

MORE THAN ROAD TRIPS AND RANGERS IN FLAT HATS:
RECOGNIZING MILLENNIAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE TO EFFECTIVELY
ENGAGE THE NEXT GENERATION
OF PARK STEWARDS

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ABSTRACT

Despite popular perceptions that the National Park Service (NPS) is first and foremost the steward of spectacular natural vistas, two-thirds of the system's nearly four hundred parks exist explicitly to protect and interpret cultural and historic resources. It is this perception that the NPS only cares for Western natural wonders that impedes the agency, especially as it looks to the future. If the National Park Service is looking to cultivate the next generation of stewards, as employees, visitors, or advocates, it must understand how this diverse audience perceives the NPS. This thesis argues that this next generation of millennials perceives the National Park Service as a purveyor of natural wonders in the Western United States, road trip destinations. While the NPS is far from only "Western nature parks," this popular perception permeates the next generation of park stewards.

With this in mind, this thesis argues that the National Park Service must actively prioritize this next generation by defining who they are, recognize their perceptions and needs from the NPS, and understand how to best engage them in all aspects of natural and cultural resources. The NPS has a long history of youth engagement and outreach, in both natural and cultural resources, illustrating its importance to the agency. Looking to the future, it is imperative that the NPS supports youth engagement and outreach in a more productive and inclusive way.

To my first foray
Into the NPS, thanks
Edgar Allan Poe

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As I said in my dedication, the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site introduced me to the National Park Service. I wish to thank the rangers there who introduced me to the wonderful, yet challenging, world of NPS historic sites. I would also like to thank the NPS Northeast Regional Office Preservation Assistance team for their mentorship (and fun P.A. staff meetings) over the past year. Secondly, I wish to thank my committee members for their expertise and encouragement. A special thanks to thank Seth Bruggeman, my advisor, for introducing me to the 1976 classic movie *Grizzly*--and encouraging, guiding, and editing my thesis. And lastly, I would like to acknowledge the best (and worst) Quizzo team ever—Stevi Williams, Sarah Sutton, Patrick Shank, Jacob Grossman and Alex Lothstein. Your Snapchats, group texts, class Facebook chats, and most importantly friendship helped me stay sane through PubComm 2016 and graduate school.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE CASE FOR NPS MILLENNIAL ENGAGEMENT

In November 2014, I became a Volunteer-in-Parks for the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site in Philadelphia, unaware of how this volunteer position would affect my research interests. Working at the “Poe House” introduced me to federal service, including the federal background check, fingerprinting, and the Volunteer-in-Parks training. Concurrently, I enrolled in Dr. Seth Bruggeman’s *History of the National Park Service* class at Temple University. This class introduced me to the mission of the NPS, its expanse, and how little I actually knew about the agency. Bruggeman tasked us with choosing an NPS unit and tracing its creation and history. Naturally, I chose the Poe House, as I had access to park rangers who could assist me. Several students chose historic sites or monuments, but most chose “famous” NPS nature parks, like Grand Tetons, Yosemite, and Acadia, even despite our proximity to so many NPS units in and around Philadelphia. They explained that they chose those places because they had visited or planned to visit them on road trips. But history parks can be visited too. Why was it then that these college students were so much more interested in nature parks than history parks?

This thesis argues that young people’s preference for nature parks does not betray a disinterest in history so much as a failure by the NPS to convince them that history

parks are worth visiting. It reflects what I observed after prodding my peers with more questions. I asked them, “Where is the National Park Service?” and “What do you think of when I say National Park Service?” Almost unanimously, they responded “out West” and “Smokey the Bear and rangers.” Newly enamored of the NPS from my volunteer position and my coursework, I entered graduate school with an interest in understanding the agency’s challenges through the lens of community engagement, a staple of public history theory and practice. Specifically, I sought to understand how the NPS engages college students? Why do so many of them still consider the NPS to be “Western road trip destinations?” Is the agency’s current method of engagement actually working? These questions guided my research, helping me discover that there is a long history of youth engagement in the NPS. Learning from it, I contend, is one way to begin reversing millennials’ perception of the NPS as just an itinerary of Western road trip destinations.

Millennials and the National Park Service

According to the NPS’s 2015 *Urban Agenda*, the millennial generation is one of the most important stakeholders in the NPS.¹ This cohort will be the next generation of advocates and stewards for the agency.² In the NPS’ 2015 report *A Call to Action*, the

¹ Millennial, in this case, is defined as someone born between the years 1977 and 1995. I will use “millennial” interchangeably with “youth” and “college- aged students.”

² *Urban Agenda: Call to Action Initiative-The Call to [Urban] Action*. National Park Service, March 2015. Accessed 20 July 2016.

https://www.nps.gov/subjects/urban/upload/UrbanAgenda_web.pdf

authors suggest developing and nurturing lifelong connections between the public and the parks—especially for young people—through a continuum of engaging recreational, educational, volunteer, and work experiences.³ While both of these reports promote engagement with the millennial audience, they do little to describe how. In fact, there is hardly anything written beyond these few sentences. These documents also do not address recent media coverage of their “youth problem”-- only about 7% of NPS staff is under 29 years old.⁴ In order for the NPS to truly begin to generate support from this younger audience, the agency needs to understand how this group perceives the parks, and then how best to communicate with them. It is also necessary to understand the agency’s important history of youth engagement, and to use this to create new and better ways to activate young people today. Understanding past programs and initiatives will help parks and programs cultivate the next generation of park stewards. For this paper, I am studying and analyzing the NPS Northeast Regional Office, several selected youth programs, and a select number of college students. This does not represent the entirety of the NPS or college students, but offers one perspective on college student engagement in the NPS.

³A *Call to Action: Preparing for a Second Century of Stewardship and Engagement*. National Park Service, 2015. Accessed 20 July 2016. https://www.nps.gov/calltoaction/PDF/C2A_2015.pdf

⁴ Ryan Bergeron and Sean Redlitz. “Does the National Park Service have a Youth Problem?” CNN. 19 March 2015. <http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/19/us/im-national-parks-older-visitors-morgan-spurlock/>

Despite popular perceptions that the NPS is first and foremost the steward of spectacular natural vistas, two-thirds of the system's nearly four hundred parks exist explicitly to protect and interpret cultural and historic resources.⁵ The perception that the NPS cares only for Western natural wonders thus impedes the agency, especially as it looks to the future.⁶ With this in mind, the NPS must prioritize the next generation by defining it, recognizing what it needs from the agency, and understanding how to best engage it in *all* aspects of natural and cultural resource management. With its centennial year now behind it, it is imperative that the NPS supports youth engagement and outreach in a more productive way. I define productive youth engagement as outreach programs or internship opportunities with a career trajectory, introducing young people to employment with the NPS.

Defining youth outreach in these terms reflects what we learn from grappling with the history of youth engagement within the NPS during its first 100 years. I provide an in-depth look at the successes and failures of youth initiatives and how the NPS can learn from its past to engage the next generation of stewards. My overview includes insights concerning the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Mission 66 era, and initiatives associated with the Historic American Building Survey (HABS). I also survey current

⁵ *Imperiled Promise: A State of History in the National Park Service*. Organization of the American Historians and the National Park Service, 2011. 11

⁶ This assertion comes from my own research on millennials and the NPS, including surveys of Temple Students in Seth Bruggeman's NPS undergraduate course.

examples of NPS youth engagement and outreach, including my own internship at the Northeast Regional Office and other NPS high school and college programs and internships. Comparing past engagement with current initiatives allows us to answer a series of questions: How does the NPS currently market itself to students? Does this influence their perceptions of the NPS? What can be done to educate more students on the possibilities of the NPS beyond the “Western nature park”? I use these questions to highlight the current successes and shortcomings of millennial engagement in the NPS.

Juxtaposing the history of youth engagement with current youth outreach programs allows us to evaluate the relationship between the NPS and its millennial audience. Data I gathered from student surveys illustrates millennial perception of the NPS, and helps us critically analyze current high school and college programs and initiatives. I identify changes that should be made in current youth outreach, and explain the necessity for these changes based on my research. Finally, taking all of this into consideration, I propose specific recommendations for the NPS on youth engagement and outreach. My first recommendation concerns social media as a tool for millennial engagement. Next I look at college programs, like Temple University’s ProRanger program, to make recommendations for more effective partnership programs with colleges and universities. Finally, I propose ways to maximize youth engagement and outreach by the NPS in the current political climate. My hope throughout is to suggest best practices for engaging millennials in all of the agency’s nature and history parks.

CHAPTER TWO

NPS YOUTH ENGAGEMENT: A HISTORY

Introduction

In 2015 the NPS published two centennial-year initiatives, the *Urban Agenda* and *A Call to Action*.⁷ Both initiatives express the importance of preparing for the next century of the NPS, including by cultivating the next generation of park stewards. In each case, the millennial generation counts among the most important stakeholders in the NPS. How, though, can the NPS engage this group? The initiatives do not provide significant guidance. If millennials are to advocate for the NPS in its next century, then they must be understood and actively engaged in NPS parks, programming, and careers.⁸

The *Urban Agenda* calls for engagement with millennials through expressions of relevancy to their lives. In order for the NPS to remain relevant to an increasingly diverse American population, it suggests, the NPS must reach out to urban areas, diverse communities, and youth. Utilizing parks and programs to reach diverse communities, enhance educational opportunities, and foster partnerships and relationships will be critical to fulfilling the mission in the second century of the NPS.⁹ *A Call to Action*

⁷ The National Park Service celebrated its centennial anniversary in 2016. The agency officially began on August 25, 1916. Its centennial anniversary was celebrated throughout 2016.

⁸ *Urban Agenda*. National Park Service, March 2015.

⁹ *Ibid.* 15

develops youth engagement further by recommending the development of connections between the public and parks—especially for young people—through a continuum of engaging recreational, educational, volunteer, and work experiences.¹⁰ This includes collaborating with education partners and youth organizations to create a pathway to employment with the NPS, with a focus on diversifying the workforce. The NPS plans to involve at least 10,000 youth each year in a multi-year progression of experiences from education programs to internships, volunteer opportunities, and employment.¹¹ While both of these initiatives highlight the importance of youth engagement to the NPS, neither recognizes past youth engagement nor do they critically consider the successes and failures of these past efforts. Examining past outreach could better inform current youth engagement.

The NPS has a long history of youth engagement and outreach, illustrating its importance to the agency. Understanding this history allows an in-depth look at successes and failures of youth initiatives and how the NPS can learn from its past to presently engage the next generation. This chapter highlights how the NPS looked toward young people during difficult moments in its history and how young people responded through participation in programs, initiatives, and other forms of outreach.

¹⁰ *A Call to Action*. National Park Service, 2015.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 9

Early Years

The history of youth engagement initiatives within the NPS begins with the New Deal. After his 1933 inauguration, President Franklin D. Roosevelt sought to alleviate the consequences of the Great Depression through his New Deal programs. These programs, intended to combat the effects of the Great Depression, increased labor and funds to develop and expand American landscapes.¹² For the Park Service, these relief programs facilitated NPS director Horace Albright's plans of park conservation and the creation of a robust history and cultural resources programs.¹³ The influx of funding, labor, and cultural resources into the NPS through the New Deal programs transformed the agency, allowing for the expansion of parks and programs through this federal support.

While the New Deal created hundreds of federal relief programs, the NPS was most concerned with was the Emergency Conservation Work Act (ECW), better known as the act that created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).¹⁴ Intended as a work relief

¹² On June 10, 1933, FDR issued Executive Order 6166, initiating a general reorganization of executive departments, placing all national historic sites and military parks under the NPS. This resulted in larger appropriations, the acquisition of new areas, and the establishment within the agency of a Branch of Historic Sites charged with responsibility for the preservation, development, and interpretation of the significant cultural resources of the country. For more on this, see: Harlan D. Unrau and G. Frank Williss. "To Preserve the Nation's Past: The Growth of Historic Preservation in the National Park Service during the 1930s." *The Public Historian*. Vol. 9 No. 2, Spring, 1987. 19-49

¹³ Denise D. Meringolo. *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012. 108

¹⁴ Joseph Speakman. *At Work in Penn's Woods: The Civilian Conservation Corps in Pennsylvania*. State College: Pennsylvania University Press. 2006.

project for young men (18-25), the CCC transformed not only the lives of these unemployed youths, but provided the NPS with labor and money to conserve its natural and cultural landscapes.¹⁵ While the Labor Department was responsible for enrollee recruitment and selection and the War Department trained enrollees, the Departments of Agriculture and Interior supervised the CCC's various projects. Interior supervised its projects through the Park Service. The NPS implemented park development, especially the improvement of existing national and state parks and the development of new parks.¹⁶ CCC workers lived in encampments on the park grounds and implemented projects designed by the Park Service, where workers built roads, campgrounds, rest areas, visitor centers, and restored historical sites in a variety of units, including the newly acquired military parks and battlefields.¹⁷

Although not created specifically by the NPS, the CCC was the agency's first foray into youth outreach and engagement. The CCC would employ thousands of jobless young men in a wide range of conservation, rehabilitation, and construction projects in the national parks. It is important to emphasize that, although the CCC included the stipulation that no discrimination shall be made on account of race, color or creed, the

¹⁵ Ibid. 110

¹⁶ Tara Mitchell Mielnik. *New Deal, New Landscape: The Civilian Conservation Corps and South Carolina's State Parks*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2012.

¹⁷ John C. Paige. *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service, 1933-1942: An Administrative History*. National Park Service, Department of the Interior. 1985.

CCC employed a majority of white men, with segregated African Americans camps and women placed in their own “SheSheShe” camps, formally known as the Federal Emergency Relief Association (FERA) camps.¹⁸ Although the CCC was created to be inclusive, the relief program mainly served white men. At the program's peak in 1935, the NPS oversaw 600 CCC camps, 118 of them in national parklands and 482 in state parks, staffed by some 120,000 enrollees and 6,000 professional supervisors.¹⁹ While these CCC men were assigned to conserve natural landscapes, many camps, especially on the east coast, worked extensively on the preservation and restoration of historical sites and monuments. CCC labor, for example, restored Fort Necessity, Pennsylvania and La Purisima Mission in California, which drew wide acclaim from historians and archeologists.²⁰ It should be pointed out the majority of the cultural resources work was completed by the segregated camps--the African American recruits.²¹

In 1942, Congress shut down the CCC due to WWII, as there was no longer a need for federal relief programming amid war time production. Although the CCC had

¹⁸ For more information on African Americans and women and the CCC, see: Olen Cole's *The African-American Experience in the Civilian Conservation Corps* or Joseph Speakman's *At Work in Penn's Woods: The Civilian Conservation Corps in Pennsylvania*.

¹⁹ “National Park Service: The First 75 Years.” National Park Service, Eastern National Park and Monument Association, 1990. 35-36. Accessed 20 October 2016:
<http://npshistory.com/publications/sontag/nps-the-first-75-years.pdf>

²⁰ Tara Mitchell Mielnik. *New Deal, New Landscape*.

²¹ Joseph Speakman. *At Work in Penn's Woods*. 149

officially ended, the influence of the men and their work at the national parks would endure. The CCC recruits, trained in both education and work skills, left the camps to serve in WWII.²² CCC recruit Curley Harvey observed, “what I learned in the CC Camp went a long ways with me . . . The army knows . . . everyone that was in the CC Camp made a heck of alot better soldier.”²³ Many CCC recruits did not go on to careers within the Park Service, however many of the specialists, like project architects, archaeologists, and historians remained on the rolls as career employees.²⁴ As history became more integrated into the NPS, these CCC historians went on to supervise historic site development and museum work, and they were considered for ranger or superintendent positions at national historic sites and monuments.²⁵ The young professionals hired to oversee CCC sites tended to remain as career employees, understanding the opportunities for them within the Park Service.²⁶ These examples of turning temporary employment

²² Joseph Speakman. *At Work in Penn's Woods*. 98-101

²³ *Ibid.* 98

²⁴ “National Park Service: The First 75 Years.” 36

²⁵ Denise D. Meringolo. *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 2012. 149-150

²⁶ *Ibid.* When the CCC began, there were only 10 landscape architects working for the NPS. By the fall of 1933, the NPS established a policy to hire one landscape architect per camp, and the agency hired them before they even graduated from college. The rise in employment opportunities for landscape architects and other landscaping professionals caused a rise in pursuing professional degrees in landscape-related fields. As a result, new programs sprang up in colleges around the country.

into NPS careers can be seen throughout the history of NPS youth outreach, with the structure of the CCC serving as a model for park relief efforts and student internships in years to come.

Post-War into Mission 66 Youth Engagement 1950s

Following WWII, the parks faced severe problems. In his 1953 *Harper's Magazine* article "Let's Close the National Parks," historian Bernard DeVoto highlighted the problems facing the parks in the postwar period, explaining, "Congress made no proper provision for rehabilitating [the national parks] at the end of the war...requiring the Service to operate a big plant on a hot-dog-stand budget."²⁷ He proposed sealing off the parks, starting with Yellowstone and Yosemite, until Congress allotted enough funding for proper staff and resources.²⁸ The end of the CCC meant an end to increased labor, funding, and staffing. NPS employees could not possibly replicate the amount of work accomplished by the CCC recruits. At the same time, the "floodgates" had opened: after 1945, parks across the system began to break their visitation records every year.²⁹ The parks, according to director Newton Drury, were "still victims of war...overcrowded

²⁷ Bernard DeVoto. "Let's Close the National Parks." *Harper's Magazine*. Vol. 207, October 1953. 49

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ethan Carr. *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007. 38

and understaffed.”³⁰ In this postwar period, Drury recognized “the dilemma of our parks,” which resulted from a number of factors and trends.³¹ These trends included college-age and professional landscape architects losing interest in park planning, instead taking advantage of the rapid period of larger and more complex projects, including designing shopping centers, campuses, corporate parks, civic places, and suburban housing.³² Additionally, the opportunities and manpower behind many of the New Deal programs, like the CCC, no longer existed, and the NPS needed to make changes fast.

The public began to notice and comment on the deteriorating parks. In his 1952 article, “Yosemite’s Beauty Fast Disappearing,” conservationist Martin Litton wrote of the impact of heavy tourism observing that it, “Put nearly 1,000,000 people to work every summer trampling and littering an area of four square miles, and the scenery is sure to suffer.”³³ The “dilemma of the parks” gloomed over Conrad Wirth when he became NPS director in 1951. The media coverage of the NPS did not end, but picked up with *Reader’s Digest*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Travel Magazine*, and many other

³⁰ Newton B. Drury to Robert Sterling Yard, undated draft (ca. 1943), Personal Papers of Newton B. Drury, entry 19, RG 71, National Archives.

³¹ Newton B. Drury, “National Parks in Wartime: A Review of the Year.” *American Planning and Civic Association*. 1942. 68-74

³² Ethan Carr. *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*. 214

³³ Martin Litton. “Yosemite’s Beauty Fast Disappearing.” *National Parks Magazine*. October-December 1952.

publications reporting on the horrifying state of the parks, blaming Congress for not funding the NPS and applauding NPS staff for surviving these poor conditions.³⁴ Wirth used this media coverage to his advantage, helping to shape his program to save the parks and their facilities. The Truman administration, preoccupied by the Cold War and the Korean War, had no time or interest in the priorities of the NPS. Taking office in 1953, Eisenhower also did not have an interest in parks, but his Director of the Interior James McKay admitted the parks needed more funding and believed this could be partially alleviated by “increased efficiency.”³⁵ Eisenhower did not want the Republican Congress to be blamed for the failing parks, and he had McKay begin to look into surveying park operations and Wirth’s Mission 66 plans. Dubbed "Mission 66," this 10-year program, passed by Congress in 1955, sought to upgrade and expand facilities in time for the Park Service's 50th anniversary in 1966.³⁶

With the approval by President Eisenhower in 1956, Mission 66 was underway, offering an infusion of staff and funding for upgrading park features and staff, as well as

³⁴ Ethan Carr. *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*. 55-60

³⁵ *Ibid.* 57

³⁶ “American Place: The Historic American Building Survey at Seventy-Five Years.” National Park Service. 2008. 34 Accessed 20 October 2016: <https://www.nps.gov/hdp/habs/AmericanPlace.pdf> The idea of "securing records of structures of historic interest" was first endorsed by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1918.

planning and research projects.³⁷ One of the programs influenced by Mission 66 revitalization efforts was the Historic American Building Survey (HABS), a preservation program under the NPS.³⁸ Established in 1933 to create a public archive of America's architectural heritage, HABS consisted of architect measured drawings, historical reports, and large-format black & white photographs of important American places. It took the Great Depression to provide the opportunity for a federal program to fund such an endeavor. Anticipating the 1935 Historic Sites Act by well over a year, HABS was the first significant boon to historic preservation at the national level.³⁹

While the documentation methods and goals remained consistent since 1933, the operating structure of HABS needed to change with the times, as economic conditions were drastically different in the postwar boom years. The 1930s survey model of district offices staffed by unemployed draftsmen was no longer feasible.⁴⁰ Instead, HABS work was increasingly accomplished by architecture students and faculty working with NPS architects from the Offices of Design and Construction in Philadelphia, San Francisco,

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ The HABS/HAER/HALS documentation programs changed leadership under different presidencies. More on this later in the paper.

³⁹ Ibid. 1-2

⁴⁰ Ibid. 1-2

and Washington, DC.⁴¹ Students had participated in documentation projects since the 1930s, but Mission 66 brought new emphasis to summer student recording teams. Since this revitalization of the HABS program in the 1950s, students have documented and provided the majority of the archival material ever since.⁴²

While the HABS program may not have been intended as a youth outreach program, it evolved to become just that. I interviewed two HABS student alumni on their experiences in summer documentation projects. I first interviewed Bonnie Halda, the Chief of the Preservation Assistance program in the Northeast Regional Office of the NPS. She described her experience documenting the William H. Robinson House in North Dakota as her entree into historic preservation. Halda was solicited to work on this project in 1975 from a member of her community. Halda, an architecture student, worked with her professor to gather the materials to carry out a HABS documentation project. Her experience was unique, as she did not work with a team of students, but rather solo. The HABS program fit her desire to work in historic preservation, but she was not aware of its connections with federal service.

Halda pointed me to my second interview with Bill Brookover, who led a student documentation team in Missouri in 1977. Brookover, a licensed architect at the time, was

⁴¹ Ibid. 35

⁴² “Seven Students win architecture awards in national competition.” *The Alcalde*, University of Texas, January 1997.

pursuing further education at Columbia University in his late twenties. The HABS documentation program advertised summer internships at Columbia, or at least within the architecture program. Brookover, like Halda, pointed out that he did not have context about HABS, just that it was a national documentation program. Brookover revealed that during the late 70s, HABS was not even housed under the NPS, so he definitely did not connect HABS with a career in the NPS.⁴³ On his summer documentation team, Brookover was made supervisor of a team of two student architects and one graduate student historian. As a supervisor, Brookover explained he and the historian drove across Clinton, Missouri to document as many historic properties as possible. He did more of the actual recording rather than architectural drawings.

From both of their experiences, it is clear that the HABS documentation program introduced young people to opportunities in their field, but it did not necessarily highlight opportunities to work in federal agencies. However, beginning in the 50s, the NPS did partner with the National Parks Association to facilitate specific internship and career opportunities for students in national parks.⁴⁴

⁴³ Under his administration, President Carter created task forces to identify federal historic preservation programs. His administration decided these programs would be best served as separate entities within the Department of the Interior, not housed under the NPS. With the election of Reagan and Director of the Interior James Watt, the HABS/HAER/HALS documentation programs went back under the NPS. Bill Brookover in discussion with author February 2017.

⁴⁴ Now called the National Park Conservation Association, the NPCA ensures funding for parks and park programs and initiatives. This is a nonpartisan group working for the betterment of the

Student Conservation Association

In 1955, as Mission 66 sought to alleviate park problems, Vassar College student Elizabeth Cushman Tutus Putnam wrote her senior thesis in response to DeVoto's article "Let's Close the National Parks." A student of environmental science, Putnam advocated for a student version of the CCC, putting high school and college students to work in the national parks. She and a friend sought support from what was then the National Parks Association (now NPCA) in 1957 for a Student Conservation Program (SCP) to relieve staff shortages.⁴⁵

Approved by the National Parks Association, the pilot program gave 53 students the opportunity to spend a summer working in national parks. This program has since evolved into a nationwide organization that still operates today. By 1964, the group changed its name to the Student Conservation Association (SCA) and established headquarters in Sagamore Hill National Historic Site in New York.⁴⁶ Just as national park "friends" groups can provide extra staff and other necessary resources, the SCA sends thousands of students into national parks, augmenting limited park budgets and

NPS.

⁴⁵ J. Vaughn and H. Cortner. *Philanthropy and the National Park Service*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013. 43-45

⁴⁶ The SCA has since moved to Arlington, VA. Information can be accessed at: <http://www.thesca.org/>

completing projects that would otherwise go unfunded or uncompleted.⁴⁷ This program was designed not only to provide labor to the NPS, but also to build the next generation of conservation leaders and inspire lifelong NPS stewardship. According to the NPS internship website, many employees get their start through SCA and similar types of internship programs.⁴⁸

This partnership program has influenced other programs: Young Adult Conservation Corp (1965), Job Corps (1967), Youth Conservation Corps (1977), Young Adult Conservation Corps (late 1970s), Urban Conservation Corps (1983), and the National Council for Preservation Education (NCPE 1978). Most of these programs do not exist today, with the exception of the Youth Conservation Corps and the National Council for Preservation Education. The “Corps” programs listed above follow the same model of the CCC--with students going into parks for a summer in order to learn conservation and work skills. Both the CCC and the above programs were funded at the federal or state level, but most of the listed programs were cut in 1981 due to dramatic federal budget cuts.

⁴⁷ J. Vaughn and H. Cortner. *Philanthropy and the National Park Service*. 43-45

⁴⁸ SCA places 2,600 people every year with the NPS and other federal, state, local, and private entities. For further information, see: <https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/jobsforstudents.htm>
For more information on the SCA, see: Joseph J. Kerski. *Interpreting Our World: 100 Discoveries That Revolutionized Geography*. ABC-CLIO, 2016. 226

Many of the programs that started in the 1960s were influenced by President Johnson's War on Poverty.⁴⁹ The War on Poverty, influenced by President Roosevelt's New Deal, mimicked work relief efforts of the 1930s. They followed the same structure as the CCC--most apparently in the name "corps." These various programs of the 60s, 70s, and 80s, influenced by the CCC and the SCA, meant to activate youth in summer programs, but also engage the "next generation of park stewards." While these types of youth programs brought youth into national parks, it was not until the 1970s that these student programs presented any opportunity explicitly for cultural resources work.

1970s-80s Youth Engagement

In September 1971, the *New Yorker* published its first (and only) profile of a NPS director. Journalist John McPhee chronicled a typical work day for the seventh director of the NPS, George Hartzog. Director Hartzog explained to a group of SCA students the need for more students with training in the social sciences, including history and anthropology, explaining, "I'm looking for social scientists, not just natural scientists. It's not enough to interpret the natural phenomena of Yellowstone."⁵⁰ Hartzog understood the trends and social movements occurring during the late 1960s and early 1970s, including ongoing struggles among women and people of color for civil rights. Park units needed to

⁴⁹ Carl E. Van Horn and Herbert A. Schaffner. *Work in America: An Encyclopedia of History, Policy, and Society*. ABC-CLIO, 2003. 649

⁵⁰ John McPhee. "Profiles: Ranger, George Hartzog." *The New Yorker*. September 11, 1971. 87-88

be able to interpret histories of a more diverse American experience. With this in mind, Hartzog believed that the parks and their employees also needed to reflect the changing times and interests of Americans.⁵¹

With over 70 units added to the system during his tenure, the passing of the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, and his new vision for urban and cultural park units, Hartzog symbolized a golden era for the Park Service.⁵² His practices and initiatives mirrored both President Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" and Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall's robust environmentalism. Hartzog viewed the national parks much like other Great Society measures, as an investment in improving the way people lived. He was deeply and passionately committed to making parks more relevant to an increasingly urbanized American society.⁵³ Under his skilled leadership, the Service reached out as never before to underrepresented and underserved groups, particularly urban populations, minorities, and young people, with urban parks and programs such as "Summer in the Parks," living history, and park volunteer programs.⁵⁴

⁵¹ "Oral History Interview with George B. Hartzog, Jr." Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. The National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 2007. Accessed transcript 20 October 2016: https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/director/hartzog.pdf

⁵² Ibid. i-ii

⁵³ Ibid. xii

⁵⁴ Ibid. 40

Hartzog's youth outreach began with a focus on environmental education for students who lived in cities, far from the large iconic nature parks. He brought the parks to these students. Developed in Washington D.C. 1968, the "Summer in the Parks" program enhanced environmental awareness, developed outdoor recreation skills, and stimulated cultural awareness among participants.⁵⁵ The participants, bused to local parks, had an opportunity to experience the outdoors in a ways they might otherwise never have. They caught fish in the C&O Canal; they rode horses in Rock Creek Park, visited farms with live animals, enjoyed hayrides, and even skipped rocks. ⁵⁶ The "Summer in the Parks" program remained popular well into the 1970s, and roused public outcry in 1976 when the NPS considered cutting it.⁵⁷ Beyond the parks, Hartzog also pursued outreach programs. For example, he created and implemented the first environmental education curriculum for kindergarten through twelfth grade. Hartzog's investment in youth initiatives and education influenced youth programming and partnerships with other organizations to fund opportunities for students in parks in the decades to follow.

⁵⁵ Kathy Mengak. *Reshaping Our National Parks and Their Guardians: The Legacy of George B. Hartzog, Jr.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 195-226

⁵⁷ Tom Zito. "Brighter Days In The Parks: Restored 'Summer In The Parks.'" *The Washington Post*. June 2, 1976.

Despite the creation of these urban national parks and “Summer in the Parks” programs, a comprehensive urban park program never materialized.⁵⁸ Former NPS Regional Director, John J. Reynolds, notes that urban national parks were, and still are, considered “outliers” to the traditional idea of the national park. “Hartzog’s urban initiatives had the potential to grow and flourish,” but without him at the helm, they were slowly dismantled and “failed to withstand the test of time.”⁵⁹ It was only recently that the NPS began to make the urban parks a priority for the agency once again. For the first time since Hartzog, the NPS is engaged in an effort to make urban parks and programs more relevant to urban populations and is actively promoting itself as an agency with an urban mission. The centerpiece of this “strategic” effort is the 2015 NPS *Urban Agenda*.⁶⁰ The *Urban Agenda* is a continuation of the work started by Hartzog. The NPS is now focused on bringing millennials, minorities, and other urban dwellers into their local national parks, both as visitors and as employees. The current focus is on urban residents in order to reflect all Americans through a diversified workforce and visitation rates.

⁵⁸ Kathy Mengak. *Reshaping Our National Parks and Their Guardians*.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Sarah J. Morath. “A Park for Everyone: The National Park Service in Urban America.” *Natural Resources Journal*. Winter 2016.

Conclusion

In Chapter One, I defined an effective youth program as an outreach program or internship opportunity with a career trajectory. With this in mind, we can see how the NPS has benefited from a variety of youth programming over time. It is clear, for instance, that the New Deal's CCC relief program influenced youth outreach within the NPS. This program, although not created by the NPS, assisted in the care and upkeep of the agency during a national crisis, utilizing unemployed young men. It brought the young men into park units and taught them conservation and education skills. The CCC also brought young historians, architects, and anthropologists in to lead projects, resulting in an awareness of careers within the agency. This is the first example of effective youth outreach in the history of NPS youth engagement, introducing college graduates to careers within the agency, although the agency may not have considered it to be outreach at that point.

Programs like the SCA and the extended HABS program stemmed from updated versions of the CCC model wherein young people supported the conservation of parks where funding was scarce. These programs, however, were not as focused on work relief, but rather bringing college students into parks to provide assistance. The SCA brought students into the parks in the 50s and continues to do so today. This program is more successful than the CCC in effective youth engagement, as many of the students who are part of the SCA are introduced to potential careers within the Park Service through their

internships and programs. Although the CCC is considered one of the most successful government programs, the SCA can attract and hire more students as they are a nonprofit, rather than a federal agency. Later in this paper, I will describe the SCA's success rate in NPS hiring. The HABS documentations programs, although similar to the CCC college architects, is not as successful in effective youth outreach. HABS brings student architects onto summer documentation team projects, but there is a less explicit connection between the documentation program and NPS or federal careers. It tends to be a summer project, rather than a program meant to show student architects possible careers within the agency. It would be useful to measure how participants in these programs and internships continue (or not continue) to be active users of parks.

Under Hartzog in the 70s and 80s, the NPS began to reflect and reach out to a more diverse audience. This included bringing more youth in the NPS through outreach programs, especially youth in the social sciences as the National Historic Preservation Act passed in 1966. While Hartzog implemented more inclusive and diverse parks and programming, there is not a particular college outreach program that was created during this period. The partner programs that brought students into parks, like the SCA, might have added more cultural resources programs during this period, but there is not a specific NPS youth program. Although there were not specific programs, the US entered a severe economic recession in the 1970s, leaving a shortage of jobs in academia. Recently graduated history students needed to rethink their career paths. Many students

turned to historical societies and the federal government for alternative history careers—including the NPS. This is typically considered the beginning of the professionalization of public history, as many graduate students began to look for work in the public sector.⁶¹

Most of the programs described above involved students working in natural parks, learning how to conserve the American landscape. The HABS program is one of the few examples of cultural resources youth outreach. It was not until recently that the NPS has started to promote cultural resources opportunities for high school and college students. Even so, these opportunities are not advertised at the same rate as those in natural parks. In Chapter 3, I will look into the current youth outreach initiatives and programs to highlight how the NPS engages students beyond natural conservation programs.

⁶¹ Denise D. Meringolo. *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History*. xvi

CHAPTER THREE

NPS CURRENT YOUTH OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Introduction

Addressing the 2010 Northeast Region and National Capital Region

Superintendents Conference, then NPS Director Jon Jarvis explained, “a large segment of the American public does not know who we are [or] what we do or see themselves working in the [NPS] ... We need to make the national parks and the work of the NPS relevant to all Americans.”⁶² Since this meeting, the NPS has made an effort to do more diverse, inclusive hiring and educational outreach. This push for inclusivity, diversity, and relevancy emanated from the NPS initiatives leading up to the 2016 NPS Centennial. Many initiatives and reports, like the *Urban Agenda* and *A Call to Action*, address this goal to increase awareness and diversity, especially through youth outreach and engagement.

The *Urban Agenda's* first goal is to “be relevant to all Americans.” To facilitate this objective, the Park Service is currently retooling its relevancy, diversity, and inclusion (RDI) in its park units and programs. In an age of growing cultural diversity, the Service must continually ask whether the way in which it tells American stories has

⁶² From remarks at the Northeast Region/National Capital Region Superintendents Conference, October 28, 2010.

meaning for all citizens.⁶³ In addition to these RDI interpretative changes in park units and programs, the NPS recognizes the need to address diversity and inclusivity in the agency's workforce. Greater diversity in the NPS workforce will bring a broader spectrum of perspectives into decision-making.⁶⁴ As we have seen, the Park Service hopes to attract this diverse audience and workforce through young people.⁶⁵ By cultivating young people, the NPS has the potential to build its next generation of more diverse park stewards.

In a similar vein, the centennial-year *A Call to Action* addresses general methods to bring young people into park units and programs. The Park Service is collaborating with education partners and youth organizations to create a pathway to employment with the NPS, with a focus on diversifying the workforce. The agency will involve at least 10,000 youth each year in a multi-year progression of experiences from education programs to internship or volunteer opportunities to employment.⁶⁶ These opportunities will create not just one-time experiences but instead build "ladders of engagement."⁶⁷ For

⁶³ *Urban Agenda: Call to Action Initiative-The Call to [Urban] Action*. National Park Service, March 2015. 10. Accessed 20 July 2016.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 10

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 10-11

⁶⁶ *A Call to Action*. National Park Service, 2015

⁶⁷ *Urban Agenda*. 11

example, Saguaro National Park and Everglades National Park have developed programs to engage youth of diverse backgrounds that go beyond short-term outreach activities to provide a continuing pathway for deepening park community relationships. These include service learning experiences in parks and communities and summer work opportunities, such as internships, for young adults.⁶⁸

The *Urban Agenda* and *A Call to Action* highlight NPS programs that engage diverse young people, giving examples of programs for elementary through high school students primarily within the natural resources sector. However, these initiatives do not highlight explicit opportunities for college students considering careers in the NPS. In this chapter, I discuss examples of youth programs and opportunities geared toward college-age students, as these are the next generation considering careers within the NPS. I examine both natural and cultural resources engagement and outreach programs toward assessing their comparative effectiveness in Chapter 4.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 11 These programs at Saguaro National Park and at Everglades National Park provide students with experiences in parks whether through internships or other college programs. These programs typically take place over the course of a summer. After the summer program has ended, these national park units continue to provide these students with opportunities in the parks. Students can volunteer at the park unit; they may receive free or discounted entry for their family or friends. This is a way to encourage younger generations to continue stewardship with the national park units after their internship officially ends. It also gives them a chance to share what they learned by bringing their friends and family to visit the park unit. This can be a way to introduce underrepresented groups in the national parks. It is important to point out that there should be more thorough assessment of these programs and their effectiveness.

Engagement and Outreach to College Students

On December 27, 2010, President Obama issued Executive Order 13562, “Recruiting and Hiring Students and Recent Graduates.” Section 1 explains that “the federal government benefits from a diverse workforce that includes students and recent graduates, who infuse the workplace with their enthusiasm, talents, and unique perspectives.”⁶⁹ It continues by describing the federal government’s hiring processes, noting that the existing competitive hiring process for the federal civil service is structured so that, even at the entry level, it favors job applicants who have significant previous work experience.⁷⁰ This structure, along with the other complexities of admission into civil service careers, creates a barrier to students and recent graduates. The president’s point was to suggest that these barriers place the federal government at a competitive disadvantage compared to private-sector employers when it comes time to hire for entry-level positions.⁷¹

In order for the federal government to compete effectively for students and recent graduates, it must improve recruitment efforts by offering: clear paths to federal internships for students from high school through postgraduate school, clear paths to civil

⁶⁹ Executive Order 13562 of December 27, 2010, Recruiting and Hiring Students and Recent Graduates, <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2010-12-30/pdf/2010-33169.pdf>.

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ Ibid.

service careers for recent graduates, and meaningful training, mentoring, and career-development opportunities across the spectrum.⁷² Exposing students and recent graduates to federal jobs through internships and similar programs attracts them to careers in the federal government, careers that they may not have known existed. In order to promote employment opportunities for students and recent graduates, there must be an improvement to the competitive hiring rules for positions within federal civil service. In an effort to generate these changes, President Obama's Executive Order defined federal programs to bring young people into federal agencies through temporary internships and employment. These opportunities bypass the bureaucratic chaos of applying to federal careers by creating a "pathway" to employment in the federal government.

Aptly titled, the "Pathways Program" consists of three federally accepted-service programs, the Internship Program, the Recent Graduates Program, and a reinvigorated Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program.⁷³ These programs, officially adopted July 10, 2012, allow students and recent graduates to participate in temporary federal

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ The federal Government's Office of Personnel Management (OPM) manages jobs postings on USAJOBS.gov, conducts background checks and security clearances on federal employees, ensures fair workplace practices, manages pension programs, and provides training for federal employees. In the case of the Pathways Programs, the OPM has accepted these Programs for temporary federal Government employment and follows the same type of protocol for these temporary student employees. More information can be found here: <https://www.opm.gov/about-us/>

service jobs.⁷⁴ Instead of applying to a federal job without prior experience in civil service, the Pathways Programs provide students with insight into the process, “getting a foot in the door,” and allowing them to be more successful when applying to a permanent position. Each program provides insight into careers within the federal government, either broadly in the Internship Program or in a more focused way with the Recent Graduates Program and the Presidential Management Fellows Program.

The Pathways Internship Program, is an opportunity to earn money and continue education, to train with people who manage the day-to-day business of the NPS, and to combine academic study with on-the-job experience. The Internship Program introduces students to all the advantages and challenges of working for the NPS. It is available to all levels of students: high school, vocational and technical, associate degree, bachelor's degree, graduate degree, and professional degree students. The Recent Graduates Program targets recent graduates of qualifying educational institutions or students within two years of their degree or certification completion. Successful applicants to this program are placed in a one-year developmental program with the potential to lead to a civil service career in the NPS.⁷⁵ The final Pathways Program, the Presidential

⁷⁴ For more information of the Pathways Programs, see: “Pathways Programs: About Us.” National Park Service. 2016. Accessed 14 November 2016. <https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/pathways.htm>

⁷⁵ “Recent Graduates Program.” The Department of the Interior Pathways Program. 2016. Accessed 14 November 2016. <https://www.doi.gov/pathways/recent-graduates-program>

Management Fellows, is a leadership development program at the entry-level for advanced degree candidates. Created more than three decades ago, the program is designed to develop a cadre of potential federal government leaders. After successful program completion and job performance, the Fellow may be converted to a permanent Park Service position (or, in some limited circumstances a term appointment lasting 1-4 years in the competitive service.)⁷⁶

The Pathways Programs are meant to provide meaningful career development for young people at the beginning of careers in the federal service. It is also the most direct path to a career with a federal agency like the NPS, as each student is designated as a federal employee. There will be more on student participation in the next chapter. In addition to these federal college programs, the NPS partners with national and local nonprofit organizations to promote and sponsor other internship and program opportunities for college students and recent graduates. As noted earlier in this chapter, the *A Call to Action* suggests that the NPS bring in 10,000 students per summer; this happens through partner programs and other opportunities. These partner programs have existed for decades and supplement the NPS workforce, providing a larger workforce as well as an introduction to careers in the Park Service.

⁷⁶ “Presidential Management Fellows Program.” The Department of the Interior Pathways Program. 2016. Accessed 14 November 2016. <https://www.doi.gov/pathways/presidential-management-fellows-program>

National Park Service Partner Programs

Following the proposal of Vassar student Elizabeth Cushman Tutus Putnam, the Student Conservation Association (SCA) accepted its first group of students in the summer of 1957. Celebrating its sixtieth anniversary in 2017, the SCA currently provides opportunities for young people to protect, enhance, and restore national parks, marine sanctuaries, cultural landmarks, and urban green spaces across the United States. They serve year-round in programs lasting anywhere from two weeks to twelve months.⁷⁷ These programs range from opportunities at individual state and national parks, CCC-style state park work, and special programs, like the SCA NPS Academy. I focus on the SCA NPS Academy as it targets college-age students and leads them to careers in the Park Service.

Since its founding in March 2011, more than 500 interns have “graduated” from SCA’s NPS Academy, an experiential learning program designed to introduce undergraduate and graduate students, ages 18-35, to career opportunities with the NPS.⁷⁸ This program aligns with the NPS’ goal to “enhance professional and organizational excellence in the next century by recruiting and retaining a workforce that reflects the

⁷⁷ More information on the Student Conservation Association can be found here: “About What We Do.” *The Student Conservation Association*. 2016. Accessed 14 November 2016. <http://www.thesca.org/about/what-we-do>

⁷⁸ Ibid.

diversity of the nation.”⁷⁹ In 2016, the NPS’s Washington Support Office (WASO) Youth Program Office funded approximately 60 summer internships. SCA strategically recruited qualified NPS Academy candidates and makes selections utilizing input from the NPS and its needs.⁸⁰ These students are recruited nationally, rather than only from the Washington D.C. area. Park units and regional programs can submit internship opportunities to the WASO Youth Programs Office for consideration. These internship opportunities include both natural resource conservation as well as work in the preservation of the NPS’ cultural and historical resources. After their time in the program, NPS Academy members are surveyed on their experiences. 96% of members have gained skills that they expect to use in the future. SCA alumni make up an estimated 12 percent of the NPS workforce.⁸¹

The SCA provides the NPS with interns from the NPS Academy Program, as well as through other types of programming. Another NPS partner, the National Council for Preservation Education (NCPE), also recruits senior undergraduates and graduate students interested in opportunities in historic preservation within the NPS. Originally founded in 1978, the NCPE has remained unchanged in its mission: to focus on

⁷⁹ *A Call to Action*. 13

⁸⁰ “The National Park Service Academy Call for Proposals.” *The Student Conservation Association and the National Park Service*. 2016. Accessed 15 November 2016. <http://envst.utah.edu/internship-job/npsa2016.pdf>

⁸¹ “About What We Do.” *The Student Conservation Association*. 2016.

encouraging and assisting the development and improvement of preservation education programs by coordinating efforts related to preservation education with public and private organizations to facilitate the collection and dissemination of information concerning preservation education, and to raise public awareness of historic preservation.⁸² The NCPE has continued to sponsor internships and other student experiences since its founding, especially in conjunction with the NPS.

As of 2011, NCPE has partnered with over fifty member institutions located across the United States, including the NPS. These academic programs in historic preservation and allied fields have educated thousands of students, many of whom have developed careers as historic preservation leaders working for local, state, federal government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and in the private sector both nationally and globally.⁸³ The NPS, in partnership with the NCPE, continues to offer paid internships in federal cultural resource program offices and in NPS park units, to graduate and undergraduate senior students in academic programs in historic preservation and allied fields such as history, archeology, architecture, and museum studies.⁸⁴ Similar to

⁸² Michael A. Tomlin. "The Early Years: Founding the National Council for Preservation Education." *Preservation Research and Education*. Vol. 3, 2010. Accessed 15 November 2016. <http://ncpe.us/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Tomlan.pdf>

⁸³ Ibid. 70-71

⁸⁴ Ibid.

the SCA, interested NPS cultural resources offices and park units are able to submit an internship opportunity to the NCPE to help fund and advertise to students across the country. ⁸⁵

The SCA and the NCPE emphasize career opportunities to college students that they may not have known existed before their program or internship. These national nonprofit organizations are beneficial to the NPS and their youth outreach goals, as they sponsor internships at park units and regional offices. The funds for these internships do not have to come from the agency. While the SCA and NCPE provide interns to the NPS, they cannot possibly attract and hire thousands of students a summer. These national programs are supplemented by state, local, and park-level college internships and programming. Smaller programs and internships are based in both natural and cultural resources, procuring funding through NPS regional offices, local nonprofits, and partnerships with colleges and universities. Advertised on a smaller scale, these internships and programs also provide students with a “pathway” to employment within the federal government. Although not necessarily sponsored through a Pathways Program, many local internships and programs are also aiming to break down the bureaucracy of the NPS hiring process to bring the next generation of stewards into the NPS.

College programs are promoted and funded at both a national and state or local

⁸⁵ Ibid.

level. The Pathways Programs, the SCA NPS Academy, and the NCPE preservation internships are all promoted nationally and funded through either the federal government or a national nonprofit organization. While these types of college programs make up a large part of college program opportunities, there are many college programs and internships promoted and funded at the regional, state, or local level. These opportunities range from a summer writing intensive at a national park to university partnerships to prepare students for careers through their undergraduate coursework. In the next section, I chose several programs to highlight and discuss toward illustrating the plethora opportunities available to college students in NPS programs and internships.

College Partnerships

Several colleges across the United States have arranged partnerships with NPS regional offices. The purpose of these partnerships is to educate and prepare college students for careers within the NPS. They also provide college students with the opportunity to understand and become familiar with how the park system operates. College programs like these potentially attract students who may never have considered an NPS career otherwise. One particular college program, the ProRanger Program, is a relatively new and successful program. Offered at Temple University, Texas A&M University, and Prairie View A&M University, this program was established to recruit, train, and employ law enforcement park rangers for the NPS.⁸⁶ Students from any major

⁸⁶ “The ProRanger Program.” Temple University. 2016. Accessed 15 November 2016.

can participate in this two-year program, as long as they adhere to the program rules and requirements. Not only will these students have two internship opportunities within park units, they will also take courses designed to assist in their success as a NPS Law Enforcement Ranger.

The partnership is funded by both the university and the NPS regional offices, in this case the Northeast Regional Office (Temple) and the Intermountain Regional Office (Texas A&M and Prairie View A&M). The summer internships are funded through the Pathways Internship Program, making the student interns temporary federal employees.⁸⁷ After the two-year program concludes and the students have graduated, they are eligible to work as law enforcement rangers. The participating universities boast 100% placement of students into park units upon graduation.⁸⁸ The students become NPS law enforcement rangers whose duties include detection, investigation, and apprehension of persons responsible for criminal activity as well as protecting parks' resources.⁸⁹

<http://www.temple.edu/provost/university-college/proranger/information.html>

⁸⁷ “National Park Service ProRanger Philadelphia Student Manual.” *National Park Service and Temple University*. 2010. Accessed 15 November 2016.

<http://www.temple.edu/provost/university-college/proranger/documents/ProRangerStudentManual.pdf>

⁸⁸ For information on the graduates of the ProRanger Programs: “The Intermountain Region ProRanger Program.” Texas A&M University and the National Park Service. 2015. Accessed 15 November 2016. <http://prorangersa.blogspot.com/> “The ProRanger Program.” Temple University. 2016. Accessed 15 November 2016.

<http://www.temple.edu/provost/university-college/proranger/information.html>

⁸⁹ Ibid.

The ProRanger Program, an offshoot of the Pathways Programs, provides a clear “path” to federal employment. The program also allows students to participate in multiple internships and hands-on education and courses to understand how the NPS and its law enforcement careers operate. In some ways, the students coming into the NPS from the ProRanger Program may be the most informed on the NPS itself, as their coursework is designed to help them learn not just a basic career skill, like law enforcement, but NPS-specific skills associated with courses such as “An Introduction to Heritage Interpretation in the National Park Service” and “Federal Land Management.”⁹⁰ While this program affords students a path to a career with the NPS, it is specifically suited for students considering jobs as law enforcement rangers, not necessarily emergency, interpretive, or education rangers. Students with majors like history, archaeology, communication, biology, may not be as interested in a career as a law enforcement ranger. There are plenty of other opportunities offered for college students in different majors, however the path to employment may not be as clear.

Park-Level College Programs

Park units across the United States take advantage of college students as interns or volunteers. Some park programs or internships are advertised and sponsored by federal or state level organizations, while others are created and funded in more local ways. In

⁹⁰ To see a ProRanger Program Timeline description: “The ProRanger Program Timeline.” Temple University. 2016. Accessed 15 November 2016.

<http://www.temple.edu/provost/university-college/proranger/information.html>

this section, I will highlight two park-level college programs and how they relate and differ from the internships and programs formerly described. These two park programs represent the abundance of programs available to college students and recent graduates. Although these programs may not explicitly create a direct “pathway” to a career in the NPS, they highlight opportunities that could open doors to further opportunities and careers in the NPS.

Following the guidance of the NPS’ *A Call to Action*, the Friends of Saguaro National Park launched its Next Generation Ranger Corps Program in 2015. Funded by the friends group and grants received from the National Park Foundation, the National Environmental Education Foundation, and the Outdoor Foundation, this new program proved to be successful and can potentially serve as a model for future NPS youth engagement. The first class of Next Generation Rangers, made up of 14 undergraduates and recent graduates, including eight women and seven minority students (Hispanic, Native American, or Asian), participated in a broad range of training experiences that provide valuable skills in NPS history, wilderness, resource management, safety, interpretation, outreach, and visitor protection.⁹¹ This comprehensive experience allowed the students to learn more about their own interests and narrow their career goals. This

⁹¹ Kurt Repanshek. “Nurturing the Next Generation of Rangers at Saguaro National Park.” National Parks Traveler. 28 December 2015. Accessed 2 August 2016. <http://www.nationalparkstraveler.com/2015/12/nurturing-next-generation-rangers-saguaro-national-park>

unique partnership between the park and Friends of Saguaro empowers young people to apply their knowledge, skills, and abilities to truly make a difference in the park, while simultaneously allowing them to gain new knowledge, skills, and abilities to pave the way to a future career.⁹²

Throughout the year this cohort was educated not only about Saguaro National Park, but on career opportunities throughout the NPS. This program has the potential to help develop a more diverse workforce, reflecting the local community surrounding Saguaro National Park. The long-term goal of the program is to not only have a workforce at Saguaro that is reflective of the area's demographic makeup, but also to see the park remain relevant to the area's population.⁹³ Each Next Generation Ranger is selected by Saguaro National Park, but paid through an Independent Contractor Agreement with Friends of Saguaro. Each intern has a designated mentor, and all the Next Generation Rangers share a broad range of training experiences that provide valuable skills in NPS history, wilderness, resource management, safety, interpretation, outreach, and visitor protection.⁹⁴ Although a new internship program, it has the chance to engage college students and recent graduates in a wide-range of NPS experiences,

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ "Nurturing the Next Generation of Rangers." *Friends of Saguaro National Park*. 2016. Accessed 2 August 2016. http://www.friendsofsaguaro.org/index.asp?SEC=EA8CC2A4-F55B-4B5E-B50C-006530D36E8A&Type=B_BASIC

⁹⁴ Ibid.

exemplifying many career paths. This program is similar to the Pathways Program Internships as it provides a broad overview of the NPS and encourages diversity in its recruits. However, it requires a well-funded Friends organization—how many national park units have this opportunity?

In celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Wilderness Act, Everglades National Park and its partners hosted the Everglades Wilderness Writing Expedition.⁹⁵ This program engaged ten aspiring writers and journalists from the local community, ages 18-25, on an exploration of wilderness, self-discovery and environmental writing.⁹⁶ This summer program, geared toward communications students (but open to all), allows students from Southern Florida colleges to discover wilderness, document their adventure, and hone their writing skills with Everglades' poet, naturalist, writer and teacher, Anne McCrary Sullivan and park ranger naturalist Sabrina Diaz. After the six-week experience, the students will have their written work exhibited in a gallery and story published in a local newspaper.⁹⁷ Additionally, the students will receive one year of additional free access, opportunities to write for the park, and the chance to serve as a

⁹⁵ Everglades Wilderness Writing Expedition Partners: The National Park Foundation, South Florida National Parks Trust, NC Outward Bound School, AIRIE Inc., and local universities. More information can be found here:

<http://evergladeswildernesswritingexpedition.blogspot.com/p/about-oparnters.html>

⁹⁶ "Everglades Wilderness Writing Expedition." Everglades National Park. 2015. Accessed 2 August 2016. <http://evergladeswildernesswritingexpedition.blogspot.com/>

⁹⁷ Ibid.

park volunteer. This additional time at Everglades National Park will cultivate these students as NPS advocates and park stewards.⁹⁸

The Everglades Wilderness Writing Expedition is quite different from the programs discussed throughout this chapter. Instead of learning about the NPS through career-oriented internships, these students participated in experiences and excursions within Everglades National Park and its surrounding areas. I would argue that this method of engagement, although not introducing explicit career options, educates the participants on the NPS as the program is led by a park ranger, explores the natural resources of the park, and the students have the chance to share their writing with the park and the local community. After the expedition is over, the students are given free admission to the park, the chance to volunteer, and the opportunity to continue to write for the park. This demonstrates how Everglades National Park wishes to extend connections with the students and encourage them to serve as stewards for the park. This type of program is especially useful since the students are local to the area, allowing the students to share their experience and the park with their local peers.

Conclusion

After examining a wide-range of NPS college internships and programs, it is evident that the agency is working to create a clearer path into careers in the federal Government and more diversity in the NPS workforce. However, how well are these

⁹⁸ Ibid.

programs engaging college students? How do students find out about these opportunities? What attracts them to experiences in the NPS? The next chapter will examine each of the internships and programs highlighted in this chapter in order to understand each program's strengths and limitations. Analyzing the current forms of youth engagement will allow me to make better recommendations for future college-student outreach.

CHAPTER FOUR

ISSUES WITH CURRENT YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

In order to accurately assess how college students perceive the NPS, I surveyed a sample of students at both Temple University and other local colleges.⁹⁹ The results of the survey confirm my hypothesis that college students consider the parks to be “grand landscapes in the West, road trip destinations” rather than sites of various size and intent scattered all across the entire country. There were the predictable notions of NPS imagery, like Smokey the Bear, Yellowstone, and rangers in flat hats.¹⁰⁰ In addition to surveying a general swath of college students, I also surveyed students in Temple University’s *History of the National Park Service* course (see **appendix** for course

⁹⁹ I wrote a survey for Seth Bruggeman’s *History of the National Park Service* class, as well as a more general survey distributed to college students at Temple University and other local colleges. I capped this survey to 60 students, due to time and content management. The students in the *History of the NPS* course knew more about the structure of the parks natural and cultural resources, however many admitted to previously thinking the parks were Western landscapes. The survey questions (for both sets of surveys) can be found in the Appendix.

¹⁰⁰ After many conversations and surveys, these types of responses outnumbered most other imagery. While this reveals the Western perceptions of the NPS, it also reveals yet another misconception about the NPS. Smokey the Bear is a symbol of the United States Forest Service (located within the US Department of Agriculture), created as a public service announcement on forest fires and wildfires. Created on August 9, 1944, Smokey the Bear was the new fire prevention symbol was agreed upon by the Forest Service, Association of State Foresters, and the Wartime Advertising Council. For more information on Smokey the Bear, here are some additional resources: “Smokey Bear.” The National Park Service. Accessed 2 February 2017. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/smokeybear.htm> “History of Smokey the Bear.” South Dakota Department of Agriculture. Accessed 2 February 2017. <http://sdda.sd.gov/legacydocs/forestry/educational-information/>

description).¹⁰¹ Although this class introduces students to multiple facets of the NPS, their survey responses indicated their original perceptions of the Park Service involved large scenic parks. Some admitted that that is still how they perceive them:

I still think of the big, scenic parks despite knowing that the Park Service encompasses far more than these parks. I suppose this is because I view the Park Service almost as an environmental organization because of the role they play in both the conservation and preservation of natural resources and animal/plant life. Because of this I tend to overlook that the NPS is also heavily involved in preserving and protecting history.¹⁰²

Both Temple students and the other college students echo this sentiment in their responses. Some students included monuments and memorials, like statues of George Washington at battlefields and the Lincoln Memorial and Washington D.C., as part of their NPS perception. Parks include, as one student explained, “stone statues of George Washington silhouetted by snowy fields and dilapidated wooden structures.”¹⁰³ Judging by these responses, the NPS is evidently synonymous with Smokey the Bear, Yellowstone, large forests, and rangers, rather than natural and cultural resource units spanning from large units in the West to military battlefields in the South to small house museums in the East. This survey only represents a small sample of college students,

¹⁰¹ The *History of the NPS* course description can be found in the Appendix.

¹⁰² A response from: Alaina McNaughton’s “The National Park Service and College Students Survey.” Spring 2016-Fall 2016.

¹⁰³ A response from: Alaina McNaughton’s “The National Park Service and College Students Survey.” Spring 2016-Fall 2016.

although the students who responded were of varied universities, majors, and experience, which provides unique perspectives. The survey questions for both the *History of the National Park Service* course and the general college student survey can be found at the end of this paper (**see appendix**).

Instead of becoming disheartened by college students' apparent nature park fetish, the NPS must consider ways to harness their perceptions of the agency to cultivate the next wave of employees, visitors, and advocates. While it is difficult to change public perception, it is possible to work with current perceptions to generate a shift. In order for the NPS to receive support from this millennial audience, the agency must understand young people, especially their perceptions of the NPS and the most effective methods of communicating with them. In this chapter, I review methods for defining a heritage audience, understanding its needs, and communicating with it. This brief survey will provide insight into best practices for defining, understanding, and communicating with any audience. I conclude by assessing current NPS youth engagement methods through the lens of these best practices.

Cultivating the Next Generation of Stewards: A Survey of Audience and Engagement

A survey of recent scholarship regarding audience engagement suggests that there are three areas of primary concern: applying audience research, recognizing audience diversity, and executing effective communication. If the NPS hopes to effectively reach

the next generation, these three issues must be addressed, especially when recruiting for internships or programs. Failure to understand a millennial audience and how to best communicate with it could hinder recruitment to these federal careers.

Applying Audience Research

The first area of effective audience engagement is the necessity of applying audience research. Museum consultant Mary Kay Ingenthron, speaking at the University of Kansas Museum Marketing Management Institute, urged the Institute's students to consult market research in order to assess a museum's current audience, its expectations, why people visit, and why they may not. "How will you know whether or not you are positioning your museum correctly without research on your audience?"¹⁰⁴ Once the audience is understood, it is necessary to then understand how your target audience perceives the museum or historic site. She argues that "if you do not know how your museum is perceived by your public, you may be wasting your marketing time and dollars and offering the wrong programs and services."¹⁰⁵ Before a museum can design programs, services, exhibitions, and marketing, it must first acknowledge its audience, the audience's current perceptions, and how to cater to its needs. By understanding what

¹⁰⁴ Mary Kay Ingenthron. "Creating Your Marketing Plan: First Know Your Audience." *History News* Vol. 55, 2000: 20-23

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* 22

a museum means to the public, it is easier to reach segments of the target audience.¹⁰⁶

Continuing the conversation on audience research, marketing developer Jeffrey Rohrs asserts that audience is the most crucial aspect in the success of a business. Companies require audiences to survive—if audiences are not built, engaged, and active, companies will fall behind their competitors.¹⁰⁷ Audience is imperative to understand when marketing a company, business, or brand; it is the bedrock on which any business is built and audience opinions matter. Audiences are “not owned” and should not be taken for granted.¹⁰⁸ Regardless of whether it’s a major television network, pop star, or professional sports team, no one owns their audience. An audience can get up and leave--mentally or physically--at any time.¹⁰⁹

While an audience is not owned, it can be a valuable business asset.¹¹⁰ Rohrs points out that audience should be the focus of a great deal of marketing's energy and attention. A more engaged proprietary audience creates advocates for a brand or organization. Rohrs warns that audience marketing efforts are occasionally created by

¹⁰⁶ Ibid 21

¹⁰⁷ Jeffrey Rohrs. *Audience: Marketing in the Age of Subscribers, Fans, and Followers*. Wiley Publishing. 2013. pp. 3-4

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 3

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 5

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 19 “Proprietary” meaning relating to ownership

siloed teams, more interested in how they communicate rather than how the company as a whole is communicating to their audience.¹¹¹ This is evident within the NPS regional offices, parks, and programs. As the NPS is a large bureaucratic organization, programs and departments are often siloed with little awareness of other programs. Unsuccessful internal communication leads to a less unified external communication, leading to siloed audiences. For example, NPS parks and program Facebook pages hardly engage with other NPS pages; each park or program “does their own thing.”¹¹² The NPS parks and programs need to learn from marketing best practices and build a more unified branding. The current digital presence may confuse digital audiences, rather than inform them on the extent of the NPS.

Recognizing Audience Diversity

If understanding audience perception is one step toward improving engagement, another involves accounting for diversity. In 1990, the Museum Education Roundtable

¹¹¹ Ibid. For more on the value of market research in audience analysis, see Denis McQuail’s *Audience Analysis* or James G. Webster, Patricia F. Phalen, Lawrence W. Lichty *Ratings Analysis: Audience Measurement and Analytics* Edition 4.

¹¹² As a NCPE communications intern with the NPS Northeast Regional Office in Philadelphia, I was exposed to the challenges of siloed regional programs, especially in regards to communicating with their internal NPS audience, as well as their external public audience. I analyzed the Cultural Resources Division’s communications tools to both their internal and external audiences. I talked with Cultural Resources program managers and staff to understand what works with their current communication and what does not, in order to suggest a better communications plan and suggest ways to implement better internal and external communications. In many of my conversations, staff pointed out the problems of trying to use social media to engage new audiences. It requires more time and effort than most parks or programs are willing to take.

and the Virginia Association of Museums hosted their sixth annual conference to discuss issues surrounding programming for diverse audiences. A summary of the proceedings published by Bonnie Garmisa highlights the conversations at this conference.¹¹³ One of the talks insisted that learning about audience is primary to the development of effective programming. It is important to consider different methods of learning and engagement, including cultural differences and learning patterns. In the panel “Researching Your Audience to Develop Culturally Sensitive Programs and Exhibitions,” the speakers reaffirmed the importance of “knowing thy audience.”¹¹⁴

Using East Hampton Historical Society (EHHS) as a case study, museum educator Karen Hensel stressed the importance of audience research and evaluation. She described literally putting a video camera on her audience to find out who makes up the audience and what this group wanted and needed to know.¹¹⁵ Her findings suggested that the historical society was trying “to create school” rather than “inviting curiosity.”¹¹⁶ These findings transformed how the historical society interacted with their audience.

¹¹³ Bonnie Garmisa. “Culturally Diverse Audiences: Some Food for Thought.” *Journal of Museum Education*. Vol. 15, Issue 2, 1990: pp. 17-19

¹¹⁴Ibid. 17

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 18

¹¹⁶ Ibid. For more on the value of recognizing audience diversity, in a government agency, see “Strategies to Enhance Air Force Communication with Internal and External Audiences: A Workshop Report.” *The United States Air Force*. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

Similar to Ingenthron, Hensel and the EHHS actively pursued audience research, in this case recognizing the diversity of audiences and their learning styles. In a similar way, NPS park units and programs should solicit feedback from their guests, both at park units and through social media to understand the diversity of their audience. The NPS programs and parks may *think* they understand their audience, but they cannot be sure without actual feedback. This can be challenging for the NPS as the agency has quite an expansive audience and it is difficult to survey visitors, as it is a federal agency. The NPS parks and programs must not assume that their audiences want the same types of content; it is necessary to ask guests what they need. It is important to constantly reassess audiences and needs, especially in an age of both physical and digital audiences. The park staff would be the best unit of the service to perform evaluations and assess audience needs as they interact most directly.

Executing Effective Communication

After understanding an audience, it is necessary to connect with it. How can the NPS use visitors and digital followers to strengthen the agency? The first step is to identify audience and then create a specific communications plan. The NPS's audience includes those individuals and organizations on which it depends for success.¹¹⁷ All of these various groups require different kinds of information, at different times, and

¹¹⁷ "Reaching Today's Utility Audiences: Why There is No Such Thing as the General Public." *American Water Works Association. Journal*, Vol 91, Issue 1, 2010. 49-51

perhaps with different areas of focus. One size does not fit all when it comes to communication.¹¹⁸ The American Water Works Association (AWWA), for instance, argues that each audience group deserves its own set of communication goals, messages, strategies, and tactics; there is no such thing as the “general public,” so there are not “general communication plans.” The AWWA points out that it is not necessary to define all possible audiences right away, priority audiences can be identified as necessary.¹¹⁹ To make these points, the AWWA uses examples from various water recycling programs across the United States.

Although this may not be explicitly relevant, the AWWA communications efforts can be applied to NPS parks and programs. The AWWA explains the necessity of assessing an audience, which is applicable to any public organization. In this case, the NPS must realize that its audience is critical to its success. While it is advantageous to understand how other sectors define audience and communication, it is important to compare that with how cultural resources professionals tackle audience and communication. How do historians and public historians define these terms? What can public historians, museum educators, or the NPS learn from interdisciplinary research?

Marianne Babal argues to the National Council for Public History (NCPH) in her 2010 presidential address that marketing and communication principles can help connect

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 50

¹¹⁹ Ibid. 50

public historians with their audiences. Often academic and public historians, she explains, use their expertise to arrive at interpretations they want to share, but often fall short in effectively conveying that to others. Historians fall victim to what might be called “the curse of knowledge,” failing to connect with a broader audience.¹²⁰ If historical and cultural institutions wish to remain relevant, Babal asserts that they must learn accessible communication inspired by marketers. This communication must demonstrate that history is relevant and essential in everyday lives, that it is valuable, useful, desirable, and in their own intellectual, societal, and economic self-interest.¹²¹

Babal recommends acknowledging the experience of marketers. Marketers understand that success depends upon connection with audience. In the same way, the NPS must communicate the importance of park units and programs through effective marketing. NPS visitors arrive with expectations and a desire for respect and recognition; and an expectation that their experience be communicated in ways personally relevant, memorable, meaningful, emotional, sensory, and increasingly, experiential.¹²² Babal’s points resonate with the previous scholarship relating to audience and communication, but through a public history context. The NPS should acknowledge its audience’s

¹²⁰ Marianne Babal. “Sticky History: Connecting Historians with the Public.” *The Public Historian*. Vol. 32, No. 4, 2010. 76-84

¹²¹ Ibid. 82 for step by step instructions on public history and audience engagement and communication, see Faye Sayer’s *Public History: A Practical Guide*.

¹²² Ibid. 80

experience as visitors to park units and create connections between the content and the audience. If NPS visitors create connections, there are likely to be return “customers.”

This brief survey points to best practices that the NPS should consider when cultivating an audience, in this case the millennial audience. As we saw in Chapter 3, the NPS actively implements programs for college students in federal, national, and local-level park specific internships and experiences. With those in mind, and having reviewed the literature on audience and communication, I will now analyze the effectiveness of each of the programs mentioned in Chapter 3. Do these youth outreach programs effectively understand the millennial audience and how to best attract them to these internships?

Analyzing the College Programs

Federal Programs

The Pathways Programs introduces college students and recent graduates to the NPS, provides hands-on work experience, and affords a “pathway” to a career following the completion of the program. These highly competitive programs place a strong emphasis on professional development within the federal Government and teach necessary government workforce skills.¹²³ Students who have successfully completed the program are eligible to gain a permanent job within the agency. While it is not guaranteed, the Pathways Programs help students and recent graduates understand the NPS and federal

¹²³ Ibid.

positions. Students in the Pathways Programs are hired as temporary federal employees, giving them an advantage if applying for a government position. While this is arguably the most effective program, there are several other problems with this program that immediately stand out: how many positions in the Pathways Programs are actually available each year? How do the Department of the Interior and its agencies advertise for such a program? How does this compare with other federal agencies?

Finding the exact number of students and recent graduates involved in the Pathways Programs proved difficult, but the Department of the Interior's Budget Justifications for the National Park Service listed the numbers in their Youth Engagement sections.¹²⁴ Each budget justification since the inception of the Pathways Programs made creating youth employment opportunities one of its highest strategic goals. In its first year, FY 2012, the NPS was able to employ 6,726 youth through the federal hiring process. Each year the program grew, and in keeping with *A Call to Action*, the NPS has gradually reached its goal of 10,000 students and exceeded it through Pathways and partner programs, with 14,541 students in 2015-2016.¹²⁵ While the NPS provides

¹²⁴ I found data from Fiscal Years 2014-2017 regarding employment opportunities for youth through both the Pathways Programs and partner organizations. "Budget Justifications for the National Park Service and Performance Information: Fiscal Year 2014." Department of the Interior. Accessed 15 December 2016.

https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/upload/FY_2014_greenbook.pdf

¹²⁵ Further Budget Justifications for Fiscal Years 2013-2017 can be found here:

<https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/upload/FY-2015-Greenbook-Linked.pdf>

<https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/upload/FY-2016-Greenbook.pdf>

numbers of students and recent graduates involved in their programs, there is not specific information on the number of positions available each year— it could change based on need and availability. It is impressive that the programs have grown since the Pathways Program was enacted, but how do students and recent graduates find and apply for these Pathways positions?

After scrutinizing social media, Google, and university websites, I found hardly any advertisements for Pathways Programs. On social media, many federal agencies promote the Pathways Programs on their Facebook or Twitter feeds, but what percentage of college students follow federal agencies on social media? The NPS runs a NPS Service Student Employees Facebook page where it posts opportunities. This Facebook page has roughly 2,700 followers with minimal likes or comments on the posts.¹²⁶ This Facebook page exemplifies the rule of thumb that social media should not be used if it is not effectively managed. Individual parks, like Glacier National Park, promote the Pathways Program on their website, but how many other park units advertise on their own sites?¹²⁷ It is also difficult to find colleges that advertise for the Pathways Programs as potential internship opportunities. If I am actively searching for these opportunities and cannot find

<https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/upload/FY17-NPS-Greenbook-for-website.pdf>

¹²⁶ National Park Service Student Network Facebook Page. Accessed 15 December 2016.
<https://www.facebook.com/NPS.Student.Network/>

¹²⁷ “Get Involved.” Glacier National Park. Accessed 4 December 2016.
<https://www.nps.gov/glac/getinvolved/pathways.htm>

them, how will students unaware of the Pathways Programs find out about them?

This lack of connection between the NPS and its college-age audience circles back to the challenge of understanding audience and effective communication. Ingenthron's article explains that it is imperative to research an audience, including its perceptions of an organization. It is simpler to reach target audiences by acknowledging their needs and perceptions.¹²⁸ In my survey of college students and recent graduates, I asked "what is the National Park Service?" and "what imagery comes to mind when you think of the National Park Service?" These brief questions provide insight into the student's perceptions of the NPS and its functions.¹²⁹ While I surveyed 60 students, if the NPS were to do this on a larger scale, it would provide a better understanding of this next generation's perceptions.

In addition to surveying perceptions of the NPS, I also asked respondents to identify which methods of outreach the NPS should utilize to reach them. The respondents could "Check All that Apply" for the following suggestions: social media, NPS website, college outreach, information at park locations, or an option to write in another suggestion. Most students identified that they would use social media and the NPS website to find information about specific parks and their offerings. For instance,

¹²⁸ Mary Kay Ingenthron. "Creating Your Marketing Plan: First Know Your Audience."

¹²⁹ In this instance, I am referring to the students who did not participate in the *History of the NPS* course at Temple University.

one respondent noted that “I want to take a trip to Yellowstone, so I will find their websites and social media pages.”¹³⁰ While these results illustrate that students use social media and websites for information, the students may only look for parks they know of, not discover other parks or seek out internship or job information. There needs to be a better way to bridge the gap and showcase more opportunities.

Partner Programs

The NPS’s partner programs like the SCA and the NCPE provide internship opportunities to college students and recent graduates across the NPS. The programs factor into the *A Call to Action*’s goal of 10,000 students in parks and programs. Partner programs introduce students to the range of opportunities within the agency. They are more flexible than the Pathways Program in that students are not temporary government employees and do not have to undergo a rigorous vetting process. Students can also extend their internships; they are not limited to one year of service. On the other hand, students in partner programs are not always temporary federal employees, so they may not receive any benefit when applying to federal jobs.¹³¹ While the SCA or NCPE partner programs may not produce immediate job opportunities, it does provide hands-on

¹³⁰ A response from: Alaina McNaughton’s “The National Park Service and College Students Survey.” Spring 2016-Fall 2016.

¹³¹ It is important to understand the hiring process within the NPS and other federal agencies. When jobs are available, Pathways participants have the opportunity to apply for a position through non-competitive hiring, meaning the applicant has 120 days to apply and be placed in a position. The window for employment is short and could possibly be anywhere across the agency.

experiences in parks and program offices allowing for students to understand the scope of the NPS. While the NPS continues to provide more and more opportunities, are there ways to improve these partner programs?

The SCA's program, NPS Academy, is the program that the NPS should use as a model for engaging youth in parks. NPS Academy introduces undergraduate and graduate students from under-represented communities to NPS careers. Interns attend a week-long orientation, and then serve as a 12-week paid summer intern at a national park unit working on natural or cultural resource conservation projects. Since 2011, 259 young people have participated in this program. In FY 2014, the program supported 122 diverse undergraduate and graduate students and in FY 2015, 111 diverse students participated.¹³² This internship is coordinated through the Pathways Program. The SCA interviews and hires 60 students and partners with the NPS WASO office to hire them through WASO's Pathways Program allotment. This puts the hiring responsibility on a partner organization and allows the two agencies to promote this opportunity. Promoting the NPS Academy Program through the SCA and the NPS WASO offices provides more opportunities for students to find this internship and apply. If students are accepted into this program, they will have an opportunity to be a temporary federal employee and apply for a federal job following their program.

¹³² Budget Justifications for the NPS and Performance Information: Fiscal Year 2016.” Department of the Interior. Accessed 15 December 2016.
<https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/upload/FY-2016-Greenbook.pdf>

Alternatively, the NCPE program is not operated through the Pathways Program, but funded through the partner organization. The NPS can write internship and program opportunities and submit them to NCPE to approve, advertise, and fund.¹³³ While this gives more flexibility than a structure like the NPS Academy, it does not conclude with the possibility of employment. Students who took part in NCPE programs can of course apply for NPS careers; however, they do not have the advantage of the Pathways Programs and their hiring processes. The NCPE provides internships in cultural resources and historic preservation, the fields that already do not have much engagement with college students. As evidenced by the survey results, most college students do not consider the NPS to offer careers in anything beyond natural resources.¹³⁴ It would be advantageous for NCPE to create a similar path to employment like the NPS Academy, as it would introduce students to career possibilities and then allow them to have a job upon completion of the program.

University-Partner Programs

Another program that provides a direct pathway to employment within the NPS is the ProRanger Programs at Temple University, Texas A&M University, and Prairie View A&M University. This program, established to recruit, train and employ law enforcement

¹³³ Michael A. Tomlin. "The Early Years: Founding the National Council for Preservation Education." 2014.

¹³⁴ Responses from: Alaina McNaughton's "The National Park Service and College Students Survey." Spring 2016-Fall 2016.

park rangers for the NPS, allows any student to participate in this two year program of NPS-specific coursework and internships.¹³⁵ Once students successfully complete the program, they are hired by the NPS as law enforcement rangers. During this program, students are given two internships across the country at various NPS partner parks. The students are temporary employees of the NPS through the Pathways Programs. This gives the students the advantage of being federal employees, making the transition to full-time careers easier as they already have the experience with the agency and the peculiarities of federal service. It seems from the examples previously mentioned, that programs that work with partners and the Pathways Programs almost guarantee job placement upon graduation. Programs that do not work with the Pathways Programs allow students to have experiences with the NPS, but without the understanding of being a federal employee.

The ProRanger Program provides any student the chance to become a law enforcement ranger within the national park system, however, what about students who want to work in other areas of the NPS? The downside to the ProRanger Program is that it only really engages students who are interested in one particular career goal, instead of offering alternatives like interpretive rangers or educators or conservationists. The ProRanger Program should rethink its model of only creating law enforcement rangers

¹³⁵ “The ProRanger Program.” Temple University. 2016. Accessed 15 November 2016. <http://www.temple.edu/provost/university-college/proranger/information.html>

and branch out to, at least, interpretive rangers. This would build on the model that already exists and introduce job possibilities to students of all different majors, not just those interested in going into law enforcement.¹³⁶

Park-Level Programs

The Next Generation Ranger Corps and the Everglades Wilderness Writing Expedition exemplify parks and their personal outreach efforts. The Next Generation Ranger Corps Program mimics the Pathways Programs Internship Program, as it too provides a wide-range of hands-on opportunities, but only at one park unit.¹³⁷ The purpose of this is to promote Saguaro National Park to the local community so they can become potential employees and advocates. One negative to a program like this is that it may not allow the students in the program to be hired immediately upon completion of the program. A specific park may not need all of this additional labor. A national program is able to place students in jobs more effectively, as there are plenty of park units that require extra labor.

The Everglades Wilderness Writing Expedition program engaged 10 aspiring writers and journalists, ages 18-25, on an exploration of wilderness, self-discovery and environmental writing. ¹³⁸ This summer program allowed students from South Florida

¹³⁶“Temple University ProRanger Program.” Temple University College of Liberal Arts.

¹³⁷ Kurt Repanshek. “Nurturing the Next Generation of Rangers at Saguaro National Park.”

¹³⁸ Everglades Wilderness Writing Expedition Partners: The National Park Foundation, South

area colleges to hone their writing skills in this six-week program inspired by Everglades National Park. After the six-week experience, they received one year of additional free access, opportunities to write for the park, and the chance to serve as a park volunteer.¹³⁹ This program is unlike any of the other programs examined in these chapters. This one-time-program took place in the summer of 2014. It was not an explicit path to a career with the NPS nor was it an internship, but it did bring college students into a park unit in an engaging way. There is no mention on the program website or the Everglades website on the success of the program or plans to fund the program again, however, I would be interested in how successful or unsuccessful this program was. I am especially interested in if this program impacted how these students thought of the NPS.

Conclusion

After analyzing each of the college outreach programs identified in Chapter 3, I find that the most effective programs are those that are through the Pathways Programs. The Pathways Programs allow college students to have work experience within the federal government and become familiar with it in order to more easily apply for a job or receive one upon completion. The problems with the Pathways Program are their lack of advertising and knowledge of how to advertise their internship and recent graduate

Florida National Parks Trust, NC Outward Bound School, AIRIE Inc., and local universities. More information can be found here:
<http://evergladeswildernesswritingexpedition.blogspot.com/p/about-oparnters.html>

¹³⁹ Ibid.

opportunities. When organizations like the SCA partner with the NPS on programs like the NPS Academy, this allows the SCA and the NPS to advertise this Pathways Program opportunity. However, if it were simply the SCA or the NPS, would the advertising be as effective? After reviewing the results of my survey of college students, I found that many “checked” that they would be interested in college outreach—if parks and programs came to colleges to promote opportunities and internships. Something like this would be especially useful for students who may not be interested in being a law enforcement ranger, but interested in interpretation, education, or a STEM career with the NPS. It is important for the NPS to recognize that college students do not know, and I would argue most Americans, do not know the extent of the NPS and all that it offers. The NPS needs to work to change current perceptions of the NPS and career possibilities for students.

CHAPTER FIVE

NPS YOUTH ENGAGEMENT: SOLUTIONS

Introduction

In order to engage the next generation of employees, the NPS must adjust how it interacts with millennials—both in person and online. It is vital that the NPS supports youth outreach in a productive way, keeping in mind this young audience and the best methods of communicating with it. As discussed in Chapter 4, college students prefer the following methods of outreach: social media, websites, and college outreach, in order of preference.¹⁴⁰ If these are the methods that college students identify, then these are the methods the NPS should take into account when advertising youth outreach internships and programs. This does not just mean sharing internship opportunities on its website or via social media, but rather actively working with other NPS park and program websites and social media accounts in the most effective ways to connect with this millennial audience.

In this chapter, I present three different solutions to current problems with NPS youth outreach. These solutions range from the simple, requiring a minimal amount of labor and funding, to a grand plan for youth engagement. These solutions acknowledge

¹⁴⁰ I wrote a survey for Seth Bruggeman's *History of the National Park Service* class, as well as a more general survey distributed to college students at Temple University and other local colleges. The students in the *History of the NPS* course knew more about the structure of the parks natural and cultural resources, however many admitted to previously thinking the parks were Western landscapes. The survey questions (for both sets of surveys) can be found in the **Appendix**.

the student survey responses in order to provide solutions that millennials think will encourage their participation in the NPS and potentially lead them to careers within the agency.

Social Media Communications Solution

During the summer of 2016, I interned at the NPS' Northeast Regional Office (NERO) in Philadelphia as the Cultural Resource Management (CRM) Communications Intern.¹⁴¹ As part of my summer internship assignment, I analyzed communications tools within NERO's CRM division and produced a Communications Needs Assessment. For the purposes of this assessment, *communications* was defined in two ways: as "top-down" agency information sharing (NPS Washington Support Office to NERO to parks/programs/partners) and as "two-way" information sharing (e.g. between region and partners). The purpose of this assessment was to understand what methods of communication are currently in use within the NERO CRM both to internal and external partners and grapple with new ideas/goals for improved CR communication.¹⁴² The division's goal is to update communications platforms and create a more accessible CRM online presence in 2017.

¹⁴¹ Cultural Resources Management in the Northeast Regions includes six programs: History Program, Preservation Assistance, Archaeology and Ethnography, Northeast Museum Services Center, National Heritage Areas, and the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation.

¹⁴² Internal audience refers to employees of the NPS and external audience refers to anyone else (state/local partners, professionals, the interested public, etc.) A partner, in this case, refers to internal or external audiences.

To accurately assess communications, I developed and implemented online questionnaires to CR communication leads, phone interviews with CR managers and staff, phone interviews with NPS partners, and a documented analysis of current communication tools (**see appendix** for sample).¹⁴³ The goal of this assessment was to evaluate CR program communication needs in order to highlight common communications goals between the programs. These common goals informed the information architecture, audience, and purpose of a new CRM online tool.

While working on this assessment, I examined current internal and external communications tools.¹⁴⁴ This examination exposed issues of siloed CRM programs, absence of defined audiences, and lack of effective communication. As we discovered in Chapter 4, audience communications efforts are occasionally created by siloed teams, more interested in how their program communicates rather than how the company as a whole is communicating to their audience. This is evident in the CRM division, as it is unaware of how different CRM programs are communicating to internal and external audiences. This lack of awareness leads to a less unified communication across the CRM division. The problem with the CRM division communications is not a singular example,

¹⁴³ It is important to note that the sampling of CRM staff and partners surveyed were selected out of convenience, and thus their responses are a sampling not necessarily representative of all NER CR staff.

¹⁴⁴ Communications Tools refers to: Meetings, emails, webinars, conference calls, websites and social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, blogs, etc.)

it is happening across the NPS. Is this why the NPS has a difficult time engaging youth online via websites and social media?

If the NPS parks and programs expect to promote youth outreach opportunities through their web presence, how can the agency do this in a more successful way? Based on my study of NERO CRM, I recommend beginning with a vigorous analysis of current communications tools. Many CRM programs, for instance, try to run Facebook pages, but lack time or staff to maintain them. If the programs lack staff time than they lack relevance online, as there is not a continuous effort to maintain and promote their park or program. The first step in effectively using social media is reflecting on current communications tools and best methods of engagement, focusing on those rather than trying to stretch themselves across multiple platforms.¹⁴⁵ For example, if a park or program has a Facebook page, Twitter, and Instagram, but only enough time or staff to successfully run one of those platforms, delete the other two until time or staff permits.¹⁴⁶

Parks and programs must assess each platform's success and limitations. Are they reaching an audience that they want or are they limiting their audience to an interested public only? For example, the Northeast Museum Service Center in the NER has a

¹⁴⁵ I analyzed each current method of CRM internal and external communications by: successes, audience, time invested, unique opportunities, limitations, and recommendations. This allowed me to identify which tools worked for the staffing and which required more work than a CRM program could handle with limited staff time.

¹⁴⁶ No one within the CRM division's explicit job is social media--it is given to a selected member of CRM program staff as collateral duty.

Facebook page—but its main audience is an internal museum professional audience.¹⁴⁷ How does having a Facebook page serve this audience? It is necessary to assess whether or not each CRM program and service needs its own Facebook page, or could benefit from a shared NER CRM page? Instead of each program or service devoting time (or not devoting time) to a Facebook page with minimal followers, wouldn't it be more productive to share the responsibility? A shared Facebook page would help promote CRM programs and services to a larger audience creating broader interest. The National Historic Landmark program's Facebook page, for instance, is a collaborative page contributed to by NHL staff from across the regions. Each staff member posts each week and shares the responsibility. This could serve as a model for other parks and programs across the agency.

The examples from the CRM division assessment highlight limitations with social media, but also offer solutions. I propose that instead of having every single park and program trying to run their own social media, the parks and programs begin to combine in order to most effectively reach audiences and share information. The NPS contains seven regions--each region should have their own Facebook and Twitter pages, where they can share information on their region's parks and programs.¹⁴⁸ Each region can add

¹⁴⁷ This was determined by author's interviews with CR manager and staff within this program.

¹⁴⁸ Many of the regional offices have one or the other. For example, the Northeast Region and the Midwest Region currently their own Twitter accounts--this staff can decide which social media platforms work best for them to share information and then use it promote parks and programs.

other forms of social media, but these are the basic accounts that they should run. If a park or program within the region has enough time and staff, they can run their own pages, but share posts with the regional page to gain more exposure. If a park or program does not have enough staff, it can send posts and updates to the regional Facebook page to be shared. The regional pages would be run by the regional staff who currently manages outreach.

ProRanger College Outreach Solution

In my survey responses and conversations with peers, millennials do not understand the full spectrum of the NPS. Because they do not understand it, working for the NPS seems like a career for people who want to carry a gun in a mountain out West.¹⁴⁹ Several survey respondents noted that they would like to see more college outreach on campus in order to highlight career opportunities within the NPS. In Chapter 3, I identified several outreach programs that highlight potential opportunities within NPS parks and programs. College outreach can simply be NPS representatives coming to campus for job fairs, but this type of outreach might only attract students interested in wilderness or law enforcement. NPS careers are also highlighted through college programs like the ProRanger Program at Temple University, Texas A&M University, and Prairie View A&M University. This program takes youth outreach to the next level by

¹⁴⁹ A response from: Alaina McNaughton's "The National Park Service and College Students Survey." Spring 2016-Fall 2016.

implementing NPS courses and internships throughout a two-year program. While this college program exemplifies career opportunities for students and helps them achieve careers within the NPS, the careers are primarily as law enforcement rangers.

The NPS is much more than law enforcements rangers. My next suggestion is building a cultural resources ProRanger Program. A cultural resources ProRanger program could show college students how the NPS is so much more than natural wonders. Not only are there different types of rangers, there are other careers in NPS cultural resources. The cultural resources ProRanger program would allow students to actively engage within NPS cultural resources parks and programs through historic preservation, cultural interpretation, and various other cultural resources programs. The NPS' role within cultural resources, historic preservation, and cultural interpretation are often unknown to college students--this may be why students, especially those within the liberal arts, do not think of careers in the NPS. In order to preserve NPS cultural resources, it is important to train the next generation of stewards in these areas through hands-on programs like the ProRanger Program.

The cultural resources ProRanger Program would present students with careers within the NPS that do not require carrying a gun. The ProRanger program is currently open for all students, but it is typically aligned with the Criminal Justice Department, not something other liberal arts student could do or would want to do. The program is open to all undergraduate students, however, the majority of students surveyed in the *History of*

NPS class, who identified as part of the ProRanger Program, also identified as Criminal Justice majors.¹⁵⁰ In order for the ProRanger and a cultural resource ProRanger Program to be most effective, it needs to entice a larger student audience. All majors should be targeted for these programs, not just Criminal Justice. The NPS would benefit from any students, ranging from majors in Criminal Justice to History to Engineering.

It is important to promote ProRanger or cultural resources ProRanger programs to all students within the universities that provide these programs. The NPS wants to engage the next generation and that generation is comprised of a diverse group of millennials with a variety of skills and interests. For example, engineering students may not immediately think of careers within the NPS. However, there are opportunities for engineers to work in cultural resources programs, like the HABS/HAER/HALS. The NPS' National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT) in Louisiana seeks to promote career opportunities in historic preservation to engineering students by promoting internships and other experience to better prepare engineers to work with the historic building systems and materials encountered in rehabilitation of historic buildings.¹⁵¹ How do these students discover these types of internship opportunities?¹⁵² If

¹⁵⁰ A response from: Alaina McNaughton's "The National Park Service and College Students Survey." Spring 2016-Fall 2016.

¹⁵¹ More information on this program can be found here: NPS' National Center for Preservation Technology and Training. <https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/programs/architecture-engineering/>

¹⁵² A student internship project, "Recording Structure and Process: HAER 3D Digital

engineering students were part of the ProRanger Programs, they could seek out these opportunities as part of their summer internships and learn about potential careers in the federal government.

Currently Temple University, Texas A&M University, and Prairie View A&M University's ProRanger programs prepare students for jobs as law enforcement rangers within the NPS, ensuring they graduate with the knowledge of enforcement rangers currently in the NPS. The cultural resources ProRanger Program would need to ensure that the graduating students understood how the NPS preserves and interprets historic parks and their cultural resources--understanding the history of the NPS and its mission of preserving cultural resources. Many of the courses for ProRanger and the cultural resources ProRanger Program could overlap, as these courses serve as an introduction to the NPS; it would not require an entirely new set of courses and instructors. The course requirements would look almost identical to the current ProRanger Program. Using Temple University's ProRanger Program requirements, I built a program timeline for a cultural resource ProRanger Program (**see appendix**).

These types of programs, either ProRanger or cultural resources ProRanger, could exist at any college or university, based on university funding and relationships with NPS parks or programs. This type of college program is more hands-on than an

Documentation Methods." NCPTT. Accessed 2 July 2015.
<https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/blog/recording-structure-and-process-haer-3d-digital-documentation-methods/>

internship program, as students are part of a two-year program with courses on the NPS and internship opportunities at partnering parks. The ProRanger Program is career-oriented, placing law enforcement rangers in positions following graduation. To extend this to students interested in cultural resources would add more students to the NPS workforce, a goal of the youth outreach programs.

Rebranding the National Park Service Solution

We learned in Chapter 4, as museum consultant Mary Kay Ingenthron explained, that “if you do not know how your museum is perceived by your public, you may be wasting your marketing time and dollars and offering the wrong programs and services.”¹⁵³ While pointed at museums and historic sites, this argument is applicable to the NPS, especially with regard to youth outreach. This next generation of stewards considers the NPS as: “a picturesque fall scene of Shenandoah, park ranger uniforms, the NPS emblem, Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, the Cathedral Spires in South Dakota, a man dissolving in acid in Yellowstone, and bears in park uniforms.”¹⁵⁴ In my student surveys, there are several mentions of preservation of battlefields or historic structures, but these are in the minority. In order to efficiently use marketing and funding, the NPS must acknowledge and attempt to adjust millennial perceptions.

¹⁵³ Mary Kay Ingenthron. “Creating Your Marketing Plan: First Know Your Audience.”

¹⁵⁴ A response from: Alaina McNaughton’s “The National Park Service and College Students Survey.” Spring 2016-Fall 2016.

The final recommendation that I offer for better NPS youth engagement is changing the perception of these young audiences on a grand level by rebranding the NPS.¹⁵⁵ As evidenced by the surveys, college students perceive the NPS as Western wonders. How can the NPS change this limiting perception? Every several years, the NPS rebrands itself based on its goals for a particular year. For example, 2016 marked the centennial of the NPS and the agency launched the “Find Your Park” campaign.¹⁵⁶ This campaign encouraged the American public to “find their park” and “share their stories” of their favorite NPS locations. The “Find Your Park” website listed every NPS unit and encouraged the American public to visit and share their experiences in the NPS’ 100th year, primarily through social media and hashtags. This campaign encouraged Americans to learn about all of the places the NPS manages, the stories told at national parks, the country’s natural resources, and diverse cultural heritage.¹⁵⁷ It encouraged Americans to understand the breadth of the agency in its advertisements, creating natural and cultural park mash-ups.¹⁵⁸ In addition, the campaign promoted how the NPS works in

¹⁵⁵ In this case, “rebranding” refers to changing how the National Park Service is perceived by creating new advertising and marketing to hone in on the cultural resources aspects of the Park Service.

¹⁵⁶ An example of another branding campaign is 2009’s “America’s Best Idea.” More can be found here: <https://www.nps.gov/americanbestidea/>

¹⁵⁷ “Find Your Park.” National Park Service. Accessed 2 November 2016. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/centennial/findyourpark.htm>

¹⁵⁸ Noreen O’Leary. “Nature-Monument Mashups.” Ad Week. 17 July 2015. Accessed 2 January

local communities through education programs, community assistance projects, and more.¹⁵⁹ While this program highlighted NPS parks and programs, I do not think it went far enough to change or challenge the American public's view of the agency.¹⁶⁰

I recently had the opportunity to hear the acting director of the NPS, Michael Reynolds, speak to the Northeast Regional Office.¹⁶¹ He explained that the "Find Your Park" campaign helped "reintroduce" the NPS to the American public. I think of this campaign as a first step for "rebranding" the NPS; however, there must be a larger push if the NPS intends to shift how the American public views the agency. The "Find Your Parks" campaign served as a stepping stone to addressing how Americans view the NPS, but I would like to see it taken further--the NPS should "reintroduce" its mission, scope, parks, and programs, specifically through marketing and branding. Poor communication often prevents the NPS from engaging in productive dialogue with its audience.¹⁶²

2017. <http://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/check-out-these-cool-nature-and-monument-mashups-new-campaign-national-park-service-165955/>

¹⁵⁹ "Find Your Park." National Park Service.

¹⁶⁰ We are currently in the period following the Find Your Park campaign, so I cannot judge its effectiveness over time, however, my student surveys were distributed and recorded during the NPS' centennial year and "Find Your Park" campaign. These campaigns did not seem to be reflected in the responses.

¹⁶¹ Michael Reynolds came to address the Northeast Regional Office regarding the turnover from President Obama to President Trump's administration. He answered questions regarding the transition of power and the future of the NPS--including a discussion on the hiring freeze and its effects on interns and seasonal employees.

¹⁶² For example, the NPS does not effectively communicate on its issues of sexual assault or other

Since the 2016 centennial year, the NPS has been growing in popularity in news outlets and social media. In 2017, the NPS is still in the spotlight as “rangers going rogue,” “alternate” Twitter accounts, and messages from the former NPS director—all against the Trump Administration—circulate in popular media.¹⁶³ The timing of an NPS rebrand is essential, and I think now is the time to start, as the agency has picked up in popularity in news outlets and Americans are reaching out to their congressman to protect our natural and cultural heritage.¹⁶⁴ The NPS took the lead in the first few weeks of the Trump presidency, countering his policies, cabinet positions, and requests for social media silence.¹⁶⁵ By opposing President Trump’s efforts, the NPS is breaking down their bureaucratic facade, allowing Americans to better connect with the agency. The NPS should jump on this opportunity to begin to rebrand.

ethical concerns.

¹⁶³ Wynne Davis. “Rogue National Park Accounts Emerge On Twitter Amid Social Media Gag Order.” NPR. 25 January 2017. Accessed 25 January 2017. <http://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2017/01/25/511664825/rogue-national-park-accounts-emerge-on-twitter-amid-social-media-gag-orders> “AltNPS Twitter.” Accessed 25 January 2017. https://twitter.com/ALTUS_NPS

¹⁶⁴ An example of this can be found here: “AltNPS” Accessed 25 January 2017. <https://www.altnps.org/>

¹⁶⁵ An example of this can be found here: Maya Kosoff. “National Park Service Defies Trump Gag Order, Tweets Climate Change Facts.” *Vanity Fair*. 24 January 2017. Accessed 24 January 2017. <http://www.vanityfair.com/news/2017/01/national-park-service-defies-trump-gag-order-tweets-climate-change-facts>

A rebranding process will take time, but I think this is the right moment to start. It can start with a simple hashtag, spread across all NPS and alt NPS social media platforms; for example, the hashtag #myNPS. This hashtag will connect NPS parks and programs across the country and highlights the scope of the NPS, introducing the public to the reach of the NPS. For example, park rangers in Badlands National Park can share their stories using #myNPS, while the Northeast Museum Services technicians can share their work using #myNPS. The American public can follow along and use these hashtags to stay part of the conversation. This hashtag is especially relevant, as funding and the future of the NPS is uncertain.¹⁶⁶

Following this social media campaign, the NPS should launch another campaign, focusing on the NPS and cultural resources. This campaign, called “The National Park Service Does That?” would continue to introduce communities to the cultural resources surrounding them. This campaign would help rebrand the NPS, highlighting on billboards, websites, social media, and commercials how the NPS works in every community. The “Find Your Park” campaign encouraged Americans to share their park experiences, but it did not highlight smaller units, nor did it effectively encourage the American public to understand its many programs, such as the National Historic Landmark program. In my student survey I asked, “What is the closest park unit to you

¹⁶⁶ Trevor Cheitlin. “America’s National Parks Face an Uncertain Future.” *The Inquirer*. 6 February 2017.

right now?” Many of the students, who identified as Pennsylvania college students, could not pinpoint a national park unit in PA.¹⁶⁷ The “The National Park Service Does That?” campaign would attempt to fill in these gaps, highlighting the agency’s wide sweep of parks and programs, especially within local communities.

From these campaigns, I would then advise national advertising for NPS youth programs and internships—still using the hashtags. The most successful models of youth engagement are through the SCA, NCPE, and other partner organizations. These programs introduce students to careers in the NPS and they feature a wide-range of possibilities—not focusing on entirely natural or cultural resource student programs. The problem I pointed out in Chapter 4 with these partner programs is advertising. If the NPS reintroduces itself through this new campaign, the next step is to provide “next steps.” After viewing the social media and advertising campaigns, the next step is for students to take action. Sharing SCA and NCPE internships on a national scale would centralize advertising for these programs and share the opportunities with a wider array of students. Even if students do not take these internships or participate in these programs, the advertising and social media campaigns, in light of the recent news surrounding the NPS, would actively start educating the next generation about the reach of the NPS.

¹⁶⁷ A response from: Alaina McNaughton’s “The National Park Service and College Students Survey.” Spring 2016-Fall 2016.

Conclusion

These three recommendations build on the youth engagement models highlighted throughout this paper. The different methods of youth engagement, like the CCC, SCA, or HABS programs, all appeared during difficult moments in the agency's history, particularly during times of faltering resources. Young people have responded to this need through the various outreach programs. The NPS has an important history with youth engagement, as it called upon young people to help the national park units during the Great Depression, postwar period, and the revitalization of the agency through Mission 66. Now the NPS is at a crossroads in current politics and the agency needs the next generation of advocates to understand the agency and its needs, in order to continue the mission of the NPS. By understanding the history of youth engagement, the agency can build on or create new ways to activate youth. Once youth understand the scope of the NPS, they can activate the NPS. Understanding past programs and initiatives will guide parks and programs to accommodate for the next generation of park stewards, especially as the NPS enters its next 100 years.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: HISTORY OF THE NPS SYLLABUS OVERVIEW

Overview:

This course will examine the ideas that have, over time, shaped the National Park Service (NPS) and its mission. It will introduce students to the key events and figures responsible for creating the agency and those that played critical roles in its development. Particular focus will be placed on significant legislation bearing on the agency's function, important turning points in its institutional evolution, the genesis of bureaucratic hierarchies and processes, the origins and evolution of its interpretive strategies, and, most importantly, the relationship over time between the agency and broad currents in American history.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Discuss the intellectual and political origins of the NPS;
- Identify formative events and leaders in NPS history;
- Understand how the evolution of the NPS reflects broad currents in the social, cultural, political, environmental, and economic history of the United States;
- Summarize the process by which parks are established and how their significance is determined;
- Explain how administrative concerns—including funding, cooperative agreements, distribution of regional offices, and staffing hierarchies—have influenced park management over time;
- Appreciate how and why the NPS interprets cultural and natural resources; and,
- Recognize the major issues facing the NPS today.

APPENDIX B: COLLEGE STUDENT SURVEY QUESTIONS

History of NPS Class Survey Questions

What is your year?

What is your major?

Are you a part of the ProRanger Program?

In your own words, what is the National Park Service?

What imagery comes to mind when you think of the National Park Service?

What national parks or national historic sites have you visited?

Who did you visit these sites with?

What did you like about visiting these sites?

What, if anything, would you change about your experiences?

Which National Park or National Historic Sites would you like to visit?

Who would you like to visit these sites with?

How do you find information about the NPS? Is it effective?

How can the NPS help you learn about parks and historic sites?

What made you interested in the NPS? Why did you sign up for this class?

Would you consider a career within the NPS? If so, please describe.

General College Student Survey Questions

Demographic Information:

Age

Race/Ethnicity

Sex/Gender

School Information:

What is your year?

What is your college/university?

What is your major or concentration?

The National Park Service and You:

In your own words, what is the National Park Service?

What imagery comes to mind when you think of the National Park Service?

What National Park Units have you visited?

Who did you visit these units with?

What did you like about visiting the units?

What, if anything, would you change about your experiences?

Which National Park Service units would you like to visit?

How do you find information about the NPS?

How can the NPS help you learn about their park units?

Would you consider a career within the NPS? If so, please describe.

Off the top of your head, what is the closest NPS unit to you now?

APPENDIX C: NPS NERO COMMUNICATIONS ANALYSIS

In order to successfully communicate WASO CRM directives to the regional offices and parks, it is necessary to understand how the CRM regional office currently communicates to each other and their parks. First, I will explore the different tools currently in use in the NER CRM programs, and analyze their successes and shortcomings. From there, I will produce a case study on a very recent communication tool, Pokémon Go. This will follow how national directives are communicated from WASO to the regional offices to the parks. It is important to follow this case study, as it may reveal problems in internal communications.

Communications Tools

External Audience

Facebook:

National Historic Landmarks Program, Monument Research & Preservation Program, Northeast Museum Services Center, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
Facebook allows NPS programs to connect with an interested public and other NPS staff and parks/programs

- Successes:
 - Facebook is the most popular social media platform and is easily assessable to the public. It is a simple way to share information with an audience—images, videos, events, links to blogs/other websites, etc.
- Audience:
 - Facebook audiences tend to be older adults, NPS staff, and other NPS parks and programs—Facebook does not engage the young audience in the way that it used to, as other methods of communication have surpassed it.
 - However, Facebook is a great community—programs like NHL have their place in the networks of historical, museum professionals—so it is a great place to share ideas about these people, but not necessarily a broader audience.
- Time Invested:
 - In order to stay relevant on Facebook, it is necessary to upkeep the page—if you aren't posting, your followers will forget you.
 - 3-4 hours investment—Facebook allows you to schedule posts, so it is possible to write posts for the entire week and schedule them to post each day. These posts should be relevant to your goals and mission as an organization—not just pushing out information for the sake of being on social media.

- Opportunities:
 - Facebook shows its users “trending topics” on the right-hand side of the newsfeed. This shows users what is “trending” or going “viral.” This means that these posts receive the most likes/shares/comments across the country. Any Facebook user in the US can see these topics/posts appearing on their newsfeed. They can also see which of their friends have posted about the topic.
 - Another recent Facebook tool is Facebook Live. Facebook Live, made popular because of recent news events, allows Facebook users (and those not on the social media platform) to view or “stream” an event as it is happening. The live video is archived onto Facebook, and is also available to watch after the event. Facebook Live allows Facebook users to comment, like, and share the video in real time—making this a great platform for dialogue on an event.
- Limitations:
 - Facebook requires time and investment. In order to stay relevant to the Facebook users who “like” your page, it is necessary to constantly evaluate your audience and their interests. This will help inform your posts.
 - It is also necessary to remain aware of the social media trends, i.e. hashtags, new tools like Facebook Live, and an understanding of Facebook. Each social media platform is different and requires an understanding of how to use it most effectively. You cannot necessarily post the same things on Facebook that you could post on Twitter or Instagram. There needs to be an awareness of what works on Facebook versus other social media platforms.
 - Facebook also limits the audience. In order to reach the general public, the general public needs to find your page and “like” it and follow along on your posts. Generally, only interested people choose to “like” pages like the National Historic Landmarks page, thus limiting the audience to subject experts, specialists, and stewards. While this creates a community of like-minded users, it does not include a broader public.

Recommendations:

Since so many of the CRM programs and services have a personal Facebook page, I think it is important to assess their success. Are they reaching an audience that they want or are they limiting their audience to an interested public only? For example, the NMSC has a Facebook page—but their main audience is an internal museum professional audience. How does having a Facebook page serve this audience? I understand the need to share your findings with the public, but is a small Facebook page the best way to do this? It is

necessary to assess whether or not each CRM program and service needs their own Facebook page, or could benefit from a shared NER CRM page? Instead of each program or service devoting time (or not devoting time) to a Facebook page with minimal followers, wouldn't it be more productive to share the responsibility?

This shared Facebook page would help promote CRM programs and services to a larger audience—it would be like combining the followers from each page—more exposure, a larger public to share information with!

Instagram:

National Historic Landmarks Program, Northeast Museum Services Center

Instagram is a photo sharing service that tends to serve younger creative audiences.

- Successes:
 - This platform allows for creative interaction between the NPS parks/ programs and its visitors, enthusiasts—leaning toward a younger audience. This tool works well for the NPS, especially parks, because users are about to “tag a location” on their Instagram photo. In addition to location tagging, Instagram users can use hashtags to link their photos with other similar photos—creating a kind of “online dialogue” through images. For example, the NPS is using #findyourpark and #encuentratuparque to have social media users link their photos into a larger conversation on the NPS and its anniversary. Hashtags encourage Instagram users to become a part of something larger.
 - Also, when using popular hashtags, it is possible to search the hashtags on Instagram and see who else posted photos using this hashtag. This is a great way to connect with people and gain Instagram “followers”
 - It is easy for the NPS to insert their parks/programs into trends using popular #hashtags—including their own #findyourpark
- Audience:
 - Instagram audiences tend to be younger, but also include NPS staff, and other NPS parks and programs—Instagram has become the new “Facebook” for the millennial generation.
 - Instagram is a great community like Facebook—hashtags are more prevalent on Instagram than on Facebook and link photos with similar photos. This is a great way to see what other Instagram users are doing/thinking about.
- Time Invested:
 - 2-3 hours per week—Instagram users understand that it is not necessarily about the number of posts, but the quality of the photos. A regular

Instagram user is wary to post more than a certain number of photos a week—that is an unwritten “rule” of Instagram.

- Instagram requires a good pool of photos, material culture to share with your audience, as well as engaging text and hashtags.
- It is possible to schedule posts on Instagram, but unlike Facebook, it does not require constant posting. Instagram users tend to post 1-2 higher quality posts per week.
- It takes time not only to post, but to engage with followers and potential followers. For example, the NHL’s Instagram page should see what photos they are “tagged in” and, if appropriate, “like” them or “reGram” them. This will give a human face to a seemingly faceless organization. And everyone likes a little shout out!
- It is also necessary to look at photos from your “location.” For example, an Instagram user could tag their location as “Independence National Historical Park.” It is possible to search this location and see what other posts appear and if your organization should “re-gram” or “like” them.
- Opportunities:
 - Instagram also has opportunities to share short videos, using Instagram or other tools like Boomerang. Videos are quickly becoming popular on Instagram and it is important to know this when creating engaging posts.
 - Instagram is a great place to be more creative with posts. Instagram users try to create the perfect “artsy” shot and the NPS parks and programs can do this too—with landscape, buildings, material culture, etc.
 - This platform allows for creatively posting without a word count, so the photo caption can be as long as you want it to be—if you are explaining the image, adding hashtags, etc.
- Limitations:
 - Instagram requires a mobile device as you cannot post/or fully use the app on the web browser.
 - It also requires having a number of images and hashtags on hand to use for your posts.
 - You must keep up with the latest tools and hashtags on Instagram—in order to have your photos seen by a larger audience.
 - Instagram also limits the audience. In order to reach the general public, the general public needs to find your page and “follow” it and follow along on your posts. Generally, only interested people choose to “follow” pages like the National Historic Landmarks page, thus limiting the audience to subject experts, specialists, and stewards. While this creates a community of like-minded users, it does not include a broader public.

- It is also necessary to remain aware of the social media trends, i.e. hashtags, new tools like Boomerang, and an understanding of Instagram. Each social media platform is different and requires an understanding of how to use it most effectively. You cannot necessarily post the same things on Instagram that you could post on Twitter or Facebook. There needs to be an awareness of what works on Facebook versus other social media platforms.

Recommendations:

Currently, the NHL program (under Preservation Assistance) and the NMSC use Instagram. The NHL program (*1,500 followers as of 7/21/16*) uses Instagram to branch out to a younger interested public of NHL stewards, as well as to NPS staff and other parks and programs. In the communication survey, the communication lead identified an external as well as internal audience. On Instagram, it is important to “like” and share or “re-gram” posts from your audience. This way they will feel a connection to your seemingly “faceless” organization. I feel like the NHL is a large enough organization to have an Instagram account—NHL sites are recognizable and users can tag NHL in their photos or add their location.

On the other hand, the NMSC (*295 followers as of 7/21/16*) does not benefit from a personal Instagram account. Their following and presence is too small. It may be useful to use a shared NER Instagram account, instead of having a few smaller accounts. I understand that they want to teach younger audiences about the NPS’ CR, however, this may not be the appropriate platform for that. This is an internal program that is geared toward museum partners and parks. The NMSC could share their work through the parks that they serve or the NER social media, rather than trying to cultivate an audience on Instagram. Social media is something to constantly reassess, and I think it is necessary for the NMSC to assess the necessity of their different social media platforms, especially Instagram.

Twitter:

No CRM Program currently has an active Twitter account—is this okay?

Twitter is a social media platform that engages audiences in a brief informal conversation.

- Success:
 - Twitter is a great tool for engaging a park/program’s audience in informal conversation. It humanizes a “faceless” NPS and allows for feedback from

- o your audience.
 - o It is a great way to pass along news and updates, as well as advertise upcoming events etc.
- Audience:
 - o Twitter engages both a younger and older audience. It is a space to share informal thoughts, feelings, and reactions. The older audiences uses Twitter similarly to Facebook, where it is a space to communicate to other people in similar circles/professions.
 - o This is a space to have a dialogue—as remarks are brief and quick.
- Time Investment:
 - o Twitter is more about promoting events, photos, blogs, etc. as there is a word count limit. It does not take much time to create and post tweets, but in order to stay relevant, it is necessary to continuously post updates daily—otherwise your audience will forget you.
 - o Twitter is fast-paced, but it is also possible to schedule tweets.
- Opportunities:
 - o Like Facebook, Twitter is also a place to be “trending” or “going viral.” Twitter shows its users “trending topics.” This means that these posts receive the most likes/shares/comments across the country. Any Twitter user in the US can see these topics/posts appearing on their home page. They can also see which of their friends have posted about the topic.
 - o Twitter also has opportunities to share short videos. Videos are quickly becoming popular on Twitter and it is important to know this when creating engaging posts.
 - o Twitter also has the live streaming tool Periscope allowing viewers to watch and comment in real time and after the fact.
 - o Hashtags are also prevalent on Twitter and link posts into a larger conversation. This is a great way to see what other Twitter users are doing/thinking about.
 - o Branching off of that, Twitter users can participate in “Tweet Chats” where they answer a posted question on a Twitter page and use a specified hashtag to link to the larger conversation.
 - Example:
 - https://twitter.com/LevineMuseum?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor
- Limitations:
 - o Twitter is a place for brief posts and links, not formal discussions. It is important to be aware of them when creating and responding to posts.
 - o It is also necessary to remain aware of the social media trends, i.e.

hashtags, new tools like Periscope, and an understanding of Twitter.

- Each social media platform is different and requires an understanding of how to use it most effectively. You cannot necessarily post the same things on Twitter that you could post on Instagram or Facebook. There needs to be an awareness of what works on Facebook versus other social media platforms.

Recommendations:

The purpose of twitter is to engage audiences in informal brief conversations. This is a quicker way to share links, videos, images, and engage your audience. While it may be useful to have a Twitter account, I don't recommend each CRM program have one. This would just be another platform that needed to be maintained. Instead, it may be useful to promote CRM programs—like NHL programs or information—through a NER Twitter account, which already exists and has a larger following (5,600 followers). By sharing a Twitter account, it would enable CRM programs to share information to an already established community of Twitter followers.

APPENDIX D: UNDERGRADUATE CULTURAL INTERPRETATION

PROGRAM OUTLINE

Certificate in National Park Service Management

- *Certificate components (15 credits):*
 - Preparation Seminar for the Cultural Interpretation Program (CIP) (1 credit)
 - This course begins to acclimate student with the NPS and the program, in order to gauge if the student wants to be a part of the program.
 - 2 Summer Internships (2 credits each)
 - The internships should be completed for course credit. In addition to the internship, the student should document the experience via blog--which can be shared by the CIP
 - History of the National Park Service (3 credits)
 - This course will give a thorough history of the NPS, with a project that allows each student to reimagine the interpretation of a particular park or historic site of their choice
 - Managing History (3 credits)
 - A course similar to the graduate level course, which introduces the students to public history projects, “doing good history,” and explaining methods of interpretation, exhibition and presentation.
 - Methods of Cultural Interpretation (3 credits)
 - This course would explain different ways to interpret culture--through history, archeology, anthropology, etc. This would allow students different perspectives on interpretation in various fields.

Each of these fields strongly contributes to the National Park Service.

- NPS in Philadelphia (3 credits)
 - This course, similar to *Museums in American Culture*, would use the city as a classroom, as Philadelphia is home to historical parks and sites, it is the perfect location to study how historical parks operate and interpret the city's culture. In addition to studying current interpretive techniques, students would be challenged to reimagine one of these historic sites/parks as a final project. The best projects could be considered for a graduate program.
- Completion of an identified interpretation project at an eligible national park
- Participation in monthly programs and activities--like conferences, visits to NPS sites, etc.