

The Arrowhead: Emblem of the National Park Service

BACKGROUND

There are thousands of parks, monuments, and historic sites in the U.S., ranging from neighborhood playgrounds to some of the most spectacular landscapes on earth. Those that are important to the greatest number of people – those that have *national significance* – are managed by the National Park Service (NPS), part of the federal government. The NPS has adopted the arrowhead as its *emblem*, to identify people and places that are associated with the NPS.

Each element on the arrowhead emblem represents a feature protected within NPS sites: the **sequoia tree** represents all plants; the **bison** represents all animals; the **mountain** represents all land forms; the **lake** represents all waters; and the **arrowhead outline** represents culture and history.



These five elements are *symbolic*. For example, although bison might not live in a particular park, the bison is a reminder that each park has a duty to protect the animals that can be found within its boundaries. The same is true for each of the other elements represented on the emblem.

Although every NPS site is unique, all are managed for the same purpose: “...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 of future generations.”

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is a spectacular landscape with unique plants and animals, water and landforms, and historic cultural features that must be protected and preserved.

TASK

You will be working in groups to find out how the five elements of the arrowhead emblem relate to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. After your group has been assigned one of the elements - *plants, animals, landforms, water, or culture* – you will explore the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore website to answer questions about your element as it relates to the Lakeshore. Finally, each group will share some of its findings with the class.