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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PURE PILGRIMAGE: MORE THAN ONE MILLION PEOPLE VISIT FLIGHT
93 CRASH SITE IN SHANKSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA**

Somerset, Pa. – Despite its remote location in southwest Pennsylvania, the crash site of United Flight 93 has already been visited by more than one million people from all 50 states and 120 countries, according to the National Park Service (NPS). A temporary memorial marks the site until the permanent Flight 93 National Memorial is built. The permanent National Memorial will be devoted to the lives and actions of 40 people who changed history on September 11, 2001, when they fought terrorists for control of Flight 93 before it plunged to the earth. The memorial site is operated by the NPS, which is observing National Park Week, April 18-26. “So many have journeyed so far to this remote place inspired by the actions of the heroes of Flight 93. It is the purity of this pilgrimage that testifies so eloquently to the strength of these peaceful fields. The full emotional and educational journey will be completed with the dedication of the permanent Flight 93 National Memorial on September 11, 2011,” said Joanne Hanley, NPS superintendent, Flight 93 National Memorial.

The NPS began counting visitors on Memorial Day weekend of 2003. The NPS estimates the one-millionth visitor arrived in late February 2009 and that the total stood at 1,006,585 visitors as of March 31. In 2008 alone, more than 235 buses with schoolchildren made educational visits.

The temporary memorial, open from dawn to dusk, is on a hilltop overlooking the crash site. It is located in Somerset County, approximately 80 miles outside of Pittsburgh. Visitors can visually follow the plane’s flight path to the crash site, now solemnly enclosed by a fence and carpeted with wildflowers. At another fence, visitors have left over 30,000 mementoes and artwork including religious symbols, notes, flowers, flags and other forms of respect. Visitors also record their thoughts in journals maintained by volunteers and staff. The NPS catalogs and preserves these tributes to understand the visitors’ thoughts and emotions. Some of these will be part of the permanent Flight 93 National Memorial.

To learn more about the temporary memorial, including its National Park Week activities, visit www.nps.gov/flni. For information on how to help fund the permanent Flight 93 National Memorial, visit www.honorflight93.org.

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