

NPS MANAGEMENT POLICIES
GENERALLY RELEVANT TO OCEAN/COASTAL PARK ISSUES
(policies that are specifically relevant to ocean/coastal park issues are in red font).

GENERAL MANDATES

1.4.3 The NPS Obligation to Conserve and Provide for Enjoyment of Park Resources and Values

The fundamental purpose of the national park system, established by the Organic Act and reaffirmed by the General Authorities Act, as amended, begins with a mandate to conserve park resources and values. This mandate is independent of the separate prohibition on impairment and applies all the time with respect to all park resources and values, even when there is no risk that any park resources or values may be impaired. NPS managers must always seek ways to avoid, or to minimize to the greatest extent practicable, adverse impacts on park resources and values. However, the laws do give the Service the management discretion to allow impacts to park resources and values when necessary and appropriate to fulfill the purposes of a park, so long as the impact does not constitute impairment of the affected resources and values.

The fundamental purpose of all parks also includes providing for the enjoyment of park resources and values by the people of the United States. The enjoyment that is contemplated by the statute is broad; it is the enjoyment of all the people of the United States and includes enjoyment both by people who visit parks and by those who appreciate them from afar. It also includes deriving benefit (including scientific knowledge) and inspiration from parks, as well as other forms of enjoyment and inspiration. Congress, recognizing that the enjoyment by future generations of the national parks can be ensured only if the superb quality of park resources and values is left unimpaired, has provided that when there is a conflict between conserving resources and values and providing for enjoyment of them, conservation is to be predominant. This is how courts have consistently interpreted the Organic Act.

1.4.3.1 Park Purposes and Legislatively Authorized Uses

Park purposes are found in the general laws pertaining to the national park system, as well as the enabling legislation or proclamation establishing each unit. In addition to park purposes, in many cases the enabling legislation or proclamation for a park unit may also identify uses that are either mandated or authorized. In the administration of mandated uses, park managers must allow the use; however, they do have the authority to and must manage and regulate the use to ensure, to the extent possible, that impacts on park resources from that use are acceptable. In the administration of authorized uses, park managers have the discretionary authority to allow and manage the use, provided that the use will not cause impairment or unacceptable impacts. In determining whether or how to allow the use, park managers must consider the congressional or presidential interest, as expressed in the enabling legislation or proclamation, that the use or uses continue. Where there is strong public interest in a particular use, opportunities for civic

engagement and cooperative conservation should be factored into the decision-making process.

1.4.4 The Prohibition on Impairment of Park Resources and Values

While Congress has given the Service the management discretion to allow impacts within parks, that discretion is limited by the statutory requirement (generally enforceable by the federal courts) that the Park Service must leave park resources and values unimpaired unless a particular law directly and specifically provides otherwise. This, the cornerstone of the Organic Act, establishes the primary responsibility of the National Park Service. It ensures that park resources and values will continue to exist in a condition that will allow the American people to have present and future opportunities for enjoyment of them. The impairment of park resources and values may not be allowed by the Service unless directly and specifically provided for by legislation or by the proclamation establishing the park. The relevant legislation or proclamation must provide explicitly (not by implication or inference) for the activity, in terms that keep the Service from having the authority to manage the activity so as to avoid the impairment.

1.5 Appropriate Use of the Parks

The National Park Service embraces appropriate use of the parks because these uses are key to the enjoyment of the parks and the appreciation and inspiration derived from the resources. Park resources have profound effects on those who experience them through appropriate park uses. An “appropriate use” is a use that is suitable, proper, or fitting for a particular park, or to a particular location within a park. Not all uses are appropriate or allowable in units of the national park system, and what is appropriate may vary from one park to another and from one location to another within a park.

In its role as steward of park resources, the National Park Service must ensure that park uses that are allowed would not cause impairment of, or unacceptable impacts on, park resources and values. When proposed park uses and the protection of park resources and values come into conflict, the protection of resources and values must be predominant. A new form of park use may be allowed within a park only after a determination has been made in the professional judgment of the superintendent that it will not result in unacceptable impacts. The National Park Service will always consider allowing activities that are appropriate to the parks, although conditions may preclude certain activities or require that limitations be placed on them. Park superintendents must continually monitor all park uses to prevent unanticipated and unacceptable impacts. If unanticipated and unacceptable impacts emerge, the superintendent must engage in a thoughtful, deliberate process to further manage or constrain the use, or discontinue it.

Appropriate visitor enjoyment is often associated with the inspirational qualities of the parks. As a general matter, preferred forms of enjoyment are those that are uniquely suited to the superlative natural and cultural resources found in the parks and that (1) foster an understanding of and appreciation for park resources and values, or (2) promote enjoyment through a direct association with, interaction with, or relation to park resources.

These preferred forms of use contribute to the personal growth and well-being of visitors by taking advantage of the inherent educational value of parks. Equally important, many appropriate uses also contribute to the health and personal fitness of park visitors. These are the types of uses that the Service will actively promote, in accordance with the Organic Act. Other forms of park uses may be allowed within a park in accordance with the policies found in chapter 8.

8.1.1 Appropriate Use

...When a use is mandated by law but causes unacceptable impacts on park resources or values, the Service will take appropriate management actions to avoid or mitigate the adverse effects. When a use is authorized by law but not mandated, and when the use may cause unacceptable impacts on park resources or values, the Service will avoid or mitigate the impacts to the point where there will be no unacceptable impacts; or, if necessary, the Service will deny a proposed activity or eliminate an existing activity.

2.3.1.2 Management Zoning

...Each park's approved general management plan will include a map that delineates management zones or districts that correspond to a description of the desired resource and visitor experience conditions for each area of the park. Management zoning will outline the criteria for (or describe the kind of) appropriate uses and facilities necessary to support these desired conditions. For example, highly sensitive natural areas might tolerate little, if any, visitor use, while other areas might accommodate much higher levels of use....

Chapter 4 Introduction

Activities that take place outside park boundaries and that are not managed by the Service can profoundly affect the Service's ability to protect natural resources inside the parks. The Service will act to protect natural resources from impacts caused by external activities by working cooperatively with federal, state, and local agencies; tribal authorities; user groups; adjacent landowners; and others to identify and achieve broad natural resource goals.

4.1 General Management Concepts

As explained in chapter 1 of these *Management Policies*, preserving park resources and values unimpaired is the core or primary responsibility of NPS managers. The Service cannot conduct or allow activities in parks that would impact park resources and values to a level that would constitute impairment.

...Natural resources will be managed to preserve fundamental physical and biological processes, as well as individual species, features, and plant and animal communities. The Service will not attempt to solely preserve individual species (except threatened or endangered species) or individual natural processes; rather, it will try to maintain all the components and processes of naturally evolving park ecosystems, including the natural abundance, diversity, and genetic and ecological integrity of the plant and animal species native to those ecosystems. Just as all components of a natural system will be recognized as important, natural change will also be recognized as an integral part of the functioning

of natural systems. By preserving these components and processes in their natural condition, the Service will prevent resource degradation and therefore avoid any subsequent need for resource restoration. In managing parks to preserve naturally evolving ecosystems, and in accordance with requirements of the [National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998](#), the Service will use the findings of science and the analyses of scientifically trained resource specialists in decision-making.

Through its planning processes, the Park Service will determine the desired future conditions for each park unit and identify a strategy to achieve them. This strategy should include working cooperatively with adjacent land and resource managers, as appropriate.

The Service will not intervene in natural biological or physical processes, except

- when directed by Congress;
- in emergencies in which human life and property are at stake;
- to restore natural ecosystem functioning that has been disrupted by past or ongoing human activities; or
- when a park plan has identified the intervention as necessary to protect other park resources, human health and safety, or facilities.

Any such intervention will be kept to the minimum necessary to achieve the stated management objectives.

Natural systems in the national park system, and the human influences upon them, will be monitored to detect change. The Service will evaluate possible causes and effects of changes that might cause impacts on park resources and values. The Service will use the results of monitoring and research to understand the detected change and to develop appropriate management actions.

Biological or physical processes altered in the past by human activities may need to be actively managed to restore them to a natural condition or to maintain the closest approximation of the natural condition when a truly natural system is no longer attainable. Prescribed burning and the control of ungulates when predators have been extirpated are two examples. Decisions about the extent and degree of management actions taken to protect or restore park ecosystems or their components will be based on clearly articulated, well-supported management objectives and the best scientific information available.

4.3 Special Designations

The Park Service recognizes that special designations apply to parts or all of some parks to highlight the additional management considerations that those designated areas warrant. These designations include research natural area, experimental research area, wilderness area, national wild and scenic river, national natural landmark, biosphere reserve, and world heritage listing. These designations do not reduce the Service's authority for managing the parks, although in some cases they may create additional management requirements or considerations.

GENERAL RESTORATION POLICIES

1.4.7.2 Improving Resource Conditions within the Parks

The Service will also strive to ensure that park resources and values are passed on to future generations in a condition that is as good as, or better than, the conditions that exist today. In particular, the Service will strive to restore the integrity of park resources that have been damaged or compromised in the past. Restoration activities will be guided by the natural and cultural resource-specific policies identified in chapters 4 and 5 of these *Management Policies*.

4.1.5 Restoration of Natural Systems

The Service will reestablish natural functions and processes in parks unless otherwise directed by Congress. Landscapes disturbed by natural phenomena, such as landslides, earthquakes, floods, **hurricanes**, tornadoes, and fires, will be allowed to recover naturally unless manipulation is necessary to protect other park resources, developments, or employee and public safety. Impacts on natural systems resulting from human disturbances include the introduction of exotic species; the contamination of air, water, and soil; changes to hydrologic patterns and sediment transport; the acceleration of erosion and sedimentation; and the **disruption of natural processes**. The Service will seek to return such disturbed areas to the natural conditions and processes characteristic of the ecological zone in which the damaged resources are situated. The Service will use the best available technology, within available resources, to restore the biological and physical components of these systems, accelerating both their recovery and the recovery of landscape and biological community structure and function. Efforts may include, for example

- removal of exotic species
- removal of contaminants and nonhistoric structures or facilities
- restoration of abandoned mineral lands, abandoned or unauthorized roads, areas overgrazed by domestic animals, or disrupted natural waterways and/or shoreline processes
- restoration of areas disturbed by NPS administrative, management, or development activities (such as hazard tree removal, construction, or sand and gravel extraction) or by public use
- restoration of natural soundscapes
- restoration of native plants and animals
- restoration of natural visibility

When park development/facilities are damaged or destroyed and replacement is necessary, the development will be replaced or relocated to promote the restoration of natural resources and processes.

4.4.2.4 Management of Natural Landscapes

Natural landscapes disturbed by natural phenomena, such as landslides, earthquakes, floods, **hurricanes**, tornadoes, and fires, will be allowed to recover naturally unless manipulation is necessary to (1) mitigate for excessive disturbance caused by past human effects, (2) preserve cultural and historic resources as appropriate based on park planning

documents, or (3) protect park developments or the safety of people. Landscape and vegetation conditions altered by human activity may be manipulated where the park management plan provides for restoring the lands to a natural condition. Management activities to restore human-altered landscapes may include, but are not restricted to

- removing constructed features, restoring natural topographic gradients, and revegetating with native park species on acquired inholdings and on sites from which previous development is being removed;
- restoring natural processes and conditions to areas disturbed by human activities such as fire suppression;
- rehabilitating areas disturbed by visitor use or by the removal of hazard trees; and
- maintaining open areas and meadows in situations in which they were formerly maintained by natural processes that now are altered by human activities.

Landscape revegetation efforts will use seeds, cuttings, or transplants representing species and gene pools native to the ecological portion of the park in which the restoration project is occurring. Where a natural area has become so degraded that restoration with gene pools native to the park has proven unsuccessful, improved varieties or closely related native species may be used.

Landscape restoration efforts will use geological materials and soils obtained in accordance with geological and soil resource management policies. Landscape restoration efforts may use, on a temporary basis, appropriate soil fertilizers or other soil amendments so long as that use does not unacceptably alter the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of the soil and biological community and does not degrade surface or groundwaters.

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

1.6 Cooperative Conservation Beyond Park Boundaries

...The Service will use all available tools to protect park resources and values from unacceptable impacts. The Service will also seek to advance opportunities for conservation partnerships. Superintendents will monitor land use proposals, changes to adjacent lands, and external activities for their potential impacts on park resources and values. It is appropriate for superintendents to engage constructively with the broader community in the same way that any good neighbor would. Superintendents will encourage compatible adjacent land uses and seek to avoid and mitigate potential adverse impacts on park resources and values by actively participating in the planning and regulatory processes of other federal agencies and tribal, state, and local governments having jurisdiction over property affecting, or affected by, the park. If a decision is made or is imminent that will result in unacceptable impacts on park resources, superintendents must take appropriate action, to the extent possible within the Service's authorities and available resources, to manage or constrain the use to minimize impacts.....

3.4 Cooperative Conservation

Superintendents will be aware of and monitor state government programs for managing state-owned submerged lands and resources within NPS units. When there is potential for such programs to adversely impact park resources or values, superintendents will make their concerns known to appropriate state government officials and encourage compatible land uses that avoid or mitigate potential adverse impacts. When federal acquisition of state-owned submerged lands and resources within NPS units is not feasible, the Park Service will seek to enter into cooperative agreements with state governments to ensure the adequate protection of park resources and values.

External threats may originate with proposed uses outside a park that may adversely impact park resources or values. Superintendents will therefore be aware of and monitor land use proposals and changes to adjacent lands and their potential impacts. They will also seek to encourage compatible adjacent land uses to avoid or to mitigate potential adverse effects. Superintendents will make their concerns known and, when appropriate, actively participate in the planning and regulatory processes of neighboring jurisdictions, including other federal agencies and tribal, state, and local governments.

In working cooperatively with surrounding landowners and managers a superintendent might, for example, comment on potential zoning changes for proposed development projects, or brief the public and officials about park resources and related studies that are relevant to proposed zoning or other changes. Superintendents should, whenever possible, work cooperatively and communicate their concerns as early as possible in the process to minimize potential conflict. Superintendents should seek advice from the appropriate NPS program managers and the Solicitor's Office when dealing with complicated external land protection issues and threats, especially those with potential for Service-wide controversy or consequences.

In some cases—such as air or water pollution—the source of a significant threat may be far removed from the park’s boundaries. In such cases the Park Service will coordinate at the regional or national level in making its concerns known and in seeking a remedy to the problem. Threats to parks from external sources should be identified and addressed in the general management plan or in other planning documents. The result will be enhanced public awareness of the far-reaching impacts of these threats and an increased likelihood of remedial actions by those who are responsible.

4.1.4 Partnerships

The Service will pursue opportunities to improve natural resource management within parks and across administrative boundaries by pursuing cooperative conservation with public agencies, appropriate representatives of American Indian tribes and other traditionally associated peoples, and private landowners in accordance with [Executive Order 13352](#) (Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation). The Service recognizes that cooperation with other land and resource managers can accomplish ecosystem stability and other resource management objectives when the best efforts of a single manager might fail. Therefore, the Service will develop agreements with federal, tribal, state, and local governments and organizations; foreign governments and organizations; and private landowners, when appropriate, to coordinate plant, animal, water, and other natural resource management activities in ways that maintain and protect park resources and values. Such cooperation may include park restoration activities, research on park natural resources, and the management of species harvested in parks. Cooperation also may involve coordinating management activities in two or more separate areas, integrating management practices to reduce conflicts, coordinating research, sharing data and expertise, exchanging native biological resources for species management or ecosystem restoration purposes, establishing native wildlife corridors, and providing essential habitats adjacent to or across park boundaries.

In addition, the Service will seek the cooperation of others in minimizing the impacts of influences originating outside parks by controlling noise and artificial lighting, maintaining water quality and quantity, eliminating toxic substances, preserving scenic views, improving air quality, preserving wetlands, protecting threatened or endangered species, eliminating exotic species, managing the use of pesticides, **protecting shoreline processes**, managing fires, managing boundary influences, and using other means of preserving and protecting natural resources.

GENERAL FACILITIES

1.9.5.2 Facilities

The National Park Service will provide visitor and administrative facilities that are necessary, appropriate, and consistent with the conservation of park resources and values. Facilities will be harmonious with park resources, compatible with natural processes, esthetically pleasing, functional, energy- and water-efficient, cost-effective, universally designed, and as welcoming as possible to all segments of the population. Park facilities and operations of all sizes will demonstrate environmental leadership by incorporating sustainable practices to the maximum extent practicable in planning, design, siting, construction, and maintenance.

9.1.1.5 Siting Facilities to Avoid Natural Hazards

The Service will strive to site facilities where they will not be damaged or destroyed by natural physical processes. Natural hazard areas include sites with unstable soils and geologic conditions, fault zones, thermal areas, floodplains, flash-flood zones, fire-prone vegetation, and coastal high-hazard areas. Park development that is damaged or destroyed by a hazardous or catastrophic natural event will be thoroughly evaluated for relocation or replacement by new construction at a different location. If a decision is made to relocate or replace a severely damaged or destroyed facility, it will be placed, if practicable, in an area that is believed to be free from natural hazards. In areas where dynamic natural processes cannot be avoided, such as seashores, developed facilities should be sustainably designed (e.g., removable in advance of hazardous storms or other conditions). When it has been determined that facilities must be located in such areas, their design and siting will be based on

- a thorough understanding of the nature of the physical processes; and
- avoiding or mitigating (1) the risks to human life and property, and (2) the effect of the facility on natural physical processes and the ecosystem.

Requirements for development in floodplains and wetlands are contained in [Executive Order 11988](#) (Floodplain Management); [Executive Order 11990](#) (Protection of Wetlands); [Director's Orders #77-1: Wetland Protection](#) and #77-10: Natural Resource Inventorying and Monitoring; and other NPS guidance documents.

9.3.4.2 Facilities for Water Recreation

Boating facilities (such as access points, courtesy docks, boat ramps, floating sewage pump-out stations, navigational aids, and marinas), breakwaters, and fish cleaning stations may be provided as appropriate for the safe enjoyment by visitors of water recreation resources, when (1) they are consistent with the purposes for which the park was established, and (2) there is no possibility that adequate private facilities will be developed. Facilities must be carefully sited and designed to avoid unacceptable adverse effects on aquatic and riparian habitats and minimize conflicts between boaters and other visitors who enjoy use of the park. A decision to develop water-based facilities must take into account not only the primary impacts (such as noise, air, and water pollution) of the development, but also the secondary impacts (including cumulative effects over time)

that recreational use associated with the development may have on park resources and visitor enjoyment.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

1.12 Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Caribbean Islanders

The National Park Service administers parks in Hawaii, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The Service will maintain open, collaborative relationships with native peoples for whom these islands are their ancestral homes. The Service will also meet any responsibilities that may have been defined in the enabling legislation of these island parks and to Native Hawaiians in the administration of the [Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act](#) and the [National Historic Preservation Act](#).

5.2 Planning

...Superintendents will ensure full consideration of the park's cultural resources and values in all proposals for operations, development, and natural resource programs, including the management of wilderness areas.

5.3.1 Protection and Preservation of Cultural Resources

The National Park Service will employ the most effective concepts, techniques, and equipment to protect cultural resources against theft, fire, vandalism, overuse, deterioration, environmental impacts, and other threats without compromising the integrity of the resources.

5.3.5.1.7 Submerged Cultural Resources

Historic shipwrecks and other submerged cultural resources will be protected, to the extent permitted by law, in the same manner as terrestrial archeological resources. Protection activities involve inventory, evaluation, monitoring, interpretation, and establishing partnerships to provide for the management of historic shipwrecks and other submerged cultural resources in units of the national park system. The Service will not allow treasure hunting or commercial salvage activities at or around historic shipwrecks or other submerged cultural resources located within park boundaries unless legally obligated to do so. Parks may provide recreational diving access to submerged cultural resources that are not susceptible to damage or the removal of artifacts. The Service will ensure that the activities of others in park waters do not adversely affect submerged cultural resources or the surrounding natural environment. The Service will consult with the owners of non-abandoned historic shipwrecks and enter into written agreements with them to clarify how the shipwrecks will be managed by the Park Service. Shipwrecks owned by a state government pursuant to the [Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1987](#) will be managed in accordance with the Abandoned Shipwreck Act Guidelines (55 FR 50116-145, 55 FR 51528, and 56 FR 7875).

SCIENCE

2.1.2 Scientific, Technical, and Scholarly Analysis

...Decision-makers and planners will use the best available scientific and technical information and scholarly analysis to identify appropriate management actions for protection and use of park resources. ...

2.3.1.4 Science and Scholarship

Decisions documented in general management plans and other planning products, including environmental analyses and documentation, will be based on current scientific and scholarly understanding of park ecosystems and cultural contexts and the socioeconomic environment both internal and external to the park. The collection and analysis of information about park resources will be a continuous process that will help ensure that decisions are consistent with park purposes.

8.11.2 NPS-supported Studies

The National Park Service is responsible for the identification and acquisition of needed inventory, monitoring, and research, as well as for the interpretation of the management and operational implications of such studies. The Service will use the best available science to assist park managers in addressing management needs and objectives that have been identified in legislation and planning documents.

The Service will support studies to

- reach a level of understanding that will minimize “crisis” management;
- ensure a systematic and fully adequate park information base;
- provide a sound basis for policy, planning, and decision-making;
- develop effective strategies, methods, and technologies to predict, avoid, or minimize unacceptable impacts on resources, visitors, and related activities;
- determine causes of resource management problems;
- further understand park ecosystems and related human social systems, and document their components, condition, and significance;
- evaluate visitor satisfaction with services, facilities, and recreational opportunities;
- ensure that the interpretation of park resources and issues reflects current standards of scholarship for the history, science, and condition of the resources;
- evaluate performance measures in support of strategic plan goals;
- establish economic measures and impact indicators of interest or importance;
- improve understanding of local, regional, and national demographics and trends.

Superintendents may authorize park staff to carry out routine duties without requiring a research/collecting permit. NPS-supported research will rely on high-quality methods and undergo peer review. NPS-supported scientists will be expected to publish their findings in refereed journals, among other outlets.

BOUNDARIES

3.5 Boundary Adjustments

The boundary of a national park may be modified only as authorized by law. For many parks, such statutory authority is included in the enabling legislation or subsequent legislation that specifically authorizes a boundary revision. Where park-specific authority is not available, the [Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965](#), as amended, provides an additional but limited authority to adjust boundaries.

The act provides for boundary adjustments that essentially fall into three distinct categories: (1) technical revisions; (2) minor revisions based upon statutorily defined criteria; and (3) revisions to include adjacent real property acquired by donation, purchased with donated funds, transferred from any other federal agency, or obtained by exchange. Adjacent real property is considered to be land located contiguous to but outside the boundary of a national park system unit.

As part of the planning process, the Park Service will identify and evaluate boundary adjustments that may be necessary or desirable for carrying out the purposes of the park unit. Boundary adjustments may be recommended to

- protect significant resources and values, or to enhance opportunities for public enjoyment related to park purposes;
- address operational and management issues, such as the need for access or the need for boundaries to correspond to logical boundary delineations such as topographic or other natural features or roads; or
- otherwise protect park resources that are critical to fulfilling park purposes.

If the acquisition will be made using appropriated funds, and it is not merely a technical boundary revision, the criteria set forth by Congress at [16 USC 460l-9\(c\) \(2\)](#) must be met. All recommendations for boundary changes must meet the following two criteria: The added lands will be feasible to administer considering their size, configuration, and ownership; costs; the views of and impacts on local communities and surrounding jurisdictions; and other factors such as the presence of hazardous substances or exotic species.

Other alternatives for management and resource protection are not adequate.

These criteria apply conversely to recommendations for the deletion of lands from the authorized boundaries of a park unit. For example, before recommending the deletion of land from a park boundary, a finding would have to be made that the land did not include a significant resource, value, or opportunity for public enjoyment related to the purposes of the park. Full consideration should be given to current and future park needs before a recommendation is made to delete lands from the authorized boundaries of a park unit. Actions consisting solely of deletions of land from existing park boundaries would require an act of Congress. [See DO 25].

CLIMATE CHANGE

4.7.2 Weather and Climate

Earth's climate has changed throughout history. Although national parks are intended to be naturally evolving places that conserve our natural and cultural heritage for generations to come, accelerated climate change may significantly alter park ecosystems. Thus, parks containing significant natural resources will gather and maintain baseline climatological data for reference.

Because any human attempt to modify weather has the potential to alter the natural conditions in parks, the Service will not conduct weather-modification activities, the Service will seek to prevent weather modification activities conducted by others from affecting a park's weather, climate, and resources.

FISHING AND OTHER EXTRACTIVE USES

4.4.1 General Principles for Managing Biological Resources

The National Park Service will maintain as parts of the natural ecosystems of parks all plants and animals native to park ecosystems. The term “plants and animals” refers to all five of the commonly recognized kingdoms of living things and includes such groups as flowering plants, ferns, mosses, lichens, algae, fungi, bacteria, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, insects, worms, crustaceans, and microscopic plants or animals. The Service will successfully maintain native plants and animals by

- preserving and restoring the natural abundances, diversities, dynamics, distributions, habitats, and behaviors of native plant and animal populations and the communities and ecosystems in which they occur;
- restoring native plant and animal populations in parks when they have been extirpated by past human-caused actions; and
- minimizing human impacts on native plants, animals, populations, communities, and ecosystems, and the processes that sustain them.

4.4.1.2 Genetic Resource Management Principles

...When native plants or animals are removed for any reason—such as hunting, fishing, pest management, or culling to reduce unnatural population conditions resulting from human activities—the Service will maintain the appropriate levels of natural genetic diversity.

4.4.2 Management of Native Plants and Animals

The Service will consult, as appropriate, with other federal land-management agencies, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, **the NOAA Fisheries**, state wildlife management agencies, other appropriate state agencies, tribal governments, and others. Such consultation will address (1) the management of selected animal populations, (2) research involving the taking of animal species of interest to these agencies, and (3) cooperative studies and plans dealing with the public hunting and fishing of animal populations that occur across park boundaries.

The Service’s cooperative conservation efforts concerning fish and wildlife management will be consistent with departmental policy articulated at [43 CFR Part 24](#). This departmental policy recognizes the broad authorities and responsibilities of federal and state agencies with regard to the management of the nation’s fish and wildlife resources; this policy also promotes cooperative management relationships among these agencies. In particular, the policy calls on the Service to consult with state agencies on certain fish and wildlife management actions and encourages the execution of memoranda of understanding as appropriate to ensure the conduct of programs that meet mutual objectives as long as they do not conflict with federal law or regulation.

4.4.2.1 NPS Actions That Remove Native Plants and Animals

Whenever the Service removes native plants or animals, manages plant or animal populations to reduce their sizes, or allows others to remove plants or animals for an

authorized purpose, the Service will seek to ensure that such removals will not cause unacceptable impacts on native resources, natural processes, or other park resources.

4.4.3 Harvest of Plants and Animals by the Public

Public harvesting of designated species of plants and animals, or their components, may be allowed in park units when

- hunting, trapping, subsistence use, or other harvesting is specifically authorized by statute or regulation and not subsequently prohibited by regulation;
- harvest of certain plant parts or **unoccupied seashells** for personal consumption or use is specifically authorized by the superintendent in accordance with [36 CFR 2.1\(c\)\(1\)](#);
- recreational fishing is not specifically prohibited; or
- commercial fishing is specifically authorized by statute or regulation.

Where harvesting is allowed and subject to NPS control, the Service will allow harvesting only when (1) the monitoring requirement contained in section 4.4.2 and the criteria in section 4.4.2.1 above have been met, and (2) the Service has determined that the harvesting will not unacceptably impact park resources or natural processes, including the natural distributions, densities, age-class distributions, and behavior of

- harvested species
- native species that the harvested species use for any purpose, or
- native species that use the harvested species for any purpose

In consultation and cooperation, as appropriate, with individual state or tribal governments, the Service will manage harvesting programs and any associated habitat management programs intended to restore and maintain habitats supporting harvested plant or animal populations to conform with applicable federal and state regulations. Habitat manipulation for harvested species may include the restoration of a disturbed area to its natural condition so it can become self-perpetuating, but this will not include the artificial manipulation of habitat to increase the numbers of a harvested species above its natural range in population levels.

The Service may encourage the intensive harvesting of exotic species in certain situations when needed to meet park management objectives.

The Service does not engage in activities to reduce the numbers of native species for the purpose of increasing the numbers of harvested species (i.e., predator control), nor does the Service permit others to do so on lands managed by the National Park Service.

The Service manages harvest to allow for self-sustaining populations of harvested species and does not engage in the stocking of plants or animals to increase harvest. In some special situations, the Service may stock native or exotic animals for recreational harvesting purposes, but only when such stocking will not unacceptably impact park natural resources or processes and when

- the stocking is of fish into constructed large reservoirs or other significantly altered large water bodies and the purpose is to provide for recreational fishing; or

- the intent for stocking is a treaty right or expressed in statute, other applicable law, or a House or Senate report accompanying a statute.

The Service will not stock waters that are naturally barren of harvested aquatic species.

8.2.2.5 Fishing

Recreational fishing will be allowed in parks when it is authorized or not specifically prohibited by federal law provided that it has been determined to be an appropriate use per section 8.1 of these policies. When fishing is allowed, it will be conducted in accordance with applicable federal laws and treaty rights, and nonconflicting state laws and regulations. The Service will manage fishing activities to achieve management objectives. Before the Service issues regulations or other restrictions, representatives of appropriate tribes and state and federal agencies will be consulted to ensure that all available scientific data are considered in the decision-making process. Any such regulations or other restrictions will be developed with public involvement and in consultation with fish and wildlife management agencies as appropriate, consistent with departmental policy at [43 CFR Part 24](#), and as described in section 4.4.3

For NPS units in Alaska, fishing will additionally be managed in accordance with the [Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act](#).

Commercial fishing will be allowed only when specifically authorized by federal law or treaty right.

8.2.2.6 Hunting and Trapping

Hunting, trapping, or any other methods of harvesting wildlife by the public will be allowed where it is specifically mandated by federal law. Where hunting activity is not mandated but is authorized on a discretionary basis under federal law, it may take place only after the Service has determined that the activity is an appropriate use and can be managed consistent with sound resource management principles.

Hunting and trapping, whether taking place as a mandated or a discretionary activity, will be conducted in accordance with federal law and applicable laws of the state or states in which a park is located. However, except for Alaska park units (which are subject to the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act and regulations published at [36 CFR Part 13](#)), the park in which hunting and trapping occur must also publish special regulations to govern the activity. Those regulations may be more restrictive than applicable state laws when necessary to prevent unacceptable impacts. Before the Service issues regulations or other restrictions, representatives of appropriate tribes and state and federal agencies will be consulted to ensure that all available scientific data are considered in the decision-making process. Any such regulations or other restrictions will be developed with public involvement.

The Service's cooperative consultation concerning fish and wildlife management will be consistent with departmental policy at [43 CFR Part 24](#). This policy recognizes the broad authorities and responsibilities of federal and state agencies with regard to the

management of the nation's fish and wildlife resources, and promotes cooperative management relationships among these agencies. In particular, the policy calls on the Service to consult with state agencies on certain fish and wildlife management actions, and encourages the execution of memoranda of understanding as appropriate to ensure the conduct of programs that meet mutual objectives as long as they do not conflict with federal law or regulation.

8.8 Collecting Natural Products

The collection of natural products for personal use or consumption is governed by NPS general regulations contained in [36 CFR 2.1](#) and [36 CFR Part 13](#). A superintendent may designate certain fruits, berries, nuts, or unoccupied seashells that can be gathered by hand for personal use or consumption upon a written determination by the superintendent that such an activity will not adversely affect park wildlife or the reproductive potential of a plant species or otherwise adversely affect park resources. In some cases, peer-reviewed scientific information may be needed to support the determination. The regulations do not authorize the taking, use, or possession of fish, wildlife, or plants for ceremonial or religious purposes, except where specifically authorized by federal statute or treaty rights or where hunting, trapping, or fishing are otherwise allowed. The collection of minerals or rocks for personal use will be allowed only when specifically authorized by federal law or treaty rights.

INVASIVES

4.4.4 Management of Exotic Species

Exotic species will not be allowed to displace native species if displacement can be prevented.

4.4.4.2 Removal of Exotic Species Already Present

All exotic plant and animal species that are not maintained to meet an identified park purpose will be managed—up to and including eradication—if (1) control is prudent and feasible, and (2) the exotic species

- interferes with natural processes and the perpetuation of natural features, native species or natural habitats, or
- disrupts the genetic integrity of native species, or
- disrupts the accurate presentation of a cultural landscape, or
- damages cultural resources, or
- significantly hampers the management of park or adjacent lands, or
- poses a public health hazard as advised by the U. S. Public Health Service (which includes the Centers for Disease Control and the NPS public health program), or
- creates a hazard to public safety.

High priority will be given to managing exotic species that have, or potentially could have, a substantial impact on park resources, and that can reasonably be expected to be successfully controlled. Lower priority will be given to exotic species that have almost no impact on park resources or that probably cannot be successfully controlled. Where an exotic species cannot be successfully eliminated, managers will seek to contain the exotic species to prevent further spread or resource damage.

The decision to initiate management should be based on a determination that the species is exotic. For species determined to be exotic and where management appears to be feasible and effective, superintendents should (1) evaluate the species' current or potential impact on park resources; (2) develop and implement exotic species management plans according to established planning procedures; (3) consult, as appropriate, with federal, tribal, local, and state agencies as well as other interested groups; and (4) invite public review and comment, where appropriate. Programs to manage exotic species will be designed to avoid causing significant damage to native species, natural ecological communities, natural ecological processes, cultural resources, and human health and safety. Considerations and techniques regarding removal of exotic species are similar to those used for native species (see 4.4.2.1 NPS Actions That Remove Native Plants and Animals).

WATER QUALITY

4.6.3 Water Quality

The pollution of surface waters and groundwaters by both point and nonpoint sources can impair the natural functioning of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and diminish the utility of park waters for visitor use and enjoyment. The Service will determine the quality of park surface and groundwater resources and avoid, whenever possible, the pollution of park waters by human activities occurring within and outside the parks. The Service will

- work with appropriate governmental bodies to obtain the highest possible standards available under the Clean Water Act for the protection for park waters;
- take all necessary actions to maintain or restore the quality of surface waters and groundwaters within the parks consistent with the Clean Water Act and all other applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations; and
- enter into agreements with other agencies and governing bodies, as appropriate, to secure their cooperation in maintaining or restoring the quality of park water resources.

9.1.6.1 Waste Management

The Service will implement solid and hazardous waste management practices that integrate waste reduction, reuse, and recycling programs to minimize the generation and disposal of solid and hazardous waste at and from NPS sites. For purposes of this section, solid and hazardous wastes include any materials that are so defined in the Solid Waste Disposal Act, as amended. The Service will require the use of biodegradable materials, the reuse and recycling of materials, and other appropriate measures to minimize solid waste and conserve natural resources to the fullest extent possible. Innovation in the use of recyclable or reusable materials is encouraged. For example, the Service may encourage the remanufacturing of recyclable materials into acceptable sales items for willing markets, including the Park Service.

The disposal in parks of solid wastes generated by non-NPS activities is, in most cases, incompatible with national park values. All disposal of solid waste on lands and waters within the boundaries of a unit of the park system, whether federally or nonfederally owned, must comply with NPS regulations in [36 CFR Part 6](#), which implement Public Law 98-506 ([16 USC 4601-22\(c\)](#)). These regulations are designed to ensure that all activities associated with the operation of solid waste disposal sites within the boundaries of national park units are conducted in a manner that will (1) prevent the deterioration of air and water quality; (2) prevent the degradation of natural and cultural resources; and (3) reduce adverse effects on visitor enjoyment. In accordance with the spirit and intent of these requirements, the Park Service will, to the extent practicable, avoid the use of park lands for landfills by such means as (1) implementing waste minimization and substitution practices, (2) diverting material to recycling facilities or other appropriate locations, and (3) using storage or treatment facilities that meet or exceed DOI and all legal and regulatory standards for any generated waste that is not diverted.

The Park Service will remove landfill operations and associated impacts from parks where feasible. Cooperative waste management solutions that minimize adverse impacts on park resources are also encouraged for areas where alternatives to landfilling are scarce for both parks and adjacent communities.

Open burning for solid waste disposal will not be permitted in parks, except in the very limited circumstances described in [Director's Order #18: Wildland Fire Management](#). Any hazardous waste that the Service generates will be disposed of separately from solid waste, in full accord with all applicable legal requirements.

9.1.6.2 NPS Response to Contaminants

The Service will make every reasonable effort to prevent or minimize the release of contaminants on or that will affect NPS lands or resources, and the Service will take all necessary actions to control or minimize such releases when they occur. For purposes of this section, contaminants include any substance that may pose a risk to NPS resources or is regulated or governed by statutes referenced in this subsection. Prevention and minimization will include, but not be limited to, (1) the acquisition, use, and selection of non-toxic or less toxic materials; (2) implementation of safe use, storage, and disposal practices; (3) recycling of spent materials; (4) implementation of effective hazard communication programs for employees, contractors, concessioners, and visitors; (5) development and extension of appropriate emergency response programs; and (6) ensuring that parties responsible for contamination or threatened contamination of NPS property bear the responsibility for addressing such contamination.

Activities pertaining to contaminants, including response actions or handling, acquisition, storage, transportation, and disposal of such substances, will comply with federal, state, and local laws and regulations including, but not limited to, (1) the [Solid Waste Disposal Act](#), including the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 and the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1984, as amended; (2) the [Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980](#); (3) the [Oil Pollution Act of 1990](#); (4) the [Clean Water Act](#); (4) the [Hazardous Materials Transportation Act](#); and (5) the [Toxic Substances Control Act](#). Such activities will also comply with the NPS integrated pest management program.

The Service will identify, assess, and take response actions as promptly as possible to address releases and threatened releases of contaminants into the environment. Each park will have an oil and chemical spill response management plan for spills that result from NPS activities or from activities that are beyond NPS control (such as commercial through-traffic on roads that pass through a park). The plans will place first priority on responder and public safety. Employees will not be permitted to respond to hazardous materials spills unless they are properly qualified and certified in accordance with Director's Order #30B: Hazardous Spill Response.

The Service will take affirmative and aggressive action to ensure that all NPS costs and damages associated with the release of contaminants are borne by those responsible for the contamination of NPS property. In addition, when lands are proposed for acquisition

by the Park Service, the Service will take steps to avoid or minimize its liability for the contamination of NPS property caused by other parties. The Service will include in the preacquisition environmental assessment process the identification of recognizable environmental conditions, such as those associated with prior or existing commercial facilities, mining sites, and landfills. Any recognizable existing or potential environmental contamination of lands proposed for inclusion in a park will be brought to the attention of the regional director as soon as they are identified.

WETLANDS AND FLOODPLAINS

4.6.4 Floodplains

In managing floodplains on park lands, the National Park Service will (1) manage for the preservation of floodplain values; (2) minimize potentially hazardous conditions associated with flooding; and (3) comply with the [NPS Organic Act](#) and all other federal laws and executive orders related to the management of activities in flood-prone areas, including [Executive Order 11988](#) (Floodplain Management), the [National Environmental Policy Act](#), applicable provisions of the [Clean Water Act](#), and the [Rivers and Harbors Appropriation Act of 1899](#). Specifically, the Service will

- protect, preserve, and restore the natural resources and functions of floodplains;
- avoid the long- and short-term environmental effects associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains; and
- avoid direct and indirect support of floodplain development and actions that could adversely affect the natural resources and functions of floodplains or increase flood risks.

When it is not practicable to locate or relocate development or inappropriate human activities to a site outside and not affecting the floodplain, the Service will

- prepare and approve a statement of findings, in accordance with procedures described in Director's Order 77-2 (Floodplain Management);
- use nonstructural measures as much as practicable to reduce hazards to human life and property while minimizing the impact to the natural resources of floodplains;
- ensure that structures and facilities are designed to be consistent with the intent of the standards and criteria of the National Flood Insurance Program ([44 CFR Part 60](#)).

4.6.5 Wetlands

The Service will manage wetlands in compliance with NPS mandates and the requirements of [Executive Order 11990](#) (Protection of Wetlands), the Clean Water Act, the Rivers and Harbors Appropriation Act of 1899, and the procedures described in [Director's Order 77-1 \(Wetland Protection\)](#). The Service will (1) provide leadership and take action to prevent the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands; (2) preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands; and (3) avoid direct and indirect support of new construction in wetlands unless there are no practicable alternatives and the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands.

The Service will implement a “no net loss of wetlands” policy. In addition, the Service will strive to achieve a longer-term goal of net gain of wetlands across the national park system through restoration of previously degraded or destroyed wetlands

When natural wetland characteristics or functions have been degraded or lost due to previous or ongoing human actions, the Service will, to the extent practicable, restore them to predisturbance conditions.

The Service will conduct or obtain parkwide wetland inventories to help ensure proper planning with respect to the management and protection of wetland resources. Additional, more detailed wetland inventories will be conducted in areas that are

proposed for development or are otherwise susceptible to degradation or loss due to human activities.

When practicable, the Service will not simply protect but will seek to enhance natural wetland values by using them for educational, recreational, scientific, and similar purposes that do not disrupt natural wetland functions.

For proposed new development or other new activities, plans, or programs that are either located in or otherwise could have adverse impacts on wetlands, the Service will employ the following sequence:

- Avoid adverse wetland impacts to the extent practicable.
- Minimize impacts that cannot be avoided.
- Compensate for remaining unavoidable adverse wetland impacts by restoring wetlands that have been previously destroyed or degraded.

Compensation for wetland impacts or losses will require that at least 1 acre of wetlands be restored for each acre destroyed or degraded.

Actions proposed by the Park Service that have the potential to cause adverse impacts on wetlands must be addressed in an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement. If the preferred alternative will result in adverse impacts on wetlands, a statement of findings must be prepared and approved in accordance with Director's Order #77-1: Wetland Protection.

GEOLOGIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

4.8 Geologic Resource Management

The Park Service will preserve and protect geologic resources as integral components of park natural systems. As used here, the term “geologic resources” includes both geologic features and geologic processes. The Service will (1) assess the impacts of natural processes and human activities on geologic resources; (2) maintain and restore the integrity of existing geologic resources; (3) integrate geologic resource management into Service operations and planning; and (4) interpret geologic resources for park visitors.

4.8.1 Protection of Geologic Processes

The Service will, except as identified below, allow natural geologic processes to proceed unimpeded. Geologic processes are the natural physical and chemical forces that act within natural systems and on human developments across a broad spectrum of space and time. Such processes include, but are not limited to, exfoliation, erosion and sedimentation, glaciation, karst processes, shoreline processes, and seismic and volcanic activity. Geologic processes will be addressed during planning and other management activities in an effort to reduce hazards that can threaten the safety of park visitors and staff and the long-term viability of the park infrastructure.

Intervention in natural geologic processes will be permitted only when

- directed by Congress;
- necessary in emergencies that threaten human life and property;
- there is no other feasible way to protect natural resources, park facilities, or historic properties;
- intervention is necessary to restore impacted conditions and processes, such as restoring habitat for threatened or endangered species.

4.8.1.1 Shorelines and Barrier Islands

Natural shoreline processes (such as erosion, deposition, dune formation, overwash, inlet formation, and shoreline migration) will be allowed to continue without interference. Where human activities or structures have altered the nature or rate of natural shoreline processes, the Service will, in consultation with appropriate state and federal agencies, investigate alternatives for mitigating the effects of such activities or structures and for restoring natural conditions. The Service will comply with the provisions of Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management) and state coastal zone management plans prepared under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972.

Any shoreline manipulation measures proposed to protect cultural resources may be approved only after an analysis of the degree to which such measures would impact natural resources and processes, so that an informed decision can be made through an assessment of alternatives.

Where erosion control is required by law, or where present developments must be protected in the short run to achieve park management objectives, including high-density

visitor use, the Service will use the most effective method feasible to achieve the natural resource management objectives while minimizing impacts outside the target area. New developments will not be placed in areas subject to wave erosion or active shoreline processes unless (1) the development is required by law; or (2) the development is essential to meet the park's purposes, as defined by its establishing act or proclamation, and

- no practicable alternative locations are available;
- the development will be reasonably assured of surviving during its planned life span without the need for shoreline control measures; and
- steps will be taken to minimize safety hazards and harm to property and natural resources.

4.8.1.3 Geologic Hazards

Naturally occurring geologic processes, which the Park Service is charged to preserve unimpaired, can be hazardous to humans and park infrastructure. These include earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, mudflows, landslides, floods, shoreline processes, tsunamis, and avalanches. The Service will work closely with specialists at the U. S. Geological Survey and elsewhere, and with local, state, tribal, and federal disaster management officials, to devise effective geologic hazard identification and management strategies. Although the magnitude and timing of future geologic hazards are difficult to forecast, park managers will strive to understand future hazards and, once the hazards are understood, minimize their potential impact on visitors, staff, and developed areas. Before interfering with natural processes that are potentially hazardous, superintendents will consider other alternatives.

The Service will try to avoid placing new visitor and other facilities in geologically hazardous areas. Superintendents will examine the feasibility of phasing out, relocating, or providing alternative facilities for park developments subject to hazardous processes, consistent with other sections of these management policies.

4.8.2 Management of Geologic Features

The Service will protect geologic features from the unacceptable impacts of human activity while allowing natural processes to continue. The term "geologic features" describes the products and physical components of geologic processes. Examples of geologic features in parks include rocks, soils, and minerals; geysers and hot springs in geothermal systems; cave and karst systems; canyons and arches in erosional landscapes; sand dunes, moraines, and terraces in depositional landscapes; dramatic or unusual rock outcrops and formations; and paleontological and paleoecological resources such as fossilized plants or animals or their traces.

9.1.3.3 Borrow Pits and Spoil Areas

Materials from borrow pits, quarries, and other clay, stone, gravel, or sand sources on NPS lands, including submerged lands, will be extracted and used only

- by the Park Service or its agents or contractors;
- for in-park administrative uses;
- after compliance with the [National Environmental Policy Act](#) and [National Historic Preservation Act](#), including written findings that

- extraction and use of in-park borrow materials does not or will not impair park resources or values; and
- it is the park's most reasonable alternative based on economic, environmental, and ecological considerations; and
- if no outside sources are reasonably available;
- after compliance with other applicable federal, state, and local requirements.

Parks should use existing pits, quarries, or sources, or create new pits, quarries, or sources in the park only after developing and implementing a parkwide borrow management plan that addresses the cumulative effects of borrow site extraction, restoration, and importation. NPS guidance documents, as well as natural and cultural resources and facilities management staff, should be consulted during plan development and the review of specific proposals.

In designated wild and scenic rivers, no new sources may be established, and existing sources should be closed and reclaimed. Borrow material may be extracted in proposed or designated wilderness areas only in small quantities for trail use and in accordance with an approved wilderness management plan.

Spoil may be used for beach nourishment or another resource management activity only if the superintendent first finds that the proposed nourishment or activity will not impair park resources and values and that the proposed activity is consistent with park planning documents.

All existing spoil areas within park units that meet the definition of "solid waste disposal site" ([36 CFR Part 6](#)) will be brought into compliance with NPS solid waste regulations in [36 CFR 6.5](#). The development of new spoil areas or borrow pits, or the expansion of existing ones, will be analyzed through the [NEPA](#) and [NHPA](#) processes. In addition, superintendents will comply with NPS solid waste regulations and other specific NPS requirements.

Proposed borrow pits and spoil areas outside parks will also be evaluated to ensure that use by the Service or its contractors does not impair resources or values inside the park, and that extraction operations comply with all applicable statutes and regulations, including the National Environmental Policy Act and National Historic Preservation Act.

WILDERNESS

6.2.1.2 Additional Considerations in Determining Eligibility

... The established use of motorboats, snowmobiles, or aircraft does not make an area ineligible for wilderness. The nature and extent of any impacts on the environment and on eligibility, and the extent to which the impacts can be mitigated would need to be addressed in subsequent wilderness studies, along with the possible need to discontinue the use.

6.3 Wilderness Resource Management

6.3.1 General Policy

For the purposes of applying these policies, the term “wilderness” will include the categories of eligible, study, proposed, recommended, and designated wilderness. Potential wilderness may be a subset of any of these five categories. The policies apply regardless of category except as otherwise provided herein.

The National Park Service will take no action that would diminish the wilderness eligibility of an area possessing wilderness characteristics until the legislative process of wilderness designation has been completed. Until that time, management decisions will be made in expectation of eventual wilderness designation.

6.3.7 Natural Resources Management

...Natural processes will be allowed, insofar as possible, to shape and control wilderness ecosystems. Management should seek to sustain the natural distribution, numbers, population composition, and interaction of indigenous species. Management intervention should only be undertaken to the extent necessary to correct past mistakes, the impacts of human use, and influences originating outside of wilderness boundaries.

6.3.11.3 Waters in Wilderness

In keeping with established jurisdictions and authorities, the **Service will manage as wilderness all waters included within wilderness boundaries, and the lands beneath these waters (if owned by the United States).**

6.4.3.3 Use of Motorized Equipment

Public use of motorized equipment or any form of mechanical transport will be prohibited in wilderness except as provided for in specific legislation. Operating a motor vehicle or possessing a bicycle in designated wilderness outside Alaska is prohibited (see NPS regulations in [36 CFR 4.30\(d\)\(1\)](#)).

However, section 4(d)(1) of the [Wilderness Act \(16 USC 1133\(d\)\(1\)\)](#) authorizes the Secretary—where legislation designating the wilderness specifically makes this provision applicable—to allow the continuation of motorboat and aircraft use under certain circumstances in which those activities were established prior to wilderness designation. Section 4(d)(1) gives the Secretary the discretion to manage and regulate the activity in accordance with the Wilderness Act, the [NPS Organic Act](#), and individual park enabling legislation. As authorized, the National Park Service will administer this use to be

compatible with the purpose, character, and resource values of the particular wilderness area involved. The use of motorized equipment by the public in wilderness areas in Alaska is governed by applicable provisions of the [Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act](#), NPS regulations in [36 CFR Part 13](#), and Department of the Interior regulations in [43 CFR Part 36](#). The specific conditions under which motorized equipment may be used by the public will be outlined in each park's wilderness management plan.

ROADS AND OFF-ROAD DRIVING

8.2.3.1 Motorized Off-road Vehicle Use

Off-road motor vehicle use in national park units is governed by [Executive Order 11644](#) (Use of Off-road Vehicles on Public Lands, as amended by [Executive Order 11989](#)), which defines off-road vehicles as “any motorized vehicle designed for or capable of cross-country travel on or immediately over land, water, sand, snow, ice, marsh, swampland, or other natural terrain” (except any registered motorboat or any vehicle used for emergency purposes). Unless otherwise provided by statute, any time there is a proposal to allow a motor vehicle meeting this description to be used in a park, the provisions of the executive order must be applied.

In accordance with [36 CFR 4.10\(b\)](#), routes and areas may be designated only in national recreation areas, national seashores, national lakeshores, and national preserves, and only by special regulation. In accordance with the executive order, they may be allowed only in locations where there will be no adverse impacts on the area’s natural, cultural, scenic, and esthetic values, and in consideration of other existing or proposed recreational uses. The criteria for new uses, appropriate uses, and unacceptable impacts listed in sections 8.1 and 8.2 must also be applied to determine whether off-road vehicle use may be allowed. As required by the executive order and the [Organic Act](#), superintendents must immediately close a designated off-road vehicle route whenever the use is causing or will cause unacceptable impacts on the soil, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat, or cultural and historic resources.

NPS administrative off-road motor vehicle use will be limited to what is necessary to manage the public use of designated off-road vehicle routes and areas; to conduct emergency operations; and to accomplish essential maintenance, construction, and resource protection activities that cannot be accomplished reasonably by other means.

9.2.1.1 Park Roads

Park roads will be well constructed, sensitive to natural and cultural resources, reflect the highest principles of park design, and enhance the visitor experience. Park roads are generally not intended to provide fast and convenient transportation; rather, they are intended to enhance the quality of a visit while providing for safe and efficient travel with minimal or no impacts on natural and cultural resources. For most parks, a road system is already in place. When plans for meeting the transportation needs of these parks are updated, a determination must be made as to whether the road system should be maintained as is, reduced, expanded, reoriented, eliminated, or supplemented by other means of travel. Before roads are chronically at or near capacity, the use of alternative destination points or transportation systems or limitations on use will be considered as alternatives to road expansion.

Park road designs are subject to NPS *Park Road Standards*, which are adaptable to each park’s unique character and resource limitations. Although some existing roads do not

meet current engineering standards, they may be important cultural resources whose values can and should be preserved with attention to visitor safety.

RECREATIONAL USE OF PARKS

8.2.2 Recreational Activities

The National Park Service will manage recreational activities according to the criteria listed in sections 8.1 and 8.2 (and 6.4 in wilderness areas). Examples of the broad range of recreational activities that take place in parks include, but are not limited to, **boating**, camping, bicycling, **fishing**, hiking, horseback riding and packing, outdoor sports, picnicking, **scuba diving**, cross-country skiing, caving, mountain and rock climbing, earth caching, and **swimming**. Many of these activities support the federal policy of promoting the health and personal fitness of the general public, as set forth in [Executive Order 13266](#). However, not all of these activities will be appropriate or allowable in all parks; that determination must be made on the basis of park-specific planning.

Service-wide regulations addressing aircraft use, off-road bicycling, hang gliding, **off-road vehicle use**, **personal watercraft**, and snowmobiling require that special, park-specific regulations be developed before these uses may be allowed in parks. (The [Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act](#) statutory provisions (e.g., section 1110(a)) and regulatory provisions in [36 CFR Part 13](#) and [43 CFR 36.11\(h\)](#) apply to snowmobile, motorboat, aircraft, and other means of access in units of the national park system in Alaska.)

The Service will monitor new or changing patterns of use or trends in recreational activities and assess their potential impacts on park resources. A new form of recreational activity will not be allowed within a park until a superintendent has made a determination that it will be appropriate and not cause unacceptable impacts. Restrictions placed on recreational uses that have been found to be appropriate will be limited to the minimum necessary to protect park resources and values and promote visitor safety and enjoyment. Sounds that visitors encounter affect their recreational and/or educational experience.

Many park visitors have certain expectations regarding the sounds they will hear as part of their experience. The type of park unit (for example, national battlefield, national seashore, national recreation area, national park) and its specific features often help shape those expectations. In addition to expectations of muted to loud sounds associated with nature (such as wind rustling leaves, elk bugling, waves crashing on a beach), park visitors also expect sounds reflecting our cultural heritage (such as cannons firing, native drumming, music) and sounds associated with people visiting their parks (such as children laughing, park interpretive talks, motors in cars and motorboats).

Park managers will (1) identify what levels and types of sounds contribute to or hinder visitor enjoyment, and (2) monitor, in and adjacent to parks, noise-generating human activities—including noise caused by mechanical or electronic devices—that adversely affect visitor opportunities to enjoy park soundscapes. Based on this information, the Service will take action to prevent or minimize those noises that adversely affect the visitor experience or that exceed levels that are acceptable to or appropriate for visitor uses of parks.

8.2.3.3 Personal Watercraft Use

Personal watercraft use is generally prohibited by [36 CFR 3.24](#). However, it may be allowed within a park by special regulation if it has first been determined through park planning to be an appropriate use that will not result in unacceptable impacts.