

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Mount Rushmore National Memorial

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: MORU

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Situated high on a granite mountain in the Black Hills of South Dakota, Mount Rushmore National Memorial is one of America's most meaningful and inspirational places. The memorial is a symbol for freedom and democracy and a special place for all people and cultures. Our vision at Mount Rushmore is to be a center of excellence for telling multicultural perspectives on the story of America. Providing leadership for training on the resources, interpretation, and education will serve not only our park, but other parks, other agencies, American Indian reservations, school systems, and the public.

As an "Icon of America" and a crossroads for diverse biomes in the region, Mount Rushmore will be a leader for protecting and managing America's resources and human life. Our Centennial plan includes new trail systems, a state of the art emergency operations and training center, and interpretive programs on our resources to educate and protect our visitors. These new facilities will provide opportunities for experiencing and learning about the natural resources and cultural history of our area including the Northern Plains tribes and their relationship to the Black Hills while maintaining a protected environment for the resources and visitors.

The Centennial vision for Mount Rushmore is that we will become a center of excellence for sharing the story of America, for providing visitor opportunities, and for protecting resources and people. We will accomplish this through the completion of high priority projects that include the development of a new 10 mile hiking trail system, a new trail to the historic Hall of Records, a new multicultural education center, the rehabilitation of the historic Sculptor's Studio, the construction of a new maintenance facility and fire cache, and the development of a new Emergency Operations and Training Center.

We have a dynamic and enthusiastic partner in the Mount Rushmore National Memorial Society, our outstanding "friends group" that has a long history of productive results in assisting with projects and programs at the Memorial. The Oglala Lakota Nation, the State of South Dakota, the National Forest Service, and Custer State Park have also been instrumental in the development and implementation of many of our programs and will continue to assist us throughout the Centennial Initiative.

The Superintendent and staff of the Memorial are enthusiastic and committed to bringing Mount Rushmore's Centennial vision to fruition.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Gerard Baker

Site: MORU

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.

The historic Sculptor's Studio, built in 1939, is an extremely valuable structure that is in need of restoration and rehabilitation. It is a classic wooden structure on the National Register of Historic Places that houses the models that Sculptor Gutzon Borglum worked from while creating Mount Rushmore. The studio is one of the foremost interpretive and educational locations at the memorial. While the building currently houses the memorial's maintenance shop and equipment and vehicle storage, these uses are incompatible with maintaining the historic integrity of the structure and conducting interpretive programs. Before the studio can be rehabilitated, a new state of the art maintenance facility must be designed and constructed at an identified location within the memorial, but outside of the historic district. This maintenance facility would serve as a center for facility maintenance, crafts, vehicle and equipment maintenance, groundskeeping, and janitorial services for this heavily visited park. Once the new maintenance facility is constructed, the Sculptor's Studio would be completely rehabilitated and used as a dynamic location for interpretation and education.

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

Site: MORU

ENVIRONMENT

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.

We would like to design and construct an effluent recycling system to make use of 50,000 gallons of treated water that is discharged on a daily basis. This water is being discharged from the memorial's Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) into an open drainage (under a SD DENR Discharge Permit). Numerous opportunities exist for the use of the water including irrigation of wildland fire prone areas, connection to existing grounds irrigation system, fire suppression connections, vehicle cleaning, pavement cleaning, and fire suppression reservoirs. The Mount Rushmore Effluent Recycling System Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment (with FONSI) have been prepared. This project is necessary to ensure potable water continues to be available to our 3,000,000 annual visitors. This project will reduce the impact on the memorial's only fresh water source and provide an additional water source for grounds irrigation and structural/wildland fire suppression and mitigation efforts.

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Site: MORU

RECREATION

Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

A new backcountry trail system totaling approximately 10 miles in length is proposed for Mount Rushmore National Memorial. This system would highlight the natural resources and history and the cultural resources and history of Mount Rushmore and the central Black Hills area. Significant features would include the "old growth" ponderosa pine forest, the wide variety of flora and fauna, the unique geology, and the storied cultural history of the area. This proposed trail system will provide outstanding new opportunities for education, interpretation, and recreation. NEPA planning for this project is already underway and our partner, the Mount Rushmore National Memorial Society, has committed to \$600,000 of contributions. American Indian tribes of the Northern Great Plains have expressed their interest in being part of the construction and interpretation of the trail. Other partners that have expressed support include the state of South Dakota and the U.S. Forest Service.

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Site: MORU

EDUCATION

Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

A new education center will provide a professional space for the exploration of America's history and culture. This center will promote cultural understanding through a wide ranager of interpretive programs, special events, and multimedia outreach. We envision this center to contain an expanded library, classroom space, museum collection education room, technology office, and a conference facility to provide educational opportunities for NPS staff, educators, students, historians, and visitors. The center should be equipped with expanded electronic media capabilities to develop new information services to include video conferences, podcasts, video streaming, e-tours and internet based multimedia. With an education center at Mount Rushmore, we would be able to increase programs with hands-on multicultural interactive experiences that would be presented in a professional setting accessible to all who visit. Incorporating multicultural and multimedia programs into our interpretive plan will encourage a global perspective with our children and future generations.

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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.

The proposed Grand Staircase Trail would connect the existing Presidential Trail to the historic "Hall of Records" located in a granite walled canyon behind the Mount Rushmore sculpture. This dramatic trail would gain approximately 400 feet of elevation over an approximately 900 horizontal feet. Mount Rushmore sculptor Gutzon Borglum articulated his vision that the Hall of Records area would be open to the public. This proposed trail would provide outstanding new opportunities to educate the public about Mount Rushmore, its meaning, and sculptor Gutzon Borglum's vision for the Hall of Records. Borglum wanted to ensure that the meaning of Mount Rushmore, who carved it and how and why, would never be lost to future generations. He conceived of a repository on the mountain - the Hall of Records - that would contain the pertinent information. While never completed, the Hall of Records is an impressive and intriguing location that stands as a monument to an unfinished dream and inspires contemplation. The construction of this trail would present the opportunity for interpretation and education on the visible, tangible, and spectacular site of history.

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PROFESSIONALISM

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Mount Rushmore National Memorial is a world recognized symbol of our nation and the ideals of freedom and democracy. We experience heavy visitation, frequent large special events, frequent dignitary visits, and frequent media events. We must implement the highest possible level of resource and visitor protection at the Memorial. We propose the construction of a new "state of the art" Emergency Operations and Training Center that would provide office space, equipment storage, physical fitness facilities, and a training center for park staff. This facility will improve our ability to provide outstanding protection and emergency services. This will serve as a training center for not only Mount Rushmore, but also for other park areas within several hundred miles and across regional boundaries, as well as for other agencies. It will be a "center of excellence" that will allow us to be on the leading edge in protecting one of America's greatest treasures and the people who visit and work there.

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