

**DRAFT* - for initial feedback*

This is a product of the BPI program and the contents within are being vetted by NPS SMEs and Policy experts before finalization.

It should not be considered formal NPS policy or guidance.

If you would like to implement one of the tactics listed, please reach out to your regional SME.

Tribal Co-stewardship Playbook

PROVIDING PARK MANAGERS DECISION-SUPPORT
TO STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND TRIBAL PARTNER
CO-STEWARDSHIP PRACTICES

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Preface

This playbook is meant to help National Park Service (NPS) superintendents and managers expand co-stewardship practices with Tribal partners. While all parks are expected to meet the legal requirements regarding Tribal Consultation, this playbook intends to aid parks in reaching beyond the minimum required level of Tribal engagement.¹ The tools within this playbook will provide guidance on how to expand co-stewardship in the following areas: trust and relationships, compensation for services rendered, commercial partnerships, grants and projects with federal funding, and employment.

This resource was developed for the Southern Arizona Office (SOAR) in Phoenix, AZ as a product of the Business Plan Internship program. The majority of the research was conducted in connection with Arizona and Intermountain Region (IMR) parks; therefore, some strategies may be specifically applicable to parks in this region. Any specificity in this playbook should not dissuade park managers in other regions from leveraging it's usefulness; while IMR park managers may find certain areas of this playbook specifically applicable to their park's regional staff and resources, most strategies are universally applicable and/or transferrable to comparable entities in other regions.

This playbook serves as a starting point for park managers looking to begin or improve co-stewardship practices with Tribal partners. It is important to note that it is non-exhaustive, but is meant to be a document that develops and expands over time as co-stewardship policies shift and practices become stronger and more prevalent within park operations.

Definitions

Every park interviewed during the researching for this resource expressed interest and willingness to advance co-stewardship. However, there is general confusion around the subtleties in the distinction between co-stewardship and co-management. Without a clear understanding of the terms, it can be difficult for parks to find a starting point to deepen collaboration with Tribal partners [*click the title of the definition to expand*].

Co-stewardship definition

Co-management definition

Management Policies and Guidance

This playbook was developed in consideration of and in alignment with the polices and guidance below. Multiple strategies within this playbook will reference several of these policies as references.

¹ For parks looking for guidance on how to improve or enhance the aforementioned required Tribal consultation practices, reach out to the Council for Indigenous Relevancy, Communication, Leadership, and Excellence (CIRCLE). CIRCLE has resources in place, such as a monthly Tribal Consultation Webinar series, to improve park operations within the realm of required consultation.

These policies direct park managers to increase shared stewardship practices with Tribal partners and provide clear direction and resources to assist in improving Tribal partner collaboration. In particular, the forthcoming revised Director's Order #20 (pending 2022 approval) and Reference Manual #20 (pending 2023 approval) should prove to be principally important to park managers as they craft agreements with Tribal partners to increase co-stewardship [[click the policy/guidance title to expand](#)].

Secretary Order 3342

Secretary Order 3403

Director's Order #20: Agreements—pending revision 2023

Reference Manual #20

Introduction

While conducting research for this resource, several common themes of best practices and possible solutions to common friction points emerged across parks of all sizes and traits. We can consolidate these themes into four categories, or strategies, for co-stewardship:

- Building and maintaining trust and relationships,
- Compensating for services rendered,
- Deepening co-stewardship practices (by leveraging opportunities within commercial partnerships, grants and projects with federal funding, and employment),
- And ultimately, striving towards formal co-management agreements.

While not exhaustive, these strategies present opportunities for park managers to grow their co-stewardship practices through incremental tactical actions that deepen Tribal collaboration within each strategy. Formal co-management requires legislated authority to delegate decision-making, and so immediately reaching for co-management may be too large and intimidating an endeavor for parks. Instead park managers can focus on the numerous actionable steps they can take to improve Tribal relationships within the umbrella of co-stewardship that may prove helpful when striving for future co-management.

This *Tribal Co-stewardship Playbook* organizes each strategy into a series of tactics that serve to advance the strategy, and ultimately, co-stewardship efforts more broadly. The tactics are further ordered by the timeline for implementation, ranging from short-term to long-term. The goal in doing so is to provide park managers with a resource that can easily be used to incorporate co-stewardship into their management strategy.

In order to visualize how the strategies fit together, we developed the *Co-stewardship Framework*. It visualizes the breadth of co-stewardship opportunities available to parks and their Tribal partners. It provides a vision for parks to build on their existing practices, improve co-stewardship collaborations, and grow momentum towards attaining co-management. While

co-management itself may not be a feasible goal for some parks (even in the long-term), this framework, as part of the larger playbook, show how all park managers should be able to find a successful next step and expand co-stewardship practices at their park.

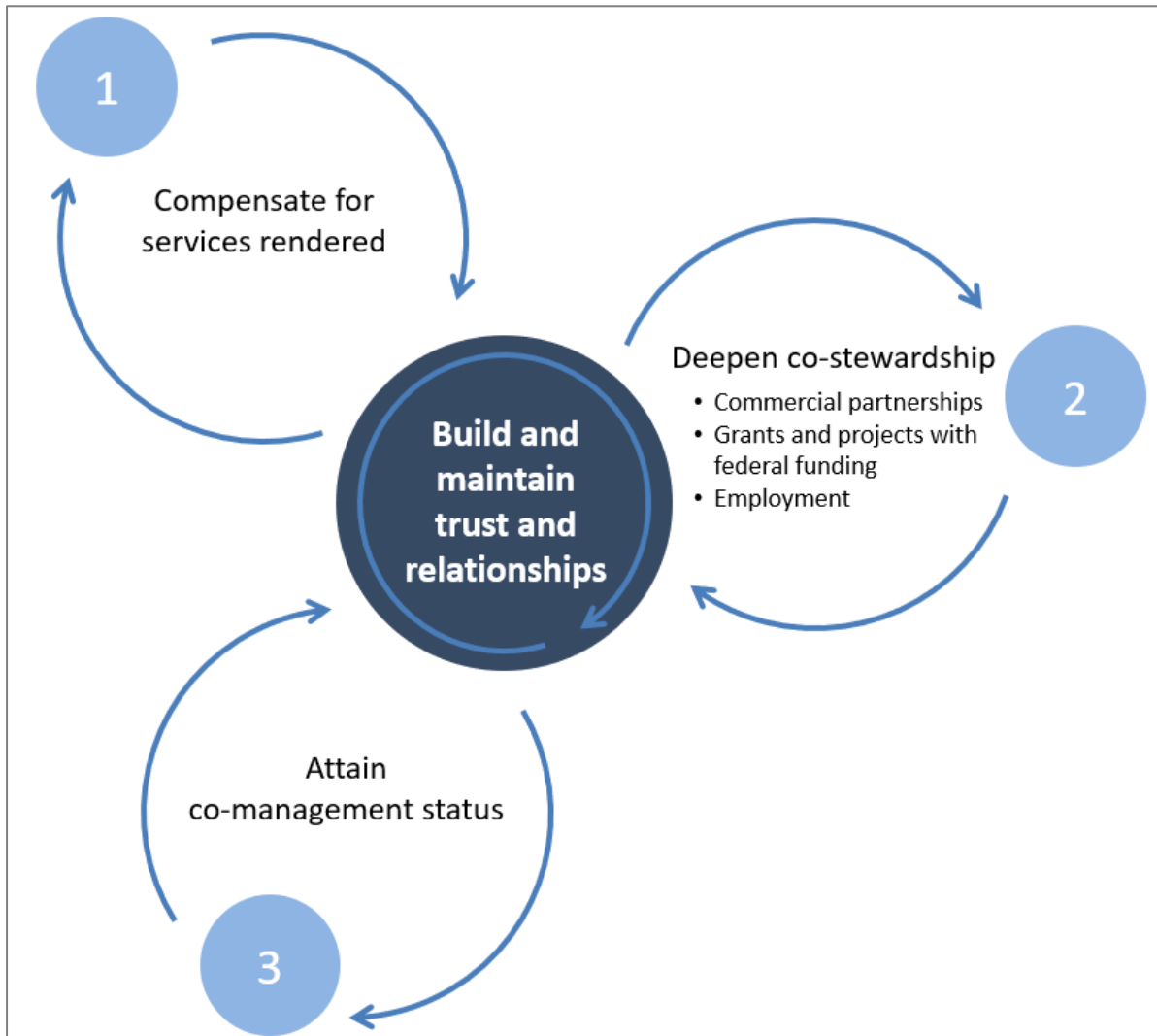


Figure 1: Co-stewardship Framework

Co-stewardship Framework

The Co-stewardship Framework (see: Figure 1) is meant to serve as a guide for parks in expanding co-stewardship practices. Parks may find that they have existing co-stewardship practices in place in some areas of the framework, and/or they may discover areas to deepen co-stewardship.

The framework is both sequential and circular. The sequential characteristics are represented by the numbered strategies. Before any step can be taken by a park and Tribal partners, strong trust and relationships must serve as the starting point and foundation for future co-stewardship. Beyond trust, consistency and reliability with compensation is a vital part of relationship-building. Proper compensation for Tribal partners enables parks and Tribal partners to explore

deeper co-stewardship practices such as commercial partnerships, shared projects via grants or federal fundings, and intentional employment. Lastly, these co-stewardship strategies can assist parks striving for formal co-management legislation.

The sequential nature of these strategies is meant as a useful tool for park managers who may feel stuck on where to begin with expanding co-stewardship. It is important to note, however, that if park managers are struggling with solidifying compensation methods, they can and should proceed with exploring alternative strategies to expand co-stewardship. The cyclical nature of this framework is meant to signify movement, momentum, and an ability to revisit strategies as they best serve parks and Tribal partners at any given point in time.

Building and maintaining trust and relationships with Tribal partners is at the core of successful co-stewardship. It is both the foundation and an ongoing practice. “Build and Maintain Trust & Relationships” is the figurative and physical center of the framework. The turning arrow within the core signifies the importance of the continually ongoing process of building and maintaining trust and relationships; parks are never “done” with this portion. The core diverges to each additional set of strategies: all arrows emerge from trust and relationships, and all arrows feed back into it.

However, co-stewardship is not strictly sequential. Co-stewardship practices can shift and deepen due to renewals and preservations of relationships. Because co-stewardship relies on strong trust between parks and Tribal partners, Tribal collaboration is not a “project” that is complete after certain objectives are met. Deepening co-stewardship requires continual work to build and maintain trust and relationships. Most co-stewardship practices are not singularly achieved; adopting one of the co-stewardship tactics in this playbook will foster relationships and trust, which in turn will enable further co-stewardship. Shared stewardship is continually crafted, maintained, and improved. To signify this, the framework subtly mirrors a windmill. Like a windmill, the only way to generate power is to keep it in motion. The framework’s circularity, as well as its emerging and returning arrows, depict the momentum needed to continuously keep co-stewardship in forward motion.

When this framework was shared with Tribal members, some reflected that traditional Indigenous thinking tends to be non-linear. Many Tribal members view many aspects of life as cyclical and ongoing. The framework’s structure of motion, cycles, and repetition not only aligns with Tribal partners’ views on co-stewardship, but it also provides parks a framework of understanding that co-stewardship can begin, continue, but may never completely finish.

Co-stewardship Strategies

Each strategy within the Co-stewardship Framework is described in more detail below. The tactics and resources are expanded on in the following sections.

Build and Maintain Trust and Relationships

Building trust and relationships with Tribal partners must be done authentically and personally. For resources how to foster trust and cultivate lasting relationships with Tribal partners, proceed to the Trust and Relationships Resource Guide below:

- [Build and Maintain Trust and Relationships](#)

Compensate for Services Rendered

Upon building a foundation of trust, parks must then determine methods for fair compensation of Tribal partners for their time and knowledge. Without this step in place, there is potential for friction or Tribal uninterest in other collaborative projects.

To learn more about Tribal partner compensation strategies, proceed to the strategy guide below:

- [Compensate for Services Rendered](#)

Deepen Co-stewardship Practices

Upon implementation of fair compensation practices, parks may be able to expand co-stewardship within many aspects of their operations. This playbook lists tactics for developing these practices in the areas of commercial partnerships, grants and projects, and employment. Park managers are encouraged to use these guides as inspiration to implement feasible and scalable co-stewardship practices.

To learn more about deepening co-stewardship practices within park operations, proceed to the strategy guides below:

- [Commercial Partnerships](#)
- [Grants and Projects with Federal Funding](#)
- [Employment](#)

Attain Co-management Status

Co-management falls under the umbrella of co-stewardship, and is thus included within the co-stewardship framework. As co-management involves delegating federal decision-making to another entity, parks require legislative authority to do so.

This playbook outlines snapshots of what co-management looks like for parks who are currently operating under formal co-management status. To see co-management in action, proceed to the co-management portion of the playbook below:

- [Co-management Logistics](#)

Overview of Playbook Resources

The remainder of this playbook contains the resources and guidance for each strategy in the Co-stewardship Framework. Because the strategies differ in their execution, these sections will vary slightly depending on the tactics.

The first section focuses on providing resources and best practices for the foundational strategy for co-stewardship, *building and maintaining trust and relationships*. This section provides some concrete resources and agreement types to help inform park managers of the multitude of ways they can begin and/or continue to develop strong trust and relationships with Tribal partners. Refer to [Appendix 41](#) for anecdotal evidence from park staff and Tribal members detailing non-exhaustive, park-specific successes in building strong trust and relationships. It is especially important that park managers and Tribal partners pursue tactics under this strategy that work within their specific context, and so this section will be less prescriptive than some of the others.

The next sections guide a park manager through actionable tactics to achieve the second and third strategies, which are to *compensate for services rendered*, and to *deepen co-stewardship practices* within operations. Within this second strategy are different sections for *commercial partnerships*, *grants and project-funded work*, and *employment*. Collectively these are referred throughout as strategy guides.

The purpose of these strategy guides is to provide park managers with decision-support about how to best expand co-stewardship practices with Tribal partners, given park-specific resources and capacities. They will help superintendents decide on and implement scaled tactics that will advance their co-stewardship practices.

Within these guides, a secondary goal is to demonstrate to park leadership that there are numerous ways to improve Tribal partnerships as they strive towards formal co-management. Parks should understand that changes are incremental and can start as small adjustments. Parks can implement various tactics to build relationships and begin to collaborate more fully with Tribal partners as they move towards larger change.

These strategy guides are non-exhaustive and are meant to be working documents; parks and stakeholders should feel free to add and adjust tactics as co-stewardship practices gain traction with time and policy is updated and/or changed.

The last section focuses on the final co-stewardship strategy, that is to *attain co-management status*. Because co-management is defined by a *specific legal basis that requires the delegation of some aspect of Federal decision-making*, the process to follow is relatively straight-forward. The resources provided in this section are primarily examples of parks currently practicing co-management with Tribal partners so that other park managers can get a sense of what this looks like in practice as they pursue the preceding strategies.

How to Use the Strategy Guides

While the process of building and maintaining trust and relationships carries on indefinitely, the strategies of compensation and deepening co-stewardship within park operations have more

discrete and actionable tactics that can be achieved. These tactics have been gathered from across the NPS and make up the bulk of the playbook.

The tactics start small and scale larger. Tactics are listed in order of expected timeline of implementation, though one tactic does not need to precede another. Park managers should use their own judgement when determining where to begin and how many tactics to complete before pursuing other strategies within the framework of co-stewardship.

To make the playbook as user-friendly as possible, the details of each tactic have been collapsed, to allow for easier browsing (see Figure 2):

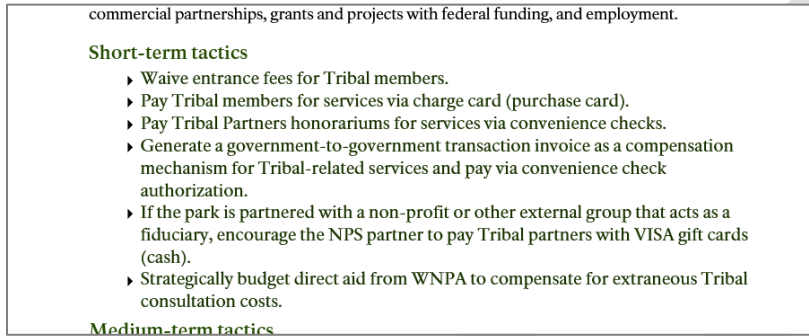


Figure 2: Screen shot of short-term tactics at-a-glance, with triangle "carrots" to expand the tactic

When a tactic seems feasible for a park manager, clicking the name of the tactic or the “carrot” next to the name will expand so that the benefits, obstacles, park-specific traits, implementation steps, and notes and/or examples of parks currently practicing this tactic (see Figure 3):

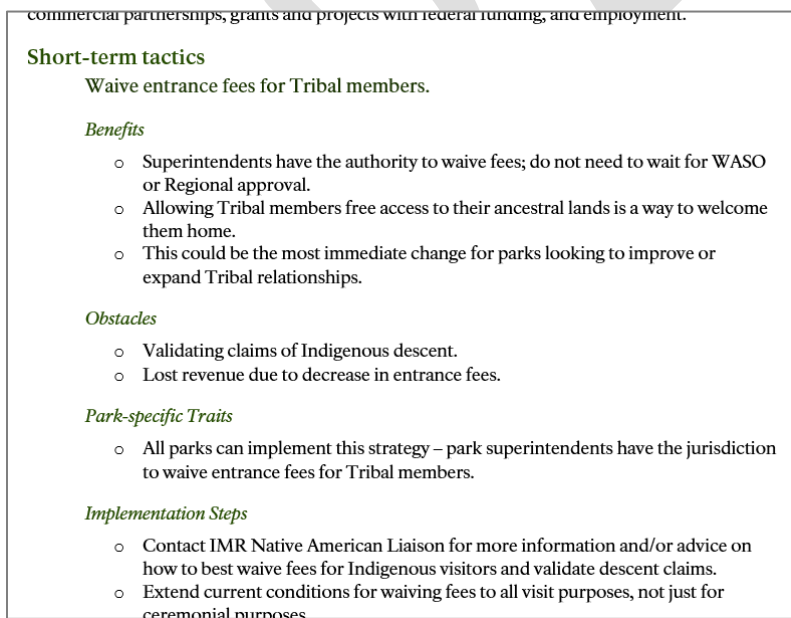


Figure 3: Short-term tactic showing detail once expanded

Building and Maintaining Trust and Relationships

This section directly addresses the first portion of the co-stewardship framework, building and maintaining trust and relationships.

Building and maintaining trust and relationships is the cornerstone of improving co-stewardship practices between parks and Tribal partners. Having strong relationships with Tribal partners is not only the start of successful co-stewardship, but also a necessary enduring process throughout all co-stewardship practices.

CIRCLE Resources

The Council for Indigenous Relevancy, Communication, Leadership, and Excellence (CIRCLE) is a resource for NPS employees to enhance their understanding of American Indian, Alaska Native, Pacific Island Native, and Indigenous issues. CIRCLE has multiple resources available to park employees to enhance their understanding of Tribal partner consultations, collaborations, and relationship building.

- [CIRCLE Common Learning Portal site](#)
- Email: CIRCLE@nps.gov

Parks should consider the following resources to support endeavors to build trust and relationships with Tribal partners. These resources are in order of expected timeline of implementation. While regional trainings may not be available until the following fiscal year, there are steps park managers can be taking in the meantime to ensure they are improving their trust and relationship building capacity.

1. **[Common Learning Portal Forum: Consultation with Tribal and Indigenous People:](#)** This forum is intended as a non-judgmental space for park employees to ask questions and discuss best practices for consultation with Tribal and Indigenous People. It is also a centralized location for updates regarding trainings. CIRCLE will use the Common Learning Portal to announce upcoming trainings, courses, and other opportunities to improve NPS and Tribal relationships. This forum is accessible for all NPS parks, and thus includes a large scope of best practices. Park managers are encouraged to request membership and ask, read, and participate in discussions, as well as follow along for any pertinent updates.
2. **[In Effigy Video Series:](#)** Incidents that occurred at Effigy Mounds National Monument provide important lessons and learning opportunities for all employees of the NPS. To gain access to the training series and participate in the discussion, join the group on the Common Learning Portal. Interested participants must consent to not sharing these videos outside of the National Park Service, as they discuss sensitive topics. These videos contain a plethora of information about working with Tribal partners and building trust and relationships.
3. **[Tribal Webinar Series:](#)** The Tribal Consultation Webinar series is being offered for NPS employees looking for an introduction into the Tribal consultation process, or for those who want to refresh their skills or ask experts for advice on best consultation practices for

managing park resources. The webinars are led by Dorothy FireCloud (Native American Affairs Liaison, Assistant to the Director) and will feature guest speakers from the CIRCLE and NPS partners specializing in Tribal consultation. This series is open to employees from all disciplines who are interested in learning more about Tribal consultation.

4. **Introduction to Indigenous Cultural Awareness Course:** This new hybrid course was developed by CIRCLE and Mather Training Center's Learning and Development. It is intended to help park staff foster a cultural awareness of Tribal Nations that are associated with their parks. The course begins by establishing a knowledge of Indigenous people associated with the park site(s). This class highlights general similarities that Tribes share as they were forced to assimilate into dominate culture. Each session begins with a discussion of the shared cultural attributes that began when the reservations were established. Attendees will develop an understanding of how to interact with Tribal Partners and develop relationships that are vital in the protection of sacred resources. A few main goals of the course are: establishing that each Tribe has their own distinct ways of doing things within their culture; acknowledging that one Tribe or Tribal person cannot speak for all the Tribes; creating a safe space for park staff that have different cultures. Within the class structure, each session is specific to a particular park. Instructors will work with park administration and employees to address specific cultural topics unique to the park. The instructors also implement continued talking points for park managers to further the discussion on the topics that are brought up in the classroom.
5. **Pathway to Confidence Course (by geographic region):** This hybrid course was created in partnership by CIRCLE and the Mather Training Center. This training is customized to the geographic region where it is being offered. The heart of this work lies in creating face-to-face relationship-building opportunities: the training brings in the Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) from the specific regional area and provides space for the THPOs and park managers to build authentic relationships. The curriculum focuses on the "nuts and bolts" of relationship building by teaching NPS personnel at management levels and above how to develop working relationships with Indigenous people and Tribal partners. Park managers will create their own unique reference manual of best practices with their Tribal partners to use upon completion of the course. For more information about upcoming courses, check the "Tribal Consultation Group" on the Common Learning Portal. Staff members who are interested must apply for admission. For further inquiries, please reach out to the Natural and Cultural Resources Training Manager. As of 2022, this position is held by Cari Kreshak (cari_kreshak@nps.gov).

General Agreements

"The National Park Service (NPS) is authorized by law to enter into agreements with other agencies, organizations, and individuals. These agreements establish formal relationships that allow the NPS to more efficiently and economically accomplish its mission. To some extent, applicable laws and regulations prescribe the manner or conditions under which agreements may be entered into. But NPS managers also have substantial latitude in crafting and entering into agreements." - [Director's Order #20](#)

The category of “General Agreements” includes both Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). These agreements document a wide range of collaborative relationships and activities with Federal and non-Federal government entities, for-profit and non-profit organizations, and individuals. While General Agreements can be written for any partner relationship, for the purpose of this playbook we have focused solely on the agreements between NPS and Tribal partners.

General Agreements are over-arching agreements meant to establish relationships between entities. These agreements are not vehicles for funding or allocating budgets. They provide parks the opportunity to find places of common interest with Tribal partners, discuss relational roles and responsibilities, establish cooperation, and share stewardship opportunities. Creating a General Agreement with a Tribal partner allows them to set a precedent for their willingness and capacity to engage with the park. It allows parks and Tribal partners to reach a mutual understanding on matters such as how often to meet, how often to consult, and how much collaboration is possible from the Tribal partners. The interactions involved in creating a General Agreement allows for a more natural, mutually respectful relationship to develop, as each party has expressed their expectations and limitations regarding partnership. Thereby, General Agreements ensure park commitment to Tribal partners and serve as an accountability tool in preserving relationships when future collaboration opportunities and projects develop.

These agreements are not mandatory prior to engaging in additional co-stewardship strategies. However, they may be a helpful prerequisite prior to facilitating subsequent agreements (i.e., an annual funding agreement). General Agreements may be used as justifications for entering into financial agreements with Tribal partners.

Parks are encouraged to enter into General Agreements with their Tribal partners even if funding for certain projects or responsibilities is not yet established; in fact, no goods or services may be transferred through a General Agreement. General Agreements help parks focus on building relationships with Tribal partners in the present, rather than focus on building out detailed future project and budgeting structures. For example, Redwood National and State Parks (REDW) and the Yurok Tribe’s General Agreement regarding condor recovery efforts does not contain details about a designated allocated budget; these logistics were developed further into the co-stewardship effort.

One suggestion for inclusion in a General Agreement is the expectation for recurring annual or bi-annual in-person meetings with Tribal partners. SOAR parks have implemented annual meetings with the 4-Southern and Hopi Tribes. Multiple staff members have attributed this meeting as the catalyst for improved Tribal relations. Of note, even if parks do not choose to pursue a General Agreement, finding a way to schedule a regular in-person meeting with all Tribal partners would still prove to be a beneficial avenue to pursue to strengthen relationships.

Relationships between parks and Tribal partners vary widely; do not view General Agreements as a “box to check off” when building relationships. Rather, consider General Agreements a tactic that could be useful for setting common expectations, generating trust, and building authentic relationships with Tribal partners.

Example General Agreements

Though General Agreements vary widely depending on park and Tribal partner, the following resources are available as references:

- [General Agreement Template](#)
- [General Agreement: Interpretation and Education Service](#)
- General Agreements: Examples from REDW
 - [REDW & Tolowa Dee-Ni' Nation General Agreement](#)
 - REDW & The Yurok Tribe:
 - [General Agreement](#)
 - [Condor Conservation Agreement](#)
 - [Environmental Compliance Agreement](#)
 - [REDW & Federate Indians of Graton Rancheria General Agreement](#)
 - [Multiple Entities: California Condor Conservation Memorandum of Understanding](#)
 - [Multiple Entities: Elk Management Memorandum of Understanding](#)

Additional Considerations

This information should not be viewed as “one size fits all.” Every park and Tribal partner will differ when deciding on the terms of a General Agreement. The process for reviewing and approving General Agreements may be different with each partner.

Prior to entering a General Agreement, ensure that personal rapport between the park and Tribal partners is already established. If unsure how to first generate personal rapport, refer to the CIRCLE resources above. There are additional pieces of anecdotal evidence in [Appendix 41](#) that may be useful.

If parks already have established relationships and personal rapport with Tribal partners, superintendents may be able to express interest to Tribal partners – perhaps through a meeting with Tribal council – about creating a General Agreement. Superintendents should ensure that the Tribal partners understand that it is up to the Tribal partner to determine what relationship they are interested in having with the park; be sure to ask how the Tribal partners would like to be involved. Consider some Tribal partners may not have the desire or capacity to enter into General Agreements. After inquiring, it may be clear that having something more formalized might be beneficial for both parties. For example, codifying communication practices may help alleviate the burden on Tribal partners when NPS staff turns over, a common frustration.

Parks that have a larger number of Tribal partners may have a more difficult time entering into one General Agreement that all Tribal partners agree with. While parks can in theory have one General Agreement per Tribal partner, it is important that park superintendents take their own capacity into consideration when thinking through General Agreements as a strategy for

furthering co-stewardship. These documents work best when each party adheres to the standards that they set for themselves; be wary of making written promises that do not have certain follow-through. While a General Agreement can be a useful tool for solidifying trust and relationships, it is important to remember that every park is different. If this method does not work for your park and Tribal partners, continue to pursue other avenues of relationship-building.

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Compensate for Services Rendered

To continue to build on strong trust and relationships, parks need to determine avenues for fair compensation for Tribal partners' time, knowledge, and services. Proper compensation is a necessary pre-requisite to deepening co-stewardship practices in other areas.

Below is a list of potential compensation tactics that park managers can consider implementing. Each strategy has an expected timeline of implementation, benefits, obstacles, and certain traits that would allow a park to have more success with a given tactic. There are also accompanying implementation steps, points of contact, and other parks that are currently implementing that tactic.

This guide contains a wide range, though non-exhaustive, list of potential tactics. Not every compensation tactic needs to be achieved to continue along the co-stewardship framework; however, park managers should feel confident in their ability to compensate their Tribal partners fairly and promptly before exploring deeper co-stewardship practices in areas such as commercial partnerships, grants and projects with federal funding, and employment.

Short-term tactics

Waive entrance fees for Tribal members

Pay Tribal members for services via charge card (purchase card)

Pay Tribal Partners honorariums for services via convenience checks

Generate a government-to-government transaction invoice as a compensation mechanism for Tribal-related services and pay via convenience check authorization

If the park is partnered with a non-profit or other external group that acts as a fiduciary, encourage the NPS partner to pay Tribal partners with VISA gift cards (cash)

Strategically budget direct aid from WNPA to compensate for extraneous Tribal consultation costs

Medium-term tactics

Specifically budget project funding for Tribal-related activities and projects by incorporating these as line-items during annual project planning

Partner with a Friends group, a university, or another external group and develop a Cooperative Agreement with that partner group to establish funding and payment methods to Tribal partners

Establish a paid Artist-In-Residence program instead of operating it as a volunteer program

Long-term tactics

Create a Cooperative Agreement between the park and Tribal partner(s) (or a Tribal non-profit) that allocates funding for Tribal-related activities, projects, and funding

Develop an annual funding agreement with Tribal partner(s) via Tribal Self-Governance Agreement regulations

Develop a Reimbursable Service Agreement with Tribal partner(s)

Deepen Co-stewardship Practices: Commercial Partnerships

Collaborating with Tribal partners on commercial partnerships provides opportunities to deepen co-stewardship practices. This guide contains a wide range, though non-exhaustive, list of potential tactics for park managers who wish to strengthen Tribal collaborations within the realm of commercial partnerships.

Each strategy has an expected timeline of implementation, benefits, obstacles, and certain traits that would allow a park to have more success with a given tactic. There are also accompanying implementation steps, points of contact, and other parks that are currently implementing that tactic.

Short-term tactics

Create transparency around the operations and money flow associated with selling craft in WNPA park stores

Have Tribal-related park store products vetted through Tribal partner Cultural Preservation Offices prior to approval

Medium-term tactics

Encourage the park staff to advocate for/outreach to local Tribal artisans and act as trusted evaluators for the cooperating association (i.e., WNPA)

Host a vending “market” where Tribal artisans can sell directly to the public as vendors

Long-term tactics

Create a contract with Tribal partner(s) to operate a park transportation or shuttle system, where they provide public programming on their history of the park land

Provide Tribal partners with a contract for concessions

Designate a particular space within the park to Tribal partners where they can conduct vending operations

Lease facilities and buildings from Tribal partners

Have Tribal partners operate park bookstores

Tribal partners operate an entire visitor site experience

Deepen Co-stewardship Practices: Grants and Projects with Federal Funding

Collaborating with Tribal partners on projects funded via grants or federal project funding provides opportunities to deepen co-stewardship practices. This guide contains a wide ranging, non-exhaustive list of potential tactics for park managers who wish to strengthen Tribal collaborations within the realm of grants and projects with federal funding.

Each tactic has an expected timeline of implementation, benefits, obstacles, and certain traits that would allow a park to have more success with a given strategy. There are also accompanying implementation steps, points of contact, and other parks that are currently implementing that tactic.

Short-term tactics

Refer Tribal partners to grants and funding opportunities for which they may be eligible

Encourage Tribal small businesses interested in contracting with the park to apply for 8(a) Business Development certification

Apply for applicable National Park Foundation grants to fund projects led by Tribal partners

Support Tribal partners in becoming a Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU)/educate Tribal partners on benefits of being a CESU

Medium-term tactics

Add “Welcome Home” signs in Tribal language(s) alongside the park’s entrance signs.

Revamp waysides and/or park brochures to incorporate Tribal partners’ languages, histories, and narratives

Partner with the Desert Research Learning Center (DRLC) to support natural and cultural resource projects within the park

Partner with universities or other organizations that have CESU status for Tribal-related projects and/or studies

Partner with external partners, such as non-profits, who can source and apply for applicable project grants

Partner with Conservation Legacy in employing the Ancestral Land Conservation Corps

Have Tribal individuals facilitate Tribal monitoring programs

Connect Tribal government/community teachers to NPS through the NPS Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program

Long-term tactics

Update museum exhibits to reflect Indigenous language, history, and narratives

Encourage Tribal partners to apply for 501(c)(3) status

Create a cultural demonstration program funded by federal project funding

Create a cultural demonstration program funded by a partnership with a non-profit

Deepen Co-stewardship Practices: Employment

Employing Tribal members as park service employees offers the ability to fully integrate Tribal representation with the NPS. Park managers can deepen co-stewardship by being intentional and thoughtful in their efforts to recruit, hire, and retain Tribal members as park employees.

Collaborating with Tribal partners on intentional Tribal member employment provide opportunities to deepen co-stewardship practices. This guide contains a wide ranging, though non-exhaustive list of potential tactics for park managers who wish to strengthen Tribal collaborations within the realm of employment.

Each strategy has an expected timeline of implementation, benefits, obstacles, and certain traits that would allow a park to have more success with a given tactic. There are also accompanying implementation steps, points of contact, and other parks that are currently implementing that tactic.

Short-term tactics

Familiarize and reference the Hiring Authorities Cheat Sheet associated with this playbook (Appendix 36)

Allow Tribal members to use a park address as their address when applying for positions through USA Jobs

Provide a standalone computer at the park with access to USA Jobs for Tribal members who would like to apply on-site

To improve Indigenous employee retention and job satisfaction, ask current Indigenous employees about their perspectives on Tribal-related Park activities

Medium-term tactics

Post job vacancies in local Tribal newspapers and Tribal radio stations to expand outreach attempts

Advertise job vacancies within local colleges, including Tribal colleges

Conduct awareness and inclusion trainings for all park employees, including front-line staff

Attend job fairs, especially in Tribal communities or schools with high populations of Indigenous students

Conduct trainings for Tribal communities and the public on how to write a government résumé, navigate USA Jobs, and apply for an NPS job

Designate an existing park employee to act as a Tribal liaison in developing Tribal relations beyond the required consultations

Enter into an Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) assignment with a (or several) Tribal members

Hire Tribal youth and students into existing park programs and internships

Employ Tribal members on the career seasonal track

Long-term tactics

Leverage existing agreements with agencies to fund applicable local intern hiring authorities

Create and hire a full-time Tribal liaison position who will conduct outreach to local Tribal communities

Logistics to Attain Co-management Status

The final step in the co-stewardship framework is attaining co-management status. This may not be achievable for all parks, nor will all parks find it necessary to pursue this avenue of co-stewardship. However, for parks that are interested in operating under full co-management with their Tribal partners, below are factors to consider before pursuing co-management agreements.

Legal-based criteria

In order to attain co-management, a necessary pre-requisite is legislation designating a specific legal basis to justify a co-management agreement.

Some parks have achieved co-management using enabling legislation and historic documents as justification. Though more difficult to attain, co-management could still be an option for parks who do not have enabling legislation determining a specific legal basis for co-management.

However, parks will need to justify future co-management legislation through strong and active co-stewardship practices to render co-management legally necessary. Some parks may not find co-management feasible, yet still have opportunities to fully collaborate with Tribal partners through deep co-stewardship practices.

Parks that share co-management authority

There are currently four parks in the National Park Service that share co-management authority with Tribal Partners. The four parks are Canyon de Chelly National Monument, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, Grand Portage National Monument, and Big Cypress National Preserve. To provide a brief outline of current co-management in action, see below for details on how each of these four parks reached co-management status and how they currently operate.

There is more than one way to achieve co-management; each park has had a different experience. The following information has been sourced [from a statement from Charles Sams III](#), the Director of National Park Service. For more information on specifics, reach out to the superintendents of these four parks [*click park name for more details*].

Canyon de Chelly NM

Glacier Bay NP&P

Grand Portage NM

Big Cypress NM

Conclusion

This project's research found that parks have a deep and unanimous interest in developing deeper relationships and more meaningful collaborations with their Tribal partners. As emerging national-level policies are beginning to direct parks to engage in more intentional co-stewardship practices with their associated Tribal partners, parks must stretch beyond required consultation compliance measures when engaging with Tribal partners.

To cultivate greater co-stewardship, it is essential for parks to assess their current collaborations with their Tribal partners, explore a multitude of strategies to deepen co-stewardship, and prioritize present and future implementations of shared stewardship. To sow the seeds these efforts, parks should continue to build and maintain strong trust and relationships with Tribal partners, as this remains both the foundation and enduring means of strengthening co-stewardship value.

Establishing thoughtful, incremental, and future-based co-stewardship strategies within multiple aspects of park operations will ensure that momentum for increased co-stewardship continues to accelerate.

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