

America's Geological Heritage Workshop Sustainability & Stewardship Session

NPS Case Study: A Tool Box

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Introduction

- NPS mandate is to manage parks for “Non-Impairment” – [**Handout on Laws, Policy, etc.**]
- NPS has traditionally relied on Landscape Architects.
- Years ago NPS Regional offices had “Regional Geologists.” Most had little impact.
- Today, lucky to have *any* Region-based earth scientist
- NPS has traditionally tolerated some “acceptable” practices, again probably because decision-making largely relied on Landscape Architects:
- L.A.s tend to ask “Can” something be done in a sensitive way.
- RATHER than asking “Should” the action be done/done in a location.
 - Putting roads/buildings/sewage ponds/other on top of caves – *Still going on to some extent.*
 - Getting road/trail/building materials from dynamic GEO resources – rivers/streams/colluvium – *Still going on* where there is a perception of “renewable” resource.
 - Locating dumpsites over/near sensitive resources – thru 1980’s; *still some* Landfill sites in more remote parks that are problematic from a GEO resource perspective.
 - Attempts at “Status Quo” over some dynamic GEO processes:
 - Attempts to close new Barrier Island inlets
 - Most often – make the political decision

How does the NPS Get to GEO Sustainability & Stewardship?

- *Ad hoc*; no systematic guidance.
- Given: Need to reach out & embrace broader constituencies and practices.
- Given: Need to focus on issues/situations that are understandable to the public. (Does not mean leaving the other issues out. Focus is for awareness).
- Given: 2 primary audiences:
 - Public: one best practice would be a “**Threatened Site/Resource**” List – *National Trust for Historic Preservation - a very good job here.*
 - Science Community: one best practice would be a **consistent system of “Study Areas,”** that is highly promoted. Such as “*Research Natural Area*” designation; not well utilized, no promotion, no local mgt. strategy.

TOOLS to get there

- Given: Need to establish and maintain public awareness that leads to public action/public support.

- Given: Need to de-mystify Geologic Heritage/Geodiversity; make it understandable to general public.
- Tools:
 1. **Adopt Local Partnership Programs:** Formal/informal; short/long term.
 - Public Advocate/Watch Dog function. *National Trust for Historic Preservation* and various Wildlife Society groups have effectively stepped into this role.
 - Use Land Trusts – TNC, Trust for Public Lands
 - Zoning, easements, partnership deals
 - Form public volunteer action groups – 4-Corners area: Volunteer Archeo. Site Steward Programs: field work, site stewards and watch, advocates.
 2. **Invoke Cultural Context:** We form emotional attachments when we learn about other cultures’ attachments to the physical world.
 - Native American and settlement-era folklore
 - Derivation of place-names
 - Local oral histories
 3. **Use Education/Enviro Ed:** reach out, involve, and provide special programs for youth.
 - The minds of youth are expanding, open to new ideas and information, and they are tomorrow’s voters/activists.
 - Studies show that adults are more influenced by their kids than direct educational efforts to change their minds.
 - Utilize specialists to apply strategies, techniques (social media), and approaches.
 - National „Children and Nature“ programs
 - State-based „Master Naturalist“ programs
 - Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program.
 4. **Active Marketing:** use marketing techniques to reach identified audiences.
 - Specialists in formulating messages and getting them out.
 - Marketing people talk in terms of “The 7 Word Story” tag-lines.
 - If you can’t get it across in 7 words, you can’t market it and you can’t get the public to “buy” it.
 - Book: „*Crusing the Fossil Freeway* = great marketing.
 - Marketing people help develop the “elevator speech;” complete messages that can be pitched when standing next to an influential person in the elevator or walking across a parking lot.
 - Experts in the use of social media & graphics.
 5. **Use Tourism Promotion Professionals:** Make it attractive as a destination, goal, *worthwhile*.
 - Experts in social media.
 - Regional and state-wide focus
 - Heavy reliance on use of photography and graphics.
 6. **Adopt Environmental Interpretation Principles:**

- Books including Freeman Tilden’s “Interpreting our Heritage” include Geo-Interpretation examples.
 - *National Association of Interpretation* (NAI) is a great resource.
7. **Use Public Affairs Techniques:** find the “story” and develop it.
- Cultivate relationships with feature story writers, environmental beat reporters.
 - Usual Model is: “Tell them what you are going to tell them; Tell them; Tell them what you told them.”
8. **Engage the Social Sciences:**
- Maslow’s Triangle of Higher needs.
 - Understanding of various audience’s needs and self-fulfillment requirements.
 - Feedback loops from identified audiences.
9. **FINALLY:** Change internal/organizational perceptions:
- Highlight need/usefulness for multiple Geo-designations, similar to the well established cultural designations:
 - ✓ National Historic Landmark
 - ✓ Cultural Landscape,
 - ✓ Historic District.
 - ✓ Historic Site.
 - ✓ Etc.