



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 5, 2008

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National Park Gun Regulations Open for Public Comment

As a result of pressure from a group of U.S. Senators to change the current firearm regulations, the Department of the Interior released proposed regulation changes on April 30. These regulation changes propose allowing concealed carry of firearms based on the laws of the state where the national park is located. Public comments are requested for the proposed change in national park gun regulations.

“Basing national park gun regulations on state laws will be confusing for many parks,” said Friends of Acadia President Marla O’Byrne.

In Maine, Baxter State Park’s regulations resemble the current regulations within national parks and refuges, prohibiting the use or possession of firearms, but permitting their transportation through the park if kept in a car trunk, enclosed in a case, or otherwise inaccessible. The regulations for the State Parks and Historic Areas is less clear, prohibiting the use and possession of firearms during a certain period, but not addressing concealed weapons, specifically.

“This confusion could have a profound impact on the parks and rangers’ law enforcement abilities.” said Ms. O’Byrne.

“Friends of Acadia opposes the proposed changes to firearm safety regulations in national parks. The current regulations have served Acadia National Park and its visitors well for more than two decades. The regulations are limited, reasonable, and necessary to ensure the protection of park wildlife, visitors, and iconic American treasures,” said Ms. O’Byrne.

Groups that are oppose the change in regulations include the National Park Conservation Association, the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees and the Association of National Park Rangers. A group of seven former National Park Service directors also formally opposed the change in regulations in a letter to Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne in April.

Friends of Acadia encourages its members and other concerned individuals to comment on the proposed regulations. Each voice will have an impact on whether or not the proposed regulations are enacted. Public comment is accepted online or by mail through June 30. A link to the proposed rules and the online comment portal can be found at www.friendsofacadia.org/advocacy.shtml.

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Friends of Acadia is an independent, nonprofit organization founded in 1986. Its mission is to preserve the outstanding natural beauty, ecological vitality and cultural distinctiveness of Acadia National Park and the surrounding communities, and thereby to ensure high quality experiences for visitors and residents. Since 1995, Friends has attracted more than 3,000 members, granted \$10.5 million for park and community conservation, and makes possible the employment of 114 workers directly serving Acadia National Park.