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### **NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION AND PBS CELEBRATE NATIONAL PARKS WEEK NYC**

Featuring “Feel Free: A National Parks Celebration in Central Park” which includes clips from Ken Burns’s upcoming PBS film “THE NATIONAL PARKS: AMERICA’S BEST IDEA” and musical performances from Eric Benet, Gavin DeGraw, Jose Feliciano, Carole King, Alison Krauss and Union Station featuring Jerry Douglas and Peter Dinklage

**NEW YORK, NEW YORK; AUGUST 24, 2009** – The nonprofit **National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA)**,

**New York City Department of Parks & Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe, filmmaker Ken Burns and PBS**

announced today the launch of National Parks Week NYC, a week-long series of events in New York City, September 19-27, 2009, featuring an evening of music and film in Central Park’s East Meadow on Wednesday, September 23 starting at 7:00pm with highlights from Ken Burns’s upcoming PBS series “THE NATIONAL PARKS: AMERICA’S BEST IDEA.”

During National Parks Week NYC, a series of public events will celebrate the rich history of our national parks and launch a national dialogue about the future of the parks as they enter their second century. A number of park-related events will take place in New York City, including a green carpet gala on Tuesday, September 22 for friends of the parks to celebrate the cause. National Parks Week NYC will provide countless opportunities to entertain and educate the whole family, from a Lantern Tour of Fort Wadsworth to Grant’s Tomb After Dark and an Evening Tour of Liberty Island.

The signature event of the week, “Feel Free: A National Parks Celebration in Central Park,” will feature highlights from Ken Burns’s new PBS documentary, “THE NATIONAL PARKS: AMERICA’S BEST IDEA,” and musical acts by an array of talented performers. The live show from East Meadow in Central Park will be shared via satellite to PBS affiliates and other partners assembled in various locations around the country. New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg is expected to kickoff the evening and Department of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar will speak, along with other dignitaries.

“As we prepare for the centennial of our national parks, we invite New Yorkers to join us at this celebration of these national treasures,” said NPCA President Tom Kiernan. “Our national parks preserve some of Americas most stunning landscapes and commemorate some of the country’s most important ideas and ideals, from national icons like

Yellowstone to New York's own Statue of Liberty and Governors Island. As the Park Service enters its second century, we must ensure this legacy lives on for our children and grandchildren to enjoy."

PBS President and CEO Paula Kerger said, "Like Ken Burns's other works, including 'Baseball' and 'Jazz,' 'The National Parks' pays tribute to an institution that is uniquely American. In their newest series, Ken and collaborator Dayton Duncan show how our parks are built on a notion as radical as the Constitution itself – the thought that America's most beautiful landscapes should be preserved not just for the wealthy and the powerful, but for all citizens. If ever we forget that we all own a stake in our parks, this series will remind us. PBS is proud to work with Ken and Dayton on this series, and we are thankful to the National Parks Conservation Association and our other partners for their support of the 'Feel Free' event."

"On behalf of the Mayor Bloomberg and the city of New York, I am proud to help launch National Parks Week NYC and co-host a celebration of the National Parks in Central Park's East Meadow," said Parks & Recreation Commissioner Benepe. "New York City's spectacular national parks allow residents and visitors to enjoy the outdoors, and provide a healthy and serene respite from city life. Thanks to the National Parks Conservation Association, Ken Burns and PBS, New Yorkers will have the opportunity to experience the magnificent national parks of our entire country and find out how they can help make them even better."

### **National Parks Second Century Commission: Examining Our National Parks and Their Role in America's Future**

Coinciding with National Parks Week NYC, the independent National Parks Second Century Commission will present report findings and recommendations that are the culmination of a year-long investigation and discussion about national parks, their values and role in society. This report will be released September 21 in Washington, DC and will offer a vision and strategic path for the future of the national parks, including recommendations for actions on Park Service policy, programs including resource preservation and education, funding, organizational issues and future growth of the National Park System.

The threats America's national parks and monuments faced decades ago, as profiled in Burns's film, are many of the same threats they face today, including chronic funding shortfalls, air and water pollution, demands for inappropriate uses of parkland and the trade-offs between increased access and damage to the natural or cultural treasures they preserve. During National Parks Week NYC, NPCA and its supporters aim to raise awareness of the challenges to our national parks—and the opportunity for each of us to help protect them for our children and grandchildren.

For more information on National Parks Week NYC and the 'Feel Free' event, go to [www.FeelFree.org](http://www.FeelFree.org).

### **About National Parks Conservation Association**

Since 1919, the nonpartisan National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting our national parks. With 325,000 members and supporters, NPCA is the largest independent, membership organization dedicated to protecting the natural, cultural, and historic treasures of our National Park System. Our mission is to protect and enhance our national parks today for our children and grandchildren tomorrow. For more information, visit: [www.npca.org](http://www.npca.org).

### **About Ken Burns and “THE NATIONAL PARKS: AMERICA’S BEST IDEA”**

The 12-hour, six-part documentary series, directed by Burns and co-produced with his longtime colleague Dayton Duncan, who also wrote the script, is the story of an idea as uniquely American as the Declaration of Independence and just as radical: that the most special places in the nation should be preserved, not for royalty or the rich, but for everyone. As such, it follows in the tradition of Burns’s exploration of other American inventions, such as baseball and jazz. Filmed over the course of more than six years in some of nature’s most spectacular locales — from Acadia to Yosemite, Yellowstone to the Grand Canyon, the Everglades of Florida to the Gates of the Arctic in Alaska — the documentary is nonetheless a story of people from every conceivable background: rich and poor; famous and unknown; soldiers and scientists; natives and newcomers; idealists, artists and entrepreneurs; people who were willing to devote themselves to saving some precious portion of the land they loved, and in doing so, reminded their fellow citizens of the full meaning of democracy.

“THE NATIONAL PARKS: AMERICA’S BEST IDEA” is a production of Florentine Films and WETA Washington, DC. Director/producer: Ken Burns. Producer/Writer: Dayton Duncan. Co-producers: Craig Mellish, Julie Dunfey and David McMahon. Supervising Editor: Paul Barnes. Episode Editors: Paul Barnes, Erik Ewers and Craig Mellish. Cinematography: Buddy Squires, with Allen Moore, Lincoln Else and Ken Burns. Narrator: Peter Coyote.

### **About PBS**

PBS, with its 356 member stations, offers all Americans – from every walk of life – the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and online content. Each month, PBS reaches more than 124 million people on-air and online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature and public affairs; hear diverse viewpoints; and take front-row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS’ broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry’s most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. PBS’ premier children’s TV programming and Web site, [pbskids.org](http://pbskids.org), are parents’ and teachers’ most trusted partners in inspiring and nurturing curiosity and love of learning in children. More information about PBS is available at [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org), one of the leading dot-org Web sites on the Internet.

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