



Other Designations Also included in the National Park System are more than a dozen other sites and areas that bear unique titles or combinations of titles: the White House, Prince William Forest Park (Virginia), and small sites in Washington, D.C., for example.

Besides the differences in labeling, more than a dozen National Park Service sites are administered cooperatively with other federal agencies. These include the Bureau of Reclamation, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the International Boundary and Water Commission, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Beyond the units of the National Park System there are some 30 areas that are neither federally owned nor directly managed by the National Park Service called "affiliated areas." These areas receive various forms of financial and technical support from the National Park Service. Many of them were the object of congressional legislation, a few were historic sites designated by the Secretary of the Interior. Among them is a national scientific reserve (Ice Age in Wisconsin), a national heritage corridor (Illinois and Michigan Canal in Illinois), and a historic community (Historic Camden in South Carolina).

Some affiliated areas are "hybrids," for which classification is complicated. Green Springs Historic District (Virginia), for example, involves preservation easements held by the National Park Service to protect a 14,000-acre landscape declared a National Historic Landmark. At Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve on Washington's Whidbey Island, the National Park Service owns and manages part of the site, but not all of it.

To further confuse the subject of labels, not all areas having a "national" designation are part of the National Park System and not all are administered by the National Park Service. Several national recreation areas are administered by the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The National Forest System, consisting of 156 national forests in 44 states, is a separate class of conservation lands. The national forests are administered by the Forest Service, which was created in 1905. National forest lands are managed for different purposes than parklands—for timber production and other consumptive uses not permitted on lands in the National Park System. The national forests do, however, provide a number of recreational opportunities, often similar to what is found in many natural and recreational parks.

The National Wildlife Refuge System—435 units in all states but West Virginia—is

administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in the Department of the Interior. Yet another category of nationally significant conservation lands are "wilderness areas," special areas set aside by Congress "where man is only a visitor" and where all forms of development and use are strictly limited to preserve the area in its natural state. Wilderness areas are usually a specific part of a national park, national forest, or national wildlife refuge.

Titles of Units of the National Park System	
International Historic Site	1
National Battlefield	10
National Battlefield Park	3
National Battlefield Site	1
National Capital Parks	1
National Historic Site	61
National Historical Park	26
National Lakeshore	4
National Mall	1
National Memorial	24
National Military Park	10
National Monument	77
National Park	48
National Parkway	4
National Preserve	12
National Recreation Area	17
National River ¹	4
National Scenic Trail	3
National Seashore	10
National Wild and Scenic River and Riverway ²	8
Park (other)	11
White House	1
Total	337

¹ National Park System units only.

² National Park System units and components of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.



Making Management Decisions During the rapid growth of the National Park System in the 1960s the National Park Service built a management scheme—a set of guidelines—around three categories of National Park System units: Natural, recreational, and historical. The object of this approach was to define how each area would be managed, what general principles would be followed in each type, what uses would be permitted, and what programs would apply to each. Management guidelines in the form of three manuals were developed, and, with varying success, applied and used at the unit level.

Problems began to occur and controversies arose because most units could not be neatly categorized. Cape Cod National Seashore, for example, was put in the category of recreational parks. It does, in fact, provide outdoor recreation for thousands of people. But the Seashore is also an exquisite natural area, one that is fragile and susceptible to permanent damage. It is a habitat for birds, wildlife, and creatures of the salt marshes. Cape Cod also has historic features—some on the National Register of Historic Places—whose management requirements parallel those of sites labeled as historic. Thus, all three management policies could be applied.

Another example is Gateway National Recreation Area, located on the harbor periphery of New York City and nearby northeastern New Jersey. This "recreational" park serves upwards of 10 million visitors a year, providing experiences as wide-ranging as ocean bathing, overnight camping, field sports, bird watching, and environmental education. But Gateway, too, is a complex and diverse agglomeration that includes a full-fledged wildlife refuge that is part of the migratory waterfowl flyway system. The Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge is largely manmade, but its "natural" characteristics demand careful management attention. Gateway also contains such historic features as the Sandy Hook Proving Ground (a national historic landmark), Battery Weed on Staten Island, and the hangars and administration buildings of New York City's first municipal airport. Having this diverse array of resources, Gateway cannot be treated as if it were an area having only recreational significance.

And so it goes all around the National Park System. Yellowstone National Park contains more than 400 historic buildings and structures and provides countless recreational experiences for more than 2 million visitors a year.

The management of historic sites everywhere is a task involving the management of people who are experiencing those sites while they are engaging in another form of recreation.

Nearly every unit of the National Park System is a mixture of natural, recreational, and historical features. It is the responsibility of the professional park manager to know and understand these complex interrelationships so that decisions may meet the objectives spelled out in the National Park Service Act of 1916 to provide for use and preservation.

Congress elaborated on the Organic Act in the General Authorities Act of 1970, in which all units of the National Park System were defined to have equal legal standing in a national system that is more than the mere sum of its parts. Congress found that "... the national park system, which began with establishment of Yellowstone National Park in 1872, has grown to include superlative natural, historic, and recreation areas ... that these areas, though distinct in character, are united through interrelated purposes and resources into one national park system as cumulative expressions of a single national heritage; that, individually and collectively, these areas derive increased national dignity ... through their inclusion ... in one national park system preserved and managed for the benefit and inspiration of all the people. ..."

The Park Service believes that it must treat all park system units with the same high measure of concern and give attention to all resources in all parks regardless of titles and of the way in which they became part of the National Park System. With that in mind the management categories were abandoned about a dozen years after they were adopted in favor of a new policy approach that seeks to treat the complexities of each park more comprehensively. In the mid-1970s the National Park Service adopted a new set of "Management Policies," still in effect, that recognizes the need to focus on the range of characteristics that each park possesses. A decision to build a visitor facility, well justified as a means of providing a better recreational experience, may have unacceptable adverse impacts on a historic asset or a natural feature. Steps to preserve a natural asset may make it necessary to bar public use or drastically alter the way in which the public can see or use it. Such cause-and-effect relationships affect decisions by park superintendents and managers almost every day.

The basic policy context for the management of each unit of the National Park Sys-

tem is the law or order that created it. Sometimes those documents are detailed and precise; sometimes they are very general or merely cite the National Park Service Act of 1916 and describe the boundaries.

The "Management Policies" provide the overall guidance for day-to-day decisions and long-range planning for all National Park System units. Because the policies are stated broadly, additional guidelines and policy elaboration are often provided in the form of published "Guidelines." Guidelines cover individual subjects in depth and often provide instructions of a technical or procedural nature.

To deal with the differences between natural, recreational, and cultural resources, the Service has adopted a land "zoning" scheme for use in planning and decision making. There are four zoning categories: Natural, historic, development, and special use. Zones are defined by the physical location of the related features on the ground, and site-specific management planning and practices are tailored to the particular circumstances. This approach not only permits the identification of smaller features, but it also facilitates planning for how areas within a park unit relate to each other.

Many management decisions affecting individual parks are delegated to the superintendent or unit manager. Controls are exercised through policy directives, reporting requirements, budget and financial controls, and through periodic operations evaluations. Major planning decisions, the annual budget, and some departures from established policies are delegated to National Park Service regional directors, each of whom oversees park system units in one or more states. The policies themselves and overall Servicewide program direction are provided by the Director. Some matters are of such importance as to also involve the Secretary of the Interior and even the President.

On a variety of issues, such as those relating to land acquisition, there is regular and continuing consultation with the appropriate committees of the Congress. The Congress also holds oversight hearings on various topics or issues from time to time, and its investigative arm, the General Accounting Office, makes studies and issues reports on selected issues.

Modern park management is a complex undertaking involving highly technical data and scientific facts and opinions. It involves many choices that are difficult, based on sub-

tle distinctions between alternatives that are often neither good nor bad. When both the pro and con sides of an issue have many good factors, the Service will always try to favor preservation. On many occasions, however, even experts do not agree on the best approach. Again, managers are charged to "err on the side of preservation," if such a choice is known and available.

Over the years, the National Park Service has developed scientific and technically trained expertise in many areas of park management ranging from wild fires to cleaning bronze statuary and preserving historical artifacts. The successful integration of science and technology into the traditional arts of park management is one of today's most critical management challenges.

The complexity of the park management job would not, in all probability, be materially helped if there were more uniform definitions for and application of labels on park system areas.

In the future, it is likely that new units will come with special legislative terms and conditions, reflecting that it is mostly no longer possible to create parks in areas that have not been previously settled by people. New parks likely will make special provisions for the people already living within them. New titles may even have to be invented to take account of the changing character of conservation.

While the titles have a general logic to them, there has never been an agreed upon scheme for applying them in any consistent way.

Certainly, in the years ahead, efforts will be made to be more systematic in assigning labels. More consistency in naming can help the public better understand why an area is part of the National Park System and what its principal features are.

**National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

Parks

**Park Designations and
How the Sites are Managed**

This publication is an outgrowth of questions asked by visitors and others about the significance and meaning of the titles given to units of the National Park System and how those titles may relate to the way in which the unit is managed, what visitors can do there, or what legal or administrative protections are afforded to the resource by the National Park Service. Are all national parks equal? What is the difference between a national park and a national monument and between a national historic site and historical park? Are all national monuments managed by the Park Service?

The words "national park" have a special meaning to many people, conjuring up images of Old Faithful, Yosemite Falls, and the massive grandeur of the Grand Canyon. The term "national monument" may not bring up such clear images, and reference to a "national historic site" may suggest only that the feature is important in the history of the United States. Though the titles may not always be perfectly descriptive, much attention has been given them since the creation of the first national park in 1872. Today, about 20 separate titles, not counting some combined titles and special areas, are used for the 337 units of the National Park System.

The initial concept of a national park was defined by Congress in 1872 in establishing Yellowstone National Park as a "public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people."

In 1916 Congress created the National Park Service to care for Yellowstone and other such areas that had been assigned to the Department of the Interior, ordering the new bureau "... to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

The National Park Service assumed responsibility for 14 national parks and 21 national monuments upon its creation. Other parks and monuments existed and continued under the Departments of Agriculture and War and the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. In 1933 the administration of most such areas was consolidated under the National Park Service, enlarging the System by about 60 sites.

While the idea of a national park was an American invention of historic consequences, marking the beginning of a worldwide movement that has spread to more than 100 coun-

tries and some 1,200 national parks and preserves, none of the original Yellowstone proponents conceived of a national park "system" that would embrace a vast array of natural and cultural (manmade) areas. The notion of a system that brings together such disparate elements as the Statue of Liberty, Yosemite National Park, Ford's Theatre National Historic Site, and the battlefield and cemetery at Gettysburg is a mid-20th century concept, reflecting an expanding level of national understanding of the environment and concern for the Nation's history and culture.

The first parklands acquired by the Federal Government were 17 public reservations that included the National Mall and other sites in the Nation's Capital that were transferred to the National Park Service in 1933.

The earliest action by Congress to create a large natural park took the form of a land grant of Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Big Tree Grove to the State of California in 1864. The lands were later ceded back to the Federal Government in 1906 to become part of Yosemite National Park, which had been established in 1890. Yellowstone National Park was, however, the first area so designated and managed under federal control.

Units of the National Park System have been created in two principal ways: Acts of Congress and presidential proclamations. When Congress creates an addition to the System, it spells out the name to be given each area and makes reference to the general concepts under which it will be managed. Sometimes Congress is very specific about management terms; sometimes Congress simply refers to the Act of August 25, 1916.

Most additions to the System are made by Congress, but the President has authority under the Antiquities Act of 1906 to proclaim national monuments on lands already under federal jurisdiction, and many National Park System units originated that way.

Some titles are clearly descriptive of the areas and features they represent, indicating to the public the nature of the primary resource or attraction within the area. National seashore, national lakeshore, national parkway, national battlefield, and national scenic trail all fall into this category.

Other titles assigned to units in the System are less descriptive, but they still indicate the general nature of the area. National historic site, national memorial, and national historical park indicate that the places contain features of historical significance or commemorate aspects of American history.



National Park In practice, "national park" has generally been assigned to the greatest natural attractions of the National Park System, and for that reason it comes closer than many other titles to having its own "image" and meaning.

The term has not been used with consistency, however. Gettysburg battlefield was first designated a national park by Congress in 1895; and Mesa Verde, predominantly of cultural rather than natural value, became a national park in 1906.

Hot Springs National Park involves a natural resource (hot mineral waters), but is a smallish site in an urban area of Arkansas. Interestingly, Hot Springs was the Nation's first "public reservation" created from the vast public domain. Hot Springs was set aside in 1832, forty years before Yellowstone. The site was redesignated to public use as a park in 1880 and its name changed to a national park in 1921. The reasons for the latter change are obscure, but it probably related to the prestige already then associated with the title national park and the desire that it fit with other park units then existing. Other sites have started as national monuments and have subsequently been converted to national parks. Zion, Grand Canyon, and Channel Islands are examples.

Besides the element of prestige, a change sometimes also has involved more substantive issues, such as the traditional ban on hunting in national parks. In fact, in recent years when Congress was considering the establishment of new national parks that appeared to meet all the characteristics normally associated with such areas—size, unique natural qualities, and superlative scenery—but in which Congress wanted to permit continued public hunting, a new category of park was created, the "national preserve," in which various uses are allowed that cannot be permitted in a national park.

To the extent there is a general understanding and working definition of a national park today, the term is meant to imply a large, spectacular natural place having a wide variety of attributes, often also including significant historic assets. Hunting, mining, and consumptive activities are largely prohibited.

Two areas originally set aside as national parks are not in the System today: Mackinac Island, which was ceded to the State of Michigan in 1895, and Sully's Hill, North Dakota, which was converted to a game preserve under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture in 1931.

There are currently 48 national parks in the System. The largest is Wrangell-St. Elias (Alaska), proclaimed as Wrangell-St. Elias National Monument in 1978 and established by Congress as a national park in 1980. The park embraces 8.3 million acres. An adjoining national preserve, in which hunting and certain other activities are permitted, includes an additional 4.9 million acres.

National Monument The Antiquities Act of 1906 authorized the President of the United States "... to declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon the lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States to be national monuments. . . ."

Under this authority President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed and reserved the first national monument, Devils Tower (Wyoming), in 1906. Although the legislation was focused primarily on prehistoric Indian remains and other cultural features, Devils Tower and most national monuments proclaimed subsequently were predominantly natural areas. Among them were such large and spectacular areas as Grand Canyon, Katmai, and Death Valley, the first two of which were later given national park status by acts of Congress. Mining activity in Death Valley has forestalled similar action for that area, though in other respects Death Valley would qualify as a national park.

The creation of national monuments by presidential proclamation and the designation of national historic sites by the Secretary of the Interior on lands in federal ownership are the principal means by which units of the National Park System have been established without a formal act of Congress. The most recent exercise of the presidential authority involved designation of a whole system of national monuments in Alaska in 1978. They were later embraced in congressional legislation.

Congress has, however, also created numerous national monuments, both natural and historical, including George Washington Birthplace (Virginia) in 1930, Canyon de Chelly (Arizona) in 1931, Pipestone (Minnesota) in 1937, Congaree Swamp (South Carolina) in 1976, and others. The term national monument, therefore, conveys little information about the nature or size of the area or how it might be managed or experienced by the public.

In recent decades other titles have been preferred for historical areas, so recently the use of national monument has been confined largely to natural areas that do not appear to qualify for one of the more descriptive designations. In general, they are smaller than national parks and lack their diversity or range of attractions. There are now 77 national monuments in the National Park System.

National Preserve In 1974 Big Cypress (Florida) and Big Thicket (Texas) became the first of what are now a dozen national preserves. Big Cypress, a large natural area adjoining Everglades National Park, might have been incorporated in the park were it not for provisions in its legislation authorizing hunting, trapping, and possible oil and gas exploration and extraction. Big Thicket legislation contained similar authorization for activities disallowed in national parks.

The other ten national preserves are in Alaska, all established by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980. Seven of these preserves border national parks of the same name; all permit sport hunting that cannot occur in the national parks. All of the existing national preserves would, without the unauthorized sport hunting, otherwise qualify for designation as national parks.

National Seashore Cape Hatteras National Seashore (North Carolina) was the first such area to be authorized, in 1937. Nine more have been established on the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific coasts, the last being Canaveral National Seashore (Florida) in 1975. Some national seashores have roads, parking, and other developments accommodating heavy beachgoing visitation. Some are in a relatively primitive state and include wilderness areas. The variety of management requirements dictated by such differences persuaded the National Park Service to abandon a scheme that attempted to structure management policies around the titles of park system areas. Hunting is allowed in most national seashores at certain times.

National Lakeshore Congress authorized Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore (Michigan) in October 1966. Indiana Dunes (Indiana), came the following month. The last two national lakeshores, Apostle Islands (Wisconsin) and Sleeping Bear Dunes (Michigan), were authorized in 1970. The lakeshores, all on the Great Lakes, closely parallel the seashores in nature and use.



National River The first area in this general category, which was authorized in 1964, was Ozark National Scenic Riverways, extending 140 miles along two rivers in Missouri. The comprehensive Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 was ultimately responsible for four more additions to the National Park System: St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, embracing about 200 miles of the river and its Namekagon tributary in Wisconsin and Minnesota; the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, a 27-mile segment of the same river; the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River, stretching from Big Bend National Park in Texas for 191 miles to the Terrell-Val Verde county line; and Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, a 75-mile stretch of the river between Hancock and Sparrow Bush, New York.

Other acquisitions, bringing the present total to 12, bear the additional labels of national river, national river and recreational area, national scenic river, national recreational river, and wild river. Most of the permutations specified in the acts of Congress authorizing the areas suggest the qualities of the rivers and lands involved.

National Scenic Trail The Appalachian National Scenic Trail, the first such unit of the National Park System, was so designated by the National Trails System Act of 1968. The trail extends some 2,100 miles from Mount Katahdin, Maine, to Springer Mountain, Georgia.

In 1983 two more national scenic trails were added: Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail, extending 694 miles from Nashville, Tennessee, to Natchez, Mississippi, paralleling the Natchez Trace Parkway; and the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. This trail is so far undeveloped, but it is authorized to extend 704 miles from the mouth of the Potomac River along both banks to the District of Columbia, then 175 miles along the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal towpath, then north to Conemaugh Gorge in west central Pennsylvania. These linear parklands are aptly described by their label.

National Parkway Four units of the System fall into this category, but none of them is actually labeled "national parkway." The first, George Washington Memorial Parkway in Virginia and Maryland, dates from 1930. The Blue Ridge Parkway and the Natchez Trace Parkway, each more than 400 miles long, were begun later in the same decade. John D.

Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway, linking Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, was designated in 1972. The first three involved the construction of carefully landscaped roads through scenic countryside; the last utilized existing roads. All were intended for "recreational motoring," although the George Washington Memorial Parkway has become an often congested commuter route. The term parkway refers to the parkland paralleling the road as well as the roadway itself.

National Recreation Area The first unit with this designation was Lake Mead National Recreation Area, called Boulder Dam National Recreation Area when the National Park Service assumed responsibility for it in 1936. It and 11 other national recreation areas in the System are centered on large reservoirs. Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area is at the site of a planned-but-never-built reservoir. The areas all emphasize water-based recreation.

Five other national recreation areas are all located near major centers of population: New York City, Akron-Cleveland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Atlanta. The first urban national recreation areas were Gateway (New York-New Jersey) and Golden Gate (California), authorized by Congress in 1972. These urban parks combine scarce open spaces with the preservation of often highly significant historic resources and important natural areas in locations that can provide outdoor recreation for large numbers of people.

National Historic Site This designation, derived from the Historic Sites Act of 1935, is currently held by 61 units of the National Park System (second only to national monument in number). The first area to bear this label was Salem Maritime National Historic Site (Massachusetts), designated by Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes on March 17, 1938.

Although a number of historic sites was ordered by Secretaries of the Interior, most of the sites bearing this label were authorized by Congress. The title has been applied to a diverse array of historic sites from forts to the homes of notable Americans. In general, a national historic site contains a single historical feature (unlike the broader national historical park) historically associated with its subject (unlike the national memorial).

National Historical Park Morristown National Historical Park (New Jersey), site of

two winter encampments during the Revolutionary War, was authorized by Congress in 1933, as the first of what are now 26 areas with this title. The term has generally been applied to complexes that extend beyond single sites or buildings, such as Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia with its collection of several structures, Boston National Historical Park with nine separate components, and Colonial National Historical Park in Virginia (originally a national monument) with its discrete Jamestown and Yorktown units.

National Memorial The National Park Service classifies 24 units as national memorials, although not all of them bear this designation as part of their titles and a few that have other designations would better fit this one. In general, a national memorial is purely commemorative of a historic person or episode. It need not occupy a site historically connected with its subject; if it does, the site is typically so altered as to bear little resemblance to its historic state.

The earliest feature now in the System classified as a national memorial is the Washington Monument, begun in 1848. Some national memorials, like this one and the Lincoln Memorial, are now historic in their own right.

The Wright Brothers National Memorial (North Carolina) and Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial (Virginia), contain historic features sufficient to qualify them as national historic sites. Nevertheless they are so classified because of their commemorative natures.

Other national memorials include Arkansas Post National Memorial, site of an early French settlement in the lower Mississippi valley; Chamizal National Memorial (Texas), marking the 1963 signing of a treaty ending a long-disputed boundary question between the United States and Mexico; Johnstown Flood National Memorial (Pennsylvania) memorializing the victims of an 1889 flood; and Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial (Ohio) on South Bass Island in Lake Erie, commemorating Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry's naval victory in the War of 1812.

National Battlefield The nomenclature under this general title includes such diverse titles as national battlefield, national battlefield park, national battlefield site, and national military park.

Ten historic battlefields in the National Park System are labeled national military park; the

first was Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park (Georgia-Tennessee), established in 1890. Antietam National Battlefield Site (Maryland), so named because it encompassed a smaller area, followed that same year and was the first with that title. Antietam and most other areas so titled were later redesignated, leaving only Brices Cross Roads National Battlefield Site (Mississippi) with that designation today.

National battlefield park was the title initially favored by the National Park Service after it acquired the War Department's historic battlefields in 1933. Kennesaw Mountain (Georgia), formerly a national battlefield site, received this label in 1935. Richmond National Battlefield Park (Virginia) and Manassas National Battlefield Park (Virginia) were established in 1936 and 1940 respectively.

In 1958 a National Park Service committee recommended national battlefield as the single title for all such areas. Ten battlefields—some subsequent additions and some re-titled older areas—now bear the designation.

To further confuse the situation, not all the Service's battlefields carry one of the above labels. Custer Battlefield (Montana) is a national monument. Palo Alto Battlefield (Texas) is a national historic site, and Saratoga (New York) and War in the Pacific (Guam) are national historical parks. Two other important battlefields, Yorktown (Virginia) and Chalmette (Louisiana) are units of larger national historical parks.

There are presently 14 national cemeteries in the System, all of which are administered in conjunction with an associated unit and are not accounted for separately. They include the national cemeteries at Gettysburg (Pennsylvania), Antietam (Maryland), Fort Donelson (Tennessee), and Custer Battlefield (Montana).

In summary, there are today ten national battlefields, one national battlefield site, three national battlefield parks, and ten national military parks.