



## Media Information

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### STUDY REVEALS LACK OF AWARENESS OF WASTE CHALLENGES FACING U.S. NATIONAL PARKS

#### Subaru and the National Parks Conservation Association unveil findings to help educate Americans on protecting our national treasures

Cherry Hill, N.J., Aug 16, 2016 - Subaru of America, in conjunction with National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), released survey findings indicating that a majority of Americans (59%) were unaware of the waste management challenges facing national parks across the country. As we celebrate the centennial of the National Park Service, the Subaru National Park Survey explored attitudes and behaviors of park goers, revealing that, while most are unaware, more than four in five (84%) would be willing to make a significant effort to reduce the amount of trash left in parks.

In addition to the Subaru National Park Survey, Subaru and NPCA recently concluded an in-depth waste characterization study that demonstrated that a significant portion of the waste that the National Park Service (NPS) manages nationally is brought in from outside the park – with a small range of everyday items being the biggest issue. The study found plastic waste, such as water bottles, plastic bags, non-recyclable or compostable food packaging, and paper hot cups, are the main drivers of waste sent to landfills and the biggest concern in the national parks.

NPS manages more than 100 million pounds of waste nationally, much of which is generated by serving more than 300 million park visitors per year. This number is in addition to waste managed by park concessioners, who provide accommodations, food services, retail operations and transportation to visitors. Even with numerous park programs currently in place to manage the waste such as [GreenLine News Update, WebRanger Trash Talkin'](#), and [Leave No Trace](#), the total amount of waste generated each year would fill the Statue of Liberty more than 1,800 times.

“As a longtime advocate for protecting the environment and a premier partner of the National Park Service Centennial, Subaru is more committed than ever to spreading awareness of these issues and making meaningful strides to keep our national treasures beautiful,” said Thomas J. Doll, president and chief operating officer, Subaru of America, Inc. “We hope these new studies shed light on the lack of awareness of this important issue, but also show that Americans are willing to make a concerted effort to help address it.”

#### **Waste Characterization Study**

The waste characterization study examined pilot parks Yosemite, Grand Teton and Denali to identify top drivers of waste sent to landfills. Subaru, recognized for having the first automotive assembly plant in America designated as zero landfill, has set out on a larger initiative to share its knowledge of zero landfill practices with the national parks, working

toward a goal of significantly reducing waste going into landfills. These initiatives, with the help of NPCA, NPS and park concessioners, are already making a difference. Denali has established a Zero Landfill Youth Ambassador Program to support employee and visitor education programs, Grand Teton has led the park service in dedicating employees to waste diversion, and to increase Yosemite's already high waste diversion levels, dozens of new recycling and trash containers have been installed in more high-traffic visitor locations. All three pilot parks have committed to adopting the standardized recycling labels from [Recycle Across America](#) that have been proven to increase recycling levels, reduce confusion at the bin and make it easier for park visitors to recycle correctly.

### **Subaru National Park Survey Results**

Taking the results of Subaru and NPCA's waste characterization study into account, Subaru's survey of those who have visited national parks examined their waste and recycling habits while there, explored misconceptions about the amount and types of waste generated at parks and surveyed park goers' attitudes and behavior toward helping tackle these issues.

#### ***Awareness of Waste Management Issues***

Respondents were asked about their awareness of national parks' waste management challenges and how far they would be willing to go to help.

- While many believe that Millennials are the most environmentally conscious generation, the results showed that both Generation X (57%) and Baby Boomers (58%) are 50 percent more likely than Millennials (42%) to do everything they can to help reduce park waste
- Those in the Midwest and South say they are more likely than those in the West to do everything they can to help reduce park waste

#### ***Visitor Waste and Recycling Habits***

The survey explored park visitors' knowledge and usage of recycling facilities at national parks.

- More than two-thirds (67%) of visitors make use of park recycling facilities
- Less than half of park visitors (49%) sort trash and recycling into separate containers before leaving the park
- Only two in five (40%) take their trash with them when leaving

#### ***Packaging and Water Bottle Usage***

Subaru's survey also studied what type of waste is brought into national parks by visitors and examined their willingness to change their behaviors to help reduce garbage left behind.

- More than four in five (82%) visitors consume food or drinks within parks, with slightly more than half (53%) purchased within the park
  - Millennials are more likely than older generations (65% vs. 48%) to buy food or drink inside parks
- Although more than one-third (35%) of park visitors drink from disposable water bottles, nearly four out of five (79%) visitors would support the removal of single use water bottles in national parks if it would significantly help reduce waste
- Those that utilize disposable water bottles say convenience (68%) is the number one reason for using them

### **How Visitors Can Make a Difference**

While waste is a major issue in the parks, Americans can make a difference. NPCA conducted research that included everything from analytics to dumpster-diving and have developed a set of tips that visitors can adopt to help reduce some of the biggest contributors to landfills from national parks, including paper, plastics and glass.

#### **Opt for Online**

- While paper maps can be a parks staple, there are smartphone apps that provide the same information and more. Even without cell service, some national park apps will give helpful information about where you can spot wildlife or catch a beautiful sunset.

### **Mug for the Parks**

- Bring a reusable coffee mug from home or buy one from the souvenir shop to help reduce the 58 billion paper cups are sent to America's landfills every year.

### **BYOB (Bring Your Own Bottle)**

- Americans throw away 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour. Keep a refillable water bottle on hand or buy one at gift shop, while taking advantage of convenient refilling stations around the park.

### **Ditch the Plastic Bag**

- Help reduce waste by not taking a plastic bag for your souvenirs or groceries that you bring into the parks. Instead, bring your own reusable bag or tote for your items to help eliminate plastic bag waste.

### **Take Out What You Bring In**

- Think about what you bring in. Check to see if it can be recycled or composted in the park you are visiting. If it cannot, try to take it home. It is often far easier to recycle near your home than in rural park areas.

"If visitors to national parks took steps to lessen their environmental footprint, it would make a significant difference in addressing these waste challenges," said Theresa Pierno, President and CEO of National Parks Conservation Association. "The actions we take now, whether it's drinking from reusable water bottles instead of buying plastic ones or taking out what you take into the park, will make an impact for generations to come. By working together – with parks, visitors, concessioners and Subaru – we can make meaningful progress to further reduce waste that parks send to landfills."

In the year of the National Park Service Centennial, Subaru is working with NPCA, NPS, the [National Park Foundation](#), and other partners to further promote the many programs already in place to educate visitors about ways they can decrease waste in parks, as well as explore new ways both Subaru and park visitors can help reduce waste and keep these parks beautiful for another 100 years.

For more information on the zero landfill initiative and Subaru's partnership with the national parks, visit [www.Subaru.com/Environment](http://www.Subaru.com/Environment).

### **Survey Methodology**

The Subaru National Parks Survey was conducted by Kelton Global between March 3 - 7, 2016 among 1,000 Americans 18+ who have ever visited a U.S. National Park, using an e-mail invitation and an online survey. Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results.

In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all personas in the universe represented by the sample. The margin of error for any subgroups will be slightly higher.

### **Subaru's Zero Landfill Efforts**

[Subaru of Indiana Automotive, Inc.](#) (SIA), the home of Subaru manufacturing in North America, was the first automotive assembly plant in America designated as zero landfill, achieving that status in 2004. Previously, in 2003, SIA became the first automotive plant site to be designated a Backyard Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation for wildlife such as blue heron, snapping turtles, coyote, white-tailed deer and bald eagles.

SIA employs a number of techniques to prepare its waste for reuse or recycling, such as separating food waste for composting and sending the dust produced from weld slag to a recycling facility where copper and other metals are reclaimed. Since 2000, SIA has reduced waste per unit by 55%. The Indiana plant currently produces the Subaru Legacy and Outback and this year will begin production of the Impreza model.

Over the years, SIA has shared its zero landfill techniques with hundreds of businesses, schools and organizations in order to benchmark their own zero landfill goals. The Subaru plant, which recycles 99.99% of its waste, will share its expertise in the arts of reduce, reuse and recycle with the pilot parks and their largest concessioners, including Aramark, Grand Teton Lodge Company, and Forever Resorts.

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

Since 1919, the nonpartisan National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has been the leading voice in safeguarding our national parks. NPCA and its more than one million members and supporters work together to protect and preserve our nation's natural, historical, and cultural heritage for future generations. For more information, visit [www.npca.org](http://www.npca.org).

### **About Subaru of America, Inc.**

Subaru of America, Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd. of Japan. Headquartered at a zero-landfill office in Cherry Hill, N.J., the company markets and distributes Subaru vehicles, parts, and accessories through a network of more than 620 retailers across the United States. All Subaru products are manufactured in zero-landfill production plants, and Subaru of Indiana Automotive, Inc. is the only U.S. automobile production plant to be designated a backyard wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. For additional information, visit [media.subaru.com](http://media.subaru.com).

### **National Park Service Centennial**

Subaru is also the premier vehicle partner of the National Park Foundation for the centennial of the National Park Service and Find Your Park/Encuentra Tu Parque, a public awareness and education movement that celebrates the milestone anniversary of the National Park Service in 2016 and sets the stage for the national parks' next 100 years. Find Your Park invites the public to see that a national park can be more than just a place -- it can be a feeling or a state of mind. Further, Find Your Park encourages people to find their own personal connections within the network of national parks and National Park Service programs.