

National Park Service

Stewardship
I N S T I T U T E



Reflections on Partnerships in the National Park Service

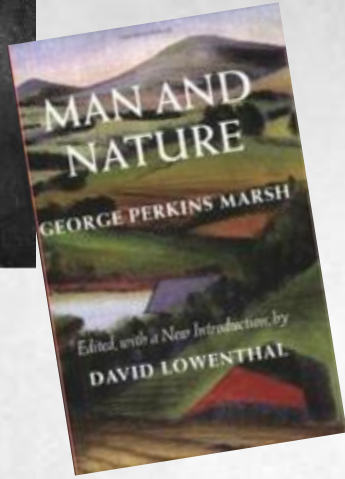
For Managing By Network 2025



Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park

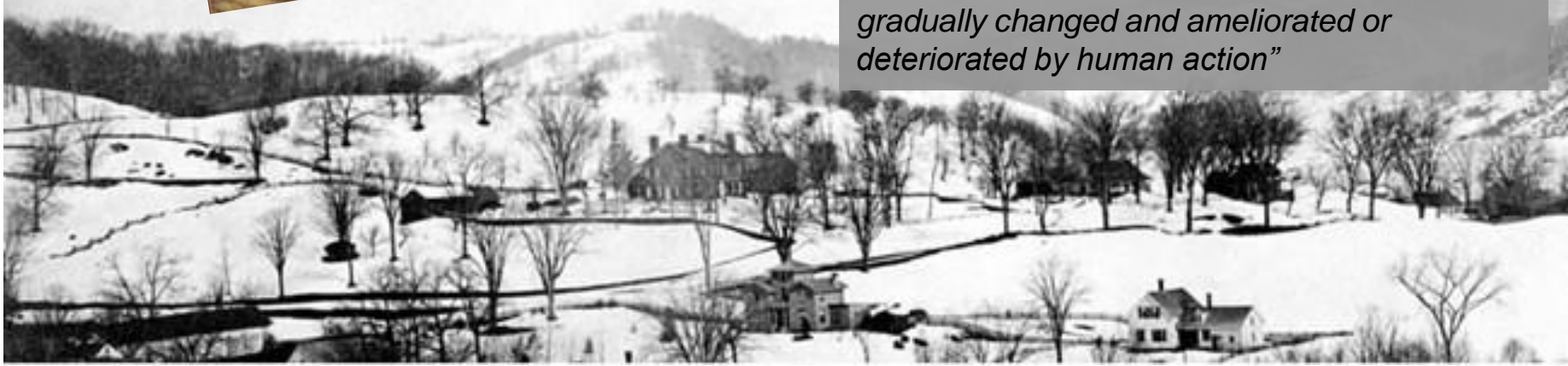


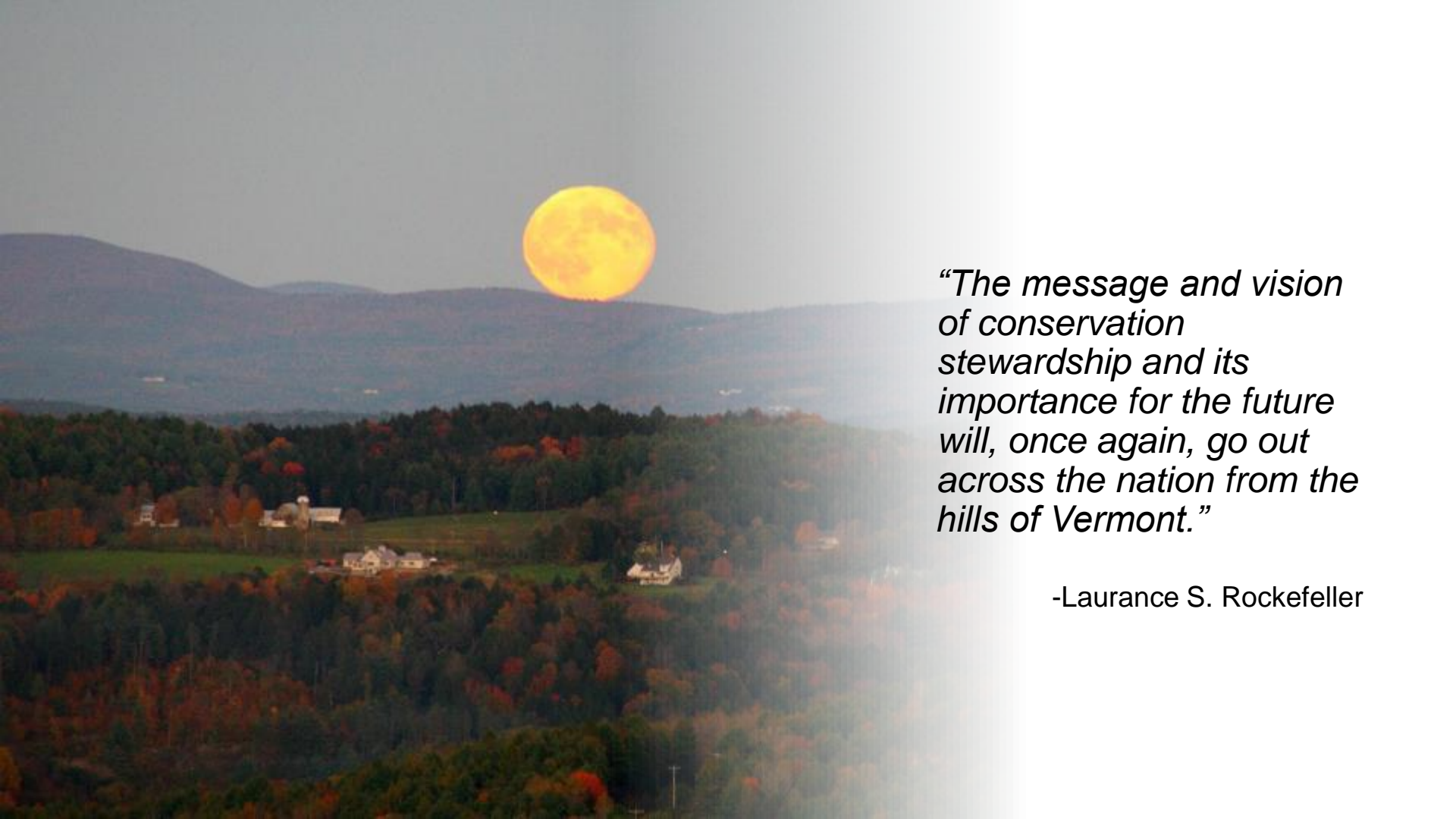
Traveling in the Footsteps of GP Marsh



"All Nature is linked together by invisible bonds and every organic creature, however low, however feeble, however dependent, is necessary to the well-being of some other among the myriad forms of life..."

"But though man cannot at his pleasure command the rain and the sunshine, the wind and the frost and snow... it is certain that climate itself has in many instances been gradually changed and ameliorated or deteriorated by human action"





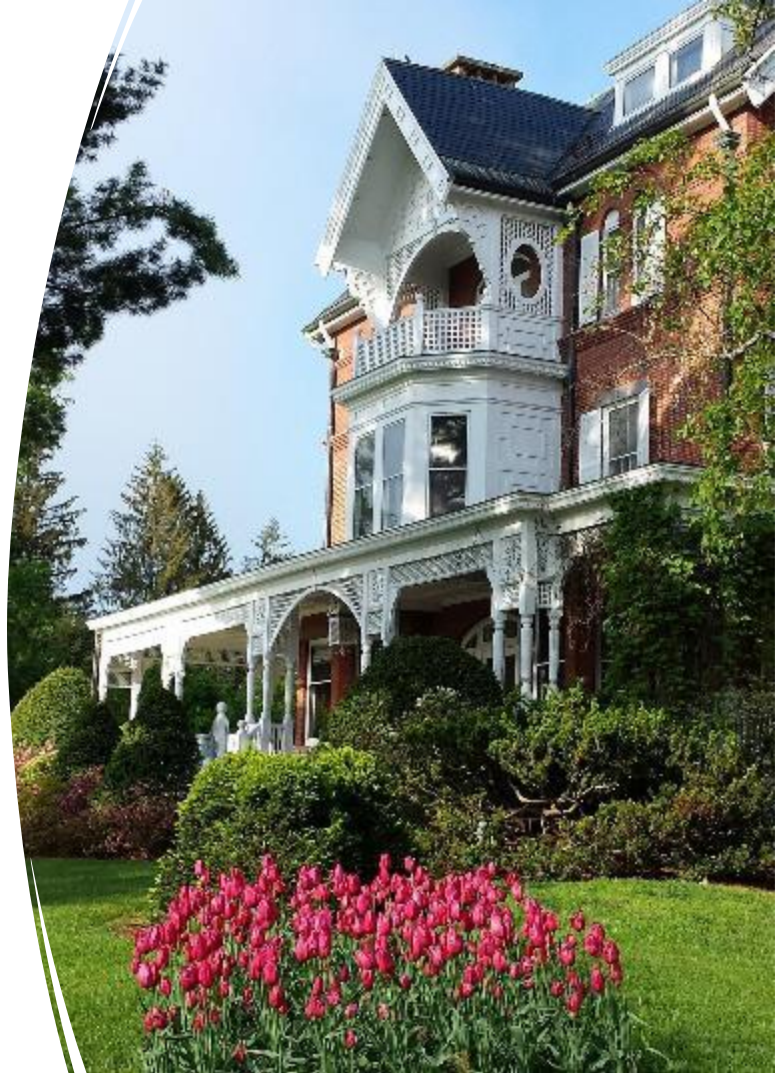
*“The message and vision
of conservation
stewardship and its
importance for the future
will, once again, go out
across the nation from the
hills of Vermont.”*

-Laurance S. Rockefeller

Stewardship Institute

Established in 1998 as a place-based center at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP, the Institute works nationally to:

- **Leadership for Change:** Support NPS leaders and partners in fostering collaborative and resilient leadership practices and nurturing productive and safe workplaces.
- **Collaboration & Engagement:** Develop innovative practices in collaborative conservation and promote NPS and partner capacity to support community-led conservation and stewardship efforts
- **Research & Evaluation:** Use research and evaluation to identify promising practices and share lessons-learned and to guide decision making and improve management



Leadership for Change

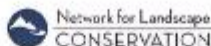
- Superintendent Leadership Roundtable
- International Park Managers Roundtable
- Facilitation Training
- Around the Table/ Virtual Trainings

Collaboration & Engagement

- Chesapeake Gateways Strategic Plan & Network Development
- Network for Landscape Conservation
- Park for Every Classroom
- Urban Agenda

Research & Evaluation

- International Park Managers Roundtable Evaluation
- Partnerships and the NPS- New Models for Partnering
- Upstate New York Administrative & Business Services



Small Staff

Large Network

Superintendents Leadership Roundtable

Established in 2001, SLR has grown to 11 groups and supports over 50% of Superintendents in the NPS.

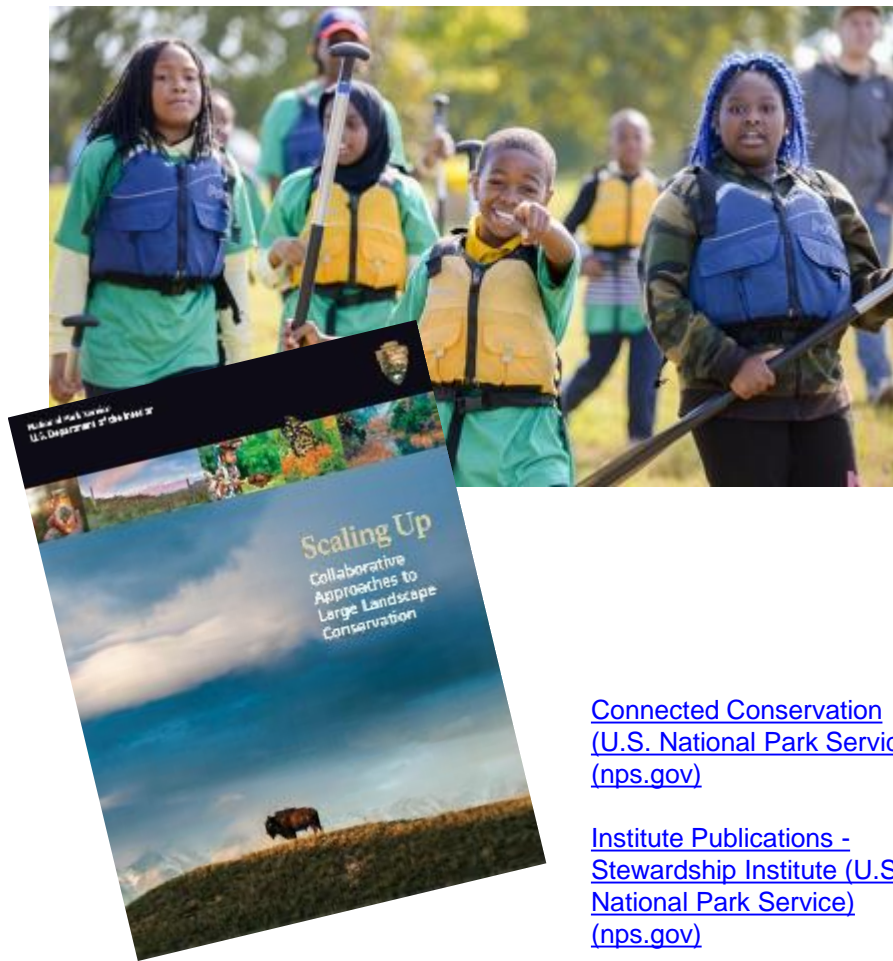
Key Components:

- **Cohort-based, continuous learning design:** trust and support, deeper dialogue, and transformative leadership development
- **Professional facilitators:** applying tools, frameworks, and insights to the real-world challenges and opportunities
- **Significant place-based experiences:** applied learning from other parks/programs, partners, and communities
- **Participant-driven agenda development:** focus on topics of highest need and most relevance
- **Ongoing learning:** resources and tools provided throughout the year and pre-session to facilitate session dialogue



Working Across Landscapes

- **Technical Assistance support for the Chesapeake Bay Office** to help develop and implement a strategic planning process that focused on partner engagement and strengthening the partnership network
- **Support NPS Connected Conservation** (formerly Scaling Up) initiatives, highlighting the ways that parks and programs work in partnership at the landscape-scale.
- **Partner with the Network for Landscape Conservation** to continue to learn from and support collaborative conservation practices.
[Network for Landscape Conservation](#)



[Connected Conservation](#)
(U.S. National Park Service)
([nps.gov](#))

[Institute Publications -](#)
[Stewardship Institute \(U.S.](#)
[National Park Service\)](#)
([nps.gov](#))

Supporting the Great Diversity of the National Park System

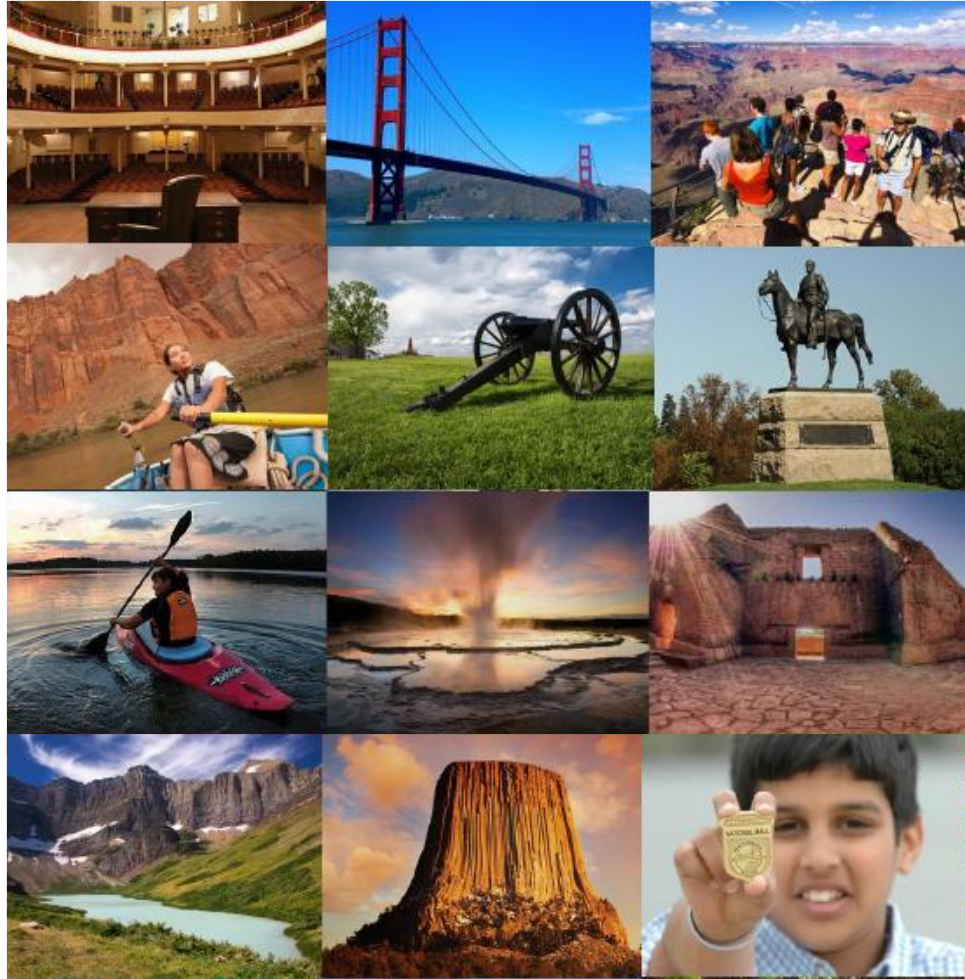


Mission

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.

The National Park Service collaborates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

We work with thousands of partner organizations on projects and programs in parks and communities around the nation.



Partnerships and Civic Engagement

Working in Partnerships

The national parks were built on partnerships. Today, there are thousands of partners working with the NPS on projects and programs in parks and communities around the nation. These partnerships play a key role in welcoming visitors to parks, preserving the history, lands and living things in parks and extending the benefits of parks into communities.

[Creating Possibilities Through Partnerships](#)

Supporting Community-based Recreation and Conservation

The National Park Service works in almost every one of America's 3,141 counties offering advice, assistance, recognition, and even funding to help communities across the country preserve history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. A sampling of programs:

- [Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance](#)
- [Hydropower Recreation Assistance](#)
- [National Scenic and Historic Trails](#)
- [National Wild and Scenic Rivers Program](#)
- [National Recreation Trails](#)
- [Land and Water Conservation Fund](#)
- [Federal Lands to Parks](#)

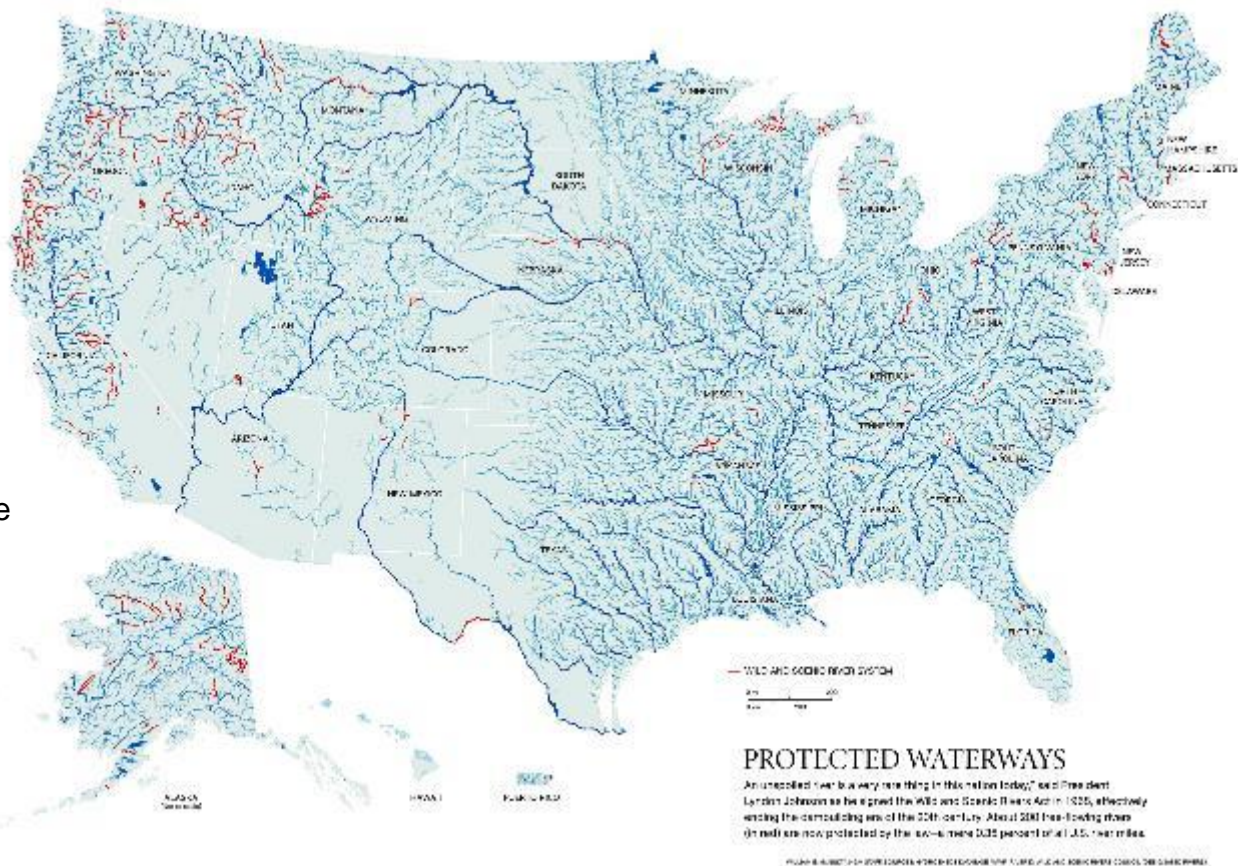


National Wild and Scenic Rivers System

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR) System preserves selected rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

- Interagency WSR Coordinating Council: National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service
- 3,200+ river segments on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory
- 1 in 10 people get their drinking water from a WSR source
- 228 rivers total, 0.4% of U.S. river miles

Wild and Scenic Rivers Program



National Trails System

Partnerships sustain the National Trails System. The administration and management of the trails is a collaborative endeavor involving Federal agencies, Tribes, States, local governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses, educational institutions, and volunteers.

Largest trails system in world with over 84,000 miles

32 national scenic and national historic trails spanning 50 states and crossing over 120 national parks

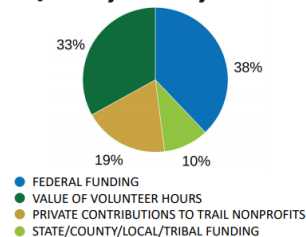
NPS leads in administration of 25 national scenic and historic trails

1,300+ national recreation trails across all 50 states

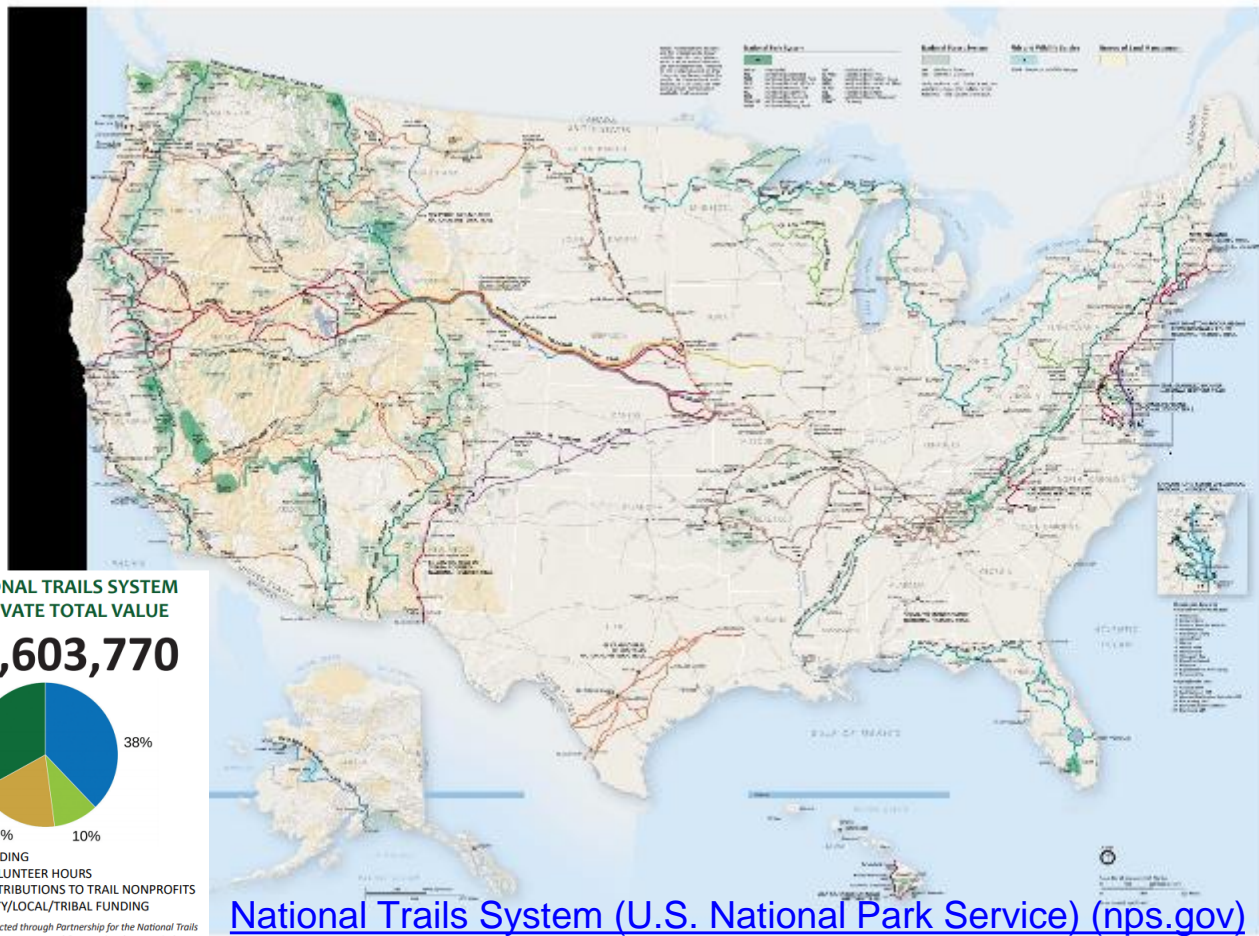
6,000 Communities and 80 million people live within 5 miles of a national scenic or historic trail

2019 NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM
PUBLIC/PRIVATE TOTAL VALUE

\$75,603,770



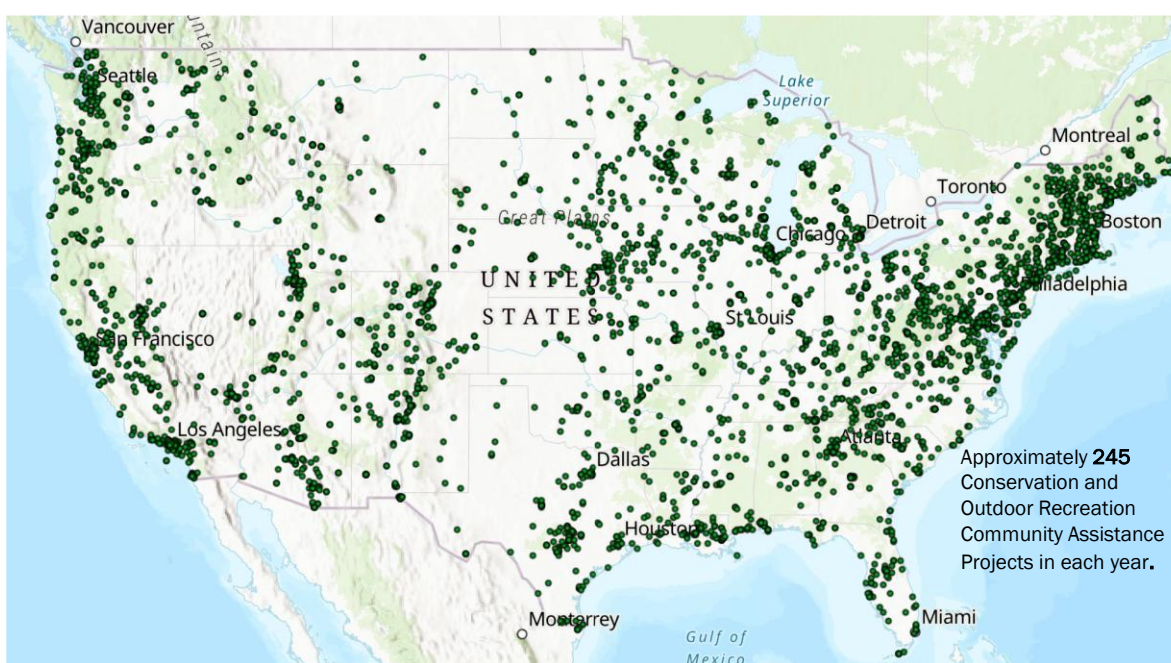
Source: Estimates collected through Partnership for the National Trails System annual Gold Sheet reports and Congressional appropriations.



[National Trails System \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/national-trails-system/)

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance

RTCA supports locally-led conservation and outdoor recreation projects across the United States. RTCA staff provide technical assistance to communities and public land managers in developing or restoring parks, conservation areas, rivers, and wildlife habitats, as well as creating outdoor recreation opportunities and programs that engage future generations in the outdoors



Web: [Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/rtca/)

Pub: [National Park Service Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Community Assistance \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/rtca/)

State and Local Assistance Programs

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) –State and Local Assistance: 50/50 matching grants to States and Territories (and to Local Governments through States) to plan, acquire, and develop public lands for outdoor recreation

Stewardship: Grant-assisted areas are protected in perpetuity, prohibited from conversion to non-recreation use unless replaced with comparable land

- Over 42,000 and \$4.1 Billion in grants awarded 420 grants totaling \$317 million awarded in FY2023
- All matched with local funds
- Providing ongoing protection of over 3 million acres of recreation lands in every State and territory in the country
- Impacting and reaching millions of people each and everyday – chances are that your favorite State or Local park has received LWCF support and is protected in perpetuity by LWCF

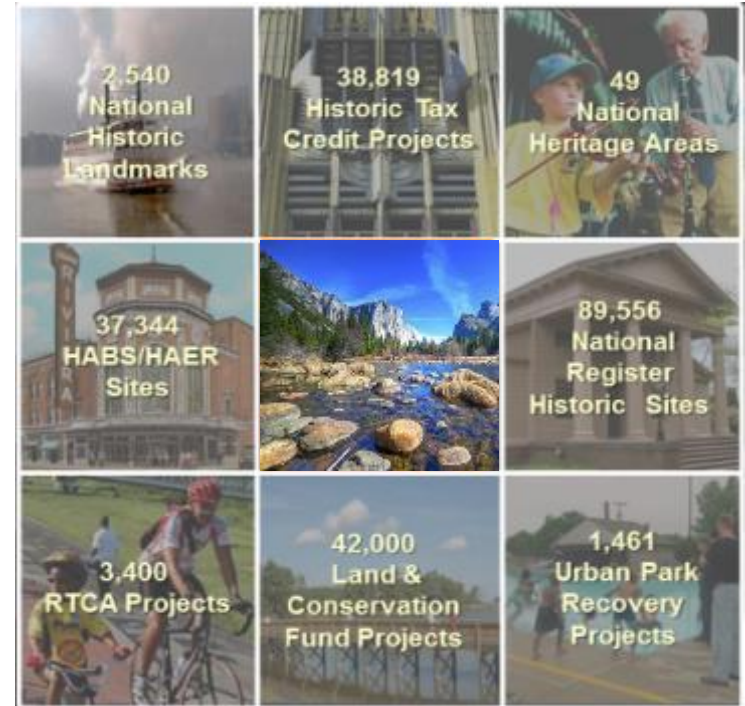


[Land and Water Conservation Fund \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/lwcf)

Cultural Resource Partnerships

The NPS national preservation partnership programs support the State and Tribal historic preservation offices, other federal, state, and local agencies, and communities throughout the country.

- **American Battlefield Protection** administers four grant programs that provide for the protection of battlefield lands.
- **Heritage Documentation Programs** (HABS/HAER/HALS) have recorded and archived approximately 44,500 federal, state, and privately owned historic sites, all available online through the Library of Congress.
- **National Center for Preservation Technology & Training** conducts research, distributes information, and provides training about preservation skills and technologies.
- **National Historic Landmarks Program** (NHL) designates nationally significant historic places that possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States.
- **National Register of Historic Places** coordinates and supports public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.
- **Preservation Grants** provides funding through the Historic Preservation Fund, and supports the work of the State Historic Preservation Offices, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, and Certified Local Governments through several programs.



Working with Tribes

[Office of Native American Affairs](#) supports NPS staff with training, consultation guidance, and technical support; and tribal governments and Indigenous people in their work with NPS on multiple topics, including: park policy, access, youth engagement, partnerships, and collaborative agreements with self governance Tribes.

[Tribal Relations and American Cultures](#) supports parks, indigenous communities, and the public through research and outreach activities related to the diverse cultural stories of our nation. TRAC promotes relevance, diversity and inclusion in cultural resource management through several key programs:

- [Cultural Anthropology Program](#),
- [Park NAGPRA Program](#),
- [Tribal Historic Preservation Program](#), and
- [Cultural Resources Office of Interpretation and Education](#).



NPS tribal affairs staff visit the reservation of the Hopi Tribe of Arizona to discuss the NPS Plant Gathering Regulation. NPS staff were guests on a site visit, May 2018. *NPS Photo*

Hear from Native American Affairs Liaison, Dorthy FireCloud:
[NPS Tribal Programs and Funding Opportunities \(youtube\)](#)

National Heritage Areas



National Heritage Areas are places where historic, cultural, and natural resources combine to form cohesive, nationally important landscapes. Unlike national parks, National Heritage Areas are large lived-in landscapes. Consequently, National Heritage Area entities collaborate with communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs.

NHA Facts

- [Sixty-two NHAs](#) have been designated by Congress since 1984. Each NHA is created through individual federal law.
- Annual appropriations range from \$150,000 – \$750,000 per heritage area.
- NPS partners with, provides technical assistance, and distributes matching federal funds from Congress to NHA entities. NPS does not impose land use controls.

Long-term benefits of NHAs for communities

- **Sustainable economic development** – NHAs leverage federal funds to support local communities through revitalization and heritage tourism

- **Healthy environment and people** – Many NHAs improve water and air quality in their regions through restoration projects, and encourage people to enjoy natural and cultural sites by providing new recreational opportunities.

- **Education and Stewardship** – NHAs connect communities to natural, historic, and cultural sites through educational and volunteer activities, which promote awareness and foster interest in and stewardship of heritage resources.

- **Community Engagement and Pride** – By engaging community members in heritage conservation activities, NHAs strengthen sense of place and community pride.



[Evaluations - National Heritage Areas](#)

Interpretation, Education, and Volunteers

- **Interpretation:** Invites people of all ages to explore personal meanings to the great diversity of national park natural and cultural resources so they are more apt to care about and for them. Example programs: [Every Kid Outdoors](#), [Citizen Science](#).
- **Education:** Introduces students, teachers and families to national parks by connecting park resources, science, and histories to school curricula. Example programs: [Teacher-Ranger-Teacher](#), [Park for Every Classroom](#)
- **Volunteers-in-Parks:** Nearly 300,000 volunteers donate more than 6.5 million hours of service a year across the NPS. Volunteers serve in nearly every discipline, unit, and career field within NPS, and are an essential part of the NPS and help us to meet our mission.
- **Youth Programs:** Increases opportunities for youth and young adults to help preserve the nation's natural and cultural treasures, develop a strong conservation ethic, and pursue careers in resource management fields. Check out: [Celebrating Stories of Young Conservation Leaders](#)
- **Cooperating Associations:** Non-profit partners that enhance the visitor experiences and provide visitor services through managing sales areas in visitor centers.

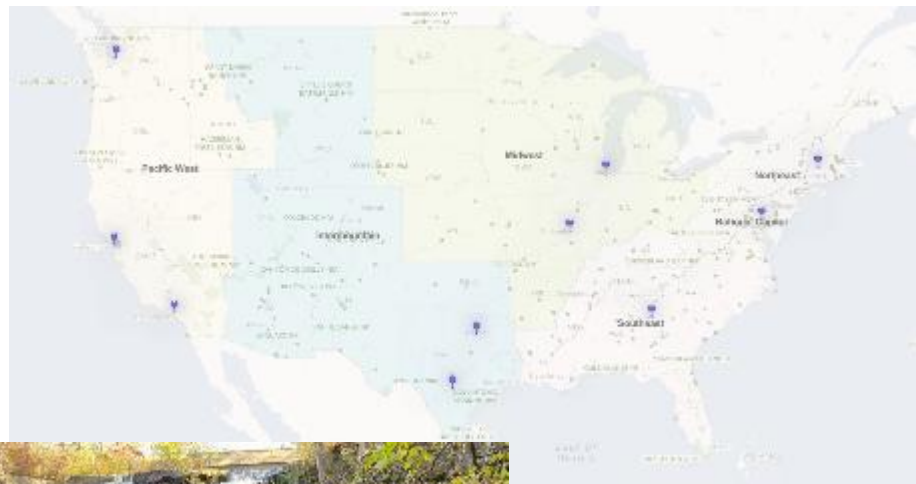


Community Engagement Program

The service-wide community engagement program was established in 2023. Building relationships with communities enhance opportunities to engage in visitor experiences, increase the relevance and understanding of NPS resources, and empower communities to co-create and shape their communities with NPS support.

A national cohort of community engagement specialists support this work, emphasizing strategic relationship-building and partnership with communities and organizations.

Using lessons-learned from the [NPS Urban Agenda](#)



Seattle
Bay Area
Los Angeles
Dallas/Fort Worth
Baltimore/District of Columbia
San Antonio
St. Louis
Chicago
Greater Atlanta
Springfield/Greater Boston



Questions and Reflections

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