

The NPS Natural Resource Condition Assessment (NRCA) Program offers two project series that support science-informed planning and decision-making by park managers. While all NRCA projects share common design elements the two series also have important differences (see table). Parks request NRCA funding for the type of condition assessment they need the most.

Key Differences	'New' Natural Resource Condition Assessment (NRCA) Project Series	Focused Condition Assessment (FCA) Project Series
<b>General description</b>	Employ a consistent ecological framework for an efficient check-in and update on current conditions, critical data gaps, and selected drivers and stressors for a subset of important park natural resources	Allow for a wide variety of study approaches, methods, and reporting products; each study “focuses” on a specific park-identified mgmt. issue or critical information need and develops the data/information requested by the park
<b>Primary deliverable</b>	Streamlined NRR- format technical report titled “Natural Resource Conditions at <i>Park Name</i> (year): Findings & Management Considerations for Selected Resources”	NPS NRR report or journal article and other primary products (if any) as identified in the study plan
<b>Other deliverables</b>	Supporting documentation; general communication products targeted to less-technical audiences	Supplemental technical products; specialized communication products targeted to different audiences
<b>Management applications</b>	Reliable condition information can be used in many mgmt. activities, especially useful for strategic planning	Study findings and reporting products should be directly useful for an active or upcoming park management activity
<b>Timeframe/updates</b>	≤1 year for report; future updates are encouraged	1-2 years; usually a one-time study w/no plan to update it
<b>Scope (# of parks)</b>	Single park	Single park or multiple parks working on a combined study
<b>Scope (# of resources)</b>	Usually six or more primary study resources (ecologically related or independently chosen) that are selected due to timeliness for assessing their current condition status	Usually one to a few primary study resources that are important to the park and are likely to be influenced or impacted by the park’s pressing issue or information need
<b>Existing vs. new data</b>	Relies on existing scientific data and information from varied sources; study can include rapid field assessments	Generally relies on existing scientific data and information; up to 30% of FCA funding can be used to collect new data
<b>Purpose for series</b>	Replaces (combines elements of) 1 <sup>st</sup> generation NRCA studies and a pilot “State of the Park” reporting effort	Broadens the types of condition assessments and reporting products that can be funded through the NRCA Program