

## PRESERVING AMERICA’S TREASURES



### Objectives

- Students will be able to explain the role of the National Park Service (NPS), understand the significance of the NPS in preserving America’s natural and cultural heritage and list at least three different national park units and their significance.
- Students will be able to give three reasons for the establishment of the National Park Service in 1916.
- Students will be able to articulate how a national park unit is established and what makes an area nationally significant.

### Background

#### *The National Park Service*

The National Park System of the United States, now in its second century, comprises over 380 areas in 49 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, Saipan, and the Virgin Islands. These areas are of such national significance that they justify special recognition and protection in accordance with various acts of Congress.

By the Act of March 1, 1872, Congress established Yellowstone National Park in the Territories of Montana and Wyoming “as a Public Park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people” and placed it “under exclusive control of the Secretary of the Interior.” 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. The Department of the Interior, the War Department, and the Forest Service, in the Department of Agriculture, administered these natural and historical areas but no single agency provided a unified management of the varied federal parklands.

*The poet-writer-philosopher-farmer, Carl Sandburg needs no introduction; he was as uniquely American as was Abraham Lincoln or Will Rogers or Walt Whitman. He was a biographer of the American Scene whose roots never left the soil.*

*— testimony to Congress on proposal to establish Carl Sandburg Home as a National Historic Site*

In an Act signed on August 25, 1916, Congress established in the Department of the Interior the National Park Service to provide cohesive administration of such areas under the Department's jurisdiction. The Act says:





*The service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations...by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks, monuments and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment for future generations.*

— Organic Act, 1916

An Executive Order in 1933 transferred 63 national monuments and military sites from the Forest Service and the War Department to the National Park Service. This action was a major step in the development of today’s truly national system of parks – a system that includes areas of historical as well as scenic and scientific importance.

Congress declared in the General Authorities Act of 1970 “that the National Park System, which began with the establishment of Yellowstone National Park in 1872, has since grown to include superlative natural, historic, and recreation areas in every region...and that it is the purpose of this Act to include all such areas in the System...”

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. Congress usually asks the Secretary of the Interior 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.

Areas added to the National Park System for their natural values are expanses or features of land or water of great scenic and scientific quality and are usually designated as national parks, monuments, preserves, seashores, lakeshores, or riverways. Such areas contain one or more distinctive attributes such as forest, grassland, tundra, desert, estuary, or river systems; they may contain “windows” on the past for a view of geological history, imposing landforms such as mountains, mesas, thermal areas, and caverns, and they may be habitats of abundant or rare wildlife and plant life.







resulted in a name change from Carl Sandburg Farm to Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site.

President Johnson signed the Congressional authorization bill on October 17, 1968.

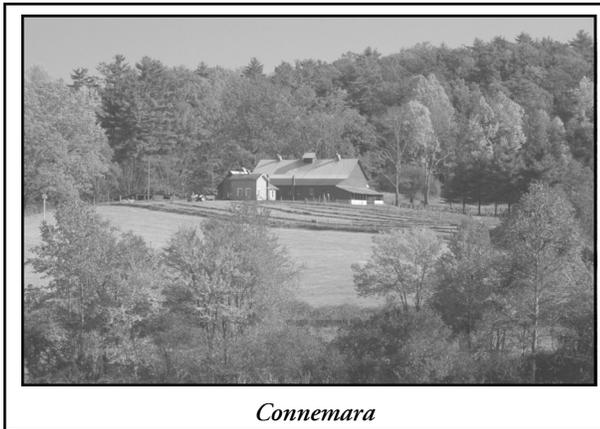
Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (NHS) is significant as the home of the Sandburg family from 1945 to 1967 and as the repository of the personal and literary effects of Carl Sandburg. The main house, originally built in 1838, stands as a graceful example of rural architecture of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The interior is particularly unpretentious with windows uncurtained and furniture functional. The Sandburg presence is visible throughout – in the vast floor-to-ceiling bookcases, collections of magazines and clippings, boxes of letters and personal items scattered about.

The property also includes a number of other structures that were also important in the lifestyle established by the family.

These buildings can be separated into two units. The farm unit was the center of Mrs. Sandburg’s dairy goat activities and thus a significant part of the park scene. The second building cluster was more closely associated with the family residence. There are over 50 structures including buildings and rock walls on the property that help tell the stories of Carl Sandburg and his family.

The grounds of Carl Sandburg Home NHS are varied and reflect the working and casual lives of the Sandburgs. The pastures provide hay and grazing opportunities for the goatherd, and the rest of the property – the ponds, the trail-laced forests and distant views – provide solitude for walking and writing.

Carl Sandburg’s legacy is embodied in this place set aside as a National Historic Site for the preservation and enjoyment of future generations. The National Park Service continues to work to preserve and protect over 300,000 objects and to tell the endless stories of how Carl Sandburg lived and how his life and works have helped shape this nation.



*Connemara*

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## THE DIVERSITY AMONG THE NATIONAL PARKS

### Background

The diversity of our National Park System is critical to the framework of our nation. Both the natural and cultural history of our nation is expansive and has relevance to each and every person. The physical objects such as the liberty bell at Independence National Historical Park, the geysers of Yellowstone National Park, the classrooms at Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, and the wolves at Denali National Park help tell the deeper stories of our nation. Whether it's a lesson from history or the discovery of a new medical use from a rare plant, the national park system holds the key to better understanding ourselves.

Without the preservation of these significant resources, our country would be left holding an incomplete book of relevant stories. Our heritage would be lost and there would be no place to go to learn the valuable stories of our history. The opportunities for discovery are endless across the country. It is one thing to read about the power, strength, and survival of the grizzly bears, but it is another to go to Montana's Glacier National Park and experience the feelings you get knowing that this National Park is doing all it can to preserve the habitat and the lives of these awesome animals.

On the same note, a visit to Martin Luther King Jr.'s home in Atlanta, Georgia gives one an opportunity to feel the emotions of the civil rights struggles of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; a visit to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park may lend itself to learning how a salamander can help determine the health of an ecosystem; and a walk through Carl Sandburg's home may offer inspiration for reading and writing.

This activity will challenge the students to research information about a particular National Park unit, its significance and its unique features and stories.

### Procedures

1. Discuss the significance of national park units within our nation and how they represent our national treasures. What makes a person or place unique, nationally

#### Subjects

American History  
English  
Art  
Speech

#### Materials

- National Park System Map and Guide
- envelopes/stamps
- classroom objects
- various magazines
- computers with access to the web (optional)

#### Handouts

- National Park Service Research
- The Organic Act, 1916
- Outline Form

#### Teaching Techniques

-  Lecture
-  Writing assignment(s)
-  Handout(s)
-  Class discussion
-  Small group discussion
-  Field trip
-  Internet search
-  Send for more info
-  Additional research









## ORGANIC ACT, 1916

“The service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations...by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks, monuments and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment for future generations.”



## National Park Service Oral Presentation

Instructions: Use the information you received from your park unit to make up a presentation for your classmates. You should begin by introducing what park you researched. Follow-up with other interesting information. You should be able to give your speech using the simple notes you record on the outline below.

I.

A.

1.

2.

B.

1.

2.

II.

A.

1.

2.

B.

1.

2.

III.

A.

1.

2.

B.

1.

2.

IV.

A.

1.

2.

B.

1.

2.



**Subjects**

History  
Government  
English  
Speech  
Art

**Handouts**

- Excerpt from Carl Sandburg Home NHS proposal
- House and Senate Discussion
- Worksheet for Visitor Services
- Worksheet for Resource Management
- Worksheet for Maintenance

**Teaching Techniques**

-  Lecture
-  Class discussion
-  Small group discussion
-  Writing assignment(s)
-  Handout(s)
-  Additional research

**ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL PARK UNIT****Background**

Today there are over 380 national park units across the nation and each one of them has unique circumstances on how it was presented to become a national park unit. However, every park unit except national monuments, which we will discuss later, have all gone through the federal government's legislative process. Whether introduced to the House of Representatives or the Senate, each potential park unit begins as a bill and must be passed by both the House and the Senate before the authorization of a new park.

Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site is a good example of how a bill is passed through the House of Representatives and the Senate before becoming public law. The bill was initially introduced to the House of Representatives, which in turn was referred to the appropriate committee, the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, for consideration. The committee made just two simple changes to the proposed bill (1) property lines were modified and (2) the word "farm" in the name of the bill became "home" before it was introduced to the full House. After much discussion regarding the significance of the proposed bill and the establishment of this new national historic site, the House of Representatives passed the bill and it was sent to the Senate for consideration.

The Senate agreed to the amendments and after discussion on the floor passed the bill, the President signed it and Public Law 90-592 authorized the establishment of Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site on October 17, 1968.

The one exception which allows the authorization of a national park unit to bypass the legislative process is that of a national monument. The Antiquities Act of 1906 was passed with provisions allowing the President to set aside "historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest" on public lands by proclaiming them national monuments.



**Procedures**



1. Discuss the process of how a bill becomes law within the U.S. Federal Government. Good information can be found at the Library of Congress homepage under Thomas Legislative process.
2. Divide your students into two groups – the House of Representatives and the Senate. Write a proposal and read it to the students (joint session of Congress will be fine) to introduce a measure to preserve their school as a national park unit. Remember all national park units fall under the Organic Act of 1916. Use the attached handout example as guidance for your own proposal.
3. Generate a discussion about significance. What makes something nationally significant? What makes some people feel strongly about the importance/significance of something while others don't? How does Congress determine whether something is significant to our nation's history? How will your students determine whether their school would be eligible as a national park unit?
4. Handout copies of what you read and have students discuss the proposal. Each group must take notes on their discussions. These notes will become the legislative history of this project. Suggestions for discussion are listed on handout (House and Senate Discussions).
5. Once the groups have had times to discuss the proposal, facilitate a discussion to determine what changes are recommended and have the class vote on these changes. List should be made on the board so the students can see the ideas from the other groups. Once all of the changes and arguments for the changes have been made, have the students vote by secret ballot whether the changes are appropriate and if the school should be authorized as a national park unit. If the students vote no (unlikely) you become the President and authorize the school a national monument using the Antiquities Act of 1906.
6. Once the park is authorized, split the students into three smaller groups – Visitor Services, Resource Management, and Maintenance. Each group must complete the corresponding worksheets for that group. The groups will then make a presentation to you (the superintendent of the park) regarding their needs and how they will work to help protect their school for future generations.





Excerpt from Carl Sandburg Home NHS proposal

CARL SANDBURG  
HOUSE

90<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS  
2d SESSION

STATEMENT OF WITNESS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS AND RECREATION, HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS IN SUPPORT OF H. R. 13099, A BILL TO AUTHORIZE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CARL SANDBURG HOME NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE IN THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

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JUNE 1968

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am pleased to support this legislation to authorize the establishment of the Carl Sandburg Home as a National Historic Site. The site is located at Flat Rock, in the mountains of western North Carolina, and was, for the last 22 years of his life, the beloved "home place" of one of this country's best-known writers, Carl Sandburg.

The poet-writer-philosopher-farmer, Carl Sandburg needs no introduction; he was as uniquely American as was Abraham Lincoln or Will Rogers or Walt Whitman. He was a biographer of the American Scene whose roots never left the soil.

Though known best as a man of the Midwest, Sandburg and his wife began the search in the early 1940's for a farm home in the Appalachians. Circumstances led them to a 241-acre farm 20 miles from Asheville, North Carolina where they settled and where he continued to write. "Connemara", his home, offered the opportunity for reflection and for walking, with the Blue Ridge clearly visible from his hilltops.

It is said that the land, the buildings and furnishings of "Connemara" embody the memory of Carl Sandburg more vividly than any other place with which he was associated.

Mr. Chairman, we recommend the enactment of H. R. 13099 which would authorize the preservation of the Sandburg Home as a living farm best reflecting the life and the times of Carl Sandburg. The legislation you are considering today would authorize acquisition of the Sandburg Farm together with adjacent or related properties required for the administration of the site—that is, an area of 279 acres.

We propose that in addition to the 241-acre farm the Historic Site should also include approximately 38 acres of adjacent land.

The remaining 32 of the 38 acres would be acquired so that access roads, parking areas and service facilities could be provided in a convenient location without encroaching upon the carefully developed and landscaped farm. A sensitive treatment of the Sandburg story calls for careful preservation of the pastoral atmosphere.

We would expect some 108,000 visitors to the Historic Site within the first year following its establishment.

There has been a most favorable reaction to the proposal from the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments. Following its 58<sup>th</sup> meeting during the past April, the Board advised that "the preservation and interpretation of the Sandburg farm and literary works and the continued management of the site which he loved as a living farm will lend great insight to future generations, through this one man's example, into the whole chapter of American History experienced by his generation. The Board, therefore, heartily endorses the proposal to establish a Carl Sandburg Farm National Historic Site as a unit of the National Park System."

Thank you Mr. Chairman. We will be happy to answer any questions you may have.



### House and Senate Discussion

Imagine that someday students don't go to classes at a school. All of their learning takes place on the computer with no interaction with other students or teachers. If this ever happens, what would be missing? Would it be important to have a place where people could come and see and learn about a school?

Work in your groups to discuss the following in order to make a recommendation for or against the establishment of your school as a national park unit.

1. What do you like about this proposal?
2. What don't you like about this proposal?
3. What would make your school significant to the United States of America?
4. What people or events make it unique?
5. Should this bill be passed to preserve your school for future generations?
6. If so, what changes to the proposal would make it better before you would vote for the bill?
7. What name will you recommend for your national park unit?







