

"In the historical areas of the National Park System are preserved the epic pages of the national march." Freeman Tilden

## National Parklands: Making Order of Diversity

**National Park** In practice, national park has generally been assigned to the greatest natural attractions of the National Park System, and for that reason it comes closer than many other titles to having its own image and meaning. To the extent that there is a general understanding and working definition of a national park today, the term is meant to imply a large, spectacular natural place having a wide variety of attributes, at times including significant historic assets. Hunting, mining, and consumptive activities are not authorized.

The term, however, has not been used with consistency. Gettysburg National Military Park was originally designated a national park by Congress in 1895; and Mesa Verde, primarily set aside for its cultural significance rather than its natural characteristics, became a national park in 1906. Other areas have started as national monuments and have subsequently been converted to national parks. Zion, Grand Canyon, and Channel Islands are examples.

Besides the elements of prestige, the title national park also has involved more substantive issues. In recent years, when Congress was considering the establishment of new units that appeared to have all the characteristics associated with such national parks—size, unique natural qualities and superlative scenery—but in which Congress wanted to permit continued public hunting, a new classification of park was created, the national preserve, in which various uses are allowed that are not permitted in national parks.

The largest national park in the System is Wrangell-St. Elias (Alaska) with 8.3 million acres. Proclaimed as Wrangell-St. Elias National Monument in 1978, Congress established it in 1980 as a national park. An adjoining national preserve in which hunting and certain other activities are permitted, encompasses an additional 4.9 million acres.

**National Monument** The Antiquities Act of 1906 authorized the President of the United States "to declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon the lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States to be national monuments." Under this authority, President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed and reserved the first national monument, Devils Tower (Wyoming), in 1906. Although the Antiquities Act focused primarily on prehistoric Indian remains and other cultural features, Devils Tower and most of the na-

tional monuments subsequently proclaimed were predominantly natural areas. Among them were such large and spectacular areas as Grand Canyon, Katmai, and Death Valley, the first two of which were later given national park status by acts of Congress. Mining activity in Death Valley has forestalled similar action for that area, although it would qualify as a national park in other respects.

The creation of national monuments by presidential proclamation and the designation of national historic sites by the Secretary of the Interior on lands in federal ownership are the principal means by which units of the National Park System have been established without a formal act of Congress. The most recent exercise of the presidential authority involved designation of a whole system of national monuments in Alaska in 1978. They were later reconfigured and established by congressional legislation. Congress, however, has also created numerous national monuments, both natural and historical, including George Washington Birthplace (Virginia) in 1930, Canyon de Chelly (Arizona) in 1931, Pipestone (Minnesota) in 1937, Congaree Swamp (South Carolina) in 1976, and others. The name national monument, therefore, conveys little information about the nature or origin of the area, how it might be managed by the Park Service, or how it might be experienced by the public.

In recent decades other titles have been preferred for historical areas, so national monument designation has been restricted largely to natural areas that do not appear to qualify for one of the more descriptive designations. In general, they are smaller than national parks and lack the diversity or range of attractions that national parks have.

**National Preserve** In 1974 Big Cypress (Florida) and Big Thicket (Texas) became the first of the national preserves. Big Cypress, a large natural area adjoining Everglades National Park, might have been incorporated in the park were it not for provisions in its legislation authorizing hunting, trapping, and oil and gas exploration and extraction. The Big Thicket legislation contained similar authorization for activities not allowed in national parks. Ten national preserves are in Alaska, all established by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980. Seven of these preserves border national parks of the same name; all permit sport hunting that cannot occur in the national parks. Many of the existing national preserves would, without sport hunting, otherwise qualify for designation as national parks.

**National Historic Site** This designation, derived from the Historic Sites Act of 1935, applies to the second largest number of units in the National Park System. The first area to bear this title was Salem Maritime National Historic Site (Massachusetts), designated by Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes on March 17, 1938. Although a number of historic sites were established by secretaries of the Interior, most of the parks bearing this title were authorized by Congress. The title has been applied to a diverse array of historic sites from forts to the homes of notable Americans. In general, a national historic site contains a single historical feature that was directly associated with its subject.

**National Historical Park** Morristown National Historical Park (New Jersey), site of two winter encampments during the Revolutionary War, was authorized by Congress in 1933 as the first of the parks with this title. The designation has generally been applied to parks that extend beyond single properties or buildings, such as Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia with its several structures; Boston National Historical Park with nine separate components; and Colonial National Historical Park in Virginia (originally a national monument) with its separate Jamestown and Yorktown units.

**National Memorial** Not all parklands classified as national memorials bear that title, and a few that have other titles would better fit this one. In general, a national memorial is purely commemorative of a historic person or episode. It need not occupy a site historically connected with its subject; if it does, the site is typically so altered as to bear little resemblance to its historic state.

The first NPS property classified as a national memorial was the Washington Monument, begun in 1848. Some national memorials, such as that one and the Lincoln Memorial, are now historic in their own right. The Wright Brothers National Memorial (North Carolina) and Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial (Virginia), contain historic features sufficient to qualify them as national historic sites, but they are classified as memorials because of their commemorative nature.

Other national memorials include Arkansas Post National Memorial, site of an early French settlement in the lower Mississippi valley; Chamizal National Memorial (Texas), marking the 1963 signing of a treaty ending a long-standing boundary dispute between the

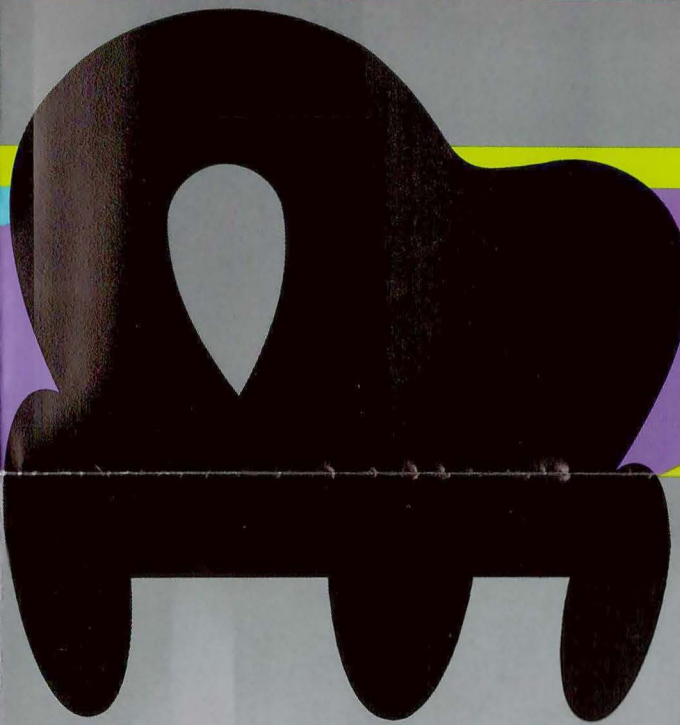
United States and Mexico; Johnstown Flood National Memorial (Pennsylvania) memorializing the victims of a disastrous 1889 flood; and Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial (Ohio) on South Bass Island in Lake Erie, commemorating Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry's naval victory in the War of 1812.

**National Battlefield** The parks under this general title include national battlefield, national battlefield park, national battlefield site, and national military park. Nine historic battlefields in the National Park System are designated national military parks; the first was Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park (Georgia-Tennessee), established in 1890. Antietam National Battlefield Site (Maryland), so named because of its smaller size, followed that same year and was the first with that title. Antietam and most other areas so titled were later redesignated as national battlefields, leaving only Brices Cross Roads (Mississippi) as a national battlefield site.

National battlefield park was the title initially favored by the National Park Service after it acquired the War Department's historic battlefields in 1933. Kennesaw Mountain (Georgia), formerly a national battlefield site, received this designation in 1935. Richmond National Battlefield Park (Virginia) and Manassas National Battlefield Park (Virginia) were established in 1936 and 1940 respectively.

In 1958 a National Park Service committee recommended national battlefield as the single title for all such parklands. Eleven battlefields—some subsequent additions and some retitled older parks—now bear the designation. However, not all the battlefields in the System carry one of these titles. Palo Alto Battlefield (Texas) is a national historic site; and Saratoga (New York) and War in the Pacific (Guam) are national historical parks. Two other important battlefields, Yorktown (Virginia) and Chalmette (Louisiana), are components of larger national historical parks—Colonial and Jean Lafitte, respectively.

There are presently 14 national cemeteries in the System, all of which are administered in conjunction with an associated unit and are not accounted for separately. They include the national cemeteries at Gettysburg (Pennsylvania), Antietam (Maryland), Fort Donelson (Tennessee), Fredericksburg (Virginia), Vicksburg (Mississippi), and Andersonville (Georgia).



The National Park System of the United States now includes some 360 diverse parklands embracing 80 million acres in 49 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, Saipan, and the Virgin Islands. Each year these parklands draw more than 250 million recreation visits. This desire to enjoy and preserve these special places has created the dynamic, ever-growing process that began with the Yellowstone Act of 1872.

### Units of the National Park System

International Historic Site	1	National Parkway	4
National Battlefield	11	National Preserve	13
National Battlefield Park	3	National Recreation Area	18
National Battlefield Site	1	National Reserve	1
National Historic Site	69	National River	5
National Historical Park	31	National Scenic Trail	3
National Lakeshore	4	National Seashore	10
National Memorial	26	National Wild And Scenic River and Riverway	10
National Military Park	9	Park (Other)	11
National Monument	78		
National Park	50		
<b>Total</b>		<b>358</b>	

**National Recreation Area** The first unit with this designation was Lake Mead National Recreation Area, called Boulder Dam National Recreation Area when the National Park Service assumed responsibility for it in 1936. It and 11 other national recreation areas in the System are centered on large reservoirs. Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area is at the site of a planned-but-never-built reservoir. These parks all emphasize water-based recreation. Five other national recreation areas are all located near major population centers: New York City (Gateway), Akron-Cleveland (Cuyahoga), San Francisco (Golden Gate), Los Angeles (Santa Monica), and Atlanta (Chattahoochee). The first urban national recreation areas were Gateway and Golden Gate, authorized by Congress in 1972. Such urban parks combine scarce open spaces with the preservation of significant historic resources and important natural areas in locations that can provide outdoor recreation for large numbers of people.

**National Seashore** Cape Hatteras National Seashore (North Carolina) was the first such area to be authorized, in 1937. Nine more have been established on the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific coasts, the last being Canaveral National Seashore (Florida) in 1975. Some national seashores have roads, parking and other facilities to accommodate heavy beach visitation. Some are in a relatively primitive state and include wilderness areas. Hunting is allowed in many national seashores at certain times.

**National Lakeshore** Congress authorized Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore (Michigan) in October 1966, and Indiana Dunes (Indiana), the next month. The last two national lakeshores, Apostle Islands (Wisconsin) and Sleeping Bear Dunes (Michigan), were authorized in 1970. The lakeshores, all on the Great Lakes, closely parallel the seashores in character and use.

**National River** The first area with this title was authorized in 1964—Ozark National Scenic Riverway, extending 140 miles along two rivers in Missouri. The comprehensive Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 was ultimately responsible for five more additions to the National Park System: St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, embracing about 200 miles of the river and its Namekagon tributary in Wisconsin and Minnesota; the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, a 27-mile segment of the same river; the Obid Wild and Scenic River, 45 miles of rivers in east Tennessee; the Rio Grande

Wild and Scenic River, stretching from Big Bend National Park in Texas for 191 miles to the Terrell-Val Verde county line; and Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, a 75-mile stretch of the river between Hancock and Sparrow Bush, New York. Other river units bear variations of this title reflecting their differences—national river and recreation area, national scenic river, national recreational river, and wild river, as well.

**National Parkway** Four units of the System fall into this classification, although none is designated as national parkway. The first, George Washington Memorial Parkway in Virginia, dates from 1930. The Blue Ridge Parkway and the Natchez Trace Parkway, each more than 400 miles long, were begun in the mid-1930s. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway, linking Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks, was designated in 1972. The first three involved the construction of carefully landscaped roads through scenic countryside; the last utilized existing roads. All were intended for "recreational motoring," although the George Washington Memorial Parkway has become a heavily used commuter route. The title parkway refers to the parkland paralleling the road as well as the roadway itself.

**National Scenic Trail** The Appalachian National Scenic Trail, the first such park in the National Park System, was so designated by the National Trails System Act of 1968. The trail extends some 2,100 miles from Katahdin, Maine, to Springer Mountain, Georgia. In 1983 two more national scenic trails were added: Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail, extending 694 miles from Nashville, Tennessee, to Natchez, Mississippi, paralleling the Natchez Trace Parkway; and the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. This mostly undeveloped trail is authorized to extend 704 miles from the mouth of the Potomac River along both banks to the District of Columbia, 175 miles along the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal towpath, then north to Conemaugh Gorge in west central Pennsylvania. The title aptly describes these linear parklands and their use.

**Other Designations** Also included in the National Park System are more than a dozen other special properties that bear unique titles or combinations of titles: the White House, St. Croix Island International Historic Site (Maine-New Brunswick), Prince William Forest Park (Virginia), and small sites in Washington, D.C., for example.

# Parks Etc.



*"Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as the sunshine into the trees."* John Muir

## National Parklands: Managing Diversity

National park, lakeshore, military park, historic site, memorial, preserve, and trail are just a few of the titles that have been used to designate our national parklands since Yellowstone National Park was established in 1872. Over the years, new titles have been created whenever new parklands were authorized that differed somewhat from those already in the National Park System. There are now almost 360 units with more than 20 different titles embracing 80 million acres.

The numerous designations within the National Park System frequently raise questions with people going to the parks. People want to know: is there a difference between a national park and a national monument or a national historic site and a national park? Or does a park's title somehow relate to the way in which the park is managed, what visitors can do there, what kinds of resources are there, the level of protection it will receive, or how important it is?

The words "national park" have special meaning to most people, conjuring up the spectacular images of Old Faithful, Yosemite Falls, and the Grand Canyon. "National historic site," although probably not a title as well recognized by the public as national park, tends to define itself as a place important in the history of the United States. What the title "national monument" means is less obvious. Regardless of the many names and official designations of the parklands that make up the National Park System, all represent some significant aspect of our natural or cultural heritage or an outstanding recreational resource. They are the physical remains of our past, great scenic and natural places, nature's playgrounds, and the classrooms of our heritage.

Yellowstone National Park was established by Congress as a "public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people." The areas that were subsequently set aside were variously designated by the Congress



and the different management agencies in some way that suited the nature of the individual sites. When the National Park Service was established in 1916, "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to . . . leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations," parks, monuments, battlefields, military parks, reservations, and a few other designations were already in place.

While the idea of a national park was an American innovation of historic consequences—marking the beginning of a worldwide movement that has spread to more than 100 countries with some 1,200 national parks and preserves—none of the original Yellowstone proponents conceived of a national park "system." The notion of a system that brings together disparate elements is a 20th-century concept that has developed along with the institutional growth of the National Park Service. This idea reflects an expanding level of national commitment to the Nation's history and culture as well as a growing understanding and appreciation of the environment.

This folder answers commonly asked questions about the National Park System, clarifies the differences between the designations, tells how they came into being, and describes how the National Park Service manages these diverse parklands.

**The Growth of a System** Historically the first parklands trace their origins to the 17 public reservations that the Federal Government acquired in 1791 for the Nation's Capital. They included the National Mall, the White House grounds, and other units in the District of Columbia that were transferred to the National Park Service in 1933. In 1832 Congress removed from the public domain an area around the Hot Springs of Arkansas. This reservation was designated for public use as a park in 1880, and became a national park in 1921. The earliest action by Congress to create a large natural park took the form of a land grant of Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Big Tree

Grove to the State of California in 1864. These lands were later returned to the Federal Government in 1906 to become part of Yosemite National Park, which had been established in 1890. Yellowstone National Park was established in 1872, becoming the first area so designated and managed under federal control.

Units of the National Park System have been created in two principal ways: Acts of Congress and presidential proclamations. When Congress creates an addition to the National Park System, it determines the name and designation for each area and makes reference to the general concepts under which it will be managed. Some-

times Congress is very specific about management terms; sometimes Congress simply refers to the 1916 National Park Service Act. The President has authority under the Antiquities Act of 1906 to proclaim national monuments on lands already under federal jurisdiction, and many units of the National Park System originated that way.

Some titles are clearly descriptive of the areas and features they represent, indicating to the public the nature of the primary resource or attraction within the area. National seashore, national lakeshore, national parkway, national battlefield, and national scenic trail all fall into this category. Other

titles assigned to units in the System are less descriptive, but they still indicate the nature of the park. National historic site, national memorial, and national historical park mean that the places contain features of historical significance or commemorate aspects of American history.

Units of the National Park System are, however, but one part of the nationwide network of parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and other lands managed for public use and conservation purposes. Many parklands with "national" in their titles are managed by other federal agencies. For example, national wildlife refuges—more than 470 units throughout the country—are

managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. They are managed primarily to conserve, protect, and enhance habitats for fish and wildlife for the continuing benefit of the American people. The National Wildlife Refuge System complements many of the purposes of the National Park System. However, the refuges are managed under policies that often allow for manipulation and enhancement of habitats while the National Park System is generally managed to perpetuate natural conditions.

The National Forest System managed by the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, encompasses 159 national forests

and 19 national grasslands in 44 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Besides the parks, forests, and refuges, more than 270 million acres of federal lands are administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Department of the Interior. The National Forest System and BLM-administered lands are managed under principles of multiple use and sustained yield, allowing for consumptive uses such as timber harvest, mineral development, oil and gas production, grazing, and commercial recreation development—uses not generally permitted in National Park System units. But some parts of these Forest Service and BLM areas have been specifically designated as wilderness, wild and

scenic rivers, national historic or scenic trails, national conservation areas, or recreation areas and are managed in ways quite similar to National Park System units.

Federal lands managed by the Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other branches of the military also conserve important natural resources, protect historic sites, and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation. Countless parks, refuges, and recreation areas are also being managed and protected by states, local governments, and the private sector. Although all these areas are not part of the National Park System, they are part of the national system of parks that provides

outstanding opportunities for conservation and public enjoyment.

Congress has also given recognition to a variety of areas that are not national park units or parts of other systems. Some areas that have a special relationship with the National Park Service but are not units of the National Park System are designated as affiliated areas with such titles as national heritage corridor, national memorial, national historical reserve, national historic site, international park, and national scientific reserve. They receive technical and financial assistance from the National Park Service, but are not defined as units of the National Park System.

**Making Management Decisions** Managing some 360 park areas with millions of visitors is a big job, even under the best of conditions. In the 1960s, when the National Park System grew from 187 to 284 units, officials realized that the challenge of administering the diverse parklands needed to be met in a more systematic way. To meet this need the Park Service developed a set of management guidelines around three categories of National Park System units: natural, recreational, and historical. The object of this approach was to define how each area would be managed—what general principles would be followed, what uses would be permitted, and what programs would apply.

And, it does, in fact, provide outdoor recreation for thousands of people. But the seashore is also an exquisite natural area, one that is fragile and susceptible to permanent damage. It is a habitat for birds, creatures of the salt marshes, and other wildlife. Cape Cod also has historic features—some on the National Register of Historic Places—whose management requirements parallel those of parklands labeled as historic. Thus, all three categories of management policies could apply to Cape Cod.

Similar examples exist throughout the National Park System. In fact, nearly every unit of the System is a mixture of natural, historical, and recreational features.

In 1970 Congress elaborated on the 1916 National Park Service Organic Act saying that all units of the National Park System have equal legal standing in a national system that is more than the mere

sum of its parts. Congress found that "the national park system, which began with the establishment of Yellowstone National Park in 1872, has since grown to include superlative natural, historic, and recreation areas . . . ; that these areas, though distinct in character, are united through inter-related purposes and resources into one national park system as cumulative expressions of a single national heritage; that, individually and collectively, these areas derive increased national dignity . . . through their inclusion . . . in one national park system preserved and managed for the benefit and inspiration of all the people."

Accordingly, the Park Service treats each unit of the System with the same measure of concern and gives attention to all resources in a park regardless of its title or the way in which it became part of the National Park System. The three management categories were

abandoned in favor of a policy approach that seeks to consider and manage the complexities of each park comprehensively. And today the National Park Service's Management Policies recognize the need to focus on the range of characteristics that each park possesses.

A decision to build a visitor facility, well justified as a means of providing a better recreational experience, may have unacceptable adverse impacts on a historic asset or a natural feature. Steps to preserve a natural asset may make it necessary to bar public use or drastically alter the way in which the public can see or use it. Such cause-and-effect relationships regularly influence decisions by park managers. However, NPS Management Policies are stated broadly; therefore, to assist with such decisions, additional guidance and policy elaborations are often provided in the form of published guidelines

that cover individual subjects in depth and give instructions of a technical or procedural nature.

Management of individual parks is the responsibility of the superintendent or unit manager. Such management is exercised in accordance with laws, policies, regulations, guidelines, and planning documents. The park planning process is the framework for making management decisions.

Each park must have a General Management Plan that sets forth an overall management concept for how park resources will be preserved and how parks will be used and developed to provide for public enjoyment. The General Management Plan establishes zones for lands and waters based on the Congressionally defined purposes of the park; the character of park resources; management objectives; and past, present, or anticipated uses. There are four

primary management zones—natural, cultural, park development, and special use. Subzones are used to indicate in greater detail how a specific area will be managed. Management zoning recognizes the differences inherent in park purposes and titles, but it is based primarily on actual conditions rather than the official designation. This means that a group of historic buildings will be managed similarly regardless of where they are located—in a national seashore, in a national historical park, in a national recreation area, or in a national park.

General Management Plans are prepared by interdisciplinary teams with opportunities for public review and involvement. More detailed implementing plans are prepared by the park to address specific details such as backcountry use, interpretation, trails, or river management. These plans then provide the framework for individual management decisions.

Over the years, the National Park Service has developed scientific and technical skills in many areas of park management ranging from controlling wildfires to cleaning bronze statuary and preserving historical artifacts. The objective is to successfully integrate science and technology into the traditional methods of park management.

Today, park management is a complex undertaking involving highly technical data and scientific facts and opinions. It involves choices that are difficult, based on subtle distinctions between alternatives that may be neither good nor bad. When both the pro and con sides of an issue have many positive factors, the Service must favor preservation to fulfill its charge to pass on the parks "unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

From its Yellowstone origins in 1872, the spread of the national

park idea has been one of constant change. In this century alone, parks have increased from a mere 15 to the world's preeminent park system with some 360 units. And Congress in a single legislative action in 1980, doubled the size of the System from 40 million to 80 million acres through the addition of a number of parks in Alaska. But the most sweeping change of all may be in the way parks are perceived. Today's parks are not only the traditional scenic and historic sites, but also new and innovative areas managed in partnership with other jurisdictions, which serve Americans in special ways. Given the demographics of an increasingly urbanized country, the national park concept will certainly continue to change in the future. As a result of earlier challenges and diversification, however, the United States now has a body of park management experience through which change can thrive in years to come.