

Department of the Interior

Departmental Manual

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Part 145: National Park Service

Chapter 1: Creation, Authority, Purpose, Objectives, Functions

Originating Office: National Park Service

145 DM 1

1.1 Creation and Authority. The National Park Service was established by the Act of August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535; 16 U.S.C. 1 2 3, and 4), commonly referred to as the National Park Service Organic Act. This Act states that "the Service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of Federal areas known as national parks, monuments and reservations . . . by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks, monuments and reservations, 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." In addition, numerous laws provide authority or direction for National Park Service programs and policies. The authority of the Director, National Park Service, as delegated by the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, is set forth in Part 245 of the Departmental Manual (DM).

1.2 Purpose. The National Park Service conserves 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 National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

1.3 Objectives. Based on the Organic Act, other applicable laws, and the organization's strategic plan, the long-range objectives for the National Park Service are:

A. Natural and cultural resources and associated values are protected, restored, and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader ecosystem and cultural contexts.

B. The National Park Service contributes to knowledge about natural and cultural resources and their associated values. Management decisions about resources and visitors are based on adequate scholarly and scientific information.

C. Visitors safely enjoy and respectfully use and observe the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities. Park visitors and the general public have ample opportunity to learn about conserving parks and their resources for this and future generations.

D. Natural and cultural resources are conserved through formal partnership programs with other federal, state, and local agencies, nonprofit organizations and commercial enterprises to provide educational, recreational, and conservation benefits for the American people and to ensure continued access for public use and enjoyment.

E. The National Park Service uses current management practices, systems, and technologies to accomplish its mission. It improves its managerial capabilities through initiatives and support from other agencies, organizations, and individuals.

1.4 Functions. In fulfillment of these objectives, the National Park Service performs the following functions:

A. Conserves park resources by;

(1) conserving, protecting, restoring, or maintaining ecosystems, geological processes, rare and native plant and animal populations, archeological and ethnographic resources, world heritage sites, historic structures and objects, research collections, cultural traditions and associated values of the resources and their settings;

(2) dealing with and resolving threats to natural and cultural resources and landscapes; by perpetuating the preservation of wilderness values and scenic grandeur; and

(3) cooperating with neighboring land managers in promoting ecosystem and conservation measures designed for management of broad landscapes.

B. Provides opportunities for public enjoyment and visitor experience of parks so that;

(1) the quality of park resources and values are left unimpaired,

(2) park visitors safely enjoy the availability, accessibility, diversity and quality of park facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities, and

(3) park visitors have opportunities to learn the reasons park resources, programs and facilities merit perpetuation.

C. Provides technical assistance and funding through the various preservation and recreation programs that the National Park Service manages with its many partners, such as the natural and cultural resources (including properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places), wild and scenic rivers, national trails, national landmarks, and heritage and recreation areas. These resources are commonly outside park boundaries and not directly managed by the National Park Service, but are supported through legislated formal partnership programs and federal funding.

D. Conserves natural and cultural resources through partnerships with national and international organizations, and other federal, state, and local agencies, resulting in a nationwide

system of parks, open space, rivers, and trails that provides educational, recreational, and conservation benefits for the American people.

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