

*National Park System Advisory Board*



*Citizen advisors chartered by Congress to help the National Park Service care for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.*

# **National Park System Advisory Board**

## **Education Committee Report**

**October 2012**



# National Park System Advisory Board Education Committee

## FY 12 ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT

DATE	October 5, 2012
NAME OF WORKGROUP	21st Century Interpreters Workgroup
NEC MEMBERS	Celeste Bernardo (co-chair), Superintendent, Lowell National Historical Park Naomi Torres (co-chair), Superintendent, Juan Be Bautista Anza National Historic Trail Marta Kelly, Chief of Interpretation & Education, National Park Service Katie Bliss, Training Manager for Interpretation and Education, Mather Training Center Sheri Forbes, Regional Chief of Interpretation & Education, Pacific West Region Melissa English-Rias, Interpretive Specialist, Southeast Region
NPSAB MEMBERS	Lois Adams-Rodgers (co-chair), Consultant, Council of Chief State School Officers Sandi Holloway, Facilitator, The Holloway Youth Project Carol B. Stapp, Ph.D. (co-chair), Director, Museum Education Program, GWU
WORKGROUP CHARGE/VISION	The National Park Service Advisory Board Education Committee Professional Development subcommittee (PD) and National Education Council 21st Century Interpreters workgroup 21st Century Interpreter (21st CI), seek to identify and define skills required for highly trained NPS interpreters, who can continually develop and model 21st Century Skills, and be better able to meaningfully engage self-directed, digitally-connected, and globally-aware populations, now and in the future.
FY12 OUTPUTS/ ACCOMPLISHMENTS	<p>Over the past six months, numerous email exchanges, along with several conference calls, led to the development of an agreement to craft a Vision Paper that would define the skills required by a 21st century interpreter, drawing upon NPS reports (<i>A Call to Action</i>), as well as other literature (<i>Museums, Libraries, and 21st Century Skills</i>).</p> <p>On September 6, 2012 a Task Agreement was signed between the National Park Service and The George Washington University to work on a project entitled <i>Vision Paper: 21st Century National Park Service Interpreter Skills</i>. The parties to the Task Agreement have since been active in developing the project, including the researcher/writer, who has begun the Vision Paper's literature review.</p>
CALL TO ACTION LINKS	<p>The Vision Paper: 21st Century National Park Service Interpreter Skills will link most closely to the theme <i>Enhancing Professional and Organizational Excellence</i> (pages 21-22). Relevant actions include: Tools of the Trade 30; Home Grown 33; Value Diversity 36.</p> <p>In addition, it is likely that success with the above-mentioned actions will have spin-offs with two additional themes and their related action items:</p> <p><i>Connecting People to Parks</i> (pages 9-11) Relevant actions may include: Step by Step 2; History Lesson 3; Next Generation Stewards 7; Keep the Dream Alive 9.</p>

FY13-15 PROJECTED  
OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES

A reflective white paper entitled *Vision Paper: 21st Century National Park Service Interpreter Skills* is scheduled for completion in September 2013. This product includes the writing, editing and design of the Vision Paper for electronic distribution. The white paper will include recommendations for action.

FY13-15 outputs and deliverables: implementing the vision paper recommendations that may relate to evaluation, description development, and position management and skills assessments and training. The committee will develop a strategy for educating interpretive managers on the Vision Paper's findings and building support for implementing the recommendations.

# National Park System Advisory Board Education Committee

## FY 12 ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT

DATE	October 5, 2012
NAME OF WORKGROUP	Education/Life-Long Learning
NEC MEMBERS	Mark Engler, Elizabeth Hoermann, Kris Nemeth, Dennis Reidenbach, Pam Rice, Christie Stanczak, Tim Watkins
NPSAB MEMBERS	John Falk, Ana Houseal, Sandra Holloway, Michael Searson
WORKGROUP CHARGE/VISION	The NPS has numerous opportunities to connect with the American public through free-choice (informal) education outreach. The purpose of this workgroup is to develop tools and best practices to support interpreters and educators in providing a variety of outstanding free-choice learning opportunities at the park level.
FY12 OUTPUTS/ ACCOMPLISHMENTS	<p>This work group has been working on developing best practices for family/ intergenerational learning in free-choice learning environments. In the next several weeks, we will be forwarding a copy of the completed literature review developed for the NPS called: <i>Family Learning in Free-Choice Educational Settings: A Review of the Literature</i>. In the development of this literature review, we took an unusual approach of using crowd sourcing to compile comparable data. We did this by having a variety of NPS advisory board members and park service employees engage in reading and giving feedback on 26 research articles. A companion piece to the literature review with the thoughts, comments and recommendations gleaned from this process is currently in progress and should be finished by the end of the calendar year.</p>
CALL TO ACTION LINKS	<p>This literature review and the other items in the toolbox will help parks accomplish the following action items from <i>A Call to Action</i>:</p> <p><i>2- Step by Step</i> Education programs are one of the first steps in connecting youth with parks. Offering or improving our programs geared towards intergenerational groups in free-choice learning environments will provide another strong opportunity for connection. In addition, research shows that youth who visit national parks with their families tend to visit them as adults.</p> <p><i>3- History Lesson, 7- Next Generation Stewards</i> People are visiting national parks as multi-generational family units in increasing frequency. History and biodiversity discovery events are perfect examples of free-choice learning. This literature review and toolbox will inform NPS staff in their endeavors to provide these events and to engage all visitors within intergenerational groups.</p> <p><i>16- Live and Learn</i> By providing outstanding free-choice learning opportunities geared towards intergenerational groups, parks will contribute towards reaching the K-12 population and fulfilling this action item.</p>

## FY13-15 PROJECTED OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES

This work group will use the recommendations that come out of the literature review to guide next steps in FY13-15. We will look back at the ideas we had for the toolbox and identify which ones are doable and which ones would best inform parks in developing free-choice learning opportunities. We would also like to make our recommendations for underrepresented and underserved populations more robust. This may require more digging into literature since most of the research articles in the literature review focused on white, middle-class subjects. Connecting with the Professional Development Work Group may be appropriate at some point.

### Toolbox Contents:

1. Strategies for working with families so that the entire family is engaged
2. Case studies (exemplars)
3. Table of best practices
4. Executive summary of the literature review that informed the rest of the items in the toolbox
5. List of readily available resources
6. Ideas that would inform working with potential visitors from underrepresented populations

# National Park System Advisory Board Education Committee

## FY 12 ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT

DATE	October 5, 2012
NAME OF WORKGROUP	Partnership Subcommittee
NPSAB MEMBERS	Lois Adams-Rogers, Anita Greenwood, Cheryl Williams, Deb Yandala
WORKGROUP CHARGE/VISION	<p>Our charge is to assist the National Park Service in addressing the need for educational partnerships as well as provide advice in managing partnerships. The NPS has the opportunity to work broadly with national partners to accomplish its educational goals. Regional and local partnerships, identified, planned and implemented at the local level are also valuable.</p> <p>For partnerships to be successful, shared principles, common goals and mutually beneficial outcomes must be identified. Using our experiences and expertise, both nationally and locally, we will provide the NPS with guidance on how to identify and manage educational partnerships. We will provide thoughtful guidance on why and how to develop partnerships that move the NPS' educational mission forward.</p>
FY12 OUTPUTS/ ACCOMPLISHMENTS	We have developed three papers on national partnerships, local university partnerships and local community partnerships. These papers will be available by the end of October.
CALL TO ACTION LINKS	Effective management of partnerships will be key to the accomplishment of Call to Action items 2, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20. The papers we prepare will be useful to those who are working on the ground to achieve these actions.

# National Park System Advisory Board Education Committee

## FY 12 ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT

DATE October 9, 2012

NAME OF WORKGROUP Research and Evaluation

NEC MEMBERS Jennie Vasarhelyi (co-chair), Elizabeth Hoermann (co-chair), Joanne Blacoe, Julie Galonska, Lindsey Kurnath, Linda Lutz-Ryan, Sue Hanson, Leslie Obleschuk, Dava McGahee, Michele Simmons, Rebecca Stanfield McCown, Toni Dufficy, Carolyn Ward, Diana Wiggams, Rebecca Wiles

NPSAB MEMBERS Martin Storksdieck

WORKGROUP CHARGE/VISION Since 2006, the NPS has sought to create a culture of evaluation for interpretation and education and establish standards for the disciplines. The focus for the first six years of this initiative had been on the process of evaluation, convincing people of its value, and conducting research to define standards. In 2012, the Service solidified its commitment to evaluation by funding an Evaluation and Visitor Studies Coordinator and has a standards project nearing completion. The focus of the subcommittee will shift to supporting the evaluation coordinator and expanding the role of research within the disciplines. Through this shift, we will position research and evaluation to play a larger role in interpretation and education throughout the Service for making informed decisions, setting priorities, maximizing efficiencies, saving money, and enhancing organizational effectiveness.

Through our work and our support to the evaluation coordinator, the NPS will have a Servicewide commitment to research and evaluation within interpretation and education that facilitates coordination, fosters information exchange, and supports application of results. The workforce will have the motivation, knowledge, skill, and ability to thoroughly integrate evaluation and research-based best practices into their daily work. The workforce will find that agency systems support rather than create barriers for evaluation.

### FY12 OUTPUTS/ ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The pilot evaluation project coordinated through Harpers Ferry Center concluded in FY12. This project involved park studies at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, and Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park. All projects focused on evaluation techniques that did not require OMB approval and were intended to demonstrate how parks can conduct evaluation as part of the development of their products and services. Deliverables for this project included a summary report and a three-day webinar series, Fearless Evaluation, that was offered in February with over 60 participants as one strategy to disseminate the report.
- The multi-year standards project achieved a major milestone by reporting the results of the front-line research project in which data collection occurred during Summer 2011. This project identified a high level of visitor satisfaction with all interpretive programs. Thus, the report distinguishes the top 15 traits that distinguish between good and excellent interpretive programs, not between good and bad programs.
- We completed a TMAP-style external review of how other organizations use national-level evaluation positions to promote a culture of evaluation within their agencies. The results of this review helped shape the position description for the will provide guidance



on what to look for in the candidate for this position and will help shape the incumbent's workplan. The report is attached.

- We worked with the WASO I&E office to offer scholarships to attend the Visitor Studies Association conference in Raleigh, NC in July. WASO funded five scholarships and the Northeast Region funded one. This scholarships covered \$1,200 of conference and travel costs. Attendees were selected based on two criteria: 1. The selectee was on the cusp of getting more involved in evaluation and 2. The selectee was willing to share information about the conference with their region and participate in advising the webinar series described below. The following people were awarded the scholarships:
  - Inez Wolins (BOST - Northeast Region)
  - Mary Beth Wright (GRSM – Southeast Region)
  - Lisa Myers (SLBE - Midwest Region)
  - Jason Bordelon (Intermountain Regional Office)
  - Susan Burke (CATAO – National Capital Region)
  - Lynne Nakata (Pacific West Region Office)
- The experience of the attendees suggests that the National Park Service should explore other professional organizations related to evaluation. Participants found that the Visitor Studies Association was a small organization with long-term membership and established interpersonal networks, although this perception may have been exacerbated by the celebration of its 25th anniversary that occurred at the conference. The conference also had an academic bent that felt intimidating and inaccessible to practitioners who wished for a greater emphasis on applying evaluation.
- At the suggestion of the NPS Advisory Board Education Research committee chair, this group discussed an approach to developing a list of research questions which the NPS Advisory Board committee can engage their students and others in providing literature searches and projects to help answer these questions. This task is not yet completed. The goal is to have a list of questions completed for review by the Education and Visitor Studies Coordinator. These questions can inform the development of an evaluation/ visitor studies strategy.
- The briefing paper on evaluation for I&E is in draft form.

## CALL TO ACTION LINKS

13 – Stop talking and Listen. Evaluation is the practice of designing interpretive & educational products with audiences, not for audiences, meeting the intent of C2A13.

## FY13-15 PROJECTED OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES

1. Provide on-going support to the evaluation coordinator in the development of the position's workplan, communication with the field, and other assistance. This includes assisting the position in developing a priority list of research and evaluation questions, as well as helping launch a webinar series.
2. Build the case to continue the evaluation coordinator position beyond its first term.
3. Work with evaluation coordinator to identify opportunities for systemic changes and promote their implementation.
4. Repeat the scholarship program for a professional conference related to evaluation, focusing on an alternative to Visitor Studies Association.
5. Work with the National Association of Interpretation's new leadership to elevate evaluation within this organizations professional development opportunities. Explore other potential partner organizations.
6. Launch a regularly scheduled webinar series focused on evaluations that can be done one the park level.

# National Park System Advisory Board Education Committee

## FY 12 ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT

DATE	October 15, 2012
NAME OF WORKGROUP	NPSAB/NEC Technology Committee
NEC MEMBERS	Don Kodak (Chair), Carolyn Hill, Lisa Mendelson-Ielmini, Milton Chen, Rick Frost, John Tobiason, David French, Trevor Martin , Michael Laing, Wendy Davis, Colin Campbell
NPSAB MEMBERS	Allison Druin (Co-Chair), Keith Krueger (Co-Chair), Theresa Coble, Tracey Gray, Andres Henriquez, Kevin Clark, Claudine Brown, Michael Searson
WORKGROUP CHARGE/VISION	<p>Our subcommittee has decided to pursue answering three questions concerning technology within the educational context/mission of the National Park Service (NPS):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What is the current state of technology within NPS?</li><li>2. What should be the basic virtual services for NPS?</li><li>3. What should be the NPS's aspirations virtual services?</li></ol>
FY12 OUTPUTS/ ACCOMPLISHMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developed a survey for NPS field units to get a detailed assessment of current digital/ social technology use. The survey will be deployed in early FY13.</li><li>• Completed a draft white paper focused on answering three questions concerning technology deployment, use, and/or development within the educational context and mission of the National Park Service (NPS):<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What is the current state of technology within NPS?</li><li>2. What should be the basic virtual services for NPS?</li><li>3. What should be the NPS's aspirations virtual services?</li></ol></li></ul>
CALL TO ACTION LINKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 16-Live and Learn</li><li>• 17- Go Digital</li><li>• 19- Out with the Old</li></ul>
FY13-15 PROJECTED OUTPUTS/ DELIVERABLES:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Submit the completed white paper to the National Park Service Advisory Board and through the Board to the NPS Director.</li><li>• Deploy our field survey, analyze the results, and use that information to inform future actions.</li></ul>