

National Park Service

U.S. Department of the Interior



Briefing Statement

Bureau: National Park Service
Issue: Natural Resource Career Academy
Date: January 2012

Background:

The Natural Resource Career Academy (NRC Academy) is a developmental pathway for employees to acquire and refine their skills in meeting job requirements, position and career field competencies, the NPS mission and personal development goals. The NPS Director's "A Call to Action" specifically identifies the academy program as a process to enhance professional and organizational excellence. The NRC Academy is being designed to address the seven essential natural resource competencies of employees at each level of their position from entry through journey level, and it will incorporate a wide variety of instructional methods.

In 2010, the Training Manager for Natural Resources led a subject matter expert group in the development of a draft framework for the NRC Academy. It provides a structure for the organization of learning opportunities for essential competencies at the developmental, journey and advanced levels.

In April 2011, the draft framework was refined and integrated into the NRC Academy Eighteen-month Implementation Strategy. The draft framework was refined by combining the seven essential competencies into four competency tracks with like subject matter. These four tracks become the basic core of the NRC Academy. The levels of learning were redefined into three series which will occur at the foundational, intermediate and advanced levels, providing a sequential pathway for employees to follow. Position specific learning opportunities (electives) such as Integrated Pest Management and Wilderness Management will be further defined and supplement the basic core.

In September 2011, the steering committee, work group leads, and NPS Learning and Development staff finalized the academy draft framework and eighteen-month implementation strategy. In subsequent months work group leads and team participants were selected for the four defined competency tracks. Participants were selected taking into consideration the individual's area of professional expertise and experience, ability to contribute to development of training modules for the competencies defined, and their representation of a park, region, or WASO office to have a diverse representation from across the NPS.

Current Status:

Over the next eight months, work groups and leads will further develop and sequence the Foundational Natural Resource Management Series. Numerous webinars, conference calls, video conferences and small meetings are being conducted. The goals for the foundational series are: develop course content and objectives based on defined competencies, prioritize learning opportunities using a wide variety of instructional design methods, and identify pre-requisites. Work groups will plan for the intermediate and advanced series after completion of the foundational series.

It is planned to pilot an on-line or classroom module of the Natural Resource Career Academy for the foundational series by September 2012. Anyone interested in additional information should go to the "Academy tab" at the website for the Natural Resource Training Program: <http://www.nps.gov/training/nrs/>

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