

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

George Washington Carver National Monument

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: GWCA

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

George Washington Carver National Monument is significant because it was the birthplace and home where Carver spent his formative years that set him on the road to becoming one of this nation's most distinguished scientists and humanitarians. The park is dedicated to memorializing the life of George Washington Carver and preserving the setting of his birthplace to ensure that it is left unimpaired for the education, inspiration and enjoyment of future generations. The park's natural and cultural resources represent the setting in which Carver developed and pursued his curiosity of the surrounding environment. His love of learning and quest for knowledge inspired him to become a distinguished African American, scientist, educator, humanitarian, Christian, artist, and musician.

George Washington Carver has several existing partnerships that will be providing support towards the accomplishment of the Centennial vision, including the Carver Birthplace District Association, Missouri Botanical Garden, Southwest Center for Educational Excellence, Iowa State University, and Tuskegee University.

The Centennial vision for the park and its partners is to further develop educational outreach and interpretive opportunities in order to reach new audiences and serve existing audiences in new ways. These opportunities will be provided through the use of exciting media and technology, development of several new interpretive venues, and production of a new park film. In the spirit of George Washington Carver we also plan to promote stewardship of the park's natural and cultural resources, and work to cultivate environmental leadership as visitors understand the role they play in protecting our environment and the precious resources housed in their National Parks. This will be achieved by restoring and preserving a historic school once attended by Carver, developing a trail that will focus attention on stewardship and environmental awareness, and creating a master repository of resources related to George Washington Carver.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Reginald M. Tiller

Site: GWCA

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.

The historic 1872 Neosho Colored School is where George Washington Carver first obtained a formal education as a boy in the mid-1870s. This early African-American school also represents the story behind the nation's "Lincoln Schools" that sprung up to educate African Americans after the Civil War ended. The powerful "Lincoln School" history in this country and the story of Dr. Carver's birth into slavery and pursuit for an education are great opportunities for visitor interpretation at this site. Other closely related topics that will be explained include the abolishment of slavery, the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and the new freedoms and liberties afforded to black citizens during this post-war time period.

Currently, the school site is owned by the park's cooperating association, George Washington Carver Birthplace District Association. The property will be acquired from the cooperating association and restored to its original appearance. Educational and interpretive programming will be developed to tell the story of the school and Dr. Carver's quest for an education, as well as the greater story of the African American struggle for education and equality.

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STEWARDSHIP

Serve as the Preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The project capitalizes on technology and partners to provide NPS resources for educators and students on a global scale through the world-wide-web. Perpetuating the legacy of Dr. George Washington Carver as a scientist, educator and humanitarian, the project provides a digital library for pre-K through grade 5 educators in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). The eMINTS (enhancing Missouri's Instructional Networked Teaching Strategies) National Center, in collaboration with the Center for Technology Innovations in Education at the University of Missouri - Columbia, proposes to partner with the Carver Math/Science Project and the NPS to build upon an extensive library of content-rich, age-appropriate, web-based resources for educators, incorporating Discovering Science in Your National Parks extension curriculum. The web resources are to be developed in collaboration with the VIEWS of the National Parks multimedia educational programming to meet thematic "eThemes," correlate to multiple state education standards and national standards, and directly correlate to elementary STEM curricula.

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STEWARDSHIP

Encourage children to be future conservationists.

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ENVIRONMENT

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.

The park includes 240 acres of a variety of natural habitats. Because of Carver's love for nature & his environmental consciousness, the trail will have multiple purposes including environmental education, resource stewardship, species & community inventory & assessment, habitat protection, & visitor enjoyment of the natural environment.

The trail will be constructed in an area of the park where there is currently no visitor access & will encompass a variety of habitats including a stream, tallgrass prairie, a glade, & woodlands. It will be designed to allow for interpretive & educational opportunities relating to each habitat. Areas will be designated for habitat protection & restoration efforts. Educational programs will be developed to allow hands-on involvement in inventory & assessment of species & communities. Accomplishment of these objectives would allow for a connection between the natural environment & the visiting public in order to broaden environmental awareness & provide for the preservation & understanding of the interrelationships of natural ecosystems. Funds would provide for the design of the trail & provide labor, materials, & equipment for construction.

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ENVIRONMENT

Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

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RECREATION

- Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.
- Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

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RECREATION

Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

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RECREATION

Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

Increase visitation by 25 percent at lesser-known parks through a national tourism effort aimed at helping people to discover the breadth of parks and experiences.

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EDUCATION

Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

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EDUCATION

Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.

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EDUCATION

Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Grounds surrounding the Discovery Center are ideal for expanding interpretive themes involving Carver's love of nature & work with scientific agriculture. Formal gardens will provide a memorial setting for contemplating his love of flowers & gardening. The Missouri Botanical Garden can offer guidance on design. Local Master Gardeners will help maintain the gardens. Agricultural demonstration plots will allow for tangible interpretive experience relating to Carver's work with peanuts, cotton, sweet potatoes & soybeans. Local FFA/4-H chapters will help maintain agricultural plots. The park has 2 interpretive films on Carver's life that are out of date & do not meet NPS standards for quality. We have identified a high-priority need for a new interpretive film that will incorporate the best information from current films with new information that has been gained in the last 20 years. The History Channel produced a film entitled "Modern Marvels: George Washington Carver Tech" which we have permission to use for interpretive programming & may aid in the creation of a new film. We hope to work with a local university for the production of the film.

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PROFESSIONALISM

Model what it means to work in partnership.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

We hope to create a master repository for information related to Carver. Many researchers contact the park each year & often we have to direct them to other entities for their research. By creating a repository that would house copies of material related to Carver & digitized images of artifacts, we can consolidate valuable resources in one location. Developing this repository would include acquiring: digital images of artifacts currently housed at George Washington Carver NM, Tuskegee Institute NHS, Tuskegee University & Iowa State University; copies of academic studies on Carver done as a graduate thesis or doctoral dissertation; photos & film footage of Carver; digital copies of correspondence related to Carver that is contained in a number of collections around the country. In addition, the park recently converted over 87,000 papers of the microfilm edition of the "George Washington Carver Papers at Tuskegee University" to electronic media (CD-ROM). The conversion did not provide an index for the papers. The park also has a collection of Carver's papers which still need to be digitized. Both collections need to be indexed in order to be more accessible to researchers.

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