

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: GRSM

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Great Smoky Mountains National Park
Centennial Vision

We are about to celebrate two milestone events, the Centennial of the National Park System in 2016 and the 75th Anniversary of Great Smoky Mountains National Park in 2009. The Park's staff, neighbors and partners look upon the Park's Anniversary and the NPS Centennial as an opportunity to showcase the Park's record of success in the stewardship of natural and cultural resources and to build upon these achievements to ensure the long term protection of this World Heritage site. As the nation's most visited National Park, the Smokies provides inspiration, diverse learning and recreational opportunities to nine million visitors each year. As America's demographics and interests change, we will strive, with our many partners, to engage young people and diverse audiences so that the Park's treasured resources will be understood, appreciated and protected in the future. We will generate in our partners, neighbors and visitors a re-affirmation of the Park as a refuge for unparalleled biodiversity and as an educational and recreational resource. The 75th Anniversary and the Centennial are opportunities to expand efforts to address the most critical threats and needs facing the Park. At the Smokies those threats and needs are: Impacts to Air and Water Quality; Long-term Forest Health; Protecting Biodiversity; Preservation of Cultural Resources and Landscapes; An Engaged and Educated Public; and Safe, Appropriate and Sustainable Facilities.

The Smokies is exceedingly fortunate to have numerous well-established partners who provide annual monetary support for priority education, natural and cultural resource preservation, and facility improvement projects. Since their formation in 1993 the Friends of the Smokies have generated over \$19 million through philanthropy to support the Park's critical needs. The Park's cooperative association, the Great Smoky Mountains Association, has provided \$18 million generated through sales of educational materials, over \$2 million in FY 2007 alone. These key partners and others are prepared to collaborate, fund and provide in-kind support to celebrate the milestone Anniversary of the Smokies and ensure the success of the Centennial Commitment and Centennial Challenge.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Dale A. Ditmanson

Site: GRSM

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)

GRSM and its partners will fund a DCP (Development Concept Plan) for the Greenbrier area of the Park which will aid Park Managers in developing a long range management plan to help preserve the history of the Greenbrier community by effectively identifying and addressing unacceptable visitor impacts, planning adequate facilities, and providing for an enjoyable experience for all users. (PMIS 137558)

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

Site: GRSM

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

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

GRSM will work with its partners to be better stewards of our Park's native habitats by funding:
Removal of exotic trout and reintroduction of native brook trout in a 12.8 km of stream in Lynn Camp Prong;
Completion of habitat studies to determine the long-term sustainability of elk which were reintroduced in Cataloochee Valley in 2001 and 2002 as well as support of the Bugle Corps operation which is an educational program utilizing volunteers to protect elk and visitors through enhancing visitor understanding of this species; and
Protection of old-growth hemlock forests and associated water sheds and native plant and animal ecosystems by controlling the exotic hemlock wooly adelgid.
(PMIS 137463, 137470, 137473)

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.

GRSM and its partners will fund a study of air-borne mercury pollution in the park to determine if mercury is accumulating at elevated levels in biota as a result of atmospheric inputs. The measurable results obtained will be used in proposing changes to state and federal air quality program standards for mercury in the region. The information collected will also be used to provide high quality data to allow for regional and national status and trends analysis. (PMIS 137453)

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Site: GRSM

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)

GRSM and its partners will produce and implement a Stabilization Plan, a Preservation Plan and an Interpretive Media Plan to tell the story of the Elkmont Historic District within Great Smoky Mountains National Park. These plans are essential steps in the Park's commitment with partner organizations including the Tennessee SHPO and the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation for the long term preservation and interpretation of the Elkmont Community. Multiple themes will be researched for inclusion, such as the Back to Nature Movement, logging, park founding. (PMIS 137560)

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Site: GRSM

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)

GRSM, with support from our partners, will continue to serve as a preeminent resource laboratory by accomplishing the following projects:
Expanding All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI) sampling methods by defining, developing, and using a structured sampling approach to systematically address each taxa, and then imparting this new approach to other parks for use in their ATBI efforts; and complete the first of its kind, ATBI in a unit of the NPS,
Developing and conducting a study to determine how much episodic storm events impact stream water quality and aquatic biota. The process will allow us to determine factors that are driving water quality degradation, and it will also enable us to relate air and water quality impacts to ecological resources.
(PMIS 137466, 137476)

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

Site: GRSM

ENVIRONMENT

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

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

GRSM and its partners will purchase a Mobile Visitor Center which will not only provide park and safety information and in-depth resource interpretation to millions of park visitors annually, but the vehicle will also be a fuel efficient model including "green energy" design such as the use of alternative fuels and the use of solar panels to charge the lighting and cash register. This will enable GRSM to model environmental excellence to all of the visitors to the Mobile Visitor Center. (PMIS 137529)

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Site: GRSM

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)

GRSM will continue to collaborate with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Unified Schools to replicate the successful Pi Beta Phi Elementary School (Gatlinburg, TN) Parks as Classroom curriculum model. Park-related curriculum units will be developed, teachers will be trained to lead the units, and field supplies and transportation funding needed to get the students onsite will be obtained. Additionally, the curriculum units will be made available on the park website so that teachers from throughout the area can adapt the curriculum for use in the classroom or in teacher-led programs in the Park.

(PMIS 137525)

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

Site: GRSM

EDUCATION

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

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(PMIS 137525)

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Site: GRSM

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.

GRSM, in partnership with a local university, will produce a series of free educational video podcasts to enhance park visitors' experiences, increase safety, and promote further understanding of resource issues facing the park. These podcasts will be used for classroom education, student research, or individual education and entertainment. Young audiences will be attracted to the podcasts and "virtual waysides" to the park website, and this will enhance visitor experiences on- and off-site. (PMIS 137528)

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Site: GRSM

EDUCATION

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

GRSM, with matching funds from the GSMIT (Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont) will provide sustainably designed, energy efficient, environmentally efficient, and appropriate residential resource education facilities at Great Smoky Mountains National Park. GSMIT, located within the park boundary with facilities owned by NPS, serves as the Park's primary residential environmental education center providing onsite environmental education programs for students and adults. The Park's Preferred Alternative will be determined by utilizing the Choosing By Advantages Process. (PMIS 137568)

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Site: GRSM

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.

GRSM will work with its partners to develop educational exhibits and projects to enhance visitor satisfaction, understanding and appreciation. These projects include:
Planning, designing, and installing new exhibits for the planned GRSM Oconaluftee Visitor Center;
Removing and replacing deteriorated photo murals and exhibit labels, upgrading lighting, and replacing damaged animal specimens in display cases at the GRSM Sugarlands Visitor Center; and
Purchasing an alternative fuel vehicle and designing resource exhibits for this vehicle which will serve as a Mobile Visitor Center in order to provide park information and interpretation to park visitors, many of whom do not stop at the Park's gateway visitor centers.
(PMIS 95803,112856,137529)

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Site: GRSM

PROFESSIONALISM

Model what it means to work in partnership.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

GRSM and the SCA (Student Conservation Association) will partner together to accomplish the work of the park by utilizing SCA interns to accomplish many of the projects put forth by GRSM for the Centennial Challenge Initiative. This will not only provide the student interns with invaluable work experience and exposure to resource challenges, but it will also ensure that the NPS has a cadre of diverse, well trained and experienced individuals to choose from when recruiting for future NPS needs. (PMIS 137477)

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