



# NEWS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 21, 2008

## MEDIA CONTACT

Scott VanDeman  
Director of Communications  
Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and  
Community Service (Volunteer Florida)  
Telephone: (850) 251-2834  
E-mail: [scott@volunteerflorida.org](mailto:scott@volunteerflorida.org)

### **VOLUNTEER FLORIDA HONORS FLORIDA STATE PARKS WITH AWARDS FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION IN VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

*Volunteer Florida's Inclusion Council recognizes Florida State Parks for outreach and recruitment, inclusion, engagement and retention of volunteers with disabilities. ...*

**ORLANDO** — The Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service (Volunteer Florida) and the Volunteer Florida Inclusion Council recognized the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Florida State Parks with two awards for excellence in engaging people with disabilities in AmeriCorps and volunteer programs. The awards were presented Nov. 20 as part of the "Building Communities from the Inside Out" dinner program during a three-day conference for AmeriCorps Program Directors held in Orlando.

The conference is an annual gathering of Florida's AmeriCorps Program Directors and representatives from disability organizations across the state. The purpose of the conference is to allow participants to develop new ideas and partnerships that engage more people with disabilities in service and volunteering.

"We are very grateful to be recognized by Volunteer Florida for inclusion practices within the park service's volunteer programs," said Florida State Parks Director Mike Bullock. "Working alongside park staff, volunteers play a significant role in achieving the mission of the Florida

(more)



Park Service and it is important that people from all walks of life are included in the great volunteer opportunities state parks offer.”

The Volunteer Florida Inclusion Council, formed in 2006, brings together disability and national service professionals from across Florida to encourage the engagement of people with disabilities in volunteer service. The Council chose to honor Florida State Parks as the result of a statewide “Better Communities Include Everyone” survey on disability inclusion practices distributed in April.

“I congratulate Florida State Parks for their commitment to including persons with disabilities in volunteer service activities,” said Volunteer Florida CEO Wendy Spencer. “The environment is a priority for Governor Crist, and Florida State Parks has shown that *everyone* can contribute to preserving and restoring Florida’s natural treasures.”

The Governor’s Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service (Volunteer Florida) was established in 1994 by the Florida Legislature to administer grants under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. The Commission grants funds to Florida AmeriCorps and National Service programs; encourages volunteerism for everyone from youth to seniors to people with disabilities; supports the Governor’s initiatives through creating innovative volunteer programs; and promotes volunteerism for disaster preparedness and response.

###

[www.volunteerflorida.org](http://www.volunteerflorida.org)

