

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Anchorage Interagency Visitors Center

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: ANCH

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Anchorage Interagency Visitor Center (ANCH) is uniquely positioned to significantly contribute to the Centennial Strategy. Our long-term vision is to facilitate world-class resource stewardship, recreational experiences, environmental leadership, education, and professional excellence by 2016.

The Anchorage Interagency Center was established by Congress with the passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act in 1980. Managed and primarily funded by the National Park Service, the facility is an important urban visitor center located in Anchorage, Alaska's largest city. By providing trip-planning assistance, interpretation and education, the center enables visitors and residents to have meaningful, safe, enjoyable experiences on public lands and encourages them to sustain the natural and cultural resources of Alaska. Representing nine different state and federal agencies, the Anchorage Interagency Center is the epitome of collaboration in providing the public with "one-stop shopping" about the network of recreational opportunities in Alaska.

With a major airport, Anchorage hosts nearly 800,000 visitors each summer. Another 275,000 residents and 55,000 students live, work and study in the community. Located in the hub of the tourist district, the Anchorage Interagency Center is an important gateway to parks and public lands in the state. The center offers exhibits, visitor services, and interpretive and educational programs that embody important park messages. Themes include the vastness and grandeur of Alaska, the diversity of its places and peoples, the spectrum of opportunities for personal growth and learning, and the need for continuing stewardship of these treasured areas. Themes are reflected in messages about wildlife etiquette, Leave No Trace, bear safety, global climate change, subsistence, and the importance of protecting history, tradition, habitat and species.

With many Alaskan parks inaccessible by road, many visitors and residents never experience these unique resources. Via exhibits and other interpretive media, the Anchorage Interagency Center provides a glimpse (or micro visit) of all Alaskan parks and strives to represent a portion of their meaning and messages. Similarly, uniformed staff engage 10,000 students each year in learning about parks via standards-based curriculum, traveling trunks and kits, on-site programs, puppet shows, and interactive websites.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Alex Carter, Director

Site: ANCH

STEWARDSHIP

Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

As an important gateway to parks in Alaska, the Anchorage Interagency Center will provide high quality interpretation and information to ensure inspiring, safe and enjoyable visits to Alaska's national parks and public lands. Through directed programming, publications, and interpretation, the center will direct visitors to lesser known parks and help them understand the mission of the Park Service as a whole.

Potential Actions:

- Develop a safety component to the interagency website, optimizing the use of pod casts and other state-of-the-art media.
- Consistent the regional findings on a changing climate and its effects on Alaskan ecosystems, the interagency center will assist in informing visitors and residents of the results... and the actions (lifestyle changes) they might take to assist.
- Incorporate the results of the NPS Service-wide Evaluation Strategy for Interpretation and Education to expand the center's capability to develop and present effective interpretive products and programs.
(underway as a task of the National Education Council)

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ANCH

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Improve high-priority assets to acceptable condition, as measured by the Facility Condition Index.

Provide for increased visitation and an enhanced visitor experience by strategically renovating the visitor center theatre and exhibits and relocating/rebuilding the visitor center.

Potential Actions:

- Strategically renovate the theatre and exhibit area for increased safety, accessibility, and enjoyment by visitors to the center.
- Relocate/build a new visitor center in a different location that is unrestricted by mandatory security screening at its entrance.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ANCH

STEWARDSHIP

Encourage children to be future conservationists.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Expand the urban education program to include an afterschool program with a focus on conserving our American heritage as reflected in our national parks.
Potential Actions:
•Develop an Urban Ranger/Future Stewards program with local informal groups in the community.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ANCH

RECREATION

Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The Anchorage Interagency Center is the epitome of collaboration by federal, state and local agencies in providing the public with information about the network of recreational opportunities. Pursue additional partnerships with public and private entities to establish new and exciting venues in visitor services and interpretation.
Potential Actions:
•Redesign the web site to better display the multi-agency recreational opportunities available to the public by incorporating pod casts, web cams, and other state-of-the-art venues.
•Develop an intriguing public lands exhibit displaying the network of recreational opportunities available in Alaska.
•Develop an introductory message to the film showings about agency collaboration at the four APLIC centers.
•Expand and enhance information and interpretation about parks and public lands through state-of-the-art displays, high definition movies, and interactive exhibits.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ANCH

RECREATION

Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

The center will continue to coordinate with partners and volunteers to establish new and exciting venues for informing the public of recreational opportunities.

Potential Action:

- Increase volunteer hours at the Anchorage Interagency Center by 100% by 2016 by optimizing partnerships with schools, universities, businesses, and community organizations.
- Provide housing for volunteers working at the Anchorage Interagency Center.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ANCH

RECREATION

Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Expand the urban education program to facilitate on-site experiences in Alaska's national parks.

Potential Action:

- Coordinate with other Alaskan parks to implement a multi-year program with transportation partners to facilitate overnight experiences in Alaska's national parks.

(This goal will be addressed in Centennial funding increases in FY08)

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ANCH

EDUCATION

Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Revive and expand the urban education program by offering high quality curriculum, programs, and on-line learning that incorporate state-of-the-art technology and coordinated educational partnerships with other national parks in Alaska. The resulting education program will be recognized as an essential educational resource for private, public, and home schools, afterschool organizations, and other community organizations.

Potential Actions:

- Increase educational contacts by 100% by restoring capacity to the urban education program. (This goal will be addressed by 08 Centennial funding)
- Create an educational component in partnership with local organizations and RTCA to encourage outdoor activities, walks and hikes for diverse youth in the community.
- Participate in a coordinated effort to establish parks as important educational resources in the State Department of Education Alaska Studies curriculum requirement. (This goal will be addressed in Centennial funding increases in FY08)
- With a goal of implementing the Teacher-to-Ranger-to-Teacher program in every Alaskan park, recruit a teacher from an underserved area in Anchorage for a position at the Interagency Center.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ANCH

EDUCATION

Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.

Expand the reach of the urban education program by offering high quality curriculum, programs, and on-line learning that incorporate state-of-the-art technology and coordinated educational messages from other national parks in Alaska.

Potential Actions:

- Incorporate site-specific, technology-enhanced curricula into a regional web site that represents educational resources from all of Alaska's national parks. (This goal will be addressed with projected Centennial funding increases in FY08)

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Expand and enhance the urban education program by offering high quality curriculum, programs, and on-line learning that incorporate state-of-the-art technology and coordinated educational partnerships other national parks in Alaska.

Potential Actions:

- Develop a system of long distance learning opportunities with other national parks in Alaska.

(This goal will be addressed with projected Centennial funding increases in FY08)

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ANCH

PROFESSIONALISM

Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.

Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.

Create an atmosphere of professional excellence by recruiting and retaining qualified diverse employees.

Potential Actions:

- Meet 100% of diversity recruitment goals by partnering with local and nationwide community organizations and university programs to provide internships, mentorships, and on-the-job experiences.
- Partner with local schools and universities in developing curricula to prepare and train students in the field of interpretation and visitor services.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Create an atmosphere of professional excellence by maintaining and enhancing the organizational structure of the center and by providing a professional development program for employment success.

Potential Actions:

- Partner with local schools and universities in developing curricula to prepare and train students in the field of interpretation and visitor services.
- Develop a state-of-the-art web-based training component for new employees that communicates important information about Alaska's parks and public lands, center mission and operations, and job expectations.

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