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National Park Service Marks National Oceans Month in June

WASHINGTON – June. Think baseball, picnics, family reunions “And National Oceans Month,” said National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis. “It’s the perfect time to dive on a coral reef, witness the majesty of a towering glacier, or stroll along a remote barrier island with sand at your feet and blue waves on the horizon.”

National Park Service employees conserve our ocean heritage in beautiful landscapes above and below the waves. You’ll find these treasures in 84 national parks with more than 11,000 miles of coast and 2.5 million acres of ocean and Great Lakes waters – spectacular places teeming with wildlife and rich with history and cultural traditions.

These national parks attract more than 86 million visitors and generate more than \$6.8 billion in economic benefits to local communities from tourism and recreation each year.

Ocean and Great Lakes parks protect marine life in coral reef parks in Florida, U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Pacific Islands, and in kelp forests in California and the Pacific Northwest. Salt marshes framed by barrier islands provide a haven for birds, fish and wildlife along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts National Seashores.

“Glaciers and fjords offer a stunning backdrop to thousands of years of native traditions and tribal culture in Alaska parks,” Jarvis said. “Shipwrecks and maritime museums tell stories of seafaring adventure and sacrifice and the historical parks commemorate heroism by servicemen and women in wartime.”

All these resources are, however, under growing pressure and suffer the effects of climate change, overfishing, pollution, exotic invasive species and more.

In response to these impacts, President Obama recently signed an Executive Order directing the Administration to work with citizens to create a new National Ocean Policy to ensure that the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes are healthy and resilient, safe and productive, and are understood and treasured. To comment on strategic action plans to implement the Ocean Policy please visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/oceans> before the end of June.

To mark National Oceans Month and the President's National Ocean Policy, the National Park Service has adopted national and regional Ocean Park Stewardship Strategies for restoration and maintenance of ocean parks and the recreational opportunities they hold for current and future generations. Within this strategy, the Park Service works to:

1. Discover, map, and protect ocean parks
2. Engage visitors in ocean park stewardship
3. Increase technical capacity for ocean exploration and stewardship
4. Establish a seamless network of ocean National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, National Marine Sanctuaries, and National Estuarine Research Reserves.

For more information on National Park Service ocean and coastal parks please visit:

<http://www.nature.nps.gov/water/oceans.cfm>

Plan your next national park adventure at <http://www.nps.gov> and be sure to visit these featured ocean parks for summer activities:

- Acadia National Park <http://www.nps.gov/acad/photosmultimedia/virtualtour.htm> and <http://www.nps.gov/acad/planyourvisit/events.htm>
- Kenai Fjords National Park <http://www.nps.gov/kefj/planyourvisit/boattours.htm>
- Channel Islands National Park <http://www.nps.gov/chis/planyourvisit/live-programs.htm>
- Assateague Island National Seashore <http://www.nps.gov/asis/planyourvisit/things2do.htm>
- Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore <http://www.nps.gov/slbe/planyourvisit/things2do.htm>

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About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 394 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov.

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.