

New Park Planning Program Standards

The 2004 Park Planning Program Standards provide a logical flow established through several levels of planning that become increasingly detailed and complementary by agreeing first on why a park was established and what resource conditions should exist, and then increasingly focused on how those conditions should be maintained or achieved. Within this framework, planning and decision making are accomplished through six discrete kinds of planning, resulting in six kinds of planning-related documents (Figure 1):

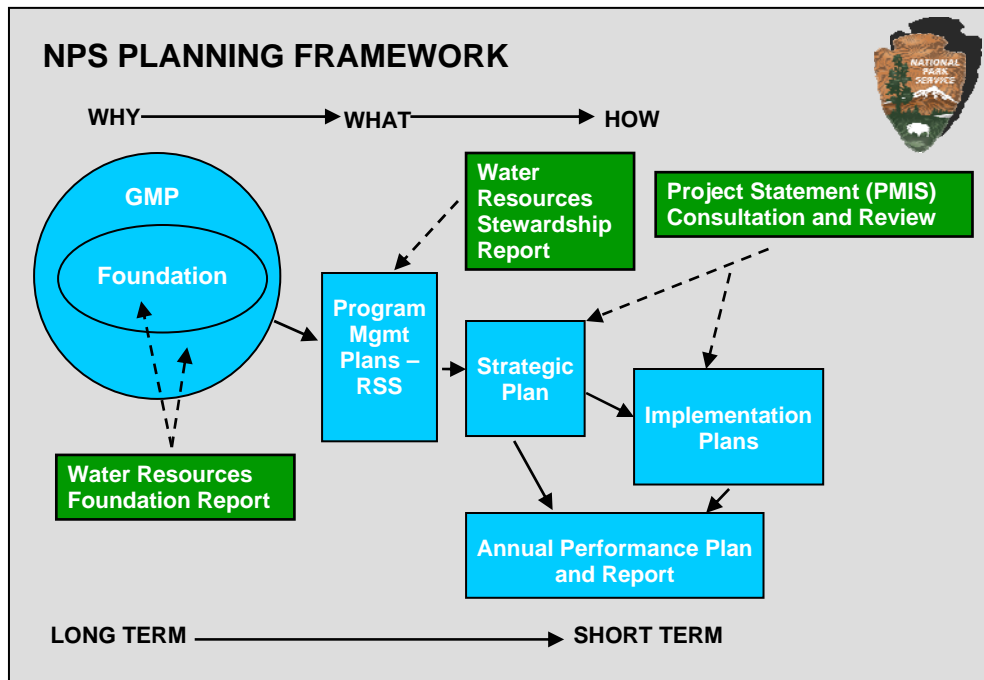


Figure 1. The “new” NPS framework for planning and decision making (blue boxes). Green boxes represent WRD planning or assistance. RSS = Resource Stewardship Strategic.

- The **Foundation for Planning and Management** defines the legal and policy requirements that mandate the park’s basic management responsibilities, and identifies and analyzes the resources and values that are fundamental to achieving the park’s purpose or otherwise important to park planning and management.
- The **General Management Plan** (GMP) uses information from the *Foundation for Planning and Management* to define broad direction for resource preservation and visitor use in a park, and serves as the basic foundation for park decision-making, including long-term direction for *desired conditions* of park resources and visitor experiences.
- The **Program Management Plan** tiers off the GMP, identifying and recommending the best strategies for achieving the desired resource conditions and visitor experiences presented in the GMP. Program planning serves as a bridge to translate the qualitative statements of *desired conditions* for fundamental park resources established in the *GMP* into measurable or objective indicators that can be monitored. Based on information obtained through this analysis, comprehensive strategies are developed to achieve the *desired conditions*. The *Program Management Plan* component for natural and cultural resources, including water resources, is the **Resource Stewardship Plan** (Figure 1). DO 2.1 (*in draft*) specifically addresses development of the *Resource Stewardship Plan*.

- The **Strategic Plan** tiers off the *Program Management Plan*, identifying the highest-priority strategies for the park, including measurable goals that work toward maintaining and/or restoring the park's *desired conditions* over the next 3 to 5 years.
- **Implementation Plans** tier off the *Strategic Plan*, describing in detail (including methods, cost estimates, and schedules) the high-priority actions that will be taken over the next several years to help achieve the *desired conditions* for the park.
- The **Annual Performance Plan and Report** measures the progress of projects from the *Implementation Plan* with objectives from the *Strategic Plan*.

It is the requirements of two of these documents, **Foundation for Planning and Management** and **Resources Stewardship Plan**, that form the basis for the new NPS water resources planning framework.

Water Resources Foundation Report

The **Water Resources Foundation Report** is designed to address the needs of the *Foundation for Planning and Management* document, extending as a reference on water resources for the GMP (Figure 1). The primary objectives of the *Water Resources Foundation Report* are to: 1) synthesize information on the existing conditions of a park's water resources; 2) identify and describe the park's fundamental water resources, building from a park's purpose and significance statements, and 3) identify stakeholders and laws and policies that apply to these fundamental water resources.

Water Resources Stewardship Report

The **Water Resources Stewardship Report**, is designed specifically to address the water resource needs in a park's *Resource Stewardship Plan* (Figure 1). This report includes long-term, comprehensive strategies that enable a park to achieve or maintain a park's *desired conditions* for water resources with measurable or objective indicators that assess the degree to which the *desired conditions* are being achieved.

Water Resources Information and Issues Overview

The **Water Resources Information and Issues Overview** offers a flexible design that serves park's unique water resource issues using available water resource information. For example, a water resource-based park, such as a wild and scenic river, may have a basic need to inform stakeholders of the conditions of its water resources and to identify and analyze priority water resource issues that it faces.