



The National Park Service does much more than operate the 400+ national parks — as complicated as that is. The agency also oversees over 30 “external” programs outside the parks, providing assistance in conserving nature and history in communities big and small across the country. Clock Tower Lofts (Denver, Colorado), a former paint factory converted to affordable housing, was funded in part by the availability of historic preservation tax credits, a congressionally authorized program administered by the National Park Service.





The Orpheum Theatre (Broadway Theater and Commercial Historic District, Los Angeles, California) was also restored using monies from the Historic Preservation Tax Act.





Groundwork Anacostia, in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Park Service's RTCA (Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance) program, works on environmental restoration in the Anacostia community of Washington, D.C.: (above) Team members; (below) A Groundwork crew cleaning up the Anacostia River.





Historic buildings, structures, places, and landscapes are systematically photographed for posterity by the National Park Service's Historic American Buildings Survey and Historic American Engineering Record: Totem Bight Community House, Mud Bight Village, Ketchikan, Alaska.





Val-Kill, part of Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site (New York), is connected with two other nearby national parks by trails developed as part of the RTCA program.





New York City's popular High Line Park was planned with the involvement of the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program. RTCA has been a part of community recreational planning in places all over the country.





The Dubuque Heritage Trail (Iowa) is a good example of a rails-to-trails project facilitated in part by the National Park Service.





One of the country's largest private-sector preservation efforts is Atlanta's Ponce City Market, a tax-credit-funded rehabilitation and redesign of the nine-story, two-million-square-foot former Sears retail and distribution center. The market now houses retail shops, restaurants, offices, and residential units. The building is situated at the crossroads of four neighborhoods and also on the 22-mile rails-to-trails BeltLine, an RTCA-assisted project.





Gas Works Park in Seattle is an abandoned waterfront industrial complex that was revitalized as a major park with a grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which is overseen by the National Park Service.