



NOT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contacts:

Alanna Sobel, National Park Foundation, 202.354.6486, asobel@nationalparks.org

Megan Behrbaum, REI Public Affairs, 253.437.7736, mbehrba@rei.com

Lauren Pearce, Riestler for ARAMARK Parks and Destinations, 602.462.2252, lpearce@riester.com

**THE AMERICAN LATINO HERITAGE FUND ANNOUNCES CONTEST TO ENGAGE
DIVERSE AUDIENCES AT NATIONAL PARKS**

*Partnering with ARAMARK and REI, the American Latino Heritage Fund
Launches the @American_Latino Expedition*

Washington, D.C. (May 20, 2013) – The [American Latino Heritage Fund](#) (ALHF) of the [National Park Foundation](#), the official charity of America’s national parks, announced today that ALHF is launching the @American_Latino Expedition to further engage diverse audiences to explore America’s national parks.

Through a partnership with [ARAMARK Parks and Destinations](#) and leading outdoor gear and apparel retailer [REI](#) (Recreational Equipment, Inc.), ALHF is issuing a national search for bloggers to apply for the opportunity to participate in a national park adventure. The Expedition focuses on education, park stewardship, outdoor recreation and exploration, all the while highlighting historic American Latino contributions at each site. The @American_Latino Expedition will feature three national parks: [Olympic National Park](#) (Washington), [Mesa Verde National Park](#) (Colorado), [Glen Canyon National Recreation Area](#) (Arizona/Utah). Expenses, including air travel, lodging and most on-site tour and excursion fees will be covered by ALHF and Expedition partners, ARAMARK Parks and Destinations and REI.

“This is a great opportunity to learn, explore and visit treasured historic and national places in America’s back yard,” said Midy Aponte, executive director of the American Latino Heritage Fund. “We are thrilled to partner with ARAMARK and REI and are confident that the @American_Latino Expedition will connect multicultural audiences with their national parks while uncovering how these amazing places tell the story of American Latino contributions.”

All bloggers are invited to apply [here](#) through June 14, 2013. Bloggers are encouraged to apply in groups of four. Families are also invited to apply. Winners will be announced the week of July 15, 2013. Follow the @American_Latino Expedition using the hashtag #ALEx13.

“We are excited to partner with the American Latino Heritage Fund of the National Park Foundation to create memorable experiences at some of America’s most treasured destinations,” said Bruce W. Fears, president of ARAMARK Parks and Destinations. “Bringing diversity into national parks is an important initiative and we look forward to welcoming the bloggers to [Lake Powell](#) in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, [Olympic National Park](#), and [Mesa Verde National Park](#).”

Once bloggers have been selected, each group will embark on an exciting national park adventure that includes visiting a local REI store to be outfitted for their trip and hosted excursions and over-night stays at unique and diverse national park lodges managed by ARAMARK Parks and Destinations. Group itineraries will focus on learning about each park’s foundation, its connection to American history, as well as environmental issues affecting the park and how one can help in its preservation. Tours and activities offered by ARAMARK Parks and Destinations will create exciting in-park experiences. Bloggers

will also meet directly with park superintendents, park rangers, park scientists and historians. “We are very excited to partner with ALHF and outfit members of @American_Latino Expedition team,” said Laura Swapp, director of Diversity and Inclusion for REI. “Latinos have made significant contributions to the National Park Service and this effort will help bring light to the history and recreation opportunities these beautiful natural spaces offer to everyone. By outfitting the team with the proper REI gear for their adventure, they will be able to enjoy the park to the maximum potential.”

Established in 2011, ALHF works to improve the representation of American Latino heritage in, visitors to, and the long-term stewardship of America’s national parks. ALHF has provided more than \$180,000 to support the nominations of historic places to date – including the [César E. Chávez National Monument](#) in California and the [Casa Dra. Concha Meléndez Ramírez](#) site in Puerto Rico. ALHF has pledged to continue funding nominations of additional sites into the system and is actively fundraising to meet its goal.

To learn more about the work of the American Latino Heritage Fund and how to support these important efforts, visit www.ALHF.org.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN LATINO HERITAGE FUND

The American Latino Heritage Fund of the National Park Foundation will assist the National Park Service and communities across the country to ensure that our national parks and historic sites preserve, reflect and engage the diverse stories and communities of American Latinos for future generations.

For more information, please visit www.ALHF.org, find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/AmericanLatinoHeritageFund and follow us on Twitter [@American_Latino](https://twitter.com/@American_Latino).

ABOUT ARAMARK PARKS AND DESTINATIONS

ARAMARK Parks and Destinations, a division of ARAMARK, delivers authentic and memorable experiences at national and state parks, national forests, specialty hotels, conference centers, museums and other tourist destinations throughout the United States. In partnership with its clients, ARAMARK Parks and Destinations seek to enhance the guest experience by offering industry-leading hospitality, environmental stewardship, recreational and interpretive programs. For more information, visit

www.aramarkparksanddestinations.com or follow us on Twitter [@TravelARAMARK](https://twitter.com/@TravelARAMARK).

ABOUT REI

REI is a \$2 billion national multichannel retail co-op headquartered outside of Seattle. With more than 5 million active members, REI serves the needs of outdoor adventurers through innovative, quality products; inspiring classes and trips; and integrated customer service that allows shoppers to buy great gear and clothing in any way they want. REI has 129 stores in 32 states, as well as REI.com and REI.com/outlet. This year REI will invest \$3 million in local communities to help care for outdoor spaces. For more information find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/REI and follow us on Twitter [@REI](https://twitter.com/@REI).

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION

The National Park Foundation, the official charity of America’s national parks, raises private funds that directly aid, support and enrich America’s more than 400 national parks and their programs. Chartered by Congress as the nonprofit partner of the National Park Service, the National Park Foundation plays a critical role in conservation and preservation efforts, establishing national parks as powerful learning environments, and giving all audiences an equal and abundant opportunity to experience, enjoy and support America’s treasured places. www.nationalparks.org.

JOIN US – This is Your Land. www.nationalparks.org

FACEBOOK <http://www.facebook.com/nationalpark>

TWITTER <http://twitter.com/goparks>