



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Mount Rushmore National Memorial
13000 Highway 244
Keystone, South Dakota 57751

IN REPLY REFER TO:

C5(MORU)

March 29, 2012

Memorandum

To: Michael T. Reynolds, Regional Director, Midwest Region

From: Cheryl A. Schreier, Superintendent, Mount Rushmore National Memorial

Subject: Reduction of disposable plastic water bottles in the park

In response to Director Jarvis' Policy Memorandum 11-03 regarding Disposable Plastic Water Bottle Recycling and Reduction, we are pleased to report that through our concessioner, Xanterra Parks and Resorts, a program will be implemented here at Mount Rushmore National Memorial where non-enhanced bottled water will no longer be sold and a hydration station installed for the filling of reusable water bottles. The hydration station is scheduled to be placed into service this spring with a target implementation date of May 1, 2012. Visitors will have an opportunity to purchase reusable containers in a variety of styles, BPA-free, from the more affordable models in the \$5.00 to \$8.00 range upwards to a more deluxe stainless steel model for approximately \$15.00. Additionally, visitors will continue to have an opportunity to purchase bottles of Smart Water or Vitamin Water, which are the enhanced water options.

While this effort will not completely eliminate the sale of beverages in plastic bottles at the park, it will reduce the amount of plastic bottles in the solid waste stream by more than 30,000 plastic bottles per year. The park and concessioner will continue their aggressive recycling program in order to manage the balance generated through the sale of enhanced water products, juices, soda, etc.

In terms of analyzing the impact of this new reduction program, the concessioner estimates that their revenue stream will be impacted by approximately 20% based on the loss of non-enhanced bottled water; however, the concessioner will realize an off-set in revenue by the sale of reusable containers, and the continued sale of enhanced water options. The offset is not something the concessioner is able to forecast or measure at this time, but will be monitoring that impact for annual evaluation purposes. The infrastructure costs for the hydration station are minimal – estimated at approximately \$3,000 for its installation. Operational costs will depend on usage, but are estimated by the concessioner to also be negligible.

The park and our concession partner will work in concert to proactively educate visitors on the importance of the park and partner's recycling and other "green" program efforts currently in place or being developed. Additionally, promotional efforts will also focus on the benefits of the reusable containers and the use of the hydration station, the environmental impacts of their purchasing decisions, and the rationale behind the reduction of the sale of non-enhanced water in plastic bottles.

In order to measure and evaluate the perception of the water station program by our visitors to Mount Rushmore, in addition to their current visitor comment cards, the concessioner will produce a comment card specific to the hydration station service and will position it near the station for ease and convenience. All responses will be shared with the NPS.

As Director Jarvis noted in his memo, "sustainability is a signature of the National Park Service". Mount Rushmore National Memorial is committed, now more than ever, to being an example in this area and fulfilling its Green Parks Plan, which is currently in the process of being developed. Mount Rushmore is also working toward accomplishing the "Go Green" goal as called out in the *Call to Action*, and, we are completing the needed steps to become a Climate Friendly Park. The NPS team at Mount Rushmore is proud to have this particular opportunity to partner with Xanterra, one of the leading concession partners in terms of sustainability and protecting the environment.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or would like additional information.