



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Everything you ever wanted to know about National Park Service Planning

Or, what are those crazy people thinking?

2012 WVDOT/MPO/FHWA Transportation Planning and Programming Conference

October 3, 2012

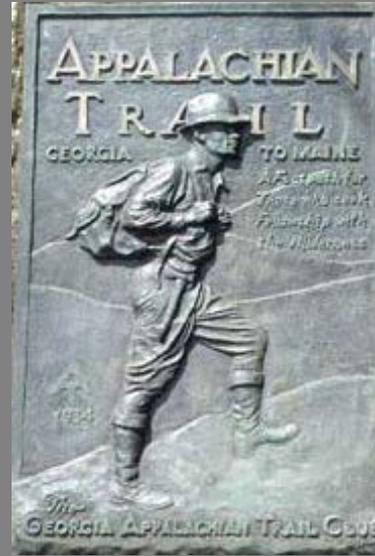


397 National Parks, 24 Designations, One System





Six Units of the National Park System in WV



- Bluestone National Scenic River
- Appalachian National Trail
- New River Gorge National River
- Harpers Ferry National Historic Site
- C and O Canal National Historical Park
- Gauley River National Recreation Area





Constant Tradeoffs . . .





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Or





Constant Tradeoffs . . .



Or





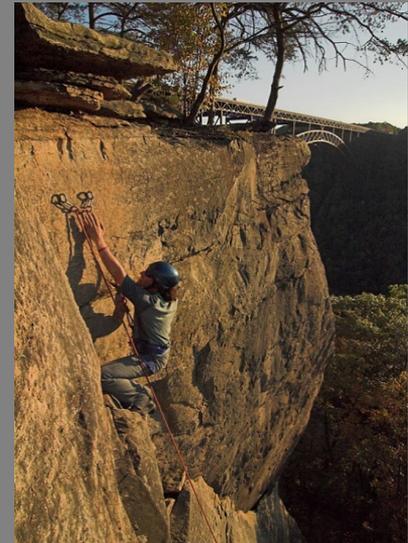
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Or



Or





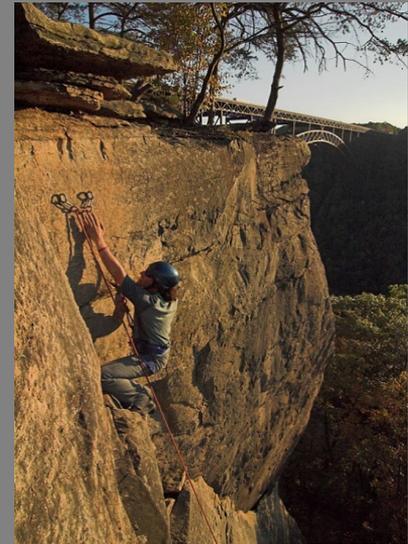
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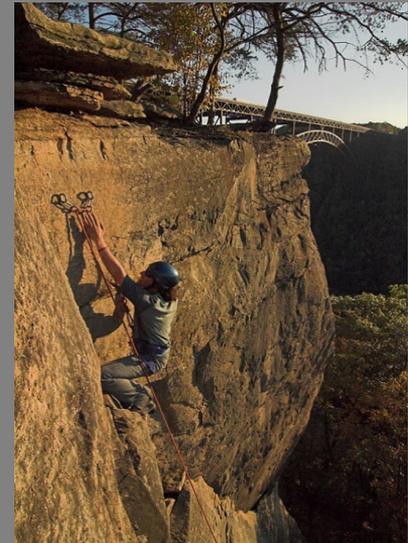
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Or





It's in our DNA! A Dual Mission

The 1916 National Park Service Organic Act

“which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”



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The Definition:



- National Parks are the places Congress has decided America will keep *forever* to tell the national story.



How do we Balance? We Plan, Plan, Plan . . .

“Park staffs plan for one reason: to ensure that the decisions made for each park achieve the park’s purpose as cost-effectively and consistently as possible.”





Park Planning is Mandated By Law

- **NPS Organic Act of 1916**
- **NPS General Authorities Act of 1970**
- **“Redwood Amendment”**
- **National Parks and Recreation Act (1978)**
- **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (1969)**
- **National Historic Preservation Act (1969), Sections 106 and 110**
- **Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) (1993)**





And Policy—Lots of Policy

NPS Management Policies

NPS Director's Order 2 – Park Planning

Park Planning Program Standards

Planners' Sourcebook

NPS Director's Order 12 – Conservation
Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis,
and Decision-Making

DO-12 Handbook

Plus about 70 other Director's Orders and their
manuals





Guiding Principles of Park Planning

Logical Framework

Analysis

**Partner and Public
Involvement**

Accountability



Framework for Park Planning



Foundation

- Park Purpose
- Park Significance
- Fundamental Resources and Values
- Primary Interpretive Themes
- Other Determinations
- Park Atlas Maps
- Assessment of Planning Needs

Dynamic Planning Portfolio

**Management
Plans**

**Comprehensive
Plans**

**Strategic
Plans**

**Studies/
Inventories**

Monitor

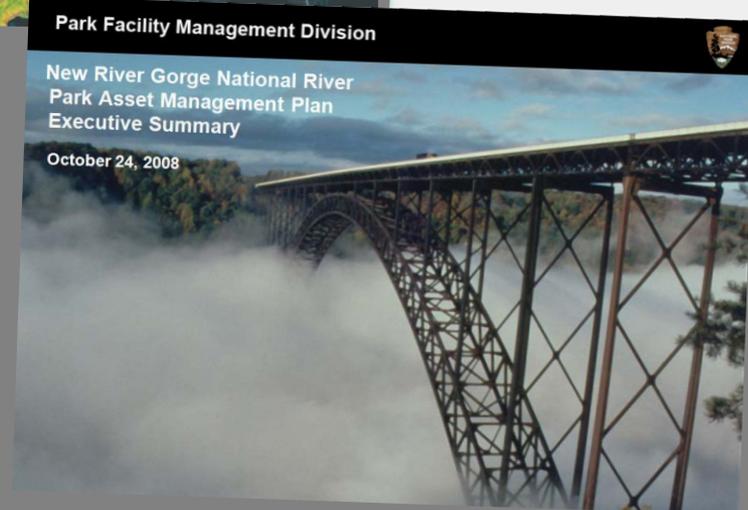
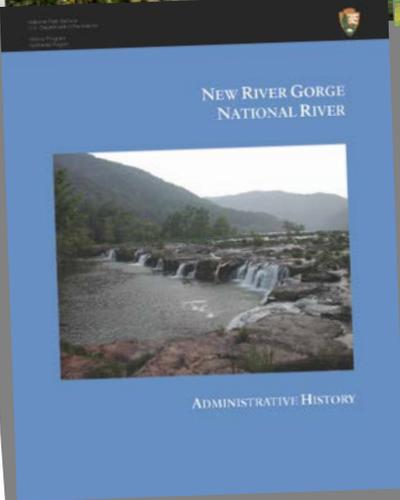
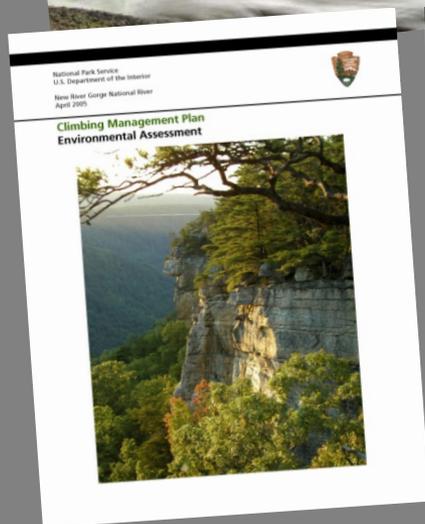
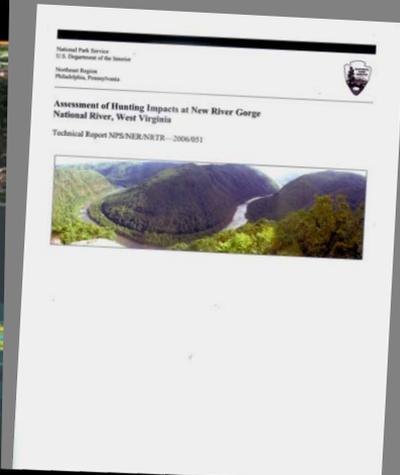
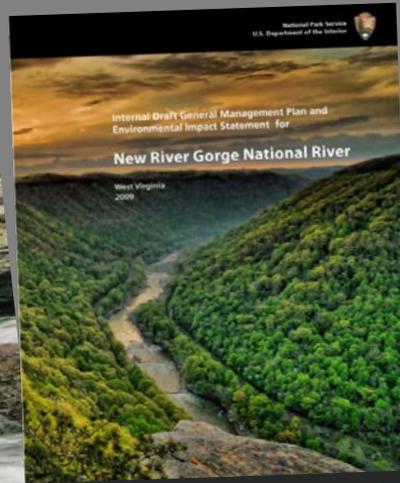


Six Types of NPS Plans

	Long Range (approximately 15 – 20 years)	Foreseeable Future (approximately 5 years)	Current Year
<i>Why?</i> <i>Purpose</i> <i>Significance</i>	FOUNDATION FOR PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT		
<i>What?</i> <i>Conditions</i> <i>Results</i>	GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN	STRATEGIC PLANS	ANNUAL PERFORM- ANCE PLANS
<i>How?</i> <i>Mngt.</i> <i>Activities</i> <i>Projects</i>	PROGRAM MANAGEMENT PLANS	IMPLE- MENTATION PLANS	



Park Planning Portfolio





The Foundation Plan: the Key to Understanding Park Decisions

Each park's purpose is defined:

- 1) In part by the fundamental purpose of the National Park Service, which is to conserve park resources and values and to provide for their enjoyment in ways that leave them unimpaired, and*
- 2) in part by more specific direction included in each park's individual authorizing legislation or presidential proclamation.*





Foundation Planning



Question Answered:

What's most important about the park?

Goal:

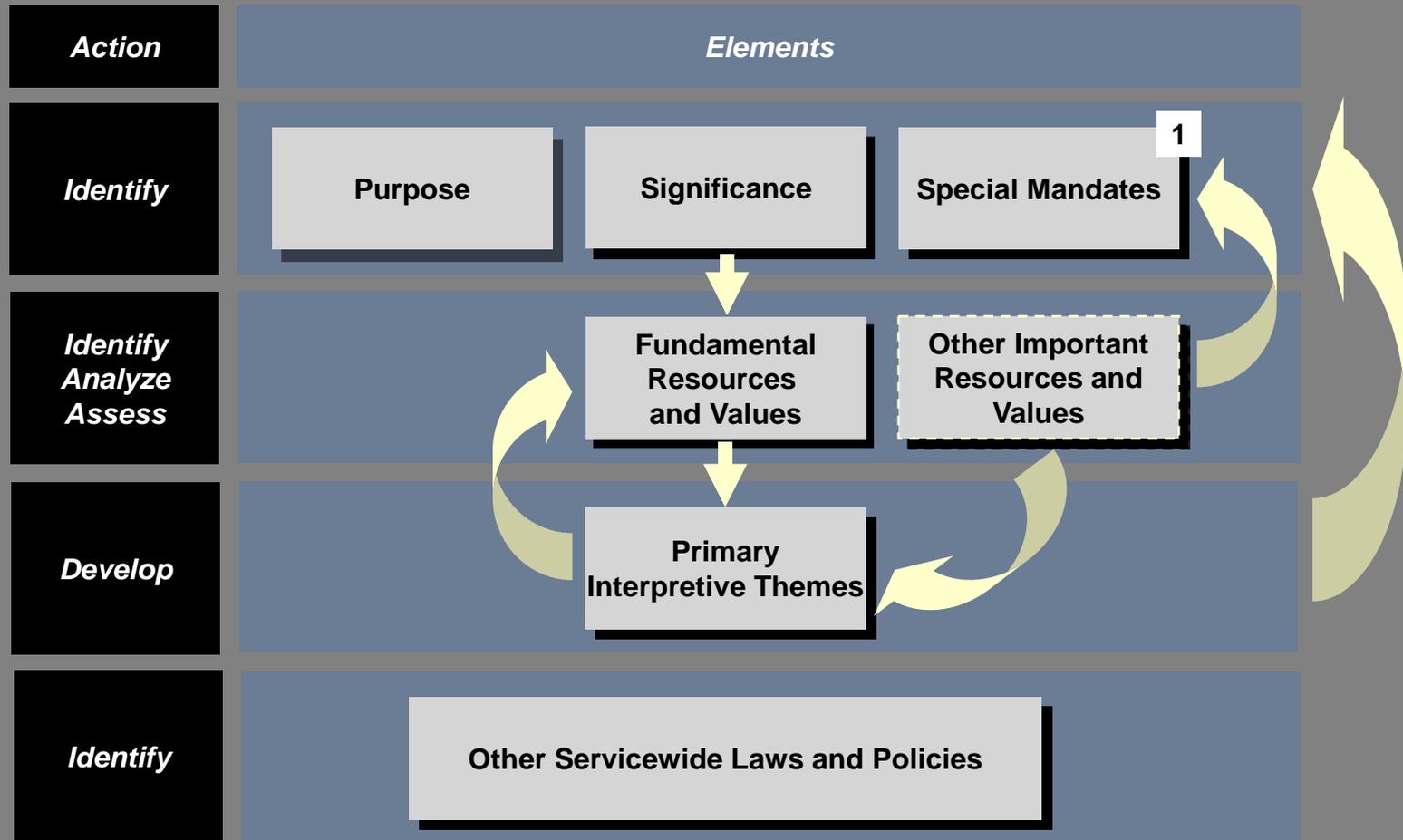
- a single shared understanding about what is most important about the park

Foundation Plan Activities:

- affirm the park purpose and significance
- identify fundamental and other important resources and values



The Foundation Plan is the Key





Foundation Planning – Park Purpose

The purposes of the New River Gorge National River are to:

- *preserve an important segment of the free-flowing New River*
- *conserve outstanding resources and values in and around the New River Gorge, including geologic and hydrologic features, terrestrial and aquatic wildlife communities, historic and archeological resources, cultural heritage, and scenic character*
- *provide public understanding and appreciation of the park's natural, cultural, scenic, and recreational resources and values*





Foundation Planning – Park Significance and Fundamental Resources



Park significance is expressed as a set of statements as to why, within a national, regional, and NPS systemwide context, New River Gorge National River's resources and values are important enough to warrant national park designation

Park fundamental resources are qualities of the park that are critical to achieving the park's purpose and maintaining its significance



Park Significance



Significance Statement 1 Geologic Features

Flowing water is the definitive creative force of the New River Gorge. The New River, one of the oldest rivers in the world, continues to sculpt the longest and deepest river gorge in the Appalachian Mountains.

- *nationally significant concentration of geologic features*
- *exposure of four coal seams, considered among the best bituminous coal in the world*



Park Significance



Significance Statement 2

The River and Its Resources

The waters of the New River system contain a mosaic of hydrologic features and aquatic habitats, support a unique aquatic ecosystem, and nourish a riparian zone that supports rare plants, animals, and communities.

- *variety and density of hydrologic features*
- *highly productive aquatic ecosystem*
- *globally rare communities and essential habitat for rare species*
- *clean water*



Park Significance



Significance Statement 3

The Park's Forest

New River Gorge National River lies at the core of a globally significant forest, contains the most diverse flora of any river gorge in central and southern Appalachia, and provides essential habitat for endangered mammals and rare birds and amphibians

- *globally significant populations of birds and salamanders*
- *nationally significant extent of forest*
- *nationally significant floral diversity*



Park Significance



Significance Statement 4

Outstanding Historic Features

New River Gorge National River contains a large, outstanding and representative group of historic places that testify to the experiences of those diverse people who settled and developed this part of Appalachia between the 19th and mid-20th centuries.

- *rare and nationally significant colliery structures*
- *railroad, timber and subsistence farming*
- *knowledge and cultural values*
- *“other” significant resources*



Park Significance



Significance Statement 5 Dramatic Views

Broad views of unbroken forest, steep gorge walls, and a river both tranquil and turbulent are punctuated by pastoral landscapes and industrial ruins to produce dramatic and vivid views from the river, along trails and rural roads, and from rocky overlooks.

- *panoramic views of the gorge*
- *cultural landscapes*
- *natural visibility*



Park Significance



Significance Statement 6 Exceptional Opportunities for Visitors

New River Gorge National River affords exceptional opportunities for exploration, adventure, discovery, solitude and community.

- *nationally significant recreational opportunities*
- *tranquil setting and largely natural soundscape*
- *diverse opportunities for educational experiences*



The Goal: To Prevent Impairment

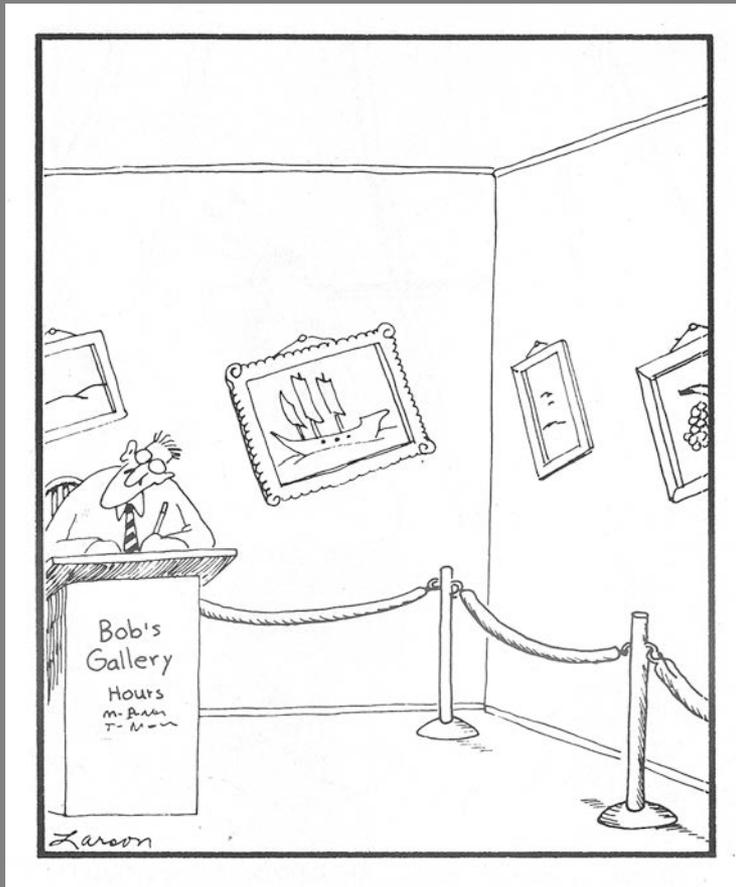


“The impairment that is prohibited by the Organic Act and the General Authorities Act is an impact that, in the professional judgment of the responsible NPS manager, would harm the integrity of park resources or values, including the opportunities that would be present for the enjoyment of these resources and values.”

NPS Management Policies 2006



Impairment: A matter of perspective



Does a proposed change affect a resource or value whose conservation is

- Necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation?
- Key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park or to opportunities to enjoy the park?
- Identified in the park's general management plan or other relevant planning documents as significant?

Park managers must document their decisions to allow change (especially relating to road and construction projects) in Findings of Non-Impairment



Thank You!