NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

SABBATICAL IN THE PARKS

2001–2002

Information for Parks

Introduction

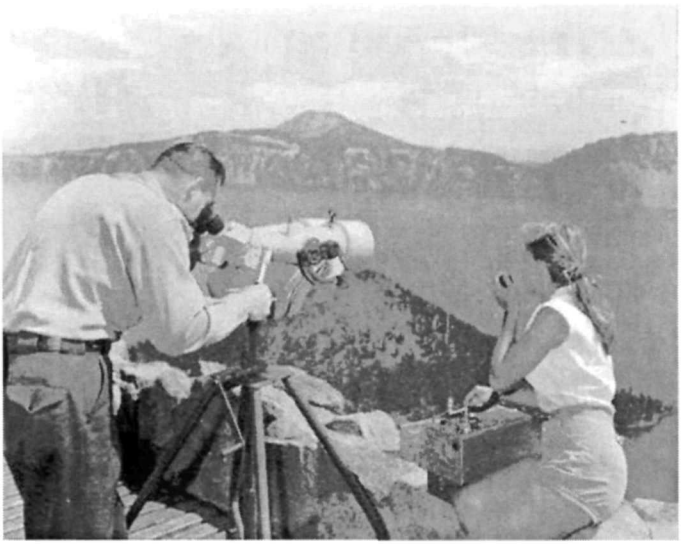
The National Park Service (NPS) is charged to preserve the nation's most unique natural and cultural resources. A thorough understanding of those resources is essential to their long-term preservation. Such understanding requires a sound scientific basis. Hence, state-of-the-art science is a necessary and important tool in resource stewardship and the effective management of the National Park System. National parks are also unique laboratories for scientific research.

The NPS has a twofold scientific responsibility—to use the best available science in park management *and* to encourage research in parks that benefits society as a whole. To effectively undertake these dual responsibilities—"science for parks" and "parks for science" the NPS must enlist the help of the academic community, and facilitate scientific inquiry in the parks.

The Sabbatical in the Parks Program was created to assist in arranging faculty sabbaticals to conduct research and other scholarly activity, which provides usable knowledge for NPS management and/or advances science and human understanding.

The Program

Sabbaticals taken in National Park System units provide the NPS with scientific and scholarly expertise. Such expertise encompasses many disciplines important to managing park resources and providing services to park visitors. Sabbaticals in parks also increase the interaction of national parks with the scientific community, and complement the research of the USGS Biological Resources Division, NPS regional science support programs, Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units, and other research occurring in NPS units. Sabbaticals in parks can play an important role in promoting the use of national parks for the advancement of science and human knowledge. The sabbatical program is one part of the Natural Resource Challenge, a broad multi-year initiative to increase resource preservation and science in parks.



Example Sabbaticals in the Parks

The following examples illustrate some of the ways park sabbaticals inform park management, and offer technical and educational assistance to host parks.

- A geology professor divides her sabbatical between five parks. At each unit she completes a technical evaluation of the park's interpretation of its geological features. She creates geology training guides, and conducts workshops for interpreters and resource managers incorporating the most recent theoretical and applied research on the geological history of the area, and her interest in the relationship between geologic features and the parks' ecology. In consultation with resource managers and

support office staff, she develops a proposal to conduct further research on the geological and ecological interface in two of the parks. At her home university, she uses her Sabbatical in the Parks experience to advise students in an interdisciplinary environmental studies program.

- A sociology professor on sabbatical, working with park managers and the local Chamber of Commerce, studies visitor carrying capacity of park resources and associated human impacts experienced during the peak tourist season. He helps the Chamber of Commerce develop a marketing plan for the "shoulder tourist seasons." He designs and facilitates a workshop, for park staff and gateway community residents, on ecological and economic carrying capacity, and resource and business sustainability. He uses this experience to update a graduate course, at his home university, dealing with the potentials and limits of natural resource-based tourism in protected areas.

- A wildlife ecologist uses his sabbatical to design a research protocol to monitor the response of grazing animals to the reintroduction of gray wolves into the park ecosystem. He designs an interpretive program focusing on the impacts of gray wolves on the park's wildlife and plant species. He also conducts a training session for the interpretive staff, which orients them to his research, current theories on predator-prey dynamics, and the ecosystem effects of gray wolf introduction. He works on a book on the history and ecology of gray wolves in the region.

- An anthropology professor, on sabbatical in a national park preserving ancient cultural ruins tests a new remote sensing method for identifying signatures of probable archaeological sites. She trains and leads volunteers in surface surveys of undocumented regions of the park, and correlates those surveys with the remote sensing data. She completes a manuscript synthesizing recent research, which utilizes remote sensing in archaeological study. She presents her work at an international conference on technological applications in anthropology.

How the Program Works

The Sabbatical in the Parks Program maintains a *sabbatical clearinghouse* (www.nature.nps.gov/sabbaticals). Research interests and expertise of university professors in the biological, physical, social and cultural sciences are matched with research, technical support and educational needs of individual NPS units. The clearinghouse depends on the work of the system-wide *program coordinator,* and a designated *sabbatical liaison* in each interested and participating NPS unit.

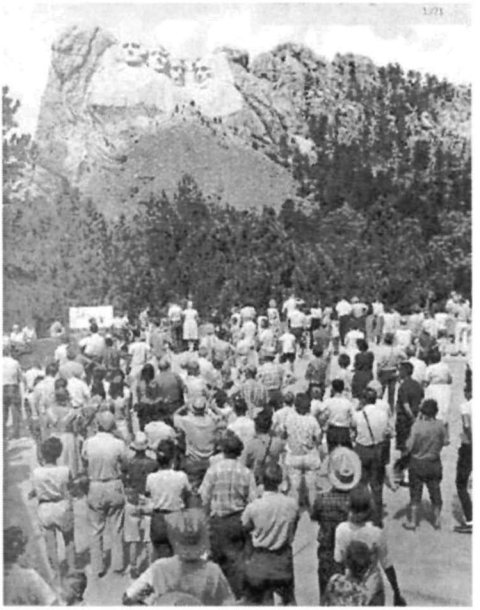
Participation is fully optional. Parks which elect to participate in the Program complete the enclosed *NPS Park Sabbatical Opportunity Worksheet* and submit this information to the sabbatical clearinghouse. The worksheet helps identify research opportunities, needs for technical assistance and education, and facilities and other support available in the park for a professor on sabbatical.

Faculty members interested in taking a sabbatical in an NPS unit submit to the program coordinator short proposals and information pertinent to their research (A separate brochure is available for interested faculty and explains the program and research opportunities in the National Park System).

All faculty submissions are reviewed by the Sabbatical in the Parks Program coordinator and entered into the clearinghouse database. Faculty research

interests are aligned with the needs of individual park units.

Interested faculty members are put in direct contact with a representative of a park unit. If discussion confirms that a good match exists, an agreement can be negotiated by the park liaison and the faculty member, with assistance as requested from the national program coordinator. Upon completion of a sabbatical, the faculty member and park superintendent submit brief evaluations to the clearinghouse.

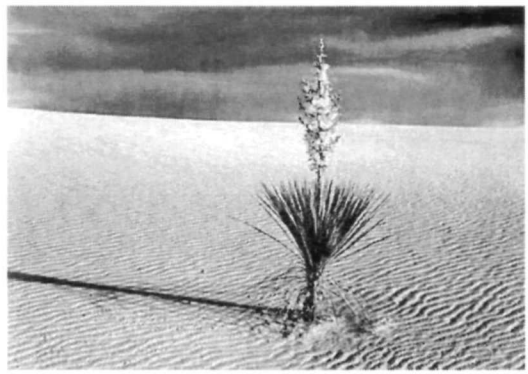


Benefits to Parks

- High-quality research, identified as essential by park management, will be carried out at minimal agency expense.
- Visiting faculty can provide training and technical assistance for park staff in their areas of scientific expertise.
- Park sabbaticals leverage existing resources for applied science that directly benefits park management.
- Visiting scientists can enhance park staff's appreciation of the role of science in park management.
- Sabbatical research in parks can expand the general base of scientific knowledge.
- Sabbatical research and reporting can be done collaboratively with NPS scientists.
- Research conducted by university scientists during sabbaticals can advance the credibility of the NPS within the academic and scientific communities.

- Because sabbatical faculty are fully or partially compensated by their university, they can be hosted by NPS units that otherwise could not afford this expertise.
- Experience working in national parks during a sabbatical may motivate faculty to do additional research in parks, encourage their students to do so, and promote park-related research among their colleagues.

Criteria for Park Participation



Each national park unit which elects to participate in the Sabbatical in the Parks Program must designate a *sabbatical liaison*. Smaller parks may share a single liaison or enlist the help of a field support office. The sabbatical liaison need not be the person that a scientist works with once he or she arrives in the park. However, the liaison performs several important functions, including:

- compiling and reporting park needs for research, technical assistance and education, and available park resources and facilities,
- serving as the point of contact and broker of negotiations with faculty members interested in taking a sabbatical,
- preparing a sabbatical agreement letter for signature by the park superintendent and faculty member,
- ensuring that any agreed-upon support, including housing, clerical assistance, computer equipment, and office and laboratory space is available when the faculty member arrives, and,
- coordinating sabbatical evaluations through the park superintendent or other executive.

The collateral work required of the park sabbatical liaisons will be reasonable. Much of it will be done with the assistance of the program coordinator. The Sabbatical in the Parks Program will provide park sabbatical liaisons with sample letters of agreement and other guidance as requested.

Criteria for Faculty Participation

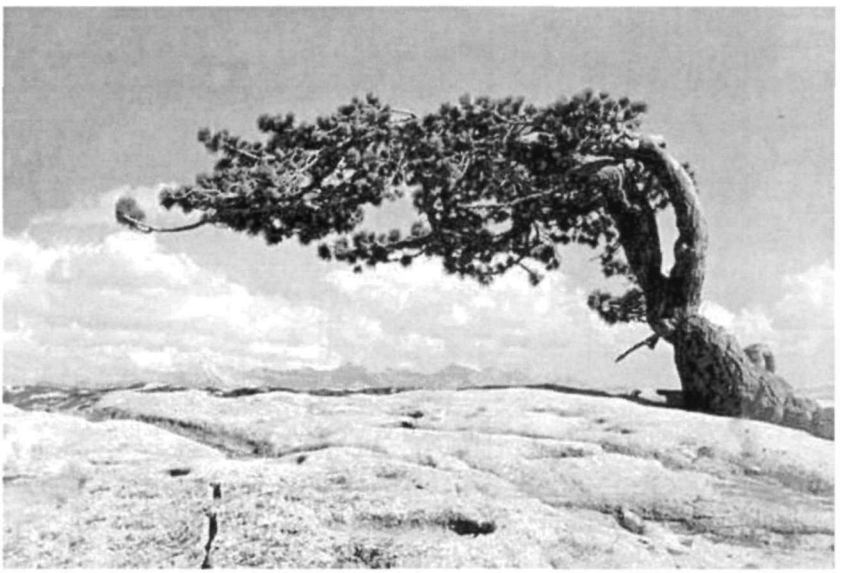
The Sabbatical in the Parks Program is open to tenure-track faculty members from four-year institutions of higher education in the U.S. who have successfully competed for sabbaticals, according to the procedures of their institution. The following guidelines address faculty participation in the program:

- Faculty members in the biological, physical, social, and cultural sciences are eligible to participate in the program.
- Sabbaticals should benefit both the visiting scientist and the host NPS unit.
- No sabbatical should begin without a formal written agreement, clearly stating the expectations of both parties, and commensurate benefits.
- All activities conducted by visiting faculty must conform to existing NPS policies on research, scientific collecting, facility use, resource management, and interpretation and education.
- Visiting faculty should have opportunities for original research, writing, service, or other creative activity consistent with their home institution's sabbatical objectives.
- Research activities involving human subjects will be subject to the review and approval policies of the home university.
- Participating faculty members will evaluate sabbaticals at the conclusion of each sabbatical.
- Park sabbaticals of one semester or one year in length can be accommodated

Typical Park Support and Obligations

Each NPS unit has different levels of support available to scientists during their sabbaticals. Examples of support may include housing, travel costs, and limited research funds. In all cases, modest administrative support (i.e. telephone, desk, office space, etc.) should be provided to faculty. Ultimately, support is negotiable between the NPS unit and the faculty member, and will vary with each sabbatical.

Faculty are expected to provide research, technical assistance, and education to the host NPS unit. This does not preclude the faculty member spending time on personal research and scholarly projects. How much time is spent on specific tasks will vary and is negotiated in each case.



Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Will a faculty member be paid by the NPS during a sabbatical in a park?*
   In most cases, no. There is no central office funding for park sabbaticals. Faculty members on sabbatical receive full or partial compensation from their university. In some cases parks may reimburse the faculty member for travel to and from the park. Additional funds are rarely available.

2. *Who may participate the program?*
   Faculty members from four-year universities in the United States, who are eligible for sabbatical according to their institution's requirements, may participate. Faculty in the biological, physical, social, and cultural sciences are eligible.

3. *Does the park provide housing?*
   This will depend on availability. Housing arrangements can be limited and are negotiated in each case with individual park unit. Parks are not required to provide housing; however, housing will likely make your park more attractive to faculty.

4. *When are the deadlines for arranging a sabbatical?*
   There are no deadlines for arranging a sabbatical. Parks submitting park sabbatical opportunity forms are most likely to attract faculty interested in a sabbatical.

5. *How much support does the park need to provide to the faculty member?*
Support will vary for each sabbatical and NPS unit. Arrangements will be negotiated as part of the sabbatical agreement. Support may include housing, office space, clerical assistance, computer access, and so forth.

6. *How much time will faculty spend on personal research projects?*
Arrangements will vary with each sabbatical, and will be included in the sabbatical agreement. In general, a faculty member on sabbatical will spend half a day to three days each week in research, technical assistance, or education activities of benefit to the host NPS unit. The remainder of the time will be devoted to conducting personal research in the park.

7. *Can a regional office of the National Park Service host a faculty member on sabbatical?*
Yes. All units and offices of the National Park Service may host sabbaticals. Parks, administrative offices, program centers, and system support offices are able to participate in the Sabbatical in the Parks Program.

8. *Are there any additional funds provided by the Sabbatical in the Parks Program to support faculty on sabbatical in a park?*
No. At this time, the program maintains the *Sabbatical Clearinghouse* and assists in arranging sabbatical opportunities for faculty in parks.

9. *Can a park arrange a sabbatical without being involved in the Sabbatical in the Parks Program?*
Yes. The Sabbatical in the Parks Program is available only as assistance to parks.

For Further Information

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Sabbatical in the Parks Program
Park Sabbatical Opportunity Worksheet

Park/Unit: _____

Sabbatical Liaison: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

NPS unit resources to support sabbaticals (check all that apply):

	Available	Park/Unit covers cost	Visiting Faculty covers cost (approx. cost)
Single-family housing/apt.	❑	❑	❑ _____
Access to a vehicle	❑	❑	❑ _____
Computer/printer	❑	❑	❑ _____
Internet access	❑	❑	❑ _____
Office space	❑	❑	❑ _____
Laboratory space	❑	❑	❑ _____
Travel support to and from park	❑	❑	❑ _____
Salary support*	❑	❑	❑ _____

* *Most faculty on sabbatical are at least partially paid by their home university.*

Please see reverse

If housing might be available, please identify approximate dates for available housing to host a sabbatical (*check all that apply*)

❑ **Fall** (*September 1-December 15*) ❑ **Spring** (*January 15-May 31*)

❑ **Summer** (*June 1-August 31*) ❑ **Academic year** (*September 1-May 31*)

❑ **Other** (*please specify dates*) _____

Has your park submitted research needs into the NPS research permit and reporting system (science.nature.nps.gov/research)?

❑ Yes ❑ No

If yes, would you like the Sabbatical in the Parks Program Coordinator to use these research needs (in addition to needs or opportunities described above) when attempting to match faculty with your park?

❑ Yes ❑ No

On a separate page, please describe your unit's needs or opportunities for research, technical assistance, education, or other scholarly activity that would support NPS management that might assist the national program coordinator in matching faculty interests with your park. Each sabbatical is customized to the park and faculty's mutual agreement so sabbaticals need not only be for needs and opportunities identified here.

Please use this worksheet information to complete your submission into the Sabbatical Clearinghouse at www.nature.nps.gov/sabbaticals

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