

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

First Annual  
Centennial Strategy for

# Rock Creek Park

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



**Vision Statement**

Rock Creek Park is a green oasis in the heart of the nation's capital. The park contains approximately 3,100 acres of valuable plant and wildlife habitat, providing protection for a variety of native species. The park's forests and open spaces help define the character of the nation's capital. Historic structures and cultural landscapes provide a glimpse of what the nation's capital was like in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. Over the past two decades, visitation to the park has almost doubled, with the park hosting nearly 10 million visitors annually.

The park's major landscape feature is the picturesque Rock Creek. A creek with clean, clear water is our goal. Stormwater runoff, combined sewer overflows, and discharges from other sources are prime contributors to the creek's poor water quality. We will continue to work with and improve coordination with other agencies to reduce the impacts on park water and land.

A healthy forest requires conditions that allow the park to sustain native plant species. This means the elimination and/or control of invasive, exotic plants. We will continue our invasive plant control program, supplementing staff with an increasing number of trained volunteers.

Rock Creek Park's forests are home to a variety of wildlife. Our goal is to protect the park's wildlife by ensuring that native plant and animal species function in as natural a condition as possible.

Preserving the park's historic and cultural resources and keeping them in superior condition, is our aim. The continuing restoration/rehabilitation of Peirce Mill, Meridian Hill Park, the Old Stone House, Dumbarton Oaks Park, Montrose Park, the Carter Barron Amphitheatre and all of the park's historic features such as bridges, trails and roads is what we are working to achieve. Employee and visitor safety continues to be paramount.

With the near-completion of a 4-year archeological study which surveyed and inventoried archeological sites in the park, our goal is now to use the findings of the study to develop new interpretive materials and programs so that the public understands and appreciates the richness and diversity of Rock Creek Park.

The Fort Circle Parks system is a primary focus for the park. Using the Fort Circle Parks Management Plan as guidance, our objectives are to 1) preserve the earthwork forts; 2) interpret the fort sites so that the public understands and appreciates their significance; 3) conserve the green spaces connecting the sites; and 4) provide recreational opportunities.

As an urban park, "partnerships and civic engagement" have, from the very beginning, been critical to the successful management of the park. A linear park surrounded by many and varied constituencies, working with the local communities is incorporated in everything we do. The Friends of Peirce Mill is a partner organization raising private funds to restore Peirce Mill. A newly-formed partnership, the Friends of Rock Creek's Environment (FORCE) is an umbrella organization for a number of communities bordering the Rock Creek watershed. We are in the beginning stages of forming a partnership for the Ft. Circle Parks.

Rock Creek Park has a long tradition of providing a wide range of visitor interpretive and educational services. Its location in the nation's capital makes the park particularly well suited to provide a large, diverse population with interpretation opportunities and to serve as an ambassador for the national park idea. The park needs to have, and our public needs to see, more rangers so that Rock Creek Park is identified as a national park in the minds of the public. Rangers also serve as role models for the children who will be the future stewards of the park.

So that our visitors have a safe and enjoyable recreational experience, we envision

upgraded trails, improved access where environmentally feasible, and rehabilitation of visitor contact facilities.

**Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager**

Adrienne A. Coleman, Superintendent, Rock Creek Park

Site: ROCR

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)

Complete and maintain trail system that allows visitor access to the park's natural, historic and recreational opportunities.  
Administer the Fort Circle Parks system.  
Implement the Fort Circle Parks Management Plan.  
Enact earthworks management plan.  
Interpret the fort sites so that the public understands and appreciates the historic significance of these sites and how they relate to surrounding communities.  
Complete and maintain trail and trail connections for the Fort Circle Parks.  
Provide recreational opportunities compatible with historic and natural resource values.

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

Site: ROCR

**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.**

Continue to restore/rehabilitate historic Peirce Mill in partnership with the Friends of Peirce Mill.  
Continue the restoration/rehabilitation of Meridian Hill Park.  
Continue the restoration/rehabilitation of the Old Stone House.

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**Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.**

Continue to administer the park's invasive exotics program. Continue to expand and incorporate volunteer component to park's exotics removal program.

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

**Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.**

Continue to work with the District of Columbia and surrounding jurisdictions to reduce/eliminate pollution of Rock Creek from combined sewer overflows, stormwater runoff, and other pollution sources.  
Complete the park's Deer Management Plan/EIS.  
Complete bird study to determine impacts of cell towers on migratory birds.  
Complete telecommunications facilities siting plan.

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

**Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.**

Insert Park Text

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

Site: ROCR

STEWARDSHIP

Set the standard of excellence in urban park landscape design and maintenance.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Continue to implement design plans for the Georgetown Waterfront.  
Continue to restore Dumbarton Oaks Park as determined by completed Cultural Landscape Report.  
Continue to restore Montrose Park as determined by completed Cultural Landscape Report.  
Continue to restore Meridian Hill Park as determined by completed Cultural Landscape Report.

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

Site: ROCR

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)

Potential land acquisitions to support new trail system for Fort Circle Parks.

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

Site: ROCR

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)

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

Site: ROCR

STEWARDSHIP

Encourage children to be future conservationists.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Continue to give interpretive talks/programs about park and the environment.  
Go to classrooms to give presentations about the park and the environment.  
Continue and expand Junior Ranger Program.  
Continue to develop printed materials about the park.  
Continue to use latest technologies (web sites, Podcasts, etc) to promote park and environment.

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

Site: ROCR

ENVIRONMENT

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Reduce park's carbon footprint  
Begin park recycling program  
Purchase only equipment that will work on alternate fuels  
All new construction will qualify for Leeds certification.  
All office supplies, cleaning supplies and other operational supplies will be recycled and /or 'green

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Site: ROCR

ENVIRONMENT

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Continue to support existing partnerships such as Friends of Rock Creek's Environment (FORCE).  
Promote new partnerships by encouraging surrounding communities to support and advocate for the park.

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

Site: ROCR

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.

Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

Create/complete trail system for Fort Circle Parks.  
Maintain trail and trail connections for the Fort Circle Parks.  
Complete and maintain Rock Creek Park trail system that allows visitor access to the park's natural, historic and recreational opportunities.

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Complete construction of 2.5 acre centerpiece of the 9-acre Georgetown Waterfront Park, which connects four national parks and more than 225 miles of parkland.

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

Site: ROCR

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)

Continue to assist/promote Bridging the Watershed program

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Site: ROCR

EDUCATION

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Construct 2.5 acre centerpiece of the 9-acre Georgetown Waterfront Park, which connects four national parks and more than 225 miles of parkland.

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



Site: ROCR

**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.

Continue and expand technologies such as Podcasts, cell phone tours, and wi-fi-accessible sites.

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

Site: ROCR

**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.

Improve messaging.  
Coordinate w/ city and other destinations to elevate NPS identity.  
Link with Cultural Tourism DC

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

Site: ROCR

**PROFESSIONALISM**

Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

Continue to involve staff in risk management program  
Improve messaging

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

Site: ROCR

**PROFESSIONALISM**

Model what it means to work in partnership.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Work with surrounding communities to create partnership for Fort Circle Parks system.

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