

The National Park Service, a brief history



On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed the act creating the National Park Service, a new federal bureau in the Department of the Interior responsible for protecting the 40 national parks and monuments then in existence and those yet to be established.

This "Organic Act" of August 25, 1916, directed the National Park Service to protect and preserve natural and cultural resources while allowing for the enjoyment of the parks.

The National Park System of the United States comprised of over 400 areas covering more than 83 million acres in 49 States, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, Saipan, and the Virgin Islands. These areas are of such national significance as to justify special recognition and protection in accordance with various acts of Congress.

By Act of March 1, 1872, Congress established Yellowstone National Park in the Territories of Montana and Wyoming. The founding of Yellowstone National Park began a worldwide national park movement. Today more than 100 nations contain some 1,200 national parks or equivalent preserves.

In the years following the establishment of Yellowstone, the United States authorized additional national parks and monuments, most of them carved from the federal lands of the West. These, also, were administered by the Department of the Interior, while other monuments and natural and historical areas were administered as separate units by the War Department and the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture. No single agency provided unified management of the varied federal parklands.

Additions to the National Park System are now generally made through acts of Congress, and national parks can be created only through such acts. But the President has authority, under the Antiquities Act of 1906, to proclaim national monuments on lands already under federal jurisdiction. The Secretary of the Interior is usually asked by Congress for recommendations on proposed additions to the System. The Secretary is counseled by the National Park System Advisory Board, composed of private citizens, which advises on possible additions to the System and policies for its management.

National Park Service



National Park Service Arrowhead

Agency overview

Formed	August 25, 1916
Headquarters	Main Interior Building (MIB), Washington, D.C.
Agency Director	Mary A. Bomar , Director
Parent agency	Department of the Interior

www.nps.gov

The arrowhead you see on the left is the official emblem of the National Park Service. The Sequoia tree and bison represented vegetation and wildlife, the mountains and water represented scenic and recreational values, and the arrowhead represented historical and archeological values.



Emblem used by the National Park Service prior to the Arrowhead being adopted in 1952. NPSA/HFC RGY55

More Facts About the National Park Service...

- The National Park System encompasses approximately 83.6 million acres, of which more than 4.3 million acres remain in private ownership. The largest area is Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Alaska. At 13,200,000 acres it is 16.3 percent of the entire system. The smallest unit in the system is Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial, Pennsylvania, at 0.02 of an acre.
- Yellowstone National Park was America's first national park established before there was even a National Park Service Agency to oversee it.
- The first caretakers of national parks were the US Army, even after the establishment of the National Park Service.
- Headquarters for the National Park Service are located in Washington, D.C., with Regional Offices in Anchorage, AK; Atlanta, GA; Lakewood, CO; Omaha, NE; Oakland, CA; Philadelphia, PA, and Seattle, WA.
- Today, roughly 60% of the 400 park areas administered by the National Park Service have been set aside as symbols and evidence of our history and prehistory. Many of our natural parks contain historic places that represent important aspects of that history.

Internet Resources:

<http://www.nps.gov/history/stories.htm>

http://www.nps.gov/history/history/park_histories/index.htm

<http://www.nps.gov/legacy/>