

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: TAPR

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve intends to celebrate, in 2016, both the centennial of the National Park Service and the 20th anniversary of the preserve's establishment by fully implementing the approved General Management Plan (GMP).

The 10,894-acre preserve was authorized as the unit in the National Park System "to preserve, protect, and interpret for the public an example of a tallgrass prairie ecosystem...and to preserve and interpret for the public the historic and cultural values represented on the Spring Hill Ranch." It is a unique partnership with The Nature Conservancy (the primary landowner), and the National Park Service (the primary manager). At one time, tallgrass prairie covered approximately 40% of the North American continent; but today less than 4% remains, primarily in the Flint Hills of Kansas where the preserve is located.

In 2000, a GMP was completed which focused on the integrated management of the natural and cultural resources of the preserve, including desired futures related to prairie enhancement, resource protection, and visitor experiences. Main components of the GMP call for the construction of park facilities to accomplish visitor center, maintenance, and other operational functions; restoration of 500 acres of bottomland prairie; reintroduction of bison; increased prairie ecosystem diversity; and a wide variety of visitor access and activities.

We look forward to utilizing these future significant birthday milestones as the catalyst to fulfill the vision of the GMP and realize the potential of this special and unique unit in our National Park System.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Stephen T. Miller

Site: TAPR

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

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

To fully implement the General Management Plan, there are a number of major projects that need to be completed. These include the restoration of 500 acres of rare bottomland prairie community in an area currently planted in brome; the change in management of the existing prairie ecosystem from a beef production emphasis to increased native plant and animal diversity; and preservation of a wide variety of cultural resources from archeological sites to extensive ranching structures.

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

Site: TAPR

STEWARDSHIP

Set the standard of excellence in urban park landscape design and maintenance.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The park site development plan to determine the location of the future park facilities will be available for public review shortly. Once completed, it is anticipated that the park will start planning and design during FY 2008. Our goal is to make sure these structures will be visually and architecturally compatible with their surrounding natural and cultural environment. Also, to meet sustainable design necessary to achieve a gold LEED rating.

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Site: TAPR

ENVIRONMENT

Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The park's establishment is built on a public/private partnership foundation. Currently, The Nature Conservancy is the primary landowner and the National Park Service the primary management. This relationship leads to a variety of collaborative efforts involving resource management. Work has begun to include not just our main partner, but adjacent landowners as well, in prescribed burning activities. Other opportunities will present themselves as the park continues to develop.

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Site: TAPR

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)

In recent years, the State of Kansas has made major efforts to promote the Flint Hills region with the preserve as the centerpiece. National exposure continues with frequent magazine articles on the park and area. The state highway through the park has been designated a national scenic byway. Local efforts continue to build to develop additional and existing attractions and promote this area as a destination. The preserve plans to expand its school education and Junior Ranger activities, and undertake outreach programs into the increasing nearby Hispanic populations.

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

Site: TAPR

EDUCATION

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

This ownership concept will be articulated through the audiovisual program currently being developed, exhibits in the visitor center, and future publications and programs.

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Site: TAPR

PROFESSIONALISM

Model what it means to work in partnership.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The preserve, on its highest level, is a partnership between The Nature Conservancy (primary landowner) and the National Park Service (primary manager). This permeates throughout all park programs and activities on a daily basis. There are numerous partnership opportunities to help offset an environment of limited financial resources. One current example is the bottomland prairie restoration project. In addition to NPS and TNC, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Green Team (a volunteer group from the area electric company) are actively involved in the project.

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