

Your American West

Western National Parks Association

Technology in Parks

Augmenting the Visitor Experience

Connection. When you visit a national park, you are looking for connection—connection to diverse and vibrant cultures, landscapes, and histories; connection to the people around you sharing the experience; connection to yourself.

At WNPA, we work to support the National Park Service’s commitment to the creative use of technology to bring national parks to the people.

Today, our parks are finding new and innovative ways to use technology

to strengthen these connections and expand the visitor experience.

As the demographics of our nation become more diverse and technologically centered, the National Park Service recognizes its responsibility to keep the parks relevant. In 2008, the National Parks Conservation Association convened the Second Century Commission whose task it was to examine the renewed mission of the National Park Service as it entered the second century of its life. At this important convention, there was a “growing realization” that technology can “increase connectivity with parks and the values they contain, and create conditions for more meaningful park experiences.”

These meaningful experiences are happening every day all over the American West. Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument in New Mexico uses technology to bring the park to the people with award-winning digital tours and visitor enrichment programs. Along

Texas’s southern coast, Padre Island National Seashore’s innovative eBird Tracker system allows visitors to experience the park in a modern way. In Colorado, the National Park Service is collaborating with educators and students to create a digital reconstruction of Bent’s Old Fort National Historic Site in the popular game Minecraft. This digital connection may be a youngster’s first contact with the parks, planting the vital seed of curiosity that will blossom into the national pride that protects our most precious resources.

At WNPA, we work to support the National Park Service’s commitment to the creative use of technology to bring national parks to the people. Embracing the future does not mean degrading the past. In fact, technological advances preserve the past and make it more accessible to those who may never have had the opportunity to hear our nation’s most important stories.

Bent’s Old Fort National Historic Site



A young couple uses modern technology to enhance their national park experience.

Keeping Stories Alive

These days, it seems like we are all racing to keep up with advances in technology. We chat, text, tweet, post, surf, stream, and pay our bills on the latest electronic devices. In fact, the majority of WNPA's members now receive this newsletter online. As our society becomes increasingly urban, we lose our connection to nature and forget the traditional stories of our collective history.

WNPA is committed to using emerging technology to share those stories and attract diverse audiences to our parks. We support the innovative efforts of our partner parks to reach the next generation, encourage visitation, and expand access to interpretation. Our goal is to increase the quality and quantity

of educational opportunities in parks. Using technology, parks have more information at their fingertips that they can share with visitors.

Our national parks are brimming with significant stories of nature, art, and heritage. In this issue we will look at new ways that NPS interpretation staff and volunteers are taking advantage of technology to ensure these stories are kept alive. We hope you agree that these creative new tools enhance the visitor experience and encourage more people to discover their national parks.



Kim Sikoryak
WNPA Board Member, retired NPS Chief of Interpretation & Education, Intermountain Region

Special Recognitions

Volunteer Reaches Milestone

Nancy Rendall is a familiar face at WNPA. As a volunteer in the National Parks Store, Nancy helps customers find the perfect items to meet their needs and in turn support our parks. This spring, Nancy was recognized for achieving an amazing milestone—3,000 hours of volunteer service. We thank Nancy for 11 years of sharing her time, talents, and fantastic spirit with WNPA.



WNPA's Board of Directors at our biannual meeting in San Francisco

WNPA Board Giving Reaches 100%

Thank you to WNPA's Board of Directors for their commitment to our mission. Their full participation in our 2015 Leadership Campaign raised nearly \$24,000 to help our partner parks share their stories.

Community Support

The Mahoney Group

The Mahoney Group (TMG) takes pride in being the largest independent insurance agency in Arizona. For 100 years, TMG has actively participated in many of the same communities where WNPA's partner parks are located. WNPA is honored to recognize The Mahoney Group as a Community Partner. Their support of our parks helps us tell the story of America's beauty, culture, and history.

For information regarding partnership opportunities, please contact Amy Reichgott at (520) 789-7406 or amy.reichgott@wnpa.org.

Community Partners

Many community partners help WNPA fulfill its mission. Their support allows us to extend the reach and impact of all our programs, products, and services.

Arizona Daily Star



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Details

Western National Parks Association is a 501(c)(3) corporation—the official nonprofit partner of 67 national parks in the western United States.

Headquarters & National Parks Store located at:

12880 N. Vistoso Village Dr.
Tucson, AZ 85755
(520) 622-1999

wnpa.org

Experience the West

Featured Events & Activities

WNPA's Park Stores host a variety of events, from arts and crafts shows to hands-on workshops to Insider Tours. These activities help connect people to national parks and nurture understanding of each park's unique culture, history, and beauty.

Visit wnpa.org or call 520-622-6014 for a full list of activities or to sign up for tours and workshops.

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

Oil & Water Art Exhibit & Sale

July 4–26

Featuring local artists' work inspired by the Santa Monica Mountains.

Wild Foods Plant Walk

Saturday, September 5

Local author, naturalist, and outdoor skills instructor Christopher Nyerges will lead a workshop on the Principles of Going Green, followed by a Wild Foods Walk.

Live Reptiles & Amphibians

Sunday, September 20

Over 100 live reptiles and amphibians! Speakers will address herpetology-related topics like the bizarre sex lives of lizards. Live music performed by the Ranger Band, made up of 5 park rangers.

Hubbell Trading Post Show & Sale

Saturday & Sunday, September 26 & 27

Navajo weavings & American Indian jewelry from Hubbell Trading Post. Rug talks and weaving demonstrations throughout the show.



Insider Tours

Arizona State Museum Curator's Tour

Thursday, July 23 or August 13

Enjoy a special behind-the-scenes curator's tour of the Arizona State Museum—home of the world's largest collection of Southwest Indian pottery and basketry.

\$85 WNPA members/\$105 nonmembers. Price includes transportation, lunch, and museum fees. Limited to 10 participants. Tickets must be prepaid and are nonrefundable.

Arizona State Museum Special Collections Tour

Thursday, July 30 or August 6

Come see national parks in a different light with a tour of the museum's special collections. Curators will create custom exhibits that tell rich stories of the parks and the people who lived there.

\$85 WNPA members/\$105 nonmembers. Price includes transportation, lunch, and museum fees. Limited to 10 participants. Tickets must be prepaid and are nonrefundable.

Chiricahua

Thursday, September 24

Explore spectacular rock formations on a ranger-led hike of Echo Canyon Loop Trail. Visit the Faraway Ranch Historic District and learn more about the people who have called this area home.

\$140 WNPA members/\$160 nonmembers. Price includes transportation, lunch, and entrance fees. Limited to 9 participants. Tickets must be prepaid and are nonrefundable.

Canyon de Chelly and Hubbell Trading Post

Wednesday, October 21–Friday, October 23

Take a jeep tour in Canyon de Chelly and enjoy an evening of storytelling and music with canyon resident William Yazzie. Visit Hubbell Trading Post for a behind-the-scenes curator's tour of the Hubbell Home.

\$695 WNPA members/\$740 nonmembers. Price includes transportation, meals, lodging, and entrance fees. Limited to 20 participants. Tickets must be prepaid and are nonrefundable.

Concerts at the National Parks Store in Tucson

Indigo Raven: A Celtic Concert

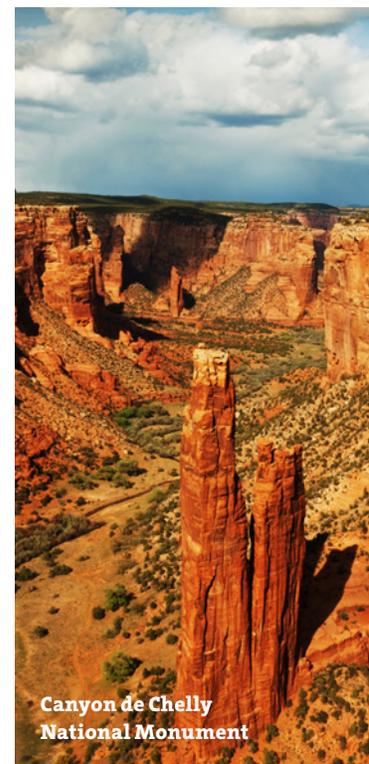
Saturday, August 1 2 PM

Enjoy an hour of simple music from the rocky coasts and emerald hills of the Celtic world. Singer Maya Cross-Killingsworth will be playing the harp and flute, bringing new life to the traditional music of England, Ireland, and Scotland.

Noctrane

Saturday, September 26 3 PM

Listen to the sounds of saxophone, guitar, and banjo for a lively concert that combines the influences of jazz and bluegrass music.



Canyon de Chelly National Monument

People & Happenings



Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site

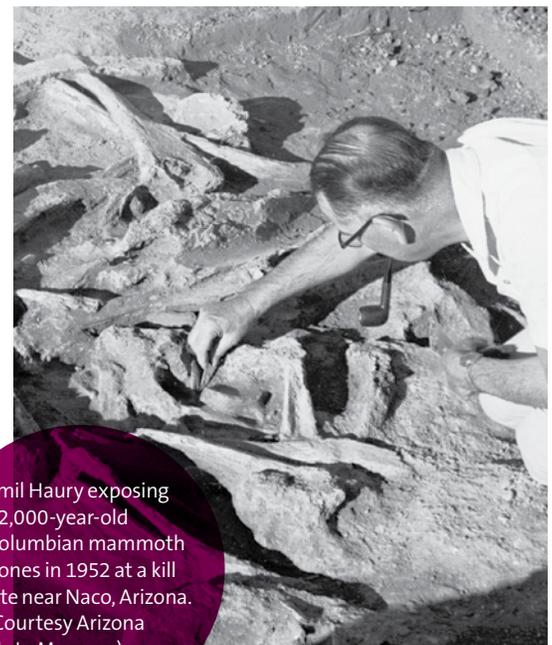
A Lasting Influence

Emil Haury Lecture Series

The Emil Haury Lecture Series, supported by the Southwestern Foundation, honors the legacy of an iconic figure in the field of the archaeology of the Southwest. An ambassador of the region, Emil Haury gave voice to countless of our nation's stories previously untold or unheard. Through his fieldwork, research, and prolific publications from 1928 until shortly before his death in 1992, Haury informed and influenced generations of scientists. His impact on archaeological thinking and methods represented a paradigm shift in the field—one that continues to influence scholars today.

Emil Haury remains an incredibly influential figure. As a founding board member, his work embodied WNPA's mission to connect new generations to the parks in meaningful ways. Now approaching its second season, this lecture series brings together the brightest minds in the field of archaeology. It recognizes the lasting influence of Dr. Haury, while inspiring curiosity and pride in advocates of the Southwest's enduring heritage.

Stay tuned for this year's lectures on October 6, 13, and 20. Visit wnpa.org and scroll down to our Research section to watch the short film about Dr. Haury, created as a part of last year's lecture series.



Emil Haury exposing 12,000-year-old Columbian mammoth bones in 1952 at a kill site near Naco, Arizona. (Courtesy Arizona State Museum)

2016
National Park Service
CENTENNIAL

FIND YOUR PARK

The National Park Service celebrates its 100th birthday in 2016. To celebrate, NPS has launched Find Your Park, a movement designed to share personal stories of our national parks and inspire visitors to seek out new park experiences. Find Your Park is about more than just national parks. It's about state parks, local parks, trails, museums, historic sites, and the many ways that the American public can connect with history and culture, enjoy nature, and make new discoveries. Participating is simple. Go to findyourpark.com. Follow links to listen to a story or find a park just for you.

Fur Trade Symposium

Bent's Old Fort

Rick Wallner, Chief of Interpretation
Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site

Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site comes to life with the sights, sounds, and smells of the past during the upcoming Fur Trade Symposium, September 23–26. Explore the fur trade through scholarly presentations, informal seminars, and Living History representations of those involved in the Southern fur trade during its peak.

The 2015 symposium intends to inform and entertain a wide range of attendees on the full scope and diversity of the southern fur trade. Our goal is to examine the breadth of the fur trade's effects on animal populations, people involved in the business, their lifestyles, interactions, economics and more. This event promises enrichment for scholars, enthusiasts, and all who have an interest in the history of the fur trade.

For a list of events, and to register for what will be one of the highlights of the year along the Western trails, visit www.2015fts.org.

New & Notable Releases

WNPA is Committed to Developing Innovative Products and Publications for Our Partner Parks

WNPA supports 67 parks across 12 Western states. Each park has a unique story to tell. We work to capture and share every park's story in new and compelling ways. Below are a few featured products and publications.

The Last Spike

Golden Spike National Historic Site

On May 10, 1869, as the last spike was driven, completing the transcontinental railroad, a golden spike was presented in commemoration of the momentous event. WNPA created two replicas of the spike, one plastic and one metal. Both are now available in the Park Store at Golden Spike National Historic Site!



Junior Ranger T-shirts

The National Parks Store

Recently, we've been expanding and refreshing our line of Junior Ranger products. Our new Junior Ranger t-shirts, debuted at this year's Tucson Festival of Books, are back by popular demand. Now in adult sizes too—because you're never too old to be a Junior Ranger! Available at the National Parks Store in Tucson.



Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles

Padre Island National Seashore

As a part of WNPA's continued focus on the critically endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle, we now have an exciting assortment of products featuring these adorable creatures. Thanks to our ongoing partnerships with vendors that help us achieve our mission—including Deneen Pottery, Lantern Press, Concept 360, Impact, and Wild Republic—we have a custom mug, poster, t-shirt, token, and plush turtle.



In the Parks



Keeping Parks Relevant

Tour Bent's Old Fort in Minecraft

Students in La Junta, Colorado, are bringing the stories of the past into the 21st century as they work to virtually recreate Bent's Old Fort in the world of the popular computer game, Minecraft. Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site features a reconstructed 1840s adobe fur trading post on the mountain branch of the Santa Fe Trail. It is one of the nation's most active protected sites, yet many have not had the opportunity to experience the fort.

Each Wednesday afternoon, 20 students from La Junta High School and Otero Junior College come together to study the old Santa Fe Trail trading post with the goal of successfully creating a three-dimensional digital model of the fort that anybody can explore from the comfort of their own home.

The digital structure will start as a Minecraft creation. Minecraft, a computer game popular among diverse age groups, is primarily a building game. Players use their imaginations to create an infinite number of landscapes. After completing the Minecraft model, students will move into a more advanced architectural

program that requires the mastery of the basic concepts of architectural design and engineering. The Immersive Education Initiative is working in collaboration with the National Park Service to make both classroom curriculum and the culture of the parks relevant for the upcoming generation.

This collaborative fusion of history and technology is exactly the type of creative technology that the National Park Service uses to kindle a youthful interest in the nation's parks.

Screenshots of the 3-D Minecraft model of Bent's Old Fort, created by students in La Junta, Colorado. (Courtesy Immersive Education)





Beyond the Edge

A Modern Seashore

by Patrick Gamman, Chief of Interpretation and Education, Padre Island National Seashore

Twenty minutes away from Corpus Christi, Padre Island National Seashore is beyond the edge of cell phone reception. As park rangers we see the change in how people experience the world. In an effort to help visitors experience the seashore in a modern way, we are partnering with Western National Parks Association to introduce satellite-connected Internet in the Malaquite Visitor Center, which will give visitors access to the Cornell University eBird Tracker—a real-time online checklist program. This eBird Tracker system allows the birding community to share their sightings across the country—the first of many steps in our journey to relevance in the 21st century.

This technology harbors opportunities: a live-stream of the endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle hatchling release and fully interactive exhibits that enrich the park experience. This system brings the park from beyond the edge to the cutting edge, opening the park experience to the public both near and far.

Accessing Gila

Exploring the Monument in the 21st Century

Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument has an award-winning interpretation program, connecting visitors to the history and culture of the park through meaningful presentations and collections. In September 2014, Western National Parks Association gave the monument two laptop and 10 tablet computers that are used today for the visitor interpretation program and staff education. The monument loaded a large collection of media on these computers, including photos of pottery, stone tools, bones and shells from the cliff dwellings, and videos of staff conducting tours. Interpreters carry mobile tablets used to graphically enhance their presentations. Large-screen multimedia shows of tours, artifacts, and architecture make the monument accessible to anyone who cannot make the 180-foot climb up to the dwellings. Streamlining staff education, the monument loaded their 2012 Herzog award-winning Cliff Notes interpretive training onto every computer. Visitors and staff are thrilled to benefit from the program, which was partially funded by a gift from the Heisey family.



Park Spotlight

Pinnacles Junior Ranger e-Book

Pinnacles National Park welcomes the Junior Ranger Book into the 21st century with the new Junior Ranger e-book. Like the original series, this e-book continues to enrich youngsters as they develop enthusiasm for our nation's parks and historic sites. Unlike prior versions, the new e-book is divided into three books designed by educators for different age groups and is sure to excite kids and parents alike. The electronic modification includes lessons that combine reading, writing, and basic math in well-balanced activities. Kids can draw or interact with video on handheld digital devices, and demonstrate mastery of skills to earn the badge of Junior Ranger.



Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument

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Membership Matters

WNPA plays a vital role for our national parks by funding educational outreach events. On April 25, Aztec Ruins National Monument hosted its seventh annual Earth Day Celebration. This successful event has become a mainstay in San Juan County, New Mexico. Over 800 visitors came out to enjoy American Indian dance demonstrations from the Pueblo Enchantment Dancers. Families also

enjoyed a Junior Ranger program, planting native seeds, tasting solar-baked cookies, and playing recycling games designed and led by local elementary-school students. Your support helps our partner parks create events like Earth Day that inspire the next generation of park advocates.

Become a member of WNPA or consider creating a lasting legacy

*I will remember that
experience and the sound
of the drum forever.*
— Visitor, Aztec Ruins
National Monument,
Earth Day Celebration

by putting us in your will or estate plan. For more information about charitable giving, visit wnpa.org or contact Amy Reichgott, Development Manager, at 520-789-7406 or amy.reichgott@wnpa.org.