

Destinations

U.S. NATIONAL PARKS

The service ...shall promote..the use of the Federal areas known as national parks... and...leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. —Organic Act, 1916

Issue 3, Winter 2000

Winter Wonderlands

National Parks Are Cool

It's winter and you see icicles shining against foliage like midnight stars, snow-dusted trees standing regal and tall, skiing slopes that are as inviting as a down pillow. In the distance steam rises from frozen thermal lakes like a glass of freshly brewed iced tea. Snow-capped mountains ascend to the clouds, and icy ocean waves crash against glacier-gouged cliffs with a rhythmic thud.

You take a deep breath and savor the serene beauty of nature; the pine fragrant air, the glistening horizon. Then you nudge yourself, happy that you are visiting a winter wonderland.

Welcome to a national park. What a cool destination! There is so much to see and do here during the winter.

Take for example **Mount Rainier National Park**, a grand landscape of forests, glaciers, streams and valleys dominated by a hulking 14,410 foot mountain—a slumbering volcano—that on a clear day you can see all the way from Seattle, Washington, some 95 miles away. An offspring of fire and ice, Mount Rainier was born a half-million years ago on a base of lava spewed out by previous volcanoes. Today the park is a major icon of the northwest, an easy drive from Seattle, Tacoma, and Portland, Oregon.



Mount Rainier National Park

“Mount Rainier is visible from almost every house on the Puget Sound,” said park superintendent, Jonathan B. Jarvis. “Because of this prominence, the park is also prominent in the consciousness of the people. People love this mountain. They have come here for generations, and now bring their kids here. That is an important tool for us in terms of the future of the park.”

Buffeted by the Pacific Ocean, the uncanny mountain generates its own moisture-laden weather system, and gets record-setting quantities of snow each year. In fact, the huge precipita-

tion shapes everything in the park, from the profuse stands of ancient cedars, Douglas fir and western hemlocks forest, to the 25 major glaciers that cap the mountain.

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**U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Office of Tourism**



Photos by National Park Service

Since the winter temperature at Mount Rainier can match arctic tundra, only the road leading from the Nisqually Entrance, just beyond the town of Ashford, Washington, on the southwestern edge of the park, is open during the winter.

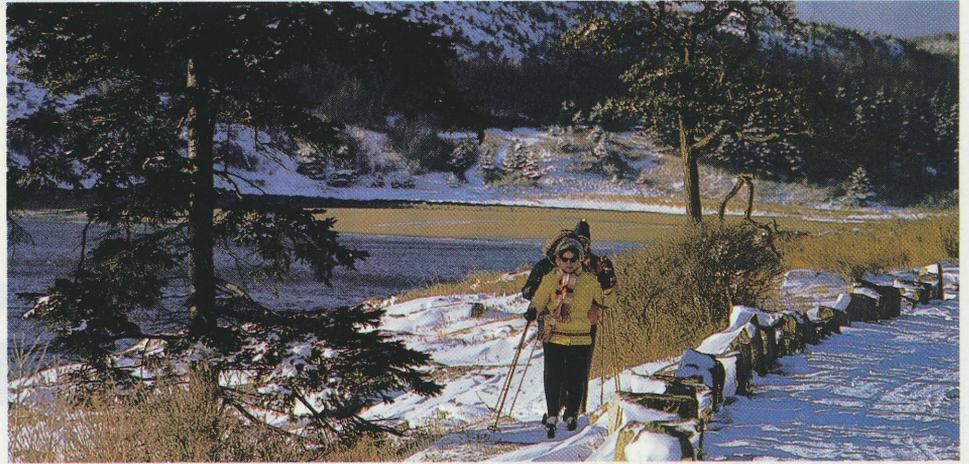
Once inside the park, follow the road to the Longmire Museum, which remains open daily year-round. Or, you can take the same road northeast to the Jackson Memorial Visitor Center at Paradise, which during the winter is open only on weekends and holidays.

Check in at the visitor center to sign up with a park ranger for an exciting introduction to the art of snowshoeing. You will discover how plants and animals adapt to the park's heavy duty snowfall, which has been known to exceed 1,000 inches a year! Snowshoes are provided free. A \$1.00 donation is appreciated to defray expenses, thank you.

Consult with a ranger to find out the best routes for cross-country skiing or snowboarding. A limited number of unplowed roads are designated for snowmobiles. A park ranger can point you in the right direction. There is also a designated snowplay area at Paradise.

Car camping is permitted year-round at Sunshine Point campground, which is near the Nisqually Entrance. When the roads aren't washed out, car camping is also permitted year-round in Ipsut Creek, which is located in the northwest edge of the park near the Carbon River Entrance. To check current road conditions, call: (360) 569-2211, ext. 3314.

A permit is required for snow camping, backpacking and mountain climbing, plus common sense and safety concerns. Before embarking on these pursuits, register with a park ranger and get information on avalanches, proper gear and clothing, and on hazardous weather conditions.



Acadia National Park

Rocks of Ages

Sea and mountain meet at the **Acadia National Park and Mount Desert Island** in Maine and if you listen you can hear the metronomic sounds of the ocean waves crashing against the ancient rocks and granite cliffs. There they go: swish, swoosh, whistle, sizzle, thumb, bang, howl, roar. Makes you want to hum a hymn, doesn't it?

Now revel in the park's surreal beauty: turbulent waves cascading over the rock-bound coast, misty fog shrouding winter-stripped leafless hardwood forest, frozen ponds glistening like glass, birds flitting about, a white-tailed deer scooting through the whitened forest, cross-country skiers moving gracefully over miles and miles of carriage roads traversed by stately hand-cut granite bridges, each a virtual work of art.

Winters are quiet at Acadia National Park, and here you can enjoy a reflective visit in a setting that was carved out by glaciers thousands of years ago. You can also marvel at the mysterious ways of nature.

Most of Acadia is located on Mount Desert Island, which is 18 miles long and 14 miles wide, cut from granite with steep cliffs dropping to the ocean off the coast of Maine. This topography was gouged some 11,000 years ago when glaciers floated south from

Canada and cut across an east-west ridge of granite, leaving mountains separated by valleys. Big blocks of ice left behind formed lakes and ponds. The sea level rose, flooded valleys, and created a fjord—a glacier-carved inlet flooded by sea water. The results today: a mountainous island and a shoreline that juts from the Atlantic ocean lined with rocks and boulders.

Archeological evidence indicates that American Indians traveled the waters of Acadia some 6,000 years ago. In 1604, a Frenchman, Samuel de Champlain, explored the coast and named the island L'Isle des Monts Deserts, roughly translated as "the island of barren mountains." Perhaps he couldn't see the forested mountain slopes from his ship.

Scenic drives are visually rewarding at Acadia. Although many roads are closed during the winter, portions of Park Loop Road, the Jordan Pond Area, Sargent Drive and Schoodic Peninsula are open. For specific routes, visit the park's Headquarters and Information Center, which is located 3 miles west of Bar Harbor on Route 233. The office is open daily from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Acadia doesn't boast a heavy snowfall, but when it does snow, the park is a physical fitness buff's delight. Cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice skating, and riding in snowmobiles are popular pastimes. Bird watchers

may spot a peregrine falcon. The hearty can dress warmly and go ice fishing throughout the winter. A license is required and can be obtained at the Bar Harbor Town Office.

Winter camping is permitted only at Blackwoods Campground, which is located on Route 3, approximately 5.5 miles south of Bar Harbor. Before pitching your tent, register first at the campground entrance station. Overnight backpacking is not allowed.

Way Up There!

It's hard to find a setting more diverse than **Rocky Mountain National Park**. Deep valleys with twisting rivers contrast towering peaks, some rising more than 12,000 feet. Colorful summer wildflowers are legendary, and the winter snow is bountiful. Magnificent forest stands perfume the air with the aroma of pine, juniper, Douglas fir and spruce. Wind-sculpted trees seem to crawl along the ground bordering an expansive treeless tundra, which covers one-third of the park. The tundra is situated above tree line, and here summers are short and winters are cold and windy.

This startlingly beautiful landscape, located 2 hours by car from Denver, Colorado, was shaped eons ago by the forces of glaciers and erosion, which carved out deep canyons, ragged boulders and towering summits; formed lakes and streams, and created an alpine tundra that resembles conditions found in the Canadian or Alaskan Arctic.

Winter comes early to this park, and so do visitors from around the world. Recreational activities are non-stop. Two visitor centers remain open during the winter: The Beaver Meadows Visitor Center at park headquarters in Estes Park on the east side of the park, is open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and the Kawuneeche Visitor Center in Grand Lake on the west

side of the park, is open daily from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Both centers are closed on Christmas Day.

Here you can enjoy cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoe ecology walks, stories by the fireside and other evening programs.

Drive-up camping is possible year-round in Moraine Park, Longs Peak, and Timber Creek campgrounds. No reservations are required during the off-season. You'll need a permit—available at the visitor centers—for backcountry camping.

Several hiking trails on the east side of Rocky Mountain remain relatively free of snow during the winter and on these paths you can savor the montane countryside without the encumbrances of snowshoes or skis.

Only experienced, well-equipped climbers should scale the mountains here during the winter. A permit—available at the visitor centers—is required to pitch a bivouac or to remain overnight in the back-country. Wildlife viewing is a premiere attraction at Rocky Mountain. You can also go on a full moon walk, which the park will offer on Friday, February 18; and Sunday, March 19 in 2000. Call (970) 586-1206 for departure time, which varies during the year.

Somebody Is On My Dune

Native American legend has it that **N**long, long ago a mother bear and her two cubs were driven into Lake Michigan by a raging fire. Mama Bear reached shore and climbed to a high bluff to wait for her cubs. They drowned. The Great Spirit Manitou created two islands to mark the spot where the cubs disappeared, and then created a solitary sand dune to mark the spot where the faithful mother bear kept watch.

Welcome to **Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore**, a mythical land of hilly terrain, dense forest, crystal clear inland lakes, a sweeping shoreline, rugged, towering bluffs, and massive sandy hills, including Mama Bear's dune, which soars to more than 80 feet. Offshore sits the legendary Manitou Islands, two quiet, secluded spots that from mid-May to October can be reached by a quick ferry ride.

This majestic landscape is located on Lake Michigan in Empire, Michigan, the state's western edge, reached by U.S. Highway 31, 22, and from Grand Rapids on U.S. Highway 131.

The shore was formed millions of years ago when glaciers spread southward from Canada and carved out the wide, deep basins of the Great Lakes. The glaciers also dumped huge piles



Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

of sand and rock debris, which over the years evolved into a dune: a pile of sand deposited by the wind. One hill, known as the Dune Climb, is the shore's highest sand peak at 130 feet.

Start your visit at the park's Visitor Center/Headquarters, which is located off Highway M-72 on the east side of Empire. The center is open daily during the winter—except holidays—from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., offering an array of services.

The snowfall here is abundant. The truly physically fit can cross-country ski for days. Others will enjoy park ranger-led snowshoe hikes and walks that take in the sweeping lake vista and the beautiful woodland.

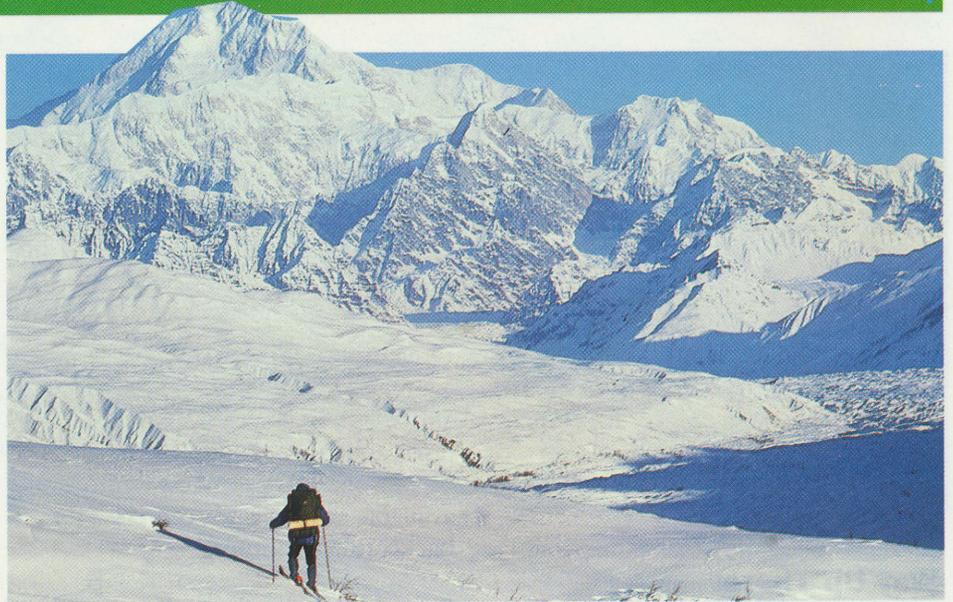
Hunting for deer, rabbit, squirrel, ruffed grouse and waterfowl is allowed in season under state regulations. Bird-watching is also popular.

Camping is year-round, and it varies from wilderness backpacking, to full-amenities campgrounds. A permit is required; apply at the visitor center and at park ranger stations. For additional camp information and a limited number of reservations, call: (800) 365-2267. A fee is charged at some sites.

North to Alaska

Baby, it's cold outside. We know. That's the reason why you came to this national park in the first place. Here in Alaska you can cross-country ski, snowshoe, dog sled, camp out or ice fish to your heart's delight, in a sparkling, panoramic setting. The scenery will certainly lure you: white-washed gorges, glacial valleys, ice-blue frozen lakes and rivers, snow-crested mountains, and abundant trees glistening with frost. Cool like ice.

Furthermore, the crowds are thinner this time of year—but don't tell anybody—and the frozen winter vista opens up many areas in the parks that are difficult to travel over during the summer when the snow melts and the ground is wet. Now you can



Denali National Park

enjoy so much more of our 49th state's rugged, wild beauty.

Think of the fun, but don't forget the challenges: Services are limited in many communities near the parks during the winter, so make sure that you come self-contained with appropriate equipment and clothing for cold weather and short days. Park officials said that visitors should check with lodge or air taxi operators about local road and weather conditions before visiting a park. A call or visit to park headquarters or visitor center is also recommended.

Here are popular destinations, with park telephone numbers:

Denali National Park and Preserve, Denali Park, Alaska, (907) 683-2294. Great for snow activities. Park also has the Riley Creek campground, which is open all winter. Pit toilets and picnic tables are provided and water is available at the park headquarters building. No fee is charged, but a permit—is required for overnight backcountry camping.

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. Popular activities are dog sledding, cross-country skiing and camping. Park headquarters, Fairbanks, Alaska, (907) 456-0281.

Kenai Fjords National Park, Seward, Alaska, (907) 224-3175. The Exit Glacier area is a popular winter destination. The visitor center is open on weekdays. Campground and rental cabins are also available.

Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, Skagway, Alaska, (907) 983-2921. The visitor center provides exhibits and an orientation film during the winter. Lodging and other services are available in the community of Skagway. In late winter and spring, the park frequently hosts Elderhostel groups.

Sitka National Historical Park, Sitka, Alaska, (907) 747-6281. The visitor center and trails are open throughout the winter.

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Copper Center, Alaska, (907) 822-5234. Real cold here. Plentiful opportunity for experienced winter enthusiasts. Information available at park headquarters.

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. Winter activities abound. Each February the international Yukon Quest Sled Dog Race between Fairbanks and Whitehorse comes through the preserve. Park headquarters, Fairbanks, Alaska, (907) 547-2233.

Some Like It Hot

“Aloha!” The moment you hear this greeting you’ll know that the cold, bracing, invigorating splendor of our winter wonderlands is a distant memory. You are now enjoying the warm weather and magnificent scenery at a national park in Hawaii.

Think of volcanic mountains spewing hot lava, stone temples constructed without mortar, crater rim drives that pass through barren desert and dense rain forest, deep canyons and towering waterfalls, and black sand beaches swept by the ocean.

Hawaii, the 50th state, is a group of islands sitting in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, some 2,400 miles southwest of California. The striking landscape is ancient and variegated, and the setting at the national parks pleases the eyes and the senses.

For example, the **Hawaii Volcanoes National Park** is a fascinating world of active volcanoes that go back millions and millions of years ago when lava was pushed from the floor of the ocean and created a succession of islands, each with its own ecosystem.

The park is located in the south central part of the island, on a 377-square miles park range that is 96 miles from the city of Kailua-Kona, and 30 miles from Hilo. It boasts two superlatives: The world’s most massive volcano, the hunkering Mauna Loa at 13,677 feet, and the world’s most active volcano, the very “hot” Kilauea.

Begin your visit at the Kilauea Visitor Center, which is off Route 11, south of Hilo. Here you can get an orientation on the park’s roads, trails, activities, and safety precautions. Yes, spewing lava is beautiful but it can be life-threatening. The visitor center is open daily from 7:45 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The park offers hiking, crater rim drives, mountain climbing, camping



Hawaii Volcanoes National Park

and more. Caution: the weather here is changeable; warm and dry on the coast, but chilly and rainy in the mountains. So if you go up into the mountains, carry along a wind breakers and good, sturdy, closed-toe shoes.

The **Pu’uhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park** is located on the western edge of the island, about 22 miles due south of Kailua-Kona. This is a beautiful, tranquil setting, where up until the early 19th century Hawaiians who broke a kapu, or one of the ancient laws against the gods, could avoid an otherwise certain death by fleeing to this place of refuge or pu’uhonua. They could be absolved by a priest and were free to go.

The 182-acre park was established in 1961, and includes not only the pu’uhonua, but a complex of archeological sites. During a walking tour of the park you will see the royal grounds, thatched huts, a reconstructed temple, beautiful stones, tree molds, and bowls carved into the rock

that years ago may have been used to hold dye, evaporate ocean water to make salt, or pound a root known as ’awa, to prepare a ceremonial drink.

The park’s visitor center is open year-round from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

There are two other spectacular national parks in Hawaii: the **Pu’ukohola Heiau National Historic Site**, located on the north-western shore of the island off Route 270, and **Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park**, also on the western edge, 3 miles north of Kailua-Kona.

The main attraction at Pu’ukohola Heiau is the “temple on the hill of the whale,” one of the last major sacred stone structures built in Hawaii before outside influences permanently altered traditional life. The rocks used to build the large temple are volcanic debris rounded by the erosive action of water. No mortar was used to construct the heiau; its walls are slanted

inward and spaces are filled with smaller pebbles.

Kaloko-Honokohau is a still developing site that was established in 1978 to preserve traditional Hawaiian cultural and activities, such as fishponds, stone slides, and religious sites. The park's visitor center is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Island Hoppin'

During the days when pirates were roaming the Caribbean, a rumor that gold was buried in the area now known as the U.S. Virgin Islands brought in hordes of fortune seekers.

The gold turned out to be only a fool's dream, but the landscape was priceless: islands of spectacular beauty dotted with bay rum trees, precious coral reefs, hundreds of species of plants and birds, unusual marine life, verdant mountains and mangrove swamps, ruins that evoke an era of sugar cane and slavery, and pristine beaches swept by both the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

That's the tableau, and much more at the **Virgin Islands National Park** in St. John, the **Buck Island Reef National Monument** off St. Croix, and the **Christiansted National Historic Site**, in St. Croix.

Each site is different and each has its own unique tropical setting, reason enough for you to go island hopping. Ferries run between the islands of St. John and St. Thomas, and frequent air flights connect St. Thomas with St. Croix.

St. John is the least developed of the islands, a rugged, volcanic landscape, with a shoreline offering a wide array of marine life, from sea cucumbers to spotted eagle rays.

The ideal way to start your visit is at the park's Cruz Bay Visitor Center, located a short walk from the ferry dock on the western side of the



Pu'uohonua o Honaunau National Historical Park

island. The center is open daily from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and it offers exhibits, a video on the park, brochures, maps and books.

Park rangers can help you plan your exploration, which may include island hikes, historical tours, snorkeling, cultural craft demonstrations, and evening campground programs. Although sugar cane is no longer cultivated on the island, old plantations ruins remain and are worthy of a visit.

Next door to St. John—a 20 minute ferry ride away—is the bustling tourist mecca of St. Thomas and its cruise ship harbor. From here you can island hop to the Buck Island Reef, which is located off the northeast side of St. Croix.

Buck Island is uninhabited, the home of fragile and endangered coral reefs and marine life. Most of the island is surrounded by a coral barrier reef,

which creates a lagoon between the reef and the island, supporting a diversity of marine life. This is a tranquil spot; excellent for snorkeling, picnicking or walking on marked hiking trails, which provide breathtaking views of St. Croix and the reef. Waterskiing and spear fishing are prohibited.

For information about day trips to Buck Island, visit the National Park Service Center in downtown Christiansted. The center is open year-round.

History buffs and art lovers will revel in the pretty buildings on the island of St. Croix, a pastoral landscape of quaint towns and rolling hills. The Christiansted National Historic Site is located here, and it preserves the architecture of the city in the 1700s and 1800s when the islands were a Danish colony. The islands became United States property in 1917.

Hidden Treasures

Right On Track

Oh the memories: the lonely sound of a whistle in the middle of the night, railroad lines stretching endless into the horizon, the promising allure of mysterious far-away places, the glory of a graceful locomotive zipping by.

Now think of luxurious Pullman dining cars and coaches, freight cars loaded with livestock, food, oil, coal, cotton, steel and ore and much more; down and out hobos hitching a ride, and the legions of men and women who kept the puffing trains moving.

Memories such as these are evoked at the **Steamtown National Historic Site**, which is located in Scranton, Pennsylvania, off I-81 at exit 53, just past the mall at Steamtown. The site celebrates our fabulous railroad era, which peaked in this country during the Roaring Twenties, held steady through World War II, and began declining in the 1950s with jet and highway travel.

Steamtown heralds the coal-fired steam locomotives that began crisscrossing the country in 1869, and not only fueled the country's industrial

growth, but also helped develop national parks by making them accessible to the people. Between 1890 and 1960, railroads advertised their service to the parks in train timetables and on promotional posters.

The Steamtown National Historic Site is located in the heart of the Lackawanna Valley, once a significant center for railroading, coal and iron production. The site was established in 1986, and today occupies about 52 acres of the yard of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad, one of the earliest rail lines in northeastern Pennsylvania.

Activities vary at Steamtown, so it is best to begin your visit at the visitor center, which is open daily year-round. The park's main entrance is at Lackawanna and Cliff Avenues.

Here at Steamtown you can jump on board and enjoy an on-track excursion, or marvel at the large collection of restored steam locomotives and passenger and freight cars that compose the heart of the site. There are also two museums offering exhibits, and a 250-seat theater showing train history films.

Steamtown's Year 2000 excursion season kickoffs Memorial Day Weekend, on May 27-29. Features include tours, exhibits, a special salute to the armed forces, troop trains and steam-powered rail excursions. So run and jump on board, quickly.

Planting a Vision

Flowers and plants played a large role in the life and work of the great educator and botanist, George Washington Carver, who was born a slave, rose to national prominence, but never forgot his roots.

Born in a cabin in 1864 during the Civil War, Dr. Carver spent much of his life helping one-horse African-American farmers in the deep South fight hunger and poverty with crop rotation and soil conservation techniques.

He also developed more than 100 different products from the sweet potato and more than 300 from the peanut—two locally grown crops. It was this work that brought him fame and earned him the name, "the peanut man."

Many facets of Dr. Carver's early life are featured at the **George Washington Carver National Monument**, a 210-acre park located off I-44 in Diamond, Missouri, where Carver was born. The park covers most of the original acreage of a farm owned by Moses Carver, Carver's master, where Dr. Carver and his brother, Jim, were reared.

Park attractions include Dr. Carver's birthplace site and the grounds he covered as a young boy: a trail, woodland area and prairie; a spring and pond, a persimmon grove, plus a Carver bust, a statue, family cemetery, and the Moses Carver farm house. There is also an ash hopper that was used to store ashes to make lye soap.



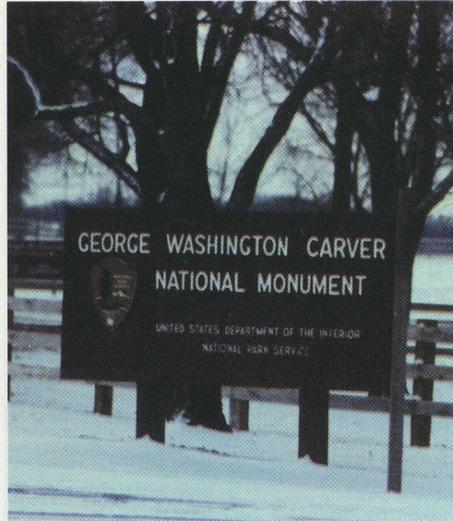
Steamtown National Historic Site

"Not only was Dr. Carver a great scientist," said William N. Jackson, park superintendent, "he was also a humanitarian. He devoted much of his life to the plight of his sisters and brothers. We can feel his spirit here."

In 1896 after earning a master of science degree from Iowa State College, he joined the faculty of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, as director of the college's research and experiment station and began his visionary work.

At Tuskegee, Carver saw that local black farmers had depleted their land by planting cotton year after year. Unlike other agricultural researchers of his time, Carver saw the need to devise farming methods practical for these poor farmers. He coaxed the farmers away from cotton, and urged them to plant vegetables, soybeans, sweet potatoes and peanuts, which not only fed their families, but also enriched the land rather than depleted it.

In addition to beautiful grounds, the park's visitor center offers a museum that has exhibits tracing Carver's life,



George Washington Carver National Monument

shows films on Carver, and has an extensive collection of African-American books for sale. Picnic tables are available on park grounds, but camping is not permitted.

The George Washington Carver National Monument is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., except Thanksgiving Day, December 25, and January 1.

Coming-Up

Heritage Eco-tourism Symposium

February 28 - March 3, 2000

Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Contact: David Look, Chief, Cultural Resource Team, Pacific West Support Office, (415) 427-1484, email david_w_look@nps.gov

The 2000 Network to Freedom

March 8 - 11, 2000

Baltimore, Maryland

Educational Roundtable Conference

"Looking Back—Moving Forward—Keep Going" Contact: International Network to Freedom Association, P.O. Box 1124, Washington, DC 20013, (703) 721-0107

Guide's Guide to the Underground Railroad

A comprehensive guide to Underground Railroad sites in the United States and Canada. Developed, designed and produced through a partnership between the National Tour Association, the National Tour Foundation, Parks Canada, and the National Park Service. Contact: Dawn Pettus, (800) 682-8886

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