

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Hopewell Culture National Historical Park

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: HOCU

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Hopewell Culture NHP has expanded rapidly in past decade from one relatively small prehistoric earthwork site to 5 earthwork sites and 13 times the original land base. Most of these lands have been acquired in the last 5 years. Only the Mound City unit has full public use and interpretation facilities. Two units have limited facilities and two units are closed to the public. In addition, a sixth unit is being considered by Congress.

These archeological sites are among the most important remains of an amazing cultural florescence that produced large ceremonial sites in the forms of circles, squares, and octagons. These sites interacted with much of North America from the Atlantic coast to the Rocky Mountains and from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes. These monumental works of the Hopewell culture are among the most significant achievements in Pre-Columbian America.

A great deal of resource preservation work and development of public facilities is needed for the newly acquired property. Much of the land has been recently acquired and is being converted from agriculture to a stable cover of native grasses.

The Centennial Initiative strategy of Hopewell Culture NHP packages several existing projects to preserve the ancient earthworks, restore former farm land, complete an important trail connection, provide public use and interpretation facilities at all units, and strengthen education programs in cooperation with partners. The park foresees stabilizing all of the 2,000-year-old earthworks in its care with ground cover that provides habitat for native plants and animals. An important link in a regional trail system needs to be completed to connect to Chillicothe, the largest town in the area. A visitor contact station is needed at the Hopewell Mound Group unit, the type site of the Hopewell culture and one of the most important sites to interpret. A visitor contact station at Seip Earthworks is proposed to be developed with the Ohio Historical Society (OHS). Basic facilities, such as parking and wayside exhibits are proposed for the remaining two units, High Banks Works and Hopeton Earthworks. The park is working with the OHS and other partners develop education and interpretation programs highlighting all of the major Ohio Hopewell sites. The park will need to nurture a new friends group to make these plans viable; therefore, the park's strategy foresees projects coming on line in the last half of the Centennial Initiative.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Dean Alexander

Site: HOCU

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)

Hopewell Culture NHP is composed of 5 archeological sites. Only 3 of the units are open to the public at this time. Two of the units are closed to the public due to lack of public facilities and safe access. For the public to benefit fully from the public investment in these sites, public facilities should be available at all 5 sites.

The park proposes to expand visitor contact facilities at the Seip Earthworks unit and the Hopewell Mound Group unit. Basic access facilities such as parking, trails, wayside exhibits, and restroom would be provided at the High Banks Works unit and the Hopeton Earthworks unit. In addition, a tunnel through a railroad embankment would be needed to safely access the High Banks Works unit.

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

Site: HOCU

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.

Hopewell Culture NHP hopes that the Centennial Initiative would speed up the conversion of recently purchased fallow fields into stable native grassland that will protect the archeological resources and prevent invasive species from becoming established. The park is slowly reintroducing native grasses on the former fallow fields which provides stabile ground cover to protect the subsurface archeological resources and creates native habitat, especially for ground nesting birds. Ground nesting birds are a special concern in Ohio and several are State-listed. Since the park has begun managing the archeological sites as grass lands several new sightings of ground nesting birds have occurred including Henslow's sparrow, Eastern meadowlark, grasshopper sparrow, and sedge wren. Managing the sites as natural grass lands also helps keep maintenance costs to a minimum.

The Park would hope that funding through the Centennial Initiative would allow the park to increase the rate at which fallow fields are replanted in native grasses, a process which also eliminates large areas of invasive plants.

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Site: HOCU

STEWARDSHIP

Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

About 2,000 years ago an important American Indian culture flowered in the Ohio River valley in what is now the state of Ohio. From 2,200 BP to 1,500 BP, a relatively small population that subsisted by hunting, gathering, and incipient garden plot agriculture built over 40 monumental ceremonial earthworks. These earthworks enclosed large areas, from 15 to over 100 acres, and took the form of circles, squares, octagons, and trapezoids. Several of the sites enclose mounds the covered significant works of art made from materials brought to the sites from areas as far from Ohio as the Atlantic coast, the upper Great Lakes, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Yellowstone Basin. A few of the sites, including High Banks Works, have evidence of astronomical alignments. Works of this magnitude are usually the products of more hierarchical, agricultural societies.

This important cultural florescence of Pre-Columbian American is largely unrecognized by most of the American public. Improving the access and information about these sites and related sites managed by the Ohio Historical Society would improve the public's knowledge of these important and monumental American Indian achievements.

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Site: HOCU

STEWARDSHIP

Encourage children to be future conservationists.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Hopewell Culture NHP has an active education program that reaches out to schools in the local area and to the large cities in southern Ohio such as Columbus, Dayton, and Cincinnati. Improving public use facilities at all of the units of the park would help facilitate partnership with school to use the several units of the park as outdoor laboratories.

In addition, the park has an active program for scout groups and helps scouts obtain the difficult-to-earn Archeology Merit badge. Improved access and interpretation would help educate and inspire young people on the accomplishments of past cultures and encourage them to pursue careers in resource management.

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Site: HOCU

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.

Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

Complete a gap in a regional rail trail that connects the Hopewell Mound Group unit of Hopewell Culture NHP to the nearest communities. A bridge, short connecting trail segment, and a proper crossing at a road intersection will complete a trail that connects the Hopewell Mound Group archeological site to Chillicothe and Greenfield. The paved trail provides access for a broad spectrum of visitors to the park and to nearby county park lands. The Ross County Parks Department will be the partner.

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Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The Seip Earthworks unit of Hopewell Culture NHP is jointly managed by the National Park Service and the Ohio Historical Society. A historic house dating from the 1820s is owned by the Historical Society and has been identified as a logical location for a joint visitor contact and education facility. The Seip Earthworks host a large portion of the total park visitation and needs proper facilities for visitor use and education. It is proposed that the Society and the Park adapt the historic house as a visitor contact station. It is also possible that the Ohio Department of Transportation will contribute towards an improved comfort station.

The Park and the Ohio Historical Society cooperate on a number of projects to preserve or interpret Hopewell culture archeological sites including a joint application for World Heritage status and joint regional tours of significant archeological sites. This project would further strengthen the relationship between the Park and OHS and improve the education opportunities at an important prehistoric site.

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Site: HOCU

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)

The five units of Hopewell Culture NHP are excellent opportunities for establishing long-term partnerships with schools and to provide the schools with outdoor learning opportunities.

As one of the few NPS units in the Eastern U.S. whose primary theme is prehistoric archeology, Hopewell Culture NHP is very active with scouting groups in providing programs for the archeology merit badge or its equivalent. The Park provides scout groups access to professional archeologist and opportunities for field work which are requirements for these merit badges. These opportunities would be improved by improved public access at all of the units of the Park and by the provision of improved interpretative opportunities.

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Site: HOCU

EDUCATION

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Hopewell Culture NHP has outstanding opportunities to provide outdoor learning through partnerships with several school districts. The five units of the Park are in 4 different school districts and near by to 3 others. By using all 5 units of the Park a wide variety of long-term learning relationships can be developed. In order to utilize all 5 units, each unit must have a minimum level of public use facilities. The Park hopes that the Centennial Initiative would help provide these basic facilities thereby unlocking the opportunities for park-based learning.

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Site: HOCU

EDUCATION

Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

Hopewell Culture NHP is undergoing a period of growth similar to a newly established park since it was expanded to 5 units in 1991. Each unit preserves a significant 2000-year-old earthwork built by the Hopewell culture. Within the last 5 years land at each of the units has been purchased. Only the original unit of the Park, the Mound City unit, has a full complement of facilities. Two of the units have limited facilities, and two units are closed to the public. Little interpretation is available for 4 of the units of the Park.

The Park's projects for the Initiative would address the facility and interpretation deficits. It would rehabilitate fallow farm fields into better and more visually pleasing habitat and address invasive plant issues that are a concern to neighboring farmers. The public would have better opportunities to learn about the variety and abundance of the ancient monuments built by the Hopewell culture. Public understanding about the relatively unknown accomplishments of a significant Pre-Columbian culture would be increased. Public satisfaction would be increased since the public would have some level of access to all of the lands acquired with public funds.

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