Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Visitor Use Management Plan

Listening Sessions
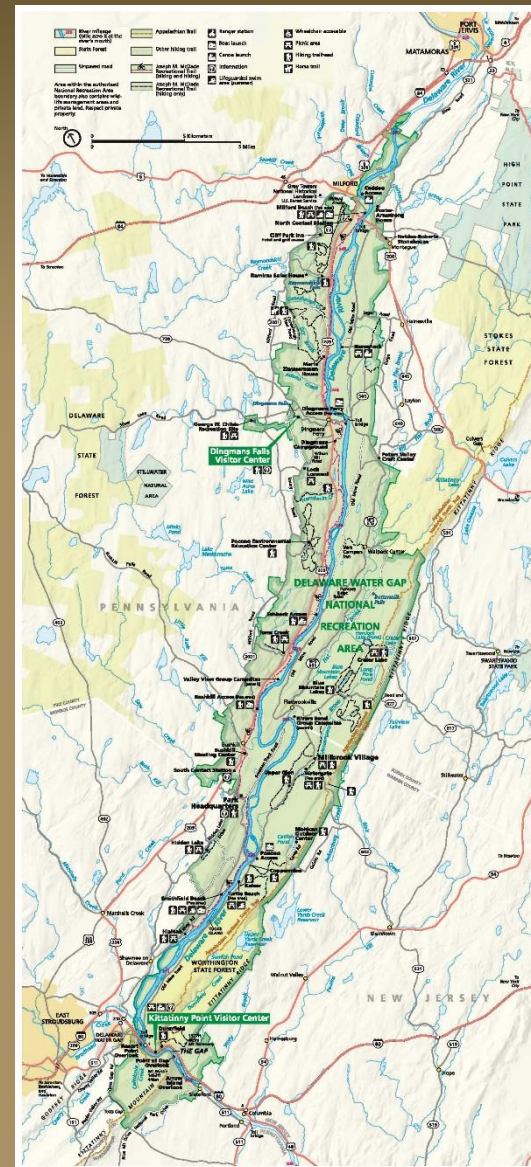**April 2015**

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions

- Meeting Purpose

- Opening Presentation

- Facilitated Question and Answer Session

- Getting Your Input

- Summary and Recap

- Next Steps for VUM Plan

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Background

- Nearly 70,000 acres

- New Jersey and Pennsylvania

- Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River

- Among top 20 most visited national parks

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Background

- Approximately 5 million visitors per year

  - Boating
  - Fishing
  - Hunting
  - Swimming
  - Biking
  - Cross-country skiing
  - Rock climbing
  - Sightseeing
  - Natural history
  - Cultural history

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Park Planning

- General Management Plan (GMP) - 1987
- Foundation Document - 2014
    - Essential to the purpose and significance of the park
    - Articulates Fundamental Resources and Values of the park
    - Identifies Visitor Use Management plan as high priority need
    - Concludes that GMP management zones outdated

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Fundamental Resources and Values

- Described in 2014 Foundation Document

- Warrant primary consideration during planning and management

Fundamental Resources and Values

- Mosaic of Terrestrial and Wetland Habitats

    - Land and water resources

    - Large unbroken forests

    - Connected habitats

    - Diverse wildlife

    - Water quality

    - Flood protection

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Fundamental Resources and Values

- Sustainable Access to High-quality Recreation Opportunities

  - River and landscape options

  - Four seasons

  - Remoteness and solitude

  - Social engagement

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Fundamental Resources and Values

- Stunning Scenic Resources and Distinct Aesthetic Values

  - River

  - Ridges

  - Plateaus

  - Islands

  - Forests

  - Streams

  - Fields

  - Ravines

  - Waterfalls

  - Dark skies

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Fundamental Resources and Values

- Changing Land Use

    - Historic settlement patterns

    - Agriculture

    - Mills

    - Camps

    - Villages

    - Historic districts

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What is Visitor Use Management?

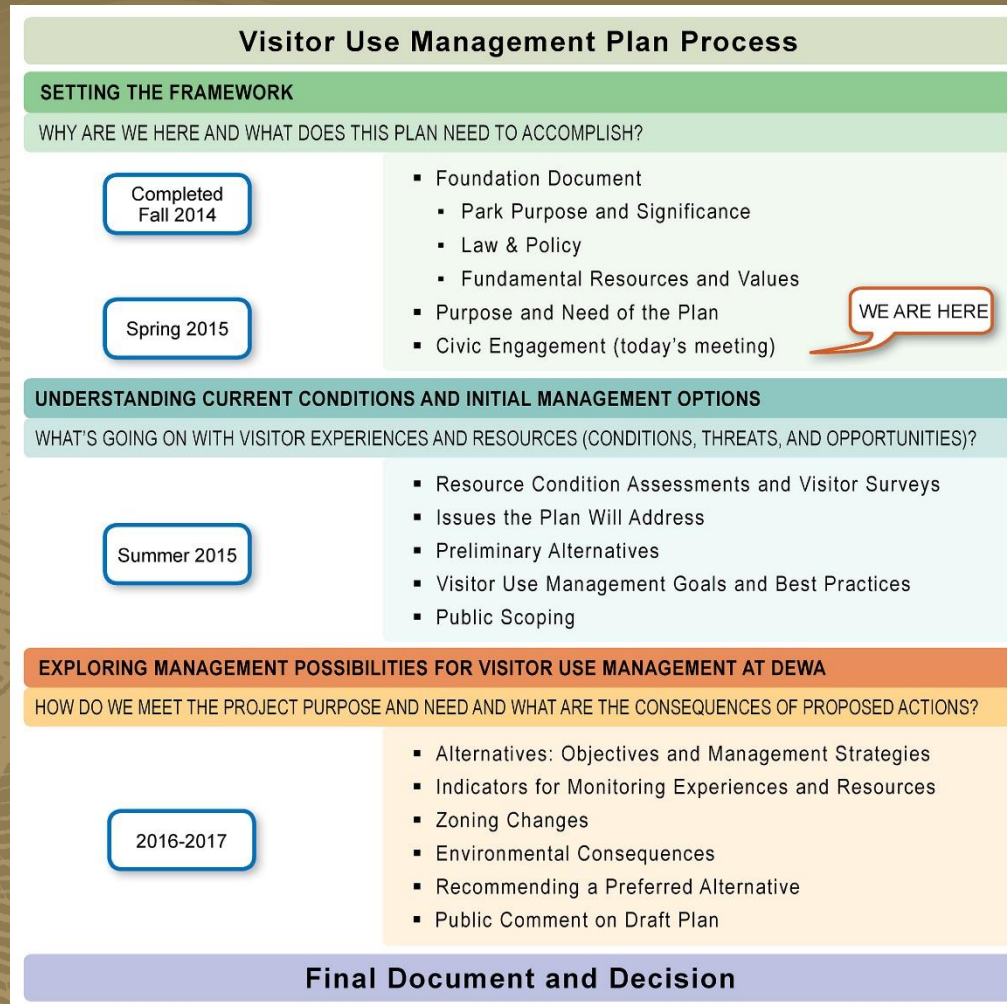- A way to encourage access while protecting resources

What is Visitor Use Management?

- Importance to DEWA

  - Enhance visitor experiences

  - Minimize impacts to resources

  - Minimize impacts to visitor experiences

  - Align visitor expectations with opportunities

  - Manage demand at popular destinations

  - Balance various management strategies

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VUM Planning Process

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VUM Planning Process

- Your role

  - Spring 2015 listening sessions

  - Online input – www.parkplanning.NPS.gov/DEWA

  - Summer 2015
    - Comment on current conditions and initial management strategies
    - Complete visitor surveys

  - 2016/2017
    - Provide input on alternatives for Visitor Use Management

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VUM Issues and Opportunities

- **Natural Resources Issues**
  - Visitor-created trails
  - Parking in undesignated areas
  - Impacts to vegetation and soils
  - Human waste and trash
  - Impacts to wildlife habitat

- **Natural Resource Opportunities**
  - Visitor education
  - Sustainable trails
  - Resource-sensitive site design
  - Visitor exposure to conservation organizations

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VUM Issues and Opportunities

- Visitor Experience Issues
    - Inadequate sites
    - Visitor confusion/lack of information
    - Inappropriate activities
    - Crowding and conflicts

- Visitor Experience Opportunities
    - Identify acceptable uses
    - Information about sites and resources
    - Identify opportunities for desired activities
    - Sustainable practices education
    - Provide sufficient facilities

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VUM Issues and Opportunities

- Cultural Resources Issues
  - Need for management and care
  - Vandalism/graffiti
  - Looting of archeological and historic sites
  - Limited access

- Cultural Resource Opportunities
  - Improve visitor experience
  - Connect people to sites
  - Engage volunteers in maintaining sites

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Questions?

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We Need Your Input

- What are your favorite things to do at the park?

- What are the most important experiences and opportunities at the park? and why?

- What issues and opportunities (including visitor experiences and resource conditions) are the highest priority to address?

- What are your suggestions to address these issues and opportunities?

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