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[digital copy emailed to waso_policy@nps.gov]

Dear Mr. Fagan:

The George Wright Society is a nonprofit, nonpartisan professional association whose mission is to advance the scientific and heritage values of parks and protected areas. The GWS promotes professional research and resource stewardship across natural and cultural disciplines, provides avenues of communication, and encourages public policies that embrace these values. We offer the following comments on the proposed revisions to the 2001 National Park Service Management Policies. First we provide an explanation of the GWS position on the preservation of park resources and resource values, followed by specific comments on the revisions, referenced to page and line number. Finally, we offer some brief recommendations on the whole revision process.

The GWS position on resource preservation in the U.S. national parks

The position of the George Wright Society is that resource preservation and protection is the paramount mission of the National Park Service. Whenever conflicts arise that involve existing or proposed uses of the parks, the solution must always be one which keeps resources and associated resource values as unimpaired as possible. In other words, resource preservation and protection trumps all other concerns in NPS management.

We base our position on two reasons, one legal and one philosophical. The legal reason is that Congress and the courts have consistently affirmed the primacy of resource preservation and protection. This extends all the way back to the National Park Service Act of 1916, and encompasses the famous preamble clause that defines the mission of NPS. The seminal scholarly study of the meaning of this clause was written by one of the most distinguished historians of the National Park Service, the late Robin Winks, in a law review article titled “The National Park Service Act of 1916: ‘A Contradictory Mandate?’” (Winks 1997). Unlike previous commentators, Winks did an exhaustive, word-by-word textual examination of the clause, linked with a historical analysis of the *Congressional Record* and other primary sources in order to discern Congress’ intent in passing the Organic Act. While acknowledging that the construction “conserve unimpaired” has engendered a great deal of confusion over the years, Winks demonstrated that “conserve unimpaired” is semantically and functionally equivalent in meaning to words “preserve” and

“protect” (which the word “conserve” alone is not). His conclusion, which we consider authoritative, is that

there was and is no inherent contradiction in the preamble to the Act of 1916. The National Park Service was enjoined by that act, and the mission placed upon the Service was reinforced by subsequent acts, to conserve the scenic, natural, and historic resources, and the wild life found in conjunction with those resources, in the units of the National Park System in such a way as to leave them unimpaired; this mission had and has precedence over providing means of access, if those means impair the resources, however much access may add to the enjoyment of future generations (Winks 1997:623).

This conclusion has since been consistently reaffirmed by Congress in several subsequent important laws, which we reference in our specific comments later in this document.

The philosophical reason for the GWS position is our firm belief that the enjoyment and edification of the American people will be achieved precisely to the degree that park resources are preserved unimpaired. (It is important to note that Congress recognizes this in the laws to be referred to below.) The uniqueness of America’s national parks—their essence, if you will—is that they embody a promise of perpetual care, at the highest level, for our country’s most special natural areas and cultural sites. Without an unwavering commitment to this, the parks will come to nothing.

It follows from all this that NPS management policies should state, as consistently and unequivocally as possible, the primacy of resource preservation and protection in all management activities. This is the orientation for our specific comments on the current revision, which now follow. (Page and line references are to the “comparison edition” PDF file of the 2006 revisions, downloaded from www.nps.gov/policy/mp/comparison.pdf.)

GWS Comment #1 • NPS mission statement (p. 2, lines 1–6)

An explanatory PDF comment appended to the comparison edition file (p. 1, line 23) states that the NPS mission statement is being changed to make it consistent with the “official mission statements” published in the Department of Interior manual. Be that as it may, the 2001 mission statement presumably passed departmental muster when it was promulgated, so it is not clear to us why the department has since come up with an NPS mission statement at variance with the 2001 version. Despite the proposed new declaration in the Introduction to the 2006 edition (p. 3, lines 10–23) that the words “conserve,” “preserve,” and “protected” should be considered interchangeable, the GWS believes that the three are distinctive. While the change to “conserve unimpaired” has the benefit of echoing the language of the Organic Act, and one might argue that “preserve unimpaired” is a tautology, the latter phrase has the advantage of being absolutely unequivocal in its meaning. Therefore we recommend that the 2001 mission statement be left unchanged and the DOI manual be changed accordingly.

GWS Comment #2 • Introduction: Terms and concepts (pp. 3–5)

The GWS agrees with the PDF comment appended to p. 3 that a section of definitions is a valuable addition to the Management Policies. We have the following comments on the definitions:

- p. 3, lines 10–23: As just noted, the terms “conserve,” “preserve,” and “protect” are distinctive and it is not sufficient to declare that they are equivalent for the purposes of the Management Policies. The highest standard of care is the standard NPS must uphold; therefore, the words “preserve” and “protect” should be used consistently throughout, and, whenever possible, substituted for any references to “conserve” (or its derivatives), except in certain circumstances where the word “conserved” is well-established usage (e.g., conservation of historic artifacts).

- p. 4, lines 1–2: delete the words “not diminished” and replace with “left unimpaired.”
- p. 4, line 3: insert the clause “and subsequent relevant legislation” after “the park’s enabling legislation.”
- p. 4, lines 7–8: insert the clause “so long as the uses involved do not impair resources and resource values” following the last word in the sentence.
- p. 5, lines 2–3: the second sentence of the PDF comment appended to p. 4 should be inserted here. That is, following the sentence ending with “unimpaired” on line 2, this sentence should be inserted: “The National Park Service not only protects parks from activities that would cause impairment of resources and values, but also from activities that would cause lesser impacts that are still unacceptable.” At various places throughout the 2006 revisions, the words “unacceptable impacts” are proposed to replace various wordings that speak generically of “adverse impacts.” PDF comments that accompany these changes claim that the “unacceptable impact” standard is stronger than the 2001 wording. In fact, just the opposite is true. The standard “unacceptable impacts” presumes, by definition, that some impacts are acceptable, and the existence of this new standard could be construed by NPS managers as tacit encouragement to allow levels of use all the way up to that threshold of unacceptability. By contrast, generic language such as “adverse impacts” errs on the side of preservation and protection by presuming that certain impacts are indeed adverse, and should be avoided wherever possible and mitigated to the highest degree where unavoidable. In addition, the term “adverse impacts” is well established in law (e.g., in NEPA and in NHPA Section 106 / CFR800) and the introduction of the term “unacceptable impacts” needlessly moves away from this legislative terminology, and at the same time does not add clarity to the Policies.

The GWS believes that the Introduction to the Management Policies should explicitly reference (by quoting key sections) the laws that establish preservation and protection of park resources as the overriding priority in all NPS management functions. (Some, but not all, of these laws are referenced in Section 1.4.1.) Aside from the Organic Act, which the Policies already reference, the following should be mentioned along with a brief explanation of their historical context (emphasis added below):

- *Section 1 of the Historic Sites Act of 1935*, in which “it is [t]hereby declared that it is a national policy to *preserve* for public use historic sites, buildings and objects of national significance for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States (Dilsaver 1994:132).
- *Section 2(a) of the Wilderness Act of 1964*, which states: “In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for *preservation and protection* in their natural condition, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefit of an enduring resource of wilderness.”
- *The preamble to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966* (as amended through 2000), in which Congress finds and declares “that the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation should be *preserved* as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people” (Dilsaver 1994:302).
- *The preamble to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968*, in which “It is hereby declared to be the policy of the United States that certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values, shall be *preserved* in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be *protected* for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Congress declares that the established national policy of dam and other construction at appropriate sections of the rivers of the United States needs to be complemented by a policy that would *preserve* other selected rivers or sections thereof in their free-flowing condition to *protect* the water quality of such rivers and to fulfill other vital national conservation purposes.”
- *The preamble to the General Authorities Act of 1970*, in which Congress explicitly recognized the parks as being united into “one national park system as cumulative expressions of a single national heritage” which must be “*preserved* and managed for the benefit of all the people of the United States...” (Dilsaver 1994:374).

- *Section 101(6)(b) of the Redwood National Park Expansion Act of 1978*, widely known as the “anti-derogation clause” of that act, which amends the preamble to the General Authorities Act of 1970 to add an clear explanation of what it means to preserve and manage the national park system for the benefit of the people of the United States. That explanation reads as follows: “... the *protection*, management, and administration of these areas [i.e., the parks] shall be conducted in light of the high public value and integrity of the National Park System and shall not be exercised in derogation of the values and purposes for which these various areas have been established” unless Congress directs otherwise (Dilsaver 1994:392).
- *Section 2 of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979*, where it is stated that the law’s purpose is “to secure, for the present and future benefit of the American people, the *protection* of archaeological resources and sites” which are “an irreplaceable part of the Nation’s heritage” (Dilsaver 1994:395).
- *Title II of the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998*, one of whose purposes (Section 201–2) is “to enhance management and *protection* of national park resources by providing clear authority and direction for the conduct of scientific study in the National Park System and to use the information gathered for management purposes,” and which (in Section 202) directs the Secretary of the Interior “to assure that management of units of the National Park System is enhanced by the availability and utilization of a broad program of the highest quality science and information” (*Congressional Record–Senate*, 14 October 1998, pp. S12494–12495; for analysis see Harmon 1999).

Again, it is important to note that in all these laws Congress recognizes that the benefits of the parks to the American people will be achieved precisely to the degree that resources are preserved unimpaired.

GWS Comment #3 • Section 1.1: The national park idea (p. 11, lines 18–20)

1988 Policies	2001 Policies	2006 Proposed Revision
This idea of a national park was an American invention of historic consequences, marking the beginning of a worldwide movement that has subsequently spread to more than 100 countries and 1,200 national parks and conservation preserves.	This idea of a national park was an American invention of historic consequences, marking the beginning of a world-wide movement that has subsequently spread to more than 100 countries and 1,200 national parks and conservation preserves.	This American invention marked the beginning of a worldwide movement that has subsequently spread to more than 100 countries and 1,200 national parks and conservation preserves.

The 1988 and 2001 policies are identical in describing the national park idea as being of “historic consequences.” The proposed deletion of this language deemphasizes the fact that the United States, as the originator of the national park idea, has a special responsibility to the rest of the world to show leadership in the protection and preservation of its parks.

GWS Comment #4 • Section 1.1: The national park idea (p. 11, lines 35–36 / p. 12, lines 1–11)

The language of p. 3, lines 10–23, is repeated here. See GWS Comments #1 and #2.

GWS Comment #5 • Multiple sections, as follows:

- p. 13, lines 17, 24, 26, 30
- p. 21, line 32
- p. 26, line 9
- p. 37, line 4
- p. 61, line 11
- p. 62, line 6
- p. 66, line 29
- p. 68, line 26
- p. 115, line 24
- p. 116, line 4
- p. 119, lines 31, 37
- p. 131, line 1
- p. 187, line 32
- p. 190, line 5
- p. 199, line 28
- p. 205, line 16
- p. 211, line 17
- p. 222, lines 26, 41
- p. 227, line 6
- p. 228, lines 9, 35
- p. 232, line 12
- p. 236, line 17
- p. 237, line 16
- p. 240, line 22
- p. 242, line 14
- p. 243, line 30

In these lines the word “protected” (or “protection”) is replaced with “conserved” (or “conservation.”) The 1988 and 2001 Policies are consistent in using the term “protected.” In two places (p. 3, lines 10–23, repeated verbatim on pp. 11–12) the proposed 2006 revisions go to great lengths to claim that “conserve” is synonymous with “preserve” and “protect,” and that “The choice of any one of these words within these policies is not intended to, and should not be construed to, imply a greater or lesser restriction on opportunities for visitor enjoyment, or level of care for park resources and values.” If that is the case, then why do the 2006 revisions systematically change “protect” to “conserve”? If we take the previous claims of synonymy at face value, then this is a flagrant self-contradiction — if “preserve” means exactly the same thing as “conserve,” then the wording should have been left unchanged. In fact, however, in common usage there *is* a clear and important distinction between these words: “conserve” denotes a lesser degree of care than “preservation” and “protection.” Furthermore, we question why—if these terms are supposedly synonymous—there is not a single instance of a reference to “conserve” being changed to “preserve” or “protect.” The unmistakable implication of all these changes is that the 2006 Policies endorse a weaker standard of care for the resource and resource values of the national park system. In all the above-cited instances the 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #6 • Multiple sections, as follows:

- p. 14, line 17
- p. 23, lines 23, 27
- p. 31, line 25
- p. 34, lines 6 (two instances), 7, 36
- p. 44, line 7

- p. 63, line 9
- p. 89, line 7
- p. 105, line 36
- p. 107, line 2
- p. 108, line 38
- p. 111, line 34
- p. 112, lines 4, 16
- p. 135, line 29
- p. 143, line 22
- p. 161, line 6
- p. 243, line 6
- p. 251, line 2
- p. 252, line 37
- p. 259, line 6
- p. 261, line 10

In these lines, which consist of new text added to the 2006 Policies, the word “conserve” (or its derivatives) is proposed instead of, or in addition to, “preserve” or “protect” (or their derivatives). Again, a lower level of care is denoted by the choice of “conserve.” In all the above-cited instances the word “preserve” or “protect,” as appropriate, should be used.

In addition, in the following places where the 2001 Policies spoke unequivocally about protecting park resources, the words “and ensuring public use and enjoyment” (or variants thereof) were inserted in the 2006 Policies, giving the mistaken impression that resource protection does not have primacy over visitor enjoyment.

- p. 34, line 20
- p. 35, lines 34–35, 35–36
- p. 37, line 27
- p. 161, line 6
- p. 215, line 26
- p. 216, lines 33–34
- p. 222, lines 25–27
- p. 244, line 3
- p. 246, line 11
- p. 260, line 16

GWS Comment #7 • Section 1.3.3: Feasibility (p. 13, lines 31–32)

The 1988 and 2001 Policies clearly envision that factors outside of park boundaries can and should play a role in determining potential new park feasibility. The 2006 deletion of the clause “taking into account current and potential impacts from sources beyond proposed park boundaries” hinders the effectiveness of park planners in evaluating potential new parks and wrongly implies that park managers should not be concerned with external impacts (both beneficial and detrimental) to park resources. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #8 • Section 1.3.3: Feasibility (p. 14, line 4)

We agree with the restoration of this clause from the 1988 Policies: if fee-simple acquisition of land for new areas is under consideration, the owners' willingness to sell should be a factor taken into account — though it ought not be the *controlling* factor.

GWS Comment #9 • Section 1.3.3: Feasibility (p. 14, lines 17–18)

The proposed new clause — “and the priority of maintaining and conserving existing national park system units”—unnecessarily supposes that Congress will not increase NPS funding in order to cover the costs of new areas. The proposed “priority” for maintaining existing national park system units at the expense of new ones does not exist in law. The effect of the added language is to discourage additions to the national park system. This clause should be deleted; the rest of the revised sentence is unobjectionable.

GWS Comment #10 • Section 1.4.3: NPS Obligations (p. 17, lines 1–40)

This section of the 2001 Policies is a great improvement over the comparable discussion in the 1988 Policies, which emphasized the historical disagreements over the proper interpretation of the Organic Act (disagreements which, as noted above, were subsequently resolved by the scholarship of Winks). While not perfect, this section of the 2001 Policies clearly communicates the paramount value of resource preservation and protection. By contrast, the overall effect of the proposed 2006 revisions is simply to confuse the matter:

- **lines 3–6:** the deletion of the sentence “This mandate is independent of the separate prohibition on impairment, and so applies all the time, with respect to all park resources and values, even when there is no risk that any park resources or values may be impaired” is warranted, because the sentence erroneously states that the directive to “conserve park resources values” is a separate mandate from that to “leave them unimpaired.” In fact, the two directives form a single inseparable mandate. As Winks showed, even though the two directives are separated in the sentence in which they appear, the meaning of the sentence, both syntactically and as evidenced by the intent of Congress, is that resources must be “conserved unimpaired”—i.e., preserved and protected. Nevertheless, the deleted sentence does express an important idea that should be retained in the Policies: namely, that the “conserve unimpaired” mandate “applies all the time, with respect to all park resources and values, even when there is no risk that any park resources or values may be impaired.” The sentence should be revised accordingly and then included in this section.
- **lines 8–11:** The intent of this sentence is good, since it plainly states that the overarching mission is to preserve park resources and values. However, as written the sentence fails to make sense because the final clause is grammatically incorrect and is also missing necessary words that would establish the baseline of conditions being maintained. We recommend splitting the sentence into two, as follows (additions in **bold**): “Through this mandate, Congress established the overarching mission for national parks, which is to protect park resources and values **unimpaired, for the enjoyment of present and future generations,** ~~to ensure by ensuring~~ that these resources and values are maintained in **a condition** as good **as,** or better **than,** ~~condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations~~ **that which prevailed at the time they came under the care of the National Park Service.**” This wording establishes an identifiable “bottom line” of acceptable resource conditions while at the same time endorsing a restoration management function so that the NPS can, whenever possible, make resource conditions better than they found them.
- **lines 19–23:** The 2001 language is more forceful here and should be restored; there is a benefit to retaining the clause “not just those who visit parks” because surveys consistently show that

Americans place a high “existence value” on just knowing that the parks are being protected, whether or not they ever visit them.

- **lines 23–40:** The 2001 language in these lines comes very close to stating explicitly the Winks position on the Organic Act. The proposed deletion of these lines is a critical mistake. The proposed substitute language (lines 32–34) contains a spurious directive, which has no basis in law, that “the Service must balance the sometimes competing obligations of conservation and enjoyment in managing the parks.” This is simply wrong. Nowhere in the law is there any such requirement to “balance” preservation and use. The substitute language continues (lines 34–36) by declaring that courts have given NPS “broad discretion in determining how best to fulfill the Organic Act’s mandate.” This is true enough, but the substitute language of lines 32–34 fundamentally misstates that mandate, so the import of this sentence is to mistakenly communicate to NPS managers that they have broad legal discretion to “balance” (read: “allow”) uses even they are in conflict with resource preservation. This is a perversion of the true meaning of the Organic Act. The initial clause of lines 36–37 then clearly (and correctly) states that enjoyment of the parks depends on resource preservation. The sentence then continues (lines 37–38) by stating that when there are disagreements about whether a proposed use constitutes an impairment, “the Service will protect the resource....” If the sentence ended there, it would be a correct reflection of the intent of the Organic Act. However, the sentence continues (lines 38–40) by stating that NPS will take “appropriate steps, including scientific study and public involvement, to resolve the concerns.” While the GWS heartily endorses the use of science, scholarship, and public involvement to inform management decisions, the phrase “resolve the concerns” could easily be interpreted to mean that managers should do whatever is in their power to come up with a compromise solution to “balance” preservation and use.
 - **Summary:** We have gone into great detail analyzing Section 1.4.3 because it is arguably the linchpin of the entire Management Policies. Overall, the proposed revisions of this section send mixed (and sometimes downright erroneous) signals to managers and, in the aggregate, are not as clear as the 2001 Policies. In the absence of specific editing as suggested above, the NPS is better served by retaining the 2001 version.
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GWS Comment #11 • Section 1.4.3.2: Unacceptable impacts (p. 18)

- **lines 11–12:** Add the words “in an unimpaired state” to the end of the sentence.
 - **lines 24–25:** Here and throughout the Policies, references to “scientific information” and the like should be revised to say “scientific and scholarly” so that the term encompasses work in the humanities and social sciences that is important in managing cultural resources, visitor attitudes and impacts, etc.
 - **lines 28–29:** See GWS Comment #10, second bullet point.
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GWS Comment #12 • Section 1.4.3.3: Park purposes and authorized uses (p. 19)

This section is generally a good addition to the Policies. However, the last sentence (lines 11–13) is unclear: presumably it refers to authorized uses as delineated in enabling legislation/proclamations, but the term “desire” suggests not an authorization, but a mere preference. The words “or unacceptable impacts” should be deleted from line 11.

GWS Comment #13 • Section 1.4.4: Prohibition on impairment (p. 19)

1988 Policies	2001 Policies	2006 Proposed Revision
Whether an individual action is or is not an "impairment" is a management determination. In reaching it, the manager should consider such factors as the spatial and temporal extent of the impacts, the resources being impacted and their ability to adjust to those impacts, the relation of the impacted resources to other park resources, and the cumulative as well as the individual effects.	While Congress has given the Service the management discretion to allow certain impacts within parks, that discretion is limited by the statutory requirement (enforceable by the federal courts) that the Park Service must leave park resources and values unimpaired, unless a particular law directly and specifically provides otherwise.	Although Congress has given the Service the management discretion to allow impacts from activities within parks, that discretion is limited by the statutory requirement (generally enforceable by the federal courts) that the Park Service must leave park resources and values unimpaired, unless a particular law directly and specifically provides otherwise.

The 2001 Policies improved the 1988 language by making it clear that managers do not have unrestrained discretion in deciding whether an action or use is an impairment. The 2006 revision backslides by seeming to state that managers have discretion to allow a broad range of impacts (rather than just “certain” impacts) and that statutory requirements are only “generally” enforceable by the federal courts.

GWS Comment #14 • Section 1.4.5: What constitutes impairment (p. 19, lines 33–36)

This sentence, emphasizing the necessity for managers to use the best available scientific and scholarly information as well as civic engagement in deciding what constitutes an impairment, and be able to justify their decisions, is a good addition to the Policies.

GWS Comment #15 • Section 1.4.7: Decision-making requirements (p. 21)

The addition of the hedging language in lines 16 and lines 20–21 weakens this section, and is unnecessary.

GWS Comment #16 • Section 1.5: Cooperative conservation (pp. 21–22)

We understand that the Bush Administration wants to emphasize its program of Cooperative Conservation. However, the fact is that there are external threats to parks, and that sometimes the Park Service will need to be an antagonist to outside interests to protect the parks. This section should be retitled “External Threats and Cooperative Conservation Opportunities.”

GWS Comment #17 • Section 1.6: Environmental leadership (p. 22, lines 30–32)

We do not see any rationale for deleting this line. It states the plain fact that NPS and its activities do touch many people’s lives, and that NPS needs to inspire in the public a powerful environmental ethic. The sentence should be restored.

GWS Comment #18 • Section 1.7: Management excellence (p. 23)

- **lines 20–24:** The National Park Service is *not* a business, and the success of its mission does not in any way *depend upon* using business principles and practices, as this newly added section claims. Such business principles and practices can, in a limited way, enhance certain managerial functions of NPS, but the NPS has a public trust mission to preserve and protect park resources and values for all of the people of the United States and the world. That cannot be achieved by running NPS like a business. These lines should be deleted.
- **lines 24–28:** We agree that managers need to demonstrate responsibility and accountability, but this assertion needs to be rephrased to demonstrate the public trust mission of NPS.

GWS Comment #19 • Section 1.7.1: Managing information (pp. 23–25)

This section has been changed from one which stressed general principles of information-sharing and public accessibility of data to one which is heavily oriented toward technical requirements and IT jargon. The deleted language on p. 23 (lines 5–12) should be restored to reinstate the general principles, which are important.

GWS Comment #20 • Section 1.7.4: Management accountability (pp. 28–29)

This section is fine as far as it goes, but should be retitled “Management financial accountability” since it talks almost exclusively about finances.

GWS Comment #21 • Section 1.7.4.4: Facilities management (p. 31)

This section contains no mention of the need for NPS facilities to be designed and built so that they produce the least environmental impact possible. NPS needs to be a leader in sustainable facility design and management, and that should be emphasized by adding appropriate language to this section.

GWS Comment #22 • Section 1.8: Civic engagement (pp. 33–34)

- **General comment:** This section reads like a paean to partnerships rather than enunciating the intellectual and philosophical core of what civic engagement means. Civic engagement is much more than a commitment to connect with diverse communities, including those who have had little or no connection to the parks, and to respect their views (vital though all that is). Civic engagement is a dynamic process whereby the citizens of the United States are challenged to rethink their assumptions about a number of topics, many of them controversial (e.g., race relations, the history of American slavery, civil rights for minority groups, etc.), using the parks as venues for discovery and debate. As the National Park System Advisory Board put it, “In a democratic society such as ours, it is important to understand the journey of liberty and justice, together with the economic, social, religious, and other forces that barred or opened the ways for our ancestors, and the distances yet to be covered.... Parks should be not just recreational destinations but springboards for personal journeys of intellectual and cultural enrichment” (National Park System Advisory Board 2001:14). Civic

engagement recognizes that complacency destroys democracy. That is its central insight. The National Park Service, as a major public institution in this country, has the moral and intellectual obligation to continually challenge the public to refuse to be satisfied with the status quo (that is, to get people to acknowledge the “distances yet to be covered”), and to be willing to continually evaluate our history to debate the lessons it offers to each succeeding generation. As written, Section 1.8 gives no sense of this vital core of civic engagement. It needs to be substantially revised along these lines. In addition, the concept of civic engagement needs to be explicitly referenced in Chapter 4, Natural Resource Management, as it is in Chapter 5, Cultural Resource Management (under section 5.1.1), rather than merely providing a cross-reference to Director’s Order 75A. This is needed to reinforce the idea that civic engagement applies to all resource fields.

- **lines 36–37:** This sentence contradicts Director’s Order 75A (“Civic Engagement and Public Involvement”), where, on p. 3, it states: “We must always remember that our first obligation is to make certain that our decisions do not compromise park resources and the right of future generations to enjoy them. Enjoyment by the public must be achieved consistent with leaving resources unimpaired for future generations.” This language should be substituted for the 2006 sentence.

GWS Comment #23 • Section 2.1.2: Scientific, technical, and scholarly analysis (p. 37, line 37)

The term “foundation documents” is not defined until Section 2.2, creating confusion here as to what that term means.

GWS Comment #24 • Section 2.1.3: Public participation (p. 38, line 15)

Substituting “resources and infrastructure” for “conditions” muddies the meaning of the sentence. Park conditions encompass more than resources and infrastructure; “conditions” include resource values, visitor experiences, etc. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #25 • Section 2.2: Major elements of planning (pp. 38–40)

- **lines 34–37, p. 38, and line 1, p. 39:** The 2006 revisions proposes to eliminate this sentence, which usefully sets goals for identifying appropriate resource conditions and visitor experiences. The 2001 wording should be restored.
- **lines 12–23, p. 39:** The proposal for creating a Foundation Document for each park has merit, but the 2006 proposed revisions deletes (lines 16–18) reference to the park’s enabling legislation or presidential proclamation (as appropriate) and any subsequent laws or executive orders that apply to the park. This does not make sense, since enabling legislation/presidential proclamations are legally binding whereas the proposed Foundation Document is a planning document only and has no basis in law. Foundation Documents must be based on, and should reproduce verbatim, the park’s enabling legislation or presidential proclamation. In addition, they should reproduce the relevant sections of general laws governing the national park system (see GWS Comment #2, above). Finally, the 2006 revisions delete (lines 19–20) reference to park mission goals tiering off from the overall goals of the national park system. In our judgment, this is a mistake. Too often parks are managed as if they were standalone entities rather than parts of a larger system of protected areas and cultural sites. A systems emphasis should be encouraged in the Policies; the language of the 2001 edition should be restored.

GWS Comment #26 • Section 2.3.1: General Management Planning (p. 41, lines 28–31)

This newly proposed sentence asserts that GMPs will have to consider the financial impact of proposed facilities and programs, as well as their environmental impacts. This is unclear. It seems to suggest that a key consideration in GMPs should be whether proposed facilities and programs will produce a negative financial impact on unspecified parties, such as, for example, local businesses outside the park. Or it could mean that proposed facilities and programs should only be included in GMPs if there is a strong likelihood that they will be funded. In any interpretation, putting financial considerations on a par with environmental ones is not advisable. This sentence should be deleted or wording changed to make it clear that financial considerations are not paramount. The policy should make it clear that, while it is important to weigh costs, especially when incurring new infrastructure that will have maintenance implications in the future, the GMP should not compromise on setting forth a plan to fully protect and preserve park resources.

GWS Comment #27 • Section 2.3.1.2: Management zoning (p. 42, line 27)

The 2006 revisions deletes the words “if any” from this sentence, thereby foreclosing the possibility that some highly sensitive natural zones cannot tolerate any visitor use. This is a serious mistake; there are many conceivable instances where a particular park area cannot tolerate any level of visitor use (e.g., a nesting site for endangered piping plovers). The 2001 language should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #28 • (old) Section 2.3.1: Science (p. 43, lines 9–17)

This entire section is proposed for deletion in the 2006 revision. The GWS stands for precisely this kind of scientific and scholarly involvement in park management. It is troubling to see the entire section expunged, without any rationale. The 2001 language needs to be restored in its entirety.

GWS Comment #29 • Section 2.3.1.4: Public involvement (p. 44, lines 8–11)

“Consensus-based management” needs to be defined here, rather than leaving it as a reference to the Department of the Interior Manual. “Consensus advice” is also a vague term that could be interpreted in a number of ways.

GWS Comment #30 • Section 2.3.1.8: Wild and Scenic Rivers (p. 45, line 22)

By deleting the word “complete” and inserting “potential” the policy that NPS maintain a complete inventory of rivers it considers eligible to be added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System has been changed to maintaining an inventory, however incomplete, of rivers that might be eligible. This is among the changes that are made with no comment, but it appears that the intent is to reduce NPS’s effort in this arena and implies that NPS does not wish to commit itself to evaluating rivers for wild and scenic river status. We believe that this is a mistake and that NPS should restore its commitment to maintaining a full inventory of eligible rivers.

GWS Comment #31 • Section 2.3.2.1: Strategic plans and GMPs (p. 48, lines 29–32)

It is not clear to us why this reference to including NEPA and NHPA requirements in GMPs is being deleted. The NEPA/NHPA requirements to assess impacts on natural and cultural resources on the socioeconomic environment are important and should be included in GMPs. The 2001 language should be restored.

GWS Comment #32 • Chapter 3, Land Protection: Introduction (p. 53)

- **line 9:** The addition of the phrase “protect property rights” implies that it is NPS’s duty, and that NPS has the capacity, to protect these rights. NPS has no such duty, and even if it did it does not have the capacity — owners alone are responsible for protecting their private property rights. The added phrase should be deleted.
 - **line 10:** The change from “will” to “may” makes proactive action by NPS to address external threats seem optional rather than mandatory. The 2001 wording should be restored.
-

GWS Comment #33 • Section 3.1: General (p. 53)

- **lines 13–15:** There is no reason given for deleting this summary of the NPS mission. The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **line 17:** The effect of the proposed change is to unnecessarily weaken the rationale for NPS fee-simple acquisition. The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **line 27:** The change from “employed” to “necessary” makes proactive action by NPS to address external threats seem optional rather than mandatory. The 2001 wording should be restored.
-

GWS Comment #34 • Section 3.2: Land protection methods (p. 54)

- **lines 13–14:** The proposed additional language here seems to be an attempt to obviate the previous sentence, which declares that fee-simple ownership is the best way to protect resources and provide for public enjoyment. By asserting that less-than-fee interests may often be more “practicable” and “acceptable” (to whom?) the added language gives managers an excuse not to pursue fee-simple acquisition. The standard of protection to be upheld by NPS cannot be based upon an individual manager’s determination of what is “practicable” — which in most cases will translate into what is politically expedient. The added language should be deleted.
 - **line 20:** The deletion of the word “critical” unnecessarily weakens the rationale for NPS fee-simple acquisition. The 2001 wording should be restored.
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GWS Comment #35 • Section 3.3: Land protection plans (p. 55)

- **lines 2-10:** In line 4, the proposed added language seeks to establish a “minimum interest” standard for land acquisition. This contradicts the statement in Section 3.2 which declares that fee-simple ownership is the best way to protect resources and provide for public enjoyment. Instead of embracing a spurious minimum interest principle, NPS needs to embrace the “maximum protection” principle of the 2001 Policies, which came down clearly in favor of fee-simple acquisition wherever possible. The 2001 wording for this entire section should be restored.

- **lines 13–14:** The effect of the proposed change is to unnecessarily weaken the rationale for NPS fee-simple acquisition. The 2001 wording should be restored.
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GWS Comment #36 • Section 3.4: Cooperative conservation (pp. 55–56)

It is good to orient the title of this section toward cooperative solutions (in line with the Bush administration’s commitment to “Cooperative Conservation”), but external threats are a reality and the title of the section should recognize this. We suggest melding the two: “Addressing External Threats through Cooperative Conservation.”

GWS Comment #37 • Section 3.7: Land acquisition funding (p. 58, lines 33–34)

The lines proposed for deletion here are an important directive to managers to identify key lands that need to be in public ownership (recalling again that NPS fee-simple ownership is the best way to protect resources and provide for public enjoyment). The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #38 • Chapter 4, Natural Resource Management: Introduction (p. 61)

- **line 4:** the addition of “strive” weakens the commitment to protection that is the idea being conveyed in the sentence. It should be struck.
 - **lines 8–10:** The 2001 wording more clearly states the central role of the evolutionary process in the origin and continuation of natural processes and species. The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **lines 18–20:** The proposed additions here are valuable changes that add depth to managers’ understanding of what needs to be protected.
 - **lines 15–16, 22–23:** While it can be argued that natural soundscapes and clear skies are not “physical resources,” certainly they intimately depend on physical resources and are not merely “associated characteristics” of physical resources. The 2001 wording for these lines should be reinstated.
 - **lines 27–28:** The proposed added wording is a tautology which adds no new meaning to the concept of “absence of human dominance.” The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **line 37:** “Must” is more emphatic and should be restored here.
-

GWS Comment #39 • Section 4.1: General Management Concepts (pp. 62–63)

- **p. 62, lines 16–17:** The 2001 wording “decide in favor of protecting” is more emphatic and should be restored here.
- **p. 62, lines 17–19:** The proposed language is an excellent addition.
- **p. 62, line 24:** There is no need to delete this reference to evolution. The 2001 wording should be restored.
- **p. 63, lines 3–9:** While the intent of this additional section is admirable, the explanation is not clear. The concept of “ecosystem” revolves around interconnectedness, so it doesn’t make sense to speak of species with “small” or “vast” “ecosystem contexts” — as if the ecosystem in which the species live is synonymous with its range. Nor can superintendents categorize all the resources they manage into separate ecosystem contexts, as the last sentence in this section asserts. Most natural resources in a park will be part of several overlapping ecosystems. If this section is to be retained, it needs to be rewritten to make it clear what ecosystems are and how managers need to understand them.

- **p. 63, lines 10–23:** The emphasis in this section is on practicability — which implies that NPS managers have the option of yielding to political expediency if it’s “too difficult” to pursue the path of preservation and protection of resources and resource values. This entire section should be deleted.
 - **p. 63, line 27:** The addition of “where practicable” unnecessarily weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **p. 63, lines 29–30:** The added language suggests that NPS should be proactively looking for ways to encourage new uses of the parks, when in fact accommodation of visitor enjoyment is secondary to resource protection and preservation. The language should be struck.
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GWS Comment #40 • Section 4.1.2: Natural resource information (p. 65, lines 17–19)

The proposed re-wording is an improvement on the 2001 Policies.

GWS Comment #41 • Section 4.1.3: Evaluating impacts (p. 65, line 34)

The deletion of “aggressive” weakens the commitment to mitigate impacts. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #42 • Section 4.1.5: Restoration (pp. 66–67)

- **p. 66, line 35:** Humans are the cause of unnatural disturbance. The 2001 wording is clearer, is consistent with the usage on p. 67, line 1, and should be restored.
 - **p. 66, line 36; p. 67, lines 4, 22:** The addition of “when[ever] practicable” unnecessarily weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be restored.
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GWS Comment #43 • Section 4.2: Studies and collections (p. 68, lines 36–37)

The added language is an improvement on the 2001 Policies.

GWS Comment #44 • Section 4.2.1: I&M/research studies (p. 69, line 18)

Replacing “necessary” with “practicable” turns restoration from a mandate to an option. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #45 • Section 4.2.4: Collection associated with commercial products (p. 71, line 13)

The proposed added language makes it sound as though collection of material that may lead to the development of commercial products is a goal that managers need to seek opportunities for and to “implement.” The 2001 wording, by straightforwardly emphasizing the limited circumstances under which such collections should be allowed, better reflects the core commitment to resource protection and preservation and should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #46 • Section 4.3: Special Designations (pp. 71–74)

- **p. 72, lines 3–4, 15–16; p. 73, line 13–14, 22–23; p. 74, lines 6–7:** This added “chilling” language is appended to the discussion of research natural areas, experimental research areas, biosphere reserves (twice), and World Heritage sites, but, curiously, not to national wild and scenic rivers or national natural landmarks. The language is unnecessary because all of these special designation processes are based on the assumption that the special designation will not cause unacceptable impacts to the values and purposes of the park. The language sends a signal that NPS does not support these special designations, when in fact they are an important means by which NPS can support scientific research and/or the preservation of internationally recognized values in the parks. The language should be struck.
- **p. 73, lines 19–20:** As written, this proposed added language is syntactically incorrect. In any event, it is unnecessary since biosphere reserve objectives must perforce be consistent with laws and regulations — the added language gives the mistaken impression that biosphere reserve designation can somehow override laws and regulations, when they cannot. The 2001 wording should be restored.
- **p. 73, lines 25–34.** This is a valuable addition to the Policies, clearly stating the process by which World Heritage nominations can be put forth. (See also additional comment under GWS Comment #70, below.)

GWS Comment #47 • Section 4.4.1: General principles, biological resource management (p. 74, line 22)

The addition of “mitigating” unnecessarily weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #48 • Section 4.4.1.1: Plant/animal population management (p. 75, line 27–28)

The addition of “where reasonable, practicable, and consistent with park priorities” unnecessarily weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #49 • Section 4.4.1.2: Genetic resource management (pp. 75–76)

- **p. 75, line 32:** There is no reason to delete the reference to evolution. NPS Policies need to explicitly reference the process whereby the biological resources of the parks came to be, and by which they continue to change. The 2001 wording should be restored.
- **p. 75, line 38; p. 76, lines 8–9:** Humans are the cause of unnatural loss of genetic diversity. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #50 • Section 4.4.1.3: Definition of native/exotic species (p. 76)

- **lines 17–18:** Human activities are the cause of the spread of exotic species. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
- **lines 21–22:** This definition of GMOs as exotic species is a valuable addition to the Policies.

GWS Comment #51 • Section 4.4.2.2: Restoration of native plants/animals (p. 79, lines 15–16)

The proposed added language is unnecessary, since these considerations are assumed for all NPS management actions. The added language should be struck.

GWS Comment #52 • Section 4.4.2.3: T&E species (p. 80)

- **lines 1–7:** The GWS believes that interagency disagreements over proposed ESA actions should be settled by the consensus decision of a scientific review committee composed of representatives of the USFWS/NPS/USGS BRD/NOAA, as appropriate, rather than political appointees such as the assistant secretary or members of the CEQ. ESA decisions must be rigorous and science-based, without partisan considerations from any part of the political spectrum. This section should be redrafted to reflect this.
 - **lines 12, 15:** “Essential habitat” is not the same as “critical habitat” as the latter term is used under the ESA. Consideration of essential habitat in addition to critical habitat affords more protection for T&E species. The 2001 wording should be restored.
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GWS Comment #53 • Section 4.4.2.4: Management of natural landscapes (p. 80, lines 35–36)

The GWS supports the integrated management of natural and cultural resources — this language is a valuable addition to the Policies.

GWS Comment #54 • Section 4.4.2.5: Altered plant communities (p. 82, lines 8–14)

See GWS Comment #52, first bullet point.

GWS Comment #55 • Section 4.4.3: Harvest of plants/animals (pp. 82–83)

- **p. 82, line 38:** The 2001 wording, with its emphasis on NPS control, is stronger and should be restored.
 - **p. 83, lines 18–19:** The 2001 wording, with its emphasis on nonimpairment of resources, is stronger and should be restored.
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GWS Comment #56 • Section 4.5: Fire management (p. 88, lines 23–24)

The minimum requirement should apply in these areas as well as in designated wilderness. The struck language should be restored.

GWS Comment #57 • Section 4.6.1: Protection of water (p. 88, lines 34)

The addition of “manage to” is grammatically unclear and in any event weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #58 • Section 4.6.4: Floodplains (p. 90, line 26)

The reference to “inappropriate human” activities is clearer and should be restored.

GWS Comment #59 • Section 4.6.5: Wetlands (p. 91, lines 28–30)

These revisions are clearer than the 2001 wording and are a valuable addition to the Policies.

GWS Comment #60 • Section 4.6.6: Watershed/stream processes (p. 92)

- **line 1:** The hedging language “to the extent possible” weakens the directive and should be removed.
 - **line 2:** Human agency in disturbance processes needs to frankly acknowledged. The 2001 wording should be restored.
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GWS Comment #61 • Section 4.7.1: Air quality (pp. 92–94)

- **p. 92, lines 24–25:** The proposed 2006 revisions put the “protection” of visitor enjoyment on a par with that of natural resources and systems. The 2001 wording, which should be restored, speaks of “sustaining” public enjoyment, thus correctly putting it in a position subsidiary to the protection and preservation of resources.
 - **p. 92, lines 26–28:** There is no scientific doubt that these elements of park environments *are* sensitive to air pollution. The “may be” hedge wording should be deleted and the 2001 wording restored.
 - **p. 93, line 31:** The removal of “aggressively” needlessly weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
 - **p. 93, lines 34–41:** The proposed 2006 revision is much less direct and clear than the 2001 wording, which should be restored.
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GWS Comment #62 • Section 4.8: Geologic resource management (p. 94, lines 21–22)

The hedging language “when practicable” weakens the directive and should be removed.

GWS Comment #63 • Section 4.8.1: Protection of geologic resources (p. 94, line 26)

The hedging language “to the greatest extent possible” weakens the directive and should be removed.

GWS Comment #64 • Section 4.8.1.1: Shorelines/barrier islands (p. 95)

- **line 9:** Human agency in disturbance processes needs to frankly acknowledged. The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **line 10:** The proposed additional language is a tautology — all park shorelines are “part of a larger system” — and should be deleted.
 - **lines 12–13:** The hedging language “a more” weakens the directive and should be removed.
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GWS Comment #65 • Section 4.8.2.2: Caves (p. 98, line 20)

The 2001 wording, emphasizing NPS control, is stronger and should be retained.

GWS Comment #66 • Section 4.9: Soundscape management (pp. 100–101)

- **p. 100, lines 12–17:** The proposed revisions seriously weaken this introductory paragraph. It abandons the high standard of care enunciated by the opening sentence of the 2001 wording. It eliminates the proper definition of natural soundscapes as being those that exist in the absence of human sound.
 - **p. 100, lines 18–19:** The proposed revision is true as far as it goes, but left unqualified it leaves the mistaken impression that determining whether a soundscape is natural or not is simply a matter of measuring decibels. The determination of a natural soundscape must occur by combining quantitative and qualitative factors from acoustics, social science, and other fields — as is acknowledged by the added languages of lines 30–35.
 - **p. 100, line 29:** The proposed change from “whenever possible” to “whenever practicable” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be retained.
 - **p. 100, line 30:** The addition of the hedge word “unacceptable” weakens the directive and should be removed. The deletion of the explanatory phrase “undesirable human-caused sound” suggests that natural sounds can be considered “noise,” which, in the context of NPS management, they cannot and should not be. The explanatory phrase should be reinstated.
 - **p. 100, lines 30–32:** This sentence presents an erroneous characterization of noise and its acceptability. All undesirable human-caused sound, no matter what level, constitutes noise. As the introductory sentence to the 2001 edition of this section states, the NPS should preserve, to the greatest extent possible, natural soundscapes. This means eliminating noise wherever possible and minimizing it everywhere else. That is the standard. The fact that it is not possible to eliminate all noise in parks does not mean NPS should not try to meet the standard by continually seeking ways to reduce noise. What this sentence should state is the concept that noise level is related to *desirability* according to the factors listed. The sentence should be reworded as follows: “Whether or not a particular noise reaches a level where it would be characterized as undesirable depends on various factors....” With this rewording, the sentence will comport with the added sentences in lines 32–35, which are valid additions to the Policies.
 - **p. 100, lines 36–38; p. 101, lines 1–11:** The proposed revisions in this paragraph essentially abandon the NPS commitment to preserving natural soundscapes as expressed in the 2001 Policies. The 2001 wording should be restored.
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GWS Comment #67 • Section 4.10: Lightscape management (p. 101)

- **line 15:** The proposed change from “whenever possible” to “whenever practicable” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be retained.

- **line 16–17:** Human agency in light pollution needs to frankly acknowledged. The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **lines 23–24, 27–28:** The proposed additions are valuable addition to the Policies.
 - **line 25:** Photoperiodicity undoubtedly has played a role in the evolution of species. There is no reason to systematically remove references to evolution in the Policies. The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **lines 29–30:** The NPS has a responsibility to seek to reduce light pollution throughout park ecosystems, not just within park units; indeed, it is impossible to be responsibly concerned about light pollution except in an ecosystem context. The 2001 wording should be restored.
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GWS Comment #68 • Section 4.11: Chemical information/odors (p. 102)

- **lines 7–10/33–37:** Contrary to the PDF comment appended to this page, this paragraph was not merely moved; it was reworded (line 33) by substituting the hedge language “greatest extent reasonable and practicable” for line 7’s “greatest extent possible.” In line 34, the hedge wording “or mitigating” was added. In lines 9/36, “unnatural” is proposed to replace “human.” The 2001 wording should be restored.
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GWS Comment #69 • Section 5.1.1: NPS CR research (p. 106)

- **lines 8–16:** The deletion of these lines undermines long-standing and diligent efforts that NPS professional staff have made to raise the level of professionalism throughout the NPS ranks. The replacement language in Section 1.7.5.1 does not have the needed level of specificity. The 2001 paragraph should be restored in its entirety.
 - **lines 35–36:** The full concept of civic engagement should be explained here as per GWS Comment #22.
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GWS Comment #70 • Section 5.1.3.2.3: Nominations for World Heritage designation (pp. 110–111)

- **p. 111, lines 16–17:** The proposed added language, “or otherwise cause unacceptable impacts to park values and purposes,” is unnecessary because all of these special designation processes are based on the assumption that the special designation will not cause unacceptable impacts to the values and purposes of the park. See further under GWS Comment #46.
 - **General comment:** With the exception noted above, the revised language of this section is a valuable addition to the Policies, clearly stating the process by which World Heritage nominations can be put forth. However, neither this section nor Section 4.3.7 recognizes that the World Heritage Committee now entertains nominations of “mixed sites” — those whose *combination* of natural and cultural qualities are of outstanding universal significance. This new category of World Heritage site should be referenced in both sections of the Policies.
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GWS Comment #71 • Section 5.2: Planning (p. 111, line 32)

The proposed addition of “unacceptable” weakens the directive and should be deleted.

GWS Comment #72 • Section 5.2.1: Consultation (p. 114, lines 4–5)

See GWS Comment #29, above.

GWS Comment #73 • Section 5.3.1.6: Carrying (User) capacity (p. 117, lines 25–28)

The introductory sentence of the 2001 edition provides a concise and strong justification for managers to protect cultural resources from user impacts by setting carrying capacity. The proposed substitute wording, by contrast, only weakly endorses protection and emphasizes “appropriate use.” The 2001 wording should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #74 • Section 5.3.5.1.4: Protection of archeological resources (p. 122, line 4)

The proposed addition of the hedge wording “reasonable” and “practicable” weakens the directive and should be deleted.

GWS Comment #75 • Chapter 6, Wilderness preservation/management (stewardship): Introduction (p. 137)

- - **line 1:** Changing the title of this chapter to “Wilderness Stewardship” weakens acknowledgement that the primary purpose of the 1964 Wilderness Act is to assure the *preservation* of wilderness. “Stewardship,” which we agree is the term to be preferred to “management,” is the means by which preservation is achieved. The title should be changed to “Wilderness Preservation and Stewardship.” The shift from “management” to “stewardship” is to be commended as it reflects a less invasive form of active management.
 - **lines 2–9:** The 2001 wording states positively that NPS managers must evaluate all the lands under their jurisdiction for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, and that they must follow a presumptive “no diminishment” stance that proactively preserves wilderness values on park lands. The 2006 revisions wrongly propose to eliminate these commitments. The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **line 14:** Delete the statement “while making it accessible for appropriate human use and enjoyment”. This makes use a co-equal goal with maintaining untrammeled conditions (preservation), when in fact providing for appropriate use is a subsidiary goal.
 - **lines 22–26:** The six public purposes identified in the Wilderness Act should only be allowed to the extent that they are compatible with protection of an area’s wilderness character. The wording here needs to be changed so as not to imply that these “purposes” are equal to preservation of wilderness character. Change to: “The primary purpose of wilderness in the national parks **is** the preservation of wilderness character and wilderness resources in an unimpaired condition. The additional public purposes of wilderness, as identified in the Wilderness Act — recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation and historical use — are permitted to the extent that they are compatible with protection of an area’s wilderness character.”
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GWS Comment #76 • Section 6.2.1, Assessment of wilderness (pp. 138–139)

This section changes the previous policy of the NPS to review for potential designation as wilderness all of its areas. The new policy requires such review for areas where legislatively mandated, requested by the Secretary, or at the discretion of the Director in response to issues raised through park planning. This means, effectively, that a superintendent's evaluation or public desire to look at an area's wilderness potential can be overridden by the Director. Thus, this policy does not encourage consideration of wilderness when, in the judgment of NPS professionals or in response to the public, such consideration is deemed appropriate. This represents a serious reduction in the commitment to wilderness designation, which is compatible with the NPS Organic Act and a useful tool for protecting a unique type of resource. Other changes to the wilderness policies, notably in 6.2.1.1. and especially 6.2.2.1, further restrict or discourage consideration of wilderness for designation. We recommend that the 2001 policy to consider all areas for wilderness potential be restored.

GWS Comment #77 • Section 6.2.1.2, Additional considerations (p. 139, lines 13–27)

- **lines 13–27:** There is no justification for deleting these directives, which allow NPS managers to consider lands as potential wilderness even if they are subject to severed mineral rights or utility rights-of-way. The 2001 wording rightly takes the view that land should not be excluded as potential wilderness if its impairments are reversible. Eliminating these directives could mean excluding valuable potential wilderness from the national park system. The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **lines 40–42:** By contrast, the 2006 revisions here laudably note that the presence of dams (which, incidentally, could potentially also be removed) do not exclude a waterway from wilderness suitability. This seems inconsistent with the reasoning behind the deletions at lines 13–27.
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GWS Comment #78 • Section 6.2.1.3, Assessment process (p. 140, lines 9–13)

The proposed added language tacitly endorses the continuing use of motorized recreational vehicles and aircraft in wilderness. This contravenes over 40 years of managerial practice in interpreting and implementing the Wilderness Act. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #79 • Section 6.2.3, Proposed wilderness (p. 140, lines 36–40; p. 141, lines 1–4, lines 34–39)

The sentence at lines 36–38 of p. 140 is proposed for deletion in the redrafting of this paragraph, which now appears at lines 34–39 of p. 141. This deleted sentence gives NPS managers a proactive directive to identify adjacent lands that are not immediately suitable for wilderness designation but which have the potential for suitability if nonconforming conditions are removed. The substitute sentence of the redrafted paragraph, at lines 34–36, merely mentions that Congress has recognized such adjacent lands as potential wilderness — there is no directive for NPS managers to actively seek to identify such lands. This weakens the NPS commitment to wilderness preservation. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #80 • Section 6.3.1, Wilderness general policy (p. 142, lines 4–34)

The overall impact of the proposed revisions to this section is to de-emphasize NPS's obligation to manage wilderness-suitable lands at the highest level of protection while the study and recommendation

process unfolds. Specifically, the language added at lines 23–25 reduces the level of protection NPS currently affords to wilderness-suitable lands by allowing nonconforming uses to continue while the study process (which can take years) goes on. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #81 • Section 6.3.4, Wilderness-related planning (p. 143, lines 21–26)

The proposed added language wrongly emphasizes use over preservation in wilderness areas, and, by using the term “optimum opportunities,” implies that NPS managers must seek to actively promote use of wilderness areas. The proposed language should be struck.

GWS Comment #82 • Section 6.3.4.2, Wilderness management (stewardship) planning (p. 144, lines 6–7)

Human agency in impacts on wilderness needs to be frankly acknowledged. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #83 • Section 6.3.4.3, Environmental compliance (p. 144, lines 41–44)

The 2001 wording proposed for deletion here is a valuable enjoinder to NPS managers that they must consider cultural resources in wilderness management, and should be restored.

GWS Comment #84 • Section 6.3.5, Minimum requirement (p. 145, lines 11–12)

The proposed deletion unnecessarily weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #85 • Section 6.3.6.2, Monitoring wilderness resources, and Section 6.3.7, Natural resource management (pp. 147–148)

- **p. 147, lines 35–36:** The directive to identify both internal and external threats to wilderness is a valuable addition to the Policies.
 - **p. 147, line 41; p. 148, lines 1–2:, 22–24:** The 2001 wording (sentence beginning on p. 147, line 41) is stronger than the proposed substitute language at lines 22–24 on p. 148, and should be reinstated.
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GWS Comment #86 • Section 6.3.9, Fire management (p. 149, lines 37–38)

As written, the proposed sentence does not make sense: it seems to say that wildfire suppression must use the minimum tool “... unless ... (2) the fire should be managed in such a way as to protect natural and cultural resources and to minimize the lasting impacts of the suppression actions.” *All* NPS-managed wildfires, whether in wilderness areas or not, should be managed this way, so taken literally the sentence means that NPS managers should never use the minimum tool. This is obviously incorrect. In addition, giving on-site managers the authority to abrogate the minimum tool requirement if they determine that “emergency conditions” exist bestows too much discretion absent further guidance on what constitutes

“emergency conditions.” This sentence needs to be redrafted in line with these recommendations or else the 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #87 • Section 6.3.10.4, Signs (pp. 151–152)

- **p. 151, lines 40–41:** Human agency in impacts on wilderness needs to frankly acknowledged. The 2001 wording should be restored, and, unless the intent is to echo the language of the Wilderness Act, where the term “man” is used (as is the case with the proposed changes on p. 138, lines 26–27 and 31), the word “human” should be substituted for “man” and the 2001 wording otherwise restored.
 - **p. 152, lines 1–2:** The proposed substitution of “feasible” for “possible” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
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GWS Comment #88 • Section 6.4, Wilderness use management (p. 153)

- **line 2:** The proposed substitution of “manage” for “limit” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
 - **lines 6–9:** The proposed added language instructs managers to use the “least restrictive management prescription available” so as to accommodate public use. This rewording wrongly emphasizes use over preservation. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
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GWS Comment #89 • Section 6.4.1, General policy (p. 153. lines 19–22)

The proposed revision here is vague and the intent and meaning of the new sentence is not clear: what are these “certain specific risks”? In the absence of clarification, the 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #90 • Section 6.4.2, Wilderness interpretation (p. 153. lines 27)

The proposed deletion of “while providing for acceptable use limits” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #91 • Section 6.4.3, Recreational use (p. 154, lines 1–5)

Again, this proposed rewording wrongly emphasizes use over preservation. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #92 • Section 6.4.3.1, Recreational use evaluation (p. 154)

- **line 29:** The proposed substitution of “managed” for “limited” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
- **lines 40–41:** The deletion of this sentence opens the door to rampant NEPA categorical exclusions of considerations of increases in, and changing patterns of, visitor use in wilderness areas. New technologies and changes in use patterns are important considerations in the continuing effective

management of wilderness areas, and should not normally qualify for a NEPA categorical exclusion. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #93 • Section 6.4.3.2, Leave no trace (p. 155, lines 5–10)

The inclusion of Tread Lightly!, an organization that promotes recreational use of motorized recreational vehicles such as 4x4 ORVs, gives NPS managers the mistaken impression that it is all right to allow such motorized recreational use in wilderness areas. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #94 • Section 6.4.4, Commercial services (p. 156)

- **lines 15–19:** The proposed revisions give too much leeway to commercial outfitters to argue that caches are needed, and contain a loophole allowing caches to be visible to the public. The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **lines 24–25:** The “Leave No Trace” protocols are a well-established and effective set of ethics that encourage the highest level of wilderness protection. The proposed rewording, with its deletion of the reference to Leave No Trace, weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be restored.
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GWS Comment #95 • Section 6.4.5, Special events (p. 156, lines 29–37)

The proposed revised language removes the directive that requires NPS managers to deny special-event permits if the event does not require a wilderness setting. That, along with the permissive wording of lines 31–33, unduly emphasizes use over preservation in wilderness. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #96 • Section 6.4.6.1, Rights of way (p. 157, lines 26)

Delete the words “where practicable.”

GWS Comment #97 • Section 6.4.6.2, Mineral development (p. 158, lines 13–15)

This proposed language is not restrictive enough in limiting motorized access to valid mineral claims in wilderness areas. We cannot envision a scenario in which a new road (as opposed to repairs to an existing road) would be “necessary for resource protection.” The sentence should be reworded to read: “There will be no new roads unless the claimant can prove a legal right in court, nor any improvement of existing roads unless they are necessary for resource protection.”

GWS Comment #98 • Chapter 7, Interpretation and education: Introduction (p. 161)

- **line 11:** The insertion here of the phrase “enjoyment of park resources” makes no sense. The meaning of the sentence is to establish connections between park resources and various groups of people (visitors, the community, park managers). Logically, one cannot establish a connection between park resources themselves and their enjoyment. The phrase should be struck.

- **line 26:** The substitution of “can be” for “is” weakens the meaning of the sentence. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
-

GWS Comment #99 • Section 7.1, Interpretive/education programs (p. 162, lines 26–27)

Curriculum-based programs *should* provide learning experiences linked directly to clear objectives. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #100 • Section 7.3.1, Personal services (p. 163, line 29–30)

The GWS believes that offering high-quality personal services by park interpreters is an integral duty of NPS, and is one of the keys to the success of the agency over the years. The proposed revisions here chip away at that commitment and imply that it’s all right to dispose of these services if budgets are tight. This would be a grievous mistake, and is the wrong message to send to NPS managers. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #101 • Section 7.4 (old), Interpretive competencies (p. 164, lines 33–38)

This section should be reinstated, for two reasons: (1) it is salutary to reiterate here the need for highly skilled interpreters, and (2) this text specifically mentions that non-NPS interpretation needs to meet the same high standards. The latter point is important given that non-NPS personnel, such as VIPs or employees of cooperating associations, are increasingly the first — and too often the only — contact that visitors make when they arrive at a park visitor center.

GWS Comment #102 • Section 7.4.2, Interpretive/educational services beyond park boundaries (pp. 165–166)

- **p. 165, lines 34–35:** The proposed revision weakens the directive to make parks more than just “islands” but rather integral parts of larger ecological and social communities. The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **p. 166, line 2:** The proposed revision makes outreach an option rather than a responsibility — a strategic mistake. The 2001 wording should be restored.
-

GWS Comment #103 • Section 7.4.3, Resource issue interpretation (p. 166)

- **lines 8–9:** The proposed deletion of this wording needlessly expunges a reference to building support for NPS decisions and initiatives, and the overall NPS mission. This is a proactive stance that should not be abandoned. The 2001 wording should be reinstated and the paragraph re-edited to include the rest of the proposed additional language.
- **lines 22–25:** Again, there is no need to delete this sentence, which speaks to the critical role of education and interpretation in eliminating threats to parks that originate in adjacent lands and communities. The sentence should be reinstated retaining the rest of the proposed revisions to this paragraph.

GWS Comment #104 • Section 7.4.8, Battle reenactments (p. 168, lines 15–22)

- **Title:** The new title for this section is appropriate. The paragraph is about battle reenactments; the title should reflect that.
- **lines 16–22:** The new language at lines 16–18 is fine and strengthens the policy. The deletion of lines 20–22, however, greatly weakens the reenactment policy. Since the policy against battle reenactments was instituted during the 1970s, the prohibition against battle reenactments has been based on three issues: resource degradation, safety for the performers, and a philosophical belief that “playing” at war is fundamentally inappropriate on ground where the original combatants had fought and died. By deleting the philosophical grounds for the prohibition, the NPS opens the possibility that reenactment groups could satisfy the “hazardous” element and open the door to “safe” battle reenactments. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #105 • Chapter 8, Use of the parks: Multiple sections

Throughout this chapter there are instances where the 2006 revisions add or change language to emphasize use or enjoyment of the parks, thereby mistakenly implying that use/enjoyment must be balanced with resource protection and preservation. In all these cases the 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #106 • Chapter 8, Use of the parks: Introduction (p. 171, lines 17–24)

The proposed revisions fundamentally misstate the meaning of the 1970 General Authorities Act and the 1978 Redwood anti-derogation amendment. As noted above in GWS Comment #2, the relevant wording of these laws speaks of resource protection and preservation, not of requiring NPS managers to accommodate public use. Again, our argument is not that appropriate public use and enjoyment is not an important function of NPS; it’s that the 2006 revisions reverse the emphasis, when in fact the Management Policies should always give primary emphasis to the foundational obligation of NPS to resource preservation and protection. The 2001 wording (lines 17–19) accurately states the meaning of the 1970 General Authorities Act and the 1978 Redwood anti-derogation amendment, and should be restored.

GWS Comment #107 • Sections 8.1.1, Appropriate use (pp. 171–172), and Section 8.1.2, Unacceptable impacts (pp. 172–173)

- **p. 171, lines 26–27:** As the 2001 wording states, public enjoyment is an important part of the NPS mission — it is not a “core element,” as the 2006 revision would have it. The core element (and logically there can only be one element at the core) is resource preservation and protection.
- **p. 171, lines 31–32, 34–39; p. 172, lines 1–7:** The 2001 language here is more emphatic and clearer than the 2006 revisions.
- **p. 172, lines 8–15, 30–39:** The bullet list at lines 8–15 attempts to define general conditions for “appropriate uses,” the first, and most critical, item of which is that they must not “cause an unacceptable impact.” The definition of “unacceptable impact” is given in the bullet list at lines 30–39. This is a confusing way of presenting this concept. Moreover, the bullet list at 30–39 says nothing about impairment of resources being an unacceptable impact. (The 2001 Policies stated this

explicitly in language now found on p. 175, line 22, but, contrary to the PDF comment appended to that page, this criterion was *not* transferred to sections 8.1.1 or 8.1.2.) Instead, the second bullet point (lines 31–32) talks about degrading resource conditions, but only in the context of foreclosing future opportunities for enjoyment. The emphasis is entirely on use and enjoyment.

- **p. 172, lines 17–19:** This bullet list implies a categorical endorsement of historical uses and uses of new technology in the parks; it should not do so.
 - **p. 173, lines 9–16:** The 2001 language here is more emphatic and clearer than the 2006 revisions.
 - **p. 173, lines 17–21:** The proposed additional language here should be edited to (1) replace the word “may” with “will” in line 17, and (2) delete the words “to the extent possible” in line 21. With those two edits, the proposed wording would be a good addition to the Policies.
 - **p. 173, line 28:** The deletion of “continually” weakens the directive. The word should be restored.
 - **General comment:** Except for the wording on p. 173, lines 17–21 (subject to the recommended edits), which could be retained, the 2001 wording pertinent to these two sections should be restored in its entirety.
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GWS Comment #108 • Section 8.2, Visitor use (pp. 174–177)

- **p. 174, lines 14–18, lines 25–36:** The proposed changes to these lines are good. We especially applaud the new section on authenticity.
 - **p. 175, lines 16–17, 22:** See GWS Comment #107, fourth bullet point.
 - **p. 175, lines 30–38; p. 176, lines 1–9:** The 2001 wording is clearer and more emphatic and should be reinstated.
 - **p. 175, lines 20, 21–22:** The proposed substitution of “management actions” for “restrictions” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
 - **p. 175, lines 26–40; p. 176, lines 1–5:** The intent of this proposed added language is good, but the fact is that NPS will (not “may,” as in p. 176, line 2) not be able to accommodate all user groups — specifically, those whose uses would cause unacceptable impacts or otherwise be inappropriate. That should be clearly stated here.
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GWS Comment #109 • Section 8.2.1, Visitor carrying capacity (pp. 177–178)

- **p. 177, line 12:** The deletion of “unacceptably impact” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **p. 178, line 13:** The deletion of “can be tolerated” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be restored.
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GWS Comment #110 • Section 8.2.2, Recreation activities (pp. 178–179)

- **p. 178, lines 36–38:** The 2001 wording is clearer and more emphatic and should be restored.
 - **p. 179, line 1:** The deletion of “the minimum” takes away the enjoinder to NPS managers to not just reduce impacts below acceptable levels, but to minimize them. The 2001 wording should be restored.
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GWS Comment #111 • Section 8.2.2.1, Management of recreational use (pp. 179–180)

- **p. 179, lines 7–8:** Contrary to the PDF comment appended to this page, “appropriate” does not set a stronger standard than “unacceptable impacts” — just the opposite. The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **p. 179, lines 25–26:** The proposed revision assumes that a specific recreational activity will be appropriate. The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **p. 179, lines 38–40; p. 180, lines 1–2:** Contrary to the PDF comments appended to the top of p. 180, the sentence is not adequately covered in the proposed revision of section 8.1.2. The 2001 wording here is much more cogent and should be reinstated.
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GWS Comment #112 • Section 8.2.2.2, Commercial visitor services (p. 180, lines 15–27)

The concepts enunciated here are not adequately covered in the cross-referenced sections (lines 26–27). For example, the directive that commercial visitor services should not be provided within parks if they can be adequately provided elsewhere (lines 20–21) is not picked up in the cross-referenced sections. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #113 • Section 8.2.2.3, River use (p. 180, line 29)

The proposed change from “will” to “should” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #114 • Section 8.2.2.4, Backcountry use (p. 181)

- **lines 9–12:** The 2001 wording is clearer and more emphatic and should be reinstated.
 - **line 14:** The proposed change from “corrective” to “management” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
 - **line 20:** The proposed change from “will” to “should” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
 - **lines 23–26:** The 2001 wording is clearer and more emphatic and should be reinstated.
 - **line 28–29:** Delete the remainder of the sentence beginning with the words “as developed” — there is no need to mention specific organizations in this context.
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GWS Comment #115 • Section 8.2.2.5, Fishing (pp. 181–182)

- **p. 181, lines 35–37:** Contrary to the PDF comment appended to this page, “appropriate” does not set a stronger standard than “jeopardize natural aquatic ecosystems or riparian zones” — just the opposite. The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **p. 181, line 39:** Inserting “nonconflicting” here needlessly introduces confusion — as if fishing could be conducting according to conflicting laws. The word should be deleted.
 - **p. 182:** “Whenever” is more emphatic and should be reinstated.
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GWS Comment #116 • Section 8.2.2.6, Hunting and trapping (p. 182)

- **lines 16–17, lines 25–28:** Contrary to the PDF comment appended to this page, these changes do imply that more hunting is allowable in the parks. The 2001 wording is clearer and more emphatic and should be reinstated.
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GWS Comment #117 • Section 8.2.2.7, Recreational pack/saddle stock use (p. 183, lines 5–23)

This section does not adequately stress the potential environmental impacts of pack and stock use, instead emphasizing minimizing conflicts between user groups. At lines 19–20, the weak phrasing (“alternative strategies must be developed”) seems to endorse allowing recreational stock grazing even when it exceeds allowable limits. This section needs to be rewritten to emphasize these concerns.

GWS Comment #118 • (old) Section 8.2.2.7, BASE jumping (p. 183, lines 24–28)

If this section truly does not comport with 36 CFR 17(a)(3), as claimed in the PDF comment appended to the page, then it needs to be rewritten so that it does, not simply expunged from the Policies. As they stand, the 2006 revisions contain no prohibition whatsoever on BASE jumping, which is a patently inappropriate activity in national parks.

GWS Comment #119 • Section 8.2.3, Use of motorized equipment (pp. 183–184)

Again, in this section the 2006 revisions turn the proper emphasis of NPS management on its head, eliminating references to protection and preservation of resources and minimization of motor vehicle use and replacing it with language that emphasizes how such use may be appropriate. The 2001 edition’s examples of natural sounds and the value of natural soundscapes that are proposed for elimination are especially valuable because of their cogency and variety. The 2001 wording of this section should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #120 • Section 8.2.3.1, ORV use (pp. 184–185)

See GWS Comment #119. The 2001 wording on p. 185, lines 1–9, proposed for deletion, is much stronger than the revised language. The 2001 wording of this section should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #121 • Section 8.2.3.2, Snowmobiles/oversnow vehicles (p. 185, lines 15–29)

See GWS Comment #119. The proposed added language at lines 20–23 seems to endorse snowmobile use. The 2001 wording of this section should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #122 • Section 8.2.3.3, PWCs (p. 185, line 31)

The proposed deletion of “is prohibited unless” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording of this section should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #123 • Section 8.2.5.1, Visitor safety (p. 187, line 4)

The proposed deletion of “it must protect” needlessly weakens the directive. The 2001 wording of this section should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #124 • Section 8.3.7, Homeland security (p. 194, line 26)

Delete the word “foreign” (recalling that the Oklahoma City bombings were perpetrated by domestic terrorists).

GWS Comment #125 • Section 8.4, Overflights/aviation uses (pp. 194–195)

- **p. 194, lines 29–35:** The 2001 wording is clearer and more emphatic and should be reinstated.
 - **p. 195, line 5:** The deletion of the reference to “minimal impact” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
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GWS Comment #126 • Section 8.4.7, Airports/landing sites (p. 197)

- **lines 20–23:** The proposed new language seems to endorse airports in gateway communities. The 2006 revisions should be struck.
 - **line 25:** The 2006 substitution of “minimizing” for “reducing” is an improvement on the 2001 wording.
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GWS Comment #127 • Section 8.6.5, Access to private property (p. 204)

The 2006 revisions (lines 23–25) open the door to NPS managers allowing access to private property when no legal rights of access exist. This is potentially disastrous and will lead to landowners pressuring managers to allow access to property that otherwise would be prohibited. The 2001 wording of this section should be restored.

GWS Comment #128 • Section 8.6.8.2, Managing grazing (p. 207, lines 21–30, 35–36; p. 208, lines 1–10, 17–33)

These lines, proposed for deletion, contain clear and forceful direction to managers to disallow grazing and other livestock use that cause unacceptable impacts to resources, that grazing needs to be continually monitored, that NEPA and NHPA compliance needs to be done, and that certain areas of parks (e.g., riparian zones) need special protection from livestock impacts. The tone throughout the deleted language

is “resources first.” The proposed substitute language (p. 208, lines 34–40; p. 209, lines 1–9) contains only some of the same directives, and is less thorough and forceful. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #129 • Section 8.6.8.2.2, Structures (p. 209, lines 25–33, 36–37)

The proposed 2006 revisions turn this section on its head: from one which strictly proscribes agricultural structures that support grazing to one which states that such structures will be allowed if they meet certain conditions. The 2001 wording of this section should be restored.

GWS Comment #130 • Section 8.7.1, Mineral exploration (p. 212, line 33)

The claim made in the PDF comment appended to this page — that the edits to this section do nothing to authorize increased mining in the parks — would be bolstered by expanding the reference to the Mining in the Parks Act of 1976 (line 33). The congressional findings and declaration of policy in the Mining in the Parks Act state that “(a) the level of technology of mineral exploration and development has changed radically in recent years and continued application of the mining laws of the United States to those areas of the National Park System to which it applies, conflicts with the purposes for which they were established; and (b) all mining operations in areas of the National Park System should be conducted so as to prevent or minimize damage to the environment and other resource values” (16 USC 1901). Adding this language to the Policies (insert at line 36) would reinforce to NPS managers that mining is in fundamental conflict with park purposes and should be disallowed or eliminated wherever possible.

GWS Comment #131 • Section 8.7.3, Nonfederally owned minerals (p. 213)

- **lines 25–26:** The proposed substitution of “may have” for “generally has” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
 - **lines 33–34:** The proposed substitution of “will consider” for “must determine” weakens the directive, as does the proposed deletion of “not adversely.” The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
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GWS Comment #132 • Section 8.8, Collecting natural products (p. 214, line 16)

The proposed substitution of “allowed” for “prohibited, except” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #133 • Section 8.11.2, NPS-supported studies (p. 217, lines 5–6)

The proposed language is a valuable addition to the 2001 Policies.

GWS Comment #134 • Section 8.11.3, Independent/commercial studies (p. 217)

- **line 18:** The proposed substitution of “use” for “restrictions” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.

- **lines 27–30:** The proposed revisions weaken the directive by deleting reference to impacts on park resources. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
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GWS Comment #135 • Section 9.1, Park facilities: Introduction (p. 221, line 7)

The appropriateness of the proposed new standard — that facility “benefit-to-cost ratio will be maximized” — depends entirely on how “benefit” and “cost” are defined. They cannot be defined strictly in monetary terms: there are many park facilities that cannot, and should not, “pay for themselves” in any strict monetary sense. This standard is problematic and should be deleted; the added language of line 6 (“cost-effective to operate and maintain” is more realistic for the national park context and is sufficient to get across the idea that facilities should be operated economically.

GWS Comment #136 • Section 9.1, General (pp. 221–222)

- **p. 221, lines 12–22:** It is nothing short of astonishing that the language of this section — which reiterates the core meaning of the Organic Act, the General Services Act, and the 1978 Redwood anti-derogation clause, and in addition states a commitment to environmental leadership in facility development and operations — should be proposed for deletion in the 2006 revisions. The 2001 wording here should be restored in its entirety.
 - **p. 221, lines 30–36:** The proposed revisions weaken the directive; they are neither as clear nor as forceful as the 2001 wording, which should be reinstated.
 - **p. 221 line 38:** It is just as important that park facilities be environmentally sustainable. Insert “environmentally and” just before “financially.”
 - **p. 222, lines 14–15:** Concession contracts should also require that concessioners use “best environmental practices” in their operations.
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GWS Comment #137 • Section 9.1.1, Facility planning and design (pp. 222–223)

- **p. 222, lines 25–27:** The deletion of the reference to protection of resources and values and the substitution of language using “conservation” and emphasizing visitor use seriously weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **p. 223, lines 6–7:** The addition of the hedge phrase “to the extent practicable” and the deletion of the reference to all phases of design and construction weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **p. 223, lines 13–14:** The proposed changes weaken the commitment to sustainable design and practices. The 2001 wording should be restored.
 - **p. 223, line 17:** The addition of the hedge phrase “to the extent practicable” weakens the commitment to sustainable design. The 2001 wording should be restored.
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GWS Comment #138 • Section 9.1.1.5, Facility siting (p. 225)

- **line 20:** The proposed substitution of “practicable” for “feasible” weakens the directive to site facilities outside of parks. The 2001 wording should be restored.
- **line 30:** The proposed substitution of “existing or planned public” for “alternative” changes the meaning of the sentence and also eliminates the directive to seek alternatives to conventional motor travel and/or conventional fuels. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #139 • Section 9.1.1.7, Sustainable energy design (p. 226)

- **line 26:** The proposed substitution of “whenever practicable” for “any” weakens the commitment to energy efficiency and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The 2001 wording should be restored.
- **lines 30, 32:** The deletion of “maximum” (line 30) and the addition of “when cost-effective” (line 32) weakens the commitment to energy efficiency. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #140 • Section 9.1.2, Accessibility for persons with disabilities (p. 227, lines 2, 25–27)

The proposed substitution of “practicable” for “reasonable” weakens the directives to provide disabled access. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #141 • Section 9.1.3, Construction (p. 227)

- **lines 36–37:** The proposed addition of “where practicable” weakens the directive, and should be struck.
- **lines 38–41:** The proposed new language is a valuable addition to the Policies.

GWS Comment #142 • Section 9.1.3.1, Construction sites (p. 228)

- **line 6:** The proposed substitution of “managed” for “controlled” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
- **line 14:** The proposed substitution of “feasible and practical” for “possible” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #143 • Section 9.1.3.2, Re-vegetation/landscaping (pp. 228–229)

- **p. 228, line 38:** The proposed addition of “where feasible and practical” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
- **p. 229, line 6:** The proposed addition of “whenever practicable” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
- **p. 229, line 8:** Contrary to the PDF comment appended to this page, the 2001 language (“significantly affect”) is a stronger standard than the 2006 revision (“unacceptably impact”). The 2001 wording should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #144 • Section 9.1.3.3, Borrow pits/spoil areas (pp. 229–230)

- **p. 229, lines 25, 27;** The proposed substitution of “unacceptably impact” for “impair” (line 25) and “practicable” for “reasonable” (line 27) weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.

- **p. 230, lines 5, 13:** The proposed substitution of “unacceptably impact” for “impair” in these two lines weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
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GWS Comment #145 • Section 9.1.4.2, Environmental products (p. 231, lines 11, 17)

The proposed addition of references to cost-effectiveness in these lines weakens the commitment to buying recycled / biodegradable / low-toxicity / energy-efficient products. The 2001 language should be restored.

GWS Comment #146 • Section 9.1.5, Utilities (p. 231, line 22)

The proposed addition of “and practicable” weakens the commitment to site utilities outside park boundaries. The 2001 language should be restored.

GWS Comment #147 • Section 9.1.5.1, Water supply systems (pp. 231–232)

- **p. 231, lines 37–38:** The proposed substitution of “achieve, to the fullest extent possible” for “maximally conserve” in weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
 - **p. 232, lines 5, 14–15:** The proposed substitution of “practicable” for “reasonable” (line 5) and “whenever practicable” for “where appropriate” (lines 14–15) weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
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GWS Comment #148 • Section 9.1.5.2, Wastewater treatment systems (p. 232, line 20)

The proposed substitution of “practicable” for “reasonable” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #149 • Section 9.1.5.3, Utility lines (pp. 232–233)

The revisions to this section weaken the commitment to place utility lines underground wherever possible. The 2001 section should be restored in its entirety.

GWS Comment #150 • Section 9.1.6.1, Waste management (p. 233, lines 22–33)

The proposed revisions to these lines weaken the directive to minimize waste and maximize environmentally responsible waste management. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #151 • Section 9.1.7, Energy management (pp. 235–236)

- **p. 235, lines 36–37:** The proposed revision renders the sentence nonsensical. Presumably the authors mean that economic and environmental impacts will be considered in deciding whether to use alternative fuels. In any event, this is a much weaker commitment to the use of alternative fuels than that expressed in the 2001 edition, whose language should be reinstated.
 - **p. 235, line 38:** The proposed substitution of “practicable” for “appropriate” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
 - **p. 236, lines 1–3:** The proposed revisions to these lines weaken the commitment to protecting park resources. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
 - **p. 236, lines 4–5:** The deletion of this sentence weakens the commitment to seek alternatives to automobile-based transport in parks. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
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GWS Comment #152 • Section 9.2, Transportation systems (p. 237)

- **lines 14–17:** The proposed revisions here weaken the commitment to protecting resources in favor of cost-effectiveness. The 2001 wording should be restored.
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GWS Comment #153 • Section 9.2.1.1, Park roads (p. 239, lines 3–11)

The 2001 wording is clearer and more emphatic here and should be restored.

GWS Comment #154 • Section 9.2.1.2, Non-NPS roads (p. 239)

- **lines 19–20:** The proposed substitution of “unacceptably impact” for “adversely affecting” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
 - **line 22:** Delete “where practicable.”
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GWS Comment #155 • Section 9.2.1.2.1, Commercial traffic (pp. 239–240)

- **p. 239, lines 33–35:** This deleted sentence should be restored because it clearly limits commercial traffic in parks.
 - **p. 240, line 4:** Delete “whenever possible and practicable.”
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GWS Comment #156 • Section 9.2.1.2.2, Construction/expansion proposals (p. 240, line 31)

The proposed substitution of “practicable” for “possible” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #157 • Section 9.2.2, Alternative transportation systems (p. 241)

- **lines 11–14:** The 2001 wording is clearer and more emphatic in endorsing a proactive approach to alternative transportation. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
 - **lines 21–22:** The proposed substitution of “unacceptable impacts” for “adverse effects” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
 - **lines 27–33:** The proposed revisions are an improvement over the 2001 edition.
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GWS Comment #158 • Section 9.2.3, Trails/walks (p. 242, lines 4–5, 9–10, 11–12)

All these changes are geared toward accommodating more use at the expense of resource protection. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #159 • Section 9.2.3.4, Bicycle trails (p. 243, lines 19–27)

The 2001 wording better expressed the goal to promote bicycling in the parks as an alternative to motor transportation, and should be restored.

GWS Comment #160 • Section 9.2.5, Parking areas (p. 245)

- **line 7:** The commitment to keeping parking areas as small as possible should be restored.
 - **lines 16–17:** The proposed substitution of “causing unacceptable impacts” for “harming” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be restored.
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GWS Comment #161 • Section 9.3, Visitor facilities (pp. 245–246)

- **p. 245, lines 32–35:** The 2001 wording is clearer and more emphatic in calling for limited facility development, and should be restored.
 - **p. 245, lines 36–37; p. 246, lines 1–2:** The proposed revisions render the sentence nonsensical.
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GWS Comment #162 • Section 9.3.1, Informational/interpretive facilities (p. 246, lines 12–13)

The proposed revisions weaken the commitment to preserving park resources. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #163 • Section 9.3.1.2, Entrance stations (p. 246, lines 34–37)

The proposed language is a valuable addition to the Policies.

GWS Comment #164 • Section 9.3.1.7, Facilities for art/culture (p. 248)

- **lines 11–12:** The 2001 wording is clearer here and should be reinstated.
 - **lines 13–14:** The proposed substitution of “unacceptably impact” for “impair” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
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GWS Comment #165 • Section 9.3.2, Overnight accommodations (p. 248, line 19)

The proposed substitution of “consistent with” for “restricted to” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #166 • Section 9.3.2.1, Campgrounds (p. 249)

- **lines 3–6:** The proposed revisions delete the 2001 directive that NPS campgrounds will generally not provide the full complement of RV-oriented amenities and utility hookups. The effect of that directive is to encourage all campers, whether RV- or tent-based, to be less dependent on amenities during their national park camping experience. The proposed change would open the door to more full-service, amenity-oriented campgrounds in national parks, and degrade the NPS commitment to promoting a more natural camping experience. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
 - **line 18:** The proposed substitution of “experience” for “preserve” weakens the commitment to keeping light pollution in parks to a minimum and to maximizing the opportunities to experience dark skies. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
 - **line 34:** Delete “for unacceptable.”
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GWS Comment #167 • Section 9.3.4, Other visitor facilities (p. 251, line 3)

The proposed substitution of “unacceptably impact” for “be detrimental to” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #168 • Section 9.3.4.2, Facilities for water recreation (p. 251, line 13)

The proposed substitution of “not practicable” for “no possibility” weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #169 • Section 9.3.4.3, Skiing facilities (p. 251, lines 25–33)

The 2001 wording clearly states that downhill skiing areas cause major environmental impacts and should only be provided outside of park areas, and provides clear guidance that existing grandfathered areas should be eliminated if they have the possibility of causing impairment of park resources. The proposed 2006 revisions strike the reference to major environmental impacts and states that ski areas “generally” should be located outside parks. The 2006 revisions open the door to new downhill skiing areas in national parks — a completely inappropriate position. The 2001 wording should be reinstated in its entirety.

GWS Comment #170 • Section 9.3.5, Advertising (p. 252, lines 8–12)

The 2001 wording is more emphatic and proactive in directing NPS managers to vigorously discourage billboards on approach roads, and should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #171 • Section 9.4.5, Miscellaneous management facilities (p. 255, lines 17–22)

Contrary to the PDF comments appended to this page, the proposed revisions to this paragraph weaken the directive: “avoid adverse impacts” is a stronger standard than “prevent unacceptable impacts.” As noted in GWS Comment #2, the similar declarations of various PDF comments appended throughout the document fail to recognize that the standard “unacceptable impacts” presumes, by definition, that some impacts are acceptable, whereas generic language such as “adverse impacts” errs on the side of preservation and protection by presuming that the impacts are indeed adverse, and should be avoided wherever possible and mitigated to the highest degree where unavoidable. The 2001 wording should be restored.

GWS Comment #172 • Section 9.5, Dams/reservoirs (p. 255, lines 32–33)

This concern is valid enough on the face of things, but it is really nothing more than a straw man: it is difficult to imagine a situation where dam removal and restoration would pose a greater threat to park resources and values than leaving a dam/reservoir in place. If this language is to be retained, at least there should be some indication given of how this threat determination is going to be made. Our recommendation is that this language be struck.

GWS Comment #173 • Chapter 10, Commercial visitor services: Introduction (p. 259)

- **line 1:** Once again, claim made in the PDF comment is simply wrong. See the remainder of this comment, and those following pertinent to Chapter 10.
 - **lines 6–9:** The 2001 wording is clearer and more emphatic, and should be restored.
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GWS Comment #174 • Section 10.1.1, Leasing (p. 259, lines 22–29)

The term “nonhistoric land” (line 23) is unintelligible: Does it mean all natural areas? Seminal areas that have been deemed (by whom?) “nonhistoric”? Something else? The term needs to be carefully defined, or deleted. Overall, this section is far too broad in allowing NPS property to be leased for commercial purposes, and sets no standard for how it will be determined that such a lease “will ensure the property’s preservation.” This wording of this section seems to be oriented toward the leasing of buildings; if so, the section should be rewritten to specify that it applies to buildings alone, and not to lands.

GWS Comment #175 • Section 10.2.1, Concession policies (pp. 260–261)

- **p. 260, lines 23–24:** The proposed deletion of this sentence eliminates the directive that concession plans should determine whether concession facilities are necessary and appropriate in the first place. This is consistent with goal of minimizing infrastructure in parks. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
 - **p. 260, lines 35–36:** The 2001 wording unequivocally states that concession facilities must further the preservation of the environment; the 2006 revisions strike this necessary language. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
 - **p. 261, lines 4–5:** The deletion of this bullet point weakens the directive. The 2001 wording should be reinstated.
 - **p. 261, lines 7–11:** The 2001 wording is more emphatic and clearer and should be restored.
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GWS Comment #176 • Section 10.2.4.10, Environmental program requirements (p. 266)

- **line 4:** What are the “certain exceptions” to the EMP requirement referred to here? And why are exceptions allowed at all? There is no rationale offered. The proposed additional language should be struck.
 - **lines 13–14:** The directive to superintendents to encourage submission of the EMP as part of the prospectus should not be deleted, as is proposed in the 2006 revisions. EMPs are an important commitment on the part of concessioners to implement sustainable design and environmentally friendly operations, and NPS officials should therefore have EMPs at hand before approving any new concession contract. We also note that on p. 268, lines 26–27, new proposed language states that responsibilities for environmental management must be included in each concession contract. The only rational way to do that is to have the EMPs be part of the prospectus, to be evaluated *before* the contract is awarded. The 2001 wording should be restored.
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GWS Comment #177 • Section 10.3.1, Commercial use authorizations—general (p. 272, lines 29-30)

Section 418(b)(1) of the NPS Concessions Management Improvement Act of 1998 states: “The authority of this section may be used only to authorize provision of services that the Secretary determines will have minimal impact on resources and values of the unit of the National Park System and are consistent with the purpose for which the unit was established and with all applicable management plans and park policies and regulations.” There is no authorization to issue CUAs that “are determined to be an appropriate use of the park,” as stated in the proposed added language at lines 29–30. The rest of this section follows Section 418 accurately; this added language does not, and should be struck.

GWS Comment #178 • Glossary, “Accessibility” (p. 275, lines 2–5)

The proposed revisions to this term are not clear: “accessibility” is defined as “individuals are able to reach” etc.; it should read “the condition under which individuals are able to reach” etc. In any event, the 2001 wording seems clearer, and should be restored.

GWS Comment #179 • Glossary, “Best available technology” (p. 275, lines 32–33)

Change “fewer” to “fewest” — BAT by definition is that technology which *minimizes* impacts, not just *lessens* them.

GWS Comment #180 • Glossary, “Civic engagement” (p. 276, lines 5–8)

See under GWS Comment #22.

GWS Comment #181 • Glossary, “Conserve (and preserve and protect)” (p. 276, line 12; p. 280, line 9)

See under GWS Comments #1, #2, and #5.

GWS Comment #182 • Glossary, “Gateway community” (p. 278, lines 10–17)

The 2001 definition is clearer and should be reinstated. In any case, “effect” (line 12) should read “affect.”

GWS Comment #183 • Glossary, “Impact” (p. 278, lines 27–31)

The 2001 definition is clearer and more emphatic and should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #184 • Glossary, “Impairment” (p. 278, lines 32–34)

The 2001 definition is clearer and more emphatic and should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #185 • Glossary, “Lightscape” (p. 279, lines 11–15)

The 2001 definition is clearer and more emphatic and should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #186 • Glossary, “NEPA process” (p. 279, line 29)

An integral part of the NEPA process is an *environmental* impact statement. There is no logical reason to delete the word “environmental” from this definition. The 2001 definition should be reinstated.

GWS Comment #187 • Glossary: “Professional judgment” (p. 280, lines 10–30)

This is an excellent addition to the Policies. We suggest that the third bullet point (line 25) be revised as follows: “good science and scholarship (as described in the NPS Research Mandate, contained in Title II of the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998)” etc. We suspect many managers are unaware of this mandate and it should be referenced here.

GWS Comment #188 • Glossary: “Scholarship” (p. 281, lines 1–4)

This too is an excellent addition to the Policies. It is important to include “scholarship” in such formulations as “the use of scientific and scholarly information” to show that NPS managers need to consider scholarship in all academic fields (e.g., the humanities, social sciences) in addition to the natural sciences.

GWS Comment #189 • Glossary: “Soundscape (natural)” (p. 281, lines 5–6)

This proposed definition is not as good as that posted on the NPS natural sounds webpage (<http://www.nature.nps.gov/naturalsounds/>): “The natural soundscape is the acoustic component of any park setting that is intended to be managed or appreciated as natural, such as most backcountry and wilderness areas. It includes the natural sounds, and their acoustic properties, that exist in a park in the absence of any human-produced noise. The natural soundscape is treated and managed as a park resource with a truly unique and inherent value, and as an important component of the park experience for visitors.” This is the definition that should be included in the Policies.

GWS Comment #190 • Glossary: “Tread Lightly” (p. 282, lines 14–16)

See GWS Comment #93. This glossary entry should be deleted.

GWS Comment #191 • Glossary: “Visitor” (p. 282, lines 24–25)

The 2001 definition is more inclusive by referencing people who visit the parks virtually through use of the Internet and library materials. These are important people to consider in NPS planning. The 2001 definition should be reinstated.

Conclusion and recommendations

In summary, there is no doubt that Congress’ intent in establishing the National Park Service, individual park units, and the overall national park system has always been that resource preservation and protection is paramount and that any uses allowed in the parks must never under any circumstances jeopardize the enduring resource values that are the very basis for America’s national park idea. We feel safe in asserting that a large majority of the American people have always endorsed, and continue to endorse, this vision of the national parks. Any revision of the NPS Management Policies, now and in the future, must be based on this foundational commitment to resource protection and preservation. Dozens of the proposed revisions to the 2001 Management Policies unnecessarily obscure, and not infrequently violate, this commitment. There are a number of good things in the 2006 revisions, but they are far outweighed by

revisions that are detrimental to proper management of the parks. The 2006 proposed revisions consistently change wording so as to emphasize the permissibility of park uses rather than the protection and preservation of resources and resource values. The unmistakable impression is that the 2006 revisions are a systematic attempt to weaken the 2001 Policies.

We are also concerned that the process of revising the policies was based on a presumption, unsupported by consultation with Congress and the public, that changes to the 2001 Policies needed to be made. Rightly or wrongly, this calls into question the legitimacy of the revisions because of the perception that the public was left out of the process at the beginning.

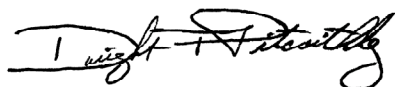
We therefore recommend that the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service discard the current proposed revisions and begin the process afresh by holding a national public scoping process to determine, in the first place, whether revisions to the 2001 Management Policies are truly necessary after only five years. If such a scoping process determines that major changes in circumstances (e.g., post-9/11 national security concerns) warrant a new edition, then collectively we will be starting the revision process from a much firmer and more transparent position. We will be better able to determine exactly what needs to be added to or altered in the 2001 policies to address these changed circumstances and whether, in addition to that, the language of core sections of the policies needs to be sharpened to bring the protection and preservation mission of NPS into perfectly clear focus. As noted throughout this document, the GWS supports revisions to the NPS Management Policies that consistently and unequivocally endorse this fundamental mission.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to make these comments.

Sincerely,



David Harmon
Executive Director



Dwight T. Pitcaithley
President

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