Inspiring
An Education Strategy
Places
for the Alaska and
Inspiring
Pacific West Regions
People
of the National Park Service
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The Pacific West/Alaska regions' education strategy provides a framework for people inside and outside the agency to collaborate on educational efforts that connect people, parks, and natural and cultural resources.
This document sets out an Education Strategy for the national parks of the Alaska and Pacific West Regions. It is a comprehensive strategy, embracing all activities used by the National Park Service and its partners, to inform and educate the public about park resources and issues. It is interdisciplinary in approach, recognizing that all employees contribute to the education mission. It declares the Service's commitment to build and maintain lasting relationships with the education community as well as the broadest of constituencies, the American people and visitors to the parks from around the world.

The term education, as used here, includes formal education (i.e., curriculum-based programs), as well as traditional interpretive services such as ranger-led talks, publications and other informational media. It also refers to media relations, community outreach, volunteer programs, international cooperation and youth programs. National Parks serve as the material and the means to teach, inform, inspire and motivate the people that we and our partners serve.

This strategy builds from the Park Service's national Education Strategy to set out goals for the two Regions' educational efforts for the period 2000-2004. It is an outgrowth of a February 1999 workshop hosted by Regional Directors Bob Barbee and John Reynolds. Sixty-seven people participated in that workshop. They represented teachers, park partners, park volunteers, and park employees from a variety of professions and...
parks, as well as National Park Service (NPS) guests from the Washington Office and the Northeast Region. Working together, they developed the goals set out here.

This document offers consistent guidance and support to National Park managers, employees and partners in fulfilling the agency's educational mission. Its intent is to lead, not to push. The purpose is to provide a framework for action to improve existing educational programs and promote new educational media and activities.

The energy of this Education Strategy is drawn from its reliance on a park-based approach to realizing its purpose. To this end, park superintendents are expected to implement these objectives by incorporating measurable goals and actions, appropriate to each park, into their parks' strategic plans. The unlimited possibilities of this approach also means the Strategy will be dynamic. The Strategy will be updated annually to incorporate new opportunities as they occur and to adapt it to changing needs and conditions.

The Alaska and Pacific West Regions will seek funding and staff increases to help implement this Strategy, but we are committed to implementing the Strategy whether or not these increases materialize. Some parks will be able to carry out these objectives aggressively, others at a slower pace as funds, staffing and opportunities permit.

The National Education Strategy

In September 1997, 34 professionals representing academia, the National Park Foundation, and the National Park Service participated in a symposium to define the NPS's role in education and to formulate recommendations for program development and funding. The following national goals emerged from this forum:

• Promote personal connections to the many American experiences through objects, places, ideas, and values.

• Develop an informed citizenry committed to the stewardship of natural and cultural resources.

• Help people understand the many landscapes, life forms, and stories of America.

• Establish the National Park System as a distinct resource for the educational community.

• Guarantee that all Americans have opportunities to learn from the National Park System whether or not they actually visit parks.
What is Curriculum-based Education?

It engages participants in a formal sequence of learning and includes:

● Park resource-based programs relevant to park interpretive themes.
● Park themes linked with national standards and state curriculum frameworks.
● Educators, students, and the community involved in program planning and development.
● Pre-visit materials that provide background information and suggest activities that prepare students for the experience.
● Post-visit materials that extend learning beyond the site experience.
● A student-centered approach to learning.
● Programs that recognize and accommodate different learning styles.
● An evaluation instrument that is integral to the program.
● Learning experiences that are directly linked to clear objectives.

The Purposes of this strategy are:

Create and share the vision of where we want to be in education;

Strengthen interregional cooperation and provide recommendations to Alaska and Pacific West region parks for staffing and funding priorities that would most effectively build on the national education program and meet these educational goals;

Help parks nurture long-term relationships with teachers and students;

Help parks reach diverse audiences, including people who do not visit parks;

Encourage interdisciplinary approaches in developing and delivering educational programs; and

Define consistent goals for the educational media and activities of parks and their partners.
Who is Responsible for Education in the National Park Service?

All employees, along with many thousands of park volunteers, teachers, scientists, and park partners, share both the challenge and the opportunities to carry out the National Park Service educational mission.

All of us are park educators...

Maintenance personnel in the field explain how their materials and practices sustain and protect resources.

Public information officers tap the public interest through the print, broadcast, and electronic media.

Resource managers and scientists conduct research and publish their findings.

Information technology employees manage and maintain the telecommunications and computer systems that enable all employees to share information electronically.

Interpretive rangers and education specialists tailor creative programs to diverse audiences of visitors and for people yet to visit parks.

Administrative specialists seek environmentally-friendly supplies, write contracts to assure practices that protect park resources, and explain these standards to suppliers and contractors. They are a vital educational link with the business community.

Protection rangers explain laws and regulations to park visitors to attain compliance and share their knowledge with visitors on the best ways to enjoy parks.

Trail crews direct and educate volunteers on trail-building and maintenance techniques.

Superintendents and planners make presentations to elected officials and at public meetings.

Entrance station rangers provide park information that sets the stage for visitors' experiences.

Clerical employees answer countless questions on the telephone.

Resource specialists promote community-based stewardship of park resources through informed, hands-on involvement by volunteers.
Our Vision

By 2005, the National Park Service, working with its partners, will be a recognized educational resource that provides opportunities for all people to understand, appreciate, and participate in preserving our natural and cultural heritage.
The National Park Service faces significant challenges to our traditional management of park resources. To serve and engage an increasingly diverse public, we must recognize that education in its broadest sense is integral to park management. We must acknowledge that political pressures and challenges to NPS policies by special-interest groups are often rooted in a lack of understanding. Education—*connecting with the people we serve*—is essential for us to achieve our resource-protection mission.

A successful education strategy will demonstrate the highest program quality, message clarity, and graphically competitive media. The following five goals will provide direction to park managers, employees, and partners as we seek to attain that success over the next five years.

1. **Involve all NPS employees in education.**

2. **Strengthen internal and external partnerships.**

3. **Provide a continuum of quality experiences for lifelong learning relevant to diverse audiences.**

4. **Increase public awareness and visibility of the National Park System, its programs, and its issues.**

5. **Develop and implement a strategic, sustainable funding approach.**

Each goal embraces specific objectives and actions. **Base-level** actions are fundamental requirements for all parks. **Desired-level** actions are additional steps that parks should strive to attain when funds, staffing and workload permit.
Involve all NPS employees in education.

To fulfill the National Park Service’s mission, all employees must understand how their jobs contribute to protecting resources through education. Every employee has opportunities to interact with the public—by telephone and in person, by electronic and regular mail, in formal presentations and public meetings, by meeting visitors or working with volunteers in the field, by working with park partners, or in informal conversations with friends and neighbors. Employees will be offered the skills training necessary to help them become effective educators in ways relevant to their jobs. Public understanding, advocacy, and stewardship are paramount for success in our resource management and protection programs, and every employee must contribute to building that support.

Objective A: Enhance employees’ resource education skills

**Base level**

- Require all employees who are frequently in public contact to attend Interpretive Competencies Module 101*Fulfilling the NPS Mission*.
- Provide all employees opportunities to attend *Compass I and II* workshops.
- Develop an interdisciplinary team to teach the basics of informal communications and formal presentations.
- Require all GS-9 interpreters to certify in the 11 interpretive competencies.
- Require all GS-025 rangers to certify in 100-level interpretive competencies.

**Desired level**

- Assign interdisciplinary teams to teach resource preservation principles to all park employees.
- Present the Pacific West Region Resource Stewardship core curriculum courses, pioneered in 1999, at Yosemite and Mount Rainier national parks.
- Develop a core curriculum for all employees on resource protection and education.
- Establish park interdisciplinary teams to evaluate park educational efforts within the context of GPRA (Government Performance and Results Act) goals.
- Require all employees with public-contact duties to certify in 100-level competencies.
- Establish a national core-competency level for non-interpretive employees who provide visitor services.
Objective B: Inform employees of the park, regional, and national education efforts.

**Base level**
- Distribute the regional and national strategies via the Internet and hard copy.
- Engage employees in focused discussions of education strategies and their responsibilities in carrying them out.

**Desired level**
- Involve all employees in implementing the regional education strategy.
- Link employee performance with specific elements of the education strategy.
- Allow education specialists and employees with collateral-duty education responsibilities to attend targeted regional training.

Objective C: Recognize resource education accomplishments.

**Base level**
- Nominate deserving employees for appropriate national and regional awards.

**Desired level**
- Develop and publicize park-level awards for interdisciplinary achievements in education and resource protection.

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**Alaska Region Parks**

*Journeys to Alaska,* the Alaska Region's distance learning project, uses satellite broadcasts and free web-based student and teacher materials to link park resources and data to national math and science standards. Students use real data and correspond directly with park rangers and scientists. Two programs produced to date have reached nearly two million middle-school students in the United States and abroad and are available to 20-30 million cable households. The first journey explores the ties between the cultures and the ecosystem of Bering Land Bridge; the second interweaves geology, math, engineering, and history in a journey to Wrangell-St. Elias. The latest production, *The Power of Volcanoes,* is based in Katmai with side trips to Mt. Rainier, Hawaii Volcanoes, the Alaska Volcano Observatory, and Mt. St. Helens. It focuses on volcanism, plate tectonics, erosion, and the effects of landscape changes on all living things.

Materials are provided to registered schools free via the Internet and satellite broadcasts through a partnership with *Satellite Educational Resources Consortium,* *South Carolina Educational Television,* and *The Weather Channel.* Additional support comes from *Parks as Classrooms* grants, the Challenge Cost Share program, and the *Department of Education's STAR Schools Program.*
Strengthen internal and external partnerships.

Through our own efforts and the programs of park partners, we will communicate the depth, breadth, and relevance of parks to expanded audiences. Programs and media will use park-specific topics and issues to exemplify broader themes of critical import. We will enhance relationships with current partners and establish new partnerships that will further connect people with parks.

Objective A: Relate the content of NPS programs and materials to broader themes.

Base level

- Identify in each park’s comprehensive interpretive plan links to local, regional, national, and international themes.
- Link park home page websites to parks, resources, and partners’ websites that share related themes.
- Encourage cooperating associations to develop thematic interpretive media relevant to park resources and to organize sales displays thematically.

Desired level

- Explore opportunities to incorporate park-specific themes and topics into other organizations’ programs (e.g., Boy and Girl Scout merit badges, Junior Achievement/NPS careers).
- Support the park Learning Centers that will be established with funds from the NPS Natural and Cultural Resources Challenges. Find ways to open your park as a laboratory for the scientists, specialists and educators who will be studying park natural and cultural resources and sharing their work with the public.
- Work with schools and universities to incorporate park stories into distance learning opportunities, field seminars, and new learning technologies being offered to students of all ages.
- Work with businesses to arrange employee community service days that include educational programs about the park’s history as part of the community.
Objective B: Work to understand different perspectives and make programs and messages relevant to diverse groups, including non-traditional audiences.

**Base level**
- Use existing partnerships (e.g., Student Conservation Association, cooperative park studies units at universities, cooperating associations, friends groups, other land-management agencies) to establish new programs and projects that increase and broaden public understanding of and support for the National Park System and the issues pertinent to parks.
- Involve community-based organizations in identifying themes and programs relevant to their needs.
- Ensure that all park-based research results are reproduced in a summary or public presentation, oral or written, in lay language.

**Desired level**
- Assist educators in developing culturally sensitive curricula for targeted groups (e.g., park staff participation in the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative coalition).
- Familiarize teachers with NPS educational resources and programs (e.g., presentations at teacher in-service training and professional conferences, articles in educational organizations' publications).
- Use special-emphasis days/weeks/months to communicate messages about NPS resources, programs, issues, partnerships, and employment opportunities.
- Collaborate with appropriate partners to provide for students and community-based groups in-depth park experiences that foster a stewardship ethic.
- Publish a bi-regional interpretive newsletter to publicize success stories and best practices in educational and interpretive programming.

**Arizona Memorial**
A teacher's workbook, *Remember Pearl Harbor*, a Parks as Classrooms project developed in partnership with the Arizona Memorial Museum Association, is a compilation of American-history study plans on the beginnings of World War II. Learning modules provide information and suggest activities for studying the attack on Pearl Harbor. Biographies of Pearl Harbor survivors and Medal of Honor recipients will be incorporated into a future edition of the workbook.

**Redwood & Whiskeytown**
At Redwood, fourth through sixth graders stay at Wolf Creek or Howland Hill Outdoor Schools for two and a half days. Students investigate old growth redwood forests, streams, prairies, tide pools and salmon-bearing streams. Teachers choose from a wide variety of activities that help the park accomplish its mission and help meet school curriculum goals.

*Whiskeytown Environmental School* provides a week-long camp for 3000 students each year and hosts a special program entitled *Pe'Lane Bos* for the Wintu native people of Northern California. Indian children from ages 5 to 18 learn about traditional connections between the Wintu people, the Whiskeytown area and park resources. Past students return as parents, interns, rangers and teachers—sharing their memories and enthusiasm for what they learned with today's children.
Alaska Support Office
How can the NPS infuse its mission into 75 elementary schools' science programs with only one staff person? Get down to the bare bones! Through the Bones Project, state and district science and social studies program offices allowed the NPS to become involved in the early stages of curriculum development and influence the use of educational materials on a broad scale. During the development of the new Anchorage School District (ASD) science curriculum, NPS staff made dissection of owl pellets personally relevant to students and teachers. Working with ASD, NPS presented 15 teacher in-service workshops. Teachers were given basic terminology, tools and motivation to expand a unit on owl pellets to include explorations of osteology, archeology and comparative anatomy. When teachers took the owl pellets back to their classrooms, park data and the conservation/education ethic of the NPS went with them.

Craters of the Moon
In collaboration with area schools, NASA, and the Idaho Space Grant Consortium, the park developed an educational experience modeled on Apollo astronauts’ training in the late 1960s. The astronauts had to become excited about earth sciences before they could identify and describe rocks, landscapes, and geological processes. Experiences in geological showcases such as Craters of the Moon sparked that excitement. Students today can walk in the astronauts’ footsteps. On class visits they discover the value and joy of scientific learning as well as the merits of preserving the park’s geologic resources.

Objective C: Encourage employee and partner activities that strengthen alliances, stimulate creativity, foster scholarship, and promote effective uses of current technologies.

Base level
- Reward parks and staff who are notably successful in developing, nurturing, and expanding partnerships.
- Offer website training for park web coordinators.
- Encourage employee membership in pertinent professional education organizations.

Desired level
- Increase the ability of park partners to articulate and promote the NPS mission and park management goals by expanding joint training opportunities with the NPS.
- Expand education programs by increasing the use of volunteers with diverse backgrounds, especially in education and technology.
- Encourage employees to apply for developmental opportunities, such as the Albright-Wirth Fund and correspondence courses.
- In collaboration with the National Park Foundation or friends groups, seek funding support from prospective donors whose philanthropic guidelines are in alignment with NPS educational goals.
Objective A: Engage families in multi-cultural programs that tell park stories through activities that appeal to all ages.

**Base level**
- Develop partnerships with at least two local community-based organizations or educational institutions that serve families. Enlist their help to evaluate and enhance current NPS programming and to publicize programs through the partners' media.

**Desired level**
- Establish partnerships with additional institutions.
- Develop and evaluate new programs and publicize them through partners' media.
- Create extended learning opportunities (e.g., kits, trunks, newsletters, websites) for families.
- Participate in family-oriented activities in local communities (e.g., family festivals).
- Establish an advisory council that helps create, publicize, deliver, and evaluate education programs.
- Solicit community feedback on education programs.

Objective B: Involve seniors in a cross-cultural approach to education.

**Base level**
- Develop partnerships with at least two local organizations or educational institutions that serve seniors. Enlist them in evaluating and enhancing current programs and in creating new programs. Recruit docents from their constituencies and train them in program presentation. Publicize programs through their media.

**Desired level**
- Establish partnerships with additional institutions.
- Create extended learning opportunities through the Internet.
- Participate in senior-oriented events in the community.
- Establish a council of senior partners to help create, publicize, deliver, and evaluate education programs.
- Solicit feedback on education programs.
Glacier Bay

*Cultural Connections at Glacier Bay and Beyond* unites traditional knowledge with Western science to help students understand the Alaska native people's connection to the landscape and the value of cultural tradition. The park has implemented local outreach programs, such as the *Hoonah Boat Trip* that involved students in grades 3-6, educators, Tlingit elders, community members and NPS staff. Adults and students worked together in small groups, rotating through various stations to learn about the natural and cultural history of Glacier Bay.

Yakutat Tlingit native interpreters can now share their stories of the surrounding landscape with the public, helping the Tlingit people sustain their cultural traditions while enriching experiences for both students in the classroom and park visitors. Through the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative Coalition (AKRSI), the park has helped integrate standards based on traditional knowledge into the overall Alaska state curriculum standards.

**Objective C: Strengthen relations with youth.**

*Base level*

- Establish and nurture community-based programs that involve young people in educational activities.
- Establish and sustain service/learning programs that link community service with park volunteerism.

*Desired level*

- Provide internships to train young people to participate and take leadership roles in park projects and programs.
- Establish a council of youth partners that helps the park staff stay current with issues, trends, and ideas relevant to young people across multicultural backgrounds and experiences.
- Employ youths in resource education and management through the Student Conservation Association, the Youth Conservation Corps, the Public Land Corps, Americorps and other appropriate programs and organizations.
- Create extended learning opportunities on the Internet in partnership with youth advisors.
Objective D: Develop partnerships with educational institutions.

**Base level**

- Strengthen links with local educational institutions and museums to identify available resources and involve the educational community in park endeavors.
- Appoint an interdisciplinary team to design curriculum-based programs linking park themes, management goals, and national and state educational standards.
- Assure current programs meet the park’s GPRA goals and are in alignment with state and national education standards.
- Develop and implement, as an element of the comprehensive interpretive plan, an education plan that identifies potential curriculum-based programs, target audiences, and the strategies and timetable for implementation.

**Desired level**

- Assure that each park has site-specific materials suitable for teacher and student use.
- Develop cooperative agreements with colleges and universities to provide field experiences for students in environmental and cultural education.
- Establish cooperative agreements with colleges and universities to provide continuing-education credits for park-sponsored teacher workshops.
- Adopt strategies from other successful education programs (e.g., Parks as Classrooms) that effectively involve education partners in program research, design, funding, and evaluation.

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**Golden Gate**

Designed for urban youth, *National Park Labs* (high school) and *Here’s the Dirt* (middle school), conducted jointly by the National Park Service and the Golden Gate National Parks Association, engage students in stewardship and habitat restoration. *Untold Stories* links young people with the Buffalo Soldiers (African-American cavalry) and American Indian protests on Alcatraz. Translated materials, recognition of multiple learning styles, and sustained relationships with schools serving students from low-income families make these programs broadly accessible.

The Community Environmental Center at the Presidio’s Crissy Field (opening in Fall 2000) will interpret wetlands ecology as well as the relationship of the area’s first people to the land and water. A multicultural approach will encourage community participation in program design and delivery, kindle relationships with neighborhoods, increase understanding of the park and foster creative mutual learning.

**Kenai Fjords**

This park is working with the Alaska Sealife Center to incorporate hands-on activities, based on national science education standards, into both park and Sealife center programs. At Kenai Fjords, a living laboratory of change, students can examine glacial and other natural processes at close range. In combination with the center’s resources, the park has the opportunity to engage students in science. This park program is funded by a *Parks as Resources for Knowledge in Science* (PARKS) grant, awarded by Exxon through the National Park Foundation.
Hagerman Fossil Beds
In partnership with local school districts, the park offers a program to make earth sciences relevant to students through interaction with park resource management and research projects. *The Principles of Science—A Virtual Classroom* uses a problem-based learning model in grades 4-12 to restructure the static learning environment in most classrooms. Digital video connections with the park classroom for 30+ school districts allow students direct access to park staff and to ongoing research and resource management activities. An enriched science curriculum uses park specimens and park-based science study to promote in-depth learning. The instructional methods and uses of technological tools help prepare students for “real-world” applications. Digital video production and archiving enables participating classes to share instructional materials with others.

**Objective E: Increase community involvement in curriculum-based education.**

**Base Level**
- Recruit and train volunteers with diverse backgrounds and experiences to conduct programs.

**Desired Level**
- Create a council of community members from environmental, history, and community-service organizations to provide guidance.

**Objective F: Develop a cadre of model teachers who will encourage other teachers to use the park’s educational resources.**

**Base Level**
- Work with experienced teachers to design a curriculum-based program and teacher workshop.

**Desired Level**
- Collaborate with experienced teachers in conducting workshops that prepare teachers to participate in a specific curriculum-based program.
- Develop and conduct, in partnership with experienced teachers, Teachers Teach Teachers institutes to enable teachers to lead self-directed education programs.
- Incorporate a teacher-exchange element into the park website and publicize its availability.
- Participate in local school districts’ in-service training to inform teachers of park programs.
- Create a council of teacher partners to provide guidance in curriculum-based programming.

Haleakalā
Education programs at this park target students in grades 3-5. The third-grade program focuses on life in the subalpine shrub habitat. Fourth-grade students learn *malama aina*—how early Hawaiians used resources and how this care for the land continues today. Fifth graders become “junior geologists,” learning mapping skills and participating in experiments to learn how volcanoes erupt, how craters are formed, and how to identify rock samples.
Objective G: Promote professional development and information exchange by providing advanced training to education specialists and coordinators.

**Base level**
- Require designated park employees and encourage others to attend Module 270 Education Competencies training.

**Desired level**
- Encourage a nearby college or university to offer Module 270 Education Competencies for credit.

Objective H: Use emerging technologies in the design and presentation of education programs.

**Base level**
- Integrate information about park programs and how to participate in them into the park's website.

**Desired level**
- Incorporate links to other NPS education programs into the website.
- Make the park's curriculum-based materials fully available on the website.
- Summarize park-based research results on the website.

Santa Monica Mountains
The Greater Los Angeles Area has one of the youngest and most ethnically diverse populations in the country. By 2040, one in 13 children in the U.S. will live in this area. The park is preparing a place in their lives for parks through curriculum-based education programs. *One Land: Many People, Many Ways* focuses on how all cultures contribute to history. Using hands-on activities, 4th and 5th graders learn about the area's American Indian, Spanish, and Mexican heritages and their contributions to the cultural diversity of southern California. In *National Park Legacy* teachers lead students on a discovery of national parks, science, and social science. Brochures, available by national park themes and worksheets, are provided to students at grade levels K-12.

Sequoia-Kings Canyon
As the University of California prepares to open its Merced campus, Sequoia-Kings Canyon and Yosemite will play major roles as research sites for its students and as outdoor classrooms for elementary and secondary students. Two cooperative programs are now underway to stimulate interest in higher education and park-related fields: For *Sierran Summer Science in the Parks*, UC graduate students and teachers from two local high schools team-taught classes including overnight trips to the parks. In the *Great Explorations in Math and Science Center workshop*, Sequoia-Kings Canyon hosted sessions for teachers that were presented by UC Berkeley's Lawrence Hall of Science.
Objective A: Develop clear, easily understood park messages tailored for targeted audiences and inclusive in breadth and depth of the National Park System's places and programs.

**Base level**

- Inform all employees at staff meetings, training classes, and other gatherings of the NPS's National Leadership Council decisions on the Message Project and ensure employees understand and can articulate new messages.
- Capitalize on special-emphasis days/weeks/months to communicate these messages to untapped audiences through multiple media.
- Incorporate messages about thematically related and lesser-visited parks into programs at high-visitation parks.
- Replace outdated park media, as identified in the 1999 Harpers Ferry Center media backlog inventory, with state-of-the-art media.
- Establish and fill a term position in the Pacific Great Basin Support Office in San Francisco to help parks produce interpretive media funded by the recreation fee demonstration program (*achieved*).
- Feature the NPS arrowhead in all interpretive media.

**Desired level**

- By 2005 diversify audiences and increase program participation by 50% from 1998 levels.
- Explain management policies and practices in temporary exhibits, traveling exhibits, and pertinent publications.
- Target articles, public-service announcements, radio and television features, and other media outreach efforts to non-traditional audiences.
- Provide training and interpretive materials to tour operators who regularly take visitors to parks to improve the accuracy and relevancy of their interpretation.
Objective B: Seek out opportunities to work with print and broadcast media to communicate park and NPS messages.

**Base level**

- Work with local and national media to incorporate park themes and stories into news programs, special interest features, documentaries, travel programs, etc.
- Develop stories for specific audiences and place in media that serve diverse communities or special interest groups.
- Work with other preservation, conservation and tourism organizations to incorporate park stories and themes into local, statewide and national public education efforts (Chamber of Commerce programs, heritage tourism campaigns, special regional publications about watersheds, wild and scenic rivers, archeology, etc.).
- Encourage developmental experiences that will enhance employees' communications skills (e.g., participation in Toastmasters).

**Desired level**

- Provide training for park staff, partners, and volunteers on working with the media.
- Selectively increase staff capabilities in the use of communications technology (e.g., web authoring, PowerPoint presentations).

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**Klondike Gold Rush**

Students can explore the Alaska gold rushes through the curriculum-based Klondike Stamped Kit, packaged in a wooden crate much like those used to ship supplies to the Klondike. Twenty-four kits are now in circulation in Alaska, Washington and Canada. Each kit includes lesson plans, a video, historic maps and text, a Chilkoot Trail guide, a gold pan and real gold, historic-photo postcards, woolen fabric, samples of an 1897 newspaper and materials to lay out their own newspaper. Students discover and use materials and possessions important to gold prospectors in the late 1800s. The kits were produced through a partnership with the C.C. Filson Company.

**John Day Fossil Beds**

The park serves as a center for coordination of scientific research throughout the John Day Basin. Its K-12 curriculum-based programs focus on state science benchmarks and the Horse Fossil Study Kit has been an effective outreach tool. Plans for a new paleontological research center at the park include a dedicated space for education and educational partnerships will continue to be important. The Oregon Museum of Science and Industry's (OMSI) Hancock Field Station, an outdoor education facility within the park, is the venue for NPS programs on geology and paleontology. Park staff also present teacher workshops for graduate credit at OMSI's Portland facility. OMSI's Earth Science Hall features a paleo lab where visitors can observe museum staff working on specimens, many on loan from the park, and a future park exhibit there will reach a larger and more diverse audience.
North Cascades
The North Cascades Institute (NCI) was founded in 1986 to help create and engage an ecologically literate constituency. NCI, a nonprofit, operates under a cooperative agreement with the NPS. It offers adult seminars and Elderhostel courses on natural and cultural history, principally of the North Cascades. Some NPS staff serve as seminar instructors. NCI's children's programs include Mountain School and the Skagit Watershed Education Project. The three-day Mountain School, curriculum-based and linked to the state's Essential Academic Learning Requirements, has introduced thousands of students from nearby counties, primarily fifth graders, to the park since its inception. Its program immerses participants in outdoor experiences. Successful fundraising, volunteer support, and NPS assistance, along with participant fees, sustain the operation financially.

Seattle City Light, the utility that owns and operates three hydroelectric dams in the park (built before the park was established), will soon construct the North Cascades Environmental Learning Center as mitigation for the dams' environmental impacts. NCI will operate the center (opening in 2002), which will accommodate 40 participants and 12 staff initially. The facility will be designed as a sustainable development that respects the setting, will be fully residential, and will include classrooms, labs, and a library.

Objective C: Encourage all employees to seize opportunities to communicate park messages to build a sense of park ownership among diverse audiences.

Base level
- Recognize participation of employees in community activities as representatives for the NPS.
- Induce all employees to create small interpretive or educational experiences in contacts with visitors and telephone callers.
- Depict a culturally diverse human presence in the graphics used in NPS interpretive media.
- Connect with diverse ethnic and gender-specific groups by recruiting writers and consultants from those groups and producing media pieces targeted for those constituencies.

Desired level
- Strengthen NPS connections with at-risk youth by providing mentors and volunteers at nearby schools with diverse populations.
- Expand donor- and partner-supported advertising for park special events, anniversaries, and other occasions conducive to promoting NPS messages.
- Establish an ethnically diverse advisory group to help develop strategies that will strengthen the NPS's advocacy base among underrepresented constituencies.
Objective A: Increase appropriated funds for education.

**Base level**
- Develop with Washington Office (WASO) assistance a regional case statement that traces the financial and statistical trends in education programs over the past five to ten years and a business plan to achieve desired funding goals.
- Prepare with regional directors' and WASO's assistance a budget request for education similar to the Natural Resources Challenge.
- Track funded and unfunded increase requests as a measure of progress and shortfalls in education.
- Establish a media specialist position in each region to help implement media projects funded by the Recreational Fee Demonstration program.
- Create interdisciplinary teams in parks to identify joint education projects and fund sources for them.
- Complete the media inventory in all parks; report results and provide an annual analysis.

**Desired level**
- Establish and fund permanent education specialist positions in both regions.
- Establish a regional financial tracking and monitoring system for education programs.
- Develop a dedicated website for park staffs to share ideas and best practices in education.
- Conduct a survey of current educational programs in parks and priorities for new programs and publicize this information on the education website.

Develop and implement a strategic, sustainable funding approach.

For the past 20 years, new NPS education programs have been financed principally by special-initiative funds. Base increases for interpretation have primarily been park-specific, not national in scale. During that span, opportunities to expand NPS educational programs have increased dramatically. As new technologies emerge, potential audiences grow, and park visitation increases, it is more apparent that we can achieve our education goals in myriad ways, through both on-site programs and community outreach. Yet, appropriated funds to meet these demands will not likely materialize soon. Consequently, we are committed to find and tap varied, sustainable funding sources that will enable us to improve current programs and develop new ones.
Point Reyes
The planned Pacific Coast Learning and Stewardship Center will creatively integrate science, stewardship, and education by providing a central forum for scientific research, information exchange and educational activities. The center will occupy a historic ranch complex built in the early 1900s. Sustainable rehabilitation of the existing structures is underway and will be completed in 2000. Collaborating institutions and agencies will have office space, a laboratory, accommodations and access to computerized information systems. NPS staff will work with academic and cooperating agency professionals to conduct studies on ecological processes, develop baseline resource inventories, conduct vital signs monitoring, and research watershed restoration techniques. The center will offer educational programs about park research, resource management, and stewardship activities. It will strategically engage partners in education by using the Creating Coastal Stewardship through Science curriculum now being developed.

Objective B: Expand the availability of non-appropriated funds for education and develop a fundraising strategy that will leverage appropriated with non-appropriated funds.

*Base level*
- Work with partners strategically, in coordination with the Message Project, to heighten public and congressional support for increased education funding.
- Complete the survey of curriculum-based programs and make this information available to the public on the Internet.
- Create a directory of curriculum-based programs that exemplify successful fundraising strategies.
- Offer the regional partnerships training course at least annually.

*Desired level*
- Establish endowments to support long-term partnerships and programs.
- Promote education program needs and successful partnerships in the NPS partnerships training course, training courses and conferences sponsored by the Association of Partners for Public Lands, and National Park Friends Alliance Group and American Grassroots Unlimited meetings. Develop park-specific and regional fundraising and partnership opportunities.
- Provide scholarships for these meetings and training courses for parks and partners that need financial assistance.
Objective C: Establish stable funding for curriculum-based programs.

**Base Level**
- Establish a term education specialist position in the Columbia Cascades Support Office in Seattle to provide direct outreach to and serve as a liaison with schools *(achieved).*
- Establish an interregional *Parks as Classrooms Educators* (PACE) task force comprising park educational specialists to develop funding strategies for curriculum-based programs.
- Offer workshops conducted by the PACE task force on how to apply for Parks as Classrooms and other grants.
- Seek locally provided pro bono training in grant-writing.
- Using an interdisciplinary team, identify regional themes and program links that can be packaged into grant proposals to the National Science Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Trust for Historic Preservation, or other major funders.

**Desired level**
- Establish additional education specialist positions in parks or clusters to provide outreach to all area schools.
- Develop a park-based education plan that defines short- and long-term strategies, including collaborations with partners, for presentation to prospective funders.
- Allocate travel funds for regional and selected park education specialists to provide technical assistance in program design, development of materials, and teacher workshops to parks without those positions.
- Create a database of all schools, K-12 and colleges, to determine in both regions the scope of potential participants in NPS curriculum-based programs.

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**Yosemite**

*Yosemite 99* linked 12 biology students from Kingsburg High School, California, with 13 counterparts at Pikeview High School in Princeton, West Virginia, the first-ever Internet satellite link between two high schools. Using GLOBE Program protocols, the Kingsburg students studied sites in Yosemite while the Princeton students collected field data from Pipestem State Park. They then exchanged data and compared the two mountain ecosystems. Results were shared with other interested schools via two live webcasts. NASA provided the Ecomm system and two of its engineers to upload the data to a satellite that enabled these broadcasts.

**Yosemite National Institutes (YNI)**

YNI is a non-profit partner with the NPS to provide educational adventures at the Yosemite Institute campus at Yosemite National Park, at the Headlands Institute at Golden Gate National Recreation Area and at the Olympic Park Institute at Olympic National Park. The core program is a residential Field Science program for schools and organized groups. Using art, poetry, philosophy, history and literature, programs emphasize experiential learning and active participation in outdoor exploration and discovery. Each campus also offers family and adult programs tailored to specific interests and topical weekend programs.
While new funds for education are not expected in FY2000, the NPS Message Project, the Natural Resource Challenge, and the Recreational Fee Demonstration program all hold promise of additional funding support for the goals in this strategy. Yet other funding sources may materialize in future fiscal years. Initially we will focus on achieving our goals within existing budgets.

It is important to note that since the Parks as Classrooms® grant program was established in 1990, park superintendents have dramatically demonstrated their ability to make a difference in education. More than 120 parks have hired education specialists to initiate and sustain long-term relationships with schools. With each additional park, the cumulative benefits for the NPS can be substantial.

The contributions of park partner organizations further extend our educational reach. Indeed, using partnerships to achieve many of the goals in this strategy will reduce the need for appropriated funds. With this strategy in place, vigorous partnership and fundraising initiatives will accelerate the rate we carry it out.

Should new appropriated funds for education become available, they will be directed to four priorities:

1. **Fund permanent regional education specialist positions.**

2. **Survey parks to build a database of educational programs in the two regions.**
   The initial survey will target curriculum-based programs, the second all park interpretive services and other educational programs. Internet access to this information will make it convenient and efficient for park staffs to share program ideas and best practices.

3. **Provide support funds for interdisciplinary education efforts.**
   Competencies training, travel funds for education specialists, and support for implementation of special initiatives exemplify some of the needs for these funds.

4. **Direct funds to support the Learning Centers and educational activities identified in the NPS Natural Resources Challenge.**
Measurable steps can be taken with existing park budgets and staff. The following six actions, which fit within national goals and will have impacts beyond park boundaries, should be implemented in each park in the Alaska and Pacific West regions:

**Complete a comprehensive interpretive plan (CIP).** The CIP should include an education plan that guides work with schools, a media outreach plan that identifies NPS messages and the audiences they should reach, a volunteers and partners plan that addresses their roles in achieving education goals, and guidelines for engaging all NPS employees in education.

**Responsible party:** Park.

**Funding sources:** Limited Harpers Ferry Center funding, park base and donated funds. Washington Office (WASO) Interpretation is requesting appropriated funds.

**Implement interpretive competencies training.** Target training for specific employee groups each year.

**Responsible parties:** Central office, park.

**Funding sources:** WASO and regional training funds, park base funds. WASO is seeking additional funds.

**Identify park and regional themes as the basis to tell the untold stories of potential interest to diverse audiences.** Parks should use park-based and off-site programs, informal worksite contacts with visitors, and the print and broadcast media to relate these stories.

**Responsible parties:** Park, central office.

**Funding sources:** Park base funds, Parks as Classroom grants, donated funds.

**Expand the park web page.** Home pages currently provide park information; parks should build on that base to offer interpretation, describe educational programs, and promote volunteer and partner assistance in achieving educational goals.

**Responsible parties:** Park. Technical assistance is available from the support office.

**Funding source:** Park base funds.

**Support and promote interdisciplinary educational efforts.** Examples include Journeys to Alaska, Alaska Region's distance learning project; Pacific West Region's resource protection initiative; the prescribed fire education program; the environmental leadership and sustainability initiative; and youth programs such as the Youth Conservation Corps and Americorps. Equally important are employees' daily contacts intended to educate visitors—e.g., protection rangers helping dog owners understand the need to keep dogs on leash, trail workers explaining to visitors why they use hand tools during spotted owl nesting season, or native-plant nursery volunteers learning the value of protecting genetic integrity.

**Responsible parties:** Park, central office.

**Funding sources:** Park base funds, various external sources.

**Reduce the interpretive media backlog.** The reduction goal for each park is identified in the 1999 Harpers Ferry Center media backlog inventory.

**Responsible parties:** Central office, park.

**Funding sources:** Exhibit cyclic and repair/rehabilitation funds, donated funds, Recreational Fee Demonstration program.
Each of us is accountable for success in meeting these goals—regional directors and staffs, superintendents and their staffs, and participating partners. Each superintendent will report results achieved annually over the next five years. Those results will be measured and discussed in the annual performance appraisal for each superintendent.

Each park must build an education program that best fits its goals and reflects local conditions and opportunities. It is imperative that programs be interdisciplinary, focus on teachers and students, and reach new and diverse audiences. Each park's annual work plan must identify specific actions that will meet the goals of this strategy.

"Through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection."

In acknowledging education as part of our core mission, we are committing ourselves to an aggressive education program that achieves or exceeds these goals. Sustained preservation and stewardship of national parks through the 21st century demand that commitment.
Since the bi-regional workshop in February 1999, two events that significantly affect the NPS's educational mission have occurred.

The NPS Message Project

The National Park Foundation, chartered by Congress in 1967 as the fundraising arm of the National Park Service, proposed a new initiative in 1998. Both the Service and the Foundation recognized that advances in communications technology and America's changing demographics required additional innovations to reach new audiences. Using proven techniques, the NPF conducted market research with youth, senior citizens, and people of different ethnic backgrounds to assess their knowledge of parks, whether they visit parks, and if so, how they use parks.

The research revealed that the majority of the public are not aware of the variety and scope of national parks and are familiar with only a few of the best-known parks. Most respondents view parks primarily as vacation destinations and know little about the NPS's mission or preservation values. Many people believe they are not welcome in parks and that parks hold nothing of interest to them.

The NPS Message Project will develop a series of concise core messages about the Service and the System. It will propose a program to deliver those messages to people who have little or no understanding of or interest in national parks' values. For the first time in NPS history messages targeted for specific audiences will cover the National Park System rather than focus on individual parks.

The Natural Resource Challenge: An Action Plan to Preserve Natural Resources

Announced in August 1999, this plan will increase scientific knowledge of park resources and apply the highest standards to their management to ensure their long-term health and protection. The Natural Resource Challenge will address a multitude of natural resource management issues, enhance resource inventorying and monitoring, increase research collaboration with the scientific community and establish learning centers in selected parks.

The action plan says, "The National Park Service will develop, with corporate and foundation assistance, 32 learning centers to serve as focal points for research, information exchange, and education. Each center will serve a network of parks... [Centers] will include dormitory and laboratory space as needed. Their scope will vary from a small classroom and modest housing for three to five scientists to facilities for 20-30 researchers and several concurrent scientific projects... As learning centers are established, they will be staffed with a research center coordinator and an education position. $7.2 million will be required."

The NPS has submitted an increase request for $20 million annually for five years to carry out this action plan. Funds will partially be used for educational outreach, including websites, specialty videos, and new publications.

A Cultural Resources Challenge is planned for 2001.
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Inspiring Places Inspiring People
Education Strategy, 2000 - 2004

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