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Welcome everyone to this first-of-a-kind webinar by the US Forest Service about the volunteer program initiatives and an update on current research and new research that's been done. My name is Rich Dolish. I'm gonna be the moderator of this two-part section of this interesting and informative webinar. I'm gonna turn the program over to Jim Bedwell, who is your director of – I'm sorry. I gotta get my own notes in order. We're gonna – thank you. He's the director of the Recreation Heritage and Volunteer Resources section for the Forest Service. Jim's gonna set the stage and give us a brief introduction. I do want to just make a couple of extra comments before I turn it over to Jim about my role in this. Those of you who don't know me, I'm the chief of public policy for the National Recreation and Park Association. I worked 30 years in parks and natural resource management, and prior to coming to NRPA I was the director of the Forest Wildlife and Heritage Service for Maryland Department of Natural Resources, so I've had a long-standing and direct tie to forest management and natural resources management, and especially public participation in programming and the volunteer service and employee, and I bring a perspective that may be a little different than those of you in the service, and there are a number of volunteers on the call today. I'd like to note that many of the staff have invited their volunteer partners to be here. We're very excited to have you all here, and this is the first-of-a-kind dialogue that's gonna begin from this. So let me turn it over to Jim to set the stage and talk about the collaborative work that's been done and the research that you're gonna hear about and the work that's being unveiled for the first time. Jim?

Okay. Thanks Rich, and let me start out thanking you for moderating this session. NRPA's participation in this event I think underscores the importance of potential of volunteers in all parks and public land management. Let me also welcome everyone out there who has joined the session. Forest Service employees, other federal partners, and volunteer partner organizations alike. This momentous occasion is one that I've been looking forward to for a long time, quite some time, and I don't use the word momentous very often and very lightly. I say that because of the hundreds of you that are out there across the country tapping into your caring and commitment to volunteerism using technology to communicate in a low-impact manner. This is the first time we used the webinar of this scale both internally and externally. We can reach more people this way by getting them together and have a significantly lower environmental impact, and of course, as Rich mentioned, people will be able to access this presentation for some time to come that couldn't be here today. It's momentous because of the approach we're taking. It's also momentous because it's a key step in carrying out the vision that the US Forest Service leadership had about two years ago when they transferred the leadership through volunteer youth and hosted programs from a human resources function, a resource area. That was based on the fact that over 80% of volunteer work that's done in the area of recreation trails and wilderness areas and leadership thought that we needed a new perspective, a fresh start. Over 100 Forest Service employees and partners gathered there to explore the future of this program, and there was a tremendous

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energy and feeling that you all wanted to participate in helping move these program areas ahead, and we are following through on that. Finally, it's momentous because I believe this provides a sound foundation to build toward a more inclusive volunteer program thoroughly integrated in the mission of the Forest Service. It's not often that we take the time to self-assess, look at other models, and examine motivations of volunteers or any program before we set forth in a strategy. We've taken the time to do that.

I talked about Salt Lake. I want to share some things that have happened since that meeting. First, we've moved ahead with a number of staff changes, or we have them in progress. Previous staff that led the program has either retired or moved on to different career opportunities. It's taken us too long to refill positions, but just last week we filled the leadership position for the partnership and volunteer program with Bill Woodland. We're very excited to have Bill and have his Forest Service experience, his determination and tenacity and commitment to moving this forward. Bill will talk at the end of the program with some closing remarks. We also expect to have two additional staffing announcements before the end of the year, two GS13s that will work under Bill and the volunteers and host the program orientation. We do retain Tim Beedi, who I believe is on the call, out in Salt Lake City who handles the Boy Scout partnership, a very important partnership we have. So that too is momentous. We are moving ahead with some significant staff changes, and again, too long in coming but we're excited to have them here. Second thing and the primary focus

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of this call is in anticipation of the new staffing coming on board, we've been taking a hard look at how our programs are functioning now and what opportunities we have for the future. We've been evaluating ways to strengthen and enhance our relationships with our volunteer and youth focus partners. Today's session is to share with all of you the work we've been doing so that we have a mutual and solid understanding of the goals and the potential avenues that we're considering. As Rich said, we don't have all the answers for you today. That's not the intent. We do have the information to share and an invitation for all of you to continue to work with us as we develop a strategy and elevate this program into the future.

So before talking about the agenda and the remaining objectives, I want to thank Martha Katel, assistant director for Recreation Heritage and Volunteer Resources who has, since Gail Vanderby's retirement as deputy, taken this program in her hands and with tremendous spirit and determination carried it to this point, and she's been aided by two regional directors, Anne Christiansen in Region 8 and Liz Close in Region 4, and those three have worked together under Martha's leadership to make everything you're gonna see today possible. It wouldn't have happened if they hadn't been there, so thank you Martha and Anne and Liz.

So what did we do? We did an internal assessment of the program from an agency and partner perspective. Lisa Macnic working in Region 4 under Liz, the presidential management fellow, came into the Washington office last winter and

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initiated an extensive survey of internal and external employees and partners, and she'll present her findings about the agency capability and challenges. We also looked at research that has been done on volunteer and agency capabilities as a baseline and a benchmark, and Jim Apshire of Pacific Southwest Station will share that work with us, which gives some historical baseline and depth to Lisa's presentation. Finally, we contracted with a private sector consultant, CHM, to explore the way volunteer programs are delivered in other agencies and organizations and how those might be good examples and might inform options for change in how the Forest Service engages partners in the area of volunteer and youth programs. That work will be summarized by Margaret Bailey and Chris Komar of CHM. So there's a lot of work here. It's a strong foundation, as I said. Seldom do we step back and really look in depth of where we are and look very realistically, but that's what you're gonna hear today. So we hope you enjoy this afternoon's presentations, I know I certainly will, and regard them as that foundation for a strong future. Let me just recognize again our appreciation to our partners who helped spark this in Salt Lake City, who participated in the surveys, and we look for continuing working with you into the future. We're gonna share some of the things we're proud of, but we're also gonna expose some of our warts, some of our weaknesses and shortcomings, because I think that's part of a realistic assessment of where we are and where we need to go, so bear with us on that. With that, Rich, I'll turn it back to you and look forward to the presentation.

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Thank you Jim. Please, to all I apologize for not giving Jim's pedigree when I introduced him. I had a great introduction. I think all of you know him, and he really brings some fresh new leadership to the Forest Service in his position, and we've really been appreciative of working with him. External partners at other national organizations see a new spirit, new direction there, and he's had a great career and a great job, so you need to get to know him if you don't already, and Jim, I apologize. We'll introduce everybody else with their bios as we go.

We're gonna bring Margaret on to the call with me. We are gonna talk a little bit about trends and I'm gonna set the stage with a little bit of a perspective about how we see trends and the increasing importance of volunteerism and the strategic use and management of volunteers by public sector agencies, but first let me introduce Margaret Bailey, the vice president of CHM Government Services. I've known Margaret now for about 10 years, and if you had to connect an image of somebody to a person, Margaret and the Energizer Bunny like are interchangeable. She's de-fatigable. She has an enormous store of energy and self-confidence and determination. She has worked over 20 years in hospitality operations and consulting experience, formally worked with PricewaterhouseCoopers and other independent consulting work and concentrated on advising public sector clients and their hospitality, recreational, real estate holdings. In a present role at CHM Government Services she oversees client services for the US Forest Service recreation and recreation programs, the National Parks Service concession program, Department of

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Defense welfare and recreation programs, and is active in the state level and dealing with a number of state park agencies. She is a top-notch – she has a really big picture or view of how market financial and investment analyses for visitor-based operations need to function in the public sector. She's got a comprehensive knowledge of all phases of it and has a strategic vision as well that goes along with that. Her primary focus in her present effort is adapting private sector best practices for public agencies, managing visitor services in natural, cultural, and historical environments. So welcome Margaret.

Thank you Rich.

I want to just briefly kind of, as I said, set the stage in a national context of where are we right now, and many of you have heard the expression we're in the new normal. We're now dealing with new normal conditions, and you know, when I first heard that expression I said how would you, you know, that's just some cutesy way of trying to pin a label on what's happening, but from our perspective, the National Recreation and Park Association, dealing with everybody from the municipal and local up through the county, the regional, the special district, the state level, and the federal land managing agencies, we really are in a different frame of reference today, and it happened very fast and caught some unaware that it was happening in the way it did. Budget conditions and economic realities that we now face and we will face for the future are gonna be with us now. This is the normal of what we have to deal with. The conditions that we have, and you

know, you in the federal estate I think you're very lucky because the stimulus, the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, put a shot of resources into your budgets that are not gonna be sustainable, but they're great while they last. Make the best of them. Those things are not happening at the state level and at the local level, and in fact, the state natural resource and park management agencies are telling us their situation is gonna get even worse. The next budget that comes out for FY-11 is gonna kill them. Some of the states, as you know, you've heard much about California's troubles, Pennsylvania just took an across-the-board 20% cut to their state parks department. These are gonna be reflected at the state, regional, and local level, making it all the more important and all the more vital that every public sector agency looks at its volunteers and the use of volunteers and the management of volunteers as a strategic asset, and really, you can't fulfill your mission if you accept that you're gonna have the status quo and expect that that will sustain you and carry you to the future. We have seen it at multiple levels and we've seen some great examples of success and models for the future of how public sector agencies can think in new ways and top to bottom look at how you utilize volunteers, how you manage them, how you empower them and equip them for the future, I think you're gonna learn some exciting things today and you're gonna have a lot of questions, and mind you, please be sure to submit your questions on the chat line and we will deal with them as they come up, but Margaret's gonna talk a little bit about some national trends and go into where are we right now and what is the state of things to be in the near future. Margaret?

Thanks Rich. Good afternoon everybody. Thank you for the introduction Rich. It's a pleasure to meet many of you. I know some of you I see by your names. Other ones, it's a pleasure to meet you on the phone. Again, I am hugely enthusiastic about the opportunity that this webinar is reaching, both those directly linked in and those who have chosen to assemble to be part of it. As Rich said, I'm trying to give you a context on a lot of this information that I am presenting to you today. In these slides is provided more detail in some of the web links that we are gonna go ahead and refer you to. Those were provided in advance along with the research, but a lot of – I'm just giving you a very high level summary to set the stage. What I've got up here is the data that is collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Basically the Bureau of Labor Statistics for over the last 50 years collects a variety of data from the American public in their current population survey, and they've been collecting information on volunteering since about 1989. In 2002 they set a new benchmark as far as how they were gonna benchmark the data going forward. So what you're seeing here is that when they do this survey they ask questions like do you volunteer, if you're over the age of 16 do you volunteer, how much time do you volunteer, where do you volunteer and what sort of things do you do, and again, I'm just giving you the high-level overview of some of these key issues, but there's a lot of interesting data out there for those of you who are particularly curious about the nature and the interest of volunteers, and I'll be going through that today. What you see on this chart is really two things. You basically see that while

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volunteering overall is down from the 2004 level of 64.5 million people in the United States over the age of 16 were volunteering. You'll see that there was an increase of approximately a million people from 2000 to 2008. That's a positive trend. This range of about 27% is pretty much what we've seen historically. It was about 28% back in 2002. This is a national piece of data. Some of the data that is available to you in the data that we talked about in the link is how this varies by state. The interesting thing too is that of this 30%, about 1/3 of these people are willing to contribute over 100 hours, so the other thing that I think about when I see about this volume of volunteers is that it's really good that the capacity is out there, but as many of you have experienced, and we'll say it's not necessarily the capacity that's the issue, it's the capacity in the right places with the right training and attitudes and the resources behind it that make the most difference, so I'm not naïve to the reality that capacity is only part of the issue.

The next slide is also a trend line, and I made this observation that the benchmark for volunteer age groups for volunteer survey data was established in 2002, but there is some 1989 data available, and you'll see that, again, 2004 was in fact the bell weather year and 2008 is pretty much matching the trend line. However, what is probably as interesting to see, and many of you either have children or are in communities where there are high schools and there are young children. One of the most significant jumps and changes in volunteering has occurred actually in this age group of 16-24. It has become, in many school districts, a mandatory requirement. Colleges and universities are expanding on

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the concept of community and civic engagement, so that's been a big jump between historic and now, even if the data isn't completely aligned from the data set, but the trend line is clearly there. The other place where you appear to see the jump is in that 45-54-year-old age cohorts and the 55-65-year-old cohorts. Those have been increasing. A lot of the research says that some of the reasons this 45-54-year-old cohort is jumping is because as schools and budgets and things are becoming tighter you're seeing increases in parents volunteering in a variety of community-based programs. I guess the main thing I would say as you look at this slide is to ask yourself the question both as a nonprofit entity or as the agency representative is are you seeing a distribution of these cohorts in your program, and if you're not, why not, and if you can, why not start thinking about strategies to engage a more diverse set of volunteers. The other thing that's really important here is to recognize kind of how these lines work, people increase in their interest in volunteering and then it slightly dies off. So as you think about your own volunteer groups right now and you look at their age cohorts, you need to be thinking about your own volunteer pipe line of succession climbing, and we'll talk a little bit later about some of your nonprofit partners, about making sure they continue to adapt to volunteer needs.

These last few slides, one of the things they ask in the survey is why don't people volunteer, and the reasons are – the top five reasons are put here. Again, more in-depth discussion of these is in the research that's available to you. I think the most important thing that we heard from your partners is these last two items,

that many volunteers are feeling that the actual skills that they bring to the table, their own professional expertise, some people want to provide those services in their area of expertise, and some want to get as far away from them as possible, but are you even thinking about asking them about their highest and best use for you. then the other issue is that when people come to volunteerism, and we'll talk a little bit about this later as well, they're looking for something themselves, how can they grow and develop, and it's programs that aren't providing these last two that we've heard pretty clearly from many of your partners.

Finally, this gets to this whole issue of what are the types of volunteers, and most of you who are dealing with nonprofits in this world, and many of you who are dealing with large-scale volunteers realize that there are all types of volunteers. The different types of volunteers that we're talking about here, probably the two that we've seen the largest growth in and some interesting examples are the with the growth of technology and corporate triple bottom line issues is the increase in the virtual volunteering and corporate volunteering, and I'll give you two examples of both of these. On the virtual side there's a company that was started up called the extraordinaires, and it basically allowed people to take actions to support causes they want to do when they have dead time. It's like micro-volunteering. So for example, the Smithsonian has had people putting identification tags on photos. Caboom has gotten the public walking around on their blackberries using their GPS to identify playgrounds so they can continue their inventory, and when I think of all the inventory issues that you have as an

agency, it's really an interesting perspective to think about how to do this microscopic episodic volunteering. The corporate volunteering, many of you possibly have seen this in the press. Disney has basically this year launched a partnership with the hands-on network where you give a day you get a day. Basically, simply, individuals register with a nonprofit that are registered with the hands-on network, and you can in fact become registered with a hands-on network for this, the people go ahead and do their volunteer activities and they in essence get a free one-day admission to Disney World. Now granted, they're not located all over the country, but when a company decides the scale and Disney recognizes that there's a value proposition in talking about corporate stewardship and corporate civic responsibility, you know that this is an immerging trend.