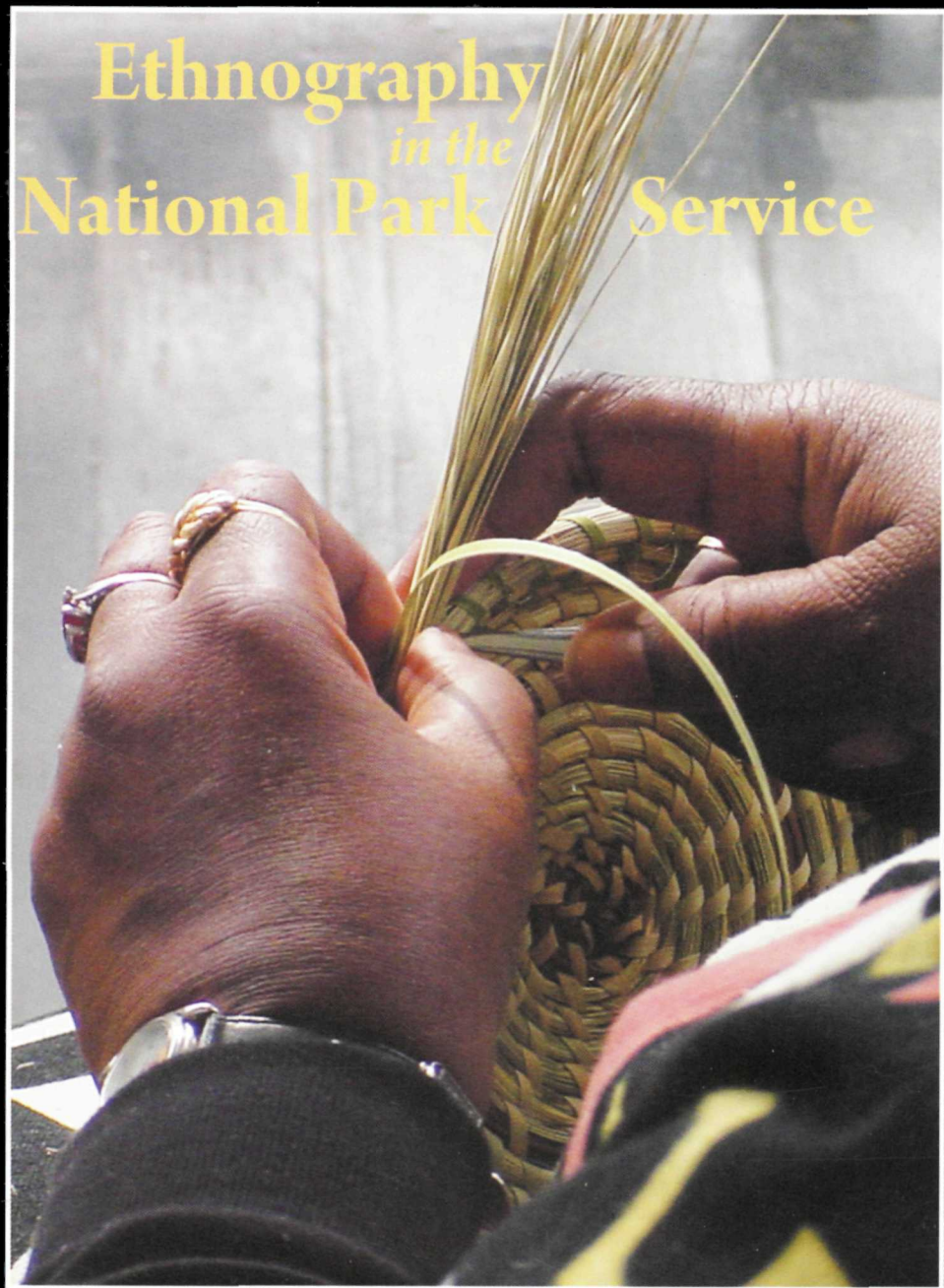


# Ethnography *in the* National Park Service



## The George Wright Forum

The GWS Journal of Parks, Protected Areas & Cultural Sites

volume 26 number 3 • 2009



### Origins

Founded in 1980, the George Wright Society is organized for the purposes of promoting the application of knowledge, fostering communication, improving resource management, and providing information to improve public understanding and appreciation of the basic purposes of natural and cultural parks and equivalent reserves. The Society is dedicated to the protection, preservation, and management of cultural and natural parks and reserves through research and education.

### Mission

The George Wright Society advances the scientific and heritage values of parks and protected areas. The Society promotes professional research and resource stewardship across natural and cultural disciplines, provides avenues of communication, and encourages public policies that embrace these values.

### Our Goal

The Society strives to be the premier organization connecting people, places, knowledge, and ideas to foster excellence in natural and cultural resource management, research, protection, and interpretation in parks and equivalent reserves.

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### The George Wright Forum

REBECCA CONARD & DAVID HARMON, *Editors*

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# The George Wright Forum

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Traditional sewing demonstration at Charles Pinckney National Historic Site. Park staff attempt to work with members of the Gullah/Geechee cultures to assure their cultural representation in the park. See the article by Erin McPherson and Kat Byerly. National Park Service photo courtesy of Carlin Timmons.

The heart of the GWS is our support for professions that promote science, scholarship, and expertise in the management of parks, protected natural areas, historic places, and cultural sites. We bring it all together in ways nobody else does. If you care about parks, won't you please join the GWS community of professionals? Membership includes a subscription to *The George Wright Forum* and discounts at the biennial GWS Conference. Use this form or join online at **[www.georgewright.org](http://www.georgewright.org)**.

# SOCIETY NEWS, NOTES & MAIL

## **All-new GWS website unveiled**

In September, the GWS realized a long-held goal when we launched a completely revamped website. Working with web designer Angela Smith, the GWS Publications Committee worked for more than a year to create a site that is more cohesive, cleaner looking, and more interactive. The site has a number of new features, among them Parkwire: Protected Area News from Around the World, a daily digest of news covering parks, protected areas, and cultural sites gleaned from the web. If you get your net news via a newsreader, you can subscribe to an RSS feed for Parkwire. If you haven't visited the new site yet, have a look! [www.georgewright.org](http://www.georgewright.org)

## **George Melendez Wright featured in "National Parks: America's Best Idea"**

The life and work of George Melendez Wright was highlighted in a six-part documentary, "National Parks: America's Best Idea," which aired in late September and early October on PBS, the US public television network. The film was one of the most-anticipated documentaries of the year. Filmmakers Ken Burns and Dayton Duncan made a special effort to highlight the contributions of racial and ethnic minorities to the development of the US national park idea and the national park system. As a Hispanic American, Wright caught their attention. Duncan, the principal writer of the documentary, has written eloquently of his admiration of Wright in the GWS' NPS Centennial Essay Series (see [www.georgewright.org/261duncan.pdf](http://www.georgewright.org/261duncan.pdf)). The Burns/Duncan series created a huge amount of buzz—as well as some criticism for focusing too much on the so-called crown jewels of the system. To find out more about Wright's role in the series, which will be rebroadcast early in 2010, go to [www.pbs.org/nationalparks](http://www.pbs.org/nationalparks).

## **Barr, Graber win re-election to Board; students get franchise**

Incumbents Brad Barr and David Graber were re-elected to a second term on the GWS Board of Directors in this year's election. In a competitive on-line vote, Barr, a senior policy advisor on marine sanctuaries with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Graber, the senior science advisor in the National Park Service's Pacific West Region, were the top two vote-getters in a field that also included Fernando Villalba, an NPS biologist. Barr and Graber will serve another three-year term beginning in 2010. GWS voters also decided to change the organization's by-laws to allow Student Members to vote in future elections. The vote was handily in favor of the change.

## **GWS2011 will roll into New Orleans**

The next George Wright Society Conference on Parks, Protected Areas, and Cultural Sites will take place March 14–18, 2011, at the Sheraton New Orleans, right on the edge of the French Quarter. GWS2011 returns to the city where this series of conferences began in 1976. It was in the Crescent City that the first Conference on Science in the National Parks convened during the nation's Bicentennial year. That meeting, and a second in 1979, were the precursors to the first GWS conference in 1982. GWS2011 will be the 16th in this series

of conferences, which have blossomed into the USA's premier interdisciplinary professional meeting on parks. A Conference Committee was recently formed by the GWS Board and planning for GWS2011 is getting underway. A Call for Proposals will be issued in June 2010. If you attended GWS2009 in Portland, you'll get the CFP automatically. If you didn't, but would like to be notified when the CFP comes out, just send us a note. Plan to join us in New Orleans!

### **GWS co-sponsors Young Conservationist Award**

The Society is collaborating with the International Ranger Federation, IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas, and Parks Victoria to sponsor the 2010 Young Conservationist Award. The award aims to recognize and raise awareness of the outstanding contributions made to the management of protected areas, and leadership shown, by young conservationists. It also seeks to encourage young professionals and help them develop networks by inviting winners to attend one of the global conservation events and become a member of the Young Conservationists Global Community. For the 2010 award, the winner will be have his/her travel, accommodation, and conference fees fully paid to attend the "Healthy Parks-Healthy People" conference, April 2010, in Melbourne, Australia. The Society is managing the application process through our website.

### **Ethnography in a National Park Service Second Century**

*Jerry L. Rogers*

ON A SUB-ZERO JANUARY DAY IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, midway through my work as chair of the Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation Committee of the National Parks Second Century Commission, prominent historian and fellow commissioner Gary Nash surprised me with a comment. The commission had been convened by the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) to envision what the National Park Service (NPS) needs to be and do in its second century of work beginning August 25, 2016. Throughout most of my 34 years with the Park Service I had developed and pursued long-range visions for where cultural resource management and historic preservation programs should go, and I had been trying hard to transfer that approach to the work of the commission. Nash pointedly stated that a number of my recommendations began with words such as “recover,” “revive,” and “re-institute,” followed by strengths the Park Service had possessed a decade ago but that had since been lost or seriously diminished. He wanted to know why I had used so much backward-looking syntax in a proposal for the future. This was not a pleasant question to answer. There were plenty of brand-new ideas, but in a distressing number of instances losses in funding, staffing, professional capability, and especially leadership between 2001 and 2009 had been so extensive that making progress almost meant starting over.

Let’s skip the sugar coating about our task. Creating a sound NPS ethnography program by the time of the agency’s centennial means starting over. In the words of a World War II song, “we did it before, and we can do it again.”

#### **Building the first ethnography program**

*Doing it the first time was not easy.* At the beginning of the 1980s, Associate Director for Cultural Resources F. Ross Holland and Chief Anthropologist Doug Scovill hired a dynamic cultural anthropologist named Muriel (“Miki”) Crespi, and enlisted support from the Society for Applied Anthropology. Together with Mesa Verde National Park Superintendent



Robert Heyder and Rocky Mountain Regional Director Lorraine Mintzmyer, they had gotten Director Russell Dickenson's blessing to convene a World Conference on Cultural Parks, the first ever of its kind. Budgets were tight, however, and Dickenson was unable to secure budget increases either to plan and conduct the conference or to staff the program Crespi was supposed to run. At that point, Holland retired and I succeeded him as associate director with responsibility for cultural resource management (history, architecture, archaeology, curation, and ethnography) in the parks and also the wide range of historic preservation programs that worked to preserve tens of thousands of places in other ownership throughout the United States.

To their great credit Mintzmyer, Heyder, Scovill, and Crespi pulled together enough public and private money, staff time, and labor from a wide variety of sources to make the conference happen. Eager delegates from dozens of countries crowded into Mesa Verde's historic Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Auditorium in September 1984 to discuss three broad themes: technology and preservation of cultural parks, tourism and use of cultural parks, and cultural parks and native cultures. Each theme featured outstanding papers, discussions, and resolutions; but with Crespi and Scovill guiding the planning it cannot have been an accident that the conference was dominated by the third theme—cultural parks and native cultures—and that the conference turned out to be a declaration to the world that nations needed to deal respectfully with people who were not members of dominant cultures but who lived in or near parks or had traditional ties to parks.

Although lack of money and staff delayed the publication of proceedings, the conference articulated a reason for the ethnography program and provided a beginning upon which to build. From it, Crespi and I developed a vision of at least one professional ethnographer in each National Park Service regional office, with funding for special studies coming from appropriations to the ethnography program and from other sources, such as the budgets for construction projects that needed the information. At the time, Native American issues, such as repatriation of sacred objects and human remains, archaeological site protection, identification of cultural landscapes, development of tribal cultural preservation programs, and access to national park lands for traditional practices were confronting the Park Service, and we presented our vision of an ethnography program as a means for NPS to understand tribal perspectives and needs. Priorities of the time caused the program, always intended to deal with the full array of ethnic populations important to the Park Service, to be born with an emphasis on American Indian issues.

Still we remained unable to get the necessary staff and money included in administration budget requests. Fortunately, through a special committee from the Society for Applied Anthropology, with representation from the American Anthropological Association, New Mexico Senator Pete Domenici learned of our vision and arranged for a small appropriation to begin to carry it out, although the amount was far too small to establish the program in every region. Knowing that some regional directors strongly desired the program, and aware that regional directors influenced their peers, we implemented the program by offering them incentives. We offered the most interested regions sufficient money to hire an ethnographer for a period of three years, with the condition that by the end of that time the region would have adjusted its own budget to keep the ethnographer working. When a region had suc-

ceeded in making the adjustment, we would then offer the seed money to a different region with the same condition. Fortunately the first regional directors to take up the offer were among the most influential, and over time we were able to get the program up and running throughout most of the agency. Frequent articulation of the vision and constant encouragement of others—in the Park Service and beyond—to join in its pursuit, were key to our progress.

### **Loss of vision**

Vision, however, must be maintained, updated, and kept constantly in front of those who have to carry it out. Vision is one of the primary functions of leadership. When leadership falters, vision wanes, progress stops, and programs atrophy. From the secretary of the interior down through the senior executive levels directly in charge of the cultural resource and historic preservation programs, beginning in 2001 the officials occupying what should have been leadership positions devoted more effort to controlling, limiting, and shrinking the National Park Service than to inspiring it to great achievements. Reorganizations rewarded loyalty to the hierarchy rather than talent and motivation. Instead of program-building, attention focused on reductions in budget and staff. Doug Scovill had accepted a field assignment, and Miki Crespi passed away. The top position in ethnography was left vacant for an extended period, presumably as part of the drastic reductions in staffing being imposed on cultural resource and historic preservation programs. During a desultory effort to recruit a chief ethnographer, a certificate of candidates known to have included highly qualified professionals was rejected by the associate director on implausible grounds. Workplace doldrums spread throughout the cultural resource management directorate. In just over a decade, cultural resource budgets declined by 26% when adjusted for inflation, staffing declined by 27%, and the National Academy of Public Administration found the whole field devoid of leadership.<sup>1</sup> That is where we are now, and that is why we must begin again.

### **The National Parks Second Century Commission**

Beginning again means developing a new vision for a new time, one that serves to inspire and motivate people. In doing so, the work of the National Parks Second Century Commission—specifically its Cultural Resource and Historic Preservation Committee—may provide a useful foundation. The commission, chaired by two distinguished former United States Senators, Howard Baker of Tennessee and J. Bennett Johnston of Louisiana, and including 26 other distinguished Americans, did its primary work in six committees: Connecting Parks to People, Education and Learning, Budget and Finance, Parks of the Future, Natural Resources and Science, and Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation. I had the honor of chairing the last-named committee, which also included James McPherson, Pulitzer Prize-winning Princeton University historian; Carolyn Finney, professor at the University of California–Berkeley; and Richard West, director emeritus of the Museum of the American Indian. We were assisted by de Teel Patterson (“Pat”) Tiller, retired NPS deputy associate director for cultural resources, who was engaged as a consultant by the commission, and by

NPCA staff liaison James Nations, a cultural anthropologist who coordinated an article elsewhere in this issue.

### Six points to consider in a new vision

The committee's vision for the National Park Service in its second century is broad and comprehensive: "a 'Century of the Environment' beginning August 25, 2016 in which history, nature, culture, beauty, and recreation are parts of sustainable community life and development everywhere and in which the National Park Service preserves and interprets selected outstanding places and provides leadership to all others in similar work." This vision is based on a continually evolving concept the committee called "the national park idea." The idea began with great scenic and natural areas such as Yellowstone, expanded to include battlefields by the late 19th century and prehistoric sites by 1906, and eventually came to include national historic and natural landmarks, far-reaching public-private partnership programs associated with the National Register of Historic Places, a rivers and trails program, and national heritage areas. Anyone, anywhere, who is working to preserve a bit of nature or a historic place, protect scenic beauty, or provide recreation is carrying out part of the national park idea. In this nationally encompassing vision, no part or program of the Park Service will limit its concern to what is inside parks or outside parks, but instead will be cognizant of both. Partnerships, heretofore generally conceived of as donations by outside fundraisers to NPS, or as assistance by a Park Service program to an outside entity, will more frequently become two-way mutually beneficial exchanges. Leadership will not epitomize control over others, but rather will be "servant leadership" in which the Park Service encourages, enables, and assists others who wish to preserve culture, history, nature, or scenic beauty; provide recreation; or educate people about such places. The focus of the Park Service will be not only on parks but upon the national park idea, wherever and everywhere in the United States someone is trying to carry it out. *To function within a National Park Service properly attuned to its second century, the ethnography program must envision itself in a similarly broad scope.*

A new vision for ethnography in the National Park Service must bring forward and build upon the best of the past without being restrained by it. The program of the future must maintain, repair, and improve the collegial work it has done with American Indian tribes and other Native American organizations. Here in particular are opportunities for mutually beneficial exchanges. The committee report points out that tribes and the National Park Service can be of great importance to one another, and together of great importance to the United States and the world. Past National Park Service interactions with tribes have in some cases contributed significantly to a renaissance among indigenous cultures. *Much remains to be done in positive interactions that benefit tribes, and such interaction must be a prominent part of the future.*

Where is the mutual benefit? The report goes on to say that

Barely in time, before some traditional knowledge is lost altogether, the National Park Service has begun to recognize that benefits of working with tribes flow to the Service from the tribes

as well as the other way around. As the Service works to help visitors comprehend their own interdependence with other species, traditional tribal reverence for the earth and her systems is becoming a persuasive addition to the findings of science and scholarship. Today's coldly utilitarian views must be moderated if the dominant cultures are not to overtax the earth's ability to sustain a large human population. This change will happen more readily if the lessons of science are presented in tandem with the older, deeper, and more spiritual lessons from generations of indigenous cultures. It is not unusual for National Park visitors to liken an opening among giant redwoods to a cathedral, or to describe their experiences in nature as sacred. Such metaphor is important to what National Parks stand for, and to the willingness of the public to use and support parks. That willingness can benefit greatly by learning from cultures for which the concept is more than metaphorical.<sup>2</sup>

*Learning about and from other cultures is at the heart the ethnography program.* If ethnography can help the Park Service reach beyond park boundaries, it can similarly help to reach beyond national boundaries. It is time for the National Park Service to move past its pride in the United States having created the first national park in the world, 136 years ago, and to recognize the many lessons we can now learn from other nations. With our "empty lands" now mostly filled up, the United States will generally be creating new park units that have ranchers, farmers, and even city dwellers living in them and using them for traditional uses—and, in some cases, for economically productive activities not normally carried on in American parks. *Knowing how to do this right will require ethnographers along with a host of professionals from other disciplines.*

Within the authorized boundaries of many parks are areas of privately owned property that the Park Service has intended to acquire eventually, sometimes because of fear that an owner might someday be motivated by profit to build some facility or development that is detrimental to the park. We call these properties "inholdings" and frequently cite their acquisition as high-priority projects necessary for protection of the parks. Often this is correct, but when the inholdings include significant cultural resources not central to the major themes of the park, it equally often is mistaken. Such inholdings that have been generally well maintained by private owners instantly become, upon acquisition by the parks, relatively low-priority cultural resource maintenance problems. Well-known examples include historic dude ranches, fishing villages, and tourist inns and cabins that may have been well-enough preserved in private ownership but that suffer neglect or worse in consequence of being acquired by parks. In these cases, new approaches such as heritage areas, use of preservation easements, or leasing of historic structures may offer better management opportunities than more traditional models. *The skills of ethnographers will be helpful in figuring out whether certain inholdings are or are not cultural resources that the Park Service should preserve.*

The Second Century Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation Committee declared that few coming changes will be as important as the rapid and fundamental ways in which the American people ourselves are changing. When we are barely thirty years into the second century, there will be 400 million Americans—about one-third more than now. Much of the increase will result from immigration, mostly from countries other than those that previously provided almost all immigrants. Groups now called "minorities" will increase as per-

centages of the population and together with new arrivals become the majority. The United States has experienced significant demographic changes before, but never with the speed and scale of changes now underway and expected to continue. In consequence of these demographic changes, basic assumptions about nature, beauty, recreation, and history may change, possibly in fundamental ways. The meaning of “historic place” may come to be very different than at present.

*The National Park Service must lead the change or else be led by it.* Viewed as opportunity, this situation offers the Park Service a chance to grow into the future it should pursue even if doing so were not imperative. If the National Park Service conceives of itself as serving all peoples of the world—because that is what the word “American” is coming to mean—it can better fulfill its role in the United States and among nations. The effects of these changes will come not only from new and different needs, values, and perspectives, but also from the time-honored practice of immigrants settling initially in places they find most amenable. People naturally choose to live near others who speak the same language, eat similar foods, and follow familiar practices. Where new immigrants choose to settle will have a significant effect on what the National Park Service must do in those localities as well as nationally. As one example, Lowell, Massachusetts, has recently come to have the largest concentration of ethnic Cambodians in the United States, and this makes a difference in the work of Lowell National Historical Park. *A strong ethnography program will be needed if the Park Service is to understand and deal with new concentrations of ethnic populations.*

These six points imply a substantial part of what a renewed vision must include to revive the ethnography program and guide it into the future. A vision is best developed by those who will work to carry it out. The task therefore belongs to what remains of the ethnography cadre inside the National Park Service and to outside professionals who are closely associated with it. A good group to begin the process would be the remaining ethnographers in the Park Service (some of whom are authors here), other authors who have contributed to this special issue, and readers who find it of interest. Eventually the process and its recommended vision must have the blessing of the National Leadership Council and the director of the National Park Service.

### How to use a new vision

When the vision has been articulated, it will be important for everyone to understand that a vision is not a goal or objective that one expects to accomplish and then check off as “done.” It is, rather, a moving target that stays ahead of us, drawing us onward as we approach it. An excessive preoccupation with accomplishment of measurable objectives leads to a culture of “bean counters,” in which process and procedure drive out creativity—as to some degree the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) has done. My fellow Second Century commissioner Peter Senge wrote in *The Necessary Revolution* that the important thing is “not what the vision is, but what the vision does.”<sup>3</sup> What a vision does, when properly used by leaders, is to engage the creative imaginations of myriad individuals in pursuing the vision, each in his or her own individual way. National Park Service employees at many levels should have performance standards linking in some way to the ethno-

graphic vision, but it will be best if each individual conceives his or her own annual standards in pursuit of the vision rather than having them imposed.

## Examples of actions

Just as the vision for an ethnography program must be developed by the National Park Service rather than proposed by me, so must action steps in pursuit of the vision be developed by the working professionals. In hope that those professionals might find them useful, I list below several action steps recommended by the Cultural Resource and Historic Preservation Committee that seem relevant to ethnography.

- Hold a Second World Conference on Cultural Parks to further the work begun at the first conference in 1984.
- Mutually improve laws, policies, and approaches with Canada, Mexico, and other nations whose boundaries adjoin or are near the United States.
- Update landmark themes and new area studies to focus on aspects of the American story that are inadequately or inaccurately covered; examine parks for opportunities to preserve and interpret forgotten, overlooked, or omitted stories.
- Review for cultural bias the policies that affect uses of parks and that govern historic preservation, heritage areas, Land and Water Conservation Fund, rivers, trails, and other related programs.
- Increase recruitment of Native Americans as National Park Service employees, and use native stories and languages in park interpretation.
- Facilitate connections by Native peoples and their living cultures to parks; allow private access for ecologically sustainable traditional cultural practices.
- Pair United States national heritage area directors with counterparts in France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere for training and collaboration.
- Using staff professionals from the National Park Service and its partners, resume a strong international role for the United States in cultural and natural heritage.
- Help Americans learn from indigenous peoples that we do not inherit the planet from our ancestors but hold it in trust for our children and grandchildren.<sup>4</sup>

### *The time to begin is now.*

I hope the authors and interested readers of articles in this special issue of *The George Wright Forum* will treat it as a call to action, using it to attract others to their cause. I hope you will carefully avoid narrow interests or preoccupation with the ways ethnography differs from other disciplines, but instead seek to make yourselves and your program valuable to all parts of the Park Service and to its partners. Go forward with the interests of the whole National Park Service in mind. You will do best when others see the value of your work to their part of the national park idea.

Act now; do not wait for direction! In a mature and confident National Park Service, leadership will flow upward through the organization as a result of individual initiative, as well as downward in execution of policy. Top-level leaders who measure up to what the

National Park Service must be and do in its second century need their subordinates to be creative, courageous, and self-starting. Help them by being so.

## Endnotes

1. Frank Hodsohl, James Kunde, and Denis P. Galvin, *Saving Our History: A Review of National Park Service Cultural Resources Programs* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Public Administration, October 2008).
2. "A Different Past in a Different Future: The Report of the Cultural Resource and Historic Preservation Committee of the National Parks Second Century Commission," July 6, 2009. Much of the remainder of this essay is from this report, of which I was principal author.
3. Peter Senge, Bryan Smith, Nina Kruschwitz, Joe Laur, and Sara Schley, *The Necessary Revolution: How Individuals and Organizations are Working Together to Create a Sustainable World* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 324.
4. Christina Cameron, "The United States National Park Service in the 21st Century," a paper offered as advice to the Cultural Resource and Historic Preservation Committee of the National Parks Second Century Commission, 2009.

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**Jerry L. Rogers** had a 34-year career in the National Park Service, including 14 years as associate director for cultural resources with responsibility for cultural resource management in the national park system and historic preservation programs covering the entire United States. He retired as chair of "Discovery 2000: the National Park Service General Conference," and recently served as a member of the National Parks Second Century Commission. He lives near Santa Fe, New Mexico, with his wife and partner Nancy Burgas, where they are engaged in several volunteer activities in pursuit of the national park idea. You can read the Second Century committee and commission reports at [www.visionfortheparks.org](http://www.visionfortheparks.org).



# Ocean Currents, Dune Hollows, and Mountain Peaks: Park Break as a Pedagogical Approach to Collaborative Experiential Learning in the National Parks

*Tinelle D. Bustam, Michelle Moorman, Carena J. van Riper, Sarah Stehn, and Rebecca Stanfield McCown*

PRESENT-DAY ISSUES FACING THE US NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS) pose complex challenges for future management. Multidimensional pressures on a single park can include urban population growth emerging at the wildland–urban interface, fostering engagement of diverse and under-served populations, climate change, and invasive species challenges, as well as resource use conflicts. In addition, the current NPS employee base largely comprises individuals from the baby-boomer era who will retire within the next 10–20 years, creating job opportunities in the NPS workforce. Recruiting younger generations who are trained to take an integrated and multidisciplinary approach to protected area planning and management in the NPS is an imminent need.

To address these contemporary challenges, in 2008 and 2009 several agencies and academic institutions collaborated to form a potential solution. Colorado State University (CSU), Geological Society of America, George Wright Society (GWS), NPS, Student Conservation Association (SCA), Texas A&M University (TAMU), and US Geological Survey (USGS) financed, designed, and implemented an experiential learning program referred to as “Park Break.” Designed to bring undergraduate and graduate students from varied disciplines to the parks during their spring break, the Park Break program is a way of fostering collaborative approaches to resources management and inspiring future professional commitment to the parks. This paper will provide an overview of the first two years of the Park Break program—which were considered a pilot phase—by discussing the program pedagogy, operations, and outcomes, as well as consideration for potential future program directions.

## **Park Break pedagogy**

Grounded in NPS philosophy and the founding tenets of experiential education, the goals of the Park Break program are twofold. Specifically, the program aims to provide an educational experience in which NPS personnel and selected students can interact to exchange multidisciplinary information. In addition, students are encouraged to consider the challenges of



protected area management in their current or future research and career ambitions. Pedagogical practices to achieve these goals incorporate experiential education and NPS enabling legislation in the program design.

The practice of experiential education allows for students and educators to interact directly while focused on an experience that has the potential to improve knowledge, build skill sets, and cultivate program-inspired values (Association for Experiential Education 2009). Experiential education is learning through action, and involves a non-traditional educator–student relationship in which participants work together toward a common goal. Many fields encompass the founding tenets of experiential education, including environmental education, outdoor education, and service learning. In experiential education, the educational value flows from the experience, allowing for both the educator and student to benefit equally (Furco 1996). Since the learning is coming from the experience itself, the traditional educator is released from the responsibility of lecturing and thus able to more fully interact with the student. This pedagogical method was effective for Park Break program design, as it encouraged a highly interactive atmosphere in which students and agency personnel were engaged in considering new perspectives on recurring management issues. By taking a part in the experiential process outside of the traditional teacher–learner roles, student and agency participants discovered a new way to interrelate and approach communication and collaboration. In the setting of a NPS management unit, participants also had access to the educational value of the resources themselves. As is generally the practice in environmental or outdoor education, immersing participants in the reality of the resource, or the problem at hand, allowed for a greater commitment to addressing questions and resolving management issues. Also, by placing the agency personnel and students side-by-side in discussion, students were able to envision themselves as collaborative colleagues with agency personnel.

In both educational institutions and the corporate workplace, activities that draw on the experiential education philosophy have long been a part of small-group projects and team-building exercises (Wagner et al. 1992). Especially in higher education, where part of the educational focus is on preparation for the workplace, self-directed exercises are commonplace, but their effectiveness is quite varied. The most effective experiential education-based training occurs when there is a tight link between the planning organization's goals and the educational program design (Wagner et al. 1992). The NPS philosophy is clearly delineated in the 1916 National Park Service Act, which mandates that the NPS “promote and regulate the use” of the national parks, whose purpose is to “conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations” (16 USC 1). Additionally, each NPS unit must abide by its own enabling legislation, which defines the motivation behind the creation of the unit and mandates the future direction of management. The Park Break program attempted to tie the NPS mission and the enabling legislation of the host park unit into the program design by maintaining focus on the constraints under which management concerns must be handled. Facilitated largely by agency personnel throughout the extent of the program, it became the framework for student thought processes and a constant checkpoint for new ideas. By thoroughly explaining the NPS mission and the breadth under which it operates, students were able to keep sight of the

link between Park Break goals and program design, thereby increasing program effectiveness as an educational and personal development exercise.

The merging of the two pedagogical design tenets—inclusion of the NPS mission and principles of experiential education—provided a framework for implementing Park Break program goals. In addition, incorporating such foundational principles into current management concerns in an NPS park setting fostered meaningful discussions and a positive attitude about future collaborations between students and agency personnel.

**Park Break programming**

The program’s pedagogical framework allowed for effective execution of program operations. Such operations included implementation at diverse park unit locations and varied subject matter, collaborative participation by several public agencies, and effective on-site coordination.

The participating NPS units illustrated diversity in geographic location and designation, and, consequently, in topical areas of concentration. The inaugural implementation of Park Break was carried out in 2008 with field-based seminars at four park units, each addressing a theme-based topic. These topics represented subject matter within the scope of natural resource management. Following the success of the first round, organizers selected three more park units and three new focus areas for implementation of Park Break 2009 (Table 1).

Park Break has evolved as a collaborative effort through the participation of the institutions listed earlier. While the majority of funding is allocated on an annual basis through the USGS, other participating organizations help to ensure the program’s implementation at multiple locations. The procedural aspects of Park Break, including participant selection, program evaluations, and the facilitation of student-written papers, are coordinated by the GWS board of directors and Park Break planners, which consist of academic faculty and staff of CSU and TAMU. In addition, travel arrangements are made by supporting organizations such as SCA and CSU. The organization of the on-site experience, however, remains flexible for each respective host in that no template is given to the park. Rather, managers are open to plan the week for students and are given the option to seek guidance from Park Break planners in formulating itineraries. By leaving the operations to be synchronized at the park level, on-site coordinators are able to identify pertinent issues facing their own park and use these as a platform of discussion among student participants, resource managers, and scien-

**Table 1** Park Break program locations and topics, 2008–2009.

Year	Park	Topic
2008	Acadia National Park	Civic Engagement
2008, 2009	Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area	Conservation Policy
2008	Gateway National Recreation Area	Global Climate Change
2008	Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore	Wildland Urban Interface
2009	Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve	Climate Change and Sustainability
2009	Fort Vancouver National Historic Site/Mount Rainier National Park/Olympic National Park	Natural Hazards

tists. The individual parks involved in Park Break can support this effort by subsidizing on-site costs such as lodging and food.

To become involved in the Park Break program, NPS units either self-nominate or are identified by GWS board members. A GWS board member is present for each Park Break session, as well as other representatives from supporting agencies such as USGS. These other agencies and organizations use the week as an opportunity to recruit and build awareness about their own mission and role in conservation. All of the contributors who maintain a presence throughout the week help to demonstrate the integrative role of multiple agencies and organizations in conservation management. The schedules at each session include discussions in a classroom setting where students exchange ideas with representative staff and field trips to outdoor destinations. The field component allows students to learn park resources first-hand, which fosters personal connections with the natural and cultural resources protected by the NPS. Such operational practices led to effective collaboration in programming for diverse park units, topics, and schedules.

A review of programs at Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Acadia National Park illustrates the diversity in topics and operations.

Staff of Delaware Water Gap have hosted students both years of Park Break, focusing on issues of conservation policy at the park and agency levels. In these sessions, student participants heard perspectives on the Park Service's evolution over time as a land management agency, explored the major challenges facing the parks, and identified key tenets of the political system that affect everyday decision-making. John Donahue, the superintendent at Delaware Water Gap, played a primary role in supporting students at the park. He helped to facilitate the in-classroom component, which was held at Gifford Pinchot's summer home, Grey Towers. Students also participated in tours of the local community and a nature walk with a field naturalist.

Presenters at the Delaware Water Gap Park Break session traveled from local-, regional-, and national-level offices to offer their insights into conservation policy and interact with students from varied educational and professional backgrounds. One such presenter in the first year of the Delaware Water Gap program was Flip Hagood, vice president of the SCA. The premise of his presentation involved keeping the parks relevant to upcoming generations in the face of a diversifying user base. The conversation that followed tapped into students' perspectives of useful tactics that park managers can employ to maintain their appeal for younger visitors to the parks. One student emphasized the importance of technology, recounting the appeal of audio and video podcasts used to relay interpretive information.

A similar experience took place at Acadia in the inaugural year of the Park Break program. This session was largely organized by David Manski, the chief of natural resources at Acadia, and Christina Marts of Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park. These individuals coordinated meetings with scientists, resource managers, and citizen experts in civic engagement, allowing students to explore the idea of parks and their resources as a backdrop for engaging the public in conservation management. For example, student participants were asked to review the park website and offer suggestions on content and layout. This produced insights on techniques that would be most effective in engaging younger, technologically savvy people in parks for virtual visits from the home or classroom. In addi-

tion, students took a field trip to some of the park's top attractions to evaluate them and provide suggestions on how educational materials can be best conveyed to the visiting public.

At Acadia, students also were presented with multiple conservation issues that directly involve the local community. This was an opportunity for students to obtain a behind-the-scenes look at how the NPS fosters public involvement from local and national levels. Community partners as well as park staff and scientists were invited to the workshop to present their perspective on the effectiveness of these interactions in helping to achieve conservation and management goals. Students were given the opportunity to converse with these individuals and provide potential solutions to park staff on how to further engage the community. Through this forum, the Park Break program explored civic engagement beyond academic theorizing to real-world applicability.

### **Program outcomes**

Two years of hosting Park Break, with its pedagogical framework of experiential education within NPS units, has resulted in successful program implementation. Since its inception, the Park Break program has achieved a variety of beneficial outcomes: diversity in park units and topics, collaborative participation, and effective coordination. By way of these successes, clear program outcomes are evident.

One requirement made of all Park Break participants was to collaborate on a journal article reflective of their learning during their Park Break experience. The intention was to provide students the opportunity to collaborate on contemporary management challenges by researching key topics from the week's program and offering their own insights. This experience was beneficial for students by providing them with an opportunity to draw on the personal experiences of managers and scientists, witness first-hand how to link research and practice, and re-think the theme-based topics explored at each Park Break site. Collaboration on 14 papers was achieved from the 2008 Park Break program and papers from the 2009 Park Break participants are currently in progress.

In addition to collaboration, employment and research opportunities emerged as student-based outcomes of the program. Specifically, several past Park Break participants have taken temporary or student employment with the NPS and USGS, as well as having written proposals to conduct research at the national parks. After participating in Park Break 2008 at Acadia, one student returned to the park for a summer internship. After graduating in the spring of 2009, two Indiana Dunes 2008 Park Break participants accepted seasonal jobs with the NPS. These examples illustrate the effectiveness of Park Break programs in assisting student professional networking and providing strategies to navigate job opportunities in the DOI.

An anticipated student-related objective of the Park Break program was to encourage student participation with the GWS, including the Society's biennial conference. Such engagement was evident as ten students from the 2008 program attended the 2009 GWS conference. In addition, three students who were selected for participation in the post-conference 2009 Park Break program also attended the conference. Student participants of the 2008 program made oral and poster presentations on their Park Break experiences and col-

laborated on a panel discussion that provided future program hosts an opportunity to discuss the outcomes of the program with the students. Attendance at this conference benefited student professional development by providing opportunities to discuss their experiences in formal and informal forums as well as establish networks with professionals and other Park Break attendees for potential future collaboration.

In fact, many student participants cited networking as one of the most important outcomes of the program. In program evaluations, participants were asked to comment on what they learned about their specific program theme. One Park Break participant responded, “Quite a bit. Almost as important I believe are the other things I learned and personal/professional contacts I made through the week.” Another participant commented that Park Break creates “networks that are long lasting,” as such relations are fostered beyond the program experience.

The Park Break program offered additional student-based benefits by providing the opportunity for student leadership. During the second year of the program, several first-year participants attended each Park Break site to serve as a group mentor. In particular, six of the 2008 participants were granted the opportunity to participate in the 2009 program as group mentors. Such participation included assistance with pre-program coordination, site coordination, program evaluations, and facilitation of paper submissions. The incoming student participants were appreciative of peer mentorship as illustrated in the following quote taken from a program evaluation of a second-year participant: “The mentors were a *huge* help and really made the Park Break program better/smooother.”

Park Break is designed to be an integrative experience that benefits both the students selected for participation and the NPS units involved in the program. Benefits to participating DOI personnel include opportunities for sharing information on contemporary management techniques, recruiting, and obtaining fresh perspectives on challenging issues within the parks. First, park managers are able to engage in conversations and learn about management techniques that are both effective and appealing for the upcoming generation of resource managers. Second, Park Break is a valuable opportunity for DOI staff to recruit young professionals. Third, the interdisciplinary research articles produced from each session are shared with managers, offering fresh new perspectives and graduate-level research conducted on pertinent issues in the parks.

As the Park Break experience evolved, planners made adjustments to the program. For instance, the original intention was to host Park Break in even-numbered years so that it would alternate with the GWS conference to allow student involvement in the conference. After an effective implementation in 2008, program planners chose to offer the program again in 2009, closely following the GWS conference.

In addition, a comparison of 2008 to 2009 programming reveals a broadening in Park Service unit interest in program participation. Of the four park units that participated in the 2008 program (i.e., Acadia, Delaware Water Gap, Gateway National Recreation Area, and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore), one chose to host the program again in 2009 (Delaware Water Gap), while one new park unit (Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve) and a network of three others (Fort Vancouver, Mount Rainier, and Olympic) joined the 2009 program.

Moreover, 2009 programming expanded to include undergraduate students in addition to graduate students. The 2008 program specifically targeted graduate students as many alternative spring break opportunities currently exist at the undergraduate level. The decision to expand the 2009 program to include undergraduate students occurred out of interest in and success of the 2008 program. The 2009 program at Great Sand Dunes offered programming for a mix of undergraduate and graduate students.

Lastly, a process for facilitating paper mentoring and review has been delineated. Specifically, several researchers and academics have dedicated themselves to shepherding these deliverables through the publication process.

### **Future program directions**

We believe that the successful implementation of Park Break for two consecutive years merits program continuation. As Park Break, there are some ways in which the program can improve.

In its infancy as a program, Park Break has already achieved noteworthy accomplishments. However, organizers and participants must contemplate future programming directions for continued program success. In particular, recommendations for future Park Break implementation center on diversifying the Park Break product. Based on the inherent flexibility in programming, diverse topics, locations, student disciplines, and student recruitment methods would be wise to consider.

Growing demands and challenges faced by NPS units warrant diversified theme-based topics. For instance, future subjects might include contemporary cultural resource management challenges, consensus-building in park management and planning, adaptive management in the DOI, resource economics and environmental impacts, transborder management challenges, and renewable resource management.

Diverse topics such as these should be matched by a diversity of geographic areas and types of park units as host sites. In particular, park units such as national heritage areas, national historic landmarks, park units along the borders of Canada and Mexico, national lakeshores, and national seashores, as well as national preserves with high-impact uses such as mineral extraction, may provide effective platforms for future programs. Encouraging the participation of students from broad disciplines would also prove instrumental in fostering program goals and future outcomes. Disciplines such as anthropology, climatology, communications, economics, environmental education, geography, and history would aid in fostering multidisciplinary dialogue and future collaboration in addressing NPS management challenges.

Furthermore, student recruitment could be expanded to include an approach that spans academic disciplines at both the university and individual student levels. Current strategies for student recruitment include discipline-level marketing in which program descriptions and applications are distributed across Internet listservs. As an added measure of efficiency, university- and student-level strategies could be employed. These could include establishing contacts at various natural resource management programs across U.S. undergraduate and graduate degree-granting institutions, or linking the program with existing student clubs. In



addition, student-level marketing could be employed by relying on Park Break alumni to recruit at their individual schools. Implementing such strategies might aid in generating student involvement from diverse disciplines as well as promoting the continuation of the program.

Diversifying the Park Break product by way of topic, location, student discipline, and recruitment method may prove worthy as a focus of future programming. Integrating these suggestions may be useful in accomplishing program goals and achieving unanticipated program outcomes.

Contemporary issues such as multidimensional pressures on park resources and concerns over an aging workforce are complex challenges for future NPS management. With two years of implementation, the Park Break program has tried to address these challenges by combining the tenets of experiential education and the philosophy of NPS. Park Break has fostered multidisciplinary student involvement in protected area planning and management as well as facilitated connections for future employment. In addition, a wide array of outcomes have been achieved over the last two years. The flexibility of the program to incorporate improvements is foundational to ensuring that the Park Break program continues into the future as a successful effort that challenges students to think critically about resource and visitor management while fostering future professional commitment to the national parks.

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[*Ed. note; The authors are all Park Break students. Park Break will be offered again in 2010, and the GWS Board is considering making the program permanent. Also, the GWS soon will be launching a web-based series, Park Break Perspectives, as a venue for the student papers.*]

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# Moving Public Participation beyond Compliance: Uncommon Approaches to Finding Common Ground

*Kirsten M. Leong, John F. Forester, and Daniel J. Decker*

THIS ARTICLE EXPLORES HOW ASSUMPTIONS BEHIND PROCESS DESIGN can facilitate or hinder success of public participation. In particular, we explore strategies that can open up new avenues to move public participation beyond required compliance to become an opportunity to improve natural resource management. Federal land managers have regularly included public input in decision-making for decades, with varying results. Legal mandates require certain procedures for including public input, yet a variety of processes can be designed to fulfill these requirements. While public hearings once were used to comply with these requirements, new paradigms for public participation are emerging, and managers are gaining experience with innovative approaches to better understand stakeholders and implement more durable decisions.

Federal natural resource management agencies are responsible for managing resources on public lands as public trust resources, to be protected and preserved in trust by the government for the benefit of current and future generations (Baer 1988). In the course of fulfilling this responsibility, natural resource managers regularly address problems that are highly complex, ambiguous, and steeped in uncertainty about the response of the ecosystem to interventions. While each agency has a specific mission that defines its purpose with respect to resource management, segments of the public (for whom the agencies manage) may have interest in the resources based on different sets of values than managers and often different from each other. In such situations, it is not surprising that management responses to complex natural resource issues often evolve into public issues when stakeholders believe they may be impacted<sup>1</sup> by either the resource itself (e.g., wildlife such as predators or ungulates, insect or fungal disease outbreaks, fire, rangeland condition) or the means for managing the resource (e.g., allowing or restricting certain forms of recreation, eradicating exotic wildlife, distribution of grazing allocations, access to public lands). Federal land managers working in this context constantly find themselves making decisions that involve negotiating between fulfilling their conservation mandates and satisfying the myriad publics, both local and national, to whom they are responsible.

In previous eras, federal agency actions were less likely to be challenged by the public; but today citizens expect opportunity for involvement in natural resource management decision-making (Decker, Brown, and Siemer 2001). Partially fueled by the environmental movement of the 1960s and '70s, a public that increasingly values wilderness and non-consumptive recreation, heightened distrust of government, and democratization of information (mak-

ing technical information more available to a more knowledgeable public), managers are experiencing increased pressure to adopt a collaborative strategy of decision-making (Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000). The federal government is responding by placing greater emphasis on stakeholder involvement in recent law and policy, such as the Negotiated Rulemaking Act of 1996 (5 USC § 561 *et seq.*), the Executive Order “Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation” (E.O. no. 13352, 69 *Federal Register* 52989, August 26, 2004), and the National Park Service (NPS) Director’s Order no. 75A, *Civic Engagement and Public Involvement* (2007).

Approaches to public participation have been described in terms of a continuum that reflects the degree of citizen engagement and power in the decision-making process, ranging from token or non-participation, where the decision is made by the vested powers alone, to co-management, where citizens are embraced as partners in the final decision and management implementation (Arnstein 1969; Decker and Chase 1997; Smutko and Garber 2001; Chase, Siemer, and Decker 2002; Leong et al. 2009). Leong et al. (2009) identified three underlying paradigms along this continuum, reflecting shifts from top-down governance (no public involvement), to a governance model that includes public input, to one that emphasizes public engagement. Public input approaches comply with legal mandates to include the desires of diverse stakeholders, often with an underlying assumption that the optimal resource decision will require trade-offs that balance competing interests. Public engagement approaches utilize dialogue-based processes that emphasize mutual learning and treat participation as an opportunity for cooperation between stakeholders who may “create value” by identifying areas where they share common interests.

Some critics worry that a cooperative approach to resource management encourages agencies to relinquish too much power to local publics, rather than enforce agency conservation mandates (Heilprin 2004), while others believe that cooperation between agencies and the public will lead to more sustainable resource management practices (Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000). These diverse interpretations reflect a dilemma of collective decision-making. In any collective management decision, participants negotiate between three interrelated areas, each of which influences the outcome: the substance of what is being allocated or managed, the procedures or processes through which those participants interact, and the relationships between the participants in the decision. But what happens when one or more of these interests is privileged over others? Parties who pay attention only to substance risk damaging relationships (and may not necessarily do well on substance); parties who only pay attention to process risk “going through the motions,” sacrificing both substantive outcomes and stronger relationships; and parties who only pay attention to relationships might risk adopting a process that teaches them nothing and ignores substantive losses. To learn how some managers are successfully balancing substance, process, and relationships in natural resource decision-making, we interviewed natural resource managers, planners, and practitioners who had experience with both competitive and cooperative participatory processes.

## Methods

Natural resource managers in the Northeast and National Capital regions of the National

Park Service, social scientists, and planners were asked to identify practitioners or other managers who had experience designing and facilitating both competitive and cooperative approaches to public participation in natural resource management decisions for federal public lands. Twenty-two practitioners and agency managers or planners identified in this way were invited to participate in semi-structured informal interviews. Interviews of approximately one hour's duration were conducted either face-to-face or by telephone, during normal business hours from January 24, 2005 to October 28, 2005. Interviewees were asked to describe their experiences with (1) civic engagement and public participation efforts of federal land management agencies and (2) designing and implementing participatory processes. Questions followed an interview guide, with follow-ups and probes added as necessary for clarification. Confidentiality was assured.

Interviewees described experiences as employees of or contractors for the following organizations: National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Department of Agriculture–Forest Service, US Geological Survey, US Department of Energy, and US Department of Defense. Respondents were not asked to provide official agency position statements, thus responses were considered to reflect only opinions of the individual responding. We did not audio record interviews; quotations in the text are an attempt to reproduce their words as faithfully as possible from handwritten notes taken during the interviews that were written up in detail immediately following the interviews and validated by interviewees in reviews of manuscript drafts. This research was approved by Cornell University's University Committee on Human Subjects (Protocol ID no. 04-04-043).

## Findings

Interviewees' experiences with public participation were examined with respect to the tension between public input and public engagement approaches to participation and implications for substantive outcomes, processes used to make collective decisions, and relationships between parties. In addition, challenges to adopting more cooperative approaches to public participation were identified.

**Substantive outcomes** Interviewees indicated a number of conditions that resulted in competition over substantive outcomes of federal natural resource management decisions. Many interviewees mentioned the preoccupation of federal agencies with the potential for every decision to be adjudicated in court, a common concern of NPS natural resource managers (Leong and Decker 2005). Judicial processes are explicitly adversarial. Parties are cast as opponents who need to make the strongest case for their own interests in a context where only one will win; it is in no one's interest to think of outcomes that split the difference or produce creative, win-win decisions (Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000). If parties think they can do better in court than through a cooperative negotiation, they may choose to sue. Because of the diversity of values extant in the American public, interviewees recognized that it is practically impossible to reach an agreement that pleases everyone. This causes many managers to approach public participation cautiously, in terms of defending agency actions to the public, in preparation for what is perceived as inevitable adversarial conflict. Interviewees believed that a public input approach to public participation (sometimes termed "compli-

ance”) reinforced the adversarial, competitive understanding of participation. As one planner described, “A public hearing in general has an outcome, you can grant or deny. It has winners and losers.” An agency scientist referred to this approach as “invite–inform–ignore,” while a third interviewee used the more familiar phrase, “decide–announce–defend.”

In contrast, one manager described a planning process that focused considerable effort on discovering the interests of potentially affected communities by engaging in informal communication networks. In this approach, park staff met with stakeholders “on their turf, at their convenience,” in informal gathering places such as churches and coffee shops to discover the topics of concern that were being discussed every day, as well as ways that park management might affect those concerns. These dialogues helped identify the people who were influential in the community (not necessarily as elected officials of a known organization, but those who the rest of the community listened to) and who would be necessary to include in more formal scoping processes, but who might not ordinarily come. This manager acknowledges that this approach does not necessarily lead to agreement on all facets of issues. Nevertheless, by using this approach in a recent general management plan, he sees that the park is now better able to articulate why they’re doing what they’re doing with confidence, and that the deeply emotional issues associated with their management appear to be less contentious and controversial than they had feared initially. Another manager described how this process helped identify changing local demographics that affected resource use. Using a process (provided by a consulting firm) to learn about communities via informal networks, the managers identified needs which may have been completely missed otherwise, an oversight that likely would have necessitated a formal amendment of the management plan in the future, costing additional staff time and resources.

In addition to the ever-present threat of lawsuits, interviewees noted that agency assumptions about the authority of certain kinds of knowledge encourage a tendency to utilize participatory processes that emphasize substantive outcomes. One agency scientist believed this mind-set was perpetuated through agency emphasis on “decisions based on sound science.” He indicated that “a myth has grown up that sound science alone will solve the problem. It relieves us of the need for the hard work of deliberation. It has decreased the focus on relationships. Information doesn’t make decisions, people make decisions.” Susskind and Field (1996) note that most people operate from a belief that we are able to interpret reality objectively, and that our social attitudes, beliefs, preferences, and priorities are rational, unemotional, and unbiased. As a result, we assume that anyone with an opposing viewpoint has limited information or is biased or irrational. These assumptions can lead to negotiations that attempt to convince or persuade other parties, using participation as a means to garner support from the public rather than listen to public concerns.

Alternatively, as one manager noted, “there may be twelve people with the same issue, but twelve different reasons for having that issue.” He believed that rather than focus on the substance of the issues themselves, managers should first try to understand the reasons behind the issues. Key to this observation is that the same information may be interpreted differently by different people based on their underlying beliefs or on the social context, such as the historical relationship between the community and the agency, assumptions about

what the other group is saying, and level of knowledge about the topic (Ziman 1991; Weeks and Packard 1997; Weber and Word 2001). One agency scientist emphasized that

Information must be three things: credible and accurate, salient to the issue at hand, and legitimate in the eyes of the public. To accomplish that, you need relationships that are transparent, open and accessible to everyone. All forms of knowledge have to be respectfully questioned and examined, both traditional and expert. This builds the legitimacy of expert knowledge. Otherwise, people will take the attitude, 'If you dismiss my local knowledge, I will dismiss your expert knowledge.'

From this perspective, relationships and processes that build relationships help participants discover each other's (perhaps diverse) understanding of the substantive issue. Interviewees described public engagement processes resulting in this type of comprehension as "amazing, it's phenomenal" and "transformative, it's amazing to watch"—observations similar to what is described in the literature as "light bulbs going off" (Forester 1994) and transformations of awareness resulting in personal growth (Lowry, Adler, and Milner 1997). Through such transformative processes, parties realize the need to learn about each other as well as the issues at hand, helping them overcome presumptions that might restrict their ability to think creatively about options (Forester 1999). Until this understanding is reached, "issues look different to opposing partisans, who think their own perceptions—and emotional reactions—are the only 'natural' ones" (Susskind and Field 1996).

One interviewee observed that most public participation efforts are focused on agency concerns, whereas learning about the public's concerns may help agencies discover more sustainable management alternatives. He explained:

Rather than asking people always to come to our meetings, we need to go out to find out what are their issues, how to align with their goals, instead of asking them always to align with our goals. We need to be there to listen rather than inform and tell, we need to be more participants.

Another practitioner believed that understanding community issues, irrespective of the specific project, can help frame the project in terms of solutions that help both the community and the agency meet their respective goals. As an example, he described an agency project to restore habitat for an endangered species. By using a public engagement approach to learn about community issues, they discovered that community residents did not care about the endangered species, but were concerned about the general issue of youth leaving the area and the more specific need for more camping sites. By learning about these community priorities, a plan was developed that created opportunities to address community concerns via habitat restoration.

Although "sound scientific information that is credible, accurate, salient to the issue at hand, and legitimate in the eyes of the public is crucial in natural resource decision-making," it also is important to understand how each party interprets and understands that informa-

tion. Such dialogue based on “good information” requires that each party has a good understanding of each other’s interests and concerns. As one interviewee observed:

Managers carry myths around that ‘people don’t want X.’ There is a need for mutual education—for the agency to learn about the community on its own terms, not what the communities can do for them, and the community learning about the agency and its mission.

This sentiment was reiterated by another manager: “There is a need for education, both of those outside and inside the park service. [Public participation] should be an opportunity to make you a better manager.” Another interviewee explained, “Even if you don’t agree, listen. Tell them why you don’t agree, have a conversation. They may convince you.”

**Process** As with substance, focusing solely on the procedural components in a negotiation also can lead to poor outcomes. A procedural orientation focuses on process criteria, such as how many people participated, how many spoke at a meeting, how well meetings were publicized, whether dialogue occurred, etc. Alternatively, success can be gauged in terms of process-related outcomes (i.e., outcome criteria), such as whether participants’ comments were useful, whether participants’ comments influenced decisions, whether participants were satisfied with the process, and whether relationships between the agencies and participants improved (Chess and Purcell 1999; McComas 2001).

Laws such as the Administrative Procedures Act of 1946 (5 USC § 551 *et seq.*) and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA; 42 USC § 4321 *et seq.*) require federal agencies to provide for public involvement in federal decision-making. One manager pointed out that agencies typically use public input approaches to participation that focus entirely on NEPA’s Section 102, the action-forcing portion of the law, which lead them to forget about Section 101, the portion of NEPA that emphasizes productive harmony and working with communities. Section 101 declares it to be a policy of the federal government “to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans” (42 USC § 4331). This manager believed that the focus on Section 102 has not been productive, and has resulted in “making the system more complex. We’re making assumptions about what we know. When we find out we don’t know, we get sued.” The emphasis on Section 102 stems from legal rulings that have upheld NEPA as imposing only procedural requirements, preventing uninformed, rather than unwise, agency action (*Robertson v. Methow Valley Citizens Council*, 1989, 490 US 332). Yet, as previously described, public input processes that meet only procedural requirements run the risk of being framed as adversarial and historically have resulted in many court challenges. Lawsuits may force agencies to start over, reassessing both the nature of the problem and appropriate solutions, as in the case of deer management at Cuyahoga Valley National Park (National Park Service 2003). Another manager provided an example of what happens at a typical public meeting designed to comply with procedural public input requirements:

At a typical public forum there are about 30 people, and maybe 3 or 4 who will speak out. Most are sitting silently, thinking. They are there because they feel something about the place,



but the majority are not comfortable speaking in a public forum. By the end of the meeting they feel forced to choose one of the articulated positions. It may not be quite right, but they feel they have to choose. This leads to the creation of factions. People start discussing ‘I agree with what John said’ while someone else says ‘well, I liked what Sally said more’ and then they get entrenched.

This manager believed that more informal processes could better engage the public and encourage effective dialogue, providing those less comfortable speaking in a public setting an opportunity to explain how they feel, rather than siding with someone else’s articulated position. Another manager described the typical lose–lose outcome stemming from public input processes that simply meet legal requirements: “If both sides are equally mad at us, we’re successful.” Everyone leaves the process feeling as though they have done poorly, yet they do not see how any alternative is possible. This manager believed that agencies resigning themselves to this mind-set have allowed fringe organizations to “isolate agencies in the middle,” an often described sentiment when public input approaches to participation are adopted.

One interviewee described an example of a more productive approach that followed the cooperative philosophy outlined in NEPA’s Section 101. Six years of traditional public input processes had been unable to yield agreement in a dispute over a proposed resource management plan that would have a lifespan of approximately 20 years. Recognizing that continuing down this path was likely to end in court, the agency adopted a new public engagement format to discover each group’s issues, facilitated workshops around those issues, and held many field trips on weekends, including meals together. They developed relationships and informal communication networks that helped identify interested parties, complementing formal announcements in newspapers and other media. Collectively, they recognized early on that they would not have enough information to make definitive decisions that would endure for the 20-year span of the plan, so rather than fight “tooth and nail” over substantive details, they chose an adaptive management approach. The focus on their common interest in a healthy ecosystem led to a solution where an influential landowner with a large landholding voluntarily changed its management practices, and an environmental group accepted responsibility for monitoring ecosystem condition. Both parties meet regularly with the agency, examining data and making decisions from year to year. After about three years, they were able to implement a plan, whereas previously there had been six years of negotiation with no agreements. By changing their approach to participation, they were able to reach a productive outcome in half as much time.

Interviewees also indicated the importance of utilizing less formal processes to improve understanding of local community dynamics. One manager described a situation where an approach to participation based on informal networks revealed that the local community leaders were not likely to attend public meetings. This manager believed that reaching out to these individuals via community networks rather than formalized processes was necessary to ensure that the agency did not “get caught blindsided” within the 20-year planning cycle. Another interviewee described how informal networks could be used to improve the turnout at public meetings:

At a public meeting where normally you would get ten people if you advertised in the newspaper, you get 200 [if you go through informal networks]. If you call five people, they call others; they post flyers in the community where you wouldn't think to post. And the 200, they'll be interested to hear what you have to say, vs. the ten who only want you to hear what they have to say.

Not all federal actions require extended negotiation with the public. For example, many standard operating activities are considered “categorical exclusions” under NEPA, meaning that they have no potential to impact the human environment and are not likely to be controversial (National Park Service 2001). Other situations are not always clear-cut, and it may be up to a manager to determine the level of participation they choose to pursue. Two interviewees described cases where simply educating the public on the NEPA process resulted in community-developed alternatives that were adopted as the preferred alternative by the agency. In both cases, the community alternatives included a co-managerial aspect that would have been outside the jurisdiction of the agency; i.e., the agency could not have developed that alternative on its own. In one instance the agency was planning a visitor facility and had identified a number of potential sites, all on agency property. A neighboring municipality that had been looking to revitalize the area was interested in the economic benefits this facility could bring. They identified two sites that were on land owned by the municipality, but adjacent to agency land, and submitted these sites as alternatives during the NEPA public comment phase. The agency included their sites in the final analysis and ended up choosing one as the preferred alternative. With this alternative, the agency does not need to use any of its own land to develop the facility, and the facility is in a more prominent location to attract visitors, benefiting both the agency and the local community.

In the second case, the agency was developing a recreation management plan. Seventeen local area recreation groups with different foci (e.g., shooting, off-road vehicle recreation) organized into an outdoor recreation association and developed an alternative that not only met agency objectives but also would help the community prevent future sprawl, a common interest that united the recreation groups. Agency managers realized that if they could work with the communities to implement this alternative, they might be able to preserve those lands forever; if not, they would be fighting with them to make it something else (that the communities might not necessarily want). Managers also recognized that if they chose the community-developed alternative, they would already have an allied group of 17 organizations who would help with implementation. This manager acknowledged that “all [the communities] needed was a better idea of how we do it with NEPA with respect to alternatives. They were able to take what they wanted to do and fit it within the NEPA process, it wasn't hard for them to do.” Another manager remarked,

There is a need to discover. Are there other possible solutions that have been overlooked? Maybe we saw them but overlooked them because they're outside our realm of control. Bringing partners and citizens in opens up solutions that you may have dismissed because you were not able to control.



**Relationships** Interviewees indicated that relationships affect federal resource management in two ways. First is a competitive situation where parties utilize relationships and political power to influence decisions (e.g., lobbying Congress rather than engaging in participatory processes). Interviewees gave examples of cooperative approaches to participation that helped reduce the use of this strategy. One planner described a stakeholder who changed his behavior when a public engagement process was adopted by the agency. After attending some of these meetings, a stakeholder who previously would stand in front of the agency and picket now engages in reasonable discussions with the planner. Another manager described a situation in which cooperative approaches produced a solution that was agreeable to all local parties, and local environmental groups were successful in requesting that the parent national environmental groups (who typically have more lobbying and political power) not get involved. Although one national environmental group appealed the decision, voicing concerns that differed from the local chapter, they did not file a lawsuit.

Alternatively, a focus on building relationships taken to the extreme runs the risk of ceding decision-making power to the public, which some fear could result in substantive losses in terms of protection of the resource (Heilprin 2004). This approach typically is not included in the continuum of public participation because it results in the agency forfeiting its responsibility to manage in the public trust, which is illegal (*Illinois Central Railroad Co. v. State of Illinois*, 1892, 146 US 387). Interviewees recognized that “the buck stops with the agency. Legally the agency has the ability to make the decision,” but that “the decision is likely to be a better one and more durable if you listen to the public.” One interviewee described an approach to building relationships that avoids forfeiting agency management mandates:

The Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement was started by the agency around 1995. It is a diverse coalition of environmental, outdoor recreation, and scientific organizations, about 20 different groups including: The Wilderness Society, Safari Club, National Rifle Association, Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club. All they agreed on was that the refuge system is important and should be funded. They developed a written agreement, a chartered agreement that says they all agree the refuge system is important, but they don’t have to agree on specific activities. They can’t agree on activities because of the different purposes for groups, they recognize that. The Fish and Wildlife Service set up the group for its centennial anniversary, they decided to see if the groups would all want to work for a common goal. Since then, the funding for the refuge system has increased significantly. Now the members of [the alliance] are listening to each other better, the level of acrimony has decreased. They don’t deal with things they won’t agree on, they work on things they can.

Another manager explained how initiatives to build relationships, learn about community issues, and empower citizens to influence decisions transformed his experiences at public meetings. Prior to relationship-building, he described public meetings where stakeholders would challenge government officials, saying “I think the government is full of BS,” and noted that as a manager, “you expect this, expect to get beat up.” After switching to a more cooperative approach, he described another meeting. A member of the public stood up and

began almost personal attacks against him. Someone else in the audience then stood up and said, “Shut up. We want to hear what he has to say.” Others in the audience agreed, and it became self-policing. Rather than being “beat up,” this manager felt that he was being protected by citizens. This manager notes that to adopt this approach, “you have to be committed to the possibility that your whole relationship with people will change.”

Building relationships outside formal participatory processes also can lead to gains in unexpected areas. One manager gave an example of relationship-building at all levels of the agency. A maintenance person was sent to a farm to work on a restoration project. While he was working, a neighboring farmer came over and asked what he was doing. He could have ignored the farmer; instead, he stopped the machine and took the time to explain the project. The farmer thought the restoration work was “cool,” said that he had land in similar condition, and asked if he could do the same thing. The refuge supervisor saw the value of this interaction and allowed the maintenance person to go out to the second farm. The maintenance person was sent to do one farm; he came back after doing 20 different restoration projects.

The Department of the Interior (DOI) emphasizes that good public participation involves lasting engagements with people, not just episodes (DOI 2005). As one manager explained:

You make a deal differently with someone you know you’ll never see again vs. someone you have to see every day. The longer you live, the more you realize you can’t assume you will never see them again.

Another summarized:

To be honest, working with the public is all about developing relationships. You always have a relationship with the public. People come to meetings with preconceived ideas, they come with a relationship. We also . . . have a predetermined perception of what their comments will be . . . we think we know what they will say. If we do business that way, we’ll never get to issues, we’ll only see positions.

### **Additional challenges**

The examples presented above illustrate the pitfalls of public input processes that become competitions over substance, process, or relationships, as well as benefits of integrative public engagement approaches that can create value in all three areas. Interviewees acknowledged that application of public engagement has been uneven across the agency, and that factors such as history, timing, and personalities of stakeholders and agency staff can affect the success of these types of approaches. They also identified a number of institutional challenges to adopting more cooperative approaches to participation. These include the need for agency-wide commitment to public participation, clear communication of agency intent for outcomes of participatory processes, and lack of resources to conduct participatory processes.

A number of interviewees identified a need for broader-based commitment to cooperative public participation throughout the various agencies. They emphasized a need for sincerity from *all* agency staff involved in public processes, noting that if some agency representatives are not genuinely interested in learning from the public or show biased points of view, they can undermine any progress others have made towards cooperation. One scientist observed that often field managers recognize they need to engage the public, but they will not be effective unless those with the authority to make decisions (who are typically at higher levels within the agency) are involved in the process. Interviewees acknowledged that using cooperative processes to uncover public interests and values can be “very scary for a person in government, [to go] into things with no preconceived perception of what the outcome will be.” This perception of risk can prevent individuals from adopting new approaches to participation. As one manager described:

It can be foggy how you get from one step to the next. It was like that for me, like I was in a fog, I couldn't see the end. You had to have faith it's getting you forward. . . . [I managed to stick with it] because I have always believed . . . that the public should be empowered in decision-making and implementing. Early on in the process, I recognized this was a method that could allow this to happen. By aligning our management and issues to community issues, we would empower stewardship, empower citizens to implement actions. I was willing to take that risk because it was something I believe in deeply.

Another interviewee noted that publicly acknowledging different viewpoints is a skill that can be uncomfortable to develop. She explained:

It is obvious to invite those who support you [to provide input]. It may be uncomfortable to invite those who are influential but don't necessarily support you. What I have learned is that if you don't invite other views early, there will be detractors later in process. There's a need for, and I'm still developing this, skills in working with people so that this approach is comfortable and successful. It can be a challenge when you're up in front of a group and people say negative things about [your agency], but by including them, the other people who are there see that you are inclusive. There is a big payoff in credibility by a lot of other people watching.

Interviewees also identified misperceptions among the public about agency intent for public participation as a barrier to more cooperative practices. One consultant thought this was especially true when people felt they hadn't been heard in the past. When this was the case, he believed public meetings often enhanced antagonism, rhetoric, and stereotypes, discouraging managers from further engaging with the public. He emphasized the importance of staff training in transparency: providing good information, being clear about expectations, and building relationships. He summarized: “I think people want honesty. They want to know ‘what do you expect of us?’ They want a commitment, ‘how are you going to use our input?’ The parameters need to be articulated or people will be skeptical.” Another interviewee emphasized the importance of building relationships and trust for successful cooperative participation:

What communities are really looking for are relationships. Through relationships they build trust. They all say the only way they can move forward is trust. It can be two years to develop trust. Trust has to be earned—once someone breaks trust, that's it. It always comes back to building long-term relationships and trust.

One interviewee believed that one of the problems facing agencies is that the public often feels that “we know you're in charge, you don't know we're here.” In these instances, this manager explains the importance of showing that you've listened, and that if you don't agree with their solutions you can explain why and can explore other options together. Interviewees acknowledge that allaying public doubts about agency intent also is a process:

Before you ever start formal public participation, you need to interject yourself, or a few people, into the community on their terms. It's personable. You peel layers of the onion away, the public positions, you need to get beneath these. And they do the same with you, they peel away the government façade to get to the reasons you're doing what you do.

Many managers cite lack of funding as an impediment to effective natural resource management planning (Leong and Decker 2005); i.e., they don't have the funding to invest in public participation even if they wanted to. Interviewees had a different perspective: they saw lack of funding as an opportunity to develop partnerships. One manager explained:

Lack of funding leads to inability of the agency to do things by themselves. It becomes a great inventor, leads to solving problems in innovative ways. If you don't have the funding, you have to partner. You get money from partners, and are able to spend their money on your projects. For one project, I had a budget that was too small, I couldn't do it on my own. After building partnerships, I ended up with a 5 for 1 return on the dollar, of flexible money, not money to pay people's salary. But you need open partnerships so that people are able to influence how their money is spent. They are more willing to spend money if they are able to influence how it is spent. Say you don't have money for a project but you have staff. Spend the time, put 1 staff member forward. If each partner has 1 staff member they can devote, with 10 partners suddenly you have 11 people working on a problem where you started with one.

Other interviewees believed it was important to consider the timing of spending limited resources on public participation, stating:

It's better to front-end load. There's an example of a park planning effort that didn't do this and is starting over because it was a failed effort. When this happens, it's harder to recover. You have to go back to the same people and do damage control.

One consultant lamented that many agency supervisors do not recognize that “front-end loading” may save the agency money in the long run. Individuals she had worked with saw the value of a more collaborative approach to public participation, but still framed it as something to try if the agency had the money to spend, rather than something that could save

the agency money in the long run. A number of interviewees noted that more dialogue-based, cooperative approaches to public participation were only adopted after issues had become so contentious that agencies and the public were at an impasse or because courts had ordered more public involvement. One interviewee believed that focusing cooperative public participation efforts earlier, on emerging issues, provided more opportunities to create partnerships. He believed that waiting until issues became disruptive was too late in the process.

**Benefits and barriers**

Negotiating between competitive and cooperative approaches to participation is not an easy task. Interviews with managers and practitioners corroborate findings in the literature that cooperative approaches to public participation can reveal mutual interests between agencies and stakeholders. Such revelation can aid in identifying potential management alternatives that create value by improving the substantive outcome for all parties as well as relationships between them. Interviewees also identified impediments to adopting this approach: an agency preoccupation with adversarial processes; agency emphasis on scientific knowledge over other kinds of knowledge; legal precedents that focus on process criteria of public participation rather than outcome criteria; the ability of stakeholders to utilize political power to make an “end run,” rendering ineffective any collaborative efforts; and the fact that the agency has the final say in the management decisions.

DOI has identified eight principles of participation (Table 1) and notes that most often when participatory processes break down, it is because these basic principles have not been respected (DOI 2005). Interviewees described many of the DOI principles for public participation as essential for a cooperative approach to participation: transparency, ensuring all voices are heard, focusing on public interests and values, valuing relationships, and basing decisions on good information. They also identified constraints to adopting this approach, which corresponded to other principles: agency-wide commitment to public participation, clear communication of agency intent, and lack of resources. Yet, rather than treat components of successful participatory processes as separate principles, interviewees described an underlying public engagement philosophy that interwove the principles. This philosophy is founded on the assumption that the agency and stakeholders are interdependent and share

**Table 1** DOI’s eight principles of public participation (2005).

Establish clear commitment to excellent public participation
Base the level of public participation on the agency’s intent
Be transparent in all actions
Ensure all voices are heard
Focus the process on public interests and values
Value relationships
Base decision-making on good information
Invest the necessary resources in planning public participation

interests. Interviewees indicated that these shared interests are better identified when the agency is open and transparent, honestly wants to learn from and with the public, and takes a proactive long-term approach to relationship building. Interviewees also recognized that this approach can be uncomfortable for managers who are used to a more episodic public input philosophy that fulfills procedural NEPA requirements. Even though managers do not cede ultimate decision-making power, they may feel like they have less control when they take a more cooperative approach to public participation. As one interviewee described:

What I've learned is that you have to manage the process but let go of the outcome—you have to trust the process. Unfortunately I've seen in the past that the agency goes through the process just because they have to, or more often because they don't know what else to do or have already made up their mind. That's deadly, that's where you get into gridlock. The important thing is how to get managers to understand that they should not be uncomfortable with the outcome—don't worry about the preferred alternative, focus on the process. It's a leap of faith that the agency doesn't want to control the alternative. What they don't understand is that participation is not decision-making. The agency still has to make the decision. You can't get to compromise unless you understand issues and trust the process. You need to dissect the issues and put them back together again.

This process of “dissecting the issues and putting them back together again” can only take place if both managers and stakeholders approach public participation as an opportunity for mutual learning and transformations in understanding. This can be achieved through some of the alternate techniques described above, as well as by integrating social science associated with natural resources (e.g., the NPS social science program and the NPS Biological Resource Management Division's human dimensions program) and cultural resources (e.g., the NPS ethnography program and oral history program). Federal land management agencies engaging the public have legal responsibilities not only to include the public, but also for making the final decisions. As such, they are in a position of power relative to the public. If the more powerful party can demonstrate in good faith that they will adopt such a cooperative strategy, stakeholders would have more incentive to do likewise.

Experience from the fields of natural resource management, environmental conflict resolution and planning, and first-hand accounts from practitioners indicate that, in the long run, integrative processes that focus on building relationships to discover shared substantive interests are more likely to lead to fair, efficient, wise, and stable decisions (Susskind and Field 1996; Chess and Purcell 1999; Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000; Chase, Siemer, and Decker 2002; Forester 2009). While letting go of pre-conceived outcomes and trusting the process can be challenging for managers, it also can be powerful and transformative, resulting in unexpected outcomes that satisfy multiple interests and may be more sustainable. As summarized by one interviewee:

The problem is that most people want to make decisions quickly, but sometimes quick decisions take a long time. You will have to keep going back if you don't get it right the first time, but if you get it right the first time, it might last forever.

The federal land managers and practitioners we interviewed recognized the costs of making quick decisions without adequately integrating stakeholder perspectives: the public instead find ways to be heard by blocking implementation. Rather, allocating resources for public participation early on can save time, money, and acrimony later. While it may take longer to reach the final decision, implementation proceeds more quickly. Adoption of this public engagement philosophy by interviewees resulted in the evolution of public involvement from a compliance exercise to lasting decisions and shared stewardship. We hope their experiences will encourage others to explore integrative public involvement processes that can help identify creative management alternatives. As interviewees discussed, this shift in philosophy takes time and commitment, yet the rewards are stewardship solutions that have the potential to last forever.

## Endnote

1. “Stakeholders” are individuals who will be affected by, or will affect, wildlife management (Decker et al. 1996; Decker, Brown, and Siemer 2001). “Impacts” are the socially determined important effects (e.g., ecological, economic, psychological, health and safety, etc.) of events or interactions involving natural resources, humans and resources, and resource management interventions (Riley et al. 2002).

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# ETHNOGRAPHY IN THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE:

PAST LESSONS, PRESENT CHALLENGES, FUTURE PROSPECTS

Jacilee Wray, guest editor

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## Foreword

*Jacilee Wray*

IN 1981, MURIEL (“MIKI”) CRESPI WAS HIRED BY THE CHIEF ANTHROPOLOGIST of the National Park Service (NPS), Douglas H. Scovill, to develop an applied anthropology program for the agency; it was soon to become the NPS ethnography program. The support she received from Jerry L. Rogers, then the NPS associate director for cultural resources, was crucial in getting this burgeoning program recognized.

I first spoke with Crespi in 1990, discussing the Native American relationships management policy, which she had originated in 1987. I learned of her diligence that led to the structure of the NPS ethnography program. She worked for years to create a program that was responsive to the need of NPS and the federal government to work with people who have historic associations with national parks. My colleagues and I created this special issue of *The George Wright Forum* to address the history and utilization of this forward-looking program and the continuing need for it today. In Crespi’s own words:

Two decades ago, the NPS established the applied ethnography program. Since then, the concepts, data, and strategies of cultural anthropology, or ethnography, as the NPS calls it, have helped the agency hear and see what had been typically unheard and unseen. By giving voices to communities and indigenous peoples, and visibility to the resources they value, the discipline has enriched our understanding of heritage by illuminating the places and concerns that have been unknown, but knowable (Crespi 2001).

The first article in the series is a brief administrative history of the program by those who were closely tied to it. I, along with Alexa Roberts, Allison Peña, and Shirley Fiske, all knew Crespi very well and have written this article based on Miki’s own documentation of the program and our personal knowledge of her goals.

David Ruppert’s article discusses NPS’s leadership role among federal agencies in establishing the ethnography program in 1981. He points out that there is a need to revital-

ize the program to meet the growing needs of a changing population and to understand the various cultural communities affiliated with our parks. He also highlights NPS's role in the international arena of heritage preservation, and concludes with some guidance for the future of the program.

Walter R. Echo-Hawk's article, "Under Native American Skies," is an in-depth look at sacred indigenous wisdom learned from the land. America needs to learn how to view the land not as a resource, but with reverence. A vigorous ethnography program would encourage agencies to look for a greater vision: an approach that taps into all disciplines and teaches a greater vision of stewardship. Everything has a spirit, writes Echo-Hawk, and this ethic should include indigenous wisdom and an understanding that "revels in Mother Earth's remarkable ability to support life."

The article by Michael J. Evans focuses on one unit of the national park system, Pipestone National Monument. This park is very important to Native Americans, and has specific legislation that allows for the tribes to make pipes from the catlinite (red clay) found there. Evans' paper discusses further ties various tribes have to the park, beyond the pipestone quarry, and how information obtained through several ethnographic studies assists park management in a multitude of ways.

Not all traditionally associated peoples (TAPs) are Native Americans. Jenny Masur has written an article on TAPs other than Native Americans to demonstrate the relevance of a workable and working definition, and the interestingly diverse cultural histories the national parks represent in these peoples' historic and ethnographic landscapes.

Barbara A. Cellarius has written a concise article on how an ethnographic overview and assessment is carried out for multiple traditionally associated groups, and the products and benefits such studies can provide to a park, using Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve as an example. The benefits are not only in establishing a baseline of knowledge about TAPs, but also in creating partnerships and enhancing government-to-government relations.

David J. Krupa's paper clearly demonstrates the importance of ethnography in carrying out subsistence requirements under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA)—a concept of park management practice entirely different from that followed in the lower 48 states, but one from which the Park Service can learn much about community involvement and sharing resources.

Erin McPherson and Kat Byerly have produced an exceptional article on the evaluation performed by the National Parks Conservation Association's Center for the State of the Parks on the condition of ethnographic resources in the national park system. Based on park interviews and a substantial amount of research, their article highlights the importance of the ethnography program, the lack of understanding of the program on the part of managers, and the lack of its use by managers.

Our series of articles is preceded in this issue by Jerry L. Rogers' National Park Service Centennial Essay, which touches upon program history but aims toward the future. Rogers was there with Doug Scovill to support Miki Crespi and see that the ethnography program succeeded. In retirement, he continues to strive to keep the program alive and progressive.

Rogers draws on work done by the Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation Committee of the National Parks Second Century Commission, whose report was released in September 2009.

As professional anthropologists and ethnographers, we must preserve for today's people and for future generations the lifeways of traditionally associated peoples. In his keynote address to the First World Conference on Cultural Parks in 1984, NPS Director Russell E. Dickenson addressed the future he saw:

[L]and managers and professionals must acknowledge their roles in a world system that includes native and other localized groups, each of whom depends upon the others to create and protect resources that all value, each in their own way (Dickenson 1984:4).

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# Creating Policy for the National Park Service: Addressing Native Americans and Other Traditionally Associated Peoples

*Jacilee Wray, Alexa Roberts, Allison Peña, and Shirley J. Fiske*

IN 1987, A DOCUMENT TITLED “NATIVE AMERICAN RELATIONSHIPS MANAGEMENT POLICY” was released for public comment by means of a *Federal Register* notice. This document was precedent-setting *because* it articulated the National Park Service’s (NPS’s) responsibility for addressing issues involving Native Americans and national parks. For the first time, NPS personnel were provided with direction to effectively recognize and consult with Native Americans who had connections to parklands.

Muriel (“Miki”) Crespi, the NPS chief ethnographer, finalized this groundbreaking document. Portions of this policy were included in the 1988 NPS *Management Policies* to formalize the agency’s official position regarding Native Americans, which became the catalyst for the NPS ethnography program.

This essay focuses on the development of the NPS ethnography program, taken from Crespi’s own documentation (Crespi 2002) and the recollections of the authors, who are anthropologists employed within and outside the NPS. It is a retrospective of how Crespi came to write that policy and develop further practices within NPS regarding not only Native Americans, but other people traditionally associated with park lands whose multiple heritages are now increasingly recognized and interpreted in NPS units throughout the USA. We conclude optimistically that the program will be re-energized in the 21st century to preserve for future generations the resources important to people traditionally associated with park lands.

In the late 1960s, two sweeping pieces of legislation—the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 1969) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA; 1966)—required federal agencies to actively seek public involvement in agency decision-making processes for natural and cultural resource management. NHPA authorized the National Register of Historic Places that, in turn, provided further impetus for the emerging ethnography program. In 1978, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) was enacted. This act reaffirmed American Indians’ rights to exercise traditional religious practices. While NPS began to consolidate its many disparate policies into a single document, Crespi and others found that there was “no explicit attention to local communities or the public in general” in NPS guidance. Further, “American Indians, who are culturally and historically connected to over 40% of the national park units, were only mentioned a few times, mostly in regard to handicraft sales and exhibit materials” (Crespi 2002:32).

Federal agencies responded to AIRFA with a review of their policies concerning management of resources with cultural significance. If existing policies were found to be inadequate, agencies were required to formulate new policies for American Indian access to and ceremonial use of traditional spiritual or ceremonial places on federal lands. In 1980, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) called for consultation between representatives of federal agencies and the Alaska Natives whose lives would be affected by creating new parks and preserves in that state—in effect requiring the agencies to address living peoples. These legislative drivers for policy change (NEPA, NHPA, AIRFA, ANILCA) led to the creation of a position of cultural anthropologist in the NPS Program and Policy Development Office in Washington, D.C.

In October 1981, Doug Scovill, then chief anthropologist in Washington, hired a chief ethnographer: Miki Crespi (Figure 1). She was given two tasks: one was to complete the Native American Relationships Management Policy that had been started in 1978 with the implementation of AIRFA, and the other was to design, initiate, nurture, and develop a program in applied anthropology (Crespi 2002).

The introduction of the ethnography program responded to the need for guidance in implementing various aspects of the relatively new pieces of legislation. Since NPS did not have any agency-specific legislation requiring the use of cultural anthropology, Crespi looked to NEPA, which instructed federal agencies to pay attention to the sociocultural environment; it also reminded agencies of their explicit obligation to incorporate consultations with federally recognized American Indian tribes into the planning process (Crespi 2003:23). Additional justification came from AIRFA, which instructed federal agencies to report back to Congress within one year on their new programs, policies, and procedures for working with American Indians whose sacred places had been incorporated into federal holdings.

What became evident to Crespi was the need to make NPS more responsive to and aware of the broader range of human communities who place cultural significance on resources within national parks, beyond the conventional associations of famous individuals or military battles. Crespi sought to democratize NPS management decisions by directing its attention to people who were “traditionally associated” with park lands and resources and to provide them with a voice through planning and consultations. She envisioned managers making informed decisions based on knowledge of people whose interests and cultural

**Figure 1** Miki Crespi at Aspen, Colorado. Photo by Shirley Fiske.



and historical connections to park lands and resources had not been visible before (Crespi 2003:31). Crespi discovered that even though NEPA and NHPA directed agencies to involve the public, NPS managers were reluctant to consult outside agency boundaries (Crespi 2002:25). Managers tended to think of park-associated people as either (a) connected to the archaeology of past cultures, or (b) visitors to parks. Instead, Crespi insisted on focusing on contemporary living communities with histories, cultural identities, spiritual values, and symbolism attached to park landscapes, buildings, sites, and even natural resources with cultural value.

Managers had to be “flexible, and responsive to external factors, especially as information enter[ed] from outside the system, through Native American consultations and studies of traditional resource users. Rather than rely exclusively on the established chain of command and organizational processes, decision-making necessarily becomes more democratized, user-oriented, and intricate, as data on contemporary people and behavioral systems join laws, regulations, and policies in driving management choices” (Crespi 2003:31).

The chief ethnographer’s role was to include anthropological approaches in NPS policies, and Crespi’s understanding of and commitment to that role gave her a broad vision in creating the ethnography program. She knew that she needed to encourage both *internal* and *external* cultural changes and alliances in order to promote the program within NPS. In reflections on her career written shortly before her death in April 2003, she described the major challenges and focus of her efforts. As she described it (2002:28), it was critical to the success of the program to:

- Create an identity for cultural anthropology—demonstrate its viability as a social science—and legitimize cultural anthropology in terms the agency would understand;
- Demonstrate its value to parks so that decision-makers, planners, and managers would perceive the need for it;
- Convince NPS associate directors and other top management of ethnography’s value and benefits to the agency, and get higher-level support so that budget allocations and formulations, and new policies, would be responsive;
- Get external allies: work closely with professional organizations, such as the Society for Applied Anthropology and American Anthropological Association for congressional support of the program; and
- Institutionalize planning and policy documents for ethnography.

Crespi went about creating a team of people within the National Park Service hierarchy who were supportive or could be supportive of what she was attempting, such as her supervisor, Doug Scovill, and his superior, Associate Director for Cultural Resources Jerry Rogers, the museum planning staff, the American Indian Liaison Office, the NPS Budget Office, the NPS Office of Planning, and the Office of the Solicitor. Crespi needed to demonstrate that the ethnography program was not a marginal program but one that has great relevance and importance to the NPS mission (Crespi 2002:28).

The mandate for ethnography needed to be *institutionalized*. Crespi used this word frequently and understood what it meant with respect to NPS management policies and guid-



ance. Crespi ensured that the policies spelled out the agency's requirements for attention to contemporary living people and to carrying out ethnographic research. Additionally, she ensured that NPS regional offices and some parks had anthropologists on staff. By the mid-1990s, almost every region had hired a regional anthropologist, as had a few park units (Figure 2). Crespi also built an *external team* to advocate for the program's importance on Capitol Hill and with top agency management by engaging national and local anthropological associations who were able to provide professional academic support for an applied anthropology program in the NPS (Fiske 2004).

Such support was forthcoming as early as 1987, when Theodore Downing, president of the Society for Applied Anthropology, wrote to NPS Director William Penn Mott, stating that Mott had "wisely determined that ethnographic research is a practical way to achieve a holistic perspective on the place of the National Park Service within the complexities of American culture and its subcultures" (Downing 1987).

The decade following the release of the 1988 NPS *Management Policies* brought a sea-change with respect to recognition of American Indians and other traditional groups in park management decisions. The 1988 policies mention Native Americans 35 times in reference to access to sacred areas and input into decision-making. Other innovations in the policy lexicon included frequent references to "local communities," "park-associated groups," and "contemporary people" (Crespi 2003:31).

The passage of the Native America Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in 1990 became a major impetus for NPS to conduct research on and consultation with American Indian tribes, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians. The act created the need to identify consulting parties and their "cultural affiliation," or the relationship of shared group identity that can be reasonably traced historically or prehistorically between a present-day

**Figure 2** Crespi and her ethnography staff in 1994. Top row (l-r): Brent Stoffle, Rosemary Suec, Dave Ruppert, Tim Cochrane. Middle row: Crespi, Ed Natay, Mike Evans, Becky Joseph, Phil Holmes, Fred York. Bottom row: Herbert Anungazuk, Helen Phillips, Jenny Masur, Allison Peña, Jacilee Wray.



Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization and an earlier identifiable group (25 USC §3001[2]). A *cultural affiliation study* is used by park anthropologists to acquire this information so that establishing links between present-day individuals and the remains of deceased people can be made to carry out repatriation. This is a crucial and time-consuming requirement of regional and park ethnographers (Crespi 2003:62).

Anthropologists must conduct credible applied anthropological studies that produce salient data for park management (Crespi 2003:38). One method used by the ethnography program to assist parks is the *rapid ethnographic assessment*, which can provide planning and site-specific information in an expedited manner for developing culturally informed alternatives. This study type can be used to respond to immediate needs for cultural information; for example, late in a planning process when a park realizes that it is lacking the knowledge necessary to make an informed decision, or when park interpretive programs need to address ethnographically meaningful places and customary uses people wish to have interpreted to visitors (Crespi 2003:62). The longer, more detailed *ethnographic overview and assessment* combines a literature review with ethnographic field work to provide parks with in-depth information about the relationships between park-associated cultural groups and park resources. Relationships may be based on treaties, traditional or oral histories, long-term residential patterns, and so forth, and resources with cultural value may include plants and animals, landscape features, archaeological sites, historic buildings, sacred places, and others. The goal of such assessments is to identify the values that park-associated cultural groups place on park resources and help the park make informed decisions about how to manage those resources, taking into consideration cultural knowledge, concerns, and sensitivities (Crespi 2003:62).

Early in its development, the ethnography program defined as “ethnographic resources” those sites, structures, objects, cultural and natural landscapes, and human dimensions that would be defined by contemporary people as being meaningful, significant, and crucial to their sense of their own past and who they are. The term refers to places and objects that could not be fully understood if they were disengaged from the people who made them or used them. “[W]e came up with this concept called ethnographic resources ... those sites, structures, objects, those tangible resources that are traditionally valued by present-day people because they contributed to their history and their life. So ... an archeological resource to which the Hopi traveled and where they pray is not just an archeological resource, we call it an ethnographic resource because ... present-day people value it in special ways and the park needs to have their attention drawn to that human dimension” (Crespi 2002:42). The concept of “ethnographic resources” piggybacked on existing, and familiar, concepts such as “archaeological resources,” “historic resources,” and “natural resources.” It was intended to bring visibility to the human dimensions of sites, structures, objects, and landscapes (Crespi 2003:42).

The 2001 NPS *Management Policies* included the new definition for park associated groups: *traditionally associated peoples*, a term which includes those cultural groups and people who have a connection to a park that predates the park’s establishment, whose association with the park has endured at least two generations, and to whom the park’s resources are essential for their continued identity as culturally distinct peoples. The goal was “to high-

light those people who had a long-term association with the park resources and who the NPS needed to seek out—not only American Indians but people who have traditionally lived in and around Parks . . . such as Hispanic Americans and African Americans with close connections to parks” (Crespi 2002:39–40). This language called park managers’ attention to traditionally associated peoples who might have legitimate concerns about the impacts that NPS actions could have on community lifeways, histories, and religions (Crespi 2003:27).

An important measure of change between the 1988 and the most recent (2006) editions of the NPS *Management Policies* is the increase in references to consultation with traditionally associated peoples, ranging from the informal exchange of information to the formal anthropological fieldwork necessary to understand the effects of proposed agency decisions and management actions on a group’s culture, relationships to culturally significant sites, and places with cultural meaning. The 2006 policies also reinforce Native American rights to pursue traditional cultural practices at parks.<sup>1</sup> The policies now acknowledge that special contemporary relationships exist between the integrity of park resources and the integrity of contemporary tribal life, which requires consultation when Park Service actions might impinge upon them. Concomitantly, NPS obligates itself to protecting resources in ways that reflect “informed concern” for the contemporary people and cultural systems traditionally associated with them (NPS 2005; Crespi 2003:20).

With the implementation of the Government Performance and Results Act (1993), managers were held accountable for their expenditures of public dollars by reporting annual measurable results of their management activities. The ethnography program quantified the results of its research and resources management efforts through a servicewide database called the Ethnographic Resources Inventory (ERI). The ERI was a tool developed to track the identification and management of ethnographic resources and document park-level progress in managing ethnographic resources. Parks found this resource database challenging to populate and maintain, however. While the database adequately tracked resources, it could not be used to document less tangible outcomes that the ethnography program was designed to promote, such as developing relationships and conducting systematic research.

Since the development and implementation of the ERI remained unfunded and it was not being effectively used in the field, its use was discontinued, contributing to a perception that the management of ethnographic resources could simply be accommodated by other existing resource management programs such as archaeology, history, and museum collections. As a result, the ethnography program declined. Since April 2003, when Miki Crespi lost her third battle with cancer, the position of chief ethnographer has remained unfilled.

In its 2001 report to NPS, *Rethinking the National Parks for the 21st Century*, the National Park System Advisory Board recommended that the agency “nurture living cultures and communities,” echoing a vision that Crespi had throughout her NPS career:

We are coming to understand that parks become richer when we see them through the cultures of people whose ancestors once lived there. . . . Throughout the national park system, this kind of knowledge may be lost as aging bearers of traditional culture die without the opportunity to fully share their deep understanding of the nature and spirit of place. Place

names, migration routes, harvesting practices, prayers and songs may be lost forever. These irreplaceable connections should be nurtured and conserved for future generations. . . . National Park Service's relationships with indigenous and local people must become steeped in understanding, patience, and mutual respect earned over time (National Park System Advisory Board 2001:22).

To address these and other recommendations, the NPS National Leadership Council met at Canyon de Chelly National Monument in May 2003, just one month after Crespi's death. There, the NPS's highest level of leadership was able to spend a week considering some of the fundamental issues to which she devoted her career. Indeed, many of the NPS's guiding principles at this important moment in its history embrace the National Park System Advisory Board's vision: to reach beyond our boundaries in promoting connections between parks and diverse communities, strengthen diverse representation in the NPS workforce, make parks relevant in the course of rapidly changing national demographics, and help instill in youth the values for preserving land, resources, and the lessons of history.

As stated by Ken Burns and Dayton Duncan in their documentary series *National Parks: America's Best Idea*:

[T]he story of the national parks . . . is much more than the story of the most stunning landscapes and sacred places in our country. It is the story of people: people from every conceivable background—rich and poor; famous and unknown; soldiers and scientists; natives and newcomers; idealists, artists, and entrepreneurs. . . . [The national parks] remain a refuge for human beings seeking to replenish their spirit: geographies of memory and hope where countless American families have formed an intimate connection to their land and then passed it to their children (Burns and Duncan 2009).

In recent guidance about the use of the landmark film series, Acting NPS Director Dan Wenk reminded park managers that “every park was someone's home. The creation of parks was influenced by Native Americans, African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and Asian-Americans. The stories of [these] and other minorities already exist in national parks and need only to be discovered or told.”

As the National Park Service prepares to celebrate its first one hundred years and position itself for the next, how will NPS discover these stories? What tools will we use to understand the deeply embedded cultural values attached to park lands and resources by generation upon generation of the diverse American cultural landscape? How will we steward resources with an informed knowledge of the many layers of cultural meaning they contain? How will we foster a connection between park lands and the complex cultural fabric of future generations? We believe that a re-energized, redesigned ethnography program is necessary to help accomplish these goals. With its emphasis on an understanding of cultural values, institutions, and complexities, the ethnography program may be the National Park Service's greatest asset in helping to develop systematic approaches to embracing a diverse America and connecting it with national parks for the next century and beyond.

## Acknowledgments

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## Endnote

1. The 2006 policies state that the AIRFA regulations (36 CFR 2.1d) are soon to be revised, and that NPS “policy is evolving in this area” (NPS 2005: §5.3.5.3.1). The authors are optimistic that the Park Service will pursue this “evolution” and that the regulation will be changed in the near future so that superintendents will have the latitude to permit Native Americans to gather specific sacred or traditionally utilized plants.

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# Rethinking Ethnography in the National Park Service

*David Ruppert*

HENRY LEWIS, AN ANTHROPOLOGIST FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA, once observed that within academia anthropology as a discipline ranks closely with departments of religious studies and the dramatic arts, but without “occupying the moral high ground of the former or having the entertainment value of the latter.” Anthropology’s major contribution, Lewis maintained, is found in its perspective and in its examination of our own culture’s assumptions (Lewis 1992:15).<sup>1</sup>

The National Park Service (NPS) ethnography program (cultural anthropology) was established in 1981 primarily to consult with traditional and/or ethnically distinct communities and document park places and resources that are culturally significant. A logical by-product of this work, in keeping with Lewis’ notion, is an exercise in “compare and contrast”: comparing the agency’s assumptions about what is significant with the assumptions of significance found in traditional communities. Hence, there is a need to understand our own assumptions enough to indicate where they differ from the communities we serve. Simply put, the program’s establishment meant that the agency had determined that there was value in finding how others, in an often overlooked diverse citizenry, viewed and valued the places and resources—views often different from those of the agency. An understanding of these cultural similarities and differences would conceivably help park managers, at the very least, to understand an often neglected element of the context within which they must make decisions: the local living cultural context. It was hoped that a better understanding of these NPS and community similarities and differences could lead to constructive resolutions to on-going and potential management conflicts.

## Early leadership

At the time, the use of anthropological methods to understand these diverse perspectives was a novel approach among federal land-managing agencies. In this regard, the National Park Service took a leading role. “Cultural programs” in agencies primarily meant archaeology or history (as they still do). But social events in the country brought more attention to contemporary matters. The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s brought Americans face-to-face with the effects of denying basic human rights to neglected communities. During the early 1970s, the American Indian Movement gained attention with their occupation of Wounded Knee, South Dakota. This incident focused attention on the rights of the country’s



indigenous peoples and their grievances. The nation was beginning to understand that cultural diversity was not an abstraction: it had social, legal, and moral consequences that could not be ignored.

Federal land management agencies were not immune to the increasing pressures to recognize local community needs and cultural values. While the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA; PL 89-665) was important in addressing the local as well as the national significance of cultural places, the ethnography program was the National Park Service's direct response to the increasing demands from cultural groups lacking a voice in resource management issues. The program was established on the heels of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA), passed by Congress as a joint resolution in 1978 (PL 95-341). This law made clear the already existing religious freedoms for Indian peoples—but freedoms that had been denied largely as a result of national and local policies derived from underlying cultural assumptions (i.e., misunderstandings and prejudice) of the dominant culture (Andrus 1979; Keller and Turek 1998; Spence 1999; Burton 2002). AIRFA challenged federal agencies to examine their management policies to determine if they placed barriers to the free exercise of Indian religion. Key individuals within the Park Service (including Jerry Rogers, a contributor to this volume) understood that a cursory examination of existing policies did not go far enough for a land and resource management agency such as NPS. Indigenous peoples had consistently indicated their desire to access places and resources within parks to conduct religious ceremonies and to have a voice in the management of lands that were so important to their cultural heritage. Understanding these requests for access to specific places (sometimes solitary or exclusive access), as well as to botanical, biological, and mineral resources, was necessary to find ways to accommodate American Indian needs while at the same time preserving these same places and resources for future generations. Documenting these culturally significant resources (later to be classed as “ethnographic resources”) and conveying their importance to park management became a major goal of the ethnography program.

The establishment of the program was also coincident with the passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (PL 96-487). This law doubled the amount of land in the national park system and provided subsistence rights to rural residents of the state. In time, the ethnography program provided vital social and cultural (and resource harvest) information directly related to subsistence hunting and gathering rights. Elsewhere, the program's leadership role expanded beyond aboriginal communities to focus on the perspectives of non-Native culturally distinct communities having close affiliations with specific sites or parks. Studies of traditional ranchers in Montana and Wyoming, Hispanic communities in the Southwest, African American communities in the East, and fishing communities on coasts of the US provided important insights into resource management plans, public education and interpretive programs, as well as day-to-day management decision-making within parks.

### **Leadership lost**

The ethnography program grew in the early 1990s to include positions in regional offices



and in a few parks around the country. However, since that time the program has largely remained static or has diminished. The position of chief ethnographer has remained unfilled since 2003 and the ethnography program support positions in the Washington office have been left vacant. Consequently, the program's profile has faded and there exists no national leadership to meet existing and emerging needs and challenges. This lessening of the program's profile is not due to fewer demands on agency resources from Indian tribes or other distinct cultural communities. On the contrary, these demands have increased.

The 1992 amendments to the NHPA and the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA; PL 101-601) increased agency responsibilities to consult with Indian tribes throughout the country. Law, regulations, executive and secretarial orders, departmental memorandums, and specific court decisions have highlighted the need for such consultation on a wide range of issues related to tribal interests and cultural perspectives.<sup>2</sup> In 1990, the publication of National Register Bulletin no. 38 (on traditional cultural properties, or TCPs), brought much-needed attention to the full consideration of local community values placed on sites and how these sites contributed to community identity—and the need to consult with community members (and not simply agency professionals) to determine if properties were eligible to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places (Parker and King 1990; King 2009).

There is an increasing need to understand how differing cultural perspectives affect parks and park visitation. Research indicates that ethnic and racial minorities are virtually absent from the major parks in the system. Efforts have been made to engage these populations by establishing park units that directly reflect minority history. But the fact remains that visitation by minorities in most park units is low relative to their numbers in the general population. Goldsmith (1994) provided visitation figures in the 1990s illustrating this point: although the proportion of African Americans in the general national population is 12%, only 0.4% of Yosemite National Park's visitors arriving by car and 3.8% of those arriving by bus are African American. At Grand Canyon National Park, the percentage of African American visitors equals that of Latino visitors (3.5%). Similar figures were reported by Floyd (2001) a few years later. Low figures for Hispanic/Latino visitation should be viewed against the fact that population figures for Latinos in the general population have increased dramatically (see Fry 2008). More recent studies have reported that general (not park-specific) visitation is more evenly distributed, but the great majority of visitors are still non-Hispanic whites (NPCA Diversity Task Force Report 2009). All studies point to the need for more research to address the issue of under-representation of minority population visitation. If NPS desires to engage these growing minority populations in the new century, there needs to be greater emphasis on studying the multiple underlying factors that presently limit such engagement. The ethnography program, along with other social science disciplines, can contribute significantly to this effort.

### **Ethnography and international concerns**

Establishment of the national parks in the United States is often referred to as the country's "best idea." The rest of the world seems to agree. Governments, often in partnership with

international conservation organizations and private land owners, have established parks, preserves, and protected areas at an astonishing speed. As reported by West and Brockington (2006, citing Chape et al. 2005) by 2005 there were more than 100,000 protected areas in the world covering more than 12% of the world's land surface—over 20 million square kilometers. These numbers continue to grow.

Efforts to preserve areas for wildlife protection or protect general biodiversity should be applauded. But the rapid proliferation of parks and protected areas around the world has raised the issue of impacts to local, indigenous human communities caught up in the web of these efforts. Anthropologists, rural sociologists, rural development personnel, and other social scientists have all watched as conflicts have grown between large-scale conservation activities and local indigenous communities. Indigenous peoples themselves have voiced concern. As many as 120 representatives from indigenous, mobile, and local communities converged on the 2003 World Park Congress in Durban, South Africa, to express the need for the international conservation community to pay more attention to their perspectives and needs when protected areas are established (Brosius 2004). The imposition of Western-style conservation philosophy and policy is not always consistent with local community cultural, subsistence, or economic needs. At stake is not only the livelihood of communities, but the integrity of their traditions—their living cultures. While the world's focus has been on the preservation of biodiversity, the effort to assist affected communities to preserve their traditions and cultures—if they choose to do so—has been neglected.

Cultural anthropologist Mac Chapin has called on international conservation organizations to pay more attention to ongoing and potential conflicts between biodiversity conservation efforts and the needs of local indigenous communities (Chapin 2004). Since the publication of Chapin's work, those involved in international conservation efforts have turned more attention to this issue and are making efforts to more fully understand and consider local indigenous cultural perspectives.<sup>3</sup>

This call to understand the differences in perspectives of cultural significance between agencies and communities mirrors the early mandate given to the ethnography program within the NPS. At a time when the volume of the discourse on these issues has been rising, the voice of the NPS has diminished—or has been altogether silent. In many ways NPS led the field when it came to determining the impacts of preservation policy on traditional communities. Today, it is a follower and has largely become disengaged from this increasingly worldwide important issue.

## **Conclusion**

The social and cultural pressures that gave rise to an ethnography program in NPS have not diminished. On the local and national levels these pressures have increased with new legislation, regulation, policy, and guidance. Changing demographics in the new century will give rise to the need for new strategies to address the needs of growing minority populations. These populations presently are under-represented in the visitation to parks, and NPS will need to understand the differing cultural perspectives that affect visitation rates and public support for the agency's mission. For these reasons alone there is a need to revitalize the

existing ethnography program. On the international scene, the conversation NPS began in the late 1970s and early 1980s concerning preservation efforts and their impact on indigenous and traditional communities has only increased. Parks and protected areas in countries outside the United States and Europe are promoted by major conservation groups and established by some governments with limited capacity to manage these areas—or to deal with conflicts with resident minority communities. The long experience of the Park Service, through its various programs, including the ethnography program, has much to offer and should become engaged in this issue.

Henry Lewis' assessment of the place of cultural anthropology within academia can be mirrored in an assessment of the ethnography program's place within the National Park Service. Cultural anthropology within the Park Service works with contemporary cultural issues, but it also works with traditional communities and their use of, and the value they give to, places and natural resources. Ethnography is a social science methodology that, within NPS, investigates links between community cultural values and park natural and cultural resources. Consequently, in a practical way, ethnography actually resides in some liminal space between the cultural and natural resource programs. Efforts to re-establish or revitalize the program should consider the advantages of interdisciplinary work.

Though the ethnography program's profile has been diminished in recent years, there is now an opportunity to rethink the role of the program within the agency. With this in mind, the following list is a set of suggested tasks that can easily be undertaken to rethink the program's strengths and weakness and to maximize the contribution it can make to the work of the National Park Service.

1. Fill the chief ethnographer position with a person qualified in the field and who also possesses strong leadership skills. This position has been vacant since 2003. This vacancy has left the entire program, in the parks and in other agencies, without national program leadership.
2. Develop a long-term (ten-year) strategic plan for the ethnography program to achieve specific goals and address changes in national, regional, and park priorities and needs.
3. Fill vacant ethnographer positions within the ethnography program in WASO (the NPS central office in Washington, D.C.). These positions have been vacant since 2007.
4. Position the ethnography program on an equal footing with all other cultural and natural resource programs.
5. Develop standard documentation guidelines for ethnographic resource research results and publications (including an easy-to-use database consistent with NPS data standards).
6. Identify and establish standard measures of program accomplishments and staff performance.
7. Develop several pilot research projects in various parts of the country that are carefully planned to be interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary in character to better serve all aspects of park resource planning and management.

8. Evaluate ethnography, NAGPRA, and tribal liaison functions and find productive ways to establish partnerships, leading to cross-program products and efficiencies.
9. Ensure that the ethnography program works with the social science program to deal with the rapidly changing demographics of the American population, as emphasized in the report of the National Parks Second Century Commission.
10. Partner with the NPS Office of International Affairs on issues that relate to the increasing attention being given to indigenous peoples and protected areas in other countries.

## Endnotes

1. Henry T. Lewis' work focused on the impact on the environment by cultural activities of indigenous populations in North America and in Australia. Of special interest was how the aboriginal use of fire affected changes in local and regional environments. His research and writings focused on gaining a greater understanding of indigenous ecological knowledge, and on indigenous technological knowledge—knowledge that is based on traditional ways to manipulate and shape local or regional environments. This work has been continued and expanded by more recent researchers (see Anderson 2005; Berkes 2008).
2. The relevant laws are those just mentioned—AIRFA, NHPA, and NAGPRA—along with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA; 40 CFR 1500). Relevant court cases include *Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association* and *Bear Lodge Multiple Use Ass'n v. Babbitt*, 175 F.3d 814 (10th Cir. 1999). Executive and other orders include Executive Order no. 13175, "Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments," 2000; Executive Order no. 13007, "Indian Sacred Sites," 1996; Executive Order no. 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," 1994; [Interior] Secretarial Order no. 3206 ("American Indian Tribe Rights, Federal-Tribal Trust Responsibilities, and the Endangered Species Act," 1997); National Register Bulletin no. 38; and NPS *Management Guidelines*. Most recently, see NPS Director's Draft Order no. 53, "Special Park Uses."
3. For an extensive review of this issue and other related issues see West, Igoe, and Brockington 2006.

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# Under Native American Skies

*Walter R. Echo-Hawk, Jr.*

THE LAND CAN SPEAK TO THOSE WHO LISTEN. The stories it tells are about the people—their origins, struggles, values, and beliefs. The songs and histories that it whispers are often profound, ancient, or can take on sacred meaning. Sometimes, the tragic stories are not pretty, in haunting places such as Sand Creek, the Washita River and other massacre sites, or places where injustice took place. The land also tells the sacred stories of the birds, animals, plants, and the natural phenomena that comprise human habitats. The lessons learned from the land are what give us our identity and make us fully human. Mother Earth will continue to shape society and nurture the human spirit, until modern man finally exits the natural world altogether and retreats into man-made environments; and many are already upon the path to that “Brave New World” charted by urban dwellers living in secular industrialized landscapes during the scientific age. Their worldview contrasts sharply with the cosmology of Native peoples who reside in indigenous habitats embedded in the natural world. The indigenous worldviews of the world’s surviving hunting, fishing, and gathering cultures have much to offer to nations that are searching for a land ethic in the twenty-first century, but those wisdom traditions have been largely forgotten, dismissed as “primitive,” disparaged as “inferior,” or demonized by the modern world.

In the United States, the federal government is the largest landowner, followed somewhere near the top by the many indigenous American Indian and Alaska Native nations, who own over sixty million acres. Indian reservation territory often borders federal enclaves; neighboring tribal communities can have sacred sites or cultural resources under federal management, and hold treaty or subsistence rights to the use of public lands and waters for hunting, fishing, or gathering purposes. As landowners and stewards, Indian tribes and federal land managing agencies demonstrate their “land ethic” to the rest of the nation through their land use practices, actions, and policies. In that capacity, they necessarily play important roles in shaping how the American public views the land and how we, as a modern industrialized nation, should comport ourselves with the humans, fish, birds, animals, and plants that inhabit the natural world, and the natural world itself.

A clear “land ethic” is sorely needed. Without it, our modern society cannot summon the political will to address the environmental problems that threaten our existence. A land ethic helps humans lead a sustainable existence, as every civilization must. It is also a key ingredient to social change, for without a land ethic, the American people cannot fully mature from a nation of immigrants and settlers recovering from a rapacious frontier history of Manifest Destiny and stride toward a more just culture that has adapted to the land and

incorporates valuable indigenous knowledge and values of its Native peoples into the social fabric. This social evolution is a natural healing and adaptation process followed by immigrant populations in colonized lands. In the post-colonial era, they shed the trappings of conquerors and the mind-set of colonists found in “settler states” and resolve to become more “native” to place.

A land ethic has been hard to achieve in the United States. In 1948, Aldo Leopold, the influential ecologist, forester, and father of public wildlife management, lamented: “There is as yet no ethic dealing with man’s relation to land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it.”<sup>1</sup> Planting the seeds for that ethic, Leopold urged society to decolonize the way we look at the land and evolve a land ethic as the social product of a mature society. He predicted that such an ethic will fundamentally change our role from “conquerors” of the land, and the animals and plants which grow on it, to becoming members of a biotic land-community that co-exists on the same land:

In human history, we have learned (I hope), that the conqueror role is eventually self-defeating. Why? Because it is implicit in such a role that the conqueror knows, *ex cathedra*, just what makes the [land] tick, and just what and who is valuable, and what and who is worthless. . . . It always turns out that he knows neither, and this is why his conquests eventually defeat themselves.

Unfortunately, Leopold’s land ethic did not take root in the 20th century. To be sure, encouraging progress was made with the passage of watershed public land laws, conservation statutes, and environmental legislation. This body of law reflects changing social values toward the end of the century. However, old habits die hard.

There are several reasons why a land ethic has not yet taken root. For most of American history, the United States has looked upon the land as a conqueror, as noted by Leopold. It fought and vigorously colonized Indian land from 1776 well into the twentieth century. That legacy is firmly embedded in our minds, legal institutions, economy, and notions of race. We have the minds, hearts, ears, and eyes of settlers, and we romanticize the American past through movies, dime novels, school books, and song. The institution of slavery was abolished and discrimination against African Americans is no longer romanticized, because Americans take those issues seriously. By contrast, little buckaroos still play “cowboys and Indians,” while grown-ups disparage the American Indian race for entertainment at sporting events.

Do we still view ourselves as cowboys, conquerors, and colonizers? Everyone is familiar with the rapacious frontier history, as Manifest Destiny swept the continent during the 19th century. Guided by the legal doctrines of “discovery” and “conquest” espoused by the Supreme Court in *Johnson v. McIntosh* (1823), the country appropriated Indian land and brushed aside the indigenous peoples in a few short decades.<sup>2</sup> During the colonization period, there was no such thing as “conservation” or “environmental protection,” and most land managing agencies did not exist. Millions of wild animals were slaughtered to near-extinction and indigenous plant communities disappeared as steel plows were pulled across the land.



The nation began the 20th century as a colonizing power at the zenith of the Age of Imperialism. It ruled a far-flung empire comprising American colonies around the world, including Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Panama, the Virgin Islands, Micronesia, parts of China, the Wake Islands, Midway Island, Santo Domingo, and the territories of Hawaii and Alaska. At home, Indian tribes were treated like colonies—that is, as colonized subjects without the rights of citizens, ruled by the “plenary power” of Congress without judicial review, as explained by the Supreme Court in *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock* (1903).<sup>3</sup> In 1955, the Supreme Court still looked at Indian land through the eyes of a conqueror. It upheld an enormous government timber sale in the Tlingit homeland in Southeast Alaska that would clear-cut a vast indigenous habitat necessary to support the Indians’ hunting, fishing, and gathering existence.<sup>4</sup> The court tersely explained that the government may confiscate aboriginal land without compensating the Indians under the doctrine of raw conquest:

Every American schoolboy knows that the savage tribes of this continent were deprived of their ancestral ranges by force and that, even when the Indians ceded millions of acres by treaty in return for blankets, food and trinkets, it was not a sale but the conqueror’s will that deprived them of their land.<sup>5</sup>

Over fifty years later, Alaska Governor Sarah Palin fervently chanted the mantra of the conqueror—“Drill, baby, drill!” and “Mine, baby, mine!”—hoping that it would carry her to the vice presidency in 2008.<sup>6</sup>

Even many professional foresters who followed in Leopold’s footsteps lost sight of his ideals in their stewardship of the public lands, as they fell under the sway of agency big-wigs in recent administrations. This is painfully visible in the US Forest Service’s shoddy treatment of Native American holy places, which continues to this very day.<sup>7</sup> To many agency politicians, the natural world must be quantified only for its resource value to the “conquerors” (to use Leopold’s term). By contrast, the Native experience on the land stands in opposition to that mind-set. It teaches that some places are holy ground, we have important relatives in the animal and plant kingdoms, and humans must cooperate with the natural world to survive. These ideals are certainly not Native American “quirks.” They are universal values engrained into early human biology long ago as humans spread across the planet, so that hunters, fishers, and gatherers who depend upon indigenous habitat can flourish and survive. Unfortunately, the values of indigenous peoples cannot be taken seriously in a colonized land by people and institutions that still see themselves as conquerors; and then there is always the race factor (*we do not want to live like Indians, these savages are racially inferior and lead a barbarous lifestyle*). That mind-set makes us hostage to an unjust past, and it prevents us from looking at the land as Native American cultures do. Leopold’s call to decolonize the way we look at the land simply cannot be heeded until that mind-set is seen, understood, and discarded by those who want his land ethic. The forces that underpin that mind-set should be searchingly examined; and this paper will begin that inquiry.

How does America view the land in the 21st century? What is the role of federal land managing agencies in shaping our land ethics? Do they help or hinder the search for

Leopold's land ethic? This paper examines the barriers faced by our nation in finding Leopold's land ethic. We must understand the forces at work that hinder agencies from assuming leadership, as the stewards of public lands, in developing an American land ethic that discards the role of the conqueror, and allows our nation to adapt, mature, and become a more just society. As will be seen, none of the barriers should be "news" to land managers or cultural anthropologists, but it is useful to list them in one place.

The challenges of adapting to the land are especially hard in former colonies because they tend to perpetuate a "settler state" outlook. That mentality looks at the land primarily in economic terms, as a "resource" to be exploited. Once the fuel that sparked that outlook has run dry, many nations in the post-colonial age have matured. Many non-indigenous peoples in colonized nations now wish to become more "native" to place in their adopted homeland, and shed the harsh frontier trappings that settlers once embraced as Manifest Destiny spread across the land. The challenge for those nations is to build a sound land ethic, one that adapts closely to the habitat and cooperates with the natural world, or they run the age-old risks faced by every non-sustainable civilization that failed to adapt to the land: overuse, despoliation, and, ultimately, extinction.

This paper explores the historical and cosmological problems that have prevented our nation from adapting to the land. It will discuss the role of federal land managing agencies in shaping a sound land ethic as the stewards of public lands. The discussion will present a case for a vigorous ethnography program for managing public lands, and encourage agency leaders to raise their eyes to a greater vision of land stewardship that forges an American land ethic as a key ingredient for social change in the post-colonial world of the 21st century.

The need for a strong federal ethnography program is self-evident. It arises from the mandates imposed on agencies by modern public land laws, such as the Native American Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (AIRFA), the National Environmental Protection Act of 1969 (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA), the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA), the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), and others, including the wilderness laws. In addition, Executive Order 13007 (1996) requires federal agencies to protect Native American sacred sites.<sup>8</sup> Ethnology works with contemporary cultural issues and traditional communities to investigate links between cultural values and the cultural and natural resources located on public lands. The goal is to incorporate those links in land management as necessary to comply with the above laws.

The National Park Service is a world leader in preserving the natural world and its cultural treasures. It is deeply indebted to the agency's pioneers who developed the ethnography program needed to comply with these laws, such as Jerry Rogers and Muriel Crespi. They led land managers into the modern era as society began to change the way that it looks upon public lands. Their valuable work should continue. It has laid the groundwork for developing a land ethic in the 21st century. Rogers has noted (in his National Park Service Centennial Essay, this volume) that the Park Service is poised to recognize the important indigenous role in fashioning the way we view national parks. Citing the National Parks Second Century Commission report's vision for this century, he wrote:

Barely in time, before some traditional knowledge is lost altogether, the National Park Service has begun to recognize that benefits of working with tribes flow to the Park Service from the tribes as well as the other way around. As the Park Service works to help visitors comprehend their own interdependence with other species, traditional tribal reverence for the earth and her systems is becoming a persuasive addition to the findings of science and scholarship. Today's coldly utilitarian views must be moderated if the dominant cultures are not to overtax the earth's ability to sustain a large human population. This change will happen more readily if the lessons of science are presented in tandem with the older, deeper, and more spiritual lessons from generations of indigenous cultures. It is not unusual for national park visitors to liken an opening among giant redwoods to a cathedral, or to describe their experiences in nature as sacred. Such metaphor is important to what national parks stand for, and to the willingness of the public to use and support parks. The willingness can benefit greatly by learning from cultures for which the concept is more than metaphorical.<sup>9</sup>

Today, parks and protected areas around the world are paying closer attention to the values and needs of indigenous peoples, as discussed in David Ruppert's paper (this volume). Western-style conservation philosophy need not crush primal cultures. That philosophy can and should be consistent with those cultures to the great benefit of both park managers and the people who depend upon indigenous habitat in the park for their way of life and cultural integrity. These are steps in the right direction, to be sure.

This paper calls upon federal agencies to fulfill a larger goal than merely complying with federal land laws. As stewards of our public lands, federal land agencies are charged with a higher degree of knowledge about the nature of the land and its cultural significance to the American public. It is incumbent upon them to help lead our nation toward a land ethic for the 21st century.

This challenge requires much more than a bare-bones ethnography program run by a room full of cultural anthropologists to tell agencies about the cultural significance of their lands. Instead, the task requires a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach guided by comparative religion experts, Indian studies scholars, historians, ecologists, ethnobotanists, wildlife and fishery biologists, traditional tribal religious leaders, and tribal hunters, fishers, and gatherers to synthesize our "cultural resources" into an American Way of looking at the land, and teach that ethic to the general public. This task cannot be accomplished by cultural anthropologists alone, for obvious reasons. They lack the broad expertise listed above; and, sometimes, anthropologists are hampered by professional conflicts of interest, as the repatriation movement has shown. In addition, it is unfortunate that agency anthropologists usually report only to mid-level managers and their professional studies frequently lie buried on dusty shelves, never to become part of the public discourse. Accordingly, this paper recommends not only that ethnography programs continue, but that they become part of a *larger interdisciplinary infrastructure* designed for a bigger task in synthesizing a land ethic. We need a "Land Ethic Program" to achieve Leopold's vision.

It is appropriate and timely to arise and stride toward Leopold's vision. In 2007, the United Nations overwhelmingly approved the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).<sup>10</sup> This historic measure calls upon each nation to imple-

ment minimum standards to protect the dignity, survival, and well-being of the world's indigenous peoples. It sets forth numerous policies designed to “decolonize” the way that we treat Native peoples and lands traditionally used by them through increased state protection of their lands, traditional subsistence, ways of life, and habitats. Implementation of the UNDRIP standards into our domestic law and policy by the next generation holds the promise of changing the way that America looks at the land. Federal agencies can foster that social change, or resist it and be among the last to look upon the land through the eyes of a bygone era.

### **The way societies view the land reveals their innermost character**

The way that societies view the land tells much about them—revealing the character, values, history, and aspirations of a people. As we chart the course toward a land ethic, there are many models in our diverse human family. Our task is to select the best model, or synthesize the best from among them in fashioning the most appropriate model for our nation in the post-colonial era. Here is a summary of the leading models followed by the human family.

The “primal” cosmology of hunters, fishers, and gatherers sanctifies the human presence in the natural world. (The word “primal” is used, because this is man’s first worldview.) This cosmology shows humans how to comport themselves with animals and plants. It allows humans to cooperate with natural processes and to thrive in the natural world by following the earliest mode of human existence. In primal cosmology, only a thin line exists between humans and the animals and plants that live in tribal habitats, and everything, including the land itself, has a spirit. Gregory Cajete, an Indian cultural studies scholar, provides an excellent description of the complex underpinnings of this cosmology in Native North America.<sup>11</sup>

By contrast, farmers must combat nature to survive. Their way of life depends upon strict human control of the biology and behavior of animals and plants, remaking the land, and restructuring the hydrologic system in order to survive by making the land, water supply, plants, and animals more productive for humans.<sup>12</sup> In the end, nature is conquered, and the wild animals, plants, and insects are eradicated as pests. The agriculturalist worldview informs the way most modern societies look at the land. It sanctifies the conquest of nature, exalts humans over all life on earth, and rationalizes our subjugation of animals, plants, and natural processes.<sup>13</sup>

These two cosmologies present viable ways of life. Both are venerated human worldviews. But they are fundamentally different and frequently come into conflict. In fact, this conflict accounts for much of the human misery and atrocity between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples around the world since 1492. The hunting, fishing, and gathering model is nearly extinct today. The age-old struggle between the two competing cosmologies began after the rise of agriculture, beginning some 10,000 years ago. It seems farmers and hunter-fishers just can’t get along, nor can those who follow their worldviews. In any event, after the conquest of nature and the industrial revolution in the past 500 years, only a few small pockets of hunting, fishing, and gathering cultures survive in tribal habitats around the world.

Nevertheless, this earliest mode of human existence remains a viable model for a land ethic needed by a modern nation that has forgotten how to comport itself with the natural world. Importantly, before most of those lifestyles went extinct data on them were preserved by ethnographers, and much more can be gleaned from the surviving tribal communities around the world. The United States contains one of the largest concentrations of those cultures left in the world—the American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian nations who still reside in their indigenous habitats, practice traditional religions, and hunt, fish, or gather as part of their traditional subsistence. The ancient cosmology is seen in their languages, songs, stories, ceremonies, ideals, and values, as well as their art, artifacts, and architecture. The way that they comport themselves with their habitat, and the animals, birds, fish, and plants of their world, tells us much about primal cosmology. Their worldview provides an attractive model for key ingredients in an American land ethic, because it is the cosmology which arose from our soil, long ago.

There are additional ways of looking at the land. Conquerors view land in military terms, as “territory” to be seized. Rape, booty, and subjugation color their eyes as they gaze upon a conquered land. War and conquest rank among our oldest human traditions, and many lands have been scarred by the ravages of war as they fell as “prizes” into the hands of conquerors. However, Leopold eschewed the role of conqueror as the foundation for looking at American soil.

Colonialism offers yet another model, one followed by Europeans for over 500 years. In the Colonial Era (ca. 1492–1960), the nations of Europe competed to colonize the rest of the world. During this lengthy period, settlers viewed colonized land in economic terms, as a “resource” to be exploited. This model has many drawbacks, because they settled lands belonging to *other people*, usually located thousands of miles away from their homeland, in order to appropriate natural resources to enrich themselves and their homeland kingdoms. Thus, European settlers immigrated to distant lands to Christianize natives, subjugate them, and steal their resources. A land ethic based on those notions cannot easily be developed for colonized land, because in nearly every colony, the colonists did not adapt to the land, as the indigenous peoples had done. Instead, the settlers retained the language, religion, values, and identity of their homeland, while distancing or alienating themselves from the Native population through discrimination, marginalization, and suppression, which worked to stamp out the indigenous cultures in the colony. In that sense, settlers were from a cultural standpoint very much strangers or aliens to the land they colonized, although the immigrants obtained stewardship of the land. This happened in America, as described by Standing Bear, a Dakota chief, in 1933:

The white man does not understand the Indian for the reason he does not understand America. He is too far removed from its formative processes. The roots of his tree of life have not yet grasped the rock and soil . . . . The man from Europe is still a foreigner and an alien. But in the Indian, the spirit of the land is still vested; and it will be until other men are able to divine and meet its rhythm. Men must be born, and reborn to belong. Their bodies must be formed of the dust of their forefathers’ bones.<sup>14</sup>

This estrangement from the land is evident in the way that 19th- and 20th-century American settlers treated indigenous plants on the Great Plains. They raced through the landscape without understanding even the plants beneath their feet. An early ethnobotanist, Melvin R. Gilmore, studied those plants and their uses by the Indians on the Nebraska prairie, which deeply shaped the cultures of the Plains Indians. After investigating the vast body of Native plant knowledge about the extant indigenous plant community, Gilmore lamented in 1914 that the native plants and their uses as food, medicine, and material were largely overlooked by incoming settlers who displaced the Indians:

The people of the European race in coming into the New World have not really sought to make friends with the native population, or to make adequate use of the plants or the animals indigenous to this continent, but rather to exterminate everything found here and to supplant it with the plants and animals to which they were accustomed at home. It is quite natural that aliens should have a longing for the familiar things at home, but the surest road to contentment would be by way of granting friendly acquaintance with the new environment. . . . We shall make the best and most economical use of all our land when our population shall have become adjusted to the natural conditions. The country cannot be wholly made over and adjusted to a people of foreign habits and tastes. There are large tracts of land in America whose bounty is wasted because the plants which can be grown on them are unacceptable to our people. This is not because these plants are in themselves useful and desirable, but because their valuable qualities are unknown.<sup>15</sup>

By contrast, the Native people were intimately familiar with plants that grew in their tribal habitats, and that vegetation was an important factor shaping their cultures. As will be discussed, their relationships with the Plant World ran deep and were maintained on a meta-physical level.

This contrast in the way that Americans comport themselves with the Plant World can be seen today in the Klamath River basin of southern Oregon. There, Indian gatherers enjoy the bounty provided by rich indigenous plant communities that grow naturally in some spots along the rivers and streams, without having to plant, irrigate, fumigate, and fertilize them. On the other hand, their non-Indian neighbors struggle to fight nature, eradicate native plants as weeds, reorder the hydrology, and irrigate crops. This is done only with massive help from federal power, irrigation, and price subsidies. Unfortunately, that enormous effort to reorder the natural world has polluted the streams, drained wetlands, watered the desert, lowered lake levels, degraded the landscape, brought about massive fish kills, and placed many fish and animals upon the endangered species list. That is a highly destructive lifestyle that heavily burdens the taxpaying public, simply because the farmers are unaware of the bounty which the Great Spirit has already provided to the land beneath their own feet. This has been the case in that water basin since the pioneer days, when early settlers starved while living in nature's grocery store among abundant edible plants, medicines, and materials that they could not see.

Colonialism does not afford an attractive model in the 21st century. It is not a sustainable system, and this highly oppressive institution was rejected as repugnant by the interna-



tional community following World War II, after many of the world's last remaining colonies achieved their independence. As that era was coming to a close, Leopold wisely urged America to decolonize the way it looks at the land. The UNDRIP strongly supports that view. It can help guide the selection of an appropriate model for developing a land ethic in a post-colonial world.

### **Four powerful forces stymie a land ethic in the United States**

American society has been alienated from the land and the natural world by several powerful forces. Each must be confronted, understood, and discarded before an American land ethic can be fully developed and implemented. They are listed here.

**1. The cosmological problem** The first root problem that bars formation of a land ethic is a cosmological problem. It is the cosmology of agriculturalists that informs the way Westerners look at animals and plants in the natural world, one that has suppressed to the point of extinction and vilified the equally viable primal cosmology of hunting, fishing, and gathering cultures. The former worldview is described by Jim Mason, an American authority on human-animal relations, in *An Unnatural Order* (2005) as “dominionism,” that is, the 10,000-year-old Western belief system that exalts human subjugation over all life on earth.<sup>16</sup> Since the rise of agriculture over time, this aggressive cosmology has overtaken the competing worldview found in our primal hunting, fishing, and gathering cultures. The latter is humanity's older, primal cosmology. It exalts life on earth, forges a spiritual bond between humans and the creatures found in their habitats, and depends upon cooperation with the natural world.<sup>17</sup> For those societies embedded in the primal world, the sanctity of nature is taken seriously and it forms a cornerstone of primal religion.<sup>18</sup> The balance between these venerated worldviews has been sorely breached in the modern world, which has relegated the primal belief system to a few surviving pockets in tribal communities around the world.

The balance between these worldviews needs to be restored before an American land ethic can emerge, because unchecked “dominionism” works to alienate humans from animals and plants. Animal-human relations in this mind-set were summed up by Sigmund Freud in 1917:

In the course of his development towards culture man acquired a dominating position over his fellow-creatures in the animal kingdom. Not content with this supremacy, however, he began to place a gulf between his nature and theirs. He denied the possession of reason to them, and to himself he attributed an immortal soul, and made claims of divine descent which permitted him to annihilate the bonds of community between him and the animal kingdom.<sup>19</sup>

Freud described our supposed supremacy as “human megalomania.”<sup>20</sup> This cosmology is a powerful, 10,000-year-old force that alienates modern man from the land. The restoration of measured balance and respect between these worldviews will be difficult, because “dominionism” is deeply embedded in the modern mind-set. It is sanctified by Western religion, strengthened by science, bolstered by secularism, and cemented into our lives by tech-



nological revolutions. Nonetheless, that outlook must be curbed and reconciled with the primal hunting, fishing, and gathering cosmology, ideals, values, and beliefs of the human race that are still maintained, almost exclusively, by traditional indigenous peoples. If we can justly mediate the cosmological conflict and find the best in both worldviews, perhaps a land ethic will emerge for the 21st century. If we cannot, the world's surviving hunting, fishing, and gathering cultures will pass into extinction, along with the habitats that supported man's earliest mode of existence.

**2. The religious question** The second barrier to forging a sound land ethic has to do with religion, including our history of religion in the United States and the diminishing role of the sacred in modern American life. As will be explained, these factors hinder creation of a land ethic, because they work to (1) blind us from seeing the spiritual side of Mother Earth; (2) rob animals and plants of their kinship with humans as living things with a spirit of their own; and (3) hinder society's ability to incorporate indigenous values, wisdom, and needs into America's land ethics. The predominant religious faith in the United States, Christianity, simply does not impart a spiritual side to American land, nor to the animals, birds, fish, and plants in North America. It teaches that holy ground lies only in a few faraway spots located in the Middle East. Furthermore, in the origin story of this religion, which was founded by early agriculturalists, God placed all living creatures, as lowly mindless beings without feelings or souls, into the service of humans. In turn, Genesis that says animals should "fear" and "dread" humans as the natural order of things:

And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea.<sup>21</sup>

These are all good religious beliefs for farmers and many others, but they present obvious drawbacks for building a sound land ethic in this part of the world. The religious belief that "nothing is sacred" in the natural world was implanted on American shores by European newcomers, folks who also believed that the Native Americans had no religion and their sacred ties to the land, animals, and plants were "savage superstitions" that must be stamped out as inferior, barbarous heresy. In a classic case of religious discrimination, the tragic history of religion that followed amounted to a wholesale government policy to stamp out indigenous primal religions. That shameful history of religious genocide was finally repudiated by Congress in the 1978 with the passage of the AIRFA policy to protect and preserve remaining pockets of traditional Native American religion.<sup>22</sup> A land ethic founded upon a religious heritage which teaches that "nothing is sacred" in the natural world is wrong-headed, because it is at odds with the long human experience on the planet. It decouples us from a broader human legacy that teaches otherwise. It unleashes "dominionism" in our relationship to the land, because it frees humans from any moral restraint in their treatment of animals and plants.

We must break the bonds of religious discrimination to see the land beneath our feet more clearly. Once freed from the shackles of religious intolerance, an America emerges as a land filled with indigenous holy places, a wondrous land where everything has a spirit, including the earth, water, every living thing, and even the mystical powers of the universe.

At once, even our American skies are holy, because they contain the heavens teeming with higher celestial powers and primal forces. Just ask the Native peoples, or see the land through their eyes. Though long overlooked by scholars of religion (and just about everyone else), Native Americans (that is, American Indians, Native Alaskans, and Native Hawaiians) are heirs to profound indigenous religions teeming with diversity in this corner of Mother Earth. These indigenous religions, which arose from the land, can provide valuable lessons for living on the land, and they can contribute critical ingredients for an American land ethic. One lesson, discussed next, is that our land has holy ground.

Have you ever walked upon sacred ground to a spot where the world was created, or made your medicine in a holy place? Nowhere is the cultural divide between tribal and non-tribal people so vast as the way that we look at the land. In ancient times, all of humanity revered the sacred found in the natural world. Today, many have forgotten how to listen to the spiritual power that springs from the land, even though the Bible reminds us that sacred places do exist. Moses' vision on Mount Sinai comes to mind. His vision shaped the destiny of a people and transformed a desert mountain into their revelatory center of the world:

There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of a burning bush. Moses noticed that, although the bush was on fire, it was not being burnt up: so he said to himself, "I must go across to see this wonderful sight. Why does not the bush burn away?" When the Lord saw that Moses had turned aside to look, he called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses." And Moses answered, "Yes, I am here." God said, "Come no nearer, take off your sandals; the place where you are standing is holy ground."<sup>23</sup>

Just as Moses climbed Mount Sinai, on this side of the world, Sweet Medicine ascended Bear Butte. That venerated Cheyenne Prophet faced the Creator on a sacred mountain where he received spiritual gifts and teachings, including the sacred arrows. Upon Sweet Medicine's return, like Moses, he instructed his people in the sacred laws, covenants, prophecies, and ceremonies that shape the Cheyenne Nation to this very day.

Worship at sacred sites is done all over the world as a basic attribute of religion. The holy places form a rich tapestry where humans can experience direct communication with God, in places such as Mount Sinai, Bethlehem, the Wailing Wall, Mecca, the summit of Golgotha (where Adam was created and buried), Jerusalem (where Jesus was crucified and sects await his return), the revered Ganges River (a pathway to salvation in India), and the Bhodi Tree (where Siddhartha attained nirvana and became the Buddha). In other parts of the world, sacred mountains, waterfalls, pools, caves, and lakes that dot the Philippines, Indonesia, Hawaii, Australia, Canada, and South America are holy places where indigenous people pray. As Huston Smith notes, "Many historical religions are attached to places," but no historical religion "is embedded in place to the extent that tribal religions are."<sup>24</sup>

In short, the modern world is filled with holy places. The renowned religious historian, Mircea Eliade, defines the tie between visions and holy places that form the basis for many world religions as "hierophany," meaning the manifestation of the sacred.<sup>25</sup> He notes that many religions are based upon theses dramatic encounters with supernatural beings that manifest themselves in natural places or features, such as the sky, mountains, stones, plants,

and water bodies. “Hierophanies” can reveal esoteric knowledge, or convey broader revelations for groups of people, or nations, as seen throughout human history. Can it be that the United States is the only land without holy ground?

Sadly, we may be blinded to Native American wisdom, including their tribal religious traditions, by our own intolerance. Senator Daniel K. Inouye noted how the religious prejudices of early colonists became American foundations for relations with Native people:

In the minds of Europeans, tribal religions of the New World were inferior. . . . Thus, it is not surprising—especially given Europe’s own heritage of religious discrimination among unpopular Christian denominations and against the non-Christian world religions—that intolerance became a basic feature in the Pilgrims’ and other colonists’ relationship with the Indians. Indeed, although early settlers came to America to escape religious persecution, Old World prejudices were transplanted in the Colonies, [in] which discrimination became commonplace.<sup>26</sup>

What has this mind-set overlooked? Huston Smith, a leading authority on world religion, classifies Native American religions among the “primal religions” of the world. In a reminiscence published in 2001, this beloved figure sheepishly explained why he revised his classic text, *The World’s Religions*, to include a chapter on tribal religion among the world’s religious traditions:

‘My God, Huston,’ I heard myself saying in the car, ‘For three decades you have been circling the globe trying to understand the metaphysics and religions of worlds different from your own, and here’s one that has been right under your feet the entire time—and you haven’t even noticed it.’ That was the moment when the significance of this totally new area of world religions, supposedly my field of study, just clicked. . . . So thirty-five years after the first edition of my book had appeared, I added a chapter about the primal religions, making it eight, instead of seven, religions covered in the book. . . . To omit them from the first edition of my book was inexcusable, and I am glad I will not go to my grave with that mistake uncorrected. The added chapter honors the primal religions as fully equal to the historical ones.<sup>27</sup>

Smith classifies tribal religions as “primal” because they came first and are the oldest religious traditions of the human race. According to Smith, these religions represent “human religiousness in its earliest mode,” and they allow tribal people to “retain insights and virtues that urbanized, industrialized civilizations have allowed to fall by the wayside.”<sup>28</sup> The primal religions, according to Smith, differ from the larger historical religions in several major respects. They are tribal in nature, practiced by small groups according to oral traditions.

The tribal religions cannot be considered in a vacuum, but must be understood within the context of the primal world, for tribes in their aboriginal places are embedded in their indigenous habitats so solidly that the line between nature and the tribe is not easy to establish. For example, when the first explorers came to Klamath country in southern Oregon, they were amazed how closely the Indian hunters, fishers, and gatherers merged with their environment. One stated: “Almost like plants, these people seem to have adapted themselves

to the soil, and to be growing on what the immediate locality afforded.”<sup>29</sup> Unencumbered by materialism, there is an absence of sharp divisions in the primal world in the lines that divide humans from animals and plants, as all are thought to possess the same spirit. As Black Elk (Lakota) put it:

All things are the works of the Great Spirit. He is within all things; the trees, the grasses, the rivers, the mountains, and the four-legged animals, and the winged peoples. He is also above all these things and people.<sup>30</sup>

In totemism, animals are like people who talk, plants have spirits just like us, and humans can exchange forms with their opposites in the natural world. As the late Vine Deloria, Jr., observed, in Native America “[s]tories abound in which certain plants talk to people or appear in dreams to inform humans of their use.”<sup>31</sup> As a result of these religious traditions, humans are kin to animals and plants in Native America connected by physical, social, and spiritual ties. Those close connections are illustrated by tribal names. Many Indians are *named* after animals and plants from their tribal areas. This is seen in my own family names from the Pawnee tribe, which is indigenous to the Great Plains: Echo Hawk, Blue Corn Woman, Acorn, Young Buffalo Calf, Eagle Woman, Mother Corn Goes Inside, New Horse, Fighting Bear, Good Horse, Big Crow, Hill of Corn, Coming Horse, Blue Hawk, Roam Eagle, Male Elk, Eagle-Flies-High, Hawk, Screaming Eagle, Crazy Horse, Stallion, Spotted Horse Chief, White Eagle, and She-Is-Leading-A-Horse-Inside-To-Give-It-Away. We are relatives to the plants and animals that comprise our world, not masters.

Similarly, no sharp lines exist between this world and the next. Smith observes that “the most important single feature of living primal spirituality” is the “symbolist mentality” that “sees things of the world as transparent to their divine source.”<sup>32</sup> He points out that “modernity recognizes no ontological connection between material things and their metaphysical source, spiritual roots” like primal peoples who are “better metaphysicians” in this sense, even though their metaphysics is “naturally of the mythic cast.”<sup>33</sup> To the primal mind, physical appearances and reality are never entirely as they seem. Instead, the landscape, forces of nature, and the animals and plants that inhabit the natural world have a spiritual side, and that reality which pervades that world presents a “‘spiritual dimension’ which escapes modern man.”<sup>34</sup>

Smith categorizes the tribal religions in the United States among the primal religions of the world—along with the indigenous religions in Africa, Australia, Oceania, Siberia, Southeast Asia, and the other Indians of North and South America—and he ranks them alongside of the major historical religions. Importantly, Smith found that no one religion is superior, stating: “No one alive knows enough to say with confidence whether or not one religion is superior to the others—the question remains an open one,” and “this book has found nothing that privileges one tradition above the others.”<sup>35</sup> Based upon that finding, this scholar says the best advice is to view all of the world’s religious traditions as a single mosaic “in a stained glass window whose sections divide the light of the sun into different colors,” because the Spirit appears in diverse ways to different peoples. Each religious difference has

inherent worth, because for God to be understood in all parts of the world, “divine revelations would have had to be couched in the idioms of its respective hearers.”<sup>36</sup>

Bare-knuckled religious intolerance, coupled with the rise of secularism and “scientism” (as will be defined shortly) are forces that make it difficult to see Native American religion through Smith’s “stained glass window.” It is especially hard to recapture the “sacred” found in the natural world by indigenous peoples, when the place of the sacred in modern society has greatly diminished over the past 100 years, with the gradual elevation of science over religion.

The rise of secularism was traced by the late Vine Deloria, Jr., in a series of articles that shed light on the situation.<sup>37</sup> He observed that Medieval Europe once followed two traditions of thought that regarded faith and reason as “equally viable paths to truth.”<sup>38</sup> In that part of the world, organized religion was gradually overtaken, for a variety of reasons, by secular science in demonstrating truth. By the time of the writing of the American Constitution, it was felt necessary to rein in the organized religions to curb religious abuse, conflicts, and persecution. This was done in the religion clauses of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, which operates to separate church from the secular affairs of the state. Even so, during early American history the churches played a significant role in everyday life, addressing social issues such as education and charity. They also influenced the literature and policies of the day, playing especially powerful roles in guiding and implementing the federal government’s Indian civilization, wardship, and assimilation policies throughout the 19th century. Over the decades, this influence upon mainstream society and government waned, as churches withdrew from active involvement in the public arena and confined themselves largely to weekly services and bingo games, leaving their realm only occasionally to make pronouncements on conservative hot-button issues, such as abortion, birth control, and the death penalty—the big church concerns. Sometimes, the organized churches also ventured forth in 20th- and 21st-century political contests in the harness of right-wing candidates. But for the most part, churches usually relegate their participation in the public arena to late-night evangelism on TV, leaving the everyday business of education, health, welfare, culture, and governance to others.

As a result, Deloria observed in 1992 that a “major phenomenon of this century has been the erosion of the power and influence of organized religion in American society.”<sup>39</sup> This demise gave birth to what Deloria termed the secular “civil religion,” in which churches took a backseat to a melding of scientific, secular, and bureaucratic thinking by administrators and institutions across the land that hold purely secularized views and see the world through the eyes of the hard sciences. Taken to its logical extreme, that attitude morphs into base “scientism” (to borrow Huston Smith’s term), when it rejects all other sources of knowledge, such as religion, philosophy, and the humanities.<sup>40</sup> Scientism asserts that science is the best, or even the only, path to knowledge, capable of describing all of reality, with authority over all other interpretations provided by religion, philosophy, mystical or metaphysical, or humanistic explanations.<sup>41</sup> The civil religion of scientism views birds, plants, and animals in the natural world, along with human beings, predominately as phenomena that can be explained only by scientific investigation. God is taken out of nature. In fact, “God is dead”

in the eyes of scientism. As Julian Huxley pronounced during the middle of the 20th century, “it will soon be [as] impossible for an intelligent or educated man or woman to believe in god as it is now to believe that the earth is flat.”<sup>42</sup> By the end of that century, the sacred was largely banished from public life.

Consequently, religion exists only on the margins of society in the 21st century. *It is just not that important.* Many urbanites and agencies see science as the only pathway to truth and knowledge about reality. This attitude is bare scientism as described by Huston Smith, not to be confused with science, and it harbors a worldview fraught with limitations when it comes to fashioning a land ethic. Science cannot see the Great Spirit, quantify the Great Mystery, nor peer into the Spirit World. That spiritual realm lies beyond the pale of science, and certainly eludes the pointy-head of scientism.

Christianity, religious intolerance, and the rise of secularism and scientism are powerful forces. They work to sever ties to the land, because they cannot see the spiritual side of Mother Earth. They deny that holy ground exists on American soil. They assert that the land, animals, and plants possess no sacred quality. A scientific land ethic that excludes the sacred excludes indigenous wisdom, because it sees science as the only path to understanding the natural world. Indigenous values that teach otherwise have no place in that ethic. In short, these forces prevent us from finding that which is “sacred” on the land and in the natural world. They effectively close our eyes to the sacred in our world, and act to take God out of nature, even though that is where the Great Spirit abides. This is troubling, because a land ethic for our industrialized nation cannot be founded upon science and technology alone, for they *caused* much of the environmental trouble and lack the tools, knowledge, wisdom, and moral willpower to solve that crisis.

This unfortunate predicament was cemented into the law of the land by the United States Supreme Court in the Indian religion cases of the 20th century. In *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990) and *Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Association* (1990), the court went to great lengths to deny extant constitutional protections for Native American religious practices. In so doing, the court seriously weakened the First Amendment, restricted American religious freedom, and, most importantly, placed the protection of that liberty into the hands of Congress where it must find protection through secular political processes. That completes the secularization process by firmly placing the sacred under the control of the secular. It opens the door for unchecked scientism, and fosters a land ethic that eschews the sacred. To fashion a workable land ethic, balance must be restored between the sacred and the secular. Our survival and well-being depend on recapturing the sacred in American life as we look upon the land.

**3. The legacy and mind-set of colonialism** The third force that stymies our search for Leopold’s vision is the legacy of colonialism, mentioned earlier, which has persisted in this nation centuries after Americans achieved their independence from England. The early settlers simply replaced England’s colonial policy for dealing with Indian tribes with their own colonial system. These forces continue to color the way we view the land. As mentioned earlier, this mind-set estranges settlers from the land, preventing adherents from adapting because of the drive to exploit colonized land as an economic resource. That mentality



opposes a land ethic built upon any other values or principles. We must confront and discard that legacy, once and for all, because it leads to environmental destruction.

Colonization of Native lands is invariably accompanied by destroying the habitat that supports the tribal way of life. Colonies displace the Natives, extract natural resources from the land, and remake the natural world for agriculturalists and manufacturers. Thus, conquest of nature often accompanies the settlement of Native territory. In *The Conquest of Paradise* (1990), historian Kirkpatrick Sale examined the astounding level of environmental degradation that accompanied European colonization of the New World.<sup>43</sup> In 1823, United States Chief Justice John Marshall described the familiar ebb and flow of colonization in the United States:

As the white population advanced, that of the Indian necessarily receded. The country in the immediate neighborhood of agriculturalists became unfit for them. The game fled into thicker and more unbroken forests, and the Indians followed. The soil . . . being no longer occupied by its ancient inhabitants, was parceled out according to the will of the sovereign.<sup>44</sup>

In just a few short decades, for example, the Plains habitat of my own tribe—the Pawnee Nation—was virtually destroyed as countless millions of buffalo and wolves were slaughtered and steel plows were pulled through native plant communities. When the Native people resisted, the law and military invariably supported the destruction of their “indigenous habitat” (meaning the land, water, animals, birds, and plants that made tribal life possible), often with harsh life-altering consequences. The depopulation of the American Indians and destruction of their cultures following European contact has been attributed, in part, to the accompanying destruction of indigenous habitats.<sup>45</sup> Simply put, deforestation, dewatering, and destruction of the wild animals and plants that sustained Indian tribes led to their collapse. Many went extinct following the conquest of nature in North and South America. The land ethic of colonists is hard on indigenous people, wild animals, and native plants. No land ethic based upon abject colonialism should be allowed to stand, ever. Although the Colonial Era has come to an end, that mind-set lingers in America. It opposes a land ethic that follows the vision of Leopold.

**4. The problem of leadership** Who shall lead the way to an American land ethic? The fourth barrier to achieving Leopold’s dream arises from certain structural problems observed in federal land agencies. One would think that they should lead. However, certain weaknesses hamper their leadership or, worse yet, have sometimes actually caused agencies to work against a land ethic during the modern era of public land law over the past thirty years. We must open our eyes to these problems to see what can be done to address them.

First, the Supreme Court in *Lyng* and *Smith* allows federal land agencies to run roughshod over tribal holy places on federal land. So does Congress. That deplorable conduct continues unabated to this very day, despite Executive Order 13007 (1996), which directs agencies to comport themselves differently. This illustrates an outright loophole in the American legal system that works against the formation of a land ethic. Agencies cannot develop a land ethic on the one hand, while destroying holy places on the land with the



other. Destroyers forfeit the moral authority to lead and cannot inspire confidence in the eyes of the general public, and especially among the Native peoples who are vital ingredients for a land ethic.

Second, when it comes to land ethics, agencies are sometimes hamstrung by internal conflicts of interest, fall prone to political cronyism by agency big-wigs, or become the hapless hostage of special-interest groups. Such is the nature of agencies that answer to many masters. During these unfortunate periods when professional land management takes a back seat, pork barrel projects rule the day, and years of hard work by dedicated mid-level line officers and professional field staff to establish credibility and working relationships with traditional tribal communities regarding cultural resources on public land are undercut. The public insists upon a more even keel, and that is usually forthcoming in many agencies most of the time. However, nasty lapses which frequently recur in others present a very serious barrier to agency leadership. If unchecked, this problem will relegate agency leadership to the margins, leaving the task of developing a land ethic to others.

We need an *independent* "Land Ethics Program" that is immune to these lapses, a program protected by oversight from the highest levels in the administration and the Congress. How that can be done is left here to the political scientists and beltway big-wigs. This paper simply identifies the problem as a cautionary note to avoid landmines hidden in the dark corners of agency headquarters, as our nation strides toward Leopold's vision.

### **Toward a land ethic that incorporates Native American wisdom traditions**

I cannot close without presenting a Native American perspective on a land ethic for comporting ourselves with animals and plants in North America. As Cajete explains, Native American cultures spring from the land itself. They derive from a hunting, fishing, and gathering existence. That way of life produced an astounding primal cosmology that revels in Mother Earth's remarkable ability to support life. It proclaims Mother Earth as the foundation for human culture. That is, human culture, ethics, morals, religion, art, politics, and economics derive from the cycles of nature, the behavior of animals, the growth of plants, and from inextricable human interdependence with all living things that are endowed with a spirit of their own. In the cosmology of Native American gatherers, plants hold an esteemed place of honor as the foundation for human and animal life. The Native American perception of animals mirrors hunting cultures around the world, and it is an ancient way of life in Native North America. This tradition evolved songs, dances, ceremonies, art forms, and a spiritual reverence for animals, producing an elaborate worldview that explains how humans should comport themselves with animals.

Historians, Indian studies scholars, and world religion experts can put flesh on these observations, with help from traditional Indian religious leaders and tribal hunters-fishers-gatherers. These accumulated wisdom traditions can inform a sound American land ethic. In an independent Land Ethics Program, ecologists, biologists, ethnobotanists, and cultural anthropologists can take that wisdom, add their expertise and knowledge about cultural resources, and together we can synthesize a uniquely American land ethic.

The land can speak to those who listen. Here are some Native voices from the land.

In the beginning of all things, wisdom and knowledge were with the animals, for *Tirawa*, the One Above, did not speak directly to people. He spoke to people through his works, the stars, the sun and moon, the beasts, and the plants. For all things tell of *Tirawa*. When people sought to know how they should live, they went into solitude and prayed until in a vision some animal brought wisdom to them. It was *Tirawa* who sent his message through the animal. He never spoke to people himself, but gave his command to beast or bird, which came to some chosen person and taught him holy things. So it was in the beginning.<sup>46</sup>

— *Eagle Chief (Pawnee), 1907*

A long time ago the Creator came to Turtle Island and said to the Red People: ‘You will be the keepers of Mother Earth. Among you I will give the wisdom about Nature, about the interconnectedness of all things, about balance and living in harmony. You Red People will see the secrets of Nature. . . . The day will come when you will need to share the secrets with other people of the Earth because they will stray from their Spiritual ways. The time to start sharing is today.’<sup>47</sup>

— *Mohican Prophecy*

All people have a liking for some special animal, tree, plant or spot of earth. If they would pay attention to these preferences and seek what is best to make themselves worthy of that to which they are attracted, they might have dreams that would purify their lives.<sup>48</sup>

— *Brave Buffalo (Lakota), 1918*

The Indian tried to fit in with nature and to understand, not conquer or rule. Life was a glorious thing, for great contentment comes with the feeling of friendship with the living things around you.<sup>49</sup>

— *Luther Standing Bear (Lakota), 1931*

All animals have power, because the Great Spirit dwells in all of them, even a tiny ant, a butterfly, a tree, a flower, a rock.<sup>50</sup>

— *Pete Catches (Lakota Medicine Man), 1973*

One should pay attention to even the smallest crawling creature for these may have a valuable lesson to teach us, even the smallest ant may wish to communicate to a man.<sup>51</sup>

— *Black Elk (Lakota Medicine Man), 1932*

A tree is like a human being, for it has life and grows; so we pray to it and put our offerings on it that God may help us.<sup>52</sup>

— *Lakota, 1894*

When you look at all the other parts of creation, all the other living creatures—the Creator endowed them with gifts that are far better than ours. Compared to the strength of the grizzly

bear, the sharp sightedness of the eagle, the fleetness of the deer, and the acute hearing of the otter, we're pitiful human beings. We don't have any of those physical attributes that the Creator put into everything else. For that reason, we have to be compassionate with one another and help one another—to hold each other up.<sup>53</sup>

— *Rueben Snake (Hochunk), 1993*

America has a primal legacy. Despite our secular mind-set, our nation is well endowed with indigenous wisdom traditions that transcend modernity. Everyone is an heir to the hunters', fishers', and gatherers' legacy. They left indelible tracks in each person. Our ancestors became fully human in the natural world. That cosmology is alive and well. It lies on the land beneath our feet. Let us arise, recapture the best in that worldview, and fashion a land ethic for the 21st century.

### Acknowledgments

The author respectfully dedicates this paper to two friends, the late Rueben Snake (Hochunk) and the beloved Huston Smith (a scholar of world religion). These profound elders shaped his life, and that of a generation.

### Endnotes

1. Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949; 1989), 203.
2. *Johnson v. McIntosh*, 21 US 543 (1823).
3. *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock*, 187 US 553 (1903). This dark case is one of the worst Indian law cases ever decided, likened by some scholars as the Indians' "Dred Scott" decision. See, e.g., Blue Clark, *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock: Treaty Rights & Indian Rights at the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1999); "Symposium: Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock: One Hundred Years Later," *Tulsa Law Review* 38 (2002), 1.
4. *Tee-Hit-Ton v. United States*, 348 US 272 (1955).
5. *Ibid.*, 289–290.
6. Scott Sonner, "Palin Appeals to Nevadans to Help Swing Election," *San Jose Mercury News* (November 4, 2008). On-line at [www.mercurynews.com/news/ci\\_10893972](http://www.mercurynews.com/news/ci_10893972).
7. In *Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association*, 485 US 439 (1988), the United States Forest Service decided to clear-cut a critical tribal holy place, even though it would destroy the religions of three Indian tribes and endanger their cultural survival. Congress later intervened and placed the area into a protected wilderness status before it could be despoiled by the agency. In *Navajo Nation et al. v. US Forest Service*, F.3rd (9th Cir., Slip Opinion, August 8, 2008), the agency desecrated the most important tribal holy place in the American Southwest by pouring fecal matter on it to make artificial snow with treated sewer water in order to support a local ski resort business. There is a long line of cases allowing federal agencies to trammel Native American holy places

- located on public lands in ways that would never be tolerated if Judeo-Christian holy places were at stake. They include *United States v. Means*, 858 F.2d 404 (8th Cir. 1988) (Black Hills); *Wilson v. Block*, 708 F. 2d 735 (D.D. Cir. 1983) (San Francisco Peaks); *Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope v. United States*, 746 F.2d 570 (9th Cir. 1984) (Arctic coastal area); *Badoni v. Higginson*, 638 F.2d 172 (10th Cir. 1980); *Sequoyah v. TVA*, 620 F.2d 1159 (6th Cir. 1980) (Cherokee homeland and burial ground); *Crow v. Gullet*, 706 F.2d 856 (8th Cir. 1983) (Bear Butte).
8. Executive Order no. 13007 ("Indian Sacred Sites"), 61 *Federal Register* 26771 (May 24, 1996).
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# Applied Ethnography and Park Management at Pipestone National Monument

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THE APPLIED ETHNOGRAPHY PROGRAM IN THE MIDWEST REGION of the National Park Service (NPS) conducts and contracts for a variety of basic cultural anthropology studies: general ethnographic overviews and assessments, traditional use studies, cultural affiliation studies, ethnobotany and ethnozoology studies, and special ethnographic studies on peoples associated with specific parks. All of the basic types of ethnographic studies are designed to provide information and data to park managers about the people who are culturally and socially associated with an NPS unit. In addition, the ethnographic research projects help identify and document the resources these groups find culturally significant and meaningful. And we often ask contract anthropologists to make recommendations based on their study on how these resources can be best protected and managed to maintain the cultural significance of the resources to the associated people.

At some NPS units, the ethnographic resources are so prevalent and significant they affect almost all aspects of park management, not just cultural resource management. Pipestone National Monument in southwestern Minnesota is such a place. The monument sits at the location of a major outcropping of “catlinite,” a naturally hardened red clay, colored red by hematite. The stone has been used for thousands of years by Native Americans for the making of pipes and other ceremonial objects. While other kinds of stone used to make pipes is found at various sites across the United States, the red stone from the Pipestone quarries is distinctive in both color and texture, as well as in its history of use for the making of sacred pipes. The stone received its name of “catlinite” as a nod to George Catlin, who visited the area in 1836 and spread word of the site’s existence through his paintings and writings in the late 1830s.

Of course, Catlin wasn’t the first person to see the pipestone area. He was attracted to the region because of stories about quarries of red pipestone that had been heard by Europeans for 175 years, dating back to French traders in the 1660s. But Native Americans had been quarrying the stone to make ceremonial and sacred objects for thousands of years. The first use of the quarries that is observed from archaeological data dates to 200 BC, and the stone and the quarries have been used by Native Americans ever since.

Pipestone National Monument is a 282-acre unit of the national park system established in 1937. The enabling legislation for the monument specifically charges NPS to protect and preserve the unique pipestone quarries, and provide Indian people access to them for acquiring the stone. The National Park Service has known from the outset that the area was



important to Indian people, and worked to provide an administrative mechanism by which pipemakers could acquire the stone they needed. Even so, managers at the monument have had opinions about the quarrying that differed from those of tribal peoples, in regard to who should have access to the stone, whether NPS should regulate how the stone is used once it is quarried, and other cultural activities in and use of the monument.

In 1994, the NPS Midwest Region applied ethnography program took form with the placement of a professional cultural anthropologist on staff to lead the program for the region. That same year, the program began work to help provide current and contemporary ethnographic information about the resources at Pipestone National Monument, why they were culturally significant, and to whom. Two studies were commissioned to look at two different, but equally important, categories of resources at Pipestone. One study was a preliminary documentation of federally recognized American Indian tribes who are culturally associated with the monument, and the second study was a comprehensive documentation of the ownership of 200 pipes that were in the monument's museum collection. Both of these studies were legislatively driven by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), passed in 1990, but also provided current cultural anthropological information to park management to help with decision-making.

The first study on cultural association was completed by David Hughes in 1995.<sup>1</sup> In his report, Hughes briefly outlined the potential associations between contemporary American Indian tribes and the monument, which led to a much more comprehensive study of cultural affiliation between today's tribes and the resources at the monument.

The second study was completed by Peter Nabokov in 1995. Based on the definitions of sacred objects and objects of cultural patrimony that were part of the NAGPRA statute (and the later regulations that became final in 1995), NPS was aware that there was a good possibility that some, if not many, of the pipes in the museum collection at the monument might fit into one or more of the NAGPRA-defined categories, and were subject to repatriation. Nabokov was asked to trace, as well as he could through historical documentation and ethnographic interviews, the lineages of the original holders of the pipes. This information was then provided to the federally recognized tribes whose descendants formerly held the stone pipes as part of the summary and inventory requirements of NAGPRA compliance. At the time, one or two NPS staff expressed concern about the study, fearing that all of the pipes would be repatriated and therefore "lost" to the monument. As it turns out, these fears were unfounded because only one pipe has been requested and subsequently repatriated to a lineal descendant (and current religious leader) of a former pipe holder.

By the time these two studies were completed, it had become clear that there was far more contemporary cultural significance attached to Pipestone by Indian people than just the quarries and the pipestone. While Indian people had been telling the NPS managers this for some time, including park employees who were tribal members, there was still not a consistent, direct connection between the cultural anthropological information and park management decisions, although there was often a certain amount of empathy expressed by some park managers.<sup>2</sup> Beginning in 1996, David Hughes was again asked to conduct an ethnographic study at the monument, this time on the traditional uses of the monument's resources.

For the applied ethnography program, a “traditional use study” is not only about what people used to do historically. A traditional use study is a type of cultural anthropology research project designed to identify and document the uses contemporary people make of park resources or the area within which a park is located. The “traditional use,” then, is a cultural use that has both historical antecedents and which continues through time to the present day, despite changes in land ownership, legal status, or the locations of the cultural groups themselves. Hughes interviewed tribal members and discovered that there were many traditional uses still occurring at the monument, including medicinal and ceremonial plant gathering, vision quests, and ceremonial activity connected to the quarrying of the pipestone. Hughes’s 1997 report not only identified these on-going traditional uses, but placed them within the monument’s boundaries so that their locations could become part of the management decision-making process.<sup>3</sup>

The monument began a general management plan process in 2000. From the beginning, NPS included the participation of federally recognized American Indian tribes. In addition, the Midwest Region applied ethnography program began detailed documentation of specific categories of ethnographic resources that would need to be considered in the general management planning process. To that end, the program began two large studies, both carried out by cultural anthropologists and archaeologists at the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology at the University of Arizona. One was a comprehensive inventory and documentation of the ethnobotany at the monument, led by Richard Stoffle and Rebecca Toupal.<sup>4</sup> The other was a comprehensive cultural affiliation study, led by María Nieves Zedeño.<sup>5</sup>

During the ethnobotany study it became clear very quickly that the identification and documentation of important food, medicine, and ceremonial plant species could not occur without being conceptually connected to the landscape itself. The research team had to include a component about the ethnographic landscape of the monument in order to tie the cultural significance of the resources together. The monument has been long recognized by NPS as an important historical place (the entire monument is on the National Register), and as a “cultural landscape” as defined by the National Park Service. The ethnobotany study, by connecting plants and other cultural features such as geologic formations to the significance of the landscape, provided ethnographic data in support of an idea that the Midwest Region applied ethnography program had been a proponent of for several years: the monument was an ethnographic landscape, and the other cultural and historical features were components of that ethnographic landscape, instead of according with the NPS definition of a cultural landscape as one having ethnographic features. In essence, all of the cultural features of the monument—the quarries, the archaeological sites, the bluff, the vision quest sites, the Sun Dance grounds, the stream, and the plants and where they grew, combined with the cultural history and oral history of the tribes, contributed to the cultural significance of this geographic landscape for the associated Indian people.

As part of the general management planning process, the monument superintendent wanted to have a definitive statement on the cultural affiliation of federally recognized American Indian tribes and the traditional associations between them and the monument’s resources. To that end, a cultural affiliation study was commissioned by the Midwest Region applied ethnography program at the same time as the ethnobotany study. The result was an

in-depth, comprehensive examination of the archaeological, historical, and ethnographic information available for the Pipestone area, and the delineation of both American Indian ethnic groups (Mandan, Lakota, Dakota, Otoe, Omaha-Ponca, and Ioway), as well as specific federally recognized tribes that were either culturally affiliated or traditionally associated with Pipestone National Monument.<sup>6</sup> All of these tribes were consulted during the general management planning process, and several actively participated throughout the eight years it took to finalize the general management plan.

Both of these studies have had an impact on park management decision-making. The ethnobotany/ethnographic landscape report identified plant species and places that have to be considered when planning to mitigate possible adverse impacts from fire management, facilities management, and park activities. The cultural affiliation and traditional association report has provided support for the park to consult with tribes other than the Yankton Sioux Tribe, and expanded management and interpretive perspectives. And while an indirect result of the cultural anthropology research over the last 15 years, the process of engaging the tribes in anthropological research, consultation, park planning, and discussion about park management led NPS in 2008 to change the preferred alternative in the draft general management plan to one suggested and supported by the consulting tribes. The final preferred alternative calls for removal of the existing visitor center (conceived in 1952 and completed in 1958), since it is now recognized that the building's location is right next to several of the pipestone quarries and has had an adverse impact on the cultural significance, as well as the traditional and ceremonial use, of the quarries and the monument.<sup>7</sup>

## Endnotes

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6. NAGPRA contains specific definitions of terms and concepts that require some care in their usage. NAGPRA defines “cultural affiliation” as “a relationship of shared group identity which can reasonably be traced historically or prehistorically between members of a present-day Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization and an identifiable earlier group.” The Yankton Sioux Tribe are clearly culturally affiliated with the quarries and the monument land, since it used to be their reservation land before it became part of the national park system. Several tribes are culturally affiliated with specific objects in the monument’s museum collection, even though those tribes were not physically present in the Pipestone area. And some groups, such as the Mandan, are traditionally associated with the monument since they may be descendants of earlier peoples who were in the area dating back to 200 BC.
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# Working with Traditionally Associated Groups: A Form of Civic Engagement

*Jenny Masur*

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ORGANIC ACT CREATES THE RESPONSIBILITY to conserve the natural and historic objects within parks “unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” Key is the phrase “future generations.” The United States is changing, and new approaches are needed for working with a non-English speaking public, neighbors, former residents of parks, and visitors unfamiliar with the idea of lands protected by and for everyone. The National Park Service’s (NPS’s) greatest center of support, the white middle class, has shrunk and the agency will have to understand new constituencies and change the attitudes of those employees who are unfamiliar with this new way of thinking. Ironically, this is a double-edged challenge. NPS finds itself dealing, on the one hand, with a highly diverse public. On the other, NPS has to highlight to the expanded public the many people in the United States who have important ties to park resources.

In order to preserve and protect parks for future generations, NPS has to enhance the public’s sense of ownership of the NPS mission. Thus, land often considered “pristine” renders associated cultural groups as invisible, not a part of the “moment in time” or the “wilderness” the park was mandated to protect or re-create. “Invisible” traditionally associated peoples remember the sites of their homes, although obvious physical traces of the communities have often been obliterated. For example, Prince William Forest Park (1948)<sup>1</sup> began as Chopawamsic Recreational Demonstration Area, created in 1936 under a Works Progress Administration (WPA) program. The recreational demonstration area displaced both African American and white families to accomplish three goals: (1) resettle families living on “unproductive or submarginal” farmland, (2) provide work projects for the Civilian Conservation Corps and WPA, (3) provide recreation areas for urban populations (Figures 1, 2). Left behind were 45 family cemeteries, challenging park managers to protect them and consider family legacies. Even though it was the state government that condemned the land and turned it over to NPS, community members often direct lingering hostility toward NPS. If the Park Service does not address residual or generational hostility, it alienates constituencies, and makes public input for planning difficult.<sup>2</sup> A possibility for a joint partnership comes from the eagerness of these groups to have easy access to the parks to tend community graves and to celebrate community reunions or religious rites on site.<sup>3</sup>

The NPS 2006 *Management Policies* ask parks to “embrace civic engagement as a fundamental discipline and practice.” It is “a commitment to building and sustaining relationships with neighbors and other communities of interest—both near and far.” Civic engagement goes further than “public involvement” since “it can be viewed as a continuous, dynamic conversation with the public on many levels that reinforces the commitment of the NPS and the public to the preservation of park resources. . . .”<sup>4</sup> This opportunity should be used

**Figure 1** Portrait of Charles and Mary Byrd, former residents of what is now Prince William Forest Park. Courtesy of Charlie Reid and Prince William Forest Park archives.

to create a dialogue that communicates “the relevance of NPS resources and programs to people, as well as ensures NPS responsiveness to diverse public viewpoints, values, and concerns.”<sup>5</sup> Civic engagement should instill ownership in the NPS mission, and guide NPS on “reasonable and effective means to involve the public in decisions at the park and program level.” Going further than public involvement, civic engagement is more easily integrated into resource management.

Civic engagement includes groups with special traditional ties to park units; these groups do not need to have relevance for park resources taught to them. Designated wilderness may be “untrammeled by humans,” retaining “primeval character,” and “without a noticeable imprint of humans’ work;”<sup>6</sup> nonetheless, there are no natural resources in a vacuum apart from human use. Careful scrutiny will allow NPS to discover cultural resources—architectural, archaeological, collections, National Register-nominated, and ethnographic—within the wilderness. Where cultures differ from those of mainstream NPS staff and visitors, the Park Service should “identify multiple points of view and potentially sensitive issues.”<sup>7</sup> Park enabling legislation for sites such as a battlefield, inaugural site, or commemorative site selects a significant moment in time, and thus “erases” the remaining history of park resources and their use. To address this omission, NPS *Management Policies* introduces the concept of *ethnographic resources*, with “ethnographic” referring to distinctive traditions handed down from one generation to the next within a community. Sensitive issues in identifying ethnographic resources include effective communication, potential impacts on park resources, and appropriate and accurate interpretation. Ethnographers are the professionals best able to advise, as they are cultural or applied anthropologists trained to apply their cross-cultural techniques pragmatically.

The term *traditionally associated peoples* (TAPs) defines a living group of people whose traditions are closely tied to the resources in national park units. This concept was meant to ensure that these groups are taken into consideration when park managers formulate policy, write plans, and make decisions. The term refers exclusively to groups who (1) form a community; (2) are tied to park resources through cultural identity and cultural heritage (i.e., ethnographic resources); (3) pass traditions and identity from generation to generation; and (4) were associated with significant resources before the creation of a park.<sup>8</sup>







**Figure 2** The Miller farm, part of what is now Prince William Forest Park. Courtesy of Prince William Forest Park archives.

Legislation such as the Alaska Native Interest Lands Conservation Act, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act require that managers pay attention to Native Americans. Laws such as the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) more generally mandate public involvement and protection of national cultural heritage.<sup>9</sup> For compliance with NEPA and NHPA, outreach requires cross-cultural approaches to go beyond “minimum legal requirements for public involvement in our decisions and activities.”<sup>10</sup> For example, some traditionally associated ethnic groups do not respond to the *Federal Register*, newspaper notices, and flyers. To reach them requires personal invitation to leaders, phone calls, and use of media oriented toward and used by the group.

The relation of non-Native American TAPs to NPS is more than that of general stakeholders with an interest in recreation (e.g., climbers at Devils Tower National Monument), conservation of wilderness (Sierra Club), or historic preservation (National Trust for Historic Preservation). The non-Native American TAPs are a particular subset of the “public.” TAPs are here differentiated from large, generic interest groups like the millions of jazz-lovers tied to New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park or the millions of immigrants and their descendants associated with Ellis Island National Monument.

In addition to American Indians, Native Alaskans, and Native Hawaiians, there are a large variety of people traditionally associated with NPS units: Spanish Americans, African



Americans, Japanese Americans, Appalachians, non-federally recognized tribes, and a variety of long-term park neighbors. There are parks embedded in “alien” cultures outside the continental US, cultures with which expatriate NPS staff have to become familiar in order to function effectively: National Park of American Samoa (Samoans), War in the Pacific National Historical Park (Chamorros), San Juan National Historic Site (Puerto Ricans) and Virgin Islands National Park (Virgin Islanders).

TAPs differ from park visitors because certain park resources are closely linked to their sense of purpose, existence as a community, and development as distinct cultural and social entities. Clues to whether a group is a TAP come from pre-park uses of park lands, ethnic inholding communities, and historic uses of resources. For example, the resources may include birthplaces of significant individuals, religious sites, landscapes associated with a way of life, artifacts, plants or minerals necessary for culturally distinctive activities, and former workplaces of a localized occupation (loggers, miners, railroad workers, mill workers). A community is not necessarily land-based. It can include examples of dispersed groups such as Storer College alumni (Harpers Ferry National Historical Park); the Tuskegee Airmen (Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site); or Japanese internees who once lived at a particular camp (e.g., Manzanar National Historic Site). Some non-Native American TAPs are specifically mentioned in enabling legislation, entitling them to special consideration. For instance there is legislation for Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve (“culturally diverse groups associated with the lower Mississippi Delta”);<sup>11</sup> Kalaupapa National Historical Park (the community of Hansen’s Disease patients); Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site (Sweet Auburn neighborhood); and Jimmy Carter National Historic Site (“the history of a small rural southern town”).

### **The problem: Who cares?**

Many TAPs discussed here are not “privileged” legally. Enabling legislation does not recognize the ranchers associated with land incorporated into a park (Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument); Spanish Americans associated with land grants; or former residents of Mammoth Cave National Park. If not specifically mentioned in legislation, why give TAPs any special treatment? Why divert valuable time and resources? A dilemma is how a park can honor traditional long-term ties without overstepping NPS policy or breaking any laws.

There are legitimate reasons why park managers need to be proactive with these communities. They can avoid misunderstandings by positive, culturally sensitive engagement with TAPs. Managers can avoid the appearance of arbitrary and capricious behavior caused by ignoring justifiably significant groups. In regard to park decision-making and compliance with acts such as NEPA and NHPA, the Administrative Procedures Act<sup>12</sup> spells out a way to protect against lawsuits. Managers must be able to make a rational connection between the facts found and choices made. A decision in the situation under legal consideration must demonstrably follow the way a reasonable person reviewing the available facts would decide. The key is that NPS managers need “relevant and reasonably accessible facts” gathered by someone in advance of an urgent issue. To comply, managers need help collecting data on groups traditionally associated with parks. Thus they need to verify past history of use and the basis for the use of park resources, and to avoid misrepresenting facts and spreading misconceptions. Decisions need to include input from long-term neighbors and TAPs as pre-

sented to a professional cultural anthropologist who can delineate the cultural history of an area.

As a special subset of the public, non-Native American TAPs are part of park history. Some communities were pushed out when a park was created (leaving behind homes that are now archaeological sites, as well as “exotic” species of plants), or are associated with an on-going institution within a park. If not dispersed, non-Native American TAPs may be neighbors to the parks or inholders.<sup>13</sup> Their community history centers on areas where kin lived, prayed, studied, and worked, such as in the “hollers” of Blue Ridge Parkway, the logging camps of Redwood National Park, and the mines of New River Gorge National River and Keweenaw National Historical Park. Their sense of community, their music, and their folklore refer to places within the park. Within park boundaries are the churches where their grandparents or great-grandparents were baptized and married, and cemeteries where they were buried.

“Overlooked” TAPs may include farmers or fishermen whose interests were downplayed in order to preserve undeveloped coastlines or archaeological sites. They have willingly (by sale) or unwillingly (by condemnation) moved out of what are now park lands. These groups may have valuable information about threatened species or landscapes, nearby real estate development, or incursion of exotic plants or animals. TAPs may include workers or descendants of workers historically on site—highlighted already at Lowell National Historical Park but just beginning to be identified and documented, for example, at plantations such as Hampton National Historic Site. An objective of an ethnographic survey is to identify past and present residents and users of land, shore, water, and other resources within the park.

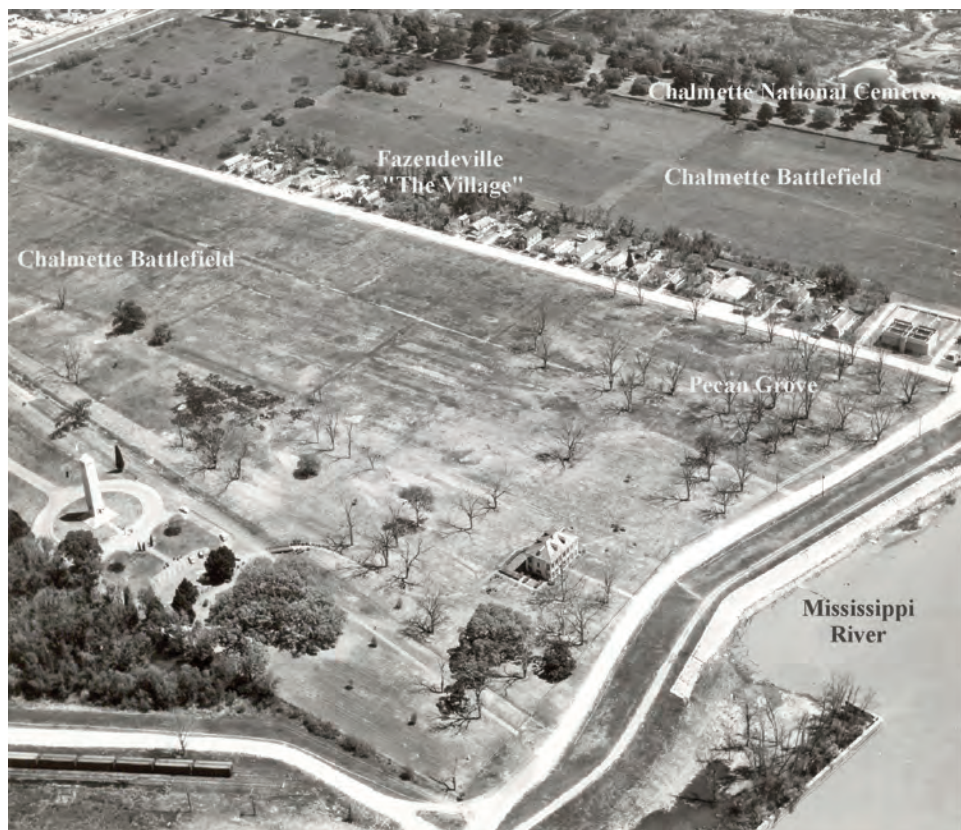
A beginning of a dialogue with TAPs is celebrating local heritage through interpretation of community history, music, and crafts, and by marking the location of the communities with site bulletins, waysides, or maps. For interpretation, Blue Ridge Parkway has musical demonstrations, Shenandoah National Park has an exhibit, and Catoctin Mountain Park has conducted oral histories. For preservation and for recruitment of staff and volunteers, however, the park must go further.

NPS has positive examples of accommodation with non-Native American TAPs’ ties to sacred sites in parks. Due to a special arrangement between the Catholic Church and NPS, Mission San Jose at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park holds mass, maintaining a tie to the local Hispanic population. By park practice, Pecos National Historical Park celebrates an annual mass at the ruins of its mission church, tied to the local Spanish American population. Congress acted in one case: the Cumberland Island Wilderness Boundary Adjustment Act (2004), which separated High Point/Half Moon Bluff Historic District from wilderness area of the national seashore, thereby preserving and facilitating access to historic buildings, including local African Americans’ First African Baptist Church.

Park managers need to look carefully at the makeup of their staff, both employees and volunteers, and attempt to recruit local people. Parks may find a lot less turnover if they recruit from the TAPs and build effective relationships in the process. Groups “invisible” to managers during planning for and after formation of the park may seek employment with NPS. On-going “invisibility” of their traditional ties creates poor employee morale. It would help if a manager asked, “Have NPS policies been explained to these members and other members of TAPs in terms easily reconcilable with traditionally associated perspectives?”

A special need for problem-solving occurs when pre-existing parks are consolidated or the park makes acquisitions. Chalmette National Historical Park, commemorating the 1815 Battle of New Orleans, was created in 1939 but the park only included a fraction of the original 1815 battlefield. A historic African American community, known as Fazendeville, established in 1867, was located on the “hallowed ground” of this significant battle (Figure 3). This residential community exemplified the early Reconstruction-period African American communities that sprang up after the Civil War. In the 1960s, local preservationists rallied Congress to save the battlefield, and NPS was directed to consolidate what remained of the battlefield between the Chalmette Monument and Chalmette National Cemetery into a single holding. Despite the community’s protests and best efforts, by 1966 the NPS had purchased Fazendeville, razed the homes, and relocated the residents to newly developing neighborhoods of the Lower Ninth Ward in adjacent New Orleans. All above-ground evidence of the historic community was removed except the road trace through the heart of old plantation fields. It was not until 1978, after Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve was legislated and Chalmette National Historical Park became a part of the newly designated park, that there was an awareness or concern for this group who maintained ties to the land.

**Figure 3** Aerial view of Fazendeville, Louisiana, and environs. Courtesy of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve archives.



At Piscataway Park in Maryland, the grave of Chief Turkey Tayac is unique in being a burial permitted in a park, though not the grave of a member of a federally recognized tribe. Piscataway Park then has to treat the Piscataway people as one of several TAPs that are without the protection of some of the laws that apply to federally recognized tribes.

Non-proactive managers may face problems such as the public outcry in New York City among local African Americans, which was generated by disregarding a historic African American burial ground that was uncovered beneath a building under construction by the General Services Administration. It took an expensive interruption of construction and the eventual creation of a park (African Burial Ground National Monument) to mitigate the situation, because review for Section 106 compliance had been cursory. In a similar situation, if a concerned TAP is identified ahead of time, construction or interpretive plans can be discussed with associated members before the NPS planners make final decisions.

The first step for park managers is to identify TAPs not already known: there are shy and “invisible” groups whose heritage is undiscovered by NPS and whose voices go unheard. Ethnographers have skills “to inform and enrich” NPS planning and programming for these groups, to foster stewardship of resources of concern, and to provide a “diversity of perspectives and stories.”<sup>14</sup> Ethnography is one of the six categories of cultural resources in NPS used to “ensure appropriate protection, preservation, treatment, and interpretation of cultural resources, employing the best current scholarship.”<sup>15</sup> Ethnographers are professionally trained to interact with, and document, cultures (e.g., TAPs) other than that of mainstream America.

Civic engagement calls for intercultural sensitivity. Accustomed to cultural diversity, an ethnographer can suggest respectful and appropriate behavior to better foster intercultural partnerships, both inside and outside NPS. Twenty years ago, cultural anthropologists were recruited to fill a role in regional offices. They have provided invaluable resources and consultation in a systematic way that managers can use to train park staff, protect resources, and develop programs with cultural sensitivity and awareness of TAPs.

Park superintendents who request it can fund ethnographic studies that provide important information to managers. Groups aspiring to be considered “traditionally associated people” need definition, and sometimes, in the case of historic ties, the descendants must be sought nearby. Ethnographic studies will help to distinguish those that are traditionally associated from other types of interest groups, especially larger, more generic groups who may also have legitimate reasons for lobbying for more attention from NPS managers and friends’ groups.<sup>16</sup>

Ethnographers can implement procedures and studies designed to identify TAPs and avoid related dilemmas. Unlike typical anthropological monographs, ethnographic studies are designed to be descriptive of TAPs in relation to the parks, and to discover their relationship to natural as well as cultural resources.<sup>17</sup> Ethnographic studies usually begin with an overview and assessment, and, if there is insufficient time and money, then they can use a set of rapid data-gathering tools. At the very least, an ethnographer can make an exploratory personal survey of a community and identify personal and institutional contacts for a park’s managers. When a park is preparing a general management plan, the managers may request an ethnographic study to identify TAPs and the associated resources. As a result of an overview and assessment, a need for more information may lead to a second study, such as an ethnohistory.



Look at some examples of useful findings. The ethnographic study of Louisiana's Cane River National Heritage Area alerted managers to disagreements among associated groups. Biscayne National Park's ethnographic overview and assessment indicated differing uses of the park by identified populations (Haitian migrants, Cuban Americans, Mexican Americans), and discovered that many visitors were not even aware of being in a national park.<sup>18</sup> An ethnohistorical study of eight villages near Cape Hatteras National Seashore looked at the impact of NPS on neighbors, and fleshed out park themes of coastal life and the fishing economy.<sup>19</sup> Traditional knowledge from Scandinavian fishermen, helpful to Isle Royale National Park, emerged from an ethnohistory conducted in and around the park.<sup>20</sup> Once managers at Capitol Reef National Park understood the meaning of orchards to the Mormon descendants of the planters, they affirmed the need to protect, not remove, the fruit trees.<sup>21</sup>

Armed with sufficient information, park managers may formulate specific park practices to recognize traditionally associated groups even if legislation does not. For instance, Lowell National Historical Park includes recent immigrant communities in its folk festival, and Blue Ridge Parkway salutes the Appalachian community by demonstrating its music and crafts. But, is this interpretation of folklore enough? Unfortunately, there are thornier problems, such as how to interpret Pearl Harbor simultaneously to Japanese visitors, Japanese American families of internees during World War II, and families of World War II veterans from US and Japan. Worrying about threats to resources, Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site followed enabling legislation and included the residents of the surrounding neighborhood, Sweet Auburn, when planning for the large numbers of visitors expected for the Olympics.

Ethnographic work can be proactive, preparing managers before a TAP approaches the park with concerns. Ethnographers' studies can provide community contacts needed to communicate with TAPs when a crisis arises. The ethnographer will work as the superintendent's representative, making no promises without specific guidance. The ethnographers' role is to identify and document TAPs and facilitate a back-and-forth with park management. The ethnographer or a supervised contractor can delve into a group's perspectives, heritage, and knowledge of the National Park Service, which itself is a community with its own cultural language. If NPS has funding, a contracted ethnographer, following a scope of work carefully written by a cultural anthropologist, can identify and document TAPs. The best choice for a contractor is an applied or cultural anthropologist, someone who has not worked solely within academe, and preferably someone who is familiar with NPS and its requirements.

There are already established procedures to assist in communication about preservation of resources. To be most useful, such a conversation should be focused and chronicled, not unlike consultation with acknowledged Native American groups. When an administrative history includes practices (past and present) in regard to TAPs and associated resources, park precedents will permit consistent decisions. Past practices in one park may suggest solutions for others.

## **Conclusion**

Traditionally associated peoples (TAPs) can include others besides recognized Native Americans. NPS must use clearly-spelled-out criteria to define such non-Native American groups for park purposes in order to maintain equity and avoid public outcry. These criteria

are based on the relationship between cultural identity, community, and multi-generational ties and park resources. Civic engagement is a general means to create dialogue with groups falling both inside and outside the definition of TAPs.

Ethnographers can identify and document cultural heritage and groups with a cultural identity tied to particular park resources. With this identification, the park can conduct outreach and create partnerships. As a form of special civic engagement, NPS can use ethnographers to begin a dialogue with TAPs to identify significant resources or history and seek their input into NPS activities. Park managers can rectify the invisibility of TAPs or mitigate perceived or real injustices. Such work can be proactive, preparing managers when one of these cultural groups approaches the park with concerns. Ethnographers' local knowledge can be useful. When working with the groups, the ethnographers do not make promises; rather they delve into a group's perspectives, heritage, and their knowledge of NPS. The ethnographer can be the cultural translator between TAPs and park management during formulation of plans setting guidelines for a decade (e.g., long-range interpretive plans and general management plans).

To summarize, the benefits of knowing the associated people means better sensitivity to these groups and will help park managers in decision-making. Knowledge about TAPs can encourage the preservation ethic, minimize park disputes with neighbors, maximize community support and cooperation with other agencies, and avoid complaints.

## Endnotes

1. Arvilla Payne-Jackson and Sue Ann Taylor, *Prince William Forest Park: The African American Experience* (Triangle, Va.: NPS, June 2000). (Unpublished oral histories.)
2. Jesse Dukes, "Shenandoah Removal," radio segment, August 2008. Online at [www.library.appstate.edu/appcoll/research\\_aid/cknight.html](http://www.library.appstate.edu/appcoll/research_aid/cknight.html).
3. Not all resources associated with TAPs are necessarily land-based—for example, vistas, landscapes, and sounds. Nor are all ethnographic resources material objects. Hence NPS applies the terms "tangible" and "intangible."
4. National Park Service, *National Park Service Management Policies 2006* (Washington, D.C.: NPS), § 1.7.
5. National Park Service Director's Order no. 75A, *Civic Involvement and Public Involvement* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2007), § I; *National Park Service Management Policies 2006*, § 1.7, glossary.
6. *National Park Service Management Policies 2006*, § 6.2.1.1.
7. *National Park Service Management Policies 2006*, § 7.5.6.
8. *National Park Service Management Policies 2006*, § 5.35.3.
9. NHPA Section 106 requires consultation about the possible impacts on any National Register-eligible property potentially affected by a federally funded or licensed project. Those who have an interest in the property and are knowledgeable should be consulted as the agency assesses possible adverse impacts; in a case of adverse impact, affected parties should be consulted. Section 110 of NHPA requires federal agencies to identify and evaluate properties they control as to their possible eligibility for the National Register.
10. National Park Service Director's Order no. 75A, § 1.

11. The legislation only mentions Acadians so there was a runaway increase in “cultural centers” for other groups—German, Isleño, American Indian, and Italian—until a superintendent called a halt.
12. 5 USC, § 706.
13. Turning the idea of inholdings on its head, Keweenaw National Historical Park is composed of very small tracts of federal land set in a larger copper mining landscape.
14. National Park Service Director’s Order no. 75A, § II.
15. *National Park Service Management Policies 2006*, § 5.1.
16. Antoinette Jackson and Allan F. Burns’s *Ethnohistorical Study of Kingsley Plantation Community* (Atlanta: National Park Service, Southeast Region, 2006) explores an extended community of multiracial people looking at the history of a plantation, the community related to it, and its relation to the greater Jacksonville, Florida, area.
17. Karen Fog Olwig’s *Cultural Adaptation and Resistance on St. John* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1985, 1993), for example, while containing data useful to park managers, including a section on the impact of the park on islanders (p. 162ff.), is not designed to be easily accessible to time-strapped park rangers or managers.
18. EDAW, Inc., *Final Report: Biscayne National Park Ethnographic Overview and Assessment* (Homestead, Fla.: Biscayne National Park, 2006).
19. Impact Assessment, Inc., *Final Technical Report, Volume One: Ethnohistorical Description of the Eight Villages Adjoining Cape Hatteras National Seashore and Interpretive Themes of History and Heritage* (Manteo, N.C.: Cape Hatteras National Seashore, 2005).
20. Rebecca Toupal, Richard W. Stoffle, and María Nieves Zedeño, *The Isle Royale Folke-fiskerisamfunn: Familier som levde av fiske. An Ethnohistory of the Scandinavian Folk Fishermen of Isle Royale National Park* (Tucson: Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology, University of Arizona, 2002).
21. David R.M. White, *By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them: An Ethnographic Evaluation of Orchard Resources at the Fruita Rural Historic District, Capitol Reef National Park, Utah* (Denver: National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Region, 1994).

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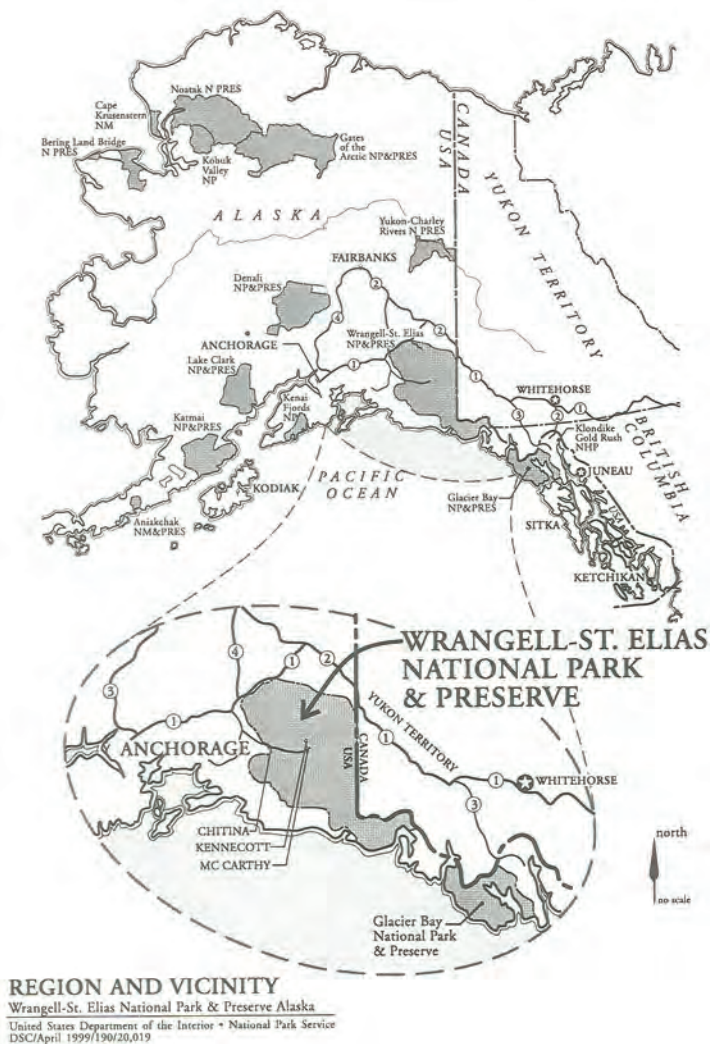
# Ethnographic Overviews and Assessments: An Example from Wrangell–St. Elias National Park and Preserve

*Barbara A. Cellarius*

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT (EOA) is one of the baseline research reports prepared through the National Park Service's ethnography program and its network of regional and park-based ethnographers. These reports review and analyze archival data and previously published materials on park ethnographic resources<sup>1</sup> and the groups traditionally associated with a park and its natural and cultural resources.<sup>2</sup> Limited interviews and discussions occur with the traditionally associated people in order to supplement and assess the documentary evidence and identify gaps in the available data. This essay describes the experience of Wrangell–St. Elias National Park and Preserve with this report, including how it fits into a park's overall cultural resource program and the interaction that has taken place with local communities along the way.

Encompassing more than 13 million acres in south-central Alaska, Wrangell–St. Elias is the largest unit managed by the U.S. National Park Service (Figure 1). Wrangell–St. Elias, along with most other Alaskan parks, is different from the majority of national parks in other parts of the United States. The park is relatively young, having been established in 1980 when Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, commonly referred to by the acronym ANILCA. When it was created, efforts were made to protect the fragile resources of its varied ecosystems while at the same time honoring well-established traditions of human use within the park. The park territory includes the homelands and traditional hunting and fishing areas for at least three Alaska Native groups—Ahtna, Upper Tanana, and Tlingit—and non-Native use and occupation of the region dates back to the early 20th century. Under the provisions of ANILCA, subsistence hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering by local rural residents—both Native and non-Native—are allowed on park lands, recognizing the important role that the harvest of wild resources has played in the lives of area residents (Figures 2, 3). Acknowledging the close and long-standing ties between local people and the park, Wrangell–St. Elias is one of about a dozen national parks nationwide to employ a professional cultural anthropologist or ethnographer on its staff.

Preparing an EOA for such a vast geographic area is a challenging task. Early on, a decision was made to divide the task into several projects. An EOA had been completed for the Ahtna Athabaskan region by the time the current park anthropologist was hired in 2002, with funding pending for an Upper Tanana Athabaskan report. That project is now done, and planning has begun for a Yakutat Tlingit EOA. Realizing, however, that these projects



**Figure 1** Location of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve.

were essentially being done by language group, in particular Alaska Native languages, it was clear that there was one language group yet to be addressed: English and other European languages. Starting in the early 20th century, the park area and its resources attracted people to the region—miners, trappers, big game hunters, and hunting guides. They are to be the subject of a future EOA, perhaps the last of the series for the park. For larger parks, it may well make sense to break the EOA task into several smaller projects, but it is also important to make sure that significant resources or peoples are not left out in the process.

At Wrangell-St. Elias, EOAs are designed to be researched and written by professional anthropologists, but in such a way that the material is understandable by a general, non-specialist audience. The need for this kind of “translation” has been specified in the project agreements. The reports are designed for use in educating the public and in orienting new



**Figure 2** Ahtna fish wheel near Chitina on the Cooper River, circa 1927. Photo courtesy of Geoff Bleakley.



**Figure 3** Lena Charley of Christochina begins processing a moose hide by scraping residual fat and tissue from the inside of the hide. Photo by Barbara A. Cellarius.

employees to the park. It is also envisioned that local communities might find the reports useful. Thus far, indications are that this will be the case. In a preliminary discussion of the Yakutat Tlingit project, the tribal council members were enthusiastic about the project. They had themselves talked about trying to establish a library of materials about the people of Yakutat and saw the EOA as making a contribution to their efforts. And requests for additional copies have been received from at least one of the communities included in the Upper Tanana report.

The Upper Tanana EOA was completed in 2007. The project was accomplished through a cooperative agreement with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and overseen by the park anthropologist. It benefited greatly from the fact that both principal investigators from ADF&G were cultural anthropologists who had done fieldwork in and written their doctoral dissertations about the study region. Going into the project, they were well versed in the published literature on the region and relevant archival sources. They were also able to draw on their own notes from the earlier fieldwork. Copies of the published report have been distributed to local schools and communities, and it is also available for download from the park website ([www.nps.gov/wrst/historyculture/upper-tanana-ethnographic-study.htm](http://www.nps.gov/wrst/historyculture/upper-tanana-ethnographic-study.htm)) and from the website of ADF&G.

In addition to a narrative synthesizing topics such as territory and language, economy, social and political organization, religion and ritual, and material culture prior to sustained western contact, the Upper Tanana EOA discusses social, political, and economic changes experienced by these communities in the twentieth century. Particular attention is paid to relationships with the neighboring Ahtna Athabaskans and relationships to lands and resources within Wrangell–St. Elias. An extensive annotated bibliography on the upper Tanana region is also included. The EOA is illustrated with numerous photographs from the personal collections of the authors as well as from archival collections.

The concluding chapter of the Upper Tanana EOA identifies data gaps and potential future projects. These recommendations have been helpful in planning cultural resource projects at Wrangell–St. Elias. For example, the park sought and is now in line for funding to add oral history interviews with residents of the Upper Tanana villages to the park's existing Project Jukebox collection, an interactive, multi-media computer system that provides digital access to oral history recordings, associated maps, photographs, and text. (The original Jukebox project was completed before the ties of these communities to the park had been formally recognized.) Other helpful suggestions address documenting traditional ecological knowledge and presenting cultural and historical information to park visitors, specifically producing a map or interpretive display combining Native place names along with the travel routes between the upper Ahtna and upper Tanana regions.

Another aspect of these projects is coordination with local communities and tribal governments in the process of preparing EOAs. The park anthropologist and one of the principal investigators met with the council members and staff of each of the federally recognized tribal governments in the upper Tanana region to introduce the project, and the local tribes were also sent copies of the draft report for their review and comment. These introductory meetings can serve as an opportunity for the tribes to have input into the project. In an introductory meeting on the Yakutat EOA, for example, a tribal council member recommended adding a related community to the project. Coming before the project had gotten started, it



was easy to implement, as well as being a welcome comment. Since some of the communities are half a day's travel or more from the park headquarters, the meetings and the other contacts with the tribes regarding the project have had the additional benefit of furthering the relationship between the park and these park-affiliated communities.

Finally, a portion of the funding for these projects has been set aside for community histories. The goal of this has been to allow the local communities to put their history or culture into their own words, to share information they think is important for park staff and visitors to know and understand. In the case of the Upper Tanana EOA, three tribes indicated an interest in writing something about themselves and entered into cooperative agreements with the park to do so. The community history received from Dot Lake Village, for example, was largely written by a retired community member and former tribal council president interested in documenting stories and other information he had heard from his mother-in-law and other community elders. An alternative approach was taken for one of the community histories written for Denali National Park and Preserve. Rather than having a single primary author, the Minchumina community history was done instead as a school project. The local middle and high school students prepared biographical sketches of long-time local residents and wrote historical essays on topics such as the general community, transportation, and trapping (Students and Teachers of Minchumina Community School 2000). Whatever the approach taken in preparing a community history, the resulting documents can be distributed alongside the associated EOA.

Wrangell–St. Elias National Park and Preserve has benefited in several ways from its series of EOAs. Technical information on park-affiliated communities and peoples has been collected, organized, and presented in a manner understandable to a general audience. Recommendations have been received regarding future research projects and the presentation of the information to the public. But the benefits extend beyond the reports themselves. They create opportunities for new partnerships and to build upon existing partnerships and relationships. A possible partnership to explore in the future as an outgrowth of the Upper Tanana EOA, for example, is to work with a local tribe or tribal cultural organization on a map or other interpretive exhibit presenting Upper Tanana and Ahtna place names and travel routes. In addition, the increased interaction between park staff and the staff and officials from local communities, for the community histories as well as the EOAs, can also benefit existing relationships with park affiliated communities more generally, including government-to-government relationships with federally recognized Indian tribes.

## **Endnotes**

1. "Ethnographic resources" are defined as "objects and places, including sites, structures, landscapes, and natural resources, with traditional cultural meaning and value to associated peoples. Research and consultation with associated people identifies and explains the places and things they find culturally meaningful" (NPS 2005, 157).
2. NPS defines "traditionally associated peoples" as follows: "[S]ocial/cultural entities such as tribes, communities, and kinship units, as well as park neighbors, traditional residents, and former residents who remain attached to a park area despite having relocated, are 'traditionally associated' with a particular park when (1) the entity regards park

resources as essential to its development and continued identity as a culturally distinct people; (2) the association has endured for at least two generations (40 years); and (3) the association began prior to establishment of the park” (NPS 2005, 159).

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# A Balancing Act: Ethnography, Subsistence, and Alaska Parks

*David J. Krupa*

If people come in there, it'll never be the same. All these years people live there and it is still the same. They never ran out of moose. And when you get that moose you get a moose skin. And you make your moccasins so you make it through the winter and you wouldn't freeze. . . . We pick berries every summer, and all kinds of places back there to pick berries. And it never run out yet. We might have some good and bad seasons but we still live through the winter. I don't see why my kids shouldn't live like we do right now. But if you make parks, how, I can't understand how people could come in and just enjoy themselves. . . . I want to be able, 30–40 years from now, to still be able to hunt, fish, do everything I'm doing right now.

— *Flora Bergman, Allakaket, Alaska, 1979*<sup>1</sup>

## **Subsistence and the National Park Service**

IT HAS BEEN OVER 25 YEARS since Flora Bergman and other Alaskans testified in the run-up to the historic Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), passed by the US Congress in 1980. This landmark legislation provided for the addition of 104 million acres of federal lands in parks, refuges, and other conservation areas, thereby nearly doubling the size of conservation lands in the United States. And while it was certainly a watershed moment in environmental preservation, it was also the first such legislation to specifically recognize and protect human use, occupancy, and subsistence activities by Native and non-Native rural residents with cultural and historic ties to the newly created parklands.

As C. Mack Shaver, then the National Park Service (NPS) superintendent of Northwest Alaska Areas, said in 1984, this was an unprecedented experiment with social and political dimensions:

The new Alaska parklands created in 1980 by ANILCA are an experiment on a grand scale. They have nearly doubled the size of the U.S. National Park System. They have set aside some of the world's largest and most magnificent remaining wildlands and dedicated them to not only protecting the state's vast natural resources and valuable resources, but providing for the continuation of the threatened lifestyles and cultures of the Alaska native people. The continuum of human history and use of the earth is nowhere better preserved; and the protection of fragile ecosystems without a complete cessation of use has been accomplished. These areas provide a great challenge to the managers and an even greater challenge to the public whose



parks they are—to continue to protect traditional park values and to allow consumptive resource use in Alaska’s living cultural national park areas.<sup>2</sup>

ANILCA was a unique departure from the common Euroamerican philosophical separation of nature and culture, and one bound to vex management agencies used to “protecting” and “preserving” land and resources through exclusion of resident populations, as well as prohibitions on consumptive human activities and impacts. Anthropologists and ethnography featured prominently—then and now—in documenting customary and traditional associations of Native and non-Native communities on parklands, both in planning for park establishment and in the intervening years where management decisions require consideration of the subsistence provisions.<sup>3</sup>

In this paper I discuss the role of ethnography in fulfilling the NPS mandate to provide for continued subsistence opportunity on parklands. The examples are largely drawn from my own experience in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve and Yukon–Charley Rivers National Preserve, where I have worked since 2002. While the examples are specific to my experience, I think they are fairly typical of that of ethnographers working in and around Alaskan parks, and they demonstrate the on-going importance of ethnographic research to subsistence issues.

### **Oral history, subsistence, and the ANILCA parks**

When I joined the National Park Service in 2002, I had already worked for nearly ten years documenting oral histories with residents living in and around Alaska’s national parks. I had worked as a research assistant in the oral history program of the University of Alaska–Fairbanks Rasmuson Library. William Schneider, founder and curator of the program, had recently developed “Project Jukebox,” a pioneering project to digitize oral history interviews with added text, photographs, maps, and other material and make them available on computer and, later, via the Internet.

In the 1990s, Sande McDermott, the Alaska regional historian for NPS, was keen to capture the administrative and social history of Alaska’s park history, and funded a series of these jukebox oral histories focused on ANILCA parks. The aim was to capture first-hand accounts of the experience of local Native and non-Native residents in and around the parks, as well as park planners and managers who had experienced those heady, turbulent days when the parks were first established. I recall thinking how unique it was for an agency to actively consult critics and allies alike, and to provide a prominent public forum for their voices to be heard without editorial or bureaucratic filters. I still believe this is a highly unusual form of auto-critique for any agency to engage in, and it is to NPS’s credit that it did not shrink from the contrary voices of those directly impacted by the creation of Alaska’s new parks.

### **Traditional ecological knowledge**

When the Yukon River Chinook (king) and chum salmon runs inexplicably crashed and

escapement to upriver spawning grounds was among the lowest ever recorded, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recognized the importance not only of continuing efforts to inventory and monitor biological aspects of the fisheries through stock status and trends studies, but also to investigate and document local and traditional ecological knowledge about the fishery.

In 2005, NPS received grant funding from USFWS to document traditional and local ecological knowledge of the Upper Yukon River fishery. The study design focused on qualitative information from key consultants who collectively have decades of experience and empirical observations about the fisheries. The results of that study will soon be available as a technical report available online through USFWS, but perhaps the most compelling element was the near unanimity of local fishers in claiming that average size of Chinook—probably the most important single subsistence resource in the area (Figure 1)—had dramatically declined, with huge implications for not only the numbers of escapement to the spawning grounds but also the quality of that escapement (fecundity rates of larger females can be more than twice that of smaller fish).



**Figure 1** Eagle village resident Ethel Beck cuts Yukon River salmon.

The details of local and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) might seem deceptively simple to experienced subsistence practitioners, park managers, or biologists. But as a compendium of local wisdom, TEK has extraordinary and often untapped potential to inform our collective understanding, not only about subsistence resources but also the people who rely on them for their livelihood. In my study of Upper Yukon River TEK, for example, there was unmistakable and widespread alarm among fishers over salmon size and run strength. The fishers had practical advice about reading the river and about how to set nets safely in fast water. They explained how people cope with shortages of key resources, and how they might shift their efforts from fishing to focus more on caribou or moose hunting in times of poor fish runs. Perhaps most importantly of all, TEK helps remind resource managers that everyone has a stake in resources that transcend mere sustenance and speak instead to a deeper existential ecology of people interconnected with each other and their environment. Subsistence, as TEK demonstrates, is a way of life rather than simply a means of production.

### **Ethnographic overview and assessment**

The NPS ethnography program often issues contracts to produce mandated informational studies, such as the ethnographic overview and assessment (EOA). One recent EOA, produced under contract with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Subsistence Division,

focused on Han Athabaskans with ancestral and contemporary ties to the Upper Yukon drainage from below Eagle, Alaska, all the way to Dawson, Yukon Territory. The final product, a book entitled *Han: People of the River*, by Craig Mishler and William Simeone, represents a comprehensive ethnography and cultural history of Eagle village residents and their fellow Han neighbors across the U.S.–Canada border region near Dawson. A more comprehensive EOA is underway for the entire Yukon–Charley Rivers National Preserve that will cover other communities in the area.<sup>4</sup> Barbara Cellarius’s contribution to this volume addresses the role of EOAs in more detail.

### **Digital repatriation and community consultation**

In and around Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, resident communities have long histories of patiently answering researcher inquiries about their lives and culture. But local residents want to know how this information will be preserved and shared to the benefit of their own communities. Local community members sometimes complain that they are only consulted when they can provide intellectual or cultural capital, only to be overlooked in the dissemination of results and products. Rather than propose new ethnographic and subsistence documentation every time a question arises, we developed a proposal to create digital portals to store research that has been completed, and to offer community access via the Internet to the rich cultural and intellectual property still archived in libraries and museums at the University of Alaska–Fairbanks.

There is an abundance of information concerning the cultural and natural landscape of Gates of the Arctic, so this comprehensive effort to develop a consultable record accessible to park staff, visitors, and village residents will provide community-based electronic portals to collate and make widely available reference materials relating to communities. A current version of this work in progress can be accessed at <http://jukebox.uaf.edu/gatesportal/index.html>. (Figure 2).

### **Subsistence Resource Commissions (SRCs) and other advisory groups**

ANILCA mandated that the new national parks in Alaska would also support subsistence by establishing nine-member Subsistence Resource Commissions (SRCs) for each park. These commissions are to be primarily composed of local resident subsistence hunters and fishers who use park lands. The purpose of the commissions is to ensure that locally qualified rural residents would continue to have substantial input into the management of the resources that support their lifeways. NPS is responsible for assisting the SRCs in submitting new (or altered) hunting or fishing regulations, commenting on issues of general park management, and ensuring that the secretary of interior is advised regarding the SRC commission meetings and recommendations.

Ethnographers are sometimes called upon to assist in “staff analysis” of new federal or state hunting proposals. Anthropologists must determine the cultural and historic precedents for such contentious issues as the use of bear parts in the production of handicrafts; cultural precedents for the controversial practice of “denning,” which involves the killing of

wolf pups or bear cubs in the den; and the collection on conservation lands of shed horns, antlers, and plant materials for the local production and sale of handicrafts.

More broadly, park and regional ethnographers provide research and consultation on “customary and traditional” determinations for proposed or on-going subsistence activities, as well as determinations of eligibility for individual users who are not affiliated with a resident-zone community but who claim subsistence rights on parklands.<sup>5</sup> These determinations of eligibility are meant to assure that legitimate claims to subsistence rights on parklands are honored while prohibiting spurious claims by people or communities with no cultural or historical connections to parklands.

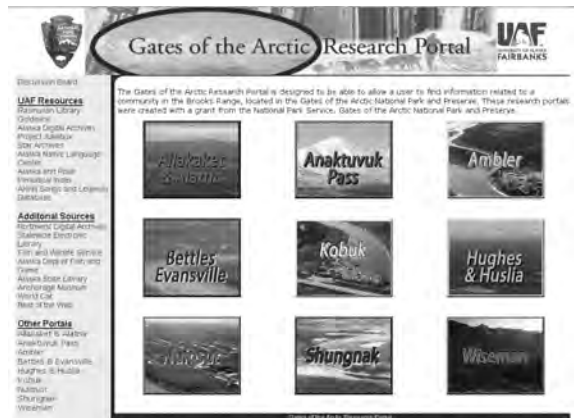
The National Park Service is a voting member of the Federal Subsistence Board (which manages subsistence on federal lands and waters in Alaska), is a key agency participating in the Federal Subsistence Program Regional Advisory Councils, and has multiple ANILCA parks with SRCs that advise parks on subsistence-related issues in park management. NPS ethnographers provide expertise that can be brought to bear on critical resource issues that have direct effect on subsistence-eligible park users, and can provide expert guidance to NPS on issues before the Federal Subsistence Board.

### **Subsistence harvest research**

Another crucial duty for park ethnographers is to further develop, manage, and provide oversight for NPS-affiliated research activities related to contemporary subsistence activities in and around NPS lands. While NPS is mandated to provide for continued subsistence opportunities for qualified local residents on parklands, most information regarding the extent, nature, and sociocultural context for subsistence practices and harvest data are more than 25 years out of date. And while park managers are charged with managing for “natural and healthy” ecosystems, this requires reliable scientific information, including the impacts of subsistence activities on local plant and animal populations and quantifiable information on the impacts to subsistence users by other park visitors.

When, for example, Western Arctic Caribou herd numbers appear to be in decline, as is now the case, or when, as has been documented concerning the Yukon River Chinook fishery since 1998, return rates and fish size issues threaten the viability of local subsistence fisheries, NPS cannot meet its statutory management obligations without credible and up-to-date information.

NPS ethnographers work collaboratively with local residents, other staff, and other



**Figure 2** Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve research portal—a work in progress.

agencies and stakeholders. This approach extends to designing and preparing internal and external funding proposals for future research, such as comprehensive harvest surveys or issue-specific subsistence studies. The goal is to ensure that all interested stakeholders have a meaningful role in subsistence programs from concept to completion.

The consultative, collaborative approach so necessary to subsistence and ethnographic documentation work also helps to avoid the pitfalls of “re-inventing the wheel” in regard to subsistence research protocols. Until recent years, the Subsistence Division of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game undertook much of the quantitative and qualitative research to develop survey and research protocols that the NPS relies upon. Taking the collaborative approach with state and federal agencies, tribes, and local stakeholders has the potential to leverage efficiencies in staffing, methods, information-sharing, and data parity. Similarly, coordination between ethnographers, subsistence personnel, and regional NPS inventory and monitoring programs help to design research projects and protocols that can address management issues that involve natural resources and the role of human harvest in population dynamics. For example, the Arctic inventory and monitoring program identified some 26 “vital signs” for the Arctic region that serve as indices of ecosystem health, including human harvest of subsistence resources.

### **Climate change and Arctic communities**

In the context of rapidly changing environmental conditions, on-going and proposed development activities on adjacent lands, and dramatic alterations of local village socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, up-to-date and scientifically credible information is an essential foundation for future management decisions. The lack of such information currently leaves NPS in a reactive position, rather than proactively managing to minimize conflicts and impairment to ensure the best possible experience for all stakeholders and visitors.

As important as “harvest survey” data are for wise park management, ethnographers move the discussion beyond harvest numbers to provide the cultural context. One example from NPS-sponsored research in Northwest Alaska demonstrates that hunting and fishing activities are unequally distributed within communities.<sup>6</sup> Certain individuals act as key “producers” who regularly redistribute their harvest via complex networks of trade and reciprocity, thereby often replicating older traditional familial or tribal social organization. Among the many practical implications of such studies is that regulations focusing on individual harvest limits may not reflect the actual hunting and fishing practices within communities. Some “community harvest” regulations have been developed to reflect this reality of sharing networks. Ethnographers help to document these cultural nuances and ensure that these insights find their way into the regulatory bureaucracy of resource management.

Dramatic environmental change highlights another key ethnographic insight, one that complicates resource management strategies but also refines their applicability: rural Alaskans and subsistence practitioners must not be confined to an “ethnographic present,” nor to an idealized sepia image of the “traditional” or the “customary,” nor to a notion of “pure subsistence.” The environment is changing but so too are local communities. Subsistence is deeply rooted in tradition but focused on the now. People adapt and change. Resource use

patterns are dynamic. Hunting, fishing, and trapping activities are opportunistic and mutable. “If the caribou don’t come by we have to work harder for moose,” for example. Or, “We used to rely on dog-team but now we use snow machines.” Ethnographers help both to document these adaptations and to explore their management implications. All-terrain vehicle (ATV) access to parklands, for example, has been an on-going issue, and historical and ethnographic research has been used to determine the nature and extent of prior use, which then guides management actions to either accommodate or prohibit such uses and users.

### **A seat at the table: Park management**

One of the most important roles for Alaskan ethnographers is simply to have a seat at the table in park management, and to be ever-attentive to the impact of park policies and management actions on subsistence users. I sit on a variety of park management teams, such as the Integrated Research Compliance Team, which analyzes internal and external research proposals to ensure their compliance with park purposes and mandates. The subsistence “filter” ensures that projects do not conflict with section 810 of ANILCA, and might involve asking for changes in research design or scheduling of fieldwork so as not to have overflights or other impacts during key hunting seasons or caribou migrations. Other management actions, such as prescribed fire efforts or decisions about whether to repair cabins, will be considered in light of our obligations to provide continued subsistence opportunity.

Differing views of the land and resources is evident in the many instances of user conflict that arise each year in and around parks. In Gates of the Arctic, for example, sport hunters and recreational floaters are drawn to the Upper Kobuk River area and often “put in” on parklands at Walker Lake, which is at the headwaters of the Kobuk River. They then float down through the preserve and eventually pass into state, federal, and private lands. There are many local camps that provide a base of activities for subsistence hunting and fishing, and the potential for conflicts between users is high. Ethnographers have helped to develop informational products that sensitize the visiting public to these subsistence activities and other methods to minimize interference with lawful consumptive uses of resources. An oft-cited example of conflicting values surrounds the issue of “catch and release” fishing practices that are permitted under sport fishing regulations. While the purpose of such regulations is to preserve the resource while allowing recreational activity, the practice is an affront to Alaska Native cultures, akin to “playing with food.” A brochure was developed a few years back aimed at reducing conflict between local subsistence fishers and sport fishers who are angling for trophy-size sheefish (*Stendous leucichthys*) to address just this case of conflicting values.

It is critically important for ethnographers to remain vigilant in keeping NPS obligations under ANILCA in the forefront of awareness for new managers. These obligations are to protect—in perpetuity—subsistence opportunity. Retired park historian William Brown touched on this issue in describing the ideal subsistence program:

What we need to further develop and perfect [a locally responsive NPS subsistence program] is the ongoing negotiation process, a constant, rolling negotiation regime. Essential to make



that regime work are knowledgeable park superintendents with much-devolved power of decision. And to make informed decisions, the superintendents must be advised by the best possible staffs: both subsistence program managers and onsite subsistence coordinators, the latter spending much time in the villages and camps to keep abreast of changing circumstances, as well as nurturing the trust relationship with the local people that keeps communications going. The importance of continuity of personnel in these operating positions cannot be overstated. That's why local people should get priority for these positions. In practical terms, whenever possible, it should be mandatory that the onsite coordinators be local people. Otherwise the whole delicate house of cards can tumble in a heap when the new face hops off the plane.<sup>7</sup>

## Conclusion

Ever since I watched Flora Bergman's testimony from 1979, and her eloquent plea for protection not just of land and resources but for a *way of life*, I've thought of her remarks as a challenge to contemporary managers. Are we succeeding in fulfilling ANILCA's promise to its resident people and cultures? The short answer seems to be "yes." NPS has so far protected the subsistence opportunity on protected lands, and local residents can still rely upon the bounty of the land and water for their essential livelihood and sustenance. The caveat is that there are so very many changes afoot—from changing community dynamics to development pressures to global climate change—and NPS must continue to work in partnership with other stakeholders to confront these challenges and adapt, just as the subsistence way of life has for millennia. Ethnographers will continue to document this cultural and natural dynamic and attempt to draw out its multiple meanings and implications for wise park management.

I close with a quotation from retired Assistant Park Manager Steve Ulvi, whose own biography reflected the complexities and challenges of subsistence and protected lands before and after ANILCA.<sup>8</sup> Whereas some see danger lurking in the complexities of managing human consumptive uses and subsistence rights on parklands, Ulvi nudges us to embrace this rich natural and cultural tapestry as a resource worthy of protection and preservation. It is in that hopeful and positive light that I see our continued ethnographic mission:

We have unheralded opportunities to achieve the greater public good in these large, intact northern biotic systems precisely because they are meant to be inclusive of, and imbued with, human culture. Biomes that still blur the arbitrary distinctions between people and nature. Human associations of nearly infinite variety. Verbal. Symbolic. Sensory. Physical. Mythic. Spiritual. Landscapes as a mutable stage for rich living traditions, cultural time capsules from the past, and human oral histories that continue to evolve. Infinite meaning in "empty landscapes" (Brown 2000)—whether we are ready to recognize it or not.<sup>9</sup>

## Endnotes

1. Excerpt from Flora Bergman's testimony before the Alaska Joint Federal State Land Use



- Planning Commission, ANILCA D-2 hearings at Allakaket, Alaska, May 5, 1979.
2. C. Mack Shaver, "Traditional National Park Values and Living Cultural Parks: Seemingly Conflicting Management Demands Coexisting in Alaska's New National Parklands," in *International Perspectives on Cultural Parks: Proceedings of the First World Conference, Mesa Verde National Park* (Washington, D.C.: US National Park Service and Colorado Historical Society, 1984), 311–315.
  3. As summarized in Title VIII of ANILCA.
  4. The project is being carried out under the terms of a Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) agreement with Michael Koskey, professor in the Rural Development Program at the University of Alaska–Fairbanks.
  5. Individual subsistence permits are authorized under Section 13.44 of ANILCA.
  6. James S. Magdanz, Robert J. Walker, and Ronald R. Paciorek, *The Subsistence Harvest of Wild Foods by Residents of Shungnak, Alaska, 2002*, Technical Paper no. 279 (Juneau: Division of Subsistence, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 2004).
  7. William E. Brown, "Overview of Subsistence in Alaska," in *Crossing Boundaries in Park Management: Proceedings of the 11th Conference on Research and Resource Management in Parks and on Public Lands*, David Harmon, ed. (Hancock, Mich.: The George Wright Society, 2001), 262.
  8. Steve Ulvi chunked a comfortable California life for the rigors of a subsistence lifestyle along the Upper Yukon River in the early 1970s. He eventually worked seasonally for the newly created Yukon–Charley Rivers National Preserve before moving to Fairbanks to further his education and that of his children. He stayed with the National Park Service and much of his work involved park management and planning, always with an eye to balancing ANILCA obligations to Alaska residents and the wider Park Service duties to the visiting American public.
  9. Steve Ulvi, "On Common Ground: An Enduring Wilderness as Cultural Landscape and Biotic Reserve," in *Crossing Boundaries in Park Management: Proceedings of the 11th Conference on Research and Resource Management in Parks and on Public Lands*, David Harmon, ed. (Hancock, Mich.: The George Wright Society, 2001), 275. Ulvi cites Brown's unpublished paper "Ah, wilderness" (Fairbanks: Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, 2000).

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# The Challenge of Ethnography

*Erin McPherson and Kat Byerly*

## Ethnographic resources in national parks

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE OFTEN SHARES STEWARDSHIP RESPONSIBILITY with indigenous people and cultural groups who have cultural, spiritual, and subsistence connections to park resources. These resources—known as *ethnographic resources*—include both the cultural and the natural features in a park that are assigned significance in the cultural system of a people traditionally associated with parklands before their designation as a national park. Ethnographic resources can include extant features, such as structures, archaeological sites, wildlife and other natural features, sacred or ceremonial locations or landscapes, and the material culture preserved in park museum collections, as well as intangible features, such as cultural values and traditions.<sup>1</sup>

Various legislative mandates require the National Park Service to work with traditionally associated peoples in an effort to include their perspectives in the planning, management, and interpretation of ethnographic resources. Mandates for working with traditionally associated peoples are rooted in the National Park Service (NPS) Organic Act of 1916, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). However, guidance for the implementation of an NPS ethnography program—so created in 1981 to distinguish the applied cultural anthropology program of working with living populations from the discipline of archaeology—first appeared in 1985 in Director's Order no. 28, *Cultural Resource Management*, which required parks to include ethnography in general management plans in order to understand how contemporary communities are traditionally associated with a park's lands and resources. Specific policies for ethnography were further instituted in the 1988 NPS *Management Policies* (most recently revised in 2006), in which ethnography was first included as an individual cultural resource category in 2001. These policies, in addition to the *Cultural Resource Management Guideline* (NPS-28; revised 1997), require consultation with people that have traditional associations with parklands. Beyond these guidelines and policies for all traditionally associated peoples, legislation such as the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (AIRFA), the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA), and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA), require research, consultation, and action to protect the interests of indigenous people.<sup>2</sup> But while policies are in place, the continued lowering of the ethnography program's overall visibility, a lack of servicewide commitment to and understanding and implementation of the program,

and an overall lack of funding and staffing of the program are realities that prevent the National Park Service from managing ethnographic resources at the levels as prescribed by its own management policies. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) notes that despite the plethora of legislation mandating that the National Park Service (as well as other federal agencies) carry out tribal consultation, “there remains a significant problem with implementation.”<sup>3</sup> In 2003, the ACHP wrote an action plan for consultation with traditionally associated peoples. In this plan, the council states that consultation is particularly susceptible to lack of consistency, which “has culminated in misunderstandings, recriminations, increasing litigation and, more recently, in nationwide attention on the shortfalls of existing consultation efforts.”<sup>4</sup> Consultation is a major component of the NPS ethnography program.

### **NPCA’s Center for State of the Parks**

The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), founded in 1919, is a private, non-profit, nonpartisan organization that advocates for the health and preservation of the national park system, with a mission to protect and enhance America’s national parks for present and future generations. In 2000, NPCA initiated the Center for State of the Parks (CSOTP) program with a goal of developing the first complete, comprehensive, and informed understanding of natural and cultural resource conditions in our national parks. With a standardized cultural resources research methodology based on Director’s Order no. 28 and the *Cultural Resource Management Guideline*, as well as other legislation and Park Service policies, CSOTP cultural resources staff conduct a process that includes examining available NPS and outside research on the parks, and engaging in discussions with park and regional staff in order to assess the condition of cultural resources in individual park units.<sup>5</sup>

Like other cultural resource categories, the condition of ethnographic resources is assessed on a park-by-park basis by examining information available on completed research and its inclusion in park planning, staffing levels and access to needed expertise, interpretation, and threats to the resources.<sup>6</sup> To date, the CSOTP program has completed 70 assessments of individual park units, with several more under way. Specifically, the ethnography section of these assessments addresses questions meant to illustrate the visibility of individual parks’ programs, identification and understanding of the program and of ethnographic resources by park staff, availability of needed expertise and management, and engagement of traditionally associated peoples. Data synthesized as a result of these 70 assessments overwhelmingly indicate a significant lack of consistency in approaches to ethnography programs, including addressing traditional uses of parklands, working with communities of traditionally associated peoples, and preserving and interpreting the ways in which parklands are held sacred or otherwise significant by different cultural groups.

As ethnography is a relatively new commitment for the National Park Service, a limited number of parks are mandated by their enabling legislation to fulfill the requirements of an ethnography program (e.g., Nez Perce National Historical Park, Big Hole National Battlefield). In addition, while park managers often have determined that potential connections to traditionally associated peoples do exist, the funding and staffing needed to address these

additional areas of park history often do not fulfill the need. Other parks have not yet conducted the research necessary to determine if ethnographic resources exist. Some park staff have attempted to cultivate ethnography programs but have received no response from the traditionally associated peoples contacted, while other park managers are the heirs of past tensions created through a variety of means, including the creation of the parks themselves and the subsequent removal of their previous inhabitants. Essentially, ethnography is a challenge for park managers because it can refer to a wide variety of resources and cultural groups, as well as require additional management, research, funding, and staff.

Over nine years and 70 assessments, CSOTP has documented ratings for parks' ethnography programs ranging from an overall high of 98 ("excellent") to a low of 18 ("critical"; see explanation of rating system under endnote no. 5), and seen the sunset of the effort to inventory and document ethnographic resources with the gradual disappearance of the Ethnographic Resource Inventory. Just nine parks rated a score of "good" score or better, with a single park demonstrating ethnographic resources in "excellent" condition. These ratings indicate not only that there is active engagement by traditionally associated peoples, but also that the parks and park staff are invested in creating and maintaining relationships with these groups in order to best protect ethnographic resources. Across the 70 parks, however, the average rating for the condition of ethnographic resources is "poor," or a rating of 55, while 30% of parks rated "not applicable" for ethnography due to a lack of research available to determine if the park even had ethnographic resources (just nine definitively did not). Overall, 62% of parks assessed to date demonstrated ethnographic resources in "poor" or "critical" condition, challenged by an overall lack of research and management capacity.<sup>7</sup>

Below, a brief summary of CSOTP's research findings to date—outlining some of the most pervasive challenges inherent in preserving, managing, and interpreting ethnographic resources in the national park system—indicates that the ethnography program is often the least straightforward and the most challenging undertaking of all cultural resource programs.

### **The success of an ethnography program begins with research**

Gathering the information necessary to determine the extent of traditionally associated peoples' connections to parklands and park resources—such as through an ethnographic overview and assessment or a traditional use study—depends on the allocation of funding and ethnography positions or access to universities or other partners to conduct research. Of the 70 parks assessed by the Center for State of the Parks, 30% did not have enough research or other information available with which to conduct an assessment of their ethnography programs—though for over half of these, evidence indicated that a program might be applicable and that additional research was warranted. Overall, 66 percent of parks where an ethnography program existed or might apply had no ethnographic overview and assessment or any other research identifying traditional uses and significance of the park to traditionally associated populations. Furthermore, documentation of ethnographic resources can bring additional challenges; in the views of some traditionally associated people, making culturally privileged resource knowledge known is not always regarded as the best protection for the

resource. For example, conducting research on and interpretation of sacred sites is often not considered culturally appropriate.

### **Staff presence is paramount and institutional memory is key**

Attention to an ethnography program requires staff, funding, and time. The ability of a park to cooperate effectively with traditionally associated peoples and conduct the research necessary to identify, protect, and interpret ethnographic resources, where appropriate, calls for the dedication of professional staff time and energy to the facilitation of relationships, as well as continued staff tenure at the park to maintain relationships and retain institutional memory. In addition, though the tasks of identifying and documenting ethnographic resources in park units often fall to the regional anthropologist (ethnographer), the responsibility for managing and protecting those resources rests with the individual parks and their staff.

Each of the nine parks rating “good” (81–90) or “excellent” (91–100) in a CSOTP assessment had three key things in common: a cultural anthropologist (ethnographer), tribal liaison, or other staff members currently located at the park who are dedicating significant time to facilitating relationships; completed research, conducted by those dedicated staff members, upon which to build and expand an ethnography program; and high engagement of identified traditionally associated peoples. Each park in the next tier, those in the “fair” (61–80) category, had either the same staffing situation at some point in its recent history or access to specialized regional staff. For example, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area employs a cultural anthropologist at the park, and when a grave site was inadvertently discovered during a construction project, Chumash groups were brought together and reached agreement on reburial within 21 days. Santa Monica Mountains has a variety of ethnographic research completed, and relationships with traditionally associated American Indians are strong. Overall, CSOTP research indicates that existence of dedicated staff time at the park level is vital to the success of an ethnography program.

### **The ethnography program is in need of systemwide consistency and guidance**

The definition applied by most parks to “ethnography” refers to an applied program of cultivating relationships and working directly with contemporary communities to document, interpret, and consult with people traditionally associated with parklands and park resources. However, some may approach an ethnography program as a way to acknowledge historical connections with different cultural groups, regardless of current recognition as “traditionally associated.” The difference—determining whether or not living communities exist as a testament to the park’s historic connections with cultural groups—can be difficult to determine and requires significant ethnographic research and consultation in gateway communities and other areas surrounding the park, or even in far-removed communities where people have resettled. Furthermore, while some parks work primarily with indigenous people, others face an expansive definition of “traditionally associated” that can include everything from European immigrants to the descendants of African slaves to third-genera-

tion ranching families. While there are illustrative examples, such as African American associations with Underground Railroad sites or Japanese Americans at Manzanar National Historic Site, discussed in the *Cultural Resource Management Guideline*, it takes a program where anthropologists can share their research and knowledge to identify who can be included in a community or group, or how to continue maintaining effective relationships with these groups.<sup>8</sup> Overall, ethnography in the National Park Service currently lacks someone to head the program who can coordinate information-sharing and ensure that policies and practices are kept current and consistent and followed by parks and regions. This guidance and dedication to the program was lost when the senior anthropologist, Muriel (“Miki”) Crespi, passed away in 2003 and the position was left vacant. In a letter to the Department of the Interior, the American Anthropological Association raised concerns that the Park Service had not yet filled this position, stating that a chief ethnographer “insures that ethnography continues to play a critical role in the planning, management and design of national parks, recreation areas and heritage sites,” and that without this leadership, NPS would be unable to fulfill its obligations under such legislation as NHPA, AIRFA, and NEPA.<sup>9</sup>

**Because of the lack of guidance, who qualifies as “traditionally associated” is often fluid and unclear**

Despite the fact that the *Cultural Resource Management Guideline* and CSOTP’s assessments show that many nonindigenous ethnic and cultural groups could fall under the official definition of “traditionally associated,” there is little guidance to address those that fall outside the current government-to-government model as actively used by the National Park Service. According to the *Cultural Resource Management Guideline*, cultural groups identified as “traditionally associated” with park resources include people and populations who assign significance to a park and its resources because those resources are “closely linked with their own sense of purpose, existence as a community, and development as ethnically distinctive peoples.”<sup>10</sup> In addition, such people are those who “remain attached to the area despite having been relocated” and whose “associations to park resources will usually have endured for at least two generations.”<sup>11</sup> This definition can extend well beyond the common category of American Indians.

CSOTP’s assessments have shown that 37% of 70 parks studied have a capacity for an ethnography program involving nonindigenous peoples. However, 31% of those parks with such a potential have no research into this possibility and, therefore, their programs could not be assessed. In addition, of those parks with active ethnography programs involving nonindigenous peoples, 78% of these demonstrate ethnographic resources in “poor” or “critical” condition.

Some parks have shown considerable effort to include nonindigenous people in ethnographic relationships. At Charles Pinckney National Historic Site, park staff attempt to work with members of the Gullah/Geechee cultures to assure their cultural representation in the park (see cover photo). The site is now part of a new Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission that will work to preserve the culture, which is a unique blend of West African cultures formed among formerly enslaved peoples on isolated plantations along the



southeastern coast of the United States. The park and its relationship with this group were keys to the formation of a greater understanding of Gullah/Geechee history through a heritage corridor.<sup>12</sup> Members of this unique cultural group, in turn, provide dynamic and unique interpretive programs at the park, such as traditional basketry and musical demonstrations.

Other parks are making great strides to develop a more expansive understanding of ethnographic relationships. When Shenandoah National Park was established in 1935, almost 500 rural families of European descent were displaced to allow the Civilian Conservation Corps to re-establish what was then considered a “natural” landscape, devoid of human habitations. Once-inaccurate impressions of these “mountain people” have more recently given way to several ethnographic and archaeological studies about the people who once lived in several hollows and villages in the Shenandoah Valley. Despite the fact that the park has no official ethnography program, and despite a rocky history, both park staff and descendants of these displaced people are attempting to build a more positive relationship and to interpret this once-lost piece of history.

Generally, however, such parks as these are not the norm. The guidance for the utilization of this broader definition of “traditionally associated” is difficult for many parks to meet, and therefore there might be reluctance to explore possibilities that would not only enhance relationships with local communities, but would also improve visitors’ experiences and their understanding of the local culture and history.

**By the same token, addressing American Indian populations as “traditionally associated” can be equally challenging**

Traditionally associated peoples may include groups who are nonindigenous, but it is first and foremost American Indians who have specific rights under federal laws enacted to improve federal responsibility. Though the more conventional definition of “traditionally associated” often refers to American Indians—including Native Alaskans and Native Hawaiians—and is most often implemented in national parks in this way, even those programs following this model have come across significant challenges. While an applied ethnography program might be more simply implemented in the West, where more parks work with American Indian tribes on a unique government-to-government basis, the success of the program and relationship-building is mainly dependent on a high level of staff time dedicated to facilitating relationships with traditionally associated peoples.

Of the 49 parks that had enough research to enable CSOTP to assess their ethnography programs, each had a program that dealt to at least some degree with American Indian, Native Alaskan, or Native Hawaiian populations. However, 43% of the ethnographic resources at these parks are in “poor” or “critical” condition. These include parks that have had little success in engaging those identified as having traditional associations with park resources, as well as those that have either no staff dedicated to the relationships or staff with higher priorities who can tend to these relationships and programs only as time allows.

Out of the 21 remaining parks that were not assessed for their ethnographic resources due to a lack of available research, 48% had the capacity for an ethnography program based on a government-to-government relationship model between national park units and Ameri-

can Indian tribes, but could not address these resources because of a lack of funding to conduct necessary research or a lack of staff dedicated to cultivating such relationships. Despite the fact that American Indian groups have a key interest in parks, many parks have found it difficult to develop or maintain these relationships and programs due, in large part, to the current lack of leadership, guidance, and funding within the National Park Service.

### **Additional legislation benefits ethnography programs**

Of the nine parks rating “good” or higher for ethnographic resources, five have reference to a provision for ethnography in their enabling legislations. In Alaska, for example, ANILCA legislation requires each park unit to address subsistence practices within parklands by Alaska Natives. These parks are effectively paying attention to the lifeways and perspectives of Alaska Natives, and the Alaska Region’s ethnography program is particularly well developed. In fact, two of the nine highest-scoring parks to date—including the single park to score an “excellent” in the ethnographic resources category—are Alaskan parks.

At Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, the park’s long-tenured staff works together to incorporate the values and perspectives of the region’s indigenous peoples and rural residents in community outreach, interpretation, and management practices, and boasts an extensive set of ethnographic and historic publications. At Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, park staff are working closely with Tlingit groups more and more in recent years. In 1995, the park participated in a NAGPRA repatriation of human remains and associated funerary objects with the Hoonah Tlingit. The tribe elected to rebury the remains inside the park, and both park staff and tribal members consider the objects and current burial site to be important ethnographic resources to be managed jointly. Each of these parks is guided in its efforts to work with traditionally associated peoples by the additional legislation ANILCA provides. Alaska, in short, is a special case because of ANILCA, the landmark legislation that requires each park unit to address subsistence practices within parklands by Alaska Natives.

The state of Hawai‘i also has a legislative history that lends itself to the positive development of ethnography programs at the park level. As with several parks across the national park system, the creation and expansion of Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park in the 1930s resulted in the displacement of native peoples and the deterioration of relationships between the park and Native Hawaiians. This legacy of distrust continued until the 1978 Hawai‘i State Constitutional Convention, during which Native Hawaiians pursued a program of ethnic preservation, including the adoption of traditional Hawaiian names for locations and the establishment of Hawaiian as the official language of the state for the first time since the overthrow of the kingdom in 1893. Another outcome of this convention was the creation of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, which helped to facilitate further relationships between Hawaiians and the government.<sup>13</sup> Less than 20 years later at Hawai‘i Volcanoes, the establishment of the park’s cultural resource program in 1994 allowed park staff to begin actively consulting with the *Kupuna* (Hawaiian elders) and other groups in order to develop more culturally sensitive management strategies and interpretive programs for Hawai‘i Volcanoes. Park staff have put forth significant effort to include Native Hawaiians in park projects and deci-

sions and have paid particular attention to the rights to religious practices of Native Hawaiians under AIRFA (Figure 1). Key to this are meetings between the *Kupuna* and ethnography program and interpretation staff that keep communication channels open and Native Hawaiian points of view central in park decision-making. This is made possible primarily by the dedicated cultural resources staff at the park who are committed to these relationships. Furthermore, in addition to being cognizant of NAGPRA compliance, the park has also developed a plant gathering permit system, fairly unique within the National Park Service, that allows Native Hawaiians to harvest traditional plants. The park maintains a thorough database that records each permit issued, which has led to a greater understanding of native culture and greater cooperation between the park and Native Hawaiian groups.

## Conclusion

When national park units actively work with groups of people traditionally associated with their resources, a unique story is created, one which can enhance the public's understanding and appreciation of landscapes, wildlife, and the multifaceted histories that are integral parts of our national heritage. By preserving and interpreting ethnographic resources through an active ethnography program, national parks enrich the park experience for visitors and add another dimension to the intrinsic importance of preserving these resources for future generations.

But without both collective and individual initiative pushing the ethnography program forward, it will not survive. Adequate leadership, both at a national level and at the parks, is

**Figure 1** Investiture of Hawaiian royalty, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Photo courtesy NPS.



key to guiding the development of positive relationships with cultural and ethnic groups interested and invested in resource management. Ethnography programs must be staffed at the park and the regional levels in order to fulfill the Park Service's own mandates as defined by management policies. The experiences and efforts of those parks that have collaborated successfully with traditionally associated peoples—as well as of those that have attempted to do so—must be documented and shared, so that the National Park Service has the information and the tools to put into practice throughout the system what has been shown to work in parts of the system.

Without effective ethnography programs, interpretation in national parks lacks significant and culturally relevant aspects of American heritage. In the context of the recent push to increase diversity among visitors and employees in the national park system, the incorporation of ethnography and the perspectives of traditionally associated peoples into park management and interpretation can expand the audience for parks' exhibits and interpretive activities to a more diverse population. In addition, the US government requires the National Park Service, as well as other federal agencies, to consult with American Indian tribes for compliance purposes through various legislation. However, perspectives of American Indian tribes and other traditionally associated people can also increase Park Service understanding of management policy implications and can help build effective and lasting management strategies. With the engagement of traditionally associated peoples, park managers can efficiently manage resources, not just as isolated objects or strictly natural features, but as part of a larger, complex system that includes local communities and their cultural values. When the National Park Service and traditionally associated peoples are able to work together to create an avenue for shared experiences and ideas, not only can NPS develop more effective and culturally sensitive management strategies, it can also more richly relate America's stories while reaching a broader, more diverse audience through increased interpretation of the oft-forgotten aspects of our national heritage.

## Endnotes

1. National Park Service, *NPS-28: Cultural Resource Management Guideline* (Washington, D.C.: NPS, 1998), 157, 181.
2. National Park Service, National Center for Cultural Resources, Archeology and Ethnography Program, *Legacy: Muriel "Miki" Crespi, National Park Service Chief Ethnographer—Her Professional Contributions to the National Park Service* (Washington, D.C.: NPS, 2003), 8, 11–12.
3. National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, *Tribal Consultation: Best Practices in Historic Preservation* (Washington, D.C.: NATHPO, 2005), 15.
4. Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, *Action Plan on ACHP Native American Initiatives* (Washington, D.C.: ACHP, 2003), 3.
5. CSOTP's cultural resource assessment methodology is based on the National Park Service's Director's Order no. 28 and its counterpart, the *Cultural Resource Management Guideline*, as well as federal legislation and other NPS policies requiring researchers to evaluate parks' cultural resource management practices against NPS standards. CSOTP

researchers gather information on research, planning, staffing, interpretation, and threats to cultural resources at each park (including history, archaeology, cultural landscapes, historic structures, museum and archival collections, and ethnography). Ratings are assigned for individual inquiries in each of these resource categories on a 0–10 scale, using best professional judgment based on the evidence available. Average ratings range as follows: 0–35, “critical”; 36–60, “poor”; 61–80, “fair”; 81–90, “good”; and 91–100, “excellent.” Ratings are interpreted in professionally designed reports intended to educate the public about resource conditions and advocate for the needs of America’s national parks. To view CSOTP’s methodology and reports, visit [www.npca.org/state-oftheparks](http://www.npca.org/state-oftheparks).

6. Cultural resource categories as assessed by CSOTP’s methodology as part of the *Cultural Resource Management Guideline* are as follows: history, archaeology, cultural landscapes, historic structures, museum and archival collections, and ethnography.
7. Of the 70 total parks assessed by CSOTP to date, 49 were assessed for ethnographic resources while 21 were not rated due to a lack of information available from which to generate a rating. Percentage rates in this paper were derived by examining the frequency of ethnographic resource challenges in each park unit assessed, such as lack of specialized staff or the absence of ethnographic research, and averaging accordingly out of 70 total park assessments and 49 total ethnographic resource assessments.
8. *NPS-28*, 158–159.
9. Damon Dozier, American Anthropological Association Director of Public Affairs, to Daniel Odess, National Park Service Assistant Associate Director for Park Cultural Resources, Washington, D.C., 12 March 2008. Letter in archives of the American Anthropological Association, on-line at [www.aaanet.org/issues/policy-advocacy/upload/NPS-Letter-Ethnographer-Meeting-Request-031209.pdf](http://www.aaanet.org/issues/policy-advocacy/upload/NPS-Letter-Ethnographer-Meeting-Request-031209.pdf).
10. *NPS-28*, 158.
11. *NPS-28*, 158–159.
12. A heritage corridor is a form of national heritage area, which is a place where there is a cohesive example of a nationally important landscape that shows patterns of human activity shaped by geography (refer to [www.nps.gov/guge/faqs.htm](http://www.nps.gov/guge/faqs.htm)).
13. Office of Hawaiian Affairs, “History,” on-line at [www.oha.org/](http://www.oha.org/).

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