National Park Service in the 21st Century:
Building Relevancy in Urban America Through Recreation
“The National Park Service’s first century was about bringing people to the parks. Its second century will be about bringing parks to the people.”

Jonathan B. Jarvis, Director
“Bringing Parks to the People”

Supporting Community Health, Resiliency and Vibrancy

City is the Park and Park is the City – LOWELL
95% of the once vacant historic mills in Lowell have been revitalized.
Preservation planning and Historic Preservation tax credits = $1 BILLION in private investment and 500 historic buildings restored.

Urban Design ST. LOUIS
CityArchRiver 2015 is a collaborative redesign of the national park, St. Louis’ urban core, connections to the Mississippi River and improved transportation systems.
It’s All About Relevancy...

- Millennial Generation 18-34 yrs: Engagement is critical
- Second Century: What’s our generation’s legacy?
- National Parks – America’s Best Idea… But not it’s last…

and Diversity and Inclusion.
Changing Population: Consider the implications for conservation

2000

- Hispanic: 4%
- White, NH: 9%
- Black, NH: 12%
- Asian, NH: 29%

2100

- Hispanic: 12.6%
- White, NH: 33.3%
- Black, NH: 13%
- Asian, NH: 12.6%

- More than 80% of Americans live in urban areas
- Demographic shift to minority majority population

Source: Various Census Bureau documents
Evolving the Second Century NPS Mission:

*Park Protection to Park Creation*

- Providing Equitable Access to and Enjoyment of Parks for all
- Promoting Health and Active Recreation
- Fostering Restoration and Conservation
- Inspiring the Next Generation
- Supporting Economy and jobs

*It's about what the NPS can do for communities....*
NPS Centennial and “Call to Action”: Strategies for Relevancy

- **Value**: Emphasizing full range of benefits to people (social, environmental and economic)
- **Access**: Connecting people to parks and outdoors (urban, youth, recreation and health priorities)
- **Promotion**: “Find Your Park”: Grey Group and outreach campaign (not just National Parks but all parks and special places)

“The National Parks System is more than just a collection of more than 400 park units – it provides a wide range of services to Americans!”
Helping People Understand NPS is more than Yellowstone and Yosemite

- More than 1/3 of 401 national parks are in major urban areas
- About 40 of the 50 largest urban areas have a national park
- Dozens of National Park Service programs support conservation, recreation, and preservation projects in nearly every city and county in the US
TRADITIONAL "VALUE" OF RECREATION IS JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

PARK VISITATION AND TOURISM SPENDING

COMMUNITY BENEFITS – SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL

TRADITIONAL VIEW
• VISITOR SPENDING MODELS
• TOURISM SERVICE ECONOMY

THE REST OF THE STORY
• COMMUNITY LIVABILITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE
• HEALTH/WELLNESS
• ECONOMIC RESILIENCY
• BUSINESS ATTRACTION
NPS Urban Parks Within U.S. Megaregions:

Urban Parks in the United States
The Complete National Park Service: Parks and Programs

- Major NPS presence in NYC, San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington DC and others
- Offers strong interpretation and education programs
- Protects cultural and natural heritage beyond parks
- Provides recreation amenities - trails, access and community restoration

Experience Your America
Other half of NPS: Community Assistance Programs

- NPS has many National Community & Resource Assistance Programs
- National Heritage Areas
- National Trails System
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- National Landmarks

Thousands of NPS projects have touched nearly every county and community in America

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA
Future of Conservation: Public/Private Partnerships and Working Across Boundaries

Collaborating, aligning resources and working in partnership with non-profit, private and public entities: MGAs, TPL, CPA, Groundwork USA, EPA, DOT and many others

- Federal Agencies
- State & Local Government
- Private, Nonprofit, NGOs and Corporate Sectors
NPS Can Support Existing Efforts and Community or Regional Goals

- National Park Service parks and programs can complement existing efforts like the work of Metropolitan Greenspace Alliances or Land Trusts
Defining New Roles for DOI & NPS through:

- **Federal Coordination** – DOI, EPA, HUD, HHS, CDC, Agriculture, Transportation and efforts like SC2, Sustainable Communities, Urban Waters partnerships

- **State and local governments** – LWCF, Council of Mayors, League of Cities, State Parks, NRPA

- **Regional and community coalitions or organizations** – TPL, TNC, CF, CPA, MGAs, Land Trusts, Conservancies etc…
NPS Community Focused Urban Agenda: Three Collaboration Strategies

- Parks within communities
- Parks adjacent to communities
- Areas without a park but can be served by NPS programs, partners or other special designations (National Trails or Heritage areas)

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA
Retooling the Way We Do Business

NPS as “Value Added”

- **Convene:** bring together and help align partners, resources and talents, provide brand with NPS

- **Collaborate:** join with coalitions of interests and organizations to protect natural and cultural resources

- **Create:** provide close-to-home access to trails, waterways and open space

- **Cooperate:** improve public/private partnership tools, training and policies
Example: **Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program**

- Over 7,000 projects in last 25 years across the country: from remote communities in Alaska to the Bronx River

80+ NPS program staff support over 350 projects each year

RTCA has helped create thousand of miles of trails
Example of Innovative Partnerships: Groundwork USA

- Restoring and enhancing urban areas and brownfields across the country. Detroit to New Orleans, Portland to Anacostia, LA to Atlanta...

An NPS/EPA partnership model
• Community gardens
• Re-purposing and restoring historic buildings
• Restoring brownfields and cleaning waterways
• Greening schools and communities
Youth Engagement

- **Play: Recreation and Fun!**
- **Learn: Environmental Ed**
- **Serve: Volunteering**
- **Work: Employment**

“It's about fostering the next generation of citizen stewards”
Promoting Healthy and Active Recreation: Key to Relevancy

- Healthy Parks Healthy People
- Trails, Greenways, and Water Trails
- Recreation Infrastructure and Programming

“Every great conservationist was first a recreationist”
Connecting, Networking and Training Urban Innovators

- Facilitating Networking, Sharing of Success and Communities of Practice
- Collaboration Training for Parks and Partners
- Promoting Health, Economic, social, and environmental analytical tools
Coalitions are critical to Community Livability, Resiliency and Vibrancy.

Key Sectors Involved:

- Planning & Transportation
- Environment & Conservation
- Health & Recreation
- Education & Youth
- Business & Corporate
Making NPS “More Recreation Friendly”: Providing a “gateway” office to help Navigate maze of recreation-related programs

- **Community Assistance**
  Conservation and Outdoor Recreation & LWCF/FLP in Partnerships AD

- **Recreation Permits/Uses**
  Regulations and Special Park Uses in Visitor & Resource Protection AD

- **Education**
  Stewardship/Env Ed: in Interpretation & Education AD

- **User Fees & Passes**
  Recreation Fees: and Interagency Passes in Business Services AD

- **Law Enforcement/Safety**
  Safety, Protection, Wilderness Visitor and Resource Protection AD

- **Web & Visitor Info**
  Printed and Digital Media in Communications AD

- **Concessions/Outfitters**
  Concession Management & Tourism in Business Services AD

- **Access & Visitor Facilities**
  Transportation, Facilities, Accessibility in Planning, Facilities, and Lands AD

- **Social – Econ Science**
  Social & Human Dimensions Research in Nat. Resources/Sciences AD

- **Experience Your America**
“Five H” Approach for Parks and Partners-
Recreation Connects People through:

- **Hearts**: Building community stewardship values
- **Heads**: Fostering science education & monitoring
- **Health**: Promoting outdoor recreation, food production & healthy lifestyles
- **Hands**: Engaging people in public service & volunteering
- **Hope**: Creating a better future by getting more kids and families outdoors to appreciate nature!

Understanding → appreciation → action
Hearts: Promoting Stewardship

- Promoting ethics and responsible use
- Integration into schools
- Creating publications or websites
Heads: Sharing knowledge and fostering interest

- Interpretation & Art
- Science Education
- Monitoring & Research
Health: Connecting people with the outdoors

- Introducing people to outdoor recreation
- Promoting fitness & active lifestyles
- Providing access to lands & nature
- Promoting gardening & local food production
Hands: Engaging people in public service & volunteerism

- Organizing events & programs
- Conducting restoration activities
- Providing monitoring & research help
- Sponsoring Youth Corps
Hope: Creating the next generation of citizen stewards

- Engaging youth through outdoor recreation/education experiences
- Providing safe and affordable access for families and youth groups
- Working with diverse constituencies to appreciate values of conservation
A New Generation Working Together
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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
www.nps.gov/RTCA