EVALUATION RESEARCH TO SUPPORT
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE 21ST CENTURY RELEVANCY INITIATIVES

Narrative Accompaniment to PowerPoint

Project partners

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Get Up, Get Out, and Go! Sara Guren, Photographer

Introduction

Underrepresentation of diverse racial and ethnic groups in national parks has been an issue for many years. Researcher have found consistent and substantial evidence of the underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities in outdoor recreation, particularly in national parks and have examined potential reasons for this under-representation and barriers to participation (Floyd, 1999; Gobster, 2002; Shinew & Floyd, 2005; Solop, Hagen, & Ostergren, 2003). In addition, a recent National Park Service (NPS) report identified the importance of effectively engaging communities of color in order for national parks to remain relevant in an increasingly diverse American society (Mitchell, Morrison, Farley, and Walter, 2006). Important components include underrepresentation of minority racial and ethnic groups as visitors to the national parks, lack of diversity in the NPS workforce, and low participation in NPS planning and management activities by communities of color.

To begin to address these concerns, this project assesses the current state of knowledge and learning needs of the NPS related to relevancy among new and diverse audiences. This assessment was done using semi-structured, qualitative interviews with NPS staff and select individuals outside the NPS. Interviews focused on (1) identifying past and present programs designed to enhance cultural diversity in national parks, (2) the success or failure of those programs, (3) perceived reasons for success or failure, (4) NPS goals and objectives regarding relevancy in the 21st century, and (5) reasons for under-representation of communities of color in national parks. The results from the interviews were used to develop a program theory model (Weiss 1998). The program theory model is an important policy analysis and evaluation tool because it represents the underlying logic between program inputs, processes, and outcomes (Patton, 2002; Russ-Eft and Preskill, 2001). Understanding the connections between program inputs, processes, and outcomes can help the NPS be more successful at engaging diverse audiences. The validity of the model will be tested in a future study evaluating relevancy programs within the NPS.

Slide 1: Title Slide

This project is a partnership between the NPS Conservation Study Institute, the NPS Northeast Region Office of Interpretation and Education, and the University of Vermont. The work presented in this report was conducted by Rebecca Stanfield McCown, the Conservation Study Institute Doctoral Fellow at the University of Vermont.

Slide 2: Trends in the Literature

Research has been conducted to explore potential reasons for underrepresentation of racial/ethnic minorities in national parks, identify barriers to visitation among racial/ethnic minorities, and understand differences in recreation choices and preferences between people of color and Whites (Dwyer and Hutchison, 1990; Dwyer and Gobster, 1992; Dwyer, 1993; Hutchison, 1987; Johnson, Bowker, and Cordell, 2001; Payne, Mowen, and Orsega-Smith, 2002; Tinsely, Tinsley, and Croskeys, 2002; West, 1989). This body of research has led to the development of four hypotheses or theories to help explain racial/ethnic minority underrepresentation in outdoor

recreation, including attendance at national parks (Floyd, 1999; Gomez, 2002; Johnson, Bowker, English, and Worthen, 1998). These hypotheses are:

- **Marginality**: The marginality hypothesis attributes differences in racial/ethnic minority representation to socioeconomic factors or measures of social class, such as limited financial resources, lower levels of education, and limited employment opportunities caused by historical discrimination. (Floyd, 1998; Floyd, Shinew, McGuire, and Noe, 1994; Dwyer and Hutchison, 1990; Lindsay and Ogle, 1972; Washburne, 1978; Woodward, 1988)

- **Subcultuel/Ethnicity**: The subculture/ethnicity hypothesis recognizes the influence of marginality on leisure and recreation patterns but attributes differences in national park visitation at least partially to cultural norms, value systems, social organizations, and socialization practices. Examples of cultural values or norms can include size of recreational groups, preferred activities (e.g., hiking, biking, swimming, picnicking), and development level of sites (e.g., bathrooms, pavilions, visitor centers). (Chavez, 2000; Dwyer and Hutchison, 1990; Dwyer and Gobster, 1992; Dwyer, 1993; Floyd, 1999; Gobster, 2002; Washburne, 1978)

- **Discrimination**: The discrimination hypothesis places importance on contemporary, post civil rights discrimination that occurs from interpersonal contact with other visitors or park personnel or through institutional policies. (Blahna and Black, 1993; Floyd, 1999; Gobster and Delgado, 1992; Roberts, 2007)

- **Opportunity**: The opportunity hypothesis examines the relationship between the residential location of minority populations, recreational sites, and recreation preferences. (Hauser, 1962; Lindsay and Ogle, 1972; O'Leary and Benjamin, 1982; Payne, Mowen, and Orsega-Smith, 2002)

- **Acculturation**: The acculturation hypothesis examines the relationship between cultural assimilation into the majority culture and recreational choices. According to this hypothesis, as a minority culture assimilates into the majority culture, they begin to take on the recreational patterns of the majority culture. (Floyd, 1999)

Research has also examined potential barriers to visitation by minority racial and ethnic groups (Payne, Mowen, and Orsega-Smith, 2002; Solop, Hagen, and Ostergren, 2003; Tinsley, Tinsley, and Croskeys, 2002). These barriers can include:

- **Transportation**: Ability to get to a national park or natural recreation site.
- **Knowledge**: Lack of knowledge about where parks are located and what activities parks offer.
- **Expense**: Both the internal cost of visiting a park (entrance fees) and the external cost of visiting a park (lodging, transportation, food, etc.).
- **Interpretation and History**: Lack of interpretation in parks relating to minority history and culture.

Slide 3: *Keeping National Parks Relevant in the 21st Century*

The NPS Northeast Region convened a conference (October 2005) and published an associated report, *Keeping Parks Relevant in the 21st Century*, which developed a framework and identified four focus areas for addressing diversity in the national parks (Mitchell, Morrison, Farley, and Walter, 2006). The report provides the foundation for this project. The four focus areas are:

1. Work with others to tell inclusive stories;
2. Engage in an ongoing dialogue with openness, sensitivity, and honesty;
3. Sustain community relationships;
4. Create a workforce reflective of society

As the NPS Northeast Regional Director, Mary Bomar established two task groups, one for each of the primary strategic areas: (1) identify and engage new audiences and communities, and (2) support change in the workforce. It is within the context of these task groups that this study was developed.

The objective of this study is to advance the dialogue from the conference by developing ways to apply the four focus areas to park decision-making. The qualitative interviews and resulting data in this presentation are the first phase of the study.

Slide 4: Research Themes

Trends in the scientific literature (summarized in slide 2), in combination with *Keeping Parks Relevant in the 21st Century* (introduced in slide 3), suggest that the following research themes would be most appropriate to guide this project:

1. Examine the current state of knowledge and learning needs of the NPS;
2. Identify opportunities, barriers, and key ingredients regarding programs and initiatives designed to increase diversity;
3. Serve as a foundation for future evaluation research

Slide 5: Methods

Qualitative research and evaluation methods were adopted for this project. Qualitative research looks to understand human behavior (e.g., relationships, communications, meaning associated to events or activities) in depth and in context (e.g., within a particular program, park setting, collaborative setting) (Patton 2002). A total of 25 in-depth interviews were conducted for this project, and study participants were chosen because of their knowledge and experience regarding diversity issues in national parks (referred to as "purposeful" sampling). Of the participants, 16 were from within the NPS and 9 worked outside of the NPS. Study participants included superintendents, chiefs of interpretation and education, Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) coordinators, park rangers, youth program coordinators, former NPS personnel, presidents of partner organizations, presidents of consulting groups, and academics. Study participants were geographically as well as racially/ethnically diverse. Snowball sampling was used to ensure that sufficient data were collected and that critical individuals were included in the study. Snowball sampling is done by asking respondents to identify other who should be interviewed. The responses are then examined to determine any other key individuals. For this

study, no additional interviews were conducted, because interviewees identified individuals who were already included in the study sample.

Interview data were analyzed through an open-ended coding process to identify patterns and key themes associated with NPS diversity and 21st Century Relevancy programs. Open-ended coding consists of the researcher reading the transcribed interviews and identifying categories of responses. Those categories are analyzed for patterns and trends. Those patterns then are developed into themes. A sub-sample of interviews was coded by multiple individuals to ensure coder reliability (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The coding for this project was done using NVivo software.

Slide 6: Interview Protocol

A semi-structured interview protocol was used in this study (see Appendix 1). Interviewees were asked questions about NPS programs that are designed to increase minority involvement. For example, study participants were asked about what makes a program successful as well as what is missing from unsuccessful programs. Other questions probed what study participants perceived as the opportunities and barriers NPS faces in addressing minority underrepresentation. Finally, questions derived from the social science literature on minority underrepresentation were also asked, to test these theories against the experiences of study participants.

Slide 7: Preliminary Findings

Analysis of study data produced six themes, each with three to four associated subthemes. These themes and subthemes tend to be interwoven and closely related to each other. The six <u>general themes</u> identified in the study data are:

1. Community involvement
2. Inclusive interpretation and histories
3. National Park Service climate
4. Program sustainability
5. Workforce diversity
6. Media and communication

Slide 8: An NPS Diversity/Relevancy Conceptual Model

Analysis of study data also suggests that the six themes introduced above are connected in certain ways. The model presented in this slide represents how these themes are generally connected. However, it is important to note that the model is a simplification of a very complex and multilevel system and does not illustrate all of the interconnections between the different themes. It is also important to note that the model and associated themes are not one dimensional. There is no identified entry point on the model, because the data suggest that a more comprehensive approach to addressing diversity is needed. Due to the comprehensive

nature of addressing diversity that emerged from the data, the model is a simplified depiction of themes important not just to a singular program in a national park unit but to the overall management for the national park unit.

Slides 9 to 32 move through the model and explore the themes, subthemes, and connections between the six themes. Quotes from the interview data are used to illustrate the themes represented in the model.

Slide 9: Theme 1: Program Sustainability

"So it died for these two reasons. I think one because there was no sense of connection among the students and two because it was so [hinged] on one individual that when he left, there was no way to keep the program up" ID#016

The notion of program sustainability emerged as an important part of program success for several reasons. For example, study data indicated that programs that go beyond "one-touch" (single event) experiences appear to build more lasting relationships with community partners. One-time, special event programs may provide an entry point to new audiences, but study participants felt strongly that programs that take place over a few weeks or even months form deeper relationships. Study participants also described the ways in which program sustainability is linked with the ability to overcome budgetary and leadership changes, as well as the development of strong partnerships. Programs, for instance, that were funded by multiple sources were better able to withstand funding changes. This quote illustrates the importance of consistent leadership in order for programs to be successful.

Slide 10: Theme 1: Program Sustainability, Subthemes

Three subthemes emerged from the data that describe different aspects of *program sustainability*. These subthemes are (1) consistency in message, (2) people involved in the program, and (3) relationship building.

Consistency of message means that everything an NPS unit does (interpretation, publicity, and workforce) should reflect a commitment to diversity. Diversity focused programs are one way to show a commitment to diversity, but all aspects of the park, even those not directly related to a program, should reflect a strong commitment to diversity. According to study participants, this consistency communicates a commitment to addressing underrepresentation as well as efforts to be a welcoming place for minorities. For example, an NPS unit that has translated interpretive material into Spanish but has not provided facilities for extended family gatherings would not be sending a consistent message to the community. Studies have shown that recreational styles between whites and minority groups differ, and that facilities and sites need to be more universally designed to accommodate different styles of recreation (Chavez, 2000).

People involved in the program refers to those individuals involved in the program as well as their degree of involvement. The study data strongly linked the notion of program sustainability to leadership and the individuals involved in the program. For example, numerous stories emerged from the data highlighting programs that deteriorated after a key individual left. The

people involved in the program subtheme also refers to community members that are or should be involved in the program. Multiple members of a community need to be involved to ensure program success and sustainability. Just like in a park, community leadership can change, impacting vital programmatic connections.

Building meaningful, intentional relationships is a crucial part of program success and sustainability. While linked closely with the previous subtheme, this subtheme goes beyond just individuals and refers to a more systematic approach to relationship building. This subtheme also emphasizes the importance of long-term efforts. Relationship building takes time and parks should be committed to working and creating a dialogue with those outside of the park in order to build and maintain meaningful relationships. Maintaining leadership and commitment is also key in developing lasting relationships with the community and other organizations.

Slide 11: Picture of Model

Slide 12: Program Sustainability → Inclusive Interpretation and Histories

"So your message has to be consistent. That you're interested; that you're a representative; that your storyline is representative; that your visitorship is diverse; and that you have multiple meanings and multiple messages for these places…You have to have a multi-vocal approach."
ID#004

This quote illustrates the connection between the **program sustainability** theme and the **inclusive interpretation and histories** theme. As mentioned in the previous slide, telling inclusive stories has important implications for the sustainability of programs. The quote illustrates the connection between inclusive stories and providing a consistent message of commitment to diversity that is essential to program success. According to study participants, the histories that are interpreted at national parks need to resonate and connect with diverse audiences. The likelihood of sustained and successful programming is low if participants do not feel as though their history and culture are part of the park's interpretive story.

Slide 13: Theme 2: Inclusive Interpretation and Histories

"But if you look at America what is determined to be historically significant… has usually been determined around criteria of its architectural significance as opposed to its social or historical significance…And very often the diverse communities have not been at the table when the importance of things or places is determined so criteria used for the primarily European American community may or may not be applicable to why a place or a building is of importance to my community" ID#004

The second theme represented in the model, **inclusive interpretation and histories**, looks at the stories interpreted at NPS units. This quote describes one study participant's perspective on reasons why interpretive themes have not always been meaningful to traditionally

underrepresented audiences. Ensuring that interpretive programs encompass the experience of all people associated with a particular story is crucial for increasing visitation and relationships with traditionally underrepresented communities. This theme looks at not only what stories are told, but how and by whom they are told.

Slide 14: Theme 2: Inclusive Interpretation and Histories, Subthemes

Three subthemes emerged from the data that describe different aspects of *inclusive interpretation and histories*. These subthemes are (1) addressing different values regarding historical and cultural importance, (2) making thematic interpretative connections across sites and time, and (3) engaging the target community in interpretation.

Addressing different values regarding historical and cultural importance focuses on ensuring that diverse groups are part of the decision-making process when defining what resources are considered "important" enough to interpret or protect. As the quote on the previous slide illustrates, traditional approaches to historic preservation may have excluded some segments of society. Study participants noted that many structures or places of historical significance to minority cultural groups may be located in buildings of little architectural significance. Consequently the stories associated with these places may not be well documented or interpreted. Ultimately, study participants felt that in order for the NPS park managers to know what resources to interpret and protect, they need to continue to work with community partners to better understand the values, perspectives, and experiences of different cultural groups. One study participant said "Well, the content, as I said, has to be multi-vocal and as complex as the story warrants. Secondly, I think there needs to be some involvement of the community…the sought after communities." This leads to the next subtheme and the importance of engaging communities in interpretation.

Making thematic interpretative connections across sites and time refers to the ways in which interpretation at any specific site might connect to broader stories and themes across the National Park System. For example, study participants noted that there may be opportunities to thematically link civil war sites and themes with civil rights sites and themes. This, in turn, may create the context for interpreting the stories of not only important historical figures/events, but how they were shaped and influenced by other events and people in the nation's history. While not every site in the National Park System will relate to every racial and ethnic group, connecting interpretive themes in meaningful ways across time and space may help broaden the context and relevance of specific NPS units to include constituencies that have yet to be engaged.

Engaging target communities in interpretation refers to the engagement and inclusion of target communities, particularly the specific community whose story is being interpreted. Study participants felt strongly that in order to tell inclusive histories and present stories from various cultures, members of those cultures need to be part of the process, and when possible, participate directly in the interpretation of those stories. For example, the Underground Railroad is a

significant story that transcends NPS units and boundaries. As an interpretive theme, it lends itself to interpretation by a broad base of individuals, not just NPS employees. Engaging target communities in interpretation may occur through increasing workforce diversity, partnering with local historical societies, or using volunteers from the target community.

Slide 15: Picture of Model

Slide 16: Inclusive Interpretation and Histories → Media and Communication

"And I think that the other one – advertising and marketing. That one is very important but if you just market and advertise and you're bringing the people out or you're telling them about the parks or these open spaces – these historical sites …but then you don't have someone who is sensitive to these visitors or has a cultural understanding or is going to be a little bit more inclusive, then it's not going to function. It's not going to work." ID#022

This quote illustrates the connection between the *inclusive interpretation and histories* theme and the *media and communication* theme. Study data suggest that culturally inclusive approaches (i.e., local community newspapers, culturally diverse radio stations, multiple language publications) to interpretation allow media outreach efforts and new forms of communication to be successful. There was wide agreement among study participants that reaching out to new audiences and drawing these groups to national parks through new communication techniques (iPods, cell phones, online networking sites) is important for program success. However, study participants also noted that when stories with broad themes are interpreted narrowly, new constituencies may be discouraged from visiting or <u>returning</u> to the site. An example of this could be the interpretation of a Civil War battle site that does not address slavery or the involvement of black soldiers.

Slide 17: Theme 3: Media and Communication

"If we're thinking that the program alone is going to do it and we're relying on our normal promotional materials for the general public it's a lot more hit or miss than when we're really also including active promotion through outlets that people will connect with." ID#005

The *media and communications* theme refers to the use of non-traditional media outlets and technology to help ensure program success. Along with the use of new and different forms of communication, study participants felt that the type of information communicated is important for welcoming and engaging diverse audiences. Providing information that is specific to target communities and fills knowledge gaps about the NPS is important to engaging diverse audiences. As the quote on this slide suggests, media and communication can not only encourage visitation to national parks but may also provide an opportunity for the NPS to connect to a more technology savvy generation.

Slide 18: Theme 3: Media and Communication, Subthemes

Three subthemes emerged from the data that describe different aspects of *media and interpretation*. These subthemes are (1) *education through press and media*, (2) *language and cultural considerations*, and (3) *new media outlets and technology*.

Education through press and media refers to using the press and media to provide communities with information about national parks and the range of programming that they offer. This education can focus on numerous aspects of the national park experience including activities people can participate in at the park, special services a park might offer, and new exhibits and interpretive material. Study participants agreed that educating communities about the NPS could be successfully done through effective and appropriate press and media. This approach would allow the NPS to take advantage of information dissemination as a way to educate communities about opportunities and activities available in national park units. This relates to the next subtheme regarding the importance of culture and language in order for press and media efforts to be successful.

Addressing cultural and language considerations is crucial when developing a media or communications plan. According to one study participant, learning about language and cultural differences and then adapting media and communications strategies appropriately will likely enable messages to reach broader communities. Several study participants noted that cultural barriers often go beyond language differences, and it is important to understand ways in which different cultures access information. Traditional forms of advertisement may not reach certain cultures; for example, radio ads may have more impact on one culture than another. Learning about and understanding these differences are crucial for a successful program.

New media outlets and technology emerged from the data referencing the use of non-traditional media outlets and new forms of technology. Many study participants emphasized the importance of using new technology for engaging youth. Study participants noted that, when possible, the NPS might think about incorporating newer technologies like MP3 players, Facebook, and MySpace. In the minds of most study participants, exploring ways that technology can enhance a national park experience and bridging gaps between nature, culture, history, and technology will be increasingly important for engaging youth and making national parks relevant to all youth, not just youth of color.

Slide 19: Picture of Model

Slide 20: Media and Communication → NPS Climate

"We've got to understand that they [youth] communicate in a different kind of way. They're texting …we've got to understand that if we're going to be successful in engagement and listening to them. They've got a whole different ethic and a mindset that's quite different from where we are and if we think that we bring them to our world with the same values and tools that we might have historically used, uh-uh – not going to work." ID#006

According to study participants, using new technology and communicating through more non-traditional methods reflects on the culture and climate of the NPS. As this quote illustrates,

being open and willing to experiment with new techniques for engagement is important and may assist in determining what works and where resources should be placed. Using new technologies and media also requires the NPS to step outside of traditional forms of advertising and reach out to different media outlets, like black, Asian, or Hispanic newspapers. Groups that have traditionally been underrepresented as park visitors or park partners may sense a more "welcoming and open" NPS climate when different/more appropriate communication strategies are used.

Slide 21: Theme 4: NPS Climate

"It's not a nice to-do, but a must-do. But that's going to need to be followed by a willingness to fund, a willingness to experiment. Actually, a barrier might be that we have very traditional ways of doing things in national parks and that can create cultural barriers essentially. We need to do programs differently, offer services differently, you know, based on what audiences might need." ID#005

The **National Park Service climate** theme refers to what underrepresented park constituencies perceive as the agency's "attitude" or "orientation" towards diversity issues in a general sense. As this quote illustrates, the vast majority of study participants felt strongly that successfully addressing 21st Century Relevancy goals requires an NPS climate characterized by a willingness to experiment with new ideas as well as the commitment to fund initiatives.

Slide 22: Theme 4: NPS Climate, Subthemes

Four subthemes emerged from the data that describe different aspects of ***National Park Service climate***. These subthemes are (1) ***21st century careers***, (2) ***cultural mindset***, (3) ***supportive authorizing environment***, and (4) ***welcoming/non-intimidating atmosphere***.

21st century careers addresses the NPS's ability to be competitive in the contemporary job market. Study participants commented on changes in society and the NPS's potential inability to remain current in the context of these changes. One study participant described it like this, "Now the estimate is that a youngster coming into the workforce may change jobs 15 to 20 times. And I don't know that the agency is prepared for that kind of turnover." Participants also brought up issues such as a lack of competitive salaries and desirable work locations as possible barriers to viable career opportunities.

The notion of a ***cultural mindset*** emerged from the data as an important aspect of ***NPS Climate***. Study participants described this in different ways. For example, one agency employee stressed the need for the NPS to continue to work towards broadening the perceptions that different cultural groups may have about the role of national parks as well as the mission of the NPS. Another study participant described it this way: "I mean everybody's not going to stand in front of the scenery and get the same kind of impact. And I think that's hard for people to understand. So I don't think you can assume that just because you provide them with transportation that

there's a foregone conclusion that they're going to first want to come, and to have an impactful kind of experience."

Supportive authorizing environment highlights the importance of strong and consistent support from all levels of NPS management, but particularly from the regional and national leadership environments. Study participants felt strongly that NPS personnel need to understand the importance of diversity and need to be culturally competent (i.e., receive training) and that various authorizing environments encourage, promote, and mandate diversity programs and initiatives.

Welcoming, non-intimidating atmosphere is closely linked to the ***supportive authorizing environment*** subtheme, but refers more broadly to the environment created by NPS employees, policies, and tradition. Creating a welcoming/non-intimidating atmosphere refers to both visitor experiences and employee experiences. Several study participants reflected on the strong tradition and culture of the NPS and the ways in which this can be intimidating, while making the work environment hard to navigate for some minority groups. This notion extends to challenges that new hires, particularly personnel from minority groups, may have in navigating the agency's culture. For example, one study participant noted the struggle that minority hires can sometimes have in remote locations where they are the only person of color on staff and in the community. Study participants widely agreed that support networks could be set up for new hires. Creating a welcoming/non-intimidating atmosphere for park visitors also relies on supportive staff. One study participant noted that all staff needs to be culturally competent, because visitors can pick up on subtle, sometimes unintended signals that make them uncomfortable.

Slide 23: Picture of Model

Slide 24: NPS Climate → Workforce Diversity

"…I think in the internship or sort of on the job kind of shadowing possibilities we bring folks in and if we don't have the right support system there, you know, the agency can be pretty intimidating. There's not a lot I think that's available that sort of gives you a sense of introduction and everybody's moving so fast and people are so overloaded with stuff these days that we don't necessarily provide that." ID#002

This slide illustrates the ways in which the ***climate of the NPS*** theme is directly linked to the ***workforce diversity*** theme. As this quote suggests, many study participants felt that the ability for interns and new hires to succeed in the agency is highly impacted by the climate of the NPS as well as the availability of appropriate support systems. Study participants also mentioned the use of mentors to help guide new hires and interns through the initial stages of their career/internship with the NPS. Study participants felt that having the guidance of a seasoned NPS employee would help new hires navigate the agency.

Slide 25: Theme 5: Workforce Diversity

"I think we need to have a better understanding of different ethnic and cultural understandings and I think that's going to happen by having people on the workforce so that if we broaden our workforce it means that we're going to have more opportunities to have focus – that have, you know, different viewpoints involved in making these connections so we would have more critical mass in making that happen." ID#002

Workforce diversity emerged from the interview data as an important theme in the overall context of NPS 21st Century Relevancy and related diversity initiatives. According to many study participants, a diverse workforce demonstrates a commitment to diversity and creates a more welcoming environment for underrepresented visitor groups. Study participants felt strongly that, ultimately, the NPS workforce must reflect the US population in order to achieve 21st Century Relevancy and other related diversity goals. As the quote on this slide suggests, a diverse workforce provides a broader range of interpretive voices and may create new avenues for connecting diverse communities with national parks.

Slide 26: Theme 5: Workforce Diversity, Subthemes

Four subthemes emerged from the data that describe different aspects of **workforce diversity**. These subthemes are (1) **career opportunity education**, (2) **employees from the local community**, (3) **support system**, and (4) **potential jobs in the future**.

Career opportunity education refers to educating youth and other potential employees of the NPS about the range of career opportunities available within the agency. Study participants noted that potential applicants from diverse communities may perceive NPS as only offering "ranger-type" careers. Several study participants felt that materials and/or outreach efforts that explain the possible avenues of employment in the service may help ensure that individuals are aware of jobs and career opportunities beyond the traditional park ranger. Other study participants suggested using career fairs, developing relationships with high schools and universities, as well as using new media and technology to communicate with diverse audiences about the wide array of career opportunities in the NPS.

Employees from the local community refers to the importance of hiring from the local community. According to many study participants, parks that are located in diverse communities may have opportunities to attract local applicants. Hiring from the local community not only increases the diversity of the workforce but also strengthens bonds and relationships with key local partners. This relates to the community involvement theme that will be discussed later in the presentation. Hiring people of color from local communities can create a relationship between the park and that employee's social network, thus providing an entry point for other individuals to visit the park. Having a diverse workforce also provides opportunities for interpretation of histories and stories by group members and people closely associated with or related to a story (as mentioned in Theme 3).

Support systems focuses on the need that many new hires and interns have for some type of support system to ensure their successful transition into the NPS. Study participants suggested the use of team hiring practices as well as team-building retreats before employees report to their duty stations. Several study participants acknowledged that bonds with other employees may be especially important for new hires of color assigned to units that have little or no staff diversity. In some situations, these employees may also be the only person of color in the surrounding community, underscoring the importance of connecting these employees with people who understand this situation. Providing a mentoring network was also mentioned as an important part of increasing workforce diversity because it provides a support network for new employees that will ensure their success in the agency.

Potential jobs in the future surfaced as a very important element for ensuring the creation of a diverse workforce. Numerous study participants mentioned that interns are highly qualified and highly trained by the completion of their internship, but, in many instances, there is no position or opportunity to hire them. Study participants repeatedly suggested a "pipeline" approach whereby the NPS would create direct opportunities for interns to enter the agency upon conclusion of the internship.

Slide 27: Picture of Model

Slide 28: Workforce Diversity → Community Involvement

"If everybody in a national park looks the same, then it is an unspoken message that this is a place for them and not for you. And I think that it's critical in a relation-building capacity that we have a diverse group of people working for us. That's not always possible in tiny parks with one or two people, but it should be made up with volunteers, with interns, with young people who are engaged and involved and certainly assertive outreach." ID#020

One benefit of enhancing workforce diversity is the resulting connections with diverse communities through diverse employees, illustrating the linkage between the ***workforce diversity*** theme and the ***community involvement*** theme. Study participants felt that units with diverse employees on staff may have more openings for relationship building with diverse communities, particularly the community associated with a specific employee. The quote presented on this slide illustrates another benefit of a diverse workforce, which is the commitment to inclusion it demonstrates to communities. Investing resources into recruitment and retention of diverse staff sends an important message to communities about a unit's dedication to addressing issues of underrepresentation. The recruitment of diverse volunteers and interns also shows a commitment to diversity and may be more appropriate for small national park units with limited staffing.

Slide 29: Theme 6: Community Involvement

"...I'm really a proponent of going into the community and taking the park to the people. A lot of the times people are very uncomfortable going into a new environment or if they don't see people of their own, you know, type, class, culture groups – it's a little bit harder for them to feel comfortable... Speak to groups that are already established like, you know, museum groups that are in the city and try to build some sort of partnership or network..." ID#022

Community involvement emerged as an important theme associated with the ways in which national parks can effectively engage diverse communities. As this quote illustrates, many study participants felt that community involvement can provide opportunities for diverse audiences to get to know their NPS unit and personnel. Many study participants emphasized the importance of community involvement both inside and outside park boundaries. This refers to interacting with the community within the park (i.e. special events and interpretative exhibits) and at location and events within the community (i.e. churches, festivals). Study data associated with this theme also suggest that there may be substantial value in partnering with non-traditional groups already working to address issues of diversity. Developing partnerships with museums addressing diversity, local government agencies (e.g., housing authority), and community groups working with communities of color (e.g., grass roots organizations, non-profit groups) are potential organizations with which parks can become engaged.

Slide 30: Theme 6: Community Involvement, Subthemes

Four subthemes emerged from the data that describe different aspects of ***community involvement***. These subthemes are (1) ***active invitations to participate***, (2) ***addressing barriers***, (3) ***school involvement***, and (4) ***using partnerships strategically to advance diversity goals***.

Active invitations to participate requires more than just being open to visitors, but actively going into the community and reaching out to underserved audiences. A majority of study participants felt that providing communities with the opportunity to get to know the park, its mission, and personnel in a comfortable familiar setting (i.e. local school, recreation centers, churches) can help build a meaningful relationship between communities and national park units as a whole.

Addressing barriers to park visitation emerged as an important subtheme. Study participants felt strongly that park managers need to understand and respond to the challenges that some visitor groups face in terms of visitation. For example, several study participants identified the lack of transportation as a potential barrier in some instances. This involves getting to know the specific needs of the community and crafting programs that respond to these needs (see Cuyahoga Valley NP example below).

School involvement also emerged as an important subtheme. Many of the programs that study participants felt had been successful involved schools, particularly those that brought park personnel into the school and used this opportunity to encourage full family visitation. Study data underscored the importance of engaging children to get whole families involved in park activities.

Using partnerships strategically to advance diversity goals emerged in many of the themes but primarily when study participants described initiatives designed to involve and engage communities. Study participants felt that the NPS should reach beyond traditional partner groups and work with community organizations, such as churches and community recreation centers, to

reach diverse audiences. The NPS might also consider uncommon partnerships with organizations already addressing minority underrepresentation in other areas. Museums and zoos, for example, are developing programs and initiatives to increase minority visitation.

Slide 31: Picture of Model

Slide 32: Community Involvement → Program Sustainability

"…you establish relationships with teachers, you establish relationships with community leaders and you establish relationships with people on your workforce who have connections to those communities you're targeting. So I think that that's very key. It means that time has to be spent doing that kind of thing." ID#020

Community involvement and program sustainability have a multi-directional relationship. Study participants felt strongly that in order for a program to be sustainable and successful, the target community needs to be involved to ensure their needs are being met. However, if a program that engages the community does not last and the community feels their time and efforts were wasted, future community involvement is likely to be jeopardized. As this quote suggests, building relationships with communities takes significant amounts of time and other resources, which means that efforts to increase diversity and engage the public need to be on-going and able to survive leadership, financial, and political changes.

Slide 33 and 34: Cyclical Model

It is important to note that the model is a simplification of a complex reality and does not illustrate all of the multi-directional relationships between the six themes. There is no one entry point identified on the model. As these quotes illustrate, all of the themes work together to address diversity and promote program success. While the arrows on the model depict a directional relationship, the relationships often flow in both directions and all of the themes are interconnected through multi-directional relationships.

Slide 35: Key Challenges

Throughout the interviews, study participants talked about the challenges the NPS faces, on a system-wide level, in increasing diversity in visitation, participation, and the workforce. Four main challenges emerged from the data: 1) lack of consistent commitment from NPS staff; 2) broadening the perception of what a national park is or can be; 3) working with non-traditional partners, and 4) collaborating with groups already doing the work.

The need for consistent commitment focuses on the challenges of maintaining leadership support from all levels within the NPS. The movement of employees between units and inevitable changes in leadership may pose challenges for maintaining consistent support for diversity initiatives. Finding ways to disperse program leadership and have active support and guidance from all levels may help to provide consistency in commitment.

Broadening the perception of people of color regarding national parks is challenging because it requires a cultural change within and outside of the NPS. Study participants noted that it is important to expand the mindset of the public to include the many types of units within the system, not just the traditional, natural resource-based parks. This includes identifying benefits and potential experiences of park visitation that are different from traditional uses. For example, Valley Forge National Historical Park has traditionally been an educational park but recent efforts have brought attention to use of the park for jogging and other passive forms of recreation.

Working with non-traditional partners or groups who are already addressing diversity issues can be challenging. Building relationships and collaborative partnerships takes time and does not always provide immediate results. Furthermore, knowing who potential partners are and how to connect with them is difficult, and managers may need guidance and/or assistance in identifying and approaching non-traditional groups.

****Slides 36 and 37** illustrate how the model applies to specific programs. Two programs are reviewed: 1) "Get Up, Get Out, and Go" from Cuyahoga Valley National Park and 2) "Boston's Environmental Ambassadors to the National Park Service" (B.E.A.N.) from Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area. These illustrations demonstrate the relationship between the model (displayed in table form) and characteristics associated with specific programs at the site-level.

Slide 36: Cuyahoga Valley National Park Example

 "Get Out, Get Up, and Go" was one of the many programs referenced by participants in the study that are designed to reach diverse audiences and engage diverse youth in the park. Study participants familiar with the program felt it has been successful in engaging diverse audiences. One study participant described it this way: "it actually is being successful at being more than just adults at schools or community organizations making decisions for kids, but getting the families to make decisions for kids to come into the park. And we're hoping – we don't know yet – that that will help people to make decisions in their leisure time to come to the park without needing a program to support their interests" ID#005. Using "Get Out, Get Up, and Go" as an example, this slide illustrates the relationship between specific programs and the model.

"Get Up, Get Out, and Go" is able to help ensure program sustainability through multiple funding sources and partners with a wide range of community partnerships. In addition, the program lasts for six weeks during which participants visit the park twice a week. "Multi-touch" programs like this can help to ensure long-term program viability by providing several opportunities for youth to experience the park.

The program does not address the interpretative themes of the park but makes itself relevant to diverse audiences by addressing current community issues. For example, "Get Up, Get Out, and Go" provides opportunities for physical exercise, which is important because, according to one

interviewee, physical education courses were recently cut from local schools. The program also developed a partnership with the Akron police department to help address issues of youth delinquency and crime, which a number of community partners identified as an important issue.

"Get Up, Get Out, and Go" used many outlets to promote the program. Through the use of neighborhood recreation centers, newspapers, and church newsletters, the park was able to reach its target diverse audience and build relationships with new media outlets. One interviewee commented that through this effort, the park has developed such a good relationship with one local church, that the church runs ads for other park activities in its newsletter.

"Get Up, Get Out, and Go" focuses on the health benefits of park visitation. This focus is a change from the more traditional natural or cultural emphasis associated with many national parks. The program also partners with many groups not typically thought of as park partners, including churches, the local housing authority, and the Akron Police Department.

"Get Up, Get Out, and Go" is just one program at Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Therefore, it does not have the ability to influence the park's entire hiring process. However, the park has used this program to recruit diverse volunteers in an effort to create a more diverse presence among the program staff.

"Get Up, Get Out, and Go" uses partnerships with community groups as the main tool for engaging communities and ensuring community involvement. The program worked with local Akron area churches, Boy Scout Troops, a government housing authority, and police departments. The program also addressed potential barriers to visitation and participation by engaging the City of Akron to provide transportation to the park.

Slide 37: Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area Example

"Boston's Environmental Ambassadors to the National Park Service" (B.E.A.N.) offers another illustration of how the model can be used to analyze specific NPS programs.

To help ensure program sustainability, B.E.A.N. relies on external funding sources along with a partnership with the Island Alliance. The program is also a long-term, after-school program. This format allows for long-term relationships to develop between B.E.A.N. interns, park personnel, and the NPS, which can help sustain the program over time.

The B.E.A.N. program uses interns to help create inclusive interpretation and recreational activities that will reach diverse audiences. The interns help develop ideas and concepts for interpretative displays. Interns also assist in identifying recreational activities of interest to local communities.

According to one interviewee, the B.E.A.N. program's primary communication or outreach strategy is personal relationships with teachers and schools. These relationships allow the program direct access to schools and to work with teachers to identify potential interns.

The B.E.A.N. program goes beyond traditional NPS methods by including the interns in the development and implementation of visitation and recruitment plans.

Through various activities with the interns, B.E.A.N. addresses workforce diversity by educating interns about potential jobs in the NPS. The interns participate in "career exploration" days to learn about the different employment opportunities available in the NPS. The presence of B.E.A.N. interns in the park and at other community events also demonstrates a commitment to diversity to communities of color and youth not involved in the B.E.A.N. program.

The B.E.A.N. program involves the community through the relationships that staff develops with individual teachers and related service programs (e.g., educational programs, stewardship projects) that the interns provide for the community. This program also addresses the needs of interns to have after-school jobs by providing paid internships for participants.

Slide 38: Next Steps

This model and presentation represent the first phase in a larger project designed to apply evaluation methods to better understand NPS diversity issues. Immediate next steps include the refinement and application of the model into a site and/or programmatic learning tool. This year, we will conduct field research at several national park units to "ground truth" the model at the site level. Ultimately, this research agenda can provide systematic information about the key ingredients associated with successful program development and implementation.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1: Interview Protocol

Interviewer: Rebecca Stanfield McCown

Advisors: Dr. Robert Manning, University of Vermont, Dr. Nora Mitchell and Dr. Daniel Laven, Conservation Study Institute

Under-representation of diverse racial and ethnic groups in national parks has been an issue for many years. The Northeast Region of the National Park Service recently convened a conference and published an associated report called, *Keeping Parks Relevant in the 21st Century*, which developed a framework and identified key themes for addressing issues of diversity. Within this context, the University of Vermont and the Conservation Study Institute have embarked on a project that will identify and evaluate programs within the NPS that are designed to increase cultural diversity in national parks. The first step in developing this project is conducting interviews with key NPS personnel and partners. We are interviewing 25 individuals, and you are invited to take part in this process because of your knowledge and experience regarding diversity issues and the NPS. This interview will be tape recorded and transcribed for purposes of this study. However, the information you provide is confidential and will never be directly associated with your name. Is it alright if I record our conversation?

Q1. In your opinion, over the last 10 years, in what ways has the NPS been successful in increasing visitation and participation by diverse groups in national parks?
   a. What programs do you know of (or have you been involved with) that have been successful?
   b. From your perspective, how do you know that these programs were successful? In other words, what did you use as an indicator of success?
   c. How has progress/success been tracked or evaluated for this program?
   d. Based on your experience, what are the key ingredients of programs that are successful?
   e. To be successful, in your view, who needs to be involved in the program?
       - What role do they need to play, or how do they need to be involved?
   f. What barriers do you think this program was able to overcome?

Q2. In your opinion, over the last 10 years, what programs do you know of, if any, that have tried and failed to increase visitation and participation of diverse groups in national parks?
   a. From your perspective, how do you know that these programs were not successful? In other words, what did you use as an indicator of failure?
   b. How has this lack of success been tracked or evaluated for this program?
   c. Based on your experience, what key ingredients were missing from these programs?
   d. What barriers do you think this program failed to overcome?

Q3. In your opinion, how have programs to increase visitation and participation of diverse groups in national parks involved youth?
   a. How were organizations, such as the Student Conservation Association or Youth Conservation Corps, involved in the program?
   b. How were local and regional schools involved in the program?

c. What other youth organization were involved in the program?

Q4. What evaluation research, if any, are you aware of that has been conducted regarding programs to increase visitation and participation of diverse groups in national parks?

Q5. From your perspective, what do you think are some of the challenges that your region currently faces in attempting to increase visitation and participation by diverse groups?
a. What do you think are some of the opportunities that the Northeast Region has for increasing visitation and participation by diverse groups?
b. How do you see these challenges and opportunities evolving?

Q6. NPS Director Mary Bomar has stated that one of her priorities is to reconnect the American people to their national parks. This includes increasing diversity in visitation, participation, and the workforce, as well as telling inclusive stories, advertising in diverse publications, and increasing relationships and partnerships with communities of color and diverse organizations. Which of these areas do you think would have the most impact on increasing visitation and participation of diverse groups in national parks?

Q7. Social science research has developed three possible explanations for why communities of color do not have high rates of participation in outdoor recreation in general and are under-represented in national parks more specifically. These explanations are (1) socioeconomic differences between communities of color and whites, (2) cultural differences between communities of color and whites, and (3) potential racial bias/discrimination against communities of color in national parks[1].
Which of these explanations, if any, do you agree or disagree with? Why?
a. From your perspective, which of these three explanations (socioeconomics, culture, or racial bias) do you think has the most influence on increasing visitation and participation of diverse groups in national parks?
b. From your perspective, which of these three explanations (socioeconomics, culture, or racial bias) represents the biggest challenge to increasing visitation and participation of diverse groups in national parks?
c. Given your experience, can you think of any other explanations for the under-representation of communities of color in the national parks?
d. From your perspective, what other challenges are there to increasing involvement of communities of color in the national parks?

Q8. What else do you think is important regarding the inclusion of racial and ethnic minorities in national parks that we did not discuss?

Q9. Given your experience, who else should I talk to about this issue?

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[1] Discrimination is the act of placing an individual or group at a disadvantage based on characteristics such as race/ethnicity (McLemore and Romo, 1998). On the other hand, racial bias/prejudice is a more cognitive variable and represents negative perceptions and/or attitudes of one person or group toward another based on characteristic such as race/ethnicity (Stodolska, 2005a; Stodolska, 2005b). Bias/prejudice can be considered a precursor or antecedent to discrimination (Stodolska, 2005a; Stodolska, 2005b).

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