? Am I turned on?

Well, thanks for inviting me. This is a little different than the swamp.

I've lived in Big Cypress for 18 years, and had a gallery there. I'm surrounded by over a million acres of Everglades systems plus Everglades National Park, to the east, and the south. Big Cypress is one of the main filters for the Big—for the Ten Thousand Islands.

When my son was killed by a drunk driver, it was the wilderness that I fled to, to get my equilibrium. Wilderness is a spiritual necessity, I think, for all humans. In—after many years of photographing the Everglades and around the country, I was asked to do a traveling show of America, by William and Mary College in Virginia. It's called "America the Beautiful." It's now a traveling exhibit. It just finished in St. Paul. And also, the Friends of Acadia National Park, we created "America National Park" exhibit, which is also traveling, which is opening in Indiana this week.

This is my way of actually getting people interested in the parks. I think these exhibits, along with Ken Burns' film on the national parks, has generated a new interest in our park system. It's exciting. I'm sure I can say, for both Ken and I, that it is our desire to keep the parks healthy and strong. I believe we have achieved success by making people aware of the beauty and the unique history of our country, and to save those important wilderness areas for our future generation.

One of the most important ways to get people to the parks, unfortunately, is advertising. Advertising—needs to capture the essence of the park. It has been my experience that when imaginative people invoke the beauty and adventure the people will have in the parks, they will fall in love with the parks and want to experience them for themselves.

Therefore, the advertising needs to be done by someone who knows and understands the ecosystems of the parks should have control of the advertising. Giving jobs to the lowest bidder rarely achieves this kind of success. Often, the lowest bidder lives in some other State, has no idea what the real park is about. So, in order

to get high quality imagery to achieve visitors, a budget needs to be created to lure people, for the advertising, and not a low bid.

When choosing a company for the park, a panel from the park should be working with the ad agencies and to feel which ones are the right people for that purpose. The superintendent should be totally involved in this process. And the OK for the job should not come from the—outside his or her park, it should come from the superintendent of the park.

I believe this process should be started using a very few parks—this is the unknown parks, not like the Tetons; everybody knows about the Tetons. And that's a great—I mean, I love the Tetons; I learned some interesting things while I was there. But, if you do do that, I think you should pick a few parks, to experiment. And so, you spend a good amount of money on those parks so that you can actually do something with those parks.

So, anyhow, the—so, those unknown parks then would be experiencing more visitors, I would hope, so you're going to need more funding. So, you've got to think about the funding for those parks, to help the park give those people a good experience.

We all talk about bringing peace to the world. I could think of no better way to encourage peace than encourage people from all over the world to enjoy the spiritual sanctuary of our national parks.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Butcher follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CLYDE BUTCHER, PHOTOGRAPHER

For 18 years, I have owned a gallery and home in Big Cypress National Preserve surrounded by over a million acres of the Everglades ecosystem. When my son was killed by a drunk driver it was to the wilderness that I fled to regain my serenity and equilibrium. Wilderness is a spiritual necessity and for that reason I feel compelled to give my opinion here today.

In 2005, I began a project of photographing America for a museum exhibit at Williams & Mary College in Virginia. "America the Beautiful" is now a traveling exhibit. From that exhibit the Friends of Acadia National Park created "America's National Parks," which is also a traveling exhibit. These two exhibits, along with Ken Burn's film on the National Parks, has generated a new interest in our Park system. It is exciting. I'm sure I can say for both Ken and I, that it is our desire to keep our Parks healthy and strong. I believe we have achieved success by making people aware of the beauty and the unique history of our country to have saved those important wilderness areas for future generations.

The most important way to encourage people to visit our National Parks is through advertising. Advertisements need to capture the essence of the park. It has been my experience that when imagery evokes beauty and adventure, people will fall in love with the park and want to experience it for themselves.

Therefore the advertising needs to be done by someone who knows and understands the ecosystem of the park they are advertising. Giving the job to the lowest bidder rarely achieves that kind of success. Often the lowest bidder lives in some other state and has no idea what the "real" park is about. So, in order to get high quality imagery to entice visitors, a budget needs to be created that can lure good advertisement agencies to apply.

When choosing a company for the job, a panel from the park that the ad will be about should look at the work of the agency to see if it feels "right" for their purpose. The Superintendent should be totally involved in this process. The "OK" for the job should not come from outside his/her park. It should come from the Superintendent of the park.

I believe this process should be started using just a few parks to see what the response will be. It would be better to spend a greater amount of money on the ads for just a few parks, rather than "bare bones" for many. The quality of advertising would be better and therefore the response better. When the results are in, then a larger advertising effort can be created.

National Parks that are “unknown” are also underfunded. If the ads succeed (and I believe they will), then in order for the experience of the visitor to be a good, the park will need to be funded appropriately. The object is for the visitor to share their fun stories with friends, who will then also want to visit the park. We don’t want them to have a bad experience in the park. Because the ads will be bringing more than the normal amount of people to the park there will be a need for more people on the park staff in order to deal with the increased number of people in the park.

We all talk about bringing peace to the world. I can think of no better way to encourage peace than to encourage people from all over the world to enjoy the spiritual sanctuary of our National Parks.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you very much——

Mr. BUTCHER. Thank you.

Senator KLOBUCHAR.—Mr. Butcher. I really appreciate it.

Mr. Bacher.

**STATEMENT OF SCOTT BACHER, OWNER AND OPERATOR,
CARLSBAD KOA, NEW MEXICO**

Mr. BACHER. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

It has been an honor and a blessing to be here. I’m coming as a private corporation, private small business, to tell you about how the national parks drive our business. It is not just driven; it “is” the business. We’re—90 to 95 percent of our attendance comes from the national parks. In particular, Carlsbad Caverns, which is right there, but we have, also, so many other—White Sands Missile, White Sands Monument—we have a tremendous amount of other things to see, that—when you’re there. So, the national parks is our business.

I didn’t start in this business. I was a contractor in New York. I built jails and schools for a living. So, I’ve always been in the accommodations business; they just never wanted to be there.

[Laughter.]

Mr. BACHER. My wife and I, when we got rid of our business in New York, we traveled the country, and we viewed over 100 parks, from Cape Cod to Oregon, looking for just the right site, saying that we would never be in the Southwest, because it was too hot. We ended up there. It has been a phenomenal business.

In the, when we bought the business, we had less than 19,000 visitors a year in our park. Last year, we topped over 50,000 and—doubling our—more than doubling our business and our gross income, and consequently, our taxes to the system.

So, we have a great corporation, a great business. KOA has helped us along the way. The national parks drive so many different things. The gateway communities, that everyone has talked about, is really the key, but it starts so much further. It starts when they decide to be an RVer or to come vacation at a park. It comes from Indiana, when they build new RVs; or Detroit, when they build new trucks; or the airlines, when they come across in self-flights to fly into—to rent different RVs across the country. It’s just—just an amazing business to us, and driven by people that want to reunite with the national parks.

In the trend of—that we’ve seen in the KOAs is that the grandparents are now taking the grandchildren. We’ve seen a—just an unbelievable amount of grandparents, with one or two grand-

children, coming across the park, and it has been a great thing to see.

We run a high-end park in New Mexico. It is the top park in New Mexico. And there are 12,000 campgrounds in the country of the United States. We're in the top 300. So, we run a real high-end park, which people enjoy to be—with all the amenities—because the national parks don't offer, I mean, they offer the sites, but they don't have the parks to support to the big RVs, which we come into, and many, many other RV parks in the area.

As far as foreign countries, in our park last year we had 17 countries—visitors from 17 countries. But, another interesting number is—back in 2006 or 2007, when we bought the park, the average stay in our park was 2.2, now it's up to 3.57 days per stay, which mean people are coming to enjoy areas in the national parks in the—across the country; they're not just coming for 5 minutes and then leaving. They're seeing many sites, many particular areas, and they're spending a lot more money across the country to get there, and to enjoy the parks once they are there.

Like—as I said, the—our community of Carlsbad Caverns had only 430,000 customers, last year, come in, and it's starting to rise up again, and we believe that, with increased roads—better roads and better advertising—the advertising, I think, is—personally, is going to be the driving factor to make the national parks attractive to foreign customers and to different people on—as the baby boomers reach, and want a vacation, to get back to the roots, see Yellowstone and, hopefully, Carlsbad Caverns, and many different sites all over the country.

The other way that we really work with the gateway—as a gateway community is with our Chamber of Commerce, and that's the organization that wanted me to come here. I've been so impressed with our Chamber, who meets every Friday. We have a breakfast with our businesspeople, and the national parks are there every week, and along with the State parks. And we converse. We talk about different activities, every Friday. And it's—and it really does seem to help. We don't—when one of us needs a plumber or any kind of a service, we don't go to the white—or, the Yellow Pages, we go to the Chamber of Commerce and find out who's in that area. And the national parks are right there with us. Since they can't advertise, they work very closely with us in our Chamber of Commerce to explain—last week was our National Free Week for national parks; I believe it was all over the country. And they really promoted that, and, in turn, telling us, we promoted it with our customers. So, it's been a great cooperation, and we enjoy being there, and it's been a great business.

I hope I never have to go back to being a contractor again. I really enjoy this.

So, thank you for your time and energy, and thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bacher follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SCOTT BACHER, OWNER AND OPERATOR,
CARLSBAD KOA, NEW MEXICO

Madame Chairperson (Senator Klobuchar), distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on this important subject.

My wife and I own a KOA campground north of Carlsbad, New Mexico. Carlsbad Caverns National Park is the main tourist attraction in the area. About 90–95 percent of my customers are there only because they are going to the Caverns. There are several other attractions in the area, such as state parks and the national forest, that may keep them in the area, but it's the Caverns they come to see.

You can probably tell from my accent that I'm originally from New York. I purchased Carlsbad KOA in 2007 after looking at over 100 locations. I wanted a place near a national park so I felt secure in the cash-flow. I have been very fortunate to have a successful business that has doubled in 4 years. Carlsbad KOA is rated the top KOA in New Mexico and in the top 300 of over 12,000 campgrounds in the Nation. Business has been so good for us that we encouraged our daughter and family to move down and help us run the business. If you want to know more about our operation, please visit our website at www.CarlsbadKOA.com.

I was told to address what impacts the national park has on my business. A direct benefit, of course, is that the world famous site draws visitors who spend money on lodging, food, and other services. At Carlsbad KOA, we have about 50,000 visitors every year. Most of them go visit the Caverns which had over 432,000 visitors last year.¹ From this steady income, we were able to build the business from 19,000 customers in 2007 to 50,000 last year. Indirectly, we benefit from the parks' impact on the local economy, such as the hospitality industry employing and spending money locally. The park helps make the area a better place to live. An economic study done in 2002 by Michigan State University states,

"Including secondary effects from the circulation of the park payroll and visitor spending through the economy, the total impact of the park is almost 1,000 jobs and \$17 million in income in the county."²

Looking to the future, I feel positive that good changes are coming. In the near term, I think that the baby boom generation will continue to travel to national parks in steady numbers, which means a dependable income for me. At the local level, we will be happy when the four-lane highway construction is completed that links Texas and southwestern states to this corner of New Mexico. Our roads have not been in good condition making RV drivers unhappy or uneasy. Good roads mean travelers are more likely to come and stay longer. The park also has construction going on right now designed to make the roads and parking lots better and safer. Last, there is currently a campaign to beautify Carlsbad. As a gateway community, to both the national park and my business, having a welcoming, clean town is critical for visitors overall perception of the area. As Carlsbad becomes more attractive to visitors, there is a greater chance they'll stay longer and spend more.

I look forward to these improvements, but there are other issues that need attention. The most critical to me is the need for the parks to advertise, or raise awareness of what they are and have to offer. National parks are great places to connect with our national heritage and nature and to reconnect with family and friends. I understand the restrictions that the parks can't advertise directly, but perhaps there could be ways to support businesses or help organizations, like the local Chamber of Commerce, advertise the parks. Second, there needs to be tourist friendly businesses in the area. This could be another awareness issue, but directed at gateway communities and business owners. How much money do we lose because the service wasn't good or the town looked uninviting? Finally, we need to attract more foreign visitors. Carlsbad Caverns National Park is a World Heritage Site. That's like naming it the eighth wonder of the world. We should capitalize on this designation and boost the chances of other national parks gaining the designation. For example, I've heard that White Sands National Monument has been nominated to be a World Heritage Site.

The collaboration between Carlsbad Caverns and KOA has been great. For instance, the national park makes their literature readily available which keeps customers informed and interested. Also, the park offers free programs that cannot be experienced elsewhere. For example, I love being able to tell visitors about the bat

¹Data from CCNP made up of the sum of ticket sales, an additional 10 percent for those who don't enter a cave, and backcountry permits. 15 year average is 460,000 visitors annually.

²*Economic Impacts of Carlsbad Caverns National Park on the Local (Eddy County, NM) Economy, 2002*; Daniel J. Stynes, Michigan State University; February 2003.

flight program that happens every night in the summer. The visitors have a great time if there are a lot of bats or not. It's one of those rare things to do unlike anything they'd find at home. Most often, I meet park staff through the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber has a networking breakfast every Friday and we see each other at the local Tourism Council meetings. Last, I was invited to speak at a park-hosted conference for local business owners and community leaders to conservation efforts, "green" practices, and recycling because at the campground we have a wind powered generator and solar panels.

In summary, let me say that the park's impact on me and my business is significant. I know that if the national park closed for good tomorrow my business would dry up and blow away. I count on the Caverns to be there and provide the excellent services that they do and on having such a great working relationship with them.

Again, Madame Chairperson, distinguished members, thank you for allowing me to present testimony on this issue.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Well, thank you so much. That was a great way of describing how the two work together; and that the parks people actually go to your chamber meetings is interesting, as well.

We're going to start with questions now. Senator LeMieux will go first. I'm going to step out for just 5 minutes.

He's promised me, Mr. Ward, that he won't do a major cross-examination of why the Everglades has more business than Voyageurs.

[Laughter.]

Senator KLOBUCHAR. So, I think you're going to be OK.

Mr. WARD. Thank you.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. All right.

Senator LEMIEUX [presiding]. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I wanted to start off with you, Mr. Shafroth, and talk about what we can do better, in terms of advertising our national parks. And is it true, now, that the national parks can't directly advertise on their own?

Mr. SHAFROTH. Mr. Chairman, I actually don't know if there's a legal impediment to the Park Service being able to advertise on its own. I could certainly get you that information or even ask our solicitors that question.

Mr. SHAFROTH. It's a good question. I think—you know, I made a comment, earlier in my testimony, about the impact of Mr. Burns' film. I know there was a huge increase in the visitation to Civil War battlefields, and—after your film on the Civil War—and we certainly expect and uptick. I think there were nearly—Ken, tell me, was it 35, 36 million people in the first round?

Mr. BURNS. Yes.

Mr. SHAFROTH. And something more, on the second round of the showing. So, I think we're going to see a higher level of, certainly, knowledge about, and interest in, national parks coming from that, and I think that's something that we ought to continue to—you know, through the National Park Foundation and other—our friends, organizations that we work closely with at the Park Service, to figure out ways to promote those activities.

The National Park Foundation also does have sort of a capacity-building program, where they help organizations that are friends of our national parks, which do have—don't have the kind of limitations that the Park Service has, in terms of promoting activities in the national parks. So, we—again, the Park Service has a very close relationship with the National Park Foundation and those

friends groups. It's probably the most effective way to getting the word out.

Senator LEMIEUX. Well, I'd like for you to check on that. It is my understanding that there is not direct advertisement by the national—

Mr. SHAFROTH. Right.

Senator LEMIEUX.—parks. And I think that—you know, especially with what we have to offer, that it makes a lot of sense. I mean, if we're going to get more dollars back than it costs to advertise, which we've found in other experiences, I think that that's something that we should look into.

Mr. SHAFROTH. OK

Senator LEMIEUX. And it makes sense, what Mr. Burns and Mr. Butcher and others have done to show and depict what these parks look like. We've talked about, often, when folks are coming into this country to visit, the Customs/Homeland Security experience is not, sort of, the best welcome to the United States. And we've talked about the fact of showing movies of the country, and, maybe excerpts from Mr. Burns or pictures from Mr. Butcher, that just, you know, give a depiction. So, whether they're on this trip, they could go to a national park or they think, "Wow, next time I come, maybe I'll make a national park as part of my trip." I think that we've got a great opportunity to market to the people who are coming to this country, potentially for completely different reasons, to get them to go to our national parks.

Mr. Burns, what thoughts do you have on what we could do better to promote our national parks? You've done a tremendous job of doing that on your own.

Mr. BURNS. Well, I agree that it needs an extra helping hand. Remember the high school philosophy class, where you were presented with the notion that, if a tree fell in the forest, and a human being didn't hear it, did it make a sound? Making a decision on that is way above my pay grade, but I know if you make a good film and no one knows it's on, it's not a good film. If you've got a good park, and no one knows it's there, it's actually not a good park. And I think that we really have to accelerate our efforts.

We—on our limited scale—are making a huge effort to reach out to international broadcasts of our film, to attract the foreign visitors. You stand at the rim of the Grand Canyon, and you will hear German and Japanese as the primary language, followed by English, Spanish, French. We know the potential is there to increase it, and I think that we can require our government to take more steps to coordinate those activities.

Just one anecdotal thing related to our Civil War series. The State of Virginia, after the broadcast in 1990—original broadcast of our series—bought, sort of, advertising rights, or promoting/sponsoring rights, on the BBC showing of the film, the second year, and had tens of thousands of identifiable British visitors that came to the United States specifically to visit Civil War battlefields, mostly in the State of Virginia, and were incredibly encouraged by that; and, as a result, helped to fund another film of mine on Thomas Jefferson. We have then, subsequently, gone out to various States to partner with them and the public television underwriting of the films that we've done and seen, with "Jazz" in Louisiana and other

states, a kind of concurrent uptick in visitations at those places. So, we can only assume that it takes some gold to get—to make some gold, to find some gold.

Senator LEMIEUX. That's well said.

Ms. Shober and Mr. Ward, I wonder, too, that—it was mentioned about, advertising to folks in your State, as well as people in America, to stay—we call them “Staycations” in Florida—and we've had a lot of success, in Florida, with our Visit Florida enterprise, to get people, especially in a difficult economy, to stay and visit our parks and visit our amenities in Florida. Do you think that that's something else that we should be emphasizing?

Mr. WARD. Well, I think in the case of Minnesota, we all—in Minnesota, we have fairly young sites, still. So, we're still evolving and we're still growing, in a sense, compared to some of the park sites across the Nation. And so, I think we are at the point where we're kind of at an apex of being able to move into a greater awareness in the communities of “just the State.” And we tried to that with the Twin Cities public television film that we created, that would go in concert with Mr. Burns' film, because in the State of Minnesota, there are a lot of folks that don't even—that aren't even aware of the seven sites; there are actually two affiliated sites, also, and trails. And so, I think, in the case of Minnesota, we're actually at a very young age, and we're going to keep moving; and the things that we're working on now, are working; and we'll see some successes from that.

Ms. SHOBER. Madam Chair and Senator LeMieux, from the standpoint of Wyoming, advertising a “Staycation” doesn't do us much good, just by the sheer size of our population. And so, we really had to focus, this year—while other States' tourism offices did take that approach, we certainly still had to—and we were fortunate enough to have the budget with which to do it, but we had to maintain our national efforts, and even on a regional basis.

But, I certainly know that, in other parts of the country, my counterparts are focusing on that, and the national parks serve as a great venue for—they've always been a good-value vacation. And that's what we continue to promote in Wyoming, is that you can come, it's an affordable family vacation, and it's an experience that you can—it's a bonding time together; so, not only are you having great value financially, but there's a great value for memories and building families and time together.

Senator LEMIEUX. Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator KLOBUCHAR [presiding]. Senator Begich.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARK BEGICH,
U.S. SENATOR FROM ALASKA**

Senator BEGICH. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you very much for all being here.

And, Madam Chair, thank you for giving the precursor that I would not brag about how big our State is, that we have eight of the largest top 10 national parks—

[Laughter.]

Senator BEGICH.—that we have the tallest mountain, that we have a million lakes—

[Laughter.]

Senator BEGICH.—we have three-quarters of coastal——

Senator KLOBUCHAR. But it's not on your license plates.

[Laughter.]

Senator BEGICH. It's—we are called “The Last Frontier”—well, it's too big to put on our license plate——

[Laughter.]

Senator BEGICH.—too many zeros. So——

But, thank you for hosting this hearing.

And thank you all for being here.

I want to follow up Mr.—the Senator from Florida's—LeMeiux's—comments on advertising, because your point is a good one; and that is, the national parks is—what I understand, there is one person—and I don't know who could answer this, but I—there's one person who actually handles, within National Park Service, all the tourism activities, or is in charge of it. That's it. So, how do we get more aggressive—I recognize that the groups who are off, decide—who are helping—but, if we have just one person in this mega-operation, in the sense of our asset, maybe not as much money—Mr. Butcher, your comments, too, about the resources—you have to have the resources. But, we have the product. That's the good thing.

Mr. BUTCHER. We definitely do.

Senator BEGICH. We have great product,

Mr. BUTCHER. Yes.

Senator BEGICH. But, we, maybe, lack the ability to market our product. Without marketing, people don't know about it. I mean, I traveled, in August last year, with my family. We drove from Alaska to here. We went to Wyoming. We went to Cody, saw the rodeo. We went to Yellowstone. We went all the way through. We drove, 19 days, across the country to see our national park system and visit many of the small towns and communities. But, if you're not marketing, then it doesn't matter; people won't come, because they don't know it.

So, give me, first—anyone's comment—one, Should the National Park Service have an advertising budget that's aggressive? Two, I think this second one is an easy one—Should they increase from one person to more people to do the marketing? I think that's a given. And how much do you think we engage with young people, the next generation, to engage in our park systems? Whoever wants to start with that.

Mr. Butcher?

Mr. BUTCHER. Well, I—let me answer your—Mr.—Senator LeMeiux's question. The park can't advertise. They can't do anything political. They're the park. That's it. So, this corporation, that's outside the park, sounds like a good idea, so that can happen.

Senator BEGICH. Can I hold you there?

Mr. BUTCHER. Sure.

Senator BEGICH. Advertising isn't political, so let me——

Mr. BUTCHER. No.

Senator BEGICH.—other than when we're running them.

[Laughter.]

Senator BEGICH. But, they can't, because Congressional efforts restrict them, probably.

Mr. BUTCHER. Oh, OK. Yes.

Senator BEGICH. One thing I learned about coming here, a year and a half ago, is, we make the laws. So, if there's—

Mr. BUTCHER. Right.

Senator BEGICH.—a law prohibiting it, we should think if the law is logical. And if it's not—

Mr. BUTCHER. Yes.

Senator BEGICH.—logical, we should consider changing it.

Mr. BUTCHER. Yes.

Senator BEGICH. But, let's assume that—if they could advertise, should they?

Mr. BUTCHER. Oh, well, I've—you know, how many people have been to Delaware Gap? Gorgeous place. Within 35 miles, 100 waterfalls. Probably one of the most pretty parks in the United States. Now, I mean—yes, we have to. I mean, no—you have—but, you—when you do advertise, you have to get the spirit of the park.

Senator BEGICH. Right.

Mr. BUTCHER. You know, you can't just send somebody out there and take a few pictures. It's—the spirit of the park is not an easy thing to get.

I'm thinking that one of the things you could advertise is, in D.C., in the Smithsonian. I mean, people from all over the world come to the Smithsonian.

Senator BEGICH. Good idea.

Mr. BUTCHER. I mean, to me, that would be a permanent—advertising that you can—that doesn't go away. I think that kind of advertising would be kind of nice; you can develop—that it's there. I mean, when you do an ad on television, it's there for 30 seconds, and it's gone. But, if you have it in the Smithsonian or somewhere in D.C., where all these people from the world come, I think that would be a great way to advertise; would be here in D.C., the heart of the country.

Senator BEGICH. Thank you.

Anyone else wish to comment?

Mr. SHAFROTH. Mr. Chairman—Madam Chair, Senator Begich, you make some very good points. I want to make—respond in three different ways.

First is, I think we have to do a much better job, through our website and the new media that's available, and how people are communicating today, especially our young people, to connect with them in ways that they are listening for and gaining—gathering information. And I think our Department and our National Park Service website is beginning to do that; we're beginning to get smarter about how to do that.

Second, I think, you know, while there may not be official advertising—you've heard the gentleman from Carlsbad Caverns—there are these relationships, at every park, with the community, with the gateway communities, with businesses. And so, I think that co-operation and collaboration is happening. Could it happen more aggressively? Well, certainly—possibly, we could do that.

And the third question you had, relative to young people—it absolutely is a—it's the future, we have to do it. I think it's one of

the great benefits of what Mr. Burns did with the film, but we—it was mentioned earlier, the President spoke, about 10 days ago, at the America’s Great Outdoors conference. And he spoke directly to the need for us, as a country, to reconnect our citizens, especially our young people, with the outdoors and with the natural world. And Secretary Salazar, Secretary Vilsack, Chair Sutley, and Administrator Jackson are working together to develop a broad-based initiative to go out and both listen to the people of this country about their ideas on that, but also to bring forward to the President some recommendations about how we do that.

So, I think you’ll be hearing more from us on that subject, because it’s our greatest challenge. If we don’t reconnect the next generation to our national parks, our national forest, our other outdoor resources, then we’re not going to have the opportunity to build for the future.

Senator BEGICH. Great, thank you very much.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you.

Senator Cantwell.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARIA CANTWELL,
U.S. SENATOR FROM WASHINGTON**

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. From the beautiful State of Washington.

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you for holding this hearing, and to Senator LeMieux, for being here, as well. They are important issues.

And I appreciate all of our witnesses here.

And, Mr. Burns, thank you for your documentary and inclusion of, I think, at least one of our parks in Washington State—

Mr. BURNS. Yes.

Senator CANTWELL.—and the history of that. I think we get something like \$250 million a year from nonlocal visitors to our parks. So, you can easily say it’s big business in Washington State.

But, I was curious, out of your documentary experience, how do you think we might continue to educate people from the history and the information? The reason why I’m saying this, sitting on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, a lot of the legislation to either create new parks or create national scenic areas, what have you, always come with this question of an interpretative center. A few people will say, “Well, what do we want to do?” “Well, let’s create an interpretive center,” or, “Let’s explain,” you know, why we have—

Mr. BURNS. Yes.

Senator CANTWELL.—legislation, that we were successful in implementing, that commemorates the Ice Age Flood Trail, all the way from Montana, you know, through to Washington State. Yet, you know, it’s hard to explain something like the history of the Ice Age Flood, but yet there’s so much information there.

Did that experience of the documentary give you ideas about how we might take the information for so many of these special places, and present them to the public?

Mr. BURNS. Well, I think, in answer almost to all the questions today, we’ve got several opportunities. One, I think, is some coordi-

nated national effort. I'm so heartened to hear what's going on in Carlsbad, but we don't hear about that; and we need to have a kind of top-down advertising that would help let people know about the glories, not just here in the United States, but elsewhere. That's usually important.

But, a huge component, I think, in answer to your third question, sir, and to your excellent question, is education. We have to begin, in the schools, to tell stories, to teach the history of this.

We were stunned to find out about Stephen Mather, who was this great promoter of the national parks, who almost willed the National Park Service into existence by the sheer force of his passion and energy. And then, relentlessly, spent every day of the rest of his life passionately defending those parks against the inevitable conflicts that come up about their very existence, but also educating people.

And, I think that, in some ways, we've abdicated that. Perhaps in a rush to be able to explain, in any specific place with a visitor's center, about this event or that event, we may have missed the forest for the trees, here. And I think we've got an enormous resource—economic resource, but obviously a great educational one, as well. And I think that these are not incompatible, and that we need to coordinate not only a sort of top-down advertising with the bottom-up sense of how we reach our children with the stories of the glories.

Most people don't realize that they—that we are all co-owners of the most spectacular waterfall on this continent, the greatest collection of geothermal features, and the grandest canyon on Earth, and that this shared ownership has very limited responsibilities. We ought to go and visit them once in a while, to make sure they're being taken care of, and we ought to pass them down to our posterity unimpaired.

Senator CANTWELL. I appreciate your thoughts—I think we need to explore more—you know, the little interpretive trail sign on the side of the road just isn't enough—

Mr. BURNS. It is not enough.

Senator CANTWELL.—in today's Internet Age, to say that that's what we're going to do to commemorate, not just the specialness of these places, because that grandeur can be seen when people go there, but the history that goes along with it, in its creation and sense, and whether it's the Olympic National Park, and how it was created or, you know, the history of Mt. Rainier. I mean, there's a lot of history in all of that.

Mr. BURNS. May I just add something very briefly—is that I think that we're all concerned by what we see is the virtual world that so many of us live in and can't live without; and that, in some ways, we've replaced the virtual experience with actual experience. And we can rub our hands and lament this. It's a fact of our lives, and all of us here are either in the process of consulting our Black-Berries, or will shortly do so.

Nonetheless, what the parks represent are real experiences. And they're real American experiences, tied to a vast geological history, and tied to a more immediate national history.

And the parks have done a superb job in gathering together the threads of that political/military/social history, along with the

grand geological history. And this is a huge resource of incalculable value as we go forward. And I just think we need to marshal that, and remind people, through these social medias and other things, how real experience can affect them. The kind of things that Wyoming is doing to connect, emotionally, to the generational thing is what we found in every person that we spoke to. “My dad,” they’d always start a conversation, or, “My mom,” or “My grandma took me.” And all of a sudden you realize, you’re not just talking about the “thing,” as you stand on the rim of the Grand Canyon, perceiving the incredible power of the Colorado River to carve out Precambrian Vishnu Schist that is half the age of the planet; you’re also very much concerned with whose hand you’re holding. And that’s a huge element, I think, in how we should “sell” this, if that’s the correct word.

Senator CANTWELL. Well, I don’t want to call out the Chair, but I know that her father was, obviously, a great mountaineer. And I read his book, and saw a picture of our Chairwoman, biking over the mountains with her father, so I’m sure she, too, was influenced by that. But, that’s what makes it even more special.

So, thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you very much, Senator Cantwell.

And I was just thinking, I know you have to leave, Mr. Burns, and I think we’ll have a few more questions here. But, I wanted to thank you, first of all. And I just had one question, as I was thinking of this marketing—just so you understand—this national promotion bill, the travel promotion bill, we’re very excited about, and I hope you will, once we get the group gathered. Commerce, I think, is making the decision on who serves on it. But—it’ll be a public/private partnership—it would be very nice, listening to the poetry of your words, if they consulted with you on how to do this.

Disney put together a “Welcome to America” movie.

Mr. BURNS. Yes.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. I don’t know if you’ve seen it.

Mr. BURNS. I have.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. It doesn’t have their name on it, there’s no Mickey Mouse. But, it’s beautiful. And their idea is to have it, you know, on huge screens, in every airport that serves international visitors, so that, when they’re waiting in line, they see the national parks, and they have that image, so it’s much more welcoming. I’ve talked to Secretary Napolitano about this, just recently, and I think that that’s a piece of it.

The other piece of it is marketing through this public/private partnership, and if we do this smart, and we do it right, like other countries have, I think we could make a huge impact.

Every 1 percent we lost to that international tourism business—we’ve gone down 20 percent since 9/11—has cost us 170,000 jobs in this country. And that’s why those of us on this panel are so obsessed with this.

But, my question is, as you looked at the history of the parks, and you saw, way back in time, did you learn anything about how they marketed the parks, back then? Was it just like Yogi Bear and Jellystone Park? I mean, what were the ways that they marketed? And is there anything that we can learn from that?

Mr. BURNS. Well, I think that what's so clear from studying history, on any subject, is the more things change, the more that there's—they're the same. There's nothing new under the sun. And we can take, from the example of Stephen Mather, from the railroad companies, which were the parks' first promoters, and the "See America First" campaign that happened, that there had been prime examples, throughout our history, of coordinated, educational events that have boosted park attendance, that have gotten generations of schoolchildren engaged with it. Some of the creation of the parks, like the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, had to do with a kind of local campaign, where kids, in the middle of the Depression, were raiding their piggybanks to add pennies, nickels and dimes, literally, to help buy the land from the loggers who were about to destroy the last major stand of virgin timber on the eastern seaboard. And we would create the park with extraordinary attendance, Great Smokies National Park.

I think even a cursory look at our documentary would give dozens of ideas of how people went about doing this. And all one needs to do is just apply the lessons of one age to the new forms of media, that Will was speaking about, that we are in, today. And I don't think it's a big leap. And what I love is, you've got, here at this table, examples of local coordination, you've got State coordination, and you have a kind of national interest, "We're going to do this."

We hope that our film will be picked up by broadcasters around the country, that that might interest more people, but we ought to be able to back that up with information. Maybe there are States, or there is an entity, that might help to promote that. I think the idea of having our borders filled with what we've got in here would be great. I know that people watch my films, waiting for jury duty, in the District, here. And I meet people all the time who say, "I had jury duty, but I got to watch half of 'Jazz' or 'Baseball,'" as they were sitting doing that.

[Laughter.]

Senator KLOBUCHAR. This is a new marketing technique.

[Laughter.]

Mr. BURNS. I guess.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Force them——

Mr. BURNS. No one consulted me, but there seem to be limitless possibilities of how to do this. And I'd just——

Senator KLOBUCHAR. I agree.

Mr. BURNS.—if you were to focus on the life and example of Stephen Mather, you could be occupied for dozens of years on how would be the best way, the correct way, to run such a campaign, both at a national and a State and local——

Senator KLOBUCHAR. OK.

Mr. BURNS.—perspective.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Well, very good, thank you. And if you have to leave, we understand.

Mr. BURNS. I do. And I just beg your indulgence, Madam Chairman, for having to do this. I had something scheduled before this, and I feel bad about leaving you, particularly with a subject so dear to my heart. But, I thank you for the opportunity.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you. Appreciate it. Thank you.

Senator LEMIEUX. May I make a shameless plug for Florida——

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Well, I'll—

Senator LEMIEUX.—before Mr. Burns leaves?

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Yes. Oh, please do.

Senator LEMIEUX. Just because I may not have the opportunity to speak to you again. I don't know what your next project is, but I would like to give you a possible idea.

[Laughter.]

Senator LEMIEUX. In 3 years, we will celebrate the 500th anniversary of Ponce de Leon coming to Florida. And in 5 years, we will celebrate the 450th anniversary of the oldest city in America, which is St. Augustine.

Mr. BURNS. St. Augustine.

Senator LEMIEUX. And we, in Florida, don't even do enough to have recognition of this gem, of what it is, the oldest city in America. And I know my friends from Virginia are always very big about how they have the first settlement, and—they've really had good propaganda on this, because the truth is, they don't have the first settlement; we did.

[Laughter.]

Senator LEMIEUX. So, I just wanted to leave that with you. That is a layperson's suggestion of maybe a possible idea for a future documentary.

Mr. BURNS. What is so thrilling to me, Senator, is that, if I were given a 1,000 years to live, I would not run out of topics in American history.

[laughter].

Senator LEMIEUX. Well said. Thank you very much.

Mr. BURNS. Thank you all.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Very nice. Thank you. Thank you very much.

I wanted to follow up on Mr. Bacher's point about this—a collaboration between the chamber and the parks, and how important that is as we look at things on a regional model. And I guess I'd first ask Mr. Ward, because I realize that our Voyageurs park there, there was some real tension on some issues, because we actually have people still living in the parks, and gradually some of that land is being sold; a conservation trust is buying it. But, there has been a real sea change; there used to be, like this, and people soon realized, as Mr. Bacher pointed out, that was in their best interest to work together, and that they're very proud of this sea change, with the local businesses and the park working together.

Do you want to talk a little bit about that, and how we can use that as a model for a smaller park, but nevertheless, a model?

Mr. WARD. Well, it's unfortunate that Mr. Burns just left, because I think this was touched upon in his film a great deal, at just about every national park, with that struggle when we first come in.

Voyageurs, in terms of what you just asked me, I think, is best described as—we're kind of at a new birth, at this point, as I was kind of touching on earlier. And, you know, we are actually in the neighborhoods or—you know, Chamber of Commerce, the CVB, Rotary, those people that actually make up the towns that are close within our communities, our gateway communities, are seeing how important the park is in their backyard now. And I think it's going

to take another generation before we get fully there, but some of the things that Mr. Shafroth touched on are occurring at Voyageurs that help us with that. And primarily, that's the connection that we have with the children in those gateway communities. Even though they're limited—there's not a huge population base there—that is who we are spending a great deal of time on. Whether it's through education programs, whether it's through getting them out in the park on a seasonal basis, whether they go out in the new Voyageur tour boat for one of their classroom settings, we're doing whatever we can to actually raise their awareness of the park, in their backyard, in the hopes that we are going to grow a new generation of constituents and supporters of the national park there. So.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Mr. Shafroth, there's a new project called "Trails & Rails" working to advertise the parks through Amtrak? Do you want to explain that?

Mr. SHAFROTH. I'm not familiar with that, to be honest with you, Senator.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Well, there you go.

Mr. SHAFROTH. I apologize. I—we could certainly give you some information—

Senator KLOBUCHAR. That's good.

Mr. WARD. Actually, coming from the St. Louis, Missouri, area, prior to where I am now in Voyageurs, there was an active Rails to Trails—Trails—

Mr. SHAFROTH. Rail to Trail.

Mr. WARD. Thank you.

And it—they would travel from park to park, and actually get programs. And I know that was at, kind of, its infancy several years ago.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. So, the idea is, on their iPods, these people that are—

Mr. WARD. Yes.

Senator KLOBUCHAR.—traveling across country, they can download info on the park, I think, and look at it. But, it's just an example of using new technology.

I just wanted to go back to what can be tension, but can turn into a positive thing, Mr. Bacher—before I turn it over to Senator LeMieux—in terms of promoting the park and just—have you had things, where you had problems, like I know we did back when Voyageurs first started out? And have you been able to work them out and then try to look at this as a net gain for everyone if you work them out?

Mr. BACHER. Well, first of all, I only have a 4-year history in Carlsbad, and it has been 100-percent positive, the whole time, because the park has been there, with their literature; every time we need literature, they make it available to us. And they have a bat flight that's—that is actually a free item; as the bats come in and out at night, or in the morning sometimes, that they allow that.

There has really been not a lot of tension, that I know of, at all, between the parks and the private industry of—and the private citizens of my area, in Carlsbad. It has been a positive thing the whole time.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Right. And then you went from 19,000 visitors in 2007 to 50,000 last year, a 30,000 jump. How did you do that?

Mr. BACHER. Well, we've redesigned our park; we do a lot more accommodations. America is traveling less, sometimes with an RV, so we've put in a lot—

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Have you seen the movie "RV"?

Mr. BACHER. Yes. And our park—

Senator KLOBUCHAR. OK, good. Well, now you know—

Mr. BACHER.—is not like the movie RV, in the desert, with the pumps and the—

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Yes, it sort of made me think of it.

[Laughter.]

Mr. BACHER. So, it—the industry we see, as grandparents and parents, sometimes they don't have that extra 100,000 or half a million dollars to buy a rig. They may want to just come and tent, or they make want to come—we have—our—the whole KOA system is going to lodging. We have beautiful wood, pine interiors. It just is—looks like a log cabin, but they have all the amenities. We have Wi-Fi and, you know, flat-screen TVs, and air-conditioning, the whole—it's very high-tech. We have a restaurant, we smoke—you know, we smoke all our meats. I get up at 5:30 in the morning and start smoking meats, and—

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Wow.

Mr. BACHER. So, we try and cater to what the people really want. It's a different buyer, it's a different client. There's an app for that. They—

Senator KLOBUCHAR. That's great.

Mr. BACHER.—really want the high-tech stuff. If we didn't have Wi-Fi, they wouldn't come to our park. I mean, they have to have Wi-Fi, they have to have good cellular service. We are—you know, we have to have all that stuff. And that's the new buyer that—you know, the baby boomers are going to last for another 12 to 15 years, and our—we believe our business will go up. I'm hoping to have 100,000 visitors in another 4 years. That'd be wonderful. We've—it has been so good, we've brought our daughter and son-in-law into the business, because we can't manage it anymore. It's just—you know, we went from 10 employees, 10 years—4 years ago, to 20, and it gets bigger. But Generation X, we don't know. I mean, it's not a—something that you have to solve today. There are about 15 years before Generation X starts to retire, or vacation and spend the money that is being spent now by the baby boomers. And the baby boomers are a huge portion of our business, if not the biggest.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Mr. Butcher? And then we'll turn over to Senator—

Mr. BUTCHER. The question was about teaching kids about—getting kids interested. I know, in Collier County—I think it's in your sixth or seventh grade—a park interpreter goes to the classrooms and tells the people about the park, then they take them out in the park. So, every schoolkid in Collier County gets to experience the Everglades, and get in the water, and get wet. And I think if every community that has a park have—make sure that there's money

for the park to bring those kids into that park, would help get kids excited about it.

And I think in Miami there's the same thing, in Everglades National Park, is that—I think it's fourth—is it fourth-graders? I think it's fourth-graders—are—they have to go to the park. And some of them think, "Wow, this is better than television." And some of them say "Uh-uh, I'm not going to do this again." But, at least we're getting them out there and—to get that experience.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. OK.

Senator LeMieux?

Senator LEMIEUX. Madam Chair, I want to follow up on Mr. Butcher's point, with Mr. Shafroth.

I mean, it seems like there is a great ability for you to coordinate with the Department of Education here. We do do that in South Florida. I remember doing it when I was a kid, I think in fourth grade. And I've taken my boys out to the Everglades. And, you know, I have a little girl now; she's only a month old, so we'll see how she adapts to it. But, for little boys, going to the Everglades is about the neatest thing in whole world, because they see alligators, they see snakes; it's beautiful. And I think that if we can work with—between the different agencies of government to—I would, you know, encourage you to try to partner with DOE, for them to promote this.

I also think—and wanted to ask you what kind of work you do with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. You know, are they promoting tourism, you know, in their work? They're—certainly have a broad swath of area that they cover. So, maybe you could speak to that, Mr. Shafroth.

Mr. SHAFROTH. Sure.

Madam Chair, Senator LeMieux, a couple of things. You're right, we are in a conversation right now with the Department of Education about how we can work together to promote environmental education at our national parks, at our 555 national wildlife refuges, BLM lands, and other lands that we manage. Fully 20 percent of our Nation's lands are under the Department of the Interior. So, you're—you make a good point. It's not just national parks here, there's a much a broader swath—Forest Service is not represented here, but they have an important contribution to make, as well.

I did want to mention that the Park Service does work very closely with the National Park Foundation on the creation of, sort of, a virtual classroom. And they have these periodic stagings that they have in national parks; most recently, one they had in Great Smokies, where 3 million young people in schools around the country were participating, through a live broadcast of an activity that was going on in Great Smokies.

And so, it's difficult—you know, it's difficult to get every kid out to every park; and yet, this is an opportunity for them to learn about this park, and the natural flora and fauna of this area.

Right now, this week, in Biscayne Bay, in your State, there's something called "BioBlitz" going on, where hundreds of people are participating in an effort to gain information about the biology of the Biscayne Bay. And it's a big event, big promotion. We hope to use that as a way, again, to educate citizens in Florida, in South

Florida, about the value and importance of the ecosystem in Biscayne Bay.

So, you make a very good point, the Fish and Wildlife Service does—has similar relationships with friends groups throughout the refuge system, but I think—I take it that there is a limitation on their ability to actually go out and formally promote and advertise their activities, but it's something we need to figure out how to do better.

Senator LEMIEUX. Well I think that's something that this committee may address, is that limitation. And we can take a look at that and—

Mr. SHAFROTH. Yes.

Senator LEMIEUX.—see that we can put some ability of these parks to advertise. And I think that Mr. Butcher's brought up a lot of good points, too, about how it should be done, so that there's local input by the superintendents of these park, because they're going to know best how to work with local folks to capture that image.

While we have you here, too, I wanted to, just by curiosity, ask you, Mr. Shafroth, is there any plans for any new national parks?

Mr. SHAFROTH. Well, the Park Service has conducted a number of studies on national park—potential national park units. And I don't know what the number of that is—maybe somebody here could help with that—but, a whole host of them that you all, in the Congress, have authorized them to do. And I think they would be there to await action by Congress, because Congress is the only body—entity that can create a new national park, or a new unit of National Park System. So—

Senator LEMIEUX. Do you propose a list to us of what you think are the top five? Or, how does it work?

Mr. SHAFROTH. Those are, sort of, incrementally proposed, and then I think they're out, sort of in a holding pattern. We're certainly—you know, the new administration has expressed interest in the potential for some new units, but they were not prepared to go formal, in terms of our presentation yet. You may hear from John Jarvis, our Director of the Park Service, on that soon.

Senator LEMIEUX. OK.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Well, I want to thank all of you.

And I take away from this hearing—as we think about the parks, vis-à-vis Congress, I think it's always—what Senator Cantwell was talking about, “Well, can we get an interpretive center? Can we get this funded?” It tends to be more focused on those kinds of issues. And I think having our Tourism Subcommittee—while we may not have direct jurisdiction over the parks, we can pretend we do. Right, Senator LeMieux?

[Laughter.]

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Having us look at it in a different way, in terms of the function of those parks for jobs and for education, learning experiences, and how they can be a major part of driving this economy, I think, is very important, and I think we should—I know Senator LeMieux and I are very focused on looking at it that way, and talking to some of our colleagues. We'll look at what those restrictions are, but also making sure that, when we do that

international marketing, that the parks are a part of that, and then looking at how we can do it on a local level, as well, because I think there's just so much more that we could do here, in terms of selling our parks in a very positive way, for the best of all reasons, as we know, for international visitors and others in our country. And I think it could be a very good thing.

So, that's what I come away—we just haven't—I don't think we usually talk about the parks in this way, and I think that it's time that we do, because they're a treasure that we want to share with others, and create some jobs in the meantime.

So, I want to thank all of you for being here. It has been a very interesting hearing. And keep up the good work.

Thank you.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:33 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. FRANK R. LAUTENBERG TO
WILL SHAFROTH

Question 1. What steps, if any, is the National Park Service taking to understand the impact of the new National Park Service firearms law on visitation and tourism to the parks? If visitation falters, what action will the Department of the Interior take to ensure domestic and international visitors that their families will be safe in America's national parks?

[The witness did not respond.]

Question 2. How will the Administration record and report firearm incidents, such as poaching, intimidation of visitors or park rangers, or the discharge of a weapon, that may take place and impact park based tourism? Please explain how DOI plans to capture National Park System wide incidents relating to the new law, so that lawmakers can know whether future action may be warranted on this important issue.

[The witness did not respond.]

