

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: MABI

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park and the NPS Conservation Study Institute envision a Stewardship Renaissance that will revitalize conventional connections between national parks, local communities, and sustainability. Moving beyond friendly coexistence, parks must become more intentional and proactive partners defining mutual interests and crafting more cooperative strategies that contribute to long-term sustainability of parks and adjacent communities. Through the Stewardship Renaissance the Institute will help the NPS develop more sophisticated partnerships, new tools for community engagement, and new 21st century conservation strategies. Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller will serve as a laboratory advancing innovations such as independent third-party certification of its forest and the design and construction of the first NPS LEED structure with 100% certified wood.

The "Stewardship Renaissance" will develop new and meaningful ways to serve parks throughout the system seeking to serve historically underserved communities and youth. By 2016 the "Stewardship Renaissance" will accomplish three outcomes:

- Citizens, young people in particular, will have transformative experiences through service learning and stewardship opportunities - gaining confidence, knowledge and citizenship skills and forging powerful connection to their parks.
- People, particularly park neighbors and friends, will broadly share an ethic of stewardship and are willing to work collaboratively for conservation.
- Visitors are more hopeful and empowered to deal with the environmental challenges such as global climate change, with a sense of optimism, resourcefulness and a commitment to one another, inspired by examples they have seen in national parks.

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller tells the story of conservation, the evolution of land stewardship, and the emergence of a conservation ethic. The park practices sustainable forest management on the oldest reforested woodlands in the America. On a landscape of loss, recovery, and stewardship, the park tells of people taking care of places - sharing an enduring connection to land and a sense of hope for the future. The park is also home and partner to the NPS Conservation Study Institute. The Institute advances innovations in collaborative conservation throughout the NPS by identifying and sharing best practices in areas such as landscape scale conservation, partnership networks, collaborative leadership, and community engagement.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Rolf Diamant, Superintendent MABI / Nora Mitchell, Director CSI

Site: MABI

STEWARDSHIP

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

Inspire visitors from all walks of life to explore the history of American conservation and examine their personal role in the stewardship of national parks and their neighboring communities.

The Forest Center (OFS # 26338A) will become the gateway to the Mount Tom Forest, the oldest managed forest in the United States. School groups, professional resource managers, and community organizations will hold workshops on best practices in conservation stewardship, place-based education, and civic engagement. Exhibits will encourage visitors to explore the 30 miles of road and trails throughout the park and community public lands, and highlight contemporary forest stewardship practices.

Expanded Personal Interpretation and Educational Services (OFS #26339A) will provide rich and unique opportunities for dialogue and discovery about conservation stewardship, connecting the story of conservation to the personal lives of the park's diverse audiences.

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

Site: MABI

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.

Through the project Improve Condition of Park Historic Structures (OFS statement), Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP will rehabilitate and maintain 15 historic buildings and 17 structural elements critical to the historical integrity and visitor experience of this park.

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

Preserve Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller Museum and Archive Collections (OFS #24401A) will preserve over 23,000 museum objects, including over 400 paintings, the largest collection of Hudson River School paintings in a national park. The park will place cataloging oversight, museum education, museum loans, and overall accountability on a sound long-term footing. These activities will increase public understanding and appreciation of the park's collections, and bring more focus to the park's historic resources, including opportunities for outgoing and incoming exhibit loans, image requests and research requests.

Rehabilitate Historic Mount Tom Forest as a Model of Sustainable Forest Management (Centennial PMIS #137677) will rehabilitate 8 of the 25 historic plantations in the nation's oldest managed forest. Cultural resource management goals will be met by enhancing the health of historic forest stands. Natural resource management goals will be addressed by invasive species removal, water quality protection, and enhanced wildlife habitat. Visitor understanding will be expanded through new educational programs that examine sustainable forest management practices.

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Site: MABI

STEWARDSHIP

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

Interpret lesser known stories of the American Civil War.

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park will offer the first NPS program interpreting the Civil War Home Front (OFS statement). This program includes walking tours of Woodstock, Vermont's historic streets including sites associated with the Underground Railroad, abolition meetings, the town's free African-American community and its service with the 54th Massachusetts Regiment. The program also examines the birth of the national park concept and modern stewardship with the preservation of Yosemite in 1864 and the concurrent publication of George Perkins Marsh's Man and Nature.

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Site: MABI

STEWARDSHIP

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

Create innovative resource management approaches to respond to environmental change.

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP will work with the Inventory and Monitoring Program and the park's many academic, federal, state, and local partners to develop an adaptive management program that assesses environmental changes and models a transparent, scientifically robust decision-making framework for responding to complex environmental changes. Bridging the Gap: An Adaptive Management Approach for Resource Stewardship (OFS statement) will provide a model for the ways in which long-term monitoring and civic engagement can build the capacity for progressive park planning and management in the context of environmental change.

The project Preserve Threatened Resources Through Community Partnerships and Volunteers (OFS #24398A) will model approaches based on civic engagement and partnerships to build a network of citizen stewards working to preserve and protect Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP and the Appalachian Trail. These citizen stewards will address pressing environmental changes in and around NPS lands, such as conservation of critical habitat and wildlife corridors, protection of viewsheds, and reduction of regional invasive plant populations encroaching on park lands.

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Site: MABI

STEWARDSHIP

Encourage children to be future conservationists.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

In partnership with schools and educators, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP will engage high school students in a Youth Conservation Rangers program (OFS statement). This service learning program will create year-long opportunities for local high school students to contribute to the care of park resources while developing their leadership skills. This program models new approaches to the Junior Ranger program, expanding opportunities to high school students.

Sharing Lessons Learned in Place-based Education (OFS statement) will disseminate the field-tested program "Learning to Make Choices for the Future" throughout the country. In this program, educators develop curriculum to connect youth with public lands. Teacher-developed curriculum will be distributed through a joint website of the NPS, USFS, and other partners. Evaluation of this program has shown enhanced student understanding of public lands in their own communities as well as increased student literacy skills.

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Site: MABI

ENVIRONMENT

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

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

Through the Park Laboratory for Sustainability (OFS statement), Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP will demonstrate cutting-edge practices in sustainable facilities management, alternative energy and energy efficiency strategies, carbon-neutral transportation, and green procurement. This project will substantially reduce the park's environmental footprint while creating interpretive opportunities for park visitors and partners.

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Site: MABI

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.

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP, in partnership with the NPS Air Resources Division, Office of Environmental Leadership and Sustainability, National Parks and Conservation Association, and the National Wildlife Federation will create the Civic Engagement for Climate Friendly Parks Program (OFS statement). Through the program, a series of regional workshops (four per region) will assist parks in translating the science of climate change into outreach initiatives for existing and newly planned park programs and exhibits with park interpreters, facility and resource managers, and park partners.

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

Create Center for Environmental Leadership and Sustainability (Centennial PMIS #137774), a partnership between the National Park Service and the University of Vermont, creates a center focused on new directions in green infrastructure, environmental leadership, sustainability, and national park system stewardship development. Building on a 10-year partnership, this initiative will strengthen the link between practitioners and scholars and create the capacity for research and education opportunities for the benefit of both the NPS and the university. This center will contribute significantly towards environmental leadership by demonstrating, evaluating and sharing best practices in green and carbon-neutral technology and strategies that advance sustainability and national park stewardship. This will create a teaching laboratory for green infrastructure tools and techniques. These strategies include green design, valuing ecosystem services, land stewardship sustainability options, certification, transportation alternatives, as well as governance in the partnership environment for designing and implementing projects.

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Site: MABI

ENVIRONMENT

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

Establish programs to showcase exemplary partnership practices and shared environmental stewardship.

Stewardship Begins with People (OFS statement) is a series of regional guides to the work of those friends and neighbors of national parks, heritage areas, and historic landmarks who are practicing a stewardship ethic and a commitment to sustainability. These guides will tap people's passion for regional food, authentic crafts and locally made products - and national parks - a very potent combination. The guides will also recognize and support environmentally responsible stewardship and traditional cultures and products.

Create Centennial Collaborative Conservation and Environmental Leadership Program (Centennial PMIS #137677), a national program initiative, will benefit multiple parks and the Service by developing an environmental leadership academic curriculum focused on current NPS management issues, including new directions and paradigms for conservation, emerging models and strategies for 21st-century relevancy, and national park and community partnerships for stewardship, visitor use, and landscape-scale conservation. This curriculum will combine technical content, knowledge, and dialogue on challenges facing the NPS with expertise in leadership theory and practice.

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Site: MABI

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.

The Woodstock Trails Partnership: Re-invigorating the Community's Connection with its Trails (OFS statement) will rehabilitate the network of 40 miles of pathways, trails, and carriage roads that connect the park to surrounding public lands and the Appalachian Trail. This project is a collaborative effort between local, regional, and federal partners. Partnership programs will build an energized and engaged group of community members, with a special focus on area youth groups, to promote the trail system and become directly involved in the care and stewardship of trail resources. The Woodstock Trails Partnership will be a model public-private collaboration that brings together diverse interests in the care of public lands and support of community health and economic vitality.

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Site: MABI

EDUCATION

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

Establish model professional development programs for educators.

Through NPS Centennial Teacher Fellows (Centennial PMIS #137674) select educators will become teacher-leaders. Using a peer-to-peer strategy, these leaders will mentor other educators in the practices of place-based education and civic engagement. Educators and park interpreters become part of a Fellows network and receive on-going access to educational resources, training, and an active network of peers and community resource liaisons to support and advance their work. This is a community-based education strategy to create a sustained network of teachers dedicated to connecting youth to the NPS, and cultivating chances for student participation in park stewardship.

Sharing Lessons Learned in Place-based Education (OFS statement) will disseminate the field-tested program "Learning to Make Choices for the Future" throughout the country. In this program, educators develop curriculum to connect youth with public lands. Teacher-developed curriculum will be distributed through a joint website of the NPS, USFS, and other partners. Evaluation of this program has shown enhanced student understanding of public lands in their own communities as well as increased student literacy skills.

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Site: MABI

EDUCATION

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

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

In partnership with schools and educators, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP will engage high school students in a Youth Conservation Rangers program (OFS statement). This service learning program will create year-long opportunities for local high school students to contribute to the care of park resources while developing their leadership skills. This program models new approaches to the Junior Ranger program, expanding opportunities to high school students.

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Establish programs for life-long learning opportunities that engage visitors of all generations.

The Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP Art and Conservation Stewardship (OFS statement) program will connect visitors of all ages to concepts of conservation through the personal exploration and powerful expression of art. The park will interpret the role of art in the creation of the national park system, the stewardship of the park, and the evolution of conservation stewardship values. Through this program, an artist-in-residence will demonstrate and interpret their personal exploration of conservation stewardship through their art. Visitors of all ages will have the opportunity to participate and personally examine their own testaments of conservation through hands-on workshops, community-based art exhibits, and direct interaction with the artist in residence.

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Site: MABI

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.

Research Learning Center for Place-based Learning and Community Engagement (OFS # 26342A), one of the designated NPS Learning Centers, will advance research and learning initiatives in community engagement, 21st century relevancy, civic leadership, conservation stewardship, and program evaluation. The Center, a collaboration of six partners, will enhance the relevancy of parks as young people develop and practice the skills needed become better and more effective stewards of public lands and their communities.

Through the program Enhance Visitor and Youth Engagement in Park Stewardship Park (OFS #25086A) interpretation and education staff will offer visitors hands-on opportunities to explore concepts of conservation stewardship and build a stronger connection between communities and their public lands. Programs will include greater collaboration with local schools, non-profit partners, and community volunteers to deliver youth programs, school visits, professional development opportunities for educational providers, and enhanced services for the visiting public.

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Site: MABI

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.

The Next Generation of NPS Leaders program (Centennial Initiative PMIS #137696), conducted by the NPS Conservation Study Institute, builds a national leadership network that reflects the face of America and prepares the next generation of NPS leaders to negotiate complicated issues, embrace innovation, and build the collaboration and commitment of a diverse public required for the stewardship of our national system of parks into the next century.

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

The Next Generation of NPS Leaders (Centennial PMIS #137696) program will create a broad-based, multi-level leadership framework. It will enable the Conservation Study Institute to make leadership development programs available to a larger audience and to directly address employee satisfaction by ensuring that park managers have superior leadership knowledge, skills and abilities. As park managers hone their leadership skills, the result will be improvements in communications, transparency, systems thinking, collaborative problem-solving, and conflict resolution at the unit level. Thus, employee satisfaction and morale will be markedly improved.

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Site: MABI

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.

The Conservation Study Institute at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP will increase NPS management excellence by developing a leadership curriculum for the Next Generation of NPS Leaders program (Centennial Initiative PMIS #137696). This national, multi-park, multi-year collaborative program develops the NPS capacity to lead change and meet leadership opportunities and challenges associated with increasingly complex park management. The program builds a national leadership network that reflects the face of America and prepares the next generation of NPS leaders to negotiate complicated issues, embrace innovation, and build the collaboration and commitment of a diverse public required for the stewardship of our national system of parks into the next century.

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PROFESSIONALISM

Model what it means to work in partnership.

Improve sustainable national park-community relationships.

The Conservation Study Institute (CSI) and Marsh Billings Rockefeller NHP model partnerships through an on-going commitment to working with non-profit and governmental partners on program development and implementation, and by building relationships between parks and neighboring communities. To enhance the NPS capacity for partnership building, the CSI will identify, evaluate, and share best partnership practices; cultivate collaborative leadership across the country; and build networks for information exchange. Through programs such as National Park - Gateway Communities forums, leadership roundtables, community engagement and 21st century relevancy seminars, a web-based publication series, CSI will provide technical assistance and conduct demonstration projects to advance park-community partnerships. CSI will also enhance the effectiveness of partnerships by sharing best practices for partnership network governance designed to enable NPS to produce the greatest public value through solid partner relations and prepare the National Park Service for its Centennial (OFS #27480A).

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