

North Atlantic Region Skills Teams

North Atlantic Region
National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior

Interpretation



The Skills Team Approach began in 1975 as a small group of interpreters out of Minute Man National Historical Park who arranged summer seasonal training for the parks around Boston. It gradually grew to include other parks in the Region to the point where today there is a greater New York–New Jersey area (South) Skills Team and a greater Boston area (North) Skills Team.

Over the years, the Team has responded to identified Regional and national training needs by arranging courses from "Administration for Interpretive Managers" and "Basic Communications" to an "Exhibit Workshop," "Interpretive Management Seminar," and "Resource Management for Interpreters."

The Team provides field input and representation to the NAR Interpretive staff. The Team assists in interpretive orientation and specialized projects. Team members are also available to assist parks with special training programs, audits, interpretive program and exhibit evaluations, and other interpretive needs.

Today the Team is expanding its functions particularly to serve as an advisory body for Superintendents in evaluating existing interpretive programs or problems. As such, the Team is in step with NPS-6 in seeking to make interpretation a stronger management aid.

Resource Management



The Resource Management Skills Team was formed in 1986 for the purpose of offering training courses at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels in a variety of course topics in both natural and cultural resource management.

The Team has already sponsored several courses and others are planned. The RMST has now divided into northern and southern work groups for planning and implementation of the next classes to be offered, such as introductory sessions of natural and cultural resource management, resource protection, pest management for curators, and an annual one-day workshop for regional gardeners.

Some Team members are working on more specialized courses with a greater depth of material, including vegetation management, museum environments, cultural and natural resource monitoring skills, a gardeners' conference examining historic landscape issues, and computer skills training in both specialized applications and general communications. Also started is a project to develop a questionnaire to identify more completely and accurately those who need training and in what areas.

Maintenance Management



The Maintenance Management Skills Team, formed in 1987, is made up of maintenance employees from different parks in the region, bringing their special skills and knowledge together to train and instruct other maintenance employees.

The Team consists of painters, carpenters, mechanics, and managers and is designed to respond to most maintenance training needs. The Team has completed a number of training courses to date, such as a painting, plumbing, carpentry, and blueprint reading course held at Fire Island National Seashore to construct a visitor bathroom facility at the park.



Joint Skills Teams meeting at Tower Mountain Training Lodge in Hancock, Mass.



Administration

An Administrative Skills Team, consisting of two teams, is being formed. A Supervisory and Management Development Task Group, made up of personnel, management, and administrative specialists from the Regional Office and the parks, will be looking at field training needs in personnel and human services, developing training packages and networking. A Personnel and Management Skills Team will tackle the FERS program and then begin developing instructor training in management techniques.



Cooperative Team Projects

The Interpretive, Resource Management, and Maintenance Teams have sponsored joint workshops in an effort to bridge the gap between various divisions in the Region. For example, the Maintenance and Resource Management Skills Teams have sponsored a gardening course. The Interpretive Skills Team and Resource Management Skills Team are working to make scientific or historical research available to interpreters in a form that will enable the public to understand and support management goals toward natural and cultural resource protection.



Career Enhancement

One major benefit to the Skills Team approach is the network which is developing among the parks in our Region through Team members. Rangers from different parks and the Regional Office, who did not previously know one another, now have an opportunity to meet, to visit each others' parks, and to work on projects and conduct training together. The Team also offers its members new teaching skills, career development opportunities, and moral support for what we are trying to accomplish, both in our jobs and our efforts as a Team.

NORTH ATLANTIC REGION SKILLS TEAMS