

Glossary

Accessibility. The provision of park programs, facilities, and services in ways that include individuals with disabilities, or makes available to those individuals the same benefits available to persons without disabilities. See also, universal design. Accessibility also includes affordability and convenience for diverse populations.

Accretion. The gradual and imperceptible accumulation of alluvion (soil) by natural causes. It is created by operation of natural causes.

Adaptive Management. A process that promotes flexible decision making that can be adjusted in the face of uncertainties as outcomes from management actions and other events become better understood. Careful monitoring of these outcomes both advances scientific understanding and helps adjust policies or operations as part of an iterative learning process. It also recognizes the importance of national variability in contributing to ecological resilience and productivity.

Adaptive reuse. The process of adapting an historic structure for a new purpose, while retaining the character-defining features that contribute to the historic significance of the structure.

Aids to navigation. Any device external to a vessel or aircraft intended to assist a navigator to determine position or safe course, or to warn of dangers or obstructions to navigation.

Aquifer. A body of permeable rock or sediment capable of storing or transmitting water.

Archeological resource. Any material remains or physical evidence of past human life or activities that are of archeological interest, including the record of the effects of human activities on the environment. An archeological resource can yield scientific or humanistic information through research.

Archeological site. Any place where there is physical evidence of past human occupation or activity. Physical evidence may consist of artifacts, agricultural terraces and hearths, structures, trash deposits, or alterations of the natural environment by human activity.

Backcountry. Primitive, undeveloped portions of parks.

Barrier island. A long broad sandy island lying parallel to a shore that is built up by the action of the waves, currents, and wind and that protects the shore from the effects of the ocean.

Benthic resources. Benthic resources include all things found within the benthic zone, which is defined as the bottom of a body of water. The organisms that inhabit the benthic zone are called Benthos. They include sessile forms (e.g., oysters,), creeping organisms (e.g., crabs), burrowing animals (e.g., many clams and worms), fish, plants and seagrasses such as eel grass.

Best management practices. Practices that apply the most current means and technologies available to not only comply with mandatory environmental regulations, but also maintain a superior level of environmental performance.

Brackish. A mix of saltwater and freshwater.

Carrying capacity (visitor). The type and level of visitor use that can be accommodated while sustaining the desired resource and visitor experience conditions in a park.

Census Designated Place. A statistical entity, defined for each decennial census according to Census Bureau guidelines, comprising a densely settled concentration of population that is not within an incorporated place, but is locally identified by a name. CDPs are delineated cooperatively by State and local officials and the Census Bureau, following Census Bureau guidelines.

Citizen Science. Citizen Science programs involve middle school, high school and college students as well as members of the general public in activities including biological inventory, long-term monitoring, and investigative research. Citizen Science programs present the opportunity to educate the public about the environment, teach people about the process of science, and connect people to the natural world through stewardship.

Coastal morphology. The study of the origin and evolution of coastal features.

Consultation. A discussion, conference, or forum in which advice or information is sought or given, or information or ideas are exchanged. Consultation generally takes place on an informal basis. Formal consultation is conducted for compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and with Native Americans.

Critical habitat. Specific areas within a geographical area occupied by a threatened or endangered species that contain physical or biological features essential to the conservation of the species, and which may require special management considerations or protection; and specific areas outside the geographical area occupied by the species at the time of its listing, upon a determination by the Secretary of the Interior that such areas are essential for the conservation of the species.

Cultural landscape. A geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person, or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values. There are four non-mutually-exclusive types of cultural landscapes: historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes.

Cultural resource. An aspect of a cultural system that is valued by or significantly representative of a culture, or that contains significant information about a culture. A cultural resource may be a tangible entity or a cultural practice. For the National Register of Historic Places, tangible cultural resources are categorized as districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects; for National Park Service management purposes, they may include archeological resources, cultural landscapes, structures, museum objects, and ethnographic resources.

Cyclic maintenance. Cyclic Maintenance constitutes a central element of life-cycle management by incorporating regularly scheduled preventive maintenance procedures and preservation techniques into a comprehensive program of recurring maintenance and component renewal to ensure a particular resource, utility, or facility meets or exceeds its intended life cycle. Cyclic maintenance is a key component in preventing deferred maintenance (DM) and controlling the costs of maintenance and repairs.

Deferred maintenance. Maintenance that was not performed when it should have been, and therefore, is delayed. Continued deferment of maintenance results in deficiencies. Deferred maintenance is the cost to repair an asset's deficiencies.

Ecosystem. A system formed by the interaction of a community of organisms with their physical environment, considered as a unit.

Ecosystem management. Management related to the interdependence of natural and cultural systems that integrates scientific knowledge of ecological relationships with resource stewardship practices.

Enabling legislation. Laws authorizing units of the national park system.

Endangered. A species in danger of extinction through all or a significant portion of its range.

Erosion. The gradual and imperceptible washing away of the land by natural causes.

Ethnographic resources. Objects and places, including sites, structures, landscapes, and natural resources, with traditional cultural meaning and value to associated peoples, assessed through research and consultation with such people. Ethnographic resources eligible for the National Register of Historic Places are called traditional cultural properties.

Floodplain. An area of land that is subject to natural flooding from an adjoining waterway.

Groin. A low wall or other rigid barrier built out into the sea from a beach to reduce erosion, trap sand, or direct a current for scouring a channel.

Impairment of resources. An impact so severe that, in the professional judgment of a responsible park manager, it would harm the integrity of park resources or values and violate the 1916 National Park Service Organic Act.

Implementation. Actions taken to achieve a long-term goal.

Implementation plan. A plan to carry out an activity or project to achieve a long-term goal. An implementation plan may direct a specific project or an ongoing activity.

Infrastructure. The basic facilities, services, and installations needed for the functioning of the park, such as transportation and communications systems and water and power lines.

Interpretation. As used in the National Park Service, the explanation to the public of the importance and meaning of NPS resources.

Littoral drift. Transport of sand or other materials along a coastline by longshore current.

Management areas. The designation of geographic areas of the park depending on the resource conditions and visitor experiences desired. Also referred to as management zones.

Mitigating measures. Modification of a proposal to lessen the intensity of its impact on a particular resource.

National Historic Landmark. Nationally significant properties in American history and archeology; recognition established through the Historic Sites Act of 1935; official list maintained by the National Park Service on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior.

National Register of Historic Places. (National Register) The official list of historically significant national, state, and local districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects maintained by the National Park Service on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior; established through the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

Native species. Plants and animals present as a result of natural processes in parks.

Natural resources. Collectively, physical resources, such as water, air, soils, topographic features, geologic features, and natural soundscapes; biological resources such as native plants, animals, and communities; and physical and biological processes such as weather and shoreline migration, and photosynthesis, succession, and evolution.

Nonnative species. Species that occupy or could occupy parklands directly or indirectly as the result of deliberate or accidental human activities.

Organic Act. (National Park Service) The 1916 law (and subsequent amendments) that created the National Park Service and assigned it responsibility to manage the national parks.

Park partner. Any state or local government (or subdivision thereof), public or private agency, organization, institution, corporation, individual, or other entity which is engaged in helping to ensure the protection, enhancement and enjoyment of the park's natural, cultural and recreation heritage.

Preservation. The application of measures to sustain the existing form, integrity, and material of a historic structure, landscape, or object. May include preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, but generally refers to the ongoing preservation, maintenance, and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new work. For historic structures, exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

Recurring Maintenance. Preventive maintenance activities that recur on a periodic and scheduled cycle of greater than 1 year, but less than 10 years.

"Reference Standard Wetlands". A group of wetlands that represents the range of variation of the same class and that maintains functions at characteristic levels for that class under unaltered or least altered conditions (Brinson 1998).

Reach. A continuous stretch or expanse of beach along the coast line.

Rehabilitation. Making possible an efficient, compatible use for a historic structure or landscape through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical, cultural, and architectural values.

Resiliency. The ability of a social or ecological system to absorb disturbance while retaining the same basic structure and ways of functioning, the capacity for self-organization, and the capacity to adapt to stress and change.

Restoration. Accurate depiction of the form, features, and character of a historic structure, landscape, or object as it appeared in a particular historic period by removing features from other periods and reconstructing missing features.

Sediment budget. The balance between sediment added to and removed from the coastal system; in this respect the coastal sediment budget is like a bank account. When more material is added than removed, there is a surplus of sediment and the shore builds seaward.

Shorebird. A bird that uses the coastal shore for feeding, resting, or nesting.

Species of Special Concern. A species likely to become a threatened species.

Stabilization. Rendering an unsafe, damaged, or deteriorated property stable while retaining its present form.

Stakeholder. An individual, group, or other entity that has a strong interest in decisions concerning park resources and values. Stakeholders may include, for example, recreational user groups, permittees, and concessioners. In the broadest sense, all Americans are stakeholders in the national parks.

Stewardship. The cultural and natural resource protection ethic of employing the most effective concepts, techniques, equipment, and technology to avoid or mitigate impacts that would compromise the integrity of park resources.

Storm surge. The abnormal rise of water generated by the winds of a storm, over and above that from predicted astronomic tides.

Strategic plan. A National Park Service five-year plan that lays out goals and management actions needed in the near term to implement the general management plan.

Sustainability. The quality of integrating economic, environmental, and equity (health and well-being of society) considerations in decisions so that the Earth's resources are passed on to future generations in a healthy and abundant manner

Sustainable design. Design that applies the principles of ecology, economics, and ethics to the business of creating necessary and appropriate places for people to visit, live, and work. Development that has been sustainably designed sits lightly upon the land, demonstrates resource efficiency, and promotes ecological restoration and integrity, thus improving the environment, the economy, and society.

Sustainable practices/principles. Choices, decisions, actions, and ethics that will best achieve ecological/biological integrity; protect qualities and functions of air, water, soil, and other aspects of the natural environment; and preserve human cultures. Sustainable practices

allow for use and enjoyment by the current generation, while ensuring that future generations will have the same opportunities.

Threatened. A species likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future through all or a portion of its range.

Traditional. Pertains to recognizable, but not necessarily identical, cultural patterns transmitted by a group across at least two generations. Also applies to sites, structures, objects, landscapes, and natural resources associated with those patterns. Popular synonyms include “ancestral” and “customary.” traditionally associated peoples. May include park neighbors, traditional residents, and former residents who remain attached to a park area despite having relocated. Social or cultural entities such as tribes, communities, and kinship units are “traditionally associated” with a particular park when (1) the entity regards park resources as essential to its development and continued identity as a culturally distinct people; (2) the association has endured for at least two generations (40 years); and (3) the association began prior to establishment of the park.

Viewshed. The area that can be seen from a particular location, including near and distant views.

Visitor. Anyone who uses a park's interpretive, educational, or recreational services.

Waterfowl. Wild game birds, such as ducks or geese, that swim.

Wayfinding. The ways in which people and animals orient themselves in physical space and navigate from place to place. Wayfinding is typically used in the context of the built environment to refer to the user experience of orientation and choosing a path, but it also refers to the set of architectural and/or design elements that aid orientation.