

National Park System Advisory Board 2013 Report

Task 6: Expand Collaboration in Education

The NPSAB Education Committee serves as advisors to the NPSAB regarding future needs, challenges, opportunities and directions of NPS education by (1) assisting in developing broader NPS contacts with educational institutions and others to promote expanded collaboration with K-12 and higher education systems, and (2) exploring the development of strategies that support innovation, creativity, and sustainable partnerships in formal and informal education.

Addressing the Task

A subcommittee offers expert guidance, advice, and collaboration in the fields of technology, partnerships, professional development, lifelong learning, and research and evaluation. Each subcommittee is aligned with National Education Council (NEC) work as an advisory group representing various entities of NPS education and interpretation. Joint priorities, goals, and outcomes address the Education Committee's primary responsibilities.

Progress Report

During 2012 various parties signed several agreements to help the NPS advance its education mission. A major accomplishment was the signing of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Departments of Interior and Education. To kick off this historic agreement, the NPS Director and the U.S. Secretary of Education filmed a short video supporting the use of national parks in place-based education and highlighting the MOU between these Departments. Additional achievements include a cooperative agreement with *Sesame Workshop* to develop six short videos and activities for children ages three to six and their caregivers and a task agreement with The George Washington University to draft a vision paper on 21st-century park ranger interpreter skills.

Education Committee members provided the NPS with opportunities to work with their individual organizations to develop two mobile applications, design and complete a literature review on informal family learning, explore grant and other funding sources, and reach out across a wide network to provide opportunities for the NPS Associate Director for Education and Interpretation and the NPSAB Education Committee Chair to speak at education-related conferences and forums.

The professional expertise of the committee members, working in collaboration with the NEC, has produced surveys, white papers, and reports to guide the NPS in determining next steps. Recent work includes a white paper on the current status of technology in national parks, papers on developing partnerships at national, local university and local community levels, and a review of positions at institutions of informal learning to provide guidance on developing position descriptions for an evaluation coordinator.

Priorities Through 2016

Provide continued guidance and support to the NPS. Assist the NPS to develop a longer-term business plan; curate a published collection of exemplary educational programs; develop new funding; and host a national summit on informal, place-based learning.

Follow Our Work

Go to a Department of Education and NPS educational message video link and download NPSAB Education Committee reports at www.nps.gov/resources/advisoryboardreport.htm. Explore additional NPS education and interpretation information at www.nps.gov/learn.