

Resource Stewardship and Protection Curriculum

Mission:

To develop and strengthen the knowledge and competencies of all National Park Service employees by connecting them to the resource, and to build proactive capabilities through interdisciplinary collaboration and partnering for resource protection.

Goals:

- **Employees understand the relationship between their individual responsibilities and those of fellow employees and partners in implementing the agency's mission and providing high-quality public service.**
- **Employees are inspired and take action to implement resource protection and stewardship in a collaborative forum.**

Background:

The Pacific West Region began development of an interdisciplinary Resource Stewardship and Protection Curriculum in 1998. Partners from multiple regions have supported the curriculum, which has been in various stages of development over the last six years. The Director's Law Enforcement Task Force recognized that this series of courses was exceptionally well designed and had the potential to resolve elemental deficiencies in resource protection implementation, recommending it be implemented on a Servicewide basis. The curriculum is now being managed out of the Horace M. Albright Training Center. Funding from the Natural Resource Challenge has been used to evaluate, refine, and develop the courses in conjunction with Indiana University, Eppley Institute for Parks & Public Lands. Refinements will ensure the course work projects a "Philosophy of Protection and Interdisciplinary Collaboration" for enhanced resource protection. In April 2005 the curriculum was revised to include four interdisciplinary courses for all NPS employees. The first three courses of the curriculum are developed. Course four, the most advanced, remains as the last course to be completed in future years.

Resource Stewardship and Protection Curriculum Courses

- 1. Introduction to Resource Stewardship**
- 2. Interdisciplinary Resource Protection and Law**
(Formerly Resource Stewardship for Protection Rangers)
- 3. Intermediate Resource Protection for Interdisciplinary Teams**
- 4. Implementing a Resource Protection Program (To be developed)**

1: Introduction to Resource Stewardship

This twenty-four hour course focuses employees on the natural and cultural resource stewardship mission of the National Park Service (NPS). It expands the roles and responsibilities of all employees in carrying out the Service's mission introduced in Fundamentals I & II. NPS history, strategic plan and goals, current policies, principles and practices are covered through lectures, group discussions, case studies and field exercises. This course builds on information participants' gain through attendance at the Servicewide Fundamentals courses and focuses students on the resource protection component of the NPS mission.

Course Objectives:

Participants will:

- Develop an understanding of how interdisciplinary approaches to resource protection and stewardship benefit the NPS.
- Define how each of their jobs contributes to resource stewardship and understand the contributions of other NPS employees.
- Display a broader appreciation of the range of resources associated with our nation's heritage.
- Understand how working beyond park boundaries promotes resource stewardship.
- Demonstrate an understanding of NPS history, philosophy, and values, that will contribute to each employee becoming more effective resource stewards.
- Demonstrate an understanding that laws provide guidance for resource stewardship and the way NPS employees perform their jobs.

Target Audience: Open to all employees from all disciplines, job classifications, grades, and lengths of service.

Prerequisite: NPS Fundamentals I e-learning course. Recommended: NPS Fundamentals II

2: Interdisciplinary Resource Protection and Law

(Formerly: Resource Stewardship for Protection Rangers)

This forty-hour interdisciplinary course provides employees with a solid understanding of the resource mission of the NPS and the primary laws, legal authorities, case law interpretation, and policies used to protect park resources. Participants will receive instruction in the functions and roles that contribute to effective interdisciplinary group work and practice these skills through resource protection case studies.

Training focuses on the ability of the employee to recognize a diversity of natural and cultural resources existing throughout the national park system and the types of threats and vulnerabilities associated with these resources. Participants utilize the legal basis (including compliance) for resource protection and develop skills and strategies to respond and take action to prevent resource impairments through interdisciplinary collaboration. Methods for implementing resource protection, visitor education, and visitor management techniques are explored.

Participants will leave this training with the basic level knowledge required to apply legal authorities to safeguard natural and cultural resources, an understanding of the broad range of threats to park resources, methodologies to use in identifying resource risk factors, the process to perform injury assessments, and strategies to recognize, respond, and take action to resource impacts. Participants will gain experience using interdisciplinary group processes to ensure effective collaboration among NPS staff, partners and the public.

Course Objectives:

Participants will:

- Demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the environmental and legal framework that safeguards natural and cultural resources in the National Park System.
- Recognize that knowledge of interrelated natural and cultural resources in their parks is central to their duty of protecting those resources.
- Understand that resource protection, prevention, and visitor education are important components of taking action to ensure resources are protected in park unit daily operations.
- Demonstrate adequate group processes to ensure effective interdisciplinary and cooperative actions among NPS staff, partners, and the public.
- Identify resources at risk in a park setting using an ecological framework for the purpose of ensuring that resource impairments are correctly acted upon.

Target Audience: Commissioned employees, interpreters in resource education and public information, resource management discipline specialists, and maintenance employees that will work in interdisciplinary teams.

Prerequisite: Recommended: Introduction to Resource Stewardship and /or NPS Fundamentals I & II.

3: Intermediate Resource Protection for Interdisciplinary Teams

This course is a progression from course two in the protection curriculum, “Interdisciplinary Resource Protection and Law.” Participants are provided knowledge to identify components of, and be able to develop, an effective resource protection program that is interdisciplinary, based on judgment and interpretation of legal authorities, policies, and resource conditions, and anticipates threats to natural and cultural resources. Students will develop leadership and communication skills through instruction and practice in facilitation, consensus building, conflict management, and development of collaborative relationships.

The focus for this course is on the complexity in identifying resources at risk, the interpretation of the complex legal and environmental framework surrounding resource stewardship, and the ability to anticipate and plan for ways in which to protect the resource. The course promotes an interdisciplinary approach utilizing team dynamics and functions, leadership skills development, integration of expertise, and guidance for decision making. The anticipation of resource issues is addressed through sessions on legal updates and recent issues in resource protection, law and policy, identifying resources at risk, performing risk assessments, and developing written problem statements. An integrated resource protection strategy process is described utilizing sessions on visitor management, education and communication, and integration of tools and expertise. Strategy plan development, the priority setting process and feasibility of strategy implementation are reviewed and practiced. Participants will become familiar with available tools and strategies used for implementing a strong resource protection program through a multidisciplinary team approach.

Course Objectives

Participants will:

- Identify components of, and be able to develop, an effective resource protection program that is interdisciplinary, based on judgment and anticipation of resource issues, and knowledge of NPS laws, policies and regulations.
- Develop communication and behavioral skills that promote and enhance trust and collaboration among divisions and the public for improved resource protection including group processes, teamwork skills, and team effectiveness.
- Implement effective resource protection strategies in a proactive manner, as part of an interdisciplinary team including consulting with other agencies as necessary.
- Apply laws, treaties, policies, procedures, and authorities for resource protection in park units as appropriate to an assessment of resources at risk.
- Use knowledge, data, information, and available tools to make judgments that anticipate, prepare, and plan for resource protection in NPS units.
- Demonstrate an interdisciplinary approach that consults other NPS disciplines and agencies, the public and visitors, and partners, in creating resource protection strategies.
- Serve as a team leader or member to ensure interdisciplinary teamwork is effective in planning for resource protection.

Target Audience: A focus on creating true interdisciplinary interactions makes the target audience for this course: commissioned employees post FLETC, interpreters in resource education and public information, resource management discipline specialists, and maintenance employees.

Prerequisite: Interdisciplinary Resource Protection and Law

4: Implementing a Resource Protection Program

This course is not yet developed but is envisioned to provide second-level supervisors, division chiefs, and others having resource protection program lead responsibilities to fully integrate a strong resource protection program into daily as well as, short- and long-range operations. Participants will understand the benefits and strategies of an integrated resource protection strategy for mission accomplishment. Participants will be able to apply strengthened visitor management and education strategies and utilize the NPS budget process to enhance funding for resource protection. This course would also develop leadership skills including: effective team-building, techniques to persuade and effectively negotiate; problem solving; and the ability to integrate scientific information across interdisciplinary decision making.

Target Audience: Commissioned protection division supervisors, natural and cultural resource program managers, interdisciplinary employees having resource protection program responsibilities.

Prerequisite: Intermediate Resource Protection for Interdisciplinary Teams

For additional information:

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