



CONSERVATION STUDY INSTITUTE



Advancing innovation in collaborative conservation for the stewardship of our national system of parks and special places.

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 to develop more sophisticated partnerships, new tools for community engagement, and new strategies for the 21st century.

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.

“On August 24, 2006, the eve of the National Park Service’s 90th anniversary, President Bush challenged the Service and the American people to work together over the next ten years to strengthen the parks and to prepare them for another century of conservation, preservation and public enjoyment. . . The three program initiatives we have developed consistent with the President’s directive are – *Strengthening Core Park Operations, Connecting People to Parks, and Serving Communities through Signature Programs.*”

“My own list is : reconnect the American people to their national parks; improve the capabilities of the system; and prepare the next generation of leaders in our Service. . . I sincerely believe that the future will indeed be brighter for our Service, and that the Centennial Challenge will truly serve as a springboard to vibrant parks for the next 100 years.”

- NPS Director Mary A. Bomar, December 2006

“ . . . we in the Northeast have demonstrated leadership in many areas, including education, business endeavors such as leasing, interpretive planning, civic engagement, partnerships, and heritage areas. I intend to continue and support the progress and innovations that we have made in these areas and hopefully identify our own NPS Centennial initiatives.”

- Acting Northeast Regional Director Chrysandra Walter, November 2006



Collaborative conservation creates sustainable stewardship of national parks and other places of natural and cultural heritage through broad-based partnerships, community engagement, and cooperative leadership, to build a vision for the future.

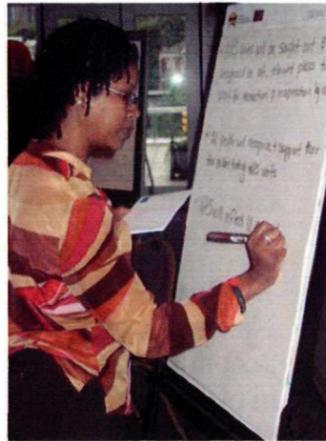


CONSERVATION STUDY INSTITUTE PROGRAMS

The Institute provides technical assistance to parks, heritage areas, and regional programs by conducting demonstration projects, distilling and sharing lessons learned, and building networks for information exchange. Institute programs in collaborative conservation help to connect the National Park Service to the evolving field of conservation. A diversity of programs creates opportunities to reflect on lessons learned, identifies and shares best practices, exchanges leadership experience, and maintains a dialogue on the best thinking and practice in the larger world of conservation. As a result, the National Park Service and its partners in collaborative conservation become more effective and creative in advancing the stewardship of our national system of parks and special places.

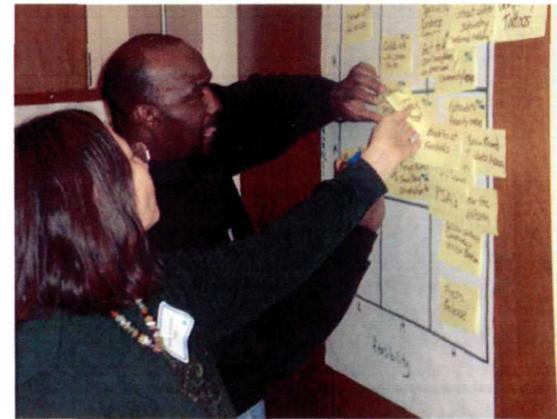
Keeping National Parks Relevant in the 21st Century

Engaging an increasingly diverse population is critical to the future of our national system of parks and special places. This Conservation Study Institute report, summarizing a conference convened by the Northeast Region, articulates a vision for the National Park Service in the 21st century and creates a strategic framework to guide actions for the Northeast Region that will enhance the connections between the NPS and the American public.



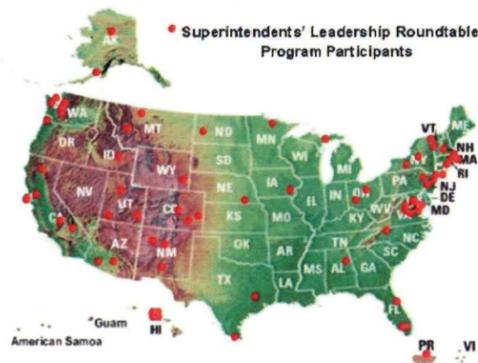
Creating Community Engagement

Partnerships are key to the success of the National Park Service. To support building and sustaining relationships, the Conservation Study Institute works with others to create opportunities for **dialogue and skill-building** for civic engagement among interpreters and other NPS staff. In addition, the Institute has, in cooperation with several national parks, facilitated **community forums** to enhance collaboration on shared issues and identify strategies and actions for mutual benefit.



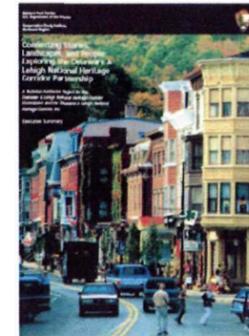
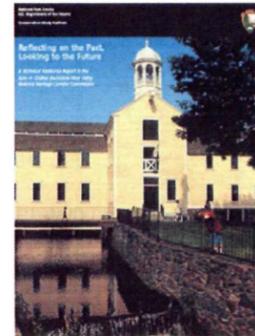
Exchanging Leadership Experience

Superintendents' Leadership Roundtables, convened by the Institute, provide an opportunity for leadership exchange among superintendents from national parks across the country. This peer network of 84 park managers (who meet in six groups of 14) enhances their ability to build and sustain collaborative relationships and more effectively meet the leadership opportunities and challenges associated with the increasing complexity of park management.



Sharing Ideas and Best Practices

Sharing ideas is critical for us to be an effective, efficient learning organization. The Northeast Region asked the Institute to **identify and share exemplary projects** that advance the NPS Legacy Goals. Over 125 projects from throughout the region were submitted by parks, national heritage areas, and regional programs (see www.ner.nps.gov and click on "Legacy Initiative") and 21 of these were documented in PSAs (Public Service Announcements) previewed at the 2006 Northeast Region Superintendents' Conference.



Building Partnership Networks

Evaluation of programs documents accomplishments, identifies opportunities for strengthening effectiveness, and provides insights into building sustainable partnership networks. At the request of the Commissions of the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor and the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, the Conservation Study Institute conducted **sustainability studies** to evaluate programs in these heritage areas. Through community dialogue, partner interviews, and in-depth discussion with the commissions, the Institute team described the partnership network and identified critical ingredients for success – and renewed the partnerships in the seamless network.



FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR THE CONSERVATION STUDY INSTITUTE

From the *Northeast Regional Office Business Plan, Doing Business in the 21st Century* (2006)

As the National Park Service moves into the 21st century, the environment in which the Northeast Regional Office operates is changing. The business planning process identified areas requiring greater investment to meet the challenges of this dynamic environment and support the diverse needs of parks, heritage areas, and communities.

Areas of future investment by the Northeast Region:

- ◆ Strengthen the Conservation Study Institute partnership network across the country with other National Park Service sites, regions, and programs, and with academic and non-governmental organizations.
- ◆ Expand success of Conservation Study Institute programs. Activities such as the Gateway Communities Forum and the Superintendents' Leadership Roundtable help to connect the National Park Service to the evolving field of conservation and should be made available to a larger audience.
- ◆ Continue the successful partnership between the Conservation Study Institute and National Heritage Areas to evaluate their success and sustainability.
- ◆ Invest in an evaluation process to direct funding to programs with the most impact.
- ◆ Seek multi-regional and national financial support for successful Conservation Study Institute programs that directly serve superintendents and support the NPS Legacy Goals with the long term vision of institutionalizing these programs within the National Park Service.
- ◆ Sustain and expand programs by seeking funding from other NPS offices and regions, other agencies, and non-government sources.





CSI Staff and Partners

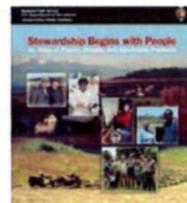


(from left to right)
Mea Arego, Nora Mitchell, Daniel Laven, Liesbeth Neisingh,
Virginia Farley, Jackie Tuxill, Delia Clark, and Leslie Shahi

Working in Partnership

Partnerships are the cornerstone of the Institute. The Institute collaborates with others to capitalize on various perspectives on conservation from the National Park Service and other government agencies, academic institutions, and nongovernmental organizations. This partnership network shapes relevant programs and creates opportunities to implement programs in cooperation with a diverse array of partners. 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 National Park Service and the broader conservation community.

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CSI Publications

Conservation and Stewardship Series

(pdf versions are available at: <http://www.nps.gov/csi/>)

No. 14 — *Stewardship Begins with People: An Atlas of Places, People, and Handmade Products, 2007*

No. 13 — *Scholars Forum, The National Park Service and Civic Reflection: A Summary Report, 2006*

No. 12 — *Working Together for a Common Future: The Community-Public Land Regional Handbook, 2006*

No. 11 — *Learning to be Better Neighbors: Case Studies in Civic Engagement Between National Parks and Neighboring Communities, 2006*

No. 10 — *Opportunities for Communities that Neighbor Public Lands, 2006*

No. 9 — *Connecting Stories, Landscapes, and People: Exploring the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Partnership, 2006*

No. 8 — *Keeping National Parks Relevant in the 21st Century, 2006*

No. 7 — *Reflecting on the Past, Looking to the Future: Sustainability Study Report. A Technical Assistance Report to the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, 2005*

No. 6 — *Collaboration and Conservation: Lessons Learned from National Park Service Partnership Areas in the Western United States, 2004*



The Institute is based at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park and works with the park to tell the story of conservation and the emergence of a stewardship ethic.