United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D. C. 20013-7127

IN REPLY REFER TO

NOV 6 1997

MEMORANDUM

TO: Directorate and Field Directorate

FROM: Robert G. Stanton
Director

RE: COOPERATIVE EFFORTS WITH GATEWAY COMMUNITIES

In my confirmation hearing, and on several occasions since I have become Director, the subject of our relationships with communities at the gateway to our parks has come up. We must develop a regular means of engaging in a two-way dialog with neighboring communities, civic and business leaders and residents. We must consider the views of many constituents and make decisions that carefully balance the competing interests, while operating within the statutory purpose of the national parks. We cannot succeed in carrying out our vision without working closely with park neighbors; certainly, to listen but also to inform them of the purposes and policies for which each park was established and must be managed.

Last year the Division of Park Planning and Special Studies contracted with the Sonoran Institute to organize two advanced seminars on partnerships with gateway communities. These seminars, conducted at Gettysburg National Military Park In June and Zion National Park in November, 1996, were designed to summarize lessons learned by park managers in developing cooperative relationships with neighboring communities to protect resources and provide visitor services.

The seminars brought together a diverse group of superintendents, division chiefs, program managers, and local officials who have taken leading roles in formulating creative solutions to problems that cross park boundaries. A complete report on the seminars, entitled **"National Parks and Their Neighbors: Lessons Learned from the Field on Building Partnerships with Local Communities,"** is attached, and is being sent to each superintendent and program center in the Service.

Of equal importance is the strong and positive relationships which the Service develops with communities who invite us in to support their open space planning efforts in areas where we have **no** NPS units. Our Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program has achieved a remarkable record of success in supporting community initiatives in conservation open space planning and

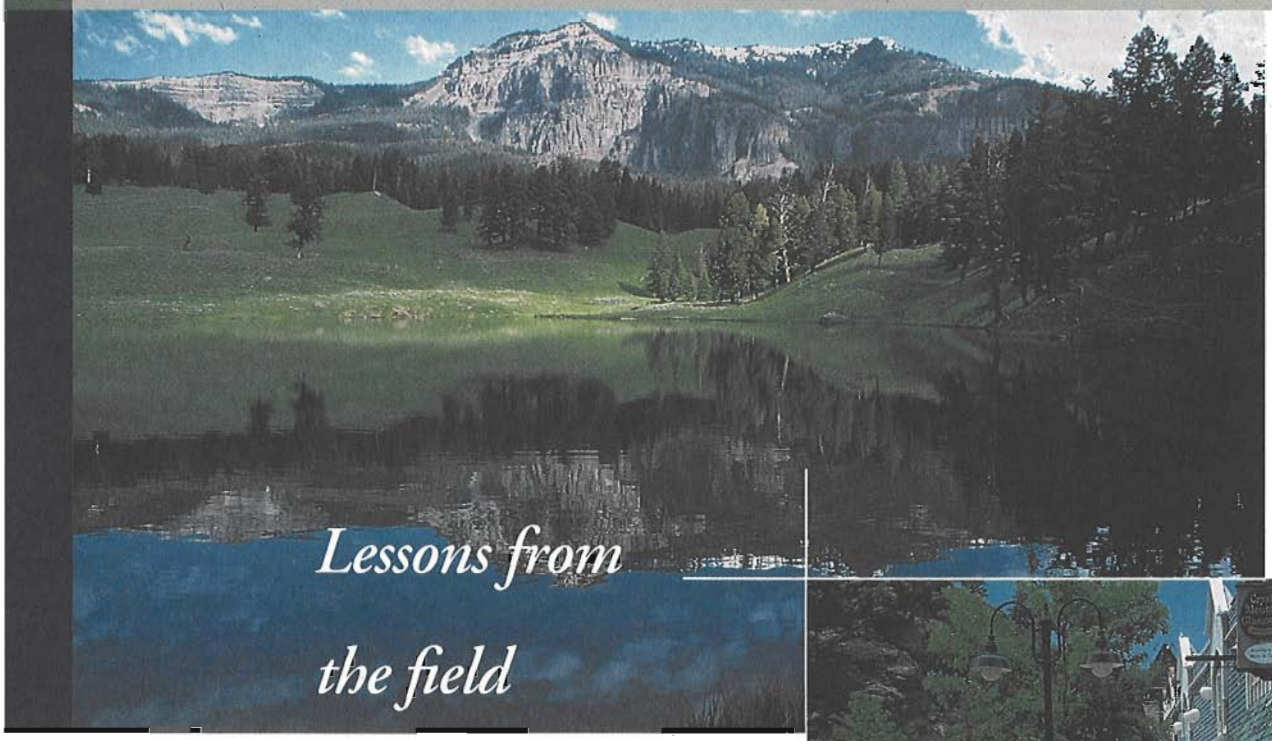
landscape protection. Many of you will have already seen an excellent notebook prepared in the Pacific West Region entitled, **"Building Gateway Partnerships: A Process for Shaping the Future of Your Community"** which I highly recommend to you.

There is also considerable interest being expressed in this large topic from the Department of Interior and in other federal Departments. Most recently, the Federal Interagency Tourism Policy Council, co-chaired by Commerce Secretary Daley and Interior Deputy Secretary Garamendi, has identified cooperation with gateway communities as one of its highest priorities, and Deputy Secretary Garamendi has seen to it that Interior has the overall lead in coordinating the federal government's effort to work more closely with gateway communities.

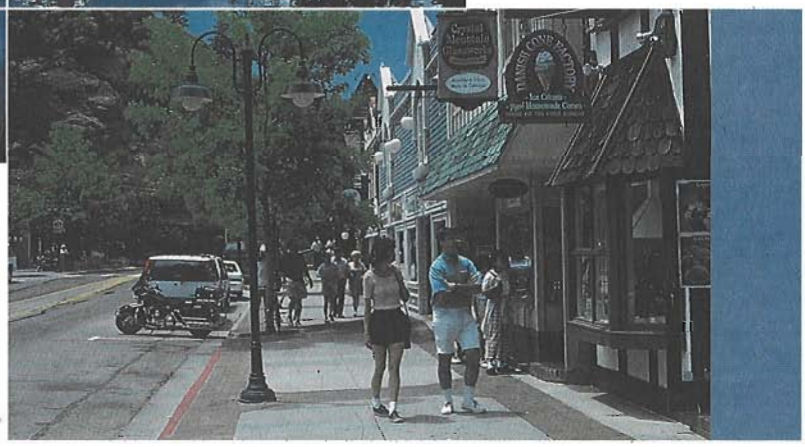
The actions suggested from our own two seminars are being considered by the recently established Servicewide Partnership Working Group. Progress on these actions will require support from this group, and both individual parks and program offices.

Taken as a whole, I hope you will agree that we must step up our outreach with our gateway communities. To this end, I will be conferring with the National Leadership Council at our next meeting to develop our best course of action. Be assured that I will expect positive results in building strong working relationships with our gateway communities.

National Parks and Their Neighbors



Lessons from the field on building partnerships with local communities



The Sonoran Institute

A Report on Partnerships Beyond Park Boundaries

Advanced Seminars held at Gettysburg and Zion National Parks

by the Sonoran Institute for the National Park Service Division of Park Planning and Special Studies

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Cover Photos:
Trout Lake, Yellowstone National Park (Merv Coleman)
Estes Park, Colorado (Sheridan Steele)

Dear Friends:

We are pleased to have hosted the recent seminars, *Partnerships Beyond Park Boundaries.* The seminars provided an excellent opportunity for park managers, planners, local officials, and "friends" organizations to exchange information and learn from each other's experiences. The report by the Sonoran Institute on these seminars provides a wealth of good ideas that can be applied throughout the National Park Service.

We hope this report will encourage you to experiment, develop new ideas, and share them with your colleagues. The report identifies several guiding principles for partnerships as well as some challenges that need to be faced if partnerships are to be effective in supporting park purposes and community goals. Addressing these challenges requires commitment by every park manager and the leadership of the National Park Service.

We do not, however, have to wait for a new program or direction from above. We can take the initiative, accept individual responsibility, and reach out to our neighbors in creative ways to foster the type of partnerships that are needed if parks are to be sustained for the benefit of future generations.

Donald A. Falvey

Don Falvey, Superintendent
Zion National Park

John Latschar, Superintendent
Gettysburg National Military Park

Foreword

In 1993, the National Park Service identified the need to evaluate the lessons that have been learned about relationships between parks and gateway communities. The scope of this inquiry initially was limited to traditional definitions of gateway communities: towns that have grown at the entrance to destination parks such as Gatlinburg, Tennessee and Great Smoky Mountains National Park; Estes Park, Colorado and Rocky Mountain National Park; Tusayan, Arizona and Grand Canyon National Park. These gateway communities have been of special interest and concern as their growth directly affects park resources and visitor experiences. Parks, in turn, affect these communities by creating a demand for visitor accommodations and services. Clearly, the need for cooperation runs in both directions.

To accomplish this evaluation with some independent perspective, the Division of Park Planning and Special Studies contracted with the Sonoran Institute to organize two seminars that would bring together NPS managers and outside partners who have been most active in this field. We decided to hold one seminar in the East and one in the West, to compare and contrast experiences in different regions. These sessions were designed to produce several results including ideas that participants could use immediately on return to their parks: improved information about what works and what does not, and recommendations for policy, funding, and new training programs. This report presents the results of these seminars.

As expected, participants repeated and emphasized many of the findings of previous efforts to define needs and make recommendations regarding land-use questions that transcend park boundaries. However, these seminars also produced some real surprises and suggestions for new directions.

One of the first challenges was to define the scope of the effort and agree on some common definitions. We soon found that the concept of gateway communities did not readily apply to many parks where boundaries are complex or the traditional concept of a community at the entrance to the park simply does not work because the park and surrounding communities are "interspersed." The scope of the discussions rapidly extended to a broad range of configurations where parks and their neighbors are working to solve common problems.

The term *partnership* was used in the invitation to the seminars but became the subject of an important discussion about what the term really means. Participants contrasted this term with relationships and articulated a distinct difference: relationships play a critical role in creating the necessary foundation for any successful partnership to develop. Relationships, however, may or may not lead to specific partnership initiatives that benefit the local community and park resources.

The seminars initially were intended to focus primarily on collaborative land-use decisions to assure compatibility of private development adjacent to park boundaries. Participants promptly agreed that this cooperation on land-use questions needed to be considered in the broader context of a regional landscape. To achieve this level of cooperation, participants recommended that most parks develop and nurture relationships that focus on funding, visitor services and accommodations, transportation issues, and management practices.

Although NPS has in the past identified some areas as "partnership parks" (e.g., Lowell National Historical Park, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor) because of provisions in the authorizing legislation, participants in the seminars suggested that a distinction between partnership parks and other parks is not desirable. ALL parks are partnership areas and thus park managers should view partnerships as an important management tool in protecting park resources.

With the scope of inquiry broadened beyond traditional gateways to neighbors, and beyond partnerships to relationships, the discussions emphasized cultivating leadership and support for partnership approaches within the National Park Service. A particularly intriguing point was that in many parks, initiatives taken by superintendents to engage surrounding communities are not always well received or supported by park staff members. In spite of a great deal of talk about managing parks on an ecosystem basis, participants reported that park rangers, resource management specialists, and interpreters often doubt the value of superintendents spending so much time working outside of the boundary rather than caring for "the resource." A major challenge remains in gaining acceptance and even active support from the "rank and file" behind the idea that involving the entire park staff (not only the superintendent, assistant superintendent, or land-use specialist) in working with neighboring communities is essential to achieving NPS goals for resource protection.

The need for support from all levels in the organizational framework also was noted. NPS leadership has consistently discussed the need to develop partnerships, most often as a way to address shortfalls in appropriated funds. However, acceptance that the risks often involved in partnering are worth taking is not so widespread, nor is the need for a different set of management skills.

A principal conclusion of the seminars was that the inclination and ability to establish, cultivate, and sustain cooperative relationships is a basic management skill and philosophy that warrants active support throughout the National Park Service. If the National Park Service is truly going to support effective partnerships with neighboring communities, a substantial shift in the culture of the organization will be required to encourage new ways of defining the Park Service's role in preserving resources and serving visitors. The NPS leadership has an opportunity to accept the challenge of how to promote the idea that successful parks need successful partners.

Warren Brown
Program Manager
Park Planning and Special Studies

Executive Summary

In 1996, the Sonoran Institute and the National Park Service Division of Park Planning and Special Studies organized two seminars for a diverse group of over 50 NPS managers and outside partners with first-hand experience in creating effective relationships and partnerships beyond park boundaries. The first seminar was held in June at Gettysburg National Military Park and the second in November at Zion National Park. Given the constraints on the number of participants that could be accommodated, the organizers sought out only Park Service managers and planners with direct experience in carrying out cooperative initiatives with adjacent communities, landowners, and other agencies.

The purpose was both novel and straightforward: to harvest the field experiences of the participants in order to assess what works, what doesn't work, and what changes are needed to make partnership approaches more effective under NPS management. Specifically, the objectives were to:

1. Identify factors and principles that contribute to successful partnerships beyond park boundaries.
2. Collect and share information on recent experiences within the National Park Service and other land management agencies in cultivating cooperative relationships with adjacent communities and landowners.
3. Improve partnership skills among park managers currently addressing complex or potentially controversial relationships with gateway communities or other park neighbors.
4. Improve information about tools, techniques, and strategies for initiating partnerships with neighboring communities.
5. Enhance support for NPS programs and operations from neighboring communities and landowners throughout the park system.
6. Develop recommendations for NPS leadership regarding policy directions, funding, training, and related needs to continue improving skills in this field.
7. Reach an understanding of regional and site-specific differences in approaches or principles.

This report presents current partnership initiatives and summarizes the conclusions and recommendations reached by participants at the Gettysburg and Zion seminars. The most important message is that *increased emphasis, skill, and success with partnerships are essential for the future of park resources.* They are essential across the board — in "partnership parks," traditional parks in all parts of the country, and in other NPS activities and programs — and will play an increasingly important role in fulfilling the National Park Service mission. Successful relationships and partnerships provide park staff with alternative strategies to address the full range of park activities, from regional landscape protection to visitor services.

To facilitate partnership initiatives, participants recommended that current legislative authorities, budget priorities, and agency policies be reviewed to reflect this new commitment to partnerships throughout the National Park Service. Fundamental to the success of partnership activities is employee training at all levels that underscores the potential value of these approaches. Training should emphasize the importance of park staff sharing risks, rewards, and responsibilities with partners. Further, participants suggested that the National Park Service establish an information clearinghouse for its staff and outside professionals to share experiences and expertise; to learn about successful and unsuccessful strategies, best practices, and case studies; and to identify resources. Park planning efforts should also incorporate partnership strategies as a means for working effectively with neighboring communities.

Ultimately, without partnership solutions that invest adjacent communities and landowners in the future of parks, traditional strategies to protect park resources are less likely to succeed.

Sheridan Steele

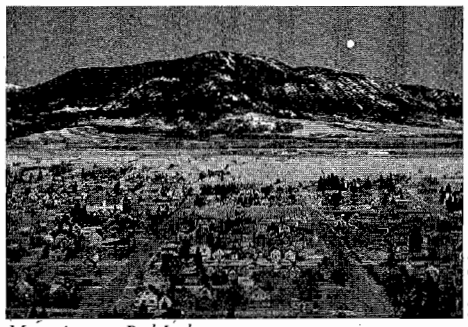
Ranger talks to visitors in Anasazi ruins at Mesa Verde National Park

Sheridan Steele

View of Riverwalk in Estes Park. The city developed this river park system over a decade ago to mitigate the impact of flashfloods. Now the river is one of the city's greatest assets.

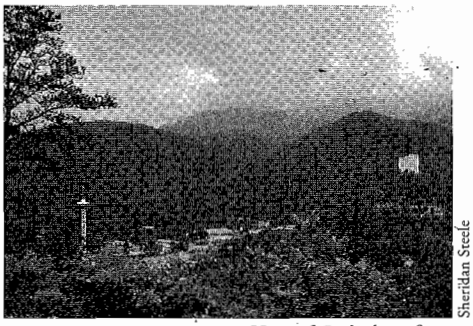
Sheridan Steele

Poorly planned strip development outside the boundaries of Gettysburg National Military Park



Merv Coleman

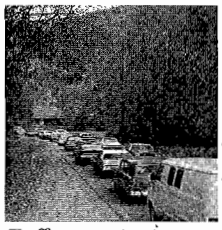
Moonrise over Red Lodge, Montana, gateway to the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem



Sheridan Steele

View of Gatlinburg from Great Smoky Mountains National Park

"Partnerships are 'the road to survival' in today's era of funding cutbacks and national interest in relocating services to communities next to parks."
Destry Jarvis, Assistant Director, External Affairs, National Park Service

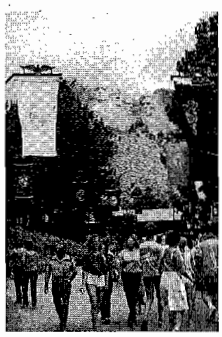


Courtesy of GSMNP

Traffic congestion in Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Glacier National Park

Bull moose browsing in willow flat at Glacier National Park



Sheridan Steele

Visitors swarm to see the granite faces of Presidents Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Roosevelt at Mt. Rushmore National Memorial

The Promise of Partnerships: A Call For A New Commitment From The Front Line

In the past, we Americans have protected our most significant landscapes by establishing national parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness areas, and other conservation areas. This strategy of drawing a boundary on the map and protecting the resources within has created perhaps the world's premier system of protected lands. However, more recently we have realized that this "buy it and fence it" strategy is insufficient to preserve the ecological and historic integrity of our most cherished landscapes. The world is now closing in on once isolated national parks, as 85 percent of America's national parks are reportedly facing threats from outside their borders[1]. We can no longer rely upon adjacent private land to provide complementary wildlife habitat and scenic viewsheds. At the same time, financial resources for park management and acquisition of critical lands are becoming more scarce.

Traditional strategies for acquiring and managing land must be supplemented with a commitment to view parks in the context of the broader landscape. This new commitment requires developing diverse cooperative mechanisms to create and sustain partnerships with neighboring communities and landowners.

National Park Service policy pronouncements increasingly acknowledge this new imperative. The NPS management policies adopted in 1988 indicate that the key to fulfilling stewardship obligations depends on working collaboratively with adjacent communities. The Vail Agenda[2] published in 1991, echoes this policy emphasis, stating the need to address external threats to park resources by promoting partnerships with neighboring communities.

More importantly, park managers across the country are developing a diverse base of experience, full of successes and difficult lessons learned, from which they are creating and carrying out partnerships with neighboring communities, landowners, and agencies to effectively further the Park Service's mission. An increasing number of experiences from the field demonstrates that relationships with adjacent communities, landowners, and agencies can in fact protect park resources and provide visitor services, while meeting the economic and social aspirations of neighbors.

[1] U.S. General Accounting Office. January 1994. Activities Outside Park Borders Have Caused Damage to Resources and Will Likely Cause More, GAO/RCED-94-95. 34 pp.

[2] National Park Service. National Parks for the 21st Century, The Vail Agenda: Report and Recommendations to the Director of the National Park Service, Chelsea Green Publishing Company, Vermont, D-726, 1991.

What Are Partnerships Beyond Park Boundaries?

Partnerships Beyond Park Boundaries are cooperative efforts with neighboring communities, landowners, and other interested groups that provide visitor services, realize community values, and help sustain resources and areas managed by the National Park Service. They require sharing risks, rewards, and authority. Partnerships are tools for carrying out the mission of the National Park Service, not ends unto themselves. They depend on establishing strong relationships with local leaders and landowners in the neighboring community. These relationships may then develop into specific initiatives that produce tangible results for both park needs and local priorities.

Keep an Eye on NPS Goals While Supporting Local Businesses

"At Blackstone River Valley, we provided sound economic reasons for the business community to support protection of the corridor, but we were careful to make sure that the goal of resource protection was not lost."

Jim Pepper, Superintendent, Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor

Create a Management Succession Strategy

"Federal managers come and go, and communities are used to these peaks and valleys. As we commit to partnerships, we have to commit to a management succession strategy. A community needs to have some assurance. We need leadership that is willing to make long-term commitments."

Gil Lusk, Special Assistant to the Director

"Mentoring is key. Superintendent Maria Burks made a big impact on Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania's adjacent land relationships. She maintained her availability after she left, which really helped the superintendent who followed. There was a degree of continuity in the park's adjacent-lands programs which there might not have been otherwise."

Bob Campbell, Chief of Park Planning and Special Studies, Chesapeake Support Office

Why Cultivate Partnerships?

Participants identified several key reasons why National Park Service managers should pay increased attention to partnership approaches.

1. Resource Protection
The health and quality of park resources generally depend upon an ecosystem or historic setting that extends far beyond legislated boundaries.

2. Visitor Experience
The quality of the visitor experience is greatly influenced by the character and aesthetic appeal of neighboring communities.

3. Financial Support
With the changing role of the federal government, NPS is unlikely to have the funds or staff to adequately protect resources within park boundaries.

4. Public Support
Partnership approaches provide a meaningful opportunity to create broad public support for national parks in neighboring counties and communities.

5. Visitor Services and Park Operations
Partnerships can mitigate adverse impacts to resources by relocating and expanding visitor and administrative services outside parks.

"One of the most striking things parks need to realize is that they and their neighboring communities are all part of a larger regional community. Our work needs to keep this perspective."
Joe DiBello, Team Leader, Stewardship and Partnerships, Chesapeake Support Office

"Partnerships are essential to deal with many major issues facing national parks. For example, the Park Service does not make the key decisions about how visitors get to and from parks, so the only way to address transportation issues in and around parks is through partnerships."
George Frampton, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Courtesy of NPS

River Stories Unit, part of the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center's Resident School Program

"Initiatives should develop short-term priorities, starting with small but tangible successes to build momentum. This provides the foundation for later tackling more difficult and complex challenges. At Arches and Canyonlands, for example, the Canyon Country Partnership focused on sharing resource and economic data before moving into management issues."

Luther Propst, Executive Director, Sonoran Institute

Establish Good Communication, Understanding, and Trust

"For the past 20 years, the Cuyahoga Valley Communities Council has provided a forum for Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA) and neighboring public agencies to discuss issues of common interest such as land development, zoning and planning, police and fire protection, and commercial development. This forum is particularly useful since the park covers 17 political jurisdictions. CVNRA funds approximately half the annual cost of the council—$10,500 per year. The council often takes on matters of mutual concern; most recently, they received grant money to conduct a three-year study of the white tail deer population problem in and around the park. Their deer management report presents scientific findings about the problem and offers a range of actions communities can take based on their own policies and regulations. This regular communication outside of formal hearings has proven extremely valuable."

John Debo, Superintendent, Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area

Guiding Principles for Creating Effective Partnerships

Participants identified five guiding principles to help park managers develop effective partnerships.

1. Understand the Political, Economic, Social, and Cultural Environment.
Effective park managers familiarize themselves with the local political and socio-economic setting, so that they are aware of the issues and stakeholders before they become involved in community affairs.

2. Reach Out Informally to Neighboring Communities, Landowners, and Agencies.
One-on-one dialogue with local interests and landowners is essential for understanding the diverse elements of the community. Successful initiatives depend on building trust and credibility with local leaders and demonstrating a long-term commitment to both relationships and specific partnership initiatives. Managers must reach out to those who may not be obvious friends of the NPS mission and engage the full range of local leaders. Most importantly, building strong relationships requires clear communication and personal ties to avoid misunderstandings which may develop during a crisis.

3. Be Flexible and Engaged Without Losing Sight of the NPS Mission.
Park managers need to establish themselves as advocates for the Park Service's mission. This requires holding park mission principles as non-negotiable. At the same time, managers must look for shared values and priorities among interested parties to provide a foundation for lasting partnerships. Skilled park managers are willing to take risks by opening up the conversation, experimenting with alternative approaches, and sharing information or expertise. Effective managers listen to requests from neighbors and respond with empathy instead of simply listing NPS rules and regulations.

4. Establish Lasting Relationships and Partnerships that Produce Tangible Results.
Park managers should distinguish between relationships and partnerships. Productive long-term relationships with key local leaders are a necessary foundation for specific initiatives. Relationships should be able to survive the conflict and disagreement that may arise over specific issues. At the same time, quality relationships should evolve into productive partnerships that benefit park needs and local communities.

5. Pay Careful Attention to the Partnership Process.
Park managers and planners need to understand that long-term commitment is essential. Successful partnership initiatives, like most aspects of park management, require long-term organizational continuity and follow-through. One of the major causes of failure is the transitory nature of park management. The National Park Service needs to offer resources — skills, funds, expertise, time, and/or political capital — to the partnership over the long term. In some cases, partnerships may no longer be productive and park managers need to know when to shift resources to other priorities.

Challenges to Creating Effective Partnerships

Participants identified three principal challenges that often hinder successful partnership efforts.

1. Individual Responsibility

Many partnership efforts suffer from a reluctance on the part of park managers to participate in collaborative processes in which NPS may exercise diminished or limited control over the outcome. Another reason why managers resist collaborative approaches is failure to recognize that cross-boundary issues are integral to their job or that strong relationships with neighboring communities and landowners can help address park management challenges. In addition, managers may lack the people skills necessary for establishing relationships with partners and building long-term partnerships.

2. Institutional Policy

Park managers interested in cultivating partnerships are sometimes hindered by NPS institutional practices. Long-term relationships with the community, for example, are difficult to establish given that NPS staff rotate from one park unit to the next. Managers sometimes face resistance from staff to engage in partnership efforts as they disagree about the value of such an approach. This disagreement may result from a lack of training emphasis on requisite skills. Managers also lack good examples and role models, and even more significantly, incentives and rewards for taking risks. Without a clear agency policy governing partnerships, managers are less inclined to initiate and invest in partnership initiatives.

3. Challenges Inherent in Partnership-Building

Park managers face difficulty establishing successful partnerships with outside partners for several reasons. First, managers are often inundated by daily operational responsibilities. Second, partnerships require a wide range of skills, many of which are not part of traditional training and experience. Partnerships can be a difficult and time-consuming undertaking that involves considerable uncertainty. Third, many park managers face a history of mistrust and conflict with neighboring communities. Lastly, even with personal and institutional commitment, success is not certain. To meet these challenges, managers need to pursue long-term strategies and recognize small successes.

"It may take years to build a productive relationship with the community before the relationship leads to tangible results, but it's worth the time and effort."
Lori Rose, Executive Director, Virgin River Land Preservation Association

"Success often depends on how you package things. At Rocky Mountain we have a 'land-use specialist' (not a 'land-use planner') who works in the surrounding communities. We were careful in naming the position. We felt that the title 'planner' might imply that we were the experts there to dictate the outcome, rather than demonstrating a willingness to work together on issues. And he's working to build relationships first...It's all how you package it."
Sheridan Steele, former Assistant Superintendent at Rocky Mountain National Park

Which Other NPS Players Create Partnerships Beyond Park Boundaries?

In addition to park staff, other NPS players who are involved in creating partnerships beyond park boundaries include:

1. Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA)
2. Park Planning & Special Studies
3. Wild and scenic river managers
4. National scenic and historic trail administrators
5. Affiliated and outside experts
6. Friends groups

"Partnerships may be essential not just to protect parks, but to actually build a park. In many respects, partnerships are the park at Santa Monica Mountains."
Art Eck, Superintendent, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

Lessons Learned from Partnership Experiences

As Phillip Bimstein, mayor of Springdale, Utah, succinctly stated, "We have not reached the limits of collaboration...we have just scratched the surface." The following section provides a representative cross-section of the dozens of success stories that participants shared.

Communicate on a Consistent Basis

In developing a management plan for the popular hiking destination of Old Rag, Ginny Rousseau, Central District Leader at Shenandoah National Park, initiated a public communication strategy with an open house for neighbors. NPS personnel considered the open house successful. However, after several months passed with no further communication, the neighbors felt patronized and concluded that NPS was scheming behind their back. Rumors filled the gap in communications. Now Shenandoah sends out periodic updates. The lesson is clear: communication must be reoccurring and consistent because occasional efforts can backfire.

David Ek

NPS staff at Fort Clatsop National Memorial worked with the county to protect this 160-acre parcel that overlooks Tillamook Head – the end of the 4,000-mile Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

Link Park and County Planning Efforts

"At Fort Clatsop National Memorial," notes Superintendent Cynthia Orlando, "the Cooperating Association raised $600,000 towards the construction of a new visitor center and purchased 32 acres of neighboring land to add to the park. Fort Clatsop also worked with the county to protect 160 acres of open space with significant historical and natural resource values through the park's General Management Planning process and under the Cooperative Agreement Authority. The park participates in periodic review of the County Comprehensive Plan. Working with local partners can help protect critical lands through non-conventional approaches."

Mend Poor Communication Quickly

Larry Gamble, land-use specialist at Rocky Mountain National Park, reports that a single incident of poor communication can poison the well for a long time. When an out-of-state developer proposed a second-home and ski development on state trust land to the north of the park in Jackson County, NPS staff wrote a letter to the state land board expressing opposition. Regrettably, they neither discussed the issue with county officials before mailing this letter nor sent a copy to the county.

Observations on Managing Control in Partnerships

"An important factor is willingness to give up some control; this is hard for managers to contemplate, but often managers don't have real control in any case."

John Debo, Superintendent, Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area

"By giving up absolute control in selective areas, you can often gain a much broader sphere of influence."

Marc Koenings, Superintendent, Assateague Island National Seashore

"Control in any case is illusory; neighboring communities possess some ability to control park decisions in every case."

John Hennessy, Assistant Superintendent, Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park

To patch up relations between the park and Jackson County, Sheridan Steele, former Assistant Superintendent at Rocky Mountain National Park, notes that, "we now go to the local authorities with our plans and try hard to incorporate their recommendations. We don't have to do this, but it opens up good two-way communications and exchange...There is undoubtedly a risk, but it yields much better results than no communication at all. We also developed Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with surrounding counties on land planning processes whereby we defined our specific roles and commitments to work together."

Talk Like a Local Business

John Latschar, Superintendent at Gettysburg National Military Park, comments on the park's new role, "Gettysburg now talks like a business to local business leaders. We did an economic impact analysis showing direct expenditures, tourist generated expenditures, taxes paid by employees, and sales taxes paid by visitors. The report revealed that the park generated $6.5 million in state and local taxes in 1994."

Create "Cooperative Positions"

Brace Hayden, Regional Issues Specialist at Glacier National Park, describes the benefits of establishing a cooperative staff position, "Along with the National Park Foundation and others, we funded a bear management specialist to work outside the park. The public doesn't really care who he works for. The key is that he deals with people who perceive that he works for them. People can call him up 24 hours a day to get help, and that can make the difference between a dead bear and a live one. It builds great goodwill for the agencies involved, and it benefits the resource."

Build Credibility Through Informed Leadership

Stones River National Battlefield Superintendent Mary Ann Peckham learned the importance of becoming an effective partner by providing quiet leadership. The NPS American Battlefield Protection Program, for example, provided a grant to develop a modest corridor protection plan which, in turn, evolved into a county-wide interpretive program. With a brochure in hand, visitors will soon be able to follow a self-guided tour to the significant historical sites in the county.

With county leadership and NPS funds, the county and others are now developing an interagency transportation plan with an historic overlay which channels traffic away from the battlefield. Peckham comments on these partnership efforts, "The role of the National Park Service has evolved from being in the driver's seat to being one of many partners. Taking on this new role has produced a more lasting and effective end-product that is sensitive to the needs of the local community."

Get Involved in the Community

Seemingly unrelated park activities can provide the foundation for important relationships with community neighbors. During the federal furlough of 1995, staff at Zion National Park volunteered to paint the community gazebo in Springdale. Zion National Park Superintendent Don Falvey comments that, "This simple act has helped strengthen important community ties and relationships that have been developed during the planning process for a transportation system serving both the town and the park."

Getting involved in community-based efforts near park borders is extremely valuable. According to Brace Hayden, Regional Issues Specialist at Glacier National Park, "The NPS has lots of staff expertise and resource information. Lending assistance to external efforts, even when they indirectly affect the park, helps to build relationships and credibility within the community."

Courtesy of GSMNP

Cooperative staff positions with neighboring communities are helping to protect natural resources and wildlife.

Lou Carter

Visitors viewing a wayside exhibit at Fortress Rosecrans, a unit of Stones River National Battlefield. The National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program will help fund a similar interpretation program where visitors will be able to follow a self-guided tour to the significant historical sites not only in the park but throughout the county.

Don Falvey

Community gazebo that staff at Zion National Park volunteered to paint during the federal furlough in 1995

Sheridan Steele

Rocky Mountain National Park Service officials worked with the owners of this land parcel to minimize the impacts of development and maintain access to a popular hiking trail.

Courtesy of NPS

The Cuyahoga Valley Railway pictured here is part of the 87-mile Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor

Sheridan Steele

Multi-Agency Visitor Center located in downtown Moab, Utah

Get Involved in the Community (cont.)

Susan Moore, Superintendent at Antietam National Battlefield, finds that an emphasis on neighboring families builds valuable bridges. Antietam holds special events honoring local families with links to the battle and works with surrounding families to provide interpretation.

Work with Developers

"At Rocky Mountain National Park," remarks former Assistant Superintendent, Sheridan Steele, "we faced a situation where owners planned to build a residential community on 140 acres near a popular hiking trail. In the past, we would have tried to acquire the land. Instead, we worked out an agreement with the landowners. We raised $10,000 of private money to hire land planners. The planners looked at both NPS and the developer's objectives, and came up with a design that allows hikers to still see meadows rather than condos *and* meets the developer's needs. Everyone's happy; it was a win-win situation. The NPS offered technical assistance, and there was no opposition. The developers can still hold their heads up high in the community."

Work with RTCA to Reach Out to Neighboring Communities

Park managers increasingly recognize the value of working with the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program (RTCA) to build bridges with neighboring communities and landowners. Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area Superintendent John Debo and RTCA are working with communities and landowners along the newly designated 87-mile Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor to preserve this historic transportation corridor. The NPS manages about one-fourth of the corridor. The other transportation route preserved within this corridor is the National Register listed Cuyahoga Valley Railway. The excursion passenger service provided by the railroad is a joint effort of NPS and a nonprofit organization, the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad. The Ohio and Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor is a premier example of regional heritage planning and resource protection.

Work with Local Leaders and Officials in the Planning Process

In 1992, landowners living in the Canyon area outside the western entrance to Glacier National Park came together to form the Canyon Citizen Initiated Zoning Group. Their goal was to create a citizen-driven land-use plan that guided development and protected local resources. According to Brace Hayden at Glacier National Park, NPS assisted this effort by helping to raise approximately $60,000 to hire a professional land-use planner. The Park encouraged other agencies, especially the Montana and US Departments of Transportation, to provide financial assistance because this locally created land-use plan along US Route 2 was in their best interest. The Flathead Economic Development Corporation served as the "administrative glue" for this partnership. The land-use plan that was eventually adopted provides for a natural resource advisory committee whose members include representatives from both the Flathead National Forest and Glacier National Park.

Provide Successful Multi-Agency Visitor Services

Fred Fagergren, Superintendent at Bryce Canyon National Park, comments on the success behind multi-agency services, "Several parks in the Southwest are working with multi-agency visitor centers. These arrangements can often be more efficient in reaching out to visitors in a community. They also provide a good strategy for promoting tourism in partnership with state and local governments. In Utah there are several joint partnership efforts between the Forest Service, the BLM, and the NPS. At Bryce, the park is very small compared to nearby BLM and Forest Service lands. When visitors go to a multi-agency visitor center, we can ask them what they want to do, and then direct them to a number of places. That way park visitors are more likely to show up well informed and have appropriate expectations. A joint visitor center is also a good place to proselytize ecosystem management, deliver good customer service, and get better visitor dispersal."

Invest the Community in the Park

"Fort Scott, Kansas is in a town with a population of 9,000. In the early days of NPS management," describes Sheridan Steele, former Superintendent at Fort Scott National Historic Site, "the 1842 Fort site barely had a presence in the town as an undeveloped park unit with limited interpretation. I went to the town with a proposal that we turn the Fort into an attraction, and got them to buy into the vision. The idea snowballed, and we raised $100,000 to buy replica cannons, uniforms, freight wagons, the works. I got 350 local volunteers to become our interpretive staff, and we trained them. It made the local Chamber happy, and we were able to maintain our standards. We developed one of the largest interpretive programs in the Midwest. And we developed a great constituency for the park."

"Partnerships must be a 'daily part of our diet,'" emphasizes Superintendent Doug Faris at C&O Canal National Historical Park. "In the case of C&O, there is no managing the park without relying on partnerships. The January 1995 Potomac River flood affected 141 miles of the 185-mile C&O and caused $23 million in damage. Following the floods, NPS staff decided to re-open the park as soon as possible and coordinate a high-profile media campaign focusing on the flood damage and restoration needs. Asking for volunteers was probably the most effective strategy; donations came with volunteers and publicity. Following the media attention and a highly effective 'friend-raising' campaign, Congress appropriated $20 million to C&O."

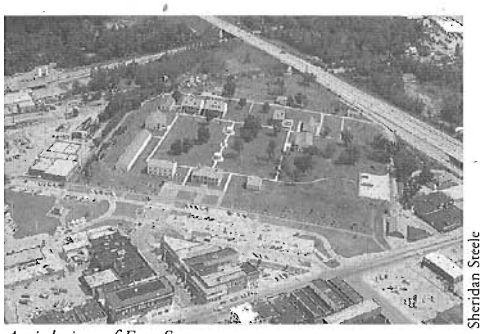
Get the Word Out about Resources at Stake to the Community

"Often times providing information about resources can be critical," observes Bob Campbell, Chief of Park Planning and Special Studies at Chesapeake Support Office. "At Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania, NPS manages only a small part of the resources. But NPS did a lot of work to identify important resources, and made that information available. Now anyone in local government reviewing development proposals can refer to this information and identify where resources are located. The counties bought in and agreed to inform themselves about it."

"At Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument," says Superintendent Harold Smith, "when we were two or three years into the GMP, there was a proposal stemming from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to turn the highway through the monument into a major truck route. As we got information out about the projected impacts, people started to change their minds about it. If you can get the information out there, people are less likely to give up valuable resources."

Rethink Traditional Job Descriptions

Increased emphasis on partnerships may require rethinking traditional roles for NPS staff. At Lowell National Historical Park, management is redesigning 20 positions to better tailor job descriptions to current realities. New positions include a VIP coordinator; a traditional interpretive position that becomes a grant-writer under a different name; and an interpretive position that becomes a video tech whose principal duty is to tell Lowell's story. This redesignation program works better than merely adding collateral duties to traditional job descriptions. According to Rich Rambur, Superintendent at Lowell, "new challenges require new skills and new administrative structures."

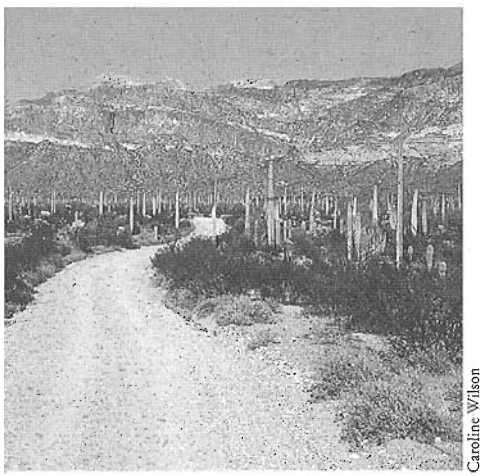


Sheridan Steele

Aerial view of Fort Scott National Historic Site and the town of Fort Scott, Kansas

Sheridan Steele

Volunteers at Fort Scott National Historic Site



Caroline Wilson

NPS staff at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument informed the local communities about the impacts of a proposal that would turn this two-lane highway through the Monument into a major trucking route. In response, a coalition of local groups rallied to protect NPS resources by challenging this proposal.

Recommendations For Enhancing Successful Partnerships

In an effort to make partnerships beyond park boundaries more integral to NPS management practices, participants agreed upon the following recommendations.

1. Authority

NPS managers and planners generally have adequate authority to carry out effective partnership initiatives. However, some of these authorities are fragmented, inconsistent, and often difficult to navigate. New legislation or administrative orders are needed to clarify and facilitate authority to provide technical assistance and in-kind services, make grants, accept funds or outside services, and enter into contracts with partners. Legislation or policy direction, for example, should provide explicit authority for park managers to make straight-forward grants without structuring them as cooperative agreements, consultant agreements, or purchase orders. In addition, some managers expressed that Park Service policy restricting paying permanent staff with non-appropriated funds should be re-examined. These recommendations are technical and corrective in nature and do not require broad legislative change.

"There are several tools which, in the right circumstances, collectively provide comprehensive authority for getting NPS money and people into state and local partnerships outside of park boundaries."
Dave Watts, Deputy Associate Solicitor, Conservation and Wildlife

Legislation or administrative policy should also clearly authorize certain activities, such as serving on the board of directors of park support groups. In light of widespread discussion of major changes in the Land and Water Conservation Fund and consideration of new conservation finance tools, NPS should urge land acquisition programs to place greater emphasis on providing funds for acquiring conservation easements and water rights, offering technical assistance, carrying out ecological restoration, and undertaking cooperative planning.

Participants recommended that NPS should review existing authorities and policies to determine how best to make these changes.

2. Budget Strategy

Partnership activities are an integral means for carrying out the National Park Service mission. In some cases, specific activities resulting from partnerships require a separate budget or program item, such as a multi-party watershed restoration project that develops from a successful cooperative planning initiative. In other cases, particularly in cultivating relationships or participating in dialogue efforts, a separate budget item is inappropriate. Park managers should not justify failing to establish relationships or participate in regional dialogue efforts because of a lack of funding.

"Partnerships can't be mandated. They are created by individuals who see the positive benefits of collaboration, and who encourage others to get involved in solving problems."
Larry Gamble, Land-Use Specialist, Rocky Mountain National Park

Park managers should be encouraged to leverage funds into partnerships when building on the base of strong relationships. Successful initiatives with neighboring communities will generally yield tangible results and meet the Government Performance and Results Act's (GPRA) accountability standards. Most importantly, park managers should be aware that substantial staff time and institutional commitment are prerequisites to placing funds effectively into partnership activities.

The National Park Service should also restructure the Challenge Cost Share program to provide seed funds for partnership activities that promote Park Service values among neighbors. Too often, this program funds conventional operations or construction activities under the guise of partnerships.


Courtesy of NPS

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

3. Policy Support

Partnerships are a basic management philosophy, not another program responsibility. The National Leadership Council should articulate clear support for the value of partnerships as an approach in carrying out the NPS mission. The Park Service should pay special attention to partnership building through personnel selection, longer staff tenure, and individual recognition. Beyond statements of support, NPS leadership should make

personnel decisions based on a demonstrated commitment to working as a partner and the ability to produce tangible successes for park resources and operations. Ultimately, actions taken by NPS leadership that encourage informed risk-taking and reward positive efforts and accomplishments are more important than policy pronouncements.

4. Training

Increased attention to partnerships is necessary throughout the agency and should be integrated into all aspects of the employee training and development programs. This training should be viewed as both an acculturation process and a technical training challenge.

Interactive training is needed to create a two-way street whereby the park and the community are invested in each other's successes. The highest priority is to encourage NPS staff throughout the agency to understand the potential value of partnership approaches. Many of the necessary skills are not easily taught in courses. Staff exchanges, details, and mentoring are important methods for learning.

5. Individual Responsibility

Park personnel at all levels should take responsibility for understanding the legal and political risks involved in carrying out partnerships. They should assess the likelihood of success and the consequence of failure. Decisions to act should be based upon "informed boldness." Managers should not create a "partnership plan" for park units, but rather demonstrate a commitment to effective collaboration with neighbors.

6. Information Exchange

An information clearinghouse should be established to serve as the central locus for NPS professionals to share their experiences and expertise; to learn about successful strategies, best practices, and case studies; and to access outside experts and additional information on partnerships. This outreach effort should be designed to convey successful and unsuccessful experiences from the full range of park settings and programs and to mainstream these strategies among park managers.

This clearinghouse should be managed either by NPS, an interagency mechanism, or a nonprofit organization. Early on, the clearinghouse should profile the broad array of available assets and incentives that the National Park Service can contribute to partnerships, such as the services available through the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA). This resource should be made available via the Internet and other media sources with an explicit emphasis on people-to-people ties, both within the National Park Service and with neighboring communities.

7. Park Planning

Park Planning processes provide an important opportunity to explore, develop, and nurture positive relationships with park neighbors. Superintendents should insist that park planners incorporate partnership approaches while developing General Management Plans (GMPs) and other planning documents. Planners can offer cooperative planning models to this process and can work to coordinate park priorities with regional needs and interests. Broad and inclusive planning efforts can open the door to lasting and productive partnerships by creating collaborative plans where all the players become signatories to a set of pledges stating what each party will contribute to make it happen. This may go a long way to help gateway communities feel more involved in the directions parks are taking.

Sheridan Steele

This transportation system at Grand Canyon National Park runs along the West Rim Drive and helps minimize traffic congestion and air pollution.

"A few years ago, we defined risk as getting involved in partnerships beyond our boundaries. Now we should define risk as not having effective partnerships."
Gil Lusk, Special Assistant to the Director

"At Glacier, there was a citizen-initiated project to create a community plan near the western entrance to the park. I helped raised funds for this project and was criticized by some for having done this as a Park Service employee. I believe that providing such assistance was in the best interest of the Park and its visitors."
Brace Hayden, Regional Issues Specialist, Glacier National Park


Bill Clark

Ranger talks to visitors about the life of Frederick Douglass at his home in Washington, DC

Conclusion

In the past, most NPS discussions about partnerships have emphasized how outside organizations can help carry out its mission. At the Gettysburg and Zion seminars, *Partnerships Beyond Park Boundaries,* participants articulated the need for park managers to understand and contribute to the two-way nature of effective partnerships.

Participants identified three fundamental principles for promoting partnership approaches:

- Recognize that building institutional capacity takes time, learning, flexibility, and patience.
- Recognize the importance of individual responsibility, initiative, and long-term commitment.
- Understand that cooperative relationships and formal partnerships are only one of many approaches necessary for protecting park resources and ensuring a high-quality visitor experience.

"We need to instill this gospel of partnerships into the park staff, making sure that it's in their performance standards."
Art Eck, Superintendent, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area


Sheridan Steele

War Memorial at Gettysburg National Military Park

List of Participants at Gettysburg Seminar June 4-6, 1996

Participants are identified by their assignments at the time of the seminar. Comments attributed to participants in the text are often based upon experiences at previous assignments.

Warren Brown, Program Manager, Park Planning and Special Studies

Ron Cooksy, Community Planner, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area

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Steve Elkinton, Program Leader, National Trails System Programming, Trails and Greenways Division, Washington DC

Douglas Faris, Superintendent, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park

Larry Gamble, Land-Use Specialist, Rocky Mountain National Park

John Hennessy, Assistant Superintendent, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park

Calvin Hite, Superintendent, Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreation River, New York and Pennsylvania

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Susan Moore, Superintendent, Antietam National Battlefield

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Richard Rambur, Superintendent, Lowell National Historical Park

Ginny Rousseau, Central District Leader, Shenandoah National Park

Jan Townsend, Chief, American Battlefield Protection Program

A. Elizabeth Watson, Chair, National Coalition for Heritage Areas

List of Participants at Zion Seminar November 5-7, 1996

Participants are identified by their assignments at the time of the seminar. Comments attributed to participants in the text are often based upon experiences at previous assignments.

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Susan Colclazer, Management Specialist, Bryce Canyon National Park

Linda Dahl, Team Leader for Community Planning, Denver Service Center

Chip Dennerlein, Alaska Regional Director, National Parks and Conservation Association

Art Eck, Superintendent, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

Don Falvey, Superintendent, Zion National Park

Fred Fagergren, Superintendent, Bryce Canyon National Park

George Frampton, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Phil Francis, Assistant Superintendent, Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Brace Hayden, Regional Issues Specialist, Glacier National Park

Gil Lusk, Special Assistant to the Director

Dianne McDonald, Director of Community Development, Springdale, Utah

Doug Morris, Superintendent, Saguaro National Park

Ray Murray, Chief of Planning, Grants and Environmental Quality, Pacific-Great Basin Support Office

David Nimkin, Business Development Associate, Sonoran Institute

Cynthia Orlando, Superintendent, Fort Clatsop National Memorial

Elizabeth Owen, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Man and the Biosphere Program

Bill Paleck, Superintendent, North Cascades National Park

Jennifer Pitt, Conservation Planner, Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), Washington Office

Luther Propst, Executive Director, Sonoran Institute

Alan Ragins, Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), Southwest Systems Support Office

Lori Rose, Executive Director, Virgin River Land Preservation Association

Brooke Shearer, Senior Advisor, U.S. Department of the Interior

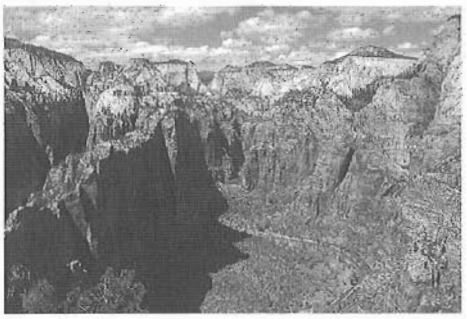
Harold Smith, Superintendent, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument

Diane Souder, Management Assistant, Petroglyph National Monument

Sheridan Steele, Superintendent, Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument and Curecanti National Recreation Area

Bill Walters, Deputy Regional Director, Pacific West Regional Office

Dave Wood, Resource Management Planner, Canyonlands National Park



Liz Rosan

View from Angel's Landing at Zion National Park

"NPS culture discourages crowing about success stories, especially for partnerships, since people in field offices and on staff tend to disagree about whether an outcome is a success."
Warren Brown, Program Manager, Park Planning and Special Studies

Mary Schmid

A unique partnership between Saguaro National Park and an adjacent landowner helped add 4,000 acres to the park and preserve critical wildlife corridors within the development. In 1995, the National Park Foundation and the U.S. Department of the Interior recognized this collaborative effort with the prestigious National Park Partnership Leadership Award.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to all the participants at the seminars *Partnerships Beyond Park Boundaries* seminars. A special thanks to John Latschar and the staff at Gettysburg National Military Park and Don Falvey and the staff at Zion National Park for hosting these seminars. Also, thanks to Delores Mescher and Jennifer Pitt of the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) for compiling notes at both sessions; Dave Nimkin for his insights, Steve Elkinton, Gil Lusk, and Doug Morris for their comments; Chris Brown, Joe DiBello, and Alan Ragins of RTCA for their assistance; and Sheridan Steele for sharing his wonderful photographs of national parks and their neighbors throughout this publication. Finally, we wish to acknowledge Warren Lee Brown for initiating this project and advocating effective partnerships with park neighbors as an important management strategy within the National Park Service.

About the Sonoran Institute

The mission of the Sonoran Institute is to promote community-based strategies that preserve the ecological integrity of protected lands, and at the same time meet the economic aspirations of adjoining landowners and communities. Underlying the Institute's mission is the conviction that community-driven and inclusive approaches to conservation produce the most effective results.

To accomplish this, the Institute brings people together to solve problems; provides information about conservation and development options; helps set up local conservation and sustainable development organizations; secures new, market-based funding sources; identifies and protects critical lands; and enhances and diversifies rural economies.

About the National Park Service's Park Planning and Special Studies

The Park Planning and Special Studies Program in the National Park Service's Washington Office coordinates policy, guidelines, and funding for the preparation of General Management Plans for existing units of the National Park System. These plans provide a framework for decisions about resource protection, visitor facilities, carrying capacity, and boundary adjustments. The program also coordinates congressionally authorized studies of potential new parks, wild and scenic rivers, and national trail system units. The program office in Washington accomplishes its mission by providing guidance on individual planning or study projects, developing training programs and materials, and updating guidelines for the work done by the planning staffs located in the Denver Service Center and Regional Offices.

This report has been reprinted by the Gateway Communities Leadership Program, a partnership of The Conservation Fund, National Park Service, Sonoran Institute, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center. The program's goal is to build the capacity of public land managers and gateway communities to collaboratively identify and address gateway and adjacent land issues through place-based partnership initiatives. The program develops educational resources and offers training courses, regional workshops, and technical assistance to emerging and existing partnerships. For more information, contact:

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Luther Propst and Liz Rosan of the Sonoran Institute wrote this report, which was first printed in June 1997.

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"The future of our parks, their ecological integrity and quality of their historic settings, depend on our ability to establish lasting partnerships with adjoining landowners and communities. We must move beyond the old notions about conflicts between parks and adjacent lands to a new era that recognizes the shared interests of parks and their neighbors in promoting outstanding environmental quality and sustainable economic development."

Denis P. Galvin, Acting Deputy Director, National Park Service

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