**NRCA Author Template** (updated March 2017)

The Natural Resource Condition Assessment (NRCA) Author Template was prepared by the NRCA Publication Team and is intended for study investigators and authors who are preparing NRCA reports for publication in the National Park Service (NPS) Natural Resource Report (NRR) series. The template is a 33-page outline that you should use to draft your NRCA report. If you notice a discrepancy, an error, or you are just plain confused, we welcome your questions and feedback so we can improve future guidelines. Thanks!

**This NRCA Author Template includes the following:**

* Lists of Contents with hyperlinks to other lists, front matter, chapters, and appendices
* Lists of Figures, Tables, and Appendices with hyperlinks to examples
* Page numbering (including roman numeral front matter)
* Chapters 2-5 guidelines (Chapter 1 remains constant for all NRCA reports)
* Reference list of examples
* The required NRR publication series MS Word font Styles are indicated and built-in

***In addition to this template we have other instructional documents that you may find useful, and these are posted on the NRCA guidance documents webpage:***

* NRCA Report Drafting Guidance: Contains the following sections: Steps to Prepare and Submit Your NRCA Report; How to Avoid Document-crashing Scenarios; and NRCA Publication Staff Contact Information.
* Importing and Replacing MS Word Styles: Instructions on how to upload the current and correct Word font Styles to your already drafted NRCA report.[[1]](#footnote-1)
* Examples for NRCA Author Template: Formatting guidelines and examples of graphics (tables, figures, photos) for NRCA reports.
* NRCA Author Checklist
* Standard NRCA Report Outline – Annotated Version: Similar to this Author Template, but provides a bit more detail.

**Continued on next page**

**How do you use this template?**

Type your text into the yellow highlighted areas of the template and delete the text that was originally highlighted. Leave all other text intact, unless otherwise noted or in instructional red text. Feel free to delete headings that are not applicable to your report, or edit the wording for the headings in the template.

**How is this template different from previous templates?**

This template does not greatly differ from previous templates, except that it is shorter and has fewer requirements. In essence, we are no longer asking report authors to do some previously requested or required formatting. Why? Because we find that things tend to move so much when we format the final reports that we might as well do these format changes for you.

***For example, authors no longer need to do the following:***

* No need to insert blank pages
* No need to make sure a level 1 heading is on an odd page
* No need to attend to the front and back cover pages (just add the photo(s) you want in the designated area(s) of the front page(s) and fill in the yellow highlighted areas of the template)
* No need to split tables and add a “continued” table caption
* No need to format the page numbers on the left margin of landscape oriented pages

***Things we would really like authors to do that make our formatting job easier/quicker:***

* Use our current template, including the boilerplate Chapter 1
* Be consistent within and between your report’s tables, to the extent it is feasible to do so. For example, in your NRCA report, you decided that the first word in a table cell is always capitalized; numbers with decimals are in cells that are always aligned center right, your borders are all 1 pt., your table note scheme is always A, B, C, as opposed to a, b, c or 1, 2, 3 here and there, etc.
* Use a mark (such as a dash) for blank table cells so we know the cell was *supposed* to be blank
* Be consistent with the way you cite photos (e.g., NPS photo by J. Clark vs. NPS/J. CLARK)
* Check that each Lit Cited citation has at least one corresponding in-text citation (Hint: Use Word’s Find function to do this)
* Verify that any hyperlinks you have in your Lit Cited section are correct

**The NRCA template begins on the next page**

**(You can delete these pages that precede it)**

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|  | |
| National Park Service  U.S. Department of the Interior  Natural Resource Stewardship and Science | National Park Service Logo |

Natural Resource Condition Assessment

Type Your Park Name Here **(nrps Subtitle)**

Natural Resource Report NPS/XXXX/NRR—20XX/XXX

Insert your cover photo here (delete this text and this box)

(Optional) Insert your inside front cover photo here (delete this text and this box)

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If you inserted an inside front cover photo on this page, type the caption here ***(nrps Inside covers)***   
Image credit goes here

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Natural Resource Condition Assessment

Type Your Park Name Here **(nrps Subtitle)**

Natural Resource Report NPS/XXXX/NRR—20XX/XXX

Author One1, Author Two2, Author Three1,Author Four3 ***(nrps Normal single line)***

1National Park Service (organization name is mandatory)   
Address Line 1(address is optional)   
Address Line 2 (address is optional)   
City, State Zip code (city and state are mandatory, Zip code is optional)

2Organization Name (organization name is mandatory)  
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3Organization Name (organization name is mandatory)  
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Month Year

U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Natural Resource Stewardship and Science

Fort Collins, Colorado

The National Park Service, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science office in Fort Collins, Colorado, publishes a range of reports that address natural resource topics.These reports are of interest and applicability to a broad audience in the National Park Service and others in natural resource management, including scientists, conservation and environmental constituencies, and the public.

The Natural Resource Report Series is used to disseminate comprehensive information and analysis about natural resources and related topics concerning lands managed by the National Park Service. The series supports the advancement of science, informed decision-making, and the achievement of the National Park Service mission. The series also provides a forum for presenting more lengthy results that may not be accepted by publications with page limitations.

All manuscripts in the series receive the appropriate level of peer review to ensure that the information is scientifically credible, technically accurate, appropriately written for the intended audience, and designed and published in a professional manner.

This report received informal peer review, which was provided by subject-matter experts who were not directly involved in the collection, analysis, or reporting of the data. The level and extent of peer review was based on the importance of report content or its potentially controversial or precedent-setting nature.

Views, statements, findings, conclusions, recommendations, and data in this report do not necessarily reflect views and policies of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute endorsement or recommendation for use by the U.S. Government.

NPS XXXXXX, Month 201X

This report is available in digital format from the [Natural Resource Condition Assessment Program website](https://www.nature.nps.gov/water/nrca/reports.cfm) and the [Natural Resource Publications Management website](http://www.nature.nps.gov/publications/nrpm/). To receive this report in a format that is optimized to be accessible using screen readers for the visually or cognitively impaired, please email [irma@nps.gov](mailto:irma@nps.gov?subject=irma@nps.gov).

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Contents *(nrps Contents)* *(Notice that the List of Contents only populates up to 3rd order headings)*

*(Page Right)* Page

[Figures v](#_Toc476045232)

[Tables vi](#_Toc476045233)

[Appendices or Appendixes vii](#_Toc476045234)

[Executive Summary viii](#_Toc476045235)

[Acknowledgments (optional) ix](#_Toc476045236)

[List of Terms, Small Glossary, Acronyms, or Contacts (optional) x](#_Toc476045237)

[Chapter 1. NRCA Background Information 1](#_Toc476045238)

[Chapter 2. Introduction and Resource Setting 4](#_Toc476045239)

[2.1. Introduction 4](#_Toc476045240)

[2.1.1. Enabling Legislation 4](#_Toc476045241)

[2.1.2. Geographic Setting 4](#_Toc476045242)

[2.1.3. Visitation Statistics 4](#_Toc476045243)

[2.2. Natural Resources 4](#_Toc476045244)

[2.2.1. Ecological Units and Watersheds 4](#_Toc476045245)

[2.2.2. Resource Descriptions 4](#_Toc476045246)

[2.2.3. Resource Issues Overview 4](#_Toc476045247)

[2.3. Resource Stewardship 6](#_Toc476045248)

[2.3.1. Management Directive and Planning Guidance 7](#_Toc476045249)

[2.3.2. Status of Supporting Science 7](#_Toc476045250)

[Chapter 3. Study Scoping and Design 8](#_Toc476045251)

[3.1. Preliminary Scoping 8](#_Toc476045252)

[3.2. Study Design 8](#_Toc476045253)

[3.2.1. Indicator Framework, Focal Study Resources and Indicators 8](#_Toc476045254)

[3.2.2. Reporting Areas 9](#_Toc476045255)

[3.2.3. General Approach and Methods 9](#_Toc476045256)

[Chapter 4. Natural Resource Conditions 12](#_Toc476045257)

[4.1. Resource A (e.g., Air Quality) 12](#_Toc476045258)

[4.1.1. Indicator 1 (e.g., Atmospheric Deposition) 12](#_Toc476045259)

[4.1.2. Indicator 2 13](#_Toc476045260)

[4.1.3. Indicator 3 13](#_Toc476045261)

[4.2. Resource B 13](#_Toc476045262)

[4.2.1. Indicator 1 13](#_Toc476045263)

[Chapter 5. Discussion 14](#_Toc476045264)

[Literature Cited 15](#_Toc476045265)

[Appendices 18](#_Toc476045266)

Figures *(nrps Heading 1)*

*(Page Right)* Page

[**Figure 1.** Figures (maps, non-decorative photos, charts, etc.) should be in *nrps Image line* font Style and placed in line with text directly following the paragraph that contains the figure’s first mention. For document stability, please do not text wrap figures and, if possible, ensure figures are between 4.5” and 6.5” in width. All figures must have a caption and be properly cited. Throughout your report, be consistent with the basic layout scheme (justification, borders, and size) and ensure that all graphic features are discernable and all major text attributes (legends and labels) are legible 5](#_Toc477272253)

Tables *(nrps Heading 1)*

*(Page Right)* Page

[**Table 1.** Tables should be in MS Word Tables (not pictures or images of tables or tables housed in external MS Office files (e.g., MS Excel), and they should be placed in line with text directly following the paragraph that contains the table’s first mention. For document stability, do not text wrap tables. All tables should be consistently formatted; the table below is formatted in a way that is compliant with NRCA standards and protocol and is highly recommended (see “Examples for NRCA Author Template” for other options). Please be mindful of keeping consistent capitalization and abbreviation schemes across tables. Tables should be no greater than 6.4” in width on a portrait page and 8.9” on a landscape page. Due to the possibility of movement during formatting, please do not add the heading “continued” to tables that span multiple pages, as this will be done by the NRCA publication team. 6](#_Toc477272190)

[**Table 2.** Example of a NRCA framework table (this table was originally published in 2016 for Lyndon B. Johnson NHP).See Table 1 for additional guidance on table formatting 8](#_Toc477272191)

[**Table 3.** Indicator symbols used to indicate condition, trend, and confidence in the assessment. (This table requires no further editing and should be used as is.) 10](#_Toc477272192)

[**Table 4.** Example indicator symbols and descriptions of how to interpret them in WCS tables. (This table requires no further editing and should be used as is.) 10](#_Toc477272193)

[**Table A.** Working examples of all standard indicator symbols. Do not include this table into the final layout. 11](#_Toc477272194)

[**Table 5.** Graphical summary of status and trends for sulfate and nitrate within air quality, including rationale and reference condition. (From the 2017 NRCA report for Carl Sandburg home National Historic Site). 13](#_Toc477272195)

Appendices or Appendixes *(nrps Heading 1)*

*(Page Right)* Page

[**Appendix A** 18](#_Toc477272285)

[**Appendix B** 19](#_Toc477272286)

Executive Summary *(nrps Heading 1)*

All NRCA reports should have an Executive Summary. The Executive Summary, which targets non-technical audiences, should be a "stand alone" section that summarizes the prominent facts discussed in the report and the conclusions reached in relation to study objectives.

A well-prepared summary can be as short as two to three pages. It should be as brief as possible, yet cover the subject in a clearly written, non-technical style so that, on its own, the reader is informed what the project was about and what conclusions were made. ***(nrps Normal)***

Acknowledgments (optional) *(nrps Heading 1)*

The Acknowledgements section is optional for NRCA reports. If included, briefly acknowledge those who directly helped with research or writing. Acknowledgments of typists, illustrators, editors, and referees may be included, but generally are discouraged. Use only forename initials with surname and do not include professional titles or academic degrees. ***(nrps Normal)***

List of Terms, Small Glossary, Acronyms, or Contacts (optional) *(nrps Heading 1)*

Some reports include a list of terms (or small glossary), commonly used acronyms, or personal contacts. If they will fit on one page, two or more sections of this type may be placed on the same page. ***(nrps Normal)***

Chapter 1. NRCA Background Information *(Do not edit)*

Natural Resource Condition Assessments (NRCAs) evaluate current conditions for a subset of natural resources and resource indicators in national park units, hereafter “parks.” NRCAs also report on trends in resource condition (when possible), identify critical data gaps, and characterize a general level of confidence for study findings. The resources and indicators emphasized in a given project depend on the park’s resource setting, status of resource stewardship planning and science in identifying high-priority indicators, and availability of data and expertise to assess current conditions for a variety of potential study resources and indicators.

**NRCAs Strive to Provide…**

* + Credible condition reporting for a subset of important park natural resources and indicators
  + Useful condition summaries by broader resource categories or topics, and by park areas

NRCAs represent a relatively new approach to assessing and reporting on park resource conditions. They are meant to complement, not replace, traditional issue-and threat-based resource assessments. As distinguishing characteristics, all NRCAs

* Are multi-disciplinary in scope;1
* Employ hierarchical indicator frameworks;2
* Identify or develop reference conditions/values for comparison against current conditions;3
* Emphasize spatial evaluation of conditions and Geographic Information System (GIS) products;4
* Summarize key findings by park areas;5 and
* Follow national NRCA guidelines and standards for study design and reporting products.

Although the primary objective of NRCAs is to report on current conditions relative to logical forms of reference conditions and values, NRCAs also report on trends, when appropriate (i.e., when the underlying data and methods support such reporting), as well as influences on resource conditions. These influences may include past activities or conditions that provide a helpful context for

1 The breadth of natural resources and number/type of indicators evaluated will vary by park.

2 Frameworks help guide a multi-disciplinary selection of indicators and subsequent “roll up” and reporting of data for measures 🢣 conditions for indicators 🢣 condition summaries by broader topics and park areas

3 NRCAs must consider ecologically-based reference conditions, must also consider applicable legal and regulatory standards, and can consider other management-specified condition objectives or targets; each study indicator can be evaluated against one or more types of logical reference conditions. Reference values can be expressed in qualitative to quantitative terms, as a single value or range of values; they represent desirable resource conditions or, alternatively, condition states that we wish to avoid or that require a follow-up response (e.g., ecological thresholds or management “triggers”).

4 As possible and appropriate, NRCAs describe condition gradients or differences across a park for important natural resources and study indicators through a set of GIS coverages and map products.

5 In addition to reporting on indicator-level conditions, investigators are asked to take a bigger picture (more holistic) view and summarize overall findings and provide suggestions to managers on an area-by-area basis: 1) by park ecosystem/habitat types or watersheds, and 2) for other park areas as requested.

understanding current conditions, and/or present-day threats and stressors that are best interpreted at park, watershed, or landscape scales (though NRCAs do not report on condition status for land areas and natural resources beyond park boundaries). Intensive cause-and-effect analyses of threats and stressors, and development of detailed treatment options, are outside the scope of NRCAs.

Due to their modest funding, relatively quick timeframe for completion, and reliance on existing data and information, NRCAs are not intended to be exhaustive. Their methodology typically involves an informal synthesis of scientific data and information from multiple and diverse sources. Level of rigor and statistical repeatability will vary by resource or indicator, reflecting differences in existing data and knowledge bases across the varied study components.

The credibility of NRCA results is derived from the data, methods, and reference values used in the project work, which are designed to be appropriate for the stated purpose of the project, as well as adequately documented. For each study indicator for which current condition or trend is reported, we will identify critical data gaps and describe the level of confidence in at least qualitative terms. Involvement of park staff and National Park Service (NPS) subject-matter experts at critical points during the project timeline is also important. These staff will be asked to assist with the selection of study indicators; recommend data sets, methods, and reference conditions and values; and help provide a multi-disciplinary review of draft study findings and products.

NRCAs can yield new insights about current park resource conditions, but, in many cases, their greatest value may be the development of useful documentation regarding known or suspected resource conditions within parks. Reporting products can help park managers as they think about near-term workload priorities, frame data and study needs for important park resources, and communicate messages about current park resource conditions to various audiences. A successful NRCA delivers science-based information that is both credible and has practical uses for a variety of park decision making, planning, and partnership activities.

**Important NRCA Success Factors**

* + Obtaining good input from park staff and other NPS subject-matter experts at critical points in the project timeline
  + Using study frameworks that accommodate meaningful condition reporting at multiple levels (measures 🢣 indicators 🢣 broader resource topics and park areas)
  + Building credibility by clearly documenting the data and methods used, critical data gaps, and level of confidence for indicator-level condition findings

However, it is important to note that NRCAs do not establish management targets for study indicators. That process must occur through park planning and management activities. What an NRCA can do is deliver science-based information that will assist park managers in their ongoing, long-term efforts to describe and quantify a park’s desired resource conditions and management targets. In the near term, NRCA findings assist strategic park resource planning6 and help parks to report on government accountability measures.7 In addition, although in-depth analysis of the effects of climate change on park natural resources is outside the scope of NRCAs, the condition analyses and data sets developed for NRCAs will be useful for park-level climate-change studies and planning efforts.

NRCAs also provide a useful complement to rigorous NPS science support programs, such as the NPS Natural Resources Inventory & Monitoring (I&M) Program.8 For example, NRCAs can provide current condition estimates and help establish reference conditions, or baseline values, for some of a park’s vital signs monitoring indicators. They can also draw upon non-NPS data to help evaluate current conditions for those same vital signs. In some cases, I&M data sets are incorporated into NRCA analyses and reporting products.

**NRCA Reporting Products…**

**Provide a credible, snapshot-in-time evaluation for a subset of important park natural resources and indicators, to help park managers:**

* Direct limited staff and funding resources to park areas and natural resources that represent high need and/or high opportunity situations   
  **(near-term operational planning and management)**
* Improve understanding and quantification for desired conditions for the park’s “fundamental” and “other important” natural resources and values  
  **(longer-term strategic planning)**
* Communicate succinct messages regarding current resource conditions to government program managers, to Congress, and to the general public   
  **(“resource condition status” reporting)**

Over the next several years, the NPS plans to fund an NRCA project for each of the approximately 270 parks served by the NPS I&M Program. For more information visit the [NRCA Program website](http://www.nature.nps.gov/water/nrca/index.cfm).

6An NRCA can be useful during the development of a park’s Resource Stewardship Strategy (RSS) and can also be tailored to act as a post-RSS project.

7 While accountability reporting measures are subject to change, the spatial and reference-based condition data provided by NRCAs will be useful for most forms of “resource condition status” reporting as may be required by the NPS, the Department of the Interior, or the Office of Management and Budget.

8 The I&M program consists of 32 networks nationwide that are implementing “vital signs” monitoring in order to assess the condition of park ecosystems and develop a stronger scientific basis for stewardship and management of natural resources across the National Park System. “Vital signs” are a subset of physical, chemical, and biological elements and processes of park ecosystems that are selected to represent the overall health or condition of park resources, known or hypothesized effects of stressors, or elements that have important human values.

Chapter 2. Introduction and Resource Setting *(nrps Heading 1)*

This chapter introduces park setting and important park natural resources.

2.1. Introduction (*nrps Heading 2*) (estimated length 3-6 pp)

This section should include the purpose for the report, as well as any background or other information to provide context for the information presented. ***(nrps Normal)***

2.1.1. Enabling Legislation (nrps Heading 3)

This section should include information about when and why the park unit was established. This section should be brief and mostly contain excerpts from enabling legislation. ***(nrps Normal)***

2.1.2. Geographic Setting (nrps Heading 3)

This section should include a description and maps of the parks size and location, as well as general park/regional characteristics that might include: physiographic setting, population and land use patterns, socioeconomic conditions, etc. ***(nrps Normal)***

2.1.3. Visitation Statistics (nrps Heading 3)

This section should include recent visitation levels and trends. Optionally, this section can include a breakdown of visitor use data to show the most-common visitor activities, most-visited areas of the park, etc. ***(nrps Normal)***

2.2. Natural Resources (*nrps Heading 2*)

2.2.1. Ecological Units and Watersheds (nrps Heading 3) (can combine 2.2.1. and 2.2.2.)

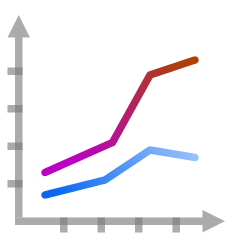
This section should include an introduction to park ecosystems or habitat types (including maps), an introduction to park and adjacent area watersheds (including maps), and, optionally, this section can also include additional landscape or regional scale natural resource information. ***(nrps Normal)***

2.2.2. Resource Descriptions (nrps Heading 3)

This section should include “area by area” or “resource by resource” descriptions for important park natural resources, including identification of federally listed threatened and endangered species and other rare, sensitive, or significant natural resources. ***(nrps Normal)***

2.2.3. Resource Issues Overview (nrps Heading 3)

This section should include an introduction to resource condition threats or stressors identified as being “of concern” in terms of potential risk/harm to important park resources. Optionally, this section can also include descriptions of past activities or conditions that influence current park conditions. Figures are often helpful in this section (Figure 1). ***(nrps Normal)***



***nrps Image line***

**Figure 1.** Figures (maps, non-decorative photos, charts, etc.) should be in *nrps Image line* font Style and placed in line with text directly following the paragraph that contains the figure’s first mention. For document stability, please do not text wrap figures and, if possible, ensure figures are between 4.5” and 6.5” in width. All figures must have a caption and be properly cited. Throughout your report, be consistent with the basic layout scheme (justification, borders, and size) and ensure that all graphic features are discernable and all major text attributes (legends and labels) are legible. ***(nrps Figure caption)***



Purely decorative graphics (i.e., photos and images that do not show data results or analyses, facts, or contextual information) should be formatted in a way consistent with figures but should not be mentioned in the text or listed in any list of contents. All photos must have a caption and be properly cited (e.g., Cows grazing in the Sunnyside Meadow at ROMO. (NPS/JOHN DOE). ***(nrps Photo caption)***

2.3. Resource Stewardship *(nrps Heading 2)* (brief summary; est. length = 2-4 pp)

This section summarizes natural resources and indicators already identified as important: a) from park-level planning or management processes and decision documents; and b) from the perspective of the NPS I&M Program and other park or NPS science support programs. Taken together, this helps frame a longer list of potential study resources and indicators. It can also suggest reference conditions and values to use. **Ideally, NPS should assemble this information prior to the study and provide it to the study investigators before the project kickoff meeting. Most of this information can be succinctly summarized and communicated via tables** (Table 1). ***(nrps Normal)***

**Table 1.** Tables should be in MS Word Tables (not pictures or images of tables or tables housed in external MS Office files (e.g., MS Excel), and they should be placed in line with text directly following the paragraph that contains the table’s first mention. For document stability, do not text wrap tables. All tables should be consistently formatted; the table below is formatted in a way that is compliant with NRCA standards and protocol and is highly recommended (see “Examples for NRCA Author Template” for other options). Please be mindful of keeping consistent capitalization and abbreviation schemes across tables. Tables should be no greater than 6.4” in width on a portrait page and 8.9” on a landscape page. Due to the possibility of movement during formatting, please do not add the heading “continued” to tables that span multiple pages, as this will be done by the NRCA publication team. (*nrps Table caption*)

| Land Cover Class\* *(nrps Table header)* | Hectares | % Land Cover |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No data ***(nrps Table cell)*** | 1,041,794.3 | 63.8 |
| Snow/cloud/light barren | 157,026.8 | 9.6 |
| Snow/cloud/light barren | 57,023.3 | 3.5 |
| Mixed forest | 47,142.5 | 2.9 |
| Open low shrub graminoid/mesic bog/graminoid shrub tundra | 41,426.3 | 2.5 |
| Closed shrub graminoid | 38,946.5 | 2.4 |
| Mountain shadow | 37,945.3 | 2.3 |
| Conifer forest | 37,071.8 | 2.3 |
| Deep clear water | 36,059.5 | 2.2 |
| Open low shrub eric./conifer woodland/mesic bog/eric. shrub tundra | 32,030.3 | 2.0 |
| Lichen shrub tundra | 27,116.5 | 1.7 |
| Miscellaneous deciduous (open alder, cottonwood, birch, willow) | 21,993.8 | 1.3 |
| Lichen | 19,882.0 | 1.2 |
| Ice, snow and clouds | 12,512.5 | 0.8 |
| Shallow/sedimented water | 8,041.3 | 0.5 |
| Marsh/very wet bog | 5,364.3 | 0.3 |
| Shadow | 4,609.8 | 0.3 |
| Wet bog/wet meadow | 4,510.0 | 0.3 |
| Turbid and/or shallow water | 1,245.8 | 0.1 |
| **Total** | **1,631,742.0** | **100.0** |

\* This table was published in 2016 for Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. (For a table with one note, we suggest using an asterisk [\*]; for a table with more than one note, we suggest using the superscript scheme A, B, C, etc.) ***(nrps Table note)***

2.3.1. Management Directive and Planning Guidance (nrps Heading 3)

If already determined by park planners or managers, this section should include the following: what the park’s fundamental and other important natural resources and related values are; the desired conditions for those resources/values and the measurement indicators—as well as the (short or longer term) management target values. Also include other formal management directives or planning guidance, such as special area designations within the park (e.g., wilderness areas or wild and scenic rivers), natural resource management objectives in park management plans, etc. ***(nrps Normal)***

2.3.2. Status of Supporting Science (nrps Heading 3)

This section should include information on natural resources and indicators (e.g., park vital signs) already identified as high priority for long term monitoring or other purposes. If already identified, include any science-based reference conditions and values for those resources and indicators. Lastly, include the status for implementing vital signs monitoring, inventory datasets, and other keystone science support programs or projects at the park. ***(nrps Normal)***

Chapter 3. Study Scoping and Design *(nrps Heading 1)*

This chapter documents the study scoping process. It also describes study design outcomes. Input from parks and other NPS subject matter experts is essential to selecting a good subset of park resources and indicators to focus on, to help identify appropriate data sets and analytical approaches, to determine the indicator framework(s) that will be used in the study, and to decide on the park areas to use for a more holistic “roll up” and summary of overall conditions. ***(nrps Normal for all non-heading body text)***

3.1. Preliminary Scoping *(nrps Heading 2)*

This section should document the meetings or other processes used to obtain NPS input during this phase. It should summarize important points and outcomes, with detailed descriptions and supporting documentation placed into an appendix (e.g., meeting attendee lists, potential list of study indicators, likely data sources, subject matter experts, reference conditions) as well as any other important steps or activities related to this study phase.

3.2. Study Design *(nrps Heading 2)*

3.2.1. Indicator Framework, Focal Study Resources and Indicators (nrps Heading 3)

This section should introduce the hierarchical indicator framework(s) to be used in the study. Then, using the framework, it should identify the natural resources and indicators (and measures, if multiple measures per indicator) that will be emphasized in this study.

Ecological Integrity Assessment Framework ***(nrps Heading 4)***

This section usually includes a description of the type of ecological framework used for this park unit. It typically also includes a corresponding framework table (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Example of a NRCA framework table (this table was originally published in 2016 for Lyndon B. Johnson NHP).See Table 1 for additional guidance on table formatting. *(nrps Table caption)*

| Framework Category *(nrps Table header)* | Resource | Assessment Level | Indicators and MeasuresB |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Landscape conditionA | Viewshed | Full assessment | * Scenic and historic integrity (2 measures) |
| Night sky | Full assessment | * Sky brightness (2 measures) * Sky quality (1 measure) |
| Soundscape | Full assessment | * Audibility (1 measure) * Sound level (2 measures) |
| Supporting environment | Air quality | Full assessment | * Visibility * Level of ozone * Atmospheric wet deposition in total * N and total S |
| Geology | Limited assessment | * Geologic resource integrity |
| Surface water quality | Full assessment | * Field properties (5 measures) * E. coli(1 measure) * Nutrients (1 measure) |
| Groundwater | Full assessment | * Groundwater elevation  (change in groundwater elevation) |
| Biological integrity of vegetation | Riparian habitat | Limited assessment | * Vegetation (7 measures) * Erosion/deposition (3 measures) |
| Restoration grasslands | Full assessment | * Hydrology soil/site stability and hydrology function (10 indicators) * Biotic integrity (5 indicators) |
| Exotic plants | Full assessment | * Potential to alter native plant communities  (1 measure) * Prevalence of exotic plants (3 measures) |
| Live oak | Limited assessment | * Occurrence and severity of oak wilt disease (3 measures) |
| Biological integrity  of wildlife | Landbirds | Full assessment | * Species of occurrence (2 measures) |
| White-tailed deer & exotic blackbuck antelope | Limited assessment | * Deer & antelope populations  (estimated # of deer & antelope) * Impact on park resources  (damage to vegetation) |

1. Notice how this table’s use of capital letters is consistent with the other table examples in this template ***(nrps Table note)***
2. While formatting should remain consistent, variation with table layout for this table is common to meet different parks’ needs.

Example of a Fifth Order Heading **(nrps Heading 5) (notice this has changed since last template)**

Consectetur gravida etiam facilisis nostra semper magna, libero proin fermentum aenean iaculis orci

Example of a Sixth Order Heading **(nrps Heading 6) (notice this has changed since last template)**

Donec urna risus felis ad fames in quam imperdiet, vestibulum etiam nunc dapibus fusce eu

3.2.2. Reporting Areas (nrps Heading 3)

This section must include whether ecosystem/habitat units or watersheds (at what scale?) will be used to summarize the overall study findings. Optionally, this section could include information on additional areas used for summary purposes (e.g., front country vs. backcountry, wilderness areas, formal or informal management units).

3.2.3. General Approach and Methods (nrps Heading 3)

This section should summarize the general approach and types of methods used to evaluate and report condition findings reported in chapters 4 and 5.

Summary Indicator Symbols ***(nrps Heading 4)***

This section should introduce the “thumbnail” condition statement or score, by providing a succinct statement or color-coded icon to indicate current condition (and trend, if evaluated). (Table 3 and Table 4). Please note that only the icons shown in Table 3 and Table 4 will be accepted for NRCA reports. Also, please note that the tables shown here (Tables 3 and 4) must be presented in NRCAs as *tables* (older templates have them as figures).

**Table 3.** Indicator symbols used to indicate condition, trend, and confidence in the assessment. (This table requires no further editing and should be used as is.) *(nrps Table caption)*

| Condition Status | | Trend in Condition | | Confidence in Assessment | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Resource is in Good Condition | Resource is in Good Condition | Condition is Improving | Condition is Improving | High | High |
| Warrants  Moderate Concern | Resource warrants  Moderate Concern | Condition is Unchanging | Condition is Unchanging | Medium | Medium |
| Warrants  Significant Concern | Resource warrants  Significant Concern | Condition is Deteriorating | Condition is Deteriorating | Low | Low |

**Table 4.** Example indicator symbols and descriptions of how to interpret them in WCS tables. (This table requires no further editing and should be used as is.) *(nrps Table caption)*

| Symbol Example | Description of Symbol |
| --- | --- |
| Resource is in good condition; condition is improving; high confidence in the assess | Resource is in good condition; its condition is improving; high confidence in the assessment. |
| Condition of resource warrants moderate concern; condition is unchanging; medium confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants moderate concern; condition is unchanging; medium confidence in the assessment. |
| Condition of resource warrants significant concern; trend in condition is unknown or not applicable; low confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants significant concern; trend in condition is unknown or not applicable; low confidence in the assessment. |
| Current condition is unknown or indeterminate due to inadequate data, lack of reference value(s) for comparative purposes, and/or insufficient expert knowledge to reach a more specific condition determination; trend in condition is unknown or not applicable; low confidence in the assessment. | Current condition is unknown or indeterminate due to inadequate data, lack of reference value(s) for comparative purposes, and/or insufficient expert knowledge to reach a more specific condition determination; trend in condition is unknown or not applicable; low confidence in the assessment. |

Standard NRCA Indicator Symbols

Table A below provides examples of standard indicator symbols that are approved by the NRSS Office of Education and Outreach and the NPS Web Standards Office. They are designed for predictable performance in the final PDF.

**Table A.** Working examples of all standard indicator symbols. Do not include this table into the final layout. *(nrps Table caption)*

| Icon | Icon | Icon | Icon | Icon | Icon | Icon | Icon |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Resource is in good condition; condition is improving; high confidence in the assessment. | Resource is in good condition; condition is unchanging; high confidence in the assessment. | Resource is in good condition; condition is deteriorating; high confidence in the assessment. | Resource is in good condition; trend in condition is unknown or not applicable; high confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants moderate concern; condition is improving; high confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants moderate concern; condition is unchanging; high confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants moderate concern; condition is deteriorating; high confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants moderate concern; trend in condition is unknown or not applicable; high confidence in the assessment. |
| Resource is in good condition; condition is improving; medium confidence in the assessment. | Resource is in good condition; condition is unchanging; medium confidence in the assessment. | Resource is in good condition; condition is deteriorating; medium confidence in the assessment. | Resource is in good condition; trend in condition is unknown or not applicable; medium confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants moderate concern; condition is improving; medium confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants moderate concern; condition is unchanging; medium confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants moderate concern; condition is deteriorating; medium confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants moderate concern; trend in condition is unknown or not applicable; medium confidence in the assessment. |
| Resource is in good condition; condition is improving; low confidence in the assessment. | Resource is in good condition; condition is unchanging; low confidence in the assessment. | Resource is in good condition; condition is deteriorating; low confidence in the assessment. | Resource is in good condition; trend in condition is unknown or not applicable; low confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants moderate concern; condition is improving; low confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants moderate concern; condition is unchanging; low confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants moderate concern; condition is deteriorating; low confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants moderate concern; trend in condition is unknown or not applicable; low confidence in the assessment. |
| Condition of resource warrants significant concern; condition is improving; high confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants significant concern; condition is unchanging; high confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants significant concern; condition is deteriorating; high confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants significant concern; trend in condition is unknown or not applicable; high confidence in the assessment. |  |  |  |  |
| Condition of resource warrants significant concern; condition is improving; medium confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants significant concern; condition is unchanging; medium confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants significant concern; condition is deteriorating; medium confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants significant concern; trend in condition is unknown or not applicable; medium confidence in the assessment. |  |  | Current condition is unknown or indeterminate due to inadequate data, lack of reference value(s) for comparative purposes, and/or insufficient expert knowledge to reach a more specific condition determination; trend in condition is unknown or not applicable; low confidence in the assessment. |  |
| Condition of resource warrants significant concern; condition is improving; low confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants significant concern; condition is unchanging; low confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants significant concern; condition is deteriorating; low confidence in the assessment. | Condition of resource warrants significant concern; trend in condition is unknown or not applicable; low confidence in the assessment. |  |  |  |  |

Chapter 4. Natural Resource Conditions *(nrps Heading 1)*

This chapter should emphasize current condition reporting for the subset of important park natural resources and indicators emphasized in the study. If the study design includes a structured logic model, to roll up and report explicit condition scores by broader resource categories or for park areas, scores at those levels can also be included in this chapter. **This chapter is structured to maximize credibility and defensibility of study findings.** The assumption is that the study framework will drive the reporting scheme used in this chapter; however, authors can propose alternative ways to organize and report resource and indicator level condition findings if they feel it improves report flow and readability. ***(nrps Normal for all non-heading body text)***

4.1. Reporting Category 1 (e.g., Air Quality) *(nrps Heading 2)*

This section should include an introductory condition statement. A simple data graphic (map or chart) could be helpful here. This section should end with a bulleted list of the measures featured for this resource.

4.1.1. Resource or Indicator A (e.g., Atmospheric Deposition) (nrps Heading 3) (variable length; estimated at 2-8 pp per resource/indicator)

Include a “thumbnail” condition statement or score: a succinct statement or color coded icon to indicate current condition (and trend, if evaluated), a simple data graphic (map or chart) could also be placed here.

**Note: The following information items need to be explicitly addressed through some combination of narrative descriptions and summary tables.**

Description ***(nrps Heading 4)***

This section should include the rationale, relevance, and context of this indicator for the resource (what this indicator means or tells us; why it is important to include in this study). If this indicator includes multiple measures, identify the measures that were evaluated and reported together.

Data and Methods (including Reference Conditions/Values Used) ***(nrps Heading 4)***

This section should include what data sets were used to evaluate the indicator and how were the data sets adjusted or processed as lead-in to analysis. Additionally, this section should address how the data were evaluated and analyzed to determine current conditions and trend. If any of the information in this section involves extensive or highly technical descriptions, refer the reader to an appendix or GIS metadata file for supporting details.

Reference Conditions/Values ***(nrps Heading 4)***

This section should address what type(s) of reference conditions and values were used and why they are logical and appropriate to use. Please include the literature or data sources they are taken from and, if they originate with the study investigators, how were they developed.

Condition and Trend ***(nrps Heading 4)***

This section should include a narrative that reports key findings regarding current conditions and trend (if evaluated), including maps and succinct data graphs/figures where possible. As appropriate, identify important threats and stressors.

Level of Confidence and Data Gaps **(nrps Heading 4)**

This section should describe what the overall confidence assigned to the condition findings is for this indicator, which can be stated in qualitative terms. Additionally, this section may include descriptions of important assumptions made with respect to the underlying data sets or as part of the analysis as well as sources of uncertainty or caveats to use. Lastly, this section should identify critical data needs/gaps.

Condition Summary ***(nrps Heading 4)***

This section typical only includes the condition assessment table (e.g., Table 5).

**Table 5.** Graphical summary of status and trends for sulfate and nitrate within air quality, including rationale and reference condition. (From the 2017 NRCA report for Carl Sandburg home National Historic Site). *(nrps Table caption)*

| Resource | Indicator | Status and Trend | Rationale and Reference Conditions |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Air quality | Total sulfur  (wet deposition in kg/ha/yr) | **Condition of resource warrants significant concern; trend in condition is unknown or not applicable; medium confidence in the assessment.** | Estimated sulfur wet deposition was 2.7 kg/ha/yr (2008-12); condition elevated to significant concern due to sensitive ecosystems; NPS ARD advises against using interpolated values for trends (Data Source: NADP-NTN via AirAtlas) |
| Air quality | Total nitrogen  (wet deposition in kg/ha/yr) | **Condition of resource warrants moderate concern; trend in condition is unknown or not applicable; medium confidence in the assessment.** | Estimated nitrogen wet deposition was 2.9 kg/ha/yr (2008-12); moderate sensitivity to nutrient-enrichment effects; NPS ARD advises against using interpolated values for trend (Data Source: NADP-NTN via AirAtlas) |

Source(s) of Expertise ***(nrps Heading 4)***

* Offices, programs, or individuals that had a primary role in providing expertise and interpretations to determine current condition (and trend) for these indicators. ***(nrps Bullet list or nrps Normal for no bullet points)***

4.1.2. Resource or Indicator B (nrps Heading 3)

Address the same information items as the above section.

4.1.3. Resource or Indicator C (nrps Heading 3)

Address the same information items as the above section.

4.2. Reporting Category 2 *(nrps Heading 2)*

Address the same information items as section 4.1.

4.2.1. Indicator 1 (nrps Heading 3)

Address the same information items as section 4.1.1.

Chapter 5. Discussion *(nrps Heading 1)*

This chapter provides a “bigger picture” summary of condition findings by park areas and topics of interest to park managers. Taken together, what do results across the varied study resources and indicators suggest in more holistic or aggregate terms? **This chapter is less about delivering rigorous scientific findings, more about providing useful interpretations and suggestions to park managers.** It can help answer the “so what” question about resource and indicator level findings as reported in chapter 4. It can also help park managers think about logical next steps to take as part of ongoing efforts to protect and manage important park natural resources.

This section should include the following: For the park as a whole and/or for the individual park areas/resource identified in chapters 3 and 4, a summary of overall conditions, possible threat and stressor concerns, and pressing scientific questions or study needs. Optionally, this section may include a summary of overall conditions (e.g., what we know, what we don’t know) relative to broader topics of interest to managers as well as suggestions to park managers concerning logical next-step activities that could be considered as a means to maintain or improve conditions for important park natural resources. ***(nrps Normal)***

Literature Cited *(nrps Heading 1)*

Below are examples for how to cite various types of literature in an NRCA report.

Note: Please only include one Literature Cited section for the entire body of the report. In regard to Appendices: 1) Each individual appendix can have its own literature cited at end of appendix; or 2) The citations used in the Appendices section can be included in this Literature Cited section).

Agency, Company, etc. as Author Examples

Fung Associates Inc. and SWCA Environmental Consultants. 2010. Assessment of natural resources and watershed conditions for Kalaupapa National Historical Park. Natural Resource Report. NPS/NPRC/WRD/NRR—2010/261. National Park Service, Fort Collins, Colorado***. (nrps Literature cited)***

Greater Yellowstone Whitebark Pine Monitoring Working Group. 2014. Monitoring whitebark pine in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem: 2013 annual report. Natural Resource Data Series. NPS/GRYN/NRDS—2014/631. National Park Service. Fort Collins, Colorado.

National Park Service. 2016. State of the park report for Zion National Park. State of the Park Reports. No. 23. National Park Service. Washington, District of Columbia.

U.S. Forest Service (USFS). 1993. ECOMAP. National hierarchical framework of ecological units. U. S. Forest Service, Washington, D.C.

Traditional Journal Article Examples

Bradbury, J. W., S. L. Vehrencamp, K. E. Clifton, and L. M. Clifton. 1996. The relationship between bite rate and local forage abundance in wild Thompson’s gazelles. Ecology77:2237–2255. ***(nrps Literature cited)***

Oakley, K. L., L. P. Thomas, and S. G. Fancy. 2003. Guidelines for long-term monitoring protocols. Wildlife Society Bulletin 31(4):1000–1003.

Sawaya, M. A., T. K. Ruth, S. Creel, J. J. Rotella, J. B. Stetz, H. B. Quigley, and St. T. Kalinowski. 2011. Evaluation of noninvasive genetic sampling methods for cougars in Yellowstone National Park. The Journal of Wildlife Management 75(3):612–622.

Book Example

Harvill, A. M., Jr., T. R. Bradley, C. E. Stevens, T. F. Wieboldt, D. M. E. Ware, D. W. Ogle, and G. W. Ramsey. 1992. Atlas of the Virginia flora, third edition. Virginia Botanical Associates, Farmville, Virginia. ***(nrps Literature cited)***

Book Chapter Examples

McCauly, E. 1984. The estimation of abundance and biomass of zooplankton in samples. Pages 228–265 *in* J. A. Dowling and F. H. Rigler, editors. A manual on methods for the assessment of secondary productivity in fresh waters. Blackwell Scientific, Oxford, UK. ***(nrps Literature cited)***

Watson, P. J. 2004. Of caves and shell mounds in west-central Kentucky. Pages 159–164 *in* Of caves and shell mounds. The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Published Report Examples

Bass, S., R. E. Gallipeau, Jr., M. Van Stappen, J. Kumer, M. Wessner, S. Petersburg, L. L. Hays, J. Milstone, M. Soukup, M. Fletcher, L. G. Adams, and others. 1988. Highlights of natural resource management 1987. National Park Service, Denver, Colorado. ***(nrps Literature cited)***

Holthausen, R. S., M. G. Raphael, K. S. McKelvey, E. D. Forsman, E. E. Starkey, and D. E. Seaman. 1994. The contribution of federal and nonfederal habitats to the persistence of the northern spotted owl on the Olympic Peninsula, Washington. General Technical Report PNW–GTR–352. U.S. Forest Service, Corvallis, Oregon.

Jackson, L. L., and L. P. Gough. 1991. Seasonal and spatial biogeochemical trends for chaparral vegetation and soil geochemistry in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. U.S. Geological Survey, Denver. Open File Report 91–0005.

Unpublished Report Examples

Conant, B., and J. I. Hodges. 1995. Western brant population estimates. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Unpublished Report, Juneau, Alaska. ***(nrps Literature cited)***

Conant, B., and J. F. Voelzer. 2001. Winter waterfowl survey: Mexico west coast and Baja California. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Unpublished Report, Juneau, Alaska.

Thesis/Dissertation Examples

Diong, C. H. 1982. Population and biology of the feral pig (*Sus scrofa* L) in Kipahulu Valley, Mau’i. Dissertation. University of Hawai’i, Honolulu, Hawai’i. ***(nrps Literature cited)***

McTigue, K. M. 1992. Nutrient pulses and herbivory: Integrative control of primary producers in lakes. Thesis. University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

Conference Proceedings Examples

Gunther, K. A. 1994. Changing problems in bear management: Yellowstone National Park twenty-plus years after the dumps. Ninth International Conference on Bear Research and Management. Missoula, MT, International Association for Bear Research and Management, Bozeman, Montana, February 1992:549–560. ***(nrps Literature cited)***

Webb, J. R., and J. N. Galloway. 1991. Potential acidification of streams in Mid-Appalachian Highlands: A problem with generalized assessments. Southern Appalachian Man and Biosphere Conference. Gaitlinburg, Tennessee.

General Internet Examples

Colorado Native Plant Society. 2016. Colorado Native Plant Society website. Available at: <https://conps.org/> (accessed 07 March 2016). ***(nrps Literature cited)***

National Park Service (NPS). 2016a. IRMA Portal (Integrated Resource Management Applications) website. Available at: [https://irma.nps.gov](https://irma.nps.gov/) (accessed 07 March 2016),

National Park Service (NPS). 2016b. Natural Resource Publications Management website. Available at: <http://www.nature.nps.gov/publications/nrpm/> (accessed 07 March 2016).

United Sates Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). 2016. Endangered Species website. Available at: <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/> (accessed 07 March 2016).

Online Data Warehouse Sites (sites that allow you see and download data from multiple sources)

National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA). 2016. NOAA National Climatic Data Center website. Available at: <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/> (accessed 07 March 2016). ***(nrps Literature cited)***

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). 2016. Storage and Retrieval Data Warehouse website (STORET). Available at: <http://www.epa.gov/storet/> (accessed 07 March 2016).

National Park Service (NPS). 2016c. NPScape Landscape Dynamics Metric Viewer website. Available at: <http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/monitor/npscape/viewer/> (accessed 07 March 2016).

National Park Service (NPS). 2016d. NPSpecies online application. Available at: <https://irma.nps.gov/NPSpecies/> (accessed 07 March 2016).

United States Geographic Survey (USGS). 2016. 2016. BioData - Aquatic Bioassessment Data for the Nation. Available at: <https://aquatic.biodata.usgs.gov/> (accessed 07 March 2016).

Appendices (nrps Heading 1)

Appendix A *(nrps Heading 1 appendix* – if there are fewer than three (3) appendices, use *nrps Heading 1)*

Example of a Second Order Appendix Heading (*nrps Heading 2 appendix*)

Example of a Third Order Appendix Heading (nrps Heading 3 appendix)

Example of a Fourth Order Appendix Heading (*nrps Heading 4 appendix*)

Appendix B *(nrps Heading 1 appendix)*

Example of a Second Order Appendix Heading (*nrps Heading 2 appendix*)

Example of a Third Order Appendix Heading (nrps Heading 3 appendix)

Example of a Fourth Order Appendix Heading (*nrps Heading 4 appendix*)

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