



MEDIA CONTACTS:

New River Gorge National River
Julena Campbell
304-465-6523
julena_campbell@nps.gov

National Park Foundation
Alanna Sobel
202-796-2538
asobel@nationalparks.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New River Gorge National River Receives 2016 Active Trails Grant from the National Park Foundation

WASHINGTON, DC (March 3, 2016) – New River Gorge National River is one of 25 national parks selected to receive a 2016 [Active Trails](#) grant from the National Park Foundation, the official charity of America’s national parks. Through a unique partnership with Active Southern West Virginia, this grant will bring a multitude of wellness programming to Camp Brookside, an emerging environmental education center located in Summers County, West Virginia. The funding will be used to both purchase equipment and train community volunteers to teach free public programs at Camp Brookside, including outdoor yoga, tai chi, stand up paddleboarding, fly fishing, archery and various guided hikes, including owl prowls, bird watches and plant identification hikes, in addition to wellness-focused and heritage-style cooking classes.

Active Southern West Virginia volunteers will receive free certification classes in exchange for teaching one class a month at Camp Brookside. To become an Active Southern West Virginia volunteer, contact Melanie Seiler at mseiler@activeswv.com or 304-254-8488. All classes taught by Active Southern West Virginia volunteers will be free and open to the public. Classes will start this summer and span all ages, with a focus on offering the local community an opportunity to try something new in their national park. New River Gorge National River Superintendent Trish Kicklighter stated that, “Having a national park in your backyard provides a positive impact to the area’s economy and a valuable contribution to the quality of life for local residents. This partnership between Active Southern West Virginia and the National Park Service highlights the possibilities to improve the quality of life here.”

Now in its eighth year, the Active Trails program supports healthy living by getting people out and active in national parks through projects promoting recreation and exercise.

Since 2008, the National Park Foundation has granted more than \$3.35 million through its Active Trails program. As of early 2015, Active Trails has engaged more than 12,000 volunteers and 740 project partners.

“From Zumba and yoga, to paddling along the seashore, to guided hikes for veterans, our national parks are places for healthy living, wellness, fun, and healing,” said Susan Newton, senior vice president of grants & programs at the National Park Foundation. “Thanks to our Active Trails program, we’re able to help people from all backgrounds discover how they can actively enjoy our national parks in ways that speak to their unique interests.”

“National parks, both urban and rural, can provide opportunities to improve one’s physical and mental health,” said Sara Newman, Director of the Office of Public Health at the National Park Service. “The scientific evidence is mounting to demonstrate that physical activity in the outdoors can lead to numerous health benefits, and we are proud our parks are a health resource for this nation. These

National Park Foundation grants will help all visitors experience our parks as places to recreate, inspire, reflect, and be active.”

The entire list of the 2016 Active Trails recipients can be found at www.nationalparks.org/our-work/programs/active-trails.

The Active Trails projects are great examples of the countless ways there are to [#FindYourPark](#). Launched in March 2015, Find Your Park/Encuentra Tu Parque is a public awareness and education movement to inspire people from all backgrounds to connect with, celebrate, and support America’s national parks and community-based programs. Celebrating the National Park Service Centennial and setting the stage for the Service’s next 100 years, #FindYourPark invites people to discover and share their own unique connections to our nation’s natural landscapes, vibrant culture, and rich history.

The National Park Foundation wishes to thank The Coca-Cola Company and The Coca-Cola Foundation for their generous support of the Active Trails program.



ABOUT THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America’s 410 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Visit us at www.nps.gov/neri, on Facebook www.facebook.com/newriversgongenps, Twitter www.twitter.com/newriversnps, and YouTube www.youtube.com/newriversnps.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION

The National Park Foundation is the official charity of America’s national parks and nonprofit partner to the National Park Service. Chartered by Congress in 1967, the National Park Foundation raises private funds to help PROTECT more than 84 million acres of national parks through critical conservation and preservation efforts, CONNECT all Americans with their incomparable natural landscapes, vibrant culture and rich history, and INSPIRE the next generation of park stewards. Find out more and become a part of the national park community at www.nationalparks.org.