

Nature Center Directors and Administrators

Section Newsletter



Important dates

Submit newsletter articles
and information by:
September 18, 2008
December 4, 2008

NAI National Workshop

November 11-15, 2008

Portland, Oregon

[www.interpnet.com/
workshop](http://www.interpnet.com/workshop)

NAI 2008— “Sustaining the Circle” Registration On-Line

By Glenda Franich

Registration is now available on-line for the NAI 2008 National Workshop in Portland, Oregon November 10-15. The rich cultural heritage and environmental diversity of the Pacific Northwest will be offered to everyone attending through a broad spectrum of preworkshop courses, exciting concurrent sessions, and engaging keynote speakers. This year’s Workshop is titled “Sustaining the Circle” and efforts are underway to insure participants will experience what it means to “be green” in a city that truly is writing the book on “green” and learn ways to improve and sustain the world around them, wherever they may be.

Friday’s off-site sessions offer a multitude of opportunities to experience the bounty of cultural and natural history in the greater Portland area. The cultural heritage of the Pacific Northwest is as varied as its climates and ecology. Native Americans have inhabited the Northwest for thousands of years and their stories can be seen from rock art in the Columbia River Gorge to eloquent displays of artwork and handcrafts at museums. Hiking through the Cascade Mountains or along the trails along the Oregon Coast will unveil the world of northwest fish, wildlife, and plants common—and some uncommon—to the area. Local vineyards will share their history and development and invite visitors to enjoy sample fare from host wineries.

Learn how an urban wildlife refuge enables local communities to experience wildlife through a newly developed education program and state-of-the-art technology. Travel back in time at the Evergreen Aviation Museum and experience the history of modern flight in the newly opened space museum.

Embrace the area of your interest or explore new horizons through these and more off-site sessions during the 2008 National Workshop, November 10-15, in Portland, Oregon.

See “green”, learn “green,” BE “green.” Experience the Pacific Northwest this coming November.

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NAI 2008
SUSTAINING THE CIRCLE

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Take a Child Outside Week September 24-30, 2008

By Liz Baird

What do you remember doing outdoors as a child? For most adults, the list includes playing in creeks, walking in the woods, and watching for the first star in the twilight.

For many children today, however, going outside only includes organized sports. You rarely see children climbing trees, building "secret forts" in the woods, or simply making mud pies. Children have become increasingly disconnected from the natural world. This separation can lead to feelings of stress, trouble paying attention, and a sense of being alienated from the world. Studies have also linked the lack of time outdoors to childhood obesity and increased attention deficit disorder behaviors.

Inspired by Richard Louv's bestseller, "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder," the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences launched the national "Take A Child Outside" week (September 24-30, 2008). It is designed to help break down the obstacles that are keeping children from exploring the natural world. The goal is to provide parents, teachers and other caregivers with resources such as places to visit and outdoor activities so that children will become reconnected with the natural world, and spend more time outdoors.

Participation as a partner in "Take A Child Outside" week is an easy way to market your nature center's exhibits and programming. It costs nothing to be a partner - you complete an online form and then add your location to the partner's map. You can offer a special event for the week or simply highlight what you are already doing. In 2007 "Take A Child Outside" week received national exposure. People from across the country were using the map as a way to find out about opportunities in their areas. The North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences is also happy to provide rack cards and electronic versions of the "Take A Child Outside" logo for your use. For more information please contact Liz Baird, director of school programs, at liz.baird@ncmail.net or (919)733-7450 ext 601. And, of course, take this opportunity to get outside!



Learn how to make a pledge, find a partner organization or a place to visit and discover outdoor activities for children.. Go to www.takeachildoutside.org,

Lake Fort Smith State Park Looks to the Future

By Jill M. Rohrbach, travel writer

MOUNTAINBURG - The original Lake Fort Smith State Park is underwater. Fortunately in this case, an end to an era means an exciting new start. The park was originally developed by the City of Fort Smith and Crawford County in the late 1930s as a recreational park. The reservoir, however, was first created to serve as a municipal water supply, which is why a water plant became the center of a mountain park known then as the Mountainburg Recreational Facility.

The original facilities were built under the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which was created in 1935 under Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" in order to stimulate the economy during the Depression. Several state parks contain works of the WPA.

The Lake Ft. Smith WPA project included several thousand square feet of concrete, gravel and earthwork. Workers constructed a wading pool, a large swimming pool with two diving towers, four stone veneer cottages, a new road to the pool facility, an arched bridge, a bathhouse, a boathouse, bridle paths and landscaping. WPA crews also cleared underbrush and built barbecue pits, shelters, stone tables and rock houses around the mountain-side springs.

Lake Fort Smith

Arkansas's 23rd state park, Lake Fort Smith, is nestled in a wooded valley in the Boston Mountains of northwest Arkansas.

The park is located eight miles south of Mountainburg on U.S. 71, or take Exit #29 off I-540 at Mountainburg.

For more information, call 479-369-2469 or visit www.ArkansasStateParks.com.

Lake Fort Smith Arkansas State Parks took over the Mountainburg Recreational Facility in 1967 and immediately began upgrading the park. The pool had been closed since 1963 because the Health Department did not approve of unfiltered water pumped directly from Lake Fort Smith. The state built a new Olympic-sized pool and remodeled the bathhouse and concession stand. The state also purchased new playground equipment and constructed a small campground.

While numerous upgrades have been accomplished at the park over the years, none compare to the current park.

Lake Fort Smith State Park, which was situated below the Lake Fort Smith dam, was officially closed on January 2, 2002, to make way for the enlarging of Lake Fort Smith and Lake Shepherd Springs, which are being expanded to meet additional municipal water demands in the Fort Smith area. The two will form a single reservoir that will total 1,390 surface acres.

A new version of Lake Fort Smith State Park has been built on the western side of the enlarged reservoir. The dedication of the new park was held Thursday, June 19. The park reopened May 21, 2008, at its new site on the western side of 1,400-acre Lake Fort Smith.

Nestled in a scenic valley of the Boston Mountain Range of the Ozark Mountains, this park offers outdoor adventure including camping, fishing, kayaking, swimming, and hiking.

Sporting all new facilities, the 259-acre park features 30 campsites [20 Class AAA sites with water/50 amp electric/sewer and 10 Class B sites with water/30 amp electric]; a group lodge with great room and kitchenette that can accommodate up to 32 persons (16 in each wing); picnic sites; a pavilion; marina with boat rentals; double lane boat launch ramp; playground; 8,000-square-foot visitor center with exhibit gallery, meeting/classroom and gift shop; hiking trails and other park support facilities. Park programs will be offered throughout the year by the park's interpretive staff.

A trail link allows Lake Fort Smith State Park to once again serve as the western terminus of the Ozark Highlands National Recreation Trail. The park's new 2,660-square-foot swimming pool has an adjacent wading pool and a splash pad. The pool's 2,251-square-foot bathhouse features changing areas, lockers, a snack bar and office.

"What we had was really great at the old park with the WPA facilities," said Park Superintendent Ron Gossage. "But the expansion is going to be nice with new ideas and new memories to be developed in the new area."

"The design of the new facilities evokes the architectural style of the Works Progress Administration facilities featured in the old park," said Arkansas State Parks Director Greg Butts. That style is rustic, heavily timbered with use of native stone. While none of the existing structures moved to the new park, Butts said some of the materials, such as rock, from the old WPA cabins were incorporated in new structures.

"And, a trail link allows this new park to once again serve as the western terminus for the Ozark Highlands Trail," said Butts. Lake Fort Smith State Park has long served as the western terminus for the trail, but because of the park's closure, the terminus has been temporarily relocated to nearby Dockery Gap.

The new park was constructed and is owned by the City of Fort Smith and leased to the Department of Parks and Tourism, just as the old one was.