



Take Pride In America Program

Some Questions and Answers



*Department of the Interior
Secretary, Gale Norton*

Q. What is the Take Pride In America Initiative?

A. The Take Pride In America Initiative is a national campaign to encourage Federal, state, and local public and private partnerships and volunteer service to protect public parks, recreation areas, and cultural resources. Its primary focus will be to encourage citizen stewards to dedicate time and service to help protect and restore resources and facilities in their area.

successful local stewardship, clean up, and restoration projects. An example might be a local soft drink distributor providing complimentary beverages to volunteers who are working on a community improvement project. Corporations and businesses could also sponsor the awards programs public agencies establish to recognize especially good and beneficial projects. And businesses and corporations can recruit their employees and consumers to take part in local Take Pride In America volunteer opportunities.

Q. Why is this being launched now?

A. President George W. Bush has made a strong commitment to encouraging citizens to public service. This initiative, part of the President's USA Freedom Corps volunteer service initiative, represents range of opportunities for citizens to take active roles in their communities. America's public parks, recreation areas, and cultural sites are more popular than ever and continue to attract many visitors. In some instances, recreational uses are up dramatically. Take Pride In America can help mobilize much needed volunteer efforts and create a new synergy in addressing Federal, state, and local resource and recreation needs.

Q. Is the Take Pride In America Initiative related to the President's call to volunteer service?

A. Yes. The President recognizes that public lands, parks, playgrounds and recreation areas afford an excellent opportunity for citizens and communities to demonstrate local pride, initiative, and stewardship. The new public lands program will help foster innovative partnerships and volunteerism on public lands as part of the President's USA Freedom Corps initiative.

Q. How can corporations and private industry participate?

A. The private sector can participate in a number of ways. First and foremost, contributions (including in-kind efforts) will be needed to launch

Q. Wasn't there an earlier Take Pride In America initiative?

A. Yes, in 1986 President Ronald Reagan launched the first Take Pride In America. All 50 states participated, along with hundreds of local communities and private corporations and countless citizens.

Between 1986 and 1992, the Take Pride In America program was credited with



generating more than 10 million hours of volunteer service to our public lands.

Q. Will this renewed initiative be similar to the old Take Pride In America?

A. There will be many similarities in goals and approaches. But the renewed program will strive to be even more inclusive and far-reaching, seeking to embrace groups and individuals who may not have been touched by the initial Take Pride In America effort.

For example, the effort will reach out to community and faith-based groups. Church and religiously-affiliated organizations provide extraordinary contributions to American society. President Bush believes our community and faith-based organizations can be valuable and highly effective partners in addressing public lands and facilities renewal projects in urban and rural settings alike. In addition, the renewed effort will reach out to inner city groups, to offer them opportunities to participate in outdoor and land stewardship experiences.

Take Pride In America will have two goals: 1) to inspire more volunteer service on public lands and at public spaces; and 2) to generate volunteer service projects that help protect, restore, and maintain public lands and enhance visitor enjoyment of these places.

Q. The earlier Take Pride In America developed a very visible and prestigious national awards program. What about President Bush's initiative?

A. Current plans call for many levels of recognition, from local community awards to State awards to national recognition. One of the chief features of the renewed Take Pride In America will be the recognition of individuals who

have made exceptional contributions of time and service. With Take Pride, individuals who contribute 4,000 hours of public service will earn a new Presidential Take Pride In America Award.

Q. These are challenging financial times – how will a program like this be funded?

A. The President's budget request for 2004 seeks \$1.1 million for the Department of the Interior to staff and coordinate the government wide Take Pride In America effort. But not all of the Take Pride In America investment must be borne by public funding sources. We believe that many responsible corporate entities will come forward to demonstrate their commitment to good environmental stewardship and community involvement.

Q. So there will be fund raising?

A. What we envision are true partnerships. Public and private sources will be asked to provide a fair and appropriate share to this initiative that will have, cumulatively, some extraordinary national benefits.

Q. How do we get additional information about the Take Pride In America Initiative?

A. Information about Take Pride In America is available at www.takepride.gov, the Department of the Interior website www.doi.gov, and at the USA Freedom Corps website www.usafreedomcorps.gov