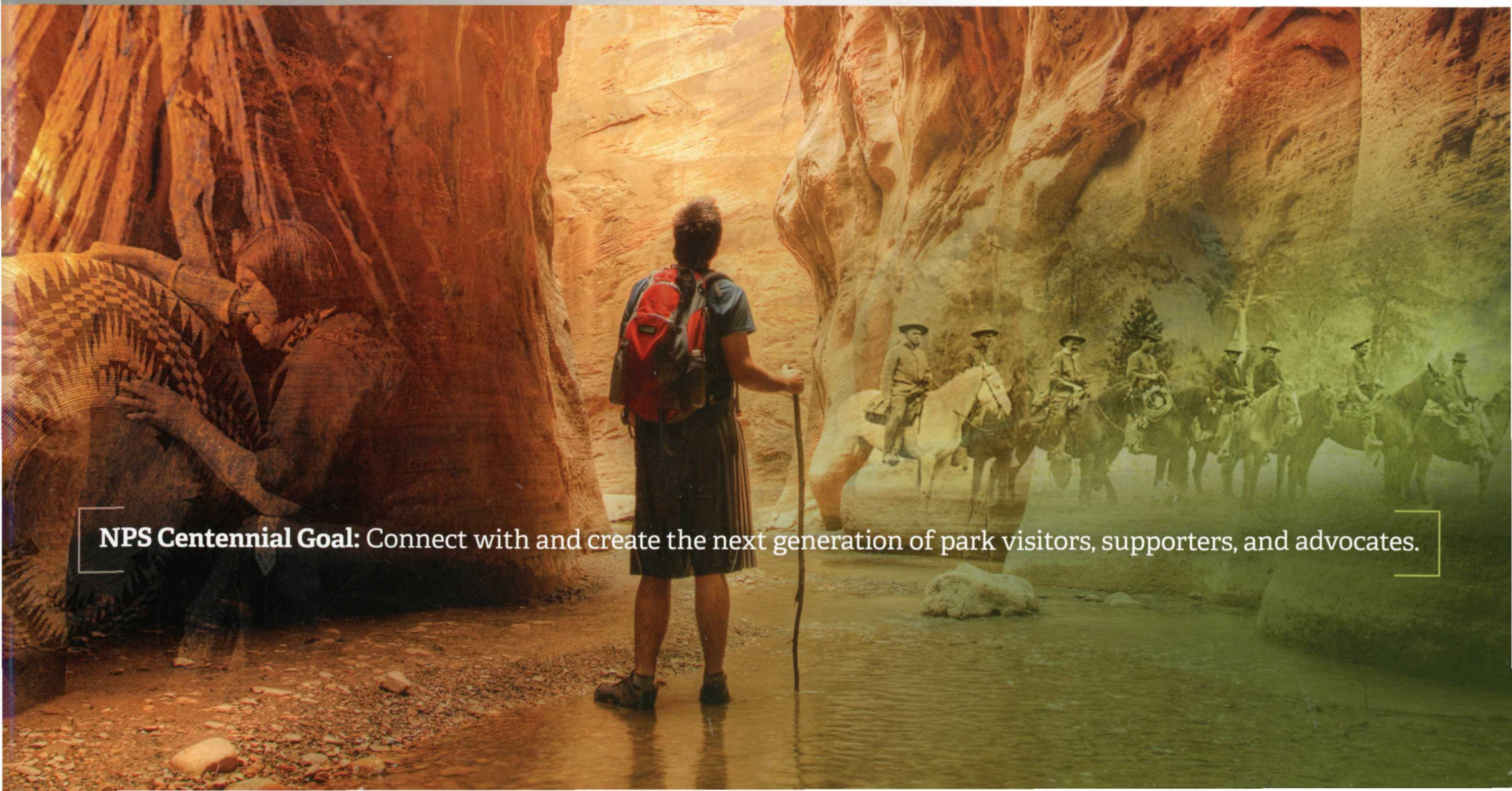


THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CENTENNIAL 1916 – 2016


An Interpretive Guide to the NPS Centennial

2016

National Park Service
CENTENNIAL



NPS Centennial Goal: Connect with and create the next generation of park visitors, supporters, and advocates.

A photograph of a National Park Ranger, a Black woman wearing a tan hat and uniform, smiling and making a peace sign. She is surrounded by a diverse group of children. The image has a semi-transparent dark green overlay on the left side where the text is located.

“The centennial will celebrate the achievements
of the past 100 years, but it is really about the future.”

— National Park Foundation



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STRATEGIC CENTENNIAL GOAL FOR INTERPRETATION, EDUCATION AND VOLUNTEERS

Create and ensure consistent communication of national interpretive messages that reach younger audiences while providing necessary guidance, advice, training, and products for NPS personnel to support the NPS Centennial goal.

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDEBOOK

In this guide, interpreters, educators, volunteers, and partners will find practical guidelines for commemorating the centennial. It is your tool to help refine your messages, shape your thinking about current programs and guide the development of new interpretive programs.



NPS MISSION

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and intrinsic values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation, and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.



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<https://sites.google.com/a/nps.gov/nps-centennial-office/home>



HOW WILL THE NPS CELEBRATE THE CENTENNIAL?

As illustrated in the pie image shown here, there are four primary ways that our efforts will contribute to our centennial goal of connecting with and creating the next generation of park visitors, supporters, and advocates. Keep in mind that our efforts are evolving and there will be more pieces of the pie as 2016 approaches.

1. Implement *A Call to Action*.

This shared vision rallies employees and partners with specific goals and measurable actions that chart a new direction for the NPS Second Century. (Tips on how to connect centennial activities to *A Call to Action* follow.)

2. Join the *Find Your Park Campaign*.

Toolkits will be made available in early 2015 that will enable each park to invite visitors, supporters, and the general public to share in the cause.

3. Hold *Activities and Events*.

Share our centennial excitement by sponsoring activities in your park, program, or community during 2016.

4. Engage with *Partners*.

Work with your local partners for ways to reach the centennial goal together.

Rooted in each flexible category are endless opportunities for parks to join in the movement. In fact, you may discover that your park is already an active participant in the centennial. Use your creativity to mold current programs to fit into this framework, or generate entirely new activities. Then, share your success stories with us at NPS.gov. For more details, visit the NPS Centennial Office website by clicking on the centennial logo on the Inside NPS homepage.

Do you agonize over writing cohesive, relevant theme statements? We have good news! When it comes to creating centennial-related programs, the work has already been done for you. So take a deep breath, turn the page and join us in creating a resilient and relevant National Park Service for the 21st Century.



MAJOR INTERPRETIVE THEMATIC MESSAGES FOR THE CENTENNIAL

The following themes will help you craft centennial-related programs that link to similar events in parks nationwide. Feel free to adapt them, as needed, to your activities. The result, as individual park units adopt these central ideas, will be a consistent and powerful message that spans the continent. *Numbers in parentheses indicate A Call to Action (C2A) activities best supported by the theme.*

Get Connected – Parks tell America's story and connect us to our history, our environment, ourselves, and each other. (C2A – 1, 3, 13, 20, 21)

In reflecting who we are, the National Park System invites us to connect with our natural and cultural heritage and our ecology, as well as each other. National parks offer opportunities to discover how our individual stories contribute to a collective narrative and how our individual lives connect to the larger society and the world around us.

Expand Your Horizons – The National Park Service is a valued formal and informal educational institution. (C2A – 2, 7, 15, 16, 20)

National parks are ideal extensions of the formal classroom by offering transformative experiences through relevant, inclusive, and active learning. Such encounters open minds of all ages and stimulate learners to analyze societal choices, evaluate information, and consider new perspectives.

Yours, Mine, and Ours – National parks reveal a comprehensive national identity. (C2A – 1, 3, 5, 36)

Parks highlight pivotal movements and moments in the nation's history which reflect a diverse cultural identity. Such revelations facilitate a more complete understanding of our past and present, and urge us toward an inclusive future.

Places of Healing – Parks promote mental, physical and spiritual health. (C2A – 4, 5, 6, 8)

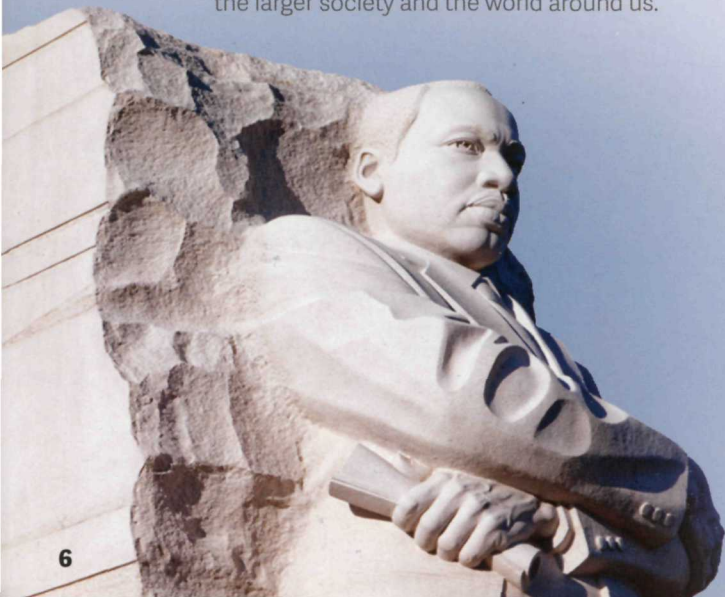
National parks help restore us physically, emotionally, creatively, and spiritually. By linking people to nature and to one another, parks inspire healthier lifestyle choices and help build more vibrant communities.

Get Inspired – National parks enliven the human spirit. (C2A – 10, 18, 27, 28)

Whether alone or with family or friends, whether encountering nature or discovering history, national parks offer limitless opportunities for reflection, awe, and wonder. National park sites can provide profound life experiences that reshape individual lives and can be shared among generations.

Evolution of a Global System of Parks and Protected Areas – National parks are connected to a global conservation community. (C2A – 14, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29)

Since the creation of the world's first national park at Yellowstone in 1872, parks throughout the world have looked to the US National Park System—the first and largest—as a model for conservation, preservation, education, and recreation. Yet, while providing leadership, we learn from and gain insight from our international partners. Our parks are part of a global community linked through species migration, cultural interaction, international partnerships, and more.



Planet Health – National parks are critical to protecting Earth. (C2A – 11, 12, 20, 23, 37)

Some national parks protect the last, nearly intact ecosystems where natural processes function independent of human alteration. This makes national parks invaluable for scientific discovery and education. Resource management in the parks is linked to research, protection, and preservation throughout the world. In addition, national parks are the anchors in landscape-scale strategies for addressing climate change, protection of air and water quality, migratory species, and more.



Find Your Park – National Park System programs extend the presence of parks to communities across America. (C2A – 2, 4, 5, 11, 13, 16)

People everywhere can find their park—whether it is a place or an idea—in their own backyard through education activities, volunteer opportunities, community assistance projects, and natural and cultural history preservation programs. Our programs reveal many meanings as they connect people to trails, rivers, museums, historic sites, and public lands nationwide.





CONNECTING THE CENTENNIAL TO A CALL TO ACTION



As you saw in the pie diagram on page 5, a full quarter of the NPS Centennial Pie is dedicated to *A Call to Action*. We have identified six such action items below that we believe relate most directly to the centennial. Attaching your activities to these items will ensure they are part of a larger whole and take us a long way toward our goal of connecting with and creating the next generation of park visitors, supporters, and advocates.

#2 Step by Step

Create deep connections between a younger generation and parks through a series of diverse park experiences. To accomplish this we will collaborate with education partners and youth organizations to create a pathway to employment with the NPS, with a focus on diversifying the workforce. We will involve at least 10,000 youth each year in a multi-year progression of experiences from education programs to internship/volunteer opportunities to employment.

#15 A Class Act

Help students develop a deep understanding of park resources and the relevance of parks in their lives through a series of park education programs. To do so, we will adopt a class of 2016 graduates (grade school, middle school, or high school) at every national park and develop a series of fun, educational, and engaging activities culminating in the NPS Centennial in 2016.

#16 Live and Learn

Provide multiple ways for children to learn about the national parks and what they reveal about nature, the nation's history, and issues central to our civic life. We will accomplish this by reaching 25 percent of the nation's K-12 school population annually through real and virtual field trips, residential programs, teacher training, classroom teaching materials, online resources, and educational partnerships.

#17 Go Digital

Reach new audiences and maintain a conversation with all Americans by transforming the NPS digital experience to offer rich, interactive, up-to-date content from every park and program. To accomplish this we will create a user-friendly web platform that supports online and mobile technology including social media.

#29 Posterity Partners

Engage the power of philanthropy and volunteerism to provide legacy support for the NPS, both nationwide and at the individual park level. To do so we will launch a public campaign linked to the centennial, and develop new tools, such as local or national endowments, to leverage sustainable philanthropic support from individuals and partnerships.

#33 Home Grown

Recruit candidates to provide a source of diverse, motivated, and well-trained employees that reflect local communities by expanding the successful ProRanger Program and similar recruitment programs to all seven NPS Regions and to additional disciplines beyond visitor and resource protection.



EVERY KID IN A PARK

You may have picked up on a theme by now. It's about youth! After all, if we want young people today to ultimately care for and support the parks we must find ways to connect with them. We know that children who interact with nature and natural areas before age 11 are more likely to have positive attitudes about them as adults. So, we are extending an invitation to fourth graders across the nation.

In collaboration with the Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation (FICOR), the National Park Service is leading the Every Kid in a Park initiative to help the next generation of park visitors, supporters, and advocates create meaningful connections to public lands and waters.

The immediate goal of the initiative is to provide an opportunity for each fourth grade student (approximately 4 million) across the country to experience such places in person throughout the 2015-2016 school year. Some of these students will come as part of organized field trips, and others will come with their families and friends.

Here are some of the ways we plan to tackle this ambitious goal:

- **Every Kid Pass:** Fourth grade students and their families will benefit from free admission to fee-collecting parks, public lands and waters by downloading a coupon from the Every Kid website and app. The site will also allow them to track their visits to different sites, earn points toward prizes, and share their experiences with friends. The program is set to launch in September 2015.

- **Education Portal Website:** This National Park Service site has abundant materials for K-12 teachers, including science labs, lesson plans, and field trip guides. Fourth grade teachers can use the materials to engage their students before, during, and after their park visit. The site is currently being updated with new standards-aligned college and career-ready materials to enhance usability.







JUNIOR
RANGER
NATIONAL
SERVICE

EVERY KID IN A PARK (continued)



• **National Philanthropic Campaign:** The National Park Foundation (NPF) – the congressionally chartered foundation of the National Park Service – is re-launching its Ticket to Ride program as Every Kid in a Park. The program will award transportation grants for kids to visit parks, public lands and waters. It provides for three points of engagement with students – pre-visit, during visit, and follow up. Broadening this time-tested program to all parks, public lands and waters, greatly expands youth opportunities for cultural or natural experiences.



• **DOI Youth Initiative:** As part of this initiative, coalitions dedicated to getting more kids active, outdoors, and connected to nature are being created in 50 urban cities across the country. Funding has already been secured to put volunteer coordinators, who will facilitate outings to public lands and waters, in each of these cities.



OUR LEGACY

Achieving and Sustaining the NPS Centennial Goal

How do we want to share this extraordinary occasion with a dynamic American and international public?

The National Park Service Centennial provides us with a unique opportunity – to deliver the message that we are committed to connecting with and creating the next generation of park visitors, supporters, and advocates. We must go beyond merely inviting the public to partake in the celebration. Our task is to encourage them not only to “find their park,” but to join us as committed stewards of these cherished public spaces across the nation.

Employees are critical National Park Service assets and our efforts are key to promoting resource protection. Interpreters and educators, as well as our volunteers, have the awesome responsibility of offering compelling and relevant interpretation of America’s treasures and stories. As we continue to provide the quality learning and inspiration we have offered since 1916, our Call to Action in this centennial is to:

- Reach new and younger audiences through more relevant techniques and programs.
- Preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the nation, so that all may experience from, learn from, and be inspired by the National Park System.
- Make known the importance of national parks and programs in the health and well-being of Americans and the international community.
- Communicate the significance of the National Park System in new and innovative ways.
- Help the public discover and relate to the many stories found in the national parks.

Interpreters, volunteers, and educators should note that the National Park Service Centennial does not end with the closing days of 2016. Our goal of connecting with and creating the next generation of park visitors, supporters, and advocates will direct, compel, and inspire us as we march together toward the next horizon.

