

# The George Wright Forum

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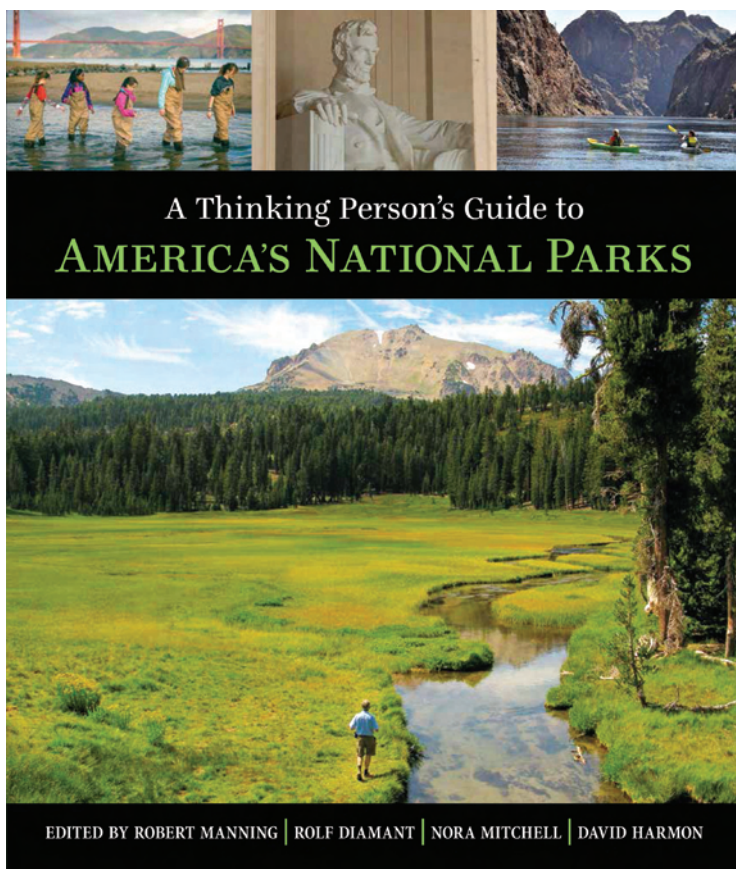
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On the cover: A NASA image of Earth's western hemisphere. Increasingly, conservation is "scaling up" to address objectives across large landscapes; see the set of articles beginning on p. 140. Photo courtesy of the National Aeronautic and Space Administration Earth Observatory.

# Newly published!



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# SOCIETY NEWS, NOTES & MAIL

## **Zarnaaz Bashir joins Board of Directors**

Zarnaaz Bashir, director of Strategic Health Initiatives with the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), has accepted an appointment to the GWS Board. She will serve a term through 2018. At NRPA, Bashir is responsible for shaping and leading the health and wellness portfolio, which includes overseeing programs that work to reduce chronic diseases and build healthier environments through parks and recreation, identifying new partnerships and stewarding existing relationships in health and wellness, and seeking fundraising opportunities. Prior to joining NRPA, Bashir worked at the National Association of County and City Health Officials. She received her Masters of Public Health from George Washington University. Over the years, Bashir has published articles in the journals *Childhood Obesity*, *Journal for Public Health Management and Practice*, and the *Journal of Community Health*.

## **William E. Brown, 1930–2016**

William E. Brown, a writer, historian, and park planner with the National Park Service who was also a columnist for *The George Wright Forum*, died at the age of 86 on May 1 in Sequim, Washington. Born in Seattle on January 19, 1930, Brown served in the Air Force before graduating from Whittier College with a major in history in 1954. He joined NPS in 1957 as a historian/writer/editor in Washington, D.C., eventually becoming regional historian for the Southwest Region in 1964. Upon passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, Brown participated on a task force dedicated to ensuring that it was implemented to achieve its full potential. After a short period out of NPS, he returned in 1971 and in 1975 went to Alaska as a member of the Alaska Task Force that worked on proposals for new national parklands. He regarded his assignments—keyman for the Yukon–Charley National Rivers proposal and task force historian—as probably the most consequential of his career. After more work inside and outside of NPS, he retired from the agency in 1991.

Brown was known, most of all, for his eloquent passion: passion in service of environmental causes, on behalf of the integrity of the parks and the Park Service, and for telling the unvarnished truth as he understood it. He brought these qualities to the “Letter from Gustavus” column he wrote for the *Forum* from 1992 to 1996. (He had retired to the village of Gustavus, Alaska, adjacent to Glacier Bay National Park.) Many of the columns had a prophetic quality to them, for he had a powerful gift to look beyond the horizon and put controversies and problems of the day into a larger and more meaningful context. Typical of his work is this, from the final paragraph he wrote in the series:

If we cannot utilize these places [i.e., parks], around the world, for thought and wisdom, as aids in our salvation, then, it seems to me, we have little chance to solve the more intractable kinds of problems we face as a species. If we cannot see the enduring values of these belays on an ever-steeper cliff—save them from the instant resource, recreation, and commercial gratifications of the moment—that inability may seal our larger hopes as representatives of intelligent life.

For Brown, the work of protecting national parks and the environment was much, much more than a mere job, and so he signed off many of his Letters with “Keep the faith, Bill.” Among his other publications were an acclaimed study of the Santa Fe Trail; *Islands of Hope: Parks and Recreation in Environmental Crisis*; and *This Last Treasure*, about the Alaska national parklands.

In 2012, Rolf Diamant, who writes the current “Letter from Woodstock” column in the *Forum*, paid tribute to Brown in the first installment of the series. He noted that Brown’s leadership on the Alaska Task Force was built around “the kind of openness, experience, and emotional intelligence” that seems in short supply today. And of course, the very title of the series is a tribute to his predecessor.

Bill Brown is survived by his wife of 35 years, Carolyn Elder, along with five sons and six grandchildren. For us in the George Wright Society, he leaves behind a legacy of deeds, words, and ideas that still speaks to us today.



## Second Sentence for a Second Century: Integrating the Mission of the National Park Service

*Denis P. Galvin*

IN DECEMBER OF 1981 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE DIRECTOR RUSS DICKENSON convened a regional directors' meeting in Seattle. He invited John Townsley, superintendent of Yellowstone, to address the group. Dickenson introduced Townsley by saying that from time to time he intended to include a superintendent in such gatherings. I don't know if Dickenson knew Townsley was ill; none of my colleagues seemed to know. In less than a year Townsley was dead, of cancer. The only thing I remember from his remarks is this: "*When our careers started we thought some parks were big enough; now we know that no park is big enough.*"

### The mission of the National Park Service

In discussing the mission of the National Park Service (NPS), commentators frequently paraphrase the Act of August 25, 1916, the Organic Act, and leave it at that. An early entry in this series of essays examined the history and application of that legislation. I was one of the authors.<sup>1</sup> The concluding part of that essay is the starting point for this one. Let me quote myself:

The Organic Act is frequently cited as the mission of the National Park Service. The statement is incorrect because it is incomplete. Congress has given the National Park Service other duties, many of them outside the boundaries of the national

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park system. As many of the forces now threatening impairment come from outside the parks, these cooperative programs provide an opportunity for the agency to influence others to make decisions in favor of the parks. Collectively, the park and cooperative programs need to be seen as a single mission that can, in part, achieve the purposes of the Organic Act.<sup>2</sup>

The *Management Policies* (2006) display the complete mission on the inside front cover: “The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation throughout this country and the world.”<sup>3</sup>

It is interesting to note that the volume that follows covers, in 168 pages, the conduct required to accomplish the first sentence of the mission, never mentioning again the procedures governing the second sentence. I’ll say more about that later. The absence of such a text confirms the long-held agency view that these programs are separate and apart from each other and from the mandate to conserve parks. But in a world where John Townsley’s view is truer than ever, the integration of the two-sentence mission has the potential to contribute much to the preservation of parks. The “partners” contemplated reside in communities whose decision-makers have the potential to affect the health of parks for good or ill. Could the benefits of NPS leadership at the community level help realize the benefits of park preservation too? Here I use “community” in a generic sense. It could be a town, city, state, tribe, region, or the entire country. The cooperative programs work at all those levels.

An interesting debating topic at an after-hours session at the George Wright Bar and Grill might pit the sentences against each other: Resolved, in the 21st century, the second sentence is more important than the first. A point being that without the cooperation of the community it will not be possible to achieve the preservation of the national park system.

### **The cooperative programs**

There is no single popular reference that outlines all the cooperative programs, unless the annual NPS budget, the Green Book, could be characterized as “popular.” What follows is my summary of those programs from the 2017 submission.<sup>4</sup> Apart from organizing them by appropriation, I haven’t followed the budget system of hierarchy. Hopefully that will enhance clarity for the reader. As I compiled this section I was again impressed by their number and variety. Using my judgment about what to include, I found 37 programs. I probably missed some.

#### *National Recreation and Preservation*

- The **National Natural Landmarks** program recognizes and encourages the conservation of sites that contain outstanding biological and geological resources, in partnership with all types of landowners. Partnership is voluntary.
- The **Hydropower Recreation Assistance** program promotes national recreation op-

portunities, primarily through the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission licensing process.

- The **Chesapeake Bay Gateway and Trails** program provides technical and financial assistance to partners to provide better access to the Chesapeake and rivers and to conserve important landscapes.
- The **National Register of Historic Places** is the nation's official inventory of historic places that have been deemed worthy of preservation (over 88,000 sites, 1.7 million structures).
- **National Historic Landmarks** are properties that possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating the heritage of the United States in history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture.
- **Heritage Documentation** programs identify and record structures and sites that have an important place in the nation's history. They are: HABS, the Historic American Buildings Survey; HAER, the Historic American Engineering Record; and HALS, the Historic American Landscape Survey. Documentation is housed at the Library of Congress.
- The **Cultural Resources GIS** program fosters the use of GIS (geographic information systems) and GPS (global positioning systems) technologies in documenting, analyzing, and managing cultural resources.
- The **Archeological Assistance** program provides coordination and guidance to all federal agencies with responsibilities for archeology. It collaborates with states, tribal, and local agencies to ensure responsible stewardship.
- The **Technical Preservation Services** program administers the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program, which provides a 20% tax credit to owners or lessees who rehabilitate income-producing properties listed on the National Register or located in a historic district (\$73.8 billion in completed projects).
- The **Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act** (NAGPRA) program guides, regulates, and supports a process for museums and federal agencies to resolve rights to Native American cultural items.
- **NAGPRA Grants** are made to museums, tribes, and Native Hawaiian organization for museum and tribal projects.
- The **Heritage Education Services** program promotes public knowledge and support for cultural resources in communities and parks nationwide.
- The **Federal Preservation Institute** provides historic preservation training and educational materials for use by all federal agencies and preservation offices.
- **Japanese American Confinement Site Grants** encourage and support the research, interpretation, and preservation of the sites where Japanese Americans were detained during World War II.
- **American Battlefield Protection Program Assistance Grants** support site identification and documentation, as well as planning, interpretation, and educational programs (not land acquisition or improvement programs).

- The **National Center for Preservation Technology and Training** serves as a research and development laboratory for historic preservation and training and advances the application of science and technology to preservation programs. It serves as clearing-house for scientific and technical preservation programs.
- The **Heritage Partnership Programs and Support** program provides funding and support to 49 national heritage areas that conserve and commemorate distinctive stories through regional landscapes.
- The **Environmental Compliance and Review** program provides review and comment on environmental impact statements (EISs) pertaining to proposals and actions of other federal agencies that may affect areas of NPS jurisdiction and expertise.
- The **Office of International Affairs** supports the NPS mission by exchanging technical and scientific information with foreign governments and international and private organizations. The office has responsibility for evaluating potential sites to be submitted to the World Heritage Convention, and administers long-term programs with Canada, Mexico, Chile, Australia, and China. It also hosts international visitors.
- The **Southwest Border Resource Protection** program works with nine park units on or near the Southwest border and Mexican counterparts and other institutions to improve resource stewardship and achieve international cooperation along the border.

#### *Historic Preservation Fund*

- **Grants-in-Aid to States and Territories** is a matching grant program to states, territories, and tribes to pay for eligible preservation projects and National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 reviews, and to assist Certified Local Governments. Works through a system of state and tribal historic preservation officers (SHPOs and THPOs).
- **Grants-in-Aid to Tribes** are made for preservation of their cultural heritage, including Section 106 reviews. There is no matching requirement.
- **Grants-in-Aid to Historically Black Colleges and Universities** (HBCUs) identify and restore those historic structures on HBCU campuses considered to be the most historically significant and physically threatened.
- **Grants-in-Aid / Competitive Grants** are offered to encourage community engagement and innovative approaches. The 2017 request (\$25.0 million) is for preserving the sites and stories of the Civil Rights Movement and the African American experience.

#### *Land Acquisition and State Assistance*

- **State Conservation Grants** are 50% matching grants to states and local units of government for the planning, acquisition, and development of lands and facilities that will provide the public with access to new opportunities to engage in outdoor recreation. The properties must be maintained in perpetuity.
- **American Battlefield Protection Program Land Acquisition Grants**, part of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, are given to state and local governments to acquire fee or protective interests in Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and Civil War battlefield sites.

- As part of **Federal Acquisition/Collaborative Landscape Planning**, Department of the Interior bureaus collaborate with the US Forest Service and other government and local community partners to achieve high-priority conservation goals.
- The **Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (Act of 1978)** gives matching grants and technical assistance to eligible economically distressed urban communities to revitalize and improve indoor and outdoor recreation facilities.

### *Operation of the National Park System (ONPS)*

Except for the national trails systems and the wild and scenic rivers system, the listed programs are carried out in units of the national park system. However, they all depend on partnerships that extend beyond parks boundaries and are consistent with the intent of the second sentence of the NPS mission.

- Under the **Volunteer in the Parks Program (Act of 1969)**, 444,000 volunteers contributed 8 million hours of service in national parks in 2015. The value of this work was estimated at \$182 million. My estimate is that about 15% of the labor in parks is performed by volunteers.
- The **Teacher/Ranger/Teacher** program provides K-12 educators a professional development opportunity during the summer months. Each year 195 teachers participate in 150 parks. About 197,000 K-12 students benefit.
- **Youth Programs** target 15-to-25-year-olds, including low-income and disadvantaged youth, who engage in public land and water restoration. This collection of programs include nine sub-programs, ranging from Junior Ranger to the Student Conservation Association.
- **Cooperative Ecosystem Study Units (CESUs)** are an interdisciplinary, multi-agency collaborative partnership of federal agencies and universities organized on a broad biogeographic basis. There are sub-networks that include HBCUs and Hispanic-serving institutions.
- In the **Cooperative Landscape Conservation** program Interior bureaus leverage their resources and expertise with that of other federal agencies, states, tribes, and others to focus on problems of concern to the nation's varied ecosystems.
- There are 19 **Research Learning Centers** located in parks that host non-NPS researchers and develop education programs related to their findings. The research covers a wide range of topics. Most of the centers are multi-park in scope. They operate as public-private partnerships.
- Led by the Environmental Protection Agency, the **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative** is a coordinated interagency process to restore and protect the Great Lakes region.
- The **National Trails** system is a nationwide network of national scenic trails, national historic trails, and national recreation trails. NPS supports 23 of the 30 trails.
- The **National Water Trails** system is a network of waterways for public exploration and enjoyment. NPS works with state and local partners to provide resources and technical expertise.

- The **Wild and Scenic Rivers** system preserves rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations. The system comprises 208 rivers, with NPS having responsibility for 60 of them.

### Strengthening the connections

What follows are some of my thoughts on strengthening connections. I do not represent it as comprehensive. It's really a game that any number can play. Readers are free to add their own approaches.

- The first step is to make these programs widely known in the NPS work force. If that can be achieved people will forge their own connections. Here's an example. Recently I was talking to the former superintendent of a new area. She said that in the early days, when the park had few resources, a HABS documentation project (see above) was invaluable in establishing credibility with the community.
- There should be a second volume of the *Management Policies* that includes all of the partnership programs and describes their content. It should be as widely distributed as the current volume.
- In each regional office there should be one position responsible for knowing what's going on in all the cooperative programs. This would be analogous to a project manager position in design and construction: knowing how the pieces fit together, but not responsible for operating the programs.
- On a pilot basis pick two superintendents and put them in charge of all the NPS programs in a relevant surrounding area. Let them make the connections that strengthen their park management. One might be urban, the other rural. Evaluate the experience after a couple of years. If useful, expand. (A confession here: this was an idea the late Bill Spitzer, who was instrumental in establishing the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program, gave me years ago.)
- Station some cooperative program staff in parks, not to work on park issues, but to do their program work in surrounding communities. The RTCA program might be a place to begin.
- As part of management development, rotate park staff through cooperative programs and vice versa.
- Strengthen the emphasis on cooperative programs in all training.
- Encourage and expand the sister park program in International Affairs. There may be non-international applications for this concept, e.g., with state or local parks.
- Make university and academic connections with parks stronger by expanding the scope of CESUs and Research Learning Centers.
- National heritage areas have proved their worth and should be a permanent part of the federal conservation strategy. Seek legislation that makes federal involvement perpetual and, like wild and scenic rivers and national trails, funds them in ONPS.

## Conclusion

It was my great privilege to work with the National Park Advisory Board that produced the 2001 report *Rethinking the National Parks for the 21st Century*. The last two sentences of that report encapsulate why I believe these connections are key to defining a successful NPS mission for the future: “By caring for the parks and conveying the park ethic, we care for ourselves and act on behalf of the future. The larger purpose of this mission is to build a citizenry that is committed to conserving its heritage and its home on earth.”<sup>5</sup>

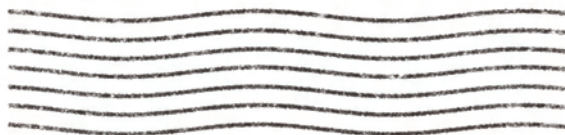
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2. Galvin, “The Organic Act,” 25.
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**Denis P. Galvin** retired from the National Park Service in 2001 after a 38-year career in which he served as park engineer, manager of the Denver Service Center, associate director, and deputy director. He remains active in parks and conservation issues as writer and lecturer. He currently is a member of the National Parks Conservation Association board of trustees.

[*Ed. note:* This is the final installment in our decade-long National Park Service Centennial Essay Series. In the next (December) issue of *The George Wright Forum*, Dwight T. Pitcaithley, who kicked off the essays in 2007, and Rolf Diamant, our regular “Letter from Woodstock” columnist and essay series contributor, will wrap things up with a retrospective highlighting some of the key ideas presented in the essays, along with their thoughts on how those ideas might change NPS in the years to come.]





*Letter from Woodstock*  
Rolf Diamant

## Thoughts on Kenai Fjords and Maine Woods

IN THE SUMMER OF 2004, while Nora Mitchell I were in Alaska kayaking at Kenai Fjords National Park, we stayed overnight in the gateway community of Seward. Picking up the local paper, I read a story about a 1976 Seward City Council resolution that protested the establishment of the national park and how, almost ten years later, a second council resolution rescinded the earlier one. Apparently, over time, the perspectives of the people of Seward and their civic leaders had changed, and they were looking more favorably on the park as a major community asset. In the early years of the park, staff became active members of the community. A new park headquarters was strategically located downtown as a way to boost tourism in Seward. The anti-park resolution was increasingly viewed in the community as an embarrassing anachronism. The city council finally decided to clear its civic conscience by officially expunging the old resolution from the public record and praising the national park as a “good neighbor.”

Alaska writer Bill Sherwonit traveled to Seward in the 1980s and interviewed a number of formerly outspoken opponents of the park about this change of heart. In an article written for the Conservation Land Trust website, Sherwonit quoted Pam Oldow, a council member who had previously championed the anti-park resolution, describing Kenai Fjords as “one of the best things that ever happened to Seward.” Pressed on why she had fought the park, Oldow admitted, “It’s hard to say exactly why—I think more than anything, it was fear of the unknown.”<sup>2</sup>

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“You have to understand, Seward’s economy was horrible in the ’70s,” recalled resident Darryl Schaefermeyer, a former city administrator and aide to Alaska’s Senator Ted Stevens, explaining his reasons for initially opposing the national park. “We were still suffering from the economic damage of the ’64 earthquake, unemployment was more than 30 percent in winter, and the town had a very small tax base. We were worried that a park would hurt the economy even more.” Like Oldow, Schaefermeyer’s view shifted with time. “I admit it, my attitude has changed 180 degrees. The park has been a marvelous success, and most people in Seward today would speak highly of having it here. Kenai Fjords has become the backbone of the economy and a source of pride. And its staff from the superintendents on down have been good neighbors, good friends.”

I recalled this story of Seward when a few years later I read an interview with Clifford Hansen, reflecting on his role in the long, contentious fight against the creation of Jackson Hole National Monument (later to be incorporated into Grand Teton National Park.) In 1943, as a protest, Hansen, then a rancher and Teton County commissioner, saddled up with Hollywood character actor Wallace Beery on a highly publicized cattle drive through the heart of the proposed monument. Unimpressed, President Franklin Roosevelt proclaimed the monument and Hansen moved on to a long political career as US senator and governor of Wyoming. However, years later Hansen too felt compelled to publicly recant his park opposition. “I want you all to know that I’m glad I lost, because I now know I was wrong,” Hansen

**Figure 1.** Kenai Fjords National Park. Photo courtesy of the author.



said. “Grand Teton National Park is one of the greatest natural heritages of Wyoming and the nation and one of our great assets.”<sup>3</sup>

As I sit down to write this 14th Letter From Woodstock, the long-simmering controversy, in nearby Maine, over the potential establishment of a Maine Woods national park is once again beginning to boil over. Elliotsville Plantation, Inc. (EPI), a private operating foundation created by philanthropist Roxanne Quimby and now directed by her son, Lucas St. Clair, is proposing to donate almost 90,000 acres of forestland abutting the eastern edge of Baxter State Park along with a \$40 million endowment to establish a new unit of national park system. A broad coalition of Mainers, from the Maine Natural Resources Council to the Katahdin Chamber of Commerce, are now urging President Obama to use the Antiquities Act to proclaim the area as a national monument before he leaves office. Opponents include local town officials, snowmobilers, hunters, and a number of representatives of Maine’s wood products industry.

Reading reports from a recent round of public hearings on the proposed monument convened by US Senator Angus King, I couldn’t help but think about Pam Oldow, Darryl Schaefermeyer, and Clifford Hansen. Of course no two places and circumstances are exactly the same but it is difficult not to see some similarities with the concerns expressed by the park opponents in Maine. The “fear of the unknown,” as Pam Oldow described it, is certainly present in Maine; adapting to change is often the tallest mountain to climb. There is a fear that traditional recreational activities and access to private lands, enjoyed by Mainers for generations, may be curtailed by new ownerships. The anxiety that Darryl Schaefermeyer expressed—“that a park would hurt the economy”—is also front and center in the Maine Woods debate. As the traditional economy of the region changes, a transition from a resource-based to a more tourism-based economy will not be a panacea for everyone. The chimera also remains that lost jobs tied to industries that have been declining for generations, such as mining and forestry, could somehow all be brought back if it weren’t for the park and changes it will bring.

At some point, the Seward City Council decided that the time had come for a candid reassessment of their earlier opposition to their neighboring national park and for a public rapprochement. Hopefully, if a Maine Woods National Monument is created, that time will someday come for its opponents as well. Conservationists and park supporters, however, also need to objectively re-examine their own actions with the passage of time. As the economy and land uses shift, some people will be left behind. They must not be forgotten. Deep cultural and traditional connections to the land have to be acknowledged and incorporated into the planning for new park areas.

With national parks, there will always be a tension between national and local interests and objectives. If the national interest were not paramount we would probably have very few national parks today. There is a paradox, of course, as many national parks are established specifically for their unique sense of place and associated stories that are an inexorable part of the fabric of local communities and their landscapes. Most of our national heritage is therefore also local heritage. In a previous Letter from Woodstock I wrote about a national historic landmark dedication that was an extraordinary expression of *both* local and national

accomplishment and pride. Striking that symmetry is not easy; however, given in the political environment we live in, it is essential.

In this context, ideological purity and rigid orthodoxy, in the pursuit of conservation, may ultimately be self-defeating. One size will not fit all. Empathy, flexibility, and innovation can be useful conservation tools. The Maine Woods proposal has evolved over the years from a huge Yellowstone-like national park to a smaller national monument that may be a better fit for Maine. Lucas St. Clair has played a critical role reshaping the proposal to recognize, in his own words, that “outdoor recreation is part of the heritage and the culture of our state” and that “the activities that we all care about will be permanently protected.”<sup>4</sup> Hunting, snowmobiling, and other types of outdoor recreation are allowed to continue on all EPI lands currently open to these traditional activities, and the National Park Service has committed not to change that if the monument is approved.

The theme of this issue of *The George Wright Forum* is landscape-scale conservation. National parks themselves may provide only relatively small pieces of larger landscape conservation mosaics. However, the lessons learned in places like Kenai Fjords and the Maine Woods that combine both vision and pragmatism mixed with a measure of candid reassessment and rapprochement, may, in the long run, make an even larger contribution.



## Endnotes

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# Scaling Up: Landscape-scale Conservation in North America

*Brent A. Mitchell, guest editor*

## Zooming Out

*Brent A. Mitchell*

WELCOME TO THIS SPECIAL THEME ISSUE ON LANDSCAPE-SCALE CONSERVATION in North America. Our topic goes by many names: connectivity conservation, large landscape conservation, heritage areas, management networks, and many variations thereon. Some of the initiatives in the tent of landscape-scale conservation are focused very specifically on biodiversity, others on environmental sustainability, still others on an integration of nature conservation and heritage preservation. But all have similar characteristics: a diversity of partners, an incumbent necessity to be adaptive, and a decentralized structure—one organization may take the lead in facilitating but does not control others. This issue examines past and current practice in landscape-scale conservation; a common thread is that the National Park Service (NPS) has a role in all of our examples.

Scaling up compels us to refocus from attention at a single site, be it a park, reserve, refuge, or other protected area. To meet their missions, our conservation and land management agencies, private organizations, and their allies must zoom out to see threats, connections, and especially gaps across space and time.

I started writing this overview article while returning from a project in Europe. For most of the flight I could only see clouds, but occasionally I would glimpse the landscape through a break. I noticed two areas: one must have been in the state of Brandenburg in Germany and the other perhaps around Kilkenny in Ireland. Both were relatively flat, with mosaics of small farm fields and forest fragments. At 37,000 feet, I couldn't make out much detail, but patterns seemed to leap up. In the German landscape, settlements were tightly clustered in nuclear villages, with field and woodlots surrounding. In Ireland, the human dwellings were much more dispersed along minor roadways. The Irish fields were demarcated by hedgerows whereas the German landscape had none. These are features that might not have been so immediately apparent from the ground, from close up, or without seeing them “near” each other in my viewing experience. To get the big picture you have to zoom out.

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## In this issue

Bookending this issue are two articles that stress the importance of working at scale and taking an expansive, landscape view. Ray Sauvajot writes that the “traditional concept of a national park or protected area as a static expression of an ecosystem, a set of natural features, or a collection of cultural or historic objects has been replaced by a more dynamic perspective that recognizes natural and cultural resources as part of ever-changing environments.” Thus, in his view scaling up is an imperative for the National Park Service. Elaine Leslie and Jodi Hilty share stories of wide-ranging species that require more continuous habitat, and outline a vision for action. “How do the National Park Service and other federal, state and private land managers, partners, and neighbors contribute to a larger national conservation strategy?”

Perhaps no effort in recent years is more strategic, ambitious and geographically comprehensive than Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs), described here by Tom Olliff and colleagues. The number and diverse organizational affiliations of the 11 authors of this article evinces the level of collaboration LCCs promote and support.

Whereas the LCCs are relatively new (created by an Interior Department secretarial order in 2009), national heritage areas have a 30-year track record, described here by Brenda Barrett and Eleanor Mahoney. Both models have been well-studied, including a 2015 study of LCCs by the National Academy of Sciences.

Still older is the Appalachian Trail. While most of us think of it as a path—albeit an exceedingly long and magnificent one—Dennis Shaffer reminds us that the original vision, nearly a century ago, was that the trail would be the backbone to a much larger contiguous landscape. He brings us up to date on a new initiative and the many partnerships working to make the vision a reality.

Jonathan Doherty and Suzanne Copping begin their description of conservation in the Chesapeake with first European contact four centuries ago. The geographic scale of the watershed, nearly the size of Wisconsin or Florida, is matched by complexity of jurisdictions, land use, and population density.

These are just a few examples of the hundreds of landscape-scale programs and initiatives identified by a peer support group, the Practitioners’ Network for Large Landscape Conservation (a more precise survey is on the drawing board). Shawn Johnson describes how this network of networks is trying to understand the inherent complexity of this work, and reviews some of the lessons learned.

And complex it is. It is easy to understand how complicated it can be to work with many partners, but networked conservation is more than that. A *complicated* situation has many different factors or elements, so many that it can be hard to track change in any one of them. But with good tools and discipline each can be observed and managed separately. On the other hand, *complex* systems are based on inter-relationships, so change in any factor or element effects the others. The picture is ever-shifting, *dynamic*, to use Sauvajot’s term. Complex systems are difficult to predict accurately because they interact in unexpected ways, and the complexity may lie beyond our cognitive limits. For example, weather is difficult to predict, not because it is complicated, but because it is complex.



## Scale matters, but not always size

We intentionally did not name this issue's theme *Large Landscape Conservation*. Large is a relative term, and geospatial size is only one determinant of landscape scale. A collaboration in an urban or suburban area may be just as complex as that in another landscape covering a hundred times as much area but less dense in population and infrastructure development. Both would require a decentralized network of diverse partners to adapt to current and anticipated challenges.

Landscape conservation also operates at different temporal scales. It is fitting that this issue should appear in the centenary of NPS because for many the appropriate time horizon for this work is a century out. Quoting Greg Wathen, coordinator of the Gulf Plains and Ozarks LCC, "What do we have to do in the next 10–20 years for the next 100 years?"

Looking at scale from a different perspective, the level of interest in this kind of work is growing rapidly. The first national conference on large landscape conservation two years ago exceeded all expectations for participation, with over 650 people converging on Washington, DC, from across the continent. And this work is not, of course, limited to North America; the interest is global. Many large and continental-scale corridors, including transboundary corridors, have been established on every continent except Antarctica and across all the world's terrestrial biogeographic realms. For example, a 2013 study of 14 networks and corridor initiatives in Australia had findings very similar to the examples in this volume.

What of the longitudinal scale of historical practice? It is difficult to put any kind of date on the beginning of landscape-scale conservation in North America. As you will read, Benton MacKaye had a vision of one very large landscape a hundred years ago. Others, like Gifford Pinchot, very much had scaling up in mind when developing large systems of managed areas. Native or First Nations groups may have had an even larger and more holistic perspective, viewing all things on the earth as one and not seeking dominion over it. *Dominion* is a useful word here, as the kind of interdependent partnership implicit in landscape-scale conservation requires that all parties give up some control.

## Networked governance

Harry Truman popularized an old saying, "It is amazing what you can accomplish when you don't care who gets the credit." In a networked partnership, individual partners have to surrender some control over means and outcomes. However, agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and others also need to demonstrate progress to their enabling authorities and funders. This creates a conundrum, unless the authorizing and funding environments shift to recognize the necessity and value of this nonbureaucratic way of working.

The need for networking is not only among different agencies and organizations, but also within the ranks of each. Work over the last three years on an Urban Agenda for NPS has revealed that collaborating internally in some of our federal agencies can be just as fraught as collaborating externally, sometimes more so. Promoting "One NPS," that is, more parks and programs working together in concert, has proven easier to describe in concept than to apply in practice.



Monitoring situations at scale and navigating networked governance can be aided by technology. On my flight home from Europe I could not see much detail from the cruising altitude of a jetliner. But we have much sharper eyes in the sky. Google is launching a new class of imaging satellites, small, cheap and with a resolution of less than 90 cm. Quite to my surprise (and somewhat to my relief!) the authors for this issue did not dwell on technology. But it must be acknowledged that remote sensing, geographic information systems, computer-assisted visualization, and other decision-support tools—not to mention communication technology—have dramatically increased our capacity to manage complexity, at scale, with high data confidence.

### Means and ends

Most of this overview has focused on the process of landscape conservation, on how this work has been practiced to date. But what is the overarching goal of this work? How will we know that it has achieved our ends at the largest of scales? In other words, how do we escape the tyranny of small successes? And the question we all dislike but must ultimately answer: how much conservation is enough?

E.O. Wilson and Tony Hiss each have recently and persuasively written about *Half Earth*, arguing that half the earth's surface needs to be conserved in some way, echoing a call by many that *Nature Needs Half*. Though clearly an arbitrary percentage, advocates argue that to avoid a planet inhabited by little more than people and their domesticated plants and animals we must recreate and reconnect much more space for other beings. Contrast this with the official, global biodiversity agenda, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).<sup>1</sup> Its targets (known as “Aichi targets” for the precinct of the Japanese city where they were agreed to) call for:

By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.

Even if these targets are met (and in a defensible way, not by recognizing areas of dubious conservation value), they fall far short of “half earth.” The case for creating more space for nature is clear, but the mechanisms are not. Wilson's book provides no guidance on how to achieve the ambitious goal of 50%.

A very recent issue of the journal *Ecology and Society* (2016) examines “Outcomes of Conservation Measures on Unprotected Landscapes.” This seems to echo the term in the Aichi target, “other effective area-based conservation measures.” This term is not defined, though IUCN (the International Union for Conservation of Nature) is currently developing guidance on what does and does not qualify. One point is becoming increasingly clear, and accepted: that we will not achieve conservation adequately through “parks and equivalent

reserves” alone, to use the wording in the original George Wright Society mission statement. The work described in this issue is at the cutting edge of the Aichi phrase, “integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.”

Planning at a landscape scale will have to do much more than prioritize targets for acquisition and make certain projects more competitive for funding. While purchasing land or interest in land for conservation will continue to be important, the need is far greater than existing financial resources can satisfy. Most of the case studies in this issue describe multi-jurisdictional collaboration, that is, different federal, state, and local agencies working together in new ways, with private conservation partners, and with related economic interests (e.g., tourism and, more recently, health care). This is challenging enough, both in theory and practice, but to go fully to scale, conservation must find ways to better engage across sectors—energy, transportation, and industry. In international conservation circles the talk is of *mainstreaming* conservation, though examples of good practice have not begun to catch up to the rhetoric.

## Conclusion

This theme issue was developed in partnership with the National Park Service Scaling Up team and under the auspices of the NPS Stewardship Institute. The Institute helps National Park Service leaders move the organization in new directions through illuminating experience and asking questions about the history and current practice of conservation.

- How can partners manage and maintain complex, networked relationships over time?
- How can conservation agencies stay true to mission but also respond to change? At what point do flexibility and adaptability become unacceptable compromise?
- Are supervisory and reward systems properly organized to support a networked approach to conservation?
- Can decision-support systems and skilled communication bridge the gap between long-term planning and the kind of short-term, threat-response posture that is human nature?
- Can landscape conservation be mainstreamed? Should it?

These questions and others will be pondered by future conservationists as our profession continues its progressive, Lamarckian evolution towards complexity and adaptability. This issue sets down some of the experience, practice, and thinking to date on landscape-scale conservation. Enjoy.

## Endnote

1. The United States has signed but not ratified the CBD treaty and therefore is not bound by the targets and other commitments. It does participate as an observer.

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# National Parks and the Scaling Up Imperative

*Raymond M. Sawvajot*

AS THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS) ENTERS ITS SECOND CENTURY in 2016, the agency, its programs, and the system of units under its care face unprecedented challenges. The specter of climate change has already begun altering and rearranging natural and cultural resources (e.g., Suarez et al. 1999; Moritz et al. 2008; van Mantgem et al. 2009; Moss 2010; Marzeion et al. 2014; Marzeion and Levermann 2014), and myriad other threats, from non-native invasive species to wide-scale land use change, all pose significant conservation concerns for park managers. The ubiquitous and far-reaching extent of these challenges will require NPS to embrace landscape-scale collaborative conservation that reaches beyond the boundaries of park units, and engages a full complement of programmatic and policy tools.

The traditional concept of a national park or protected area as a static expression of an ecosystem, a set of natural features, or a collection of cultural or historic objects has been replaced by a more dynamic perspective that recognizes natural and cultural resources as part of ever-changing environments. The challenge for NPS and other park management agencies is how to achieve their conservation and preservation missions while recognizing that changes are inevitable and stressors that impact resources often emanate from outside of parks, beyond the control of park managers. Indeed, it is widely recognized that essentially all resources in parks are inextricably linked to their surrounding landscapes, from migratory species that spend only portions of their life cycles within national parks (Berger et al. 2014) to entire ecosystems, such as the Everglades, that are dependent on land use and management decisions occurring outside of park boundaries (Mitchell and Johnson 2015). For cultural resources as well, the place-based authenticity of a visitor's experience is linked to the landscape context in which it resides. To manage parks and protected areas successfully and ensure that resource values persist, park managers must understand landscape-scale phenomena; establish and maintain relationships with other agencies, organizations, and stakeholders; and engage directly in conservation efforts at local, regional, and even national and international scales. It is imperative that NPS embrace this concept of "scaling up" in its second century to ensure that the natural and cultural resource heritage it is entrusted to protect is conserved for future generations.

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The need for “scaling up” is not a new concept for NPS, but its importance and management focus has become a significant area of emphasis. In 2011, as part of the NPS director’s centennial report entitled *A Call to Action*, a formal “Scaling Up” effort was launched that states that NPS should promote large landscape conservation to support healthy ecosystems and cultural resources (NPS 2011). The Scaling Up goal in *A Call to Action* specifically describes the need to “protect continuous corridors” through “voluntary partnerships across public and private lands and waters,” and promotes NPS efforts to do this in multiple geographic areas. NPS has been implementing Scaling Up by establishing a community of practice within the agency to cultivate and share best practices in science, scholarship, and collaborative stewardship that advance landscape-scale planning, policy, decision-making, and education, and reaching out to partners and stakeholders to publicize and advance the importance of landscape-scale perspectives for NPS. Scaling Up accomplishments include a highlights report documenting landscape-scale engagement by NPS (NPS 2014), internal outreach and training materials such as webinars and a Scaling Up web tool; integration of NPS parks, programs, and activities around Scaling Up objectives; and an overall effort to position NPS toward reaching beyond park boundaries and embracing landscape-scale conservation in its day-to-day work.

While the increased emphasis on landscape-scale conservation is fairly recent, NPS has long had tools available that support this kind of work. For example, NPS *Management Policies* (2006) state, “Cooperative conservation beyond park boundaries is necessary as the National Park Service strives to fulfill its mandate to preserve the natural and cultural resources of parks unimpaired for future generations” (p. 13). *Management Policies* further indicate that NPS managers should “cooperate with ... governments ... individuals and organizations to advance the goal of creating a seamless network of parks” (p. 14) and “establish corridors that link together ... open spaces ... and compatibly managed private lands...” (p. 14). At the same time, landscape conservation work must be done collaboratively and in recognition of shared interests, as NPS “will not relinquish any of its authority to manage areas under its jurisdiction, nor will it expect other partners to relinquish theirs” (p. 14).

Legislative authorities also exist that support and recognize the need for NPS to work beyond park boundaries and at landscape scales. For example, the 2008 Consolidated Natural Resources Act (54 U.S.C. §101702) permits NPS to expend appropriated funds beyond unit boundaries if such expenditures help protect park resources. The act also acknowledges the opportunities for, and provides authority to enter into, cooperative agreements inside and outside of park boundaries. Other policies and authorities support similar landscape-scale activities, such as the Service First Authority that allows transfer of funds and promotes collaboration between the departments of the Interior and Agriculture.

NPS also has many partnership programs that offer the capacity to operate outside of traditional national park units, such as the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program, which provides technical assistance to communities for conservation and recreational initiatives. The National Natural Landmarks program provides another mechanism for non-NPS managers and landowners, including those of other public as well as private lands, to receive recognition and formal designation for conserving significant natural features and

sites, expanding the array of tools available for landscape-scale conservation. For cultural and historic resources, an extensive set of partnership programs offer technical assistance, grants, tax incentives, and other kinds of support to help identify and preserve significant sites, features, districts, and landscapes. When evaluated within a landscape context, such cultural and historic resource partnership programs can be helpful in integrating cultural values into landscape-scale conservation efforts. NPS has also engaged in other landscape-scale conservation programs, for example through its collaborative participation in the National Heritage Areas program, regional conservation investments in places such as the Chesapeake Bay watershed, international collaboration at Glacier National Park in the Crown Managers Partnership, and collaborative conservation along units of the national trail system such as the 2,400-mile long Appalachian Trail. All told, NPS is equipped to effectively advance landscape conservation approaches and, with the coordinated support and agency-wide focus advanced by the Scaling Up community of practice, the agency is well positioned to assume a greater leadership role.

The importance of landscape-scale perspectives for NPS is clearly reiterated by the National Park Service Advisory Board Science Committee's report, *Revisiting Leopold: Resource Stewardship in the National Parks* (Colwell et al. 2012). The national park system and the programs of NPS should strive to "form the core of a national conservation land- and seascape" (Colwell et al. 2012: 11). Landscape connectivity is essential to ensure resilience and persistence of NPS resource values and "21st century conservation challenges require an expansion in the spatial, temporal, and social scales of resource stewardship" (Colwell et al. 2012: p. 13). As NPS celebrates its centennial year, the success of its mission and the conservation of nationally significant natural and cultural resources will depend on engaging partners at the landscape scale. To confront resource threats and challenges, NPS managers must recognize the interconnections between natural and cultural resources and their surrounding lands (Figure 1). Park managers and program staff must engage with landowners, agencies, and jurisdictions well beyond park boundaries to advance shared conservation goals. Finally, NPS can and must creatively apply the authorities, tools, and mechanisms available to "scale

**Figure 1.** Since 2002, NPS has been studying mountain lions in and around the Santa Monica Mountains near Los Angeles to determine how they survive in an increasingly fragmented and urbanized environment. Photo courtesy of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.



up” resource stewardship and landscape-scale conservation. As NPS embarks on its second century, to achieve its public service mission it is imperative for the agency to continue “scaling up” and embrace landscape-scale conservation.

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# Landscape Conservation Cooperatives: Working Beyond Boundaries to Tackle Large-Scale Conservation Challenges

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THE LARGE EXTENT, VOLATILITY, AND SPEED OF STRESSORS impacting our ability to conserve natural and cultural resources—climate change, habitat fragmentation, cultural and socioeconomic changes, land use change, rapid increases in invasive species, sea-level rise, and other stressors—have led to a growing consensus that conservation efforts need to work across boundaries at larger scales with multiple partners, consider longer time frames, understand and incorporate new kinds of science, and better incorporate uncertainty to be successful (McKinney, Scarlett, and Kemmis 2010; Halofsky, Peterson, and Marcinkowski 2015; Groves and Game 2016). Human activity, including climate change, has altered landscapes more substantially since the mid-20th century than at any time during history (NRC 2010). These changes threaten species and biodiversity; in fact, it is estimated 10–20% of known species are now threatened with extinction (Pimm et al. 2014).

Conservation has of course been accomplished across boundaries and at large scales. This is confirmed by a brief look at the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee, working across five large ecosystems to restore grizzly bear populations and habitats (IGBC 2016); the Joint Ventures Program, working throughout North America at large scales to conserve and restore bird populations and habitats (NAWMP 2012); and America's Longleaf Pine Initiative, working to restore America's longleaf pine forests in the southeastern states (Figure 1; ALRI 2014).

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But each of these efforts, as large-scale and successful as they are, focuses on a single species or single resource. Working at large scales across jurisdictions to conserve a suite of resources—land, water, wildlife, and cultural resources—is a relatively new venture (McKinney et al. 2010). This is being driven by large-scale stressors and the recognition that our existing models of conservation are going to be increasingly powerless against the volatile, often unpredictable nature of the changes in our socioecological systems (National Park System Advisory Board 2012). Working together, partners can achieve conservation successes that cannot be accomplished alone. For example, federal land management agencies increase area, latitudinal range, elevational range, and connectivity—all important metrics that

conserve biodiversity and ameliorate loss from climate change—by partnering with even one other agency (Monahan and Theobald 2012). Conservation strategies that maintain biodiversity in human-modified landscapes outside of protected area borders, particularly those aiming to maintain or restore connectivity between remaining habitat patches, are now considered critical in the face of future landscape change.

Ecological connectivity has become a cornerstone of conservation science and practice. Since the introduction of wildlife corridors as a game management strategy in the early 20th century, habitat loss and fragmentation have widely been agreed to constitute the single greatest threat to biodiversity worldwide and climate change is expected to exacerbate these effects as species' ranges must shift across fragmented landscapes to track suitable conditions. Federal land management agencies are now mandated to consider connectivity, or working across boundaries in larger landscapes, and climate change in conservation plans such as US Forest Service forest plans (Code of Federal Regulations 2012), National Park Service (NPS) foundation documents (NPS 2012), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land management plans, and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) refuge comprehensive conservation plans (Czech et al. 2014). A landscape conservation approach works across boundaries to answer the questions: (a) What do we want to conserve?; (b) Where are the best places to conserve this resource?; (c) What should we protect to ensure the resources are connected?; (d) Will our conservation strategy hold up into the future?; (e) Who should be involved in this conservation?; and (f) What science is needed to inform conservation? This approach has four major components: (1) convening stakeholders to articulate a vision, a set of goals, and targets; (2) conducting landscape assessments of current and future conditions; (3) determining a spatial conservation design; and (4) identifying strategies to implement the conservation design. These components are not necessarily linear (USFWS 2015).



**Figure 1.** Longleaf pine stand. Photo courtesy of Randy Browning, USFWS.

This conservation approach is growing rapidly around the globe in response to large-scale environmental change. From marine seascapes to terrestrial landscapes, ecological connectivity conservation is the preferred approach for sustaining the ecological processes that sustain nature and people. In North America alone, there are over 300 self-identified large-scale conservation efforts that embody ecological connectivity from the Canadian Boreal Forest to the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative to New England's Wildlands and Woodlands effort. In other parts of the world, there are a similar number of large-scale connectivity efforts. The reality of large-scale conservation is that ecological connectivity conservation embodies multi-jurisdictional and multi-stakeholder collaboration, utilizes the best available science and local knowledge, and supports collaborative conservation practice.

### **Landscape Conservation Cooperatives: A forum for supporting landscape-scale, multi-jurisdictional conservation**

Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) are public-private partnerships involving states, tribes, federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), universities, international jurisdictions, and others working together to address landscape-scale conservation issues. The Department of the Interior created LCCs to provide a framework and capacity for facilitating landscape-scale conservation. Twenty-two LCCs cover the entire US and trans-boundary Canada and Mexico and the Pacific Islands and serve as bridging organizations to build conservation partnerships (DOI 2009; Jacobson and Robinson 2012). Although a self-directed steering committee guides each of the LCCs, they all (1) use applied science in collaboration with partners in a defined geographic area; (2) function as a fundamental management partnership that help frame decisions made at the unit level in a larger landscape partnership; and (3) working together, provide a national (and international) network of land, water, wildlife, and cultural resource managers, as well as interested public and private organizations, to respond to landscape-level stressors such as climate change and land use change (Austin 2011).

Each LCC provides illustrations of successful collaboration to strengthen conservation, including the Mississippi River Basin/Gulf Hypoxia Initiative, led by the Eastern Tallgrass Prairie & Big Rivers LCC; the California LCC's Central Valley Landscape Conservation Project; the North Atlantic LCC's Connect the Connecticut; and the Pacific Islands LCC's Setting the Path for Climate Adaptation in the Pacific Islands. Here we focus on two representative examples, one from the Great Northern LCC (GNLCC) and the other from the South Atlantic LCC (SALCC), to provide an in-depth view on the types of projects that LCCs support. Visit <https://lccnetwork.org> for more stories, projects, examples, or to learn how to get involved with the LCC in your area.

### **The Columbia Plateau conservation design strategy**

The Columbia Plateau is one of eight socioecological areas identified as a cooperative partnership in the partner-rich GNLCC (Finn et al. 2015). The Columbia Plateau covers most of eastern Washington, with a large swath in Oregon and smaller areas in Idaho and British Columbia, Canada (Figure 2). It encompasses 20 million acres and includes nearly 500 miles



**Figure 2.** The Columbia Plateau ecoregion. From Miewald, Hall, and Steele 2013.

of the Columbia River, as well as the lower reaches of major tributaries such as the Snake and Yakima rivers and the associated drainage basins. The arid sagebrush steppe and grasslands of the region are surrounded by moister, predominantly forested, mountainous ecoregions on all sides. Where precipitation allows, the area has been extensively cultivated for wheat. Water from the Columbia River and tributaries is highly regulated and subject to diversion. Consequently, the Columbia Plateau is one of the most fragmented ecoregions in the GNLCC due to human development (Theobald et al. 2016), where no entity has the authority and resources to achieve landscape-scale conservation goals. In addition to fragmentation, existing habitats are currently threatened by invasive species, altered fire regimes, declining water tables, and other stressors (ALI 2014a). Climate change impacts are expected to further alter the long-term viability of the current distribution of habitats and species across the entire landscape (Theobald et al. 2016).

The GNLCC is a voluntary network of partners working to address common landscape conservation goals. Its business model is to create the conditions that enhance individual and collective partner implementation of landscape-level conservation. It tries to create efficiencies and reduce the challenges of working in complex ecological and jurisdictional systems through information-sharing, capacity-building, developing effective analyses and decision-support tools, and supporting collaborative networks. In the first year of operation, the GNLCC began to support collaborators developing a spatially explicit, science-based, landscape-scale conservation program in the Columbia Plateau that led to a conservation design strategy that (a) identifies conservation goals, conservation targets, landscape stressors,

and agreed-on methods for assessing current and projected future conditions; (b) includes a scientific baseline assessment of current and predicted future landscape patterns; (c) identifies priority areas and management actions (mitigation, acquisition, or restoration) to address conservation needs; and (d) develops a coordinated approach towards implementing the design to reduce biodiversity loss and ecosystem service vulnerabilities, maintain ecosystem resilience, and increase social–ecological systems’ sustainability for future generations.

Developing the Columbia Plateau strategy has been a sequenced, iterative process, supported by the work of multiple initiatives, led by a variety of partners who convened local stakeholders. In 2010, the GNLCC began to support the Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group (WHCWG) a science-based collaboration of land and resource management agencies, NGOs, universities, and Washington treaty tribes. This collaboration, initiated in 2007 and co-led by the Washington state departments of Fish and Wildlife and Transportation, was completing a broad-scale wildlife habitat connectivity baseline assessment across Washington state and adjacent landscapes in Idaho, Oregon, and British Columbia. In 2011, WHCWG refined the statewide methods to conduct a fine-scale connectivity baseline assessment for the Columbia Plateau ecoregion, including increased local participation, higher-resolution data sources, and assessment of features impossible to consider at the level of any single state. This analysis included focal species and ecological integrity-based approaches, and incorporated climate-smart connectivity methods in areas most likely to facilitate species movements in response to climate change. In 2012, this science analysis was published and made available to organizations implementing landscape conservation (WHCWG 2012).

That same year, with GNLCC support and LCC network guidance, the USFWS Region 1 national wildlife refuge system (NWRs) and the Arid Lands Initiative (ALI), a private–public partnership initially convened in 2009 to address the challenges that landscape-scale conservation in Columbia Plateau must overcome (ALI 2014a), pooled resources to pilot a spatially explicit landscape conservation design for the Columbia Plateau ecoregion. They used the science foundation and tools created by the WHCWG and earlier ALI efforts, and added additional partners and analyses to develop a clear picture of landscape priorities, along with data and decision-support tools. Over the course of three years, the partnership produced a comprehensive Columbia Plateau landscape conservation design strategy that (a) identified a set of eight priority focal systems, and species and places, for further land protection planning to increase connectivity; (b) developed data infrastructure, decision-support tools, and a process for landscape-scale planning that can be shared with partners in the region; and (c) created a spatially explicit conservation database in coordination with other agencies, universities, and NGOs (ALI 2014a; ALI 2014b; Crawford and Rocchio 2014; USFWS 2015). GNLCC support in 2014 allowed the cooperative to integrate riverine/riparian landscape analyses into the strategy. This design, and the supporting documentation, is meant to inform on-the-ground partner action, not dictate specific decisions. Partner organizations must fit collaborative action into their own missions, priorities, resources, and planning processes.

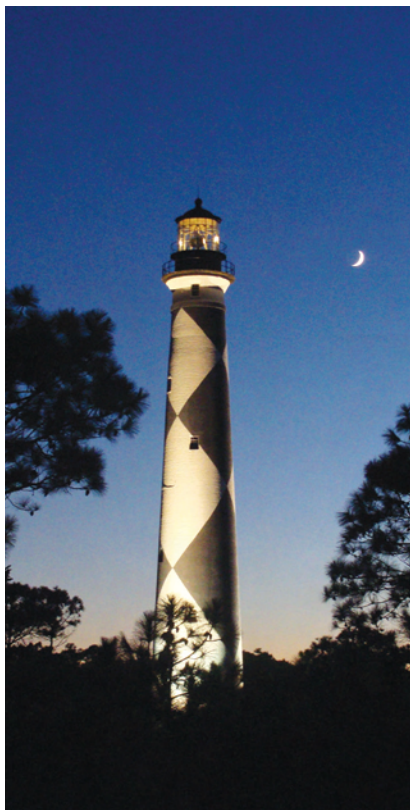
With this strategy in hand, collaborators from federal agencies, state agencies, and NGOs, along with private lands biologists, are now beginning to implement complementary,



coordinated management actions. For example, the Mid-Columbia National Wildlife Refuge Complex is using the strategy to establish and maintain connectivity with neighboring habitats; Audubon Washington, in its Saving Important Bird Areas and Sagebrush Ecosystem Initiative; and BLM, in its draft Eastern Washington Resource Management Plan. In addition, new collaborators are being recruited to implement the strategy (e.g., the Yakima Nation and Colville Confederated Tribes, energy industry and county government representatives, and conservation entities active in north central Oregon).

### **The South Atlantic Conservation Blueprint**

The South Atlantic LCC spans parts of six states, from southern Virginia to northern Florida, including US waters to 200 miles offshore. The region supports a complex mix of biological richness and human activity; since over 90% of the land is privately owned, balancing the two poses a challenge. The Piedmont harbors hardwood forests and amazing aquatic diversity, both threatened by rapid urban growth. In the Coastal Plain, agriculture and pine forestry thrive, and many military installations balance mission readiness with rare species habitat. Along the shore, ships unload freight in ports near historic lighthouses (Figure 3) and beach-nesting birds—all while sea level rises and storms intensify. Offshore, energy exploration is underway. Recreational and commercial fishermen harvest their catch while whales migrate up the coast.



Dramatic changes such as urbanization and climate change are sweeping the lands and waters of the South Atlantic. If growth trends continue, recent research predicts that Southeast urban areas will double in size by 2060, creating a megalopolis connecting Raleigh to Atlanta (Terando et al. 2014). Within the South Atlantic geographical area alone, roughly 2 million acres of coastline are predicted to transition due to sea-level rise by 2050 (SALCC 2015a). SALCC and the Conservation Blueprint emerged out of growing recognition that addressing such large-scale changes would require unprecedented partner coordination.

The staff of SALCC spent several years reaching out to people and organizations working on conservation within the geographical area. The conservation community converged on the need to improve cooperation so that the impact of partners' combined efforts would surpass what each could

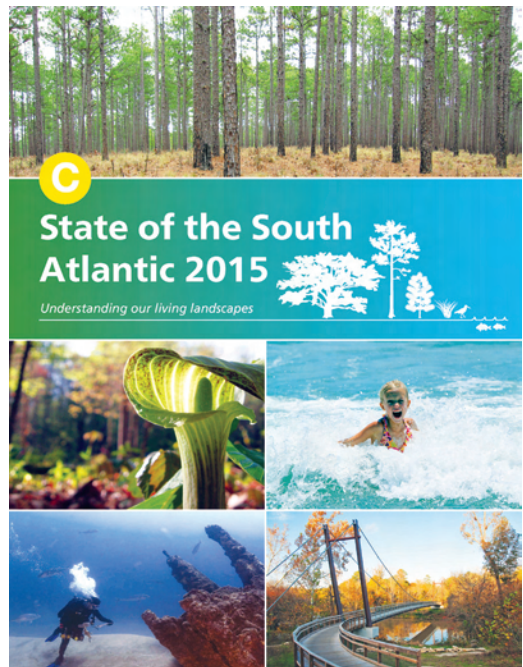
**Figure 3.** Cape Lookout Lighthouse, Cape Lookout National Seashore, North Carolina. Photo courtesy of National Park Service.

achieve independently. To formalize its role as a forum for collective conservation action, SALCC hosted workshops to identify a shared mission, priorities, and goals. The resulting mission was to develop blueprint for sustaining natural and cultural resources for current and future generations. This blueprint is a living spatial plan that identifies conservation priorities across the region. As SALCC evolved, this mission grew to encompass facilitating conservation action guided by the blueprint.

The first step in creating the blueprint was identifying shared indicators of ecosystem health—shared metrics of success. These indicators allow SALCC to measure the condition of natural and cultural resources. SALCC currently supports about 30 different indicators, including those measuring the status of species, habitats, and abiotic factors. The natural resource indicators reflect ecological integrity, while the cultural resource indicators capture intact cultural landscapes. These metrics either correspond to a specific ecosystem, or are intended to capture the connections across terrestrial and aquatic systems. All the indicators can be modeled using existing data and accurately reflect other components of healthy ecosystems. Currently, more than 200 people from at least 50 organizations have participated in selecting, testing, and providing data for the ecosystem indicators. SALCC updates the indicators annually based on the results of rigorous validation, and to incorporate the best available spatial data.

The next step was to use the indicators to assess the current condition of the South Atlantic region. The *State of the South Atlantic 2015* report, released in April of that year, is a SALCC publication designed to help us all understand our living landscapes (Figure 4; SALCC 2015b). It measures and scores each of the ecosystem indicators in the style of a report card. This captures a snapshot in time that will serve as a baseline for future assessments, enabling us to track trends and monitor progress. In addition, the *State of the South Atlantic* highlights the region's conservation successes and challenges, describes all the South Atlantic ecosystems, and includes forecasts for the future.

The final step was to develop the Conservation Blueprint plan itself. Blueprint 2.0, released in June 2015, is a totally data-driven plan based on terrestrial, freshwater, marine, and cross-ecosystem indicators. It uses the current condition of the indicators to identify the areas of the South Atlantic most important for



**Figure 4.** Cover of the *State of the South Atlantic 2015* report.

natural and cultural resources. Through a connectivity analysis, the blueprint also identifies corridors that link coastal and inland areas and span climate gradients. The blueprint reflects extensive feedback from the broader conservation community, with more than 400 people from over 100 different organizations actively participating in its development so far.

The blueprint has already been used in at least 20 different projects. For example, in June 2015, the blueprint, ecosystem indicators, and strong partner relationships in SALCC helped secure \$770,000 from the Department of Interior Wildland Fire Resilient Landscapes Program in the first year alone. The second year of funding brought the total to \$1.75 million in support of prescribed burning in longleaf pine focus areas within SALCC's geographical area. The ecosystem indicators also serve as shared measures of the project's success, demonstrating the impact of the burns on the integrity of the pine and prairie system.

In the summer and fall of 2015, staff from the Georgia and South Carolina departments of natural resources used Blueprint 2.0 to protect coastal and riparian habitat. In South Carolina, the blueprint was referenced in two successful proposals for funding from the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program and Forest Legacy Program, which secured about \$2 million to conserve high-priority conservation lands on South Fenwick Island and alongside the Savannah River. In Georgia, Blueprint 2.0 helped win \$2 million in coastal wetlands grant funds to protect important habitat on the lower Altamaha River and St. Simons Island.

In September 2015, Conservation Blueprint 2.0 was also used to prioritize fish and wildlife habitat across the South Atlantic region for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). Drawing on lessons learned in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, NFWF recognized the need to identify conservation priorities before the next disaster strikes. SALCC helped connect a coalition of partners who collaborated on a successful proposal, including the Cape Fear River Partnership, NatureServe, and the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program. The assessment anchored a local Cape Fear River watershed prioritization around North Caro-

### **Delivering a Landscape Approach to Conservation: The National Academy of Sciences Evaluation of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives**

The Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC) Network was established in 2009 to provide a framework and capacity for facilitating landscape-scale conservation. Federal agencies provide staff and funding that enable the LCCs to serve this function. In 2014, Congress mandated a National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report to evaluate the purpose, goals, scientific merit, and outcomes of the LCC Network; the resulting report was released in December 2015. The LCC Network is currently using the report to address the committee's recommendations and set a trajectory for improvement.

The committee defined the landscape approach as seeking to "provide tools and concepts for allocating and managing land to achieve social, economic, and environmental objectives in areas where agriculture, mining, and other productive land uses compete with environmental and biodiversity goals...." This approach is needed when landscapes are expected to provide for both conservation and nonconservation val-



ues and resources are affected by factors that cross land ownerships and jurisdictional boundaries. The committee concluded that the nation needs to take a landscape approach to conservation.

The committee found that the LCC Network's strategic plan includes the critical elements of the landscape approach—stakeholder engagement, adaptive management, and delivery of landscape-scale designs—and that the network's goals are consistent with the scientific literature. The report noted both the importance of developing scientific information and applying it to conservation actions, and that this can be facilitated by boundary-spanning organizations such as the LCC Network. The committee concluded that the concept of the LCC Network is correctly based on conservation science, and that in implementation, its structure and function is appropriately designed to address landscape-scale conservation challenges.

The committee compared the LCC Network to other landscape-scale programs and concluded that it is unique in that “no other federal program is designed to address landscape conservation needs at a national scale, for all natural and cultural resources, in a way that bridges research and management efforts.”

The report described the importance of establishing metrics and evaluating outcomes, and noted the challenges of doing so at the landscape scale. It recommended that the LCC Network better distinguish ends, means, and process objectives, and better account for partner contributions. The committee found that it is too early to expect the LCC Network to have generated measurable improvements in ecological health, given the newness of the program and the scale of the challenge. The report found that current LCC Network accomplishments align with the types of process outcomes—developing steering committees, collaborative governance, shared conservation objectives, extensive science developed and used to improve resource management decisions, and landscape conservation designs—expected during program inception.

The report noted that the LCC Network needs to catalyze conservation actions by those steering committee members that have management authorities in order to move from planning to conservation delivery. The landscape conservation design efforts of the Network provide processes and products for informing strategies and actions by conservation practitioners. The report acknowledged the importance of landscape conservation design efforts and provided recommendations for improving their utility for conservation decision-making at landscape scales.

Finally, the committee outlined important components to achieve long-term outcomes from the practice of large landscape conservation, including: a unifying theme or common vision, partnership development and stakeholder engagement, adaptive management, and a plan to move from vision to action. They also identified the important role of governmental agencies in serving a convening function to facilitate collaborations across organizations. The committee concluded that the LCC Network has the components and structure necessary to deliver on the national need for a landscape approach to conservation.

lina Natural Heritage data, and anchored the broader South Atlantic prioritization around Conservation Blueprint 2.0 and the Florida Critical Lands and Waters Identification Project.

SALCC intends the blueprint to eventually become a “gold standard” for guiding large landscape conservation. To learn more about the South Atlantic Conservation Blueprint, visit [www.southatlanticlcc.org/blueprint/](http://www.southatlanticlcc.org/blueprint/).

### **Advice from the field**

Working across boundaries, with multiple partners that have mandated jurisdictions, at landscape-level geographic scales, and projecting trends of resources decades into the future can be difficult work indeed. Several common lessons cut across these partnerships in the Columbia Plateau and the South Atlantic, including:

1. Working together around a shared plan and measures of success can help bring in new funding for on-the-ground actions.
2. Participating in landscape partnerships can be particularly helpful if you’re new to the area. It’s a great way to meet other people near you with a shared interest in a healthy natural and cultural landscape.
3. Think about natural and cultural resources as the core of what makes a healthy ecosystem and community. Greater overlap of the natural and cultural resource management communities can lead to benefits for everyone.
4. You are the cooperative. The true power of a cooperative comes from the energy, experience, and ideas of everyone involved.
5. Don’t underestimate the challenge of data integration. Data collected and analyzed by different organizations are often difficult to combine, scale up to a larger collaborative, and to match across jurisdictional boundaries.
6. Partnerships take time: time to build a science foundation for collaboration; time to build trust; time to gather everyone together, hear their stories, find common goals, and plan for the future. And partnerships don’t move along in a linear fashion. Be willing and ready to circle back to engage partners that have not participated.

### **Conclusion**

If the North American Wildlife Management Model (Organ et al. 2012) and ecosystem-based management (Grumbine 1994) were the models of 20th-century conservation, conservation at landscape scales across jurisdictional boundaries is becoming the conservation approach of the 21st century. By collaborating with partners through LCCs, federal land management agencies, state and provincial agencies, tribes, NGOs, and private landowners can enhance the overall health of the shared landscape, improve conservation potential, increase connectivity, improve links to communities and culture, and build a scientific foundation on which to establish adaptation actions. Serving as an active contributor to a larger conservation design means that federal land managers will be able to continue to preserve and protect resources for future generations.

Despite strong rationale and support for landscape approaches in the conservation literature, and mandates to work across boundaries at larger scales for federal land management

agencies, this new model is still in its infancy, and most conservation actions continue to be single-unit, single-place activities. If the potential for landscape conservation is to be fully realized, agencies and organizations must continue to push toward this model through policy and guidance, and individuals within organizations must be willing to spend at least a part of their time contributing to these collaborations.

The National Academy of Sciences was mandated to convene an *ad hoc* committee to examine the LCC program in 2014 (see text box, above). The committee concluded that the LCC network is unique among federal programs, designed to address landscape conservation needs at a national scale, for all natural and cultural resources, in a way that bridges science and management (NRC 2015). The report concludes:

The nation needs a landscape approach to conservation. Implementing landscape approaches in the United States is challenging because of the multitude of federal, state, local, and tribal jurisdictions, as well as numerous private landholders and stakeholders. The LCC Network initiated by the Department of the Interior aims to address this national need. Many other programs are also striving to address regional conservation challenges. However, only the LCC Network is designed to address this need at a national scale for all natural and cultural resources, and to bridge from research to management.

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# National Heritage Areas: Learning from 30 Years of Working to Scale

*Brenda Barrett and Eleanor Mahoney*

NOW MORE THAN EVER, the time is right to assess the effectiveness of existing landscape-scale conservation efforts. Issues such as climate change, habitat resilience, energy development and urban sprawl transcend political and disciplinary boundaries. They demand a regional, if not multi-regional, strategy to ensure effective nature conservation. In addition, the definition of what makes up a cultural landscape has also expanded in recent decades to include not just single buildings or neighborhoods, but entire zones of activity and settlement. While exciting, these large landscape approaches have complicated traditional planning and resource protection strategies, necessitating the development of an entirely new skill set.

To add to these difficulties, the finances of both public agencies and nonprofit organizations continue to be stretched thin by ongoing budget cuts and the lingering effects of the Great Recession. Once seen as a creative add-on or novelty, partnerships have now become an essential element of protected area management, serving as a cost-saving mechanism to remedy the decline in resources and as a means to build relationships and trust among diverse groups of stakeholders. Government bodies and private entities are incorporating shared governance into many of their core strategic documents, with the National Park Service (NPS), for example, highlighting the “Scaling Up” initiative, an effort aimed at working collaboratively beyond park boundaries, in its most recent plan, the *Call to Action* (NPS 2011).

Given contemporary conservation challenges, it is not at all surprising that so many practitioners have been drawn to the promise of large landscapes. Yet, can the reality of “going big” match the hopeful rhetoric? Have regional and multi-regional aspirations ever translated into recognizable and measurable achievements? One place to look for an answer is the National Heritage Areas (NHA) Program. This unique initiative, which dates to 1984, offers

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more than three decades of on-the-ground experience in working with multiple partners at a landscape scale. NHAs also have the added benefit of being extensively studied and evaluated, so much so that a rich dataset, capable of revealing the benefits and the challenges of working cooperatively at scale, now exists to be mined by others hoping to initiate or improve large landscape projects.

### **NHAs in action**

The 1980s marked another period of transition not only for conservation policy, but also government action more generally. When Ronald Reagan famously declared that “... government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem,” in his first inaugural address, he set the tone for a decade characterized by reductions in discretionary funding and regulatory action. The appointment of James G. Watt, former president and chief legal officer of the Mountain States Legal Foundation, as secretary of the interior sent a strong signal to supporters of NPS and other public lands agencies that the long post-World War II era of expansion, which had witnessed the creation of more than a hundred new park units as well as the passage of the Wilderness Act and the creation of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, had finally come to an end. Retrenchment and austerity would instead become the order of the day, with officials in Washington actively considering how to dispose of—rather than how to add to—the government’s portfolio of parks, forests and rangelands.

However, despite the strident tone in the nation’s capital, many local communities still expressed a strong desire to secure investment and economic development through the designation of national park units. In the face of opposition from Interior leadership, NPS, along with savvy local partners, fashioned a new and innovative approach to protected area management—one built on lessons learned from national recreation areas, national trails, urban historic districts, greenways, state-level programs in New York and Massachusetts, and even European park planning (Barrett 2003; Eugster 2003a). Though widely divergent in scope and focus, these efforts all emphasized partnerships and included lands managed by multiple owners and zones of highly developed, even industrial uses—characteristics that would come to define the nascent National Heritage Areas Program as well.

In 1984, President Reagan signed legislation creating the Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor (IMCNHC), the first national heritage area (Figure 1). At nearly 100 miles long and roughly 6 miles wide, the corridor stretched from Chicago to the Illinois River in LaSalle–Peru. It included rural, urban, industrial, and de-industrialized zones and passed through more than 1,000 units of local government. Right from the start, the IMCNHC displayed both the scale and the multi-jurisdictional approach that would characterize later heritage area designations. In contrast to traditional national park units, the corridor’s authorizing legislation limited the financial commitment of the federal government to a set amount of support. Additionally, the legislation required that the federal share of projects and activities be matched with other sources. Most significantly, however, the landscape would not be controlled by NPS in a top-down manner. Instead, a federal commission, representative of multiple viewpoints—local, regional, and national—would be the entity initially given the task of corridor management.<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 1.** President Ronald Reagan signs legislation creating the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor in 1984.

Today, there are 49 NHAs stretching from Florida to Alaska (Figure 2). Each one is authorized by Congress and, though placed in the portfolio of NPS, operates with a great degree of autonomy. Demand for new designations remains strong, with several bills currently under consideration and dozens more in various stages of development. Although to date there is no legislation authorizing the program, the majority of NHAs show a great degree of similarity in their basic legislative elements. For example, most enabling acts contain a clear statement of the national significance or importance of the cultural, historical, and natural values of the region. And further, the legislation also states that the purpose of designation is to preserve, promote, and interpret natural and cultural resources and, in some cases, make them available for the economic benefit of the included communities. Finally, almost all include a management plan requirement. The secretary of the interior must ultimately approve this keystone document, which lays out the goals and objectives of the NHA and its stakeholders.

NHAs are not typical federal protected areas staffed and funded by the assigned federal agency. The individual NHAs are managed by nonprofits, state and local governments, universities, or federal commissions and operate with a high degree of local control. The direct funding commitment for both program administration and project work is limited and NHAs seek support from other funding sources and partnership arrangements. NHAs encompass a range of resources from urban areas such as Wheeling, West Virginia, and Baltimore, Maryland, to vast rural landscapes in northeastern Iowa or northern New Mexico. Unlike many



Figure 2. There are currently 49 national heritage areas (light grey) stretching from Florida to Alaska.

NPS units and landmark designations that have been criticized for not reflecting the diversity of the nation, NHAs tell stories related to slavery and race, indigenous peoples, and labor and working-class history. While much more work remains to be done in this regard, NHAs have nonetheless begun the process of exploring difficult, yet absolutely vital, aspects of America's past and present.

### **Deconstructing the NHA model: Does it deliver?**

NHAs are lived-in landscapes. Designated areas receive federal support and recognition, but there is no regulatory authority connected to gaining NHA status. This model, so different from other national designations, has caused some to fear that the program will enlarge the scope and scale of government involvement and others to dismiss the idea as re-directing scarce federal dollars from sites in the ownership and control of a public agency. Such debates, though frustrating to practitioners, have nonetheless generated a silver lining of sorts: the development of an impressive number of studies and evaluations of the NHA model. Reports by NPS, professional evaluation consultants, and academic researchers have reviewed the efficacy of NHA management planning, governance structure, and public engagement strategies. This work has helped identify many of the essential elements for large landscape collaboration and, even more importantly, evaluated the outcomes of such ventures over time.

The National Park Service's Conservation Study Institute (now the Stewardship Institute) undertook the first systematic reviews of heritage areas, closely examining three efforts between 2004 and 2008. These included the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (Tuxill et al. 2005), the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor (Copping et al.

2006), and the Cane River National Heritage Area (Tuxill et al. 2008). These studies looked at the NHAs' investments and accomplishments over time to determine progress towards their stated goals. They also made recommendations on future sustainability. Daniel Laven and others went on to use the data from these three evaluations to build a dynamic model of the NHAs that is tied to network theory. The model posited how NHAs activate networks of partners from national, state, and local sectors. This work explored the connection between network structures and the effectiveness of heritage areas and concluded that NHAs could be seen as "venues for partnership" providing resilience in the face of dynamic changes to the surrounding landscapes (Laven et al. 2010).

In 2008, Congress mandated that nine more NHAs undergo evaluation as a condition for renewal of federal funding (Public Law 110-229, US Statutes at Large, May 8, 2008). NPS hired outside consultants to complete the examinations, with an eye towards the development of a standardized approach. This was important as it allowed for the comparison of the data from all 12 NHAs. The similarity of the legislative language establishing each NHA and the use of common NPS management planning guidelines also made the information collected easier to compare across areas. In this way, it was possible to track the NHAs' accomplishments, governance, financial investments, and sustainability. NPS is continuing to use this evaluation model to assess the accomplishments of other NHAs (NPS, n.d.).

What were the overall findings of these evaluations? As a starting point, it should be noted that the reviews of the 12 NHAs were overwhelmingly positive. The evaluations documented that all but one of the NHAs addressed each of the goals identified in the area's legislation and approved management plan. The highest-priority work for all 12 of the NHAs was cultural and natural resource conservation, with approximately a third of the areas' programmatic dollars invested in the restoration of watersheds and river corridors, the preservation of landmark properties, and the documentation of cultural practice and folk traditions. For example, the Rivers of Steel NHA has protected the landmark Carrie Furnaces (Figure 3) and the adjacent Hot Metal Bridge, and restored two other sites of labor history, the Bost Building and the Pump House. In addition, the Homestead Historic District and Carrie Furnaces site are both undergoing a multi-million-dollar restoration for a mixed-use industrial and commercial development using state and federal funds (Myers et al. 2012).

Education and interpretation of both the natural and built environments, including the cultural traditions of residents, proved to be the second-highest funding priority for all 12 areas. For example, the Essex NHA connected its region together with permanent signage and visitor centers. Special events and educational programming, in turn, shared the benefits of these investments. Silos and Smokestacks NHA, which covers a large swath of northeastern Iowa, successfully linked a large geographic area through the creation of its award-winning Camp Silos initiative, which provides online interpretive farm experiences to over 500,000 visitors (Helba et al. 2011: 44).

While resource conservation, education, and recreational development were identified as important in all areas, every NHA tailored its work to meet the needs highlighted in its own management plan. Areas in which community and economic development were identified as part of the mission have made promotional efforts a priority. Working in close partnership





**Figure 3.** Carrie Furnaces 6 and 7 are rare examples of pre-World War II iron-making technology. Located along the Monongahela River in southwestern Pennsylvania, the furnaces were once part of the giant Homestead Steel Works facility, one of the largest mills in the world for much of its history. Photo © 2015 Adam Piscitelli, used by permission.

with tourism providers, South Carolina NHA developed four regional visitor centers and promoted NHA assets like the Agriculture Tourism Trail (Helba et al. 2012:10).

The evaluations of the NHAs concluded that locally led management entities delivered. The NHAs developed effective board governance structures, retained capable and experienced leadership and staff, and utilized responsible fiscal management systems. The evaluations also documented the use of adaptive management strategies that reflected changing public needs. The reports singled out Hudson River Valley (Henderson et al. 2012: 5–76), Rivers of Steel (Myers et al. 2012: 5–99), and Silos and Smokestacks (Helba et al. 2011: 67) NHAs for their adaptive approaches to changing conditions.

The evaluations demonstrated that NHAs implemented their legislative mandate and management plans through a network of partnerships, and did so with a high level of continued citizen involvement over time. The strength of these networks is well documented. Most manage by developing an extensive web of partnerships. For example, Silos and Smokestacks NHA has 108 formal partners in 37 counties (Helba et al. 2011: 672-63) and South Carolina NHA has 175 community partners (Helba et al. 2012:2-35).

Finally, the findings on NHA financial management were also positive. The reports noted that appropriated federal funding was prudently allocated to carry out the areas' goals. The NHAs met and, in most cases, exceeded the 50% required match for NPS funding. In

addition, the NHAs had a track record of leveraging program funding with other federal, state, local, and private sources to implement resource conservation, recreation, and educational projects at a ratio of up to 4 to 1 (Alliance of National Heritage Areas 2013).

Despite a record of accomplishments, the NHAs struggle for recognition and funding (Barrett 2015). The outside evaluations of NHAs commissioned by NPS found evidence that NPS support is necessary for the long-term sustainability of the program (Alliance of National Heritage Areas 2013). These are challenges that seem to face many large landscape approaches where partnerships require sharing budgetary authority and outcomes are more difficult to directly measure and justify. A recent National Academy of Sciences report on the Department of the Interior's Landscape Conservation Cooperatives documented similar issues (National Academy of Sciences 2015; see pp. 156–157, this issue). The body of research now available on NHAs, an outlier program in the National Park Service, may provide important lessons for the emerging landscape-scale approach.

### **Lessons from NHAs**

Evaluation of programs that work on a landscape scale is a complex undertaking. It is difficult to identify and then measure outcomes from what are often small inputs over a large geographic region over long periods of time. Collected over several decades, the NHA evaluations provide one of the few datasets available to demonstrate the viability of landscape-scale management. The literature on landscape-scale conservation is only in the early stages of development. Matthew McKinney and Shawn Johnson outlined some of the guiding principles to regional collaboration (2009). This was followed by a publication that proposed a series of strategic recommendations to improve the policy and practice on regional collaborations and landscape-scale conservation (McKinney et al. 2010). In a 2015 publication, Charles Curtin has written on the theory and practice for conserving large landscape systems based on a number of nongovernmental examples that build such conservation from a grassroots base.

Herein lies an opportunity, as the evaluative research on NHAs can be used to ground some of the significant components identified in the landscape-scale conservation literature. In addition, NHAs also demonstrate that this approach can be successful when applied on a variety of scales and in different geographic regions. The following broadly transferable components of large landscape work may be useful as a starting point to build a community of practice.

**Adopt a common narrative.** Setting boundaries around a large landscape and then engaging the residents and partners in supporting common goals is challenging. Creating a shared regional identity seems to be a key factor for success. Curtin notes the significance of being rooted in a place and the importance of communicating knowledge of place through storytelling (Curtin 2015:10). The NHA approach is built around the idea that a shared narrative is the centerpiece of a community engagement strategy that can bring diverse landholders and stakeholders together to fashion a common vision (Thompson 2016). This can include both the desired future for a region as well as recognition of a region's shared problems (McKinney 2009). In NHAs, the founding legislation identifies the significant historic and natural values and requires that a management plan set agreed-upon goals for the region.

As a resident interviewed for the evaluation of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor stated:

Heritage defines the region and that is instrumental to our goals. If there is no regional entity, no regional glue, then we are something totally different. The regional goal is bringing us together as a network. That's why our mission is about developing the network and community stewards. And it all goes back to what defines the Blackstone Valley: the national heritage and the natural resources (Tuxill et al. 2005:41).

**Develop strategic partnerships.** There is general agreement that networked, multidisciplinary partnerships are an essential component of large landscape work (McKinney 2010; Curtin 2015; Tabor 2015). From the beginning, NHAs were built on just such an approach. Their management entities include federal, state, and local officials as well as interested citizens and organizations that could contribute special expertise, such as historic preservation, recreational development, or tourism. It was the NHA's ability to activate a range of sectors that was a significant factor in their regional effectiveness (Laven 2010 et al.).

Finally, the development of strategic partnerships allows the landscape approach to tap into community support and multiple funding streams, which adds resilience to these systems. This is particularly important in times of limited fiscal resources and governmental uncertainty. More partners with a stake in the outcome can provide a foundation of effective project funding and implementation (Alliance of National Heritage Areas 2013).

**Use the power of convening.** The power to convene partners to work at a large scale cannot be overstated. To develop partnerships or a network requires vision and the ability to think, as one skilled planner has said, "one size larger" (Eugster 2003b). A program or model that is recognized as having the authority or experience to implement this approach can help speed the collaborative process. One with some funding attached is even better. Early implementation dollars from the convening body, such as funding for operations or small grant assistance to targeted goals, helps power the development of regional collaboration. The NPS heritage area grants play an important role in sustaining implementation of the area's management plan (Barrett 2015).

Other federal agencies are stepping up to play the role of convener. The 2015 National Academy of Sciences report identified over 20 federal programs that seek to carry out their missions using a landscape-scale approach. For example, the boundaries of the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives in the Department of Interior encompass all of the United States and parts of Canada and Mexico. However, in some places, governmental programs may not be the best approach for a landscape-scale initiative. In these cases, the other component parts, such as a common narrative, listening to the impacted community, and providing some incentives, may be even more critical.

**Address community needs.** Closely related to the importance of identifying a common narrative and developing strategic partnerships is tackling projects that can support a region's need for social and economic vitality. To be successful and sustainable, landscape-scale initiatives must respect and account for the desires of local people (Curtin 2015). This approach



is critical as collaborative conservation approaches are adapted to meet changing stakeholder needs as well as changing environmental and socioeconomic conditions (McKinney 2010). There are positive signs, for example in the Chesapeake Watershed, that the conservation movement is awakening to the need to include the cultural or human dimension in landscape conservation planning (Thompson 2016).

NHAs differ from most cultural and natural landscape conservation efforts by explicitly recognizing the need to benefit local communities, whether through the conservation of locally valued cultural and natural assets, meeting economic development goals, or both. This work can take a variety of forms, from retaining working landscapes to supporting the continuation of cultural practices, as well as growing the region’s heritage tourism sector. NHAs that have led the way in this regard include Cane River NHA, the Gullah Geechee National Cultural Corridor, and the Northern Rio Grande NHA (Figure 4). However, like all such initiatives NHAs are challenged to deliver on the promise to help communities that seek to retain their cultural identity in a lived-in landscape.

**Conclusion**

Telling regional stories and working to protect threatened landscapes on a large scale is hard work. It requires constant effort and advocacy on the part of committed actors, who are ded-

**Figure 4.** Windmill near Galisteo, New Mexico, in the Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area, a diverse landscape that includes indigenous homelands (eight northern New Mexico Pueblos and the Jicarilla Apache Nation) and centuries-old Hispano towns, villages, ranches, and farms. Photo courtesy of Eleanor Mahoney.



icated to maintaining a diverse network of partners and allies. The goals of history, culture, ecology, and community revitalization are often pulling in different directions. Interpreting the past, caring for long-standing traditions, and protecting sensitive environmental areas all can, and frequently do, generate controversy. The vagaries of local and national politics only add to the difficulties of large landscape work, as support, especially funding, is often unpredictable.

Yet, even with the challenges outlined above, the future of landscape collaboration has never appeared more promising. Interest in the idea is growing and the range of partners seeking to advance the work is rapidly expanding. A 2011 survey by the Regional Plan Association of New York, for example, identified over 165 projects in the northeastern United States. The recently launched Practitioners' Network for Large Landscape Conservation, an umbrella organization dedicated to improving the process of large landscape conservation by sharing information, policy, and practice, has already identified nearly 300 efforts across the country. And over 20 federal programs have identified large landscape work as part of their mission, most prominently the Department of the Interior's Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (National Academy of Sciences). There are a host of other federal and state programs in various stages of development and all are, or will be, seeking guidance in collaborative conservation.

So what are the next steps? All parties interested in large landscape work should sharpen their focus on the identification of best practices and the development of a robust evaluation model capable of capturing both qualitative and quantitative benefits. Too often, programs centered on partnerships are the first to be cut, making the ability to demonstrate their value all the more important. Additionally, practitioners must increase outreach to and inclusion of diverse voices and perspectives in a manner that is more than mere consultation. Instead, real and respectful engagement may eventually mean the handover of management or even ownership rights. The eventual form such transitions might take would likely vary according to the histories and contemporary challenges of a particular region.

Whether a large transboundary conservation project or the work of a small community land trust, NHAs can help deliver on the promise of landscape-scale partnerships. The model also offers innovative ideas for NPS to implement its "Scaling Up" initiative, blending both cultural resource management and nature conservation. Finally, NHAs provide lessons in how to adapt to the head winds of demographic and economic change. Their work can aid governmental agencies, nonprofits, and community leaders in finding a voice capable of speaking to constituents, partners, and elected officials about the need to scale up in order meet the needs not only of today, but also of the next 100 years.

Perhaps the National Park System Advisory Board said it best when it concluded, "National Heritage Areas are a powerful way for the diverse people of this nation to tell their stories with authenticity and integrity" (National Park System Advisory Board 2006).

## Endnote

1. In 2007, management of the IMCNHC transitioned from a federal commission to a

nonprofit organization, the Canal Corridor Association (CCA). The CCA had been a key player in the creation and development of the corridor since before its designation.

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# Connecting Humans and Nature: The Appalachian Trail Landscape Conservation Initiative

*Dennis Shaffer*

Let us assume the existence of a giant standing high on the skyline along these mountain ridges, his head just scraping these floating clouds. What would he see from this skyline as he strode along its length from north to south? (MacKaye 1921)

## History and background

HIKING THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL (A.T.) isn't just a walk in the woods—it's an experience that embodies an environment linking the majestic Appalachian Mountains to the human landscapes of the eastern cities. These linkages were at the heart of Benton MacKaye's original vision for the Appalachian Trail. MacKaye, the regional planner and forester who first conceived of a long-distance hiking trail connecting the skyline of the Appalachian Mountains (Figure 1), wrote about planning at the large landscape-scale as early as 1921.

The Appalachian Trail is conceived as the backbone of a super reservation and primeval recreation ground ... its ultimate purpose being to extend acquaintance with the scenery and serve as a guide to the understanding of nature. (MacKaye 1921)

The landscape surrounding the world-famous A.T. connects rural communities and working farms and forests, squeezes through rapidly developing regions, and provides the foundation for outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities. Since the trail's conception and earliest construction, the iconic viewsheds, precious natural resources, and cultural heritage that surround it have been linked to enhance the A.T. hiking experience.

MacKaye pictured conserving "a crucial portion of our original primeval America" and helping people experience this natural world "despite the inroads of a metropolitan

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**Figure 1.** Benton MacKaye in the Smokies (undated photo).

civilization.” His “vision” was rapidly embraced by other conservation leaders early in the 20th century: a long-distance footpath that would allow people to “conserve, use, and enjoy the mountain hinterland which penetrates the populous portion of America from north to south...” (MacKaye 1921).

The remarkable men and women who embraced this vision and built the A.T. were ahead of their time. The A.T. connected existing trails and blazed new ones, slowly weaving together a continuous footpath that traversed the Appalachian range. The route was finalized in 1937, and the first through-hiker walked its entire length in 1948. The A.T. experience steadily grew in popularity and American lore. The trail was designated as a unit of the national park system and one of the country’s first national scenic trails in 1968 (National Trails System Act of 1968, Sec. 5 {16 USC 1244}, n.d.)

In 1974, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) commissioned a greenway study in conjunction with the organization’s 50th anniversary. Ann Satterthwaite, author of the report, recommended the development of a broad landscape in direct relationship to Benton MacKaye’s original vision. Satterthwaite called her recommendation “An Appalachian Greenway” (Satterthwaite 1974). The Appalachian Greenway was endorsed by the ATC Board of Managers and membership in 1974. But the proposal faded as ATC turned its attention to completing protection of the A.T. footpath itself—a critical need that Satterthwaite called out in her report.

Over the next 30 years a concerted effort was made to purchase and protect permanent public access along the entire length of the A.T. This work has resulted in one of the most significant and successful land conservation programs in the history of the United States.



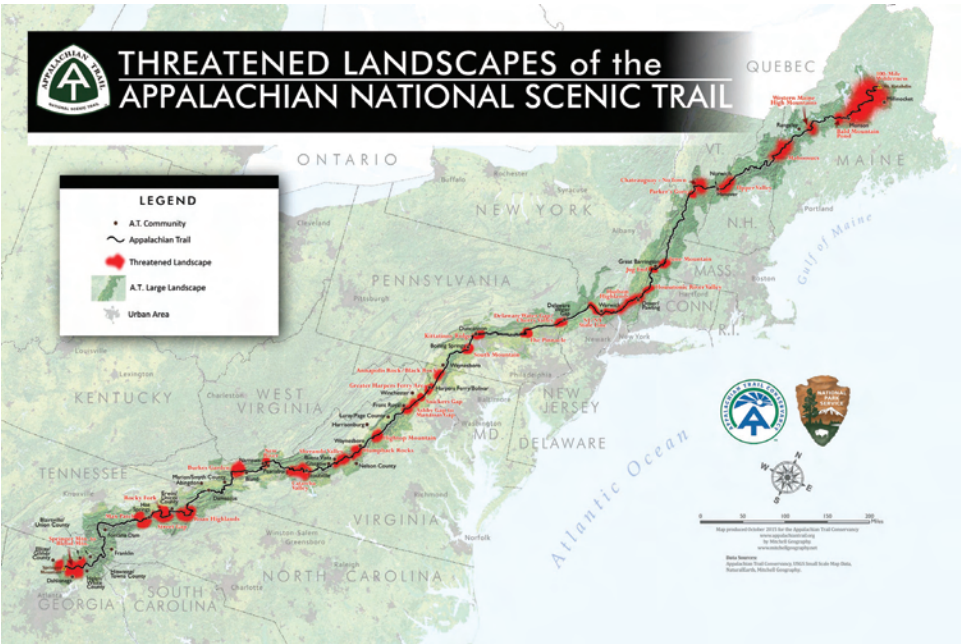
Today, there is a 280,000-acre “green ribbon” along the A.T. that connects significant federal and state conservation lands of the eastern United States. Nearly 100 percent of the 2,190 miles of the world’s most famous and popular long-distance hiking trail is within a protected passageway that, in most places, extends at least 500 feet on either side of the trail.

**The need for landscape-scale conservation along the A.T.**

Beyond the protected trail corridor, many of the viewsheds, watersheds, and areas of natural and cultural significance remain unprotected and vulnerable to external threats as our human footprint continues to grow (Figure 2). These threats include incompatible commercial development, suburban sprawl, habitat fragmentation and destruction, inappropriately sited energy development facilities, and noise pollution. These ever-expanding impacts pose long-term implications for those visiting the Appalachian Trail and the diversity of conservation resources surrounding it.

The Appalachian Trail was never intended to be a narrow corridor squeezing through increasingly developed and degraded regions of the East Coast, crisscrossed with utility lines, dotted with wind towers, and invaded by the smells and sounds of urban life. Instead, the vision was for a wide conservation greenway that protects nature and the experience of hiking through nature for all to enjoy: as MacKaye told a 1933 ATC Conference, “a realm and not merely a trail marks the full aim of our efforts.” Now, nearly 100 years after Benton MacKaye’s vision, one-third of the nation’s population is within a day’s drive of the A.T. It is estimated that more than 3 million people hike on a portion of the trail every year.

**Figure 2.** Threatened landscapes of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.





Both the National Park Service (NPS) and the ATC have identified the vulnerability of the narrow trail to the impacts of escalating landscape fragmentation and degradation, and the critical need to work more proactively to address the trends that cause “major impacts on the Trail’s viewsheds, soundscapes, ecological systems, and cultural resources” (NPS 2015).

### **The convergence of landscape, culture, and community**

The long linear footprint of the A.T. provides opportunities to connect a broad and diverse spectrum of conservation resource values. The trail spans 14 states, 8 national forests, 6 national park units, 2 national wildlife refuges, 24 wilderness areas, 8 national natural landmarks, 3 national historic landmarks, approximately 60 state protected areas, 88 counties, 168 townships and municipalities, and many other protected areas. The A.T. and its surroundings transcend traditional boundaries and jurisdictional designations. This interconnectedness provides the foundation to showcase some of the richest and most significant ecological, scenic, cultural, historic, and recreational values of local communities stretching from Georgia to Maine.

The A.T., threading the spine of the Appalachian Mountains, has stood as a landscape-scale conservation project for nearly a century. In addition to the highly successful 30-year campaign to protect the A.T. footpath, there have been many outstanding examples of public and private entities working to conserve high-priority resources along the trail and its surrounding landscape. The Appalachian Trail brand is often used as leverage to gain influence when conservation projects can demonstrate a connection to the trail.

Such conservation success stories date back to the earliest days of A.T. history. Protection of lands along the A.T. and its surroundings has been the focus of some of the nation’s leading and most innovative conservation agencies and nonprofit organizations. The work is often complicated and expensive. These efforts have been organized and carried out by local, regional, and national entities.

A few examples of conservation success stories that have benefited the A.T. and its surrounding landscape:

- The Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy and the US Forest Service conserved nearly 70,000 acres of the Roan Highlands in Tennessee and North Carolina. The A.T. runs through the heart of the Roan Highlands (Figure 3).
- The Rocky Fork project in Cherokee National Forest protected nearly 10,000 acres. This property was a high-priority conservation target since at least the mid-1930s. Multiple public and private nonprofit conservation organizations collaborated to complete this acquisition.
- Another 6,800-acre tract in Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee was acquired to protect an important part of the viewshed as one looks south from Max Patch in North Carolina to Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Davenport Gap. Six miles of the A.T. pass along its eastern ridge top.
- Sterling Forest, a historic land conservation success story, represents the conservation of more than 22,000 acres along the A.T. on the New York/New Jersey border, just over an hour’s drive from New York City.



**Figure 3.** The bald on Big Yellow Mountain in the Roan Highlands of North Carolina. Photo courtesy of Travis Bordley.

- In Maine, the state has acquired Nahmakanta Lake, which is now the state's largest designated Public Reserve at more than 43,000 acres, offering backcountry visitors a roadless forest of more than 8,000 acres, a 12-mile stretch of the Appalachian Trail, lakeside and remote campsites, and 24 lakes and ponds with more than 50 miles of combined undeveloped shore frontage.

Many tracts large and small, adjacent to or near the A.T., have been protected since the trail was first constructed. These properties often expanded existing public lands, such as units of the US Forest Service, NPS, state-owned lands, and other conservation areas.

### **Bringing attention and focus to the next generation of A.T. protection**

The Appalachian Trail Landscape Conservation Initiative is an emerging private–public collaboration recently adopted by the ATC and NPS. The initiative is rooted in the trail's earliest beginnings: building on a collaborative partnership of strong local, regional, and national support to safeguard the picturesque vistas, wildlife habitat, streams and rivers, farmlands, and valuable historic sites that are all part of the trail experience and that impact many other landscapes and ecosystems of the Appalachian Mountains. The goal is to look at the entire A.T. landscape as one whole system rather than a long, thin, linear corridor divided by boundaries and jurisdictions. While concerted A.T. conservation efforts in the past focused on the protection of the footpath and a diversity of ecological resources that inhabit the lands immediately adjacent to the trail, this next phase of A.T. land conservation is focused on

broadening the scale of protection. Protecting the resources that enhance the trail experience and making meaningful connections to local communities are two important examples of a broader focus.

The A.T. Landscape Conservation Initiative includes work on climate change mitigation, connecting with cultural and historic resources, and opening up the trail to a wider and more diverse audience. The initiative is working from the trail looking out across the landscape and from the perspective of local communities looking back across the landscape to the trail. As part of the Appalachian Trail Community Program, there are currently more than 40 designated “A.T. communities.” The program is designed to recognize communities that promote and protect the A.T. Towns, counties, and communities along the trail are considered assets by all that use the A.T. and many of these towns act as good friends and neighbors to the trail. The program serves to assist communities with sustainable economic development through tourism and outdoor recreation, while preserving and protecting the A.T. and its surrounding landscape.

There is a wealth of cultural resources throughout the Appalachian Mountains that tell the story of America’s past. Many examples of this history can be experienced within the landscape of the Appalachian Trail. Conserving and interpreting cultural and historic resources of national significance enhances a community’s sense of place and pride and contributes to economic sustainability. Collaborative efforts are underway to strengthen partnerships with cultural and historic preservation entities working within the A.T. landscape.

A strong public-private cooperative management partnership has guided the construction and maintenance of the Appalachian Trail for decades. ATC and NPS work closely with the US Forest Service, state agencies within the 14 states through which the trail passes, and the staff and volunteers of the 31 A.T.-maintaining trail clubs. The A.T. cooperative management partnership is frequently held up as a model for the management of public lands. More than 7,000 volunteers contributed 210,000 hours of time and labor in 2015 to ensure public access and enjoyment of the trail. This model is recognized in NPS’s 100th anniversary *Call to Action* “Scaling Up” initiative (NPS 2014).

### **The A.T. Landscape Conservation Initiative today**

In December 2015, ATC and NPS co-hosted a workshop to launch the A.T. Landscape Conservation Initiative. The workshop, attended by nearly 70 conservation leaders from up and down the trail, served to establish the foundation for partnership-building, initiate the process to identify high-priority target areas, discuss communication strategies to build diversity and engagement among all partners, and consider strategies to access multiple public and private conservation funding sources.

One of the outcomes of the December workshop was a desire to create a vision for the initiative that embraces a refuge for people to fully experience the solitude, quiet, health, spiritual renewal, ecological and cultural richness, and simple beauty of the world around them. Participants expressed a strong desire and support for reaching out to new partners who have not been part of the A.T. cooperative management system in the past.

The long linear nature of the A.T. means that it and its surrounding lands overlay with other landscape-scale conservation initiatives along the Appalachian Mountain chain. There are numerous conservation efforts, public and private, actively targeting and working to conserve high-priority lands of local, regional, and national significance along the full length of the Appalachian Trail. Many of the regional and local landscape programs overlap each other. The A.T. Landscape Conservation Initiative is well-positioned to promote and advance these collaborative efforts that are also looking to gain traction and momentum.

Landscape-scale planning and implementation work taking place up and down the Trail is utilizing a variety of organizational approaches.

- The Regional Conservation Partnership (RCP) Network in New England is one model that includes work within the A.T. landscape. While not on the scale of the A.T. Landscape Conservation Initiative, these regional collaborative efforts are informal networks of people representing private and public organizations and agencies that develop and implement a shared vision across town and sometimes state and international boundaries to increase the pace, scale, and connectivity of their collective land conservation and stewardship activities. Eleven RCPs are working along the A.T. from eastern New York to Maine in places such as the Mahoosuc Range in northeast New Hampshire and western Maine, the High Peaks area of Maine, and the Green Mountains of Vermont (Labich 2015).
- The Chesapeake Conservation Partnership started with a one-off meeting following a presidential executive order. The partnership has built a collaborative process structured around a steering committee and working groups focusing on near-term priorities while working to advance long-term conservation goals including mitigation strategies. Nearly one-fourth of the entire A.T. falls within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.
- The South Mountain Partnership in Pennsylvania encompasses a four-county region that surrounds the trail near the state capital of Harrisburg. An 80-mile stretch of the Appalachian Trail is surrounded by a landscape of elaborate barns, apple orchards, historic sites, and the largest contiguous intact forest between Harrisburg and Washington, DC. A partial list of South Mountain partners includes local historical societies, advocates for hunters and wildlife, tourism bureaus, county and municipal governments, NPS, local and national nonprofit land trusts, ATC, and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The partnership brings people together across geopolitical and sectorial boundaries to highlight the importance of the landscape and take action to secure its future.
- In rural western Maine, the Trust for Public Land and a coalition of partners engaged local communities through a series of weekend gatherings at local recycling centers, calling them “Dump and Donut” events. TPL used the information gathered at these community events to populate mapping layers highlighting the concerns and priorities expressed by local residents. Many stories were heard about favorite hunting and fishing areas and getaway spots. Not surprisingly, the favorite spots of local community

members matched up with the high-priority areas that popped up by overlaying the most recent scientific data. These results led to a targeted preservation effort that has protected more than 40,000 acres over the past 10 years, and more projects are in the pipeline.

- Examples of other landscape-scale efforts currently underway within the A.T. landscape include the Roan Highlands of North Carolina and Tennessee, the mountains of central and northern Maine, and the Kittatinny Ridge in Pennsylvania.

Each of these efforts brings together willing and interested public and private partners to connect and conserve ecological, cultural, historic, scenic, and community values of the natural landscapes, all benefiting the Appalachian Trail and the local communities through which it passes.

### **Challenges and learning**

While there are endless opportunities to protect a broad diversity of values along the A.T., there have been and continue to be challenges to working effectively to conserve resources along a trail that spans 2,190 miles. These challenges can be impediments to collaboration:

- The numerous sub-A.T. landscape initiatives happening along the long linear trail greenway employ different frameworks for governance, collaboration, and communications.
- Legal boundaries and jurisdictional designations often result in focused efforts that do not benefit a large landscape approach. Geographic distances can create “silos” that limit the power and potential of collaborative work.
- Local, state, regional, and national conservation projects frequently compete for limited public funding.
- Private nonprofit conservation organizations also compete for limited private dollars.
- Collaborative planning along a long linear greenway is challenging to coordinate.
- Effective communication strategies often strain organizational capacities of both public and nonprofit organizations.
- Conservation organizations have to balance competing priorities—few organizations focus on just the A.T. landscape.
- Community engagement and outreach is costly and time-consuming. Process can be overruled by opportunity windows created by funding availability and landowner readiness.

Lessons that are emerging from recent conservation efforts along the A.T. suggest that landscape-scale work is about much more than enlarging the area of geographic focus. Successful conservation on such a grand scale requires a shift in thinking about the scope of resource values and the depth of community engagement. A fully integrated landscape consists of a combination of natural, economic, ecological, cultural, and recreational values. Working

lands, wild areas, and community settlements are all part of a sustainable environment. A successful landscape-scale approach demands an inclusive, participatory process.

ATC and NPS are engaging with key governmental, conservation and community partners in developing a strategic vision to build on the protected A.T. footpath and corridor. A steering committee has been formed to support the development of a vision for the A.T. landscape and to identify high-priority target areas worthy of public and private conservation investments. Identifying the highest-priority viewsheds, watersheds, and ecological corridors within the A.T. landscape, and building strong local coalitions that share these goals, are key to the success of the A.T. Landscape Conservation Initiative.

The initiative is bringing together the expertise and funding capacities of organizations, communities, and public agencies along the A.T. A current conditions analysis is underway to collect and map all known data and complete a comprehensive inventory of current initiatives and organizations working within the A.T. landscape. All of this is important to support collaborative planning and coordination.

The multi-jurisdictional complexity of the A.T. requires a large landscape conservation strategy which involves commitments from a variety of stakeholders. The demographics of those who are hiking and enjoying the trail are changing. ATC and NPS are promoting programs to educate and encourage younger and more diverse audiences to visit and enjoy the A.T. and its surroundings. Increasing numbers of civic and community organizations, church groups, public and private schools, and colleges and universities are using the A.T. as an outdoor classroom to introduce children and young adults to the natural world. These visitors are gaining access to and experiencing more than just a recreational resource. They are being introduced to a wide range of natural and cultural values. Community engagement that promotes understanding and incorporates the priorities of these diverse constituents will be critical to the long-term success of the A.T. Landscape Conservation Initiative.

ATC and NPS have laid the foundation to build on the existing A.T. cooperative management system. ATC, NPS, and conservation partners up and down the trail are embracing a landscape-scale approach that requires inclusive community participation, including a diversity of stakeholders and participants. New partnerships are emerging with constituents not traditionally involved in A.T. management and protection. ATC recently established a Next Generation Advisory Council, a group of young, diverse and up-and-coming conservation leaders who are working together to promote and share their appreciation for what is most valuable in experiencing the A.T. and its surroundings. These new partnerships are creating strong local, regional, and national support to safeguard the diversity of conservation values that symbolize the A.T. landscape.

MacKaye's "greenway" concept that was later promoted and embraced by Ann Satterthwaite and the ATC Board of Managers never fully caught hold. Individual land acquisition projects resulted in very important conservation outcomes, but a fully integrated approach was still waiting to happen. Today, ATC and NPS have taken steps to implement the dreams of these early visionaries. The A.T. Landscape Conservation Initiative is embedded in the recently adopted strategic plans of both organizations (ATC 2014; NPS 2015) Organizational



resources are being dedicated specifically to a comprehensive and collaborative approach to promote and enhance land conservation efforts outside of the footpath and its surrounding corridor for the first time in the trail's history. And land conservation professionals around the country are seeing and experiencing the benefits and successes of collaborative landscape-scale conservation work. Now is the time to embark on this next generation of protection of the Appalachian Trail experience.

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# Chesapeake: A Network of Conservationists Across 64,000 Square Miles

*Jonathan L. Doherty and Suzanne E. Copping*

FOUR CENTURIES AGO CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH SAILED INTO CHESAPEAKE BAY with a group of English settlers. The tiny colony called Jamestown arose in the midst of a rich, vast, and already inhabited landscape. Powhatan, Rappahannock, Pamunkey, Piscataway, Nanticoke, and Susquehannock peoples—and dozens of other tribes—occupied the lands surrounding the 186-mile-long bay and its many tributaries.

Smith, ever the promoter, described the Chesapeake's wealth in glowing terms: "There is but one entrance by sea into this country, and that is at the mouth of a very goodly bay, 18 or 20 miles broad. The cape on the south is called Cape Henry, in honor of our most noble Prince. The land, white hilly sands like unto the Downs, and all along the shores rest plenty of pines and firs.... Within is a country that may have the prerogative over the most pleasant places known, for large and pleasant navigable rivers, heaven and earth never agreed better to frame a place for man's habitation."

Prescient as he was, neither Smith nor the indigenous peoples who called the Chesapeake region home could ever have imagined the degree of "habitation" that was to come, or the changes to the landscape that would result. Yet they would likely understand why this iconic region remains central to the American story and has motivated long-standing conservation and restoration efforts.

This paper explores large landscape conservation work focused on the six-state, 64,000-square-mile Chesapeake Bay watershed (Figure 1), particularly through the evolving role of the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership. What positions the Chesapeake region for this work? What motivates it? Why is it taking place now? And what can be learned from this experience?

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## Laying the foundation for large landscape collaboration

Four distinct characteristics of the Chesapeake watershed have positioned conservation partners in the region to work at a large landscape scale.

### *The connection between nature and culture.*

[W]e found, and in divers places that abundance of fish, lying so thicke with their heads above the water, as for want of nets (our barge driving amongst them) we attempted to catch them with a frying pan.

Smith's classic description of Chesapeake abundance may sound exaggerated to some, but few bay watermen, fishers, hunters, birders, or historians would likely question it—though they may lament what has been lost over time. The Chesapeake Bay and the vast watershed around it retain a unique and profound significance. There is a sense of place to the Chesapeake landscape that resonates within our culture.

Part of this is due to the region's ecological richness and wildlife, and the desire to bring that back. Archetypal (and economically valuable) Chesapeake species have long motivated people: blue crabs, oysters, rockfish (striped bass to those outside the region), brook trout, and diverse migratory waterfowl once existed in enormous numbers. During the 19th century, oysters even spawned violent clashes over management in Maryland and Virginia waters known as “the Chesapeake Bay Oyster Wars.” The deep-seated culture of the Chesapeake watermen and their classic workboats evolved around these species. They were shaped by the bay and in turn changed it. Nature and culture intertwined.

The water resources of the Chesapeake—the region's first transportation highways—have had widespread effects across time. American Indian cultures settled and traveled along the bay and its rivers for the same reasons immigrants from Europe did in the centuries after Jamestown: access to water, land, resources, transportation, and commerce (Figure 2). This explains why the Chesapeake's major urban areas are where they are—Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, Norfolk, Harrisburg. It influences the patterns of plantation culture in Virginia and Maryland—including those that spawned many of the nation's “founding fathers,” Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe among



**Figure 1.** The Chesapeake Bay watershed spans 64,000 square miles (43 million acres) in New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia, Virginia and the District of Columbia.



**Figure 2.** Great rivers link the Chesapeake landscape: the Potomac, James, Rappahannock, York, Shenandoah, and, here, the Susquehanna, flowing through central Pennsylvania. Photo courtesy of Nicholas Tonelli.

them. The pattern of bay, rivers, and settlement shaped how abducted Africans were brought to North America and sold as slaves in Annapolis and other Chesapeake ports. The interrelationship of land and water influenced pivotal battles of the Revolutionary War at Yorktown, the War of 1812 in Washington and Baltimore, and many of the patterns and movements of the Civil War that played out through the heart of the Chesapeake landscape. It explains why and where fortifications were built and modern military bases constructed. The presence of water facilitated vast deforestation in the Chesapeake heartland as huge rafts of timber were floated down the Susquehanna to mills and markets. And the pattern of watercourses also explains the rise of the Chesapeake and its rivers as tremendous recreational resources—meccas for sailing, boating, and relaxation.

How does human interaction with these species and patterns over time position the Chesapeake for large landscape conservation? At least three observations are apparent. First, many people in the region truly view nature and culture as linked—a relationship that can fuel a deep appreciation for both, and more powerfully motivate stewardship. Second, many—including public officials—also recognize the bay, its rivers and its fisheries as shared resources that cross jurisdictional boundaries and collaborative management. Finally, those who work to protect land recognize it typically has multiple, and compatible, conservation values: preserving an acre of valued farmland may also protect an acre of historic battlefield.

**A land conservation/preservation tradition.** The values found in the Chesapeake landscape have spawned a century and a half of land conservation and preservation. The region

today hosts 55 units of the national park system, 17 national wildlife refuges, five national scenic and historic trails, two national forests, two vast national heritage areas and parts of others, and hundreds of state parks, forests, and wildlife management areas covering large acreages. Think Jamestown, Yorktown, Gettysburg, Williamsburg, Monticello, the Appalachian Trail—and so many more with international name recognition. Further, out of a 43-million-acre landscape that was almost exclusively privately owned as of the late 19th century, today more than 8.5 million acres are permanently protected—some 21% of the watershed.

Conservation progress has been driven by the region's ecological and cultural significance combined with progressive and innovative private-sector leadership, individual land-owner actions, and federal, local, and state agency initiatives. Consider the following illustrations:

- The historic preservation movement was effectively born in the Chesapeake in 1858 when the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association acquired and protected the home of George and Martha Washington overlooking the tidal Potomac River. This effort led to a broader landscape conservation movement focused on the entire Mount Vernon watershed, and a national park created solely to protect it.
- Throughout the early and middle decades of the 20th century, a series of visionary leaders built the state forest and park systems in the region. In Pennsylvania, Joseph Rothrock and later Gifford Pinchot propelled efforts to acquire lands completely deforested in the late 19th century. As a result, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Recreation is today the largest single landholder in the region, with over 2.3 million acres under management.
- Other state-level innovations include the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, established as a public body in 1966, which has protected more than 600,000 acres through conservation easements, many facilitated by the state's groundbreaking Land Preservation Tax Credit Program. Maryland's Program Open Space, established in 1969 as a dedicated funding source for land conservation, has protected over 350,000 acres. Pennsylvania's Farmland Preservation Program has protected over 350,000 acres since 1989 (Figure 3). Governors in Chesapeake states have regularly set significant goals for land conservation during their terms.
- Over 125 public and private land trusts operate in the Chesapeake watershed. These include large state-chartered institutions such as the Virginia Outdoors Foundation and the Maryland Environmental Trust, and entirely independent organizations, often structured around particular geographies, such as the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, which manages 52,000 acres.

These examples point to another observation on what motivates conservation in the Chesapeake: people in the region care about the land they value and they act to protect it; and new conservation activity builds on over a hundred years of land protection accomplishments.



**A decades-long history of collaboration.** Beyond direct land conservation, agencies and organizations have understood and practiced collaborative conservation across jurisdictional boundaries for decades.

Since the 1980s, state and national heritage areas have strategically and intentionally drawn together cultural tourism and conservation perspectives. Pennsylvania and Maryland led the effort by focusing on distinctive regional landscapes through state heritage area programs created in 1989 and 1996, respectively. Pennsylvania also established a Conservation Landscapes Initiative in 2005.<sup>1</sup> Congressional designation of national heritage areas—driven by local demand—has fueled the movement as well.<sup>2</sup> For example, the 2.5-million-acre Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District was established in 1996 and the 3.4-million-acre Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area and Scenic Byway in 2006, both of which lie within the Chesapeake watershed. These efforts unite jurisdictions and disciplines around common visions and initiatives for conserving and capitalizing on the region's heritage.

During roughly the same period collaboration began around efforts to restore Chesapeake Bay water quality and aquatic species. A bi-state (now tri-state) Chesapeake Bay Commission was established in 1980 to coordinate bay-related policy across state lines. Since 1983 when the first Chesapeake Bay Agreement was signed, and by subsequent agreements through 2014, state and federal agencies have regularly updated goals and implemented new strategies and programs. Supported by the Environmental Protection Agency, the Chesa-

**Figure 3.** A view of the storied landscape of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The Chesapeake region has a rich agricultural heritage; some nine million acres (22% of the watershed) are in agricultural use. Photo courtesy of Nicholas Tonelli.





apeake Bay Program utilizes agency and nonprofit staff, working groups, meetings, modeling, and analysis to facilitate progress.<sup>3</sup> Since 2000, the program has included goals for other conservation objectives beyond water quality and fisheries, including protecting 20% of the watershed by 2010. However, water quality improvement has remained the primary focus of both conversation and resources within the program.

Almost four decades of collaboration has created another reality about conservation in the Chesapeake: agencies and nongovernmental organizations are used to meeting and collaborating regularly across jurisdictional lines and at multiple scales. They do it routinely and many know one another on a first-name basis. People are used to regional goal-setting, sharing data and analyses to inform decision-making, and tracking collective progress.

**An evolving partnering role for the National Park Service (NPS).** The Chesapeake is undeniably nationally significant in many ways. Yet few of the 55 NPS units in the Chesapeake watershed are located on the bay proper, and none have the bay or watershed as their principal focus or theme. This has stimulated continuing exploration of how to better represent the Chesapeake in the national park system.

The search for an appropriate and beneficial role for NPS in the Chesapeake began as a partnership and regionally focused mindset. The skill sets to support implementation were developing within the agency and especially its Northeast region. Decades of work by the NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, the growth of the national heritage area movement, and an increasing number of partnership parks in the system shaped this partnerships-first approach.

In the early 1990s, NPS explored partnership options for the Chesapeake in the first of two special resource studies.<sup>4</sup> A few years later the agency placed a staff person at the Chesapeake Bay Program. In 1998, Congress passed a new and creative piece of legislation—the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act—giving NPS direction to provide technical and financial assistance to a broad range of partners for identifying, interpreting, conserving, and restoring Chesapeake resources. It effectively said “go forth and build partnerships” to connect the public with the Chesapeake. And the NPS Chesapeake Bay Office did that through the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network, establishing relationships and partnership agreements with over 170 sites regionwide by 2006.

That same year, Congress established the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, spanning over 2,000 miles of waterways throughout the tidal Chesapeake (Figure 4). The NPS Chesapeake Bay Office adopted the same collaborative approach to implementation, recognizing that as the only way to build the sprawling trail’s identity. An advisory council was formed that gathered members across the watershed, and new partnership projects and initiatives resulted. When charged with planning and developing the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail in 2009, the NPS Chesapeake Bay Office again took the same approach.

Through the Gateways Network and the national trails, over the past decade, NPS has built dozens of long-standing relationships with local, state, and federal partners around the watershed. Collaboration over the years has built mutual trust and understanding between many organizations and NPS.



**Figure 4.** City of Baltimore, National Park Service, and national heritage area staff lead “Kids in Kayaks,” a program connecting youth with the John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. Eighteen million people live in the Chesapeake watershed, concentrated in metropolitan areas arcing from Norfolk to Washington to Baltimore. Photo courtesy of James Chang.

By 2009, these four major threads—the unique interconnectedness of culture and nature, 150 years of land conservation, decades of cross-jurisdictional collaboration, and a fundamentally partnership-oriented NPS working at a landscape scale—had built a foundation for the next phase of large landscape conservation. What would spark the next step?

### **A call to action**

The first decade of the 21st century is nearing its end. The Great Recession hits in 2008, jarring state and local budgets, two of the biggest funders of land protection. While the ten-year Chesapeake Bay Program land protection goal (permanently protecting 20% of the watershed) is met, cleaning up bay water quality by 2010, a centerpiece of the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement, is not. There is concern about “bay fatigue” from the inability to bring the bay back. Water quality regulation looms in the form of certain limits on the total maximum daily load (TMDL) for nutrients and sediment flowing into bay waters. There is no clear time frame for a new bay agreement among the watershed states.

Virginia Governor Tim Kaine, an advocate of bay conservation and land protection, has chaired the Democratic National Committee in the lead-up to the election of President Obama. On May 12, 2009, the President signs the first “environmental” executive order of his new administration: E.O. 13508—Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration.<sup>5</sup> The order directs federal departments and agencies to ramp up Chesapeake efforts on a series of

fronts. Reports are required within six months and a combined strategy within twelve, which motivates federal Chesapeake partners and many others into action.

The National Park Service takes on coordination of the report and recommendations focused on land conservation and public access to the water. The NPS Chesapeake Bay Office utilizes its partnership orientation and relationships to convene more than 50 representatives of nongovernmental organizations and state and federal agencies to consider the needs and craft recommendations. These collaboratively developed ideas form the basis of the report<sup>6</sup> and supply the actions included in the implementation strategy.<sup>7</sup> The strategy sets new goals—to protect an additional 2 million acres and develop 300 new public access sites by 2025.<sup>8</sup> While the order only directs federal agencies, collaboration on implementation actions begins more broadly.

### **The Chesapeake Conservation Partnership**

***Building a network of networks.*** The collaborative development of action items in 2009 by land conservation and public access partners stimulated a desire to reconvene over the next several years.

In 2010, NPS, in collaboration with the Chesapeake Conservancy, a regional nonprofit, re-convened the group to focus on implementing actions called for in the executive order strategy: creating a shared, conservation priority system,<sup>9</sup> developing a watershed-wide public access plan,<sup>10</sup> and expanding a youth conservation corps network. A series of work groups were created, propelling accomplishments on all three fronts by 2011.

NPS and the conservancy reconvened the group in 2012 under a tentative name, the Chesapeake Large Landscape Conservation Partners. The gathering highlighted successes of the partners over the prior eighteen months and identified common principles that united the group. The meeting ended with an expectation that the “loose affiliation” of the group would benefit from further structure. Work on key action items continued, including a new effort to secure a larger share of federal Land and Water Conservation Fund allocations for the Chesapeake.

By 2013, NPS had conducted research looking at models and best practices in large landscape efforts around the nation,<sup>11</sup> and participants at the annual meeting considered how these examples might apply within the Chesapeake. The group viewed itself as a “network of networks” linking together broad geographic and programmatic networks in the Chesapeake land conservation community. A steering committee was formed and charged with drafting a mission, vision, and logo. NPS funded a position to assist with coordination. At the subsequent 2014 annual meeting, and again at the National Workshop on Large Landscape Conservation held shortly thereafter in Washington, D.C., the group debuted as the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership, with the National Park Service and the Chesapeake Conservancy serving as co-conveners. The group’s purpose: “to foster collaborative action to conserve culturally and ecologically important landscapes to benefit people, economies, and nature throughout the six-state watershed.”<sup>12</sup>

***Principles for collaboration.*** How do you form a working partnership of representatives of dozens of organizations and agencies across a multi-state landscape? Despite the advantag-

es evident in the Chesapeake, building partnerships is still a challenge. Shared recognition of a series of principles linking the group has been essential.

*Embrace iconic landscapes with multiple values:* In the Chesapeake watershed, conservation is not just about protecting one species or historical event—landscapes are too layered for that. The region is ecologically complex, with corridors serving as vital migratory pathways and breeding areas for vast numbers of fish, crabs, and birds. The quality of streams, rivers, and the bay itself depends on uses on the land. Chesapeake lands and waters feed the region through farms and fishing. Layer upon layer of history rests in the landscape. People use the landscape for working farms and forests and for all forms of recreation, and have done so for centuries.

The partnership embraces these values; they are the defining characteristics of the region. Attention to multiple values brings more people, more resources, and more opportunities for collaboration for conservation. It enriches stories and creates the potential for ecotourism and heritage tourism in the same landscapes. And it brings richer results, benefiting more of the public. Large landscape conservation efforts in the region typically see conservationists and tourism partners collaborating closely to achieve mutual goals. The partnership's membership reflects this.

*Approach priorities inclusively:* The vast Chesapeake watershed landscape combines many individually recognized regional landscapes, some spanning a million or more acres themselves. Regions often include many more localized landscapes important to particular communities. At each geographic scale—Chesapeake watershed, regional, local—passionate conservationists focus their work of pieces of the larger landscape. As a network of networks, the partnership brings these three scales—and their networks—together.

The partnership recognizes that everyone's land conservation goals and priorities—at each scale—are important. They are what motivate engagement and conservation action. Further, the partnership sees that pooling priorities provides greater influence. So, conservation goals for the Chesapeake landscape level must be inclusive of all conservation partners' priorities. A partnership initiative begun in 2015 to articulate and map long-term landscape conservation goals for the watershed is doing just that.<sup>13</sup>

*Bake a bigger pie:* The Great Recession contributed to a flat or downward trend in public funding for land conservation at all levels of government. The partnership has no interest in simply dividing up the existing pie by rearranging priorities or criteria current programs use. Rather, it is focused on how to make a bigger pie, both supporting and expanding existing programs and creating new resources for conservation amidst the pressures of development and a changing climate. The diverse makeup of the partnership, intentionally including both nongovernmental organizations and state and federal agencies, facilitates information-sharing and collaboration on new strategies, as well as private-sector support for policy and funding initiatives.

*Share data, track progress, and communicate success:* One of the earliest partnership initiatives stemming from the executive order was creation of a broadly accessible system for sharing conservation priorities and data. LandScope Chesapeake now includes more than 175 geospatial datasets of a broad range of conservation priorities.<sup>14</sup> It also houses a regularly

updated comprehensive watershed-wide protected lands dataset; this draws from more than a dozen different data sources to provide significantly more complete information for the Chesapeake than nationwide datasets.

Good information supports collaboration among partners and tracking collective progress. Partners use the awareness and understanding of each other's priorities to achieve mutual objectives, divide up the work, match funding, and assemble collaborative proposals. Reporting regularly on progress—the partnership is 29% toward achieving the 2025 2-million-acre goal and 36% toward the public water access goal—informs strategy and the need for resources and conveys accountability to each other.

*While networking is vital, remain action-focused:* Conservationists are busy and focused people. But there is value for organizations in working outside their individual agendas. Partners get that value in part from networking—learning from the innovative experiences of others across the broad Chesapeake landscape, and strategizing with them by being in the same room. At the same time, the partnership takes on annual and long-term initiatives in addition to acting as a network. This action-driven outlook has continued since the initial 2009 executive order strategy session.

## Challenges and lessons

While collaboration at a large scale is not new in the Chesapeake, the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership—and other similar large landscape collaborations—faces a series of challenges as it evolves. We all learn from each other's lessons.

*Broad-based stimuli motivate action:* Groups typically come together in response to some stimulus, often a perceived threat or opportunity. The partnership benefited greatly from the sense of urgency and short-term results that the Chesapeake executive order generated. There was an immediate call to action, and a broad one, that engaged many partners with diverse interests.

*An inclusive approach creates more room for collaboration:* While the Chesapeake executive order could only bind federal agencies, convening a range of state and nongovernmental land conservation and public-access partners early on resulted in a mutually developed and more broadly shared agenda.

*A consistent convener perceived as fair is vital:* A consistent, unbiased convener is particularly helpful as a group evolves and grows. As a co-convenor with the Chesapeake Conservancy for seven years, the National Park Service Chesapeake Office has consistently strived to check its ego at the door and convene for the greater good of all partners.

*Meet regularly, but with well-planned sessions and a good facilitator:* Groups need to meet regularly to sustain momentum, but no one can afford to meet for meeting's sake. The Chesapeake conveners have consistently worked to have objectives and agenda-driven sessions whether in large annual meetings or smaller working groups. The services of a highly skilled facilitator for many sessions have been invaluable. While we do not always succeed at the level we might hope, our test is always, "Did people feel their time was well spent?"

*The meeting space makes a difference:* For its annual meetings the Chesapeake partnership has been fortunate to use a conservation-themed facility in West Virginia along the Poto-

mac River. An inspirational setting positively influences the level of discourse. As the partnership has grown to include more people, sustaining the intimacy of a smaller group remains important, and requires recalibrating meeting and space planning. It may seem mundane, but the optimal design of a room often proves critical to the quality of collaboration.

*GIS documentation of resource information is priceless:* After several decades of regional resource documentation the Chesapeake likely has a far better than average set of spatial data. The data helps people work together, it facilitates effective conservation, it ties large landscapes together by making their connections clear, it is crucial for avoiding impacts from infrastructure projects. That said, there are still significant gaps in documentation in the Chesapeake and elsewhere. This is particularly true for cultural landscapes and scenic resources where comprehensive identification of landscape patterns and connectivity is woefully incomplete.

*Complexity does make the simple narrative more difficult:* Some large landscape conservation efforts organize around a single theme—a migratory route, a single type of resource. Doing this in the Chesapeake is complicated by its ecological and cultural richness. There are great benefits to bringing all these interests and people to the table. Yet, this does make the conservation narrative harder to convey to funders who often seek turning the dial significantly on one simple indicator.

*A western bias sometimes predominates:* The vast acreage managed by federal agencies in the western US can sometimes lead large landscape conservation to orient more to the West than the East. Generally higher eastern land costs and the perceived greater extent of development in the East can influence this view as well. This highlights the importance of encouraging policy-makers to explore the eastern landscape to understand its values, successes and threats (Figure 5).

*Find the niche, make some space:* The Chesapeake conservation community can often be dominated by the big water-quality players, even more so since the advent of the bay TMDL.<sup>15</sup> While the many motivations for conservation are interconnected, and water can be a powerful driver for protection, partners have consistently expressed the need to focus specifically on land conservation driven by other factors that also happen to support water quality. The Chesapeake Conservation Partnership fits into that niche and creates the venue for this level of focus as the necessary TMDL conversations continue to occur elsewhere.

*Sustaining momentum long-term requires increasing capacity:* The early period of any collaborative effort often succeeds through the energy and commitments of the “founders.” But at a certain point, as ambitious agendas are set, there is a need for growing the capacity of the collaborative itself. Dedicated staff who focus daily on how to strengthen the partnership are necessary to sustaining the network’s momentum. Funding ongoing leadership and coordination positions can be a challenge, as funding for operations is limited. Cost-sharing among agencies and private partners is one mechanism for sustaining a staff.

*Increasing diversity is a priority:* The conservation field lacks a color composition that reflects America’s diversity. Despite the diversity of the watershed’s 18 million residents, the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership faces this problem as well. Deepening the connection between urban areas and landscape protection for the well-being of all populations is essen-





**Figure 5.** Visitors enjoying the Oakland Run waterfall, York County, Pennsylvania. The stream cascades through a deep ravine filled with rhododendron, moss-covered boulders, and an old-growth forest of hemlocks and mixed hardwoods. Understanding the values inherent in eastern landscapes is important to counteracting the tendency to think of large landscape conservation as being more applicable in the West. Photo courtesy of Nicholas Tonelli.

tial to the long-term health of collaborative conservation efforts. The partnership has more work to do along this vein.

### **Protecting the past, looking to the future**

In the late 1500s there were over 15,000 indigenous peoples living in over 30 distinct groups along the southern shores of the Chesapeake Bay. Many paid tribute to Powhatan, an inspirational leader living at Werowocomoco on the north bank of what is now called the York River. In 1607, Captain John Smith was taken captive and brought to Werowocomoco by Powhatan's military leader Opechancanough and a large group of Pamunkey, Mattaponi, Paspahegh, Chickahominy, Chiskiack, and Youghtanund hunters. This was the first of five visits to Werowocomoco described by Smith, and the one at which Smith reported—years later—that Powhatan's daughter Pocahontas had saved his life.

By the mid-17th century, knowledge of Werowocomoco's location seems to have disappeared. It did not resurface for almost four centuries until the site was rediscovered in 2001. Subsequent archaeology found the site was occupied by indigenous peoples in a sizeable town as early as 1200. Today, Werowocomoco is described as one of the most important American Indian locations along the East Coast.

The National Park Service purchased the 260-acre Werowocomoco property in 2016

to permanently protect it as part of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. This likely would not have happened—or certainly not as quickly—without the chain of events initiated by the 2009 Chesapeake executive order and the broad collaboration on landscape conservation across the Chesapeake region that followed. By 2013, Chesapeake Conservation Partnership members were actively working to bring more federal funding into the Chesapeake to leverage state program funds. These efforts have made protection of Werowocomoco and other important resources around the watershed possible.

Large landscape conservation efforts seek land protection successes every year. But they are truly about progress toward the long game—conserving the broad patterns upon which our culture and the environment that sustains us are based. The complexity of interests in these landscapes dictates the need for collaboration among the networks of people engaged in them. The Chesapeake Conservation Partnership links those networks across 64,000 square miles to create synergy, share expertise and experience, connect the dots on a landscape scale, and create the conversation that helps drive and support the conservation agenda for the decades ahead.

## Endnotes

1. Pennsylvania's Conservation Landscapes are large areas "identifying values at a landscape scale, revitalizing communities, and engaging local and regional partners in conservation and economic development." See [www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cli/aboutcli/index.htm](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cli/aboutcli/index.htm).
2. National heritage areas are designated by Congress "as places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape." See <https://www.nps.gov/heritageareas/FAQ/>.
3. The Chesapeake Bay program is authorized through the Clean Water Act. Partners include the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Delaware, New York, and West Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission; and the Environmental Protection Agency, representing the federal government. See [www.chesapeakebay.net](http://www.chesapeakebay.net).
4. Special resource studies (SRSs) are used by NPS to explore the eligibility of particular resources for inclusion within the national park system. A draft SRS was initially prepared for the Chesapeake in the early 1990s. A second SRS was later requested by Congress, completed in 2004, and subsequently transmitted to Congress. See [https://www.nps.gov/chba/learn/management/upload/Chesapeake\\_Bay\\_Final\\_SRS.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/chba/learn/management/upload/Chesapeake_Bay_Final_SRS.pdf).
5. See <http://executiveorder.chesapeakebay.net/page/About-the-Executive-Order.aspx>.
6. See [http://executiveorder.chesapeakebay.net/file.axd?file=2009%2F9%2F202\(e\)+Access+%26+Landscapes+Draft+Report.pdf](http://executiveorder.chesapeakebay.net/file.axd?file=2009%2F9%2F202(e)+Access+%26+Landscapes+Draft+Report.pdf).
7. See *Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay Watershed* at <http://executiveorder.chesapeakebay.net/page/Reports-Documents.aspx>.
8. These goals were subsequently adopted by the full Chesapeake Bay Program through the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement of 2014. See [www.chesapeakebay.net/chesapeakebaywatershedagreement/page](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/chesapeakebaywatershedagreement/page).
9. The executive order strategy called for creating a publicly accessible, GIS-based system

for sharing a broad range of conservation priorities. This was launched in 2012 as LandScope Chesapeake. See [www.landscape.org/chesapeake](http://www.landscape.org/chesapeake).

10. See [www.nps.gov/chba/learn/news/chesapeake-watershed-public-access-plan.htm](http://www.nps.gov/chba/learn/news/chesapeake-watershed-public-access-plan.htm).
11. See [https://www.nps.gov/chba/learn/news/upload/LLC-Partnership-Analysis\\_110120-13-1.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/chba/learn/news/upload/LLC-Partnership-Analysis_110120-13-1.pdf).
12. For more information see [www.chesapeakeconservation.org](http://www.chesapeakeconservation.org).
13. The partnership has drafted a set of mappable goals articulating the long-term landscape conservation effort for the watershed. Mapping the resources reflecting these goals on a watershed-wide scale is underway.
14. See [www.landscape.org/chesapeake](http://www.landscape.org/chesapeake).
15. Total maximum daily load. For more information about the Bay TMDL see <https://www.epa.gov/chesapeake-bay-tmdl>.

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# Connecting Conservation Leaders to Advance Policy and Practice: The Practitioners' Network for Large Landscape Conservation

*Shawn Johnson*

LARGE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION OFFERS ONE OF THE BEST HOPES for addressing a range of critical conservation challenges facing people and nature. But it is difficult work, and existing organizations and jurisdictions do not have the ability or authority to undertake large landscape conservation efforts on their own. Rather, working at the large landscape scale relies on a network of people and organizations with the capacity, authority, and civic will to understand a complex web of overlapping and intersecting jurisdictions, sectors, issues, and scales. It requires thoughtful, informed, and coordinated action.

The Practitioners' Network for Large Landscape Conservation is a voluntary network of conservation leaders who are focused on making the promise of large landscape conservation a reality. Participants in the network have had practical success in overcoming problems, motivating citizens, and creating large-scale conservation projects that work for people and nature. Individually, these large landscape conservation successes are achieving tangible, place-based results; together, they are re-shaping the way people work together to address some of the most pressing conservation challenges of our time.

Participants in the network are now focused on establishing a robust community of learning and practice that can provide ongoing support to those navigating the complexity of large landscape conservation on the ground. The goal is to help even more people work effectively across boundaries to develop innovative strategies, programs, and practices to protect, restore, or connect natural systems at the large landscape scale for the benefit of people and nature.

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This article describes the origins and early efforts of the network, highlights its current activities and efforts, and notes future ways it can continue to shape and support the critical shift to large landscape conservation.

### **Origins of the Practitioners' Network for Large Landscape Conservation**

In response to increasing efforts across sectors to understand and address resource conservation issues at the large landscape scale, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and the University of Montana's Center for Natural Resources & Environmental Policy convened leaders from the public, private, and nongovernmental sectors in two national policy dialogues in 2009. At these dialogues, participants sought to synthesize what was known about large landscape conservation and to identify the most important needs facing the field. Ultimately, those dialogues informed the content of a 2010 Lincoln Institute policy focus report, "Large Landscape Conservation: A Strategic Framework for Policy and Action" (McKinney et. al. 2010). The report provides a high-level summary of large landscape conservation and five core recommendations to continue to inform the theory, practice, policy, and performance of large landscape conservation:

1. Gather and share information to improve the science and governance of large landscape conservation.
2. Encourage a network of practitioners to build capacity.
3. Establish a national competitive grants program to catalyze, enable, coordinate, and sustain promising efforts.
4. Improve the policy toolkit to achieve large landscape conservation.
5. Facilitate innovative funding opportunities to support large landscape conservation.

Noting the decentralized nature of large landscape conservation initiatives emerging across North America, the report states "it would be extremely valuable to create a network to bring them all together." Moreover, the report provides some early objectives of a network of practitioners:

The primary objective of such a network or alliance is to improve large landscape conservation projects by providing some or all of the resources and services identified above [understand and refine key elements of success, acquire new skills and tools, network with other large landscape leaders, share lessons learned, coordinate across efforts, etc.]. A secondary objective is to build a national constituency to advocate for large landscape conservation into the future.

In May 2011, leaders of 19 large landscape conservation initiatives joined ten resource professionals and nine members of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy's executive committee on large landscape conservation (collectively, the Founders Group) to explore whether and how to create a network of practitioners working at the large landscape scale. At the end of the two-day session, these leaders decided to launch a new "Practitioners' Network for Large Landscape Conservation" and organized themselves into a coordinating committee—

which would provide leadership and direction to the network—and working groups focused on capacity building, public policy, and networking.

Additionally, the Founders Group affirmed the following over-arching objectives and began to articulate a series of tasks that formed an emerging work plan for the network.

- Build capacity for large landscape conservation at various scales and across sectors.
- Promote and support large landscape conservation efforts.
- Link existing and emerging large landscape conservation initiatives.

### **Early years**

With convening and organizational support provided by the Lincoln Institute–University of Montana partnership, volunteer leaders of the network developed a charter to guide it. An important first decision was to determine how broad the network should be, with leaders deciding that it would be best to include a broad range of people and organizations engaged in all manner of efforts related to large landscape conservation. As such, the charter describes the network as “an alliance of people and organizations engaged in leading, managing, researching, advocating, funding, educating or setting policy to advance large landscape conservation initiatives.”

From 2011–2013, the network evolved from a loose group of people and organizations into a nationally recognized “big tent” forum and collective voice for advancing the theory and practice of large landscape conservation. The network grew to include conservation and community leaders from the nonprofit, academic, private, philanthropic, and public sectors. It gained additional support from the US Forest Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service through agreements with the University of Montana and the University of Arizona. Moreover, the network focused on “right-sized” efforts that enabled it to achieve several quick successes while it continued to grow, evolve, and find its niche within the large landscape conservation field. Among the notable, early achievements of the network during this period:

### **Organizational milestones**

- Developed a charter that outlines governance structure, membership, and central objectives;
- Established a coordinating committee, policy working group, communications working group, and capacity building working group to organize and lead activities;
- Developed and launched a website; and
- Developed and maintain a master mailing list of large landscape conservation leaders and practitioners for e-newsletters and announcements (500+ subscribers as of November 2013).

### **Contributions to the field**

- In coordination with the Regional Plan Association and other partners, developed an inventory and map of large landscape conservation initiatives in the Northeast and the Rocky Mountain states as well as a preliminary list of large landscape efforts across North America;



- Facilitated a series of conversations with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Partners for Conservation, Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, US Forest Service, US Geological Survey, Bureau of Land Management, and other federal agency officials on establishing a competitive grants program to promote and support large landscape conservation (ultimately, the Fish and Wildlife Foundation moved forward with a pilot grant program);
- Organized and led full-day seminars at the Land Trust Alliance Rally on large landscape conservation and the role of the Practitioners' Network in 2011 and 2012;
- Organized and convened a full-day seminar on large landscape conservation policy, practice, and performance at the US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution's Seventh National Conference, "ECR2012: Working Across Boundaries";
- In September 2012, facilitated the development of a position paper outlining federal policy positions that can support large landscape conservation over the next four years;
- Organized a track on large landscape conservation at the Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute conference in 2013;
- Organized and led a full-day workshop on large landscape conservation in metropolitan America in conjunction with the American Planning Association Conference in Chicago in 2013;
- Developed and administered a national survey on large landscape conservation policy; and
- Organized and convened a three-day workshop for large landscape conservation practitioners in the Intermountain West focused on building knowledge and transferring lessons.

These early efforts resulted in a better understanding of how many people and organizations were engaged in large landscape conservation, where, and for what reasons; how they were working with multiple organizations in pursuit of their goals; what was working; what barriers existed; and what challenges and opportunities remained largely unexamined.

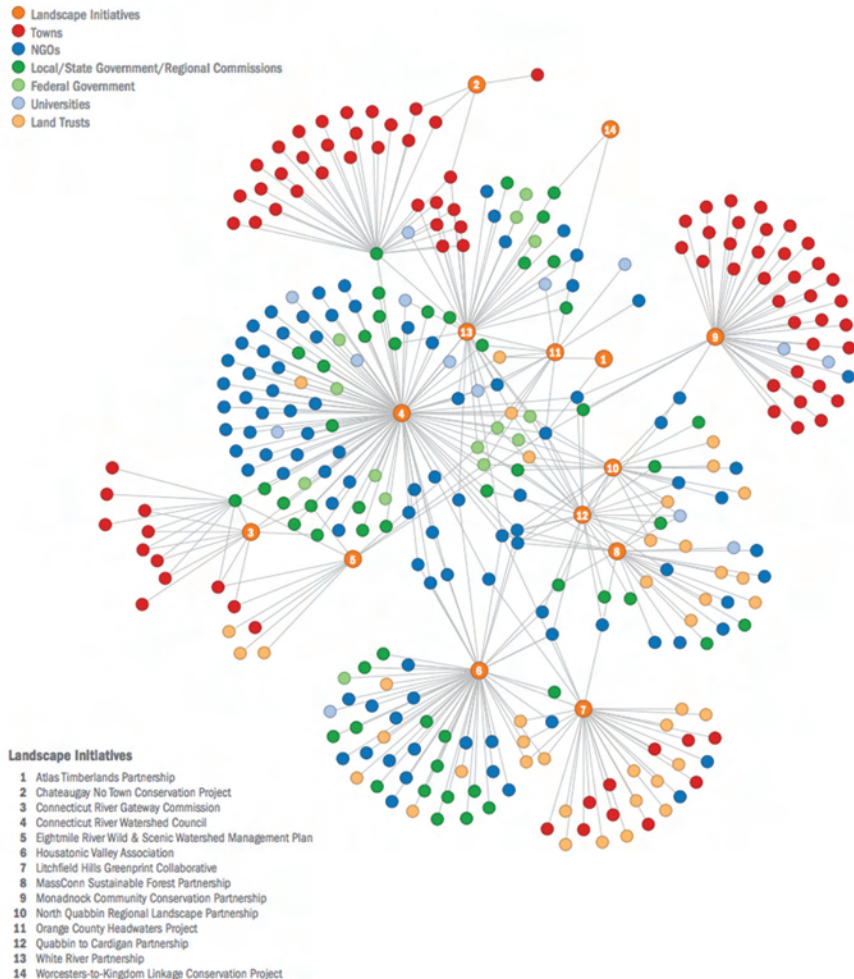
While these efforts revealed many new insights into the practice of large landscape conservation, they also highlighted two overarching characteristics of the field that were particularly compelling. First, in both the Northeast and Rocky Mountain region, large landscape conservation was a relatively new approach to conserving natural and cultural heritage for the benefit of people and nature. Second, people were reorganizing themselves in innovative ways—largely through ad hoc and fluid networks—to achieve shared objectives at the large landscape scale (Figure 1). Both of these characteristics call attention to the emergent nature of the field and the need to capture and share early lessons and best practices across these disparate and widely varying efforts.

### **Growing in scope and scale**

Following these early efforts, the network pursued two higher-profile efforts that sought to engage even more people and organizations and to expand its reach beyond in-person meetings and workshops: (1) an online learning and knowledge sharing tool, "Taking Conserva-

## The Conservation Network in the Connecticut River Valley

In the Connecticut River Valley, federal, state, and civic initiatives work with each other as well as with local government and academic institutions.



**Figure 1.** The Conservation Network in the Connecticut River Valley. Source: Regional Plan Association 2012.

tion to Scale,” and (2) the first-of-its-kind National Workshop on Large Landscape Conservation—one that would be organized and convened by a number of public, private, nonprofit, philanthropic, and academic partners interested in the promise and practice of large landscape conservation.

The 2014 National Workshop on Large Landscape Conservation focused on a key question for the field as a whole: *Given more than a decade of promising work, what course should*

*we set for large landscape conservation over the coming decade?* To guide this overarching conversation, the workshop asked participants to focus on a number of critical questions facing the large landscape conservation community, including:

- How can “*mitigation at the landscape scale*” foster land conservation and economic development?
- How can we effectively *invest for measurable results and environmental resiliency* in the context of climate change?
- How can we, *across the continuum from urban areas to wilderness areas*, engage diverse communities in the green spaces outside their doors?
- How can we *leverage advanced technologies and innovative financing tools* to dramatically advance the practice of large landscape conservation?

Following more than a year of active and engaged planning, conservation practitioners and policy-makers from across North America met at the National Workshop on Large Landscape Conservation on October 23–24, 2014, in Washington, DC, to share ideas on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in implementing large landscape conservation, as well as to explore the most effective tools, strategies, and science available to inform large landscape initiatives.

The outcomes of the workshop are well-documented in the report *Expanding Horizons: Highlights from the National Workshop on Large Landscape Conservation* (Mitchell et. al. 2015). They are expansive and impressive, spanning issues from diversity and inclusion to engaging the next generation, incorporating ecosystems services frameworks and approaches, integrating climate change, and articulating best practices for partnerships and collaboration. In addition, the report highlights the number of participants, sponsors, and organizers of the event—all of which exceeded expectations in sheer size and all of which point to the need for ongoing coordination across the many people and perspectives involved in the field. For purposes of the network, the workshop underscored the need to revisit and refine its role as an ongoing forum to examine, explore, experiment, share, and engage on all issues related to large landscape conservation. The National Workshop’s summary report articulated this call to continued action as follows:

Most of all, the conference pointed up the need for greater human and organizational connectivity. Network and networking were among the most frequently used words to appear in post-conference evaluations, (fourth in frequency after sessions, conservation and landscape, excluding prepositions, basic verbs, and other common words). *Large landscape practitioners are asking for more opportunities to forge connections....* The tangle of obligations, expectations, reputations and mutual interests inherent in integration require a non-hierarchical organizational approach, with longterm, recurrent exchanges that create interdependencies. *In short, large landscape conservation requires a diverse networked professional community, people from many walks of life connected by common necessity. Such a complex web must be*

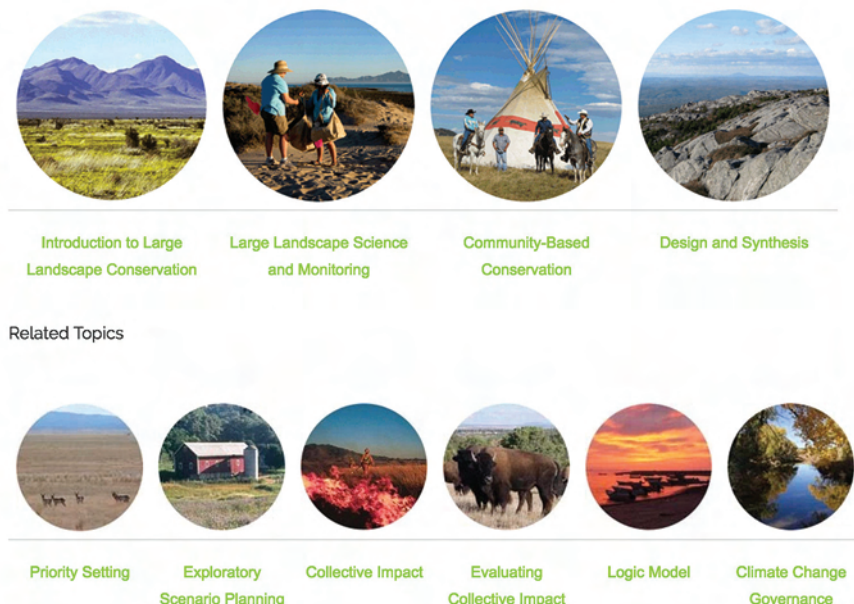
*built with great intention. It must be convened by a facilitative structure, informed by science, and supported as a natural solution to issues of human, wildlife, cultural and ecological health* (Mitchell et. al. 2015, emphasis added).

Following the workshop, leaders within the network sought to take stock of the outcomes and chart a meaningful and purposeful path forward. That effort started with a call to all interested workshop partners and past leaders of the network to a meeting at the Field Museum in Chicago in 2015. The results of that conversation mark the beginning of the network's current stage of development.

The other large-scale effort during this period, Taking Conservation to Scale, ultimately launched in the spring of 2015 with a series of modules, webinars, and print resources to inform the policy, practice, and performance of large landscape conservation. It includes four core modules and six sub-modules, the latter of which draw upon the insights, experience, and expertise of network partners and affiliates (Figure 2).

While Taking Conservation to Scale provides a new and useful source of information, developing the online tool in a way that would serve as a dynamic portal for both sharing information and gathering new insights from users proved difficult. These challenges, which included both content-design and user-interface obstacles, highlighted how much organizational capacity and technological know-how are required for larger-magnitude projects.

**Figure 2.** Screenshot of “Taking Conservation to Scale,” the online learning platform; online at [www.largelandscapenetwork.org/taking-conservation-to-scale](http://www.largelandscapenetwork.org/taking-conservation-to-scale).



## Current areas of focus

As noted above, the January 2015 meeting of the network's leadership in Chicago marked the start of the current era. At the meeting, the network affirmed its role as a community of conservation leaders focused on connecting, educating, influencing, and inspiring fellow conservation practitioners to create a dynamic and innovative community of large landscape conservation practice. The network also set about to develop its first multi-year strategic plan and to articulate vision and mission statements to guide its work:

- **Vision:** A broadly supported and enduring system of connected and protected ecological systems across the globe that sustain vibrant human and natural communities for current and future generations.
- **Mission:** To help people work effectively at large scales, across boundaries to develop innovative strategies, programs, and practices to protect, connect, and steward natural systems at the large landscape scale for the benefit of people and nature.

## Continued focus on “how” questions

While 2015 marked a re-boot of the network following the 2014 national workshop, many of the core ideas and inspirations remained. Notably, there was a continued focus on the *how* of large landscape conservation, including *how* to collaborate effectively across institutional and geographic boundaries and *how* to incorporate the best science at the landscape scale. There was also recognition that convening and connecting were paramount roles for the network to play, recognizing that large landscape conservation practitioners largely work in isolation at the initiative or sub-regional levels. Moreover, by playing a linking and connecting role, the network can leverage and amplify the efforts of individuals and organizations focused on a diversity of issues across a multitude of geographies rather than be limited to the efforts it coordinates and directs.

In the fall of 2015, the network's coordinating committee identified the following five specific objectives to advance the mission over the near term in practical and tangible ways:

1. Publish an educational and inspirational *primer on large landscape conservation* for conservation professionals, community leaders, and other key practitioners in the field.
2. Conduct a *detailed survey of large landscape conservation activity* across the US to deepen understanding of this rapidly evolving field and to help develop the most effective tools and strategies based on practitioners' needs.
3. Work with the Bureau of Land Management and other land management agencies on an *assessment of large landscape conservation* efforts and their impacts.
4. Launch a carefully planned and researched *exchange program* to bring practitioners together to assist in problem-solving within specific landscapes, sharing results with the entire community of large landscape conservation practitioners.
5. Expand the network's *website and associated communications* (learning modules, e-news, webinars, resource library, LinkedIn Group, and presentations) as vehicles for sharing ideas and inspiring innovation.

Each of these efforts is designed to provide real-world help to key individuals who are facilitating large landscape conservation, often in the face of daunting organizational and political obstacles. To move each of these efforts forward, members of the coordinating committee and other large landscape conservation practitioners have formed working groups focused on the design and delivery of each item. In addition, the network is developing a more deliberate and sophisticated organizational structure, including hiring a dedicated coordinator and part-time professional communications assistance. These organizational resources are focused on ensuring that the working groups have the information and resources they need to be successful.

In addition to these efforts, the coordinating committee recognizes there are many important activities related to large landscape conservation occurring outside or tangential to the network itself. Practitioners participating in the network have had practical success in overcoming problems, motivating citizens, and creating large-scale conservation projects that work for people and nature. In addition, complementary and intersecting efforts, like the Landscape Conservation Cooperative network or the Landscapes for People, Food, and Nature initiative, are spearheading important work, generating new knowledge, and connecting even more people to the important conversations shaping the future of communities and landscapes. Networked together, these individuals and initiatives can not only help each other but also provide new information and insights about what contributes to large landscape conservation success in different places at different scales across a diversity of issues.

There are a growing number of examples highlighting the role of the Practitioners' Network as a forum that can both shape and amplify the lessons from this larger community of practice. Over the past couple of years, members of the network helped lead discussions about the role of networked governance in large landscape conservation. Those conversations focused on a number of important characteristics of networks, from the general life-cycle of a network to leadership dynamics to political challenges (including the threat of "network capture" by a particular interest group or sector) to the importance of measuring progress across multiple dimensions. The conversations led to a special issue of the journal *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* (see Bixler et. al. 2016). In addition, leaders from the network have been building a relationship with the leadership of the Metropolitan Green-space Alliance, which is working to address landscape conservation challenges in urban areas across the United States.

Programs of public land management agencies are playing important complementary roles as well, including the work of the Scaling Up team of the National Park Service, landscape-scale collaborative projects supported by the US Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management's recently launched assessment of large landscape conservation efforts, among others. These discussions and activities provide additional layers of depth and richness to the field of large landscape conservation. By connecting these efforts and providing avenues to share their results and insights, the Practitioners' Network is providing access to information, resources, and lessons learned that otherwise would not exist. As a specific example of the usefulness of partner efforts, the Regional Conservation Partnership Network in New England, whose coordinator serves on the Practitioner's Network's coordinating



committee, recently outlined ten steps of collaborative conservation for regional conservation partnerships organized around three life stages—“emerging,” “maturing,” and “conserving” (Table 1; Labich 2015). This handbook can serve as an invaluable resource for others looking for a road map for designing, implementing, and sustaining large landscape conservation efforts.

**Future needs**

While the network has been successful in many respects, it faces several challenges as it continues to evolve. These encompass both the evolving field of large landscape conservation and the role of the network itself, and include:

- How to identify the greatest needs of the large landscape conservation community and build the most responsive and effective programs and peer connections possible, recognizing the network’s capacity constraints.
- How to build individual leadership and knowledge as a fundamental component of an active and effective large landscape conservation community of practice.
- How to move beyond capturing and sharing experiences and lessons to advancing improved policies, practice, and funding (of both the network and the field as a whole).

**Conclusion**

The Practitioners’ Network for Large Landscape Conservation holds a unique place in the larger story about large landscape approaches to conservation. The network is not focused on a particular outcome, approach, scale, or geography. Rather, it is born of the idea that

<b>Table 1.</b> Ten steps for landscape conservation and stewardship activities (from Labich 2015).
Emerging
Step 1: Convene and define your regional conservation partnership
Step 2: Further organize your regional conservation partnership
Maturing
Step 3: Increase capacity as you prepare to conserve
Step 4: Plan and map a strategic conservation vision
Step 5: Plan to implement conservation activities
Step 6: Engage potential partners within your region
Step 7: Engage potential partners beyond your region
Conserving
Step 8: Promote your shared conservation vision
Step 9: Raise funds and conserve land
Step 10: Manage transitions

learning is the prerequisite for action and that without tools, information, and a network of people who can share ideas with one another, large landscape conservation will not realize its potential.

Because large landscape conservation is a new, complex, and often challenging paradigm, its practitioners need information, resources, and relationships that can help them develop priorities and take meaningful action across a range of land and water conservation challenges facing people and nature. At the same time, practitioners have a lot of experience and insight to share as they invent new ways of working across boundaries. The Practitioners' Network provides the forum to build and share knowledge, examine trends, explore new tools and ideas, and advance the practice of large landscape conservation in a way that is more informed and ultimately more effective and enduring.

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## A Journey's End?

*Elaine F. Leslie and Jodi Hilty*

WHAT DO A GRAY WOLF, A WOLVERINE, AND A JAGUAR ALL HAVE IN COMMON? It's not a trick question—it's about dedicated space to roam. It's a question about what we are going to finally do to get off of our collective pages of rhetoric and move to coordinated on-the-ground actions. How do the National Park Service (NPS) and other federal, state, and private land managers, partners, and neighbors contribute to a larger National Conservation Strategy? This would be a strategy that uses best available science, and builds from the core of already protected areas to ensure that we act upon the conservation of our national natural heritage today and well into the future.

Numerous US laws, policies, and programs, from local to national scales, implicitly or explicitly support the conservation of biological diversity. These protections, including NPS lands and waters, represent a significant national investment in conservation. They have been necessary but insufficient to stem the tide of biodiversity loss and degradation of ecosystem services. What is needed now is a cohesive and comprehensive approach for designing a cornerstone strategy. We examine the biological rationale and a path forward to developing roles of the national park system in a broader conservation strategy, and focus on potential action steps that can be taken by NPS. It is only with a national strategy that parks can manage and conserve biodiversity within and beyond their boundaries.

In short, we set forth a vision to create action.

NPS, on behalf of the American people, was created a century ago to administer federal lands and waters with a mission to “conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to ... leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations” (National Park Service Organic Act, 1916). NPS currently administers over 400 park units spanning over 84 million acres in every state and in four US territories.

Our nation depends upon NPS to safeguard some of our most cherished natural and cultural resources and landscapes, as well as our American stories, for our current generation

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and those of the future. But it is increasingly clear that NPS cannot achieve its mission simply through good ecological stewardship of NPS units alone. This reality is particularly obvious for conservation of the many migratory species that inhabit or transit through national parks seasonally. In its 2001 report *Rethinking the National Parks for the 21st Century*, the National Park System Advisory Board envisioned an expanded role for NPS to play as trustees of many of the nation's natural resources.

We, as a land management agency, and more importantly, as a conservation agency, must ensure the persistence of native species (migratory and resident), their habitats, and their extraordinary and magnificent, yet challenged, journeys. We must transform how NPS does nature conservation in the 21st century. Postage-stamp-size protection measures must be replaced by a whole-systems approach. Continental conservation, with its inherent focus on landscape-level connectivity, must be not only strategized, but implemented. We must enhance the Park Service's ability to address the issue of corridors, and conversely fragmentation, in surrounding landscapes on varying scales, which affect wildlife species and the habitats through which they range. Such complex and changing factors can impair park resources, nationally and internationally, subsequently impacting the journeys of wildlife (Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** Brown noddies, Dry Tortugas National Park, Florida. Brown and black noddies, magnificent frigatebirds, and masses of sooty terns nest along the beaches of Bush Key. Although populations are considered stable worldwide, Wetlands International considers the population trend for noddies to be unknown. Island colonies appear to be at risk from the threat of invasive species and threatened by predation from introduced rats, cats and brown tree snakes. Photo courtesy of Elaine F. Leslie.



Achieving new conservation advances while simultaneously ensuring our past investments against rapidly changing conditions requires conservation synergies far beyond the current levels that exist within NPS or even within the departments of the Interior and Agriculture. Such an approach will require a larger vision for conservation across the country, including partnerships and efficiencies of scale within the entire community of federal, state, and local agencies and other conservation organizations. A truly national conservation strategy is one where federal entities, states, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations all see a role for themselves in a national effort to preserve, restore, and conserve our national natural heritage. For NPS, it requires expanding beyond our constructed boundaries within the states as well as reaching out to our trilateral partners in Canada and Mexico—using new technologies and strategies in a more unified approach to continental conservation.

Where information and capabilities are lacking to preserve and protect species, restore habitat, or mitigate impacts, we must undertake efforts to develop feasible, sound, and scientific approaches to filling these gaps. While many NPS units may have different missions, jurisdictions, ownership patterns, and uses, their overall perceived role as landscape anchors in nature could create a much greater ecological whole than the sum of their individual parts. This biological principle is well understood and accepted in the scientific community, yet rarely taken to the next level of connectivity conservation on the ground (Figure 2). Numer-

**Figure 2.** Pronghorn antelope. Studies have shown that ancient migratory pathways for species still exist today. While the Path of the Pronghorn initiative has helped conserve a piece of the pathway, there is still no federal designation to preserve and protect migratory pathways. Photo courtesy of Elaine F. Leslie.





ous opportunities exist across the national park system to create this kind of connectivity with other landowners. We, as managers of these special places, must come to the realization that jurisdiction and ownership patterns are less important than the resulting grand landscape to preserve future ecological services to the benefit of the public good. The Everglades complex, for example, includes lands and waters owned or administered by federal and state agencies as well as two separate Indian nations, effectively creating approximately 5 million acres of contiguous habitat. Opportunities exist for further enhancement in places as distinct as the Mojave Complex in the California desert, the Yellowstone to Yukon area, the Greater Yellowstone and Grand Canyon ecosystems, Two Countries One Forest in the northern Appalachians, the Spine of the Continent from Canada to Mexico, and the Baja to Bering initiative. Moreover, multiple opportunities exist to work on smaller scales across this nation.

The National Park System Advisory Board has recognized this important and well-established biological principle of connectivity in past reports. NPS could now take the next step from the pages of these reports and become a significant partner in the establishment of goals and actions of creating contiguous habitat in conjunction with other entities.

Creating connectivity and enhancing overall ecological service retention through partnerships with states, counties, and municipalities should be a critical criterion in the selection of land acquisition projects that are considered for funding. In many locations, NPS plans may coincide with county master plans, state open-space goals, and regional efforts by various federal agencies. These sites should be targeted for high-priority funding for acquisition, easements, agreements, and the use of other open-space protection tools. In other places, an effective program of creating a similar consensus on the priorities for acquisition could be launched with a variety of partners and collaborations.

### **Our call to take action!**

- *Identify partners and design resiliency networks and corridors (continental climate corridors, pollinator corridors) and create an official federal designation of a corridor.* NPS's Natural Resource Science and Stewardship Directorate (NRSS) and Biological Resources Division (BRD), along with the Scaling Up Team, will support efforts to analyze current applicable law and policies and work with international, state, and other partners to examine the benefits of a designated North American (trinational) corridor system.
- *Increase native species' capacity to recover, and retain native biodiversity.* NRSS/BRD is poised to assist parks with the restoration of plant and animal species—offering technical expertise and other support to restore and ensure biological diversity within and adjacent to parks through evaluation, feasibility studies, and on-the-ground efforts.
- *Create and support large landscape conservation in and around parks.* NPS is committed to the identification of potential areas and partnerships that lead to the restoration or establishment of habitat and corridors that benefit the movement of migratory wildlife. This may include cooperative agreements, contracts, and consultation efforts between partners and parks.
- *Align priorities across NPS with a larger conservation vision across the country and the*



*continent*. NRSS/BRD will continue to participate in such efforts as the Trilateral Conference, the work of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the State Department's efforts on the Convention of Biological Diversity, and collaborations with private and nongovernmental organizations that have complementary missions and goals in regard to the conservation of migratory species, their habitats, and persistence.

- *Implement species and habitat restoration projects (minimum of 10 new efforts by 2025—a proposed Natural Heritage Legacy) that we, as NPS, can put our efforts and momentum behind* (see Figure 3). BRD will assist parks and regions in the establishment of this list, seeking the funding and compliance support for subsequent actions with a targeted completion date of mid-FY17 for the list.

## 21st-century priorities

A first priority is to enhance protected core areas that strengthen resiliency to stressors in the context of large landscape conservation.

- *Promote and expand protection of healthy reefs, mangroves, and coastal wetlands that can minimize damage to coastal communities by buffering them against increasingly frequent and intense storms*. NRSS, through active participation and technical expertise from the NPS Water and Geological divisions, the Climate Change Response Program, the Inventory and Monitoring Division, and BRD, is committed to assisting parks and regions in technical support in this critical area through consultation and collaboration with states and other federal agencies.
- *Prepare now for climate change, alternative energy development, and urbanization*. NRSS/BRD is committed to continued engagement with and support of Land and Water Conservation Fund efforts as well as Department of the Interior-wide efforts to implement climate-friendly strategies. Actions include: (1) acquire, protect, manage, and enhance (expand) parks and natural areas that will be significantly altered or impacted by climate change; (2) identify national and international migratory species that utilize park and adjacent lands, and restore, protect and enhance resiliency in order to facilitate their adaptation; (3) design and implement conservation strategies to minimize harmful impacts, prevent impairment, and provide educational opportunities; and (4) create and collaborate on programs that research, analyze, and monitor alternative energy development and climate change impacts to wildlife species and their habitats and the ecosystems upon which they depend.

The process of building relationships and partnerships to address these issues at the landscape level requires a commitment and sustained focus that must be much broader than any in which our agency has engaged previously.

- *Use innovative conservation approaches that can be replicated other places*.
- Strive to ensure that these collaborative conservation partnerships are not the rare exception but the standard. Restore and protect our resources and values across the na-



**Figure 3.** Grizzly bear. While efforts are underway to delist the species from Endangered Species Act protection in the Great Yellowstone Ecosystem, grizzly bear restoration efforts are going through the National Environmental Policy Act process for the Greater North Cascades Ecosystem, with the core area being North Cascades National Park. Photo courtesy of Elaine F. Leslie.

tion and include landscape conservation as part of our standard business models and practices.

- *Embrace technology.* We must understand the benefits and consequences of the varied uses of technology (drones, GPS collars, geo-locators, infrared camera and audio traps, fertility control, and even genomic engineering approaches) while retaining natural history field skills and abilities in the workforce to support wildlife management and adaptation.
- *Share lessons from collaboration and networking in conservation at scale.*

Our interconnected conservation efforts will establish and preserve wildlife corridors between protected areas, promote healthy watersheds, and sustain and protect our cultural resources and values. Identified projects will become emblems of the need to protect and sustain entire landscapes that are vital not only to natural and cultural resource conservation, but to the vitality of communities, their economy, and our nation's quality of life. By support-

ing park efforts at even the smallest scales that work across jurisdictions, we make progress on seamless boundaries between parks and neighboring lands and waters, and as a result, connectivity!

## Conclusion

Now, let's get back to the initial question: What do a gray wolf, a wolverine, and a jaguar all have in common?

Gray wolves haven't been observed in the Greater Grand Canyon Ecosystem since the 1940s. In 2015, the US Fish and Wildlife Service confirmed that since January 2015 a radio-collared female gray wolf had roamed from near Cody, Wyoming to a location just north of Grand Canyon National Park. She had traveled at least 750 miles, crossing Interstate 80 at least once. She was killed just outside the park in southern Utah by a hunter who mistook her for a coyote.

Existence of a wolverine had not been confirmed in North Dakota since the 1800s—not until early 2016, that is. In 2009, a wolverine, well known as “M56,” trekked from Jackson Hole and Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming and eventually reached Rocky Mountain National Park, thereby becoming the first wolverine in 90 years known to inhabit Colorado. In this journey M56 crossed the Red Desert in Wyoming, as well as Interstate 80 more than once. During subsequent years he journeyed throughout Colorado, and safely made it across Interstate 70 multiple times. The incredible journeys of M56 ended in a cow pasture in near Alexander, North Dakota, when he was killed by a ranch hand who didn't recognize him as a wolverine and thought he was threatening to livestock.

Northern Mexico is considered the northern limit of jaguar range. A prominent male jaguar known as “El Jefe” (“The Boss”), observed by means of camera traps in the Santa Rita Mountains south of Tucson, is most likely a dispersing male jaguar that is striking out on his own from the nearest breeding population, which is about 100 miles south in Sonora, Mexico. The journeys of El Jefe continue to capture the imagination and wild hearts of young and old alike who follow camera trap photos and videos with zeal.

Connecting protected areas through coordinated transboundary efforts is one of the cornerstones of what is needed in a national conservation strategy. It is essential to do now, given the changing landscape and climate. So what are we waiting for? These animals' movements are signals of the need to coordinate conservation across boundaries. If we pay attention to these three adventurous individuals and to the myriad of ancient migratory pathways, we'll know where corridors need to be officially established. They have in essence raised a flag and showed us a path forward. And we know who our partners are or need to be. It's time to take action. It's time to be brave and to be courageous. It's time to ensure that journeys do not end, but have bright beginnings.

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# The Confederate Monument Movement as a Policy Dilemma for Resource Managers of Parks, Cultural Sites, and Protected Places: Florida as a Case Study

*Irvin D.S. Winsboro*

RENOWNED HISTORIAN IRA BERLIN recently published *The Long Emancipation: The Demise of Slavery in the United States*, a work that evolved partly from his contribution to a National Park Service (NPS) forum in 2000. In this study, Berlin meticulously examines the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction periods of American history and contextualizes them within current historiographical and public debates. In Berlin's view, "History is not about the past; it is about the arguments we have about the past." In particular, Berlin finds the ongoing debates about the commemoration of Confederate versions of history as much about present issues as past events.<sup>1</sup> The focus of this study is to contextualize Confederate monument movements and debates in Florida, the third most populous state, in order to demonstrate how resource managers often face dilemmas in their efforts to present issues of past events and current iconography accurately, in this case stemming from neo-Confederate demands for memorials based on the "Lost Cause" version of "Southern heritage." As a state indicative of Dixie, Florida offers a useful national microcosm of past and contemporary debates over neo-Confederate demands, often promulgated in unison with public and political allies, for controversial memorials to their version of Southern and national history. Florida also reflects what John Freemuth has identified as a deeply rooted dilemma for resource managers and staff, the "political versus professional determinants of policy."<sup>2</sup>

During Reconstruction, black Floridians experienced unprecedented optimism for racial uplift. Old South Florida, under the white Bourbon reactionaries, soon dashed these hopes. Indeed, the state had effectively reinstated its antebellum racial codes by the 1880s. Like other former Confederate states, Florida exercised white control through both legal and extra-legal means, often enforced through Klan intimidation or violence. In *The Invisible Em-*

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pire: *The Ku Klux Klan in Florida*, Michael Newton concluded that the state had a “130-year history as one of the Klan’s strongest and most violent realms...”<sup>3</sup>

By the dawn of the 20th century, Florida’s policymakers had orchestrated a Jim Crow society reflective of the South at large. When laws and codes did not suffice in their view, white power brokers turned to Klan violence well into the 20th century to force social, economic, and political dominion over blacks. In Florida, like most of the South, whites used lynching, or the constant threat of lynching, to lock black citizens into their “proper place.” The specter of mob violence and death constantly hung over Southern African-Americans. In its study, *Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror*, the Equal Justice Initiative documented almost 4,000 lynchings of blacks from 1877 to 1950 in the states south of the Mason-Dixon Line. Florida held the dubious distinction of leading Dixie in per-capita lynching for much of that time. Indeed, Phillip Dray established in his study of national lynching that Florida exited the 1930s with “the last of the big American spectacle lynchings.”<sup>4</sup>

Educators, historians, and resource managers have often traced the origin of Jim Crow segregation to the *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court ruling of 1896. In fact, most of the South, including Florida, had institutionalized “separate but unequal” a decade or more in advance of *Plessy*. In the dust of the Supreme Court’s repudiation of racial equality in the South, Florida and many neighboring states moved to imbed imagery of the Confederacy in their state flags and monuments as commemoratives to Southern ideals. Thus, Florida, as in the South in general, undermined the promises of Reconstruction in favor of a society rooted in white supremacy and racial oppression as symbolized in Confederate valorizing in and over places of public space.

As the 20th century progressed, Confederate glorifiers ignored or subsumed the South’s Civil War defeat and racial oppression into their versions of history. Prime among the Southern revisionist history was the sentimental Lost Cause interpretation of faithful slaves and a virtuous South oppressed by Northern tyrants prior to and after the war. The only reason the Confederacy’s noble warriors suffered a humiliating defeat was that a vastly larger invading force from the North overwhelmed an ill-fated South. The president-general of the United Daughters of the Confederacy maintained that the “South surrendered to the weight of numbers,” but subsequently rose up to regard “our flag ‘with affectionate reverence and undying remembrance’.” A Virginian later captured the essence of the Lost Cause version of defeat, “They never whipped us, Sir, unless they were four to one. If we had had anything like a fair chance, or less disparity of numbers, we should have won our cause and established our independence.”<sup>5</sup> Whereas white Southerners recalled their version of “whippings,” black Southerners recalled and passed on to their youth a decidedly different definition of whippings. The post-war Union occupying force, as the Lost Cause purports, resulted in a Reconstruction era during which ignoble Yankees and freedmen forced a corrupt and vindictive regime on an honorable but defeated people. This sentimentalization of history quickly seeped into the national culture and psyche of Americans through popular literature and such blockbuster, but historically inaccurate, movies as *Birth of a Nation* and *Gone With the Wind*. In short, the Civil War and Reconstruction took on the aura of a noble struggle for the South that the



vindictive Northern invader, with its carpetbagger and black allies, forced on a righteous yet subjugated people.<sup>6</sup>

Through historical misrepresentation, the Lost Cause, and its academic iteration, the so-called Dunning School, views of Southern history became popularized in the folklore and ideology of the white South and memorialized in the Southern symbolic use of the Battle Flag and the monument movement of the early 20th century to the present.<sup>7</sup> In creating or demanding monuments to defiant Confederates in public spaces, the sons and daughters of the Confederacy, and their heirs and defenders, have sought to create permanent visual symbols to their historical visions of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Simply waving the Confederate Battle Flag on holidays and Confederate Memorial Day (now celebrated officially in seven Southern states) was not enough to satisfy those Americans who wanted to impose “selective” memory, as Ralph Ellison once termed it, on the public at large. As a past chronicler of monument movements concluded, “One of the major ceremonial events in ... the South was the dedication of monuments raised to the honor and memory of Confederate heroes.” He further found that in the absence of bona fide local heroes, Confederate memorializers simply dedicated generic monuments to the “Boys in Gray.”<sup>8</sup>

Thus sprouted the neo-Confederate movement to memorialize its Lost Cause narrative of history by converting public space into visual guardians of their adaptations of local and national history. Beginning in the 1970s with the publication of the *Southern Partisan* magazine, and growing in the 1990s as a result of the creation of the League of the South and the “New Dixie Manifesto,” the movement experienced a resurgence of the Lost Cause commemoration of history into what Euan Hague and Edward H. Sebesta termed the “curious acceptance of and relevance for the short-lived Confederacy and its legacy of racism and white supremacy.”<sup>9</sup> As a corollary to the movement by Southerners to redefine history and public space, they adopted policies, often supported by political leaders of their states, that opposed not only Union narratives of the war and Reconstruction, but also any movements to honor the 360,000 Northerners who fought and died in America’s bloodiest war, many of whom had succumbed to wounds on Southern battlefields.<sup>10</sup> As a result, for well over a century Floridians, and many Southerners in general, have debated the historical role and collective memory of their state’s local and national significance in the Civil War and Reconstruction and how to commemorate (glorify?) it. Florida offers a useful case study of this historical phenomenon.

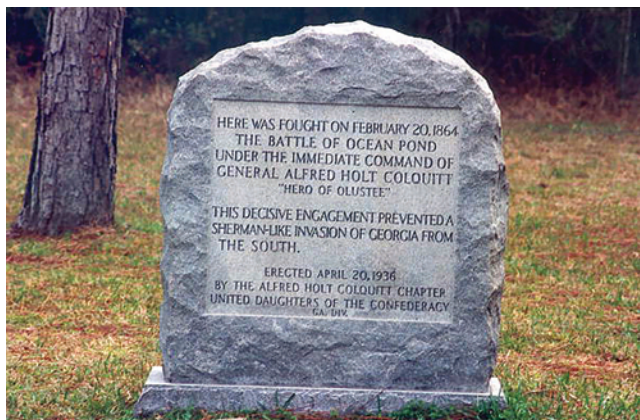
William B. Lees and Frederick P. Gaske found in *Recalling Deeds Immortal: Florida Monuments to the Civil War* that the debate erupted in the wake of the conflict itself and has continued through the present day in various forms and venues, including the arguments for and placement of commemorative stone and bronze monuments in national and state parks. To date, neo-Confederate organizations have supported the placement of 100 monuments in the Sunshine State and eight in other states in which Florida forces fought and died. These monuments to Florida’s Confederate soldiers range as far north as Winchester, Virginia; their various iterations appear not only in parks, but in battlefields, cemeteries (some administered by the Department of Veteran’s Affairs), churches, forts, historic houses, lighthouses, military



buildings, museums, and railroad sites. Florida is not unusual among Southern states in creating these types of commemorations to the Confederacy (Figure 1).<sup>11</sup>

The major architects of the monument movement to create and sustain the Lost Cause narrative in Florida will be familiar to historians and resource managers of sites in other former Confederate states. Those neo-Confederate groups are often proponents of, as J. Michael Martinez writes, a “romantic view of the South as a place where traditions and ideals intersect without encompassing racist views.”<sup>12</sup> This romanticized embodiment of Southern heritage is exemplified in the Lost Cause version of history by self-identified descendants of Confederate loyalists and combatants. Notably representative of these groups are the Ladies’ Memorial Associations, United Daughters of the Confederacy, United Confederate Veterans, Sons of Confederate Veterans, the Heritage Preservation Association, and a smattering of local “patriotic” groups, re-enactors, cemetery restorers, and, most recently, giant Confederate Battle Flag flyers on property adjacent to Southern interstate highways. Many of them seem to be motivated by the desire to foist their concept of historical relativism onto a general public that may not always share their viewpoints. J. Michael Martinez and William D. Richardson characterize these viewpoints in *Confederate Symbols in the Contemporary South* as “the South’s mythic past.” In analyzing these issues, Martinez and Richardson defined the crux of the problem as “the act of honoring the values supposedly symbolized by the Confederacy (and commemorated by a sign such as a flag or a monument) that perpetuates conflict owing to differences in interpreting those values.... Were this not the case, it would be a relatively simple proposition to [satisfy] all parties.”<sup>13</sup> While commenting on the Confederate flag issue in particular, noted journalist and historian Eliot Kleinberg recently summed up the acrimony of neo-Confederate memorializing in general: “Where does that Confederate flag go? It might well be the most divisive symbol in all of America. Does it stand for hatred or heritage?”<sup>14</sup> Soon after Kleinberg’s challenge, the *New York Times* addressed the issue in a hard-hitting editorial, “Confederate Memorials as Instruments of Racial Terror.”<sup>15</sup> The NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) reacted even more demonstrably by reiterating its historical condemnation of any displays of Confederate flags or memorials in or above public lands or places of public space and leisure.<sup>16</sup>

**Figure 1.** United Daughters of the Confederacy monument (erected 1936) at Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park, Florida. Courtesy of the State Archives of Florida.



Ironically, the first monument appeared in Florida in 1866 under a Union flag to commemorate the Northern casualties of the bloody battle of Olustee (or Ocean Pond to the Confederates) on February 20, 1864. Subsequently, reactionary Floridians excoriated the commemorative work and created numerous monuments to commemorate their own dead and wounded (Figure 2). In the process, they contested the placement of any proposed Union-orientated monuments. The latest incident occurred at Olustee in 2013 as the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War attempted to erect a commemorative marker at the Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park, long considered a place of special veneration by Southern heritage groups and other neo-Confederates.<sup>17</sup>

The Sons of Confederate Veterans took their opposition to a sympathetic state legislature, arguing that the proposed Union construction was nothing more than a “special monument to invading Federal forces . . . that will disrupt the hallowed grown [sic] where Southern blood was spilled in defense of Florida.” As reported recently in the *New York Times* article, “Blue and Gray Still in Conflict at a Battle Site: Monument for Union Troops Draws Fire,” the debate over the placement of a proposed Union monument near the Confederate one at Olustee underscored the present tensions and arguments over Florida’s and the South’s role to exculpate themselves from an embarrassing Civil War defeat.<sup>18</sup> In addressing the issue of resource managers in its state

**Figure 2.** United Daughters of the Confederacy monument (erected 1912) at Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park, Florida. Courtesy of the State Archives of Florida.



having to face similar dilemmas of approving and sustaining Confederate monuments, the *Chicago Tribune* stated, “what to do with Confederate monuments will not be quick and or easy. But it’s clear the status quo is not sustainable.” The paper added that park and site visitors “should not be expected to endure publicly sanctioned symbols that glorify” the Southern interpretations of history alone.<sup>19</sup> As suggested in the *Chicago Tribune* and *New York Times* articles, these are present and growing issues affecting local, state, and national park services that may frustrate resource managers and perplex segments of the public at large.

Moreover, the issue of Confederate monument placements has created a quandary for the administrators of contemporary park services as they address the interpreta-

tion of “human history ... [as] an educational service” in their management goals—should they accede to the demands of neo-Confederates to the placement of their icons and heroes of Southern heritage, or reject them on the grounds of their being historically inaccurate and racially insensitive? In regard to the latter option, the decision-making of park officials regarding historical memory is often complicated by partisan “memory brokers” and “competing interests,” as two relevant studies have termed them, and the presumed or promised backlash of local and national politicians sympathetic to these modern iterations of the Lost Cause.<sup>20</sup> Kimberly J. Bodey and Nathan A. Schaumleffel in their study, “Politics and Advocacy,” warn park management that the all-too-often mixing of public policy and decision-making “can be fraught with confusion, contradiction and consternation.” In his study on the evolution of, and politics behind, the creation, rejection, or modification of monuments, *America’s National Monuments: The Politics of Preservation*, public historian Hal Rothman challenged his readers to understand that many monuments arose from “the vision of a few that has become a generally held social objective.”<sup>21</sup> This historical and modern confluence of public vision existing in the shadow of social objective often places resource, site, and park professionals in sensitive assessment dilemmas as they deliberate the appropriateness of proposed Confederate monuments (and flags and buildings) to their spaces of public trust and their mission, as the National Park Service notes, “to discover American history in all its diversity.”<sup>22</sup>

In the case of the Confederate Battle Flag, many state politicians in the South have quietly removed the symbol from public view. As the governor of South Carolina noted after the state removed the flag from the capitol following a deadly shooting at a black church in Charleston, “The fact it [the flag] causes pain to so many is enough to move it from capitol grounds.”<sup>23</sup> Almost in unison with South Carolina’s tempering of the Confederate symbol, the National Park Service issued a statement requesting that superintendents voluntarily remove Confederate flag memorabilia for sale to further NPS’s mission “to tell the complete story of America.” Not long after this, however, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the governor of Louisiana, with the support of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, sought to prevent the removal of Confederate symbols and monuments from public space in his state. This resulted in a heated debate between supporters and opponents of Confederate statuary and tributes in the state that transcended the decision-making authority of resource managers in favor of political solutions. The politicization of the debate has ensured that the issue of monument placement would remain at the level of state and local public spheres despite some Southern states’ rejections of Confederate symbols.<sup>24</sup>

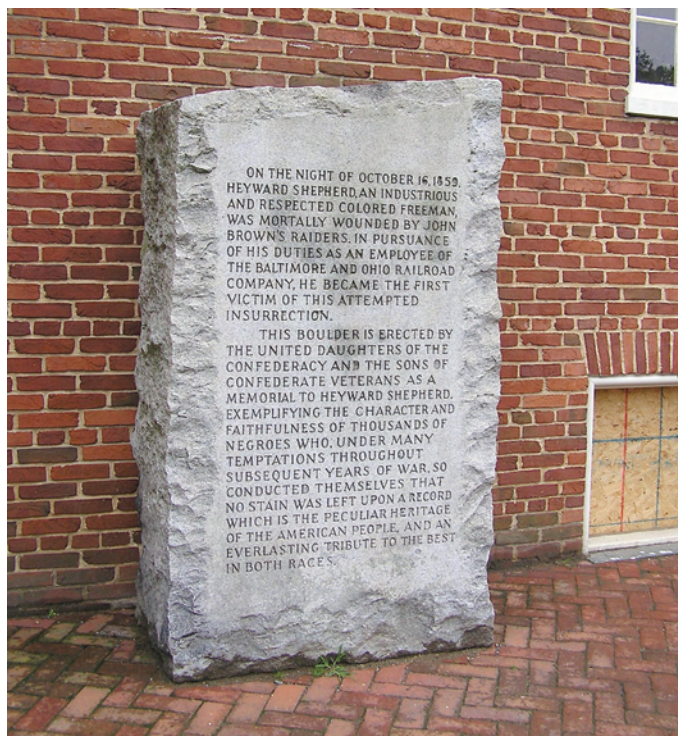
While high-placed politicians may have the authority to unilaterally decide the fate of symbols of Southern heritage in public spaces, resource managers are often required to base such policy decisions on a web of bureaucratic and public input processes. Not only do resource professionals of public trust have to decide the appropriateness of the subject matter as transmitters of historical viewpoints, but, as highly trained professionals, they must also weigh the possible unintended consequences of Confederate iconography and structures on the historical interpretations adopted by out-of-region and even out-of-country visitors. This may be a perplexing problem for state and national resource managers who face not only pressure to approve more Confederate monuments, but sometimes equal pressure, such as

the case in Louisiana, not to remove Confederate flags and memorials. By the late 20th century, in the Deep South there were 352 monuments, or nearly 20% of all monuments, devoted to the remembrance or commemoration of the Confederacy. Concurrently, the National Park Service oversaw 233 Confederate memorials at such sites as Antietam and Gettysburg.<sup>25</sup> Simply stated, many site visitors depend on resource professionals to adopt and enact operational procedures that properly and fairly portray events and persons as historically accurate commemorative symbols. Often this proves to be a difficult, time-consuming, and controversial process for addressing the appropriateness of neo-Confederate memorials and related matter in parks and public sites.

In the case of the National Park Service, by way of example, proposed Civil War commemorative works must be supported by “compelling justification,” “be authorized by legislation,” and “include public participation” as authorized in the Administrative Procedure Act.<sup>26</sup> While this may partly de-politicize the selection process in national battlefields and parks, resource managers at state and local parks may face a more daunting approval process that is often influenced and funded by pressure groups, bureaucrats, and politicians sympathetic to the Lost Cause folklore. This issue rose to national attention in the 1990s when the protests over the “Faithful Slave” monument (the Hayward Shepherd monument) at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park caused a conundrum for NPS (Figure 3). Confederate support groups and the NAACP clashed over the idealism of the work, particularly the inscription which reads, in part, “exemplifying the character and faithfulness of thousands of negroes.” At first, NPS responded to protests of the imagery of a “Faithful Slave” by shielding it. When both sides rejected that, NPS pursued another solution to the issue (by then national in scope) by sanctioning a counter-display contextualized within the historical and scholarly parameters of the depiction.<sup>27</sup> Resource managers might look to this example for guidance to their own similar monument and site dilemmas, but NPS’s resolution of the “Faithful Slave” may not always be adaptable to local circumstances.

The balancing act of enacting proper and accepted operational procedures has become even more challenging of late for commemorative professionals and park staffers, as many states have transferred their oversight and funding functions from conventional park, heritage, and preservation services to different state departments, such as interior and environmental services. Finally, plans to approve or disapprove contested monuments such as those devoted to the Lost Cause and Southern heritage are often subject to feedback from advisory groups (often composed of elected officials or their appointees), public meetings, and workshops. The result of this frequently vitiates site managers’ guidelines and prerogatives, as local and state priorities take precedence over issues of historical accuracy and racial sensitivity. In this case, NPS’s guidelines for compelling cause and/or authorizing legislation become problematic—how do park and site managers satisfy all constituencies while ensuring historical accuracy and racial sensitivity in their efforts to approve or create visual symbols to the past? Moreover, what is the proper place of Confederate physical objects and buildings in the promotional imagery of parks and sites, and how can this imagery affect park managers’ relationships, often based on park themes, with land uses or proposed land uses (i.e., development) around their sites?<sup>28</sup> Again, this managerial dilemma is not only rooted in historical





**Figure 3.** The “Faithful Slave” monument, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. Photo courtesy of lcm1863 via Wikimedia Commons.

relativism, but also in the historical “reality” visitors, and even local residents, place on these symbols of past events. To neglect these challenges of historical memory and interpretations would imbue a certain irony to Voltaire’s famous dictum, “History is nothing but a pack of tricks the living play upon the dead.”

In addressing the historical and physical presence of these monuments, and proposed monuments, state and national constituencies are often adamant in their positions. That is, both camps argue that history is on their side. This presents even more conundrums for policy-makers and the public at large. As Lees and Gaske point out about extant and proposed monuments, “Many of these are, of course, embodiments of the Lost Cause narrative, but they are also eloquent sentinels of a significant period in our history....”<sup>29</sup> The suggestion that neo-Confederate monuments are, in fact, “eloquent sentinels” is a question of some concern for contemporary America. Yale scholar David W. Blight has written volumes of acclaimed works about the historical permutations of Civil War commemorating, and how ownership of the era and its legacy has proved fluid across time. Historian W. Fitzhugh Brundage, writing in the *Journal of Southern History*, finds the debate simply part of the new “memory industry” contemporary Americans must maneuver through in their quest to know the past. In *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong*, James W. Loewen

captured the historical versus modern demands for depictions in resource spheres: “Historic Sites Are Always a Tale of Two Eras.” He might have added that historical eras shape historic sites, as well. Edward Tabor Linenthal in his book, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields*, also finds that the fluid memory of martial losses has transformed battle sites in both sacred and disturbing ways over time.<sup>30</sup> His study is useful for noting that the physical commemoration of contested interpretations of such historical episodes as the Civil War and Reconstruction can profoundly influence the views of those events by new generations of park and cultural site visitors. And herein lies the contemporary challenge for state and national park services—how to balance missions supported by public funding and oversight with interpretive physical portrayals of history?

## Conclusion

Most Americans interpret past events through the written word and visual symbols. This presents a sometimes difficult challenge for resource managers of parks, cultural sites, and protected places as they are increasingly forced to navigate a decision-making process through interest groups, many of which have now become politicized through the adoption of ideology over facts-based and inclusive history. As the case study of Florida demonstrates, this dilemma today is perhaps best represented by the placement and naming, or requested placement and naming, of Confederate monuments and iconography in locations of public space and cultural preservation. While certain Confederate efforts to memorialize their ancestors may be reasonable as policy decisions (e.g., in cemeteries and at battle sites), many past and contemporary neo-Confederates’ efforts to memorialize their version of the Civil War era are drawn from, and justified in their arguments by, the Lost Cause version of history and its corollary, the contemporary narrative of Southern heritage. Inherent in this version of the past are, however, the counterpoints of interest groups that argue that the rubric of Southern heritage distorts the true history of our nation by ignoring—or worse, commemorating—racial injustice and bigotry. While resource professionals routinely face an array of proposals to retain, create, or remove site displays, arguably the present-day demands for or against Confederate memorialization are as perplexing and challenging as any they need to resolve for their sites. It is, therefore, useful for resource professionals to understand, as reflected in the case study of Florida, that memories of the past are now based not only on interpretations but also romanticized and politicized viewpoints that frequently complicate their work.

Unlike many private sites of eco-conservation, resource managers of public spaces are also agents of public trust in terms of fairly and accurately portraying the historical record—they are held by the public and their profession to the highest standards of decision-making in regard to the selection and protection of symbols of the past. Once a park service has satisfied its guidelines and management policies on contested exhibits and places its imprimatur on them, the public will often internalize that work as an accurate portrayal of past events. That is, the public will shape its memory of the past based on an act of faith that park and site professionals have not allowed biased or romanticized representations of historic events, causation, and outcomes. In this regard, the nation at large has invested trust in resource managers to eschew one-sided portrayals of history in favor of accurate and balanced depic-



tions of the past. In their efforts to ensure accuracy and balance in approving or maintaining displays and symbols of yesteryear, resource personnel must be aware of the consequences today of supporting, rejecting, or modifying displays or symbols of the Lost Cause version of history. So politicized have these and corresponding issues become in certain states of Dixie that final decisions on these actions may well engender public and political controversy, such as the one at the Olustee battlefield site in 2013 that resulted in state legislative action and national coverage in such newspapers as the *New York Times*.

In the final analysis, resource professionals must identify and articulate to the public and pressure groups a compelling, extraordinary, *and* defensible justification for their decisions and actions regarding Confederate monuments and symbols, and realize that the public, the media, and politicians might question or criticize their actions. Simply stated, the inevitable public debates between vested interests in promulgating memories of the Civil War era and the efforts to preserve and reinterpret them are deeply ingrained in the American psyche and will continue to complicate the judgments of resource managers for generations to come. While the contemporary challenges of preserving, creating, contextualizing, and recontextualizing memory of Confederate-oriented displays and commemorations certainly presents a challenge to their decision-making, resource managers might realize, as well, that such contemporary challenges also represent an opportunity to validate the public confidence with which they have been entrusted.

### Acknowledgments

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# The Evolution of the National Park Service: A Hundred Years of Changing Ideas

*Compiled by David Harmon and Rebecca Conard*

IN THIS YEAR OF CELEBRATING THE CENTENNIAL OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, and assessing how far the agency has come, it is worth reflecting upon how different the world of 1916 was compared with ours today. The passage of the Organic Act must have been a barely discernable ripple to a country that was in the midst of the first modern global cataclysm, “the war to end all wars.” In 1916, Jim Crow ruled the South, eugenics was considered state-of-the-art social planning, ecology as a science was in its adolescence, American Indians were thought to be on the cusp of assimilation or total destruction, and most American families did not own an automobile or a telephone. Of course, much remains the same, too; and even in the face of pervasive climatic and demographic change no one is quite yet ready to abandon the foundational goal of preserving the national parks unimpaired in perpetuity. So it would seem that the ideal which animated Olmsted and Mather and Albright is durable, even if it now appears more aspirational than practicable.

To serve that steadfast ideal within a changing society, the Park Service has had to evolve: to take on board a host of new ideas in a never-ending process of adaptation. Here, we offer a sketch of some of the key waypoints in that evolution. Presented are short excerpts from the writings of a variety of thinkers and practitioners, accompanied by a brief explanation of their context. We originally conceived of this as a timeline, but came to realize that representing every important event in NPS history in chronological order would require far more space than is available. Instead, we have grouped them (sometimes loosely) under four thematic headings:

- *Directives*—words of instruction and inspiration to and from NPS leaders;
- *Course Corrections*—major decisions that resulted in a fundamental change in policy, or

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- how the agency views itself, or both;
- *Provocations*—“creative disruptions” that helped move NPS to a new philosophical place; and
- *Visions*—serious thinking about the future ... the very opposite of the all-too-ubiquitous Internet “hot take.”

We make no pretense of completeness—not every important shift in NPS history is represented.

The primary contribution of the George Wright Society to the NPS hundredth anniversary has been the Centennial Essay Series. The last installment comes in this issue with the contribution by Denis P. Galvin, and the series will formally wrap up in December with a retrospective from Dwight T. Pitcaithley and Rolf Diamant. These 27 essays, we hope, have added some new ideas to the constellation that has been built up since 1916. The National Park Service’s mission is rooted in action, but it draws sustenance from a parallel life of ideas. Nurturing that life continues to be an important part of what the George Wright Society does.

## DIRECTIVES

### Setting course: The Lane Letter (1918)

Once the Organic Act was secured, the first step was for the new agency to set up shop: hire employees, establish offices, buy equipment. That “constructive work” took about a year and a half. Next, it was time to state a set of basic policies to carry out—or, perhaps, sort out—its twin preservation and enjoyment mandates. As historian Richard West Sellars explains, Horace Albright drafted the policies, which, after review, were presented to Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane, who turned around and published them in the form of a May 13, 1918, letter to Stephen Mather, the first NPS director—what has come to be known as the “Lane Letter.”

Mather and Albright enjoyed an exceptionally close working relationship, and it’s safe to assume that the Lane Letter reflects their collective thinking. The new agency would be anchored on three basic principles:

First that the national parks must be maintained in absolutely unimpaired form for the use of future generations as well as those of our own time; second, that they are set apart for the use, observation, health, and pleasure of the people; and third, that the national interest must dictate all decisions affecting public or private enterprise in the parks.

The addition of the intensifier “absolutely”—the Organic Act doesn’t include it—points us toward a preservation-trumps-use interpretation of the mission. So does the next sentence of the Lane Letter. “Every activity of the Service is subordinate to the duties imposed upon it to faithfully preserve the parks for posterity in essentially their natural state.”

It all seems very straightforward. But the Organic Act also includes a long, never-quoted list of actions the director is allowed to take that, by today’s standards at least, contradict any notion of non-impairment: cattle (but not sheep) grazing, timber cutting, and the “de-



struction” of any animal or plant that may be detrimental to the use of the parks. The Lane Letter tightens some of these (cattle should be grazed “in isolated regions not frequented by visitors,” any timber cut should be used for park buildings or to improve vistas) but of course could not countermand the new law. In that, the Lane Letter was just the first in a long series of recalibrations, still ongoing, of the basic contradictions enshrined in the ambiguous central sentence of the Organic Act: “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.”

### **Looking beyond boundaries: Stewart L. Udall (1964)**

Almost a half-century later, another summation of purpose was sent to a newly appointed director from the secretary of the interior. This one, from Secretary Stewart L. Udall to Director George B. Hartzog, Jr., emphasized a basic principle that had slowly dawned on the agency over the years: parks are not islands.

By the mid-1960s, America’s population was rapidly growing, demand for recreation climbing, and understanding of the interconnectedness of environmental problems deepening. A savvy and effective secretary, Udall realized “that effective management of the National Park System will not be achieved by programs that look only within the parks without respect to the pressures, the influences, and the needs beyond park boundaries.” While the primary concern of NPS will always be the resources directly under its care, its responsibilities “cannot be achieved solely within the boundaries of the areas it administers.”

The Service has an equal obligation to stand as a vital, vigorous, effective force in the cause of preserving the total environment of our Nation. The concept of the total environment includes not only the land, but also the water and the air, the past as well as the present, the useful as well as the beautiful, the wonders of man as well as the wonders of nature, the urban environment as well as the natural landscape. I am pleased that among its contributions, the Service is identifying National Historic and Natural History Landmarks throughout the country and is cooperating in the Historic American Buildings Survey.

Udall’s call-out of some of NPS’s external, cooperative programs is indicative of a national policy shift toward comprehensive approaches to cultural and natural heritage, soon to be expressed in such landmark laws as the Wilderness Act (1964), the National Historic Preservation Act (1966), and the National Environmental Policy Act (1968).

### **Flexible commitments: A Call to Action (2011)**

The centerpiece statement of NPS under the directorship of Jonathan B. Jarvis, the *Call to Action* is “a call to all National Park Service employees and partners to commit to actions that advance the Service toward a shared vision for [the centennial in] 2016 and our second century.” This collegial tone, with the implied emphasis on the agency’s work being a calling as well as a duty, is interesting in itself. It also differs markedly from the Lane and Udall letters in expressing forceful agencywide commitments while embracing a decentralized approach.

The implementation strategy emphasizes *choice*.... Program managers and superintendents will select actions that best fit the purpose of their program or park, workforce capacity, and skills, and that generate excitement among employees.... *Flexibility* and *creativity* are encouraged. The plan identifies what to accomplish, but allows employees and partners to determine how to achieve the objectives through innovative strategies and approaches.

NPS has always had trouble balancing central-office priorities with the realities of day-to-day operations in the field—a legacy of the early days, when many of its parks were truly remote. In the *Call to Action* autonomy is treated as a positive virtue, but even so the heart of the plan is stated as a series of imperatives:

In our second century, the *National Park Service must recommit to the exemplary stewardship and public enjoyment of these places*. We must promote the contributions that national parks and programs make to create jobs, strengthen local economies, and support ecosystem services. We must use the collective power of the parks, our historic preservation programs, and community assistance programs to expand our contributions to society in the next century.

This collective resolve is to be put to work to achieve four goals: connecting people to the parks, strengthening NPS's role as an educator, preserving the parks, and improving organizational performance. The dedication to achievement is unequivocal:

... *we will* fully represent our nation's ethnically and culturally diverse communities. To achieve the promise of democracy, *we will* create and deliver activities, programs, and services that honor, examine, and interpret America's complex heritage. By investing in the preservation, interpretation, and restoration of the parks and by extending the benefits of conservation to communities, the *National Park Service will* inspire a "more perfect union," offering renewed hope to each generation of Americans.

No doubt these commitments will be tested in the years to come.

## **COURSE CORRECTIONS**

### **Embracing the past: The Historic Sites Act (1935)**

In a major agency-building coup, in 1933 Director Horace Albright persuaded President Franklin D. Roosevelt to reassign the historic sites and monuments then under the Agriculture and War departments to the National Park Service. As Jerry L. Rogers relates, there were other ideas percolating within the New Deal for using emergency employment to bolster historic preservation—not just on public lands, but throughout the country—but there was no statutory authority to back them up. The Historic Sites Act of 1935 filled that bill, and declared for the first time “that it is a national policy to preserve for public use historic sites, buildings and objects of national significance for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States.”

The law, Rogers notes, was “wonderfully broad” in what it allowed the government to involve itself in. NPS, under the authority of the secretary of the interior, could:

- Secure, collate, and preserve drawings, plans, photographs, and other data of historic and archaeologic sites, buildings, and objects.
- Make a survey of historic and archaeologic sites, buildings, and objects for the purpose of determining which possess exceptional value as commemorating or illustrating the history of the United States.
- Make necessary investigations and researches in the United States relating to particular sites, buildings, and objects to obtain true and accurate historical and archaeological facts and information concerning the same.

And much more: purchase and restore buildings, artifacts, and other property; erect monuments and markers; and operate sites themselves, either directly or by agreement with the states or other parties. The law also created what is now known as the National Park System Advisory Board, still going strong as a major consultative body for NPS.

As Rogers concludes, the Historic Sites Act was a capstone to “Albright’s earlier brilliant vision of a national park system no longer confined to a few western states,” helping “the young bureau to become national in scope as well as name.”

### **Embracing the future: The decision to desegregate parks in the South (1939–1942)**

Like many institutions in American society, the National Park Service has had a checkered history when it comes to race relations. The routine expulsion of Native Americans and others from newly created national parks is an obvious case in point. Less well-known is how the agency unofficially but firmly discouraged African Americans from visiting the parks during its early years. As the geographer Terence Young has shown, this practice went back at least as early as the 1922 superintendents’ conference, where attendees decided that—Negroes being “conspicuous” and “objected to by other visitors”—“we cannot openly discriminate against them, [but] they should be told that the parks have no facilities for taking care of them.”

At first, when most of the large destination parks were in remote areas of the West, such discrimination could be allowed to proceed fairly quietly since so few African Americans were in a position to visit them. But by the 1930s there was growing black middle class, and African Americans travelers of means were able to consult editions of *The Negro Motorist Green Book* for help in deciphering where they would (and wouldn’t) be welcome, or even allowed, to eat, sleep, and shop. Also in the 1930s Mammoth Cave, Blue Ridge Parkway, Great Smoky Mountains, and Shenandoah were all created in southern states where Jim Crow reigned. Because NPS had agreed to enforce state laws in other parks, they had to do the same in these new parks. That brought the issue to a head within the FDR administration, and caught the attention of Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes, who in 1939 convened a meeting on what to do. Taking notes, Associate NPS Director Arthur Demaray reported that Ickes wanted to split the difference in Shenandoah:

... we were to select one large picnic area, most conveniently located, and permit both races to use it. No signs indicating race segregation within the picnic grounds or in the comfort stations are to be permitted within this area. In all other picnic and campground areas in Shenandoah, signs are to indicate that they are for Negro and white visitors.

In these segregated areas, Ickes “also very emphatically stated that equal facilities must be provided Negro visitors, not in number but in quality.” Tenuous though they were, these moves were a foothold in desegregating the new southern parks.

As Young writes, “This progressive change in policy might have continued to expand slowly over the next several years, but as with so many other social issues, World War II overwhelmed racial segregation in the national parks.” The nation’s leaders realized that they needed African Americans to fully support the war effort, and so had to pay attention to bolstering “Negro morale.” This led to a series of directives culminating in one in June 1942 in which Director Newton Drury ordered the regional director responsible for the South “to make certain that the policy of the Department of the Interior on the non-segregation of Negroes is carried out in the southern areas administered by the National Park Service.” Within a few years, official discrimination at park campgrounds and other facilities had been ended.

### **Embracing the future of the past: James Oliver Horton (2000)**

A turning point in NPS interpretation came in 1999 when Congress (through language written by Representative Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.) ordered the agency to reassess its programs at Civil War battlefields to encourage interpreters to highlight “the unique role” that slavery played in causing the war. In response, NPS convened a symposium in 2000 to discuss how to do it.

Several eminent scholars addressed the gathering, making the case that NPS should boldly refocus its traditional battlefield interpretation, which emphasized military strategy and exploits, to the broader context of the war and its root cause: slavery. None did so more forcefully than the historian James Oliver Horton. Speaking to an audience of superintendents and other NPS employees, Horton was forthright:

When you approach the notion of slavery as a cause of a war a hundred or more years ago, keep in mind that part of our past is not totally past. The Civil War was about slavery and as we discuss the Civil War we do so in a time that is all about race. Again, your job in talking to the public about these uncomfortable issues is not an enviable one. Yet, your job is critically important. National Park Service historians and interpreters will educate more people in the course of a month than I will in a lifetime. That makes what you do both difficult and vital.

A questioner asked Horton, “How do we incorporate broadly fashioned interpretive programs on the issue of slavery into our battlefield parks?” First of all, he replied, “we need to talk about the reason the battlefield existed in the first place,” why people were willing to give their lives there. And “the answer to that leads directly to the issue of slavery.” Not that

slavery needs to or can be interpreted the same at every Civil War park, but at every one of them it does need to be interpreted, regardless of how controversial or difficult that may be, because “the fact is that slavery was a central part of the Civil War.”

Now, we can make several decisions. We can say okay, it was but I am not talking about it. You can do that but you can't wish it away. It was there.... I think it is harder to rationalize not including the entire story, because sooner or later somebody is going to ask you a really embarrassing question. The fact is that slavery was there. Slavery was important. You have the responsibility of interpreting the history, and since slavery is so much an important part of that history, it becomes part of your responsibility.

Coming out of the symposium, NPS leadership, both in the Washington headquarters and in the parks, accepted the responsibility—a remarkable turnaround.

### **A new vision of stewardship: Revisiting Leopold (2012)**

The 1963 Leopold Report is widely credited as a landmark in NPS history for being the first policy statement that advocated management of natural areas in the parks on ecosystem principles. Its core recommendation was that “the biotic associations within each park be maintained, or where necessary recreated, as nearly as possible in the condition that prevailed when the area was first visited by the white man. A national park should represent a vignette of primitive America.”

The report also made numerous specific scientific research and resource management recommendations, but as the end of the 20th century drew near it was apparent that progress toward carrying these out had been fitful at best. That was the conclusion of a 1992 review by the National Research Council, which went on to call for a legislative mandate for science research in the parks. In 1997, the publication of Richard West Sellars' *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* further propelled the conversation forward, and helped inspire the Natural Resource Challenge and its ramping up of NPS scientific capacity.

In 2012, acting on a request from Director Jarvis, the Science Committee of the National Park System Advisory Board produced *Revisiting Leopold: Resource Stewardship in the National Parks*, a report that offered “general and conceptual answers” to three linked questions: what should be the goals of NPS resource management, what policies are needed to achieve the goals, and what actions are needed to carry out the policies: in sum, what should park stewardship look like “during a time of unrelenting change”?

Environmental changes confronting the National Park System are widespread, complex, accelerating, and volatile. These include biodiversity loss, climate change, habitat fragmentation, land use change, groundwater removal, invasive species, overdevelopment, and air, noise, and light pollution. All of these changes impact park resources, from soil microbes to mountain lions and from historic objects to historic landscapes.

New problems, unheard of in the Leopold era, and a new scope: not just wildlife, but all natural and cultural resources under the care of NPS. The committee put forth a new, holistic vision of how parks should be cared for:

Parks exist as coupled natural-human systems. Natural and cultural resource management must occur simultaneously and, in general, interdependently. Such resource management when practiced holistically embodies the basis of sound park stewardship. Artificial division of the National Park System into ‘natural parks’ and ‘cultural parks’ is ineffective and a detriment to successful resource management.

Instead of Leopold’s “reasonable illusion of primitive America,” *Revisiting Leopold* said that NPS “should make as its central resource policy the stewardship of park resources to preserve ecological integrity and cultural and historical authenticity” and “formally embrace the need to manage for change.”

## PROVOCATIONS

### The malignancy of “white man’s” impact, and its antidote:

#### George Melendez Wright (1934)

The first scientist to work for NPS, George Melendez Wright inspired the founders of the GWS to name their new organization in honor of his farsighted contributions. Known for his winning personality, Wright was able to bring many people along with his vision of a scientifically informed system of national parks. But he was also unafraid to voice provocative opinions when he felt it necessary or warranted.

In 1934 he co-wrote (with Ben H. Thompson) the second in the famous *Fauna* series of scientific monographs about the parks. To that book he contributed a chapter on the problems of wildlife management, which is full of prescient observations like this:

As the results of the failure of the parks to be self-contained, self-walled biological units, typical maladjustments are lack of winter range, ebb-flow of animals that are blacklisted outside the park areas, invasion by exotics, dilution of native species through hybridization, and exposure of natives to diseases and influences of alien faunas.

He went on to make some observations about the “incurable” problems of reconciling human interest with needs of wildlife. Then he offered this extraordinary passage:

Though white man is in one sense part of the whole natural environment, one in the aggregate of faunal and floral species constituting the biota of the park, just as are the Indians who came via the Aleutians, and the grasses whose seeds were borne across the ocean, there are two things that set him apart even from other recent arrivals. White man’s impact upon his environment is tremendous as compared to that of all other living forms. He is as much like them as cancerous growth is like normal growth and as destructive in effect.



Wright's cancer metaphor is startling on its own merits (it would not be developed further until 1955 when Alan Gregg, an officer with the Rockefeller Foundation responsible for international public health grants, suggested the same relationship in an article published in *Science*). Equally remarkable, though, is his sensitivity to the fact that indigenous peoples' impacts on the landscape, while undeniably large, were in no way comparable to those of Euroamerican immigrants.

But then Wright pivots the passage away from this dire reflection, and gives us a hint as to why his passion for the national parks ran so deep:

The second thing which sets him apart and which is the antidote to the first, is his unique ability to appreciate his effect on the environment. He thus becomes capable of self-imposed restrictions to preserve other species against himself.... The whole national park idea is a manifestation of this second attribute of man. Admittedly, his object is a selfish one, just as it is when he chooses to destroy other species to use them for food, but it is a higher, more altruistic selfishness. It is selfishness for the benefit of all individuals of his own kind, and their descendants after them. And incidentally it is a selfishness which reacts beneficially upon the animals over which he holds power of destruction.

### **Outflanking the best of intentions: Walker Percy (1954)**

Known primarily as a novelist with a philosophical bent, Walker Percy was continually interested in how and why things and places come to have a particular meaning for people. In an influential essay written in 1954 titled "The Loss of the Creature," Percy considers how hard it is to encounter a place for the first time and see it with completely fresh eyes, with no preconceptions. The Grand Canyon is his example:

García López de Cárdenas discovered the Grand Canyon, and was amazed at the sight. It can be imagined: One crosses miles of desert, breaks through the mesquite, and there it is at one's feet. Later the government set the place aside as a national park, hoping to pass along to millions the experience of Cárdenas.

But he doubts that the Park Service can, in fact, mass-produce that sort of experience:

The assumption is that the Grand Canyon is a remarkably interesting and beautiful place and that if it had a certain value  $P$  for Cárdenas, the same value may be transmitted to any number of sightseers.... It is assumed that since the Grand Canyon has a fixed interest value  $P$ , tours can be organized for any number of people. A man in Boston decides to spend his vacation at the Grand Canyon. He visits his travel bureau, looks at the folder, signs up for a two-week tour. He and his family take the tour, see the Grand Canyon, and return to Boston. May we say that this man has seen the Grand Canyon? Possibly he has. But it is more likely that what he has done is the one sure way not to see the canyon.

Percy argues that the tourist from Boston has not seen the canyon as it really is. Rather, his experience—unlike that of Cárdenas—is something preformulated. It may still be a pleasurable experience, but it is at best a step removed from how the Spanish explorer encountered the place. The sightseer, Percy says, measures his satisfaction by the degree to which the canyon conforms to his expectations. The opportunity for a novel encounter is gone.

What can people do to “recover the Grand Canyon”—that is, to recover the possibility of really seeing it as Cárdenas did? There are “any number of ways, all sharing in common the stratagem of avoiding the approved confrontation of the tour and the Park Service.” One way is to get off the beaten track, avoid the tours and the trails and the interpretive signs at developed overlooks. In doing so, Percy thinks, “he sees the canyon by avoiding all the facilities for seeing the canyon.” And, he continues, should “the benevolent Park Service” catch on and, enlightened agency that it is, wish to add its official blessing to *that* sort of behavior—perhaps by placing “the following notice in the Bright Angel Lodge: *Consult ranger for information on getting off the beaten track*—the end result will only be the closing of another access to the canyon”—the canyon as it really is.

Percy is challenging us to reconsider the basic, and usually unquestioned, role of the Park Service as intermediary between people and place. He is also indirectly questioning the assumption, almost sacrosanct, that the national park experience is somehow self-generatingly democratic, open to anyone so long as they are simply willing to follow the Park Service rules.

### **Restraint will set you free: Wallace Stegner (1955)**

Wallace Stegner was a key combatant in the 1950s fight over plans to build a dam in Echo Park within Dinosaur National Monument. Writing *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian*, his classic account of John Wesley Powell’s explorations of the West, had made Stegner very familiar with the river canyons of Dinosaur’s backcountry. Some have marked the battle over Echo Park as the beginning of the modern American environmental movement, and conservationists prevailed—against the odds—in no small part thanks to opposition worked up by David Brower and the Sierra Club. One of their most effective tools was a coffee-table book, *This is Dinosaur*, filled with stunning pictures of this little-known park, and animated by Stegner’s words.

Places like Dinosaur are much-needed refuges from the too-much world of human striving. How much wilderness do wilderness-lovers want? he asked.

The answer is easy: *Enough so that there will be in the years ahead a little relief, a little quiet, a little relaxation, for any of our increasing millions who need and want it.* That means we need as much wilderness as still can be saved.

For Stegner, wilderness was not to be saved because of its intrinsic value. It has none. “A place is nothing in itself,” he declared. “It has no meaning, it can hardly be said to exist, except in terms of human perception, use, and response.” Rather, places like Dinosaur can be saved only if we, the most powerful species of all, exercise self-restraint. The cardinal rule is Hippocratic: first, do no harm.

It is legitimate to hope that there may [be] in Dinosaur the special kind of human mark, the special record of human passage, that distinguishes man from all other species. It is simply the deliberate and chosen refusal to make any marks at all. Sometimes we have withheld our power to destroy, and have left threatened species like the buffalo, a threatened beauty spot like Yosemite or Yellowstone or Dinosaur, scrupulously alone. We are the most dangerous species of life on the planet, and every other species, even the earth itself, has cause to fear our power to exterminate. But we are also the only species which, when it chooses to do so, will go to great effort to save what it might destroy.

Soon after *This is Dinosaur's* publication in the spring of 1955, every member of Congress found a copy on his or her desk. And soon after that, plans for the dam which might have destroyed Dinosaur were dropped.

### **Not instruction but provocation: Freeman Tilden (1957)**

Freeman Tilden was not the first great interpreter in the National Park Service, but even three decades after his death he is still the most influential. His 1957 book *Interpreting Our Heritage* has never lost its influence as a touchstone for the agency. Tilden's six principles of interpretation, covering its nature, aims, and essential practices, are still a central part of NPS interpretive training. At the apex of these principles is this pronouncement: "The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation."

Not the least of the fruits of adequate interpretation is the certainty that it leads directly toward the very preservation of the treasure itself, whether it be a national park, a prehistoric ruin, a historic battlefield, or a precious monument of our wise and heroic ancestors. Indeed, such a result may be the most important end of our interpretation, for what we cannot protect we are destined to lose. I find in the park service administrative manual a concise and profound statement, and my heartiest thanks go to whoever it was that phrased it: 'Through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection.'

I would have every interpreter, everywhere, recite this to himself frequently almost like a canticle of praise to the Great Giver of all we have, for in the realest sense it is a suggestion of the religious spirit, the spiritual urge, the satisfaction of which must always be the finest end product of our preserved natural and man-made treasures.

### **After a million years of neglect, progress arrives: Edward Abbey (1968)**

An icon of American radical environmentalism, beloved by many and reviled by many more, Ed Abbey did stints as a seasonal ranger at Arches, Casa Grande Ruins, Organ Pipe Cactus, and Everglades. A devoted student and practitioner of anarchism, Abbey was both attracted to and repulsed by the federal government as keeper of public lands. In the preface to one of his most famous books, *Desert Solitaire*, he wrote:

Regrettably I have found it unavoidable to write some harsh words about my seasonal employer the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, United State Government. Even the Government itself has not entirely escaped censure. I wish to point out therefore that the Park Service has labored under severe pressure from powerful forces for many decades and that under the circumstances and so far it has done its work rather well. As governmental agencies go the Park Service is a good one, and better than most. This I attribute not to the administrators of the Park Service—like administrators everywhere they are distinguished chiefly by their ineffable mediocrity—but to the actual working rangers and naturalists in the field, the majority of whom are capable, honest, dedicated men.

Abbey celebrated Utah's desert solitude in a dumpy Park Service trailer for two seasons at Arches in the late 1950s. One day, though, it all came to an end when two road engineers showed up in a dusty Jeep, armed with surveying equipment and news of big development plans for Arches. Revisiting the park a few years later, he ruefully reported, "all that was foretold has come to pass."

Where once a few adventurous people came on weekends to camp for a night or two and enjoy a taste of the primitive and remote, you will now find serpentine streams of baroque automobiles pouring in and out.... The campgrounds where I used to putter around reading three-day-old newspapers full of lies and watermelon seeds have now been consolidated into one master campground that looks, during the busy season, like a suburban village; elaborate house trailers of quilted aluminum crowd upon gigantic camper-trucks of Fiberglas and molded plastic; through their windows you will see the blue glow of television and hear the studio laughter of Los Angeles.... Down at the beginning of the new road, at park headquarters, is the new entrance station and visitor center, where admission fees are collected and where rangers are quietly going nuts answering the same three basic questions five hundred times a day: (1) Where's the john? (2) How long's it take to see this place? (3) Where's the Coke machine?

Progress has come at last to the Arches, after a million years of neglect. Industrial Tourism has arrived.

### **"Proclamation to the Great White Father and All His People": The Alcatraz Takeover (1969–1971)**

In November 1969 a group of American Indians representing several tribes chartered a boat to Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay to claim it for Native people. The occupiers cited treatment under the government's Indian termination policy and numerous broken treaties as reasons for their action. They said they took over the island with the aim of building several facilities devoted to Native American culture and ecology.

To announce their action to the world, the activists issued a "Proclamation to the Great White Father and All His People," printed here in its entirety:

We, the native Americans, re-claim the land known as Alcatraz Island in the name of all American Indians by right of discovery.

We wish to be fair and honorable in our dealings with the Caucasian inhabitants of this land, and hereby offer the following treaty:

We will purchase said Alcatraz Island for twenty-four dollars (\$24) in glass beads and red cloth, a precedent set by the white man's purchase of a similar island about 300 years ago. We know that \$24 in trade goods for these 16 acres is more than was paid when Manhattan Island was sold, but we know that land values have risen over the years. Our offer of \$1.24 per acre is greater than the 47¢ per acre that the white men are now paying the California Indians for their land. We will give to the inhabitants of this island a portion of that land for their own, to be held in trust by the American Indian Affairs [sic] and by the bureau of Caucasian Affairs to hold in perpetuity—for as long as the sun shall rise and the rivers go down to the sea. We will further guide the inhabitants in the proper way of living. We will offer them our religion, our education, our life-ways, in order to help them achieve our level of civilization and thus raise them and all their white brothers up from their savage and unhappy state. We offer this treaty in good faith and wish to be fair and honorable in our dealings with all white men.

We feel that this so-called Alcatraz Island is more than suitable for an Indian Reservation, as determined by the white man's own standards. By this we mean that this place resembles most Indian reservations in that:

1. It is isolated from modern facilities, and without adequate means of transportation.
2. It has no fresh running water.
3. It has inadequate sanitation facilities.
4. There are no oil or mineral rights.
5. There is no industry and so unemployment is very great.
6. There are no health care facilities.
7. The soil is rocky and non-productive; and the land does not support game.
8. There are no educational facilities.
9. The population has always exceeded the land base.
10. The population has always been held as prisoners and kept dependent upon others.

Further, it would be fitting and symbolic that ships from all over the world, entering the Golden Gate, would first see Indian land, and thus be reminded of the true history of this nation. This tiny island would be a symbol of the great lands once ruled by free and noble Indians.

The protesters and their successors ended up occupying the island for 19 months until, finally, they were forcibly removed.

According to historian Troy Johnson, “The underlying goals of the Indians on Alcatraz were to awaken the American public to the reality of the plight of the first Americans and to assert the need for Indian self-determination. As a result of the occupation, either directly or indirectly, the official government policy of termination of Indian tribes was ended and a policy of Indian self-determination became the official US government policy.” In 2011 a permanent multimedia exhibit on the occupation was opened on Alcatraz, which is now part of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. NPS now acknowledges this episode of American Indian protest prominently, and recently Alcatraz was the site of a temporary installation of work by the prominent dissident Chinese artist and human rights activist Ai Weiwei.

### **Recognizing women’s rights, then and now: Judy Hart (1980)**

The National Park Service has an uncomfortable history when it comes to the role of women, as documented by Polly Welts Kaufman in *National Parks and the Women’s Voice*. Although women were tolerated as seasonal employees, helpmate wives of superintendents, and anthropologists in certain southwestern monuments, they were not generally admitted to professional positions until the 1960s.

Judy Hart, first superintendent of Women’s Rights National Historical Park, is representative of a generation of NPS professionals who began to press for women’s equality within the agency and greater recognition of women’s history at national parks. In a 2008 interview, she recalled entering the NPS in the late 1970s, when women rangers were protesting the NPS policy of gendered uniforms: “That was a boiling pot for the whole Park Service.... [O]ther organizations in the country had moved along a little faster with the appearance of equality.” As a new legislative specialist for the North Atlantic Region, she was tasked with developing proposals for new-area studies of places that qualified for inclusion in the national park system.

So I went to the files, and there were two things in there; there was a home of a general, so I asked around and nobody knew what war he’d been in. I thought, ‘This is ridiculous; we don’t know why he’s in here.’ As I recall, the other had something to do with Mark Twain, but ... it wasn’t a site that was central to his life. I thought about it for a while, and I thought, why don’t we do something that has to do with women?

With support from the regional office, Hart approached Peggy Lipson, her counterpart in the WASO (Washington headquarters) legislative office, for assistance in identifying sites. Lipson was willing but anticipated some resistance from the agency. She counseled that only places already designated as national landmarks had a realistic chance of being considered for park status. They found two good prospects: the Susan B. Anthony House in Rochester, New York, and the Elizabeth Cady Stanton House in Seneca Falls, New York. After several rounds of internal discussion and consultation with local and state preservationists, Hart and landscape architect Shary Berg, who had worked on the preservation of Val-Kill (Eleanor Roosevelt’s home), made a reconnaissance trip in December 1978.



They first stopped at the Anthony House in Rochester. To their surprise, the members of the Susan B. Anthony Memorial, which had owned and operated it as a house museum for more than thirty years, were not interested in national park status. “Then we went to the Stanton House. We hadn’t even gotten out of the car [before] we were met by the welcoming group, maybe eight people.... They all wanted to share with us how excited they were.” Hart, too, became excited about the Stanton House and even the Wesleyan Chapel, which had been altered almost to oblivion and was then being used as a laundromat with apartments above.

... the Stanton House was a bit of a challenge, and the Wesleyan Chapel was a complete disaster, from the perspective of the Park Service, because a big part of national significance is retaining integrity, and there is no way you could say Wesleyan Chapel retained its integrity.... Shary argued vehemently that we should not finish the study and submit it, that it just did not fit as a national park. I argued vehemently on the other side and said this was clearly a nationally significant story.... Women didn’t happen to always do their history in magnificent, glorious architectural gems, and they weren’t always preserved, and that’s part of the story. I always felt that the history of what happened in the Wesleyan Chapel was extremely important ... [and] the fact that it wasn’t honored as a place of a major event in women’s history.

The regional office agreed with Hart, as did the Washington office, and the new-area study resulted in a bill to create Women’s Rights National Historical Park, introduced early in 1980 by New York Senator Patrick Moynihan and New York Representative Jonathan Bing-ham. The bill quickly passed the House, then stalled in the Senate. But there was tremendous support on the Hill.

There were a couple of things that propelled it, in my observation. I was allowed and encouraged to go down repeatedly and do presentations on Capitol Hill and talk to anyone who was willing to talk to me.... Professional women aides were pretty new [then], but they were, as tends to happen, very well connected and networked. They worked and talked to each other all the time, and there was a great buzz about this park. As soon as word got out, they loved the idea. I was never privy to all the inner workings of things, but I couldn’t go anyplace that they hadn’t already heard about it. I’d go in and set up a slide show and people would come—that was just a major mark of honor, when you’re on the Hill, given all they have to pay attention to.

The Senate finally held a hearing in September, then nothing happened until Ronald Reagan won the presidential election in November. The Seneca Falls contingent, however, had been lobbying Senator Moynihan mercilessly. After Reagan was elected,

Everybody was trying to get their piece of legislation enacted during that Congress.... Sen. Moynihan got the subcommittee to vote on it, and the full Senate to vote on it December 13. I was in Canada for the Christmas holiday when I heard that Jimmy Carter had signed it on December 28 ... with a broken collarbone. I know they

have auto-signature machines very sophisticated at that level—but I always pictured his staff kind of holding his elbow and pushing his arm around so he could sign it.

### **“No, national parks are not America’s best idea”: Alan Spears (2016)**

The cultural resources director for the National Parks Conservation Association, Alan Spears posted an article under this title to the “African American Explorations” blog in February of this year. A long-term employee of NPCA, Spears grew up in southeast Washington, DC, across the street from the NPS-run Fort Dupont Park, as part of a family that made annual summer pilgrimages to Gettysburg. “I think it would be fair to say that America’s national parks mean a great deal to me,” he writes. But Spears is troubled by the ad nauseam repetition of the slogan “The national parks are America’s best idea”; they are not, he says, “and describing them as such may be preventing us from creating and sustaining the diverse constituency our national parks need to survive and thrive in their second century.”

Any African American worth his or her salt will tell you that national parks don’t crack the top 10 list of best ideas. The Emancipation Proclamation, the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution, the Voting Rights Act and Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1965, respectively, all occupy a higher place in the order of best ideas than our national parks. Gay men and lesbians probably feel the same way about the recent and long overdue Supreme Court ruling on marriage equality. Asian Pacific Islander Americans might add to this burgeoning list the repeal of racist exclusionary laws. For women, it may be the passage of the 19th Amendment.

Spears points out that the “best idea” language might actually alienate people:

Park enthusiasts moved to hyperbole by the majestic splendor of our National Park System often fail to see the arrogance at the heart of the ‘best idea’ sentiment. It’s the assumption that those who don’t get national parks have failed to embrace a universal concept. That they (we) need to be converted into believers not for the sake of park protection but to improve shoddy lives not yet blessed by a visit to Old Faithful.

Instead of lionizing them, Spears suggests that we regard national parks as “an ever-evolving concept filled with great promise” but also “in need of constant stewardship.” He believes people of color and from other underrepresented groups are ready to help create a more perfect national park system, but “only if we can have an honest discussion about when, where and why we enter the national parks movement, and where those magnificent sites fit into the long list of America’s best ideas.”

## **VISIONS**

### **Embracing the future: The first nationwide recreation study (1941)**

In 1941 the Department of the Interior published *A Study of the Park and Recreation Problem of the United States*, the most comprehensive survey of the topic yet undertaken. With a foreword by Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes, it was very much a product of

the New Deal and its emphasis on centralized planning. It concluded with a recreational plan for the whole country. The plan is notable for recognizing that the United States was rapidly changing, with more and more people moving to cities and suburbs, all of whom needed outlets for play and relaxation.

The plan was extraordinarily ambitious in seeking to reach *all* people regardless of class or income:

Every element and all types of population need areas and facilities for outdoor recreation. There is a paramount need, however, for public recreational areas, of all obtainable types and providing for a wide range of beneficial activities, within easy reach of all urban populations. There is a daily life, lived among man-reared walls, man-built streets, objectionable noises and smells, and, for a large percentage of them, in poor housing. To provide what they need for frequent use requires:

(a) Neighborhood playgrounds within easy walking distance (not more than a quarter of a mile) of all children.

(b) Playfields and neighborhood centers within half a mile to a mile of all citizens.

(c) Parks, or other areas characterized by natural or man-made beauty, sufficient in extent so that wear and tear will not be such as to render the cost of maintenance of their attractive features prohibitive, and sufficient in number and so distributed that all citizens, no matter how poor, may enjoy them at least occasionally. The limit of distance for areas of this type probably should not exceed two miles.

(d) Protection of urban and suburban streams and other waters from pollution and 'uglifying' uses; provision of points of access and facilities for use in such places and of such extent as prospective use will justify.

(e) Parkways along waterways and to connect major units of the recreational-area system.

The study helped set the stage for Mission 66, the expansion of urban parks under the Hartzog directorship, and, later, the Park Service's present-day cooperative programs (for which see Denis P. Galvin's NPS Centennial Essay in this issue).

### **The signs of where we came from: *With Heritage So Rich* (1966)**

Many people consider the country's most far-reaching historic preservation law to be the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. It created the National Register of Historic Places, the National Historic Landmarks program, the requirement that federal agencies evaluate the impact on historic and archaeological sites of all projects they carry out or issue permits for (Section 106 review), and the system of state historic preservation offices and officers

(SHPOs). The primary direct influence on the act was the publication, a few months previously, of a special report titled *With Heritage So Rich*. The report mixed essays, poetry, photography, and, critically, policy recommendations. All of these recommendations were incorporated into the law.

*With Heritage So Rich* originated in the 1964 United States Conference of Mayors. The conference, alarmed by the widespread loss of historic sites to “urban renewal” projects, convened a special committee to report on the situation nationally. The committee, some of whose members had been involved in drafting the landmark Venice Charter in 1964, began by touring eight European countries to search for international precedents to guide a new approach to historic preservation in the US.

One of the contributors was Sidney Hyman, an author and speechwriter for President Kennedy. Hyman had been one of the original students in Robert Maynard Hutchins’ Great Books program at the University of Chicago. He used that training to provide a big-picture context for historic preservation in his essay, “Empire for Liberty.” The wholesale clearing of historic structures and even whole neighborhoods to make way for freeways and other infrastructure, far from increasing the level of order in society, can actually threaten it:

A nation can be a victim of amnesia. It can lose the memories of what it was, and thereby lose the sense of what it is or wants to be. It can say it is being ‘progressive’ when it rips up the tissues which visibly bind one strand of its history to the next. It can say it is only getting rid of ‘junk’ in order to make room for the modern. What it often does instead, once it has lost the graphic source of its memories, is to break the perpetual partnership that makes for orderly growth in the life of a society.

It is, Hyman thought, this strange, wonderful partnership between the people of the past and those of the present that provides the continuity which must be the basis of any notion of national identity.

What we want to conserve, therefore, is the evidence of individual talent and tradition, of liberty and union among successive generations of Americans. We want the signs of where we came from and how we got to where we are, the thoughts that we had along the way and what we did to express the thoughts in action. We want to know the trails that were walked, the battles that were fought, the tools that were made. We want to know the beautiful or useful things that were built and the originality that was shown, the adaptations that were made and the grace-notes to life that were sounded. We want to know the experiments in community living that were tried and the lessons that were taught by a brave failure as well as by a brave success. It is all these things and more like them that we want to keep before our eyes as part of our lived life as a people, and as connecting links between a past which millions of Americans helped make and a future we must continue to make.

The fruits of *With Heritage So Rich* go beyond the National Historic Preservation Act. The book continues to be a touchstone for American historic preservation today, 50 years after it was published.

## **From memory to action: Creating a coalition of sites of conscience (2000)**

In December 1999, representatives from nine historic site museums (led by New York's Lower East Side Tenement Museum) met in Bellagio, Italy, and decided to form the International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience, now known simply as the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience. Sites of conscience define their mission in terms of (1) interpreting history through historic sites; (2) engaging in public programs that stimulate dialogue on pressing social issues; (3) promoting humanitarian and democratic values as a primary function; and (4) sharing opportunities for public involvement in issues raised at the site. They explore issues such as racism, sexism, totalitarianism, immigration, forced removal, and genocide. Today, the coalition has more than 200 members that adhere to the four principles noted above. Members include actual places (memorials, historic sites, museums), memory initiatives (group efforts that publicly remember an event), and nongovernmental organizations.

NPS played a key role in the founding meeting, and one of its leading representatives was Marie Rust, the director of the Northeast Region. After her return, she briefed Director Robert Stanton on how the meeting had fired the imaginations of those who participated:

It is safe to say that the participating site directors came without high expectations. They arrived simply content to share program ideas and experience with other like minded institutions. They left having formed the basis of a potentially powerful coalition promoting a new role for historic sites in the world. We look forward to the day when visitors to historic sites will learn not only the history of that site but be involved in dialogue concerning the contemporary implications of the issues raised there ... and emerge as better citizens for having had the experience. In this view, historic sites become places of engagement and partners in the process of building and sustaining democracies.

"Reaching across boundaries of nation, political systems, race, and language, these discussions inspired an outpouring of support and generosity," Rust reported, resulting in the group deciding "unanimously and unequivocally to form an International Coalition to strengthen each participating site and empower emerging sites around the world."

NPS also played an important role in introducing the new coalition to the press and public in the United States by helping organize a weeklong tour in May 2000. In a press release announcing the tour, Rust said:

These museums feature controversial moments in history that people around the world are remembering and showcasing. Our stories can inform and guide our visiting public not to repeat the mistakes of the past, but to apply lessons learned towards improving the future. No story exists in isolation. The stories we tell at Women's Rights, Independence, Gettysburg, Ellis Island and throughout the National Park System have international relevance and need to be portrayed within the whole context of world history. Working together in an international network, we will be far more effective than working on our own.

Today, the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience remains “dedicated to transforming places that preserve the past into dynamic spaces that promote civic action on today’s struggles for human rights and justice.” As the coalition notes, millions of people visit memorials every day, and many use such spaces to express or discover personal connections to political issues. Sites of conscience can be safe outlets for people to come together and make civic choices that shape and sustain democracy.

### **A pact between generations: Rethinking National Parks for the 21st Century (2001)**

“The creation of a national park is an expression of faith in the future. It is a pact between generations, a promise from the past to the future.” With these words, the National Park System Advisory Board opened its 2001 report *Rethinking National Parks for the 21st Century*. Chaired by the historian John Hope Franklin, the board was responding to a request from Director Stanton for a broad-brush look at the purposes and prospects for the national park system over the first quarter of the new century.

The tenor of the report is to acknowledge the successes and popularity of the parks while pushing for even loftier standards and aims. Ninety-five percent of the public may approve of the parks; nonetheless, “[i]t is time to re-examine the ‘enjoyment equals support’ equation and to encourage public support of resource protection at a higher level of understanding.” The agency, too, needs a spur: it is “beloved and respected, yes; but perhaps too cautious, too resistant to change, too reluctant to engage the challenges that must be addressed in the 21st century.” The report made eight recommendations (quoted verbatim here). NPS should:

- Embrace its mission, as educator, to become a more significant part of America’s educational system by providing formal and informal programs for students and learners of all ages inside and outside park boundaries.
- Encourage the study of the American past, developing programs based on current scholarship, linking specific places to the narrative of our history, and encouraging a public exploration and discussion of the American experience.
- Adopt the conservation of biodiversity as a core principle in carrying out its preservation mandate and participate in efforts to protect marine as well as terrestrial resources.
- Advance the principles of sustainability, while first practicing what is preached.
- Actively acknowledge the connections between native cultures and the parks, and assure that no relevant chapter in the American heritage experience remains unopened.
- Encourage collaboration among park and recreation systems at every level—Federal, regional, state, local—in order to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.
- Improve the Service’s institutional capacity by developing new organizational talents and abilities and a workforce that reflects America’s diversity.

Since 2001 progress has been made toward all eight recommendations, but every single one is still on NPS’s agenda. And they likely will be for the foreseeable future. The board probably sensed this. “The National Park Service has a twenty-first century responsibility of great importance,” they concluded. “It is to proclaim anew the meaning and value of parks,



conservation, and recreation; to expand the learning and research occurring in parks and share that knowledge broadly; and to encourage all Americans to experience these special places.”

As a people, our quality of life—our very health and well-being—depends in the most basic way on the protection of nature, the accessibility of open space and recreation opportunities, and the preservation of landmarks that illustrate our historic continuity. By caring for the parks and conveying the park ethic, we care for ourselves and act on behalf of the future. The larger purpose of this mission is to build a citizenry that is committed to conserving its heritage and its home on earth.

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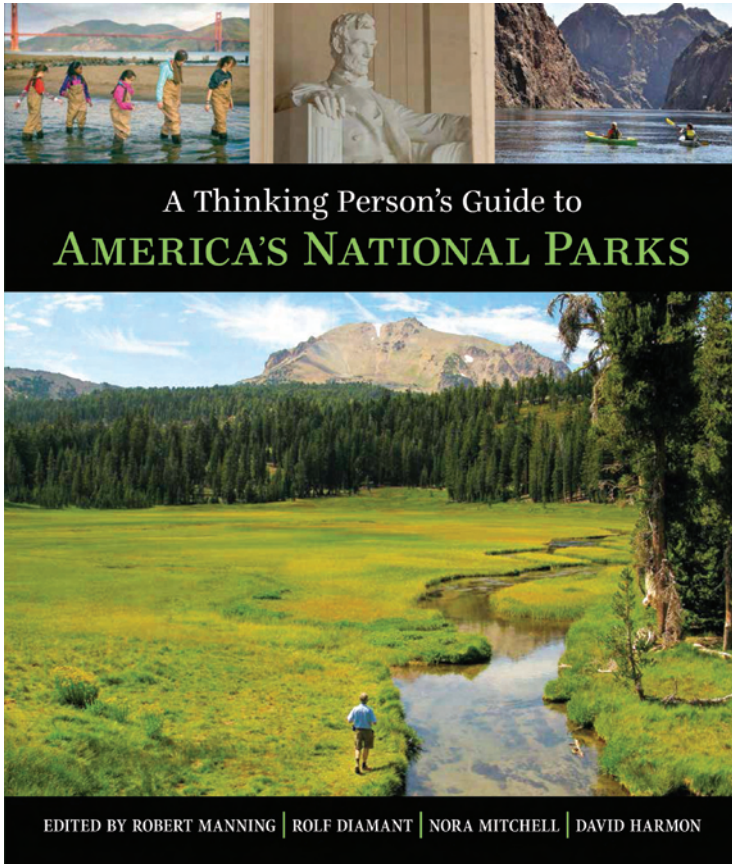
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