

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Booker T. Washington
National Monument

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: BOWA

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Booker T. Washington National Monument preserves and protects the birth site and childhood home of Booker T. Washington while interpreting his life experiences and significance in American history as the most influential African American between 1895 and 1915. The park provides a resource for public education and a focal point for continuing discussions about the legacy of Booker T. Washington and the evolving context of race in American society.

This plan envisions the park working collaboratively with partner institutions-local, regional, and national-to enhance protection of the park's cultural and natural resources and to create opportunities for outstanding and memorable visitor experiences that promote reflection, learning, and enjoyment related to the life and achievements of Booker T. Washington. Priorities for the plan include the investigation and careful stewardship of the park's cultural, ethnographic, and natural resources; improvement and expansion of the site's educational and interpretive offerings; and the preservation of the park's rural setting.

The plan builds upon and reinforces initiatives to broaden the scope of interpretive programming, enrich the visitor experience, and attract new audiences. By offering topical programs that connect the history of the site with events that continue to affect people today, the park has a tremendous opportunity to meet and further build on its legislated purpose. The park has the potential not only to portray one man's rise from slavery to worldwide prominence, but also to examine the impact that Washington's philosophy has had on the shaping of civil rights and race relations in America.

The park, with its rolling pastures, tobacco fields, and woodlands, also provide a direct link to the community's agricultural past and preserves a small piece of the region's rural character in the midst of increasing modern development. The park is a valued part of Franklin County's cultural heritage and is an anchor for future heritage preservation and development in the region.

A major goal of this plan is to create a dynamic site that offers a changing menu of compelling educational programs-homage to Washington, who was one of the most notable educators of his era. Utilizing ongoing research and investigation of the site's resources, the park will be able to develop a rich repertoire of programs that will draw visitors of many ages time and again. The idea is to continue in the pursuit of new knowledge that may offer different perspectives or explore different facets of Washington, his childhood, and this site where he was born.

An up-graded visitor center complete with engaging exhibits and a new audio-visual program would modernize the current Mission 66 facility. Interactive exhibits and film would explore the more controversial aspects of Washington's life presenting a deeper, more compelling perspective of his life and accomplishments. Another key element of the plan would be the transformation of the former Booker T. Washington Elementary School, which currently is used for offices and a maintenance facility, into a secondary venue for educational programs. The history of this building, which was constructed as a segregated school for African American children in Franklin County, provides a crucial link between the distant and more recent past.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Rebecca L. Harriett

Site: BOWA

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Improve high-priority assets to acceptable condition, as measured by the Facility Condition Index.

Construct an 80-seat auditorium addition to accommodate school and tour groups; up-date interactive exhibits about Booker T. Washington and slavery; remodel the cooperating association sales outlet area; construct an addition over the current garage area for a library, meeting room, and staff offices; remodel the garage for museum collection storage.

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

Site: BOWA

EDUCATION

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Design and produce a teacher's guide and student's workbook for grades K-11 and an on-site ACTIVboard System to compliment the above programs. This interactive system would be engaging to students of all ages, but especially as we reach out to minority students who do not typically visit the park except through organized school tours. Topics for this interactive education program include Booker T. Washington's relationship with slavery, the American Civil War and Reconstruction, the Jim Crow South, and Booker T. Washington's educational philosophy and political controversies with his contemporaries. This is also a program that could be utilized at Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site.

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Site: BOWA

EDUCATION

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Develop and install interactive exhibits in the former auditorium space (once the new visitor center auditorium is constructed) to compliment the new orientation film and education programs.

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Site: BOWA

EDUCATION

Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

Complete production of a new audiovisual program using current technology and recent scholarship on Booker T. Washington. The program would have a captioning system for hearing-impaired and those whose language is other than English. The current short film was produced in 1983 and focuses on Booker T. Washington's childhood and his adult life as an educator. This new film would provide visitors with a more comprehensive look at his life and the complexities of his political activities in context to a violent and racially segregated South. A script was completed in 2003. This film could also be shown at Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site.

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