

Findings and Recommendations Education Initiative Symposium

United States Department of the Interior ■ National Park Service





*Findings and Recommendations
Education Initiative Symposium*

September 25–27, 1997

United States Department of the Interior ■ National Park Service

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Prologue: The NPS Education Strategy

NPS natural and cultural resources are at the heart of what has been called the nation's greatest university without walls. NPS areas include many of the world's most magnificent landscapes, some of the best examples of American culture, many significant historic objects, and places that commemorate the most important events in American history. The National Park Service has always provided authentic learning experiences through access to natural resources and original documents and artifacts.

Changing demographics, emerging technologies, and national priorities are necessitating additional approaches. Few fields have changed more rapidly in the last few years than education and communications. Through the Internet and television, Americans consume data and information at a phenomenal rate, and there is a greater thirst for information and learning than ever. Historians, anthropologists, and archeologists have opened new areas of research and have incorporated a wide array of experiences into the national narrative. They have generated a rich and exciting body of literature that has energized students and scholars throughout the country. Educational institutions are developing national standards, and educators are seeking authentic learning experiences for their students as well as professional development opportunities to further their own knowledge and understanding.

There are exciting possibilities for educating broad sectors of society — people of all ages and ethnicities, even if they never visit an NPS area. Understanding different perspectives and making programs and materials relevant to diverse groups increases the potential to engage millions throughout the country in learning about the parks, the resources, and the importance of stewardship. Participants in current programs have shown an increased level of awareness and knowledge as well as improved skills in critical thinking.

The National Park Service began reexamining its overall responsibilities for education and analyzing its organization in 1991 with the Vail Agenda. The process continued with the development of the *Strategic Plan* and the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act. In 1997 the National Park Service Strategic Plan issued an important challenge:

Improving the National Park Service's educational success requires a changed attitude, one that is mindful of the educational importance of parks and their resources to our citizens and their everyday lives. A changed attitude also means increased outreach and interaction with educational institutions at all levels. . . . Using current and emerging technology can bring knowledge and appreciation of NPS resources to millions of Americans, whether they visit parks or only learn about parks through the media.

The challenges and the opportunities that lie ahead have been articulated in a number of reports. The one common denominator is the role of education — making natural and cultural resources meaningful to all Americans, including those who cannot experience them firsthand.

Developing and packaging programs and materials by common themes will increase the potential for use, enhance the quality of the message, and demonstrate the significance of the parks. Making NPS resources more available to the public and specialized groups through the Internet, mass media outlets, and agreements with educational institutions will bring abstract concepts to life and allow people to develop a deeper understanding of their heritage. The call to develop and adopt rigorous national education standards is underway, and success will depend on the commitment of public and private resources. The National Park Service will support this agenda as one of its primary missions.

The content of NPS educational messages is being examined and materials are being reorganized to adapt to the new media and new audiences. By cooperating with educators, other government agencies, and private industry, the National Park Service can link people with resources on a scale unimagined only a few years ago.

Work has been done through a number of NPS programs, including Parks as Classrooms, Teaching With Historic Places, national register travel itineraries, and Expedition into America. New efforts should build on current programs and break new ground. Local and regional efforts should be supported and guided by a national strategy that addresses the big picture and implications for the agency. There has never been a shortage of ideas, but setting priorities and sustaining programs financially have always been challenging.

The goal is to encourage people to think about their environment and their past. The most effective forms of education are those that are relevant, appeal to different learning styles, involve the learner, and require critical thinking and the application of what is learned. Major advances have been made in school-based resource education. Tremendous strides have been made in applying new and emerging media, such as the NPS website, to reach larger and more diverse audiences, but broader connections among parks, resources, and themes must be developed. For example, habitat management can be taught within the larger context of an ecosystem; battles can be understood within the larger societal context of wars and conflicts. Much more can be done to thematically link stories and resources.

The purpose of the NPS education strategy is to:

- raise the visibility of education servicewide
- focus energy on model opportunities and new ventures
- fuel the momentum that has already been established
- foster thematic connections
- act as a catalyst for exploring new ideas and testing new approaches

GOALS AND KEY ACTIONS

The education strategy directly supports two of the agency's overall mission goals:

- The National Park Service contributes to knowledge about natural and cultural resources and associated values; management decisions about resources and visitors are based on scholarly and scientific information.
- Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the preservation of parks and their resources for this and future generations.

The following actions are key to implementation of the strategy:

- Make programs and materials developed by the National Park Service more useful by expanding their context and increasing the ways that they are made available to the educational community and the general public.

- Use new technologies and mass media to reach new audiences. This is especially important for people who may never visit an NPS site or have no knowledge that the national park system exists.
- Use new media, link places thematically, and forge agreements with institutions that share an interest in broadening the influence of education to make resources more accessible and useful to the public.
- Bring a variety of educational messages to new groups of people, thereby deepening the public understanding of natural and cultural resources, improving the quality of programs, and expanding employee expertise.
- Make every effort to understand different perspectives and make programs and material relevant to diverse groups.
- Train teachers to use natural and cultural resource information in classrooms, which would multiply the positive effects of our efforts. Teachers reinforce the concepts learned through the parks in an interdisciplinary fashion over a period of time, which increases the depth of understanding.

- Create an environment that encourages employees to pursue advanced studies to remain current in their field. This intellectual investment in our employees will ensure that NPS educational programs and services will continue to evolve and that our employees will better understand the intellectual underpinnings of the material they present to the public.
- Develop systems that ensure the incorporation of that new information on a continuing basis.

The national education strategy has been endorsed by the NPS National Leadership Council. To ensure that the National Park Service has set out on a course that incorporates and complements efforts of educators nationwide, the first step in implementing the strategy was to bring together a symposium of educational leaders and teachers from all over the United States. Their ideas and recommendations follow.

Further implementation of the strategy will build on, connect, and publicize the symposium's recommendations and other efforts underway in the National Park Service.

The National Park Service Education Symposium

The extraordinary places that are part of the national park system are beautiful, spiritual, inspirational, and nationally significant.

And even more than that, they hold information that doesn't exist anywhere else. Parks are laboratories that hold huge collections of natural and cultural resources. They can teach geology, botany, zoology, history, ethnology, political science, and much, much more. They link natural and human history. The parks provide active, hands-on learning experiences (experiential learning), opportunities for disparate people to meet, and abundant areas for research. And because the parks are managed as a system through a large national organization and through NPS natural and cultural resource partnership programs, broad educational themes can be offered.■

The National Park Service is proposing to enrich its nationwide educational program. Target audiences would be all inclusive — old and young, multiracial, multiethnic, frequent park visitors and those who have never been in a national park, the well educated and the uninformed. A thematic, overarching approach would be taken (the Civil War rather than the battle of Gettysburg, the prehistoric people of the Four Corners region rather than Mesa Verde National Park, volcanic activity rather than Lassen Volcanic National Park).■

To guide the NPS educational mission, a symposium was held in September 1997 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. For two days a group of 34 professionals from academia, the National Park Foundation, and the National Park Service worked together to

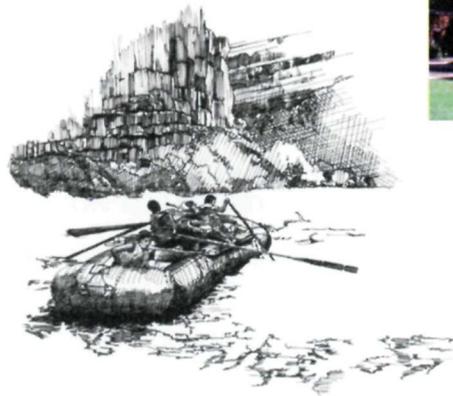
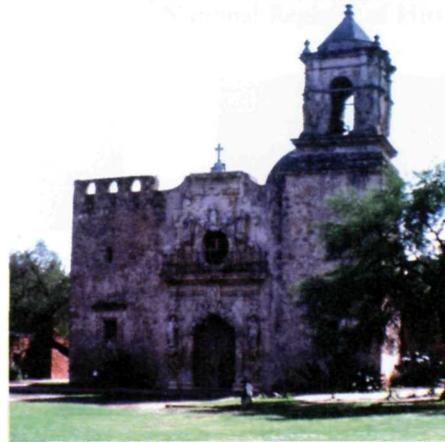
- define the role of the National Park Service in cultural and natural history education
- make recommendations to guide NPS educational program development and funding■

A spirited group of elementary, middle school, high school, and university educators; park partners; and NPS managers, education specialists, interpreters, historians, and planners (see the list of participants at the end of this report) brought a full spectrum of thoughts and ideas to the table. The National Park Service thanks everyone who gave so generously of their time, creativity, expertise, and

energy to provide the extremely useful information in this report, which will provide a comprehensive framework for the educational program.■

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE IS DEDICATED TO CONSERVING UNIMPAIRED THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES AND VALUES OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM FOR THE ENJOYMENT, EDUCATION AND INSPIRATION OF THIS AND FUTURE GENERATIONS. THE SERVICE IS ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING A GREAT VARIETY OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO HELP EXTEND THE BENEFITS OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND OUTDOOR RECREATION THROUGHOUT THIS COUNTRY AND THE WORLD.

*The National Park Service Mission
National Park Service Strategic Plan 1997*



Part One:
*The Purpose of Education
in the National Park Service*



*Ranger on horse
with hikers*

*Dinosaur
National Monument*

*Redwood
National Park*

*San Antonio Mission
National Historical Park*

*Jimmy Carter
National Historic Site*

Rafters

Part One: *The Purpose of Education in the National Park Service*

To provide a clear focus for the education program, participants started out by developing purpose statements. These statements provide a framework, articulate why the National Park Service should be involved in education, and state clearly what is to be accomplished. In other words, purpose statements articulate goals. They clarify basic assumptions concerning the role of National Park Service in education and provide the fundamental criteria against which all recommendations, decisions, and actions can be tested.

Listed below each purpose statement are the major ideas that the National Park Service wants the intended audiences to understand. These ideas or messages provide insights and direction about who the primary audiences are and what kinds of actions might be most successful. The ideas can apply to units of the national park system as well as to the places associated with NPS natural and cultural resource partnership programs (e.g., National Natural Landmarks, National Register of Historic Places).

PROMOTE PERSONAL CONNECTIONS TO THE MANY AMERICAN EXPERIENCES THROUGH OBJECTS, PLACES, IDEAS, AND VALUES

We want all Americans to know that:

- UNDERSTANDING THE PAST CAN ILLUMINATE THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE.
- LOCAL NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES CONTRIBUTE TO NATIONAL THEMES.
- MAKING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN IDEAS AND PLACES ADDS MEANING AND DIMENSION TO HISTORY.
- THERE ARE STORIES IN NATIONAL PARKS THAT ARE RELEVANT TO ALL AMERICANS.
- NATIONAL PARKS HELP PEOPLE VISUALIZE AND IMAGINE EXPERIENCES DIFFERENT FROM THEIR OWN.
- SOME PLACES POSSESS SPIRITUAL MEANING FOR PEOPLE OF VARIOUS CULTURES.
- PARKS OFFER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PLACES FOR ENGAGING MINDS AND HEARTS.

DEVELOP AN INFORMED CITIZENRY COMMITTED TO THE STEWARDSHIP OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

We want all Americans to believe that:

- NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ARE INHERENTLY FRAGILE AND REQUIRE PROTECTION.
- STEWARDSHIP OF AMERICA'S RESOURCES IS PART OF A GREATER PATTERN OF HUMANS LIVING RESPECTFULLY AND RESPONSIBLY IN A GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT.
- OUR SPIRITUAL, PHYSICAL, AND INTELLECTUAL WELL-BEING DEPENDS ON THE PRESERVATION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES.
- WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE COMMITMENT OF PAST GENERATIONS AND MUST INSTILL CONSERVATION VALUES IN FUTURE GENERATIONS.

HELP PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THE MANY LANDSCAPES, LIFEFORMS, AND STORIES OF AMERICA: *the relationship of the parts to the whole; the triumphs, tragedies, and conflicts; the diverse perspectives*

We want all Americans to understand that:

- NATURAL HISTORY AND HUMAN HISTORY ARE INTER-RELATED.
- HISTORIC PLACES PROVIDE A COMMON GROUND WHERE COMPELLING STORIES COME ALIVE AND WHERE DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES AND INTERPRETATIONS ENRICH HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.
- NATURAL AND CULTURAL PLACES PRESENT STORIES THAT ARE INTEGRAL TO LARGER THEMES THAT CONNECT PAST AND PRESENT.
- NATURAL AND HUMAN HISTORY ARE DYNAMIC; THEY CHANGE AND REQUIRE REINTERPRETATION. PARKS HELP PEOPLE UNDERSTAND CONFLICTING VISIONS AND CONTESTED INTERPRETATIONS OF HISTORY.
- PARKS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING INTERPRETATION BASED ON THE BEST AVAILABLE RESEARCH; THE PUBLIC MUST EVALUATE WHAT THEY LEARN IN THE PARKS.

ESTABLISH THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM AS A DISTINCT RESOURCE FOR THE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY

We want educators to know that:

- CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES ARE PRIMARY SOURCES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING.
- THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM HAS SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESEARCH, STUDY, AND INQUIRY IN HISTORY, SCIENCES, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES.
- THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM OFFERS UNITS IDEAL FOR THEMATIC AND INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES.
- EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND IN THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM.
- THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM PRESERVES CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES FOR FUTURE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.
- THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM OFFERS A CONTINUUM OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS OF ALL AGES AND BACKGROUNDS.

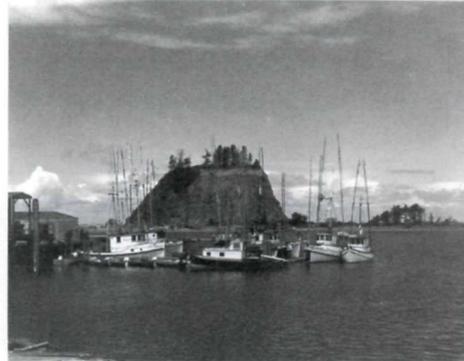
GUARANTEE THAT ALL AMERICANS HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN FROM THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM WHETHER OR NOT THEY ACTUALLY VISIT THE PARKS

We want the National Park Service to demonstrate that:

- NATIONAL PARKS BELONG TO ALL AMERICANS.
- THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO IDENTIFY AND ATTRACT DIVERSE POPULATIONS.
- THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ENGAGES ALL AMERICANS USING NEW AND NONTRADITIONAL WAYS AS WELL AS THE TRIED AND TRUE METHODS.
- AN ACTUAL SITE VISIT IS ONE WAY TO EXPERIENCE HISTORIC AND NATURAL PLACES, BUT THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE EXTENDS A VARIETY OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES BEYOND THOSE PLACES.
- THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE HELPS PEOPLE LEARN FROM PLACES IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES.



*Independence Hall
(Independence National Historical Park)*



Part Two:
Recommendations



Ranger demonstrating
knot ties to children

Glen Canyon
National Recreation Area

Golden Gate
National Recreation Area

Olympic
National Park

Statue of Liberty
National Monument

Thomas Jefferson
Memorial

Part Two: Recommendations

To fulfill the broad purposes that were defined for the NPS education program, symposium participants contributed an array of recommendations and offered ideas to guide the National Park Service in setting priorities for the educational program. The recommendations do not directly correlate to the individual purpose statements, and some may relate to more than one purpose statement.

The brainstorming session generated five major recommendations and a broad range of examples of possible ways to implement them. The ideas were intended to guide the National Park Service, but it was not expected that all of the examples would be implemented or that all of the recommendations could be accomplished by the National Park Service alone. Partnerships with the educational community and the private sector will be critical to the success of the NPS education program.

The symposium participants offered admonitions as well. Based on previous experience, it was strongly advised that the National Park Service not develop curricula, particularly not on a national level. Participants advised that the programs should be relatively small and that mass production should be avoided. They cautioned against creating programs “in a vacuum” or without extensive input from educators. They did not feel that a separate, parallel bureaucracy to carry out the NPS educational mission would be helpful. Participants’ suggestions for successful programs (not necessarily in priority order) follow. The ideas that were preferred by the most participants are marked with a ►.

EXPAND THE RELEVANCE OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM TO AN INCREASINGLY DIVERSE POPULATION

► Market the parks through a variety of media

- use print and visual media to connect to retail outlets
- create short TV spots and public service announcements for schools
- use celebrity spokespeople who are popular with children
- develop a mascot for advertising

Develop and disseminate new learning materials — park folders, study guides, and kits — for all ages and backgrounds

Develop links to alternative learning systems such as Elderhostel

Expand connections with ethnic groups

- include articles in ethnic and gender-specific magazine
- recruit writers and consultants from ethnic groups
- connect to ethnic web pages

OFFER BETTER ACCESS TO CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL STORIES AND REACH PEOPLE WHO MAY NOT VISIT THE PARKS

“Send” people to places through traveling trunks, troupes, and exhibits

Expand the use of electronic media — Parknet, virtual visits, distance learning, park computer games, virtual park passports, and Internet access to park collections



INCREASE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AND EDUCATORS

- ▶ **Publicize all NPS programs and materials and raise the NPS profile**
 - maintain and distribute a directory of park educational programs and activities, volunteer opportunities, and websites
 - develop effective distribution vehicles for reaching schools
- ▶ **Connect to educators**
 - send NPS employees to teachers' conferences
 - use Internet links to teachers' associations
 - create an NPS subscription journal for teachers and students
 - write articles for and advertise in state and national educational publications
 - establish agreements with national professional organizations and state government agencies to promote research, the exchange of information and staff, and workshops, training, and professional development
- ▶ **Link the objectives of all NPS educational programs to state and local standards**
 - work with state departments of education to create programs and materials
 - work with the educational community to develop standards of excellence for NPS programs and services
 - link programs and services to state and local curricula
- Cooperate with post-secondary educational institutions**
 - offer financial support for graduate students involved in park-related studies
 - develop cooperative programs to foster opportunities for research, internships, materials development, evaluation, and mentoring
 - initiate internships and summer residencies for graduate students

Bring teachers to the parks

- offer field trips and residencies in parks and work with schools to offer specific courses related to national park resources
- use educators for summer work or special projects
- ensure college credit, continuing education credits, or teacher certification for experiential learning in the parks

INCREASE THE SKILLS OF NPS EMPLOYEES AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NPS PROGRAMS

- ▶ **Develop thematic programs in consultation with partner educational institutions for each geographic cluster in the national park system**
 - produce a comprehensive education plan for each park unit; involve local communities
- ▶ **Share information about model educational programs; work together to sustain existing efforts and adapt them to other sites**
- ▶ **Establish thematic seminars that address conflicting visions and contested interpretations of natural and human history (help staff explain such conflicts in public programs)**

Promote continuing education opportunities at universities for NPS staff

Develop an agency strategy for funding new educational programs and continuing programs such as Parks as Classrooms and Teaching with Historic Places

Evaluate and revise NPS programs periodically based on feedback from educators

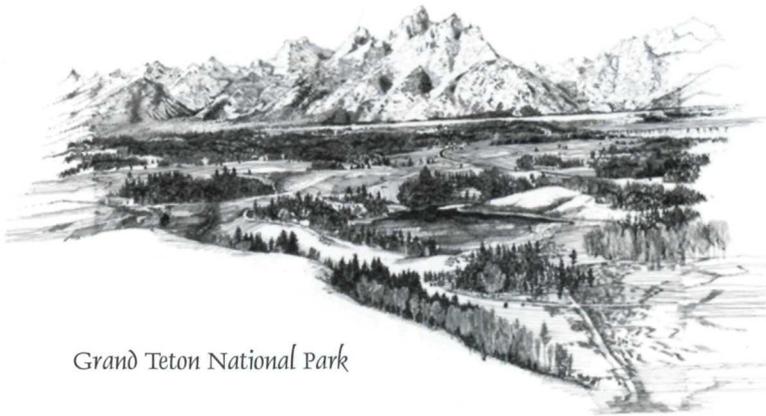
HELP BUILD A NATIONAL ETHIC OF RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

Network with local partners and other concerned citizens to address and solve critical resource issues

Sponsor events that revolve around specific, important monuments or sites.

Involve kids (grades 7-12, college) in solving community problems

Sponsor hands-on school involvement in environmental monitoring and other park-based programs



Grand Teton National Park

"My brother always complains that he can't touch the animals. Make petting zoos for younger kids."
Becky



"Expand access on the internet."
Justin

Justin



"More national parks need to be made to set aside land before it is all destroyed by development."
Becky

Becky

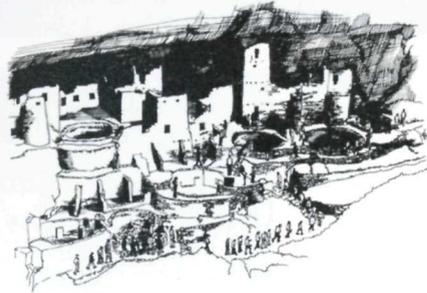
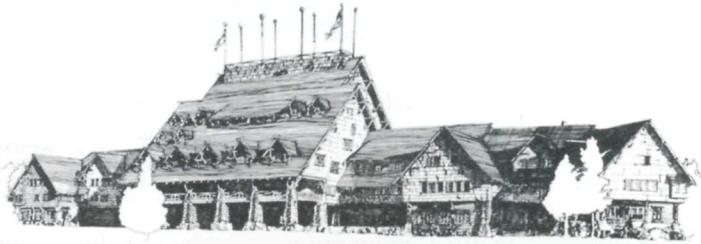
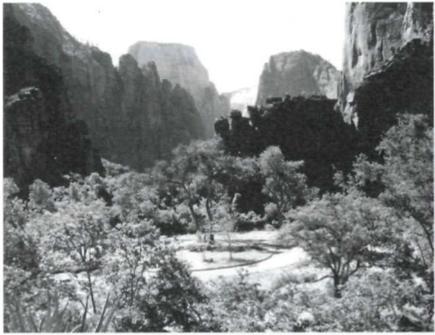
"Have science camps and adventure camps for kids in the parks."
Brady

Brady



"I read the material on the national parks role in education. I was excited about the move to change the focus more to reaching the children. They will be the care taker of our nation and planet."

*Deborah Singleton
parent*



Part Three:
Current Programs



Zion
National Park

Yellowstone
National Park

Yosemite
National Park

Grand Canyon
National Park

Ranger identifying
aquatic life

Mesa Verde
National Park

Part Three: Current Programs

The symposium participants recognized that educational programs are not a new concept for the National Park Service. This program will build on the long-standing NPS tradition in interpretation and education that has been a strong influence on national heritage and conservation philosophy. Throughout NPS history many approaches have been undertaken to educate the public about America's cultural and natural resources.

Symposium participants shared information on a number of educational programs. Current programs are as diverse as the parks themselves, ranging from large-scale partnerships with school districts to single classroom visits by rangers. The following is a brief (and not at all comprehensive) list of some of the programs in the system.

PARKS AS CLASSROOMS

Parks as Classrooms is a nationally recognized program that was established in conjunction with the National Park Foundation. From traveling trunk exhibits and kits to residential/camping experiences, to teacher workshops and in-service training, to classroom visits by rangers, to on-line resources, Parks as Classrooms reaches out to a wide variety of communities.

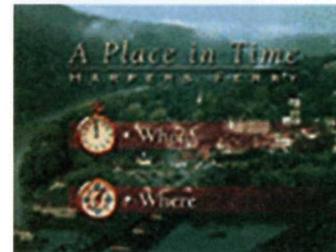
TEACHING WITH HISTORIC PLACES



Teaching with Historic Places is administered by the National Park Service through the National Register of Historic Places to promote the use of the official districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture in teaching history, social studies, geography, and other subjects.

The Teaching with Historic Places program sends students into their own communities to find historic places related to specific themes. Many lessons are on parks; many include African American, Hispanic, Indian, women's, and other perspectives. Citizenship activities and the curriculum framework strive to instill a sense of ownership and caring about resources.

INTERNET



The National Park Service website (www.nps.gov) offers choices such as "Links to the Past, America's Histories and Cultures," "Park Smart, Education and Interpretation," "Info Zone, Servicewide Information," and "Nature Net, Natural Resources in Parks." Many parks have their own web pages that also offer a way for people to "visit" and learn from home or school.





PARK-SPECIFIC PROGRAMS

All park areas have interpretive programs. Most are designed to educate visitors about the specific features of the area and to pique curiosity about broader subjects.

- Several national parks, including Hawaii Volcanoes, Everglades, Yellowstone, and Biscayne, have worked with the JASON Foundation for Education on the Jason Project, which brought the wonders of these national parks to global audiences.
- Harpers Ferry National Historical Park has developed interpretive programs that use local research to tell the larger story of slavery, resistance, and the tragedy of the Civil War.
- There are scholarships, endowments, and internships for students in national parks. Journeys is a community outreach program at the Teton Science School that offers educational ideals and experiential learning based on a sense of place. The school offers residencies in environmental education, such as the graduate level training program (16 people per year) through Utah State University. The Canyonlands Field Institute, the Yosemite, Glacier, and Yellowstone Institutes, and others have well-developed residential and day programs that are delivered outdoors and in classrooms. The focus is on natural resource connections to people. Cuyahoga Valley's "All the Rivers Run" includes teaching stewardship values and practicing stewardship skills as does the Presidio Stewardship Program. Many areas, including Little Big Horn Battlefield National Memorial, produce programs in conjunction with Indian tribes.
- Many cooperating associations offer or sponsor educational programs.
- The Organization of American Historians sends teams of historians to assess programs and evaluate history interpretation for various parks.

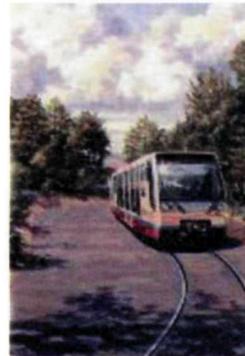
- The Artists in Residence Program helps interpret park experiences and promotes personal connections. Some field programs offered by cooperating associations provide intensive educational in-park programs for a fee.



- Smoky Mountain Classrooms resulted from the collaborative relationship between Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Pi Beta Phi Elementary School. The programs are designed for individual schools that want a one-day park experience.
- "Unlocking Alcatraz" is a historic site curriculum-based programs that tells stories from the personal perspectives of inmates and guards and includes the views of the individuals who took part in the Native American occupation of the site.
- Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center offers an interdisciplinary experience in science and art.
- Lowell National Historical Park (through the Tsongas Industrial History Center) offers interdisciplinary workshops and experiential learning opportunities for students in a hands-on workshop. Oral histories illustrate the local connection to the larger issue of immigration. Gateway parks, such as the national recreation areas, have educational programs targeted at urban schoolchildren
- There are camps with educational missions in some national parks. For example, in Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area a local historical society operates a pioneer history camp, the environmental education center runs River Run Arts Earth Studies Camp, and there are scout camps.



- Elderhostel programs for seniors are available in many park areas and offer experiences ranging from vigorous outdoor activity to quiet contemplative study.
- There are many books and videos that guide park use and demonstrate park values. Park newsletters, TV advertisements, posters, and billboards at Golden Gate National Recreation Area foster stewardship. Park brochures have been produced on subjects ranging from the African Americans in the Civil War to the Wright Brothers to the wolves of Glacier National Park to the coral reefs of Dry Tortugas National Park.
- The Rails to Trails Program brings together rangers and volunteers from Jean Lafitte National Historic Park and Preserve who ride on Amtrak trains interpreting natural, cultural, and historical history for riders.



Alcatraz Island (Golden Gate National Recreation Area)

Where Do We Go From Here?

The NPS education program is intended to make NPS programs more useful to a broader audience by grouping materials under common themes and taking advantage of different techniques to reach new populations. With the help of the educational community, the agency will develop prototypes to test new ideas and approaches and establish models that can be replicated throughout the National Park Service.

A request for proposals will be disseminated throughout the National Park Service to solicit ideas for the development of prototype projects that test new ideas and approaches. The prototypes must fit within the framework outlined in this report: they must help accomplish the purposes identified in the symposium, explain the major ideas that the National Park Service wants the public to understand, help achieve the recommendations listed, and be based in a thematic approach.

Selection of prototypes will also include the following criteria:

Achievable with Tangible Results. A good prototype must address real needs and be completed, widely seen, and marketed within 12 to 18 months.

Visible/Imaginative. A credible prototype must be seen as new, innovative, and exciting. The project must capture the attention of NPS personnel and partners.

Educationally Sound, Credible, and Relevant. Prototypes must be grounded in current scholarship and education methods and must convey varying points of view.

Sustainable. This project should be sustainable beyond the development and implementation phases.

Involve Partners. Reaching out to public and private sector partners is key to this effort. A strong prototype must involve partners in developing themes, funding, and distribution channels.

Implementation of these proposals will form the basis for an enhanced NPS education program. The main goals are to provide overarching themes to tie together detailed subject matter, support the people, parks, and programs that present thematic approaches, and bring an appreciation for the national park system to more Americans. To do all that, we will need the financial support of partners and the continued guidance of educators. Together we will make the national parks and programs more meaningful to a broader segment of the American public.



Symposium Participants

Educators

David Blight, professor, Amherst College, Department of History

Glenn Bogart, principal, Pi Beta Phi Elementary School, Gatlinburg, Tennessee

Shelley Fisher Fishkin, professor, America Studies Program, University of Texas

Jim Horton, professor, George Washington University

Lois Horton, professor, George Mason University

Frederick Hoxie, vice president for research and education, the Newberry Library

Ann Palkovich, professor, George Mason University

Carla Peterson, professor, University of Maryland

Thomas Rinehart, teacher, Willie William Middle School, Moultrie, Georgia

Holly Robinson, deputy state superintendent of schools, Atlanta, Georgia

Jack Shea, director, Teton Science School

Djuana Smith, teacher, Hutto Middle School, Bainbridge, Georgia

Cynthia Stout, teacher, Summit Ridge Middle School, Littleton, Colorado

Rhea Suh, student, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Robin Winks, chair, Department of History, Yale University

Armando Quintero, chief, special park uses, Golden Gate National Recreation Area

National Park Foundation

Claudia Schechter, vice president for operations and chief financial officer

National Park Service

Connie Backlund, superintendent, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site

Bob Barbee, director, Alaska Regional Office

Beth Boland, historian, National Register of Historic Places

Kevin Cheri, assistant superintendent, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve

Gary Cummins, manager, Harpers Ferry Center

Kathy Dimont, writer/editor, Denver Service Center

Maureen Finnerty, associate director, Park Operations and Education

Denis Galvin, deputy director, National Park Service

Bill Gwaltney, chief interpreter, Rocky Mountain National Park

Betty Hoermann, coordinator, Cooperative Park Education Unit, Lowell National Historical Park

Corky Mayo, program manager, Interpretation and Education Division

Ed Natay, American Indian trust responsibility officer, Southwest Support Office

Dwight T. Pitcaithley, chief historian, National Park Service

Patti Reilly, education specialist, Boston Support Office, Education and Visitor Services

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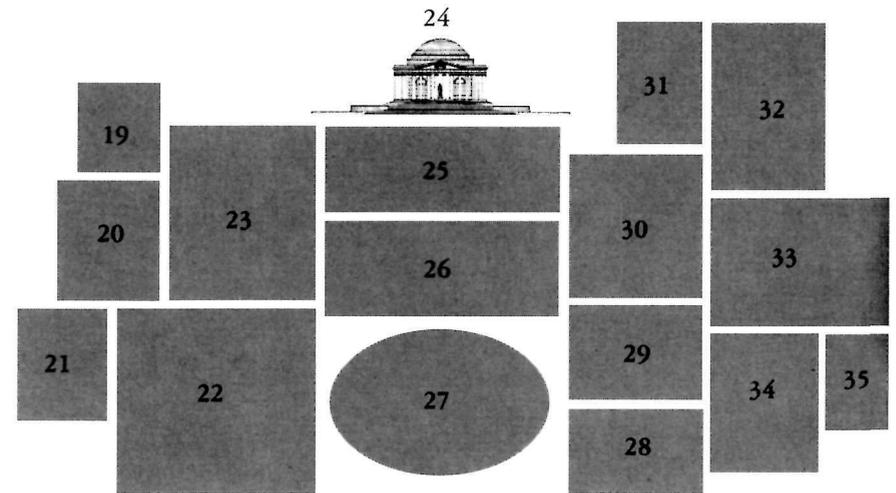
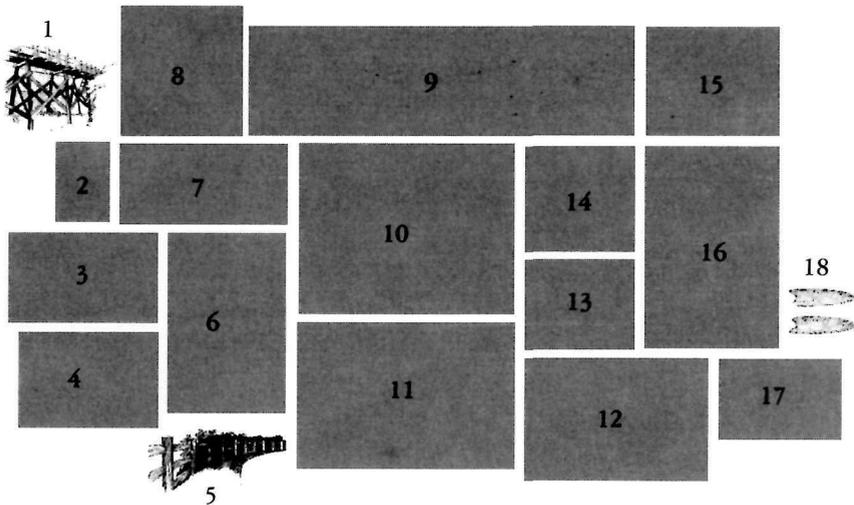
Cynthia Young, chief, resource planning, Denver Service Center

Description of back cover images:

- 1 Blue Ridge Parkway
- 2 Wright Brothers NM
- 3 Dayton Aviation Heritage NHP
- 4 Townhall, Nicodemus NHS
- 5 Blue Ridge Parkway
- 6 Old Faithful, Yellowstone NP
- 7 The Yellowstone Institute, Yellowstone NP
- 8 Cape Hatteras NS
- 9 Joshua Tree NP
- 10 Manzanar NHS
- 11 Kingley Plantation, Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve
- 12 Glacier NP
- 13 USS Constitution Museum, Boston NHP
- 14 Independence NHP
- 15 Red Cloud - Oglala Chief, Fort Laramie NHS
- 16 Mesa Verde NP
- 17 Teton Science School, Grand Teton NP
- 18 Arrowheads, Knife River Indian Villages NHS

Description of front cover images:

- 19 Teton Science School, Grand Teton NP
- 20 Federick Douglas NHS
- 21 Little Bighorn Battlefield NM
- 22 Canyon de Chelly NM
- 23 Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial NMP
- 24 Thomas Jefferson Memorial
- 25 Minute Man NHP
- 26 Brown vs. Board of Education NHS
- 27 Eleanor Roosevelt NHS
- 28 Arches NP
- 29 Ranger led tour, Everglades NP
- 30 Statue of Liberty NM
- 31 Booker T. Washington NM
- 32 Carlsbad Caverns NP
- 33 Tumacacoi NHP
- 34 Jefferson National Expansion Memorial
- 35 Women's Rights NHP
- 36 Independence NHP





As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

