



National Natural Landmarks Program

Background

The National Natural Landmarks (NNL) Program recognizes and supports the voluntary conservation of outstanding geological and biological sites, regardless of ownership. Ongoing partnerships with public and private landmark owners allow participants to share information, solve problems cooperatively, and conserve outstanding examples of our nation's natural history. Over 580 landmarks have been designated by the Secretary of the Interior since the program's establishment in 1962.

Land acquisition by the federal government is not a goal of this program. NNLs are owned by a variety of land stewards, and participation in the program is voluntary. National Natural Landmarks are selected for their outstanding condition, illustrative value, rarity, diversity, and value to science and education. The National Park Service administers the program, reports on the condition of NNLs, identifies specialists to advise landmark owners on resource management, and advocates for the protection of designated sites.

Accomplishments

While providing funding for NNLs is not the norm, the program staff has been very successful in securing grants for conservation work and outreach projects. Recent projects include:

- Interpretive walkways and exhibits, Orono Bog, Maine;
- Digital mapping of dinosaur tracks at Dinosaur Valley State Park, Texas;
- A film on the geology of the Ellenville Fault-Ice Caves, New York;
- A book on the history of the Wallula Gap, Washington;
- Mapping and eradication of non-native plants, Red Rock Lakes, Montana.

Status and Future

Potential sites continue to be evaluated for review by the National Park System Advisory Board and designation by the Secretary. Promoting awareness of existing landmarks is important for educational value and to enable planners of public works and development projects to avoid impacts to landmark resources when possible. Continued dissemination of information to landmark owners, states, and other federal agencies will help meet this goal, as will information provided on the Internet.

Winning photographs from the NNL Program's annual photo contest are published in a widely distributed calendar that increases awareness of landmarks and their significance, and provides contact information.



New boardwalk at the Orono Bog protects resources while improving visitor access.



Third place winner of 2008 photo contest: Garden of the Gods, Colorado.

More Information

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