

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Western Alaska Area National Parks

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: WEAR

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Our vision is based on maintaining excellence in the cooperative stewardship for the conservation and understanding of natural and cultural resources in northwest Alaska through outreach and partnership development.

Western Arctic Parklands will continue to recognize the distinctive importance and place of subsistence within park values and management to the maintenance and continued way of life of local rural residents as set forth in ANILCA. Management decisions will be made based on the best available information, in collaboration with local residents and other stakeholders.

Park visitors and local residents will receive high quality educational and interpretive products and programming at professionally staffed facilities. Park neighbors will receive high quality education and interpretive programming through an exceptional Village School outreach program to foster stewardship assistance for our vast parklands.

All park staff will have the opportunity to live in clean, affordable, modern government housing.

Park stewardship decisions are guided by expanded natural and cultural resource management programs in concert with the Arctic Inventory and Monitoring Network's Vital Signs monitoring program. Resource programs are models for management excellence in arctic biology, ecology, and archeology, and the park - with vast, intact ecosystems -- is a national leader in the study of global climate change.

Research capabilities are expanded through the construction of modern bunkhouse, laboratory and storage facilities. Research agendas will reflect park needs. Park facilities and operations demonstrate innovative, sustainable, environmentally friendly designs and management policies.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Thomas A. Heinlein, BELA & George Helfrich, WEAR

Site: WEAR

STEWARDSHIP

Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

- Complete a Development Concept Plan for Serpentine Hot Springs that is a joint product developed by the NPS, local villages and other interested user groups. The goals of the plan are to provide access and facility improvements that are culturally appropriate, and maintain the unique character of the site. The plan will be guided by a need to provide improved access and facilities that are safe, healthy and sustainable in an arctic environment.

- Complete an access plan for the Great Kobuk Sand Dunes in KOVA.
- Complete a Transporter Plan for the Noatak National Preserve that resolves user conflict among sport hunters and subsistence users.
- Complete a WEAR Backcountry Management Plan that will provide a unified set of consistent management policies for recreational, subsistence, management and research use within lands that are designated, proposed or eligible as wilderness.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.

Stabilize and rehabilitate two historic cabins (Fairhaven Ditch and Goodhope River) within BELA

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.

Monitor and control the establishment of invasive species around NPS owned facilities within the cities of Nome and Kotzebue.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Improve high-priority assets to acceptable condition, as measured by the Facility Condition Index.

- Restore and/or maintain all employee housing units, administrative facilities, and backcountry cabins to acceptable condition, as measured by the FCI.
- Hire additional maintenance support positions to populate and maintain the Facilities Management Software System (FMSS) and all of its companion programs/components.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.

- Use OFS base increases to hire seasonal Biotechnicians to monitor wildlife populations and landscape components identified as key vital signs.
- Hire a coordinator to design an efficient and forward-looking research permit/compliance program.
- Restore natural resource personnel in key areas such as wildlife biology, fisheries biology, geology and ecology.
- Design a model program for the management of fish and wildlife subject to legislatively mandated consumptive uses.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.

Create OFS increase for establishment and implementation of a long-term cultural resource inventory and monitoring program for north and northwest Alaskan parks

- With GAAR, create a North Alaska Cultural Resource Program Team to increase efficiencies and share special expertise.
- Digitize existing Inupiaq place names datasets for use in natural and cultural resource management, cultural, bilingual and educational programs, search and rescue and other applications.
- Partner with the AK Dept of Fish and Game to document current local subsistence harvest and land use patterns (several PMIS entries).
- Restore cultural staff funding to FY06 levels (4.0 FTE).

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Complete historic resource studies for all WEAR park units (PMIS 55549 - funded)

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

STEWARDSHIP

Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

- Acquire the Humboldt Creek mining claims in BELA.
- Restore and interpret the Goodhope River Cabin which is an excellent example of reindeer husbandry between local Inupiaq Eskimo and Lapland Sami cultures from the early 1900's.
- Restore and interpret the Fairhaven Ditch and associated cabins, which are excellent examples of the gold rush era in northwest Alaska in the early 1900's.
- Develop strategy with the Bureau of Land Management to acquire and curate significant federally owned northwest Alaskan archeological collections currently housed at Brown University (Giddings and Anderson, CAKR).
- Document reflections of local residents on the development and legacy of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in northwest Alaska (PMIS 91265).
- Expand NPS knowledge of archeological, historical and traditional use sites through research of ANCSA 14(h)1 related archives located in various agency files (PMIS 112393).

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

STEWARDSHIP

Serve as the Preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

- Construct a modern bunkhouse facility in Kotzebue to house arctic researchers, seasonal workers, and visiting NPS permanent staff. Construct basic laboratory/storage facilities in both Nome and Kotzebue to serve as discovery and learning centers for arctic and sub arctic research. These facilities are critical support components for implementing the NPS Alaska Region Ocean Park Strategy and a multifaceted Climate Change Research program.
- Partner with local residents to document the Traditional Ecological Knowledge of WEAR inholders (PMIS 35797).

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

STEWARDSHIP

Encourage children to be future conservationists.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

- Update Science in Our Lives program with new content, technology and partners.
- Conduct Teacher Workshops in hub communities and villages.
- Expand educational outreach programs to schools in all resident zone communities.
- Implement the Teacher-to-Ranger-to-Teacher program in all WEAR parks by 2008, drawing educators from _____ communities adjacent to parks as well as teachers from underserved urban areas. Regional coordinator (who could be based in a park) would handle advertising and applications, and placement. Park-based coordinators would facilitate all aspects of the teach employment experience. Participants would be required to contribute to the Alaska Learning Exchange, through curriculum development or hosting a blog, etc.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

ENVIRONMENT

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.

- Consolidate research and management aviation needs to reduce carbon emissions.
- Develop dedicated research and management base camps in the backcountry with privies.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

ENVIRONMENT

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.

- Develop and lead partnerships in Nome and Kotzebue to promote recycling and energy efficiency.
- Identify and implement energy efficiency measures in all park facilities

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Demonstrate environmental excellence through increased use of alternative energy and fuels at every park.

- Develop solar, wind and geothermal energy systems at backcountry facilities.
- Develop wind and solar systems at housing and administrative facilities to supplement power drawn from local, diesel-powered generation facilities.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Serve as a model for energy efficiency, under Executive Order 13423, by ensuring Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards.

Develop a model backcountry facility at Serpentine Hot Springs utilizing LEED standards.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

ENVIRONMENT

Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

- Partner with the village of Shishmaref to provide site stewards at Serpentine Hot Springs.
- Partner with local villages to create educational education programs for local residents and park visitors (in conjunction with the Murie Science and Learning Center). Design programs that integrate traditional ecological knowledge with western science to improve cross-cultural awareness. Employ local residents in their villages to provide cultural orientations for visitors prior to entering WEAR parks.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

RECREATION

Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

Design a system of short disability-accessible trails at Serpentine Hot Springs. Total trail system would be less than one mile in length.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

RECREATION

Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

- Implement a shelter cabin adoption program in BELA.
- Develop a cadre of skilled volunteer carpenters and maintenance workers to rebuild and maintain historic and non-historic backcountry facilities.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

RECREATION

Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Expand educational outreach activities to all communities in the Northwest Arctic and Bering Straits Regions.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

RECREATION

Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

Increase visitation by 25 percent at lesser-known parks through a national tourism effort aimed at helping people to discover the breadth of parks and experiences.

- Develop partnership with the City of Nome, Nome Chamber of Commerce, State of Alaska, and partners from the adventure-cruise industry to re-build a regional visitor base that targets WEAR parks as new destinations for shore excursions.
- Work with the Alaska Travel Industry Association to promote WEAR parks as adventure destinations.
- Develop a WEAR handbook to promote a greater public awareness and appreciation for the purpose and significance of our remote, rarely visited, spectacular parklands.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Increase the number of visitors that attend ranger-facilitated programs such as campfire talks, hikes, and school programs.

- Complete the Northwest Arctic Heritage Center which will provide modern facilities for ranger-facilitated programs.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

EDUCATION

Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

- In conjunction with the Murie Science and Learning Center, develop teacher education and cultural workshops within the backcountry of each park unit.
- Continue to develop educational kits and programs for our educational curriculum-based outreach programs. Programs will meet Alaska State Education standards and will target the Northwest Arctic, Nome and Bering Straits School Districts.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

EDUCATION

Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.

Hire a permanent Public Information Officer/Media Specialist to concentrate on web, print, television and radio communication.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

EDUCATION

Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

- Develop junior ranger book through junior ranger ambassador program.
- Continue to fund a minimum of two Student Conservation Volunteer Resource Assistants to provide visitor services, Junior Ranger programming, backcountry support, assistance with village-based summer camps and other local outreach programming aimed at youth.
- Continue to partner with Girl Scouts of America to foster communications with respect to their programs and activities relating to the conservation, management, protection and development of the national parks' natural and cultural resources and collaborate on designated projects & activities.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

EDUCATION

Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

- Complete the Northwest Arctic Heritage Center, which will serve as a model for bringing together park staff, visitors and local residents for culturally and scientifically accurate interpretive and educational opportunities.
- With funds provided in a FY08 OFS increase, hire a permanent, subject to furlough education specialist to manage exhibit fabrication, program and class development, and outreach associated with the Northwest Arctic Heritage Center in Kotzebue.
- Hire additional local seasonal interpretation staff in both Nome and Kotzebue.
- Complete Park Films that showcase park resources, visitor opportunities and the significance of WEAR parks to local villages, subsistence users, and local Inupiat and Yupik cultures.
- Partnering with local communities, research and develop culturally sensitive backcountry visitor guides for the Noatak and Kobuk River corridors (PMIS 80615).

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

PROFESSIONALISM

Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.

Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.

- Continue to utilize local hire authority and expand recruitment efforts to attract a quality workforce that reflects the face of Alaska and America as a whole.
- Develop outreach consortium with local agencies and organizations and increase use of technology to increase span of vacancy advertisements.
- Develop modest administrative or storage facilities in villages close to park units. Employ seasonal liaisons and base field operations from these points.
- Attend recruiting fairs at state colleges and universities and advertise positions through student service offices.
- Hire public information officer to promote NPS job opportunities.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Attain the highest employee satisfaction rate of all federal agencies, as measured by Office of Personnel Management surveys.

- Continue to improve employee satisfaction by sharing vision/goals/information, involving them in decision making processes, developing skills, and recruiting qualified candidates.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

PROFESSIONALISM

Use strategic planning to promote management excellence.

Establish a structured professional development curriculum to provide park managers with the skills to apply best business practices and superior leadership.

- Develop individual development plans for all term and permanent employees to determine training and development needs.
- Develop a workforce planning strategy to assess future workforce needs and actions to address those needs.
- Target positions for upward mobility.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

PROFESSIONALISM

Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

- WEAR will put greater value on the benefits of the Alaska Region aviation program by advocating for improved pilot recruitment and enhanced training/mentorship. Consistent with the Safety Leadership Council, WEAR will participate in the creation, development and delivery of a regional aviation training strategy. An action of the strategy will be to make permanent the Regional Aviation Trainer position. With this effort, aviation program preparedness and safety will become and remain a critical operation focus for the entire region and strive for the lowest rate of accidents within DOI. This position will coordinate with all aviation-parks to provide: improved decision making; specialized aviation training; park operational support, consistency of check rides and attainment of flight standards; and essential coordination with other DOI aviation programs. -Continue to provide safety training for employees (e.g. DOIMOC, Hazmat) and annual safety inspections of facilities.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WEAR

PROFESSIONALISM

Make national parks the first choice in philanthropic giving among those concerned about environmental, cultural, and recreational values.

Improve communications and marketing capacity to increase public understanding of our mission, opportunities, and benefits.

Work with partners including the National Parks Conservation Association, University of Alaska and Alaska Pacific University to communicate and market our unique, remote, subsistence-based parklands.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS