An aerial photograph of a coastal lighthouse station. The lighthouse is a tall, white, cylindrical tower with a black lantern room, situated on a rocky island. Several white buildings with dark roofs are scattered around the lighthouse. A yellow path winds through the green grassy area. The island is surrounded by dark, jagged rocks and the ocean. In the background, a small boat is visible near the shore, and distant islands are visible on the horizon under a clear blue sky.

# *Collaboration and Conservation*

*Lessons Learned in Areas Managed through  
National Park Service Partnerships*

## ***A Report on a Workshop***

*Convened by Conservation Study Institute  
and QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment  
for the National Park Service  
Park Planning and Special Studies Program*

***May 15-17, 2000***

*Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National  
Historical Park, Woodstock, Vermont*

This report is the third in the Conservation and Stewardship Publication Series published by the Conservation Study Institute. This series includes a variety of publications designed to provide information on conservation history and current practice for professionals and the public. The series editor is Nora J. Mitchell, Director of the Conservation Study Institute. This volume was co-published by QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment. The principal editors were Jacquelyn L. Tuxill and Nora J. Mitchell, with additional editing by Jessica Brown, Warren Brown, Judy Hart, and Brent Mitchell.



The Conservation Study Institute was established by the National Park Service in 1998 to enhance leadership in the field of conservation. A partnership with academic, government, and nonprofit organizations, the Institute provides a forum for the National Park Service, the conservation community, and the public to discuss conservation history, contemporary issues and practice, and future directions for the field. The founding partners are Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, the University of Vermont, Shelburne Farms, and QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment.

Conservation Study Institute  
P.O. Box 178, Woodstock, Vermont 05091  
Tel: 802-457-3368 / Fax: 802-457-3405  
<http://www.nps.gov/mabi/csi>



QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment is a private nonprofit organization whose mission is to support the rural communities and environment of eastern Canada and New England, and to create models for stewardship of natural resources and cultural heritage which can be applied worldwide. The Quebec Labrador Foundation (QLF) is incorporated in both the U.S. and Canada; the Atlantic Center for the Environment is the working name for its environmental programs. For over 35 years QLF has been working in rural communities of the Atlantic Region. Its international programs extend to the countries of Central Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment  
55 South Main Street, Ipswich, MA 01938  
Tel: 978-356-0038 / Fax: 978-356-7322  
<http://www.qlf.org>



We encourage you to share the information in this publication, and request only that you give appropriate citations and bibliographic credits. Copyrighted images are not placed in the public domain by their appearance in this document. They cannot be copied or otherwise reproduced except in their printed context within this document without the written consent of the copyright holders.

Recommended Citation: Tuxill, Jacquelyn L., and Nora J. Mitchell, eds., *Collaboration and Conservation: Lessons Learned in Areas Managed through National Park Service Partnerships*. Woodstock, Vermont: Conservation Study Institute, 2001.

# COLLABORATION AND CONSERVATION

*Lessons Learned in Areas Managed  
through National Park Service Partnerships*

*A Report on a Workshop  
May 15-17, 2000  
Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park  
Woodstock, Vermont*

*The workshop was convened by  
Conservation Study Institute and  
QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment*

*for the National Park Service  
Park Planning and Special Studies Program*

CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP PUBLICATION NO. 3

*Published by Conservation Study Institute  
Woodstock, Vermont  
2001*

Dear Colleagues,

It was our pleasure, as colleagues and partners in Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, to host and participate in the workshop, "Planning and Collaboration: Lessons Learned in Areas Managed through National Park Service Partnerships," held May 15-17, 2000. We know from experience that managing through a partnership is sometimes challenging. Nevertheless, it is tremendously rewarding, bringing benefits not only to the land and resources being managed, but also to the cooperating organizations and institutions, the community and region at large, and the general public.

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park is located in Woodstock, Vermont, long renowned as one of New England's most beautiful villages. The park includes the historic estate that has been successively the home of George Perkins Marsh, Frederick Billings, and Billings's heirs, most recently his granddaughter, Mary French, and her husband, Laurence S. Rockefeller. The Park came into existence in 1992 through the generous gift of Mary and Laurence Rockefeller, with a mission to interpret its place in American conservation history and the changing nature of land stewardship in America. The establishment of the National Park Service's Conservation Study Institute, based at the park, extends this park mission to a broader audience.

The park operates in partnership with the Billings Farm & Museum, which is privately owned and operated by the Woodstock Foundation and is situated within the park's protection zone. An operating dairy farm and historical museum of rural Vermont culture, the Billings Farm & Museum engages its visitors in interactive learning that fosters appreciation for responsible agriculture and sustainable land use. The partnership between the National Park Service and the Woodstock Foundation includes operational collaboration to present the park and the museum to the public. The foundation also holds a dedicated endowment fund for preservation and conservation of the park's historic resources.

Real partnerships, based on common goals developed and shared by public and private partners, are necessary if the National Park Service is to advance its dual mission of assuring preservation and public enjoyment of partnership areas. There is much to learn from the people who have been in the forefront of developing, planning, and managing the many innovative partnership parks and Congressionally designated conservation areas that mark the recent decades of the Service. We firmly believe that partnerships and collaboration will remain essential elements of the National Park Service and, indeed, the world of conservation in the future.

We must first understand the scope of what is possible and then work together to define a clear vision and steps that will take us there. The workshop and this report are important first steps in that process. Please get involved.

Rolf Diamant  
*Superintendent*  
*Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park*

David A. Donath  
*President*  
*The Woodstock Foundation, Inc.*

Dear Colleagues,

The Conservation Study Institute is built on partnerships. It was therefore a special pleasure for the Conservation Study Institute and QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment, a founding partner of the Institute, to convene this workshop on “Planning and Collaboration: Lessons Learned in Areas Managed through National Park Service Partnerships” in cooperation with the NPS Park Planning and Special Studies Program.

The workshop’s partnership theme, together with our commitment to learning from practitioners and their experience, provided an ideal opportunity for our collaboration and builds on the missions of our two organizations. The Conservation Study Institute’s mission is to create opportunities for dialogue, inquiry, and lifelong learning to enhance the stewardship of landscape and communities. QLF is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to support the rural communities and environment of eastern Canada and New England, and to create models for stewardship of natural resources and cultural heritage which can be applied worldwide.

The twenty-five people who participated in the workshop brought rich experience with cross-sectoral partnerships involving the National Park Service and a diverse array of partners. Their stories of how these partnership areas have developed to protect natural and cultural heritage—and to encompass lived-in landscapes as well as wild areas—demonstrates the importance of community-based conservation for the stewardship of America’s special places. Successful experience with partnership areas will be central to our evolving National Park System in the coming century and to the conservation of landscapes in communities across the country. This approach is a trend paralleled in other countries around the world.

At this workshop, participants examined the lessons learned from real experiences in real places and suggested steps to enhance future partnerships. We are enthusiastic about the findings and recommendations of this workshop, and look forward to convening another workshop on this theme in the near future. We welcome your comments and ideas on ways to move this dialogue forward.

Nora Mitchell  
*Director*  
*Conservation Study Institute*

Jessica Brown  
*Vice President for International Programs*  
*QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment*

# CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	iii
<i>Executive Summary</i>	v
<i>I. Workshop Design and Objectives</i>	1
<i>II. Setting the Context for the Workshop</i>	3
<i>A. Historical Perspective</i>	
<i>B. National and International Context</i>	
<i>C. Defining Partnership Parks and Areas: The challenge of terminology</i>	
<i>III. Summary of Workshop Discussions: What have we learned about working in partnership areas?</i>	9
<i>A. Principles for Forging Long-Term, Sustainable Partnerships</i>	
<i>B. Observations on the Benefits of Working in Partnership Areas</i>	
<i>C. The Challenges of Change</i>	
<i>D. A Vision for the Future</i>	
<i>IV. Steps to Enhance and Sustain NPS Partnerships</i>	19
<i>V. Concluding Remarks</i>	23
<i>List of Participants</i>	25
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	27
<i>Further Reading</i>	28
<i>Workshop Co-Sponsors</i>	<i>Inside Back Cover</i>



# FOREWORD

In 1970 Congress declared that the units of the National Park System were a cumulative expression of our national heritage. During the past 30 years there have been several cycles of expansion of the system to encompass different types of resources and different strategies for protecting them so they will be unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. Increasingly, the recent designations rely on partnerships and shared investment in planning and management.

In the past year alone, Congress has directed the National Park Service (NPS) to study more than 35 new areas for potential designation, many of them reflecting local interest in some type of relationship with the NPS that does not necessarily involve the traditional formula of federal acquisition and management. At the same time, the NPS is being asked to continue a long tradition of providing assistance to partners working in areas outside of the units of the National Park System.

As the NPS responds to demands for recognition, formal designation, and technical and financial assistance, discussions about the future of the agency often focus on three major questions:

- How will the NPS reach out to the changing and diverse population of the United States?
- How will the national parks address increasing public use pressures?
- How will the national parks be protected from threats that originate primarily beyond park boundaries?

Perhaps the “problem” of the burgeoning interest in establishing “nontraditional” areas is really the solution: that the agency must look beyond the traditional models and recognize the potential of partnerships to help the NPS fulfill its mission to protect our nation’s natural and cultural heritage. Perhaps the distinction between “internal” and “external” programs is no longer valid because protecting the parks depends upon our ability to expand a stewardship ethic throughout the nation, to protect resources at the local level, and to see the units of the National Park System as hubs in a broader network of protected areas.

Differing assumptions about the costs and benefits of “nontraditional” areas are often reflected in the challenges of studying and planning for Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Trails, Heritage Areas, and the new parks that are managed through complex partnerships. Even though there is extensive experience with partnership work, the opportunity to learn from common

experiences is often constrained by the fact that these similar issues are being addressed by different programs and offices within the NPS. There are also few opportunities to acknowledge the insights gained from the expanding use of partnerships and to examine the implications for both the agency and its partners.

It is within this context that the NPS Park Planning and Special Studies Program, the Conservation Study Institute, and the QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment convened a workshop to explore the experiences of working in partnerships that are outside the traditional NPS management model and to propose next steps for creating more effective long-term conservation partnerships.

As discussed in this report, workshop participants described factors that contribute to successful partnerships and the benefits that extend throughout the National Park System, even to the “traditional” national parks. They questioned whether there are really any “traditional” parks since even the Yellowstone and Yosemite increasingly work with and depend on partners. The workshop also highlighted a concern of many NPS staff and partners that the partnership activities and programs lack the same respect and prestige afforded traditional parks.

Looking to the future, workshop participants identified a series of challenges: to foster in the institutional culture of the NPS a deeper understanding of partnerships, to create a broader agency vision that includes the full spectrum of partnerships, and to learn from the growing experience of both the NPS and its partners about building effective long-term collaborations. Although they proposed ideas for next steps to begin to meet these challenges, they also recognized the need to bring more voices to the table to develop a comprehensive, strategic approach.

This report is part of an ongoing discussion about these issues. The Park Planning and Special Studies Program, the Conservation Study Institute, and the QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment intend to convene additional workshops. We hope that readers of this report will be able to use the findings, suggestions, and ideas to protect resources for the enjoyment of future generations on either side of a boundary that designates a park, river, trail, or heritage area.

**Warren Brown**

*Program Manager*

*Park Planning and Special Studies, NPS*



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1916, the National Park Service (NPS) has served as the land manager for the country's National Park System, conserving resources unimpaired for future generations, and providing interpretation and public access. The NPS also manages a number of programs related to natural resource conservation, outdoor recreation, and historic preservation that rely primarily on partnerships with others outside the federal government. In the past two decades, these two roles have been combined in new models for planning and managing many long distance trails, wild and scenic rivers, heritage areas, and new units of the National Park System. These partnership models represent an ongoing evolution of conservation that relies increasingly on long-term collaboration between public and private organizations to protect, manage, and interpret natural and cultural resources.

People working on new models of parks and "partnership areas" and those in the agency providing assistance through partnership programs face substantial challenges working within a framework designed for "traditional" NPS units. Although there is now extensive experience with collaborative models that benefit both parks and partnerships, there have been few opportunities to examine what has been learned, share this knowledge with others, or incorporate these lessons into NPS policy and practice.

In May 2000, twenty-five people with partnership experience from the NPS and partner organizations participated in a workshop, "Planning and Collaboration: Lessons Learned in Areas Managed through National Park Service Partnerships." This workshop was convened by the Conservation Study Institute and QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment for the NPS Park Planning and Special Studies Program.

Based on their collective experience in a variety of places across the country, workshop participants examined the process and evolution of effective partnerships, and identified operating principles for successful long-term collaboration. Participants described the benefits of working in collaboration—benefits that strengthen the entire National Park System. They also discussed the disparity they perceive in agency recognition of partnership areas and programs compared to areas that are designated as units of the National Park System. There was a sense that this disparity results in missed opportunities to enhance the stewardship of national parks and other places that are part of the nation's heritage.

The vision that emerged from discussions was of a future in which units of the National Park System and the partnership areas outside the System are all part of

a nationwide network of parks and conservation areas that are relevant to a diverse population. In this future, nonprofit organizations, institutions, businesses, and public sector agencies all are important players. NPS involvement in this network of collaboration is central, founded in the agency's traditional strengths but extending beyond this tradition to include its extensive experience in partnerships. Agency programs that support conservation efforts outside of the National Park System are recognized as a valuable and integral part of the agency's mission. The sense of competition that many participants feel today between parks and partnership areas is replaced with an appreciation for the contributions of each to conservation and the desire to learn from each other's experiences. Workshop participants recognized the potential of the NPS to be a leader in working collaboratively, and they embraced the idea that it was time to articulate and demonstrate a broader role for the NPS in working with others on stewardship of the American landscape.

The group made a number of recommendations for next steps that include the following:

- Create additional opportunities to learn from our partnership experience, involving both NPS staff and partner representatives.
- Develop means for recognizing the successes and contributions of partnership areas and programs, and for rewarding the individuals who make them work.
- Provide new tools and more flexibility in NPS planning.
- Revise management approaches to staff transition in partnership areas to retain institutional memory and ensure continuity of partner relationships.
- Develop clearer direction on the appropriate application of NPS management policies and other federal guidelines and requirements in partnership areas.

This report, which is based on the workshop discussions and written comments from workshop participants, is intended to contribute to a continuing dialogue—both within the NPS and between the NPS and its many partners—on the increasingly vital role of partnerships in conserving the heritage of America's most important landscapes.

1. *The Eastern Shore tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay contain many of the region's natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources. The Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network seeks to link the places people value to an understanding of the Bay as a system, thereby enhancing public commitment to restoration and conservation. The NPS coordinates the Network with state and local governments, the private sector, and other federal agencies. Photo of Onancock Creek by Len Kaufman, courtesy of Virginia Tourism Corporation.*
2. *Within the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, the NPS, Massachusetts and Rhode Island state governments, municipalities, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and educational institutions work in partnership to protect the Valley's special identity as the place where America's Industrial Revolution began. One example is the 180-acre Daniels farm, protected for its extensive historical documentation on land use and rural life within the Valley. Photo courtesy of Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.*
3. *The North Country National Scenic Trail in North Dakota as it crosses tallgrass prairie in the Shyenenne National Grasslands. The NPS administers the trail in cooperation with other federal, state, and local agencies, private organizations, and individuals. The trail links the seven northern tier states from New York to North Dakota, where it connects with the Lewis and Clark National Historical Trail. NPS photo.*
4. *Participants in a 1997 Underground Railroad Bi-National Charette, which explored interpretive linkages of the Underground Railroad story in the U.S. and Canada. Delegates from the NPS, Parks Canada, and partners spent eight days visiting Underground Railroad sites in Ohio, Michigan, and southern Ontario, Canada. Photo by Barbara Tagger.*
5. *Youth taking part in summer art programming offered by ArtWorks! at Dover Street, a partner of New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park in New Bedford, Massachusetts. The participating youth visited the park to explore their city's whaling history, using art as a medium. Photo by John Robson, courtesy of ArtWorks! at Dover Street.*
6. *A backpacker along the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. The 2,600 mile trail follows the Sierra and Cascade peaks of California, Oregon, and Washington between the Mexican and Canadian borders. Courtesy of the NPS.*



# I. Workshop Design & Objectives



6



5



4

The workshop, “Planning and Collaboration: Lessons Learned in Areas Managed through National Park Service Partnerships,” held on May 15-17, 2000, was designed to provide participants with a chance to reflect on their work, discuss challenges and new directions with colleagues, and consider the opportunities presented by partnership areas. The twenty-five participants, drawn from the National Park Service (NPS) and partner organizations, brought to the dialogue extensive and diverse experience in collaborative work. The workshop goals were to:

1. Learn from the experience and expertise of participants in order to more effectively plan and manage partnership areas;
2. Develop a strategic vision for the NPS and its partners that will help these areas to flourish; and
3. Identify the next steps needed to implement this vision.

Prior to the meeting participants responded to a set of questions designed to begin capturing their ideas, and the responses helped to frame the workshop agenda and discussions. These questions related to the key issues and challenges that the NPS and its partners face in partnership work, critical factors for successful planning and management, the contributions of partnership areas to the National Park System, and the ideal role for the NPS in the planning and management of these areas. The responses to the pre-meeting questions have contributed substantially to this report.

1. The Chesapeake Bay community of Ewell on Smith Island. The Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network is a partnership system of parks, refuges, museums, historic communities, and water trails—each telling part of the Bay story. Together, these Gateways provide a way for understanding the Bay as a whole. The NPS provides technical and financial assistance to locally initiated projects that help convey the Bay's diverse stories. Photo courtesy of Maryland Office of Tourism Development.



2. The Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor has put significant effort into signage, which has helped heighten awareness of the sites and the region's history. Photo courtesy of Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor.



3. The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, a nonprofit excursion railroad that operates in partnership with the NPS in Ohio's Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Established in 1975, the park preserves rural landscapes along the Cuyahoga River between Cleveland and Akron. Photo by Sandra Gillard.

4. Walking the Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail. Established in 1983, the 700-mile trail generally follows the track used by American Indians and early settlers as the shortest route between the Tennessee and Mississippi Rivers. NPS photo.

5. Hauling logs from horse-drawn skid to portable sawmill as part of an educational demonstration on sustainable forest practices for woodland owners in Vermont. The 1995 demonstration was a collaborative project of Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, Billings Farm & Museum, U.S. Forest Service, Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation, and Vermont Woodland Resources Association. Photo by Nora Mitchell.



6. A 1993 photo of the John Parker home in Ripley, Ohio, on the Ohio River. John Parker (1827-1900) was born into slavery in Virginia. After an escape attempt, Parker was sold to another owner in Alabama, where he eventually purchased his freedom in 1845. Four years later he moved his family to Ohio, where he assisted hundreds of runaways to freedom in the Ohio Underground Railroad. Photo by Barbara Tagger.



7. The John Parker Home in 1999, following designation as a National Historic Landmark and restoration through the efforts of the Ripley-based John Parker Historical Society. The Parker Home will serve as a museum and interpretive center on the Underground Railroad. Photo by Barbara Tagger.



8. Students learn about water quality while conducting sampling of White Clay Creek in Delaware. White Clay Creek, designated a National Wild and Scenic River in 2000, is managed in partnership with state, county, and local governments and private organizations. Photo courtesy of Delaware Nature Society.



## II. Setting the Context for the Workshop

Over the past 20 years, Congress has established an increasing number of conservation areas that depend upon long-term collaboration between partner organizations and the National Park Service (NPS). Areas managed through innovative partnerships include certain national parks, national long distance trails, wild and scenic rivers, and, more recently, national heritage areas. These areas, which create opportunities for shared investment and management among public and private organizations, represent new approaches that draw on traditions within the NPS, yet extend the agency beyond its traditions.

As Congress, responding to increased public interest, has created more partnership areas, it has raised new challenges for the NPS and its partners, such as:

- How can the NPS more successfully forge long-term partnerships with local organizations and communities to plan and manage these areas?
- How can the agency and its partners build professional capacity to deal with management decisions posed by these areas?
- How can the NPS expand beyond its traditional approach of direct management control to incorporate approaches that encourage collaborative, community-based conservation?

With a wide diversity in the specific arrangements for cooperative planning and management, there is no one “partnership model.” The arrangements vary with the place and its natural and cultural resources and recreational opportunities, as well as the array of organizations and institutions involved and the nature of land ownership. In each case, however, the partnership structure encourages diverse organizations to work together, and building lasting relationships among the partners is fundamental to the conservation effort.



## Two Examples of Recently Designated Partnership Parks

~ New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park (Massachusetts) was established in 1996 to commemorate whaling as part of American history. The park encompasses 34 acres and 70 buildings, about one-third of New Bedford's downtown. Federal property ownership within the park is limited, and the NPS relies on partnerships with state and municipal agencies, as well as nonprofit institutions, to carry out its mission. The park also has a distant partner. To recognize the contributions of Alaska Natives in

the history of whaling, the park is legislatively linked to the Inupiat Heritage Center in Barrow, Alaska, making New Bedford National Historical Park the first bicoastal unit of the National Park System.



Courtesy New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park

~ The New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park (Louisiana), established in 1994, is dedicated to the preservation and celebration of jazz, our nation's best-known indigenous art form. The park is structured around a cooperative agreement between the NPS and the City of

New Orleans; other partners include the New Orleans Jazz Commission and the city's many neighborhood jazz clubs. The "park" encompasses a living cultural tradition that is woven into the fabric of New Orleans, and the story of jazz will be conveyed at various locations throughout the city, allowing visitors to experience the sights, sounds, and places where jazz evolved. The role of the NPS is to educate and interpret the evolution of jazz, and to cooperate in perpetuating an art form rather than managing land or buildings. A visitor facility with performance venues and an education center will be located in buildings leased in the city's Armstrong Park.



Gene Hyden

## A. Historical Perspective

Although partnerships have been used to successfully conserve important resource areas for a number of years, the evolution of a partnership model gained momentum with the establishment of Lowell National Historical Park in 1978. In a presentation on the first day of the workshop, Rolf Diamant, Superintendent of Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, noted that following on the success of the Lowell partnerships, support grew in Congress to pursue parks based on collaborations with other public and private parties. Congressional interest was also heightened with the increasing desire of communities across the country to draw upon the services and resources of the NPS. As a result, in the 1980s and 1990s, many new units of the National Park System were established with a variety of nontraditional formulas (see box at left for two examples of partnership parks). Diamant also noted that Lowell National Historical Park, "... with its successful formula of mixing public/private investments in downtown heritage preservation with NPS expertise in visitor services and interpretive facilities, in turn inspired the first generation of national heritage areas." In heritage areas, federal, state, and local governments and private interests join together to provide for preservation, interpretation, recreation, and other activities. Each national heritage area tells the stories of its residents, past and present, celebrating cultural and natural heritage and preserving special landscapes. The NPS is often a catalyst among the partners, providing technical assistance as well as financial assistance for a limited number of years following designation.

This history of the last two decades depicts an evolving conservation model that includes new roles for the NPS and a wide array of partners. (For an overview of the many different designations for which the NPS now has responsibility, see page 5.) As the partnership models continue to evolve, the concept of a nationwide system of parks and conservation areas is becoming more clear. This concept provides an inclusive national framework for conservation that encompasses wilderness areas as well as places close to where people live and work. The distinction between "a national system of parks" and the National Park System was first noted by Stephen T. Mather, the founding director of the National Park System, according to Paul Pritchard in a recent *George Wright Forum* article on state parks. Pritchard also uses the term "national system of parks and conservation areas." (See Further Reading.)

## Current Definitions from the Index of the National Park Service

The *National Parks: Index 1999-2001*, the “Official Index of the National Park Service,” lists the Congressionally designated properties for which the NPS has responsibilities. The Index describes the National Park System and the various designations it encompasses. Besides the National Park System, **four other categories** of nationally important areas exist: National Heritage Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Trails, and Affiliated Areas. These areas, almost all Congressionally designated, are closely linked in importance and purpose to the national park areas managed by the NPS. Although most are not currently defined as units of the National Park System, these related areas conserve important segments of the nation’s heritage. Many are managed through partners working in cooperation with the NPS.

⤿ The **National Park System** has been defined as comprising those areas owned and managed by the NPS. The designations for units include: National Parks, National Monuments, National Lakeshores, National Seashores, National Rivers and Wild and Scenic Riverways,\* National Scenic Trails,\* National Historic Sites, National Historical Parks, National Recreation Areas, National Preserves, National Reserves, National Memorials, National Parkways, and four designations for areas associated with United States military history.

⤿ **National Heritage Areas** include entire communities or regions in which residents, businesses, and local governments have come together to conserve special landscapes and their own heritage. Conservation, interpretation, and other activities are managed by a designated local management entity through partnerships among federal, state, and local governments and private nonprofit organizations.

The NPS does not acquire new land in these areas, but provides technical and financial assistance for a limited period.

⤿ Rivers within the **National Wild and Scenic Rivers System** are classified as wild, scenic, or recreational according to the degree of development, and may include only a segment of a river. The system includes rivers designated by Congress and also by the Secretary of Interior (provided they have been protected first at the state level). While some designated rivers are managed directly by the NPS, thus are units of the National Park System, a growing number are administered through partnership arrangements between the NPS and other entities.

⤿ The **National Trails System** includes national scenic trails, national historic trails, national recreation trails, and side and connecting trails. Since the National Trails System Act of 1968, 22 national scenic trails and national historic trails (collectively referred to as long distance trails) have been designated. The NPS administers 17 of them, one jointly with the Bureau of Land Management. The federal government has also recognized 800 national recreation trails totaling 9,000 miles in length. Of these, 525 are on federal lands, 151 are state trails, 85 are local, 31 are on private lands, and 12 are managed by two or more entities.

⤿ **Affiliated Areas** include a variety of significant properties with high historic or scientific value. These areas, Congressionally designated, are eligible for NPS technical and financial assistance but are neither federally owned nor administered by the NPS.

*\*Note, however, that not all designated rivers or trails are units of the National Park System*

### National Park Service



**National Park System**

PHOTO © BRENT M. ERB



**National Heritage Areas**



**National Wild & Scenic Rivers**



**National Trails System**



**Affiliated Areas**

## A Working Vocabulary for NPS Partnerships

For the NPS and its partners, the term “partnership” has several definitions:

- ☞ Within national parks, **partnerships** are increasingly important in carrying out basic missions and mandates. Many national park managers have initiated collaboration with neighboring communities and local organizations to create better communication and to work on issues of mutual interest, such as visitor traffic and adjacent land development. Participants in two 1996 seminars on national parks and gateway communities, organized by the Sonoran Institute for the NPS Park Planning and Special Studies Program, commented that all national parks are partnership areas and that “park managers should view partnerships as an important management tool in protecting park resources.” (See report, *National Parks and their Neighbors*, in Further Reading.) Overall, partners in the national parks include neighboring communities, volunteers, friends groups, cooperating associations, concession operators, as well as corporations, foundations, and others who help support park operations.
- ☞ The legislation for certain national parks specifies one or more partners to work with the NPS in planning and managing the designated area. These can be called “**partnership parks**.” Partners may include state and other federal agencies, local governments, and local business or nonprofit organizations.
- ☞ Certain Congressionally authorized areas, such as national heritage areas and some wild and scenic rivers and long distance trails, are managed by other entities through partnerships with the NPS. In these cases, which can be termed “**partnership areas**,” the NPS provides technical and financial assistance to the local managing organization(s).
- ☞ The term “**partnership programs**” refers to programs that the NPS administers outside of its role as a land manager. These programs operate from the NPS regional offices and provide technical and financial assistance to states, local governments, and the private sector for such activities as historic preservation, river and trail conservation, urban parks, and recreation.



## B. National and International Context

The rise in designations of NPS partnership areas reflects broader concurrent shifts taking place in conservation. In the United States, the last 15 years have seen a dramatic increase in community-based conservation, evidenced by the growth of local organizations such as land trusts, watershed groups, and historic preservation initiatives. In remarks at the workshop based on a recent research project on stewardship, Jacquelyn Tuxill, workshop coordinator for QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment, noted that locally based conservation often builds on a strong sense of place and a concern for landscape integrity that includes both cultural and natural heritage. Many community-based initiatives pursue collaboration among diverse interests, weaving together economic, social, ecological, and cultural objectives. (See *The Landscape of Conservation Stewardship* in Further Reading.)

At the workshop, Jessica Brown, Vice President for International Programs for QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment, noted that these trends in parks and protected area management and community-based conservation in the U.S. are paralleled globally. Worldwide, there is growing recognition that protected areas can no longer be treated as islands but must be seen in the context of overall land use, and that successful managers are adopting more inclusive, collaborative approaches in working closely with local communities. Over the last two decades, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have grown dramatically and now play a major role in conservation. As conservation strategies become increasingly bioregional in scope, yet must also demonstrate benefits at the local level, there is a trend in many countries toward partnerships among public agencies, NGOs, and diverse stakeholders. (See *Landscape Stewardship: New Directions in Conservation of Nature and Culture*, special issue of *George Wright Forum*, Vol. 17, No. 1, in Further Reading.)

*Through a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service, the nonprofit Appalachian Trail Conference monitors and maintains the Appalachian National Scenic Trail through its network of member organizations. Volunteer hours in 2000 totaled 201,466 hours, contributed by 4,629 volunteers. Valued at \$14 per hour, this represents \$2.8 million in donated services. Photo by John Wright, Appalachian Trail Conference.*

## C. Defining Partnership Parks and Areas: The challenge of terminology

As Congressional designations of nationally significant areas have diversified and brought partners into planning and managing, these new designations no longer fit neatly into the traditional National Park System definitions. Consequently, these new areas have been placed into other categories, called “related areas,” which seem to imply lesser value and a lack of connectedness to the more traditional national parks under the purview of the NPS. Agency nomenclature can be confusing, for those inside as well as outside the NPS (e.g., the Appalachian Trail, a national scenic trail and part of the National Trails System, is also a unit of the National Park System). This report uses as its working vocabulary the terms “partnership parks” and “partnership areas.” As defined on page 6, these two terms indicate places where the NPS is working in a long-term relationship with other organizations for conservation of Congressionally designated areas.

In addition, the growth of collaboration and the diversity of the conservation model have resulted in widespread use of such terms as “partnership,” “empower,” or “work inclusively.” The workshop participants struggled to find terminology that captures the insights they have gained about partnerships that are intended to last in perpetuity. They acknowledged the need for words that go beyond the commonly used rhetoric that can convey the necessary skills, the commitment, and the rewards of working in long-term partnerships for conservation. They did consider and reject certain terms—for example, using “non-traditional” to describe the more recent national parks and other designated areas involving partnerships—agreeing instead to continue the search while, through this report, putting this challenge before a broader audience.

### III. Summary of Workshop Discussions: What have we learned about working in partnership areas?

1. Historic canal remnants are visible in many places along the North Country National Scenic Trail in Ohio, such as Lusk Lock in Beaver Creek State Park. The trail makes a U-shaped sweep through Ohio, following the Buckeye Trail for much of the way. NPS photo.
2. One of many steel mills in the Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania) region, once the "Steel Making Capital of the World." A commanding force for over a century, the Pittsburgh steel industry made possible railroads, skyscrapers, and shipbuilding while altering corporate practice and labor organization. Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area helps to preserve the region's cultural heritage and develop educational programming. Public hiking trails and riverboat tours link remnants of the old mills and communities founded by mill workers. Rivers of Steel is managed by a nonprofit organization, working in partnership with local communities, business and union interests, and local, state, and federal agencies. Photo by Judy Hart.
3. The North Country National Scenic Trail in the Ottawa National Forest in Michigan. The trail, which began as U.S. Forest Service proposal in the 1960s, takes hikers through publicly owned lands, including national forests, state parks and forests, and near or through small villages and towns. The diverse landscapes and scenic and historic features offer hikers a chance to understand how the land was formed, and how it has been used and altered by humans. Photo by Bill Menke.

7. Inupiat dancer from Barrow, Alaska, performing at the New Bedford Whaling Museum in July 2000. The museum and the Inupiat Heritage Center in Barrow are two of the partners that help the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park carry out its mission to commemorate whaling as part of American history. Photo by John Robson, courtesy of New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park.



4. A classic Chesapeake Bay screw-pile lighthouse, now part of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. The Museum is a "Gateway hub"—a primary visitor orientation point for the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network. The NPS assists local efforts to enhance Gateway sites that tell a piece of the overall Bay story and to link them with a network of walking, biking, and water trails. Photo courtesy of Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.
5. Along the Maurice National Wild and Scenic River in New Jersey. The river was designated in 1993 to protect critical habitat on the Atlantic Flyway. NPS photo.
6. Chimney Rock National Historic Site in western Nebraska, one of the first landmarks along the Oregon Trail. An NPS affiliated area, the site is owned by the State of Nebraska, and administered by the City of Bayard, the Nebraska Historical Society, and the NPS under a cooperative agreement. NPS Historic Photo Collection, photo by George A. Grant.

*"I think that partnerships or the partnership model is the key conservation tool [the NPS] will be using in the future."*

Joe DiBello, Stewardship and Partnerships Team Manager, Philadelphia Support Office

*"Partnering makes sense for a better future for ALL parks."*

Kathy Abbott, Executive Director, Island Alliance and NPS partner

*"I am convinced that the new frontier for the NPS in the twenty-first century will be partnership parks—they simply aren't making more of the traditional variety. The newer 'partnership' initiatives ... are an indication of what is to come. If the NPS is to do more than be a 'custodian' of a static system in the future, it needs to get on board the partnership concept with enthusiasm and resources."*

John Debo, Superintendent, Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Partnerships are complex and dynamic, a dance of relationships between the tensions of mutual interest and self interest. They can form in different ways and for many reasons, ranging from a "kitchen table" brainstorming of common interests, to responding to the availability of funding or the promise of joint economic benefits. In any setting it takes time and hard work to forge effective relationships that continue to be productive for all parties. Working within a federal agency is especially challenging because decision-making can be slow and can hinder the collaborative process, and guidelines often appear voluminous and unclear to nongovernmental partners. Given the increasing commitment of the National Park Service (NPS) to long-term conservation partnerships, it is imperative to glean lessons from experience about what does and doesn't work, to share this knowledge across the agency and with partners, and to build it into agency policy and procedures.

Workshop participants reflected on their experiences and contributed many thoughts on the factors critical to forging successful long-term partnerships. They also discussed the benefits throughout the agency of working collaboratively and the challenges of creating more effective NPS partnerships.

## A. Principles for Forging Long-Term, Sustainable Partnerships

*“The critical factors for success are rooted in the nature of the relationships between the NPS and its partners.”*

David Donath,  
President, The Woodstock  
Foundation, Inc.,  
and NPS partner

*“Everyone has to be an equal player, or at least agree on what is a fair and reasonable ‘balance of power.’ A big part of what makes the [Appalachian Trail] volunteer-based ‘cooperative management system’ successful is that it builds on ... volunteer stewardship. It means ... sharing ownership.”*

Pamela Underhill, Park Manager,  
Appalachian National Scenic Trail

*“Use an open process which empowers a variety of interests to participate.”*

Charles Barszcz, Wild  
and Scenic Rivers  
Program Leader,  
Philadelphia Support  
Office

The experience of workshop participants was quite varied, yet they had many common insights into what contributes to successful, long-term cooperation. The following principles that they described work in concert to create and sustain effective partnerships.

### ☞ **Listen and be responsive to the needs of others.**

Listening well contributes to good relationships and enables the NPS to better serve the partners and communities of people who have not traditionally been involved in national parks. “A critical factor for me was learning to listen to the partners I work closely with,” says Barbara Tagger, Southeast Regional Coordinator of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program. “We must understand that the projects we [in the NPS] work on are just that—projects. But for the people we work with, these planning efforts are their livelihoods, heritage, and, more importantly, their story.” Tagger gives great attention to the needs of partners and believes that providing technical assistance to meet local needs is crucial to making a partnership work. “If management is to be effective and community-relevant in the long run, it must address the needs and aspirations both of the NPS and of local stakeholders,” offers partner David Donath, President of the Woodstock Foundation.

☞ **Build relationships and sustain trust.** “Strong relationships and trust are essential,” says Phil Huffman, who has experience with NPS partnerships from within and outside of the agency. Tom Gilbert, Superintendent of Ice Age and North Country National Scenic Trails, stresses “clear, open communication and integrity” as critical to success. Being accessible to partners, sharing costs and commitments, being truthful, and listening to and respecting

each partner’s perspectives, motivations, and values all contribute to a sound foundation of trust that can carry a relationship successfully through the ups and downs of long-term joint work.

### ☞ **Work openly and inclusively in ways that build a partnership team.**

“Planning and collaboration must be inclusive,” says partner Augie Carlino, Executive Director of Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area. “In national heritage areas, any decision made by partners will affect a ‘community’—[whether] cultural, geographical, or occupational—therefore decisions must be made with their involvement and with consideration of the effect on the community.” Pamela Underhill, Park Manager, Appalachian National Scenic Trail, believes that “achieving ‘buy-in’ by all essential stakeholders and partners is critical to successful planning and management,” and recommends bringing any critics or naysayers to the table. A concerted, ongoing effort to involve all major stakeholders and the grassroots pays off, even though it can be “messy” and time-consuming. “Give things the time they take,” says Judy Hart, then National Heritage Areas Program Leader.

Involving people and groups with a stake in the partnership area invests local residents in long-term management, which helps to sustain the collaboration over time. “If [Appalachian Trail] volunteers didn’t feel that they truly have a ‘say’ in decisions ... I don’t think they’d still be here,” says Underhill. Deirdre Gibson, Program Manager, Park Planning and Special Resource Studies in the Philadelphia Support Office, sees an inclusive public involvement process as a strategic opportunity to build the capacity of local organizations “because they will be there for the long run.” Working inclusively from the earliest opportunities can build the support so important

*“Use the planning process to develop and strengthen local partnerships. ... Ensure that local support is developed because that’s where the implementers are.”*

Deirdre Gibson, Program Manager, Park Planning and Special Resource Studies, Philadelphia Support Office

*“Genuine community involvement at all levels is a critical factor for success.”*

Barbara L. Pollarine, Management Assistant, Northeast Region, Philadelphia

*“The NPS must strongly consider working with ethnic groups and communities that have not been traditionally involved in partnerships.”*

Barbara Tagger, Southeast Regional Coordinator, National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program

in later phases. As an example, Huffman suggests engaging a broader cross-section of stakeholders in the initial resource evaluation for potential national heritage areas and other partnership areas. “The special resource study needs to be more than just an academic evaluation done from a distance,” he says.

People whose participation is critical include “leaders at local, state, and national levels who are genuinely interested in the long-term values of the area,” according to Sarah Peskin, Planning and Legislation Group Manager in the Boston Support Office. John Haubert, Outdoor Recreation Planner in Park Planning and Special Studies, believes in having a “dedicated local constituency that is able to influence the ‘movers and shakers’ in the community.” Tagger brings partners into planning because “in most instances they have a greater vision and understanding of the project.” She also urges that as the NPS restructures interpretive programs to be more inclusive of the contributions of all Americans to the nation’s history, the agency also reach out to these groups through NPS partnership programs and planning efforts.

☞ **Be flexible and responsive to changing circumstances.** It is important to be “flexible enough to deal with each area or organization on the basis of its own capacity,” says Gibson. “Responsiveness and flexibility on the part of NPS project staff and management are essential,” offers Huffman, “including an ability and willingness to tailor the study/planning process around the most important issues rather than following a regimented cookbook approach.” Underhill believes partnership work takes people “who are willing to cut through the red tape, think outside the box, and look for creative solutions.” Carlino points out that with natural and cultural

resources subject to many different threats and conditions, “the NPS and its partners must be able to respond quickly to imminent changes to the resources.” Jonathan Doherty, Manager of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, suggests that partners should jointly develop “a strategy for dealing with major conservation issues for the area.”

Changing circumstances can also offer new opportunities. Tagger points to one such opportunity within the changing demographics of our country. “The NPS must become more involved in ‘non-traditional’ communities. These communities place little or no demands on the NPS for its services,” which makes it easy for the agency to ignore these potential partners or provide them only limited services.

☞ **Be willing to share control, and work together in ways that empower the partners.** “A partnership is not a ‘team’ where there is a hierarchical system,” observes Carlino. “In a partnership there are at least two, if not more, partners with decision-making capacity.” Donath describes an enduring partnership as one which is “business-like and mutual, entailing shared investments, decision-making, and benefits,” and suggests that the NPS approach these collaborations with the sense of give and take and mutuality of interests that characterize private sector partnerships. For an agency such as the NPS, to achieve this degree of mutuality involves, in the words of several participants, “letting go of the ‘large and in charge’ approach, ... respecting and encouraging bottom-up visioning,” “letting go of being right,” “trying the unusual, even letting the nonprofit partner ‘drive the car’”—in other words, a willingness to share or, in certain circumstances, give up control.

### *Partnerships develop and work along various gradients*

FORMED IN THE OPPORTUNITY OF A CRISIS	FORMED IN THE ABSTRACT, IN QUIET TIMES
SHORT-TERM	LONG-TERM
PROJECT FOCUSED	PROGRAM FOCUSED
SELF-DIRECTED	FORCED OR DIRECTED FROM THE OUTSIDE
MUTUAL INTEREST	SELF-INTEREST
EQUAL	SUBORDINATE/DOMINANT
BOTTOM UP	TOP DOWN

☞ **Have a realistic understanding of each partner’s mission and perspective, and seek to resolve issues in ways satisfactory to all parties.** Understanding and respecting each other’s contexts adds clarity to a partnership. It can help each partner to “understand what’s in it for the other and the extent to which missions are congruent,” offers Gibson. “While we may be partners, we also each have individual missions and authorities we adhere to,” says Gilbert. Steve Elkinton, Program Leader for National Trails System Programming, describes this as “respect for the motivation factors that keep each other going”; Hart as “the ability to walk in another’s shoes, think in another’s head”; and Barbara Pollarine, then Management Assistant, Northeast Region, as “appreciation for another’s point of view, agenda, values.” Still, issues and problems will inevitably rise in a long-term collaboration. It’s important to “locate and articulate the important issues,” says Hart. Solid relationships, trust, and understanding each other’s contexts make it easier to find solutions that work for all partners.

☞ **Build a common understanding and vision.** Common understanding among partners requires that key elements be clear to all concerned, including expectations for the partnership, roles and responsibilities of all partners, and goals for the project, which should be mutually agreed-upon. Working inclusively is key to building common understanding and vision, although it can be a challenge, as Huffman observes, to “get a diverse array of stakeholders ... to coalesce around a shared vision.” He notes the importance of public involvement, in all stages, to this process. In designating new partnership areas, Huffman urges that the NPS “conduct management planning before designation ... so every-

one knows up front exactly what designation will and won’t mean, and then build those provisions into the designating legislation.” This approach has been used successfully for several recently designated wild and scenic rivers that are managed cooperatively. Carlino suggests that holding informal meetings brings better involvement from the community than more formal public meetings. Ongoing, open communication contributes to common understanding also. Gilbert offers that “individual communications to all landowners within the study area or designated area has proven to be a critical factor in trail planning.”

☞ **Tell the stories of people and place, providing accurate, well-focused information.** Having “a cohesive focus and effective story lines and messages” contributes to effectiveness, says Doherty. At the local level telling the story builds pride, understanding, and support and contributes to sustaining the cooperative work. Tagger sees telling stories as a way to reach out to “ethnic groups and communities that have not traditionally been considered for partnerships,” although she cautions about the need to work closely with these communities to honor their heritage and their story. Partnership areas often commemorate “overlooked areas of American history,” according to Gibson, so storytelling can contribute a broader awareness of the nation’s cultural heritage.

☞ **Maintain continuity and transfer knowledge.** Continuity is important, from both a staffing standpoint and a knowledge of the partnership. “Staff continuity is critical in establishing and maintaining relationships and trust,” observes Huffman. Charles Barscz, Wild & Scenic Rivers Program Leader, Philadelphia Support Office, agrees, saying that you

“cannot have different planners coming in and out of the process.” Yet, Peskin describes situations where “the planning team develops great knowledge and experience of a given park or partnership area and then moves on to other projects, never to be consulted again.” If partnerships are viewed as a long-term arrangement rather than a short-term project, it becomes a priority to maintain the trust that has been created through the personal working relationships. Investing in thoughtful transitions between personnel can be critical to sustaining partnerships through inevitable staffing changes.

☞ **Develop ways to continually share experience and understanding.** Workshop participants stressed the importance of capitalizing on the accumulating knowledge and understanding of collaborative work, but also acknowledged that this isn’t currently happening within the agency. Elkinton says that “every trail planning team starts from scratch,” while Joe DiBello, Stewardship and Partnerships Team Manager, Philadelphia Support Office, concedes that

“we are not effective at integrating or harnessing the experience we do have.” Several participants offered ideas for dealing with this situation. Gibson says the “RTCA [Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program] already is adept with the skills needed for partnership planning—loosen it up and fund it to encompass more than just rivers and trails.” Haubert suggests “an annual gathering of partnership planners and managers to discuss what occurred the previous year and what was acceptable and workable.”

☞ **Celebrate successes.** Recognizing successes and the people involved rewards the hard work of building partnerships and helps to sustain the relationships. “Support for project staff from other levels in the NPS ...[including] providing moral support” is critical to effective partnership work, says Huffman. Telling the stories of successful partnerships also provides greater visibility for this work, increases understanding of the benefits, and helps to share ideas and techniques.

## *The Evolution of a Sustainable Partnership*

Workshop participants suggested the following evolution in an effective long-term partnership:

- CLARIFY ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS
- MOVE TOWARD CLARITY AND RESPECT
- ACCOMPLISH ONE PROJECT TOGETHER
- EXPLORE COMMONALITIES
- DEVELOP SHARED VOCABULARY
- ESTABLISH REGULAR COMMUNICATION
- CHECK ENVIRONMENT FOR OPPORTUNITIES
- BEGIN LOOKING OUT FOR EACH OTHER
- BUILD MUTUAL TRUST
- CHECK IN PERIODICALLY ON PARTNERSHIP
- CAPITALIZE ON DIFFERENCES
- CELEBRATE SUCCESSES
- DISCUSS VALUES
- BUILD SHARED VISION
- ACCEPT AND CHERISH DIVERSITY OF VALUES



*Participants in the 1997 Underground Railroad Bi-National Charette, here being hosted by the National African American Museum in Detroit, Michigan. The 35 delegates discussed ways the U.S. and Canada can link interpretations of the Underground Railroad story. Photo by Barbara Tagger.*

## B. Observations on the Benefits of Working in Partnership Areas

*“The main contribution of these areas to the National Park System is to broaden the scope of the agency’s interpretation and conservation agenda. We are not just about what goes on in our federally owned parks, or if we are, we are destined to have only a limited role in conserving the great places of the Nation.”*

Jonathan Doherty, Manager, Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network

The workshop participants described many benefits that flow from the experience of working in partnership areas—benefits that strengthen the entire National Park System as well as partner organizations and the public at large.

### **Partnership areas help the NPS to reach new constituencies and build relationships that enhance public support for conservation.**

*Partnership areas “improve chances for the National Park System to remain relevant and viable to the American public, in genuine preservation of resources, in using parks as educational/learning locations.”*

Barbara L. Pollarine, Management Assistant,  
Northeast Region, Philadelphia

*“The Underground Railroad has no precedent within the National Park System. ... We’re looking at ... communities who have been excluded in the past because their [stories] don’t fit the criteria. This is forcing us to think about how to deal with different cultures. We’re also dealing with sites that are non-tangible and may not exist any longer, but the story is still there.”*

Barbara Tagger, Southeast Regional Coordinator, National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program,  
Atlanta

Partnership areas can reach people who wouldn’t otherwise be reached, thus building new constituencies and support. Because these areas are often found in or near communities—in people’s “backyards”—they can make the idea of the National Park System more tangible to a broader cross-section of the general public. Working cooperatively builds long-term relationships among the NPS and conservation and preservation interests as well as officials and legislators at the local, state, and federal levels. These connections can also

lead to national and regional collaboration that serves to protect natural and cultural resources and helps to expand understanding of the NPS and partner organizations.

### **Partnership areas help to broaden the impact of the NPS.**

*“Some people view heritage areas as an innovative way of realizing the broader mandate of the agency to provide national leadership in conservation and historic preservation.”*

Rolf Diamant, Superintendent, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller  
National Historical Park

*“Partnership areas are critical in meeting the need for additional open space and in commemorating overlooked areas of American history in a timely manner.”*

Deirdre Gibson, Program Manager, Park Planning and  
Special Resource Studies, Philadelphia Support Office

The mission of the NPS (see box) is written broadly to focus on the National Park System and, through cooperation with partners, to enhance conservation. Partnership areas offer a wide range of opportunities for the NPS to provide national leadership in conservation. As Jonathan Doherty noted, the NPS through its various collaborative arrangements has an opportunity “to embrace and extend the conservation and interpretation role of the agency and deal with the evolving sense of what constitutes an important place today.” Areas managed through partnerships enhance recreational opportunities and the protection and interpretation of nationally significant resources, both cultural and natural, often in instances where it wouldn’t otherwise happen. These areas are able to leverage other funding and private sector contributions, thus extending the investment of federal dollars.

*“We need to come to grips with the notion that there are lots of places where we can play an important role that do not meet the test of ‘sacred ground.’”*

John Debo, Superintendent,  
Cuyahoga Valley National Park

*“Partnership areas carry the message that our nationally treasured scenic, cultural, and recreational resources can be lived-in landscapes.”*

Tom Gilbert, Superintendent, Ice Age and  
North Country National Scenic Trails

### Partnership areas offer valuable lessons that can be applied in other settings.

*“Partnership areas continue to broaden the ‘toolkit of conservation’ which NPS can offer the nation.”*

Steve Elkinton, Program Leader, National Trails System  
Programming, Washington, D.C.

*“Through the newly authorized partnership parks, we have learned how to manage collaboratively. This has in turn benefited the more traditional parks, which often face many of the same issues.”*

Sarah Peskin, Planning and Legislation Group Manager,  
Boston Support Office

The diverse working relationships that result from managing the partnership areas introduce fresh perspectives and new interpretation and conservation techniques, which can be applied in other circumstances by both the NPS and its partners. In addition, as pointed

out by Phil Huffman and others, the accumulating body of experience in planning and managing partnership areas is directly relevant to challenging situations that confront the agency in the more traditional units.

### Partnership areas foster a stewardship ethic among the general public.

*Partnership areas contribute to a “broader dissemination of the natural and cultural resource preservation ethic because more people will end up living closer to nationally treasured resources. ... [They] enable more people to have an emotional connection to the National Park System.”*

Tom Gilbert, Superintendent,  
Ice Age and North Country National Scenic Trails

*“People are raising their field of vision beyond the often fragmented preservation of individual areas, structures and critical habitats to focus on how the benefits of parks and responsible stewardship can be integrated into the connecting fabric of people’s everyday lives.”*

Rolf Diamant, Superintendent,  
Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park

Areas that are jointly planned and managed by NPS and partner organizations offer many opportunities for conveying a stewardship message. Partnership areas such as the national heritage areas affirm that the places where we live and work contain cultural, scenic, and recreational resources worthy of protection. They contribute a broader context and relevance to the story of the nation’s natural and cultural history, and they enhance the ability to convey those messages in ways that may affect conservation on a broader scale.



*The Mission of the National Park Service*

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

– From *NPS Strategic Plan, 2001-2005*

## C. The Challenges of Change

Over the past two decades, the NPS clearly has begun to emphasize protection and management of conservation areas through long-term collaborations. In this time of transition, there are a number of challenges to the agency, including to:

- Create a broader vision for the NPS that encompasses the full scope of partnerships;
- Foster in the institutional culture of the NPS a new and deeper understanding of partnerships as a potent catalyst for stewardship of the landscape;
- Provide training in leadership skills that positions the NPS to be most effective in its collaborations; and
- Learn from experience.

In general, participants expressed an urgent need to raise awareness of the many contributions of partnership areas to the NPS as a whole, in order to create better support agency-wide for these areas and for partnership programs. In a more practical sense, even though the trends show more cooperative designations and increased requests for technical assistance, agency policy and procedures often do not reflect what is needed to be effective in collaborative work. “Traditional organizational structures are not well suited to the demands of managing partnerships,” states John Debo, and “the background and training of NPS personnel are often not adequate for the challenges associated with partnership areas.” Joe DiBello adds, “None of our existing programs addresses planning in terms of partnerships in any comprehensive way. We need to develop new policies or direction in how we conduct and organize our planning programs.” Barbara Pollarine stresses the importance of building agency staff capacity “in the areas of coalition and relationship building, fundraising and development activities, and collaborative agenda setting.”

As the agency moves increasingly from a paradigm of management to one of stewardship, there is an accompanying challenge to create a broader vision that encompasses the concept of partnerships, and to realign policies and procedures to support this shift in approach.

## D. A Vision for the Future

As the workshop discussions proceeded, the need to articulate a vision for the future became clear. Participants foresee a future in which units of the National Park System and the partnership areas outside the System are all part of a nationwide network of parks and conservation areas that are relevant to a diverse population. This network includes resources protected through traditional public ownership, areas protected through the efforts of private organizations such as land trusts, and the resources conserved through collaborative strategies. This future includes a strong, innovative private sector working with a variety of audiences. Nonprofit organizations, institutions, academia, businesses, and public sector agencies all play important roles.

National Park Service involvement in this network of collaboration is central and crucial, founded in the agency’s traditional strengths and roles but extending beyond its identity as park manager in the following ways:

- NPS manages resources as national parks through a spectrum of partnerships ranging from new parks that are operated jointly with other entities from the onset, to the ever-expanding partnership strategies that address conservation issues surrounding more traditional parks. In all instances, the NPS brings its fullest range of tools to the partnership work table, whether it be the ability to provide planning assistance for a collaborative effort or to help interpret a story that plays out beyond a traditional park boundary.
- NPS invests in the conservation and interpretation of areas of special importance to the nation’s natural or cultural history through long-term conservation partnerships focused on specific areas, such as designated national heritage areas. In these instances, often the expertise requested of the NPS and the rationale for NPS commitment are the same: helping to tell a nationally important story and conserve significant resources.
- NPS supports local efforts to develop conservation areas through long-established technical and financial assistance programs (e.g., Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance and National Register of Historic Places).

In this future, NPS programs that support conservation efforts within partnership areas are recognized and accepted as valuable and integral to the agency's mission, and there is widespread understanding of the skills and commitment that build and sustain long-term collaboration. The sense of competition that many participants feel today between parks and partnership areas is replaced with an appreciation for the contributions of each to conservation of the American landscape.



*The Appalachian National Scenic Trail at Black Rock, Shenandoah National Park, in Virginia. Vistas along the footpath, which follows the ridgelines of the Appalachian Mountains between Maine and Georgia, range from pastoral to wild. Two-thirds of the U.S. population lives within 550 miles of the trail. Photo by Mike Warren, courtesy of Appalachian Trail Conference.*

*“It would seem time to articulate, demonstrate and broadly accept a vision of the [National Park Service] role in the American landscape. ... By embracing involvement in these parts of the landscape, we create a broader context and relevance for the story of the nation’s natural and cultural history. Moreover, we greatly enhance our ability to convey those messages in ways that may affect conservation on a broader scale.”*

Jonathan Doherty, Manager,  
Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network

1. *Spring Plowing Match at Billings Farm & Museum in Woodstock, Vermont. The museum is a working dairy farm and a museum of agricultural and rural life operated by the Woodstock Foundation. The museum works in partnership with Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park to continue a shared legacy of land stewardship. Photo by Jon Gilbert Fox, courtesy of Billings Farm & Museum.*



2. *A scene along the seven-mile corridor of the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area in Georgia. The canal transformed Augusta into an important regional industrial area on the eve of the Civil War, and played a key role in the post-Civil War relocation of much of the nation's textile industry to the south. Photo by Judy Hart.*



3. *Informational materials on the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. The NPS makes a key contribution to many partnerships by providing skilled interpretive and technical assistance, important here to the Corridor's tourism and regional educational efforts. Photo courtesy of Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.*



4. *The Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail, established in 1996. The 54-mile trail commemorates the 1965 voting rights march led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., along U.S. Highway 80 from Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church in Selma, Alabama, to the state capitol in Montgomery. The march helped inspire passage of the voting rights legislation signed into law by President Johnson in August 1965. Photos by Barbara Tagger.*



5. *Waterman on the Chesapeake Bay. Traditional livelihoods and ways of living, which are based on the Bay's unique natural resources, are integral to the region's stories and culture. The fate of these livelihoods, at risk due to degradation and overuse of resources, rests on conservation and restoration efforts. Restoration in turn depends upon education that fosters understanding, which is at the heart of the mission of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network. Photo courtesy of Virginia Tourism Corporation.*

6. *A ranger-led tour of Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in Woodstock, Vermont, overlooking the fields of the Billings Farm. Photo courtesy of Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park.*

7. *Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore along Lake Superior in Michigan. The North Country Trail crosses the top of these multicolored sandstone cliffs. Photo by Tom Gilbert.*

## IV. Steps to Enhance and Sustain National Park Service Partnerships

The workshop discussions generated many ideas for addressing the challenges of building long-term partnerships and creating effective National Park Service (NPS) collaborations. This section summarizes these ideas, but does not offer detailed prescriptions for implementation. Much of what follows is directed at enhancing the effectiveness of the NPS as a partner. Through additional dialogue within the agency and with collaborating organizations, the NPS and its partners can further develop specific actions for more effective partnerships to conserve the important cultural and natural heritage of the United States.

☞ **Create additional opportunities to learn from partnership experiences, involving both NPS staff and partner representatives.** To be a learning organization, the NPS must develop opportunities for evaluation and feedback from both agency staff and partners. Since NPS partnerships are evolving rapidly, it is essential to continually evaluate the partnership models and hone the necessary expertise and collaborative leadership skills that lead to success over the long term. Incorporating this understanding of what it takes to achieve successful collaborations will enable both NPS staff and partners to strengthen local partnerships. Gathering the stories of successful partnerships can enhance understanding of collaborative work, and can build support for partnerships within the NPS and with important constituencies. In addition, participants specifically noted that the vocabulary for the diversity of partnership arrangements has not kept up with the evolution of practice. Participants suggested the following ideas for creating additional learning opportunities:

- ✦ Organize, perhaps on an annual basis, additional workshops such as the workshop upon which this report is based, in order to share lessons and to collectively reflect on future directions for this type of conservation. Future workshops should expand the participation of partners from other regions of the country, paying particular attention to groups who represent diverse populations or urban constituencies.
- ✦ Capitalize on the extensive experience of the Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program in planning ongoing partnership training opportunities.



7



6



5

- Compile a series of case studies on partnerships and partnership areas. Such a compilation of best practices could be distributed to professionals involved in similar work within and outside the NPS and could also be presented in various training programs. Case studies could include such information as the legislative framework, innovations, and reflections on the successes and failures from a variety of perspectives.
- Expand training opportunities for NPS employees, partners, and other conservation professionals that specifically focus on making partnerships work. Professional development in such areas as collaborative leadership, facilitation, and conflict management was suggested.
- Create a mentorship program and a means for identifying individuals with the potential to be especially successful in partner relationships.
- Simplify the language used to describe partnerships and collaborative work to encourage greater understanding of the benefits both within and outside the NPS. More thought should be given to terms that are accessible to diverse audiences.
- Seek terminology which conveys parity to partnership areas and traditional national parks and furthers the concept of a nationwide network of parks and conservation areas. Clarify agency nomenclature to reduce the confusion within existing descriptions of national parks and other conservation areas (see page 5, “Current Definitions from the Index of the National Park Service,” which was taken from recent NPS literature).

☞ **Develop means for recognizing the successes and contributions of partnership areas and programs, and for rewarding the individuals who make them work.** Workshop participants believe it essential to increase understanding and build additional support within the agency for partnership areas. They suggested highlighting success stories and the people involved; emphasizing the benefits of partnership areas to staff throughout the agency; and in particular cultivating support within the NPS leadership for partnership initiatives, new types of park areas, and partnership programs. More widespread understanding of the role partnerships can play in conserving the American landscape would enable the NPS to be a more effective partner and leader. Ways to give a higher profile to partnership areas and the individuals who make them work could include:

- Provide information on the home page of the NPS website, such as listing the different partnership area categories outside of the National Park System, the criteria for eligibility, information on local responsibilities, and the opportunities for financial, technical, and planning assistance.
- Include information on partnership areas and programs in all NPS internal bulletin boards and publications.
- Provide information and explain the benefits of partnership programs and areas in NPS materials for the general public.
- Recognize annually those individuals within the agency and partner organizations who have made outstanding contributions in advancing partnerships.

☞ **Provide new tools and more flexibility in NPS planning and management of partnerships and partnership areas.** Workshop participants would like to see availability of new tools and additional flexibility within the existing NPS planning programs to better facilitate collaborative planning and management and to meet the different needs of partnership areas. In addition, participants commented on the importance of more effectively engaging partners and local communities in planning and management activities, and often referred to “buy-in” or “empowerment” of a wide diversity of people. They stressed the need to use an open process that transcends traditional public involvement. Participants also suggested a phased approach to designating new partnership areas that would strengthen relationships with key partners prior to designation. Some of the suggestions that follow may require some restructuring of the NPS budget formulation and allocation process to provide greater flexibility and support for partnership areas and programs.

- Add a technical assistance component to existing planning programs that addresses collaborative planning projects.
- Build a capacity for “hot-spot” planning and assistance to provide for quick response and innovation.
- Consider amending the traditional NPS “one-size-fits-all” planning framework to better accommodate areas that require a longer planning time frame, technical assistance, and an investment strategy.

- Open up the traditional public involvement process of planning and management to encourage ongoing local engagement and to build participation by diverse audiences.
- In designating new partnership areas, consider using the early stages of public involvement to build lasting relationships with potential partners. One possible model used successfully by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Program to study and designate several mostly privately owned river corridors has the following four phases:
  - Determine eligibility with full public involvement;
  - If determined eligible, conduct management planning with local communities and other key stakeholders and, if applicable, identify a management entity;
  - Undertake demonstration projects to assess long-term feasibility;
  - Determine whether to seek authorization/designation and in what form.

NPS staff and partners frequently do not have a common understanding of the implications of federal designation, and as a result have different expectations for NPS and partner roles. Therefore, consider the following:

- Clarify the application of NPS guidelines for all new partnership areas, including national heritage areas and affiliated areas;
- Define the appropriate application of NPS standards (for example, NPS maintenance and accessibility standards) to nonfederal lands in a partnership area; and
- Provide more specific guidance on the full universe of federal technical and financial assistance that may be available to partnership areas.

≈ **Revise management approaches to staff transition in partnership areas to retain institutional memory and ensure continuity of partner relationships.**

Throughout the NPS and in partner organizations, managers are spending more and more time and energy on cultivating partnerships of all kinds. Since successful collaborations rely on building relationships, longer staff tenures are critical. Inevitably, however, key personnel do move on, and the NPS and its partners must facilitate as smooth a management transition as possible. Recognizing those people who have played key roles in the partnership can be an important part of the transition.

- Find ways during transition of key partnership staff to capture critical institutional memory, and work to maintain momentum, continuity, and personal communication between the NPS and partner organizations.
- Recognize and appropriately honor the contributions of individuals who have built and sustained these relationships over time.

≈ **Develop clearer direction on the appropriate application of NPS management policies and other federal guidelines and requirements in partnership areas.**

Workshop participants identified the lack of clarity on the application of existing NPS guidelines as a hindrance to effectiveness in partnership areas. This ambiguity surrounding guidelines means that

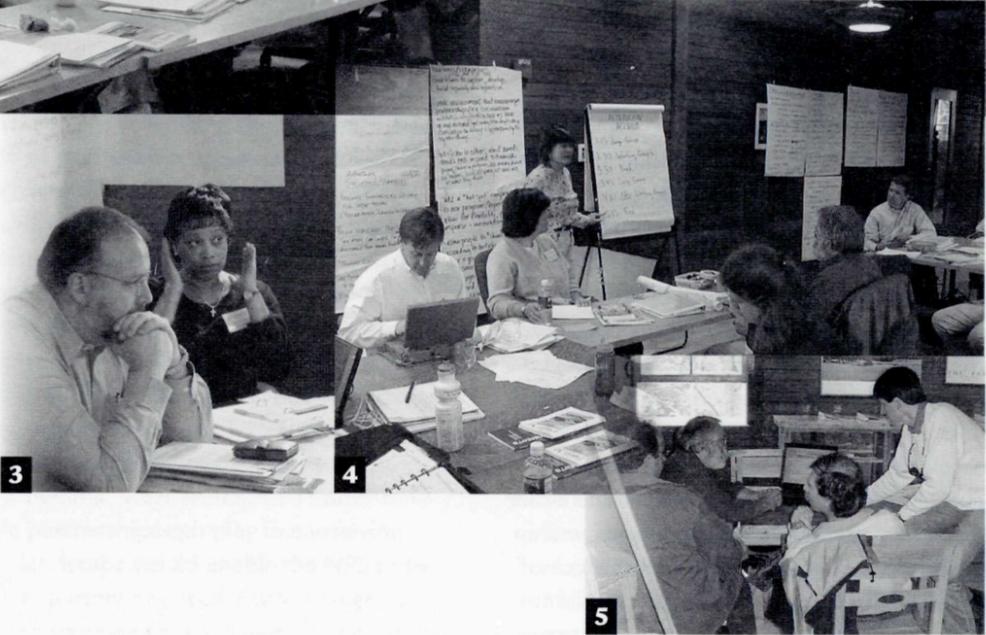
# V. Concluding Remarks

This report has endeavored to describe the evolving nature of partnerships between the National Park Service (NPS) and other organizations that extend both the agency and its partners beyond traditional forms of management. Whether new national parks or other Congressionally designated areas administered jointly with a diverse array of partners, these collaborations enable the NPS and its partners to reach new constituencies, commemorate previously overlooked stories, and extend the agency's stewardship practice and message in new ways. These partnerships, designed for the long term, broaden the agency's leadership potential and bring benefits to the entire National Park System, including the more traditional national parks.

Across the United States today, people are working together in community-based conservation initiatives that integrate natural and cultural heritage. The NPS, with its combination of flagship national parks, expertise in interpretation and story-telling, and expanding array of successful partnerships, is uniquely positioned to contribute to conservation practice into the future. As workshop participants observed, it is imperative that the NPS capitalize on the considerable experience both within the agency and with its partners in order to fulfill this potential.

Workshop participants have envisioned a future in which the NPS is a leader—managing national parks in partnership, facilitating resource management through collaborations with diverse organizations and institutions, and assisting local efforts to preserve the important stories that together make up the heritage of all Americans. This report places this vision before a broader audience. By engaging others in this discussion, including all levels of the agency and partner organizations, the NPS and its partners can move to a new, more collaborative paradigm of stewardship.

Photos courtesy of Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park



1. The workshop participants outside of the historic carriage barn that houses the offices of Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park.
2. Workshop participants Sarah Peskin, Jonathan Doherty, partner David Donath, Steve Elkinton, and partner David Startzell, left to right.
3. Partner Augie Carlino, left, and Barbara Tagger, right.
4. John Debo, Barbara Pollarine, workshop facilitator Sharon Behar, partner Jessica Brown, Bob McIntosh, and Chuck Barscz, left to right.
5. Joe DiBello, Bob McIntosh, Warren Brown, and Jonathan Doherty, left to right.



# LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

**Planning and Collaboration:  
Lessons Learned in Areas  
Managed through National Park  
Service Partnerships**

May 15-17, 2000  
Woodstock, Vermont

**Charles Barscz**  
Wild and Scenic Rivers Program Leader  
NPS Philadelphia Support Office  
200 Chestnut St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

**Jessica Brown**  
Vice President, International Programs  
QLF/Atlantic Center for the  
Environment  
55 So. Main St.  
Ipswich, MA 01938

**Warren Brown**  
Program Manager  
NPS Park Planning and Special Studies  
1849 C St. NW, Room 3230  
Washington, DC 20240

**Augie Carlino**  
Executive Director  
Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area  
338 E. Ninth Ave., 1st Floor  
Homestead, PA 15120

**Michael Creasey**  
Superintendent  
John H. Chafee Blackstone River  
Valley National Heritage Corridor  
1 Depot Square  
Woonsocket, RI 02895

**John Debo**  
Superintendent  
Cuyahoga Valley National Park  
15610 Vaughn Rd.  
Brecksville, OH 44141-3018

**Rolf Diamant**  
Superintendent  
Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National  
Historical Park  
P.O. Box 178  
Woodstock, VT 05091

**Joe DiBello**  
Stewardship and Partnerships  
Team Manager  
NPS Philadelphia Support Office  
200 Chestnut St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

**Jonathan Doherty**  
Project Manager  
Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network  
NPS Chesapeake Bay Program Office  
410 Severn Ave., Suite 109  
Annapolis, MD 21403

**David Donath**  
President  
The Woodstock Foundation, Inc.  
P.O. Box 489  
Woodstock, VT 05091

**Steve Elkinton**  
Program Leader  
NPS National Trails System Program-  
ming  
1849 C St. NW, Room 3622  
Washington, D.C. 20240

**Tom Gilbert**  
Superintendent  
Ice Age and North Country National  
Scenic Trails  
700 Rayovac Dr., Suite 100  
Madison, WI 53711

**Judy Hart**  
Superintendent  
Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front  
National Historical Park  
600 Harrison St., Suite 600  
San Francisco, CA

**John Haubert**  
Outdoor Recreation Planner  
NPS Park Planning and Special Studies  
1849 C St. NW, Room 3230  
Washington, DC 20240

**Phil Huffman**  
Conservation Consultant  
82 Church St., 3rd Floor  
Burlington, VT 05401

**Robert McIntosh**  
Associate Regional Director  
Planning, Resources Stewardship,  
and Science  
National Park Service  
15 State St.  
Boston, MA 02109

**Nora Mitchell**  
Director  
Conservation Study Institute  
P.O. Box 178  
Woodstock, VT 05091

**Donald Owen**  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Appalachian National Scenic Trail  
NPS Harpers Ferry Center  
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425

**Sarah Peskin**  
Manager  
Planning and Legislation Group  
NPS Boston Support Office  
15 State St.  
Boston, MA 02109

**Barbara L. Pollarine**  
Park Planner  
Valley Forge National Historical Park  
P.O. Box 953  
Valley Forge, PA 19482

**Barbara Slaiby**

Program Coordinator  
Conservation Study Institute  
P.O. Box 178  
Woodstock, VT 05091

**David Startzell**

Executive Director  
Appalachian Trail Conference  
P.O. Box 807  
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425

**Barbara Tagger**

Southeast Regional Coordinator  
National Underground Railroad  
Network to Freedom Program  
NPS/Atlanta Federal Center  
100 Alabama St. SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303

**Jacquelyn Tuxill**

Workshop Coordinator  
QLF/Atlantic Center for the  
Environment  
1490 Elder Hill Rd.  
Lincoln, VT 05443

**Sharon Behar**

Workshop Facilitator  
108 Central Ave.  
So. Burlington, VT 05403

People who were unable to attend  
but submitted written contributions:

**Kathy Abbott**

Executive Director  
Island Alliance  
408 Atlantic Ave., Suite 228  
Boston, MA 02110

**Glenn Eugster**

Assistant Regional Director  
Partnerships Programs  
NPS, National Capital Region  
110 Ohio Drive, SW  
Washington, DC 20242

**Deirdre Gibson**

Program Manager  
Park Planning and Special Resource  
Studies  
NPS Philadelphia Support Office  
200 Chestnut St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

**Cassie Thomas**

Outdoor Recreation Planner  
NPS Alaska Support Office  
2525 Gambell St.  
Anchorage, AK 99503

**Pamela Underhill**

Park Manager  
Appalachian National Scenic Trail  
NPS Harpers Ferry Center  
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425

# Acknowledgments

The workshop organizers gratefully acknowledge the advice provided by Warren Brown, Joe DiBello, Steve Elkinton, Judy Hart, John Haubert, Sarah Peskin, and Sandra Washington, who acted as an advisory committee. We also thank the workshop participants and other people who contributed substantial written comments in advance of the workshop. The thoughtful discussions at the workshop and the untold number of flip charts generated a wealth of ideas—we hope we have captured the key points in this report. Special thanks go to Sharon Behar for facilitating the workshop sessions, to Rolf Diamant and the staff of the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park for hosting the workshop, and to David Donath and the staff of the Billings Farm & Museum and The Woodstock Foundation, Inc., the national park's partners, for welcoming the participants with a reception.

The report editors, Jacquelyn Tuxill and Nora Mitchell, especially thank Jessica Brown, Warren Brown, Mike Caldwell, John Debo, Rolf Diamant, Joe DiBello, Jonathan Doherty, David Donath, Steve Elkinton, Tom Gilbert, Judy Hart, Phil Huffman, Bob McIntosh, Brent Mitchell, Don Owen, John Piltzecker, Barbara Slaiby, and David Startzell for their many substantive contributions to the report. We also thank Susan Brockman, Chris Brown, Doug Evans, and Brooke Shearer for providing background information and assistance; and to Sue Andrews, Roger Archibald, Ron Baraff, Chuck Barscz, Mike Caldwell, Ellen Levin Carlson, Michael Creasey, John Debo, Rolf Diamant, Jonathan Doherty, Steve Elkinton, Mark Forster, Judy Hart, Gayle Hazelwood, Bruce Jacobson, Margie Ortiz, Don Owen, Robert Rubin, Barbara Slaiby, Barbara Tagger, and Jennie Vasarhelyi for providing photographs. Thanks also to Brian P. Graphic Arts, for the design and production of this report.

Finally, we give special recognition to Warren Brown for his leadership in supporting a better understanding and appreciation of the benefits of partnerships for conservation.

## Further Reading

- Brown, Jessica, and Brent Mitchell, editors. 1998. *Stewardship: An International Perspective*. Special Issue of *Environments*. Vol. 26. No. 1. Heritage Resources Centre, University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.
- Brown, Jessica, Nora Mitchell and Fausto Sarmiento, editors. 2000. *Landscape Stewardship: New Directions in Conservation of Nature and Culture*. Special issue of the *George Wright Forum*. Vol. 17. No. 1. The George Wright Society, Hancock, Michigan.
- Diamant, Rolf. 2000. "From Management to Stewardship: The Making and Remaking of the U.S. National Park System." *George Wright Forum*. Vol. 17. No. 2, pp. 31-45. The George Wright Society, Hancock, Michigan.
- Howe, Jim, Ed McMahon, and Luther Propst. 1997. *Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities*. Island Press, Washington, D.C. and Covelo, California.
- Lucas, P.H.C. 1992. *Protected Landscapes: A Guide for Policy-makers and Planners*. IUCN-The World Conservation Union, Gland, Switzerland. Chapman and Hall, London.
- Prichard, Paul. 2000. "Challenges Facing State Parks." *George Wright Forum*. Vol 17. No. 3, pp. 60-61. The George Wright Society, Hancock, Michigan.
- Propst, Luther, and Liz Rosan. 1997. *National Parks and their Neighbors: Lessons from the Field on Building Partnerships with Local Communities*. The Sonoran Institute, Tucson, Arizona.
- Stolton, Sue, and Nigel Dudley, editors. 1999. *Partnerships for Protection: New Strategies for Planning and Management of Protected Areas*. WWF/IUCN, Gland, Switzerland. Earthscan, London.
- Tuxill, Jacquelyn, et al. 2000. *The Landscape of Conservation Stewardship: The Report of the Stewardship Initiative Feasibility Study*. Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, The Woodstock Foundation, and Conservation Study Institute, Woodstock, Vermont.
- U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. 1991. *The National Parks: Shaping the System*. National Park Service, Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. 1999. *The National Parks: Index 1999-2001*. National Park Service, Washington, D.C.
- Wondolleck, Julia M. and Steven L. Yaffee. 2000. *Making Collaboration Work: Lessons from Innovation in Natural Resource Management*. Island Press, Washington, D.C. and Covelo, California.
- Yaffee, Steven L. and Julia M. Wondolleck. 2000. "Making Collaboration Work." *Conservation Biology in Practice*. Vol. 1. No. 1. Society for Conservation Biology, <http://conbio.rice.edu/scb/>

# Workshop Co-Sponsors

## ***Conservation Study Institute***

P.O. Box 178, Woodstock, Vermont 05091

Website: [www.nps.gov/mabi/csi](http://www.nps.gov/mabi/csi)

Contact: Nora Mitchell, Director

The Conservation Study Institute was established in 1998 by the National Park Service (NPS) to enhance leadership in the field of conservation. In collaboration with the NPS and academic and nonprofit partners, the Institute provides a forum for the conservation community to discuss conservation history, contemporary issues and practice, and future directions for the field. The Institute's mission is to create opportunities for dialogue, inquiry, and lifelong learning to enhance the stewardship of landscapes and communities. To accomplish this mission, the Institute has three inter-related programs: education and training, research, and building networks within the conservation field. These three programs inform each other and create an environment continually renewed by current scholarship and practical experience. The founding partners include the NPS, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, the University of Vermont, QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment, and Shelburne Farms. We envision that the Institute's network of partners will expand over time.

## ***QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment***

55 South Main Street, Ipswich, Massachusetts 01938

Website: [www.qlf.org](http://www.qlf.org)

Contact: Jessica Brown, Vice President for International Programs

The Quebec-Labrador Foundation/Atlantic Center for the Environment is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to support the rural communities and environment of eastern Canada and New England, and to create models for stewardship of natural resources and cultural heritage which can be applied worldwide. Incorporated in the United States and Canada, QLF has over 35 years of experience working in rural communities of the Atlantic Region. Its international programs extend to the countries of Central Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America and the Caribbean. QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment is a founding partner of the Conservation Study Institute, and has a long history of cooperative work with the National Park Service on projects related to landscape stewardship, public education and leadership development.

## ***National Park Service Park Planning and Special Studies Program***

1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20240

Contact: Warren Brown, Program Manager

The Park Planning and Special Studies Program in the NPS Washington Office coordinates policy, guidelines, and funding for the preparation of General Management Plans for existing units of the National Park System. These plans provide a framework for decisions about resource protection, visitor facilities, carrying capacity, and boundary adjustments. The program also coordinates Congressionally authorized studies of potential new parks, wild and scenic rivers, and national trail system units. The program office in Washington accomplishes its mission by providing guidance on individual planning or study projects, developing training programs and materials, and updating guidelines for the work done by the planning staffs located in the Denver Service Center and Regional Offices.



*ABOVE: The Appalachian Trail has embodied partnerships and volunteerism since its construction in the 1920s. The Appalachian National Scenic Trail is now a unit of the National Park System; partners include the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, state agencies, the Appalachian Trail Conference (ATC), and other hiking clubs. Today, as in the 1920s, ATC volunteers contribute many services, including trail and facility construction and maintenance as well as resource management and visitor education. Photo by John Wright, Appalachian Trail Conference.*

*FRONT COVER: Boston Light on Little Brewster Island. The 30 islands in Boston Harbor Islands national park area are managed by a 13-member Partnership, designated by Congress, that includes the National Park Service, the U.S. Coast Guard, state and municipal agencies, and private nonprofit organizations. Boston Light is the oldest light station in America, pre-dating the Declaration of Independence, and the last remaining lighthouse with a U.S. Coast Guard keeper. Photo © Brent M. Erb, courtesy of Boston Harbor Islands.*

**Copies are available from:**

**CONSERVATION STUDY INSTITUTE**  
PO Box 178  
Woodstock, VT 05091

**QLF/ATLANTIC CENTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**  
55 South Main Street  
Ipswich, MA 01938

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**  
Park Planning and Special Studies Program  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

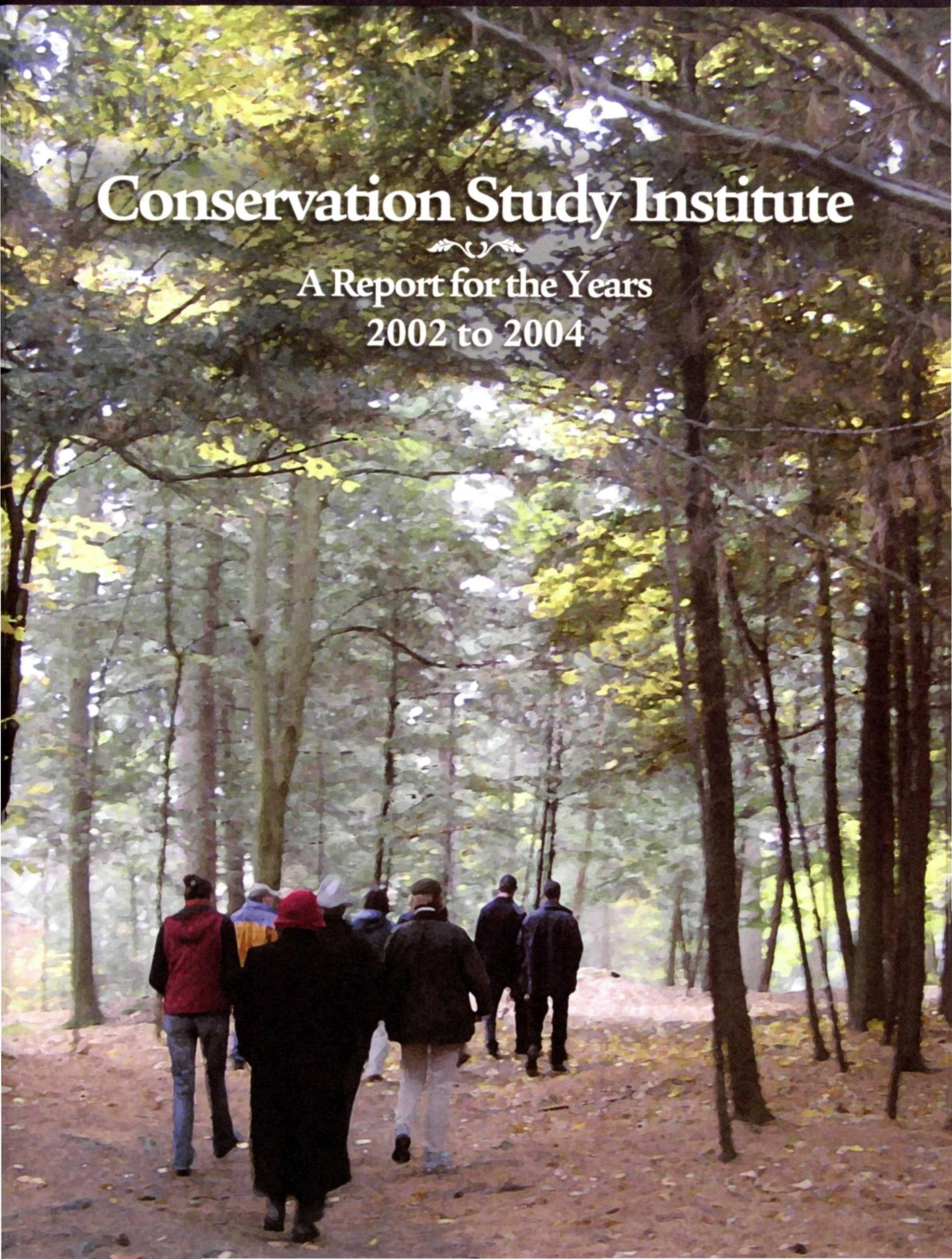




# Conservation Study Institute



A Report for the Years  
2002 to 2004



The Conservation Study Institute (CSI) was established by the National Park Service in 1998 to enhance leadership in the field of conservation. A partnership with academic, government, and nonprofit organizations, the institute provides a forum for the National Park Service, the conservation community, and the public to discuss conservation history, contemporary issues and practices, and future directions for the field.

We encourage you to share the information in this report, and request only that you give appropriate citations and bibliographic credits. Copyrighted images are not placed in the public domain by their appearance in this document. They cannot be copied or otherwise reproduced except in their printed context within this publication without the written consent of the copyright holders.

Recommended citation: *Conservation Study Institute: A Report for the Years 2002 to 2004*. Woodstock, Vermont: Conservation Study Institute, 2004.

For additional copies, contact:  
Conservation Study Institute  
54 Elm Street  
Woodstock, VT 05091  
Tel: (802) 457-3368 / Fax: (802) 457-3405  
[www.nps.gov/csi](http://www.nps.gov/csi)

CSI publications in the Conservation and Stewardship Publication Series:

No. 1 — *Landscape Conservation: An International Working Session on the Stewardship of Protected Landscapes, 2001*

No. 2 — *International Concepts in Protected Landscapes: Exploring Their Values for Communities in the Northeast, 2001*

No. 3 — *Collaboration and Conservation: Lessons Learned in Areas Managed through National Park Service Partnerships, 2001*

No. 4 — *Speaking of the Future: A Dialogue on Conservation, 2003*

No. 5 — *A Handbook for Managers of Cultural Landscapes with Natural Resource Values, 2003* (web-based)

No. 6 — *Collaboration and Conservation: Lessons Learned from National Park Service Partnership Areas in the Western United States. A Report on a Workshop March 18–19, 2003, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 2004*

All publications are available in PDF format at [www.nps.gov/csi](http://www.nps.gov/csi).

**Our most effective**  
[conservation] work results from  
**engagement with others, where the**  
**collective effort extends the reach of all. The**  
[National Park] Service and our partners  
**understand it is only through our**  
**combined efforts that we can help our**  
**society to succeed in passing on unimpaired**  
**to future generations the national**  
**system of parks and special places...**

—National Park Service Director Fran P. Mainella

## *Letter from the Director*

Successful stewardship of national parks and other places of heritage depends on broad-based partnerships, increased community engagement, and a commitment to the future. This means that conservation today is complex and challenging, but also provides tremendous opportunities for more people to be involved in many more ways than in the past.

*“The world has profoundly changed since the late nineteenth century when the first national parks were created. These changes have challenged the National Park Service to assume responsibilities never anticipated when the agency was established in August 1916 ... [today] parks are part of broader communities ... [and] park management is more complex ...”*

*– NPS Director’s Order on Communication*

The National Park Service established the Conservation Study Institute to help the agency and its partners stay in touch with the evolving field of conservation and develop more sophisticated partnerships and new tools and strategies.

This three-year report highlights our work in sharing best practices, cultivating leadership, and analyzing trends in conservation. A diversity of programs creates opportunities to reflect on lessons learned, to exchange leadership experience, and to maintain a dialogue on the best thinking and practice in the larger world of conservation. The Institute is dedicated to assisting the National Park Service and its partners in becoming increasingly effective and creative in meeting new challenges, and more open and responsive leaders in building collaboration and commitment for the stewardship of our national system of parks and special places.



Handwritten signature of Nora Mitchell in black ink.

Nora Mitchell  
Director  
Conservation Study Institute  
National Park Service



The Institute's mission is  
to create opportunities  
for dialogue, inquiry,  
and lifelong learning  
to enhance the  
stewardship of  
parks, landscapes, and  
communities.



## Contents

### 1 Letter from the Director

### 4 Sharing Best Practices on Partnerships

*Exploring the Lessons of Partnerships: Workshop Advances a National Park Service Priority*

*Building Bridges between Public Lands and Their Neighbors: Gateway Communities Leadership Program*

*National Heritage Areas: Landscapes for Partnerships and Community Engagement*

*Learning from 20 Years of Experience: A Sustainability Study for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor*

*Considering Future Directions for National Heritage Areas: A Report to the NPS from the National Park System Advisory Board's Partnership Committee*

### 8 Sharing Best Practices on Civic Engagement

*Conversations on the Contemporary Meaning of Parks: Civic Engagement Initiatives*

*Exploring the Relationship between Nature and Culture*

*Recognizing the Diversity of Innovation in National Park Stewardship*

*Celebrating Stewardship: An Atlas of Places, People, and Handmade Products*

### 10 Sharing Best Practices on Place-based Education

*Education, the Parks, and Leadership: Seminars Kindle a New National Vision*

*Renewing the NPS Education Mission: Follow-up Actions to the National Seminar Series*

*Crossing Boundaries and Generations: Education Connects People to Parks*

*Sustaining Public Land—Community Connections through Place-based Education: A Forest for Every Classroom*

*Testing Program Effectiveness: The Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative*

*Sharing the Promise of Place-based Education: A New Research Learning Center Focused on Innovation and Evaluation*

### 14 Cultivating Leaders

*The Power of the Group: Leadership Roundtable Creates Lifelong Learning*

*Convening National Dialogues on Conservation*

*Exchanging Perspectives on Innovation: National Conservation Leadership Dialogues*

*Forging the Link between People and Place: Land Trust Alliance National Workshops*

*Exploring the Connection between Experience of Place and Conservation: Murie Center Symposium*

*Growing the Next Generation of NPS Leaders*

### 18 Analyzing Trends in Conservation

*Conservation's New Century: Thinking, Talking, and Working Together; A National Symposium Gathers Insights*

*Sharing National Symposium Findings through Two Publications*

*Conservation at the Landscape Scale: Lecture Series Explores Emerging Models and Strategies*

### 22 Reaching Out

### 23 Working with a Network of Partners

## Sharing Best Practices on Partnerships

The Institute examines and shares conservation efforts that create vital connections for sustaining heritage conservation among a broad set of partners. These partnerships cross disciplines, boundaries, and sectors to accomplish large-scale conservation, placing national parks in their landscape context.

# Exploring the Lessons of Partnerships

*Workshop Advances a  
National Park Service Priority*

By Doug Wilhelm

When Laura Gates, superintendent of the Cane River Creole National Historical Park in northwest Louisiana, arrived at the workshop that CSI co-sponsored in Santa Fe last March, she hoped that she could both contribute lessons from her own experience and learn from other seasoned practitioners. Gates traveled to this program, "Collaboration and Conservation: Lessons Learned from National Park Service Partnership Areas in the Western U.S.," with a partner in her work, Nancy Morgan, executive director of the Cane River National Heritage Area, a congressionally designated regionally distinct rural agricultural landscape that includes the historical park.

Within the National Park Service, diverse working partnerships are a growing presence; these include areas that are managed through collaboration with many other organizations, such as national heritage areas. In recognition of the increasing importance of collaboration, NPS Director Fran P. Mainella created an associate director for partnerships and the NPS Partnership Council. Drawing its membership from parks and regions, the council advises Mainella and her leadership team on ways that partnerships could be expanded "across NPS program and geographic lines."

"Our most effective work results from engagement with others, where the collective effort extends the reach of all," Director Mainella wrote. "The [National Park] Service and our partners understand it is only through our combined efforts that we can help our society to succeed in passing on unimpaired to future generations the



Laura Gates and Nancy Morgan at Santuario de Chimayo within the proposed Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area.

FACING PAGE: Ernest Ortega (center) leads a field trip in the proposed heritage area with Jim Bellamy (left) and San Juan Pueblo Councilor Herman Agoyo (right).

national system of parks and special places ...”

CSI designed the partnership workshop in collaboration with the QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment and the NPS Planning and Special Studies Program. The workshop created an opportunity for 27 people with substantial partnership experience to reflect on what they have learned, and to collectively identify insights and strategies. Jackie Tuxill, CSI director for partnership programs, explained, “workshops like this allow people to share their experience with peers—it’s structured for dialogue.”

“One of the things I loved about the program,” Gates said, “was learning how partners in other parts of the country are operating.” She was particularly impressed with the idea that “partnerships are key,” not only to her park and heritage area, but “for any kind of concept to flourish, that partnerships are built on trust, [and] that every interaction must have trust as the basis of it.”

### ***More Interactive, More Proactive***

Another experienced partner who participated in the workshop was Greg Moore, executive director of the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, a community-based nonprofit that has been working for 15 years with Golden Gate National Recreation Area, a 75,000-acre complex of national parks in the San Francisco Bay area.

“Here at Golden Gate, our community is broad and diverse—it runs the gamut from school kids to senior citizens, to people of all economic and [ethnic] backgrounds, to people who see that the ideals of the NPS have resonance within their own communities.”

“When the conservancy began, we started with the primary purpose of providing quality interpretive and education materials for park visitors ... over time, we began to see that interpreting park values was a multifaceted enterprise, and it meant more than publishing brochures—it needed to be more interactive, more proactive, it had

2000 to co-administer the new El Camino Real National Historic Trail in New Mexico.

“The trail runs through lands that we have long-term ties with—either we manage them, or communities that live along the trail provide management,” Schlanger explained. The partnership, she said “is a way for the bureau to reach out to



to reach outside park boundaries and involve people.”

Moore said he, too, took away new ideas and insights from the Santa Fe workshop. “Partnerships by their nature are very custom-built for each individual alliance,” he said. “So the ability to be among professional practitioners who are trying a whole variety of interesting and effective techniques and programs is illuminating in terms of the content, and it’s also inspiring.”

### ***Creating a “Road Map”***

Among the newest partners who came to Santa Fe was Sarah Schlanger, associate state archeologist for the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in New Mexico. In a first-time collaboration of its kind between the two agencies, NPS and BLM began in

those communities in a different way: not through issuing permits, but by working with those communities to come to a better understanding of our shared heritage.” The El Camino Trail collaboration has, she said, “opened BLM’s eyes to the opportunity to connect with communities in a totally different way than we normally do.”

At the partnership areas workshop, Schlanger found that, indeed, “the things that people are doing out there are models for being creative to get things done. The people who were at that workshop are really an astonishing group, who have been able to put together quite diverse and powerful partnerships.”

Karen Wade, former NPS regional director for the Intermountain Region, agrees. “The parks that are doing the best are those that have

Continued from page 7

figured out how to collaborate and share ... It is my belief that building relationships creates opportunities."

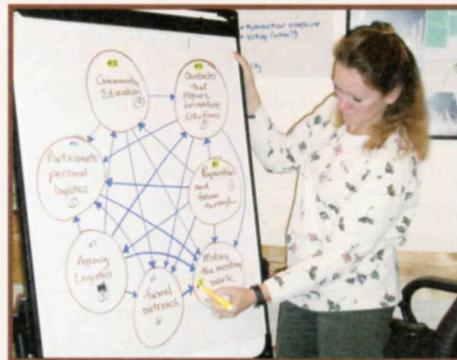
Wade also participated in the workshop. "It was very exciting; [the dialogue] allowed for consensus ideas to emerge. We ended up with a list of ideas that were so well-constructed that it provides a road map for the development of partnership programs for the whole service." The workshop participants produced a brief summary of the workshop, "Developing a Sustainable Environment for Partnerships," and presented it to the NPS Partnership Council. These recommendations call for placing communities at the center of partnerships, developing a compelling vision statement for partnership work, mapping the assets from which the NPS can learn, and doing research and analysis that can support partnership work. CSI published the findings of this workshop in *Conservation and Collaboration: Lessons Learned from National Park Service Partnership Areas in the Western United States* to encourage more discussion on partnerships.

"A conventional view of partnership is that it's something that you enter into so that each party can advance an agenda, or have more resources to get something done," Moore reflected after the program. "A deeper view has evolved for me—that a partnership really allows for broader community and societal ownership of what the national park values are all about, and to help evolve the meaning of what national parks and protected areas mean for people from a variety of backgrounds. ... This creates a richer concept of what national parks can be and should be for the future."

## GATEWAY COMMUNITIES LEADERSHIP PROGRAM:

### Building Bridges between Public Lands and Their Neighbors

Public land managers and neighboring towns and cities—often referred to as gateway communities—are building their collaboration through a program cosponsored by the Institute and a consortium of partners in the Gateway Communities Leadership Program. Over the last five years, the partners have worked together to create a



Planner with Matanuska-Susitna  
Borough, Alaska

multidimensional program that builds the capacity of public land managers and gateway communities to collaboratively identify and address issues of mutual concern. The program includes national course offerings, tailored regional and community workshops, interactive television workshops, case study videos, and publications.

Every two years, a national training course, "Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities," offers assistance to public land-gateway community teams to plan and carry out collaborative community-based initiatives. During the workshop, teams of public land and community representatives work together to craft strategies that can be implemented in their home regions. Offered in Seattle in September 2002 and in Savannah in October 2003, the national course attracted teams from Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the neighboring Nantahala National Forest, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Cape Lookout National Seashore, and Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Parks, among others.

Often requests for follow-up workshops and technical assistance originate with teams that attend the national course. This was the case with the teams from Denali National Park and Preserve (Alaska) and the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (Minnesota and Wisconsin). Follow-up technical assistance from CSI Director of Community Engagement Delia Clark assisted the Alaska team with conducting a vision-to-action workshop that launched a community conservation and sustainable development initiative complementing national park efforts to develop the new Denali south-side visitor center. The team from the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway developed a series of eight regional workshops in 2003 designed to address the needs of communities along the 25-mile-long river corridor. These workshops created a sense of regional identity and a common agenda among the communities along the two-state river valley.

PARTNERS: The Conservation Fund, NPS Park Planning and Special Studies Program, Sonoran Institute, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center

## Landscapes for Partnerships and Community Engagement

Heritage areas are an important direction in conservation, as demonstrated by the growth in the number of heritage area initiatives at every level in the U.S. Today, there are 27 congressionally designated heritage areas and corridors, and many proposals for additional national areas. A number of new state heritage programs have joined the established ones in New York and Pennsylvania, and literally hundreds of regional grassroots initiatives are underway across the country.

While the first national heritage area was designated as recently as 1984, the concept of conserving important lived-in regional landscapes—by engaging every level of government and, most critically, the people who live in them—had been under development for over 30 years. These ideas have been tested not just in the U.S., but also in Europe and around the world.

Brenda Barrett, NPS national coordinator for heritage areas, and Nora Mitchell, CSI director, served as guest editors for the June 2003 issue of the *George Wright Forum* on “Stewardship of Heritage Areas.” These papers examine global trends in conservation stewardship, review the historical development of heritage areas in the U.S., and identify the benefits of this collaborative approach in telling richer stories and tackling daunting preservation projects.

### *Learning from 20 Years of Experience: A Sustainability Study for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor*

Now in its twentieth year, the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission is taking both a reflective and forward-thinking approach to determining its future. The commission decided to evaluate progress toward achieving the corridor’s goals established by Congress in 1986, and to review the existing management structure and look at options for strengthening its effectiveness. The commission’s desire to be transparent and open in its deliberations led to a partnership with the NPS Conservation Study Institute. The Institute is conducting a “Sustainability Study” that will provide the commission with a framework to inform its decisions about strategic future directions for the corridor. The report will:

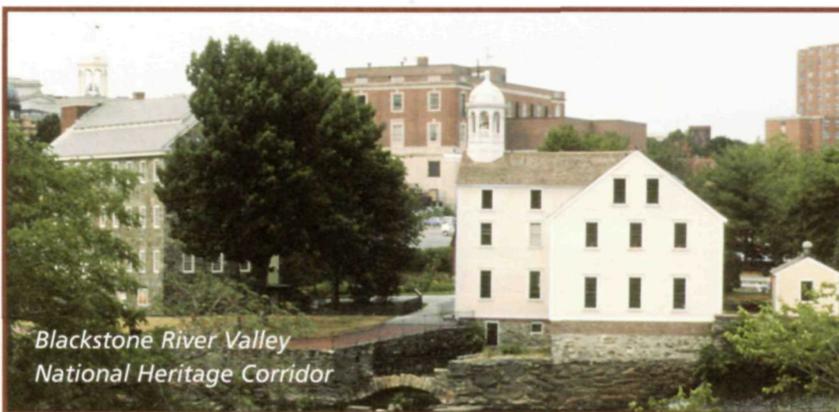
- Evaluate the commission’s accomplishments, including documenting leverage of National Park Service funding;
- Analyze potential management alternatives for achieving the national interest of the Blackstone Valley; and
- Assess future commitments needed to attain sustainability of the conservation efforts.

This project is being used as a case study by the Partnership Committee of the National Park System Advisory Board in its deliberations on the future of National Heritage Areas and their relationship to NPS. A report on this sustainability study will be presented to the commission in February 2005.

### *Considering Future Directions for National Heritage Areas: A Report to the NPS from the National Park System Advisory Board’s Partnership Committee*

In 2004, NPS Director Fran Mainella asked the National Park System Advisory Board to look at the future of national heritage areas and their relationship to the National Park Service. The board, authorized by Congress to advise the director of the National Park Service on current conservation issues, asked the Partnership Committee to prepare a report based on a series of discussions and cases studies. The Conservation Study Institute has been working with NPS National Heritage Area Coordinator Brenda Barrett and the NPS Policy Office to support the work of the Partnership Committee.

Mayor Jerry N. Hruby of Brecksville, Ohio, Chair of the Partnership Committee, convened the first meeting in the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (Massachusetts and Rhode Island) and the second in the Cane River National Heritage Area (Louisiana). The Institute’s sustainability study for the Blackstone National Heritage Corridor is serving as a case study for the committee’s deliberations. A report from the National Park System Advisory Board to the NPS director is anticipated in late spring 2005.



The Institute convenes dialogue on current issues to encourage innovation, strengthen public commitment, and ensure the relevancy of national parks and other special places to all citizens.

# Conversations on the Contemporary Meaning of Parks

## *Civic Engagement Initiatives*

Over the last three years, the Northeast Region, with the leadership of Regional Director Marie Rust, initiated a national discussion on how civic engagement can enhance stewardship and strengthen the public's connection to national parks. Subsequently, in 2003, NPS Director Fran Mainella issued a director's order articulating the park service's commitment to civic engagement.

"Civic engagement is a continuous, dynamic conversation with the public on many levels that reinforces public commitment to the preservation of heritage resources, both cultural and natural, and strengthens public understanding of the full meaning and contemporary relevance of these resources."

— Director's Order 75A:

Civic Engagement and Public Involvement, 2003

## *Exploring the Relationship between Nature and Culture*

In 2004, the Institute collaborated with the NPS Northeast Region and Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park to host a civic engagement seminar, "Contested Landscapes: Humans and Nature in National Parks." This workshop explored the challenges of interpreting American landscapes and, in particular, national parks with discordant views about natural and cultural resources.

Dr. Edward T. Linenthal (Professor of Religious and American Culture at the University of Wisconsin) and Dr. William Cronon (Professor of History, Geography, and Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin) served as seminar discussion leaders. Three case studies—Cuyahoga River Valley National Park, Point Reyes National Seashore, and Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park—demonstrated the dilemmas involved with managing public landscapes that are



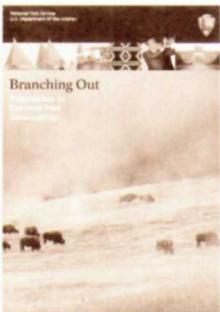
"Within this [Northeast] region, the emphasis is on how our sites speak to visitors, so they can understand all the stories and engage in dialogue about what happened here and why. We use our sites not only for interpretation, but also for education and participation. The goal is about building better citizens through civic engagement."

— Marie Rust, NPS Northeast Regional Director

rich in history, cultural traditions, and dynamic natural ecosystems. Deliberations highlighted the importance of public lands as places of learning and as great laboratories for cultivating a more mindful and integrated relationship with our natural and cultural environment. Participants acknowledged the deeply held values in the NPS and in American society, and discussed ways that civic engagement contributes ideas related to site-specific management as well as defining new intellectual constructs for a more complex meaning of place.

*PARTNERS: NPS Northeast Region, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP, NPS Policy Office*

### **Recognizing the Diversity of Innovation in National Park Stewardship**



The goal of Eastern National's publication, *Branching Out: Approaches in National Park Stewardship*, is to create a greater under-

standing of innovations in national park management, and in particular to recognize the significant role partnerships play in meeting the challenge of resource stewardship. Published in 2003, this booklet points out that the evolution of the park concept over time has been in response to changes in American society and cultural values. Today, "partnerships that combine a landscape perspective with a growing community-based commitment to stewardship have become critical factors in the sustainability of all national park areas." CSI Director Nora Mitchell served on the editorial advisory team for the publication.

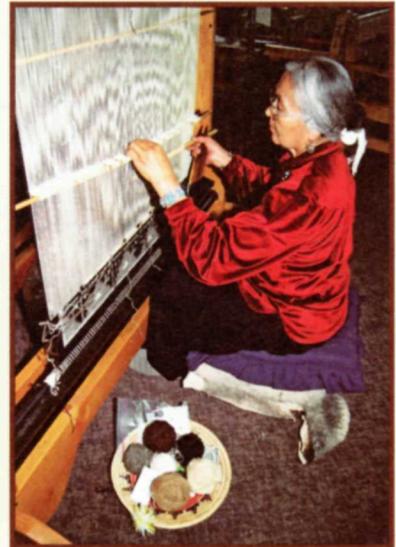
## CELEBRATING STEWARDSHIP:

### *An Atlas of Places, People, and Handmade Products*

Stewardship begins with people. This atlas celebrates the personal stories of stewardship, while illustrating its broad, rich geography. Its inspiration comes from people taking care of special places. For more than 30 years, Mary Lee Begay (right) has woven traditional Navajo rugs for Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site in Ganado, Arizona. Dave Evans, a fifth-generation Pierce Point rancher at Point Reyes National Seashore, California, is developing innovative, sustainable approaches to keep agriculture alive on the peninsula. Along the Blue Ridge Parkway, Judy and Bill Carson and Kit Trubey, owners of The Orchard at Alta Pass in Spruce Pine, North Carolina, encourage local theater and music, while growing heirloom apples. These are faces of stewardship—friends, neighbors, and communities in and around our national parks, heritage areas, and national historic landmarks. They preserve authentic traditional cultures and landscapes, demonstrating for local residents and visitors alike an enduring stewardship ethic and a commitment to sustainability.

A project update is the beginning of an exploration of the connections between places, people, and special products. This update includes three case studies illustrating good stewardship and highlighting traditions and innovations that advance conservation and sustainability. In *An Atlas of Places, People, and Handmade Products*, we will include more

stories from more places. With this project, we plan to create a network of park people and producers eager to share their knowledge and experiences.



#### *Principal Project Objectives:*

1. Recognize people practicing stewardship that sustains important landscapes and living cultures.
2. Demonstrate the relationship between people, special products, and landscapes and explore issues related to marketing, branding, and certification.
3. Highlight the biodiversity value of cultural landscapes.
4. Model sustainable behaviors to visitors and neighbors, demonstrating a commitment to community stewardship of landscapes.
5. Enhance relationships between parks and neighboring communities.
6. Build a network of people and organizations involved in this work.

## Sharing Best Practices on Place-based Education

The Institute demonstrates and evaluates education that forges an enduring connection between people, their communities, and public lands. Place-based education provides youth and adults with opportunities to become engaged in stewardship.

Ecologist Tom Wessels reads the natural and cultural history of the forested landscape.

**"Park-based learning is powerful—and transformative. People more readily retain information, grasp meanings, and adopt new behaviors and values when directly involved with cultural and natural heritage resources and sites."**

— NPS Director Mainella,  
Renewing Our Education Mission, June 2002

FACING PAGE: *Renewing Our Educational Mission Report to the National Leadership Council, June 2003, National Park Service.*

# Education, the Parks, and Leadership

## *Seminars Kindle a New National Vision*

By Doug Wilhelm

In its landmark report, *Rethinking the National Parks for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, the National Park System Advisory Board challenged the NPS to "proclaim anew the meaning and value of parks, conservation, and recreation; to expand the learning and research occurring in parks and share that knowledge broadly; and to encourage all Americans to experience these special places." In addition, the board emphasized that "parks ... are powerful resources offering unique, place-based learning opportunities ... [and] offer citizens of all ages opportunities to strengthen their connections to the environment and to renew their sense of wonder and appreciation for our democracy." The nation as a whole has been seeking fresh perspectives on how its educational institutions can have a much greater impact, the advisory board said. The National Park Service is such an institution, and American society will benefit enormously if NPS takes a deep new look at all the best ways it can help people learn and become more engaged citizens.

The NPS National Leadership Council (NLC) responded to this advisory board report and its education challenge with an effort unlike any it had undertaken in the past. From December 2002 through June 2003, with support from the new NPS Director Fran P. Mainella and help from a national working group that included CSI, the NLC devoted part of each bimonthly meeting to a series of seminars in which council members listened and talked in depth with a succession of experts, researchers, and field practitioners engaged with leading-edge education as it relates to American parks.

“The series was conceived as a bridge between NPS leadership and the best ideas on education in this country,” said Nora Mitchell, CSI’s director. To develop the topics and assemble the speakers, the working group gathered ideas and input from park superintendents and education practitioners across the country.

“We drew on the experience in education out in the field, which is tremendous and impressive,” Mitchell said. “We also drew on the knowledge from a wide range of experts outside the NPS—this was a great combination to bring to NPS leadership as it crafted a response to the challenge set by the advisory board—to raise the bar higher.”

“It’s important that the NLC had the interest and took the time and the energy to go through a series of seminars to learn about the potential of national parks as a contributor to learning in America today,” said Julia Washburn, a member of the series working group who is vice president for grants and programs at the National Park Foundation. “So this,” she added, “was a very important step forward.”

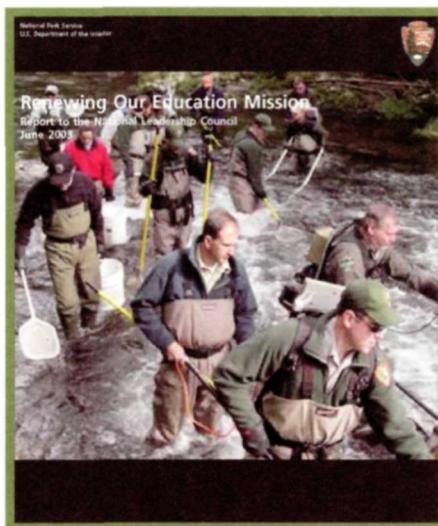
Loran Fraser, director of the NPS Office of Policy, agrees. “This was a commitment by the leadership of the organization to learn [and] to gain information on current practices, research, and theory before making any decisions on what the course of action would be.”

### **“Place-based Education Has Great Promise”**

The topics that seminar speakers and the NLC explored included “place-based education, highlighting the strong connection between place and the learner; learning styles and the need to understand the different ways in which people process information; the challenge of providing meaningful multiple

learning experiences; and the need for program evaluation,” along with technology and distance learning, the *NLC Journal* reported. Speakers were both national and community-based leaders in their fields.

Among them was Megan Camp, vice president of the Vermont-



based educational nonprofit, Shelburne Farms. CSI has worked with Shelburne Farms on a place-based education project titled “A Forest for Every Classroom: Learning to Make Choices for the Future,” together with Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, the Green Mountain National Forest, the National Wildlife Federation, and teachers from a number of Vermont communities. This partnership was crafted on a common vision of students learning from and caring for public lands. A professional development program for teachers introduces them to public lands in their communities as places for exploration and real-world learning, and then supports their development of curriculum that integrates interdisciplinary study of place with stewardship and civics.

“Parks themselves are place-based, so they are an incredible classroom,” Camp later reflected. “In

addition, there’s a close relationship between knowledge of place and a sense of stewardship—through learning opportunities on public lands, learners have the chance not only to gain knowledge, but also to be stewards of their own heritage. The long-term goal is to contribute to developing important civic engagement and citizenship skills.”

Camp said the NLC members asked her questions about the results learned from the project’s evaluation, which was then in mid-process. “They wanted to know: Is there evidence that if we invest in these types of programs, we’ll see a longer-term outcome of more involved citizenry practicing stewardship in our communities?” Although research is ongoing, Camp notes that “the evidence to date indicates that place-based education has great promise for both engaged student learning as well as revitalizing teachers.” Camp quoted one of the participating teachers, “This program has rekindled my soul and passion for teaching. It has made it meaningful again.”

### **The Results: A National Strategy**

“Throughout the seminar series, NLC members grappled with the issues and ideas very directly,” said working group member Patti Reilly, director of NPS’s Northeast Center for Educational Services. “The seminar series was an opportunity to take a step back for thoughtful discussions with experts and people outside the NPS, and to consider the larger picture. This was also a look forward—how are we going to be operating into the next century? What are the implications of demographic changes and the need for more

Continued from page 11

community connections? How can we be more strategic? At the conclusion, I hoped the series would put the agency in a position to develop a national approach to education," Reilly said, "and it did that."

The NLC followed up by recommending to NPS Director Mainella a vision, guiding principles, and three goals for National Park Service education: build capacity, guarantee opportunities, and strengthen partnerships. The NLC then asked a group of NPS staff from across the country to review these recommendations and develop a more detailed educational strategy that was published in June 2003 as *Renewing Our Education Mission*. Director Mainella then created a National Education Council, with NPS representatives from across the country, to guide the implementation of this effort. The National Park System Advisory Board has formed an education committee to continue its focus on the learning potential of national parks, and to work in concert with the NPS education council.

"I have never seen an issue so excite this organization as the prospect of developing our capacity as an educator," reflected seminar participant Loran Fraser. "This was very exciting, it was reaching out. It was growth."



## RENEWING THE NPS EDUCATION MISSION:

# Follow-up Actions to the National Seminar Series

**R**ethinking the National Parks for the Twenty-first Century (published in 2001) called on the National Park Service to further develop its capacity in education. The report declared that education is central to the mission of the National Park Service, and stated that NPS can not accomplish its mission without a more coherent and comprehensive educational focus. It observed that parks are powerful educational resources, and that NPS has enormous potential to advance its purposes through education. It called on the National Park Service to become a more significant part of America's educational system, with budgets, policies, and an organizational structure reflecting this vision.

**[The board recommends that] the National Park Service embrace its mission, as educator, to become a more significant part of America's educational system by providing formal and informal programs for students and learners of all ages inside and outside park boundaries.**

— National Park System Advisory Board, *National Parks for the 21st Century*, 2001

In response to this report, the NPS director and the National Leadership Council initiated a seminar series designed to explore state-of-the-art education theory and practice, and to consider NPS opportunities. The seminars invited scholars and experts outside the park to present and discuss with NPS leaders a variety of initiatives and current research. The goal of the seminars was to inform decision making for designing a comprehensive twenty-first century National Park Service education program. The Conservation Study Institute played a key role in organizing this seminar series (see related story, pages 10–12).

During the concluding seminar in June 2002, the NPS National Leadership Council agreed on a vision statement, guiding principles, and goals for a national framework for an education program. After field review, a report, *Renewing Our Education Mission*, was approved by the director and the NPS Education Council created. In May 2002, the director asked the National Park System Advisory Board to create an education committee.

In May 2004, the NPS Education Council, an interdisciplinary advisory forum of representative NPS national and field staff, convened for its first meeting. They agreed that to guide implementation of the national actions in *Renewing Our Education Mission* a number of work groups must be formed and asked to recommend issue-specific plans.

CSI Director Nora Mitchell is serving on the evaluation work group and will work with the NPS Education Council and, through the NPS Policy Office, the National Park System Advisory Board's Education Committee, to develop a nationwide approach to evaluation.

# Crossing Boundaries and Generations: Education Connects People to Parks

## *Sustaining Public Land— Community Connections through Place-based Education: A Forest for Every Classroom*

For the past three years, the Institute has worked with a network of partners to design and evaluate a place-based education program to demonstrate and evaluate the strength of public land–community connections that can be created. “A Forest for Every Classroom: Learning to Make Choices for the Future” is a professional development program for educators built on place-based education principles. Participants commit to a year-long program and develop their own curricula integrating exploration of local natural and cultural heritage with hands-on service learning and civic engagement. At the heart of the program is the belief that educators and their students who are immersed in the interdisciplinary study of their home place are more eager to learn and be involved in the stewardship of their communities and public lands. For the sponsoring partners, each organization has built professional capacity by learning

from each other, and enhanced their community relationships while providing a high quality program (see related story on program evaluation below).

**PARTNERS:** *Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, Green Mountain National Forest, Shelburne Farms National Historic Landmark, National Wildlife Federation, Northern Forest Center*

## *Testing Program Effectiveness: The Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative*

Rigorous evaluation is essential to ensure that programs are achieving their intended goals. In 2002, several New England organizations formed the Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative in order to professionally evaluate each of their four individual place-based education programs and to identify successful

characteristics that span all of the programs. Although distinct, the programs—including A Forest for Every Classroom (see related article above)—share goals of enhancing the connections between communities and schools, cultivating motivation and skills for citizenship and civic engagement, and building social capital for more successful, innovative, and resilient communities. This evaluation partnership is also laying the foundation for research into the effectiveness of place-based education models.

**PROGRAMS AND PARTNERS:** *Community Mapping Program at Orton Family Foundation, Vermont Institute for Natural Sciences, Community-based Environmental Education at Antioch New England Institute, Sustainable Schools at Shelburne Farms, Upper Valley Community Foundation*

*For evaluation reports, see <http://peecworks.org>*

## *Working Definition*

Place-based education provides youth and adults, teachers and students with opportunities to connect with their communities and public lands through hands-on, real-world learning experiences on community-based projects.

## SHARING THE PROMISE OF PLACE-BASED EDUCATION:

### *A New Research Learning Center Focused on Innovation and Evaluation*

Place-based education is emerging as an innovative and effective way to strengthen civic engagement, connections between public lands and communities, and resource stewardship. The Center for Place-Based Learning and Innovation is one of 32 research learning centers around the country initiated through the NPS Natural Resource Challenge. Through this center, the CSI and its partners contribute to the state of the art in place-based education, research, and evaluation of programs on national parks and other public lands.

To share lessons learned, the center co-sponsored “Promise of Place: Community-based Education in the Northern Forest Region” in November 2002 and again in March 2004. The center has also offered “Principles and Best Practices for Place-based Education,” a training program for public land managers and educators regionally and nationally through the Gateway Communities Leadership Training Program (see related story, page 6).

**PARTNERS:** *Shelburne Farms National Historical Landmark, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, NPS Natural Resource Program*

## Cultivating Leaders

The Institute cultivates leadership that is reflective and collaborative, that embraces innovation and leads change in response to new directions in conservation.

# “The Power of the Group”

## *Leadership Roundtable Creates Lifelong Learning*

By Doug Wilhelm

Across the country, National Park Service superintendents share many similar challenges: very busy days, much responsibility, high community profiles, complicated, often contentious issues, and often a sense of isolation at the top.

Since the NPS Superintendents' Leadership Roundtable program began in 2001, four groups of 12 superintendents, along with some deputy and assistant superintendents, have come together for a four-day initial program and continue to meet once a year. Convened by CSI and begun as a pilot among three NPS regions—Northeast, Intermountain, and Pacific West—the Roundtable is now a national program that has drawn comments like these from participants:

“If I only have money for one development opportunity—this is it!”

“It is the best learning experience that I have had since becoming a superintendent.”

“This is a great opportunity to connect with peers, discuss difficult issues, and build lasting support networks.”

Why has the program struck such a chord among park leaders?

“For me it was very freeing to be able to say, ‘I've got the same issues as everybody else,’ and to be able to ask, ‘how did you handle it?’” said Gayle Hazelwood, superintendent at National Capital Parks East. “It's open and refreshing to be able to talk with your colleagues, in a very safe environment, about what your concerns are, or your perceived limitations. We all have elements of self-doubt; we get second-guessed a lot, and in this forum we can say, ‘Hey, this is what's going on.’ We have opportunities to learn new best practices, as well.”



2004 roundtable participants

FACING PAGE: Superintendents' Leadership Roundtable 2003



### *Solving Problems and Building Leadership*

The NPS Roundtable is facilitated by Dennis Duncan, who has extensive experience in leadership professional development and who plays a parallel role in the U.S. Forest Service's Leadership Program. Virginia Farley, CSI director of leadership programs, notes that Duncan "offers a leadership framework including information on current research. Dennis has the ability to create a learning environment that skillfully blends presentation of leadership concepts, encouragement of participant inquiry, offering of professional counsel, and facilitation of meaningful dialogue."

The content is helpful—yet participants say that what they value most are the open discussions, building of mutual trust, and continuing relationships that the roundtables develop, along with the chance simply to reflect on their work.

"It gave me time to back away from being in the midst of the action, and to really think about what's going on, where we're going as a park, and how I might be able to effect change in a positive way. It's hard to think and plan, because you are so busy doing," said Sarah Craighead, superintendent of Saguaro National Park in Arizona.

Craighead took on the leadership post at Saguaro shortly after her group's initial, multi-day roundtable session. She quickly found herself using some of the leadership development techniques she had learned from the program.

"Dennis suggested conducting a transition session with the park's leadership staff," she said. "We held a one-day session, and it was very productive. We got to know each other a little bit better, and talked about the individual goals of the members of the team and what motivated them."

Within NPS, said Bill Laitner, superintendent of Olympic National Park, the roundtable program is unique: a professional development opportunity at the

superintendent's level that focuses both on building skills and on developing and supporting leadership.

He reflected, "Building this network is an important way of creating relationships with peers whom you can call and who will just listen to you, where you can be open and honest in your conversations.

"I think it's really important that this continue over time," Laitner said of the roundtable program and its ongoing groups. "It may be next year when the huge challenge occurs that will make or break your park area—and you'll need this help. Twelve people working together with a trained facilitator can solve difficult problems; there's a synergy that comes together that's almost magic.

"I think you get much, much closer to the root causes of leadership challenges," he added. "And we do that with a trained facilitator, who can dig or probe or push gently when needed. It's all in the power of the group."

## Convening National Dialogues on Conservation

### *Exchanging Perspectives on Innovation: National Conservation Leadership Dialogues*

In cooperation with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and the Program on Conservation Innovation at Harvard University, the Institute cosponsored “Conservation in the Twenty-first Century: A Leadership Dialogue.” This national symposium, held in June 2002 at the Lincoln Land Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was a gathering of top conservation leaders. Twenty-five participants from across the country discussed innovation in conservation science, conservation education, resource protection, and stewardship.

This dialogue launched an annual series. In June 2003, the second conservation leadership dialogue, “Landscape-scale Conservation: Grappling with the Green Matrix,” was held at the Presidio in Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco. Participants explored definitions, examples, and strategies through a series of case studies on landscape-scale conservation.

In 2004, the focus of the leadership dialogue shifted to “Frontiers of Conservation Finance” and was held at the Lincoln Land Institute. This discussion investigated promising new techniques for financing conservation projects. A publication on this seminar is underway.

**2002 PARTNERS:** *Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Program on Conservation Innovation at Harvard University*

**2003 PARTNERS:** *Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Program on Conservation Innovation at Harvard University, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment*

**2004 PARTNERS:** *Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Program on Conservation Innovation at Harvard University*

### *Forging the Link between People and Place: Land Trust Alliance National Workshops*

At the Land Trust Alliance national conference in October 2004 (in Providence, RI), CSI co-sponsored two workshops on “Theories of Change in Conservation.” These workshops were organized and facilitated by CSI leadership program director Virginia Farley and Andy Pitz with the Natural Lands Trust. This dialogue focused on identifying critical points for change to support sustainable conservation at the individual and community level. A third workshop on “The Role of Place-based Education in Fostering Land Conservation” was organized by CSI community engagement program director Delia Clark in collaboration with Megan Camp (from Shelburne Farms National Historic Landmark in Vermont) and Constance Washburn (from Marin Agricultural Land Trust in California). Participants examined and discussed the key role of place-based education in engaging citizens—youth and adults—in stewardship of their own communities.

In October 2003, CSI co-sponsored a workshop titled “Connecting Land and People: The Stories and Motivations for a New Practice of Land Conservation” at the national conference in Sacramento, California. The workshop was facilitated by CSI leadership program director Virginia Farley in cooperation with Peter Forbes of the Trust for Public Land and the Center for Whole Communities. The workshop focused on redefining our notions of success in conservation and on the power of stories.

At the Land Trust Alliance national conference in Austin, Texas, in October 2002, Virginia

Farley co-facilitated a workshop on “The Why of Land Conservation.” This workshop featured Scott Russell Sanders, distinguished professor of English at Indiana University and author of 18 books. The workshop challenged participants to explore their commitment to land stewardship. CSI also co-sponsored a day-long seminar, “Stories of Place” featuring Nan Jenks-Jay, director of environmental affairs at Middlebury College, and Gary Paul Nabhan, noted author, MacArthur Fellow, and former member of the National Park System Advisory Board.



### *Exploring the Connection Between Experience of Place and Conservation: Murie Center Symposium*

The Murie Center, located on the historic Murie Ranch in Grand Teton National Park, carries forward the values inherent in the teachings of the Murie family—respect for nature, the importance of wilderness, and responsible action. During the center’s 2002 Summer Symposium, CSI leadership program director Virginia Farley participated in a panel discussion on the interrelationship of personal and professional values. She focused on the link between formative experiences on the land and professional interest in conservation. Virginia also led two workshops exploring the use of dialogue and reflective writing as tools for conservation leadership.

## Growing the Next Generation of NPS Leaders

### *Conservation Curriculum for Emerging Leaders*

The Institute has been conducting the conservation leadership curriculum for the NPS Entry-Level Intake Program for six years. This is a two-year leadership development training program for NPS employees early in their career who show leadership promise. In 2003, the Institute conducted a two-week course titled “Conservation Leadership: History, Current Practice, and Future Directions.” Through this course, participants explored partnerships between government agencies and nonprofit organizations through site visits to Essex National Heritage Area and Salem Maritime National Historic Site. NPS and outside guest speakers joined the group for a look at conservation history and reflections on NPS leadership. The intake class graduated at CSI in August 2003. In August 2004, Virginia Farley conducted a workshop on “The Meaning of Place to the NPS” for the new class of 2005. The workshop was held at the Lied Conference Center in Nebraska.

*PARTNERS: NPS Training and Employee Development, Essex National Heritage Area, Salem Maritime National Historic Site, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park*

### *Mid-Career Leadership Development*

The Institute provided training for the 2002–2003 pilot of the Mid-Level Intake Program, a leadership development program for mid-career NPS employees. The two-year program was designed to create a highly competent, motivated, and diverse group of people ready for the challenges of professional and management careers in NPS. The Institute conducted a series of three sessions—held in Rhode Island and Vermont—on “Conservation Leadership: History and Practice.” Guest speakers offered insights on NPS history, the spectrum of stewardship philosophies, the importance of connecting people to “place,” reflective leadership styles, future scenario planning, and effective leadership in today’s NPS. Through Northeast case studies at the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, and the Green Mountain National Forest, participants looked at current trends in conservation, including partnerships—one of the new directions for NPS—and the current dialogue on wilderness.

*PARTNERS: NPS Training and Employee Development, Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, Green Mountain National Forest, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park*



*Intake participants at Salem Maritime National Historic Site and Essex National Heritage Area.*

## Analyzing Trends in Conservation

The Institute examines new directions in conservation to stay informed on the best thinking and practice. As the field of conservation evolves, the Institute offers opportunities for evaluation and discussion of new strategies.

# Conservation's New Century: Thinking, Talking, and Working Together

*A National Symposium Gathers Insights*

By Doug Wilhelm

**W**hat does the future look like for conservation? What is our legacy from previous generations? Where is the field of conservation headed? What do academics who study the movement say? What about conservation practitioners?

Those were the essential questions posed and explored during "Reconstructing Conservation: History, Values, and Practice," an ambitious national symposium co-sponsored by CSI in November 2001. The program attracted 50 scholars and practitioners for five days of presentations and dialogue—first in an academic setting, at the University of Vermont (UVM), then at CSI in Woodstock. The discussions and reflections that participants shared have since given birth to both a book and an Institute report on the symposium.

Several participants said that for them, the benefits of stepping away from day-to-day challenges and reaching for a wider, deeper, more expansive view have had lasting benefits.

"We're all busy with conservation work and the forum gave us a chance to put our work down and reflect on where we've been, where we are, and where we might be going," said J. Glenn Eugster, NPS assistant regional director, Partnerships Office, National Capital Region. "I think it was very appropriate that the program was held in New England, because of the history of the conservation movement there. The context enriched the discussions.

"It took you to a higher plane," he added of the symposium, which was co-sponsored by The Woodstock Foundation, UVM's Rubenstein School of the Environment and Natural Resources, the NPS CSI, the Trust for Public Land, and the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park. "... It was an honor to be in the company of all those scholars and practitioners; it was an inspiration. But also, asking a

**"To become a viable goal, conservation ... needs to become more inclusive in three senses: it must care for all locales, not just a select few; it must involve all the people, not just a select few; it must laud all creative acts, not just those that preserve some past. Above all, effective conservation requires not just immediate but sustained action, collaborative effort over many generations."**

— David Lowenthal, professor emeritus at University College, London, "Epilogue," *Speaking of the Future*

FACING PAGE: Beth Humstone and Phil Huffman present themes resulting from small group dialogues.

large number of people to share their thoughts challenges you to reflect on your own experience and to distill what works and what doesn't."

### *Pushing for a Fresh Perspective*

"What we wanted to do with the symposium was bring the leading academic scholars together and ask them to focus on the future—and, perhaps more important, to translate their academic perspective into a set of principles that would be relevant to people and communities grappling with issues around conservation," said Donald DeHayes, dean of the UVM Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources.

The second stage of the program, in Woodstock, he added, "was aimed at dialogue between the academics and community-based professionals and organizations, and I think it was very successful."

"The main theme was community-based conservation," said participant Susan Flader, a professor of history at the University of Missouri-Columbia. "This is not new; there's been local-level activity all along, but ... now we're realizing that what happens at the local level is really the most important thing—and that it can be assisted by other levels of organizations and government."

Flader said she has looked into the history of American conservation and found a legacy of vital community-based work reaching back to the era of the American Revolution. In scholarly interpretation today, she added, "the whole tendency is to look at the grass roots, from the bottom up."

"The conference organizers invited people to the program who are alert to what is happening in conservation today and at the com-

munity level," she added. "It was a very, very stimulating conference for me. I was at several others, right at about the same time; but this was the most concentrated look at what is happening with the conservation movement—and I got a lot of insight from this experience."



### *Commitment to Place and Community over Time*

"There's a pretty widely held view that the conservation movement, and certain ways of thinking about conservation, need to be rethought," said John Elder, a participant and author on conservation who is a professor at Middlebury College. Along with Flader, Eugster, and others, Elder contributed an essay to the CSI symposium report *Speaking of the Future: A Dialogue on Conservation*.

Reflecting on the symposium, Elder—whose next book will examine the career and influence of George Perkins Marsh—said, "for me, it's trying to put conservation of resources and places in a richer social context. We're moving beyond simplistic dichotomies. That's finally what it's about."

"People are talking about the relationship between conservation and citizenship," he explained.

"Basically the reason we have conservation is both to sustain the resources that we need, and to explore what it means to be a citizen and to live in a society ... 'Stewardship' is a critical word from the lineage of George Perkins Marsh—and stewardship implies a special personal commitment to a

particular place and a particular community over time."

Added Eugster of NPS, "that's one of the exciting things about this change to a more community- or place-based philosophy: you recognize that we're all experts in something. We've gotten away from this notion that government agencies or non-profits are the sole answer and actor for

conservation. Rather, the solutions are in the communities. Some of them are still to be discovered; but the refreshing thing that came out in Vermont was that by working with people at the community level in an equitable way, you create an opportunity for people to help solve problems and identify opportunities."

Said Dean DeHayes of UVM, "we had voices at the table from land trusts, and people talking about multiculturalism in conservation, as well as people talking about the history of the movement, and about communities and parks from a national and international perspective. That was a very moving experience ..."

For both the National Park Service and the broader conservation community, said John Elder, CSI "is creating settings where people can think about these broader issues. This is a very important role and it's a good time for it."

## Sharing National Symposium Findings through Two Publications

“This symposium and the publications emanating from it are an excellent example of what can be accomplished through partnerships.”

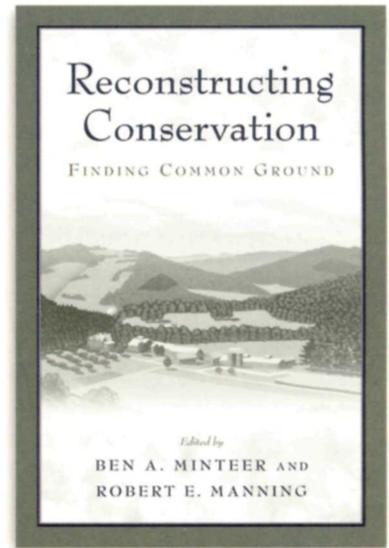
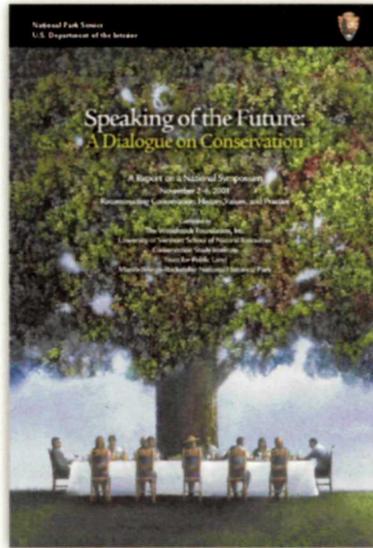
— Dean Don DeHayes, University of Vermont’s Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources

Fifty prominent academicians in environmental philosophy and history, as well as leading conservation practitioners from the public and private sectors, participated in a national symposium. Two publications based on this symposium critically examine long-held conservation tenets and envision principles for conservation in the twenty-first century.

In 2003, the Institute edited and published a report, *Speaking of the Future: A Dialogue on Conservation*, that included nine papers presented at the symposium describing lessons learned and insights gained from conservation practice. Also included were a summary of key themes that emerged from the symposium dialogue and reflective essays by four symposium participants that create a broad vision for the future of conservation. Professor David Lowenthal’s epilogue provides a historical context for re-envisioning conservation and concludes with a challenge: to find a future path that intentionally embeds stewardship in the fabric of society and in our daily lives.

Twenty-three leading scholars and practitioners contributed to *Reconstructing Conservation: Finding Common Ground*, a 2003 Island Press book that explores the conceptual foundations and contemporary vitality of the American conservation tradition. One chapter, “Reinventing Conservation: A Practitioner’s View,” was co-authored by Rolf Diamant (superintendent, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park), Glenn Eugster (assistant regional director, Partnership Office, National Capital Region), and CSI director Nora Mitchell. The book was edited by Ben A. Minter (Arizona State University) and Robert E. Manning (University of Vermont).

**PARTNERS:** *The Woodstock Foundation, University of Vermont Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, the Trust for Public Land, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park*



### *Twelve Principles for Reconstructing Conservation*

from *Reconstructing Conservation: Finding Common Ground*, edited by Ben A. Minter and Robert E. Manning

A “reconstructed conservation” will:

1. adopt an integrative understanding of nature and culture;
2. be concerned with working and cultural landscapes as well as more “pristine” environments;
3. rely on a wider and more contextual reading of the conservation tradition;
4. require long-range landscape stewardship and restoration efforts;
5. have “land health” as one of its primary socio-ecological goals;
6. be adaptive and open to multiple practices and objectives;
7. embrace value pluralism;
8. promote community-based conservation strategies;
9. rely on an engaged citizenry;
10. engage questions of social justice;
11. be politically inclusive and partnership driven; and
12. embrace its democratic traditions.

## CONSERVATION AT THE LANDSCAPE SCALE: Lecture Series Explores Emerging Models and Strategies

To protect remaining wild lands and sustain working landscapes, many conservation efforts today operate at the landscape scale. To be successful at this large scale, these efforts must integrate ecological, cultural, and recreational values with economic and community development. As a result, the practice of landscape-scale conservation is complex and challenging: it requires working across political and ecosystem boundaries, adopts an interdisciplinary perspective, and involves the collaboration of many organizations.

In spring 2003, the Institute initiated an annual lecture series co-sponsored with the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources at the University of Vermont. The series, titled "Conservation at the Landscape Scale: Emerging Models and Strategies," invites leading experts to share their experiences in working on large-scale landscape conservation initiatives.

Selected lectures and panel discussions are broadcast nationally through the NPS distance learning network and videos are also available on our website [http://www.nps.gov/csi/trends/uvm\\_lecture\\_series.htm](http://www.nps.gov/csi/trends/uvm_lecture_series.htm). In spring 2005, a thematic issue of the *George Wright Forum* will be dedicated to landscape-scale conservation based on this lecture series.

**PARTNERS:** *University of Vermont Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, Snelling Center for Government, Shelburne Farms, QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment*

### FALL 2004

**Kathleen Fitzgerald**, executive director and co-founder, Northeast Wilderness Trust.

**Don Murphy**, deputy director, National Park Service.

**Gustavo Fonseca**, executive vice president, Conservation International. Dr. Fonseca also participated in a panel discussion moderated by CSI director Nora Mitchell, which was broadcast to sites across the U.S. as a distance learning event. Luis Vivanco, assistant professor of anthropology, University of Vermont and Jessica Brown, vice president for international programs at QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment, served as panelists.

### FALL 2003

**Brenda Barrett**, national coordinator for heritage areas, National Park Service.

**Jeffrey McNeely**, chief scientist, IUCN-The World Conservation Union. Dr. McNeely also participated in a panel discussion moderated by CSI director Nora Mitchell, which was broadcast to sites across the U.S. as a distance learning event. Mike Soukup, NPS associate director for natu-

ral resources stewardship and science, and Jessica Brown, vice president for international programs at QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment, served as panelists.

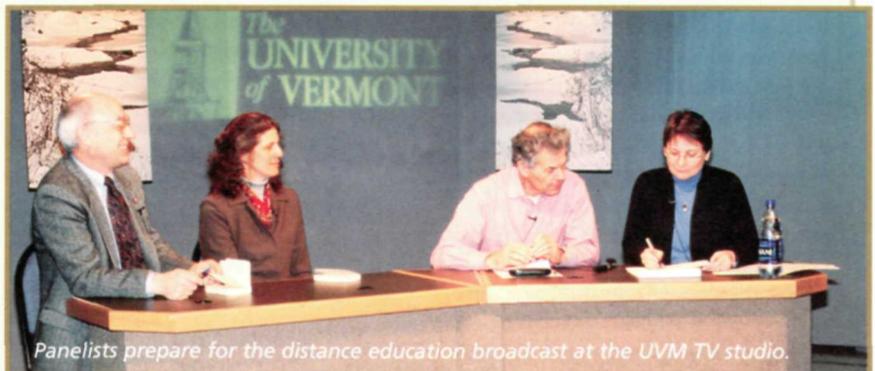
**Liz Thompson**, consulting conservation biologist, University of Vermont.

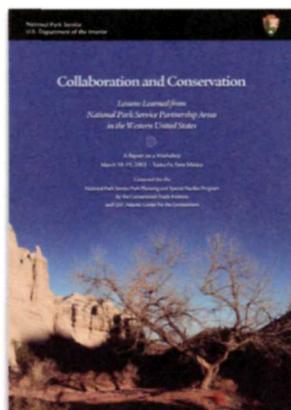
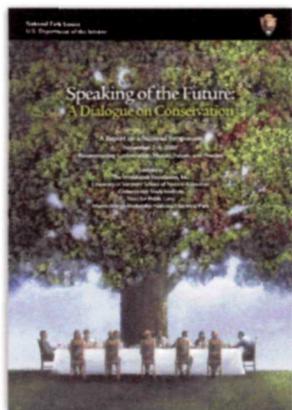
### SPRING 2003

**Dr. Reed Noss**, Davis-Shine professor of Conservation Biology at the University of Central Florida and chief scientist for the Wildlands Project.

**Adrian Phillips**, senior advisor to IUCN's World Heritage Programme. Mr. Phillips also participated in a panel discussion moderated by CSI director Nora Mitchell, which was broadcast to sites across the U.S. as the Institute's first distance learning event with a viewer call-in component. Mike Soukup, NPS associate director for natural resources stewardship and science, and Jessica Brown, vice president for international programs at QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment, were on the panel.

**Nancy Bell**, Vermont director for The Conservation Fund.





The Institute uses a variety of formats, designed for professionals and the public, to share information on conservation history, current practices, and perspectives on the future. The Institute continues the Conservation and Stewardship Publication Series, edited by CSI director Nora Mitchell.

To obtain a copy of any Conservation Study Institute publication, visit our website: [www.nps.gov/csi](http://www.nps.gov/csi) or contact us by e-mail: [stewardship@nps.gov](mailto:stewardship@nps.gov) or by mail: Conservation Study Institute, 54 Elm Street, Woodstock, VT 05091.

## CSI Publications

- ✦ Tuxill, Jacquelyn L., Nora J. Mitchell, and Jessica Brown. *Conservation and Collaboration: Lessons Learned from National Park Service Partnerships in the Western U.S.*, Conservation and Stewardship Publication No. 6, Woodstock, VT: Conservation Study Institute, 2004. This book presents deliberations and recommendations from a workshop held in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in March 2003. The workshop brought together 27 experienced partnership practitioners from the NPS and partner organizations to share what they have learned about building effective conservation partnerships and to discuss how to create a sustainable approach to partnerships within the NPS, other federal agencies, and a wide range of partner organizations. This workshop was designed to build on a similar workshop held in Woodstock in 2000, which convened practitioners primarily from the eastern United States.
- ✦ Slaiby, Barbara, Nora Mitchell, Brent Mitchell and Susan Buggey. *Handbook for Managers of Cultural Landscapes with Natural Resource Values*. Conservation and Stewardship Publication No. 5, Woodstock, VT: Conservation Study Institute, 2003. <http://www.nps.gov/csi/csihandbook/home.htm> (web-based only). The Institute developed this web-based handbook for managers of cultural landscapes as part of its work to bridge the traditional gap between natural resource and cultural heritage conservation. It is meant to be a living document that will continue to evolve and expand as readers contribute additional case studies and advice gleaned from their professional experience.

- ✦ Mitchell, Nora J., Leslie J. Hudson, and Deb Jones, eds. *Speaking of the Future: A Dialogue on Conservation*. Conservation and Stewardship Publication No. 4, Woodstock, VT: Conservation Study Institute, 2003.
- ✦ National Park Service. *Stewardship Begins with People: An Atlas of Places, People, and Handmade Products, Project Update*. Woodstock, VT: Conservation Study Institute, July 2004.

## Articles

- ✦ Barrett, Brenda, and Nora J. Mitchell, eds. "Stewardship of Heritage Areas." *The George Wright Forum* 20, no. 2 (2003).
- ✦ Brown, Jessica, Nora Mitchell, and Jacquelyn Tuxill. "An Evolving U.S. System of Parks and Protected Areas." *Parks* 13, no. 2 (2003): 31–41.
- ✦ Buggey, Susan, and Nora Mitchell. "Cultural Landscapes Venues for Community-based Conservation." In press (2004).
- ✦ Diamant, Rolf, J. Glenn Eugster, and Nora J. Mitchell. "Reinventing Conservation: A Practitioner's View." Chapter 19 in *Reconstructing Conservation: Finding Common Ground*. Ben A. Minter and Robert E. Manning, eds. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2003.
- ✦ Mitchell, Nora, Barbara Slaiby, and Mark Benedict. "Local Community Leadership: Building Partnerships for Conservation in North America." *Parks* 12, no. 2 (2002): 55–66.

## Web Resources

- ✦ Expanded CSI website, [www.nps.gov/csi](http://www.nps.gov/csi), including:
- ✦ *Handbook for Managers of Cultural Landscapes with Natural Resource Values* [www.nps.gov/csi/csihandbook/home.htm](http://www.nps.gov/csi/csihandbook/home.htm)
- ✦ *A Forest for Every Classroom* Place-Based Education Curricula [www.nps.gov/csi/trends/forest.htm](http://www.nps.gov/csi/trends/forest.htm)
- ✦ Video archive of the lecture series, "Conservation at the Landscape Scale" [www.uvm.edu/conservationlectures](http://www.uvm.edu/conservationlectures)

## Videos

- ✦ Rattigan, Charles F. "A Forest for Every Classroom: Learning to Make Choices for the Future." Woodstock, VT, Company for Home Entertainment, Inc., 2003. A 15-minute documentary featuring interviews with participating teachers and program partners. Available in DVD and VHS format.

## Other Publications

- ✦ Minter, Ben A., and Robert Manning, eds. *Reconstructing Conservation: Finding Common Ground*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2003. This book resulted from the 2001 symposium, "Reconstructing Conservation: History, Values, and Practice."
- ✦ National Park Service. *Branching Out: Approaches in National Park Stewardship*. Fort Washington, PA: Eastern National, 2003. This booklet features a sampling of U.S. national park areas that represent the tradition and growing trend of shared stewardship.



Partnerships are the cornerstone of the Institute's vision and success. We are committed to collaborating with others to capitalize on various perspectives on conservation from academic, government, and private interests, and to shape relevant programs. Through collaboration, the Institute ensures that its programs examine the most challenging current issues and draw on contemporary experience and state-of-the-art thinking within the NPS and the broader conservation community.

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park** is the only national park to tell the story of conservation history and the evolving nature of land stewardship in America. Home to pioneer conservationist George Perkins Marsh, the park includes a model farm and forest developed by Frederick Billings and continued by granddaughter Mary French Rockefeller and her husband, Laurance S. Rockefeller. The park, working in partnership with the Billings Farm & Museum, chronicles three generations of stewardship and the emergence of a national conservation ethic. The Conservation Study Institute's home office is located here.

[www.nps.gov/mabi](http://www.nps.gov/mabi)

*Rolf Diamant, Superintendent*

**NPS National Heritage Areas Program** manages heritage areas around the country to conserve and celebrate heritage and special landscapes.

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas/>

*Brenda Barrett, Program Director*  
*Suzanne Copping, Program Assistant*

### NPS Northeast Region

*Marie Rust, Regional Director*  
*Chrysantra Walter, Deputy Regional Director*  
*John Maounis, Chief of Staff*  
*Robert McIntosh, Associate Regional Director*

**NPS Park Planning and Special Studies Program** establishes policies and coordinates activities related to general management planning for all units of the national park system.

<http://inside.nps.gov/waso/waso.cfm?lv=2&prg=50>

*Warren Brown, Program Manager*

**NPS Partnerships Office** offers nationwide partnership programs for interpretation, education, volunteers, and outdoor recreation to further support and foster stewardship for the 388 national parks and a multitude of programs.

*Chris Jarvi, Associate Director for Partnerships, Interpretation and Education, Volunteers and Education*

*John Piltzecker, Partnership Program Manager*

**NPS Policy Office** develops and communicates policy and regulations (and helps others do so), administers the committee management program, and plans and coordinates conferences.

*Loran Fraser, Chief, Office of Policy*

**NPS Training Community** provides resources, context, and stimulus for personal and professional growth in support of the NPS mission and strategic goals and trains and develops NPS employees from sites throughout the United States.

[www.nps.gov/training](http://www.nps.gov/training)

*Chris Perry, (former) Training Manager, Entry-level Intake Program*

*Mary Bonacorda, Employee Development Specialist*

*Peggy Sandretzky, NPS Liaison to the National Conservation Training Center*

*Sandy Taylor, Training Manager, Supervision, Management, and Leadership*

*Michael Watson, Superintendent, Mather Training Center*

*Constantine Dillon, Superintendent, Albright Training Center*

*Clarenda Drake, Superintendent, National Capital Training Center*

## ORGANIZATIONS

**Harvard University/Program on Conservation Innovation at the Harvard Forest** advances the practice of land and biodiversity conservation in the twenty-first century.

<http://harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu/research/pci/Welcome.htm>

*Jim Levitt, Director*

**Land Trust Alliance** works to accelerate the pace of land protection and to safeguard the long-term future of land trusts and the lands they conserve.

<http://www.lta.org/aboutlta/index.html>

*John Bernstein, Director of Conservation*  
*Ezra Milchman, Northeast Director*

**Lincoln Institute of Land Policy** is a nonprofit educational institution established in 1974. Its mission is to study and teach land policy, including land economics and land taxation.

<http://www.lincolnst.edu/aboutlincoln/index.asp>

*Armando Carbonell, Senior Fellow and Co-chair*

*Jean Hocker, Board Member*

**Murie Center** "inspires people to act mindfully on behalf of wild nature."

<http://www.muriecenter.org/>

*Nancy Shea, Executive Director*

**National Park Foundation** strengthens the enduring connection between the American people and their national parks by raising private funds, making strategic grants, creating innovative partnerships and increasing public awareness.

<http://www.nationalparks.org/Home.asp>

*Julia Washburn, Vice President, Grants and Programs*

**QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment (QLF)** is a private, non-profit organization whose mission is to support the rural communities and environment of New England and eastern Canada and to create models for stewardship of natural resources and cultural heritage that can be applied worldwide. Incorporated in the United States and Canada, QLF has over 35 years of experience working in rural communities of the Atlantic region.

[www.qlf.org](http://www.qlf.org)

*Lawrence B. Morris, President*

*Jessica Brown, Vice President, International Programs*

*Brent Mitchell, Vice President, Stewardship*

*Tom Horn, Vice President, Programs*

*Stephanie Tuxill, Coordinator, International Programs*

**Shelburne Farms** is a national historic landmark and a nonprofit, place-based educational organization whose mission is to cultivate a conservation ethic in Vermont and around the world by teaching and demonstrating the stewardship of natural and agricultural resources. Its educational programs reach students and teachers, conservation professionals, and the public.

[www.shelburnefarms.org](http://www.shelburnefarms.org)

*Alec Webb, President*

*Megan Camp, Vice President, Programs*

*Pat Straughan, Family Program Coordinator*

**Sonoran Institute** is a nonprofit organization that works collaboratively with local people and interests to conserve and restore important natural landscapes in western North America, engaging partners such as landowners, public land managers, local leaders, community residents, and nongovernmental organizations. "Community Stewardship" is the Institute's innovative approach to conservation.

<http://www.sonoran.org/>

*Luther Propst, Executive Director*

*John Shepard, Associate Director of Programs and Administration*

**The Conservation Fund** forges partnerships to preserve our nation's outdoor heritage: America's legacy of wildlife habitat, working landscapes, and community open space.

<http://www.conservationfund.org/>

*Larry Selzer, President and CEO*

*Ed McMahon, former Vice-President*

*Mark Benedict, Senior Associate for Strategic Conservation*

*Kristin Peppel, Training Program Manager*

*Nancy Bell, Vermont Director*

**The Woodstock Foundation, Inc.** promotes conservation, sustainable land use, and heritage as values that are essential to culture, community, and the human spirit. The foundation's centerpiece is the Billings Farm & Museum, an operating dairy farm and museum dedicated to telling the story of Vermont's rural heritage.

*David Donath, President*

**University of Vermont (UVM)** provides both scholarship on conservation history and educational programs through the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources and allied programs on campus. Faculty in the Rubenstein School have extensive expertise in recreation management research in national parks and national forests across the country. The Conservation Study Institute has an office at the university.

[www.uvm.edu](http://www.uvm.edu)

#### **Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources**

*Don DeHayes, Dean*

*Deane Wang, Associate Dean*

*Steve Libby, Lecturer*

*Robert Long, Doctoral Student*

*Robert E. Manning, Professor*

*Leslie Morrissey, Associate Professor*

*Pat Stokowski, Associate Professor*

*Wes Graff, Manager, Instructional Television*

*Robert McCullough, Lecturer, Historic Preservation Program*

*Rick Paradis, Director, Natural Areas Center*

*Walter Poleman, Lecturer, Botany*

*Tom Vissar, Director and Associate Professor, Historic Preservation Program*

**Vermont Law School** provides legal education rooted in a commitment to civic values.

<http://www.vermontlaw.edu>

*Geoffrey Shields, President and Dean*

*Karin Sheldon, Assistant Dean, Environment Program; Director of the Environment Law Center*

*Belinda Sifford, Assistant Professor*

#### **US Fish and Wildlife Service/ National Conservation Training Center**

is a gathering place where conservation professionals from all sectors can learn together in an environment especially designed for them. Individuals from governments, nonprofit organizations, and corporations can come together in a non-threatening, collaborative setting to learn new skills, share perspectives, break down barriers, establish networks, find common ground, and move toward field-based solutions built on consensus and mutual interest.

<http://training.fws.gov/>

*Steve Chase, Special Assistant to the Director, NCTC*

*Dawn Lagrotteria*

*Laura Jones*

### **STAFF AND PROJECT PARTNERS**

#### **Conservation Study Institute**

*Nora Mitchell, Director*

*Mea Arego, Administrative Officer*

*Delia Clark, Community Engagement Program Director*

*Virginia Farley, Leadership Program Director*

*Leslie Hudson, Editor*

*Deb Jones, former Program Associate*

*Daniel Laven, CSI Fellow at University of Vermont*

*Susanne McDonald, Management Assistant*

*Leslie Shabi, Program Management Specialist*

*Barbara Slaiiby, Education Program Coordinator*

*Jackie Tuxill, Partnership Program Director*



**The Conservation Study Institute thanks the following  
for the photographic contributions to this report:**

Jonathan Blake: inside back cover

Suzanne Copping: 2 top

Delia Clark: 6

BJ Dunn: 14 inset

Bo Hoppin: 2 bottom right, 12

Bill Laitner: 14

National Park Service: 2 middle right, 7, 8

Nora Mitchell: front cover, 2 bottom left, 4, 5

Ernest Ortega: 23

Jeff Roberts: 9

Barb Slaiby: 2 middle left, 10, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21

Special thanks to Deb Jones.

Design: Brian P. Graphics Arts, [brianpgraphics@adelphia.net](mailto:brianpgraphics@adelphia.net)

Printed on recycled paper.

CONSERVATION STUDY INSTITUTE



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Conservation Study Institute

54 Elm Street / Woodstock, Vermont 05091

Tel: (802) 457-3368 / Fax: (802) 457-3405

Web: [www.nps.gov/csi](http://www.nps.gov/csi)