

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Prince William Forest Park

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: PRWI

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Prince William Forest Park is a former Recreation Demonstration Area (RDA) containing 15,000 acres of Piedmont Forest, and five Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) built cabin camps that are still in use today. The park is only 30 miles from Washington D.C. and acts as a gateway national park experience for urban and suburban dwellers from Maryland, D.C. and Virginia. All types of camping, hiking, biking, wildlife viewing and outdoor recreation are available.

The vision for the park is to build on its history, and by changing its name, to permanently commemorate the CCC as a part of the National Park System. The suggested name would be CCC National Recreation Area, which has been endorsed by the major national CCC alumni groups.

Centennial projects related to this vision would include improving the way visitors enter the park to allow access and viewing of a typical cabin camp as identified in the 2006 business plan. We would also provide a parking lot and multi-use trail access on the northern side of the park along Route 234, where most of the population growth has occurred in recent years. Other projects would repair and rehabilitate the five cabin camps, and remove all graffiti from the cabins by 2016, and to create a unique conference room and theater that could be rented by the public. Educational programs would be enhanced, with more emphasis on students from Prince William County and the Bridging the Watershed program for high school students.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Bob Hickman

Site: PRWI

STEWARDSHIP

Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The provision of a safe and inspiring environment for visitors, volunteers, and employees is a top priority for the management team at Prince William Forest Park (PRWI).
During FY08, PRWI will receive funding to employ up to three temporary maintenance staff. The primary responsibilities of these positions will be to assist existing journeyman level skilled trades, such as carpentry, plumbing, and painting, performing required, preventative, and rehabilitative maintenance on park assets. These employees will also supplement the skilled trades in performing more routine and less complex assignments so that the skilled trades can continue on higher priority work.
We propose the creation of an historic preservation skills team that would address all asset/infrastructure deficiencies for park facilities, especially in the four historic cabin camps. The historic camps were built by the CCC in the 1930's many are experiencing signs of aging and require more intensive and extensive rehabilitation work to maintain them for public use and historical integrity. Such a team may be able to perform a concentrated approach to performing maintenance on facilities and assets

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: PRWI

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.

Part of our vision is to improve the condition of the 158 historic cabin camp structures. One objective is to rid the cabin interiors of graffiti, which will further deter future such acts. The preferred product and method is environmentally safe and does not harm the historic fabric of the cabins. This commercial product is known as "Sponge Jet™". Small particles of sponge like material are projected with high pressure air to create a sand blasting effect with less than minimal effect to the historic wood fabric. The particles can be recycled for several uses before requiring disposal. Removal of graffiti will also provide a more positive visitor experience. Another part of the vision would be to create a "preservation work crew". This crew would focus on rehabilitating these seventy-five year old, 158 historic structures that are still actively used by thousands of visitors per year and are beginning to show their age. The crew would require skills in carpentry, masonry, plumbing, and electrical work with an emphasis on historic preservation work.

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STEWARDSHIP

Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

PRWI is in need of additional ethnographic and historic resource studies to accurately interpret historical events. For example, studies could include research on individual historic families, the resettlement period of the establishment of the park (as an RDA), the early urban cabin camp users. Additional sites are eligible for listing on the National Register and would need the required studies. Some have even proposed nominating the entire park for inclusion on the National Register. Cultural landscape studies are needed for the cabin camps to assist in maintenance and preservation efforts. To further protect the park, additional funding is required to complete land acquisition within the congressionally authorized boundary. Further acquisitions will not only protect historic viewsheds and impacts to cultural resources, but will also protect natural resources such as the Quantico Creek watershed.

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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)

To expand its knowledge of diversified natural resources through scientific research, one vision would be to conduct a natural resource "bio-blitz". The blitz would consist of the involvement of numerous disciplinary experts and volunteers to perform a short term intensive inventory of natural resources. Information gathered from the blitz can aid in the confirmation of existing species, identify previously unidentified species within the park, and note species not present that were previously identified. Such an event will also make known the resources of the park within the scientific, educational and public arenas, furthering the objective to increase the recognition of the park and its resources. Similar to the Artist-in-residence program, we would envision creating a "Scientist-in-Residence" program to bring scientific experts into the park to assist with resource management and/or to conduct studies within their area of expertise.

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Site: PRWI

ENVIRONMENT

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Prince William Forest Park will incorporate sound environmental and sustainable practices into park operations. Park management will explore means to reduce environmental impacts such as the use of photovoltaics, alternative energy sources, energy efficient design and construction, the use of post-consumer products, recycling waste material, and educating the visitor regarding their impact and imprint upon our resources.

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Site: PRWI

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.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

A new northern public access entrance into Prince William Forest Park is needed from Virginia Route 234 (VA 234) in order to better serve the local and regional public, increase awareness of the Park, and improve understanding of Prince William Forest Park as a unit of the National Park Service. Currently, the only public access entrance is from Virginia Route 619 (VA 619), which is inconvenient for Park visitors arriving from points north and west of the Park, such as the newer communities along the VA 234 corridor, and the heavily populated Manassas area. In contrast, an entrance from VA 234 provides logical access for the visitors coming from these areas. Just over half of the visitors recently surveyed (52.2 percent) are either moderately or very interested in access from VA 234 (Lawson, et. al., 2006). An Environmental Assessment and civic engagement have already been completed towards this objective. The approved preferred alternative is a short entrance road to a parking area where visitors then access the park on foot or bicycle via a multi-use trail.

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Site: PRWI

EDUCATION

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

PRWI envisions the creation of additional curriculum based education programs along appropriate park themes. These may include the Civilian Conservation Corps, the pyrite mine industry, the African-American story, the American Revolution as it relates to the Washington-Rochambeau route, and natural resource related curricula. Curriculums would be based on the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL's) achievement goals so as to be relevant to school programs.

Part of the vision also includes developing overnight thematically based experience camps for youth such as a Leave No Trace® program, a CCC camp, and a "spy" camp based on the use of the park by the U.S. Army Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during WWII.

We would also envision expanding our existing Bridging the Watershed (BTW) program into more Prince William County Schools. BTW is a science resource based hands-on interpretive program for high school students. BTW is an existing partnership within the NCR with the Alice Ferguson Foundation.

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