

National Park System Advisory Board
SUPPORTING THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CENTENNIAL

May 21, 2014

The Centennial Advisory Committee offers advice and assistance as the NPS seeks to catalyze and align the parks partner community in support of its 100th anniversary. The Committee is helping the NPS broaden connections with all Americans, promote awareness of the agency's modern mission, and highlight the significance of America's natural, cultural and recreational resources. The Committee is comprised of 30 key allies and advocates and includes friends groups, conservation and preservation organizations, concessioners, cooperating associations, youth programs, educators, and health interests.

Status of Activities

Though a scheduled Committee meeting in February was cancelled due to weather, a webinar presented Members the draft Centennial campaign message. In place of the cancelled meeting, a three hour conference call was held in early March, and the Committee's Steering Group met in April to follow-up. A full Committee meeting is scheduled June 11-12.

During these months, the Committee responded positively to campaign message development. Beyond the base of current visitors—largely Boomers—messaging will include a specific focus on Millennials. The message will be designed to broaden public awareness of NPS work, spotlight all units of the system, not just the iconic scenic western parks, and highlight NPS activities close to home. The Committee was not enthusiastic about an initial proposed Centennial logo, though a revised version was subsequently received positively by the Steering Committee.

In this period, primary Committee attention has been to address national signature projects and learn more about Members' spheres of influence. The Committee considered and offered recommendations on forty possible proposals. From these and other recommendations, including input from Grey Advertising, the marketing campaign team, six proposed signature projects were presented. The Committee reviewed these six projects within the context of agreed upon criteria. While liking many, the committee felt there was still inadequate representation of education, volunteerism, and health. Importantly, the Committee felt no project individually brought the "sizzle" one would expect of a national initiative. For example, a question was raised would there be a national day of celebration? Work to refine the signature projects is on-going. Meanwhile the need was reiterated for a toolbox and branding guidelines for partners to support the many local projects to help tie them to the overall campaign.

Next Steps

At the June meeting the Committee will consider further the national signature projects, hear an updated version of campaign creative messaging, and discuss the campaign's roll-out, including ideas for an initial launch in early 2015. The Committee will also discuss supportive initiatives developing around the country, several of which are planned by organizations participating as Members of the Committee, consider a number of centennial legislative and administrative efforts, and discuss proposals for toolbox content and Centennial licensing.