

**National Park System Advisory Board**  
**NATIONAL NATURAL LANDMARKS COMMITTEE SUMMARY REPORT**  
**November 15, 2012**

**Background**

The NNL Program was established by Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall in 1962 as part of his broad legacy of conservation programs. The Program recognizes and supports the voluntary conservation of outstanding geological and biological sites, regardless of ownership. Ongoing partnerships with public and private landmark owners allow participants to share information, solve problems cooperatively, and conserve outstanding examples of our nation's natural history. Over 590 landmarks have been designated by the Secretary of the Interior since the program's establishment in 1962.

Many of these landmarks are the best remaining examples of features or ecosystems in our nation. Through recognition of these outstanding natural areas, the National Park Service works together with communities, other agencies, and private landowners to conserve natural resources across boundaries and across the landscape.

NNLs are owned by a variety of land stewards, and participation in the program is voluntary. National Natural Landmarks are selected for their outstanding condition, illustrative value, rarity, diversity, and value to science and education. The National Park Service administers the program, reports on the condition of NNLs, identifies specialists to advise landmark owners on resource management, and advocates for the protection of designated sites.

**Addressing the Task**

The Board continued its work through the National Natural Landmarks (NNL) Committee reviewing evaluation reports for proposed National Natural Landmarks and forwarding recommendations onto the Secretary.

**Progress**

Ten sites were recommended for designation over the past two years, in addition to major boundary expansions at two existing NNLs. Eight new NNLs have been designated during this same period. The Board supported, raised funds for, and attended a 50th Anniversary commemoration of the National Natural Landmarks Program. In conjunction with that celebration, members of the board visited two NNLs: the Morrison-Golden Fossil Area near Denver and Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs. These visits highlighted the enormous potential for NPS to support connections with scientists and the public in appreciating and enjoying our natural heritage.

The Board continues to support the NNL Photo Contest and the production of annual calendars that illustrate the beauty and diversity of our nation's natural landmarks, as well as the longevity of the National Park Service's relationship with conservation partners. Board members also supported the NNL Program's outreach to communities and children through booths and educational publications for the Bioblitz festivals at Rocky Mountain and Saguaro National Parks.

**Realizing the Vision**

We envision the National Natural Landmark Program as an effective mechanism for in empowering local land stewards, encouraging scientific discovery, and increasing environmental awareness and community spirit.

Goals for the coming year include forwarding recommendations for five additional NNLs and raising funds for evaluation of potential sites.