
Centennial Initiative News Release



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Four Mid-Maryland National Parks Centennial proposals eligible for matching funds

Frederick, MD – A proposal jointly submitted by four local National Park sites—Monocacy National Battlefield, Antietam National Battlefield, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, and Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park—to create a website and educational programs focusing on the Civil War in this region is one of 201 selected by National Park Service Director Mary Bomar and Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne as eligible for Centennial Challenge funding in Fiscal Year 2008. This announcement was made at a press conference held in Yosemite National Park today to celebrate the 91st anniversary of the NPS.

“The National Park Service has, after a rigorous review, certified these proposals as eligible for centennial challenge matching funds,” Bomar said. “And they are ready to go in Fiscal Year 2008 which begins Oct. 1.”

The selected local project, titled “Crossroads of War: Civil War and the Homefront in the Mid-Atlantic Border Region,” represents a partnership between the National Park Service, the Catocin Center for Regional Studies at Frederick Community College, the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area, the Maryland Office of Tourism and schools in the mid-Maryland region to create a website, a series of public programs, and educational projects to place the local story of the Civil War in a broader regional perspective. In anticipation of the upcoming Civil War Sesquicentennial, the project will link the local NPS units to tell the complex story of the Civil War in this border region, exploring military and homefront issues, and using park-specific resources and stories to highlight the era’s complex interweaving of race, politics, sectional division, and conflict. Total proposal cost: \$144,000.

Director Bomar said, “The centennial challenge is a critical element in the National Park Centennial Initiative put forward by President Bush and unveiled by Secretary Kempthorne one year ago. The full centennial initiative is a potential \$3 billion investment in our national parks, two-thirds of it a public-private partnership of matching money.”

The President’s fiscal year 2008 budget called for an additional \$100 million a year for 10 years to be dedicated to bolster basic park operations, Bomar said. Congress has included the first \$100 million

for operations in the fiscal year 2008 budget that awaits final passage.

“The second part of the initiative is the centennial challenge – a funding mechanism to match up to \$100 million a year over 10 years of public money with \$100 million a year for 10 years in private donations,” Bomar said. “Congress has yet to finish legislation necessary to create the public-private centennial challenge.”

Financial commitments to the first round of proposals exceeded the President’s challenge. “We have about \$370 million in proposals with not \$100 million in private commitments but \$216 million committed from park visitors, friends groups and other partners,” Bomar said.

“I’ve testified before Senate and House subcommittees and judging by the warm reception we received, I believe Congress will include centennial challenge money in our next budget. We look forward to working with members from both sides of the aisle to provide the key to the centennial challenge. When that happens we can make decisions on which of these wonderful proposals to begin in the fall.”

The total cost of the “Crossroads of War” project is \$144,000, with half of that amount pledged by Frederick Community College through grants that it has received. “We are very excited that this project was selected by the National Park Service as eligible for funding under the Centennial Initiative,” declared Dr. Carol Eaton, president of the college. “The Catocin Center for Regional Studies has proven to be a very fruitful partnership with the National Park Service and we look forward to expanding it and providing additional educational opportunities for the local community through the “Crossroads of War” project.”

In addition to the “Crossroads of War” project, three of the four parks—Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Chesapeake & Ohio National Historical Park, and Monocacy National Battlefield—are included as part of another multi-park project selected by Secretary Kempthorne and Director Bomar as eligible for funding in Fiscal year 2008. This proposal calls for expanding the highly successful Bridging the Watershed educational program in ten participating national park sites in the District of Columbia, Virginia, Maryland, and West Virginia. In partnership with the Alice Ferguson Foundation, which has pledged to provide up to \$400,000 in additional funding over the next two years, this program provides curriculum-based education modules for high school students to study water quality and watershed issues within the parks. Tracy Bowen, executive director of the Alice Ferguson Foundation, remarked, “Through the power of this public/private partnership, we will be able to reach many more students and teachers and engage them in learning about their world and their relationship to the Potomac River watershed.”

The list of proposals – at 116 parks in 40 states and the District of Columbia – touches parks nationwide with a centennial effort to inventory every living thing in the national park system.

To be certified, proposals had to be imaginative and innovative, addressed critical Service needs, had a philanthropic partner, required little or no additional recurring operating funds to be sustainable, improved the efficiency of park management, operations and employees and produced measurable results.

Other proposals:

- Lewis and Clark National Historical Park adopting the Class of 2016 with the goal of turning students to stewards.
- Additional student education through Acadia National Park’s “No Child Left Inside” project.
- Strengthening efforts to save Kemp’s Ridley sea turtles – the world’s most endangered sea

turtle – with citizens assisting park rangers to observe and relocate nests on Padre Island National Seashore, the turtle’s most important U.S. nesting habitat.

- Restoration of more than 50 miles of important foot trails in Yosemite National Park.
- Climate change research of glaciers at Mount Rainier National Park and
- Utilizing scientists and volunteers to study life along the Appalachian Trail seeing national parks as an environmental barometer.

“There is a huge wave of excitement among National Park Service professionals and our partners,” Bomar said. “We will create park-based centers for Junior Rangers, implement cutting-edge energy projects like fuel cells and geothermal and build multimedia wayside exhibits that “talk” to visitors. This is a victory for national parks and over 270 million park visitors we see each year.

“Last week, I sent an email to the men and women of the National Park Service to inform them of our announcement. One of the replies I received says it best: ‘This is thrilling! A win/win opportunity like we've never seen before. Thanks for the energy and vision for the NPS.’

“That thanks,” Bomar said, “is for the many who worked to transform vision into action: Secretary Kempthorne and our friends in Congress, from both sides of the aisle who introduced legislation to support the Centennial. But most of all, our thanks go to park superintendents, friends groups, partners and an army of supporters.”

“When history is written,” Bomar said, “the Centennial Initiative will be second only to the creation of the national park system itself.”

The full list of centennial challenge-eligible projects and programs is available on-line at the National Park Service centennial web site www.nps.gov/2016

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