



General Management Planning
and Special Resource Study Programs
October 2003

Successes & Accomplishments





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General Management Plan Successes

Mojave National Preserve, California • GMP

○ *Far-reaching public engagement fosters new understanding and interest in Preserve*

A comprehensive vision for management of this unit was developed in consultation with an advisory commission, interagency partners, hunters, off-road enthusiasts, ranchers and other interested parties. There were forty-two public meetings held and multiple opportunities for written comment to be submitted during the development of the plan. This extensive public involvement process engaged the public and created an atmosphere of understanding and involvement in the park and its management that had not previously existed.

○ *Resource protection strategy provides impetus for leveraging private funds*

A land protection strategy and accompanying resource information were gathered, synthesized and presented in the GMP. This information, combined with the NPS management presence, has resulted in millions of dollars in private funds being made available to retire grazing allotments and to purchase private property from willing sellers, thus avoiding conflict and allowing for better protection of the threatened desert tortoise.

○ *Rehabilitation of historic train depot supported by a wide audience*

This nationally significant historic resource built in 1924 by Union Pacific Railroad has been vacant since 1985. The building became property of the NPS in 1994 upon establishment of the Preserve. Mojave's GMP calls for this building to be rehabilitated and used as the primary visitor center for the Preserve. The NPS plans to use the building for exhibits on the natural and cultural resources of the Preserve, a theater for presentations on the Preserve, a bookstore, a discovery classroom for school groups, a small restaurant in the Beanery, and a few offices for staff that operate the visitor center.



○ *Common goals link NPS and neighbors*

The park faced a range of major problems related to organizational effectiveness, resource protection, public safety, and enjoyment and public understanding. The GMP addressed the park's need for a current and clear vision as to what the mission goals are from a park/regional perspective, and what the short and long-term strategy should be to achieve those goals.

During and after the GMP effort, the park worked with the U.S. Forest Service and the local community to determine if there were any common goals and needs among the group. The group determined that the various entities involved had common goals and concerns, but were struggling individually with strategies for accomplishing their goals.

○ *Shared resources and facilities maximize NPS and US Forest Service efficiency*

During the planning process the NPS made a decision to move facilities outside the monument and it became apparent that for other reasons, the U.S. Forest Service also faced the need to relocate facilities and services. The two agencies have been able to work together to define their needs, share facilities and staff, and in turn minimize overall cost. Based on the NPS and U.S. Forest Service efforts to locate property in which to build a joint facility, on December 6, 2002, Congress passed PL. 107-329

which provided for "...the acquisition of land and construction of an interagency administrative and visitor facility at the entrance to American Fork Canyon, Utah, and for other purposes."

○ *County government collaborates with NPS and U.S. Forest Service to address visitor protection needs, safety, and efficiency*

The county outside the park also expressed a need and interest in working with the NPS and U.S. Forest Service in the shared facility venture to address some of their law enforcement needs and provide visitors with greater protection. The GMP is expected to significantly improve public safety and opportunities to improve visitor enjoyment and understanding, and increase organizational efficiency for Park Service as well as the other entities involved.

○ *Clear GMP vision provides direction for action and implementation to save resources*

With a clear vision and appropriate environmental clearances the park was able to move ahead in implementing the approved GMP. The plan called for removing the majority of the visitor/administrative facilities out of the monument because of impacts on natural and cultural resources and the many hazards and limitations associated with geologic, avalanche, floodplain, and flash flood zones.



○ *Planning for public/private museum partnership cements relationship between NPS and Vancouver*

The GMP process has helped to foster a close relationship between the park and staff and elected officials of the City of Vancouver, Washington. The GMP incorporates by reference the 1995 Pearson Air Museum Plans as part of the long-range future of the National Historic Site. The Air Museum occupies four historic properties and some seven acres of land within the eastern portion of the National Historic Site. The management and use of this area of the park is addressed through a written agreement between the NPS and the City of Vancouver, who, in turn, has a formal relationship with a non-profit museum board of directors, which oversees the museum.

The GMP process allowed the park staff and the City of Vancouver an excellent opportunity to reaffirm their relationship with each other concerning their adaptive reuse of historic properties, which are on park land, and to affirm the continued use of a portion of park property by the City of Vancouver for museum purposes. Relocation of several active airplane hangers to city property has also allowed the park to restore the cultural landscape adjacent to the Fort. These efforts have resulted in meeting both community and national historic preservation and visitor use interests.

○ *GMP process provides forum for City and NPS to focus on Discovery trail siting*

Another successful result of the Fort Vancouver GMP process has been solidifying a good working relationship with the City of Vancouver concerning the siting of the Discovery Trail through a portion of the National Historic Site. This includes a trail connection to a GMP proposed land bridge/pedestrian overpass, which links the park to its Columbia River waterfront area. The GMP process has provided the forum to address the appropriate location and type of trail that will link areas of the National Historic Reserve with the waterfront. Sensitivities for archeology, trail routing, public access, compatibility with the historic scene, and opportunities for the park visitor to use the trail to link to various NPS interpretive sites were among the areas of mutual interest which benefited from the GMP process.



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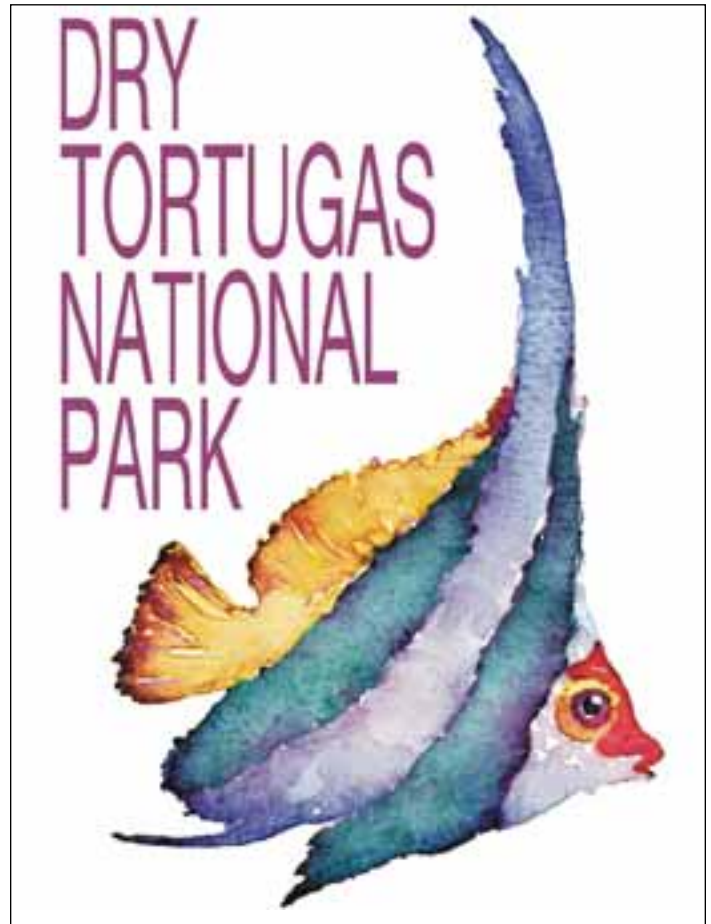
○ *Diverse groups unite to support creating the largest protected marine area in the National Park System*

The GMP process brought together environmentalists, fisherman, and park users to create a shared vision that resulted in the creation of a 46 square mile Dry Tortugas Research Natural Area. The natural area provides enhanced protection of near-pristine resources such as coral reefs and sea grass beds, fisheries and submerged cultural resources.

This protective area complements the adjacent Tortugas Ecological Reserve in the waters of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, established in April 2001 by the Governor and Cabinet of the State of Florida. When fully implemented, this research natural area will be the largest fully protected marine area in the national park system, and when considered with the Ecological Reserve, constitutes the third largest marine reserve in the world.

○ *Award Winning Collaboration and Innovation*

The Southeast Region and the Denver Service Center received an award from the American Planning Association in the category of Outstanding Collaborative Planning Project for the Dry Tortugas National Park General Management Plan Amendment. The plan was recognized for its emphasis on consensus building and for offering imaginative ways to balance preservation and revenue objectives.



○ *GMP partnership creates plans for visitor facilities outside Park*

The Mount Rainier GMP was completed in February 2002. Among the GMP recommendations was to pursue outreach programs with the surrounding gateway communities to establish welcome centers in cooperation with local governments and visitor information bureaus.

Specific planning efforts as an outgrowth of the GMP have led to two proposals that are being pursued with local governments, organizations, and other partners in the communities of Enumclaw and Ashford, WA. The City of Enumclaw has taken the lead in establishing an interagency welcome center involving the NPS, U.S. Forest Service, and the local Chamber of Commerce. In Ashford, a partnership to establish a mountaineering center along

the most heavily used highway entry corridor into the park is moving forward involving Pierce County, the community of Ashford, and Rainier Mountaineering, Inc. The project combines a welcome center orientation facility with interactive exhibits and a shuttle transfer station.

○ *Local governments ask for and support Park boundary adjustment*

With the support of local government and several local organizations, the GMP also recommended a boundary addition of approximately 1,000 acres in the Carbon River drainage to provide much needed visitor facilities in this area of the park and to give greater protection to the Carbon River corridor. Boundary legislation has been recently introduced in Congress.

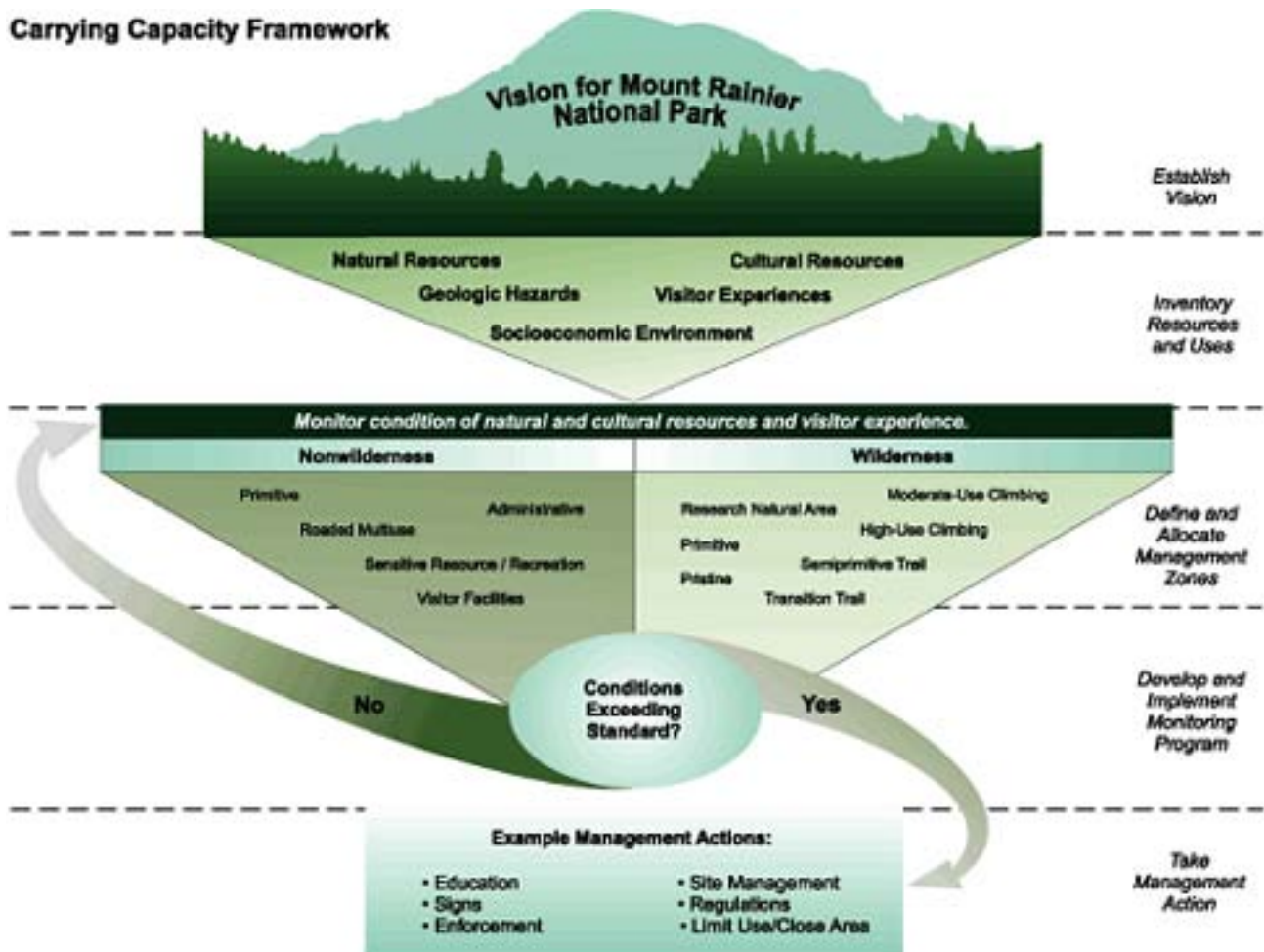


Figure 1

○ *Relationship with Ojibwe strengthened*

Although not yet completed, the GMP has been a catalyst for change in the relationship between NPS and the Ojibwe Indians. The Ojibwe gave the land for Grand Portage National Monument to NPS with the implied understanding that NPS would bring jobs and an opportunity to sell craftwork. As a result of the plan several very important accomplishments will be achieved, and the relationship will continue to grow.

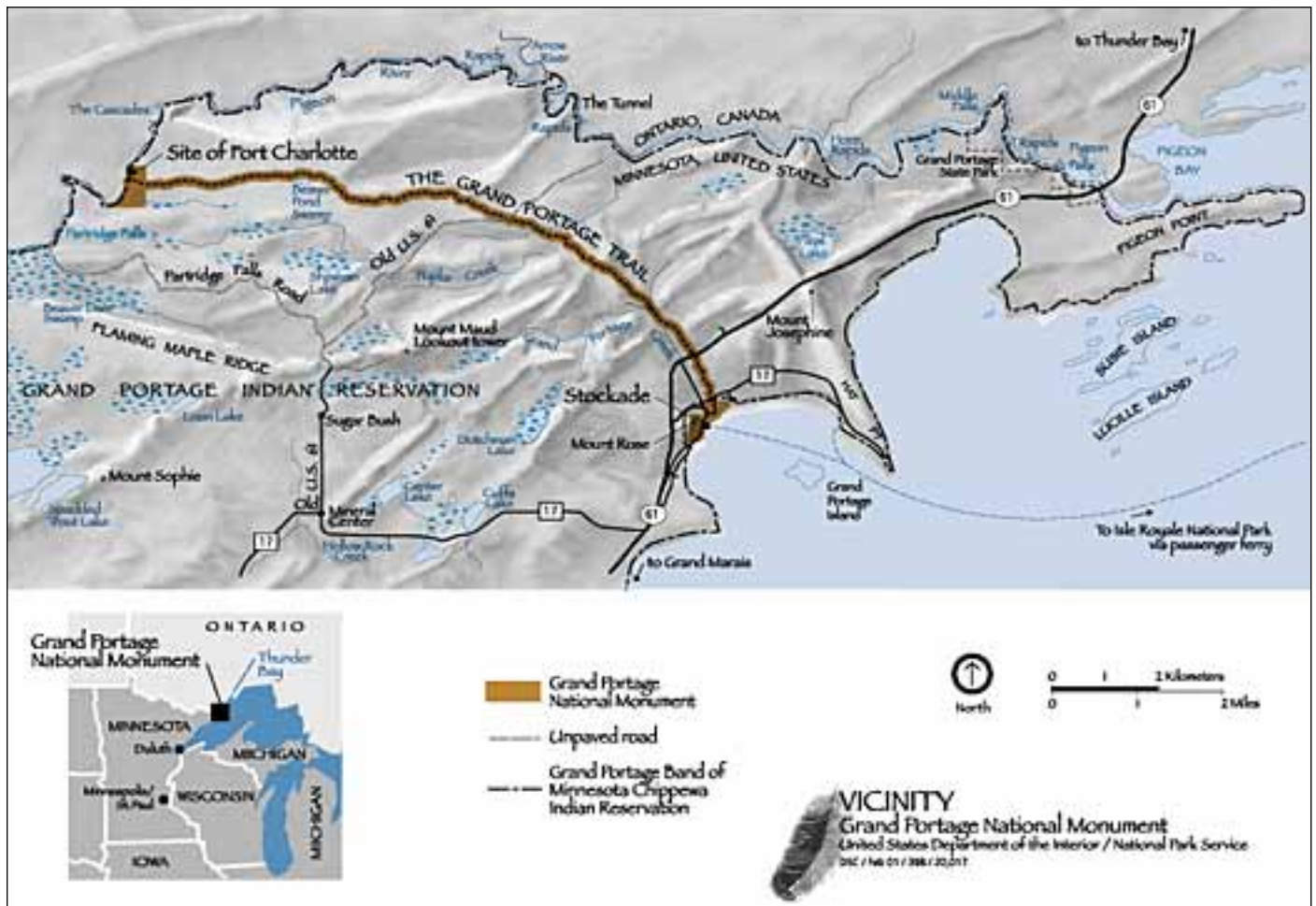
○ *Tribe provides land and housing to NPS and supports decision to relocate road outside Monument*

The Ojibwe have made available to NPS some housing for seasonal and full-time staff allowing NPS to avoid as much construction as originally proposed. In addition, the Ojibwe will allow NPS to move its maintenance facility and boneyard onto Ojibwe property and out of the

national monument. This may be a combined reservation/NPS facility, as the Ojibwe currently contract to perform NPS maintenance. The Ojibwe also concur with the removal from the national monument of County Road 17, a dangerous road through the site that will be relocated on Ojibwe land, outside the monument boundary.

○ *Ojibwe and NPS partnership will educate visitors and provide more appropriate visitor services at Monument entrance*

The Ojibwe and NPS will build a gateway to the park and the community of Grand Portage that will be a more appropriate entrance to an NPS area, more inviting, and less confusing for visitors than the current entrance. This facility will also provide a venue for the Ojibwe to sell their craftwork and demonstrate native crafts in the new Heritage Center in keeping with the original enabling legislation.



New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, Massachusetts • GMP / EIS

- *Public /Private cooperation helps revitalize downtown and attract tourism*

Through New Bedford's GMP process, park partnerships were forged and a solid, collaborative implementation strategy emerged. Already the positive effects of this strategy are apparent.

For instance, one of the plan's proposals called for NPS to work in partnership with the New Bedford Whaling Museum to develop an appropriate venue for the park's orientation film. As a result, the film is now shown in a 250-seat auditorium at the New Bedford Whaling Museum that was rehabilitated with modest support from the NPS, bringing nearly 30,000 visitors to a downtown seeking revitalization.



Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area, Massachusetts • GMP / EIS

- *GMP process critical to uniting 13-member management partnership*

The GMP is an especially critical document for Boston Harbor Islands NRA, which is managed by a 13-member partnership. Work on the plan has involved an extraordinary commitment to communication, collaboration, and cooperation for conservation.

- *Successful partnership allows park to compete for and obtain state funding*

The relationships and partnerships formed in the planning process were instrumental in the park obtaining \$5 million through the Commonwealth as part of a mitigation agreement, which allows for development of visitor amenities and environmental education on Peddocks Island, one of 30 islands in the park.



- *NPS and California State Parks create model management relationship through GMP process*

The GMP provided the unifying vision for NPS and the three California State Parks within the national park boundary. The GMP was produced at a time the fledgling partnership between NPS and state parks was getting off the ground and went a long way in building a solidifying this model partnership.

- *Planning process creates an integrated framework, increasing efficiency*

The plan reflects an unusual blending of the federal and California State Park planning processes to produce an integrated management framework that saves both agencies time and money for operations. All entities are happy with the plan, and the relationships that have developed through the process.



Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona • GMP / EIS

- *GMP process successful in getting support to address visitor services and gateway issues*

The GMP successfully addressed and marshaled support and funding to resolve difficult visitor transportation and visitor services and gateway partnership issues on the south rim of the Canyon. Key action items from the plan have been completed largely with funding from concession revenue sources, and as a result the park has a new transportation system to relieve traffic congestion and improve visitor experiences.



Blue Ridge Parkway, Virginia and North Carolina • GMP

- *GMP inspires cooperative stewardship with local communities taking the lead*

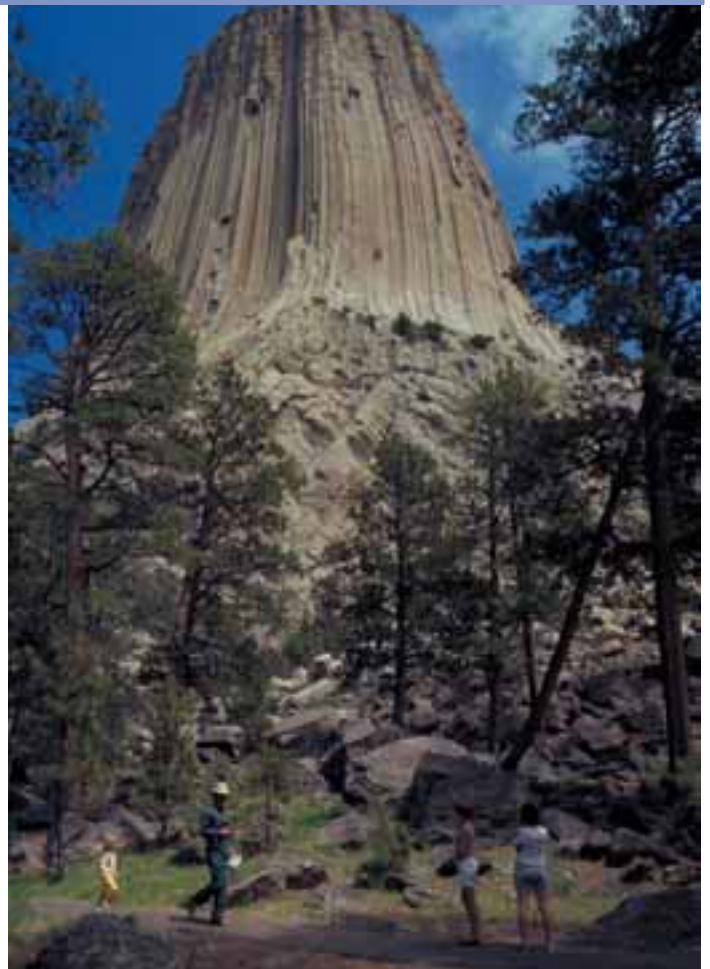
Recent scoping workshops for the GMP resulted in new cooperative stewardship opportunities. The county administrator and a planning commissioner from Botetourt County, Virginia, approached the parkway superintendent with a proposal to create a county administrator/planning commissioner task force of counties along the parkway. The task force will work collaboratively with the park to develop "beyond boundary" local measures to implement the GMP, protecting parkway views and enhancing the quality of life for area residents. In this case, the work on the GMP has encouraged local initiatives to collaborate and protect important resources that will not require NPS acquisition or operational expenses.



Devils Tower National Monument, Wyoming • GMP

- *GMP leads to state funding support for transportation solutions*

The recently approved GMP for Devils Tower calls for establishment of a shuttle system to alleviate visitor crowding and resource impacts at the Tower. This proposal has been positively received by the State of Wyoming, which has contributed about 13% of the total cost of developing the needed staging and interpretation area for the park.



Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve, Florida • GMP / EIS

- *Partnership created through GMP process still seeing new success*

The Timucuan Preserve's GMP approved in 1992 helped establish partnerships as the most practical and desirable strategy for management of this multi-ownership area. On-the-ground this broad concept manifests itself in a formal relationship between the NPS, Florida Park Service, and City of Jacksonville to co-manage the broader Preserve area. The partnership operates on several levels and has been increasingly successful over the years since completion of the GMP. Joint objectives include: planning, promotion, resource sharing, and operating procedures. In FY '01-'02 projects included a preserve-wide bike trail design, boat dock construction, research, the Ribault Clubhouse restoration, and land acquisition.

- *GMP generates partner support, increasing public awareness and leveraging private funds*

Funds and in-kind services received as a result of this partnership include more than \$1 million in land acquisition, \$150,000 for a recreational use study, and almost \$400,000 for capital construction.

Other partners have also donated time and services. Pot O' Gold Productions designed, produced, and displayed a promotional piece the Timucuan Preserve at no cost to Timucuan. The slide is shown at local area movie theaters during the pre-movie time slot. These and other examples of partner support for the park are one result of the types of relationships and public awareness that were developed through the GMP.



Saguaro National Park • GMP

- *Planning process redefines park purpose and significance to better communicate monument assets and reflect park priorities*

The Saguaro National Park planning team held a workshop in 2002 to come to consensus and document park purpose, significance, mission goals, and interpretive themes. This was done as part of their strategic and comprehensive interpretive planning processes. In March 2003, the DSC GMP team scheduled a workshop with the same group to "reaffirm" park purpose, significance, interpretive themes, and to identify intrinsically important resources. The park managers were confident that the session would be short. At the end of the second day, the park had revised park purpose and significance statements, and new interpretive themes. Staff also had determined which resources are intrinsically important to the park purpose. The GMP team asked the staff if they thought the exercise had been worth the time spent. All agreed that the products were greatly improved and that they better communicated the important assets of Saguaro.





Special Resource Studies & Other Study Successes

Shenandoah Valley Battlefields, Virginia

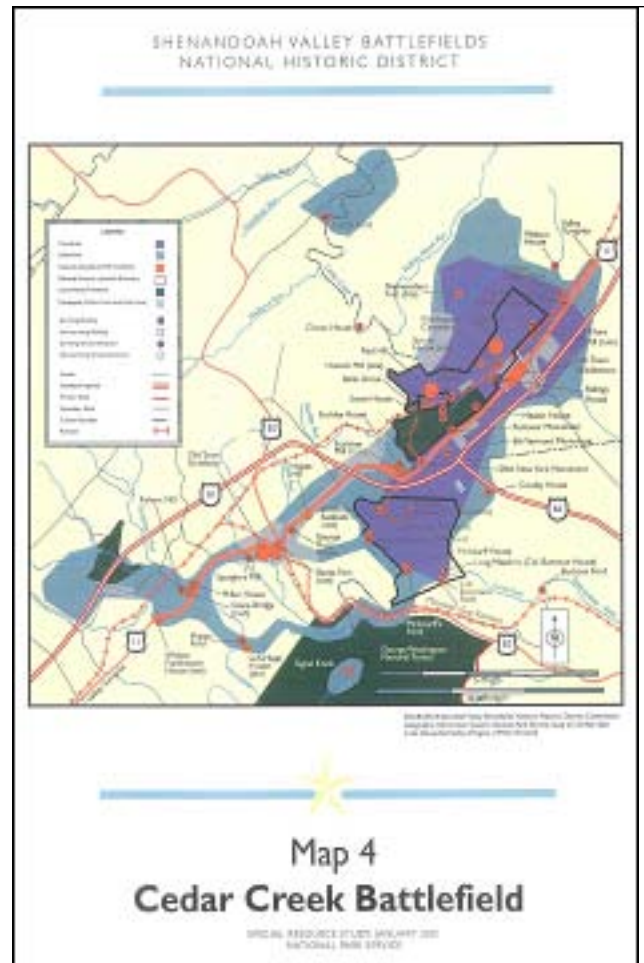
○ *New Park protects critical Civil War site*

The special resource study of the Shenandoah Valley Civil War campaign found that most of the sites were not feasible for management by the NPS. Of the dozens of sites considered, only one, Cedar Creek was considered to be eligible. In 2002 Congress authorized the Cedar Creek Belle Grove National Historical Park was created as a new unit of the National Park system.

This new unit encompasses the core of the Cedar Creek battlefield. Cedar Creek – the final major Civil War battle in the Shenandoah Valley – is a story of daring surprise attacks, sweeping troop movements and a crushing counterattack. This Union victory also contributed to Lincoln's reelection in November 1864. Thomas Jefferson assisted with the design of the Manor House at Belle Grove, which was completed in 1797 by Isaac Hite, a Revolutionary War patriot married to the sister of James Madison. Madison was a frequent visitor at Belle Grove.

○ *Model partnership management entity created as a result of study*

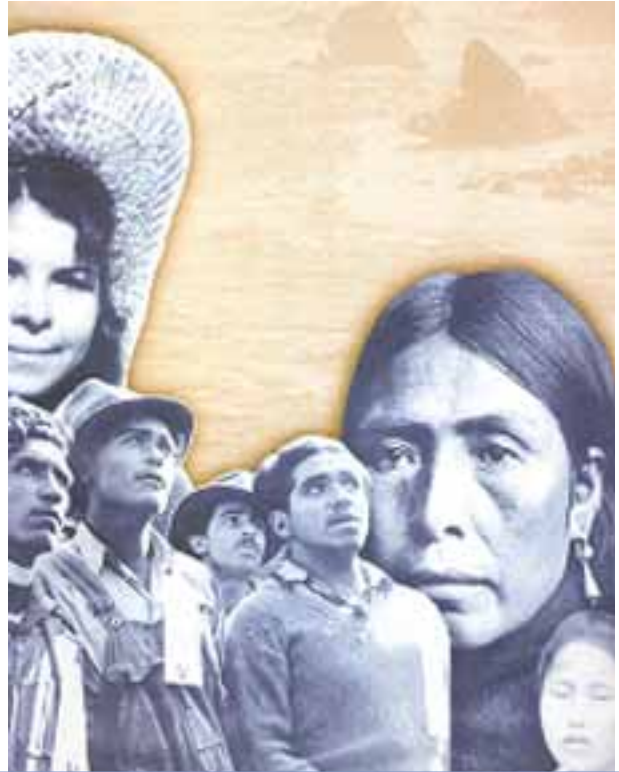
As a model partnership park, Cedar Creek & Belle Grove National Historical Park represents the next generation of national parks. It is nestled within the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District which is managed by the non-profit Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation. Within the park itself are nested Belle Grove, Inc. and the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation. All of these non-profit organizations will work in partnership with the NPS in the development and management of the park.



Angel Island Immigration Station/Pacific Coast Immigration Museum Feasibility Study, California

- *Public/private partnership leverages funds to study and restore Angel Island Immigration Station*

A study of the feasibility of interpreting immigration in and around the Golden Gate was undertaken by a partnership group of NPS, California State Parks and Angel Island Immigration Station. For Angel Island Immigration Station, the \$100,000 provided by Congress was leveraged into a \$400,000 state appropriation for bench mark studies and a cultural landscape report to guide the restoration of the station, a million dollars in public and private grants for restoration and \$15 million State Park Bond funds for stabilization, restoration and interpretation.



Civil Rights In America • Sites Context Study

- *Study provides valuable resource for the examination of specific civil rights sites*

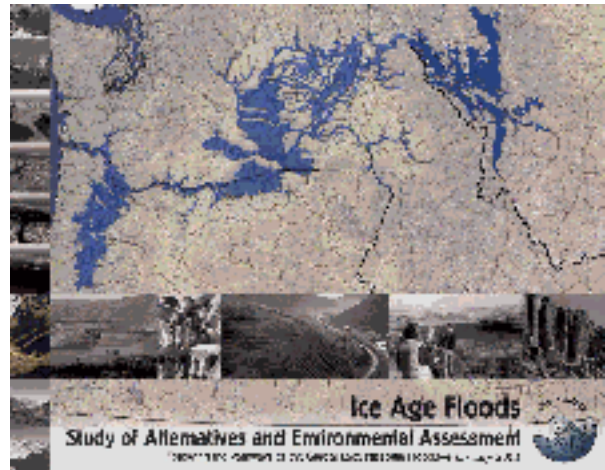
The National Park System includes a few sites related to the history of civil rights in America, and Congress has expressed interest in expanding the number of sites that tell the whole story of the increasingly diverse American experience. During the late 1990's NPS was asked to evaluate several sites associated with the history of desegregation in public education, but lacked a general context for evaluating significance and suitability. In 1999 Congress authorized a study of civil rights sites, and NPS proceeded in cooperation with a panel of scholars through the Organization of American Historians to develop a report on what are the major types of themes, resources, and stories that can illustrate the struggle for equal rights in this nation from 1776 to the adoption of the 1964 civil rights act. The study provides a framework to evaluate sites associated with the entire range of groups including Native Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and gays and lesbians that have struggled for equality in education accommodations, voting, and employment. Formal transmittal of the report is expected early in 2003, but the findings are already providing useful guidance in evaluating proposals for studies of specific sites.



Ice Age Floods Study of Alternatives, Pacific West Region

- *American Planning Association award for balancing economics, education, environment and involving public*

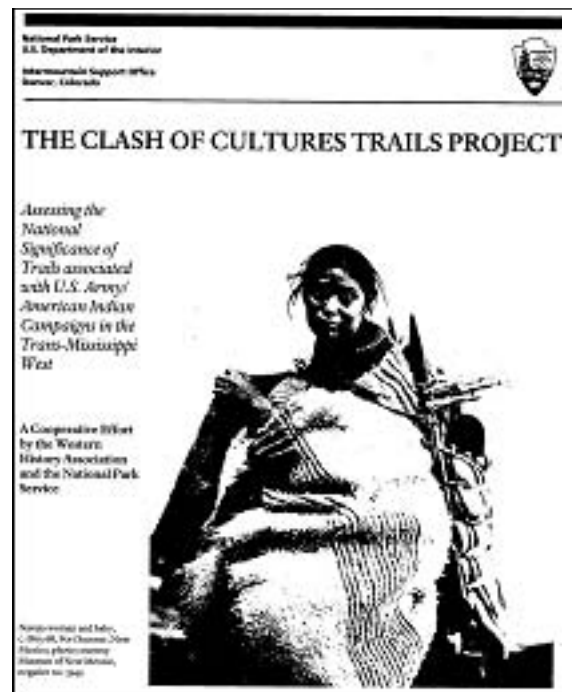
The Pacific West Region was a co-winner in the category of Outstanding Non-Military Federal Planning Project for "Ice Age Floods Study of Alternatives." The study was cited for balancing tourism, scientific education, and sustainability objectives and for its public participation process across four states.



Clash of Cultures Theme Study

- *Study done in partnership with Western Historical Association identifies nationally significant trails*

During the 1990s Congress began to show increased interest in adding military campaign trails to the National Trails System in the category of National Historic Trails. The Planning Program Office provided \$100,000 and teamed with the National Historic Landmarks Program to contract with the Western Historical Association (WHA) to look at military routes in the Trans-Mississippi West involving Native Americans and the U.S. Army. The resulting report entitled "The Clash of Cultures Trails Project" identifies six trails that the WHA mentors overwhelmingly concurred are of national significance and reflect the major themes associated with the history of U.S. Army/American Indian conflict in the West. One of these, the Nez Perce Trail, had already been designated. Congress authorized a second, the Navajo Long Walk, for study only months after completion of the report. The other four trails are: Bozeman, Northern Cheyenne Exodus, Smoky Hill, and Trails of the Great Sioux War. The importance of the study is that it provides guidance to Congress and to the Department of the Interior for future study bills when trails in this theme are being considered.



○ *Toolbox of Incentives for Resource Conservation*

A handbook of ideas for neighbors in the Curecanti area of Colorado, that can be applied to other areas throughout the country to encourage private landowners, local communities, and city, county, state, and federal agencies to work in partnership to manage their lands for more effective resource conservation.

○ *Curecanti: Great Scenery, Outstanding Resources, and Good Neighbors*

Ideas about how agencies and landowners can work together to maintain the outstanding qualities that are commonly valued; created specifically for the Resource Protection Study at Curecanti National Recreation Area, the ideas are applicable throughout the country.

Although these documents were created for the study at Curecanti, where we are working closely with Gunnison and Montrose Counties, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, and U.S. Forest Service, they are applicable nationwide. For example, we are applying the concepts contained in these documents at Aztec Ruins NM in northeast New Mexico, where we are starting up a new GMP. This 300-acre park is surrounded by the City of Aztec, and we are consulting with the city planner to mitigate the impacts

of encroaching development, to conserve resources within and surrounding the park, and to enhance the enjoyment of park visitors and residents alike. As the project progresses, we will be meeting with private landowners, American Indian tribes, and other stakeholders to work toward the same goals. The same principles are also being applied at other sites in our region where there are on-going GMPs, such as Colorado National Monument, and Great Sand Dunes. In short, we are finding that in the Intermountain Region, application of the concept of Communication, Consultation, and Cooperation; all in the service of Conservation, is working.



River & Trail Study Successes

Lamprey Wild and Scenic River, New Hampshire

- *NPS partners with the State of New Hampshire and localities to draft cooperative management plan for river*

Congress authorized a Wild and Scenic River study of a 23.5-mile segment of the Lamprey River in New Hampshire in 1991. The river was found eligible and added to the National System in two installations: 1996 and 2000. The NPS assisted the local communities during the course of the study in developing a management plan for the river that would require actions by local, state and federal governments to implement. This plan was accepted by all involved local political jurisdictions and designation of the river was voted for in popular elections.

Most management activities are coordinated by the Lamprey River Advisory Committee, which is composed of representatives appointed by local governments. Local governments continue to control land uses in the river corridor. The State is responsible for water quality and maintaining adequate river flow to sustain natural resources and human needs. The NPS reviews water resources projects requiring federal assistance to assure they will not adversely affect free-flow of the river or unreasonably damage the values for which the river was designated. It also provides technical assistance and financial assistance to acquire scenic easements on key tracts of land in the river corridor, which are purchased and held by towns, non-profits, and the state. Thus far 925 acres of easements protecting 5.7 miles of shoreline have been acquired with another 450 acres and 2 miles of shoreline nearing acquisition. The NPS by law can neither acquire nor hold any land rights, and to this point has provided a relatively small amount of the acquisition dollars.

This study/planning effort have led to significant resource protection through a true partnership arrangement with no one holding complete power or providing all the staff or monetary contribution. This arrangement has met with overwhelming local acceptance in an area of the country noted for its independent spirit.



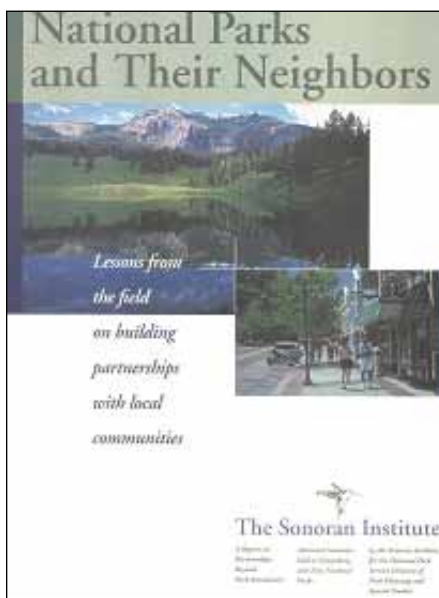


Program Development Highlights

Training and Innovation

In addition to support for specific GMP projects, the funds from the planning program support work on some initiatives to improve the effectiveness of the NPS in working with its neighbors and other agency partners. The Gateway Community Leadership Program is a partnership involving the Sonoran Institute, The Conservation Fund, the Conservation Study Institute, and the Fish and Wildlife's National Conservation Training Center. This program develops and delivers training programs for gateway communities and their public land partners. These include three major elements: a course "*Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities*," regional workshops, and distance learning opportunities where interactive presentations are made through televised broadcasts.

The programs provide a valuable opportunity for the NPS to educate, to build the capacity of the agency to work effectively with local communities, and to learn with community partners. In FY 2002 the program offered the course *Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities* in Seattle. Five teams of land managers and community partners participated in the course. The interactive television workshop "*Gateway Communities: Keys to Success*" was also offered in FY2002 384 land managers, partners, and community members participated in this workshop at 78 downlink sites located in 30 states. The program also developed a training video highlighting the City of Sanibel / J.N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge / Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation gateway community partnership.



Center for Gateway and Community Planning

Within the Denver Service Center (DSC) the General Management Planning program supported the establishment of a special center for gateway and community planning. This group of specialists develops public involvement and outreach strategies for major planning projects, and provides direct assistance to parks in working with surrounding communities. *A Hyde Park Planning Concept: Gateway to the Hudson River Valley* is an example of one of the group's FY 2002 successes. The project brought together representatives from the Home of FDR NHS, the Town of Hyde Park, and Scenic Hudson Inc. as well as state and local partners to develop a program for a Regional Information and Transportation Center. The center will orient visitors to the mid-Hudson Valley, link area attractions through a variety of transportation modes, connect the town center to the Roosevelt sites, and restore historic features in town and at the Roosevelt sites. The center is one piece of a shared vision for Hyde Park that combines the preservation of historic attractions with expansion, deepening, and invigoration of the town's economic base.

The planning program also has contracted with the Sonoran Institute to develop a website that will provide case studies, models of best practices, and access to technical experts for land managers seeking to expand their work on gateway partnerships. The website is in final testing and will be unveiled in FY2003.





The park planning program supported development of a comprehensive planning website for the NPS. Linked to park net, the site provides one location on the internet where the public and agency staff can access information about ongoing planning projects. The site has helped enhance opportunities for public and partner participation in park planning projects by giving easier access to information about ongoing and recent planning projects nationwide, and providing an on-line forum for comments. During 2002 the site recorded more than 66,000 visits.

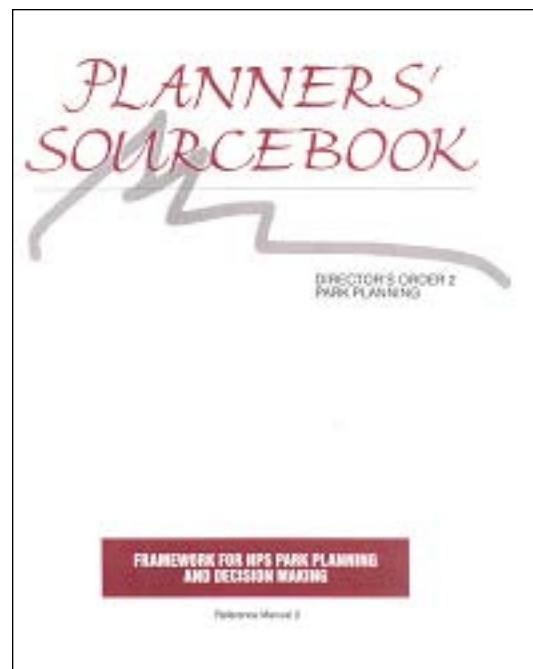
Another example of using technology to improve program management includes the development and adoption of an internal web-based project tracking system designed by Chris Marvel in the Intermountain Region that allows project managers to easily update key milestones and accomplishments for their planning projects and allows WASO to keep abreast of the status of current plans and studies.

General Management Planning Guideline Update

The Park Planning Program is reviewing and updating the Director's Order on Planning, Program Standards, and Sourcebook to reflect experience over the past several years and explore opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness. A contractor is taking the lead in writing and editing this effort that is being directed by an interdisciplinary task force.

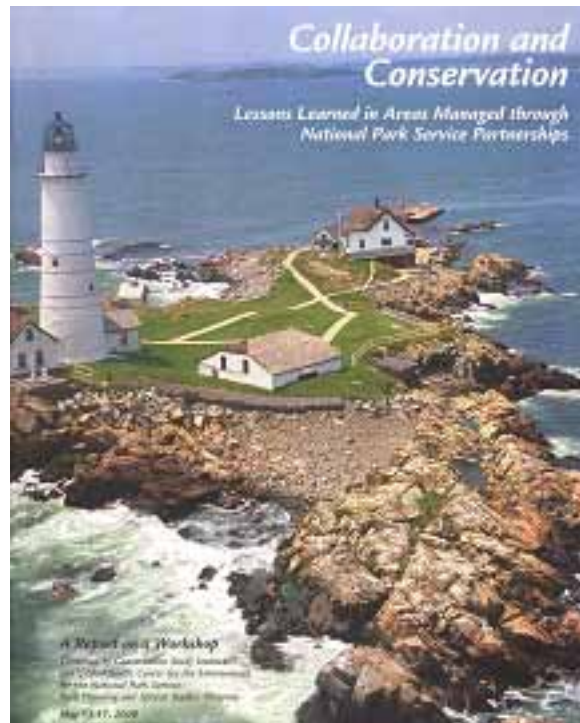
The update is focusing on:

- improving public and partner relationships and enhancing opportunities for involvement in the development of park planning documents
- ensuring that general management planning adequately addresses those things that are most important about the park and minimizing surprises that could greatly increase the controversy and cost of planning
- incorporating life cycle cost estimating as a key component of GMP's



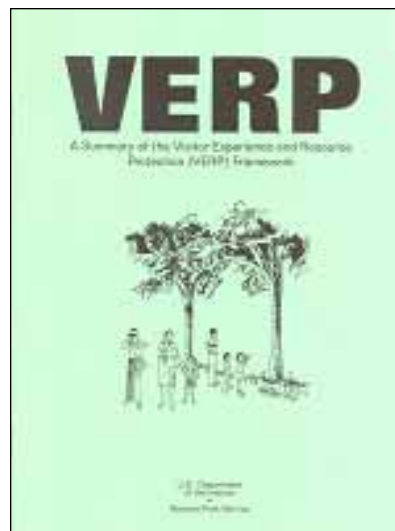
Documenting and Sharing NPS Partnership Experience

The Park Planning and Special Studies program contracted with the Conservation Study Institute to conduct two workshops evaluating lessons learned in areas managed through NPS Partnerships. A report on "Collaboration and Conservation" was released in 2002 and distributed to park managers and partners throughout the service. The report summarizes some of the common threads that challenge managers of long distance trails, heritage areas, wild and scenic rivers, and an increasing number of "non-traditional" parks where NPS is one of many partners responsible for resource protection and visitor services. The report published in 2002 is based primarily on experience in the Northeastern states, and a follow up workshop is scheduled for 2003 focusing on examples in the West. This \$50,000 investment in program evaluation for the two workshops has already yielded benefits for participants who exchanged information about best practices and opportunities to learn from past experience.



Visitor Capacity Management Methodology

The NPS planning program has been responsible for the development of the Service's methodology for addressing Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) in response to the legislative mandate for GMP's to identify Carrying Capacity. Work on VERP has endeavored to dispel a common connotation about "carrying capacity" that it involves limits on the number of visitors. Instead, the park planning process, especially VERP has emphasized the value of defining desired conditions and experiences, defining indicators and standards, and then managing all of the variables to maintain a high quality visitor experience. The planning program participated in and helped disseminate the report of an interagency task force on visitor capacity to help parks find better ways to manage visitation without necessarily relying on restrictions or additional facilities





Park Planning & Special Studies