ADVANCING THE NATIONAL PARK IDEA

NATIONAL PARKS SECOND CENTURY COMMISSION

Committee Reports

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Committee Reports

In 2008, the nonprofit National Parks Conservation Association convened an independent Commission charged with developing a 21st-century vision for the National Park Service, and for the magnificent collection of unique places it holds in trust for the American people. • The National Parks Second Century Commission consisted of a diverse group of distinguished private citizens, including scientists, historians, conservationists, educators, businesspeople, and civic leaders. It met five times, and heard from conservation and preservation experts, field staff of the National Park Service, teachers, volunteers, and groups that help to support the work of the national parks. At three additional public meetings, Commissioners solicited ideas and priorities from concerned citizens.

During the initial meeting of the Commission, six standing committees were established: Science and Natural Resource, Cultural Resource and Historic Preservation, Education and Learning, Connecting People and Parks, Future Shape of the National Park System, and Funding and Budget. As the work of the Commission progressed, two additional committees were established to address Governance and Capacity.

All of the committees met in person and by teleconference to discuss ideas in much greater depth than possible during the five meetings of the full Commission. Committees also drew advice from subject-matter experts from universities, the private sector, non-profit organizations, and federal agencies, including the National Park Service. The committees were staffed by consultants with deep knowledge of the National Park Service, its programs, and policies. The National Parks Conservation Association designated a liaison to each committee.

Summary reports of each committee were presented to the Commission and informed lively discussions. Some of the recommendations in the individual committee reports were unanimously accepted by the Commission; others were identified as ideas worthy of further discussion and consideration for future actions.

The Commission agreed that its final report should be concise and inspirational rather than encyclopedic. Consequently, the committee reports in this document provide a great deal of detail that is intended to answer questions and identify some new ones, promoting discussions and actions to support the national parks and the National Park Service in the next century.

Additional appendices are available online at www.npca.org.

The Eight Committee Reports

SCIENCE AND NATURAL RESOURCE COMMITTEE REPORT

CULTURAL RESOURCE & HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT

EDUCATION AND LEARNING COMMITTEE REPORT

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PARKS COMMITTEE REPORT

FUTURE SHAPE OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM COMMITTEE REPORT

FUNDING AND BUDGET COMMITTEE REPORT

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

CAPACITY COMMITTEE REPORT

ADVANCING THE NATIONAL PARK IDEA

NATIONAL PARKS SECOND CENTURY COMMISSION

Science and Natural Resource Committee Report

A Science-based System for Tomorrow

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Vision

The National Park System preserves a science-determined representation of the nation's terrestrial and ocean heritage unimpaired. The National Park Service provides leadership in an American landscape that is managed to sustain ecological integrity, beauty, enjoyment, and national identity. National parks are key elements of a network of sustainable uninterrupted ecological systems of linked lands and waters that work for both people and nature, and have an active role in preserving them. National parks become epicenters for catalyzing dialog on the future American landscape. National parks teach the nation place-based science and an environmental ethic that reaches around the world. • To succeed in managing the National Park System, the National Park Service becomes the scientific authority on its resources, on ecosystem dynamics, and the restoration of impaired lands and key species.

Introduction

Science tells us that the next hundred years may be vastly different in the scale and speed of human enterprise and its effect on nature (McNeill 2000). Many scientists believe that human activities are changing the planet at a dangerous pace—an "uncontrolled experiment" with great implications for our nation, and for its national parks.

National identity and quality of life are shaped by a nation's natural heritage. Historically, natural resources determined where societies arose. Now, to a large extent, humans are dictating where nature can persist. National parks are a human invention wherein it is intended that nature and human use both thrive in perpetuity. As the nation that "invented" national parks, we must now ensure they thrive in a challenging future. In turn, national parks are likely to repay that investment many fold.

There's a long litany of serious indicators that the future world will be very different. Humans have already consumed nearly 50% of the Earth's productivity for their own use while accounting for over 25% of the CO2 level in the atmosphere. Troubling indications of species declines in the U.S. include the 60 % of freshwater fish species that now appear on some state or national threatened or endangered list, and 80% of freshwater mussel species. Perhaps most ominous is the precipitous decline in oceans fisheries; 90% of the large fish are gone, and fishing pressure continues unabated—serially depleting species after species. Worldwide, 50% of mangrove forests—fish nurseries—have been destroyed. National parks have their own instances of over-fishing (Appendix A; G. Davis, National Park Service (Ret.)); as one example, state fisheries management in Biscayne National Park has been such that University of Miami researchers recently made 24 SCUBA dives before finding the first legal-sized grouper.

In our coastal waters and in the uplands aggressive invasive species represent an enormous threat to the native plants and animals of the nation and its national parks. Current conditions in national parks vary, reflecting their individual land use histories and that of their surroundings (Appendix B; G. Dethloff, NPCA).

The National Park System stands now as a national treasure, and one whose value will be far greater tomorrow.

While scientists have been measuring how fast the world is changing for some time, it is revealing that some changes, such as the rapid loss of the Arctic ice cap, can still surprise them. At the same time, many citizens and policy-makers remain confident that humans are not significantly impacting the vast biological, oceanic and atmospheric processes upon which our quality of life depends. This suggests a need for better communication about the future and a national resolve to prepare for it.

However the future unfolds, a great nation must prepare for all inevitabilities. It is clear to this Committee that a prudent priority, and potentially invaluable investment for our nation's future, is to capitalize on the national park idea, and the experience and success of our National Park Service.

The Science and Natural Resource Committee recommends:

I. Building the National Park System to fully represent the nation's natural legacy;

II. Ensuring its long-term health and viability in a changing landscape; and,

III. Re-tooling the National Park Service to be successful in long-term stewardship of the natural heritage of so favored a nation.

Building a National Park System to fully represent the nation's natural legacy: "A good tinkerer saves all the pieces."

The next 100 years may see unprecedented challenge to the underpinnings of nature. If, as science tells us, our species' present rate of resource consumption and disruption is likely to cause significant changes in the ecological services that support our future quality of life, one of the most prudent steps a nation can take is to protect a representative sample of its natural heritage, and the ecological services provided, and maintain them unimpaired. Protecting those intact reserves—those blueprints and storehouses—will provide an important long-term asset.

Congress could not have been foreseen such change when it created the National Park System in 1916, nor could it have imagined the range of roles this system might play in meeting society's needs in its second century. The National Park System stands now as a national treasure, and one whose value will be far greater tomorrow.

In the next 100 years, parks may be called upon to serve new roles such as early warning sentinels, last havens for vanishing species, reservoirs of rare genetic materials, sources of genetic materials for species and systems restoration, catalysts for communication on environmental issues, and certainly links for urbanites and youth separated at birth from nature. The information contained in intact natural systems can be our blueprints for restoration—if we need to find our way back. National parks preserve options for solving problems and seizing opportunities we have yet to discover.

Since the environmental stakes are so high, it makes sense to hedge all bets by investing in national parks. The National Park System must now be perfected—to be truly representative of our natural heritage as a nation. Aside from the spiritual, recreational, personal health, and economic returns, a viable and representative National Park System is a most valuable investment in a time of uncertainty and change.

National parks preserve options for solving problems and seizing opportunities we have yet to discover.

Perhaps also unforeseen, the National Park Service experience in maintaining resources unimpaired, while valuing human use, may prove useful in and of itself. The mindset created by managing use within the limits of natural system resilience leads to understanding how to live within environmental means. Such lessons may resonate if nations are forced to take on the difficult task of modifying what societies expect from a planet with seemingly limitless opportunity for material wealth and comfort.

To date, Congress has wisely built a pioneering and world class National Park System. That system now requires a strategic vision and growth process to fulfill its potential. The National Park System has currently grown to nearly 400 units, but without a scientific rationale or a process that follows a coherent strategy. A clear vision and strong criteria for inclusion in the system must now replace the ad hoc process that has characterized recent decades of system growth.

To capitalize on its "best idea" 100 years ago, it is time for America to perfect and protect it. The Science and Natural Resource Committee recommends a fully representative (some of all that's important) and viable National Park System (with resiliency (big enough or having connectivity) and redundancy (not all eggs in one basket)) as a fundamental investment for the future well-being of the nation.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 1

Provide a science-based foundation for building a National Park System for the 21st Century:

- Congress requests a comprehensive study by the National Academies of Science (or alternatively, the president through a Presidential Commission) to design a national park system that can fill the roles American society may need from it in the next 100 years. This study must establish a scientifically-based rationale and strategy—and science-based eligibility criteria—for retaining a complete and viable reflection of the nation's heritage. This system can serve as a lasting foundation for a nation blessed with an extraordinary natural heritage and quality of life. The greatest emphasis in new units may be found necessary in the oceans across the Economic Enterprise Zone (EEZ). This study should review options for transferring lands among agencies (e.g., including National Monuments such as the Marianas Trench, Northern Hawaiian Islands, and possibly via the military base realignment and closure (BRAC) process) for the most logical level and most efficient approach for their protection.

- National Park Service scientific staff should review and prioritize (according to potential development impacts to park ecological integrity and visitor experience) all existing national park in-holdings for purchase on a willing seller basis, and promptly deliver this list to Congress for acquisition with Land and Water Conservation funding in a time frame that reflects the importance and urgency of this initiative.

Maintaining the health of our treasured landscapes—create a national conservation strategy

Lands that become isolated fragments of nature, including national parks, lose their species over time. Smaller parcels, and parks, will lose them faster. Genetic isolation, local extinctions, and local catastrophic events gradually take their toll, and the complex array of species—or "nature"—fades away. Protected areas can not usually be made large enough to overcome this fact. Yet with a conscious effort to maintain important wildlife pathways and connections between areas, nature replenishes itself and basic processes necessary to support life remain unimpeded. Hence protected areas—where nature rules—need only some strategic connections from sympathetic management on adjacent lands to retain functional connections and long term viability. The goal of maintaining strategic connections must be shared across federal agencies and by willing private land owners.

...the inspirational nature of a park experience today cannot persist without better coordination of land uses to preserve wildlife movement and replenishment.

Early national parks were wild areas surrounded by open range and undeveloped land. More recent parks are small, suburban, or urban units (Appendix C, Svancara and Scott, USGS). Today all are surrounded to different degrees—often by stark and disruptive land uses. Many park plant and animal communities are now isolated from migrating individuals that replenish local wildlife populations and provide new genetic material. While what data exist indicate that today's national parks are in relatively good shape—in some cases because of hands-on re-introduction of key species—the inspirational nature of a park experience today cannot persist without better coordination of land uses to preserve wildlife movement and replenishment.

Step one in a coordinated national conservation strategy: Stop federal agency activities from working at cross purposes

Perhaps the best news comes from the fact that better orchestration of federal lands can be a logical and powerful first step in a national strategy for keeping the natural beauty and health of our land. Without major new expenditures, better federal coordination in some areas can combat the effects of habitat fragmentation on wildlife and to some degree accommodate the shift of plants and animals responding to climate change impacts.

Federal lands make up roughly 30% of the nation, with much of it in the west, and often with multi-use lands surrounding the nation's most treasured landscapes (national parks, wilderness areas, wildlife refuges, etc.) They are managed by a number of federal agencies, notably the Department of Agriculture (US Forest Service) and the Department of the Interior (Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service).

Presently each agency follows its own primary mission, sometimes in direct conflict with the land use of its neighboring agency. It is time for each agency, while continuing pursuit of its own mission, to consider national heritage interests, such as national parks, in their land management and leasing decisions. The Commission visited Yellowstone where clear-cutting in National Forests along the park boundary has in the past produced a dramatic truncation of wildlife habitat. A similar approach has isolated other parks (for example, Olympic NP) resulting in the well-known reports by astronauts who wondered aloud what the green squares were (national parks) that stood out as they looked back towards earth (Appendix D, E. Lewis). Similar impacts occur in a number of parks from mining, oil and gas leasing, grazing leases, etc.

Since it will be difficult to increase the size of most national parks, and since transfers of federal lands between agencies or changes in agency mindsets are difficult, the long term solution may be in broadening management responsibility of all public lands to include compatibility with the nation's long term protection of its natural heritage. To protect the nation from substantial losses in its biodiversity, activities in larger ecosystems must be harmonized in a manner that sustains communities, economies, and wild life, as well as parks. An advantageous place to begin is by orchestrating all federal lands—including the coastal zone and the EEZ (The Exclusive Economic Zone, provided by the 1982 UN Convention of the Sea, gives nations exclusive exploration rights and use of marine resources out to 200 nautical miles from their coasts.) toward a common goal of protecting the nation's heritage while multi-use agendas are pursued. Climate change will accentuate the need for a united response among federal agencies if the nation's natural heritage and biodiversity are to be maintained (Appendix E; L. Welling, National Park Service).

The Committee believes that the nation's natural heritage must be seen as an invaluable, irreplaceable part of the nation's patrimony; and that the nation's natural heritage must be given a similar level of priority routinely accorded other areas of national security.

Natural assets of national value (e. g., National Parks, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Trails, National Wildlife Refuges and National Landscape Conservation Lands (in the Department of the Interior (DOI)), Wilderness Areas (in DOI and the Dept. of Agriculture (DOA), National Forests (DOA), National Monuments in DOI and DOA, Marine Sanctuaries in NOAA (Dept. of Commerce) should all benefit from harmonizing activities and regulatory decisions by other agencies that often pursue conflicting agendas without regard to the larger issue of protecting our national heritage.

Congress (through legislation) or the president (through an Executive or Presidential Order—for example see the May 2009 Executive Order for Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration) can direct all agencies to manage their lands in the best long-term interests of the nation's most treasured landscapes—parks, refuges, wilderness areas, and national landscape conservation lands, national historic landmarks and national natural landmarks, etc. Protection of the nation's heritage must be a shared goal of all federal agencies.

Agencies managing treasured lands should be given early consultation opportunity and expedited dispute resolution when necessary. This will not require new funding; it does require new leadership that fosters awareness of within all federal agencies of the common goal of protecting the nature of this nation—as reflected in the nation's treasured landscapes.

...the nation's natural heritage must be seen as an invaluable, irreplaceable part of the nation's patrimony; and that the nation's natural heritage must be given a similar level of priority routinely accorded other areas of national security.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 2

Create a new Executive Order for federal lands to make ecosystem management an overriding responsibility on all federal lands, inland waters, Great Lakes and oceans management.

- The new Executive Order (EO) would identify protection of the nation's natural assets as a common goal for all agencies. All federal agencies will provide support to this goal as a priority while pursuing their respective agency agendas.
- The EO would provide federal standards based on ecosystem management principles for the management of wildlife on all federal lands, with the highest standards of protection maintained on national park land and waters. Fish and wildlife management on all federal lands and

waters would be uniformly consistent with applicable ecosystem-based management policies and practices, and federal agencies will not allow less protective management by any other authority.

- The EO will ensure that any action taken on federal lands and waters adjacent to or affecting National Park Service resources will require early consultation and a project agreement with the National Park Service.

- The EO should encourage restoration of key species wherever feasible on national park lands in concert with other agencies, and that national wildlife treasures such as the original genetic strain of American bison be restored on federal lands within their native range wherever feasible.

- The EO should direct ocean, Great Lakes, and coastal parks units to be managed such that they provide replenishment of marine habitats and marine life in perpetuity, and, direct that national parks be used as laboratories to understand how to effectively zone marine protection areas for long term restoration and conservation of fish and other marine life, to adaptively manage to optimize protection zones, and to communicate the lessons learned.

- The EO should provide an assessment of opportunities for marine national parks within the EEZ. The EO should call for consolidation of jurisdictions, policies, practices, and management of submerged lands, open waters, and marine life for long-term sustainability.

- The EO should capitalize on national parks as showcases, as potential communication platforms to demonstrate climate change adaptation, mitigation, and communication programs, technology and practices.

- The EO should set a goal for all national park units to be: a) carbon-neutral in their park operations by 2016; b) carbon neutral in all park operations and visitor services (including concessions operations by 2020); c) model programs to disseminate effective messages, practices and mindsets as one avenue for educating the public on responding to human-induced climate change.

- The EO should provide policy directives, federal regulations, and an active role in promoting conservation partnerships and working relationships with the private land trust community and other non-governmental organizations that foster ecosystem protection with the intended outcome to strengthen the long term protection for national parks and lands of national heritage value.

- The EO should require a review of laws and policies established long-ago to promote exploration and settlement of the west, such as those subsidizing mining and grazing, for their economic and ecological compatibility with the future needs of the National Park System and other natural heritage assets.

- The Executive branch and Congress should jointly consider new models of oversight and finance to isolate national parks from continuous pressure for short-term, unsustainable, and vested-interest agendas (Attachment F; testimony of Robert D. Rosenbaum, Washington, DC Public Listening Session, Second Century Commission, Feb. 20, 2009).

Step two in a national conservation strategy: Facilitate willing landowner protection of the ecological value of their land

Perhaps the more difficult part of a national strategy for a sustaining our nation's natural heritage is in enlisting private land owners to the cause of larger landscapes that work for all. This includes private, state and other non-government lands. Federal involvement in the use of private lands raises many issues and concerns, and it should be predicated on willing participation by landowners who care about the ecological future of both their nation and their land.

In 1966, Congress gave the National Park Service, via the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), a leadership role in encouraging private and local participation in the conservation of historical and cultural sites. That Act has had considerable success and impact in stimulating the preservation of historic resources on private lands through providing incentives and protection standards (J. Rogers, pers. comm.). Congress was careful to give the National Park Service a role that was non-threatening to private property rights.

In the same fashion, Congress must now provide National Park Service a similar role (and authorities) for preservation on the scale that maintains natural resource systems that can function unimpaired over time—sustaining our wildlife heritage indefinitely. Appendix G is a draft 'Natural Heritage and

Sustainable Future Act' which paraphrases the NHPA of 1966 with the kinds of roles and incentives that can successfully encourage and reward willing private land owners for participating in a national landscape-level nature protection strategy.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 3

Create new legislation, modeled after the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, to enhance protection of natural heritage values on non-federal lands.

- The new legislation would provide an approach similar to the NHPA, with National Park Service providing leadership, technical assistance, overall protection standards, grants, and incentives for achieving the levels of ecosystem unimpairment necessary for the nation's sustained quality of life.
- The legislation would provide a new strategic approach to maintaining important wildlife corridors for long term sustainability of the full range of native plants and animals.
- The legislation would provide for the identification of heritage lands, corridors, and waters—those public and private lands important to maintaining the nation's plant and animal diversity.
- The legislation would provide enhanced incentives (and their transaction costs, such as appraisals, surveys, etc.) for those private landowners within key migratory pathways, waterways, and viewsheds who voluntarily maintain lands to standards that support national conservation goals and maintain sense of place.
- New legislation with tax incentives, grant funds, and enhanced RTCA capability should authorize an increase of $80 million in base funding.

Re-tooling the National Park Service to be equal to the task ahead

Managing 84+ million acres of complex natural systems unimpaired is a highly technical endeavor. Differentiating between natural variation, the impacts from a quarter billion visits per year, and extra-boundary influences on park health, requires high levels of certain skills found nowhere else. Each park is different and each element of a park is important.

While the implications of the Organic Act have driven National Park Service to be a pioneer in the science of wildland fire, natural sounds, night sky, air quality modeling, barrier island dynamics, all taxa biodiversity inventories (ATBIs) and "bioblitz's", inventory and monitoring, ecosystem and species restoration, etc., surprisingly the National Park Service has not traditionally supported a strong role for science in park management (Sellars 1997).

This paradox has led to important failures, resulting in a number of critiques, including several studies by the National Academy of Science's National Research Council (NRC). For example the NRC's Robbins report (1963) stated:

- "It is inconceivable to this Committee that property so unique and valuable as the national parks, used by such a large number of people, and regarded internationally as one of the finest examples of our national spirit, should not be provided with sufficient competent research scientists in natural history as elementary insurance for the preservation and best use of parks." (p. 32)
- "The Committee was shocked to learn that for the year 1962 the research staff (including the Chief Naturalist and field men in natural history was limited to 10 people and that the Service budget for natural history research was $28,000—about the cost of one campground comfort station." (p. 32)
- "Consultation with the research unit in natural history the National Park Service should precede all decisions on management operations involving preservation, restoration, development, protection and interpretation and the public use of a park." (Recommendation #10, p. xiv).

Similarly, in 1992 the National Research Council's *Committee on Improving the Science and Technology Programs of the National Park Service* stated:

- "With the 20/20 vision of hindsight, any examination of the national park system can uncover many cases in which a lack of understanding of park resources has led to problems—degradation of resource quality, increased conflicts between visitors and resources, or the escalation of minor issues into major problems." (p. 2)
- "Since the first major independent reviews of the adequacy of the National Park Service science program were conducted in the early 1960s, many experts have shared their views on the scope and quality of the National Park Service

research program. In all, the many reviews provide both general and very specific recommendations for strengthening science in support of the parks. Many of the suggested improvements were recommended repeatedly, yet few have been effectively or consistently implemented." (p. 56)

- "Indeed, many administrations have come and gone during the past 30 years and they have operated in very different settings, but with the same result—science has not taken hold as a key element in the foundation of the National Park Service mission." (p. 57. National Academy of Sciences, 1992).

National Park Service Director James Ridenour responded favorably to the 1992 report and moved to implement the NRC recommendations, including the most internally contentious one (line authority for scientists to manage scientists—eliminating potential for, or any appearance of, influence from park managers on scientific results.) However Ridenour soon left with the change in administrations in 1993. The Clinton administration (and DOI Secretary Babbitt) chose to take all biological research scientists from all DOI bureaus to form a new bureau, the National Biological Survey (NBS) in 1994. The NBS did not succeed as a separate bureau and became the Biological Research Discipline of the U. S. Geological Survey (USGS).

Management decisions strengthened by ever increasing scientific certainty generate credibility and support from local communities, stakeholders, and the public at large.

Today's National Park Service has come a long way in overcoming the traditional reticence towards a strong role for science in managing national parks. In spite of the absence of a biological research function, the NRC's 1992 recommendations have been closely pursued in the National Park Service's "Natural Resource Challenge"—an effort that began in 1998 to bring better resource information to park managers. That initiative has built bridges to academe, to USGS and other agencies, and provided an inventory and monitoring effort in direct support of park management. However, the crucial missing science element necessary for keeping national parks unimpaired over generations is its own self directed research capacity. This in-house capacity must be targeted towards site-specific, long-term research with continual synthesis and direct application of science to management decisions and outreach.

To meet future challenges head-on, the National Park Service must be re-constituted with science and information-based management as its foundation. In-park researchers must be present to provide long-term information on complex, dynamic natural systems, continuously assimilating their understanding into usable knowledge. Over time, each national park can become authoritative through long-term research projects carried out by sufficient internal staff to generate, accumulate, integrate and transmit knowledge and experience beyond the length of individual careers. Management decisions strengthened by ever increasing scientific certainty generate credibility and support from local communities, stakeholders, and the public at large.

Knowledge and outreach offer the national parks' best protection.

National Park Service leadership must be outfitted for outreach to park neighbors and visitors on difficult complicated issues. Systems thinking and development of integrating tools such as multi-stakeholder dynamic models will allow National Park Service to engage stakeholders in communally assessing future outcomes of land use decisions. The agency's culture, organizational structure, personnel assignments, career ladders, and budgets must be broadened to accommodate the complexity of the task and the long view that is required for unbroken resource protection over generations. Knowledge and outreach offer the national parks' best protection.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 4

Build a balanced program of research for national parks that can only come from an internally directed research program. The program must center upon in-park, or monitoring program-based, research scientists. The National Park Service science effort should continue to draw heavily on partnerships with academe, and especially USGS, but Congress and National Park Service must also provide adequate funds and National Park Service research positions. The supervision and personnel management framework must ensure long-term site fidelity, scientific objectivity, career ladder opportunities, and direct incorporation of findings into park management.

- Configure the new research element as recommended by the National Research Council in 1992.
- Provide annual increases of $10 million in research base funding for 10 years so that a stable $100-million research program is in place by 2021.
- Develop ties to the National Science Foundation and Office of Naval Research and other organizations. Encourage partners to view national parks as key research venues where their basic science is welcomed, supported, and directly applied for societal good—providing a double return for each research dollar invested.
- Provide scientists, citizen scientists, educators, and volunteers opportunities to use parks for science as well as participate for providing science for parks.
- Place the director, or his/her deputy, on the president's science advisory committees (such as the National Science and Technology Council and Office of Science and Technology Policy).
- Make both ecosystem and species restoration a hallmark of National Park Service applied science capability; develop demonstration efforts to restore the American chestnut and the American bison to exemplify the nation's resolve to maintain its natural heritage unimpaired.
- Assemble an internet encyclopedia of the biodiversity of national parks and their natural history as an interpretation and science teaching archive.
- Provide National Park Service training in modeling development and multi-stakeholder dialogue processes ($3 million annually).

Our Committee is honored to submit these thoughts and recommendations and believes their implementation to be of the highest importance and value to the future well-being of the nation and to every citizen, to whom the National Park System belongs.

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ADVANCING THE NATIONAL PARK IDEA

NATIONAL PARKS SECOND CENTURY COMMISSION

Cultural Resource and Historic Preservation Committee Report

A Different Past in a Different Future

THE DIVERSITY OF THE NATION. IT IS CRITICAL TO ACTIVELY RECRUIT THE NEXT GENERATION OF NPS LEADERS SO THAT THE WORKFORCE REFLECTS THE DIVERSITY

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We recommend

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We advise Congress

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PROTECT, RESTORE, AND SUSTAIN THE MOST VALUABLE PLACES, LANDS, AND WATERS IN THE UNITED STATES. WE RECOMMEND A PRESIDENTIA

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Vision

It is a common and serious mistake to assume that cultural resources and historic preservation are secondary interests of the National Park Service.[1] The error derives in part from the agency's name, suggesting pastoral nature; from popular images of national parks as vacation destinations; and especially from a deeply-ingrained institutional culture that places the mountains, geysers, lakes, waterfalls, forests, animals, and back country of the "Mother Park," Yellowstone, at the center of its mythology. The National Park Service (the agency and its people) and the National Park System (about 400 places of various designations managed by the Service) represent all of those things and much more. For decades the vast majority—fully two thirds—of National Park System units have been set aside for historical, architectural, or archaeological values, and all units contain at least some cultural resources. Although inventories of park cultural resources remain incomplete, it is known that the system contains 27,000 historic buildings; 3,500 statues, monuments, and memorials; probably over two million archeological sites, more than 120 million museum objects and archival documents; and a large but uncounted number of rocks, rivers, mountains, trees, animals, and landscapes that have cultural significance.

The cultural resource and historic preservation parts of the Service long ago broke free of the crippling view that they could do little beyond the boundaries of parks. When the Service was nineteen years old the Historic Sites Act of 1935 acknowledged a greater mission than could be accomplished through public ownership and operation of every important place, establishing a national policy to identify nationally significant places, to promote their preservation either as National Historic Landmarks or as units of the System, and to collect and preserve records of other historic places. In 1949, partially instigated by visionary National Park Service historians, Congress chartered the non-profit National Trust for Historic Preservation to provide leadership in the private sector for preservation work important to the nation. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 expanded these beginnings to include a National Register of places of local or greater significance in history, architecture, archeology, and culture. By these laws and subsequent ones the National Park Service is now at the center of a network including all federal agencies, 59 states and similar jurisdictions, 1,668 certified local governments, 76 American Indian tribes and Native American organizations, 40 National Heritage Areas, and the private sector. In consequence of these partnerships, over 80,000 places are listed in the National Register of Historic Places including approximately 1.3 million historic buildings, 36,000 of which have been rehabilitated with almost $50 billion in private sector investment; 40,000 places have been documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey / Historic American Engineering Record and related programs; hundreds of tribal, state, and local preservation ordinances and incentives have been enacted; countless non-profits are preserving places, and myriad private owners proudly use this supporting framework to preserve their parts of the national heritage.

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The key to this vast scope of effectiveness is that National Park Service cultural resource and historic preservation programs are among the most highly decentralized, grass-roots, citizen-driven activities of any in the federal government. They reach across park boundaries in both directions, apply to all parts of the United States, and are geared more to enable people to do good things than to prevent people from doing undesirable things. Their concepts have matured to acknowledge the cultural values in many places heretofore considered "natural."

Their outcomes are so intrinsically bound up with scenic beauty, clean air and water, public health and safety, education, recreation, economic development, and other quality-of-life issues as to make them ubiquitous. As the Commission saw in its meeting at Lowell National Historical Park and Essex National Heritage Area, things work best when there is virtually no distinction between parks and programs. It is with this experience that the Cultural Resource and Historic Preservation Committee has approached its work from a comprehensive perspective, and that the committee's stated vision is one for the nation rather than for one part of one agency.

Following Committee Advisor Roger G. Kennedy's example, the Committee naturally applies a historian's perspective, viewing the National Parks Second Century Commission as one among several bodies convened over time to create vision for the future.[2] Such a body was the Special Committee on Historic Preservation[3] appointed in 1965 by the United States Conference of Mayors, made up of distinguished Americans from many backgrounds and chaired by former Congressman Albert Rains, Jr. That committee's report, *With Heritage So Rich,* not only resulted in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and guided its implementation, but remains an important source of historical background and guiding philosophy. This Commission's work should be similarly important both in the immediate future and far into the second century. With this perspective the Committee offers this report.

The Cultural Resource and Historic Preservation Committee envisions a "Century of the Environment" beginning August 25, 2016 in which history, nature, culture, beauty, and recreation are parts of sustainable community life and development everywhere and in which the National Park Service preserves and interprets selected outstanding places and provides leadership to all others in similar work.

The "Century of the Environment" concept was inspired by Second Century Commissioner Edward O. Wilson's statement at the National Park Service's *Discovery 2000* conference in September, 2000.[4] The concept extends well beyond the National Park Service, but the Service is a vital element. This vision requires significant accomplishments in at least nine broad Cultural Resource and Historic Preservation categories set forth below. They are not presented in order of priority, except that the first three are essential to the other six.

Introduction

For more than a decade as the National Park Service approached its centennial date of August 25, 2016, people in and around the Service began to fix attention upon that anniversary. In this young nation, 100th birthdays of important institutions provide valuable opportunities. For the proud the centennial seemed an opportunity to celebrate great achievements. For the pragmatic it was a chance to highlight the need for money and to propose public / private partnerships intended to secure it. For the philosophical, the centennial was in invitation to reflect upon and learn from what has been done. For visionaries it was all of those at once, especially a time to consider what the world was like "at the creation" in 1916, how different it is now, how different it is likely to be a hundred years from now, and what might be done to prepare for that very different future.[5]

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 1

Exemplary Management of the National Park System

LONG TERM: Manage park cultural resources (districts, sites, buildings, structures, landscapes, and objects significant in history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture) according to standards required by law and in a manner that sets the best possible example and teaches others.

STEPS

- Establish sound professional cultural resource and historic preservation leadership in Washington and Regional Offices and engage it fully in working with the field.
- On an urgent and remedial basis, fill multiple vacancies in key cultural resource and historic preservation positions.
- Develop a Cultural Resource and Historic Preservation Challenge—a vision, action plan, and budget and staffing proposal that will enable the Service to do its complete

cultural resource and historic preservation job in the parks and through its programs.

- Incorporate cultural resource management concerns into all considerations of institutional capacity. The National Park Service Director, all associate directors, regional directors, superintendents and others take full responsibility for the cultural resources in the System.

- Bring consistent management of park cultural resources up to or above standards of the National Historic Preservation Act and other applicable laws in addition to the statute or proclamation authorizing the park.

- Provide, by Internal Revenue Code Amendment, incentives for concessioner and lessee rehabilitation of selected park historic structures, and eliminate disincentives.

- Lead by example in sustainable planning, development, resource management, operations, and concessions management practices.

  - All parks are operationally carbon-neutral by 2016.
  - All parks meet zero to landfill standard by 2026.
  - All parks are entirely carbon-neutral by 2036, including visitor and concession activities.
  - By 2010, plans to meet these goals and progress toward them are prominent parts of interpretive programs.

Exemplary management is a goal that must be forever pursued and is unlikely ever to be fully met. New parks and new laws over time, the struggle for money and staff, the constant erosive effect of time and environment upon resources that are almost universally non-renewable, and even the continually maturing concepts of what constitutes cultural resources keeps this goal ever ahead and never quite in hand. That this is true does not in the least diminish its validity.

As Committee Advisor Ernest Ortega and a National Parks Conservation Association study suggest, however, this must not be allowed to mask the need to remedy setbacks and failures of recent years.[6] A focus upon the presumed inevitability of continually declining budgets rather than statutory and professional standards has driven away many well-qualified cultural resource and historic preservation professionals, stifled the creativity of others, and produced an environment of low expectation and lower hope. Tedious studies into whether vital professional work might be outsourced for less money have predictably proven pointless while diverting time and money from the work itself. New and energetic executive-level leadership must immediately replace the dead hand of inhibition and limitation with a renewed sense of pride and possibility. No part of the great future the National Park Service must create for itself can be achieved without this change, which appears to be most acutely needed in cultural resource and historic preservation, and especially in Washington and some regions.

A 2008 study by the National Academy of Public Administration highlighted the above need and others, revealing a 26% decline in park cultural resource funding (when adjusted for inflation) and a 27% decline in cultural resource staffing since 1995.[7]

It is time for a park Cultural Resource Challenge counterpart to the successful Natural Resource Challenge of recent years. Fifteen million dollars per annum for seven years is recommended for Cultural Resource projects in parks and for professional staffing, from craftspeople to scholars and scientists, essential to the job. A final product of this Challenge, due August 25, 2016, should be a comprehensive report to the Congress and the public outlining a plan to the year 2036 with estimated costs, staffing, and both internal and outsourced activities for cyclic maintenance and other predictable actions to keep park cultural resources managed according to standards derived from law.

Major leadership and management improvements are also necessary. A decentralized approach is vital to a successful future, but the complex challenge of making park resources available to the present generation while preserving them unimpaired for all future generations also requires a cohesive organization that fully understands and respects cultural resources. Neither parks nor regions nor specialized program areas can continue as the nearly independent principalities they have long been. An overall interdependence must replace the situation in which cultural resource programs, natural resource programs, interpretation, law enforcement, and other parts of the Service have fought separately for individual interests with little regard for the whole.[8]

The time of the simple decision, when natural or cultural resource considerations could be excluded because a question was perceived to be purely a visitor services matter, or when an orientation toward one kind of resource precluded consideration of another, was never right. Its vestiges must be put to an end and prevented from reviving. All executives and managers in all parks and programs must take responsibility for cultural

and other resources in the parks and for the programs that preserve places beyond park boundaries. This does not imply diminution of specialized expertise, but rather a broadening of commitment by all to the whole mission of the Service. Nor does it require administrative combinations of specialties that appropriately might be separate, but it does require overcoming organizational and attitudinal barriers that prevent effective cooperation. Finally, it means placing the interests of the resources first among all considerations; otherwise preserving them unimpaired is impossible.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 2

Leadership & Benefits Beyond Park Boundaries

LONG TERM: The vast National Park Service experience in preserving public and privately owned historic places everywhere is used on behalf of all parts of the National Park Idea—including nature, recreation, scenic beauty, and education.

STEPS

- Demonstrate exemplary cultural resource & historic preservation leadership in Washington, regions, and parks, and engage it fully in interactions with federal, state, local, tribal, and private partners.
- Pair or group National Park System units with "sister" state monuments and parks, and other appropriate entities.[9]
- Propose legislation to authorize National Park Service leadership through technical and financial assistance and other means for preservation of National Natural Landmarks, ecosystems shared with parks, and other parklike resources throughout the United States.
- Employ systems thinking and servant leadership concepts in all National Park Service activities beyond park boundaries in order to develop a cadre of willing cooperators among other federal agencies, tribes, state and local governments, and the private sector.
- Develop additional federal incentives (such as grants, tax incentives, and payments in lieu of taxes) to preserve resources (such as archaeological sites, battlefields, natural areas, trails, recreational places) not easily preserved by market forces.
- Provide by Internal Revenue Code amendment incentives for certified rehabilitation of historic owner-occupied properties within high poverty census tracts, Department of Housing and Urban Development Empowerment Zones, and Renewal Communities.
- Provide by Internal Revenue Code amendment, incentives for the certified rehabilitation of historic structures meeting Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) or similar standards.
- Fund state, local, tribal, and private partners to the $150 million per annum level being deposited in the Historic Preservation Fund from mineral leasing on public lands and the outer continental shelf.
- Develop a rapid historic preservation response program to help communities impacted by disasters; support through Historic Preservation Fund and waive matching requirements as needed.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of 50 years (in 2016) of the national historic preservation programs to ensure that current approaches are the most effective in delivering services and assistance and that they remain relevant and effective preserving the nation's prehistoric and historic material culture.
- Re-energize and provide adequate funding and staffing support to the National Historic Landscapes program in partnership with the American Society of Landscape Architects, similar organizations, and, as appropriate, colleges and universities.

One of the most important steps the National Park Service can take to prepare for its second century is to apply its vast experience in preservation of historic places everywhere in the United States to the full scope of the National Park Service mission. The National Historic and National Natural Landmark programs derive from long-standing recognition that not all nationally significant places should be preserved in public ownership or be managed after the patterns established with Yellowstone. Although some places need to be set aside under absolute protection, others are more appropriately preserved "as living parts of community life and development."[10] Under the National Historic Preservation Act, which will reach its semi-centennial in the year of the National Park Service centennial, an effective network of state, local, tribal, and federal agency preservation officers has evolved that reaches every part of the

United States and supports preservation of places of all levels of significance.[11] Because the Act was crafted to enable individuals, neighborhoods, cities, counties, and states to defend their historic places against degradation caused by federal projects, the National Park Service has cultivated this network through a form of servant leadership in which the Service enables rather than directs—creating environments in which state, local, tribal, and other Federal agency preservation programs, private organizations, and individuals, can succeed in preserving their parts of the National heritage.[12] A few select places are preserved as units of the National Park System, but tens of thousands more are preserved by their public and private owners. These partners support preservation work inside the National Parks while benefitting from association with it.

In some cases a simple declaration that a place is important or is at risk can be enough to generate public or private action on its behalf.

Systems parallel to this should be developed for other major components of the National Park Service mission, such as stewardship of natural, scenic, and recreational places, and carrying out the Service's education functions. Although National Natural Landmarks must have an important place, it is not necessary to develop "National Registers" of natural areas, scenic places, recreational lands, rivers, trails, or educational opportunities. What is needed instead is acknowledgement that many places that will never be in National Parks are important to the nation, that many public and private owners are willing to preserve them, and that servant leadership by the National Park Service—creating environments in which those owners can succeed—is necessary and appropriate for the whole to function well.[13]

In some cases a simple declaration that a place is important or is at risk can be enough to generate public or private action on its behalf. Sometimes the owner needs reinforcement against threats from major federal or other projects. In some cases financial assistance in the form of grants or tax incentives is important. Sometimes information and technical expertise is critical. Often, philanthropy is the key, and even more often environmentally responsible private profit-seeking investment is the foundation for success. What works best is a situation in which a private investor can package Federal tax incentives on income, capital gains, or estates together with state and local incentives on income, property, or sales taxes in a manner that makes feasible the preservation or improvement of affected resources. Committee Advisor Ted Harrison described how his company, Commonweal Conservancy, is working to develop portions of the historically, archeologically, and culturally important Galisteo Basin in New Mexico in a way intended to produce a profit and also to preserve scenic, natural, and cultural resources. This is a manifestation of the partnerships led by the National Park Service.[14]

There is great potential to apply National Park Service leadership more effectively on behalf of cultural resources and to begin to apply them for natural resources and other "parklike" values.[15] Although this should be initiated immediately, it is also a strategic issue that will require continued thought and innovation for decades to come.

A beginning draft of legislation to affirm and improve the National Park Service leadership role in activities beyond park boundaries has been jointly initiated by the Natural Resources and Science and the Cultural Resource and Historic Preservation Committees. That draft should be perfected by the National Park Service, its potential partners, and the Congress, and enacted into law. Its implementation should then be evaluated once or twice each decade to assure that it evolves in ways that work best for all.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 3

Preservation Research, Technology, & Training

LONG TERM: The National Park Service and its federal, tribal, state, local, and private sector partners have easy access to the necessary scholarly and scientific studies, technical information, and skills training.

STEPS

- Carry out, through the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training, a nationwide assessment of needs by parks, programs, and partners for preservation research, technology, and training.
- Ensure coordination of administration, strategic planning, and service delivery of all Service centers of expertise that engage in study, research, technical information, and training.
- Eliminate the long-standing backlog of needed park cultural resource research, inventories, and studies.

- With the Green Building Council, develop "Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines" that make LEED standards more practicably applicable to the rehabilitation of historic properties; establish related professional accreditation standards for historic preservation professional practitioners.

- Support directed research in historic preservation technology; strengthen Cooperative Ecosystems Study Units (CESU) nationwide to advance historic preservation technology research and training for all who need it.

- Establish a historic preservation conservation trades/crafts training and accreditation program available to Park Service employees and other federal agencies.

- Assure that research and planning related to climate change and other natural environmental considerations (e.g. acid rain, changing cultural landscapes, sea level changes, permafrost melting) are fully applied to cultural resources.

Preserving cultural resources requires knowledge. Many resources remain unrecognized, uninventoried, and unregistered. With few exceptions, they are non-renewable. Because losses of cultural resources, including those caused by well intended but inadequately informed preservation efforts, are beyond correction, errors are never acceptable. It is therefore essential to know and understand in detail the resources, the things that threaten them, and the things that can be done about it. This requires a great deal of sound scholarly and scientific research, capture of lessons from experience, wide dissemination of information, and systems to assure success.

The array of resource types that fall within the rubric of cultural resources and historic preservation is almost indescribably wide, and the preservation problems that must be handled and possible solutions to those problems are comparably diverse. The brick of which historic buildings were made in one city is not the same as that in historic buildings elsewhere, nor is the mortar binding the bricks the same, nor the wood, nor the plaster, nor the paint. Especially different from one place to another are environmental factors that disintegrate historic materials, whether rain and mildew, wind and sand, ultraviolet rays, or the freeze-thaw cycle. Just recognizing cultural resources sometimes requires understanding cultural values and world views unlike those of the dominant culture. Places important because they were the scenes of historic events, or because they contain important archaeological information require different understandings than those important because they contain significant architecture.[16] Because the factors that make up the broad field of cultural resources and historic preservation cannot be made simple, the work necessary to understand and to preserve the resources is inevitably complex. Knowing how will always be a major concern.

The National Center for Preservation Technology and Training was established in the National Park Service to lead and coordinate work to meet these complex needs.[17] Well before the second century begins and at intervals afterward the center should coordinate preservationists and centers of expertise everywhere in an ongoing assessment of needs for research, training, technology, and dissemination of information. That assessment should thereafter inform, and as appropriate guide, budgeting and staffing to meet the continually-evolving needs. Although the constant expansion of the body of knowledge may lead to new and higher standards as time passes, the National Park Service can succeed best by presiding over the participatory development of a national consensus about what practices are acceptable and what are not, rather than as an authority empowered to dictate.

Both the positive solutions and negative errors involve lessons of great potential benefit to others engaged in historic rehabilitation.

Dedicated research is necessary for some problems, but many answers are discovered and used in daily experience and ready to be captured and shared among the wider world of people who need the information. A particular model of this approach is the program under which private owners receive federal income tax credits when they rehabilitate historic buildings according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. In most years since 1981 several hundred projects have been initiated by private owners and submitted to the National Park Service for certification. A substantial percentage of those projects have encountered problems for which guiding information did not exist. Often such projects have then developed innovative and positive solutions to the problems, and sometimes they have committed serious negative errors that harmed the historic qualities intended to be preserved. In every case, both the positive solutions and negative errors involve lessons of great potential benefit to others engaged in historic rehabilitation. Those lessons should always be captured by the National Park Service and shared with the world, as has been done in the past.

From time to time new national priorities require specific attention by those who lead the evolving national consensus about standards and practices.[18] The Americans with Disabilities Act required specific attention to accessibility of historic buildings, few of which had been constructed in accessible ways. Positive action by the National Park Service with the historic preservation community led to new understandings of what kinds of modifications could meet accessibility needs with minimum or no negative effect on the historical qualities of buildings. A similar positive action is needed now to show how historic structures can be made to meet LEED, or similar standards with minimum or no negative effect upon historical integrity. Presumably this will result in a significant amount of new technical information as well as new approaches to meeting the Secretary's Standards.

The other obvious subject requiring immediate National Park Service leadership is global warming and environmental considerations which will affect cultural resources almost on the scale to which it will affect natural resources. Many living cultures and lifeways and hundreds of thousands of archaeological sites are subject to disturbance and destruction by melting permafrost and rising sea levels. Major changes in the natural environments of historic places will destroy historical contexts and make it difficult to comprehend the stories the places embody. Acid deposition and precipitation dissolves the materials of which many historic structures are made—particularly the majestic monuments and memorials of white marble.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 4

A Changing America

LONG TERM: Assure that all Americans are able to recognize themselves and their stories in the National Park System and in the programs of the National Park Service.

STEPS

- In consultation with a wide range of disciplines and professional organizations in cultural resource and historic preservation fields, conduct a five year study to:
  - Update National Historic Landmark themes and new area studies to focus on aspects of the American story that are absent or are inadequately or inaccurately covered at present.[19]
  - Examine present park units for opportunities to preserve and interpret forgotten, overlooked, or omitted stories.
- Make all visitors feel welcome in parks by increasing diversity among park employees and using multiple language interpretative programs and educational outreach such as those at Santa Monica Mountains and Lowell.
- Review for cultural bias and modify if appropriate the policies that affect uses of parks. Target interpretation toward groups whose cultural habits may not now comport with use policies that are appropriate.
- Apply similar reviews to the Historic Preservation Programs, Heritage Areas, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Rivers, Trails, and other related programs.
- Strengthen Ethnography programs to a point where every park has access to professional studies and advice.
- Thoughtfully consider needs for park sites or areas of larger parks that are focused on the needs and desires of different urban populations
- Take specific steps to engage the youth of a changing America with cultural and natural resources in order to create a sense of participation in, ownership of, and a personal identification with the stories embodied in the resources.

Few coming changes will be as important as the rapid and fundamental ways in which the American people ourselves are changing. When we are barely thirty years into the second century there will be 400 million Americans—about one-third more than now. Much of the increase will result from immigration, mostly from countries other than those that previously provided almost all immigrants. Groups now called minorities will increase as percentages of the population and together with new arrivals become the majority. The United States has experienced significant demographic changes before, but never the speed and scale of changes now underway and expected to continue.[20]

Basic assumptions about nature, beauty, recreation, and history may change, possibly in fundamental ways. The National Park Service must lead the change or else be changed by it. Viewed as opportunity, this situation offers the Service a chance to grow into the future it should pursue even if doing so were not imperative. If the National Park Service conceives itself as serving all of the peoples of the world, because that is what the word "American" is coming to mean, it can better fulfill its role in the United States and among nations.

The effects of these changes will come not only from new and different needs, values, and perspectives, but also from the time-honored practice of immigrants settling initially in places they find most amenable. People naturally choose to live near others who speak the same language, eat similar foods, and follow familiar practices. Where new immigrants choose to settle will have a significant effect on what the National Park Service must do in those localities as well as nationally.

The concept of "historic place" may change more rapidly than it has before. The network of State and local historic preservation programs, being grassroots-driven and responsive to local changes, are likely to be in the vanguard. Changes in the kinds of places nominated to the National Register should inform changes in the thematic structures and the significance judgments made in the National Historic Landmarks program. Changes in the National Historic Landmarks program should be manifest in the kinds of places added to the National Park System. Helping the National Park Service foresee and shape its own future may prove to be among the most important of the many ways in which these beyond-boundary programs are valuable.[21]

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 5

American Indian Tribes & Other Native American Peoples

LONG TERM: Sovereign tribes and other entities recognized in law as representing indigenous peoples under United States jurisdiction are full and reciprocal partners with the United States in accomplishing the National Park Idea.

STEPS

- Assure American Indian Tribal, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian consultation on all appropriate activities of National Parks and National Park Service programs.
- Increase recruitment of Native Americans as National Park Service employees.
- Use native stories and languages in park interpretation.
- Cooperate with and provide assistance to tribes in developing and operating tribal park systems and tribal programs to preserve natural and cultural resources and in other endeavors that are part of the National Park Idea.
- Assure full implementation of laws such as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act that have particular importance for tribes.
- Update policies to facilitate connections by Native peoples and their living cultures to parks and other areas, including private access for ecologically sustainable traditional cultural practices.
- Establish an Office of Tribal and Native Peoples Relations within the Department of the Interior Solicitor's Division of Conservation and Wildlife with the goal of removing unnecessary barriers to National Park Service and other agencies in tribal relations.
- Draw upon "Native Science," the knowledge, traditions, values, and attitudes toward the earth as guidance to the ways the National Park Service manages and interprets parks and resources.

The sound beginning made by the National Park Service in collegial work with American Indian tribes and other Native American organizations holds particular promise for the second century. The National Park Service can be of great importance to tribes, tribes can be of great importance to the Service, and together they can be of great importance to the United States and the world. Indigenous peoples the world over have suffered from rapid expansion of influence by a few cultures so powerful that they have risen to near absolute dominance. These powerful cultures offer changes purported to be benefits—modern medicines, education, jobs, communication, exposure to a wider world—that may also undermine fundamental beliefs, principles, and practices by which people have defined themselves and understood their places in the world. Rapid loss of cultural reference points sometimes leaves impacted people confused, disoriented, and uncertain of how to cope with the challenges and dilemmas of life. The ennui that may follow is often remedied by rediscovering and reviving respect for cultural traditions. National Park Service assistance to tribal cultural heritage programs, some of it deriving from joint management of certain parks over many decades, some from implementation of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980,[22] some from a provision in the National Historic Preservation Act, and some directly from the 1984 World Conference on Cultural Parks, have contributed valuably to a renaissance among indigenous cultures in the United States and elsewhere. This benefits not only the indigenous cultures but also the world. Yet it is only a beginning and it will become ever more important in the future.[23]

Barely in time, before some traditional knowledge is lost altogether, the National Park Service has begun to recognize that benefits of working with tribes flow to the Service from the tribes as well as the other way around. As the Service works to help visitors comprehend their own interdependence with other species, traditional tribal reverence for the earth and her systems is becoming a persuasive addition to the findings of science and scholarship. Today's coldly utilitarian views must be moderated if the dominant cultures are not to overtax the earth's ability to sustain a large human population.[24] This change will happen more readily if the lessons of science are presented in tandem with the older, deeper, and more spiritual lessons from generations of indigenous cultures. It is not unusual for National Park visitors to liken an opening among giant redwoods to a cathedral, or to describe their experiences in nature as sacred. Such metaphor is important to what National Parks stand for, and to the willingness of the public to use and support parks. That willingness can benefit greatly by learning from cultures for which the concept is more than metaphorical.[25]

Respect is the key to enabling one culture to benefit from knowing another. Specifically in the United States respect means more than mere attitude; it means acknowledging many tribes as political sovereigns and dealing with them on a government-to-government basis even as we may be dealing with tribal individuals on a person-to-person basis. This too will grow in importance as the second century progresses.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 6

A Nation Guided By Its History

LONG TERM: People of every age, background, and status have a sound understanding of what it means to be an American and are motivated to participate in the duties of citizenship.

STEPS

- Assure that cultural resources in parks and everywhere are held to high professional and ethical standards of truth and accuracy.
- Assure that cultural resources are understood and used as primary source documents that speak directly from the past to present and future generations.
- Assure that cultural resources are understood and used as universal educational tools supplementing classrooms, books, and other media.
- Strengthen cultural resource presence in and coordination with Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units and other centers of expertise; employ visiting scholar programs in parks.
- Update and make easily available as appropriate[26] the full range of National Park Service historical, architectural, archaeological, ethnographic, and other studies and data bases to scholars and the public.
- Apply the *Teaching With Historic Places* and *Teaching With Museum Objects* programs to all parks and all parts of the United States.
- Employ the full range of cultural resource and historic preservation programs in all interpretive and educational activities.

Commissioner Sylvia Earle, emphasizing the importance of informing people about their roles in planetary health, said "if we did not have the National Park Service we should have to invent it." Committee Advisor Craig Barnes wrote that "if… we are trying to find the lever with which to move the world, the lever is story."[27] As custodian of many nationally and globally significant places; as helper, guide, and facilitator to others who also work to preserve significant places; as host to 270 million annual visitors and likely many more in the future, the National Park Service has its hand on the lever of story and can move the world. With the ability comes obligation—because it can, it must.

Politics is the way a democracy does its business, but scholarship and science must guide politics rather than be guided by it.

This brings a sobering responsibility. History and related disciplines practiced to the highest professional standards and informed by the best research are fundamental to democracy. Turned even slightly to political ends, pseudo-history can easily become mere propaganda and be used to undermine democracy. Politics is the way a democracy does its business, but scholarship and science must guide politics rather than be guided by it. The National Park Service must constantly improve its own staff of historians, archaeologists, ethnographers, architects, landscape architects, engineers, conservators, and others in order to participate responsibly in shaping the ever-evolving national story—so that story can move the world in the best directions.

Meeting this responsibility requires fostering a respect for the ability of historic places to speak directly from the past to the present.[28] Authenticity—the real building, site, structure, or object—is what most fundamentally distinguishes the National Park Service from theme parks and other entities that may also teach lessons of history. Even with the best scholarly and scientific studies, the original and authentic resources must be experienced by visitors in direct and personal ways. A synopsis of the Declaration of Independence, or a version with a few sentences obscured and later copied over, or even an exact facsimile would be less informative than the original. Preservation of that document is deemed vital to the nation. A similar attitude must guide treatment of the places that embody our stories. Preservation of the original and authentic must always be the guiding principle, so that the Service is no more willing to remove and replace components of historic buildings than it would be to erase and re-write words in historic documents. Recognizing that most cultural resources are subject to at least gradual degradation from exposure and use, the policy statement that has guided the National Park Service since the 1930s remains appropriate: *"It is better to preserve than to repair, better to repair than to restore, better to restore than to reconstruct."*[29]

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 7

National Heritage Areas

LONG TERM: National Heritage Areas are designated and managed in a rationally-planned, creatively flexible, systematic, and statutorily-guided manner.

STEPS

- Propose draft legislation to authorize and define a nationwide system of National Heritage Areas.
  - Convene a committee representing the congress, states, tribes, local governments, resource experts, businesses, citizens, parks, and professional specialists to review and perfect the draft.
  - Incorporate into the draft approaches employed by European nations for preserving parks and other special places without removing them from the life and culture of the nation.
  - Determine whether such areas are units of the National Park System, a parallel system, or functions of National Park Service programs.
  - Provide by Internal Revenue Code amendment, incentives for preservation of significant natural and cultural places within National Heritage Areas.
  - Assure funding for each National Heritage Area by authorizing direct federal Historic Preservation Fund matching grants for survey, planning, restoration and rehabilitation of significant historic places in National Heritage Areas, and by appropriating commensurate amounts.
- Resolve the status of other "special designations" such as National Trails, National Corridors, and Wild and Scenic Rivers with regard to the National Park Service and System.
- Engage the National Park Service institutional culture in support of all such designated areas.
- Develop a philosophy of support that beyond preservation and interpretation of resources and their stories, to include quality of human life and planetary health.

Parts of the institutional culture that focus on large traditional parks may view National Heritage Areas and other special designations as departures from the norm. It is important to establish that they are not.

This general topic is addressed by the Future Shape of the National Park System Committee, but is also appropriate for the Cultural Resource and Historic Preservation Committee. Many of the special designations comport well with long-standing historic preservation practice and represent the work of grass-roots partners in the historic preservation programs.

...there are few remaining large tracts from which parks of the old model might be created.

The current reality is that there are few remaining large tracts from which parks of the old model might be created. Making them into parks often involves overcoming bitter resistance from the agencies that now manage them. There are few philanthropists today who can purchase sufficient lands from private owners and assemble them into workable large parks for donation to the United States as some have done in the past. Government action to purchase such tracts, and even private philanthropic purchase, often meets powerful resistance from individual owners and from property rights organizations.

In the meantime, the country's need for additional parks and preserved areas continues to grow. If the National Park Service is to create the future the nation requires of it, the institutional culture must embrace this current reality.[30]

The Commission has seen the current reality function at a near-optimum level in its meeting at Lowell National Historical Park, the Essex National Heritage Area, and Salem Maritime National Historic Site, where two units of the National Park System; a National Heritage Area; National Historic Landmarks; National Register of Historic Places; Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance; and state, local, and private sector entities interested in cultural resources, natural resources, scenic beauty, recreation, education, and economic development function in nearly seamless harmony.[31]

There is a tendency among the National Park Service and allied organizations to view situations such as this as applicable to cultural resources in the urban Eastern United States, but as not particularly relevant elsewhere. This is an example of the institutional culture preventing recognition of realities, however, as Committee Advisor Reed Jarvis has outlined in his paper on *Non-Traditional NPS Areas in the West.*[32] In fact, the greatest potential for progressive use of many of these tools is in the West, often near the great parks of the traditional model.

The United States may have given the National Park Idea to the world, but in the second century the United States has much to learn from the world. Nations that had to develop their own versions of National Parks without the luxury of vast empty lands on which to do so have developed philosophies, methods, and skills that enable them to preserve places without displacing local residents or taking lands out of traditional productive economic uses. Organizations like English Heritage, the National Trust for Scotland, and the *Parc Naturels Régionaux de France* hold lessons sure to become more important to the National Park Service as the second century ensues.

Embracing the current reality and eagerly pursuing the likely future will help the National Park Service deal with certain problems that cannot be solved everywhere by following practices traditional to great Western parks. Inholdings, for example, parcels of property that remain in private ownership within park boundaries, are generally considered as locations for potentially adverse future development. Often this is correct, but when the inholdings include significant cultural resources not central to the major themes of the park, it equally often is mistaken. Such inholdings that have been generally well maintained by private owners, upon acquisition by the parks instantly become relatively low priority cultural resource maintenance problems. Well-known examples include historic dude ranches, fishing villages, and tourist inns and cabins that may have been well-enough preserved in private ownership but that suffer neglect or worse in consequence of being acquired by parks.[33] In these cases, new approaches such as Heritage Areas, use of preservation easements, or leasing of historic structures may offer better management opportunities than more traditional models.

It is essential to fund National Heritage Areas to a level that will allow them to carry out their work. Otherwise the hopes raised by each new authorization eventually will result in disappointment, failure, and cynicism.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 8

Cultural Resource & Historic Preservation Institutional Capacity

LONG TERM: The National Park Service, from the highest levels to the Volunteers in Parks, in every region and park, fully understands and successfully accomplishes the cultural resource and historic preservation elements of the mission.

STEPS

- Assure sound, strong, and articulate policy guidance from the Directorate level to all regions, parks, centers, and partners who participate in the park and beyond-boundary partnerships and programs.
- In order to make possible an effective career development program, correct, on an urgent and remedial basis, the gaps in mid-level and mid-career expertise that have accumulated during fifteen years of failure to fill professional staff vacancies.
- Establish career-long professional development for cultural resource professionals and workers—internships, mentoring, career paths, succession plans, educational sabbaticals, frequent training, rotating developmental assignments, intergovernmental and international developmental assignments, evaluations, and use of organizational learning approaches.
- Assure that all parts of the National Park Service fully comprehend and value the cultural resource and historic preservation part of the mission.

- Unleash the potential of over 20,000 National Park Service employees and countless partners by replacing vestiges of command-and-control with a culture that challenges and inspires individuals in pursuit of a common vision.
- Manage cultural resource activities in parks and historic preservation activities everywhere in an overall coordinated manner.
- Develop in parks and centers the degree and array of expertise necessary to assure that every cultural resource in every park is known and is managed to appropriate scholarly and scientific standards.
- Establish ongoing discussions among craftspeople, experts, supervisors, managers, and executives involved in specific program areas to continually improve the consensus about the application of standards.
- Delegate as far as practicable authority to determine significance and appropriateness of treatment of cultural resources, and employ management systems to assure application of proper standards.
- Implement the "Recommendations to Improve the Structure of the Federal Historic Preservation Program" approved by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on March 19, 2009.
- Implement a leadership development program focused on systems thinking and servant leadership.

The single most important characteristic of National Park Service institutional capacity in the second century must be the ability to conceive and consciously move toward a desired future that is very different from past or present. The second most important will be to bring forward into the future the best parts of a deeply ingrained institutional culture while leaving behind those aspects that are outdated. This is not a contradiction, but rather a matter that will require sustained attention, perhaps forever. What must be brought forward are traditions of commitment to a cause, dedication to excellence, and pride in service to the resources and to the public to whom the resources belong.[34]

What must be left behind is nostalgia for some mythical time when all seemed simple and well. Such times are likely to be selective memories of limited experiences rather than broad views encompassing the full National Park Service mission. For far too long this has caused some to try to apply management approaches from an idealized situation to places and circumstances in which they were inappropriate. Not terribly long ago well-intentioned individuals tried to impose remote western park models upon recreation areas that needed to accommodate local history and tradition and to serve large urban and immigrant populations. Not terribly long ago a National Park Service regional director declared that no one should care what color paint was used on the inside of Independence Hall. Not terribly long ago a director of a region that now has a sophisticated and successful cultural resource management program declared that "we don't have cultural resources in our region." Within memory one of the most important historic places in the United States, now designated Golden Spike National Historic Site, was opposed for inclusion in the National Park System because another regional director found its scrubby, although historically accurate, desert setting "not what a park is supposed to look like."[36] Remnants of these attitudes even today impede contemporary approaches to resource management. They have to be let go.

The broader and more inclusive approaches already mentioned under other headings will be vital to developing the institutional capacity needed in the second century—elimination of barriers that separate cultural and natural resources, interpretation, visitor services—recognition that the National Park Service mission is not confined within the parks themselves—understanding that partnerships involve give and take in both directions. It is above all the high values of the institutional culture that must be brought forward from tradition and put to work shaping innovation.

Strong and principled leadership is vital. The director of the National Park Service must be the model, but it is essential not to vest all hope in this one officer. A discernable pattern exists in which a new director arrives amid great hope and optimism. Then, as budgets fail to satisfy and broader administration policies or political forces contrary to the great hope come into play a sense of disappointment takes root, enthusiasm dims, energy diminishes, and more than 20,000 employees begin to look forward to a next director who may provide the longed-for leadership.[37] This pattern may be broken by a director and a senior executive cadre who will focus on a challenging vision for the future and engage all employees, all partners, and as much of the public as possible in working toward it. Engaging employees, partners, and the public means freeing them from restraint, reducing the need for permission, and turning "authorities" at all levels into motivators, enablers, mentors, and colleagues.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 9

International

LONG TERM: The United States, using the National Park Service and other appropriate sources of expertise, holds a prominent place among the community of nations in cultural resource management and historic preservation.

STEPS

- Authorize in law and administratively invigorate the National Park Service International Affairs program.
- Hold a Second World Conference on Cultural Parks to further the work begun at the first conference in 1984.
- Update and maintain the 2008 tentative list of natural and cultural places that should be considered for nomination to the World Heritage List.
- Develop programs specifically aimed at mutual improvement and harmonizing of laws, policies, and approaches with Canada, Mexico, and other nations whose boundaries adjoin or are near the United States.[38]
- Pair United States National Heritage Area Directors with counterparts in France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere for training assignments and collaborations.
- Participate fully in the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS); in the United States chapter, US/ICOMOS; and in the International Centre for the Study of the Conservation of Cultural Property in Rome (ICCROM).
- Develop a World Heritage Youth Corps.
- Work with the Department of State to employ international cultural resource and historic preservation programs as diplomatic tools.
- Employ international programs as learning and development activities for National Park Service professionals.
- Encourage international tourism to national parks and other important places.
- Help other nations to succeed in sustainable development while saving significant cultural and natural heritage resources.
- Work with the World Bank to promote appreciation of the economic and other benefits of cultural resource preservation

The United States seems set on a course of a globalized economy with minimum barriers among nations. It is often explained that commercial interdependence promotes peace. It would be glaringly inconsistent not to pursue a globalized approach to saving the cultural resources that emphasize our common humanity[39] and also the elements of nature essential for humans to survive and thrive anywhere on earth.

It would be glaringly inconsistent not to pursue a globalized approach to saving the cultural resources that emphasize our common humanity[39]...

Almost everything this report has said about the National Park Service within the United States also applies to its roles on a global scale. The United States introduced to the world the concept of National Parks and was among the first nations to provide for highly professional care of the places it chose to preserve. Committee Advisor Christina Cameron reminds us that the idea of a World Heritage Trust originated at a White House Conference in 1965, that at a 1972 international summit the United States proposed that the World Heritage List include places of cultural heritage as well as natural, and that the United States was the first country to ratify the World Heritage Convention. Other countries have rightfully come to expect strong professional interaction with the United States. The United States should resume its appropriate international role in cultural and natural heritage, and the professionals who staff that participation should come in large measure from the National Park Service and its partners.

Christina Cameron writes that the primary international organization charged with supporting places of cultural heritage, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), is relatively impoverished in comparison with the World Conservation Union (IUCN). "The permanent ICOMOS secretariat is composed of eight people… By contrast, IUCN has over 1,000 professional staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners." The fact that an American, Gustavo Araoz, is now President of ICOMOS international presents an excellent opportunity in the United States for a fund raising campaign and other steps to strengthen ICOMOS, and for the National Park Service and its partners to provide leadership and support.

This clearly is among the steps that need to be taken now in preparation for the second century.

Many committees of this Commission have emphasized the importance of youth. ICOMOS and many other international organizations provide internships and international experiences for young people. A World Heritage Youth Corps, led in the United States by the National Park Service and focused on World Heritage Sites and other outstanding places, could contribute vitally to employment and advancement of young Americans, support the conservation of natural and cultural places, and promote a safer and more peaceful future.

... part of the responsibility of our generation is to help prepare the decision makers of tomorrow to take over stewardship responsibilities for the heritage of our planet.[40]

Indigenous peoples worldwide have much in common both in the problems they face and in the strengths they have to offer others. Indigenous peoples almost universally believe that we do not inherit the planet from our ancestors but rather that we hold it in trust on behalf of our children and grandchildren and that part of the responsibility of our generation is to help prepare the decision-makers of tomorrow to take over stewardship responsibilities for the heritage of our planet.[40] As part of its many-faceted Tribal Cultural Heritage program, the National Park Service should encourage, cooperate in, and benefit from similar programs internationally.

The diplomatic value of parks and places of cultural and natural heritage should not be overlooked. Sometimes the course of relations among nations leads to a vicious cycle of alienation. Nations that differ profoundly on only a few major issues may become so negatively-focused that they create greater and greater differences, demonizing one another and risking enmity and warfare. When nations reach a point where they cannot or will not talk with one another about profound differences, they sometimes can talk about more nearly universal values such as cultural heritage, parks, or nature. A table-tennis game broke a decades-long alienation of the United States and China. Exchanges of cultural heritage professionals from the United States and the Soviet Union helped to reduce tensions in the 1970s and eventually to end the Cold War. In times past the State Department has viewed the National Park Service and its partners as significant resources in its diplomatic work. That arrangement should be re-established immediately and nurtured throughout the second century.

Conclusion

The world of 1916 was not simple but rather one of unprecedented change. Visionary leaders of that time recognized the urgency of having a federal agency devoted to preservation and management of extraordinary places for the benefit of their time and for all times to come. To do this they created a National Park Service and charged it in law with a magnificent mission—to manage the parks for the inspiration and benefit of the people but to do so in ways that would leave the parks unimpaired for inspiration and benefit of future generations. Great ideas are difficult to accomplish in part because they will not hold still while people work to carry them out; instead they produce greater and greater ideas. Struggle as we may to reach a goal, by the time we have gotten there the actual goal has moved to a newer and farther place. So it has been with the "National Park Idea," a concept that, although fundamental, never was and never will be simple and easy to define. From the beginning this idea generated other ideas, attracting new responsibilities and creating a growing mission. For a hundred years the National Park Service has been a leader, sometimes energetic and inspiring and sometimes reluctant, but always and inevitably a leader.

So it will be after 2016. Preserving the extraordinary places designated as national parks will be even more bound up with the vastly broader natural ecosystems and cultural environments of which they are only parts. Preserving other significant places such as those eligible for the National Register will be even more vital to the well-being of the parks themselves. The meaning of *American* history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture will continue to expand until it represents the world itself. The National Park Service must embrace its leadership responsibilities among nations, federal agencies, states, local governments, tribes, and the private sector. It must recognize that leadership does not mean command or control of what others do, but rather it means inspiring and enabling others to accomplish their parts of the National Park Idea, which itself will not be the same from one decade to the next. The single most important characteristic of a successful National Park Service in its second century will the ability to shape its own future. The single most important difference must be that its leadership is never reluctant but always energetic and inspiring.

Committee Advisors

The Cultural Resource and Historic Preservation Committee cast a wide net for ideas and information, making the opportunity to contribute generally known among experts and practitioners in its various professional fields and the public. Many recognized experts were specifically invited to contribute statements of informed opinion about what sort of National Park Service the United States would need in the second century of such a Service. People responded thoughtfully and generously, some with carefully crafted and polished statements and some with simple lists and electronic messages. These have been gratefully accepted without modification.

Forty-two papers, rich with information and ranging from the specific and local to the general and the global, have been received from 37 Committee Advisors. In addition, the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees has developed 11 "Professional Opinion Papers" that this organization of experienced individuals developed over a period of two years specifically in order to inform this Commission; Two other papers by Commissioner Rogers and Committee Consultant Tiller have been included with those from Advisors. These papers will be available on www.npca.org.

These papers have provided vital source material for this report and the other work of the Committee, but their greater value may yet lie in the future. After the report of the National Parks Second Century Commission has been completed and released, years of follow-up action will be necessary in order for its recommendations to be fully developed, understood, and put into practice. Papers by Committee Advisors should become important parts of that follow-up, perhaps polished and published in various media, perhaps as the basis for symposia convened for deeper exploration of the ideas, perhaps for television and other media programs,[41] and perhaps for uses not yet apparent. The Cultural Resource and Historic Preservation Committee is grateful for the outstanding thought and concentrated effort of its Advisors.

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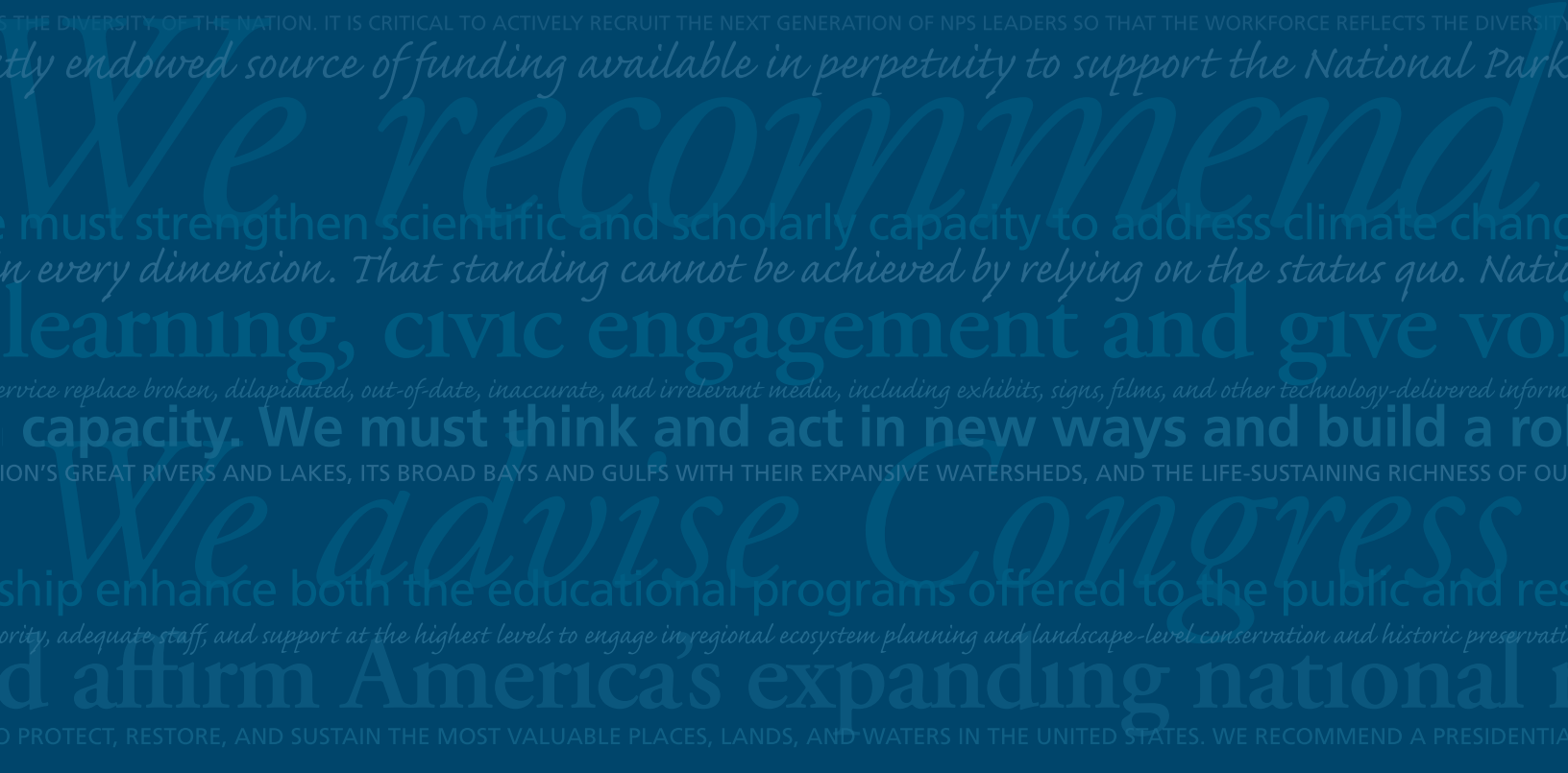
ADVANCING THE NATIONAL PARK IDEA

NATIONAL PARKS SECOND CENTURY COMMISSION

Education and Learning Committee Report



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Vision

Our national parks have limitless potential to strengthen democracy and enhance the environment, while remaining true to their charter mandate of preserving the nation's natural and cultural treasures. In its second century, the National Park Service will offer a rich and varied range of experiences that nourish place-based, life-long learning, civic engagement, and stewardship, taking advantage of the many new environments in which people can now learn. To fulfill this potential, the National Park Service must become a catalyst in facilitating partnerships with the citizens it serves so that every American will embrace the national parks as part of our common pursuit of satisfying lives and a sustainable environment.

Introduction

As one of the largest providers of educational experiences, national parks have the opportunity to support lifelong, place-based learning. This type of learning deepens our understanding of the rich cultural and natural history of our nation, enhances educational achievement, promotes civic engagement and fosters stewardship. Just as the Organic Act established the framework needed to maintain the parks during the first century, education is vital to the success of the parks during the next century.

Education in the national parks is provided through the visitor experience, interpretive programs and media, and curriculum-based educational programs. Surveys demonstrate not only that visitation is declining but that current visitors do not reflect the demographics of America.[1] To engage our increasingly diverse society, visitor experiences must reflect the interests of our diverse communities. Exhibits need to be updated to current standards, in terms of both content and technology.[2] Interpretive programs are offered to millions and represent a major learning opportunity. But they must be created in collaboration with communities rather than for them, and facilitate partnerships with communities and volunteers.[3] Failure of our citizens to find relevance in the educational, cultural and historic opportunities contained within our parks will result in a tepid commitment to their preservation.

The very existence of our parks depends upon Americans finding these places relevant to their lives and to the future of our nation. Without this, we cannot expect a widespread, passionate commitment to their preservation. Certainly this is how new parks are created and how the future of our existing parks will be determined. Hence, our greatest opportunity is to facilitate a connection between our parks and the interests of the visitor, creating an opportunity for the visitor to discover importance and personal significance in these places.

Among our nation's priorities, education ranks among the highest. National parks can be an effective partner with state and federal departments of education in improving our system of childhood education. Programs that offer place-based learning in our parks result in students having measurable improvement in academic performance and higher test scores.[4,5] Inquiry-based learning methods used in park-based programs enhance science proficiency,[6] lead to gender neutral participation in science learning, and result in a high degree of student engagement.[7] Moreover, there is evidence that promoting environmental stewardship and civic engagement leads students to take responsible actions to sustain our environment and the planet as a whole.[8] Even a one-day field trip to a national park has the potential to bestow positive and lasting benefit.[9]

To fulfill this potential, education must become a priority and partnerships must be facilitated so that the national parks will be embraced as part of our common pursuit of satisfying lives and a sustainable environment.

The Future of Education and Technology: A Role for the National Parks

Tremendous changes are coming to the American educational system, which has operated on assumptions from the 1950s and 60s based on preparing a workforce for a factory-based industrial economy and an earlier agrarian society. These

assumptions can still be seen in the school calendar and classroom schedules, the textbook-based curriculum, and teachers teach within the four walls of the classroom, and how students learn through individual "seatwork."

However, in a knowledge-based, global economy where information is always "on," schools are shifting to new models. It will be possible for learners of all ages to learn "anytime, anywhere." Learning will become more personalized and meaningful. Learners will have more choice in what they learn and how they learn it. The Internet, in particular, is quickly replacing the textbook as the source of classroom knowledge and a platform for sharing student work and teacher collaboration. Instead of a curriculum based on memorization, the curriculum is moving to emphasize thinking, the ability to analyze multiple sources of information and data, and the skill of collaborating with others to produce beyond what individuals can accomplish alone.

The explosive growth of online learning, where students access the most current material from the Internet and communicate online and in person with their instructors, other experts, and fellow students, will continue through the next decades. The national parks represent one of our nation's richest and highest quality sources of educational content that can be brought to a much larger audience via the Internet. Other examples of federal agencies that have created high quality archives of educational content related to their missions include the American Memory Project of the Library of Congress (memory.loc.gov) and NASA's educational website (education.nasa.gov). Both are very popular with teachers and students at all grade levels. For the National Parks to achieve its promise in serving its educational mission, a much greater investment will be needed in creating a new generation of interpretive and curricular materials.

In the future, it will be possible for every learner to access the best lectures and experts in any field, including at national park sites. It will be possible for students to take a virtual tour of the Gettysburg battlefield with James McPherson. They will be able to see and hear our leading scientists and historians on topics relevant to our national parks, such as E. O. Wilson on biodiversity or Sylvia Earle on the fate of our oceans. As easily as we now make a phone call, every classroom in America will be able to conduct live videoconferences with park rangers, natural and cultural resources staff, and other experts, to learn about the wide range of issues in these parks and how these issues relate to larger global, as well as local, community issues.

A major part of this shift is the creation of authentic, place-based learning experiences, where students work on real-life issues related to important places, such as their own homes and communities, and places of local, regional, and national significance. The national parks have a unique role to play in these new models of learning as places where critical environmental and historical issues are addressed. Compared to what will be possible, this larger role for the national parks is still largely untapped. But in many park sites, such as Valley Forge National Historical Park, we can see the groundwork being laid. As Kant said, "the actual proves the possible."

As easily as we now make a phone call, every classroom in America will be able to conduct live video conferences with park rangers, natural and cultural resources staff, and other experts, to learn about the wide range of issues in these parks...

There are many ways in which the national parks can play a larger role in contributing to the education of Americans, of all ages and stages, through formal schooling as well as informal, out-of-school experiences. Many of these experiences are already taking place. Our goal should be to bring them to greater scale so that more Americans, and a more diverse group of Americans, achieve a greater level of engagement with the national parks, recognize their value, and become stewards and active supporters of the parks. Examples of these types of learners include:

- Children who come to the parks with their families, from the earliest ages, through adolescence, for recreation and enjoyment, as well as learning about nature and history.
- Students, from elementary school through the college and graduate school years, who experience the parks as part of a formal curriculum. These experiences can include field trips for a day that include a strong interpretative component; residential programs that may last a week or several weeks; or high school and higher education programs that use the parks as classrooms for field experiences and research.
- Teachers, from their years as novice teachers through experienced, master teachers, can incorporate the national parks in their lessons and curricula. These lessons can

include in-person trips to National Park Service sites, as well as virtual visits to the parks, to enable more students to experience more park sites and learn about their scientific and historical content in greater depth. To bring these efforts to greater scale, more investment in the professional development of teachers around national park curricula will be needed.

Student teachers can also begin this process during their training in colleges of education, through curricula that incorporate National Park Service content that prepare them to teach in the fields of science, mathematics, the environment, or U.S. history.

- Senior citizens, who will be living longer in this century, can become volunteers and docents to support educational activities in the parks.

Human Capital

The future of the national parks' education and interpretation work will be inextricably tied to the quality of personnel who will be providing these services. The national parks, both the National Park Service and their partners, should take a more comprehensive "human capital" approach to the recruitment, training, and development of staff charged with the education mission. The seeds of career interest in the fields of environment and history, and the important role of the national parks in these fields, should be planted early, as early as the middle and high school years, and certainly during the college years.

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Creating the national park workforce of the future should be viewed as a pipeline that begins with the educational and interpretive programs envisioned in this report, creating a "ladder of learning" that can result in a career. As youth are exposed to national parks during their student years, they will also be exposed to the idea of the national parks as a future place to work. Programs such as youth leadership programs, student internships and fellowships can play a vital role in creating the diverse and skilled twenty-first century workforce needed for the national parks.

National Park Service Education Mission

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 1

Affirm the important role of the National Park System in life-long, place-based learning and authorize the supporting structure and resources to provide for the same.

ACTION A: The National Park Service should seek enabling legislation that clearly secures its educational mission for the second century and establishes a Fund for Education for the National Park Service and its partners.

RATIONALE: Internet technology and the "information age" are having a profound impact on the way we communicate, learn, interact, find and store information, and nurture civic engagement. This change is similar in scale and effect to the change brought about by the invention of the printing press. Our approach to education and life-long learning must change accordingly and our need for authentic experiences and place-based learning opportunities is becoming essential.

The National Park Service as a major informal education institution and steward of important authentic places that preserve and interpret history and the natural world, must play a prominent role in American education—far beyond the original concept of providing for public "enjoyment" as designated in the Organic Act of 1916. What is unique about the National Park Service that would allow us to pursue this role? The General Authorities Act of 1970 states it clearly: *"as cumulative expressions of a single national heritage; that, individually and collectively, these areas derive increased national dignity and recognition of their superb environmental quality…. preserved and managed for the benefit and inspiration of all the people of the United States…."* Our current mission is clear. The stakes are high; the reward is the survival of our national parks. Integrating parks into the formal education system will place a claim on the student's time. Interpretation and education are fundamental National Park Service activities. Taking the next step into expanding place-based, life-long learning in our national parks is a natural step.

The Redwoods Act of 1978 reasserted system-wide the high standard of protection in managing our national parks prescribed by Congress in the Organic Act of 1916. It stated: *"Congress further reaffirms, declares, and directs the promotion and regulation of the various areas of the National Park*

System…. Shall be consistent with and founded in the purpose established by the first section of the Act of August 25, 1916, to the common benefit of all the people of the United States." The legislation recommended in this report would similarly build on the concept of "enjoyment" in the Organic Act to include place-based, life-long learning to occur within our national parks. The legislation would also call for an evaluation of the educational assets – sites, stories, people – contained within any newly proposed National Park Service sites consistent with the 'national significance' criteria spelled out under the 'Criteria for Inclusion' in the National Park Service Management Policies 2006. In the future, a new area designation would include, within the purpose, the role of education (math, science, history, and civics) and place-based learning in the overall mission for the site.

ACTION B: The National Park Service should convene a taskforce of the appropriate federal entities and non-profit partners to clarify the mechanics of partnership agreements so that all funds can be effectively leveraged.

RATIONALE: If the National Park Service is to be an effective catalyst in facilitating partnerships with the citizens it serves, the sharing of funding, resources and knowledge with its partners is essential. The establishment of a Fund for Education that encourages and facilitates such resource sharing would go a long way in meeting our vision for education within our national parks in their second century. Establishing "partnerships" at the national, state, regional and local level will give all those concerned permission, flexibility and authority to work together. To achieve this goal, the mechanics of partnerships need to be clarified and structured in such a way that encourages long-term collaborations and maximizes the ability of both the National Park Service and its partners to leverage funds. These funds must be available to all partners. While there is ongoing dialogue between the National Park Service and its partners over partnership agreements that affect many programmatic areas, solutions will need to be in place before a Fund for Education, as called for here, can reach its full potential.

National parks, the places and the stories they tell, are the fabric of our nation. They allow us to understand our past, make sense of our experiences today, and can guide us into the future. Experiences that occur in parks are rooted in the unique history, culture, and environment of the place. Children, youth, teachers, adults, and the elderly are all our audiences. The national parks, as places for scientific inquiry, project-based learning, civic engagement, and life-long learning, can support a new *learning society.*

The Role of National Park-Based Education in American Society

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 2

The national parks should become catalysts in promoting life-long learning, civic engagement, and stewardship.

ACTION A: Strengthen and support collaborations with multiple public and private community partners and engage potential audiences in order to reach as many people as possible through programs and services which enrich lives and fortify the concept of active citizenship and stewardship in a democratic society.

RATIONALE: The mandate of the National Park Service to "conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects," of the nation has proven to be a distinctly difficult challenge for the service. The multiple opportunities for achieving these goals, while still providing for the "enjoyment of future generations" require a national mobilization. Stewardship of the national parks is fostered through engaging with visitors and partners to find value in their parks.

As a ubiquitous institution, with branches spanning from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, the National Park Service has always found itself in a unique position to help foster a life-long love of education in the nation's citizens as well as in the visitors from abroad. The National Park Service, and its educator staff members, have become trusted sources for educational excellence and place-based learning. Research has documented the importance of universal education. The nation's public schools and universities play an important role in these educational endeavors. Experiences in the classroom, however, can be magnified through use of place-based education in public spaces for all audiences. America has what could be called a "moral imperative" to both preserve our cultural and natural resources, and provide for their interpretation to foster the continued renewal of our democratic culture. To this end, outreach programs should be developed, and those which currently exist within the National Park Service should be strengthened, to better support teachers in incorporating parks into a national curriculum framework. By providing teachers effective and meaningful park experiences, the national parks only stand to widen their constituencies. Curriculum-based programs, developed in partnership with communities and professionals in the field of education, will provide another entry point for burgeoning park stewards.

By learning about the unique themes presented in national parks at an early age, and continuing to foster these connections through adulthood, the people who visit parks develop a sense of care about the preservation of their parks, their nation, and their world. The programs and learning environments present in national parks cannot be duplicated in a classroom or in front of a computer terminal. Instead, the learning which the National Park Service undertakes is distinctly place-based. Instead, as constituencies of the nation change, so too must the parks shift their purpose. National parks must shift from places devoted to pedantic teaching to environments of free debate and open dialogue of ideas. This paradigm shift will not be easy, but is necessary for the survival and prosperity of our national treasures.

The United States can be strengthened by a re-envisioned, democratic system of national parks which are dedicated to working in partnership with the communities which they serve. By exploring the opportunities and challenges which have faced our society in the past, and which still face our society today, our parks can help strengthen our national narrative and create a heightened sense of civic responsibility.

Programs and services where diverse citizens can gather and share ideas with one another in a safe and open environment will help stimulate twenty-first century society as a whole to become an environment inviting active participation and dialogue. Educational and interpretive conversations, in conjunction with a widening range of experiential learning opportunities, will foster an abiding stewardship which will help preserve national parks, and American democracy, for generations to come.

ACTION B: Create ambitious and scalable partnership initiatives with the federal, state and local departments of education, universities, nonprofits, and other community entities leading toward the integration of national park programs into the public domain.

RATIONALE: The National Park Service is not alone in its concern for both the preservation of the physical resources and well-being of the national dialogue. Just as the effectiveness of traditional educational vehicles, public schools and universities can be magnified through cooperation with the national parks, the National Park Service can magnify its overall effectiveness through cooperation with partners across the country, in both the public and private sector. By braiding resources and working cooperatively with these constituent groups, the National Park Service stands to both gain access to an ever broadening pool of visitors, and better serve the needs of those visitors.

The collaborative endeavors of the National Park Service should be fostered on all levels, from the national level through inter-agency collaborations and partnerships, to the level of individual parks with cooperative partnerships with local schools, historical societies, science centers and private foundations to better serve the park visitor. These partnerships should not be treated as fleeting arrangements but instead as long-term, lasting agreements which stand the test of time. Collaborations with multiple partners can be sustainable only when people are committed to common goals and commitments. Understanding each others' institution is critical. This mutual respect requires a new structure by which all partners, public and private alike, have equal status and stake in the success of prospective programs.

Collaborative partnerships must be used to help magnify the work that federal employees already undertake on a day to day basis: dialogue with visitors and the promotion of park stewardship.

Partnerships should not work simply to outsource work that could be done within a park's boundaries, but instead should seek to create cooperative work between a park and its constituents. Partnerships cannot function as a solution to the loss of positions endemic within the National Park Service in recent years. Instead, collaborative partnerships must be used to help magnify the work that federal employees already undertake on a day-to-day basis: dialogue with visitors and the promotion of park stewardship. This magnification could come from any number of partnerships, from the synergy created by aligning park themes and programs with national or local educational curriculum, to the verity fostered by increased access to cutting-edge scholarship and on-the-ground research, to helping increase visitorship to local cultural and natural resources, both within parks and their neighboring communities.

ACTION C: Strengthen and expand Service Learning and Citizen Science opportunities at national park sites and their surrounding communities to reflect a changing global landscape.

RATIONALE: Education in the United States, both formal, curricular-based education and that done on an informal basis, is shifting away from simply learning about an event or concept at a distance. Tactile learning experiences are moving to the forefront, as studies have begun to show that learning through active participation is vastly more effective than simply living

vicariously. At the same moment, Americans are recommitting themselves to service to community and nation. Various groups have advocated and recommended that all students, from preschool through high school, and into the university as well, participate in a service-learning and place-based experience as a key component of their core curriculum. Service-learning opportunities stand to help develop civic responsibility and park stewardship, while the place-based nature of the experience adds heightened context and meaning to their work. These experiences have been shown to be both an effective teaching tool for educators and an effective learning strategy for students. In hands-on environments, such as National Park Service sites and units, students and visitors are given the opportunity to learn by experiencing concepts first-hand.

The National Park Service represents a unique institution in that it may offer service-learning and place-based opportunities across the nation with an established and revered educational institution. A national program which fostered and supported service-learning, place-based experiences in national parks for students and visitors would serve the learning community as a whole, as well as the core missions of the National Park Service. By broadening the constituencies of the park, and involving youth, the National Park Service can instill in the next generation of park stewards an increased respect for natural and cultural resources, while furthering the primary goal of physically preserving resources for future generations. By integrating and strengthening service learning and place-based opportunities within national parks, research suggests we both teach civic responsibility and strengthen our natural communities.

Service-learning opportunities stand to help develop civic responsibility and park stewardship...

ACTION D: Implement a variety of current and leading edge technologies and media to facilitate National Park-based learning anytime, anywhere.

RATIONALE: The National Park Service relies chiefly upon the physical resources it hold to educate and engage its visitors. Place-based education is at the core of the National Park Service's inherent strengths. However, the world outside of the boundaries of federal lands has advanced technologically at lightning pace. Technological advancement is occurring in modern society at ever increasing speeds, and with technological change comes cultural shift. Americans and citizens of the Internet in general, are finding themselves living in a vibrant and interactive culture. As technology becomes more ubiquitous, consumers are coming more and more to expect assistive technologies in their day-to-day activities.

When approaching the Internet, the National Park Service, and the government as a whole, must be respectful of the culture which exists there already. This respect should be a guiding principle for any interaction with the public in the digital age, just as in the physical space of a park itself. The Internet is a vibrant instrument which the National Park Service should seek to embrace and join and not usurp. As such, the first step for the national parks to enter the digital age is to join and seek out our visitors where they live on the Internet. Through the existing means of communication, the burgeoning social networking systems and social media engines, the parks stand to engage an audience in a true dialogue. The revolution of the late 1990s and early 2000s toward social media presents the National Park Service as a whole a ready laboratory, where the raw materials and guidance come from the historians, scientists, and interpreters, but the creative conclusions and synthesis comes from the virtual visitor.

Social media and new media initiatives offer the distinct opportunity for the National Park Service to engage its visitors in a new, evolving atmosphere. Remote access to parks through digital media offers the opportunity for augmented stewardship and education for any interested visitor. Technology can help to acclimate teachers, students and visitors to a park through pre-visit activities and information. It can help augment the programming offered by rangers, staff and partners within a park's boundaries during a visit by the general public or from a classroom. Most excitingly, the technological revolutions of social networking and social media can offer each visitor a ready means by which to become a steward of their parks, to continue interacting with park personnel, partners and other visitors from their homes, both preparing for their own next visit and sharing why they feel national parks are important places. In this relationship, the National Park Service as a whole, and each of its employees and partners, can be seen as facilitators and moderators in a gigantic dialogue that ties place based learning together with life-long learning. This offers a long-term educational opportunity for visitors young and old.

The National Park Service has at its fingertips the systems by which to achieve these revolutionary changes in education. Ultimately, the systems to accomplish these goals come ready-built as the social networking appliances our visitors already use. By utilizing the present technologies in new and creative ways, educator in our parks can reach an audience already

prepared to engage in dialogue. Services such as YouTube, Skype, Flikr, Twitter, and numerous others are ready-made networks with which the National Park Service can facilitate greater interaction between visitors and the landscape around them. In some cases, these services might be used as they are, in the same way that a member of the general public might use them. In other cases, partnerships with the Web 2.0 community will be required to achieve this new, interactive National Park Service. Creative uses, however, require a paradigm shift in how the National Park Service thinks about its presence on the Internet. In some cases, employees of parks and their partners cannot utilize these services to communicate because they are blocked by highly restrictive firewalls and security policies. In other cases, the use of social networking tools is frowned upon by local park management, and to some extent prohibited. Still other tools require users to agree to terms of service agreements which cede oversight to state law, which create legal questions and stand as roadblocks to innovation in the parks. These inhibitions must be removed through systemic change and creative partnerships before new and creative means of promoting life-long, place-based learning in an interactive world can be developed to their full potential.

Building National Park Service Capacity to Fulfill its Education Mission

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 3

Build capacity for every American to embrace the National Parks by engaging audiences which reflect the diversity of our nation.

ACTION A: Improve the National Park Service's institutional commitment to education by fostering a culture conducive to attracting diverse staff with new skills to enable parks and their partners to provide innovative education programs and opportunities for multiple audiences.

The Committee suggests the National Park Service:

a. Create a senior-level management position with sole responsibility for overseeing education initiatives;

b. Create strategies and build resources that enable parks to evaluate interpretative and educational services;

c. Seek a streamlined process for establishing cooperative agreements and create an easier, consistent, accessible, and transparent process for engaging formal partners;

d. Recruit and retain employees with diverse cultural backgrounds and skills with emphasis on engaging young people and providing a clear and accessible career ladder;

e. Allow employee and partner access to and training in technology and communication platforms such as Web 2.0 social networking sites where the National Park Service is not allowed to go;

f. Provide professional development opportunities that inspire innovative interpretive strategies;

g. To this end, add to existing successful partnerships by seeking collaboration with education, museum, and professional partners with demonstrated accomplishments in innovative and inclusive programming.

RATIONALE: The operations-oriented culture of the National Park Service is not conducive to supporting educational innovation, experimentation, and collaboration with the partners and audiences it serves. Nodes of educational excellence exist, but have evolved inconsistently across all the parks because of chronic under-funding, lack of support for professional development, and bureaucratic barriers to partnerships, research, monitoring, and evaluation. Many individual parks, managers, and educators have long been committed to education; however, the National Park Service as an agency has not. Interpretation and education must not be discretionary. To reach its full educational and preservation potential, the National Park Service must be collaborative, nimble, flexible, and interdisciplinary.

Currently, many National Park Service educators view themselves as experts charged with spreading understanding and preservation values. The old role of the ranger as authority is increasingly leaving audiences behind, while twenty-first century audiences seek to participate and become personally involved. This is particularly important because interpretation and education programs are the primary means by which the National Park Service interacts with the public. Through greater professional development, interpreters and educators can facilitate much-needed collaboration with audiences, communities, and institutional partners to help foster an educational experience that belongs to visitors and educators alike.

ACTION B: Replace broken, dilapidated, out-of-date, inaccurate, and irrelevant "interpretive media"— including exhibits, film, signs, audiovisual programs, and other technology-delivered interpretation—to improve visitor experiences immediately and dramatically.

RATIONALE: In 2008, the National Park Service recorded 274 million visits to national park units. Nearly every one of those visitors encountered stories and information presented through interpretive media—the signs, exhibits, introductory movies, audio-visual programs, audio messages, slide shows, cell phone tours, podcasts, and other technology—used to deliver essential interpretation and safety information.

Parks have identified 2 billion dollars worth of outdated, broken, inaccurate, and ineffective exhibits, films, and other media. Many of these are not accessible to the disabled. Far too many exhibits and films are aged; many were installed 45 to 55 years ago during the *Mission 66* initiative. These ineffective technologies do not appeal to visitors, both young and old, living in a visually dynamic and increasingly interactive culture. Older exhibits and films also fail to reflect an explosion of scholarship in recent decades illuminating multiple points of view and diverse perspectives. These deficiencies make it increasingly more difficult for modern audiences to connect with their national parks. Implementing Action B in a timely manner can produce immediate results which will be a tangible sign to the public that their parks are attempting to involve them. Greatly enhancing visitor experiences will directly benefit not only the American public, but the millions of foreign visitors national parks host each year. Old interpretive media often lacks compelling illustrations and designs needed to attract and engage modern users—especially youth—who are accustomed to visual sophistication and communication through bold graphics and interactive experience.

The National Park Service must embrace appropriate technologies as they emerge, and become a leader in adapting technology to place-based and distance learning.

The National Park Service must embrace appropriate technologies as they emerge and become a leader in adapting technology to place-based and distance learning. Current educational research concludes that most people prefer learning in a highly individualized and specific way. Interpretive exhibits, films, and new technologies offer those interested in national parks a wider variety of opportunities for learning experiences which fit their unique needs and interests. Embracing Web 2.0 and evolving technologies will provide the National Park Service the ability to open a dialogue with an ever widening audience, increase civic engagement, and enhance greater stewardship of public lands. Parks are working with new technology on an individual basis, but coordinated evaluation, dissemination of best practices, the establishment of standards, strategies and training initiatives for such tools are required to heighten visitor experience and maximize employee effectiveness.

Funding for media replacement, installation, and appropriate technology is currently a function of individual parks. The Committee recommends the National Park Service invest an additional $200 million annually for media evaluation, replacement, installation, and developing new media and technology using Web 2.0 and future technologies. Such funding will allow for the revitalization of current media in ten years and, beyond that, a cyclic schedule for evaluation and updating every ten to fifteen years.

ACTION C: Create a public/private Center for National Park Educational Innovation with an Internet-reliant virtual dimension.

RATIONALE: Innovation is difficult in national parks because interpreters and educators are taxed by park operations. Chronic under-funding of interpretation and education programs causes most practitioners to devote all of their resources to maintaining existing services. Added pressures for media development, web and other technology demands, the call for civic engagement, and additional innovation areas strain limited time and personnel. The decentralized structure of the National Park Service also makes communication and sharing difficult for interpreters. Parks develop most of their programs and media independently of other sites. This results in duplication of effort and inconsistent quality. While great strides have been taken in the last fifteen years to develop standards and a shared professional language (interpretative planning, increased evaluation, training, and national initiatives have all contributed) the effort is far from complete and most interpreters and educators have little contact with those outside of their park—even less with related professionals outside the agency. Parks often lack capabilities and training in social science, cultural competence, emerging technology, and other areas critical to innovation. Finally, while many national park interpreters and educators are aware of the expertise of potential partners and the need for innovation, it is rare for parks to invest significant amounts of time or money in research or new approaches.

The proposed Innovation Center is envisioned as a consortium of partners, field interpreters, and educators who will develop, pilot, and promote best practices as well as train and convene practitioners and subject matter experts. The parks themselves will be the primary laboratories for innovation. Together, partners and the National Park Service will facilitate innovation and will disseminate emerging practices, ideas, tools, competencies and other resources to support park-based, life-long learning. Much of the work will occur virtually and any physical facilities could be placed in existing structures. Practitioners at the Center will primarily consist of multiple and changing subject matter experts from the National Park Service and partners. The Center will seek endowed fellowship positions from universities, sabbatical positions for teachers, and detail assignments for National Park Service employees.

The Center will help the field and partners develop tools and techniques and train for, among others, program evaluation, audience research, civic engagement, cultural competence, use of new technologies, interpretive media, curriculum-based education, partnership and collaboration, facilitation, the presentation of controversial issues, multiple points of view, and overall visitor experience. The private/public partnership is critical to the success of the Center for National Park Education Innovation. The Center, as a consortium, provides the flexibility to meet constantly changing needs. Potential partners include: The Department of Education, universities, private foundations, school systems, corporations, professional organizations.

The Center for National Park Education Innovation requires $25 million per year. Permanent staff is envisioned as the lowest potential cost. Specialists and coordinators could be stationed throughout the National Park Service. Greater expense will be required for the salaries and housing expenses for detailed employees, school teachers' sabbatical positions, and university fellows. Gathering field and partner subject matter experts is an additional expense. By far the largest costs will go to support evaluation and other innovation projects in the field. Finally distance learning and funded residential learning opportunities complete the general areas of expenditure.

ACTION D: Establish and disseminate measurable operating standards for education program done by or on behalf of the National Park Service and develop benchmarks to measure their effectiveness.

RATIONALE: The 2006 *Interpretation and Education Program Business Plan: Helping People Enjoy, Care About, and Care for National Parks* charged the National Park Service with developing:

> *"...measurable operating standards and 'core' function statements for a healthy and effective Interpretation and Education Program. Few tools exist to help managers recognize or strive for quality programs that meet a consistent national standard.... Current principles for planning and executing programs are not comprehensive, are rarely measurable, and often fall short of gauging the true needs and value of the Interpretation and Education Program". (p.45)*

The National Park Service seeks to identify measurable standards, assess outcomes, determine program levels and requirements, and use the information to prioritize future funding. Standards would describe the desired outcomes of a variety of interpretation and education programs and would recognize the varied needs and resources of parks. Metrics will also be created to assess operations and leadership in interpretation and education.

The National Park Service seeks to identify measurable standards, assess outcomes, determine program levels and requirements, and use the information to prioritize future funding.

The National Park Service also requires, both on a service-wide and individual park level, the latitude to conduct assessment of visitor experience and program efficacy. This would, in the most opportune scenario, include the ability for parks to conduct public surveys and gather visitor feedback in a more fluid environment than currently exists within the service. Such assessment would not only help to judge individual effectiveness of programming or media presented in parks, but could help park administrators to better direct new funding to fill gaps in interpretation with new resources, innovative methods and creative use of evolving professional practices.

ACTION E: Use new hiring authorities to establish interpretation and education park positions at all grade levels, with diverse backgrounds and skills (particularly in media, technology, and evaluation), to start developing and implementing park interpretation and education innovations.

RATIONALE: The Committee recognizes that without established operational standards and core function statements—metrics that can determine essential interpretation and education program and staffing needs—it is not possible to identify and recommend funding levels to adequately support the National

Park Service's interpretation and education program. Ultimately, and the sooner the better, those standards need to be established. However, it is certain the prevailing trend in interpretation and education has been to cut positions and increase staff responsibilities, often at the expense of innovation. In order for the needs and interests of twenty-first century visitors to be met; for satisfying and meaningful visitor experiences to be facilitated; for the public and societal benefits provoked by place-based learning and civic engagement to be realized; and for the preservation of park resources to continue for the next 100 years, the National Park Service requires an increase in the number of interpretation and education personnel. Employees with diverse backgrounds, fresh ideas, and new skills are needed to renew media, unleash the power of technology, and continually evaluate the effectiveness of interpretation and education services.

The Committee recommends $150 million annually to fund interpretation and education positions that will begin these and other innovative practices. ($150 million could translate into approximately 3000 GS-11s, 3600 GS-09s, or 5550 GS-5s depending on what skills and skill levels are needed.)

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The Education and Learning Committee would like to gratefully acknowledge the contributions and ideas from students, teachers, parents, university professors, park rangers, park partners, and other educators with whom they consulted while developing this report.

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ADVANCING THE NATIONAL PARK IDEA

NATIONAL PARKS SECOND CENTURY COMMISSION

Connecting People and Parks Committee Report

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Vision

The National Park Service and its leaders at all levels recognize and embrace the extraordinary diversity in America's people. The Park Service is fully dedicated to inviting all people to experience their parks and park programs, promoting meaningful personal connections that support our country's important landscapes, culture, and history, while preserving our resources unimpaired for future generations. It will connect with individuals and communities in ways that are meaningful in the context of the diverse perspectives, interests, and values that our communities represent. Through Park Service employees, community partnerships, and programs, all people who interact with the parks will feel welcome, enlightened, and inspired by their association with the parks. These deep connections will build an appreciation of the parks, ensuring their support for the benefit of future generations.

Introduction

In 1872, Yellowstone National Park was created "as a public park…for the benefit and enjoyment of the people." In 1916, after having created 26 additional national parks, Congress created the National Park Service to manage the parks to preserve scenery, natural and historic resources and wild life (sic) and to provide for their enjoyment by "future generations."

The work of the newly-formed National Park Service focused clearly on creating a broad awareness of politically active constituencies throughout the country of the national parks, and to encourage traveling Americans to visit and be inspired by them. Nearly 100 years have passed since then, and the demographics of the nation have changed dramatically, becoming more diverse, urban, and technologically-oriented.

The demographics of the nation have changed dramatically, becoming more diverse, urban, and technologically-oriented.

This Committee's focus is to concentrate on how these epochal changes in the nation's demographics affect how the national parks and the National Park Service relate to the nation as it exists today and as we enter the second century of the National Park Service, and how both the parks and the Service can retain and increase their social benefit to society and their relevancy to all of the people.

Demographic Change

The changes in our population from 1900 until now are dramatic, and projections are even more so. Several essential trends are evident.

- **A Multi-Cultural or Majority Minority Nation:** As the era of white majority across the country comes to a close, every racial and ethnic group is expected to increase in both number and percentage, as a result of births, reduced death rates, and immigration. Today's "minority groups" will become the nation's majority by before 2050. As a percentage of the total U.S. population, non-Hispanic whites are projected to shrink from 66% in 2008 to 46% by 2050. At the same time, Native populations are expected to grow by approximately 25% (from 1.6 to 2% of the U.S. population). Asian-Americans are expected to nearly triple in size/number (growing from 5 to 9% of the national population). African-American populations are expected to increase from 14 to 15%. The most dramatic growth, however, is in the Hispanic population, which is expected to triple in numbers before 2050 and therefore grow from 15% to 30% of the total U.S. population, and constitute nearly one-third of the population.

- **An Aging Population:** By 2030, the youngest of the baby boomer generation will be 65 and older, and will constitute 20% of U.S. residents. By 2050, the 65 and older population is expected to double from 2008 levels while the 85 and older population is expected to triple. Most of these seniors will be non-Hispanic whites. The visitation patterns of these seniors are likely to change. Previously active park users are likely to adopt more risk-

averse behavior in their senior years, preferring "safer," more sedentary or more "convenient" activities, or may become more active on-line "users".

- **Immigration:** Immigration patterns have changed dramatically from the early 1900s. Then, most immigrants were non-Hispanic whites. Now, Hispanics and a wide variety of other ethnic groups comprise the bulk of immigrants, coming from all over the world. Many bring with them cultural values which they wish to maintain, even as they become loyal American citizens.

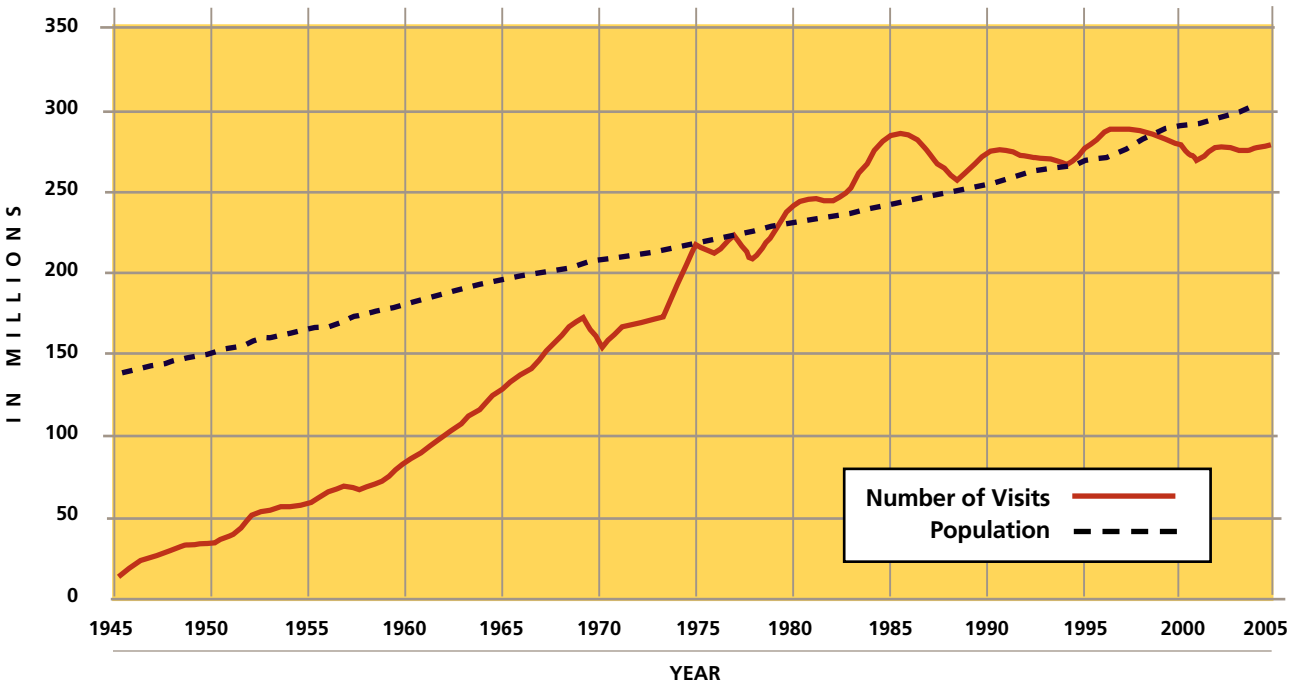
- **The Next Generations Will Arrive Already Diversified:** In coming decades, the youngest age brackets will increasingly reflect the diversity of the nation. According to the U.S. Census, the population of children is expected to grow from 44% minority today to 62% majority by 2050. Thirty-nine percent of children are projected to be Hispanic (up from 22%), while only 38% are projected to be non-Hispanic whites (down from 56%). By about 2025, "minorities" will comprise more than half of all children. Further, by 2050, one in three children will be an immigrant or have immigrant parents. As today's youth start to inherit leadership positions in the middle of the century, the U.S. population will be more than 50% people of color.

These demographic changes will affect how parks are valued, how they are visited, what kinds of development are appropriate, and who votes on behalf of parks. Without a doubt, parks that aim to preserve resources and stories for future generations will have to quickly learn to speak the language of youth, and understand the culture of these generations. The National Park Service, both in park locations and more broadly, will need to relate directly to these communities. Indisputably, much of the success of the National Park Service in coming years will depend on its ability to diversify and prove its relevancy to these new populations.

The foregoing discussion is adapted from a paper prepared by Nina S. Roberts, Ph. D., San Francisco State University and Duffy Ross, M.A., Triple E Consulting for the Intermountain Regional Office, National Park Service, Lakewood, Colorado, in 2009.

FIGURE 1: Number of Visits to the National Park System and US Population by Year, 1945-2007

SOURCE: NPS Statistical Abstract / US Census



Visitation

Historical and current visitation reflects population growth, access to parks, economic conditions and cultural attitudes toward outdoor recreation and parks. Figure 1 shows the number of visits to the National Park System 1945-2007, overlaid with the general U.S. population.

Figure 2 shows the data as the number of visits per person in the general U.S. population. Visitation increased faster than population from 1945-1985, and has since declined relative to population size. Increased international visitation buffers the decline from being more significant. A variety of explanations have been proposed for this decline in visitation, including a changing population structure, increased travel costs, competition from other recreation activities (including sedentary activities among youth), and changing attitudes toward nature and outdoor activities.

Figure 3 shows the number of visits to the National Park System by type of unit; national parks, recreation areas and parkways account for over half of the visits. Current visitation (275.6 million visits in 2007) varies significantly by type of unit and region of the country.

Figure 4 shows the number of visits by administrative region. The Southeast and Pacific West regions account for over 100 million visits; the Alaska region had less than 3 million visits.

Unlike visitation statistics which are collected annually by all units of the National Park System, data on the characteristics of visitors is collected by surveys that sample visitors at select units. Hence, the data reflect the type of survey, units participating,

TABLE 1
% of Population, Recent Visitors, by Race and Ethnicity, 2001

	%
White non-Hispanic	36
American Indian	33
Asian	29
Hispanic American	27
African American	13
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	11

Source: NPS Comprehensive Survey of the American Public and statistical variation common to such data collection. The most recent National Park Service general population survey was conducted in 20006; the results are suggestive of the system as a whole. Recent visitors (in the last two years) had higher education levels, were younger, more in family groups, more fully employed, had higher access to the Internet and had higher annual income than non-visitors.

FIGURE 2: Number of Visits to the National Park System per Person Per Year, 1945-2007

SOURCE: NPS Statistical Abstract

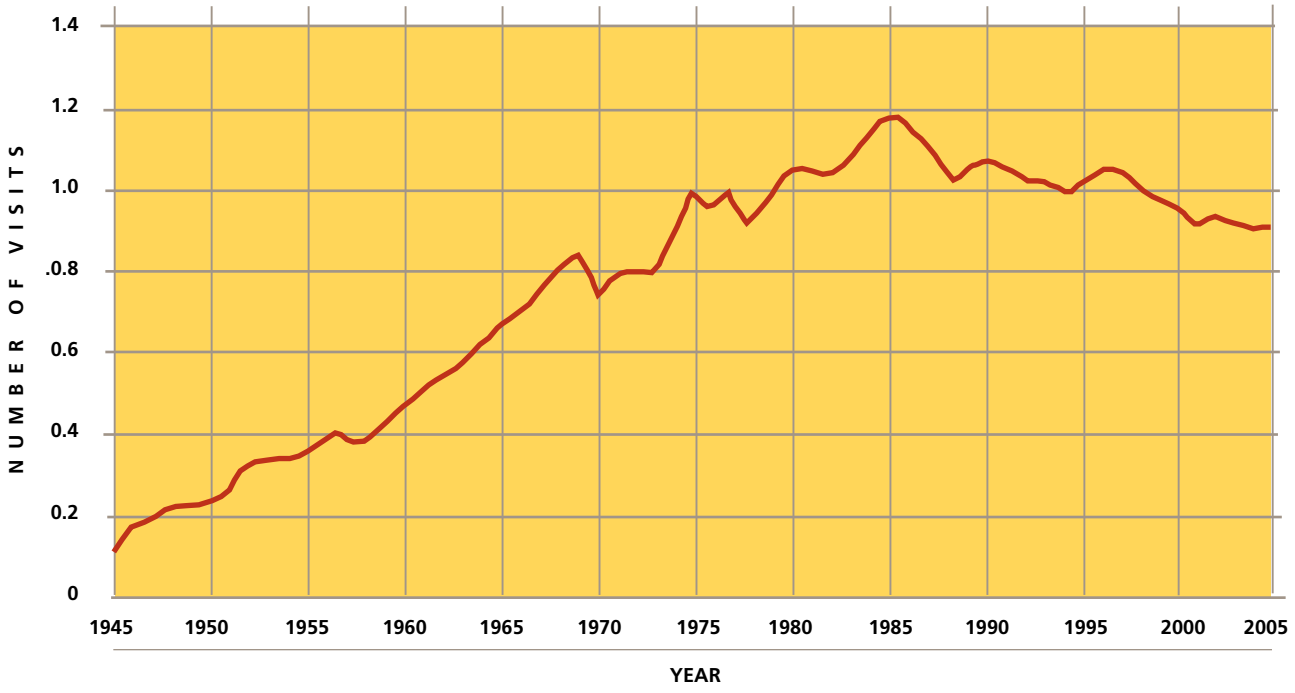


FIGURE 3: Number of Visits to the National Park System by Type of Unit, 2007

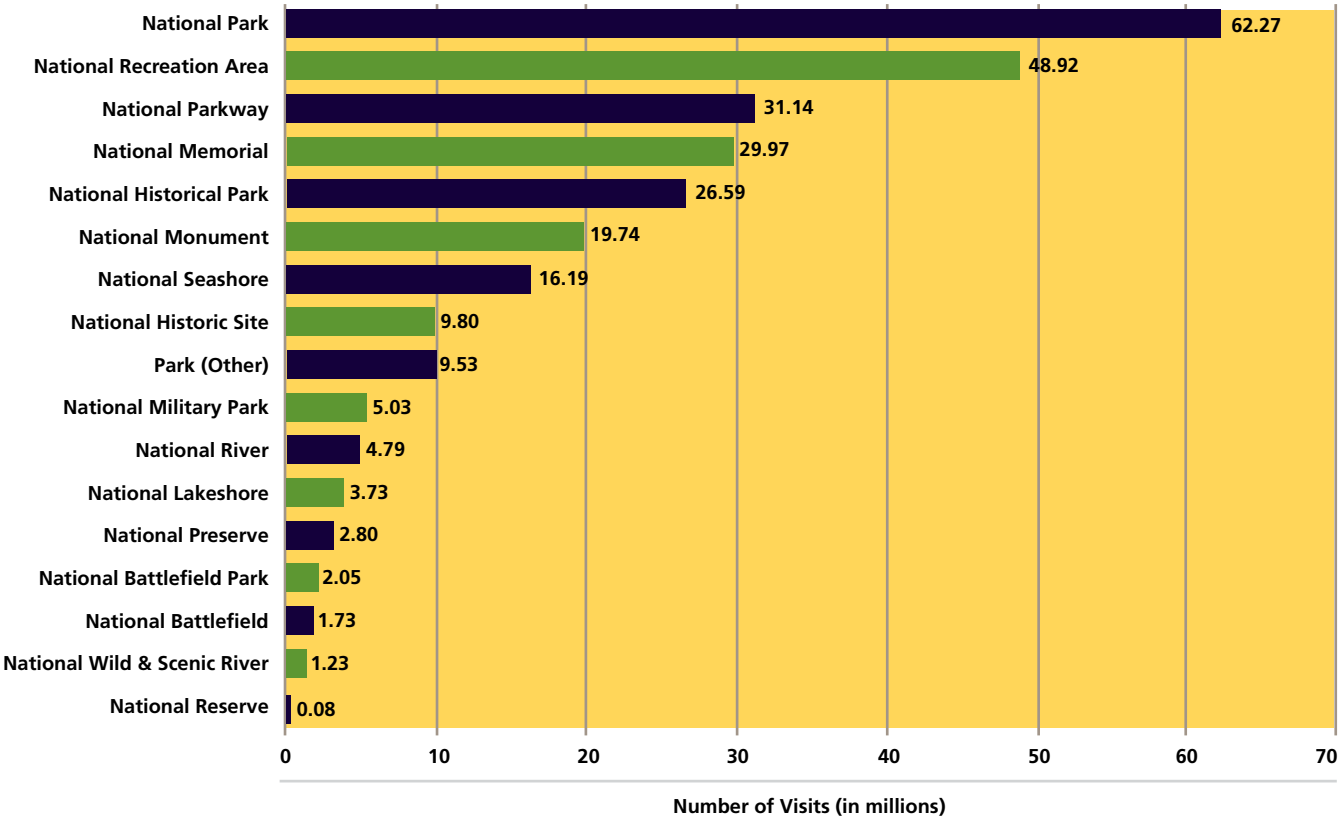
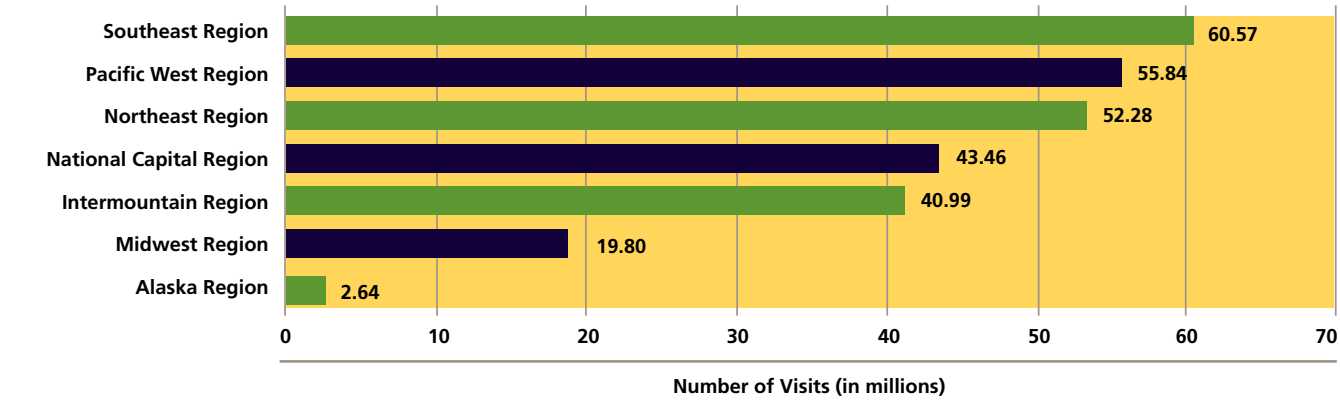


FIGURE 4: Number of Visits to the National Park System by Region, 2007



Visitation varies by ethnicity and race; gender differences are minor. Table 1 shows that visitation is highest amongst white non-Hispanics (36%), and is similar in proportion for all major ethnic groups except African Americans (13%). There is also significant variation in perceived barriers to visits, access to parks, and service to visitors.

The foregoing discussion is adapted from *Visitors to the National Park System: An Overview,* prepared in 2009 as an informational report to the National Parks Second Century Commission by Dr. Gary E. Machlis, Professor of Conservation, University of Idaho and Visiting Senior Scientist, National Park Service.

Significant data do not exist to determine what parks non-white visitors use most frequently, nor in what locations, even though current documentation indicates little variation among racial and ethnic groups overall for the National Park System as a whole, except for African-Americans and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders. Future research will be of value to understand visitation patterns in more depth.

In 2008, researchers (Patricia A. Taylor, Ph. D., University of Wyoming; Burke D. Grandjean, Ph. D., University of Wyoming; and James H. Gramann, Ph. D., Texas A&M University and Visiting Chief Social Scientist, National Park Service), conducted a survey, *Identifying National Park Visitors in National Household Surveys, 2000 and 2008,* designed to compare data from a similar survey in 2000 with 2008 data. The following information and conclusions are adapted from a preliminary report on that research presented to the George Wright Society in 2009. It was presented "solely for the purpose of pre-dissemination communication," as is the case herein.

In both the 2000 and 2008 surveys, respondents were asked the following question: "The National Park System consists of all the units managed by the National Park Service, including national parks, historic and cultural sites, and national monuments. How many times in the past two years have you visited a unit of the National Park System?" Respondents who said they had visited a national park unit at least once in the past two years were then asked to name the last National Park Service unit they visited. Only those respondents who identified a valid National Park Service unit were defined as "visitors."

Through pre-testing of the 2008 questionnaire it was learned that respondents often recalled the National Park Service unit they visited not by its official name, but by its location, a colloquial alias, or some key geographic or natural feature. Therefore, in the full-scale 2008 calling, when a telephone interviewer could not find the named park on a list of the 391 park units, three "primary probes" were introduced into the telephone script: "Do you know what state that park is in?"; "Is there another name for that park?"; and finally, "Can you spell that name for me?" Responses to these questions allowed the interviewer to double-check the list of park unit names.

...respondents often recalled the National Park Service unit they visited not by its official name, but by its location, a colloquial alias, or some key geographic or natural feature.

If the telephone interviewer still could not find the named park unit on the list, or if the respondent said he or she had not visited any unit in the past two years, a "secondary prompt" was provided. The respondent's state of residence (as determined in a previous question) was used to identify two nearby national park units. The script then provided the following statement for the interviewers to read: "A lot of people don't realize that the National Park System includes not only the big units like Yellowstone, but also national battlefields, national seashores, national recreation areas, and small urban sites. In your area, _____ and _____ are both National Park System units. With this in mind, can you give me the name of any place you've visited in the past two years that you think is part of the National Park System?" If the respondent could name or describe any place visited, the interviewer took down the response verbatim, and the respondent was treated tentatively as a park visitor. After completion of the interview, these open-ended responses were reviewed and only then was a final determination made as to whether any persons were indeed park visitors. For example, a respondent might report going to a national park beach in Corpus Christi, Texas, without being able to name the unit. Similarly, another respondent might say the family visited the "Arch" in St. Louis.

The table on the next page presents the results of the two surveys as regards defining recent "visitors." Both sets of data have been weighted to adjust for the stratified sampling and to generate comparable national estimates.

Visitor Percentages to a National Park Service Unit by Year Sample Survey Data for 2000 and 2008

	2000 (n=3506)	2008 (n=1088)
Says ever visited NPS unit	86.9%	91.0%
Says visited in past 2 years	53.4%	62.5%
Says visited in past 2 years and names a valid unit	32.1%	49.1%
Says visited in past 2 years, names unit after a prompt		62.9%

Visitation by a large segment of the United States population is demonstrated by this survey. That more than 90% of respondents reported visiting a National Park Service site during their lifetime, and up to 63% said they had visited a site in the past two years that they could name, suggests a strong connection between the American public and the national parks. Additional analyses of the 2008/2009 data are in progress; more complete information will be available regarding the attitudes of Americans toward their national parks, and will further illuminate the connection between the National Park System and the U.S. population.

...more than 90% of respondents reported visiting a National Park Service site during their lifetime, and up to 63% said they had visited a site in the past two years...

Technological Change

Massive degrees of technological innovation are having largely unknown effects on the ways increasing numbers of Americans receive their information, interact with information, and share experiences in terms of how they then learn about, connect with and value national parks. Visitor centers are not generally up to date in effective use of technology to assist in communicating information and concepts important to understanding parks. The Committee received revealing input from park superintendents and other employees with whom they discussed the use of new technologies in parks. Although some believed that use of some technologies may be degrading park experiences, the Committee found a growing realization that such technologies and the expectations and habits of those who use them (especially younger populations), can increase connectivity with parks and the values they contain, and create conditions for more meaningful park experiences.

Three broad issues emerged:

1. Parks and the Park Service are generally not allowed to use new communication and social networking technologies on government-supported websites because of security concerns. These regulations severely dampen the ability of the Park Service to benefit from the new communication processes that visitors may access to make decisions about what to do, where to go, or what services are worthwhile for their social group. This condition is especially acute for young, "hip" users of web-based communication technologies.

2. Visitor centers and other locations where visitors gain information in parks are more and more often viewed as out-of-date and old fashioned. They are not friendly to the ways in which more and more tech-savvy visitors gain information once in a park, or to increasing amounts of information that is available to visitors before they come to a park.

3. Websites and in-park information are not usually available in languages other than English. "Best practices" adopted by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) strongly encourage parallel websites for each language used rather than using auto-translation programs, and current mythology within the Service indicates that such programs are unreliable and inaccurate in translation. However, sites such as the Virginia State Park site are having excellent results. Maintaining one website for a system as large as the National Park System, with nearly 400 parks and a myriad of other subdivisions, takes massive resources. Replicating such information for millions of Americans who communicate most easily in languages other than English is untenable financially, and single-page substitutions are unfair for people whose right it is to access their national parks. The Park Service and the OMB need to reassess current dogma.

National Park Service input to the Committee generally raised awareness in the Committee that there is widespread diffusion within society of new communication technologies, and that both users and park managers are increasingly desirous of utilizing them.

National Park Idea

The traditional "national park idea" has as its basis two basic precepts. The first is that significant natural areas and historic sites will be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations. The second is that these treasured places will be available to all people.

This concept has evolved as the nation has evolved, its population has grown, diversified and urbanized, as nonprofit entities have evolved to join with individuals, businesses and government to provide opportunity and social benefit, and as the relationship between people, land, history and their common future has become more interwoven and complex.

As a result, Congress has from time to time responded by asking that the National Park Service apply the national park idea in a variety of ways in addition to managing the national parks. For example, the National Historic Preservation Act created the National Register of Historic Places, administered by the Service. Community assistance, rivers and trails and national natural and historic landmark programs bring Park Service expertise to communities and local and state governments working to protect resources important to them and their constituents. Most recently, the creation of a popular and rapidly growing array of national heritage areas formed with assistance from the Service has evolved onto the conservation and historic preservation scene.

[The national parks]...are increasingly seen as a far-flung university and library without walls, as important adjuncts to the public education system, as opportunity to be meaningful partners in addressing international environmental issues such as climate change and national health issues ... and as touchstones for what and who we are as a society.

At the same time, there is growing awareness that the national parks themselves provide an array of social benefits in addition to recreation, inspiration and research. They are increasingly seen, for example, as a far-flung university and library without walls, as important adjuncts to the public education system, as opportunity to be meaningful partners in addressing international environmental issues such as climate change and national health issues such as obesity and air pollution related illnesses, and as touchstones for what and who we are as a society.

The Committee expanded its vision of the role and value of the National Park Service, and makes recommendations regarding the future.

Conclusions

Based on its own research and on the experiences gained at Commission meetings at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, Lowell National Historical Park, Essex National Heritage Area, Gettysburg National Military Park, Yellowstone National Park and Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the committee reached the broad, over-arching conclusion that the National Park Service, in order to retain its status as a premier federal agency deserving of strong political support and federal funding, needs to recognize and incorporate the following conclusions:

- It needs to actively develop enduring relationships with all of the diversity of the American people, both as visitors and as employees.
- It needs to create lasting partnering relationships with local communities, nonprofit organizations that provide social benefit through their association with the parks, individuals who wish to volunteer or otherwise provide service to the parks, and businesses and individuals who wish to support the parks financially.
- It needs to more fully explain and implement the application of the "national park idea" to the American people as it is applied through the many community assistance, national heritage area and National Historic Preservation Act programs of the Service.

Flowing from these conclusions, the Committee's recommendations to the full National Park Second Century Commission follow.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 1

Establish a universal commitment within the Park Service to engage and serve people of all backgrounds with an urgency and dedication that equals the commitment to preserve park resources.

ACTION 1. Make a sustained commitment from the top of the National Park Service through its ranks across the organization to embrace our country's diversity and shape the Service to make our national parks welcoming and relevant to all Americans. A sustained commitment to training, community outreach, and programs that authentically tell the stories of our country and connections to our resources must become part of the Service's ongoing practices and values for this to be achieved. Clear objectives and tangible outcomes must be developed and measured over time.

ACTION 2. Embrace available and emerging technologies to reach and interact with the American people, connecting National Park Service employees with their communities and facilitating interactions with parks and programs that are engaging to visitors. Leverage technologies to receive and respond to broad public input.

ACTION 3. Cultivate an agency culture through training, partnerships and clear objectives to recruit and retain a workforce that reflects the racial, ethnic, and cultural demographics of the nation, and the values of the Park Service. Proactively encourage partners and contractors to do the same. Set clear objectives and measure outcomes over time.

ACTION 4. Create a continuum of service and work programs from high school through college that includes volunteerism, national service, paid internships, and conservation service by partnering with existing youth service programs such as the Student Conservation Association and other, similar local programs. These programs should be undertaken with the goal of building a life-long connection between young people and the parks, preparing them for employment in the parks while supporting needed improvement to park facilities, assets, and resources. These programs will be particularly impactful to young people with limited employment opportunities that may provide an introduction to the parks.

ACTION 5. Provide facilities that are reflective of the evolving needs and interests of the full diversity of potential visitors, including cultural requirements, age considerations, disabilities, appropriate emerging recreational activities, and effective use of technology. Support responsible access to park resources, facilitating connections between visitors and the parks that resonate with their evolving interests.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 2

Leverage partnerships at all levels to position and operate the National Park Service as an integral and respected partner in achieving larger natural, historical, cultural, and social goals.

ACTION 1. Foster and create mutual respect, common working relationships, operational goals and programs with communities, agencies, and organizations adjacent to parks in recognition that "we are all in this together" socially, economically, culturally, and environmentally. Strategies to create mutual respect and positive relationships would include engaging in collaborative work processes when undertaking park planning efforts or coordinating efforts to attract visitors.

ACTION 2. Engage with non-profit, academic, governmental, community, and other partners to cultivate programmatic connections to parks that make use of park resources for the mutual benefit of parks and partners. For example, such programmatic connections may include place-based environmental, cultural and historical education, research, healthy activities, clean air and water, social justice programs, and the like.

ACTION 3. Maximize philanthropic opportunity as a way to build and expand personal, foundation, and corporate understanding of and support for national parks and the National Park Service. Use philanthropy as a catalyst to innovation in park management, programs, and resource stewardship.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 3

Evolve the National Park Idea to advance the role of the National Park Service in embracing and collaborating with grassroots efforts outside of parks around the principles of preservation, environmental consciousness, and cultural heritage.

ACTION 1. Engage interested constituencies on a national scale in discussion and dialogue about issues represented by parks that affect larger society, such as civil rights, global warming, educational opportunity, etc.

ACTION 2. Partner with and proactively assist communities in their efforts to conserve natural and historical community assets and landscapes through the use of National Park Service programs such as the National Register programs, tax credits, river, trail, and community assistance programs, national landmarks, national heritage areas, and others.

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ADVANCING THE NATIONAL PARK IDEA

NATIONAL PARKS SECOND CENTURY COMMISSION

Future Shape of the National Park System Committee Report

A System that Works for All

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Vision

National parks are cornerstones of a network that protects the nation's biological, geological, and cultural diversity. Corridors between them sustain connectivity. Sites reflecting the complexity of the American experience weave together a unified national tapestry. Cultural landscapes are sufficiently expansive to protect their meaningful place in our heritage. Grassroots-based programs reach out to all citizens, and empower them to participate in their own individual ways. • Such a system will come about and be sustained only by an engaged and supportive public. It is reflected in a map that includes much more than national parks. Other public lands must be seen as integral components of a preservation system. The private sector, through land trusts and other approaches, is vital to its success. • When that larger vision is achieved, the role of present and future national parks emerges. They are the center of a network of protected areas. Existing parks anchor regional and local protection strategies. New ones are established where preserved areas are few or non-existent. The National Park Service encourages and supports local initiatives to value and protect the places that define our identity as Americans.

Introduction

The Declaration of Independence
…that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness…

The Constitution of the United States
…and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity,

The Mission of the National Park Service
The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the national and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic
…a land ethic changes the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also for the community…

To accomplish this mission requires us to see land as a community to which we belong rather than a commodity belonging to us.

When Congress created the National Park Service in 1916, and in subsequent acts directed it to cooperate with others in preserving places outside the park system, there was no reference to a land ethic. Yet the idea of preserving for future generations is certainly such an ethic. To accomplish this mission requires us to see land as a community to which we belong rather than a commodity belonging to us: a resource to be conserved rather than consumed so that it can be passed along unimpaired for the benefit of generations not yet born. As it approaches the end of its first century, the National Park Service can be judged reasonably successful in protecting spectacular scenery and significant cultural resources. Nearly 400 places of impressive diversity have been set aside within the system. Tens of thousands of other sites outside the boundaries of national parks, especially through the National Register of Historic Places, have been recognized and designated as important to the nation and are being preserved by a wide range of public and private partners. The national park system attracts more than 270 million visits each year.

However, the forces affecting this network have grown in complexity and scope. They are the same forces that affect the places we live. They are regional, national, and global in their reach. The National Park Service alone cannot contain or limit their impact. We now recognize that setting aside, or putting a boundary around a park or historic site, is not sufficient to assure protection of the dynamic processes that sustain natural resources and cultural values. But in cooperation with a wide range of partners, the National Park Service can be the catalyst for the broad societal changes needed to stimulate new behaviors more friendly to the earth.

The "all" in a system that works for all is an expansive definition. The system commemorates a past we revere and from which we learn to build a better future; among them, those who fought at Gettysburg, internees at Manzanar, George Washington, Martin Luther King, the birth of jazz, the great kivas at Chaco, and the fossils of Dinosaur. We are also in debt to a past that created this system; John Muir, Theodore Roosevelt, Stephen Mather, Horace Albright, and many others.

The present is defined by all who are served by the parks and those who should be but are not; and all the living things the parks hope to save; and the addition of sites that tell a more complete story of the nation's experience.

The future is those to whom we pass the legacy "unimpaired". It is a duty of the present to those yet to come, who now have no voice.

The Current System

An ideal system would be part of a network that tells all of the nation's stories and preserves portions of all of its iconic landscapes. It would protect all living things for future generations. The current system has grown in response to opportunities without a clear vision or plan. It is inadequate to protect natural resources because it tends toward stirring scenery most often found on high elevations, steep slopes, poorer soils, and with scant vegetation (Svancara, Scott and Lawler). The 243 units with significant natural resources are often small and isolated. In 35 states, park units comprise less than 0.5% of the land area. There are only five states and two territories where units exceed 5% of the land area (Galvin).

The cultural resource inventory will always be incomplete as the nation's past becomes better understood and as its future unfolds. But important themes remain under- represented. In the 1972 system plan for history, themes relating to America at Work, the Contemplative Society, and Society and Social Conscience were identified as poorly represented (National Park Service). That remains largely true today. Historic thematic frameworks updated today would also highlight the importance of race, ethnicity and gender in thinking about what sites merit recognition as units of a park system that represents all of our people and especially America's changing demographic character. An added challenge stems from the ever-increasing speed of technical and social change in American life, which causes some important places to be lost before their historical value has been recognized, and before preservation steps can be taken.

Nationwide, the national park system encompasses only about 3% of the nation's land, only about 1.5% of the contiguous 48 states, so conservation of biological diversity is not likely to be successful if we rely exclusively on expanding park designations and ownership. Similarly, thousands of cultural resources have been recognized as nationally significant, but are not necessarily suitable or feasible for management by the National Park Service. These are best preserved as National Historic Landmarks. While there is clearly room for robust system growth, it is unrealistic to think that the national park system can succeed in all these purposes in isolation. Other lands, public and private, must be considered if the nation's heritage is to be preserved.

The Place of the National Park System in a Larger Vision

Before we can define strategic growth for the national park system we must envision a network of lands in diverse ownership, including physical and thematic connections. Such connections would protect biological diversity, ameliorate climate change, enhance ecological vitality and illuminate our heritage. There is now no such vision endorsed by Congress, the Administration, or the National Park Service nor is one understood by the public.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 1

The National Park System is the center of an inter-connected network of public and private lands and waters that protect biological diversity, adequately represent the American experience, and are geographically dispersed to protect examples of all eco-regions and provide equal opportunities for access.

ACTIONS: The president establishes a broadly representative task force to map a national strategy that identifies areas critical to preserving the national heritage; floral, faunal, cultural, and geological. The National Park Service would have a leading role in this effort as an authoritative source for science and resource preservation. The National Park Service also should act as a facilitator to encourage and support local initiatives and create opportunities for others to succeed in preserving outstanding resources.

The achievement of this larger vision would provide the context for the growth of the national park system. It would identify areas that now have no protection and themes currently poorly represented. Complementary protected systems (forests, refuges,

state parks and protected areas) would be strengthened by links to the national system. It would require the National Park Service to develop a strategic plan for growth, something it has not done since the late 1970s. Growth of the "system" would include recognition of National Heritage Areas, National Trails, Wild and Scenic Rivers and other designations. They provide a starting point for making the connections that a viable system requires.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 2

A strategic vision for the national network of protected areas is widely supported and understood. A system is in place that allows and encourages the National Park Service to evaluate areas that will help achieve the vision of future growth to address climate change, a new understanding of ecological processes, our constantly improving understanding of the past, and the continuing progress of history.

ACTIONS: Congress should restore National Park Service authority, funding and staff to develop a system plan and to conduct studies of potential additions. A national park system plan would grow out of, and be informed by the broader national network planning called for above. It should also be informed by examples from other countries, including Canada, Costa Rica, Tanzania, the United Kingdom, and France, and it could be consistent with the protected area approach envisioned by the World Heritage Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Past plans have been overly prescriptive: we envision a plan that identifies thematic gaps in the system without nominating specific areas. Standards for new park units would be revised to include the importance of redundancy, resilience, and the potential for restoration of natural areas that currently lack integrity. Maintenance of biological diversity requires more than the one superlative example that is envisioned in current standards for new national parks. Criteria for new units also should recognize and explain that once they lose their integrity cultural resources can be stabilized but cannot be restored. Communications with Congress and the public should highlight the value of a system plan in identifying priorities for protection as well as lands that could be developed for other purposes with "no regrets" or at least less potential for conflicts.

Adjustments to the Existing System

Some existing parks have boundaries that are inadequate to protect natural resources and cultural systems and landscapes. Where they border federal public land, adjustments to boundaries should be identified in park plans and enacted by Congress. Some protected areas currently managed by multiple use agencies might more logically become units of the national park system. In cases where the need for protection is imminent, Congress should consider creating park units that might not be immediately staffed or managed due to funding constraints or temporary incompatible uses but could become fully operational at some future date.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 3

Some selected National Monuments and other areas managed principally for protection by the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, and the Fish and Wildlife Service are added to the national park system. National park areas have boundaries that make ecological and/or landscape sense. Areas are added that preserve currently unprotected natural systems, including appropriate marine areas, and add important cultural themes not now well represented. Park designations protect fragile areas even if they cannot be actively managed until some future time.

ACTIONS: The National Park Service should review existing plans and studies to identify new areas and boundary expansions that are ready to be authorized. This should be followed by prompt action by the Administration and Congress. Some priority areas could include marine environments, grasslands, and habitats in the Midwest and Great Plains not now represented in any protected area system. Fort Monroe in Virginia and sites around the Chesapeake Bay are examples of areas with high potential for addition to the National Park System that were advocated by local individuals and organizations during the Commission's public hearings and meetings. There is strong regional and national interest in a Maine Woods National Park that has benefited from substantial private initiatives to support conservation.

The General Management Plan Program should be adequately funded to insure that all parks have plans that are current and reviewed or revised after no more than 10 years. The plans would reconsider park purpose and significance in light of the new vision for the system. They would consider the park unit

in a regional context, identify gaps, define logical boundaries for resource protection, and point out important connecting corridors that link other protected lands. By 2016, each park should have at least a current foundation statement addressing these issues.

The Unfinished System

The existing National Park System contains 1.8 million acres of private lands within the congressionally authorized boundaries that remain in private ownership. Some of these lands have high resource value and are critical additions. Many are owned by willing sellers. These lands should be acquired in some reasonable time frame, and should be in most cases owned by the Park Service by 2016. In some cases, particularly where historic buildings are now well-preserved by their owners, the Park Service should employ agreements and easements rather than acquisition in fee.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 4

Private lands within park boundaries are acquired for public use or protected through other permanent measures to assure compatible uses.

ACTIONS: Land Protection Plans for those parks with non-federal lands should be developed or reviewed and updated to be current. High priority lands should be acquired by the 2016 centennial. Protection through easements should be encouraged, especially where traditional agricultural and other uses are consistent with park purposes.

Boundary Lands

Even if parks achieved logical boundaries, the forces affecting them would still include a substantial number of influences that originate outside the new lines. Air, water, and migratory patterns flow across the perimeters of even the largest parks and carry with them impacts that may be harmful to park resources. In the NPCA 2008 *National Park Resources Index* report, 89% of the sites surveyed reported threats that originate beyond park boundaries (NPCA). Development adjacent to parks can destroy the landscape context of cultural areas, and block migratory routes of fauna originating in the parks. Only 5 parks in the lower 48 states are large enough to sustain viable populations of large mammals (Scott). A recent study found that 30% of the land in counties immediately adjacent to parks is already fragmented or relict and thus unable to support biodiversity (Svancara, Scott, Loveland, and Pidgorna). The Clean Air Act provides the National Park Service some voice in affecting actions that impact park air quality, but there are few other explicit authorities that reach across the boundary to protect park resources. Development pressures that impact wildlife habitat also impact the cultural settings of our historic parks.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 5

Parks have effective authority and support from the Department of Interior to anticipate, avoid, and mitigate conflicts with federal agencies and other land users whose actions could adversely impact park resources. Managers of lands near national parks recognize mutual interests in compatible uses.

ACTIONS: Review existing authorities and identify new methods, including new legislation or executive orders that enhance National Park Service ability to deal with trans-boundary issues. Emphasis should be placed on providing incentives for compatible uses and finding cooperative solutions to potential conflicts. The commission heard presentations about a range of options for encouraging compatible land uses on a regional basis. They should be reviewed along with previous proposals for park and heritage protection legislation, including current regional models (e.g. Northern Forests, Greater Yellowstone, and Everglades Restoration).

Influencing Compatible Use

Parks are inevitably part of a matrix of land patterns that evolve from decisions made in a living landscape. Many of these decisions are compatible with the preservation mission of the parks but some are not. In those cases where adverse impacts arise from outside land uses it would be beneficial to have a toolkit of incentives that the Service could use to influence decisions in favor of preservation. Many of these work successfully in the realm of cultural resources, but few are available to protect natural resources. The development of National Heritage Areas around parks has highlighted the value of preservation to local communities without any additional regulatory authority at the federal level. Partnerships with other agencies in urban national parks like Santa Monica and Lowell have aligned community needs and preservation in a positive fashion. These approaches are not exclusively urban, however, and have been used to great effect at Ebey's Landing National Preserve, Nez Perce National Historical Park, and elsewhere in the West. The Rivers, Trails,

and Conservation Assistance program (RTCA) has developed a cadre of National Park Service employees skilled in helping communities define their preservation programs. These approaches should be expanded to achieve a compatible living landscape, not just adjacent to protected areas, but throughout the nation.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 6

There is a nationwide system of interconnected and interdependent land conservation that preserves natural and cultural sites while being compatible with the living landscape. National parks units are successful in encouraging compatible uses of adjacent lands. The National Park Service provides leadership by creating an environment where other conservation agencies can succeed.

ACTIONS: Identify existing areas for conservation and preservation regardless of jurisdiction. Highlight the gaps that make existing patterns ineffective. Staff capability in parks would be enhanced to continually work with adjacent land users to encourage compatible use on near-by lands. A suite of programs similar to the current cultural resource preservation mandate for national parks that sets standards and provides incentives should be developed for natural resources. The National Park Service also should have authority to acquire conservation easements outside of park boundaries where necessary to protect existing park resources.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) should be revised to meet these needs. The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program should be expanded, and a component should be added that centers on areas in the vicinity of parks. There should be new tax incentives and grant programs that include authority to spend money outside park boundaries to promote compatible uses. Programs that recognize outstanding features on non- park lands, such as the National Natural Landmark Program, should be expanded. The benefits of open space on carbon sequestration and climate change should be documented and rewarded.

National Heritage Areas should be recognized by Congress, the public and the National Park Service as a valued component of the nation's strategy for conserving important resources and landscapes. The National Park Service provides leadership and support for designated national heritage areas, and encourages local initiatives to apply this concept as part of a national network that sustains national parks as well as areas of state, regional, and local importance.

...over one million acres of open space are being lost to development each year; an effective restoration program could offset that loss.

Restoring the Landscape

There are many areas that could be restored to a condition that makes them useful for recreation, ecological vitality and preservation purposes. Such areas lacking integrity have traditionally not been considered eligible for addition to the national park system. However, the National Park Service has developed considerable expertise in ecological restoration at parks in the system. An early example is Shenandoah National Park: established in 1935 it was composed of land that had been logged, grazed, and farmed. Parts of Shenandoah have now returned to a wilderness condition with native flora and fauna. More recent examples of restorations include Everglades, Redwood, Sequoia, Olympic, Gateway, and Golden Gate. The nationwide effort to control and eliminate exotic species in parks is another example. This experience could be put to beneficial use outside the boundaries of parks and in urban areas to restore landscape to useful purposes and ecological vitality. According to the Biodiversity Project and other sources, over one million acres of open space are being lost to development each year; an effective restoration program could offset that loss.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 7

The National Park Service cooperates with other agencies and leads a program that restores areas to ecological and recreational value and effective cultural preservation. There is an emphasis on restoring urban landscapes to bring natural values and experience to population centers. This could include cooperation with EPA on selected Brownfield restorations. Natural areas such as the Great Plains that are not well represented in the current national park system would be a priority. After restoration these areas could be managed by a State or local government or other appropriate jurisdiction. Some of these areas could be added to the National Park System.

ACTIONS: Update National Park Service criteria for national significance to recognize the value of ecological restoration areas. Conduct an inventory of potential projects. Develop a pilot legislative program. Document the economic and social benefits of restoration areas and the contribution to carbon sequestration.

Achieving Clarity

In the one hundred thirty plus years that Congress has been establishing units of the National Park System it has created over 30 terms to describe them (National Park Index 2005-2007). For the most part they do not define any functional difference. Some national monuments and national recreation areas are managed by BLM and the Forest Service under different policies than apply to areas with similar titles managed by the National Park Service. This multiplicity complicates public understanding of the defining purpose of national parks as described in law. It should be possible to greatly simplify the terminology and enhance public awareness of the unity of the system.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 8

The public understands what designation as a unit of the national park system means. The public also understands the economic benefits of protected areas.

ACTIONS: Congress should consolidate 30 current titles to no more than five. Recent studies documenting the value of protected areas to surrounding communities, the nation, and the planet should be disseminated. An organized campaign should be undertaken to develop, expand, and disseminate information to increase public awareness of the National Park System and the national system of protected areas.

Management

These recommendations, if carried out, in whole or part, require a National Park Service different than the existing organization. An organization designed around management of land in dispersed locations must be re-shaped to reflect new roles as a catalyst, a convener, and cooperator with a suite of tools that extends far beyond site operations. The agency must assume leadership in realizing a strategic view of a future and effective park system. Such a National Park System can only succeed as part of a larger interconnected system of protected lands. Achievement of this larger system will require new skills and knowledge on the part of all stakeholders. Political decision making must be integrated with rapidly evolving analytic tools that permit measurements of global scale phenomena. Community building approaches must be developed. New incentives must be found. The role of protected lands in mitigating climate change must be defined.

Management will take place in a larger landscape, not defined by park boundaries. The forces that shape the future will become increasingly global in scope. This will call for personnel at all levels in the organization who are skilled in collaboration and consensus building.

The forces that shape the future will become increasingly global in scope. This will call for personnel at all levels in the organization who are skilled in collaboration and consensus building.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 9

Administration of the National Park System is focused on the long term vision of ecological sustainability and historical integrity, accuracy and completeness, informed by science and scholarship, with a balance between independence and coordination with other preservation programs. The National Park Service provides preservation leadership to communities throughout the nation, and provides leadership internationally as well.

ACTIONS: Congress and the Administration should evaluate alternative administrative arrangements, including new lines of authority, new terms of office for the directorate, independent agency status, combining agencies (e.g. National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service), or a new cabinet level Department of Natural Resources (or Natural Security).

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ADVANCING THE NATIONAL PARK IDEA

NATIONAL PARKS SECOND CENTURY COMMISSION

Funding and Budget Committee Report

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Vision

In order to establish a sound funding base for the National Park Service, to create a funding stream to support the parks and their ecosystems in perpetuity and to identify sources of funding for new initiatives and directions endorsed by this Commission, the Funding and Budget Committee recommends the expansion of the funding base of the National Park Service to include a wider pool of both appropriated and external revenue sources.

Introduction

Annual funding for the National Park Service is currently at the $2.4 billion level. This is comprised primarily of discretionary federal appropriations, supplemented by a small percentage from fees (8% of total National Park Service funding), donations (1%), and volunteer support (estimated at 3.3%).

The $2.43 billion in direct appropriations is 76.6% higher than comparable amounts from Fiscal Year 1993, 16 years ago, not adjusted for inflation, but only 11% higher than 8 years ago in Fiscal Year 2001. At the same time, base costs have increased at an annual growth rate of between 3-4% due to higher personnel, material and equipment costs, unfunded mandates, and the increasing needs of park visitors. The National Park Service budget system recently contained over $750 million in annual operational funding needs. In addition, the appropriations funding level has been volatile and unpredictable—making it difficult for National Park Service managers to plan and budget effectively and requiring them to take money from priorities to pay for mandated pay raises (in those years when the rate of increase did not cover them), or by causing the deferment of hiring for unfilled positions.

The National Park Service has been able to take care of some its operational needs through an authorization allowing it since Fiscal Year 1997 to retain entrance fees and various use fees to fund maintenance, interpretation, habitat restoration and law enforcement projects. Similar authority was provided regarding concession franchise fees in Fiscal Year 1998. In Fiscal Year 2009, these two fee sources are estimated to provide parks a total of $234 million. 80% of the money collected from these fees remains with the collecting park and 20% is distributed at the discretion of the National Park Service Director for priority proposed work, which means that all of these funds do not necessarily go to where the greatest need exists.

In addition to the $750 million annual operational shortfall, the National Park Service estimates that it has an $8.4 billion backlog of construction and maintenance projects. The National Park Service has 7,590 public use and administrative buildings, 26,000 historical structures, 5,300 housing units, and 680 water and waste systems. The recent American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides a one-time $735 million injection of funds for National Park Service construction and maintenance, but will only provide funding for approximately 9% of the National Park Service backlog. If the United States current expansionary fiscal policy comes to an end in near future, it will likely be followed by a period of belt-tightening, during which little money will be available to pay for these kinds of projects.

The National Park Service has 7,590 public use and administrative buildings, 26,000 historical structures, 5,300 housing units, and 680 water and waste systems.

Though roadwork has been better funded recently—at $240 million in Fiscal Year 2009 through the Federal Highway Trust Fund managed by the Federal Highway Administration—the 5,450 miles of paved roads, 6,544 miles of unpaved roads, and 1679 bridges, culverts and tunnels are estimated to be deteriorating at approximately 2% a year of their replacement value of $20.6 billion. National Park Service roadwork would have to be funded at a $412 million annual level to keep all its roads in good condition.

The lack of funding over the past decade has left the National Park Service with a shortfall of administrative capacity to manage these projects. This makes it imperative for the National Park Service to obtain funding for training and hiring in areas such as acquisition management. Typically an organization

needs to spend at least 4% of its personnel budget on training, which suggests an annual need on the order of $60 million. In 2009, The National Park Service has budgeted only $10.1 million in their centralized and managed training program, and knows not where, and for what skills, other training might be being obtained through park budgets.

Finally, the National Park Service has not been funded adequately to purchase non-public lands that are within authorized boundaries. Funding for this purpose is supposed to be provided through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), but despite an authorization level of $900 million per year for the Department of the Interior's land management bureaus, appropriations for the LWCF have been about half that level since the beginning of the program. During the past 8 years, LWCF funding for the National Park Service has fallen precipitously from $123 million in 2001 to $34 million in 2007. The NPS estimates that it would need $1.9 billion to purchase its "in-holdings", of which about $300 million worth involves willing sellers at present.

However, the "in-holdings" purchase is probably the bare minimum needed to "complete" the parks. Additional funds would be required to address potential boundary adjustments, and newly authorized parks. If a vision of far greater eco-system management is to be pursued, then the National Park Service might need to acquire some additional lands, or easements for corridors and other key parcels around each park. It is not known what the cost of this would be.

There is consensus that the National Park Service needs funding increases beyond the rate of inflation just to fulfill its current mission, let alone be able to take on greater responsibilities. There is also agreement that core funding for the National Park Service should be from Federal appropriations, fees from people who visit the parks and use the services provided, fees from concessioner operations, and that donated funds or services need to be significantly increased.

Federal appropriations are confined by Administration or Congressional funding ceilings and spending caps, especially during political cycles that require stringent reductions in discretionary spending to reduce the deficit, or that require huge resource shifts to other priorities such as the military or health reform. These cycles tend to prevent significant long-term increases to the budget of any individual bureau, such as the National Park Service, regardless of need, forcing it to compete with other bureaus in the Department of the Interior, such as the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and with other agencies, such as the Forest Service, that are funded by the same Congressional appropriation subcommittee. Any gains by the National Park Service are generally offset by losses in other agencies and bureaus, and vice versa. Appropriated funding for the Department of the Interior is about the same level as it was in Fiscal Years 2003 and 2004.

It is essential in guaranteeing the sustainability of the National Park Service into its second century that a sound funding base is established...

Other funding sources come with their own sets of problems. Increasing fee rates brings the potential of decreasing visitation, especially by those in lower income brackets. Relying on partners or donations make support of continuing operations unreliable, and a potential danger that project or facility support might be seen to entail quid pro quos, or lead to commercialization and the diminution of resource protection issues.

Therefore, it is essential in guaranteeing the sustainability of the National Park Service into its second century that a sound funding base is established for the operation of the parks, and that a dependable funding stream to support the parks and their ecosystems in perpetuity is created.

Funding from Appropriations

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 1

Federal appropriations should be strengthened and stabilized, and remain the core funding for the National Park Service into the future. Several actions are proposed to ensure an increased funding stream with reduced volatility.

ACTION 1. Pursue legislation to establish a permanent appropriation for the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at the fully authorized level, with a separate line item within LWCF for National Park Service park-related land acquisition for the purchase of vital lands within park boundaries and for other, broader uses including landscape protection and biodiversity conservation, and allowing for an expanded set of acquisition-related tools including easements.

ACTION 2. Pursue legislation to establish a permanent appropriation for the Historic Preservation Fund at the fully authorized level to allow the National Park Service to provide the necessary financial and technical assistance to state and local governments and others to ensure that America's prehistoric and historic resources are preserved.

ACTION 3. Pursue legislation for new sources of permanent appropriated funds for National Park Service operations and infrastructure improvements from revenue gained from expanded oil and gas drilling leases or other new sources of Federal revenue.

ACTION 4. In the near term, the Commission encourages the Administration and Congress to continue the pattern of appropriating increased National Park Service operating funds that has occurred in Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009, above the amount necessary to cover fixed costs such as those for pay raises, until the unfunded operational backlog of the National Park Service is eliminated. The Fiscal Year 2010 President's Budget continues the recent trend by proposing an added $100 million for National Park Service operating costs above fixed costs, a pace that should meet the challenge of addressing the operating backlog by the National Park Service Centennial in 2016.

Fundraising

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 2

The president should convene a Commission of notable Americans to lead a Campaign for the National Parks.

ACTION. A Presidential Commission would raise contributions from philanthropists, corporations and other willing citizens, to connect this and coming generations of diverse Americans to healthy, sustainable national parks, and to promote broad commitment to the values and ideals of the National Park Service mission. Harnessing the potential of the internet, new social media, and the coming national park centennial, we are confident that all Americans, from the classroom to the boardroom, will respond to the call to show their support for keeping our national treasures protected. Such a campaign should emphasize youth engagement and be designed to foster national pride in a job well done in preparing the National Park Service for a new era of expanded public engagement and national leadership starting in 2016. This president should combine this campaign with a robust federal commitment to more than match efforts by American citizens.

New Sources of Funding

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 3

Initiate a Presidential Centennial Committee to propose and fund an endowment structure to support the Parks and their ecosystems in perpetuity.

The Funding and Budget Committee believes strongly that the financial support of the National Park Service needs to be adjusted to better reflect the understanding that parks, historical sites and heritage areas are intended to be preserved in perpetuity. At present, the parks are funded through short-term appropriations supplemented by donations that are typically only related to immediate needs such as the construction of a visitor center. However the parks enjoy enormous public support that could be translated into a more substantial philanthropic footprint from various sources combined to meet both present shortfalls and future requirements. The role of private philanthropy needs to be amplified and, in order to achieve this, institutional arrangements are required to capture and hold non-appropriated funds for the National Park Service.

ACTION 1. Establish a National Park Service Presidential Centennial Committee that would design an endowment to serve as a perpetual source of support for the preservation and enhancement of all of America's national parks, historical sites and heritage areas.

The purpose of the Centennial Committee would be to consider and propose a permanent endowment for the National Park Service. The Centennial Committee should be made up of prestigious Presidential and Congressional appointees, with a focus on expertise in specific areas necessary for the establishment of an endowment, including law, finance, management and governance. The Committee will consider a wide range of models for capturing and releasing endowment funds, and will consider strengthening, complementing, or replacing existing support structures including the National Park Foundation in order to optimize fundraising efforts.

An endowment, similar in some ways to the Smithsonian Institution's, would provide a perpetual revenue stream for an organization with a perpetuity mission, enabling donors to gift or bequeath funds to provide for a wide range of purposes, including support of National Park Service science, scholarship and education, specific National Park Service projects and programs, and public/private initiatives outside parks that need to be done for the preservation of parks. Since philanthropic dollars are often deemed more suitable for funding innovation

and new ventures, as well as very long-term efforts, the endowment would serve as a source of funds that would supplement appropriations, which would continue to fund the core operating and infrastructure needs of the National Park Service.

Seed funding for the endowment would be drawn from public sources such as fees, centennial coins and stamps and the National Park Service Centennial Challenge. The Challenge, which was initiated in 2008 but only partially funded to date, requires a private donation match, and is currently directed at projects to alleviate National Park Service backlogged needs in advance of the centennial in 2016. The purposes of the Centennial Challenge should be expanded to enable some of its funds to be targeted to the Presidential Centennial Committee and the endowment.

ACTION 2. Pursuant to the recommendations of the Presidential Centennial Committee, pursue legislation to establish an endowment on behalf of the National Park Service, to provide for a long term reservoir of funding for the preservation of America's national parks, historic sites and heritage areas.

The endowment would need to be managed and staffed professionally and be fully accountable to donors, Federal oversight bodies, and the public. The endowment's governing body, or board, would consist of term Presidential and Congressional appointees, skilled in philanthropy, fundraising, and money management. The board's prime mandates would be to ensure that the endowment-funded projects and activities proposed for National Park Service approval would meet all Federal standards and provide for the recognition of donors only in accordance with National Park Service directives. The disbursement decisions would be made by the board based on priorities established together with donors, the 'friends groups' of a park, other National Park Service support groups, and the National Park Service.

The endowment should be authorized to pool contributions into a diversified portfolio of holdings to provide eventually for disbursements from the invested principal. The board should also be authorized to issue bonds based on the endowment's projected revenue stream.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 4

Initiate an evaluation of the potential for legislating tax incentives (credits) and disincentives (fees, penalties) to influence development in certain critical natural resource situations near parks.

ACTION. The Department of the Interior or the National Park Service should initiate an independent evaluation of the possible use of tax incentives/disincentives to further its natural resource mission. The tax incentives contemplated by the Committee would be similar to the current Federal Preservation Tax Incentives Program, under which a 20 percent credit against Federal income taxes is available to property owners who rehabilitate historic buildings, if the rehabilitation project is certified to preserve the historic character of the building. Such incentives could be particularly helpful in the development of heritage areas.

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ADVANCING THE NATIONAL PARK IDEA

NATIONAL PARKS SECOND CENTURY COMMISSION

Governance Committee Report

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Vision

The National Park Service is able to effectively carry out its mission based on the best available scholarly and scientific information. Governance of the National Park Service and National Park System should provide insulation from inappropriate intrusions into its discretion to interpret and carry out its mission. As the leader and primary steward of the nation's heritage, the National Park Service should have the best available access to appropriations as well as other sources of funding such as private philanthropy.

Increasing the ability of the National Park Service to be insulated from inappropriate political pressures can be accomplished by a combination of new or clarified authorities and a strong oversight function. We also believe a key tool for defending the National Park Service from "inappropriate" political pressures is a strong, vocal, and effective constituency. Advocates for the National Park Service mission need to have capacity to successfully challenge pressures from parochial and short term economic interests that are not consistent with the long term welfare of our national heritage. This is now accomplished in part by non-governmental organizations such as NPCA.

Introduction

During the initial meetings of the National Parks Second Century Commission, several members outlined a rationale for the National Park Service becoming an independent agency. This idea is based on a number of observations including:

- Political appointees often overrule or suppress recommendations by the National Park Service that are supported by professional, scientific and scholarly information.
- The National Park Service has lost control over many support functions that now reside elsewhere in the Department including scientists, land appraisals, strategic planning, solicitors, and the inspector general.
- Layers of bureaucracy within the Department of the Interior inhibit the National Park Service from being able to carry out its mission.
- The Department of the Interior's responsibilities for resource development and extraction: the Minerals Management Service, Bureau of Reclamation, and Bureau of Land Management for example, are not consistent with the conservation and "unimpaired" mission of the National Park Service.
- The Department's role as regulator of oil, gas, and minerals operations also may conflict with opportunities for the National Park Service to seek philanthropic support from businesses that might be involved in litigation with the Department.
- Independence for the National Science Foundation successfully improved access to appropriations.

Proposals for an independent National Park Service are not new and appear in the 1988 NPCA National Park System Plan. Related legislation was considered in Congress but not enacted during the 1980s.

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Several of the commission's committee reports addressed the governance question highlighting concerns about layers of bureaucracy and constraints on National Park Service independence. Conflicts between the long-term mission of the National Park Service and the flux in the cycle of administrations were also highlighted. The full commission considered governance issues during its fourth meeting at Gettysburg in an effort to synthesize different ideas and a special committee on governance was established to develop this report.

Political Pressures on the National Park Service

The committee observed that the issue of separating the National Park Service from the Department of the Interior would be highly controversial and had the potential to overshadow other substantive recommendations about a vision for the next century addressing funding, capacity, and growth of the national park ethic.

Much of the discussion about independence has focused on problems associated with "political" interference with National Park Service management and decision making. The committee on governance also noted that the sources of this type of influence include individual members of Congress as well as congressional committee staff, and various levels of the administration: from the White House and the Office of Management and Budget to many different levels within the Department. Although some "political" pressures on the National Park Service have been in conflict with the agency's mission, many of the innovations and new directions for the Service have come from the political process and were initially resisted by the National Park Service but are now considered to be positive directions. The special challenge is to find an appropriate balance between public input and high professional standards for resource stewardship.

The committee notes that the specific areas of concern regarding the diminishment of National Park Service authority include budget, policy and regulations, personnel, resource management decisions, and legal advice. Of these five areas, budget and resource management decisions are the most critical. However, it is noted that the trend to centralize control over these functions is not limited to the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior: centralization has been taking place throughout the government.

The committee believes that the full commission can recommend some improvements in the governance structure that will help support the National Park Service for the next century and will be feasible to implement. This involves a middle ground between the status quo and making the National Park Service an entirely independent agency. Our recommendations focus on what we want to accomplish, recognizing that several different methods may be successful in achieving this goal.

Increasing National Park Service Independence and Authority

Some steps that could be taken to increase independence and authority for the National Park Service within the Department of the Interior include:

- Legislation to specify appointment of the National Park Service director for a fixed term that would transcend administrations (six years).
- Current law specifies that the director is appointed by the president, confirmed by the Senate, and that the director "shall have substantial experience and demonstrated competence in land management and natural or cultural resource conservation." These professional requirements should be updated to reflect the complex and broad scope of the Park Service's mission.
- Enhanced authority to manage the agency separate from that of the Secretary of the Interior: Authorities that would rest with the Director rather than being delegated by the Secretary such as reporting to Congress about potential new or expanded park units,
- Streamlining the budget process so that National Park Service requests are not subject to so many different layers of review within the Department.
- Establishing an independent National Park Service Solicitor's Office as was the case in 1955 before consolidation of legal functions reporting to the Secretary.
- Providing the National Park Service with greater capacity and control over strategic planning, procurement, cooperative agreements, land appraisals, and other functions that have been centralized in the Department. Assure that the National Park Service has adequate control over the agenda for science and scholarship to support its mission. The National Park Service should be able to guide priorities for long term studies and independent analysis and synthesis to support resource management decisions at the park level. Some of these important science functions are now being effectively provided through Cooperative Ecosystem Study units in universities while others were assigned to the US Geological Survey during reorganization.

- Engaging the Council on Environmental Quality to resolve disputes with other Federal agencies, using similar processes as the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to assure consultation and efforts to avoid adverse effects.

- In the future, evaluate opportunities to consolidate some National Park Service functions with functions of the Fish and Wildlife Service to strengthen both agencies in their conservation mission.

- Strengthening the role of the National Park System Advisory Board so that it has a clear mandate and independent staff to support National Park Service decisions when questionable or inappropriate pressures are brought to the board's attention. The advisory board should not become an additional layer of bureaucracy. Advisory Board members have become effective ambassadors for the National Park Service agenda. Although the board could remain advisory to the Director, it could speak to the American public and to Congress.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 1

The National Park Service Should Have Authority Over Basic Functions That Support its Mission

- The secretary should realign critical support functions for the National Park Service so that they report to the National Park Service director. These include strategic planning, land appraisals, and science functions

- The secretary should reorganize units from Office of the Solicitor so that they are more responsive to the National Park Service Director.

- Congress should provide that reporting requirements about the status of the National Park System and potential new units are vested in the National Park Service director and not delegated from the secretary.

- Congress should specify that only the director can initiate regulations regarding park management, subject to a veto by the secretary.

- The secretary should reorganize the departmental budget process to reduce layers of review and approval within the Department.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 2

The National Park Service Director Should be More Independent Within the Interior Department

- Congress should authorize a fixed term of six years for the National Park Service director, appointed by the President with advice and consent of the Senate, and update requirements for professional qualifications to reflect the complexity and breadth of responsibilities.

- Congress should reauthorize the National Park System Advisory Board, with authority for appointments by the National Park Service director, staggered terms, ex-officio representation for congressional committees, membership by nationally recognized experts in designated professional fields, and an independent staff.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 3

The National Park Service Should Have More Effective Authorities to Encourage Uses and Regulatory Decisions That Are Compatible with Protection of Significant Resources

- The president should issue an Executive Order instructing other federal land managing and regulatory agencies to consult with the National Park Service and carry out their responsibilities in a manner to be compatible with conservation of nationally significant resources. The executive order of May 12, 2009, regarding the Chesapeake Bay is one useful model for this type of order.

- The president should instruct the Council on Environmental Quality to develop new processes and procedures to help anticipate, avoid, and mitigate potential conflicts between land management for conservation purposes and other federal agency activities.

- A review should be conducted in five years to determine if these increased authorities result in more effective protection of resources and engagement with the American public.

ADVANCING THE NATIONAL PARK IDEA

NATIONAL PARKS SECOND CENTURY COMMISSION

Capacity Committee Report

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Vision

A second century National Park Service contributes to society as educator, leader and partner in protecting our natural and cultural heritage and by welcoming and including in America's story our increasingly diverse population. The National Park Service is a learning organization and has an organizational culture that both respects and utilizes its history and tradition of mission and excellence while being skilled at innovation, creativity, adaptation, and change. It is an organizational culture that values expertise and the open sharing and use of it, and continuous learning. The organization creates resiliency and growth by incorporating innovation and experimentation throughout, by intentional provision of knowledge to those who may need it both vertically and horizontally through the entire Park Service and with partners, by learning from outside the Park Service and by continuous inquiry and conversation to create quality responses to changing needs and situations.

Introduction

The Commission heard from many Park Service leaders and partners that they believe the second century National Park Service should play a larger role in society as educator, leader, and partner in protecting natural and cultural heritage, and in welcoming and including in America's story our increasingly diverse population. Central to success in playing this role will be building a more adaptive and flexible organization, and an organizational culture that actively encourages innovation and supports its employees.

The National Park Service is a place-based organization, its workforce located mainly in or around national parks and in communities across the country where Park Service people are supporting conservation activities, and also in program-level offices generally in Washington, D.C., or in regional offices. Partnerships are essential to the future of the Park Service and managers must have flexibility to participate in a wide variety of relationships with land owners, local officials, levels of government, jurisdictions, diverse communities and cultures, and the public. New skills and proficiencies are needed to do this work effectively.

Looking to the challenges and opportunities of the future, we believe that in addition to leadership development and management reforms, fresh attention must be focused on enhancing scholarship and science. Like many organizations, the National Park Service can be resistant to absorbing outside points of view and to follow through on recommendations for change. However, the Commission has also seen a wide range of sparks of creativity and examples of great innovation that suggest what is possible.

Begin Now – To Build and Empower a Second Century National Park Service

Organizations do learn to be adaptive—they intentionally practice becoming and being a learning organization. Therefore, we recommend the shift to the second century organization begin *immediately,* not as a distant vision of a future desired state. All processes used in moving toward the desired organizational culture must embody that culture now. For example, if we want the desired organizational culture to be one of respect, learning, empowerment, and innovation, then all change processes used must exemplify these in their design. We have to "walk the talk." We have to practice the future state now.

By learning about innovations already in place, the Park Service can grow from its strengths. We learned that although there are many outstanding examples of innovative programs, the National Park Service lacks the capacity to capture, assess, and diffuse this knowledge efficiently and widely to promote broader applications. While National Park Service staff is aware of the expertise of potential partners and the need for innovation in programming, investments of time or money in research or new approaches are not common due to operational demands on their time, and the resultant habits the organization has acquired over time. In a rapidly changing environment, organizations must constantly learn and act on new information and understandings—making the rapid sharing of knowledge a key management asset.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 1

Create an organizational culture to accomplish the second century National Park Service mission.

ACTION A: Encourage this organizational culture throughout the National Park Service; engage colleagues-as-co-learners, and create Communities of Practice.

We recommend that the National Park Service establish one or more "hubs" for innovation that would serve as focal points to collect learning and share lessons quickly throughout the organization. Among program areas for highest attention are place-based education, leadership, and developing and expanding collaboration for large natural and cultural landscape scale conservation. This "hub" would develop "communities of practice" to connect people engaged in similar work to more easily exchange ideas and hone their practice, and it would synthesize evaluation of innovations for the benefit of the entire system. It might be developed as a public/private consortium of Park Service staff and partners that include universities, foundations, nonprofit organizations, school systems, corporations, and professional organizations.

ACTION B: Use the National Parks Second Century Commission Report as a conversation starter within the National Park Service and with partners to develop interest and ownership.

The Committee recommends that the National Park Service use the 2nd Century Commission report, *Advancing the National Park Idea,* as a foundation for a series of "conversations" within the Park Service and with partners. The Committee is convinced that it will be critically important that people throughout the Park Service and Park Service partners be actively engaged in sorting through our recommendations and be invited to discuss them and make them their own. Staff, partners, stakeholders and citizens can all be involved. When this engagement is successful and system-wide, it generates not only a richness of ideas and insights, but also builds motivation and ownership—moving this report from paper to implementation. We recommend that the Park Service use "social networking" to gather and share ideas and tell "new" stories emerging from this dialogue, so that through this participatory approach, the Park Service and its partners can collectively articulate their second century vision and begin to define a way forward. We recommend that these conversations be used to demonstrate the benefits of gathering and sharing insights from across the nation and to begin developing the networks and communities of practice.

Enhancing Professionalism, Scholarship and Science

National Park Service responsibilities have grown exponentially since 1916. The National Park System is more than ten times larger than when the organization was created, including nearly 400 parks, each with its own purposes and dramatically diverse characteristics. The professional and technical workforce capacity needed to oversee a vast wilderness in Alaska, manage historic properties in Philadelphia, and be a partner to the National Heritage Areas is highly complex. The National Park Service also manages a vast infrastructure and programs to serve the hundreds of millions of visitors experiencing these places each year, and it administers a host of additional programs engaging others by providing grants and planning assistance to communities nationwide. This is an infinitely broader set of roles than were ever imagined for the organization in the beginning.

Developing Leadership for Change

Effective leaders use strategic thinking, problem solving, and the ability to inspire and motivate employees; this leadership approach can be effectively taught. Looking to the future, the National Park Service leadership should focus on collaboration, empowerment, evidence-based decision-making, and systems thinking. Experience in many other organizations has demonstrated that investment in leadership development pays high returns to organizational effectiveness and creativity, quality of the work environment, and employee morale and motivation. A larger investment in leadership development is essential.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 2

Build a "recruitment to retirement" capacity—founded in current best practices in adult motivation and learning—to assist and empower people throughout their careers.

ACTION A: Make ongoing professional development a priority by which the agency meets its mission, and establish a standard of excellence in every profession or technical area.

We recommend that the National Park Service make professional and technical capacity development a priority in every organizational unit, and consistent with practices in the private sector, invest at least 4% of its annual personnel budget per year in this work. The National Park Service should

develop a "recruitment to retirement" strategy to work with people throughout their careers along established career paths. It should establish a standard of excellence in every profession or technical area and, through partnerships with academic institutions, provide academically rigorous and academically accredited training programs for National Park Service personnel to ensure their knowledge remains current in rapidly changing fields.

The Park Service should build a robust research capacity targeted toward site-specific, long-term research with direct application to management, optimizing a balance between internal and partner-provided research. In-park researchers provide long-term information on complex, dynamic natural and cultural systems, continuously assimilating their understanding into usable knowledge. Over time, each national park should become authoritative through long-term research on cultural, natural, and social science carried out by sufficient internal staff to generate, accumulate, and integrate knowledge and experience beyond individual careers. Management decisions are strengthened by ever increasing scientific knowledge and scholarship. Such knowledge better positions the National Park Service to be a trusted and contributing partner to a sustainable future for both the park and communities with which it is associated through collaboration.

Management decisions are strengthened by ever increasing scientific knowledge and scholarship.

ACTION B: Establish and maintain a robust, effective leadership capacity that includes skills in collaboration, empowerment, evidence-based decision making, systems thinking, and learning.

We recommend that the Park Service establish an institute to guide leadership development and to evaluate what works. The Superintendents' Leadership Roundtable managed by the Park Service's Conservation Study Institute offers an idea of what an effective leadership initiative should address. This program has created a national network of park leaders better able to negotiate complicated issues and to innovate. Participating managers report they are better able to lead change, mentor their employees, and build partnerships with diverse publics. Such opportunity should be available to all in leadership positions throughout the Park Service.

We recommend the Park Service identify emerging leaders and cultivate their leadership capacity. The Committee observed several innovative programs that are reaching youth, many from diverse communities, in particular at Santa Monica Mountains and at Lowell. These young people have a particularly important role to play in creating a second century National Park Service and it is critical to reach out, engage them, and listen to their ideas as we prepare the agency toward its next 100 years. There were many discussions among the Commissioners about the importance of having a National Park Service workforce that reflects the face of America, and is skilled in its many languages. Ultimately, it will be important to launch a leadership program to develop leadership skills throughout the agency at all levels of the organization.

Re-inventing Management and Business Systems

The Committee found, as do so many Americans, that National Park Service employees are highly dedicated to their work, many passionately so. It has been said that beyond the paycheck they earn, they are rewarded for their efforts in "sunsets." But, working for a noble cause is not always romantic, and while deeply committed to the National Park Service mission, a great many are frustrated with the increasingly bureaucratic environment in which they find themselves. Morale has been tested of late by declining budgets, staff losses, growing layers of bureaucracy, and the trend in government to centralize critical administrative functions.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 3

Align systems and processes to provide accurate, timely information to those in the best position to make decisions and to promote ongoing collaboration among all stakeholders and minimize unnecessary reports, procedures, and policies.

ACTION A: We recommend that the Park Service undertake an analysis of all systems, processes and reports presently required with the goal of simplifying, integrating and distributing decision making to the lowest appropriate level.

It is especially important to secure access to cutting edge communications technologies, including social networking systems; to ensure authorities are in place for hiring the next generation of employees; to execute cooperative agreements in working with partners and to increase delegations to the field (as described below).

In particular, the Committee recommends a particular focus on:

- Open National Park Service access to cutting edge technology. When the Committee learned of the difficulties the National Park Service faces in using Facebook and other social networking technology, they were dismayed by the limitations this creates. The Committee unanimously agreed that the National Park Service must have ready access to new and emerging technologies to be effective in the second century.

- Ensure authorities are in place for hiring the next generation. The Committee recommends the National Park Service aggressively pursue recruitment of the next generation though youth programs as a means of reaching the best and the brightest young people that reflect the demographics of America. The Committee also recommends that the National Park Service develop succession plans to ensure access to career development to successfully retain new recruits.

- Ensure legal authorities are in place. The Committee experienced the direct benefits of long-term relationships between national parks and partners and neighboring communities. It is therefore essential that the National Park Service have clear legal authorities for cooperative agreements to be able to work effectively with their long-term committed partners. As part of this, National Park Service should be given the authority to cede some of its normal decision-making authority to a partner within the context of broader partnership agreements. The Committee also heard about the legal barriers to youth projects and service learning that will be critical to remove.

- Increase delegation to the field and support informed risk taking as a management expectation. The Committee learned that superintendents are willing to assume more responsibilities and to take informed risks, and should be given this authority and support to move the National Park Service to an adaptive and learning organization.

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