
Centennial Challenge News Release



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***Rangers in the Classroom* Receives Major Funding Grant as the First Centennial Challenge Project in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks**

Rangers in the Classroom, a joint effort of the National Park Service at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and the Sequoia Parks Foundation, has received a major federal grant.

“*Rangers in the Classroom* represents a major effort on the part of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks to address the needs of elementary school children in Central California,” stated national park superintendent Craig C. Axtell. “It is a great program. It has a wonderful ability to bring together not only students and rangers, but also public and private funding.”

The \$50,000 grant, announced on April 24 by Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne comes from the National Park Centennial Initiative, a \$50 million joint public/private project to enhance the condition of the national parks in preparation for the National Park Service Centennial in 2016. Centennial Initiative projects match federal funds with philanthropic donations from park partners.

National Park Service Director Mary A. Bomar said, “With the nearly \$25 million Congress has appropriated and nearly \$27 million of matching commitments from our park partners, the Centennial Initiative today moves onto the landscape and into people’s lives. It’s a great day for the National Park Service and a great day for *Rangers in the Classroom* at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.”

Philanthropic support for the *Rangers in the Classroom* comes from the Sequoia Parks Foundation, a non-profit fundraising group based in Visalia, California. During the first phase of its efforts, the Parks Foundation has raised over \$90,000 to match federal funds. These funds have come from a broad variety of sources. Recent support has come from the Land of Lakes Foundation, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, and numerous individuals. To learn more about the effort to raise funds for this program, visit the Sequoia Parks Foundation website at www.sequoiaparksfoundation.org.

The program brings national park rangers to Central California schools to share messages about nature and national parks. Lessons are designed to support existing California State curriculum standards in science, mathematics, language arts, and social studies.

The *Rangers in the Classroom* program was designed by National Park Service staff in close consultation with an advisory group of local educators. Organizations participating included the Tulare County Superintendent of Schools, the Clemmie Gill School of Science and Technology (SCICON), the Sequoia Riverlands Trust, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

The National Park Centennial Initiative is a 10-year program to reinvigorate America's national parks and prepare them for a second century. The initiative includes a focus on increased funding for park operations plus a President's Challenge: up to \$100 million a year in federal funds to match \$100 million a year in philanthropic donations to the National Park Service.

"This is how we put our Centennial goals on the ground and it's quite a beginning," Bomar said. "We have 110 programs and projects involving more than 130 individual, public and non-profit partners benefitting 76 national park in 38 states and the District of Columbia."

The National Park Centennial Initiative provides a framework for the National Park Service to engage the public in its mission. Its goals and strategies will embrace new constituents and gain support from a broad array of public and private partners to ensure America's national parks continue to thrive into the next 100 years.

Centennial Challenge programs and projects for 2008 elsewhere in the United States include:

- Nine national parks across the country will embark on a national effort to discover and catalog all plant and animal life in the national parks – technically speaking, they will conduct *all taxa biologic inventories*.
- Restoration of ancient redwood forest and watershed in Redwood National Park.
- Creation of the Institute at the Golden Gate to Advance Preservation and Global Stability, Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco.
- New or expanded Junior Ranger programs at many national parks.

For a complete list of the 2008 National Park Service Centennial Challenge projects and programs please visit www.nps.gov/2016.

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