Connecting People to Parks

- Fill in the Blanks – Identify a national system of parks and protected sites (rivers, heritage areas, trails, and landmarks) that fully represents our country’s cultural and natural diversity.
- Community Engagement – Facilitate bottom-up engagement with local communities and partners. To achieve this, we will work with communities and partners to submit to Congress a comprehensive National Park Service Centennial Act that establishes the ecological regions, cultural themes, and stories of diverse communities that are not currently represented.
- Step by Step – Create deep connections between a younger generation and parks through a series of diverse park experiences. To accomplish this, we will work with education and cultural organizations to create a pathway to employment with the NPS, with a focus on diversifying the workforce to 30% by 2030.

History Lesson – Excite and involve new audiences in the exploration of the full diversity of the American experience by conducting history diversity, history projects, purposeful journeys, and sharing their heritage, using a variety of participatory methods, in at least 100 parks each year.

In My Back Yard – Improve urban residents’ awareness of and access to outdoor and cultural experiences close to home by promoting national parks in urban areas and ensuring parks and enjoyable physical connections from parks to a variety of sustainably transportation options aligned with local and state planning and policies.

Parks for People – Enhance the connection of densely populated, diverse communities to parks, greenways, trails, and waterways to improve close-to-home recreation and natural resources conservation. We will achieve this by proactive Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Programs and park-based programs that develop a deeper understanding of communities’ needs and connect citizens to the outdoors through events and programs that reach those with the least access to parks.

Take a Hike, Call Me in the Morning – Expand the health community’s use of parks as a healing tool and increase citizen recognition of the value of parks to improve health and psychological health by forming formal partnerships with health and medical providers across the country.

Next Generation Stewards – Create a new generation of citizen stewards who will understand the value of the land and water we are entrusted to protect and be stewards of both the land and water. To achieve this, we will establish, through partner funding, an NPS Science Scholars program enabling 24 Ph.D. students from biological, physical, and social sciences to conduct research in national parks each year.

Eat Well and Prosper – Encourage park visitors to make healthy lifestyle choices and position parks to support local economies by ensuring that all future and future concession contracts require healthy, sustainably produced, and reasonably priced food options at national park food service concessions.

Keep the Dream Alive – Foster civic dialogue about the stories of the civil rights movement found within the parks. The NPS will conduct a community engagement plan with the participation of 50 significant civil rights movement anniversaries of the civil rights movement (Civil Rights Act passage, “I Have A Dream,” etc.).

Arts Afire – Showcase the means of parks to new audiences through dance, music, visual arts, writing, and social media. To do so, we will launch 25 arts and culture expeditions that involve youth in celebrating the next generation of park experiences by creating new expressions of the park experience through fresh perspectives and new technology.

Focus the Fund – Increase the benefits of NPS community assistance by focusing on the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Land and Water Conservation Fund projects make in meeting outdoor recreation needs, especially close to where people live, for under-served communities and protecting land, trails, and waterways. To do so we will expand online information and tools with our state and local partners, and provide a comprehensive report on the benefits and impacts of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Follow the Flow – Support communities’ efforts to expand access to water-based recreation and protect and restore watersheds across the country by increasing access and enjoyment of park water bodies.

Stop Talking and Listen – Learn about the challenges and opportunities associated with connecting diverse communities to the heritage and history of our national parks. To do this, we will conduct in-depth, ongoing conversations with citizens in seven communities, one in each NPS region, representing broadly varied cultures and locations. We will create and implement work plans at each location, which explore new approaches for fostering and sustaining mutually beneficial relationships with diverse communities.

Value Added – Develop awareness among the American public of the many ways national parks contribute to the economic vitality of our nation. To do so, we will complete a study on the economic value of the full range of park experiences and engage with diverse audiences through new and innovative media platforms to promote the results.

ADVANCING THE NPS EDUCATION MISSION

- A Class Act – Help students develop a deep understanding of park resources and the relevance of parks in their lives through a series of park education programs. To do so, we will adopt a class of 2016 graduates (grade school, middle school, or high school) at every national park and develop a series of fun, educational, and engaging activities culminating in the NPS Centennial in 2016.
- Live and Learn – Provide multiple ways for children to learn about the national park system. As they reveal about nature, the nation’s history, and issues central to our civic life. We will accomplish this by reaching 25 percent of the 6-12 school population annually through real and virtual field trips, resident programs, teacher training, classroom teaching, and media-generated programs.
- Go Digital – Reach new audiences and maintain a conversation with all Americans by transforming the NPS digital experience to offer rich, interactive, up-to-date content from every park and program. To accomplish this we will create a user-friendly web platform that supports online and mobile technology including virtual reality and augmented experiences.
- Ticket to Ride – Expand opportunities for students to directly experience national parks, where natural and historical settings inspire powerful learning. To achieve this we will provide transportation support for 100,000 students each year to visit national parks through collaboration with the National Park Foundation and other park fundraising partners.
- Out with the Old – Engage national park visitors with interactive media that offer interactive experiences, convey information based on current scholarship, and are accessible to the broadest range of the public. To that end we will replace 2,500 outdated, inaccurate, and substantively reductive exhibits, signs, and displays with new, interactive, immersive, fully accessible, and learner-centered experiences.
- Scholarly Pursuits – Sponsor excellence in scholarship and teaching, part and parcel about park resources, and create the next generation of conservation scientists. To do so we will establish a NPS Scholar program enabling 24 Ph.D. students from biological, physical, and social sciences to conduct research in national parks each year.
- What’s Old Is New – Modernize historic preservation methods and technologies, show historic landscapes and sites in new and creative ways, and support efforts to rebuild the economic vitality of rural and urban communities. We aim to modernize the National Park Service’s historic preservation standards and guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties in collaboration with other federal agencies, partners, and the public.
- Back Home on the Range – Return the American bison, one of the nation’s iconic species, to our country’s landscape. To achieve this we will restore and sustain wild bison populations across the western United States in collaboration with tribes, private landowners, and wildlife management agencies.
- Starry, Starry Night – Lead the way in protecting natural darkness as a precious resource and create a model for dark sky protection by establishing America’s first Dark Sky Cooperative on the Colorado Plateau in collaboration with other federal agencies, partners, and local communities.
- Park Pulse – Assess the overall status of park resources and use this information to improve park priority setting and communicate complex park condition information to the public in a clear and simple way. To accomplish this, we will complete the first “State of the Park” report that uses a new NPS Condition Assessment System.
- Park Stories – Share the stories of the past and present day visitors who have come to visit our parks and programs. To do so, we will generate and share stories from the people of parks.
- Park Life – Remove the barriers to park access and use by providing multiple ways for children to learn and engage with America’s past and present day heritage.
- Park People – Partner with communities to help establish and implement innovative programs that support the creation of a more inclusive workplace where new employees are encouraged. The plan identifies what actions best fit the purpose of their program or park, workforce makeup, and unique needs and goals. Program managers must also evaluate and prioritize current functions to decide which may be slowed or discontinued in order to implement these actions.

IMPLEMENTATION EMPHASIZES CHOICE.

While many of the actions required of every park and program, most do not. Program managers and stakeholders will select the actions that best fit the purpose of their program or park, workforce makeup, and unique needs and goals. The plan emphasizes big ideas and small steps, with the NPS providing resources for those steps. Program managers must also evaluate and prioritize current functions to decide which may be slowed or discontinued in order to implement the plan.

FLEXIBILITY and CREATIVITY are encouraged. The plan identifies what actions best fit the purpose of their program or park, workforce makeup, and unique needs and goals. The NPS will provide resources for those steps. The manager must also evaluate and prioritize current functions to decide which may be slowed or discontinued in order to implement the plan.

The work of the National Park Service is dynamic and requires to be fully reflected in the actions of the day. The daily work of the NPS includes long-term management actions and immediate actions that enable the achievement of long-term protection and stewardship goals. The NPS will take full advantage of these opportunities and will encourage partnerships to implement these opportunities.

You make the difference!

Check the boxes where your park can make a difference.