

A scenic landscape of rolling hills and a herd of bison at sunset. The sky is filled with soft, golden light, and the hills are covered in sparse vegetation. In the foreground, a herd of bison is grazing in a field of low-lying shrubs.

NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2018 - 2023



**National  
Park Foundation**™

CELEBRATING **50** YEARS

*“We have fallen heirs to the most glorious heritage a people ever received, and each one must do his part if we wish to show the nation is worthy of its good fortune.”*

– Theodore Roosevelt



# Executive Summary

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## **A COMMITMENT TO STEWARDSHIP**

Our National Park System, managed by the National Park Service (NPS), was established for the benefit and enjoyment of all Americans. More than a century later, it secures our inheritance, and requires our constant and committed effort to protect and steward.

The more than 400 park units comprising the National Park System belong to all of us. We are partners in their protection. National parks need us now more than ever to ensure that in the next century these American treasures are supported, protected, enjoyed, and appreciated by all.

## **A MODEL FOR SUCCESS**

National parks have long relied on a combination of federal appropriations and private philanthropy to keep them beautiful, vital, and accessible. Throughout its history, the National Park Foundation (NPF) has played a leadership role, raising \$1 billion in priority projects and programs. This model of public-private partnership underscores our belief that we all share in the responsibility to protect our parks as a living inheritance for future generations.

## **A CALL TO ACTION**

Our success in this second century of parks will be defined by how we respond to emerging challenges to the National Park System presented by aging infrastructure, deferred maintenance, overcrowding, and the urgent need to modernize and enhance visitor experience while protecting cultural and natural resources.



**OUR VISION**

Thriving national parks are the common ground where all people are able to experience the richness and diversity of America's natural beauty and shared history in perpetuity.

**OUR MISSION**

As the official nonprofit partner of the National Park Service, the National Park Foundation generates private support and builds strategic partnerships to protect and enhance America's national parks for present and future generations.

# Our Organization

**NPF'S UNIQUE ROLE**

Chartered by Congress in 1967, the National Park Foundation raises private funds to help protect more than 84 million acres of national park land through critical conservation and preservation efforts, connect all Americans with their incomparable natural landscapes, vibrant culture and rich history, and engage the next generation of park stewards.

PHOTO CREDIT: DAWN KISH



## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### Stewardship

We foster a culture of stewardship of our national parks and the investments we make in them.

### Strategic

We work with the National Park Service to identify, fund, and advance priority initiatives.

### Impact

We invest in critical projects that provide lasting, measurable benefits to national parks.

### Common Ground

We represent common ground where all those who love the national parks can support a shared agenda.

### Partnership

We convene strategic partnerships to amplify our efforts and achieve broader impacts within our national parks.

### Innovation

We employ an entrepreneurial approach to address the complex challenges facing our national parks.

### Diversity

We encourage inclusion and diversity of people, beliefs, and viewpoints among National Park Foundation staff, board, and partners.

### Future Orientation

We help the National Park Service to anticipate future challenges and create long-term solutions.



# Lessons Learned from the Centennial

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In 2016, NPS celebrated its milestone Centennial anniversary. NPF's involvement in the Centennial planning and celebration demonstrated the value of strategic alignment and collaboration with agency partners to identify funding priorities required to direct private philanthropy in a larger, transformational way. Find Your Park, the centerpiece marketing campaign of the Centennial, invited all Americans to experience the natural and cultural treasures preserved in our national parks. The combination of strategic focus and increased public awareness positioned NPF to dramatically expand its fundraising efforts and to more aggressively target new donor communities and channels.



## **STAKEHOLDER INPUT**

By virtue of its charter to align with NPS and its long standing history, NPF occupies a unique role as a trusted partner, influencer, and convener of stakeholders, enabling it to appeal to donors who share the interest and desire to create system-wide impact. Greater return on philanthropic investment requires engaging the untapped potential of community partners, while amplifying and leveraging NPF's role as convener of partner groups to share ideas and build networks.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS**

NPF's organizational structure, capabilities, and processes must shift to reflect a more expansive mission and ambition. A renewed focus on stewardship and engagement with donors and NPF partners is a priority, in addition to the ongoing need to diversify, streamline and professionalize NPF's fundraising approach.



# Leveraging Core Competencies

We will invest in what we do best in order to amplify our impact. NPF will increase funding to launch priority initiatives for the second century of America's National Park System. We will continue to work closely with our key partners to target and combine resources to accomplish goals more efficiently and strategically for the benefit of parks and programs.



## ALIGNMENT

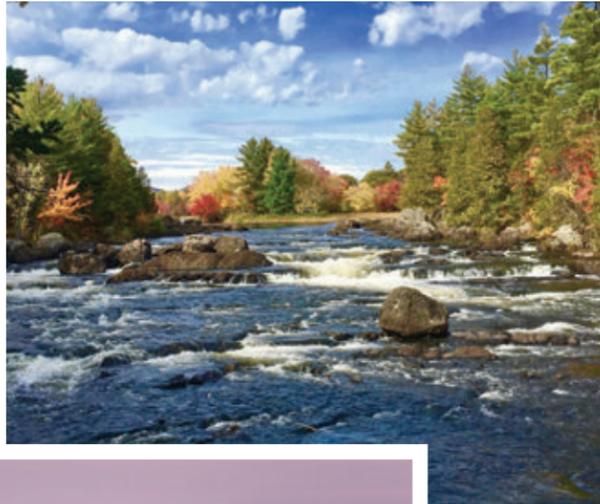
NPF's unique relationship with NPS, as its congressionally chartered national philanthropic partner, provides the opportunity to jointly leverage strategic planning and funding for emerging areas of innovation. This relationship enables them to pilot and scale best practices within the park service; and to advance complex, high impact, high priority projects that the service wouldn't otherwise be able to accomplish.

## FUNDRAISING

NPF's fundraising provides critically important supplemental resources to enhance and improve parks. While NPF is now the grateful recipient of limited federal funding to build an endowment – an important resource to steward and leverage additional funding – private philanthropy will remain NPF's largest source of revenue.



Individual philanthropists currently make up NPF's largest donor pool. Driven by passion and commitment, these individuals consistently champion NPF's most significant priority projects, including land acquisition, infrastructure improvement, and restoration of cultural and historic sites and monuments. Notable recent examples of this extraordinary generosity include the donation of land for Katahdin Woods and Waters, modernization of the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument, and the acquisition of the Antelope Flats inholding.



Corporate contributions represent an area of growth in NPF's funding mix, demonstrated by the highly successful Find Your Park campaign and continued corporate interest in this platform beyond the centennial celebration.

Foundation donations occupy a unique space critical to NPF's ability to convene networks of partners and to underwrite timely research to inform park management and restoration efforts.



### PARTNERSHIPS

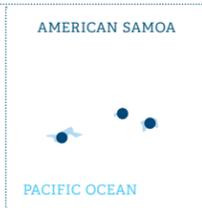
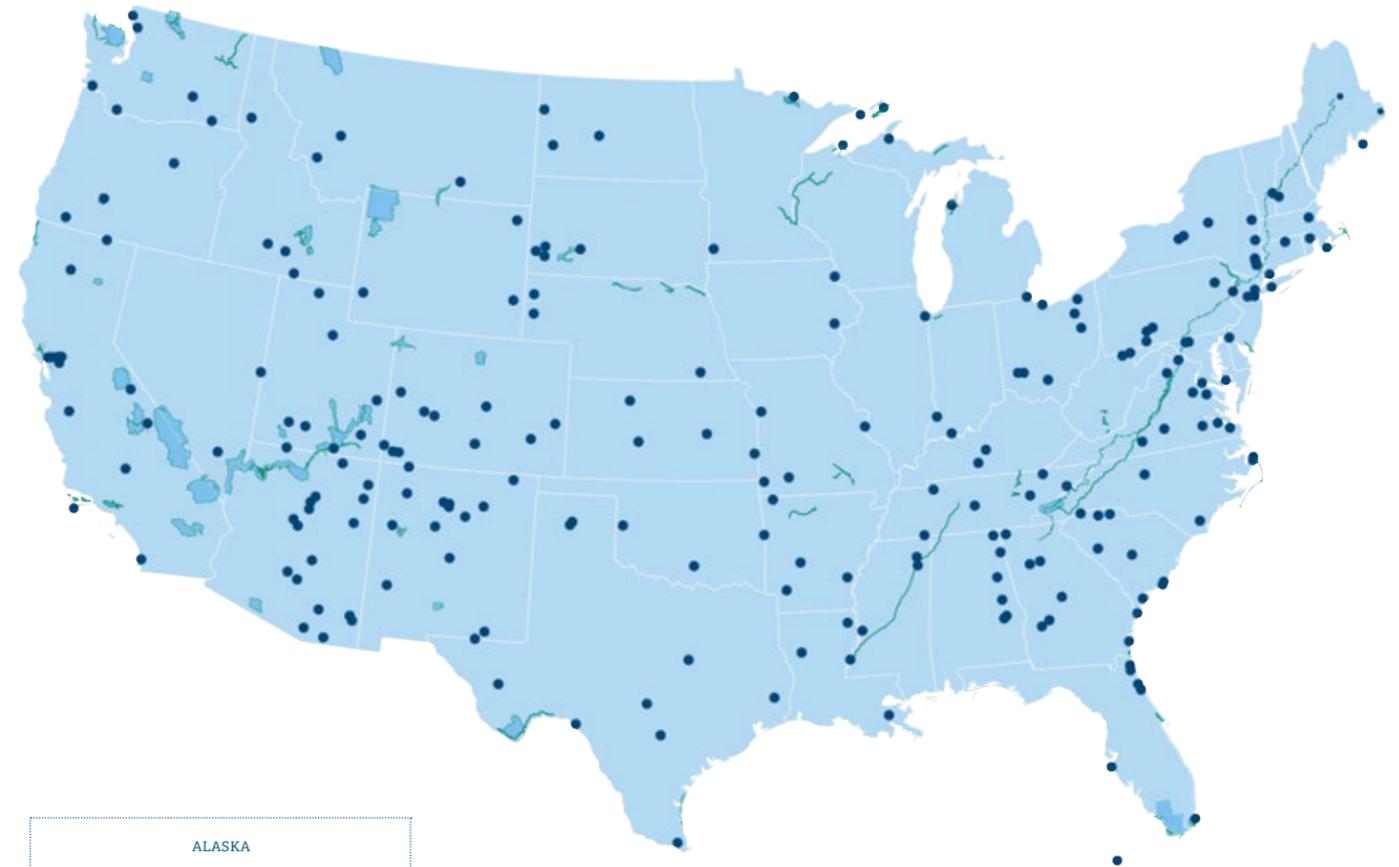
As the official non-profit partner of NPS, NPF brings long standing, well-established relationships and a national perspective to its leadership role as connector and convener. NPF recognizes that expanding and deepening its relationships with local and national partners is critical to successfully advancing priority initiatives to support NPS.

### FUNDRAISING GOAL

**\$90-100 million**  
raised in annual support  
of national parks

**70-80%** of funds dedicated to Protect  
**20-25%** of funds dedicated to Connect & Engage  
**2.5-5%** of funds dedicated to capacity building and networks

### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SYSTEM UNITS



### UNIT TYPE AND TOTAL DESIGNATIONS

National Battlefields	11	National Memorials	30	National Rivers	5
National Battlefield Parks	4	National Monuments	87	National Wild and Scenic Rivers and Riverways	10
National Battlefield Site	1	National Parks	59	National Scenic Trails	3
National Military Parks	9	National Parkways	4	National Seashores	10
National Historical Parks	51	National Preserves	19	Other Designations	11
National Historic Sites	78	National Reserves	2	<b>Total Units</b>	<b>417</b>
International Historic Sites	1	National Recreation Areas	18		
National Lakeshores	4				

# Strategic Framework

	GOAL	INITIATIVES	ESTIMATED ANNUAL RANGE
PROTECT	Mission critical park infrastructure meets increasing visitor needs for NPS' next century of park management and stewardship	Visitor Management and Services	\$2 - 5 million
		Modern and Resilient Infrastructure	\$10 - 20 million
	Natural and cultural resources of the park system are preserved and restored to increase resilience over time	Natural/Ecological Restoration	\$10 - 15 million
		Cultural/Historic Preservation	\$10 - 15 million
	New units of the park system have safe, welcoming, and accessible facilities and interpret unique stories for a world-class visitor experience	Support of New Sites	\$5 -10 million
	Parks are managed in the context of broader landscapes to achieve shared economic, cultural and conservation goals for the parks and the communities within which they reside	Collaborative Landscape Conservation	\$5 - 8 million
		Inholdings	\$5 - 10 million
Investments in research, capacity building, networks, convening, and shared learning	–	\$3 million	
<b>TOTAL RANGE</b>	–	<b>\$47 - 88 million</b>	
CONNECT & ENGAGE	National park stories inspire people of all backgrounds to visit and care about these treasures for now and future generations	Inspire people of all backgrounds to see themselves in parks	\$8 - 10 million
		Showcase a continuum of engagement that supports lifelong engagement for people and parks	\$1 - 2 million
	There is a clear ladder of engagement that supports lifelong connections between people and parks	Bring people to parks for introductory experiences	\$5 - 7 million
		Enable more teachers and students to experience parks as places of learning	\$2 - 3 million
		Provide more opportunities for people to become more deeply engaged with parks through park stewardship	\$1 - 3 million
		Strong Parks, Strong Communities	\$3 - 5 million
	Investments in research, capacity building, networks, convening, and shared learning	–	\$3 million
<b>TOTAL RANGE</b>	–	<b>\$23 - 33 million</b>	



## Protect, Connect & Engage

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The objective of our strategic realignment is to amplify the impact of NPS' highest priority initiatives where philanthropic investment can both accelerate impact, and leverage NPF's core competencies.

The first pillar of the strategic framework, Protect, centers on investments to protect, preserve and restore the natural, cultural, and historic resources stewarded by NPS. The second pillar, Connect & Engage, focuses on building greater public awareness of national parks, communicating the relevancy of parks, and inspiring deeper public engagement with them.



# Protect

## ENHANCE, PRESERVE, AND RESTORE PARKS AND CULTURAL AND HISTORIC PLACES

NPS' dual mission to provide facilities and services for visitor enjoyment, while also protecting the park's natural resources for future generations requires significant infrastructure investment.

### ASSETS, ACCESS, AND THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

NPS manages assets valued at more than \$157 billion – the largest number of constructed assets of any civilian agency in the federal government. The maintenance and sustainable operation of these assets comes at an immense cost.

NPS holdings include over 84 million acres of land, water, and shoreline. These resources represent a vital piece of our shared history, presenting unique management challenges and requiring significant funding to steward them. NPS is also charged with making these places available and accessible for a growing constituency of domestic and international visitors placing increasing demands on the system.

These factors underscore the opportunity for philanthropy and public-private partnerships to invest in mission-critical infrastructure priorities to modernize park assets, meet visitor needs, and preserve and restore these unique assets and places.

### PARKS AS PART OF A LARGER LANDSCAPE

National parks are inextricably linked to natural resources and the communities that surround them.

Effective management to protect our NPS resources must consider risks to ecosystem integrity from fire, invasive species, fragmentation, and land conversion; while maintaining access to recreation.

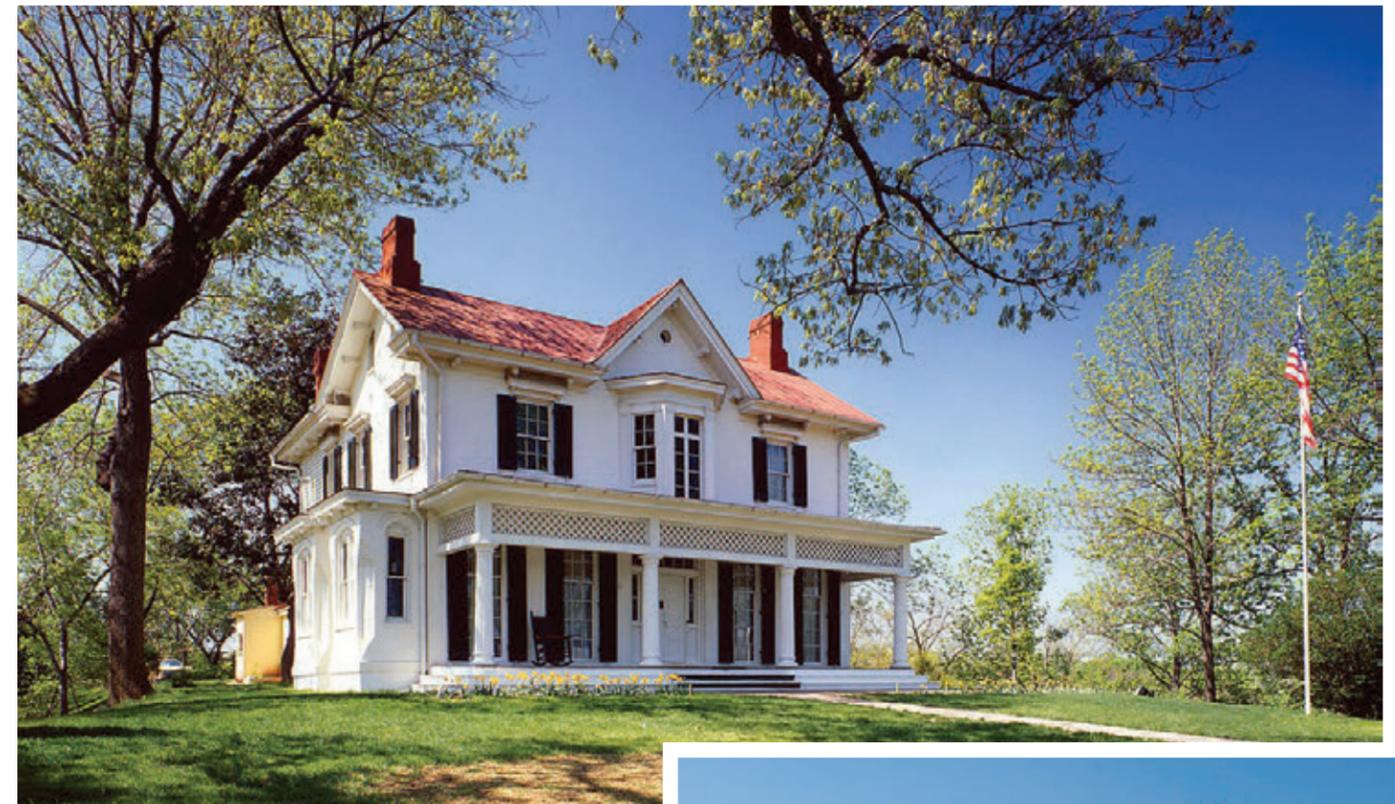
National parks are interwoven with 2.7 million acres of privately owned lands, or inholdings, within park boundaries. NPS has identified the private inholdings most critical to preserve. There is an opportunity to support efforts to acquire inholdings and permanently gift them to the American people to increase recreational access, conserve important natural resources and historic sites.

### GOAL 1

Mission-critical park infrastructure is improved to meet anticipated visitor needs for the next century of park stewardship

#### Desired impact:

- Modernize NPS infrastructure with emphasis on facilities, trails, systems, and visitor services
- Improve visitor management at priority sites focusing on improved access to information, services, trails, interpretive assets and facilities, while protecting cultural and natural assets



### GOAL 2

Preserve and restore natural and cultural resources of the park system and increase resiliency over time

#### Desired impact:

- Preserve and restore irreplaceable natural, cultural and historic assets in the care of the park service
- Preserve and restore natural settings and ecological features
- Restore historic and cultural sites (e.g. patriotic sites, civil rights sites)
- Support mission-critical natural and social science research to enable NPS to better protect and steward its natural, cultural and historic resources

### GOAL 3

New park system units offer safe, welcoming, and accessible facilities and interpret unique stories for a world-class visitor experience

#### Desired Impact:

- Recently added parks have critical infrastructure in place and are prepared to provide a world class visitor experience



### GOAL 4

Parks are managed in the context of larger landscapes and nearby communities

#### Desired Impact:

- National parks and national park programs are managed in the context of broader landscapes to achieve shared economic, cultural and conservation goals for the parks and the communities they touch
- Acquire inholdings that protect the viability and integrity of parks



# Connect & Engage

## INVITE PEOPLE TO EXPERIENCE THE AWE AND WONDER OF PARKS

The National Park System's 417 sites each tell a unique story. These American treasures belong to all of us, a legacy that each generation passes to the next.

### INSPIRING PEOPLE OF ALL BACKGROUNDS TO SEE THEMSELVES IN PARKS

National parks do more than preserve our nation's natural and cultural heritage; they enrich lives, enhance learning, and provide inspiration.

Many Americans have not experienced these special places, do not feel a strong connection to them or cannot physically access them. Our challenge is to connect them to our national parks not only to experience the intrinsic value of their pristine, natural beauty, but because parks connect us to one another. As the stories of lesser known parks are amplified and shared, our parks become places of awe, joy and wonder, telling a more an inclusive story of our heritage and our history, its glory, and its imperfections.

Bringing people to parks was a vital facet of the first century of NPS. In the next century of park stewardship, we will also invest in bringing parks to people. We will share stories of the parks that reflect a diversity of American experience, leveraging the power of media and technology to inspire all people to visit, care for, and invest in these treasures for the benefit of future generations.

### DEEPER ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN PEOPLE AND PARKS

NPS offers numerous opportunities to engage people through education, recreation, service, and economic pathways. Targeted private support can enhance these efforts to forge deeper personal connections to parks.

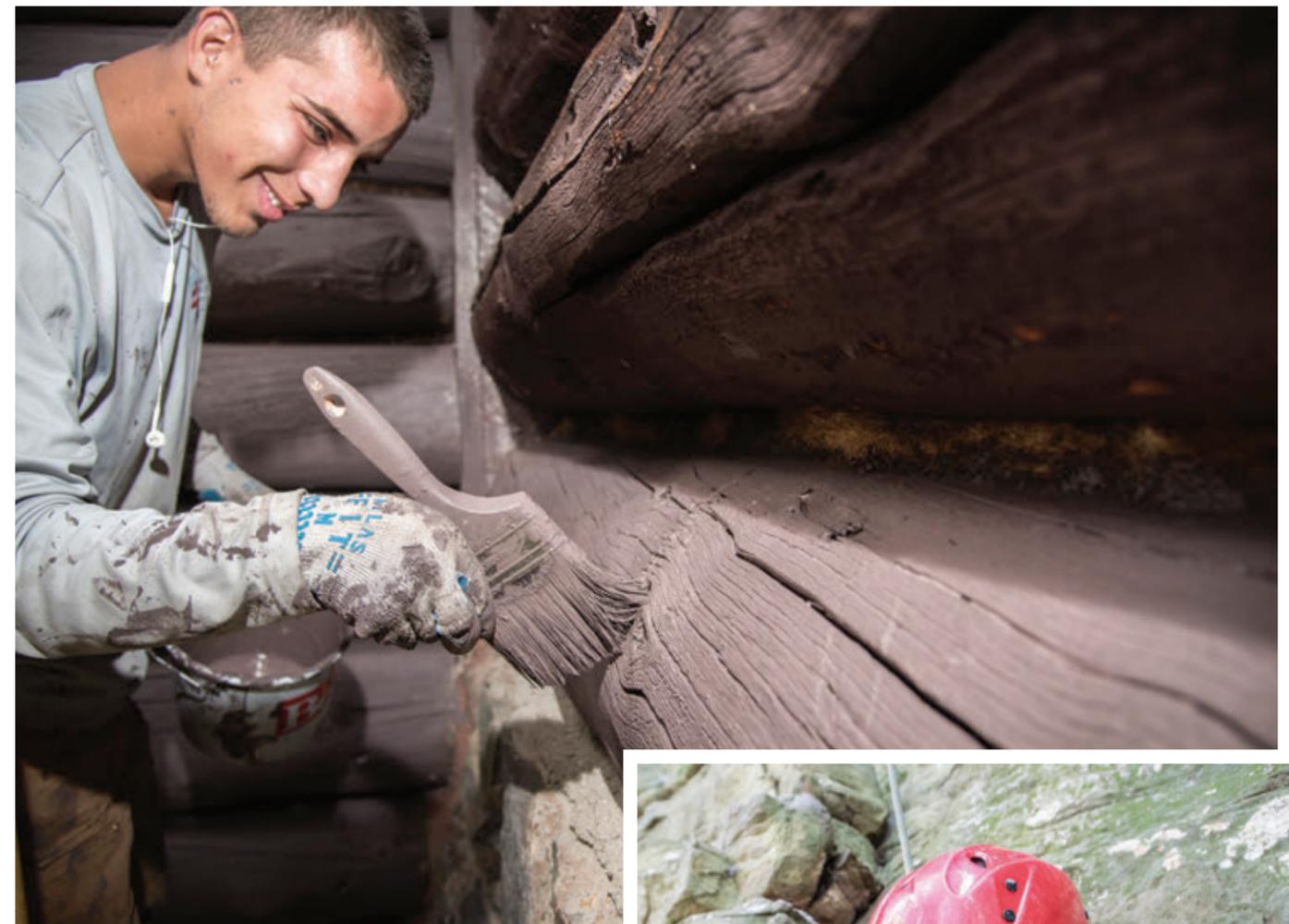
NPF will continue to build this portfolio of work to support public engagement around the relevancy of NPS and the transformative work it carries out in communities across the country.

#### GOAL 5

People of all backgrounds are inspired to visit national parks, and to care about parks for the benefit of future generations

##### Desired impact:

- Expand park experiences beyond physical boundaries to bring the power of place to life, and inspire people to connect with parks in new ways
- Leverage media and digital strategies and technologies to link the public with information throughout the visitor lifecycle



#### GOAL 6

Visitors are aware of the opportunities to engage with and develop a lifelong connections with parks

##### Desired Impact:

- Develop multiple points of entry for people of all backgrounds to engage with parks from introductory experiences to park stewardship opportunities.
- Identify and implement initiatives to encourage park visitors to continue from introductory experiences to more advanced and lasting engagement
- Nurture and build the next generation of park supporters required to help protect parks, increase access for new audiences, and re-imagine interpretive and educational programs
- Increase the diversity of park enthusiasts from all walks of life, by enhancing the capacity of existing partners and expanding our work with new partners to be more inclusive



# How We Will Operate

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NPF will develop and clearly articulate new fundraising strategies, and apply best practices to increase donor support for high priority NPS projects capable of achieving much greater impact.

## **PROJECT SELECTION**

NPF will consult with NPS at the leadership level about the goals of the strategic plan, and specific projects to accomplish goals. NPF and NPS will agree annually on a pipeline of projects that align with goals, and projects from that list generally will be pursued. However, being on the list is not a guarantee that all projects will be funded in any given year.

## **PROGRAMS, PROJECTS, AND PARTNERSHIPS IMPACT**

NPF will align the organization around achieving the goals of the new strategic plan. NPF will identify strategic plan goal champions, and work across programmatic and operational areas to successfully execute plans. NPS will identify similar goal champions. The primary responsibility for the overall implementation of the plan will be the new Chief Operating Officer together with the Assistant Director, Partnerships and Civic Engagement at NPS.

The structure of NPF's Grants & Programs and Community Partnerships teams will be realigned around goals set out in the strategic plan. Additional staff will be required, as well as closer alignment between the Lands, Community Partnerships, and Grants & Programs teams. Close collaboration with the Marketing & Communications and Government Relations departments will be necessary.

## **COLLABORATION AND DONOR-CENTRIC APPROACH**

NPF will place a high priority on collaboration between departments, recognizing that all departments, working together, are responsible for successful implementation of the strategic plan. NPF will ensure that the organization's systems and processes recognize that our future success is dependent upon the strong and lasting relationships NPF builds with its donors and partners.





 **National  
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CELEBRATING **50** YEARS

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