

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Homestead National Monument of America

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: HOME

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Homestead National Monument of America commemorates the lives and accomplishments of all pioneers and the changes to people, land and the world brought by this act. Under the Homestead Act of 1862 more than 270 million acres, 10 percent of the land in the United States, were turned over to individuals. This great transformation led to profound and lasting changes to land, American Indians, immigration and migration patterns, industry and agriculture. Today it is estimated that there may be as many as 93,000,000 descendants of these early settlers who were in pursuit of the America Dream, Free Land! Historians have said; that of all the laws ever created by our Nation, the Homestead Act of 1862 is one of the three most important.

Homestead National Monument of America will work with its partners to engage the American Citizenship in discussions and educational opportunities provided by the complexity of the Homestead Act, the numerous and diverse people involved and this law's affect upon the world. Furthermore, Homestead National Monument of America will strive to inspire passion in environmental leadership and stewardship, while incorporating technology in interpretation, education and in the managment of cultural and natural resources.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Mark Engler 402-223-3514

Site: HOME

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)

With the construction of the multi-purpose Homestead Heritage Center complete, the park will move towards establishment of a fully functioning Education Center employing "state-of-the-art" distance learning technology. This technology allows Homestead to conduct real-time outreach programs including curriculum based education programs to students throughout the United States without leaving the Monument. This center will allow for display of special temporary exhibitions. Connecting visitors to the Education Center, Homestead Heritage Center and with the resource will be a series of new parkwide wayside exhibits. Work in partnership with the University of Nebraska, National Archives and others to bring copies of the 30 million Homestead Land Entry Case Files to Homestead. Our partner, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, believes that once these records are available and indexed that our Nation should expect a major rewrite of American History as it relates to the settlement of the American West! Completing this project will allow the 93 million Homestead descendants to make personal connections to the epic Homesteading Story.

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

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.

90% of the park's historic structures will remain in good condition. The park will work with the local community to preserve their history. Adjacent to the Pony Express Trail is the community of Odell, Nebraska; special attention and support will be given to them in their efforts to establish a Welcome Center for the trail. Assistance and support will be given to other community projects and organizations.

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

The protection of the historic osage orange hedge row and bur oak forest (which has been identified as a rare system in the State of Nebraska) will be enhanced with a boundary modification. Manage vegetation so that exotic species in the prairie ecotone do not exceed a mean relative frequency of 5% as measured by long-term ecological monitoring. Implement actions called for in studies of the bur oak forest. Continue to use prescribed burning as a tool to control exotic species.

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

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

Maintain park visitor facilities in top condition.

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.

Work with the Heartland Network will continue. Engage intergenerational groups in monitoring Cub Creek water quality.

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

Site: HOME

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.

The park will work to establish a permanent Museum Technician position. The park will maintain the museum checklist standards at 93% or better and search for partners to aid in the establishment of activities or structures that will allow for the protection and expansion of the park's legislatively directed museum collection.

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Showcase the historic osage orange hedge row by implementing the Sutton Report, weaving this hedge as early homesteaders would have.

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Site: HOME

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)

2012 marks the 150th anniversary of the Homestead Act of 1862. The Monument will work with partners to commemorate this historic anniversary.

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

Site: HOME

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)

Work to understand and protect the integrity of Monument resources. Promote the ideals associated with park greening activities. Monitor flora and fauna and work with local governments to ensure that the integrity of the park's natural and cultural resources are maintained for future generations. Expand the understanding of the historic landscape by highlighting the Monument's boundary.

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

Site: HOME

STEWARDSHIP

Encourage children to be future conservationists.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Convert the building used previously as the visitor center into the Homestead Education Center, as called for within the park's 1999 General Management Plan. Look for innovative ways, through technology, to present traditional ranger programs.

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Site: HOME

ENVIRONMENT

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

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

Work to keep Homestead a leader in this arena. Look to expand the use of photovoltaic systems in the Monument. Continue search for a partner that will help bring a wind generation station to the Monument. The windmill has long been a symbol on the American Frontier. Education opportunities exist for connecting the windmills of the past with current wind powered towers used for the generation of electric power.

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

Site: HOME

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.

The windmill has long been a symbol on the American Frontier; what better place than at Homestead National Monument of America to showcase the evolution of the windmill to current day wind turbines. Educational opportunities will be established in conjunction with the installation of a wind turbine at the park.

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

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

Homestead has long been a leader in environmental excellence. The Monument will continue to look for ways to extend this legacy. The monument will look to change out its GSA fleet to hybrid vehicles (where available).

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

The new Homestead Heritage Center which opened in May 2007, was built to achieve the silver LEED standard. Plants, native to Nebraska, will be part of the building's landscape. It is our goal to have this landscape in place by 2010. Opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of the Education Center will be searched out and achieved, including the introduction of solar tubes.

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Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

In the manufacturing community, Southeast Nebraska is known as the lawnmower capital of the world. The park will continue to work with this industry in hopes of finding mowers that can use alternative power. Should such technology become available, the Monument will incorporate this within its education programs.

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Site: HOME

ENVIRONMENT

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Homestead National Monument of America will be aggressive in its outreach to local, regional and national media to draw attention to the 150th Anniversary of The Homestead Act of 1862. The Friends of Homestead will be supported in their efforts to move forward a new communications plan; The Homestead Congress. The Homestead Congress will support programs and activities at the Monument.

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

Site: HOME

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.

Plan and build the homestead spur trail which would connect the cities of Beatrice and Lincoln, Nebraska to Homestead National Monument of America. This spur trail, which is supported by the Nebraska State Comprehensive Trails plan and Homestead National Monument of America's General Management Plan, would be 3.5 miles in length. It is hoped that funding from Federal Highways will make this happen. This trail is to be built within the right-of-way of the Homestead Heritage Parkway which has been authorized by Congress.

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Continue to support the city of Beatrice and Rivers, Trails and Conservation Office with planning activities that will lead to enhanced recreation opportunities along the Big Blue River. Work with local government and other partners to move the Homestead Heritage Parkway concept closer to becoming reality.

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Site: HOME

RECREATION

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

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

Homestead National Monument of America has a award winning volunteer program. Look to maintain this level of performance while increasing the hours of support received by volunteers.

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Site: HOME

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)

Bring the Homestead Education Center up to full operation providing innovative opportunities, yet to be explored, to Homestead. These programs may include overnight learning adventures or intergenerational activities.

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

Site: HOME

RECREATION

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

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

Work with local tourism officials.

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

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

The Monument will build upon it's extensive list of program offerings by adding daily walks or talks during the summer season. Programs such as an Craftsman-in-Residence and expanding education offerings will be evaluated and if possible introduced.

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

Site: HOME

EDUCATION

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Homestead will work to expand curriculum offerings. Distance learning and other technologies will be employed to move education programs forward. New publications, and media and electronic technology will be used to increase awareness of program offerings to teachers. An educators' blog will be established to ensure a discussion of education offerings.

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

Site: HOME

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.

Homestead National Monument of America will redouble its efforts in this arena. It is hoped that an electronic guest register will be added to Homestead's site along with a web cam. It is also Homestead's goal to become a wireless site, pending approval at all levels. A wireless site will allow visitors to enjoy and utilize the Monument in ways yet to be determined.

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Park Ranger and Historian podcasts posted on the Monument's website will engage learners in the natural and cultural resources. In partnership with ESU #5, Homestead will serve as a lead in the expansion of Distance Learning Technology to other units of the NPS.

The Monument would like to host an Electronic Field Trip that would create opportunities for millions of students to interact with the natural and cultural resources of Homestead. A Traveling Trunk program will be created and implemented. Curriculum offerings will be expanded to incorporate high school students and allow them to make connections with history primary sources and with the natural resources at Homestead NM of America as a living laboratory. With the new curriculum offerings, additional teacher workshops will be created and offered along with existing workshops for Grades 4-6 curriculum. All curriculums will be made available on the Monument's website to allow teachers, students and other learners a higher level of access to the Monument's resources. It is desired to offer teacher workshops at a nation-wide level through other funding sources.

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Site: HOME

EDUCATION

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

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

New Junior Ranger books will be printed and made available. Program components will continue to be evaluated and modified as needed to ensure continued success with this program. This program will be promoted through the media twice annually.

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

2012 will mark the 150th anniversary of the Homestead Act of 1862. Homestead will work with partners to help bring awareness to this event. The Monument will work with partners to bring a copy of the original Homestead document to the park, and recognize this event through other commemorate activities i.e. request the stamp commission to re-issue Homestead Act stamp, etc.

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Site: HOME

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.

The Monument will offer programs and exhibits opportunities through publications for visitors to learn more about the National Park System and host naturalization ceremonies articulating connections between parks and people.

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

Site: HOME

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.

Recruit, develop and retain a work force that is representative of the demographics of our Nation.

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

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

Continue to promote the use of positive communications and effective team work.
Encourage employees to grow and excel in areas where their interests, within their jobs, lie.

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

Site: HOME

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.

Support detail training opportunities.

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

Site: HOME

PROFESSIONALISM

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

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

Maintain Homestead's outstanding record in this arena.

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Site: HOME

PROFESSIONALISM

Model what it means to work in partnership.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Homestead National Monument of America has received outstanding support from a variety of sources. The Monument will continue to develop partnerships to ensure the success of future programs. The Monument will serve as mentors in this area to other sites, should others request assistance.

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Site: HOME

PROFESSIONALISM

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

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

Homestead National Monument of America will continue to look for opportunities to expand communications and marketing capacity. Homestead will develop a new film for the Homestead Heritage Center and share copies of the film with all Nebraska school districts. The Monument will work with the Friends of Homestead in launching a new communication program; The Homestead Congress.

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