



HARPERS FERRY CENTER, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION

5.0.01 DIRECTOR OF LANDSCAPE DIVISION AT THE NPS, THOMAS VINT, PRESENTING A MASTER PLAN IN AN OFFICE, 1934

## 5.0 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



5.0.02 YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA, 1922



5.0.03 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE INDIAN ARROWHEAD LOGO

## 5.0 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The National Park Service was created to conserve areas of national importance for the “enjoyment of present and future generations.”<sup>1</sup> It stewards dramatic landscapes such as the Grand Canyon National Park as well as places of historical significance like George Washington Birthplace National Monument. Together this network of parks and monuments serve to show the nation’s heritage. The National Park Service was first established in 1916 as part of the Department of the Interior. It has grown to include 390 parks, totaling approximately 84.4 million acres of land.

### 5.1 Formation

The notion of a national park system is usually attributed to the artist George Catlin. Upon visiting the Dakotas in 1832, he wrote that these landscapes should be preserved “by some great protecting policy of government ... A nation’s park, containing man and beast, in all the wild and freshness of their nature’s beauty!”<sup>1</sup>

Thirty-two years later, in 1864, Yosemite Valley was donated by Congress for preservation as a state park. In 1874, the Yellowstone country was reserved by Congress and administered by the Department of the Interior. In 1866 the U.S. Army took over the administration of the park in an attempt to control the poaching that was depleting the park’s resources. In 1906, the government passed the Antiquities Act, preserving Indian ruins and artifacts as well as national monuments. It was not until 1916 that legislation was approved to create the National Park Service (NPS) within the Department of the Interior to manage all of these resources.



5.1.01 THE WESTERN OFFICE STAFF REVIEWING MASTER PLANS



5.1.02 “RUSTIC-STYLE” ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK, 1928

From 1916 to 1942 the character of the NPS developed as “landscape architects, architects, and engineers forged a cohesive style of landscape design which fulfilled the demands for park development while preserving the outstanding natural qualities”<sup>2</sup> of each park. Many of these early parks were in the dramatic landscapes in the western interior of the country. Thus the NPS focused on landscape or scenic preservation.<sup>3</sup> It identified wilderness areas to be preserved with limited access and camouflaged any new development. The design vocabulary came from the 19<sup>th</sup> century English gardening tradition, which gained popularity in America through the park designs of Fredrick Law Olmstead as well as the writings of Andrew Jackson Downing.<sup>4</sup> The style was employed to “create a systemwide identity for the national parks in the 1920’s.”<sup>5</sup> This identity is the basis of what now makes up the “National Park Experience.”

The identity of the national parks evolved with input from many NPS staff members. But it was Thomas Vint, the landscape architect within the NPS, who most greatly influenced the design of national parks with his formulation of the “master plan” or, as it was later known, the “general management plan” (GMP).

Vint began working for the NPS in 1922, as one of the two staff members who made up the entire landscape architecture and planning division. By 1927 he was chief of this division and by the late 1920’s, the expanded landscape division had devised the GMP, which quickly became the procedure for park development. The primary aim of the GMP was to produce “rational, comprehensive plans that would coordinate and control all aspects of park development.”<sup>6</sup> This methodology of park development is used in the NPS today.

## 5.2 Legislation

The National Park Service was brought into existence by legislation that was approved by both houses of Congress. National Parks are also created in this manner, but can also be formed by presidential decree under the Antiquities Act. The act that created the NPS is commonly known by the unofficial title, the “Organic Act,” and the act that creates a national park the “Enabling Legislation.”<sup>1</sup> The “Organic Act” outlines the purpose of the NPS, and the “Enabling Legislation” describes the particular national park’s purpose, boundaries, resources and the mechanism for revisions.

The “Organic Act,” establishing the National Park Service within the Department of the Interior, was enacted on Aug. 25, 1916. It is contained within Title 16, Chapter 1, Subchapter I of the United States Code.<sup>2</sup>

*“The service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations hereinafter specified ... 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.”*

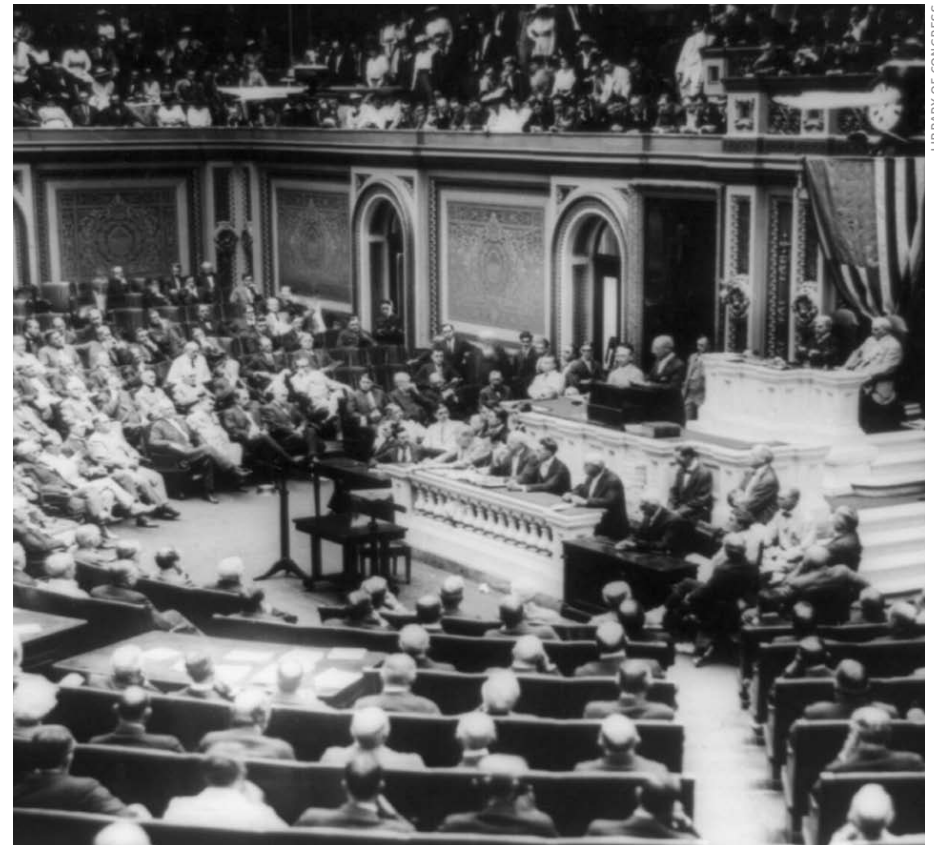
Title 16, Chapter 1, Subchapter I, 1

Thus the NPS’s role fundamentally serves as a “pact between generations,” in perpetuity.<sup>3</sup> The present generation is responsible for continuing the conservation of resources from past generations, so that future generations may enjoy them and continue the tradition of conservation. However, this does not mean that the NPS has a static management system. In fact, changes happen as the cultural climate evolves and the NPS continues to “envision and ensure a system of parks and programs that benefits a new generation of citizens in a changing world.”<sup>4</sup>

The “Organic Act” not only defines the mission of the NPS, it also defines the purpose of the national parks as a collective system.

*“The national park system ... though distinct in character, are united through their inter-related purposes and resources into one national park system as cumulative expressions of a single national heritage; that, individually and collectively, these areas derive increased national dignity and recognition of their superb environmental quality through their inclusion jointly with each other in one National park system preserved and managed for the benefit and inspiration of all the people of the United States”*

Title 16, Chapter 1, Subchapter I, 1a-1



5.2.01 CONGRESS IN SESSION, 1890-1920

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



5.3.01 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RANGER

### 5.3 Gateway Legislation

Gateway National Recreation Area belongs to this National Park System. Gateway was established in Title 16, Chapter 1, Subchapter LXXXVII, 460cc of the United States Code, ratified on Oct. 27, 1972. Gateway NRA in New York and New Jersey and Golden Gate NRA in San Francisco were established on the same day, and were the first urban national recreation areas in the National Park System. These parks were a new interpretation of the mandate of the NPS, which was for the first time creating national parks for the urban populations for the purpose of recreation in addition to the preservation of natural or historic sites.

While Gateway and Golden Gate were the first urban National Recreation Areas, neither the “Organic Act” nor the “Enabling Legislation” has a separate definition for what makes a NRA different from other national parks. Thus, the NRA’s more complex intent of providing recreation areas as well as conserving natural and cultural features creates new precedents for those interpreting the legislation. In turn, deciding what is to be conserved and protected, and what should be developed for recreation opportunities “for current and future generations” is subject to intensive debate. For example, the creation of ball fields is likely to take away from the preservation of the natural ecology of an area, but not having ball fields could also be seen as not fulfilling the park’s role of providing recreation opportunities.

The legislation states that Gateway was established “to preserve and protect for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations an area possessing outstanding natural and recreational features.”<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that though Gateway contains significant historical resources, many of these sites were still in operation, or only recently closed, at the time of the establishment of the park. Therefore, they were not yet held in the historical esteem they have since gained.

The legislation also singles out the primary character of the three units. Staten Island and Sandy Hook Units were designated with the aim of “having present and potential historical, cultural, or architectural significance and shall provide for appropriate programs for the preservation, restoration, interpretation, and utilization of them.”<sup>2</sup> While Jamaica Bay Unit has “the primary aim of conserving the natural resources, fish, and wildlife located therein and shall permit no development or use of this area which is

incompatible with this purpose.”<sup>3</sup> The William Fitts Ryan Visitor Center located on Floyd Bennett Field in the Jamaica Bay Unit, is designated as “the principal visitor center within the recreation area.”<sup>4</sup> However, the legislation is only specific only about the name of the principal visitor center not its location.

The legislation also provides the means for areas of Gateway to be acquired through the transfer or donation of federal, state, city, or private land. Six areas are defined as comprising Gateway: Jamaica Bay Unit; Breezy Point Unit; Sandy Hook Unit; Staten Island Unit; Hoffman and Swinburne Islands; and “all submerged lands, islands and waters within one-fourth of a mile of the mean low water line of any waterfront area included above.”<sup>5</sup> This land transfer included two very popular beachfronts: Sandy Hook, a large part of which was previously a New Jersey State park and Jacob Riis Park, which was a New York City park. There were also two well-used New York City parks that were included in the transfer: Great Kills Park on Staten Island and Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge in Queens. Gateway’s legislation also designates special provisions for Breezy Point and Broad Channel, which have portions that have remained private residential land within the park. The last large portion of land was transferred in 1995, when the U.S. Navy ceased operation at Fort Wadsworth on Staten Island and ceded it to the Department of the Interior.

The legislation allows for the development of water resources for erosion control, beach protection, navigational improvements, and the “hunting, fishing, shell fishing, trapping, and the taking of specimens on the lands and waters.”<sup>6</sup> Also permitted are the maintenance, operation and upgrade of airway facilities at Floyd Bennett Field. These permissions are granted by the creation of relevant mutually acceptable plans from the various federal authorities.

An advisory committee of 15 people representing national, state and city interests was established by the legislation, for the purposes of guiding the interpretation of the legislation to create Gateway and its GMP. The term of this committee was 20 years from the establishment of Gateway. It was disbanded in 1992. Further, Gateway’s legislation authorizes the appropriation of “not more than \$92,813,000 (July 1971 dollar value) for the development of the recreation area.”<sup>7</sup> This budget was used to build the necessary facilities within the park so that it could be opened to the public. Gateway is now

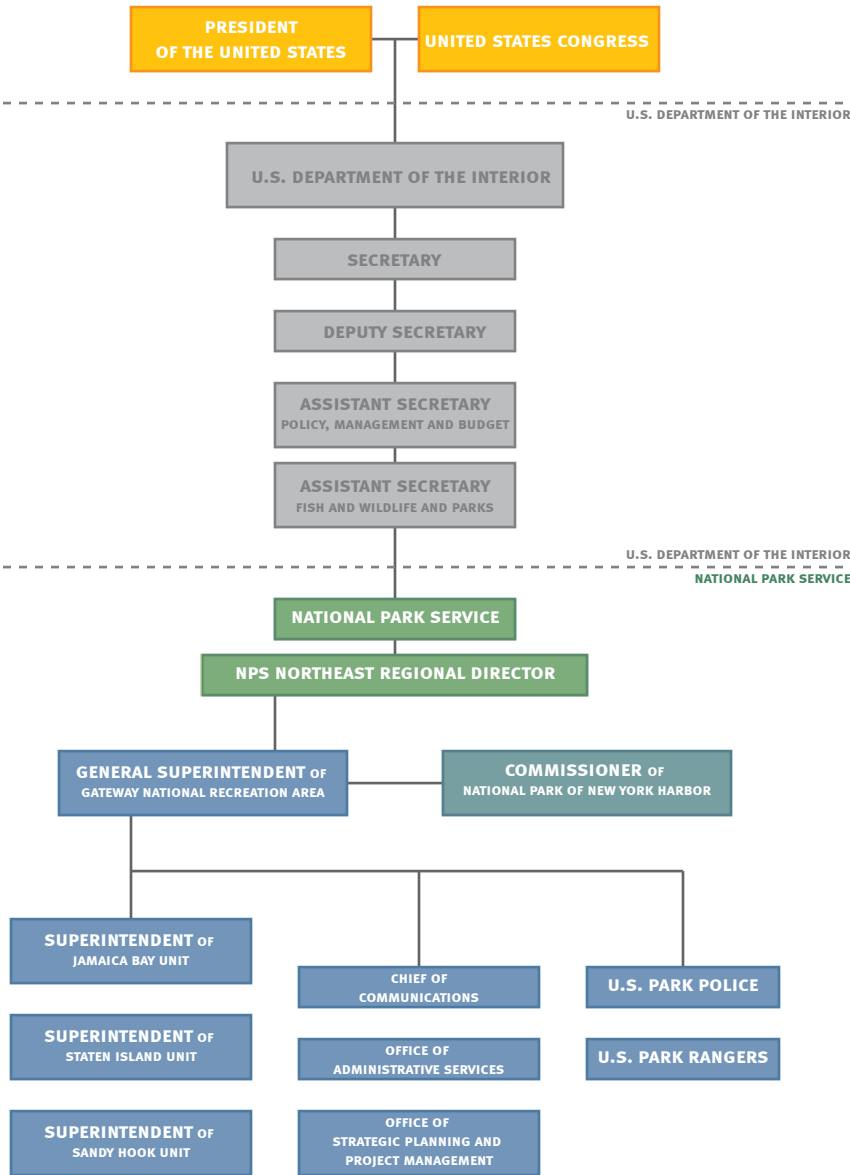
funded like all other national parks, with “an annually appropriated base budget, plus competitively awarded funds for particular purposes.”<sup>8</sup>

The broad purpose and character of Gateway, set out by the “Enabling Legislation” are interpreted and developed in detail within a GMP written for the park, approved by Congress and published in 1979. A GMP can be revised many times over the course of a national park’s development, and Gateway’s GMP was written for a lifespan of 20 years ending in 1999. A new GMP will be developed by the NPS. During this interim period, the 1979 GMP is still being used to guide current park development.



5.3.02 STATEN ISLAND INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM, 1990

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



5.4.01 SIMPLIFIED DIAGRAM OF THE GATEWAY CHAIN OF COMMAND

### 5.4 Gateway Management

Some major changes to a national park such as boundaries, or in the park’s legislated mission and purpose, need to be approved by the president and Congress. There is a chain of command that is followed by each member of the National Park Service.<sup>1</sup> Each member has a different decision-making role – from the park ranger through to the superintendents; regional managers to the NPS director; and the secretary of the Department of the Interior to the presidential administration and Congress.

On the day-to-day level, the park rangers and park police are the public face of the NPS. They shape the experience for the visitors by maintaining the park, ensuring public safety, providing directions and explaining sites of interest. These services maintain the identity of the park, which is guided by different levels of management and the GMP; all of which interpret the legislation that created the national park.

The legislation that created Gateway was passed by Congress on Oct. 27, 1972. Two years later, the park was opened to the public, but it was seven years before the GMP was approved. The plan is intended to further develop the broad intent of the legislation, which seeks “to preserve and protect for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations an area possessing outstanding natural and recreational features,”<sup>2</sup> and to set objectives tailored for resources within Gateway. The plan sets these guiding principles that will then be further developed for individual projects within the park, such as the Aviator Sports and Recreation concession that was recently completed at Floyd Bennett Field or the multi-use path in the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge.

Concessions are independent, profit-making ventures within a national park that offer services other than those considered part of the NPS’s core mission. At Gateway this ranges from food and drink stands at the beach to horse-riding facilities, marinas, book and souvenir shops, and sports centers. These concessions are expected to increase and attract a wider range of visitors to the national parks they serve. These concessionaires are not part of the management structure of a national park but are contracted out.

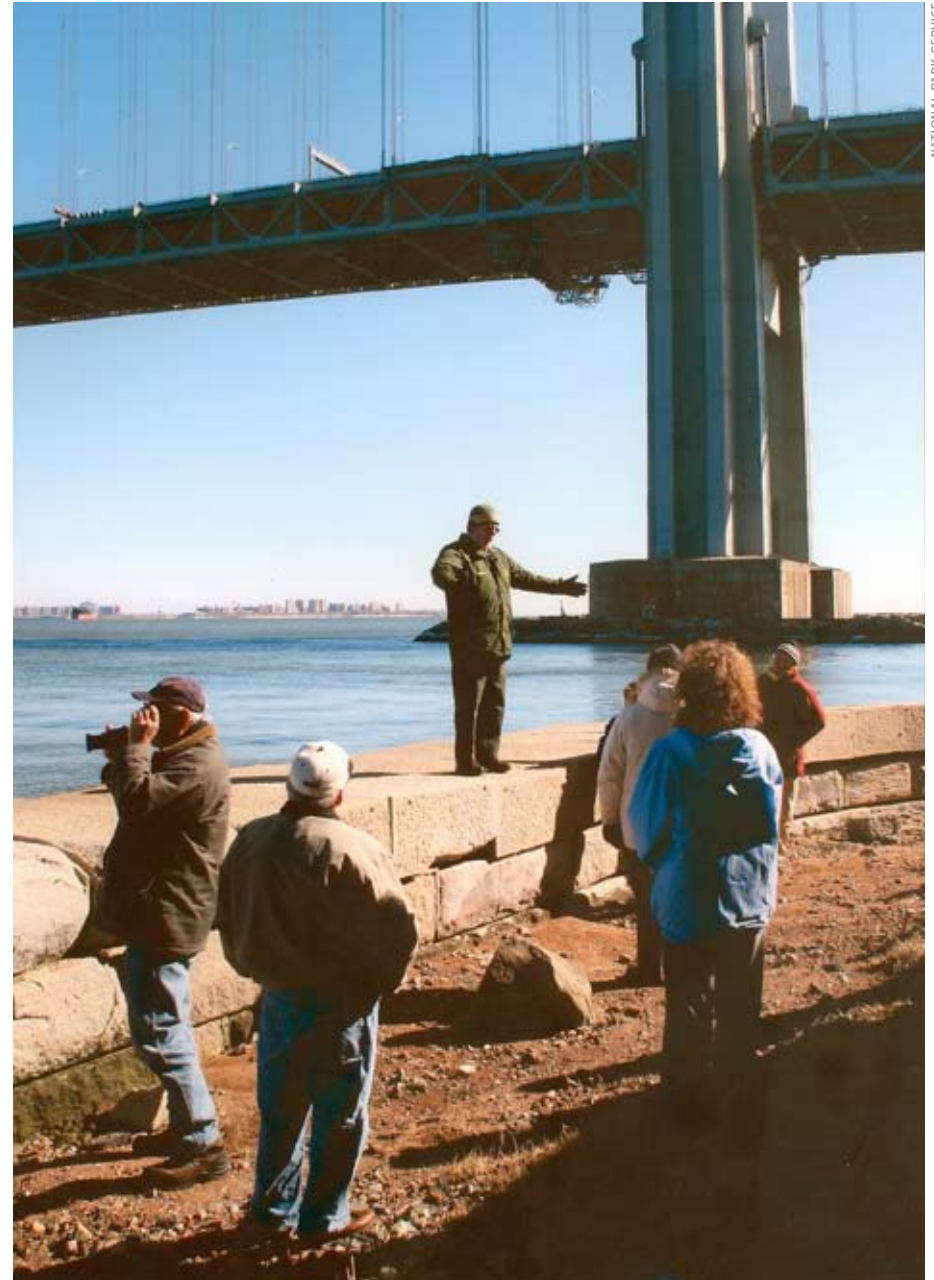
Gateway is a national park within the North East Regional Directorate of the NPS. It has a particularly complex administrative structure as it is a park within a larger park system that consists of many different significant sites. In 2001, the NPS and the National Park

Foundation created a public-private partnership for a new network of parks known as the National Parks of New York Harbor, of which Gateway is a part. This national park has a commissioner who organizes collaborative programs between all the parks within the National Parks of New York Harbor system. However, this commissioner has no authority over the individual parks within the system.

Gateway is managed by a general superintendent who oversees all the units (Sandy Hook, Staten Island, Jamaica Bay) that comprise Gateway. Then each unit also has its own superintendent who looks after each specific unit and reports to the general superintendent. Because of the complexity of Jamaica Bay Unit, it also has district rangers who take care of each district and a director who coordinates the research within the unit. Each park unit also has a team of rangers, some of whom specialize in maintenance, the interpretation of unique parts of the park or coordinate educational tours. Gateway also relies on a team of about 4,000 volunteers who work as guides for tour groups, man visitor centers, perform conservation work or help with the maintenance of the park.

In addition to this general structure, there are members of the staff who specialize in understanding and managing the specific resources of the park. These specializations include cultural resources such as historical sites, structures, and views; natural resources such as wetlands, forests, and beaches; and strategic planning such as opportunities for partnerships with both private and public entities, concessions and public outreach. While the division of staff members with expertise in natural and cultural areas streamlines park management, these divisions may contribute to a lack of overall strategic vision relative to conceiving the park as an overall system and experience.

As Gateway is part of the National Park System, its managers have to answer to the highest level of governance. However, the park also has a management system to ensure that its regional, local, and park concerns are addressed.



5.4.02 RANGER AND VISITORS AT FORT WADSWORTH, STATEN ISLAND, 1990



5.5.01 ROOSEVELT ARCH AT THE NORTH ENTRANCE TO YELLOWSTONE NP, WYOMING, MONTANA AND IDAHO

### 5.5 Mission

The mission of the National Park Service is clearly mandated within the “Organic Act” of 1916. However, this legislation requires constant interpretation to remain current with the cultural climate of our time. The most current mission statement from the National Park Service was published in the “National Park Service Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2001-2005.”

*“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 Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.”*

National Park Service Strategic Plan FY 2001-2005

Within this document are 11 guiding principles that are to be implemented within the NPS:



5.5.02 YOSEMITE VALLEY, CALIFORNIA, 1908

- **Excellent Service:** providing the best possible service to park visitors and partners
- **Productive Partnerships:** Collaborating with federal, state, tribal and local governments, private organizations, and businesses to work toward common goals
- **Citizen Involvement:** Providing opportunities for citizens to participate in the decisions and actions of the National Park Service
- **Heritage Education:** Educating park visitors and the general public about their history and common heritage
- **Outstanding Employees:** Empowering a diverse workforce committed to excellence, integrity, and quality work
- **Employee Development:** Providing developmental opportunities and training so employees have the “tools to do the job” safely and efficiently
- **Wise Decisions:** Integrating social, economic, environmental, scientific, and ethical considerations into the decision-making process
- **Effective Management:** Instilling a performance management philosophy that works toward common goals fostering creativity, focusing on results and requiring accountability at all levels
- **Science and Research:** Applying scientific information to park management decisions to preserve park resources. Promoting parks as centers for broad scientific and scholarly inquiry to benefit society
- **Shared Capabilities:** Sharing technical information and expertise with public and private land managers
- **Environmental Leadership:** Complying with all environmental laws and applying the highest standards of environmental stewardship to our own operations. A system of in-park environmental audits, conducted by the Park Service and others, and environmentally sensitive standard procedures for park operations are necessary to demonstrate sound stewardship.

National Park Service Strategic Plan FY 2001-2005



5.5.03 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN NATIONAL MEMORIAL, PHILADELPHIA



5.6.01 EXTERIOR OF LAKE RANGER STATION, YELLOWSTONE NP, WYOMING, MONTANA AND IDAHO



5.6.02 INTERIOR OF LAKE RANGER STATION, YELLOWSTONE NP, WYOMING, MONTANA AND IDAHO

## 5.6 Defining Characteristics

*“Many Americans associate the Park Service with the preservation of pristine natural places, few realize that almost two-thirds of the national parks ... were designated specifically to preserve an important aspect or moment in our nation’s history.”*

Rethinking the National Parks for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century<sup>1</sup>

There are 390 parks placed into 20 categories within the National Park System. All of these sites aim to provide the “National Park Experience.” The different names of the parks indicate the most important aspect to experience within each park. These descriptive names are created by the Congressional legislation that authorizes the creation of a park, except for national monuments, which are created by the president under the Antiquities Act of 1906. All the varying park types have equal standing within the legal system.

**National Park:** *These are generally large natural places having a wide variety of attributes, at times including significant historic assets. Hunting, mining and consumptive activities are not authorized.*

**National Monument:** *The Antiquities Act of 1906 authorized the President to declare by public proclamation landmarks, structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest situated on lands owned or controlled by the government to be national monuments.*

**National Preserve:** *National preserves are areas having characteristics associated with national parks, but in which Congress has permitted continued public hunting, trapping, oil/gas exploration and extraction. Many existing national preserves, without sport hunting, would qualify for national park designation.*

**National Historic Site:** *Usually, a national historic site contains a single historical feature that was directly associated with its subject. Derived from the Historic Sites Act of 1935, a number of historic sites were established by secretaries of the Interior, but most have been authorized by acts of Congress.*

**National Historical Park:** This designation generally applies to historic parks that extend beyond single properties or buildings.

**National Memorial:** A national memorial is commemorative of a historic person or episode; it need not occupy a site historically connected with its subject.

**National Battlefield:** This general title includes, **national battlefield park**, **national battlefield site**, and **national military park**. In 1958, an NPS committee recommended national battlefield as the single title for all such park lands.

**National Cemetery:** There are presently 14 national cemeteries in the National Park System, all of which are administered in conjunction with an associated unit and are not accounted for separately.

**National Recreation Area:** Twelve NRAs in the system are centered on large reservoirs and emphasize water-based recreation. Five other NRAs are located near major population centers. Such urban parks combine scarce open spaces with the preservation of significant historic resources and important natural areas in location that can provide outdoor recreation for large numbers of people.

**National Seashore:** Ten national seashores have been established on the Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific coasts; some are developed and some relatively primitive. Hunting is allowed at many of these sites.

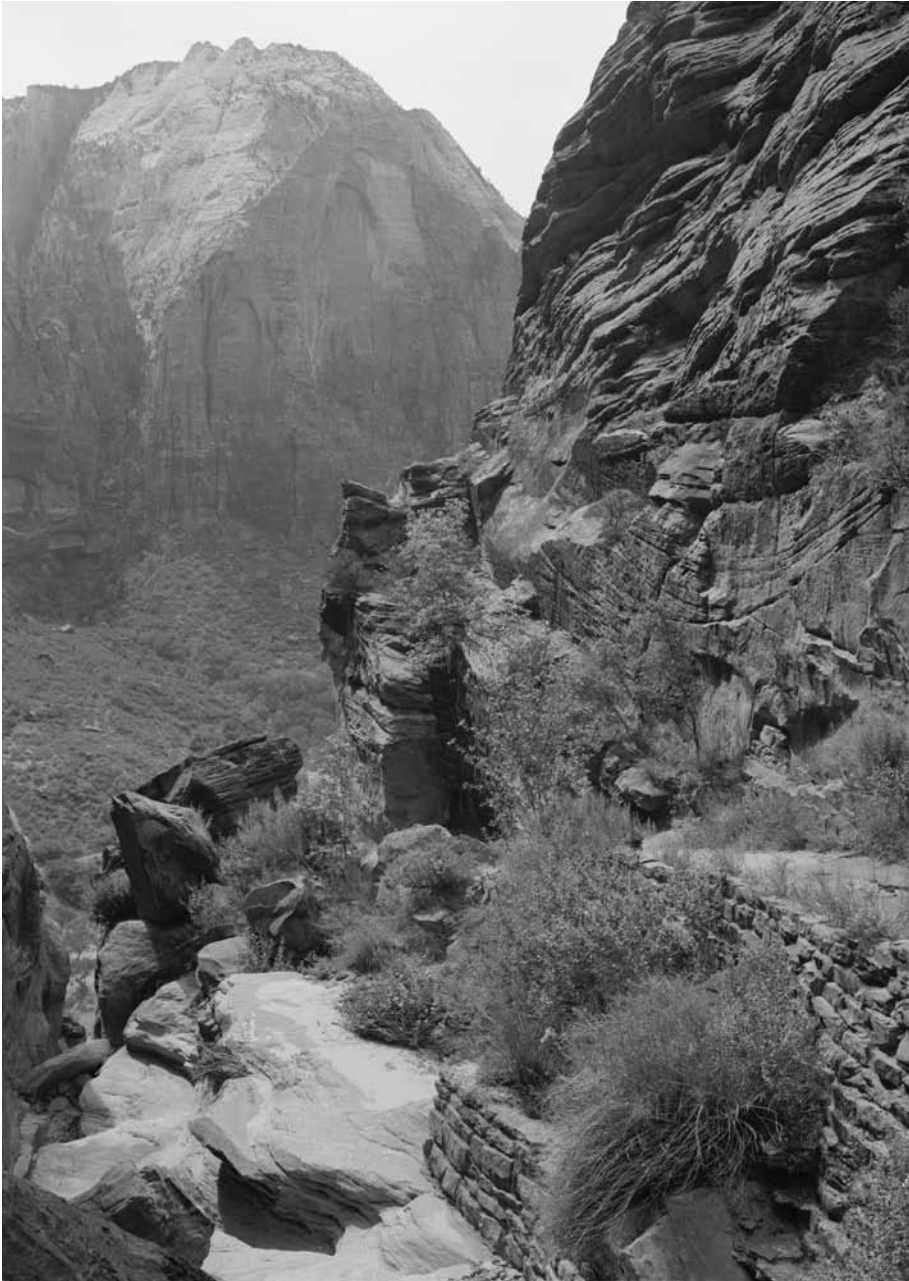
**National Lakeshore:** National lakeshores, all on the Great Lakes, closely parallel the seashores in character and use.

**National River:** There are several variations to this category: **national river and recreation area**, **national scenic river**, **national wild river**, etc. The first was authorized in 1964 and others were established following passage of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968.

**National Parkway:** The title parkway refers to a roadway and the parkland paralleling the roadway. All were intended for scenic motoring along a protected corridor and often connect cultural sites.



5.6.03 BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY, NORTH CAROLINA AND VIRGINIA



5.6.04 ZION NATIONAL PARK TRAIL SYSTEM, UTAH

**National Trail:** *National scenic trails and national historic trails are the titles given to these linear parklands (over 3,600 miles) authorized under the National Trails System Act of 1968.*

**Affiliated Areas:** *In an Act of August 18, 1970, the National Park System was defined in law as, “any area of land and water now or hereafter administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the National Park Service for park, monument, historic, parkway, recreational or other purposes.” The Affiliated Areas comprise a variety of locations in the United States and Canada that preserve significant properties outside the National Park System. Some of these have been recognized by Acts of Congress, others have been designated national historic sites by the Secretary of the Interior under authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935. All draw on technical or financial aid from the National Park Service.*

**Other Designations:** *Some units of the National Park System bear unique titles or combinations of titles, like the White House and Prince William Forest Park.*

MLO, National Park Service, March 28, 2000.

The category with the greatest number of parks is “National Monuments,” with 93 sites. It is closely followed by “National Historic Sites,” which has 80 parks. The “National Park” designation has 59 sites and is the third-largest category. There are only 17 parks with the “National Recreation Area” designation. National Recreation Areas within urban areas are even more rare and include Gateway NRA, New York and New Jersey, established 1972; Golden Gate NRA, California, established 1972; Santa Monica Mountains, California, established 1978; Chattahoochee River, Georgia, established 1978, and Boston Harbor Islands NRA, Massachusetts, established 1996.

These urban national parks represent a unique opportunity within the National Park System, and exemplify how thriving natural systems can exist alongside core urban areas.

## 5.7 Design Vocabulary

The National Park Service has at certain points in its history been a true innovator in the realm of design. The NPS's emergence from the tradition of preserving scenic vistas and the tradition of tourism has been well documented. (See, for example, "Frederic Church, Winslow Homer, and Thomas Moran: Tourism and the American Landscape," Cooper Hewitt Museum Exhibition & Catalogue, 2006.) This section will focus on some highlights in the history of the design vocabulary of the NPS.

Two distinctive phases in the park's history of design are of particular note. The first was the New Deal era and the second was Mission 66. Both of these coincided with initiatives by the federal government to give additional funding to the NPS for improvements. These design innovations span the fields of architecture, planning, landscape architecture, and graphic design.

The Great Depression ushered in the New Deal era. The federal government implemented funding for the Public Works Administration, which engaged private contractors to provide skilled labor and the Emergency Conservation Work, which directed the Civilian Conservation Corps. The corps was comprised of enrollees, typically unemployed men. The work done during this era was based on general development plans that had been created by the Landscape Division of the NPS under the guidance on Thomas Vint, thus continuing the design character that his division had begun to develop in the late 1920's. Vint was an important character in the formation of the NPS design ideology, and was the first to propose a comprehensive GMP format that still organizes the planning framework of the NPS today.<sup>1</sup> The objective of these designs was to harmoniously blend all park development with the natural landscape and heritage structures into an overall master plan.

Sites were selected for improvement based on their ability to be concealed from main thoroughfares and to frame important views; natural materials were selected; construction details were derived from native and pioneer techniques; and raw scars of cut and fill were avoided. Vegetation was selectively planted to conceal new structures, and thinned or removed to frame views of the landscape. Roads were laid to take advantage of scenic vistas and made of crushed stone with rough hewn rock barriers. These design ideas were disseminated throughout the park service in the form of several



5.7.01 GETTYSBURG NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK, PENNSYLVANIA, CYCLORAMA AND VISITOR CENTER BY ARCHITECTS RICHARD NEUTRA AND ROBERT ALEXANDER, 1958



5.7.02 ROANOKE RIVER BRIDGE DESIGN, VIRGINIA



5.7.03 GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK, CLINGMANS DOME TOWER, NORTH CAROLINA AND TENNESSEE

design portfolios that documented exemplary projects. The first were published in 1934 and titled “Portfolio of Comfort Stations and Privies” and “Portfolio of Park Structures.” In 1935, “Park Structures and Facilities” was published and, in 1938 the final volume, “Park and Recreation Structures,” was published. The work and design development of the New Deal era came to an abrupt halt in 1942 when all funding was directed toward the United States entry into WWII.

The second phase of notable design innovation evolved relative to the presence of the automobile in the national landscape, post-war prosperity and car-based tourism. As soldiers returned from WWII, there was a massive increase in visitors to national parks. From 1931 to 1948, visitors to national parks increased from about 3.5 million to almost 30 million.<sup>2</sup> By 1955, there were approximately 50 million visitors to a park system that was designed to accommodate only half that number.<sup>3</sup> Moreover this was a park system that was suffering a backlog of work because funding was halted in 1942. The huge numbers of visitors caused the degradation of natural features through overuse as well as vandalism.

Conrad Wirth, at the time director of the NPS, devised a plan for a decade of funding for park improvements to coincide with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1966, of the founding of the NPS. Mission 66 was “envisioned as a bold and forward-looking initiative”<sup>4</sup> and staff members were told by their subsequent director, William G. Carnes, to “disregard precedent, policy, present operating and management procedures, traditions and work habits” and remember “only the fundamental purpose of national parks.”<sup>5</sup>

At the national parks, the designs of rustic style and domestic scaled development that had blended with the natural environment in its first decades were duly discarded. New architectural forms that were symbolic of a new age were sought. The most iconic gesture of this era is the Gateway Arch designed by Eero Saarinen for the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial National Historic Site in St. Louis, the construction of which was funded by Mission 66.

Arguably the most significant achievement of Mission 66 was the innovation of the now ubiquitous building typology of the “visitor center.” These visitor centers were usually sited in a prominent location in close proximity to features of primary interest. They

combined park administration, visitor facilities, and park interpretation into a single location. Sometimes the larger visitor centers would also incorporate other functions such as a museum, a library, a bookstore, an auditorium or workrooms. The visitor centers enabled the NPS to streamline and standardize visitor services.<sup>6</sup>

The design of these visitor centers were a direct contrast to buildings constructed during the New Deal. These buildings were to represent the modernization of the NPS. Thus, they experimented with new structural forms, and made extensive use of glass, concrete and steel in machine-driven construction methods.<sup>7</sup>

Visitor centers also created a hub for the education and interpretation of park resources for the public. This was the focus of a new strategy employed by the NPS in order to instill an appreciation for the park and ensure visitors were conscious of their contribution to its preservation.<sup>8</sup>

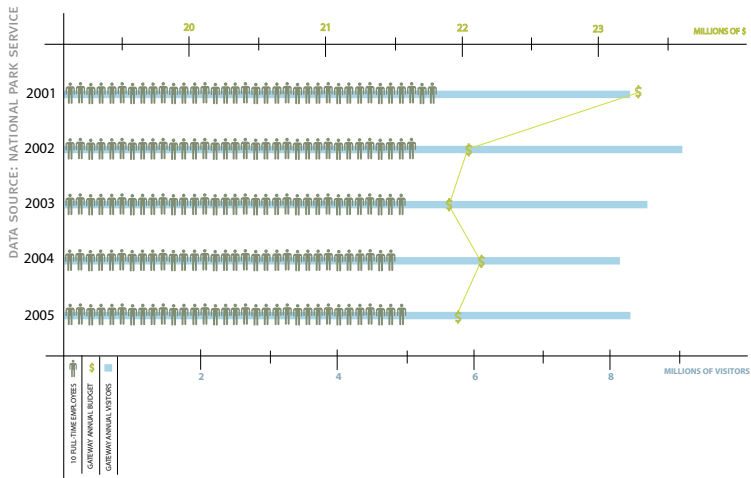
Mission 66 also included the construction of extensive interpretive trails as well as roadways to better access the parks. The most significant of which is the Blue Ridge Parkway, which runs from the Shenandoah National Park in Virginia to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina and Tennessee. This was a project that was left two-thirds incomplete at the close of the New Deal era and was completed with the Mission 66 funds.

At the close of Mission 66 in 1966, the national parks saw 80 million visitors in that year.<sup>9</sup> With Mission 66, 78 more parks were added to the system and funded the construction of 584 comfort stations, 221 administrative buildings, 36 service buildings, 1,239 units of employee housing and more than 100 new visitor centers.<sup>10</sup>

As a federal body, the NPS has relied on government support in order to make the transformations to the park system that it experienced in the past. Since 1966, there have been no significant federal government initiatives to improve the National Park System and it would appear that there has not been an opportunity for a re-interpretation of the NPS design vocabulary in the last 40 years.



5.7.04 JEFFERSON NATIONAL EXPANSION MEMORIAL, MISSOURI



5.8.01 COMPARISON OF VISITATION, BUDGET AND FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES TO GATEWAY

### 5.8 Gateway Statistics

Gateway is one of 390 park sites within the National Park System. While Gateway is only the 98<sup>th</sup> largest national park, it is the fifth-most visited and ranked No. 4 in funding for its running costs in the 2005 fiscal year.

Though NRA’s are few in number in the overall park system, they are among the most visited parks, with four in the top ten: Gateway NRA, Golden Gate NRA, Lake Mead NRA, and Delaware Water Gap NRA. <sup>1</sup> Their high rates of visitors are most likely due to their ease of accessibility for the greater urban populations compared to parks in the interior of the country such as Yellowstone.

Gateway’s visitation pattern was studied in 1990 by the University of Idaho’s Cooperative Park Studies Unit. It found that 59 percent of visitors stayed in the park for two to five hours. The favored pastimes in the park were swimming, picnicking, fishing, walking, sunbathing and cycling. Thirty-six percent of these visitors had been to Gateway more than 10 times and 98 percent of all visitors to Gateway were from the United States. Other parks have a higher portion of international visitors, for example, in 2005, 18 percent of visitors to Yosemite National Park were from outside the United States. When compared with other national parks, it appears that Gateway serves a very local population.

Each national park competes with the others for funding from Congress through the Department of the Interior. Recent years have seen no substantial increase to the funding of the NPS despite rising running costs and maintenance backlogs. A review by the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees has found that the NPS has been compromised by the lack of funding from the federal government and “nearly all parks suffer from reduced law enforcement, [and] emergency response personnel.”<sup>2</sup> This report also found that there are “at least \$600 million in operations funding deficits and an enormous maintenance backlog of up to \$7 billion.”<sup>3</sup>

Like many other national parks Gateway has had no increase to its budget for operating costs since 2001, forcing the reduction of services to the park. However, there has been some substantial work achieved by Gateway in the past year, including the Aviator Sports and Recreation concession at Floyd Bennett Field and the Elders Point marsh restoration in the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge.

Gateway is among a unique group of NRA’s that are some of the most frequented parks in the system. Gateway was the second-most visited NRA in the country, host to approximately 8.4 million visitors in 2005.