

## Odwalla Strikes Deal With All 50 State Parks

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- Todd Wasserman



Odwalla will be the first brand to have a presence in all 50 state parks, thanks to a new initiative from the National Association of State Park Directors.

That organization voted in December to allow for the creation of such national deals. The decision came after state budgets had been hammered by the recession, but also was the result of the September appointment of Joe Elton as NASPD president. Phillip McKnelly, NASPD executive director, said Elton, who serves a two-year term, had two primary goals for the organization: To become more active in

Washington and to market and brand the state parks collectively. "Each state system is a bit different and they have not been branded," said McKnelly.

As part of the latter effort, the NASPD voted on Dec. 3 to allow for branding programs in all 50 state parks. That ushered in the Odwalla deal. In May, the juice brand will launch a promotion encouraging consumers to go to the Web to decide where they'd like a tree planted. Odwalla will also do some retail promotion and launch a Facebook campaign behind the effort, said Shari Boyer, CEO of Government Solutions Group, which brokered the deal. Odwalla will plant \$200,000 worth of trees.

Boyer said she hopes other marketers will do national deals as well. In the past, Coca-Cola launched a program with the state of California's parks systems that was worth \$600,000. Juicy Juice has also done deals with the state of New York's parks system, among others. In response, Juicy Juice's brand logo appeared on some park signs.

The state parks receive about 725 million a year versus 274 million visits for national parks, Boyer said, although the 50 state parks systems combined have a smaller budget than the national parks. "Because they haven't banded together before, people didn't realize that," said Boyer.



Going forward, Boyer said that only brands in certain categories will be considered for deals and that in-park signs will be subtle. "You won't see a big Coca-Cola sign, but it might say its 'supported by' Coca-Cola," she said. "As long as you apply the right standards, there's no reason why government should not be entering into public-private partnerships to enhance the park system," she said. "Even in a perfect world where [parks] were 100 percent funded, I still think [such] partnerships can bring value to visitors."