



The Modern-Day Mather Hike: *Healthy Parks Healthy People* **A micro-grant opportunity to engage parks and health leaders** **through inspired hikes in America's parks**

Background: Stephen Mather, the first Director of the National Park Service, was a visionary and early advocate for the preservation and conservation movements. Starting in 1915, the year before the National Park Service was created, Mather hosted numerous backcountry trips in current-day national parks (e.g. Sequoia, Yosemite) for politicians, businessmen, journalists, and other opinion makers.ⁱ These hikes were critical for inspiring influential leaders and congressmen, generating support and funding for the National Park Service, and for promulgating Mather's vision to the American public.

Healthy Parks Healthy People: Many parks (national, state, and local) were initially created, not only to preserve landscapes, but also to promote health.ⁱⁱ In November 2012, Director Jon Jarvis established the National Park Service's *Healthy Parks Healthy People* program to rejuvenate and raise awareness for the role of public lands in improving the health of our nation. National parks are model settings to promote physical activity, healthy eating, and mental health, while also demonstrating how human health is interdependent with the health of eco-systems.^{iii iv v}

Preparing for the National Park Service Centennial: July 19-23, 2015, the National Park Service will continue to build social and financial capital on the *Healthy Parks Healthy People* movement by co-hosting the 2nd *Healthy Parks Healthy People* International Congress and EXPO with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in Atlanta, Georgia. As one event in a series leading up to the National Park Service Centennial, this event will serve as the premier international forum connecting thought leaders, practitioners, researchers, educators, foundations, agencies, organizations, and corporations to share practical and inspiring solutions that advance the role of parks and protected areas in contributing to the health and wellbeing of people and sustainability of the planet.

Program Objectives:

1. Provide a unique, low-cost forum to further energy and enthusiasm to generate new *Healthy Parks Healthy People* endeavors in parks and communities all across the nation.
2. Inspire community leaders in multiple sectors to share common ideals and values and engage in meaningful dialogue about public lands and public health.
3. Challenge community leaders both intellectually and physically.
4. Stimulate the development of innovative, inter-disciplinary demonstration projects.

Program Description: Through a competitive process, 10 microgrants (\$1,000 each) will be awarded to National Park Service parks and programs for organizing inter-disciplinary modern-day Mather hikes to promote *Healthy Parks Healthy People* discussion among community leaders. Hikes should be completed no later than September 30, 2014, include at least one overnight stay, and have no more than 20 total participants. Funds may be used to help defray the costs of travel, and/or staff time to organize the event. All awarded national parks and programs will be recognized on InsideNPS and the *Healthy Parks Healthy People* website as Modern-Day Mather Hike grant recipients and health promotion pioneers.

Deliverables: A final report summarizing the Mather Hike/meeting, including a participant list and all project ideas discussed and next steps, will be due on November 15, 2014. Outstanding and innovative project ideas will be considered for FY15 implementation grants (up to \$5K) from the National Park Service's Healthy Parks Healthy People program.

Submission Guidelines: Interested staff representing National Park Service parks and programs should e-mail a brief proposal (no more than 2 pages) and a letter of support from the park superintendent/program manager to Diana Allen by COB, June 13, 2014. The proposal should contain the following elements:

- Name of park/program and region
- Hike leader and contact information
- Hike details, including dates, trail names, round-trip distance, and overnight location(s)
- Brief description of what the NPS unit hopes to gain from this meeting (limit 100 words)
- List of organizations committed to participate (include names and titles of specific attendees, if known)
- Amount and source of additional funds, if any

Selection Criteria: Proposals will be reviewed and scored using the following criteria:

- Breadth of organizations committed to participate (4 points)
- Clarity of the proposal (3 points)
- Additional funds secured from partners (3 points)
- Achieving overall diversity among awardees (e.g. park regions, park settings) (2 points)

Notification: Grant awardees will be notified of selection no later than June 23, 2014.

Funding Source: NPS Office of Public Health

Contact Information: Diana Allen, Chief, Healthy Parks Healthy People, NPS Office of Public Health
phone: 202.360.6251 email: diana_allen@nps.gov

ⁱ National Park Service. Parks and people: Preserving our past for the future. Available at:

http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/sontag/sontag3.htm.

ⁱⁱ Fisher T. Frederick Law Olmsted and the campaign for public health. Available at:

<http://places.designobserver.com/entry.html?entry=15619>

ⁱⁱⁱ Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005. Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Biodiversity Synthesis. World Resources Institute, Washington, DC. Available at:

<http://www.millenniumassessment.org/documents/document.354.aspx.pdf>.

^{iv} Stolton, S., & Dudley, N. (Eds.). (2010). *Vital Sites: The Contribution of Protected Areas to Human Health: a Research Report by WWF and Equilibrium Research*. WWF. Available at:

http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/gpap_home/gpap_solutions/gpap_arguments/?11475/Vital-sites--The-contribution-of-protected-areas-to-Human-Health

^v Blanck, H. M., Allen, D., Bashir, Z., Gordon, N., Goodman, A., Merriam, D., & Rutt, C. (2012). Let's go to the park today: the role of parks in obesity prevention and improving the public's health. *Childhood Obesity (Formerly Obesity and Weight Management)*, 8(5), 423-428. Available at:

<http://online.liebertpub.com/doi/abs/10.1089/chi.2012.0085.blan>