

APPENDIX A.

NPS MANAGEMENT POLICIES 2006 - 7.1: INTERPRETIVE AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Since its inception, one of the chief functions of the national parks has been to serve educational purposes. The Service is committed to extend its leadership in education, build on what is in place, and pursue new relationships and opportunities to make national parks even more meaningful in the life of the nation. Within the rich learning environments of national parks and facilitation by NPS interpreters, visitors will be offered authentic experiences and opportunities to immerse themselves in places where events actually happened, experience the thrill of connecting with real objects used by previous generations, enjoy some of the most beautiful and historic places in America, and understand the difficult moments our nation has endured.

Every park will develop an interpretive and educational program that is grounded in (1) park resources, (2) themes related to the park's legislative history and significance, and (3) park and Service-wide mission goals. The intent will be to provide each visitor with an interpretive experience that is enjoyable and inspirational within the context of the park's tangible resources and the meanings they represent. In addition, visitors should be made aware of the purposes and scope of the national park system.

Interpretation will encourage dialogue and accept that visitors have their own individual points of view. Factual information presented will be current, accurate, based on current scholarship and science, and delivered to convey park meanings, with the understanding that audience members will draw their own conclusions. Interpretation will also reach out to park neighbors, segments of the population that do not visit national parks, and community decision-makers to stimulate discussions about the park and its meanings in local, regional, and national contexts. In addition, interpretive services will help employees better understand the park's history, resources, processes, and visitors.

An effective park interpretive and educational program will include :

1. *information and orientation programs* that provide visitors with easy access to the information they need to have a safe and enjoyable park experience;
2. *interpretive programs* that provide both on- and off-site presentations and are designed to encourage visitors to form their own intellectual or emotional connections with the resource. Interpretive programs facilitate a connection between the interests of visitors and the meanings of the park;
3. *curriculum-based educational programs* that link park themes to national standards and state curricula and involve educators in planning and development. These programs include pre-visit and post-visit materials, address different learning styles, include an evaluation mechanism, and provide learning experiences that are linked directly to clear objectives. Programs develop a thorough understanding of a park's resources in individual, regional, national, and global contexts and of the park's place within the national park system; and
4. *interpretive media* that provide visitors with relevant park information and facilitate more in-depth understanding of—and personal connection with—park stories and resources. This media will be continually maintained for both quality of content and condition based upon established standards.

