

OVERVIEW

The United States of America is a country equally broad in size as it is diverse in its make-up. The National Park Service (NPS) in its role as steward to some of the most important natural and cultural treasures in the nation, leads the way in preserving its heritage. The lands and resources that the Service is pledged to preserve and protect stand as places of unique beauty, as well as in tribute to the many important people and events that have shaped the United States throughout its considerably rich history.

Diversity in Parks and People

The National Park System represents the diversity of the land and culture that is America from the vast ecological wonders found in Everglades National Park in Florida, to the stark wilderness and solitude found at Big Bend National Park in Texas, to events that shaped the nation's growth and its collective thought such as John Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park in West Virginia, or the story of the country's growth at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis.

In this its 83rd year of existence the National Park Service continues to be the premier park system throughout the world. The NPS strives constantly to meet and maintain its mission goals not only for the present but the long term. In reaching and maintaining these goals the Park Service relies on the vast experience and knowledge of its dedicated employees including the maintenance workers keeping the facilities in order, front line park ranger conducting tours to the visiting public, law enforcement rangers assuring the safety of the resource as well as the visitors, and the administrative staff assuring that all the various paperwork is done. All of these individuals working in their separate specialties are part of the same family, working as a team to accomplish the same goal. The NPS also relies on the willingness of the public to put back into the

system by direct means through various volunteer programs whether maintaining trails, staffing a visitor center desk, or helping staff conduct research. The volunteer programs attract a diverse base, encouraging people from all walks of life to come together in the common goal of preserving "their" parks.

The National Park Service's dual mandate to protect the lands and resources while making them available for the enjoyment of the public has become increasingly challenging. The resources are threatened by a variety of considerations such as pollution, population



Tuskegee Army Airfield, one of two new national parks designated in 1999, is the location of the first flying training program for Blacks. Col. B.O. Davis, Jr. received the Distinguished Flying Cross for his valor in combat.

encroachment on park boundaries, fragmentation, and wildlife issues. The NPS has come to rely heavily on its upper-level managers to develop effective programs and policy that take in account local, regional, and national interests, and tread the tenuous line between preservation and progress.

Visitation continues to reach historic highs. In FY 1999, over 288 million people visited the 378 units in the National Park System. These visitors are from very diverse backgrounds, economic make up, and country of origin. You will find autoworkers from Detroit, CEO's of large corporations from California, college students from all over, disadvantaged youth from New York City as well as visitors from points spanning across the globe. In meeting the growing demands of visitation, the NPS has placed an increased effort on educating the visitors to the attractions while at the same time continuing efforts to maintain the attractions. Through these efforts the visitors realize in their own way their tie to the resource. The NPS has also redoubled its efforts to educate the young people, as well as individuals not traditionally active in the Parks. Through outreach, research and various education programs the NPS hopes to connect the visitors of today as well as those of the future to the Parks.

The National Park System

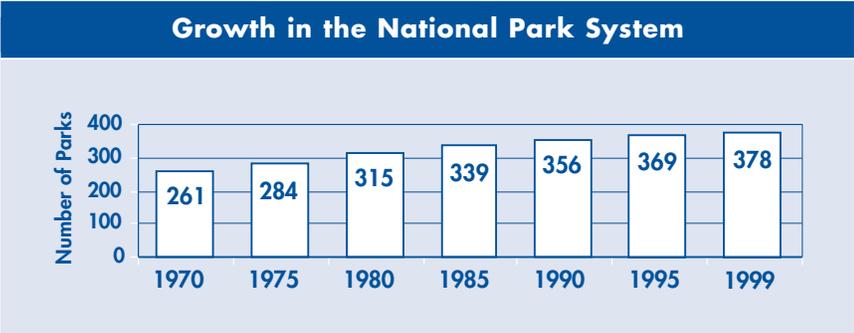
On August 25, 1916 President Woodrow Wilson signed the act creating the National Park Service. The National Park Service was initially responsible for protecting 35 national parks and monuments. The original purpose of the agency was "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." As the number and nature of

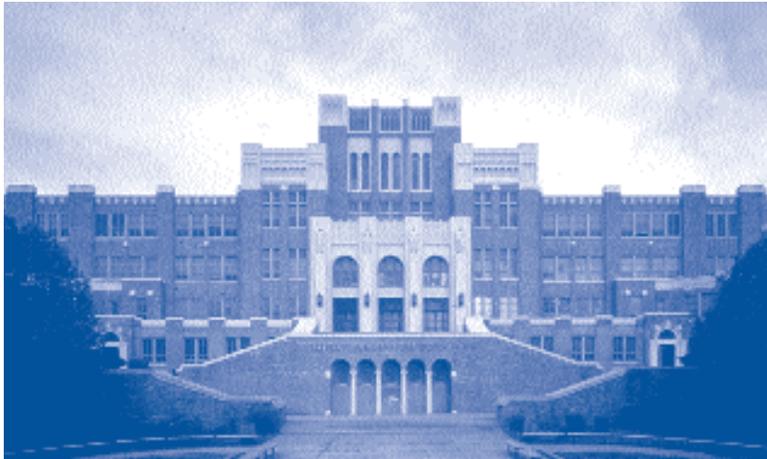
the parks in the National Park Service has increased, the role of the National Park Service has expanded as well. It is also guardian of diverse cultural and recreational resources, environmental advocate, world leader in the parks and preservation community, and pioneer in the drive to protect America's open space. The National Park System represents a remarkable array of the Nation's significant cultural, natural, scenic, recreational, and scientific resources in every region of the United States.

Size and Composition

The National Park System now consists of 378 units encompassing more than 83 million acres of land in every state except Delaware, as well as in the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands. The diversity of the National Park System is reflected in the 20 plus different unit designations which reflect the orientation of the park. Parks are designated reflecting whether they are acres dedicated to enjoying the beauty of natural resources, monuments of natural or cultural significance, historic places of interest, battlefields, recreational water areas, scenic trails, nature preserves or parkways.

Two new units were added to the National Park System in FY 1999 by legislation signed on November 6, 1998. The Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site in Alabama preserves the remaining airplane hangar and other historic structures at Moton Field where pilots of the all-black air corps unit received their initial flight training in the early 1940s. The historic site is being developed in association with Tuskegee University, which is donating Moton





Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site, one of two new national parks designated in 1999, is a national emblem of the often violent struggle over school desegregation.

Field and more than 80 acres of land to the Federal government. Central High School National Historic Site in Arkansas is a national emblem of the often violent struggle over school desegregation. *Parting the Waters* author Taylor Branch calls the Little Rock crisis “the most severe test of the Constitution since the Civil War.”

Visitation

In FY 1998, the latest year for which data is available, visitation reached a new peak. Over 288 million people enjoyed the parks, a significant 5 percent increase in visitation over 1997, the previous record high year. The National Park System has witnessed a steady and significant growth in visitation since 1985 hosting over 250 million visitors each year since 1987.

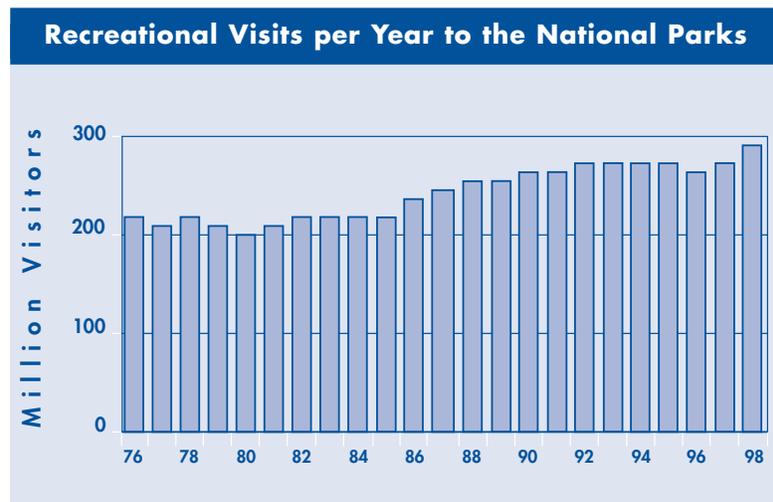
Visitors are an integral part of the National Park System. Parks are established to encourage and service visitation and, conversely, visitation drives the services that are made available in the different parks. The increasing visitation to the National Park System is making it more difficult

for NPS to fulfill its dual mission to provide for the enjoyment of national parks while conserving resources for future generations. Concern over rising visitation in parks and accompanying impacts on resources has led NPS to focus on the concept of carrying capacity and its implication for visitor use management. The concept of carrying capacity is intended to safeguard the quality of both the park resources and the visitor experience.

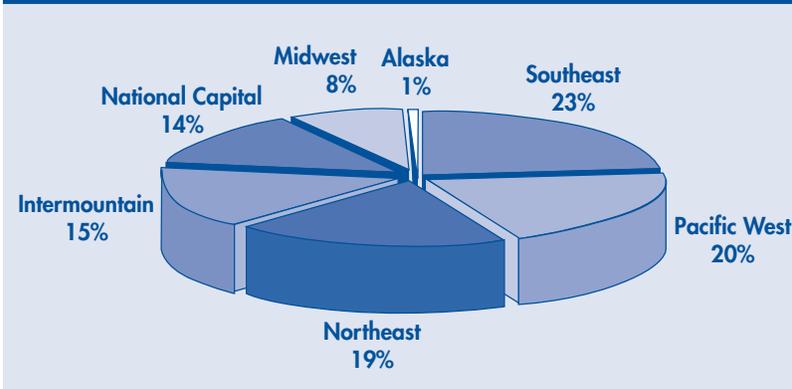
Visitation is spread throughout the system although some regions have

higher visitation than others. With several notable exceptions, the highest visitation totals are for parkways and recreational areas near major centers of population. According to visitation breakdowns for 1998, the latest year for which this type of information is available, the high rates of visitation on the Blue Ridge Parkway, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and Natchez Trace Parkway allowed the Southeast region to lead in visitation. The Pacific West region is second in visitation due to high levels of visitation at Golden Gate and Lake Mead National Recreation Areas.

The next most frequently visited region is the Northeast region because of strong visitation to several New York and Boston area park



Recreational Visits to the National Parks by Region, 1998



units, including Gateway National Recreation Area, the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, and Cape Cod National Seashore. The Intermountain region has its highest visitation levels at the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, and Rocky Mountain National Parks. The National Capital Region hosts visitors at multiple sites in Washington, DC and on the George Washington Parkway. The major attractions in the Midwest region are Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area and the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (informally referred to as “the Arch”) in St. Louis, Missouri. Major NPS destinations in Alaska are Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park and Denali National Park and Preserve.

Organization and Leadership

The National Park Service is administered by a Director who, upon Senate confirmation, is responsible to the Secretary of the Interior. The Director is assisted by two Deputy Directors, an Assistant Director of External Affairs in charge of offices for Legislative and Congressional Affairs, Public Affairs, and Tourism. There are also offices of International Affairs, Equal Opportunity, Policy, and, new in FY 1999, American Indian Liaison connected to the Director.

The National Park System is organized into seven regions: Alaska, Intermountain, Midwest, National Capital, Northeast, Pacific West and Southeast. Each is headed by a Regional Director

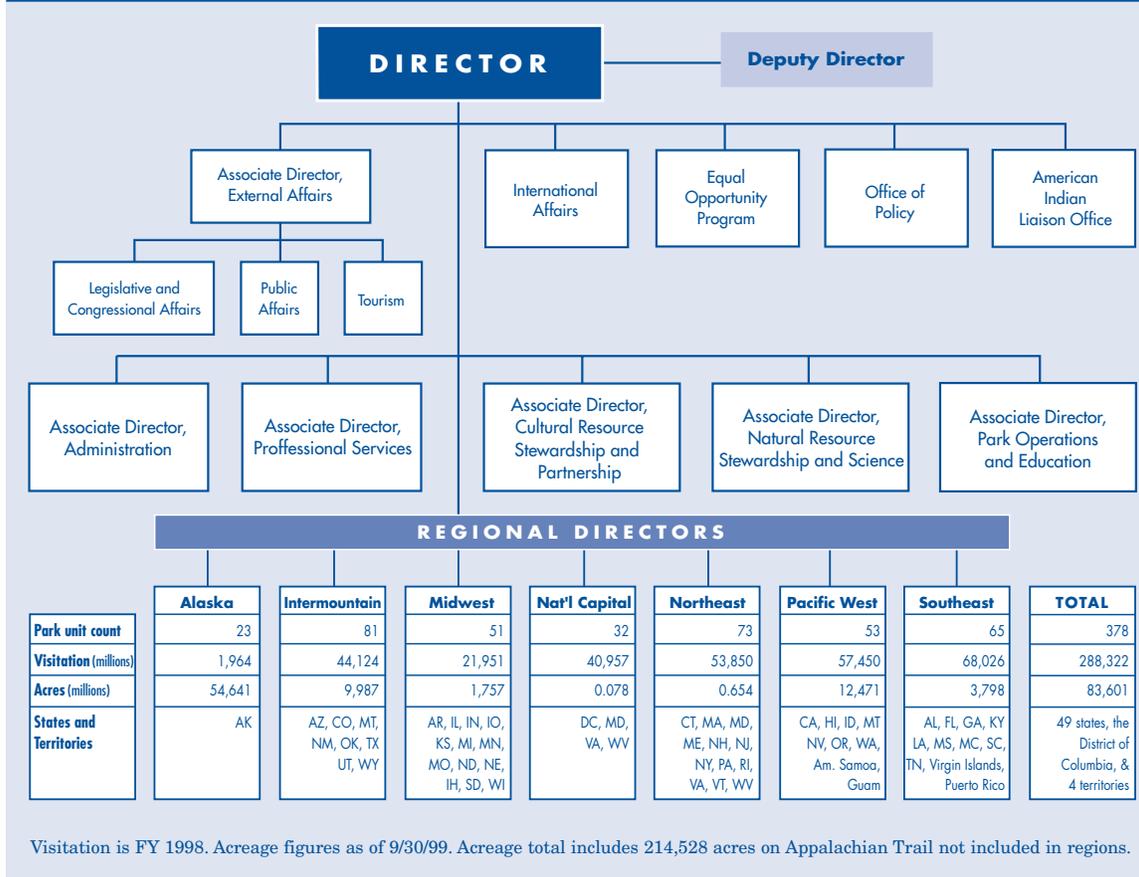
who provides line supervision for all park superintendents within the region. The National Leadership Council (NLC), composed of the Director, two Deputy Directors, five Associate Directors, and the seven Regional Directors, sets policy and the overall direction for the Service. The NLC forms the executive decision-making group involving the NPS as a whole.

NPS Staffing

In FY 1999, the Park Service used 19,918 full-time equivalent (FTE), a 2.6 percent increase over the previous fiscal year. The growth in personnel, which was entirely at the park level, was a result of increased park funding provided in FY 1999 coupled with the increase in funding available through the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program. The FTE count equates to an on-board strength of over 25,000 employees during the summer months when visitation is at its peak.

The current motto for NPS workforce diversity states “Our work force should be as diverse as the National Park System it both serves and represents.” Diversity in the National Park Service means valuing employees in all occupations, at all levels and providing them the opportunities for working at their full potential and making their maximum contributions toward achieving the organization’s mission and goals. Diversity encompasses more than the differences in race, religion, national origin, disabilities, age, gender or sexual orientation; it includes respecting and appreciating individual differences and ensuring all employees are included as full, contributing and influential team members; encouraging initiatives designed to empower and motivate employees; creating and maintaining an inclusive approach to all systems, policies and practices; providing equitable treatment and opportunities; educating the work force on the nature of diversity; encouraging employees to offer differing views and suggestions toward

Organization of the National Park Service, 1999



achieving program goals and objectives; showing flexibility toward non-traditional quality of worklife efforts and facilitating culture change to support new behaviors.

NPS Funding

The NPS receives most of its funding from congressional appropriations. In addition, there are a number of permanent, indefinite appropriations and trust funds which automatically become available to the NPS without the need of action by Congress through the appropriations process.

Congressional Appropriations. In FY 1999, Congressional appropriations totaled \$1.79 billion. The NPS received five distinct appropriations in FY 1999: Operation of the National Park System, Construction, Land Acquisition and State Assistance, National Recreation and Preservation, and the Historic Preservation Fund.

Additional Revenue Sources. Several permanent, indefinite appropriations, trust funds, and other sources of revenue are automatically available to the NPS without the need for action by the Congressional appropriations process. In FY 1999, revenue from “Permanents and Trusts” totaled \$206.6 million. Interagency agreements also provide funds in exchange for specialized services provided by NPS staff. In FY 1999, revenue sources separate from appropriations and “Permanents and Trusts” totaled \$380 million. The increase stemmed largely from an increase in “reimbursable” funding for Year 2000 (Y2K) computer issues and Federal land acquisition that was provided to the Secretary of the Interior in the Congressional appropriations process.

The full amount available to the National Park Service from all the above sources during Fiscal Year 1999 was \$2.379 billion. Amounts and descriptions of all funding sources are provided in the following table.

**National Park Service
FY 1999 Funding, all sources**

Funding Source	Funding (\$000)
Appropriations	
1) Operation of the National Park System	\$ 1,285,724
2) Construction	239,419
3) Land Acquisition and State Assistance	147,915
4) National Recreation and Preservation	46,182
5) Historic Preservation Fund	72,412
SUBTOTAL, Appropriations	1,791,652
Permanents and Trusts	
6) Recreation Fee Permanent Appropriations	144,794
7) Concessions Improvement Accounts	19,125
8) Other Permanent Appropriations	27,055
9) Miscellaneous Trust Funds	15,617
SUBTOTAL, Permanents and Trusts	206,591
Permanent Contract Authority for Land Acquisition	
10) Land and Water Conservation Fund	30,000
Rescission	(30,000)
SUBTOTAL, Permanent Contract Authority	0
Other Revenue	
11) Transfers from Other Accounts	104
12) Allocations from Departmental Funds	
Wildland Fire Management	56,769
Central Hazardous Materials Fund	2,560
13) Reimbursables	320,905
SUBTOTAL, Other Revenue	380,338
SUBTOTAL, Funding Other than Appropriation	586,929
TOTAL, NPS Funding Sources	\$ 2,378,581
Non-NPS Funds Used for NPS Purposes	
14) Federal Land Highways Program	\$ 144,034

**Descriptions and Notes on
NPS Funding Sources**

1) Operation of the National Park System. This appropriation funds all operational, maintenance, and administrative costs for parks, field areas, and the Washington D.C. headquarters office.

2) Construction. The Construction appropriation is a “no year” appropriation with funds available until expended. These funds support line item construction projects; emergency and other unscheduled projects, and housing projects; construction planning; equipment replacement; and general management planning. Planning provides the basic guidance for the management of each unit of the Park System; protection, use, development and management of each area; and evaluation of potential new units to the System. Note: most of the Service’s road and bridge rehabilitation is accomplished through the Federal Lands Highways Program (in the Department of Transportation Appropriation.)

3) Land Acquisition and State Assistance. This appropriation funds the Federal acquisition of land or interest in land within the National Park System and matching grants to states, territories and local governments. Administrative expenses for both programs are also provided. All funds provided from this account are available until expended.

4) National Recreation and Preservation. These annual funds provide for a broad range of activities outside the National Park System, including outdoor recreation planning, national and historic resource preservation, and technical assistance to state, local and international governments for recreation and preservation projects.

5) Historic Preservation Fund. This two-year appropriation provides matching grants to and in partnership with state and local governments, Indian tribes, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, to help support the identification, evaluation, registration, and preservation of the nation’s historic, archeological, and cultural heritage. In addition, funds were provided in FY 1999 for priority preserva-

tion projects under the Save America's Treasures Initiative

6) Recreation Fee Permanent Appropriations. In FY 1999, five permanent accounts received funding from recreation fees under permanent authorizations: Recreational Fee Demonstration Program; Fee Collection Support; Educational Expenses, Children of Employees, Yellowstone National Park; Payment for Tax Losses on Land Acquired for Grand Teton National Park; and Deed-Restricted Parks Fee Program. For the last of these accounts, authority was enacted in FY 1999.

7) Concessions Improvement Accounts. By agreements with NPS, some concessionaires deposit funds into special accounts to be used for improvements to concession service facilities without accruing possessory interests therefrom.

8) Other Permanent Appropriations. In FY 1999, four accounts received funding under permanent authorizations: Park Concessions Franchise Fees, Operation and Maintenance of Quarters; Delaware Water Gap Route 209 Operations; and Glacier Bay National Park Resource Protection. Before FY 1999 concessions fees receipts were deposited into the Treasury.

9) Miscellaneous Trust Funds. Donations are authorized to be accepted and used for purposes of the National Park System. Donations are made by individuals, groups, corporations, and associations, either by direct contribution or by bequest.

10) The Land and Water Conservation Fund. Act authorizes the obligation of up to \$30 million by contract each fiscal year for authorized Federal land acquisition in advance of an appropriation to liquidate the contract authority. This contract authority has been rescinded each fiscal year in recent years.

11) Transfers from Other Accounts. Funds are shifted between accounts for specific purposes as authorized by law.

12) Allocations from Departmental Funds. Funds are originally appropriated to accounts for the entire Department for certain purposes and then are allocated during the fiscal year to NPS and other bureaus on the basis of need.

13) Reimbursables. The National Park Service is reimbursed for work done for other agencies, Federal and non-Federal. For FY 1999, amounts include priority land acquisition funds from Title V of FY 1998 appropriations and Year 2000 conversion funds.

14) Federal Lands Highways Program. Under authorization currently effective through FY 2003, a certain portion of Federal Lands Highways Program funds, provided each fiscal year to the Federal Highway Administration, are earmarked to be used for construction projects in the National Park System.

The National Park Service

The role of stewardship of our Nation's heritage resources was given to the NPS in its enabling legislation. The NPS was established by Congress in 1916 to conserve America's public lands and natural resources and to provide for their use by present and future generations, as stated in the Organic Act of 1916:

...which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

Subsequent legislation reinforced and expanded this mission. To preserve and protect the resources under its care, the role of the NPS has adapted so as to address current needs including being an advocate for environmental science, research, biodiversity and preservation. Today, the NPS plays four key and complementary roles:

- **Steward**—responsible for preserving the Nation's most significant natural and cultural resources;
- **Guide and teacher**—helping people experience, value, and respect the meaning of our shared national heritage;
- **Advocate and partner**—helping society achieve a quality of life enhanced by natural and cultural resources and recreational open spaces; and

- **Leader**—providing the management practices, sustainable facilities, and modern-day technologies needed to effectively carry out all aspects of the mission.

These roles are derived from the agency’s 1916 Organic Act and decades of subsequent legislation.

The NPS is a world leader in the parks and preservation community and a pioneer in preserving the Nation’s heritage through the wise stewardship of our national parks and monuments and through partnerships and assistance programs to others.

Dedicated to Mission

In response to eight decades of expanding and changing responsibilities, the Service’s National Leadership Council reaffirmed this commitment by adopting the following comprehensive mission statement in the NPS Strategic Plan:

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

By involving all levels of Service employees, as well as its customers and stakeholders in the strategic plan process, the NPS has produced a vision appropriate for the next millennium.

Goals, Results, and Outcomes

The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRRA)¹ of 1993 requires the NPS to have a strategic plan that includes a comprehensive statement of mission, and outcome related goals and objectives to fulfill that mission. NPS completed and published its first Strategic Plan in

¹ GPRRA was passed in 1993 to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness by requiring agencies to define their mission goals and identify long- and short-term program goals through strategic planning, and to measure and evaluate program performance through annual accountability reports to the American people.

1997 and has recently updated it to cover the years 2000-2005. GPRRA also requires annual performance plans and annual performance reports.

The Department of the Interior is participating in a pilot program established by the OMB to enhance government-wide compliance with the Government Management Reform Act (GMRA).² This pilot reporting program consolidates agency reports required under OMB Circular A-11 and GPRRA. As part of that pilot, the FY 1999 goals were included in the annual performance plan for the FY 1999 budget submission that was submitted to Congress in February 1998. The actual performance accomplished for all FY 1999 goals was reported in the Annual Performance Report, which was incorporated in the FY 2001 Annual Performance Plan submitted in February 2000.

The diversity of NPS programs and activities reflects the broad spectrum of responsibilities associated with the Service’s primary mission goals. As articulated in the Strategic Plan, the mission goals of the Service fall into three mission-related categories: 1) preserve park resources; 2) provide for the public enjoyment and visitor experience of parks; and 3) strengthen and preserve natural and cultural resources and enhance recreational opportunities managed by partners. A fourth category, “ensure organizational effectiveness” deals with means and strategies that help enable success.

Within the three mission-related categories, four annual performance goals were selected to highlight the NPS accomplishments for FY 1999.

For the National Park Service, the hierarchy of goals relates to the fundamental missions of the bureau. At the highest level are the goal categories. These are also referred to as GPRRA Program Activities in OMB Circular A-11 and as Reporting Segments in the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board’s standard number 4. Below the goal categories are mission goals, which are goals typically not measurable. And, below the mission goals are the long-term goals identified in the strategic plan and the annual goals identified in the annual performance plan.

² GMRA was passed in 1994 and expanded the requirements of the Chief Financial Officers (CFO) Act by requiring the audit of 24 agency-wide reports beginning with FY 1996. GMRA further required a consolidated finance and operating report, which was submitted to Congress on March 31, 1998 for the entire Federal Government beginning with FY 1997.

National Park Service Government Performance and Results Act Accomplishments, 1999, Selected Performance Measures

Department of the Interior Goal	NPS GPRA Goal category	NPS Performance Measure	NPS 1999 Performance Goal	NPS 1999 Achievement	Percent of goal
Protect the environment and preserve our Nation's natural and cultural resources	Preserve Park Resources	Ia1. Acres of disturbed lands and acres of disturbances contained	1) By September 30, 1999, 4.5% of targeted disturbed park lands, as of 1997, are restored.	14.6% of identified disturbed lands restored	339%
			2) By September 30, 1999, 4.1% of priority targeted disturbances are contained.	8.2% of exotic species impacted acres restored	201%
		Ia5. Historic structures in good condition	By September 30, 1999, 47.7% of the historic structures on the 1998 List of Classified Structures are in good condition.	46% of structures listed on the LCS are in good condition	97%
Provide recreation for America	Provide for Visitor Enjoyment	Ila1. Park visitors satisfied	By September 30, 1999, 95% of park visitors are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.	94% of visitors satisfied	99%
	External Legislated Partnerships	IIlb1. Additional miles of trails, miles of river corridor and acres of park and open space.	By September 30, 1999 an additional 920 miles of trails, an additional 1,340 miles of river corridor, and an additional 40,700 acres of park and open space over the 1998 totals are conserved with NPS partnership assistance.	2,116 trails, 1,504 linear miles of river corridor, 45,425 acres of park was added.	230%, 112% and 112%, respectively

Preserve Park Resources

This goal category marks the NPS commitment that natural and cultural resources and associated values are protected, restored and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader ecosystem and cultural context. Goals in this category relate to Departmental Goal 1—Protect the Environment and Preserve Our Nation's Natural and Cultural Resources. It includes the concepts of biological and cultural diversity. Long-term goals include the protection, restoration, or maintenance of ecosystems, rare plant and animal populations, archeological and ethnographic resources, world heritage sites, historic structures and objects, research collections, cultural traditions, and subsistence activities, relevant to the purpose and/or significance of the site.

In addition to the goals that deal directly with preserving the resource, this goal category also includes goals having to do with the National Park Service's contribution to scholarly and scientific research. The Service has fundamental information needs for making decisions about managing natural and cultural resources within the National Park System.

Two performance goals were selected to highlight the accomplishments in preserving natural and cultural resources.

1) Goal Ia1—Disturbed Lands/Exotic Species

Long-term Goal: By September 30, 2002, 10% of targeted disturbed park lands, as of 1997, are restored, and 8.5% of priority targeted disturbances are contained.

This goal addresses resource conditions in parks. Activities to meet this goal include

restoration of lands impacted by former uses and containment of invasive plant and animal species. Disturbed lands are those park lands where the natural processes have been impacted by development, such as roads and mines, and by invasion of alien species.

FY 1999 Annual Goal: By September 30, 1999, 1) 4.5% of targeted disturbed park lands, as of 1997, are restored, and 2) 4.1% of priority targeted disturbances are contained.

The Service projected that it would restore 4.5% of the 241,000 acres of lands disturbed from earlier development, or nearly 11,000 acres. Actual accomplishment is 35,380 acres of disturbed lands restored, or 339% of the projection. The Service also projected that it would restore 4.1% of nearly 1,890,200 acres of lands impacted by exotic species, or nearly 77,500 acres. Actual accomplishment is 155,869 acres of exotic species impacted acres restored, or 201% of the projection.

2) Goal Ia5 – Historic Structures

Long-term Goal: By September 30, 2002, 50% of the historic structures on the 1998 List of Classified Structures are in good condition.

The objective of this goal is to increase the number of structures listed on the 1998 List of Classified Structures (LCS) that are in “good” condition.

FY 1999 Annual Goal: By September 30, 1999, 11,051 of the 23,167 LCS structures are in good condition (47.7%).

The Service projected that it would have 11,051 of the 23,167 structures listed on the LCS, or 47.7%, in 1998 in good condition. This would mean 1,066 structures would be improved to good condition during 1999. In 1999, the NPS improved the condition of 674 structures bringing the number of structures on the LCS in good condition to 10,659, or 46% of all structures of the LCS (96.6% of projection.)

Provide for the Public Enjoyment and Visitor Experience of Parks

The objectives in this goal category are inclusive of the mandate in the NPS Organic Act

“...to provide for the enjoyment of the (resources) in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” The goal category includes all NPS goals for visitor satisfaction, enjoyment, safety, appreciation, and understanding are appropriate here. These goals relate to Departmental Goal 2 – Provide Recreation for America.

These goals cover the broad range of visitor experience in the parks. Enjoyment of the parks and their resources is a fundamental part of the visitor experience. Visitor enjoyment and safety are affected by the quality of park programs, facilities and services, whether provided by the National Park Service, a concessioner, or a contractor.

Visitors park experiences grow from enjoying the park and its resources to understanding why the park exists and the significance of those resources. Satisfactory visitor experiences build public support for preserving this country’s heritage and develop a better understanding of the diversity of experiences and peoples that built a nation.

Serving the visitors requires that the National Park Service maintains a physical inventory containing approximately 16,000 permanent structures, 8,000 miles of roads, 1,500 bridges and tunnels, 5,000 housing units, approximately 1,500 water and wastewater systems, 200 radio systems, over 400 dams, and more than 200 solid waste operations. These facilities must be maintained at an operational level that ensures safe use by the visitor and continued protection, preservation and serviceability.

One performance goal was selected to represent the accomplishments in serving the visitor.

Goal IIa1 – Visitor Satisfaction

Long-term Goal: By September 30, 2002, 95% of park visitors are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.

This goal addresses visitor satisfaction. While many factors affect visitor use and enjoyment, this goal focuses on providing the facilities, services, and recreational opportuni-

ties for visitor use, comfort, and enjoyment. Servicewide baseline and performance information is derived from the Visitor Services Project annual surveys. Facilities, services, and recreational opportunities identified by visitors as “good” and “very good” define “satisfied”.

FY 1999 Annual Goal: By September 30, 1999, maintain 95% of park visitors satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.

The Service projected that the results of annual surveys for visitor satisfaction would indicate a 95% satisfaction rate Servicewide. Actual survey results indicate a 94% visitor satisfaction rate meeting the goal.

Benefit from Partnerships

This goal category focuses on the many partnership programs legislated under the National Historic Preservation Act, the Historic Sites Act, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and others. Natural and cultural resources include properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, wild and scenic rivers, national trails, national landmarks, and heritage and recreation areas.

These goals deal the results of a broad range of programs that assist others to preserve our natural and cultural and recreational resources. These programs encompass formal partnership programs with over 60 other Federal agencies, 59 states and territories, more than 1,000 local governments, over 300 Indian tribes, foreign governments, private organizations, friends groups, academic institutions, and the general public. These goals include increasing the number of significant historic, archeological, and natural properties protected and improving customer satisfaction with technical assistance provided by the National Park Service.

There are goals that relate only to recreational opportunities external to the National Park System through providing conservation assistance for adding miles of trails and rivers and acres of parks and open space to meet America’s outdoor recreations needs and improving

community satisfaction with NPS partnership assistance. In addition to assisting others develop recreational resources, the Service also assures that transferred Federal lands or land purchased by Federal dollars for recreational purposes continue to serve their role for improving the recreational opportunities available.

One performance goal was selected to represent the accomplishments in this goal category.

Goal IIIb1 – Conservation Assistance

Long-term Goal: By September 30, 2002, 1,580 additional miles of trails, 2,060 additional miles of protected river corridors, and 61,700 additional acres of parks and open space, from 1997 totals, are conserved with NPS partnership assistance.

This goal tracks the results of NPS technical assistance to states, communities, and non-profit organizations to protect additional resources and to provide increased local recreational opportunities.

FY 1999 Annual Goal: By September 30, 1999, an additional 920 miles of trails, an additional 1,340 miles of protected river corridor, and an additional 40,700 acres of park and open space, over the 1998 totals, are conserved with NPS partnership assistance.

Based on information provided by state and local partners, nearly 2,116 acres of trails were added (230% of projection), 1,504 linear miles of river corridor was added (112% of projection), and 45,425 acres of park and open space was added (112% of projection).

Implementation of Performance Management

In 1998, GPRA was implemented throughout the NPS. All operations in the NPS are now covered by the strategic plan and an annual performance plan. In 1998, initial reporting of accomplishments towards meeting Servicewide goals was implemented. In accordance with GPRA, the NPS also provided an Annual Performance Plan in conjunction with its FY 1999 budget request to Congress. The NPS is working towards meeting the requirements for

GPRA as outlined in P.L. 105-391, the National Parks Omnibus and Management Act of 1998.

The NPS will continue to evaluate its goals and its collective progress in achieving these goals. In doing so, the NPS will have a firm basis for improving agency effectiveness and efficiency. It will be a dynamic process. The current budget structure of the NPS is not aligned with the GPRA goals of the organization. Until the budget structure is revised, the relationship will continue to be indirect, although still useful.

Customer Service

With visits to the National Park System at an all time high it is more important than ever for NPS to listen to its customers. The Visitor Services Project (VSP), an ongoing NPS research project, gathers visitors' opinions about their park visits and quality of services in the parks. The VSP uses two main survey tools to provide the NPS with valuable visitor feedback: in-depth visitor studies and customer satisfaction cards. The data from both types of studies show that visitors continue to be very satisfied with the overall quality of services in the National Park System. Visitor satisfaction is measured by the combined proportion of visitors who rate services as "very good" or "good."

Visitor Studies.

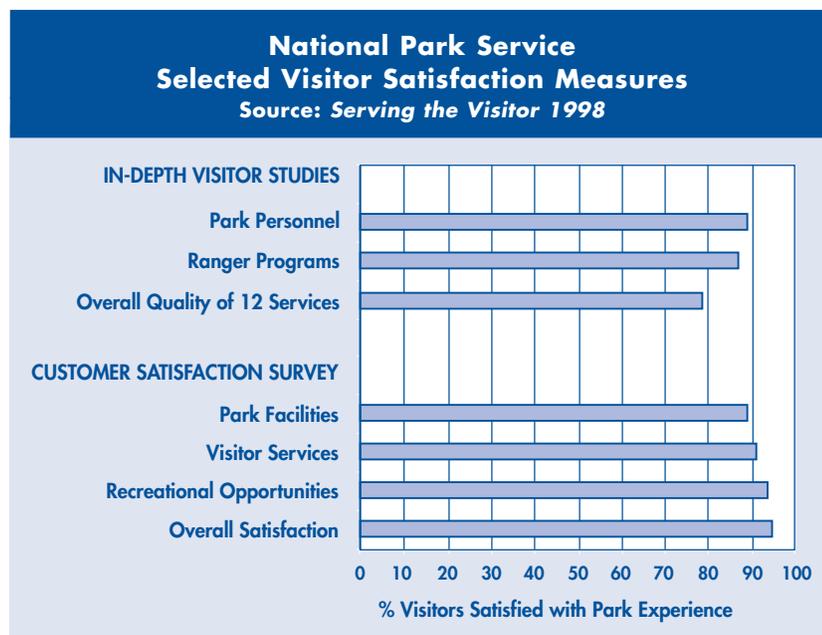
The VSP has conducted in-depth visitor studies at a sample of park units to measure visitor satisfaction with the quality of services visitors used during their park visit. The most current results available are for 1997-98 and are compared to a baseline measure generated from 1992-96 data. To measure overall quality of NPS services, the ratings of 12 typical visitor services including park brochures, ranger programs, park person-

nel, campgrounds, and lodging were combined. In 1997-98, 79% of the respondents were satisfied with the 12 services, compared to 78% for the five-year baseline.

Park personnel includes the broad range of employees that visitors may encounter such as rangers, maintenance workers, emergency response teams and law enforcement officers. In 1997-98, 89% of the respondents were satisfied with the quality of park personnel compared to 87% for the baseline. The greatest change is seen in the proportion of visitors rating park personnel as "poor" or "very poor" which decreased from the baseline of 8% to 3%.

Ranger programs include guided walks and tours, campfire programs and living history demonstrations. In 1997-98, NPS park programs improved to where 87% of the respondents were satisfied with the quality of ranger programs compared to the baseline measure of 83%. In addition, the proportion of visitors evaluating ranger programs as "poor" or "very poor" decreased from the baseline of 9% to 3%.

VSP Customer Satisfaction Card. A standard customer satisfaction card is used annually by all NPS units to measure performance related to Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) goals, including the rate of visitor satisfaction. In the summer of 1998, the



customer satisfaction card was completed and returned by a sample of 22,913 visitors at 281 national park units. Visitors were asked to rate a number of services available at the parks. Ratings for multiple services were then combined to develop indexes of satisfaction for facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.

Visitor opinions of visitor centers, exhibits, restrooms, walkways, trails and roads, and campgrounds and/or picnic areas are used to measure visitor satisfaction with park facilities. Ratings indicated 89 percent of visitors are satisfied with park facilities provided within the National Park System.

Visitor opinions of assistance from park employees, park maps or brochures, ranger programs, and commercial services in the park are used to measure satisfaction with visitor services provided in the parks. Ratings indicated 91 percent of visitors are satisfied with visitor services provided within the National Park System.

Visitor opinions of learning about nature, history or culture, outdoor recreation, and sightseeing are used to measure visitor satisfaction with recreational opportunities provided in the parks. Ratings indicate 94% of visitors are satisfied with recreational opportunities provided within the National Park System.

The customer satisfaction card includes an overall quality question. It is used as the primary measure of visitor satisfaction for GPRA purposes. This question asked visitors to rate the “overall quality of facilities, services and recreational opportunities.” Ratings indicated that 95% of the park visitors surveyed are satisfied with the overall quality of facilities, services and recreational opportunities.

Survey results are reported at the individual park, cluster, regional, and national levels. The customer satisfaction card results show strong evidence of excellent visitor service across the National Park System. Of the 281 parks which participated in the 1998 visitor satisfaction survey, 275 met the annual Servicewide goal of 77% visitor satisfaction.

The Visitor Services Project will continue to conduct in-depth surveys in a number of parks each year. The Customer Satisfaction Card will also be used at all national park units on an annual basis. Both types of survey results help park managers improve operations, save taxpayer dollars and better serve park visitors.

