

THE  
**FUTURE**  
OF  
**AMERICA'S**  
**NATIONAL**  
**PARKS**

First Annual  
Centennial Strategy for

# Theodore Roosevelt National Park

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: THRO

Year: 2007

### Vision Statement

Theodore Roosevelt National Park, in western North Dakota, is an outstanding area of national significance, which astounds, delights, and often surprises 475,000 visitors each year. The park, established in 1947, preserves 70, 447 acres of extraordinary badlands scenery, healthy and visible wildlife populations, native mixed-grass prairie, and the legacy of Theodore Roosevelt. The park consists of three separate units (North, Elkhorn, and South) and is dedicated to the preservation and public enjoyment of important historic, scenic and natural resources. The central, unifying feature of the 110 square mile park is the free-flowing Little Missouri River, which winds through the South and North Units and forms the east boundary of the small Elkhorn Unit.

The park is significant because the colorful North Dakota badlands provide a scenic backdrop to a place that memorializes our 26th President for his enduring contributions to the conservation of our nation's resources. The park allows people to enjoy panoramic vistas and a sense of solitude, inspiration and timelessness similar to Theodore Roosevelt's experience in the Dakota Territory in the 1880s. The area provides an opportunity to learn about an environment and way of life that helped shape Roosevelt's attitudes and philosophy regarding conservation.

The Little Missouri River has shaped the land that is home to prairie plants and animals including bison, elk, bighorn sheep, and prairie dogs. Small herds of feral horses and longhorn steers represent the historic scene as living exhibits. The park experience is created by the interplay of natural forces including weather, vegetation, wildlife, vistas, smells, color and shape of landforms, air quality, varied light, and seasons. Ongoing geological activities create spectacular examples of badlands terrain and provide opportunities for visual interpretation of erosional processes. The park contains one of the few islands of designated wilderness (29,920 acres) in the Northern Great Plains, and is designated as a Class 1 air quality area providing for clean air, brilliant clear day and night skies and outstanding examples of a relatively unpolluted environment. The park has one of the largest petrified forests in the US and extensive paleontological deposits from the Paleocene epoch.

In 2007, the park is celebrating its 60th Anniversary with the theme - 60 years of Preservation, Tradition, and Inspiration. This is just the beginning. In the next decade, the park will revitalize its mission and purpose to connect with the American public, the way that Theodore Roosevelt revitalized the nation during his presidency.

### Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Valerie J. Naylor, Superintendent

Site: THRO

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 park will be continuing to rehabilitate the historic Peaceful Valley Ranch in the South Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. The ranch is on the National Register of Historic Places and is significant because it was established during Roosevelt's time in the badlands. It also served as park headquarters during the first year's of the park's existence. The historic ranch house will have its foundation rehabilitated in late 2007 and early 2008, and additional improvements will follow until the ranch is in good condition.

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

Site: THRO

STEWARDSHIP

Encourage children to be future conservationists.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Through enhanced interpretation of Theodore Roosevelt and his conservation legacy, the park will reconnect with young people and encourage them to develop a conservation mindset early in life.

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Site: THRO

ENVIRONMENT

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Theodore Roosevelt National Park has developed an expanded recycling program at both the North and South Units, using recycling trailers to haul materials to recycling centers. The program is currently working primarily for waste generated from park offices and park residences, but is being expanded slowly to include more waste items generated by park visitors.

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Site: THRO

ENVIRONMENT

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

Demonstrate environmental excellence through increased use of alternative energy and fuels at every park.

In the next few years, Theodore Roosevelt National Park plans to replace some of its fleet with hybrid vehicles. This will cut down on fuel costs and fuel consumption and will set a good example in a rural state where alternative fuel/hybrid vehicles are not as well known as in some other areas.

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Site: THRO

ENVIRONMENT

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Theodore Roosevelt National Park plans to work with the City of Medora, and perhaps the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation, to expand the park recycling program to city visitors. If this partnership is successful, it will make a significant difference in the amount of materials that are sent to a landfill.

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Site: THRO

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.

Theodore Roosevelt National Park has a cutting edge tourism promotion program which also highlights the mission of the National Parks in North Dakota. The park has worked with Fahlgren-Mortine, one of the top 100 publicity firms in the country, to develop items to encourage travel writers to focus on the North Dakota National Parks. Fahlgren-Mortine is providing their services pro-bono. The next effort will focus on a 14 park area in North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and eastern Wyoming. This publicity effort will begin in fall of 2007. Both of these efforts are on-going.

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Site: THRO

**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.

The park will work with Dickinson State University to digitize collections related to Theodore Roosevelt and make them available through kiosks in park visitor centers and elsewhere. This project is a portion of a larger undertaking involving Dickinson State University and the Library of Congress as partners. When complete, it will have national significance, as the project will create a software system, document portal, and website that will index, classify, categorize, interpret, and disseminate the combined Roosevelt collections. This new way of getting information will be attractive to young people and students and should encourage young people to learn more about Theodore Roosevelt and his conservation legacy.

In addition, podcasts developed to interpret the Elkhorn Ranch Site, should attract more young visitors and their families to the Elkhorn Ranch, Theodore Roosevelt's home in Dakota.

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