

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
75TH ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM**

**Revised Recommendations of the Working Groups on
*OUR NATIONAL PARKS:
CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY***



November 1991





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INTRODUCTION

The National Park Service is charged with the management of the nation's most precious natural, cultural, and historical resources. These resources are inextricably woven into our national heritage, and they provide citizens the world over with opportunities for recreation, aesthetic beauty, historical reflection, cultural enrichment, and environmental education. It is the responsibility of those involved in park management and policy formulation to ensure that the national park system does not fail to preserve and protect the resources managed by the National Park Service. Yet, fulfilling this enormous responsibility is not a simple process, nor is it free of controversy.

The National Park Service faces a broad range of challenges to its mission to manage the park system. An ever-growing population continues to surround park units, often bringing traces of economic and social activities that are the antitheses of those activities that the parks are designed to foster. Visitor levels and mixes are changing, resulting in demands for often mutually exclusive experiences and services from the national parks. The Park Service is also being challenged to enhance the national park system as a model of conservation and preservation — a model that can teach valuable lessons to a world increasingly concerned with environmental threats, as well as with rapid cultural and historical changes. To effectively perform under these kinds of pressures, the Park Service itself must be well-managed, and it must be guided by wise public policies.

To assess the organizational and policy problems that most threaten the national park system, four working groups were formed in spring 1991, the year of the 75th anniversary of the National Park Service. These groups, comprised of individuals both within and outside the Park Service, have addressed four broad areas of concern:

- Organizational Renewal
- Resource Stewardship
- Park Use and Enjoyment
- Environmental Leadership

The four groups each met twice in extended working sessions. At each session the groups also received advice and comments from interested individuals inside and outside the Park Service. Drawing upon the insights gained in these working sessions, each group then prepared a draft report identifying the key policy and organizational problems confronting the Park Service.

These draft reports were then presented at the National Park Service's 75th Anniversary Symposium in Vail, Colorado, on October 7-10, 1991. The symposium was an international gathering of individuals interested in the future of the National Park Service, and it served as an opportunity to respond to the policy recommendations suggested by the four working groups. In response to feedback received from symposium participants, the working groups have since redrafted their proposals, incorporating the ideas and concerns expressed by the Vail participants. The revised recommendations are provided here for public

comment. Written comments are invited during the period November 18 through December 13, 1991. Comments must be submitted by December 13 to

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The symposium Steering Committee was chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) in order to ensure the public a voice in the proceedings. In accordance with the dictates of FACA, the Steering Committee is convening a public hearing in Washington, D.C., on December 17 from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. at the J.W. Marriott, 1331 Pennsylvania Avenue NW. This hearing constitutes the final information-gathering session in the recommendations process, after which the proposals will be finalized and sent to the director of the National Park Service for implementation. Any party wishing to make a presentation to the Steering Committee at the FACA hearing should notify Laurie Shaffer for scheduling purposes no later than December 9 at 5:00 P.M. Ms. Shaffer's telephone number is (202) 208-5917 or FAX (202) 208-7520; her address is National Park Service, 1849 C Street NW, Room 3329, Washington, D.C., 20240.

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
75TH ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM

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ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Issue 1. How can the human resource systems for recruitment, orientation, training, and development enhance the organization's base of knowledge and professional skills, its cohesion and sense of shared commitment?**

Recommendations:

1-A Establish a standardized process for recruiting and hiring Park Service personnel in key career fields.

- Review all series used in the Park Service and determine which have recruitment and/or retention problems. Work with OPM to identify appropriate strategies to strengthen any series so identified.
- Establish positive educational requirements as appropriate for positions that need a strong base of technical, scientific, cultural, or administrative knowledge. In particular, the park ranger series should have a degree requirement at entry level. Degrees could be in either natural resource or cultural resource/history specialties. There should be a specific list of qualifying degrees.
- Work with OPM to establish a single-agency classification and qualification standard for park rangers and seek delegated examining authority.

The Park Service is by far the single greatest user of the park ranger register and thus can argue that employees hired from it must meet this agency's needs. The existing standard should be revised to require academic credentials and to reflect the unique demands of park ranger work. Rangers must be versatile, adaptable, and able to independently integrate a broad variety of information in complex field settings where their decisions can have far-reaching consequences.

- Develop a strategy to provide for the transition of current Park Service employees who do not meet newly established educational requirements.

It is important that current employees not be adversely affected by the adoption of stronger standards for new hires. The Park Service should develop a transition strategy that allows existing employees opportunities to enhance their professional skills and educational background.

- Ensure that the process gives full consideration to high-quality seasonals and current Park Service employees.

ORGANIZATIONAL RENEWAL

Currently, managers in the field use a variety of creative hiring processes to give deserving seasonals permanent status. This is largely due to the cumbersome and time-consuming centralized process managed by OPM. Unfortunately, because these "back door" methods often require no effective competition, the Park Service as a whole may not be getting the best. In addition, seasonals often suffer substantial hardship when forced to take jobs they don't want in places they don't want to work just to become permanent.

1-B Strengthen recruitment, hiring, and retention of a culturally diverse work force.

- Take full advantage of special hiring authorities such as student co-op programs. Provide the opportunity to hold vacant appropriate intake positions for competitive placement of student co-op graduates.
- Encourage students to engage in seasonal or part-time work with the Park Service during their undergraduate years, so as to be well positioned to compete for permanent, professional positions upon graduation.
- Use contemporary and creative means to reach out to school-children and visitors in underrepresented groups to familiarize them with the Park Service and its career opportunities.

The Park Service needs to be substantially more creative in recruitment and affirmative action measures. Such approaches as early outreach, use of nontraditional media, and aggressive placement must be adopted. For example, by the time students reach high school age, their concept of who they are and the kinds of work they might do have begun to gel. It is less effective to introduce the Park Service to them for the first time at this stage of their lives. The Park Service needs to reach out to younger children and visiting families, introducing them to the NPS system and mission so that they become comfortable and familiar with it before employment becomes an issue. This must be done using words and images that have meaning for target groups.

1-C Establish typical career paths within each key career field that define opportunities and establish realistic expectations for their achievement.

Mechanisms should be provided to assess individual achievement toward career goals. This is most effective when redefinition of career goals and expectations takes place on a recurring basis. Such discussions should include typical expectations for tenure and mobility, and a review of options for alternative career or job design where either the employee's or agency's expectations are not being met.

- 1-D Initiate and implement a comprehensive program for employee training and development based on the preparation of a plan for each career field which addresses the knowledge and skill enhancement required at key points in each career cycle.

Continued support for employee development must be far more aggressive and institutionalized. Park Service employees too often find themselves the least up-to-date in their chosen fields when serving on panels and interagency work groups. Though often cited as a morale issue, there are actually far greater costs in terms of professional effectiveness in the field and leadership credibility outside the Park Service.

At lower levels improved support could take the form of more and better-directed training, in-house requirements for refreshers where legal requirements don't already exist, and recognition of those who pursue additional job-related training on their own. Later support could include allowing time or money for advanced academic training (such as training in new technical approaches or advanced degree work) or supporting attendance at a certain number of related professional meetings.

- 1-E Strengthen policy and encourage supporting career-development programs that demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of changing work force demographics. This policy should address issues such as mobility, housing assistance, job-sharing, flexible work schedules, spouse employment assistance, and locality pay for the problems of two-career couples.

Moving is stressful in and of itself. Now, with more and more employed spouses and dual-career couples, as well as other demographic changes, the need to move may materially interfere with career growth. The Park Service needs to identify disincentives to mobility where they appear to interfere with career growth or with the needs of the Park Service. These impediments should be addressed far more systematically and with more resources than in the past.

In addition, the Park Service should avail itself of the long-term work force demographic projections that private sector research has developed in order to plan such support programs, as well as other matters relating to recruitment and retention, 10 to 15 years ahead.

- 1-F Develop a top-quality orientation and initial training program for all Park Service employees.

- Prior to starting work, employees should complete a brief Park Service orientation program.

ORGANIZATIONAL RENEWAL

- All employees should receive training upon reporting to the initial job site, as well as orientation to their specific tasks and responsibilities.
- For those identified key career fields, new hires should complete a more substantial initial training program that focuses on skills and traditions. During the second half of their initial year, those persons should complete more specialized professional training in their chosen field.
- For park rangers, on completion of training and other assignments in the trainee's initial year and a successful probationary review, he or she would be promoted to the next grade (GS-9 if hired at GS-7). Subsequent promotions would require transfer to a new site.
- For those career fields selected for the more substantial initial program, consideration should be given to reestablishing the "boot camp" approach epitomized by the old "Introduction to National Park Service Operations" course. Such residential, intensive programs can be a highly effective means of passing on vital elements of agency culture.

1-G Review the existing Park Service grade structure and, working with OPM, initiate actions to correct inequities.

Issue 2. How should the process of identifying, testing, training, and developing the managers and leaders of the Park Service be improved?

Recommendations

2-A The Park Service should develop a new mid-level program to identify, select, and train promising employees as prospective managers and future leaders. These employees could come from any of the job series.

2-B The Park Service should establish career paths for managerial employees that begin at the GS-11 or -12 level.

2-C The Park Service should establish a senior-level executive development program (primarily GM 14/15 and above).

2-D The Park Service should establish a human resources management board that would serve three functions:

- Manage the assignment, training, and development of the top 10% of Park Service managers (say, 50 to 70 positions).

- Review and approve all proposed "candidate" assignments of the 750 GM employees in senior management positions.
- Develop the comprehensive, servicewide human resource policy described under issue #1.

2-E The Park Service should have such an effective development program that senior positions are primarily filled from within the agency. However, all senior jobs should generally be competitive nationwide.

Issue 3. How can the structure, procedures, and culture of the organization be enhanced in ways that more effectively focus resources on the operation of the system's parks and sites?

Recommendations

3-A The Park Service should introduce internal market incentives into the provision of support services for the park system.

3-B There should be a thorough strategic audit of functions performed in regions, headquarters, service centers, and parks. It should have three purposes:

- Ensure that the functions add value to the mission of the Park Service.
- Determine at which levels the functions can best be performed.
- Evaluate the number of regions needed to carry out the Park Service mission effectively.

3-C Key superintendencies and selected regional management jobs should be established as career-reserved SES positions.

3-D We recommend that, *henceforth*, all SES positions within the Park Service have, as a prerequisite, park managerial experience or comparable field experience in other organizations.

3-E Senior managers should shift assignments every five or six years.

Issue 4. How can the National Park Service enhance its ability to acquire and manage responsibly the large-scale financial resources essential to its mission? How can it stimulate and exploit the evident interests of private institutions in contributing to the goals of the organization?

Recommendations

- 4-A** The Park Service should reevaluate its fees to ensure that they are fair and market competitive. Current legislative authority that permits 50% of all entrance fees paid at a park to remain in that park should be reaffirmed.
- 4-B** The National Park Service should give financial management greater priority.
- The Park Service should develop a set of pilot budgets for several parks to reflect the actual relationships between costs, service levels, and performance standards.
 - The Park Service must strengthen financial management training for all managerial personnel and for those directly involved in budget administration, development, and concession management.
 - The Park Service should evaluate the Accounting Operations Division to determine whether decentralization would make it more efficient.
- 4-C** The Park Service should experiment with partnerships with a wide range of public and private organizations to fund projects in specific parks as well as to meet servicewide needs.
- 4-D** The Park Service should establish a more coherent concession policy, improve the ways it accounts for and represents concession income and contractual relationships, introduce greater competition into the process, realize higher returns from concessioners, and recognize creative contributions to the NPS mission by concessioners.
- 4-E** We recommend immediate approval of the proposed America the Beautiful pass, which admits holders to all NPS units for an annual fee of \$35, and the increase of park-specific annual pass fees where appropriate.

Working Group on Resource Stewardship

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ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Issue 1. What steps can be taken to more effectively protect park resources from external threats and to positively influence compatible land uses and resource management within the regional ecosystems and historical context of parks?

Recommendations:

1-A

There should be more effective and positive use of all existing authorities to deal with concerns and activities that transcend park boundaries.

In order to implement this recommendation the National Park Service should

- Initiate an intensive training course for managers to explain existing authorities, mechanisms, and strategies for addressing transboundary issues and to help managers view park management in an ecosystem and historical context. The course should be a requirement for new superintendents and be a mandatory part of any managerial development program. It should also be a component of the resource management specialist training program.
- Develop local, regional, and national constituencies that are sensitive to the importance of park resources and that will help defend parks against the impacts of adverse external activities.

1-B

There should be better documentation of transboundary problems and more effective use of scientific data in mitigating them.

In order to implement this recommendation individual parks should

- Identify and prioritize external problems facing each park and develop plans to address them.
- Coordinate their resource management goals with park neighbors and participate in regional land use planning efforts to prevent or mitigate the impact of potential adverse threats.
- Make effective use of existing scientific data from all sources and conduct additional research if necessary in order to better document, respond to, and mitigate the potential impacts of adverse external threats.

1-C

The secretary of the interior should clarify existing authorities, ensure their appropriate and consistent use, and seek additional legislation necessary to protect park resources from external threats.

In order to implement this recommendation the secretary of the interior should

- Encourage Department of the Interior solicitors and Department of Justice attorneys to be more aggressive and supportive in the use of existing authorities.

In order to implement this recommendation the National Park Service, in concert with the secretary, should

- Encourage Department of the Interior solicitors to clearly define the legal responsibility and authority of park managers to involve themselves in external matters impacting park resources.
- Develop a program to evaluate and identify those parks where additional land acquisitions may be the only way to deal with external threats.
- Seek legislation selectively to address pressing external problems confronting individual parks, and regularly review whether more general statutory authority is necessary to enable the National Park Service to address external problems effectively.
- Issue a triennial "State of the Parks" report indicating the current health and integrity of each unit and the park system as a whole.
- Enter into partnerships with state and local officials to broaden protection for national register properties, national historic landmarks, and national natural landmarks.
- Encourage the secretary of the interior to meet periodically with the chiefs of all bureaus under the secretary's jurisdiction.

Issue 2. How can protection and maintenance of resources be strengthened in National Park Service units?

Recommendations

2-A

Substantially increase the number of National Park Service resource professionals, emphasizing subject matter specialists

currently lacking in the agency and the placement of individuals in parks that lack sufficient resource management expertise.

- 2-B** Enhance the ability of parks to use the expertise of resource professionals who work outside the agency.

In order to implement both recommendations individual parks should

- Initiate and implement programs to identify and prioritize internal and external threats to park resources.
- Effectively monitor resource trends and conditions.

Procedure. Use measurable parameters or indicators sensitive enough to provide an early warning of change. Work with other agencies involved in developing monitoring protocols. Give monitoring priority to resources that are at risk.

- Identify measurable objectives for desired resource conditions. The identification of baseline conditions should be linked in part to global change studies.
- Establish and implement human carrying capacities for each unit.

In order to implement both recommendations the National Park Service should

- Develop programs for methods of preservation technology for cultural resources, particularly for those materials where standards are not available.
- Make implementation of identified resource management programs an important performance evaluation criterion for managers.

Issue 3. How can the ability to identify and evaluate resources be strengthened?

Recommendations

- 3-A** Standardize and base fund programs that identify and evaluate the significance of park resources.

In order to implement this recommendation individual parks should

- Gather and organize existing information.

Procedure. Catalog all resource information available on a given park and surrounding region in a database that identifies the investigators, describes the nature of the study, and indicates where it took place and where the original documents are located. This program could be patterned after the resource database program in the Pacific Northwest Region. As resource information was identified, appropriate data would be stored in centralized regional data centers, which would be compatible with, built upon, and linked to existing resource databases like the state natural heritage program, the cultural sites inventory, and those available from state historic preservation officers and from state liaison officers.

- Synthesize and interpret the available data, thereby providing a history of scientific and cultural research for a given unit.
- Develop a functional geographic information system (GIS) synthesizing all relevant spatial data.
- Develop conceptual ecosystem models and comprehensive contextual studies to help identify and prioritize gaps in resource knowledge.

Procedure. Identify natural resource data needs in the context of conceptual ecosystem models. Use a systems perspective to help identify key ecological processes and ecosystem components, thereby prioritizing future inventory and research. Conduct comprehensive context studies for archeology and history to provide a broader basis for evaluating and interpreting the resources the park was established to protect and interpret. Use these studies to help place in context those resources that are outside the park's primary focus but that still may have significance or research value.

- Fill in gaps in resource knowledge through inventory and research.

3-B

Revise the National Park Service management planning process to emphasize resource protection.

Issue 4. How can the quality of research and resource management programs be improved and fully integrated with park management?

Recommendations

- 4-A** Develop a comprehensive natural, cultural, and social sciences research program and propose legislation that would strengthen and expand the congressional sanction for this program.

In order to implement this recommendation the National Park Service should

- Do an analysis of those parks such as Channel Islands and Glacier Bay that have an individual research mandate in order to learn how such legislation has influenced each park.

- 4-B** Base all resource management and planning decisions on full consideration of the best available scientific research, and conduct further research as needed.

In order to implement this recommendation the National Park Service should

- Provide a training course for park managers on the research process, including design, methodology, peer review, and publication.
- Provide training and experience for managers in the role of science, and recognize and reward managers who effectively use science in the decision-making process.

In order to implement this recommendation both the National Park Service and individual parks should

- Bring scientific expertise and scholarship into management decision making as early as possible.
- Maintain full open communication between researchers and managers during all scientific and scholarly investigations.

- 4-C** Promote closer ties between cultural and natural resource professionals.

In order to implement this recommendation the National Park Service should

- Expand the system of cooperative park studies units at universities to include cultural resource professionals in appropriate disciplines. Units established at universities

already supporting a natural sciences GPSU should improve interactions between both categories of professionals.

- Establish joint meetings and workshops that focus on an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving.
- Consider new organizational structures that more closely link cultural and natural resource management responsibilities.

4-D Create a greater appreciation for research and scholarly activity, and recognize and seek to raise the level of professionalism among resource professionals and managers.

In order to implement this recommendation the National Park Service should

- Encourage resource professionals to develop closer ties with like professionals in academic institutions and in state, private, and other federal agencies.
- Consider placing resource professional positions in all disciplines under research grade evaluation. Evaluations should consider assistance to managers and internal communication of findings to nonprofessional field staff as well as research studies and publications.
- Explore alternative forms of evaluation for professionals whose disciplines do not involve research.
- Encourage and fund resource professionals to attend major nonlocal professional meetings at least once every two years.
- Encourage resource professionals to publish their findings in recognized scholarly, peer-reviewed outlets.
- Expand interdisciplinary resource studies.
- Fill open positions with individuals holding appropriate professional qualifications.

4-E Seek legislation endorsing the establishment of cooperative park studies units patterned after Fish and Wildlife Service cooperative research units.

Issue 5. How can the greater public support for resource stewardship be generated?

Recommendations

5-A Greatly expand the local, state, regional, national, and international outreach programs.

In order to implement this recommendation the National Park Service should

- Target public affairs training as a high priority throughout the Park Service.
- Develop a pilot program to evaluate the utility of establishing a public affairs function in every unit.
- Provide and encourage training for all managers in public and media relations.
- Develop an active environmental education program working directly with schools and children to acquaint them with park resources and concerns. Make park films and archives more widely available for educational purposes.
- Develop public service announcements that spotlight NPS resource management achievements and problems.
- Expand the use of existing National Park Service external programs, including grants and technical assistance programs.

5-B Strengthen the constituency for resource stewardship by developing new partnerships and by utilizing the educational, interpretive, and research capabilities of the National Park Service and its partners.

In order to implement this recommendation the National Park Service should

- Strengthen partnerships with national, state, and local cultural and natural resource preservation organizations, academic institutions, Indian tribes, and special interest groups.
- Strengthen external program activities, such as partnerships with state historic preservation officers and state liaison officers, and capitalize on national historic landmark and national natural landmark designation.

RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

- Expand technical assistance programs to historic preservation and to natural and recreation areas.

In order to implement this recommendation individual parks should

- Make park facilities and archives more widely available for research and study.
- Identify specific outreach targets and methods used to reach potential partners.

In order to implement this recommendation both the National Park Service and individual parks should

- Co-sponsor activities and events on all levels with natural and cultural resource preservation groups.
- Expand the concept of park citizen advisory groups to include additional parks.

- 5-C** Greatly expand the role of the public in resource stewardship activities and eliminate the barriers to public participation.

In order to implement this recommendation individual parks should

- Hold local forums to inform and allow the public to discuss resource issues of interest. These should be informal and on a regular basis and not only when an environmental assessment is planned.

- 5-D** Provide more information and better education to all National Park Service, concessions, and cooperating association personnel on resource stewardship issues.

Issue 6. What factors should control the addition of new areas to the park system or the expansion of existing areas of the park system?

Recommendations

- 6-A** Base the criteria for the selection of new areas on those resources and themes lacking representation in the national park system.

In order to implement this recommendation the National Park Service should

- Revise the *National Park System Plan* using all previous studies as a starting point.

- Establish and adequately fund a systematic program of theme studies.

6-B Provide for the professional evaluation of new areas to ensure that they meet criteria for national or international significance, resource integrity, suitability, and feasibility.

In order to implement this recommendation the National Park Service should

- Reinstate a new areas study program within the Park Service.
- Support ongoing studies such as the Fish and Wildlife Service's "gap analysis program," which is developing methods to better assess and evaluate resources that require protection.
- Work jointly with other agencies to develop a database of lands currently protected by all agencies.
- Facilitate the ability of regional offices to evaluate new cultural areas by elevating the cultural resource programs in all regional offices to full dimension, with the capability to manage both internal and external programs.
- Seek legislative authority to undertake suitability studies on lands managed by other federal agencies.

6-C Work with constituent groups and with federal, state, and local agencies to develop suitable strategies for determining how best to protect areas outside the national park system that may have significant resources.

In order to implement this recommendation the National Park Service should

- Establish a heritage areas program in cooperation with state and local agencies.

6-D Aggressively seek adequate funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Historic Preservation Fund for states to protect significant resources outside the national park system.

6-E Develop and promote a National Park Service legislative program to deal with new areas.

Working Group on Park Use and Enjoyment

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ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Issue 1. What should be the role of the National Park Service, both in American society and globally?

Recommendations:

- 1-A We recommend that the National Park Service consider the preservation and interpretation of cultural diversity to be significant criteria in the acquisition of new historic and cultural sites and the management of existing sites.
- 1-B We recommend that the National Park Service strengthen and expand its program of technical assistance to meet visitor needs for natural, scenic, recreational, cultural, and historical experiences outside the boundaries of the national park system.
- 1-C We recommend that the National Park Service embrace the concept of "partnership parks."
- 1-D We recommend that the National Park Service fully implement existing legislative mandates under PL 89-29, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, the Urban Parks and Recreation Resources Act, and related statutes *or* propose that these responsibilities be transferred to another entity.
- 1-E The National Park Service should reinforce its role as a world leader in the national park movement through agreements to facilitate the exchange of information, development of environmental strategies, and protection of critical world resources.

Issue 2. How will the national park system be used and enjoyed?

Recommendations:

- 2-A We recommend that the National Park Service broadly communicate the breadth and value of the national park system.
- 2-B We recommend that the National Park Service embark on an innovative program of facility planning, design, and maintenance to prepare the "frontcountry" of each park for future visitor needs.
- 2-C We recommend that the National Park Service minimize development of park facilities within park boundaries while striving for excellence in visitor services.

PARK USE AND ENJOYMENT

2-D We recommend that the National Park Service develop a technical assistance program aimed specifically at gateway communities and regions linked to national park system areas.

2-E We recommend that the National Park Service take prompt action to develop visitor transportation systems in parks where resource protection and enhancement of the visitor experience can be achieved.

Issue 3. How should the National Park Service interpret the national park system and educate the public, and for what purpose?

Recommendations:

3-A We recommend that the National Park Service commit its resources to offering all visitors basic interpretation, including a general orientation to the site and insight into its unique features and significance.

3-B We recommend that the National Park Service embark on an innovative program of educational and informational outreach, serving existing and potential visitors, as well as citizens that do not visit the parks.

3-C We recommend that the National Park Service encourage managers and interpreters to examine the issue of how to interpret controversial events and sites, and to interpret events and sites from multiple points of view.

Issue 4. How will park use and enjoyment impact natural and cultural resources, and what should be done about these impacts?

Recommendations:

4-A We recommend that the National Park Service undertake a systemwide analysis of visitor use impacts on park resources, including a careful documentation of crowding conditions in the parks.

4-B We recommend that the National Park Service undertake a program of trials, whereby different techniques for minimizing visitor impacts are applied, evaluated, and communicated in a fortified technology transfer effort.

4-C We recommend that the National Park Service, its concessioners, and its other partners develop an educational program that encourages visitors to minimize resource demands.

Issue 5. How can the National Park Service make wise decisions regarding park use and enjoyment in the future?

Recommendations:

- 5-A** We recommend that the National Park Service establish a task force to improve the public involvement process within the agency.
- 5-B** We recommend that the National Park Service develop an expanded social science program.
- 5-C** We recommend that the National Park Service and its partners act to increase the financial and human resources available to the agency in order to better serve park users.

Working Group on Environmental Leadership

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ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Issue 1. What steps should the National Park Service take to embrace a leadership role in sound resource management?

Recommendations:

- 1-A** The National Park Service should promote sound ecological management of its natural resources and develop visitor use policies consistent with such management. In some situations, this would include limiting visitor use.
- 1-B** The National Park Service should also enhance the management of its cultural and heritage programs to emphasize the American experience in all its diversity.
- 1-C** The National Park Service cannot manage its resources in isolation from environmental concerns that may originate locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally.
- 1-D** The National Park Service should form strong public-private partnerships with states, tribes, local governments, and nonprofit organizations. Such partnerships could facilitate joint management of historical, cultural, and natural resources, joint research programs, and ongoing exchanges of ideas and expertise.
- 1-E** The National Park Service must upgrade its research capability in the areas of ecology, natural resources, and culture. Its credibility in managing its resources, providing interpretive programs, and promoting its policies will be dependent on the strength of the information on which its actions and programs are based. A strong and respected research program is a prerequisite for developing a first-rate information base.
- 1-F** The National Park Service should pursue cooperative research efforts with other federal, state, and tribal land agencies, universities, and private nonprofit institutions where practical.

Issue 2. How can the National Park Service lead in environmental and cultural education?

Recommendations:

- 2-A** The national parks should serve as an outdoor classroom in which millions of Americans can learn about the American experience and, more specifically, the ecological, historical, and cultural values which are part of that experience.

ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP

- 2-B** The National Park Service should create a professional career path for interpretive personnel and reward creativity and innovation in this area.
- 2-C** To enhance the public's understanding of major environmental issues, the National Park Service, in its role as an educational institution, should support the inclusion of these issues in interpretive programs. To ensure the credibility of the information provided, discussion of these issues should be tied to park resources and linked to ongoing research efforts within the Park Service and in other federal environmental and natural resource agencies.
- 2-D** The National Park Service should rely to a greater degree on multimedia programs to interpret park resources in order to reach audiences beyond park boundaries.

Issue 3. How can the National Park Service promote a leadership ethic practiced throughout the agency?

Recommendations:

- 3-A** The National Park Service should demonstrate environmental leadership by "leading by example" at all levels. It should strive to become the most environmentally aware agency in the U.S. government.
- 3-B** The National Park Service should refocus its training programs to ensure that employees are knowledgeable of the NPS mission and are skilled in all aspects of management, including interaction with external constituencies.
- 3-C** The National Park Service should take steps to improve communications between the director and the regional directors, between the regional directors and superintendents, and between the employees in Washington and the regional offices and those in the parks.
- 3-D** The National Park Service should structure rewards and incentives so that efforts to carry out the agency's mission are recognized. Managers demonstrating innovation and creativity in ways that fulfill the shared vision of the Park Service should be recognized as leaders within the agency.

Issue 4. What management practice will ensure that NPS personnel are able to exert professionalism in a political environment?

Recommendations:

- 4-A** The National Park Service should develop an annual legislative program which should evolve from field recommendations coordinated through the NPS regional offices. The program should be proactive and should involve legislators from both sides of the aisle.
- 4-B** The National Park Service should enhance its institutional capability to develop and implement policy analysis and strategic planning.
- 4-C** The secretary of the interior should review the organization levels between the secretary and the director of the National Park Service with an eye to shortening them as much as possible and ensuring that there is a mutual understanding of programs and policies.
- 4-D** The director of the National Park Service should establish a planned rotation system between the field and key assignments in Washington to ensure that there is a continual interchange of ideas and an understanding of current NPS programs and challenges.
- 4-E** The regional offices of the National Park Service should be given clearer authority and responsibility for the coordination and direction of NPS activities within each region, including ensuring that NPS programs and policies are effectively developed and executed.
- 4-F** The director of the National Park Service should establish an interchange program with other federal and state cultural, historical, and natural resource organizations.
- 4-G** The National Park Service should continue to provide leadership locally, regionally, and internationally in managing natural, cultural, and historical areas and in designing and delivering educational programs that enhance people's understanding of their natural, historical, and cultural heritage.

Issue 5. How can the National Park Service take a leadership role in cooperative efforts to protect America's natural and cultural heritage?

Recommendations:

- 5-A** The National Park Service should foster a new grass roots planning process to identify the pieces of America's heritage that the public wants to save. This planning process should provide ample opportunity for participation by groups representing the broad cultural diversity of the United States. Those elements identified through the planning process would fall into different categories. Those of national significance might become part of the national park system, while those of regional or local significance should be preserved through a range of options, including federal and state/tribal partnerships.
- 5-B** An American heritage area (AHA) should be established to protect and conserve areas that are of significant regional value and are worthy of national recognition, but that do not meet the requirements necessary for inclusion in the national park system. Under this proposed system, the National Park Service would enter into partnerships with state and local governments to conserve specific areas without long-term federal involvement.
- 5-C** Existing National Park Service programs, including the scenic rivers and scenic trails programs, the urban parks program, and the state comprehensive outdoor recreation plan (SCORP) program of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, would be maintained, or in certain instances reconfigured, to complement the proposed grass roots planning process and AHA program.
- 5-D** The National Park Service should work with all federal landholding agencies to ensure their participation and cooperation with these proposed programs.

Issue 6. How can the National Park Service take on these leadership responsibilities at a time when its operations budget is already stretched to the limit?

Recommendations:

- 6-A** The issue of funding underlies all aspects of this working group's recommendations. To implement the programs outlined in this report, including the AHA program, additional monies will be needed.
- 6-B** The National Park Service should increase its efforts to obtain a meaningful appropriation level from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. As a parallel effort, it should also strongly advocate

a 1¢ per gallon fuel tax to support federal parks and recreation programs. The tax should be part of a larger gasoline tax package to raise additional revenues to improve the country's transportation infrastructure and protect the environment.

6-C

The National Park Service should study the broad array of user fee options, which are effective and important vehicles for revenue enhancement, in order to assess the relative costs and benefits of individual proposals.

