

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

National Capital Parks - East

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: NACE

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

National Capital Parks-East is one of the jewels of the National Park System, managed and promoted by consummate professionals dedicated to conserving resources and providing safe and enjoyable experiences. We strive to inspire this and future generations to recognize, understand, conserve and protect our natural, cultural and recreational resources.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Gayle Hazelwood

Site: NACE

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)

Provide safe access to all the sites by connecting the forts with a system of trails for the Civil War Defenses of Washington managed by Rock Creek, National Capital Parks-East and the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The trails will be marked with trail markers, signs and the information regarding the trails will be published on the NPS website. This goal will be achieved utilizing the recommendations identified in the 2004 Management Plan.

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

Site: NACE

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Restore and rehabilitate the earthworks utilizing best management practices implemented at other Civil War sites in the National Park System for the Civil War Defenses of Washington managed by Rock Creek, National Capital Parks-East and the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

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Site: NACE

STEWARDSHIP

Encourage children to be future conservationists.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Bridging-the-Watershed (BTW) provides hands-on experiences in a real-world setting, making the abstract classroom science concept more relevant to students. This applied scholastic experience provides a rich addition to traditional classroom activity.

BTW reaches the whole student and teacher by combining park interpretation with professionally facilitated curriculum-based programs. Research has shown that the two pieces - the cognitive and the affective - are essential to changing students' beliefs and behaviors. Teachers have increased levels of comfort with the out-of-doors and effectively use parks as classrooms with their students.

BTW has an active service learning component institutionalized in schools (credit/class time release). Students have an opportunity to take their first action as a 'future conservationist' and model ways in which they can support parks into the future.

BTW provides students with first-hand opportunities to build an individual conservation ethic. Students see what personal actions they can take in their homes, schools and communities to contribute to a trash-free Potomac and other conservation goals.

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Site: NACE

ENVIRONMENT

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Bridging-the-Watershed (BTW) is a collaboration across parks, the Alice Ferguson Foundation (AFF), and schools. Students will take these messages back to their homes, schools, and communities, creating a ripple effect.

Through a joint project with Rock Creek Park (ROCR), BTW developed a park-specific curriculum. 'Herring Highway' is a stewardship project in ROCR that focuses on the fish ladder installed at Pierce Mill. To complement the curriculum for students, 10 waysides were installed along the length of the tributary, explaining to park visitors the annual migration.

Every field study is a model in walking lightly on the parks, for example, teachers are trained to encourage students to bring trash-free lunches.

By 2016, the service component of the BTW program will be expanded. All students who participate in a field study will return to the park for an active stewardship project that meets park resource management goals. Hopefully, students and teachers will be inspired to expand this service element by organizing community-wide service opportunities to help protect the parks and the grounds around their schools.

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Site: NACE

RECREATION

Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Establish formal agreements with diverse recreation enthusiasts and organizations (American Hiking Society, Inter-mountain Biking Association, American Heart Association, Trips-For-Kids) to maintain existing trail systems and promote healthy recreation to new visitors in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia for the Civil War Defenses of Washington managed by three park units (ROCR,NACE,GWMP)

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Site: NACE

RECREATION

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Bridging-the-Watershed (BTW) brings a diverse & underserved audience of high school students to national parks. The field study is an introduction to the parks and their resources. Students receive the message that national parks belong to them.

BTW engages teachers and students directly with the resources of the national parks. Students look at water quality and ways their actions affect it.

BTW improves student lives by improving their academic experience. For many students who do not thrive in a traditional classroom, the chance to apply science learning outdoors provides a monumental moment. These students engage in science learning for the first time.

Teacher on BTW's effect on a "hard to reach" student:

Just completed my first field study at Monocacy NB today...Kids thought it was great and cannot wait to do it again. One student, who is autistic, was refusing to participate. I [finally] convinced him... and he said "Well Fine!!!" and charged into the water (I think with brand new sneakers—oops). Later I heard him YELL!! "Bring the net, there is a crayfish over here."
(More words & clearer than I have ever heard from him!)

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Site: NACE

EDUCATION

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Bridging-the-Watershed (BTW) curricula are developed with schools and National Park Service (NPS) professionals. They are consistent with standards of learning and other systemic priorities to ensure their pedagogical quality and factual accuracy.

BTW field studies are part of the larger classroom experience; students receive personal and academic experiences. Students make real-world connections to scientific exploration methodologies through best field-based science technologies. Interactive online activities provide students with knowledge and skills before they arrive at parks.

BTW provides students with online access to water-quality data. In the classroom, students review their online data, conduct analysis and compare their data and that of others. This data is uploaded through the use of handheld GPS units. Students compare their data with parallel data collected by NPS staff.

BTW is embedded as regular curriculum in secondary schools. Administrators allow teachers structured time and resources for BTW trainings; permission for students to go on field studies; and classroom time to prepare students with foundational knowledge needed for their field investigation.

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Site: NACE

EDUCATION

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

Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

Develop Jr. Ranger booklet for Civil War Defense of Washington sites within National Capital Parks-East.

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Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Bridging-the-Watershed (BTW) provides students with connections to National Park Service (NPS) youth programs so that by 2016 rangers team teaching the field studies with foundation staff are BTW program alumni. BTW has a student alumnus who, following college, became a park ranger at George Washington Memorial Parkway and now leads BTW programs. This ranger weaves his high school experience into the interpretation he provides with students. When he speaks about his path to his current job as an NPS ranger, you can see lights go on in some students' minds - a door they had never even known existed, much less considered, has suddenly been opened.

A curriculum module based on careers within NPS will be developed to make these possibilities more explicit. Opportunities for these programs will be shared with participating teachers and students in a timely manner. The BTW program prepares students to become stewards of their national parks - an immediate way to begin that stewardship is through employment in the NPS.

Generational learning could begin immediately by having high school participants pass their learning along to younger students in elementary schools in their districts.

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Site: NACE

PROFESSIONALISM

Model what it means to work in partnership.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The Bridging-the-Watershed (BTW) program models a public-private partnership between National Park Service (NPS), Alice Ferguson Foundation (AFF) and the participating schools and their school systems. Partners share and leverage resources and seek the best outcomes for agreed upon goals. Rather than a linear relationship between partners, a strong web exists between individual parks, individual schools, and AFF. Actions of any individual partner reflect positively on the entire web.

One strength of the partnership is that BTW is institutionalized into NPS programs. Ranger trainings are eligible for developmental credits. Funding for the program is spread through 10 parks. BTW will be institutionalized in several school systems, both on an academic level and on a logistical level. The BTW Advisory Council is collaborative body for guidance, problem-solving and decision-making. Each partner park, school systems, and AFF are represented.

BTW provides students and teachers with powerful experiences and impresses upon them the importance of national parks. BTW is a feeder for future NPS employees and attracts diverse individuals from both high school students and teachers.

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