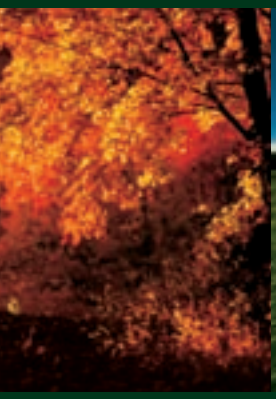

Advancing THE NATIONAL PARK IDEA

NATIONAL PARKS SECOND CENTURY COMMISSION *report*

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RESTORE, AND SUSTAIN THE MOST VALUABLE PLACES, LANDS, AND WATERS IN THE UNITED STATES. WE RECOMMEND A PRESIDE

A HIKER EXULTS IN THE MIST AND POWER OF VERNAL FALLS IN YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA.

BILL HATCHER, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STOCK

We have fallen heirs to the most glorious heritage a people ever received, and each one must do his part if we wish to show that the nation is worthy of its good fortune.

— THEODORE ROOSEVELT, 1886

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FOREWORD

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

In 2016, the nation will *mark the centennial of* the National Park Service.

MARIA STENZEL

Commissioners Sally Jewell, and (seated, from left) Gary Nash, Rita Colwell, Margaret Wheatley, and Stephen Lockhart, at Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

As we reflect on the tremendous success of the national park idea and its many contributions to society, we have cause for celebration—and action. National parks today serve purposes and provide benefits far broader than were envisioned for them a century ago. They also face threats to their survival not imagined in the beginning. But their mission remains fundamentally important to America, and grows ever more vital as ecological and social challenges demand solutions.

One year ago, the nonprofit National Parks Conservation Association convened an independent commission charged with developing a 21st-century vision for the National Park Service and for the magnificent collection of unique places it holds in trust for the American people. The commission consisted of a diverse group of distinguished private citizens, including scientists, historians, conservationists, educators, businesspeople, and leaders with long experience in state and national government. We met five times, and heard from conservation and preservation experts, field staff of the National Park Service, teachers, volunteers, and groups that help support the work of the parks. At three additional public meetings we listened to the ideas and priorities of concerned citizens. Commission committees focused on key issues. Their reports and minutes of commission meetings are online at www.VisionfortheParks.org. We are grateful to all who helped us.

Our yearlong concentration on the national park idea convinces us that its evolution has been of exceptional value to the nation. Continued expansion of that idea should play a central role in solving some of our most daunting problems. Our recommendations capture strategies that will, if they are adopted now, strengthen education, reduce impacts of climate change, provide meaningful opportunities for young people, support a healthier and more interconnected citizenry, preserve extraordinary places that reflect our diverse national experience, and safeguard our life-sustaining natural heritage on land and sea.

This agenda is urgent. America stands at a crossroads: Down one road lie missed opportunities and irretrievable loss of our natural and cultural legacy. Down the other is a future in which national parks—protected forever and for all—help forge a better world. We encourage all Americans to join us in learning more about our national parks, and in building a path to hope.

Howard H. Baker, Jr. J. Bennett Johnston
Co-Chairs, National Parks Second Century Commission

NATIONAL PARKS SECOND CENTURY COMMISSION *Members*

Co-Chairs

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Former U.S. Senator (Republican, Tennessee)

J. BENNETT JOHNSTON
Former U.S. Senator (Democrat, Louisiana)

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Harvard University
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Former U.S. Representative (Democrat, Michigan)
Former U.S. Ambassador to Canada

MILTON CHEN
Executive Director
The George Lucas Educational Foundation

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Former Chief Scientist
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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Former Mayor of Anchorage
Former Chair
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Author and consultant on leadership and healthy communities
Co-Founder and President Emerita
Berkana Institute

E. O. WILSON
Pellegrino University Professor Emeritus
Harvard University

LORAN FRASER
Executive Director

ROSEMARY PETERNEL
Senior Program Coordinator

Our spirits need the experiences that the national parks offer. They help us fully understand what it means to be human.

— COMMISSIONER JOHN FAHEY

THE RUGGED HILLS OF SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA IN CALIFORNIA RISE ABOVE THE GLITTERING SPRAWL OF LOS ANGELES.

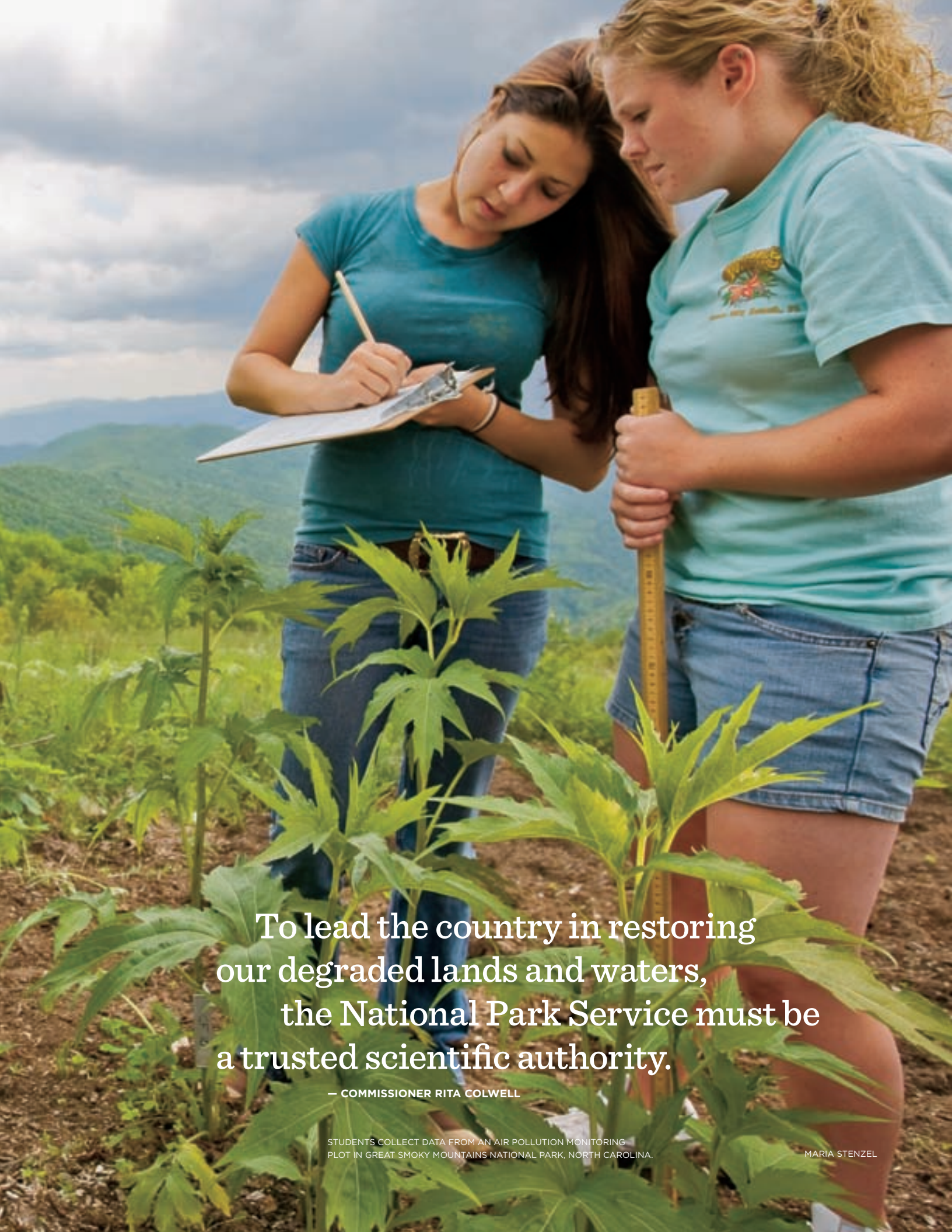
IAN SHIVE

YOON S. BYUN

There's no better route to civic understanding than visiting our national parks. They're who we are and where we've been.

— COMMISSIONER SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR

VISITORS LEARN ABOUT EARLY POWER LOOMS AT THE BOOTT COTTON MILLS MUSEUM IN LOWELL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, MASSACHUSETTS.



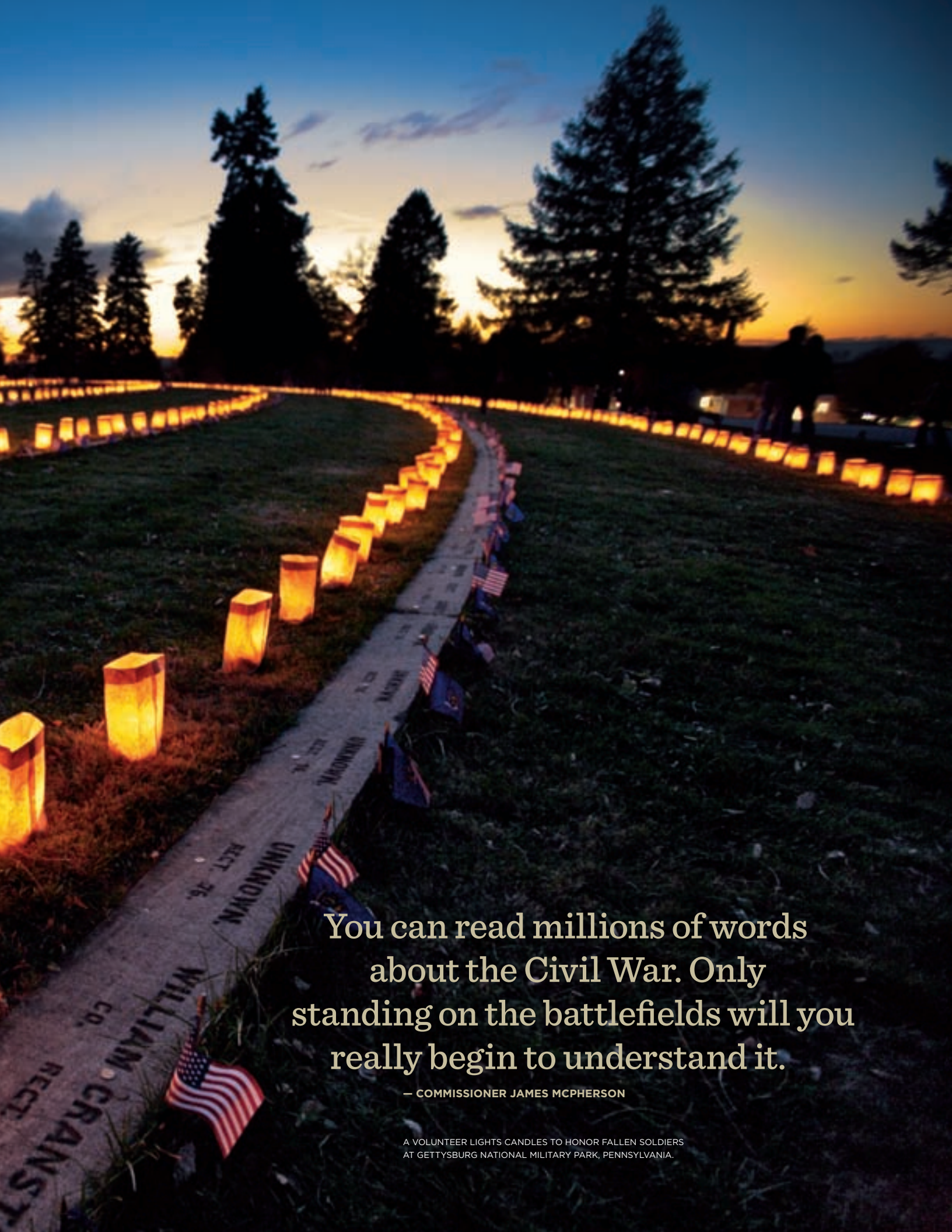
To lead the country in restoring our degraded lands and waters, the National Park Service must be a trusted scientific authority.

— COMMISSIONER RITA COLWELL

STUDENTS COLLECT DATA FROM AN AIR POLLUTION MONITORING PLOT IN GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK, NORTH CAROLINA.

MARIA STENZEL

MICHAEL MELFORD, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STOCK



You can read millions of words about the Civil War. Only standing on the battlefields will you really begin to understand it.

— COMMISSIONER JAMES MCPHERSON

A VOLUNTEER LIGHTS CANDLES TO HONOR FALLEN SOLDIERS AT GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK, PENNSYLVANIA.

If we intend to protect the national parks in perpetuity, basic finance tells us that we must fund them in perpetuity.

— COMMISSIONER LINDA BILMES

A CRACKLING SUMMER STORM SWEEPS ALONG THE NORTH RIM AT GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK IN ARIZONA.

MICHAEL NICHOLS, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STOCK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A VISION FOR OUR NATIONAL PARKS

Americans have a *deep and enduring love* for the national parks, places we treasure because they embody our highest ideals and values. National parks tell our stories and speak of our identity as a people and a nation. In 1916, Congress created the National Park Service to manage a growing collection of special places "unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." The world has changed profoundly since that time, and so has the national park idea, adapting to the needs of a changing society. But at the core of the idea abides an ethic that embraces the preservation of nature and our shared heritage, and promotes regard for their significance inside the parks and throughout our country.

A JOURNEY INTO THE PARK SYSTEM

To learn firsthand how the national park idea and the National Park Service are evolving now, commissioners met over the past year at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in California, Lowell National Historical Park and Essex National Heritage Area in Massachusetts, Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania, and Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee. One forceful and unanimous reaction to this journey was that all of these places, however they are officially titled, are equally, vitally, national parks. The current welter of classifications for National Park Service units is confusing and, the commission believes, unnecessary. The Park Service has taken positive steps to enhance branding and recognition of the parks through more uniform design standards for signage and publications. To carry that work forward, we call on Congress to simplify as far as possible the more than two dozen park titles now in use. Throughout this report we will use the terms "parks" and "national parks" to refer to all of the units under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service.

During each of its five meetings the commission heard compelling stories about threats to park resources, efforts to maintain and restore them, and creative partnerships that are building better parks and better communities. As the nation looks to the centennial of the National Park Service, it is fitting to consider how the national park idea and National Park Service can help meet America's 21st-century needs. We must craft a plan for the future of the parks based not simply on the grand vision of their founders, but also on our own awareness of urgent environmental problems, a burgeoning population, and critical needs in education. It is essential that our vision recognize the interrelationships between ourselves and the natural world, and point the way to a more sustainable relationship between people and the planet. We have come to believe that our national parks are powerful places to learn about the social and environmental challenges our country faces today,

KITRA CAHANA, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

A Michigan family's trip to Washington, D.C., includes Frederick Douglass National Historic Site—the home of a man born a slave who became one of the greatest champions of freedom the world has ever known.

and that the National Park Service is uniquely positioned to offer creative responses to those challenges.

A HISTORY OF EXPANDING SERVICE

The earliest national parks were set aside within defined boundaries under the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal government. Today, many are managed cooperatively with state and local public agencies and nonprofit partners. Once located exclusively in remote, wild places, national parks now have a firm footing in urban areas. The National Park Service also has a portfolio of programs serving the public beyond the boundaries of the parks. The Park Service supports others in their efforts to preserve significant places, designating them as National Historic Landmarks and National Natural Landmarks, and maintaining the country's National Register of Historic Places. It offers grants and technical assistance, and supports tax incentives to states, tribes, and localities outside park boundaries to facilitate the protection of distinctive landscapes and the survival of great American stories.

Enjoying consistent public goodwill for a century, the national park system and National Park Service have grown dramatically since 1916: from 14 parks, 21 monuments, and one reservation, encompassing a total of six million acres, to 391 parks covering 84 million acres in 49 states, the District of Columbia, and islands in the Pacific and Caribbean; from a handful of park wardens to a workforce of 21,000 full-time employees; from 350,000 annual visits to 274 million. This extraordinary growth reflects a widespread and continuing recognition of the significance and benefits of the national park idea.

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Our nation, and the national parks, face a daunting future: human activities drive climate change, air and water pollution, and the degradation of archaeological sites and historic structures. We have manipulated terrestrial and marine ecosystems to their detriment, strained finite resources, and caused rapidly accelerating rates of extinction over much of the world. At home, familiar open landscapes are disappearing before the relentless advance of suburban sprawl and big-box commerce. Changing demographics test the very idea of a shared national culture, or

Telling America's whole story, with all its imperfections and beauty, is a gift to ourselves and to future generations.

— COMMISSIONER CAROLYN FINNEY

391
parks

84 million
acres

49
states

21,000
full-time employees

274 million
annual visits

common national ideals. Our children and young adults seem to have lost touch with nature and history to an unprecedented degree. Perhaps the only thing we know for sure is that we must think and act in new ways. Solving these pressing problems will require that government bodies, educational institutions, businesses, and nonprofit organizations work differently—and work together.

Our nation is best armed to address the future with a public knowledgeable about its history, its resources, and the responsibilities of citizenship. The national park system encompasses an unparalleled range of educational assets, including distinctive land- and water-based ecosystems and cultural landscapes, historic sites and structures, artifacts, and primary source documents. Representing many topics and perspectives, parks inform us not only about their individual stories, but also about our condition as a nation and a species. Educators say this learning is unique and powerful. But a sustained commitment is needed to strengthen the educational role of the Park Service, including the creation of new partnerships with the formal education community. The Park Service should pursue the same goal as all of our educational institutions: to build a citizenry committed to the nation's principles and purposes, and empowered with the knowledge and skill needed to carry them forward in the world.

MANAGING A VITAL ECONOMIC ENGINE

The national park system generates $13.3 billion of local private-sector economic activity and supports 267,000 private sector jobs nationwide. In communities across the country, parks are central to local economic security. An annual federal appropriation of $7.1 million to Acadia National Park in Maine generates annual visitor spending of $137 million. An annual federal appropriation of $15.8 million for Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado generates $193 million in annual visitor spending. At Zion National Park in Utah an annual federal appropriation of $9.4 million generates more than $83 million in visitor spending. Every dollar of taxpayer funds spent on the national parks generates four dollars in additional economic benefit through tourism and private sector spending. Investing in our national parks is investing in economic prosperity.

Successfully managing park resources will require mastery of systems ecology and information systems, along with the most current and authoritative science and scholarship to support collaborative decision making. Robust skills in finance, communications, and leadership are needed. Despite the economic benefits it generates, the Park Service operates with substantial shortfalls in staff and funds, and a growing backlog of maintenance needs. New sources of revenue are essential to support the mission of the National Park Service.

WORK OF THE HIGHEST PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Our vision of the National Park Service and of the national parks in American life is animated by the conviction that their work is of the highest public importance. They are community-builders, creating an enlightened society committed to a sustainable world.

National parks are among our most admired public institutions. We envision the second century National Park Service supporting vital public purposes, the national parks used by the American people as venues for learning and civic dialogue, as well as for recreation and refreshment. We see the national park system managed with explicit goals to preserve and interpret our nation's sweep of history and culture, sustain biological diversity, and protect ecological integrity. Based on sound science and current scholarship, the park system will encompass a more complete representation of the nation's terrestrial and ocean heritage, our rich and diverse cultural history, and our evolving national narrative. Parks will be key elements in a network of connected ecological systems and historical sites, and public and private lands and waters that are linked

INNOVATION: *Youth*

Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy in California provides young people with training and support that empowers them to create positive change in their neighborhoods, along with conferences and job fairs that help them explore "green" careers.

together across the nation and the continent. Lived-in landscapes will be an integral part of these great corridors of conservation.

Clearly defining itself as an educational institution, the National Park Service will be committed in purpose, organizational structure, and operations to facilitating behavior friendly to the Earth. As we become a more urban people, we must not lose our connection to the natural world. Lifelong learning opportunities will also foster engagement in the nation's civic life. As the nation becomes more multicultural, there is a need to instill a sense of common heritage as Americans. Everyone should be able to walk in the footsteps of our history. The Park Service will manifest a deep understanding of America's cultural pluralism, with its leaders, workforce, and programming reflecting that we are a nation of many traditions and points of view. The Park Service will invite all people to experience the parks and extend opportunities for enjoyment, learning, and stewardship.

National parks are the sources of some of our purest water and storehouses of our continent's surviving biodiversity. The National Park Service safeguards an encyclopedic array of irreplaceable resources at the heart of defining landscapes, watching over icons like bison, grizzly bears, and redwood trees, homes where heroes were born and buildings where history was made, and battlegrounds where Americans, as Abraham Lincoln said at Gettysburg, "gave the last full measure of devotion," to form and reform a nation.

The Commission concluded its work believing the National Park Service has great potential to advance society's most critical objectives: building national community and sustaining the health of the planet. The national parks appeal to our best instincts—love for the American landscape, respect for nature and the lessons of history. They inspire a natural faith, that through acts of conscientious conservation and stewardship, we can begin to fulfill our profoundest duties to each other and to the living world around us.

TO REALIZE OUR VISION

WE RECOMMEND THAT THE NATION:

Embrace a 21st-century mission.

We must **extend the benefits** of the national park idea in society by:

- **creating new** national parks, **collaborative models,** and corridors of conservation and stewardship, expanding the park system to **foster ecosystem and cultural connectivity.**
- **increasing lifelong learning** within the parks and beyond.
- **enhancing community** conservation and **local initiatives** to preserve distinctive **heritage resources**.

Enhance stewardship and citizen service.

We must **strengthen our protection** of park resources and **broaden civic engagement** with the parks by:

- **enhancing** park **protection authorities** and **cooperative management** of large land- and seascapes.
- **nurturing service learning** opportunities in the parks.

Empower a new-century National Park Service.

We must **equip** the Park Service to **accomplish its mission** by:

- **invigorating capacities** in history, scientific research, and community assistance.
- **building** a more **adaptive, innovative, and responsive** organization.
- **creating enduring bonds** to the full diversity of America.

Ensure sustainable funding structures.

We must **guarantee the continuing vitality** of the national park idea by:

- **increasing appropriations** supplemented by new revenue sources.
- **creating** a national parks **endowment,** a robust, tax-exempt, **permanent source of funding** beyond the vagaries of the annual budget cycle.
- **establishing a commission** of leading citizens to **broaden fund-raising** for the parks, and **engage the public anew** on behalf of the parks' mission.

FACING OUR MOST DIFFICULT STORIES

GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

Symbol of America's struggle to survive as a nation, memorial to soldiers who served in the cataclysm of Civil War, Gettysburg has been cared for by the National Park Service since 1933. For decades the service focused on military narratives, and offered little about why the war was fought, or how it affected civilians whose homes and lands it ravaged. An accumulation of commemorative works, park facilities, and adjacent commercial development threatened to overwhelm the historic landscape.

But since 1997, Gettysburg has told a bigger story, embracing the best current scholarship and introducing the causes and consequences of the war into its programs. Stories of post-war reconciliation are told in the context of reconstruction, segregation, and African-American political disenfranchisement. Landscape restoration and forestry work have largely reestablished the open character of the battlefield, intruding structures are being removed, and relationships forged with community leaders and property owners encourage historically sensitive development around the park. Built in partnership with the nonprofit Gettysburg Foundation, a new visitor center and museum (right) houses more than a million artifacts, including the restored 19th-century cyclorama that illustrates the battle's climax.

Gettysburg represents a seismic shift in the way the National Park Service collaborates with scholars, partners, and communities to present American history, and help visitors find its broader meanings.

TOP, RIGHT: FROM THE COLLECTION OF GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK. RIGHT: RAYMOND GEHMAN

His portrait preserved at Gettysburg, Sgt. George Dean, 62nd Infantry Regiment, U.S. Colored Troops, was among 220,000 black men, two-thirds former slaves, who served in the Union Army. Dean survived the war and went home to Missouri, where members of his regiment helped fund a school for freed slaves—now Lincoln University.

THE NATIONAL PARK IDEA

EMBRACING A 21ST-CENTURY MISSION

Ever since the Yellowstone National Park Act passed in 1872, creating the world's first national park "for the benefit and enjoyment of the people," each generation has redefined the role of parks to meet the needs of their times. The commissioners hope that this report will serve as an inspiration and a guide as Americans take up that vital task today.

From Arctic seashores in Alaska to an African burial ground in New York, we have continued to set aside special places, and commit ourselves to their care, for the betterment of all. Growth and change have been the rule in the national park system from the beginning, and understanding something of that history provides an enlightening perspective on the present, and informs our sense of what is possible for the future.

ESTABLISHING A PATTERN OF EXPANSION

The earliest national parks were established to protect scenic splendors, geologic wonders, and prehistoric treasures in the wide open spaces of the American west. In the early decades of the 20th century, the national park idea was broadened to embrace eastern lands closer to population centers and more obviously influenced by human occupation—places like Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and Acadia National Park in Maine.

The conception of national parks was changing in other ways, as well. In the 1930s, professional biologists were recruited to make the first inventories of park wildlife. New management policies were adopted that recognized the vital role of bears, wolves, cougars, and other predators in the balance of nature. At the same time President Franklin D. Roosevelt transferred dozens of historic sites, battlefields, monuments, and recreation areas from the Forest Service and the War Department to the National Park Service, creating a portfolio of landscapes that was, for the first time, truly national in scope.

Franklin Roosevelt also challenged the Park Service to be socially useful during the national emergency of the Great Depression. In response the Park Service ran hundreds of Civilian Conservation Corps camps, providing jobs and hope for almost three million unemployed men. Through the efforts of the Corps, the National Park Service built 700 state parks and constructed major projects in national parks throughout the country. The Corps legacy includes stretches of perennially popular scenic roads like Shenandoah's Skyline Drive, and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Later the Park Service was called on to manage recreation areas serving Americans who did not always have easy access to the great landscape parks. National park units established in proximity to urban centers recognized the value of open spaces to the mass of Americans living in and around cities. In many, a complex mosaic of land uses and jurisdictions has required that the Park Service build a new generation of partnerships to manage them.

PHIL SCHERMEISTER, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STOCK

At Manzanar National Historic Site in California, a 1943 memorial to Japanese-Americans who died in the World War II forced relocation camp reads, "Soul Consoling Power."

New parks have also been created to protect precious—but less tangible—aspects of our shared heritage. Weir Farm National Historic Site in Connecticut preserves a landscape key to the development of American Impressionist painting. New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park in Louisiana preserves the native ground of a unique American musical form that has spread around the world.

In the 1960s, a half-century after its creation, the National Park Service had become widely recognized as a source of experience and expertise in conservation, recreation, and heritage preservation, and Congress directed the Service to lead and assist others engaged in similar efforts. The National Historic Landmarks program was followed by the National Register of Historic Places, which now extends national recognition to 1.3 million properties across the United States. Today the Park Service provides technical assistance and grants to state, local, and tribal governments, and community partners. The Service also administers a program providing tax incentives for rehabilitating historic commercial properties that attracts private-sector investment averaging in excess of two billion dollars a year. And when the first National Heritage Areas—large collaborative landscape and heritage conservation efforts—were created at the end of the 20th century, community and regional leaders drew on Park Service expertise to help with planning, preservation, and programming.

In recent years our country and the Park Service have recognized that important stories have long been missing from the chronicle embedded in our parks. The Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail commemorates the 1965 Voting Rights March in Alabama. Civil War battlefield park programs now address the causes and consequences of the war, including slavery and emancipation, along with their traditional military narratives. Cane River Creole National Historical Park nurtures understanding of a people and their traditional culture. Manzanar National Historic Site in California reminds us that, if we let them, fear and prejudice can be more powerful than love of liberty and respect for human rights.

Such changes reflect a growing awareness that national parks play an important role in building civil society—a role that grows more important as our country becomes more diverse.

7,600
public and administrative buildings

680
water and waste systems

12,000
miles of paved and unpaved roads

1,600
bridges, culverts, tunnels

Inner-city kids from a Baltimore public school unfurl a replica of the 1814 "star-spangled banner" that inspired our national anthem at Fort McHenry National Monument in Maryland.

JIM ROGERS, NPS

Our population will continue to grow, exerting pressures of many kinds on parks across the country. Our demographics will continue to change, and with them the physical capacities, languages, ethnicities, lifestyles, needs, and aspirations of those the parks serve. To fulfill its mission in the next hundred years, the National Park Service must cultivate both strength of purpose and flexibility of approach.

CREATING A NEW PLAN TO ADVANCE THE PARK IDEA

The 1916 act that established the Park Service declares that one of the parks' chief purposes is to provide "enjoyment." At this the national parks have been enormously successful. For many families, national parks are the preferred destination for long vacations and simple day trips alike. But not all Americans feel equally at home in the parks. "It's not enough to welcome nontraditional park visitors—recent immigrants, non-English speakers, single moms with their kids—when they show up," says Commissioner Maria Hinojosa. "The National Park Service must find ways to invite new publics into the parks." Park Service outreach must be expressed in multiple languages and take advantage of multiple technologies, formats, and venues. Developing a deep, lasting, and effective commitment to diversity and inclusion requires patience, determination, financial support, unwavering leadership, and time. But the commissioners are convinced that the long-term viability of the parks and the quality of life in surrounding communities increasingly depend on the Park Service building strong constituencies across the full spectrum of our population, as it engages with Americans both locally and nationally.

Lands managed by the National Park Service are only a part of a much larger network of places that conserve our natural and cultural heritage. National Forests, National Wildlife Refuges and other federal landscape conservation areas, state and local parks, privately owned lands, National Historic and National Natural Landmarks, and sites on the National Register of Historic Places are all part of this picture.

The commission recommends a presidential initiative to develop a shared national conservation framework to protect, restore, and sustain the most valuable places, landscapes, and freshwater and marine environments in the United States. We endorse the concept of a broad public-private partnership, with strong incentives, using this common framework to advance regional collaboration for protection of these treasures.

Accelerating impacts of climate change, fragmentation and disruption of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, and a progressive loss of distinctive regional characteristics, and historic sense of place, add great urgency to the need for such a framework.

We also recommend that the National Park Service begin immediately to develop a new national park system plan to guide growth of the system in ways that reflect the goals of the national conservation framework. The plan should be strategic in identifying places where additions to the system are needed, and where the Park Service can best play the role of partner, assisting and advancing local conservation goals. It should update the criteria for new national parks to reflect changing environmental and civic needs.

The commissioners believe that new parks should broaden the diversity of our national narrative and reflect our nation's evolving history. "A park is an idea expressed in terms of place," says Commissioner Denis Galvin. "As we think about creating new parks, we should ask what national ideas and aspirations now need expression in terms of place."

The plan must assess the need for new parks that enhance the full representation of our nation's ecological diversity, and address the positive redundancies necessary to insure resilience in the face of climate change and other environmental stressors.

The plan must remedy our longstanding failure to protect the purity and vitality of our nation's great rivers and lakes, its broad bays and gulfs with their expansive watersheds, and the life-sustaining richness of our ocean environments. Our national parks already encompass 4.5 million acres of coastal waters, lakes, and reservoirs, some 43,000 miles of shoreline, and more than 85,000 miles of perennial rivers and streams. Marine and freshwater conservation must no longer be a mere afterthought to resource extraction, and the National Park Service must play a vital role in this critical change in attitude and behavior.

The new Park Service plan must evaluate the potential for new kinds of national parks, including "lived-in" landscapes and cityscapes, ecological restoration areas, and corridors of conservation that connect parks and recreational facilities, historic sites, and cultural landscapes.

National Heritage Areas provide a collaborative model that fits well within a large-landscape-scale preservation and conservation framework. Recognizing them as long-term assets to the national park system, we recommend that Congress pass authorizing legislation creating a system of National Heritage Areas providing for permanent funding and directing full program support from the National Park Service to designated areas.

As the park system evolves and expands, additions may have elements in common with National Heritage Areas and historic districts, which encompass contemporary communities where people live, work, and maintain traditional ties to the land. These models rely on strong and durable partnerships and a strong Park Service capacity to provide conservation support, including technical and financial assistance and tax incentives.

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 provides permanent protection to some of North America's last fully functioning wilderness ecosystems. The Alaska parks also acknowledge that people and parks can flourish together. Congress promised that management of the state's protected lands would be responsive to the needs of local residents as well as to the imperative to protect natural and cultural wonders. As the Park Service moves into its second century, it must preserve the wild character of the Alaska parks while respecting the promises of the 1980 Alaska lands act to residents of the state.

We recommend that the National Park Service support the living cultures of Native Americans—on park lands and through Park Service national heritage and conservation programs. The benefits are mutual: Learning how Native peoples understand and feel about their lands and cultures, and

Informed citizens are the bedrock of a democracy. Parks must help us unravel our nation's ecological challenges, so we can make wise choices.

— COMMISSIONER GARY NASH

INNOVATION: *Education*

High school students with the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps earn academic credit working in, and learning about, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park. They build leadership skills—and they're eligible for summer park internships.

acting on that knowledge, has built better parks and a better America.

Education ranks among our nation's highest priorities. Through education we build a citizenry committed to society's values. National Parks have a distinct role in this mission, offering place-based learning that promotes a more sustainable environment, encourages the development of lifelong, health-enhancing habits of physical activity and appreciation of nature, and stimulates learners to consider and discuss democratic issues that are central to our civic life.

Students who participate in park educational programs show measurable improvement in academic performance and higher test scores. The explosive growth of online learning, which allows students to access current research material on a wealth of park topics and to communicate directly with instructors, other experts, and fellow students, will continue to open up a world of park knowledge to much larger audiences than visit in person.

PUTTING EDUCATION FRONT AND CENTER

For the Park Service's expanded educational mission to achieve its high purposes, investment is necessary. As a first step, the commission recommends that the Service replace broken, dilapidated, out-of-date, inaccurate, and irrelevant media, including exhibits, signs, films, and other technology-delivered information. We further recommend that the Park Service and its educational partners ensure access to current and leading-edge technology and media to facilitate park learning. As easily as we now make a phone call, every classroom in America should be able to conduct video conferences with park rangers, natural and cultural resources staff, and other experts, to learn about issues that are important to the parks, and how these issues relate to local, national, and global concerns.

Just as the 1916 act that created the National Park Service established the structures needed to maintain the parks during the first century of the National Park Service, education will be central to the Service's success in caring for the parks and carrying out its broader mission during the next century. "Education must be at the forefront of the National Park Service agenda," says Commissioner Stephen Lockhart, "and Congress should establish a clear legislative mandate for education as a fundamental purpose of the parks."

WORKING AROUND THE WORLD, AND FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE

The National Park Service has a long history of international engagement. Early Park Service leaders believed strongly in the global duty of the Service to help other countries develop and manage their own parks. They also understood that the Service had much to learn from conservation agencies around the world. Ironically, while the Park Service has given up much of this role, the need for international engagement by the Park Service has never been more urgent. U.S. national parks share responsibility for protection of critical habitats for migratory species, mitigation of transboundary air and water pollution, and the preservation of World Heritage sites. The commission recommends renewed international engagement by the National Park Service, in partnership with theState Department.

It has been 75 years since Franklin Roosevelt directed the National Park Service to lead the Civilian Conservation Corps in meaningful work that restored individual self-respect and built an enduring bridge between communities and their public lands. We must ensure that national parks are equally ready to respond to national needs today and tomorrow.

The commissioners see an America emerging in the 21st century that is home to healthy and sustainable communities, that harnesses the drive and cultural richness of its growing diversity, that places a premium on nurturing young people through opportunities for education and public service, and that cares for places that define our national character and purpose. We believe our national parks are uniquely positioned to help realize this vision.

From mountain streams to the deep seas, we must protect our waters and the diversity of life they hold as if our lives depend on it—because they do.

— COMMISSIONER SYLVIA EARLE

MARIA STENZEL

Troubles hatched far away scar the Smokies. The balsam woolly adelgid, a European insect invader, has destroyed millions of Fraser firs in the park, leaving mountains littered with dead and dying trees. Air pollution often drops a curtain of white haze that cuts the view from the 6,643-foot peak of Clingmans Dome, which should extend a hundred miles, to less than twenty miles.

FINDING OUT WHAT WE HAVE, BEFORE IT'S GONE

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

Scientists from all over the world have been coming for more than a decade to this remarkable expanse of forests straddling the Tennessee–North Carolina border. Their goal is to collect and identify every one of the hundred thousand or so species of plants and animals thought to be living within park boundaries. So far this All-Taxa Biodiversity Inventory has discovered almost 900 species completely new to science, and more than 6,000 species not previously known to occur here. Great Smoky Mountains National Park's 800 square miles of southern Appalachian Mountains hold some of the richest biodiversity of any temperate region in North America, including more species of trees than are found in all of Europe, and a greater variety of salamanders than live in any other spot in the world. The park's biodiversity now also includes invasive species, which threaten native plants and animals. Among their most dramatic impacts is the decline of the park's majestic hemlock trees, some of which are more than 500 years old. The trees are being attacked by a tiny Asian pest known as the hemlock woolly adelgid. This insect and the fungus it carries have killed thousands of hemlocks.

Drawn by the park, vacationers and others spend $718 million a year in North Carolina and Tennessee. That generates 13,000 regional jobs, and demonstrates the park's continuing value as an economic engine as well as a stronghold for natural and cultural resources. That value deserves support—and conservation action to help Great Smoky Mountains National Park endure for generations.

PARKS AS PARTNERS

ENHANCING STEWARDSHIP AND SERVICE

When it created the National Park Service in 1916, Congress demanded preservation of the parks "in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." At that time, parks' legal boundaries themselves seemed the most important protectors—fending off timber barons, mining companies, and an army of hucksters ever ready to surround a national treasure with a sprawl of shoddy tourist attractions. The Park Service was expected to fulfill its mission by managing resources and uses within those boundaries. Today many of the most serious threats to our parks come from beyond their borders. We know that we can no longer draw a line on a map and declare a place protected.

CONFRONTING A CONSERVATION CRISIS

National parks today face challenges no one imagined in 1916, not only at the local level, but also on regional and global scales. Invasive plants and animals are displacing native organisms, even killing them outright. Some highly managed park species are recovering from near extinction, but 400 park species are still classified as endangered.

Air pollution obscures many of the grand vistas that inspired early national park advocates, and often transforms vigorous outdoor activity—a fundamental park purpose from the beginning—into a health hazard for visitors in many settings. Acid rain contaminates streams, eats away at the stone, wood, and metal of historic structures, and threatens the survival of organisms from fishes to ferns.

Global climate change is rearranging wildlife habitat, pushing ranges northward in the lowlands and upward in mountain regions, sometimes forcing species outside the boundaries of parks designed to protect them. Changing ocean temperatures and acidity compound the impacts of careless human activity, ravaging coral reefs. Rising sea levels inundate coastal archaeological remains of the continent's earliest human settlers, as well as fragile evidence of 16th- and 17th-century European colonization of the New World.

Irrigation for industrial agriculture, and water systems for expanding communities, have drawn down rivers and aquifers that are the lifeblood of park ecosystems, aggravating the impact of droughts that have plagued many park regions in recent years.

Damage to large-scale ecosystem integrity occurs even when all the land involved is publicly managed. The edge of Olympic National Park in Washington state was clearly visible in satellite photographs when adjoining National Forest lands, under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture, were clear-cut right up to the park border. "All federal agencies should meet a high shared standard for protecting the full integrity of the nation's natural and cultural heritage as they pursue their individual missions," says Commissioner Tony Knowles.

This is not mere wishful thinking. In the wake of the September 11, 2001,

MICHAEL MELFORD, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STOCK

Development crowds the edges of Biscayne National Park in Florida, straining park capacity to preserve healthy habitat for wildlife, or quiet for visitors.

terrorist attacks, and the Hurricane Katrina disaster four years later, public agencies at every level recognized the need to engage in cooperative and continuing efforts to improve national, state, and local security and disaster-response capacity. An equally serious, equally long-term nationwide response to our ecological crisis is both necessary and possible—if our leaders and citizens choose to make it happen.

ANSWERING THE CALL TO PARTNERSHIP

Economically productive uses of federal lands can be accommodated without damaging impacts on park resources if all agencies commit to early consultation and cooperation. Conservationist Gifford Pinchot was the first Chief of the U.S. Forest Service. The mission of his agency, he said, was "to provide the greatest amount of good for the greatest amount of people in the long run." With its emphasis on shared benefits and durable goals, that sounds like common ground, and a basis for collaboration.

To protect the parks going forward, collaboration isn't a nicety, it's a necessity. "The National Park Service has a role to play outside park boundaries as a convener of stakeholders, and a leader-by-example," Commissioner Gretchen Long says. Working with federal, state, local, tribal, and private owners of adjacent lands, and residents of surrounding communities, the Park Service must help build a shared conservation agenda—locally and nationally. The commission recommends that the National Park Service have clear authority, adequate staff, and support at the highest levels to engage in regional ecosystem planning and landscape-level conservation and historic preservation efforts.

The stewardship ethic and expertise nurtured in national parks enhance the quality of life in our towns, cities, and rural landscapes as well. Though chronically underfunded, the National Park Service's community assistance programs have already proved that they can provide tremendous conservation, preservation, and recreation value in cooperation with the citizens they serve. The National Register of Historic Places, the National Historic Landmarks Program, and the National Natural Landmarks Program demonstrate that formal recognition on a national level empowers local stewardship and builds community spirit.

Parks must offer service opportunities that unleash the spirit and energy of committed Americans.

— COMMISSIONER SALLY JEWELL

YOON S. BYUN

Volunteers prepare *Friendship,* a replica of a 1797 merchant vessel, to welcome visitors at Salem Maritime National Historic Site in Massachusetts.

"The tremendous status of the National Park Service brand and its mission of 'protection forever,'" says Commissioner Belinda Faustinos, "inspires pride and determination in people working on local projects, even when the going gets rough."

The Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program is helping the community of Caldwell, Idaho, restore a nearly half-mile-long section of Indian Creek, which had been buried under streets and buildings in the center of town since the 1930s. By resurrecting the stream, the project has improved flood protection capacity by 50%, enhanced water quality and fish habitat, and created a new city park and river trail that are turning a once-deserted downtown into a magnet for local workers, families, and visitors. The $9 million the City of Caldwell leveraged for creek restoration has become a catalyst for revitalization. Public and private investment partnerships have committed $30 million to downtown redevelopment, including civic facilities, housing, offices, shops, and restaurants. Projects like this, that combine environmental and economic benefits, are being repeated throughout the nation with help from the Park Service.

Though typically funded at only a fraction of its appropriated level since it was established in 1965, the Land and Water Conservation Fund enables the Park Service to help local communities acquire new park lands. Grants from the Historic Preservation Fund support local cultural resource efforts, and the Technical Preservation Services program puts state-of-the-art information at local fingertips. "Whether the material is wood, stone, steel, glass, or adobe, the National Park Service has deep expertise in solving technical preservation problems," says Commissioner Jerry Rogers, "and it shares that expertise throughout the country."

In partnership with state historic preservation offices and the IRS, the Park Service manages a tax incentive program the National Trust for Historic Preservation calls one of America's "most powerful and effective tools for community revitalization." Nearly two-thirds of the country's 12,000 historic districts overlap with areas where more than 20% of households are poor. In 2008 alone, the program helped create more than 5,000 units of low- and moderate-income housing. Since inception it has leveraged $50 billion in private-sector investment for 36,000 projects, creating 1.9 million jobs—all outside park boundaries.

The commission recommends that established community assistance programs be fully funded and recognized as integral to the Park Service mission.

5 million hours of service *contributed annually by national park volunteers* = **$100 million** value *estimated*

Based on the proven effectiveness of these programs, we also recommend new legislation, modeled on the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, giving the Park Service authority to offer natural-resource-related technical assistance tools and grants to facilitate ecosystem conservation.

HARNESSING THE POWER OF CITIZEN SERVICE

National parks have always been shaped by the energy and determination of individuals. And for decades the Park Service has relied more and more on committed volunteers to meet its goals. Last year at Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, 823 volunteers presented programs, staffed a visitor center, maintained 200-plus miles of trails, responded to emergencies, cleared river debris, and helped preserve historic structures, donating 113,678 hours of service in all.

Participating in a Student Conservation Association field crew transported Washington, D.C., native Genevieve Allen to Washington state's Olympic National Park, and transformed her life. "It was good for my health and my peace of mind," the 21-year-old says. "I got home and realized how much I waste—energy, water, food. Learning what conservation can really mean has made me rethink how I live."

Educators know that service-learning projects work for young students, too—especially children who may struggle in traditional classrooms. When fifth-graders at Manzanita Elementary School in southern California become SHRUBs—Students Helping Restore Unique Biomes—they join the fight to restore native plants like giant wild rye and hummingbird sage to Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. This is no one-shot field trip. SHRUBs, three-fourths of whom come from families living in poverty, visit the park every month, tending plants and hiking in the hills. City kids see their first coyotes, their first bluebirds. They keep journals, learn to use scientific instruments, and, at the end of the year, present a program about their accomplishments to their families and to the Manzanita fourth-graders who will follow in their footsteps.

For the more than 175,000 people who volunteer in the parks each year, such experiences combine powerful journeys of individual discovery with genuine contributions to resource preservation and the Park Service mission. The commissioners recommend that the National Park Service be provided with resources and direction to expand and enhance service learning, internship, and volunteer programs everywhere the Service works.

People who participate in service to the national parks gain a sense of pride and ownership that lasts a lifetime. Discovering firsthand that they can be agents of positive change for their communities and for the environment, they become the informed and engaged citizens our country so urgently needs.

INNOVATION: *Sustainability*

North Cascades Environmental Learning Center in Washington state is a partnership project of North Cascades National Park, Seattle City Light, and the North Cascades Institute. The LEED-certified facility stands as a model of sustainable operations.

INVITING EVERYONE TO THE PARK

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

An archipelago of open spaces in the midst of 17 million people, Santa Monica stretches 43 miles from the beach at Point Mugu in Ventura County, to Griffith Park in Los Angeles. A sliver of the park even extends along the Pacific Ocean past the Santa Monica Pier (right). Park lands include old movie locations on Paramount Ranch and canyons so remote they shelter families of mountain lions. "When the park was first proposed, the principal justification for its creation was to protect the airshed of Los Angeles," said commission co-chair Bennett Johnston. "Only a 'little recreation' was anticipated. Last year, however, there were 35 million visits to the park!"

The park operates through a collaboration with California State Parks and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and offers an energetic array of educational offerings. The goal is to engage all kinds of communities in the area, especially those traditionally underserved by parks.

Eight of ten children in Los Angeles schools were born in another country or have immigrant parents. A program called EcoHelpers welcomes city youngsters not just as visitors, but as active stewards of the land. Commissioners saw EcoHelper kids, with encouragement from parents and brothers and sisters who had also come to the park, planting trees along eroded stream banks. "This opens doors," a fifth-grade teacher said. "Kids are thinking about careers in biology, even about becoming park rangers, who they now look on as rock stars."

BOTH: IAN SHIVE

Summer heat can't sap the energy of L.A. kids at Paramount Ranch, a piece of movie history preserved by the park. "Every child should have a chance to connect with a special place," says Santa Monica Superintendent Woody Smeck. "One day soon the parks will be in their hands."

MEETING NEW CHALLENGES

EMPOWERING THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Just as the National Park Service faces conservation challenges unimagined a century ago, so too have its management obligations grown complex beyond the provisions of its founding. Fresh attention is needed to developing leadership, building scientific and scholarly capacity, capitalizing on innovation, and strengthening the management and governance of this dynamic institution.

As this report goes to press, the national park system includes 391 units, each with its own characteristics, potentials, and needs. The Park Service oversees wilderness in Alaska, historic properties in Philadelphia, and multi-million-dollar grant programs nationwide. It operates a vast infrastructure, accommodating some 274 million visits last year. Its network of partner organizations extends through federal agencies, states, territories, city, county, and town governments, Indian tribes and Native American organizations, local and national nonprofits, and the for-profit sector. And there's no reason to expect that the job's going to get any simpler.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE

Effective leaders enlist the hearts and minds of employees and associates, create a shared vision of the future, motivate others to work toward it, and clear roadblocks from their paths. Strategic thinking, problem solving, and the ability to inspire and motivate can be taught. National Park Service leaders must be fluent in collaboration, empowerment, research-based decision-making, and systems thinking. The commissioners are convinced that substantial new efforts to support leadership development are essential to the future effectiveness of the Park Service. These efforts must be broad in scope and should enlist the aid of universities and private partners to design an integrated program that uses current best practices in adult learning and organizational capacity building. Investing in leadership returns powerful dividends in organizational effectiveness, employee morale, and public confidence. Building a strong management corps today will also empower the National Park Service to actively recruit a new generation of leaders, and forge a workforce that reflects the diversity of our country.

We recommend that the Park Service establish an institute to guide leadership development and evaluate what works. The existing Superintendents' Leadership Roundtable, managed by the Park Service's Conservation Study Institute, models what such an initiative should accomplish. This program has created a national network of managers who report they are better able to negotiate complicated issues, lead change, mentor their employees, and build partnerships with diverse publics.

We also recommend that the Service make professional and technical development throughout its ranks a priority, and consistent with best practices in the private sector, invest an amount equal to at least 4% of its annual personnel budget per year in this work.

MARIA STENZEL

Park biologists work to restore native brook trout to a stream in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Anglers and park friends groups have helped, donating money and labor.

The commission believes that the Park Service should offer clear career paths in all major areas of responsibility from recruitment to retirement. It should establish a standard of excellence for every professional and technical position and, through partnerships with colleges and universities, provide rigorous and accredited training programs for Park Service personnel to ensure that their knowledge and skill sets stay current in rapidly changing fields.

ESTABLISHING A ROBUST RESEARCH CAPACITY

The National Park Service must be a trusted source for authoritative research regarding park resources and their wider ecological and cultural contexts. Up-to-date and substantial scientific knowledge and cultural scholarship enhance both the educational programs offered to the public and resource management decisions that guide conservation and preservation work in the parks. Such expertise also positions the Park Service as a contributing partner to a sustainable future for the parks, their surrounding communities, and the nation as a whole.

To meet this need, the Park Service should build a robust internal research capacity targeted toward site-specific, long-term research programs. In-park researchers are able to develop detailed knowledge of complex, dynamic natural systems, and comprehensive familiarity with diverse archaeological, artistic, and historical resources, and connect that knowledge to broader ecosystems and cultural contexts.

Such capacity is particularly crucial in the context of global climate change. Park managers face a future of rapid alteration of natural environments unprecedented in living human experience, including modified weather patterns, shifting wildlife habitats, rising sea levels. They must be able to assess how these changes are affecting their areas of responsibility, and formulate appropriate responses. That will require ongoing firsthand observations and first-rate analytical skills.

Fielding its own robust research program will also make the Park Service a more valuable collaborator with other federal agencies with land management responsibilities. And it will support more productive partnerships with colleges, universities, and other research organizations for which the national parks have long served as valuable natural laboratories and cultural study sites.

26,000
historic structures

2,200
cultural landscapes

More than 121 million
museum specimens and artifacts

HANNAH BURGARD, SCA

Spring break with a difference: Student Conservation Association volunteers work to remove graffiti from rock formations at Grand Canyon National Park.

The commission also recommends that the Director of the National Park Service should serve as a member of the President's National Science and Technology Council, and that the Park Service should be part of interagency efforts to develop sound science and technology policies and budgets coordinated by the President's Office of Science & Technology Policy.

CAPITALIZING ON INNOVATION

In all the parks the commission visited, we encountered outstanding examples of imaginative problem-solving, inventive programming, and effective management, and we heard accounts of similar accomplishments across the system. But we also learned that the National Park Service typically fails to capture, assess, and diffuse knowledge of these field-based innovations, weakening its ability to promote wider applications, and limiting its capacity to grow from its own strengths. In a rapidly changing environment, where organizations need to acquire and act on new information constantly, the rapid sharing of knowledge—and good ideas— ranks as a key management asset.

Despite the ferment of creativity bubbling among park personnel and their partners, the National Park Service bureaucracy can display a tendency to retreat, retrench, and continue business as usual. The Service can be resistant to absorbing outside points of view and to following through on recommendations for change. Focus and long-term commitment are required to build an organizational culture that truly values innovation and flexibility.

The commission recommends that the National Park Service establish a Center for Innovation to gather and share lessons learned quickly throughout the organization. Place-based education, leadership, public engagement, and collaboration should receive particular attention. The center should form communities of practice, connecting people engaged in similar work so that they can more easily share ideas and experiences. As a public-private consortium, the center could include the Park Service, universities, foundations, school systems, corporations, and professional organizations.

The center should also participate in evaluations of new projects and programs, for the benefit of the entire system. "Educational programs especially call for rigorous evaluation," says Commissioner Deborah Shanley. "Park staff must measure outcomes so they can tell when projects are working and when they're not, and so they have objective tools to improve them."

INNOVATION: *Climate Change*

The Climate Friendly Parks Program partners 18 national parks with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, to help the parks develop sustainable strategies to mitigate their greenhouse gas emissions, and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

STRENGTHENING MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The commissioners found, as do so many Americans, that Park Service employees are dedicated to their work, many passionately so. But despite deep commitment to the mission, a great many are frustrated with the increasingly bureaucratic and hierarchical environment in which they find themselves. Morale has been tested by declining budgets and staff losses, and efforts at efficiency have been stifled by the trend to centralize government administrative functions.

We recommend that the Park Service undertake an analysis of all management processes and reports presently required, with the goal of simplifying and integrating those systems, and distributing as much decision-making authority as possible to the field level.

The ability of National Park Service personnel to carry out their mission is also strongly influenced by the structure of governance within the Department of the Interior. Commissioners believe the work of the Park Service will benefit if the Director has control over support functions that have been centralized within the Department. For example, the Service should have direct access to legal advice, land appraisals, procurement, and scientific capabilities.

When the commission learned of the difficulties the Park Service faces in using the Internet, including social networking tools, we were dismayed by the limitations this creates. Security concerns must not be allowed to stop the work of the Service in its tracks—and that work fundamentally includes engaging the public in accessible and up-to-date ways.

The Department should reduce the layers of review and approval for cooperative agreements, budget requests, construction, and land acquisition, and allow the Park Service to develop its own strategic plan that is directly responsive to the agency's mission.

Conflicts over resource management decisions, especially between short-term local interests and long-term national interests, are probably inevitable, but the Park Service can be insulated from unreasonable pressures that are clearly contrary to its mission. Challenges to professional decisions by the Park Service come from a variety of sources, but the best defense for sound resource management is sound information and an informed constituency. We have already addressed the need for scholarly and scientific research capacity within the Service to inform management decisions. An influential and independent advisory board can also support the Service when controversial issues arise. To that end, we believe the National Park System Advisory Board should be reauthorized, and strengthened to include ex officio representation for congressional committees and an independent staff.

We also believe that leadership at the highest levels must look beyond the cycles of presidential administrations to the long-term mission of the National Park Service. We recommend that the Director be appointed for a term of six years, and that the qualifications for the position be updated to reflect the breadth and complexity of the modern National Park Service mission.

The commissioners recognize that staff throughout the Park Service, members of its partner organizations, and other stakeholders and citizens, must have opportunities to consider our recommendations, discuss them, and make them their own. "Carried out successfully and system-wide, these discussions will generate a richness of ideas, insights, and enthusiasm," says Commissioner Margaret Wheatley. "They will also foster the drive and sense of ownership essential to turning this report from ideas on paper to actions in the parks and beyond."

2.6 million acres infested *by invasive species* = **$20 billion** in damages *to park lands*

The Park Service must be a catalyst, integrating public and private stakeholders into a shared ecosystem management process.

— COMMISSIONER PETER SENGE

WEAVING A PARK INTO THE FABRIC OF A CITY

LOWELL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

The idea of creating a national park in a distressed urban area like Lowell was almost as radical as the technological innovations that built the city in the first place. For a century, mills along the Merrimack River produced vast quantities of cotton cloth for a young nation just joining the industrial revolution. Eventually the textile industry moved south and the mills shut down. This urban national park was created in 1978 to help restore the fabric of the Massachusetts town that shares its name. Today mills have been transformed into museums and conference centers. They preserve the stories of the early "mill girls" who traded farm life for 14-hour days working power looms, and the French-Canadians, Greeks, Portuguese, Poles, and other immigrants who later replaced them.

The park is woven into the rest of the community not just by its physical layout—sites are scattered throughout the old mill neighborhood—but also by collaborations with local government agencies, private donors, colleges, and community service projects. For nearly 20 years the Lowell Summer Music Series has drawn crowds to Boarding House Park (right). Nearly 700,000 visitors a year—including some 60,000 children who come to the Tsongas Industrial History Center for hands-on learning—have a chance to see the restored boarding house where workers lived, travel on replicas of the trolleys that carried laborers to the mills, and experience the thundering noise of 90 historic looms at the Boott Cotton Mills Museum.

TOP, RIGHT: MICHAEL CREASEY, NPS. RIGHT: JAMES HIGGINS

National Park Service ranger Duey Kol (left, at center) works with the Angkor Dance Troupe. Recruited from Lowell's Cambodian community—the second-largest southeast Asian population in the U.S.—the group reflects Lowell's continuing immigrant story.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

ENSURING SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

The national parks are greatly admired and the National Park Service is arguably the most popular agency in the federal government, but current funding is fundamentally inadequate. Our financial commitment to the parks matches neither their importance to society nor the enormous franchise they have with the American people. For decades, budgets for park operations have fallen

far short of basic needs, failing to keep pace with either the physical expansion of the system or the growing complexity of its mission. "As a people, we're good at building things, but not so good at maintaining them," says Commissioner James Blanchard. "That needs to change." Today the Park Service must manage with an annual operating deficit of more than $750 million. Significantly increased revenues are needed simply to meet immediate priorities. Additional sources of income and new funding systems must be established if the parks are to surmount the challenges they face, and if the nation is to benefit from the opportunities the parks offer to build a healthier, wiser, more sustainable society.

Annual Park Service appropriations are approximately $2.5 billion—less than one-tenth of one percent of the federal budget—an amount that cannot possibly stretch across the distance of public expectations and Park Service needs. For parks to fulfill their increasingly important role in environmental conservation, historic preservation, education, recreation, and research, their physical fabric must be maintained. That means constant upkeep for 7,600 public use and administrative buildings, 5,300 housing units, 680 water and waste systems, 3,500 statues and memorials, 26,000 historic structures, and more than 121 million museum artifacts and specimens. The Park Service's approximately 12,000 miles of paved and unpaved roads, and more than 1,600 bridges, culverts, and tunnels, alone carry a replacement value of well over $20 billion. Today the agency faces a backlog of deferred maintenance and construction projects that carries an estimated price tag of more than $8 billion.

The agency is also falling further behind in funding already authorized purchases of lands within park boundaries. In many cases these lands are in danger of being developed in ways that would destroy significant park resources and values. Funding for land acquisition, provided through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, has been appropriated at, on average, only half its authorized level since the fund was created in 1965, and the trend is downward. In fiscal year 2008 the Park Service received $44 million from the fund, one-third of what it received a decade earlier. The overall land acquisition backlog is about $2 billion. Some $200 million is needed just for current willing sellers. Key properties inside parks are now on the market. Their owners would very much like to sell them to the parks, but these opportunities are being lost. At the current rate of spending, it would take more than half

CARY WOLINSKY, TRILLIUM STUDIOS

Battling time and budget limits, a Park Service mason repairs crumbling 19th-century walls at Fort Jefferson, part of Dry Tortugas National Park in Florida.

a century for the Park Service to secure just the inholdings that have already been identified for acquisition.

BUILDING A BUDGET FOR A NEW CENTURY

A combination of strategies is needed to meet the fiscal challenges facing the National Park Service. First, Congress and the Administration should boost annual appropriations for park operating expenses and maintenance and construction needs. We strongly encourage the Administration and Congress to continue the recent effort to increase National Park Service operating funds by $100 million annually, over the cost of inflation, until the unfunded operational backlog of the Park Service is eliminated. Continuing the pace set in the President's fiscal year 2010 budget would achieve this goal by the Park Service centennial in 2016.

Fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund will enable the Park Service's highest-priority land acquisitions to move forward. A permanent appropriation for the Historic Preservation Fund at the full authorized level is vitally important so that the National Park Service can provide financial and technical assistance to state, tribal, and local governments, and other preservation organizations, and ensure that America's prehistoric and historic resources are protected within and beyond park boundaries.

Second, other steps should be taken to strengthen and stabilize the appropriations revenue streams. New sources of permanent appropriated funds could be secured from: revenue gained from any expansion of oil and gas drilling leases; new fees levied for renewable energy facilities located on federal lands or waters; or other new sources of federal revenue. Such funds might be used to stop the $8-billion-plus backlog of maintenance and construction needs from growing larger as Congress works to reduce it through the annual appropriations process.

Third, private philanthropy is underperforming its potential and needs new encouragement. The National Park Service is a special institution worthy of philanthropic support, no less than higher education institutions, social benefit charities, and cultural arts organizations. The American people should be inspired by the knowledge that giving to the parks will empower them to provide the fullest possible spectrum of benefits to our society.

Investing in parks yields returns in human capital—greater environmental awareness and civic engagement.

— COMMISSIONER MILTON CHEN

$1.00 spent on national parks *in taxpayer funds*

=

$4.00 economic benefit *through tourism and private-sector spending*

Our national parks should be exemplars in every dimension. That standing cannot be achieved by relying on the funding status quo. National park system financing structures should be adjusted to genuinely reflect the understanding these special places are meant to be preserved forever. At present, short-term appropriations and supplementary donations are typically related chiefly to immediate needs. Given the volatility of this type of funding, and the "hand-to-mouth" nature of the annual appropriations cycle, we recommend the creation of a tax-exempt endowment.

MANAGING LONG-TERM ASSETS WITH LONG-TERM REVENUES

An endowment would provide a perpetual revenue stream for an institution with a mission in perpetuity, enabling donors to give or bequeath funds to provide for a range of purposes, including science and scholarship, education, specific Park Service projects, and public-private initiatives outside park boundaries that serve the broader mission.

Philanthropic support is attracted to innovative ventures and long-term goals, so the endowment would supplement annual appropriations, which should continue to pay for core operating and infrastructure needs. The purposes of endowment dollars must be carefully and clearly delineated, to ensure that neither Congress nor the Executive Branch merely offsets endowment resources by cutting appropriations for National Park Service operations and established programs.

The endowment should welcome public and private revenue sources, which could include park admission fees, corporate donations, mineral leasing on public lands and the outer continental shelf, and proceeds from small donor campaigns. It could operate through the adjusted mission of an existing entity, like the National Park Foundation, or through a new structure.

We also call on the President to convene a commission of notable Americans to lead a Campaign for the National Parks, to raise substantial funds from philanthropists and corporations, and donations from citizens of all walks of life. The campaign would run in the years leading up to the National Park Service centennial, concurrent with establishing the endowment. In order to engage a new generation in full stewardship of lively, sustainable national parks and the ideals on which they're built, the campaign must also galvanize the array of friends and advocacy groups already serving the park system throughout the country, and speak especially to young people.

"The Campaign for the National Parks can also give a powerful impetus to the long process of seeding the national parks endowment," says Commissioner Victor Fazio. "That's a durable accomplishment that would truly foster national pride in a job well done."

We believe the new public-private partnership we recommend will inspire our citizens, unite the parks community, and advance the national park idea for the benefit of generations to come.

INNOVATION: *Traditional Use*

Shared desire to protect a traditional agricultural landscape in northwest Ohio has inspired a partnership among farmers living and working inside the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Ohio's nonprofit Countryside Conservancy, and the National Park Service.

MICHAEL MELFORD, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STOCK

Getting stuck in a buffalo traffic jam is a distinctly Yellowstone experience, but outside park boundaries these iconic animals are still at risk. In the winter of 2007 there were 4,700 bison in the park. "Then the spring migration started," recalls former NPS chief scientist Mike Soukup. "Outside the park, 1,700 bison were shot. The Yellowstone herd is the most important reservoir of intact wild American bison genetic diversity we have left, so for a conservationist, that's a terrible loss."

SAVING ROOM FOR WILDLIFE

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

Yellowstone's 2.2 million acres seem almost too large to grasp. But to a bison or a bear, they're not big enough. Grizzlies need two to three times that much wilderness to sustain a viable population, which is why most bears in Yellowstone don't live just in the park. Like all national parks—whatever their size—Yellowstone is a relatively small part of a much larger ecosystem, which includes private property as well as other public lands. During the past 20 years landscape fragmentation and habitat degradation in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem have increased alarmingly. Human population has grown by 62%, developed land by 350%. Large tracts that were farmed and ranched for generations have been broken up into rural subdivisions and "ranchettes." Remoteness helped protect many parks during the 20th century. It's vanishing. Researchers have reported losses at many levels: ecosystem diversity, species diversity, and genetic diversity within species have all declined. Any park that becomes an island loses wildlife. Especially at risk are large creatures that require expansive ranges.

Yet we know from experience that some species can recover. Grizzlies, once on the brink of extinction in the lower 48 states, have bounced back, thanks to collaboration among federal, state, and private landowners. The lesson is clear: Conservation must become a shared objective. Guided by scientific research, careful orchestration of public and private efforts can provide habitat that works for all species, so that the wild heritage of this country can be passed on.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

FROM THE COMMISSION

To advance the 21st-century National Park idea,

The President of the United States should:

ESTABLISH A TASK FORCE, including the National Park Service and other federal agencies involved in conservation and historic preservation, along with their state, local, and nonprofit partners, **to map a national strategy for protecting America's natural and cultural heritage.**

THE TASK FORCE SHOULD:

- In consultation with foremost scholars and scientists, **define critical indicators and standards for ecosystem integrity.**
- **Identify bold and achievable goals** for preserving the nation's heritage resources.
- **Articulate the role of National Parks,** in cooperation with National Forests, National Wildlife Refuges, other federal agencies, state parks, and other public, tribal, and private lands and waters, **in carrying out the nation's conservation and preservation strategy.**

The Congress of the United States should:

REQUIRE THE PREPARATION OF A NEW PLAN for the national park system that provides a **more representative picture of America,** and makes the national parks **cornerstones in a network of protected areas** that safeguard biological diversity and the nation's evolving cultural heritage.

THE PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE:

- **Updated criteria for the designation of new park units,** developed in consultation with the National Academy of Sciences.
- **"Lived-in" landscapes** in urban and rural areas where **traditional and sustainable land uses** continue.
- **Critical habitats**—especially freshwater and marine areas, and corridors connecting protected areas with broader wildlife ranges—to ensure the **ecological integrity and long-term viability** of national park ecosystems.
- Historic sites and cultural landscapes that **broaden the diversity of the national narrative** embedded in the parks.

- **Ecological restoration areas:** heavily impacted landscapes with the potential to be restored to near-natural conditions, and **to serve as demonstration areas,** especially near cities.
- Recommendations for **streamlining the process** for studying and proposing **additions to the national park system.**

AUTHORIZE, clearly define, and base fund **a system of National Heritage Areas. Encourage,** where possible, the establishment of heritage areas in **association with national parks.**

AFFIRM IN LEGISLATION that **education is central** to the success of the National Park Service mission, and that **the Service has a fundamental role to play** in American education over the next century.

PROMOTE STRONGER CONNECTIONS and greater partnership opportunities among the **national parks** and primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, and other community-based **educational institutions.**

ENHANCE THE NATIONAL PARKS BRAND recognition and promote public awareness that **all units are part of the same system,** by substantially reducing the more than two dozen different park titles currently used.

The National Park Service should:

INVITE ALL AMERICANS to build a **personal connection** with the parks, placing high priority on **engaging diverse audiences** through its operations and programming.

OFFER OPPORTUNITIES for **recreation, learning, and service,** that are **relevant** to visitors' interests, **integral to their cultures,** and foster appropriate **enjoyment for all.**

ENHANCE ITS CAPACITY to **provide life-long, place-based learning** across the system.

EFFORTS SHOULD INCLUDE:

- **Breaking down internal barriers** between, and strengthening programmatic relationships among, the **Service's preservation, research, and education functions.**
- **Replacing dated, broken, and inaccurate exhibits,** signs, films, and other materials, with informational and explanatory media that exploit the **most effective available technologies** to present content that is current, accurate, and relevant, in formats that are as **accessible** as possible to the **broadest range of visitors**.
- **Strengthening collaborations** with partners, including community nonprofit organizations, and teachers at every level, to research and develop **educational services and programs** in and related to the parks and their natural and cultural surroundings.

FACILITATE use of current and **leading-edge technologies** and media to **enhance place-based learning, including social networking**.

CULTIVATE close relationships with Native American peoples, and convey appropriate **Native understandings** of national park lands, waters, resources, and stories through educational materials and programming.

RENEW AND REVITALIZE its commitment and **capacity to engage internationally.**

To strengthen stewardship of our nation's resources, and to broaden civic engagement with and citizen service to this mission,

The President of the United States should:

DIRECT ALL FEDERAL AGENCIES that have responsibility for public lands, inland waters, coastal zones, and marine areas, **to work toward a common goal of protecting** the nation's **biodiversity** and cultural **heritage.** Such coordinated federal efforts would constitute the first element of a **broad public-private initiative to create corridors of conservation and stewardship** throughout the U.S.

PROMOTE THE EXPANSION and **diversification of service opportunities** in and around parks nationwide.

The Congress of the United States should:

ENCOURAGE public and private **cooperative stewardship** of significant natural and cultural landscapes.

USING THE 1966 NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT as a guide, enact legislation providing the National Park Service with **authority to offer a suite of technical assistance** tools, grants, and incentives—including enhanced incentives for conservation easements—to encourage natural resource **conservation on private lands.**

PROMOTE ACCESS to **historic preservation technical assistance, grants, and tax incentives** by **residents of high-poverty** areas across the country.

ESTABLISH DIRECTIVES to **encourage compatible uses of lands** adjacent to national parks that are **managed by other federal agencies.**

The National Park Service should:

ENHANCE FUNDING FOR, and make full use of, its **extensive portfolio of community assistance programs**—such as Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance, National Historic Landmarks, National Natural Landmarks, and the National Register of Historic Places, among others—**to better support** state and local governments, tribal, and private-sector conservation and **preservation efforts.**

IDENTIFY IMPROVEMENTS to authorities, budgets, and programs that would enhance its ability to **reach beyond park boundaries** and **deliver technical and financial aid** that supports the protection of locally important natural, cultural, and historic landscapes.

DEVELOP A CULTURAL RESOURCES INITIATIVE that includes a **multi-year strategic effort to prepare** the Park Service's heritage preservation and cultural programs to meet the **challenges of the new century**—both in the parks and in communities nationwide.

To build an effective, responsive, and accountable 21st-century National Park Service,

The Congress of the United States should:

AUTHORIZE A SIX-YEAR TERM FOR THE NPS DIRECTOR, and update the qualifications for the post to **reflect the complexity and scope** of the modern Service.

REAUTHORIZE THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM ADVISORY BOARD. Appointments to the board should be made by the Director of the National Park Service **in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior.** Relevant congressional committees should have ex officio representation, and the board should have an independent staff.

PROVIDE THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE with **clear legal authority,** notwithstanding any other provision of law, **to enter into cooperative agreements without competition** that benefit both the National Park Service and partners. Define **"public purpose"** to include both direct benefit to the National Park Service, and to partners, for projects within and outside park boundaries.

The Secretary of the Interior should:

REALIGN KEY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SUPPORT FUNCTIONS, including strategic planning, land appraisals, and long-term ecological monitoring, so they **report to the NPS Director.**

The National Park Service should:

BUILD A ROBUST INTERNAL RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP CAPACITY in the sciences and humanities to **guide management and protection** of our nation's natural, historic, and cultural heritage.

CREATE A CENTER FOR INNOVATION to quickly **identify** instructive organizational experiences—successful and otherwise—and to **swiftly share lessons learned**, along with demonstrably **effective models** of leadership, education, public engagement, and collaboration for landscape-level conservation and preservation.

FOLLOW PRIVATE SECTOR BEST PRACTICES by **investing an amount equal to 4% of its annual personnel budget** each year in professional development.

FORM PARTNERSHIPS WITH ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS to provide rigorous **staff training** and **continuing education programs.**

CREATE AN INSTITUTE to develop leadership and build the culture of organizational learning **needed by a creative, networked enterprise.**

REALIGN BUSINESS SYSTEMS to **support** informed risk-taking, rapid adaptation to **changing circumstances** and opportunities, creative collaboration, and the **formation of a rich array** of public and private **partnerships at all levels** of the organization.

ANALYZE ALL PROCESSES AND REPORTS currently required with the goal of simplifying management systems and **distributing** as much **decision-making authority** as possible **to the field level.**

USE YOUTH SERVICE CORPS, intergenerational programs, and other means to **actively recruit a new generation** of National Park Service leaders that **reflects the diversity** of the nation.

To ensure permanent and sustainable funding for the work of the National Park Service,

The President of the United States should:

PROPOSE TO CONGRESS the **establishment of a national park endowment,** and a governing structure to manage it.

APPOINT A COMMISSION composed of notable Americans from across the country and from all walks of life to lead a **21st-Century Campaign for Our National Parks,** with a primary goal of **raising substantial funds during the run-up to the centennial.**

THROUGH 2016, REQUEST ANNUAL BUDGETS that will **cumulatively eliminate** the current National Park Service operations **shortfall.**

The Congress of the United States should:

INCREASE FUNDING for the National Park Service by at least $100 million over fixed-cost inflation each year until 2016, **to eliminate the current operations shortfall** by the centennial.

FULLY FUND THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND at least at the $900-million-dollar level authorized in the 1965 Act. The Commission also encourages Congress to **increase that authorization level,** established more than 40 years ago, to account for inflation and the multiplication of needs and opportunities over time.

AMEND the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act to provide a line item for the National Park Service **allowing wider use** of Fund monies for **conservation easements** beyond existing park boundaries, and other means, to protect historic landscapes, conserve biodiversity, and **connect parks with the broader ecosystems** on which they depend.

FULLY FUND THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND to allow the Park Service **to provide financial and technical assistance** to state, tribal, and local governments and others to ensure that America's prehistoric and historic resources are preserved.

PROVIDE GREATER PREDICTABILITY in National Park Service funding by **dedicating a new source of federal revenue,** beyond the annual appropriations process, **to specified needs.** Potential sources include royalties from oil and gas drilling leases.

NATIONAL PARKS *By headquarters state*

ALABAMA
Horseshoe Bend National Military Park
Little River Canyon National Preserve
Russell Cave National Monument
Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site
Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site

ALASKA
Alagnak Wild River
Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve
Bering Land Bridge National Preserve
Cape Krusenstern National Monument
Denali National Park and Preserve
Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve
Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve
Katmai National Park and Preserve
Kenai Fjords National Park
Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park
Kobuk Valley National Park
Lake Clark National Park and Preserve
Noatak National Preserve
Sitka National Historical Park
Wrangell–St Elias National Park and Preserve
Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve

ARIZONA
Canyon De Chelly National Monument
Casa Grande Ruins National Monument
Chiricahua National Monument
Coronado National Memorial
Fort Bowie National Historic Site
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
Grand Canyon National Park
Hohokam Pima National Monument
Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site
Montezuma Castle National Monument
Navajo National Monument
Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument
Petrified Forest National Park
Pipe Spring National Monument
Saguaro National Park
Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument
Tonto National Monument
Tumacacori National Historical Park
Tuzigoot National Monument
Walnut Canyon National Monument
Wupatki National Monument

ARKANSAS
Arkansas Post National Memorial
Buffalo National River
Fort Smith National Historic Site
Hot Springs National Park
Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site
Pea Ridge National Military Park

CALIFORNIA
Cabrillo National Monument
Channel Islands National Park
Death Valley National Park
Devils Postpile National Monument
Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site
Fort Point National Historic Site
Golden Gate National Recreation Area
John Muir National Historic Site
Joshua Tree National Park
Kings Canyon National Park
Lassen Volcanic National Park
Lava Beds National Monument
Manzanar National Historic Site
Mojave National Preserve
Muir Woods National Monument
Pinnacles National Monument
Point Reyes National Seashore
Redwood National and State Parks
Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park
San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
Sequoia National Park
Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area
Yosemite National Park

COLORADO
Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site
Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park
Colorado National Monument
Curecanti National Recreation Area
Dinosaur National Monument
Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument
Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve
Hovenweep National Monument
Mesa Verde National Park
Rocky Mountain National Park
Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site
Yucca House National Monument

CONNECTICUT
Weir Farm National Historic Site

FLORIDA
Big Cypress National Preserve
Biscayne National Park
Canaveral National Seashore
Castillo De San Marcos National Monument
De Soto National Memorial
Dry Tortugas National Park
Everglades National Park
Fort Caroline National Memorial
Fort Matanzas National Monument
Gulf Islands National Seashore
Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve

GEORGIA
Andersonville National Historic Site
Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area
Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park
Cumberland Island National Seashore
Fort Frederica National Monument
Fort Pulaski National Monument
Jimmy Carter National Historic Site
Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park
Martin Luther King, Jr, National Historic Site
Ocmulgee National Monument

HAWAII
Haleakala National Park
Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park
Kalaupapa National Historical Park
Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park
Pu'uhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park
Pu'ukohola Heiau National Historic Site
World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument

IDAHO
City of Rocks National Reserve
Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve
Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument
Minidoka National Historic Site
Nez Perce National Historical Park

ILLINOIS
Lincoln Home National Historic Site

INDIANA
George Rogers Clark National Historical Park
Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial

IOWA
Effigy Mounds National Monument
Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

KANSAS
Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site
Fort Larned National Historic Site
Fort Scott National Historic Site
Nicodemus National Historic Site
Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve

KENTUCKY
Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park
Cumberland Gap National Historical Park
Mammoth Cave National Park

LOUISIANA
Cane River Creole National Historical Park
Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve
New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park
Poverty Point National Monument

MAINE
Acadia National Park
Saint Croix Island International Historic Site

MARYLAND
Antietam National Battlefield
Assateague Island National Seashore
Catoctin Mountain Park
Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park
Clara Barton National Historic Site
Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine
Fort Washington Park
Greenbelt Park
Hampton National Historic Site
Monocacy National Battlefield
Piscataway Park
Thomas Stone National Historic Site

MASSACHUSETTS
Adams National Historical Park
Boston National Historical Park
Boston African American National Historic Site
Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area
Cape Cod National Seashore
Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site
John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site
Longfellow National Historic Site
Lowell National Historical Park
Minute Man National Historical Park
New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park
Salem Maritime National Historic Site
Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site
Springfield Armory National Historic Site

MICHIGAN
Isle Royale National Park
Keweenaw National Historical Park
Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

MINNESOTA
Grand Portage National Monument
Mississippi National River and Recreation Area
Pipestone National Monument
Voyageurs National Park

MISSISSIPPI
Brices Cross Roads National Battlefield Site
Natchez National Historical Park
Natchez Trace Parkway
Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail
Tupelo National Battlefield
Vicksburg National Military Park

MISSOURI
George Washington Carver National Monument
Harry S Truman National Historic Site
Jefferson National Expansion Memorial
Ozark National Scenic Riverways
Ulysses S Grant National Historic Site
Wilson's Creek National Battlefield

MONTANA
Big Hole National Battlefield
Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area
Glacier National Park
Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site
Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

NEBRASKA
Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Homestead National Monument of America
Missouri National Recreational River
Niobrara National Scenic River
Scotts Bluff National Monument

NEVADA
Great Basin National Park
Lake Mead National Recreation Area

NEW HAMPSHIRE
Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site

NEW JERSEY
Edison National Historic Site
Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River
Morristown National Historical Park

NEW MEXICO
Aztec Ruins National Monument
Bandelier National Monument
Capulin Volcano National Monument
Carlsbad Caverns National Park
Chaco Culture National Historical Park
El Malpais National Monument
El Morro National Monument
Fort Union National Monument
Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument
Pecos National Historical Park
Petroglyph National Monument
Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument
White Sands National Monument

NATIONAL PARKS *By headquarters state*

NEW YORK
African Burial Ground National Monument
Castle Clinton National Monument
Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site
Federal Hall National Memorial
Fire Island National Seashore
Fort Stanwix National Monument
Gateway National Recreation Area
General Grant National Memorial
Governors Island National Monument
Hamilton Grange National Memorial
Home of Franklin D Roosevelt National Historic Site
Martin Van Buren National Historic Site
Sagamore Hill National Historic Site
Saint Paul's Church National Historic Site
Saratoga National Historical Park
Statue of Liberty National Monument
Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace National Historic Site
Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site
Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site
Women's Rights National Historical Park

NORTH CAROLINA
Blue Ridge Parkway
Cape Hatteras National Seashore
Cape Lookout National Seashore
Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site
Fort Raleigh National Historic Site
Guilford Courthouse National Military Park
Moores Creek National Battlefield
Wright Brothers National Memorial

NORTH DAKOTA
Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site
Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site
Theodore Roosevelt National Park

OHIO
Cuyahoga Valley National Park
Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park
First Ladies National Historic Site
Hopewell Culture National Historical Park
James A Garfield National Historic Site
Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial
William Howard Taft National Historic Site

OKLAHOMA
Chickasaw National Recreation Area
Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

OREGON
Crater Lake National Park
John Day Fossil Beds National Monument
Lewis and Clark National Historical Park
Oregon Caves National Monument

PENNSYLVANIA
Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site
Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site
Eisenhower National Historic Site
Flight 93 National Memorial
Fort Necessity National Battlefield
Friendship Hill National Historic Site
Gettysburg National Military Park
Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site
Independence National Historical Park
Johnstown Flood National Memorial
Middle Delaware National Scenic River
Steamtown National Historic Site
Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial
Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River
Valley Forge National Historical Park

RHODE ISLAND
Roger Williams National Memorial

SOUTH CAROLINA
Charles Pinckney National Historic Site
Congaree National Park
Cowpens National Battlefield
Fort Sumter National Monument
Kings Mountain National Military Park
Ninety Six National Historic Site

SOUTH DAKOTA
Badlands National Park
Jewel Cave National Monument
Minuteman Missile National Historic Site
Mount Rushmore National Memorial
Wind Cave National Park

TENNESSEE
Andrew Johnson National Historic Site
Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area
Fort Donelson National Battlefield
Great Smoky Mountains National Park
Obed Wild and Scenic River
Shiloh National Military Park
Stones River National Battlefield

TEXAS
Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument
Amistad National Recreation Area
Big Bend National Park
Big Thicket National Preserve
Chamizal National Memorial
Fort Davis National Historic Site
Guadalupe Mountains National Park
Lake Meredith National Recreation Area
Lyndon B Johnson National Historical Park
Padre Island National Seashore
Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site
Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River
San Antonio Missions National Historical Park

UTAH
Arches National Park
Bryce Canyon National Park
Canyonlands National Park
Capitol Reef National Park
Cedar Breaks National Monument
Golden Spike National Historic Site
Natural Bridges National Monument
Rainbow Bridge National Monument
Timpanogos Cave National Monument
Zion National Park

VERMONT
Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park

VIRGINIA
Appomattox Court House National Historical Park
Arlington House, The Robert E Lee Memorial
Booker T Washington National Monument
Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park
Colonial National Historical Park
Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park
George Washington Birthplace National Monument
George Washington Memorial Parkway
Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove on the Potomac
Maggie L Walker National Historic Site
Manassas National Battlefield Park
Petersburg National Battlefield
Prince William Forest Park
Richmond National Battlefield Park
Shenandoah National Park
Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts

WASHINGTON
Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve
Fort Vancouver National Historic Site
Klondike Gold Rush–Seattle Unit National Historical Park
Lake Chelan National Recreation Area
Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area
Mount Rainier National Park
North Cascades National Park
Olympic National Park
Ross Lake National Recreation Area
San Juan Island National Historical Park
Whitman Mission National Historic Site

WEST VIRGINIA
Appalachian National Scenic Trail
Bluestone National Scenic River
Gauley River National Recreation Area
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
New River Gorge National River
Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail

WISCONSIN
Apostle Islands National Lakeshore
Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway

WYOMING
Devils Tower National Monument
Fort Laramie National Historic Site
Fossil Butte National Monument
Grand Teton National Park
John D Rockefeller, Jr, Memorial Parkway
Yellowstone National Park

OTHER JURISDICTIONS

AMERICAN SAMOA
National Park of American Samoa

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
African American Civil War Memorial
Carter G Woodson Home National Historic Site
Constitution Gardens
Ford's Theatre National Historic Site
Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial
Frederick Douglass National Historic Site
Korean War Veterans Memorial
Lincoln Memorial
Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site
National Capital Parks–East
National Mall
Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site
President's Park (White House)
Rock Creek Park
Thomas Jefferson Memorial
Vietnam Veterans Memorial
Washington Monument
World War II Memorial

GUAM
War in the Pacific National Historical Park

PUERTO RICO
San Juan National Historic Site

VIRGIN ISLANDS
Buck Island Reef National Monument
Christiansted National Historic Site
Salt River Bay National Historic Park and Ecological Preserve
Virgin Islands National Park
Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument

NPS PROGRAMS BEYOND PARKS

American Battlefield Protection
Certified Local Governments
Cultural Resources Diversity
Cultural Resources Geographic Information Systems
Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network
Discover Our Shared Heritage Travel Itinerary Series
Federal Archaeology
Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives
Federal Lands to Parks
Federal Preservation Institute
Grants-in-Aid to Historically Black Colleges and Universities
Grants-in-Aid to Indian Tribes
Grants-in-Aid to Preserve America
Grants-in-Aid to Save America's Treasures
Grants-in-Aid to States and Territories
Historic American Buildings Survey
Historic American Engineering Record
Historic American Landscapes Survey
Historic Preservation Internship Training
Historic Preservation Planning
Historic Surplus Property
Hydropower Recreation Assistance
Japanese American Confinement Sites Grants
Land and Water Conservation Fund State Conservation Grants
Maritime Heritage
National Center for Preservation Technology and Training
National Heritage Areas
National Historic Landmarks
National Historic Lighthouse Preservation
National Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
National Natural Landmarks
National Register of Historic Places
National Trails System
National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom
Office of International Affairs
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance
Route 66 Corridor Preservation
Shared Beringian Heritage
Teaching with Historic Places
Technical Preservation Services
Tribal Preservation
Urban Park and Recreation Grants
Wild and Scenic Rivers

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CRITICAL TO ACTIVELY RECRUIT THE NEXT GENERATION OF NPS LEADERS SO THAT THE WORKFORCE REFLECTS THE DIVERSITY OF THE NATION. IT

Create a National Parks Endowment Fund, a permanently endo

believe We must

strengthen scientific and scholarly capacity to address climate change

Our national parks should be exemplars in every dimension. Th

become a catalyst in promoting lifelo

As a first step, the commission recommends that the Service replace broken, dilapidated, out-of-date, inacc

think and act in new ways and build a robust research

PLAN MUST REMEDY OUR LONG-STANDING FAILURE TO PROTECT THE PURITY AND VITALITY OF OUR NATION'S GREAT RIVERS AND

ve advise the Presiden

Up-to-date and substantial scientific knowledge and cultural scholarsh

The commission recommends that the National Park Service have clear authority, adequate staff, and suppo

ent should give voice to and affirm Am

WE RECOMMEND A PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE TO DEVELOP AND ENHANCE A NATIONAL CONSERVATION FRAMEWORK TO PROTECT,