

The National Park and U.S. Forest Services

THE UNITED STATES has the most extensive national park and forest systems in the world. We owe those Americans who established these systems a debt of gratitude. We also must ensure that these treasures are in place for future generations.



Objectives:



1. Describe the National Park Service.
2. Describe the U.S. Forest Service.

Key Terms:



national battlefield
national cemetery
national historic park
national historic site
national lakeshore

national memorial
national monument
national park
national parkway
national preserve

national recreation area
national river
national seashore
national trail
Organic Act

The National Park Service

The National Park Service is the envy of the world. How was it established, how has it grown, and how is the National Park System managed?

THE HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

On March 1, 1872, Congress established Yellowstone National Park in the territories of Montana and Wyoming as a public park for the benefit and enjoyment of the people and

placed it under exclusive control of the Secretary of the Interior. Yellowstone National Park was the first national public park, and its founding began a worldwide park movement. Currently more than 100 nations contain some 1,200 national parks.

On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed the **Organic Act**, which formed the National Park Service. The National Park Service was created as a federal bureau in the Department of the Interior, and it was



FIGURE 1. Yellowstone was the first national park.

responsible for protecting the 40 national parks and monuments in existence at that time and those yet to be established. The Organic Act states that “the Service shall promote and regulate the use of Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations...to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM UNITS

Today the National Park Service manages 394 units in the National Park System. The units include 123 historic parks or sites, 74 monuments, 58 national parks, 25 battlefields or military parks, 18 preserves, 18 recreation areas, 10 seashores, 4 parkways, 4 lakeshores, and 2 reserves. These properties, covering more than 84 million acres, are in every state (except Delaware), the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, Saipan, and the Virgin Islands. National parks have more than 275 million visitors annually.

Wrangell–St. Elias National Park and Preserve in Alaska is the largest unit, with 13.2 million acres.

The smallest unit, at 0.02 acres, is the Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial in Philadelphia.

The National Park Service also manages the National Register of Historic Places, national heritage areas, national wild and scenic rivers, national historic landmarks, and national trails.

National parks in the United States are created by acts of Congress. National parks are “areas of national significance distinguished by superlative natural scenery, set aside for preservation as nearly as possible in unimpaired condition and dedicated to the use and inspiration of the people.”

NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM UNIT DESIGNATIONS

The National Park Service designates sites according to the following categories:

National Park

A **national park** is a tract of land declared public property by a national government for the purpose of preservation and development for recreation and culture. National parks are large natural places that have a wide variety of attributes. Consumptive activities, such as hunting and fishing, are typically not allowed. Examples of national parks are Yellowstone (Idaho, Montana, Wyoming), Yosemite (California), Grand Canyon (Arizona), Everglades (Florida), and Great Smoky Mountains (North Carolina, Tennessee).

National Monument

A **national monument** is a natural landmark, a structure, or a site of historic interest set aside and maintained by a national government for public enjoyment or preservation. The President can proclaim landmarks, structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest on land owned or controlled by the federal government to be national monuments. Some national monuments are Rainbow Bridge (Utah), George Washington Birthplace (Virginia), and Grand Portage (Minnesota).

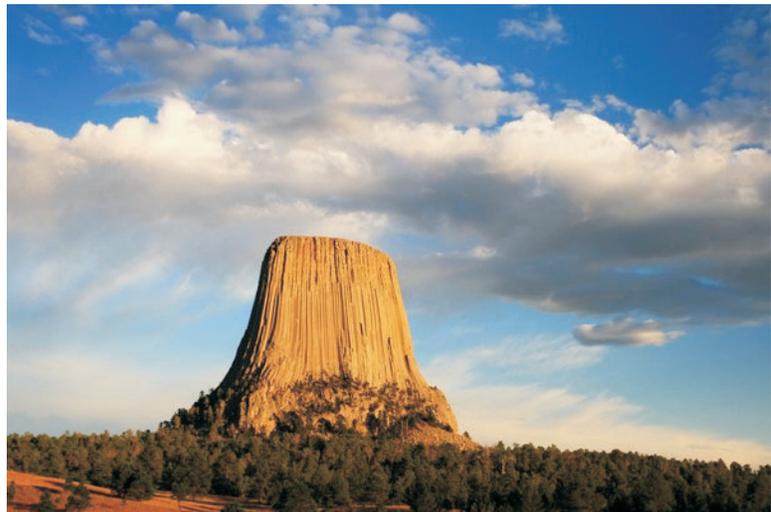


FIGURE 2. Devils Tower in Wyoming is a national monument.

National Preserve

A **national preserve** is an area that has characteristics associated with a national park but on which Congress has permitted activities such as hunting, trapping, and oil exploration. Many existing national preserves, without sport hunting, would qualify for national park designation. A few national preserves are Big Cypress (Florida), Tallgrass Prairie (Kansas), and Mojave (California).

National Historic Site

A **national historic site** is a site that contains a single historic feature. Some national historic sites are Clara Barton (Maryland), Ford's Theatre (Washington DC), and Tuskegee Airmen (Alabama).

National Historic Park

A **national historic park** is a historic area that extends beyond a single property or building. Examples of national historic parks are Abraham Lincoln Birthplace (Kentucky), Chaco Culture (New Mexico), and Dayton Aviation Heritage (Ohio).

National Memorial

A **national memorial** is a landmark or structure commemorative of a historic person or episode. Mount Rushmore (South Dakota); Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial (Virginia); and the World War II Memorial (Washington DC) are national memorials.

National Battlefield

A **national battlefield** is a site on which a battle was fought and has been preserved for historic interest. National battlefields include national battlefield parks, national battlefield sites, and national military parks. Cowpens (South Carolina) and Wilson's Creek (Missouri) are national battlefield parks. Kennesaw Mountain (Georgia) and Manassas (Virginia) are national battlefield sites. Gettysburg (Pennsylvania) is a national military park.

National Cemetery

A **national cemetery** is a cemetery maintained by the federal government for people who have served honorably in the armed forces. There are 14 national cemeteries, and all of them are associated with another unit of the National Park Service. Abraham Lincoln (Illinois), Andersonville (Georgia), Shiloh (Tennessee), and Little Big Horn (Montana) are a few national cemeteries.



FIGURE 3. Despite its name, the Washington Monument is designated a national memorial, not a national monument.



FIGURE 4. Gettysburg is a national military park.

National Recreation Area

A **national recreation area**

is a site whose natural features and heritage make it an attractive setting for recreational pursuits.

There are currently 17 national recreation areas within the National Park Service, 12 of which are centered on large reservoirs and emphasize water recreation. Five of the national recreation areas are located in major population areas and combine open spaces with the preservation

of significant historic resources and natural areas to provide outdoor recreation for large numbers of people. Boston Harbor Islands (Massachusetts) and Lake Meade (Nevada, Arizona) are national recreation areas.



FIGURE 5. Boston Harbor Islands is a national recreation area.

National Seashore

A **national seashore** is a recreation area adjacent to a seacoast that is maintained by the national government. Ten national seashores have been established on the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific Coasts. Cape Hatteras (North Carolina) and Padre Island (Texas) are national seashores.

National Lakeshore

A **national lakeshore** is a recreation area adjacent to a lake that is maintained by the national government. National lakeshores are similar to national seashores and are all on the Great Lakes. Apostle Islands (Wisconsin) and Sleeping Bear Dunes (Michigan) are national lakeshores.



FIGURE 6. Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore.

National River

A **national river** is a free-flowing stream that has not been dammed, channelized, or otherwise altered by humans, along with any preserve land bordering it. This category contains several variations, such as national river and recreation area, national scenic river, and wild river. The first was authorized in 1964, and others were established following passage of the



ON THE JOB...

CAREER CONNECTION: Park Ranger

While many Americans enjoy visiting our national parks, the great outdoors found in the parks draws many people to devote their professional lives to being Park Rangers. The U.S. Department of the Interior employs Park Rangers in our national parks.

Park Rangers perform a wide variety of duties in managing parks, historic sites, and recreation areas. Park Rangers supervise, manage, and perform work in conservation. Their tasks include forest or structural fire control; protection of property; gathering and dissemination of natural, historic, or scientific information; development of interpretive material for the natural, historic, or cultural features of an area; and demonstration of folk art and crafts. Other tasks are enforcement of laws and regulations; investigation of violations, complaints, trespass/encroachment, and accidents; and search and rescue. Also, they are responsible for the management of historic, cultural, and natural resources, such as wildlife, forests, lakeshores, seashores, historic buildings, battlefields, archaeological properties, and recreation areas. Park Rangers operate campgrounds, provide information to visitors, and lead guided tours. The duties performed by Park Rangers vary due to the grade of position, the site's size, and specific needs.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. Buffalo National River (Arkansas) and Great Egg Harbor Scenic and Recreational River (New Jersey) are two rivers within the national river category.

National Parkway

A **national parkway** is a road intended for scenic motoring along a protected corridor, along with the land flanking it. National parkways often connect cultural sites. Two examples are the Blue Ridge Parkway (Virginia, North Carolina) and the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway (Wyoming).

National Trail

A **national trail** is generally a long-distance footpath located in an area of natural beauty. Such linear parkland may be designated as a national scenic trail or national historic trail under the National Trails System Act of 1968. The Lewis and Clark (Missouri to Oregon), Appalachian (Maine to Georgia), and Natchez Trace (Mississippi to Tennessee) are three national trails.

Affiliated Areas

There are affiliated areas that include a variety of locations in the United States and Canada that preserve significant properties outside the National Park Service.

Other Designations

Other designations have unique titles or combinations of titles, such as the White House and Prince William Forest Park.

The U.S. Forest Service

The U.S. Forest Service, within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, manages public lands known collectively as the National Forest System. These lands are located in 44 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The lands comprise 8.5 percent of the total land area of the United States. The natural resources on these lands are some of the nation's greatest assets and have major economic, environmental, and social significance for all Americans.

FOREST SERVICE HISTORY

In 1799 Congress appropriated \$200,000 to buy reserves of live oak along the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia in what was the first acquisition of timberland by the federal government.

In 1881 the Division of Forestry was created within the Department of Agriculture.

In 1901 the name was changed to the Bureau of Forestry, and in 1905 to the Forest Service. The first chief of the Forest Service was Gifford Pinchot.

FOREST SERVICE ACTIVITIES

The job of the Forest Service is to manage the nation's forests in a way that allows people to share and enjoy the forests while conserving the environment for generations to come. The Forest Service accomplishes this task through five main activities:

1. Protection and management of natural resources on National Forest System lands
2. Research on all aspects of forestry, rangeland management, and forest resource utilization
3. Community assistance and cooperation with state and local governments, forest industries, and private landowners to help protect and manage non-federal forest and associated range and watershed lands for the improvement of conditions in rural areas
4. Achievement and support of an effective workforce that reflects the full range of diversity of the American people
5. International assistance in formulating policy and coordinating U.S. support for the protection and sound management of the world's forest resources

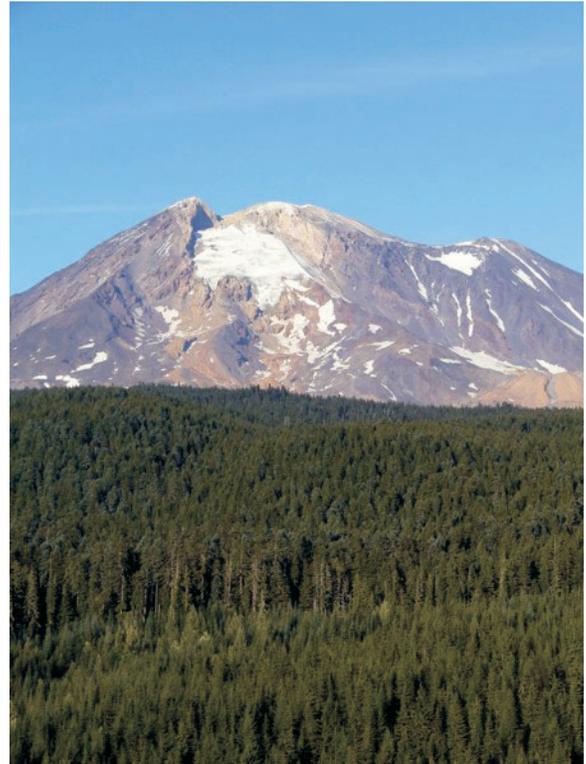


FIGURE 7. Mount Adams, Washington, is in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

FOREST SERVICE ORGANIZATION

The Forest Service is organized into four basic levels: ranger district, national forest, region, and national level. Each level has a specific role to play in accomplishing the management tasks of the nation's forest resources.

Ranger District

The district ranger and his or her staff may be your first point of contact with the Forest Service. There are more than 600 ranger districts. Each district has a staff of 10 to 100 people. The districts vary in size from 50,000 acres to more than 1 million acres. Many on-the-ground activities occur in the ranger districts, including construction and maintenance of trails, operation of campgrounds, and management of vegetation and wildlife habitat.

National Forest

There are 155 national forests and 20 national grasslands. Each forest is composed of several ranger districts. The person in charge of a national forest is called the forest supervisor. The district rangers within a national forest work for the forest supervisor. The headquarters of a national forest is called the supervisor's office. This level coordinates activities between districts, allocates the budget, and provides technical support to each district.

Region

There are 9 regions, numbered 1 through 10 (Region 7 was eliminated some years ago). The regions are broad geographic areas, usually including several states. The person in charge of a region is called the regional forester. Forest supervisors of the national forests within a region report to the regional forester. The regional office staff coordinates activities between national forests, monitors activities on national forests to ensure quality operations, provides guidance for forest plans, and allocates budgets to the forests.

National Level

This is commonly called the Washington Office. The person who oversees the entire Forest Service is the chief. The chief is a federal employee who reports to the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The chief's staff provides broad policy and direction for the agency, works with the President's administration to develop a budget to submit to Congress, provides information to Congress on accomplishments, and monitors activities of the agency.

Summary:



On March 1, 1872, Congress established Yellowstone National Park as the first national public park. The Organic Act, signed in 1916, formed the National Park Service.

The National Park Service manages 394 units in the National Park System. The units include 123 historic parks or sites, 74 monuments, 58 national parks, 25 battlefields or military parks, 18 preserves, 18 recreation areas, 10 seashores, 4 parkways, 4 lakeshores, and 2 reserves. National Parks in the United States are created by acts of Congress.

The U.S. Forest Service manages public lands known collectively as the National Forest System. The Forest Service is in the Department of Agriculture. The first chief of the Forest Service was Gifford Pinchot.

The Forest Service manages the nation's forests in a way that allows people to share and enjoy the forests while conserving the environment for generations to come. The Forest Service is organized into four basic levels: ranger district, national forest, region, and national level.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. When was the National Park Service established?
2. What are the different unit designations within the National Park Service?
3. How did the National Forest Service come about?
4. What five main activities are performed by the Forest Service?
5. What are the responsibilities of the four basic levels of the Forest Service?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Go to <http://www.nps.gov/photosmultimedia/index.htm>, and take a virtual tour of national parks that interest you. Determine what makes the park special.

Web Links:



Evolution of an Idea

<http://www.nps.gov/americasbestidea/templates/timeline.html>

National Parks

<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/national-parks/>

National Park Service

<http://www.nps.gov/index.htm>

U.S. Forest Service

<http://www.fs.fed.us/>

Agricultural Career Profiles

<http://www.mycart.com/career-profiles>