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Glossary

Some of the words, terms, and concepts used in these Management Policies will have different meanings for different readers. For the purposes of understanding and applying these policies, their meanings are as shown below.

Accessibility—occurs when individuals with disabilities are able to reach, use, understand, or appreciate NPS programs, facilities, and services, or to enjoy the same benefits that are available to persons without disabilities. See also, “universal design.”

Accession— a transaction whereby a museum object or specimen is acquired for a museum collection. Accessions include gifts, exchanges, purchases, field collections, loans, and transfers.

Adaptive management—a system of management practices based on clearly identified outcomes, monitoring to determine if management actions are meeting outcomes, and, if not, facilitating management changes that will best ensure that outcomes are met or to re-evaluate the outcomes. Adaptive management recognizes that knowledge about natural resource systems is sometimes uncertain and is the preferred method of management in these cases. (Source: *Departmental Manual 516 DM 4.16*)

Administrative record— the “paper trail” that documents an agency’s decision making process and the basis for the agency’s decision. It includes all materials directly or indirectly considered by persons involved in the decision making process, including opinions or information considered but rejected. These are the documents that a judge will review to determine whether the process and the resulting agency decision were proper, and that future managers will use to understand the evolution of the issue(s) and how decisions were reached and made.

Appropriate use—a use that is suitable, proper, or fitting for a particular park, or to a particular location within a park.

Archeological resource— any material remains or physical evidence of past human life or activities which are of archeological interest, including the record of the effects of human activities on the environment. An archeological resource is capable of revealing scientific or humanistic information through archeological research.

Backcountry— refers to primitive, undeveloped portions of parks, some of which may be managed as “wilderness.”

Best available technology – the use of the latest technology that will result in fewer impacts at the same level of use.

Best management practices (BMPs)— 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. See also, “sustainable practices/ principles.”

1 **Carrying capacity**— the maximum population of a particular species that a particular region can
2 support without hindering future generations’ ability to maintain the same population. A visitor,
3 or user, carrying capacity is the type and level of use that can be accommodated while sustaining
4 the desired resource and visitor experience conditions.

5 **Civic Engagement** — is a discipline and a practice. It can be viewed as a continuous, dynamic
6 conversation with the public on many levels that reinforces the commitment of the NPS and the
7 public to the preservation of heritage resources, both cultural and natural, and strengthens public
8 understanding of the full meaning and contemporary relevance of these resources. Civic
9 engagement is the philosophy of welcoming people into the parks and building relationships
10 around a shared stewardship mission, whereas public involvement (also called public
11 participation) is the specific, active involvement of the public in NPS planning and other
12 decision-making processes.

13 **Commemorative work**— any statue, monument, sculpture, plaque, memorial, or other structure
14 or landscape feature, including a garden or memorial grove, designed to perpetuate the memory
15 of a person, group, event, or other significant element of history.

16 **Conserve**—to protect from loss or harm; preserve. Historically, the terms conserve, protect, and
17 preserve have come collectively to embody the fundamental purpose of the NPS—preserving,
18 protecting and conserving the national park system.

19 **Consultation**— a discussion, conference, or forum in which advice or information is sought or
20 given, or information or ideas are exchanged. Consultation generally takes place on an informal
21 basis; formal consultation requirements for compliance with section 106 of NHPA are published
22 in 36 CFR Part 800. Consultation with recognized tribes is done on a government-to-government
23 basis.

24 **Cooperating associations**— private, nonprofit corporations established under state law which
25 support the educational, scientific, historical, and interpretive activities of the NPS in a variety of
26 ways, pursuant to formal agreements with the Service.

27 **Cooperative conservation**—as defined in Executive Order 13352, means actions that relate to
28 use, enhancement, and enjoyment of natural resources, protection of the environment, or both,
29 and that involve collaborative activity among federal, state, local, and tribal governments, private
30 for-profit and nonprofit institutions, other nongovernmental entities and individuals. It is one of
31 several “tools” or authorities that park managers may employ as they use the full scope of NPS
32 authorities to protect park resources and values, while encouraging others to use theirs toward
33 the same purpose. The Service applies the principles of cooperative conservation to cultural
34 resources as well as natural resources.

35 **Critical habitat**— specific areas within a geographical area occupied by a threatened or
36 endangered species which contain those physical or biological features essential to the
37 conservation of the species, and which may require special management considerations or
38 protection; and specific areas outside the geographical area occupied by the species at the time of

1 its listing, upon a determination by the Secretary of the Interior that such areas are essential for
2 the conservation of the species. (See 16 USC 1342)

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

8 **Cultural resource**— an aspect of a cultural system that is valued by or significantly
9 representative of a culture, or that contains significant information about a culture. A cultural
10 resource may be a tangible entity or a cultural practice. Tangible cultural resources are
11 categorized as districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects for the National Register of
12 Historic Places, and as archeological resources, cultural landscapes, structures, museum objects,
13 and ethnographic resources for NPS management purposes.

14 **Defensible space**— the space needed for firefighters to adequately defend structures from
15 oncoming wildland fires, or to stop a structural fire before it ignites wildland vegetation.
16 Defensible space describes the desired result of planning, siting, landscaping and constructing
17 developed facilities in a way that minimizes their vulnerability to wildfire threats and maximizes
18 their protection against wildfire hazards.

19 **Derogation**— see “impairment.”

20 **Decision maker**—the managerial-level employee who has been delegated authority to make
21 decisions or to otherwise take an action that would affect park resources or values. Most often it
22 refers to the park superintendent or regional director, but may at times include, for example, a
23 resource manager, facility manager, or chief ranger to whom authority has been re-delegated.

24 **Desired conditions**—this term applies to a park’s natural and cultural resource conditions that
25 the NPS aspires to achieve and maintain over time, and the conditions necessary for visitors to
26 understand, enjoy, and appreciate those resources. These conditions are identified through a
27 park’s planning process.

28 **Developed area**— an area managed to provide and maintain facilities (e.g., roads, campgrounds,
29 housing) serving visitors and park management functions. Includes areas where park
30 development or intensive use may have substantially altered the natural environment or the
31 setting for culturally significant resources.

32 **Directives system**— policy guidance system established by Director’s Order #1 in 1996. The
33 system replaces and updates guidance documents formerly known as NPS Guidelines, Special
34 Directives, and Staff Directives. The system consists of 3 levels:

35 **Level 1— NPS Management Policies**— the primary policy document for managing the
36 national park system.

1 **Level 2— Director’s Orders**— operational policies and procedures that supplement
2 Level 1.

3 **Level 3**— Reference Manuals and other detailed guidance on how to implement Service-
4 wide policies and procedures.

5 **Ecosystem**— a system formed by the interaction of a community of organisms with their
6 physical and biological environment, considered as a unit.

7 **Environmental assessment**— a brief NEPA document that is prepared, with public
8 involvement, (a) to help determine whether the impact of a proposed action or its alternatives
9 could be significant; (b) to aid the NPS in compliance with NEPA by evaluating a proposal that
10 will have no significant impacts, but may have measurable adverse impacts; or (c) as an
11 evaluation of a proposal that is either not described on the list of categorically excluded actions,
12 or is on the list, but exceptional circumstances apply.

13 **Environmental impact statement**— a detailed NEPA analysis document that is prepared, with
14 extensive public involvement, when a proposed action or alternatives have the potential for
15 significant impact on the human environment.

16 **Environmental leadership**— advocating, on a personal and organizational level, cooperative
17 conservation, best management practices, best available technology, adaptive management, and
18 the principles of sustainability, and making decisions that demonstrate a commitment to those
19 practices and principles.

20 **Ethnographic landscape**— an area containing a variety of natural and cultural resources that
21 traditionally associated people define as heritage resources. The area may include plant and
22 animal communities, structures, and geographic features, each with their own special local
23 names.

24 **Ethnographic resources**— objects and places, including sites, structures, landscapes, and
25 natural resources, with traditional cultural meaning and value to associated peoples. Research
26 and consultation with associated people identifies and explains the places and things they find
27 culturally meaningful. Ethnographic resources eligible for the National Register of Historic
28 Places are called traditional cultural properties.

29 **Foundation Document**—a document that begins a park’s planning process and sets the stage for
30 all future planning and decision making by identifying the park’s mission, purpose, significance,
31 special mandates and the broad, park-wide mission goals.

32 **Gateway community**— a community that exists in close proximity to a unit of the national park
33 system whose residents and elected officials are often affected by the decisions made in the
34 course of managing the park, and whose decisions may effect the resources of the park. Because
35 of this, there are shared interests and concerns regarding decisions. Gateway communities
36 usually offer food, lodging, and other services to park visitors. They also provide opportunities

1 for employee housing, and a convenient location to purchase goods and services essential to park
2 administration.

3 **Geologic resources**— features produced from the physical history of the earth, or processes such
4 as exfoliation, erosion and sedimentation, glaciation, karst or shoreline processes, seismic, and
5 volcanic activities.

6 **General management plan (GMP)**—a plan which clearly defines direction for resource
7 preservation and visitor use in a park, and serves as the basic foundation for decision making.
8 GMPs are developed with broad public involvement.

9 **Historic property**—a district, site, building, structure, or object significant in the history of
10 American archeology, architecture, culture, engineering, or politics at the national, state, or local
11 level.

12 **Impact**—the likely effects of an action or proposed action upon specific natural, cultural, or
13 socioeconomic resources. Impacts may be direct, indirect, individual, cumulative, beneficial, or
14 adverse. (Also see **Unacceptable impacts**.)

15 **Impairment**—An impact that, in the professional judgment of a responsible NPS manager,
16 would harm the integrity of park resources or values and violate the 1916 NPS Organic Act's
17 mandate that park resources and values remain unimpaired.

18 **Implementation plan**—a plan that focuses on how to implement an activity or project needed to
19 achieve a long- term goal. An implementation plan may direct a specific project or an ongoing
20 activity.

21 **Integrated pest management**—a decision-making process that coordinates knowledge of pest
22 biology, the environment, and available technology to prevent unacceptable levels of pest
23 damage, by cost-effective means, while posing the least possible hazard to people, resources, and
24 the environment.

25 **Leave-no-trace**—principles and practices that emphasize the ethic of leaving a place clear of the
26 residual evidence of human presence; applied to all forms of recreational activities within
27 wilderness, backcountry, and frontcountry areas.

28 **Life cycle costing (analysis)**— an accounting method that analyzes the total costs of a product
29 or service, including construction, maintenance, manufacturing, marketing, distribution, useful
30 life, salvage, and disposal.

31 **Lightscape management (natural ambient)**— the effective use of good design to appropriately
32 light areas and minimize or eliminate light clutter, the spill over of light into areas where light is
33 not wanted and light pollution, all of which wastes energy, and impacts park visitors, neighbors
34 and resources.

1 **Manager**—the managerial-level employee who has authority to make decisions or to otherwise
2 take an action that would affect park resources or values. Most often it refers to the park
3 superintendent or regional director, but may at times include, for example, a resource manager,
4 facility manager, or chief ranger to whom authority has been redelegated.

5 **Management prescriptions**— a planning term referring to statements about desired resource
6 conditions and visitor experiences, along with appropriate kinds and levels of management, use,
7 and development for each park area.

8 **Minimum requirement**—a documented process used by the NPS to determine the
9 appropriateness of all actions affecting wilderness.

10 **Minimum tool**—means a use or activity, determined to be necessary to accomplish an essential
11 task, which makes use of the least intrusive tool, equipment, device, force, regulation, or practice
12 that will achieve the wilderness management objective.

13 **Mission-critical**— something that is essential to the accomplishment of an organization’s core
14 responsibilities.

15 **Mitigation**— a modification of a proposal to lessen the intensity of its impact on a particular
16 resource.

17 **National park system**— the sum total of the land and water now or hereafter administered by
18 the Secretary of the Interior through the National Park Service for park, monument, historic,
19 parkway, recreational or other purposes.

20 **Native Americans**— means any band, nation, or other organized group or community of
21 Indians, including any Alaska Native Village, which is recognized as eligible for the special
22 programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.

23 **NEPA process**— the objective analysis of a proposed action to determine the degree of its
24 impact on the natural, physical, and human environment; alternatives and mitigation that reduce
25 that impact; and the full and candid presentation of the analysis to, and involvement of, the
26 interested and affected public –as required of federal agencies by the National Environmental
27 Policy Act of 1969.

28 **New use**— is a use that has not previously taken place within a particular park, or that has taken
29 place previously and been discontinued due to public disinterest or as a result of a management
30 action.

31 **Organic Act (NPS)**— the 1916 law (and subsequent amendments) that created the National Park
32 Service and assigned it responsibility to manage the national parks.

33 **Paleontological/ paleoecological resources**— resources such as fossilized plants, animals, or
34 their traces, including both organic and mineralized remains in body or trace form.
35 Paleontological resources are studied and managed in their paleoecological context (that is, the

1 geologic data associated with the fossil that provides information about the ancient
2 environment).

3 **Park**— any one of the hundreds of areas of land and water administered as part of the national
4 park system. The term is used interchangeably in this document with “unit,” “park unit,” and
5 “park area.”

6 **Practicable**—capable of being done or put into practice. Practicable reflects not only what is
7 possible to do, but also what is reasonable, after considering all of the consequences.

8 **Prescribed burning**—the deliberate ignition of fires to accomplish specified resource
9 management objectives and under an identified range of conditions documented in a prescribed
10 burn plan.

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12 **Preserve**—to protect from loss or harm; conserve. Historically, the terms preserve, protect and
13 conserve have come collectively to embody the fundamental purpose of the NPS—preserving,
14 protecting and conserving the national park system.

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16 **Preservation**—for the purposes of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of
17 Historic Properties, preservation means the act or process of applying measures necessary to
18 sustain the existing form, integrity and materials of an historic property.

19 **Professional Judgment**—a decision or opinion that is shaped by study and analysis and full
20 consideration of all the relevant facts, and that takes into account

- 21 • the decision-maker’s education, training, and experience;
- 22 • advice or insights offered by subject matter experts and others who have relevant knowledge
23 and experience;
- 24 • good science and scholarship; and, whenever appropriate,
- 25 • the results of civic engagement and public involvement activities relating to the decision.

26 **Public involvement**—(also called public participation) is the active involvement of the public in
27 NPS planning and decision-making processes. Public involvement is a process that occurs on a
28 continuum that ranges from providing information and building awareness, to partnering in
29 decision-making.

30 **Record of decision (ROD)**—the document which is prepared to substantiate a decision based on
31 an analysis of a range alternatives (e.g., an EIS). When applicable, it includes a detailed
32 discussion of rationale and reasons for not adopting all mitigation measures analyzed.

33 **Sacred sites**— certain natural and cultural resources treated by American Indian tribes and
34 Alaska Natives as sacred places having established religious meaning, and as locales of private
35 ceremonial activities.

36 **Scholarship**—knowledge resulting from study and research in a particular field, or the mastery
37 of a particular area of learning reflected in a scholar's work. A scholar is a learned person;

1 someone who by long study has gained mastery in one or more disciplines and practices, and
2 whose mastery is recognized by a peer group.

3 **Soundscape (natural)**—the aggregate of all the natural, nonhuman-caused sounds that occur in
4 parks, together with the physical capacity for transmitting natural sounds.

5 **Special Regulation**—a regulation that is prescribed for a specific park area. A special regulation
6 may amend, modify, relax or make more stringent the “general” regulations that are applicable to
7 all areas of the national park system.

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

12 **Stewardship**— the cultural and natural resource protection ethic of employing the most effective
13 concepts, techniques, equipment, and technology to prevent, avoid, or mitigate unacceptable
14 impacts.

15 **Strategic plan**— a Service-wide, 5-year plan required by GPRA (5 USC 306) in which the NPS
16 states (1) how it plans to accomplish its mission during that time, and (2) the value it expects to
17 produce for the tax dollars expended. Strategic plans serve as “performance agreements” with the
18 American people.

19 **Superintendent**— the senior on-site NPS official in a park. Used interchangeably with “park
20 superintendent,” “park manager,” or “unit manager.”

21 **Sustainable design**— design that applies the principles of ecology, economics, and ethics to the
22 business of creating necessary and appropriate places for people to visit, live in, and work.
23 Development that has a sustainable design sits lightly upon the land, demonstrates resource
24 efficiency, and promotes ecological restoration and integrity, thus improving the environment,
25 the economy, and society.

26 **Sustainable practices/ principles**— those choices, decisions, actions and ethics that will best
27 achieve ecological/ biological integrity; protect qualities and functions of air, water, soil, and
28 other aspects of the natural environment; and preserve human cultures. Sustainable practices
29 allow for use and enjoyment by the current generation, while ensuring that future generations
30 will have the same opportunities. See also, “environmental leadership” and “best management
31 practices.”

32 **Traditional**— pertains to recognizable, but not necessarily identical, cultural patterns
33 transmitted by a group across at least two generations. Also applies to sites, structures, objects,
34 landscapes, and natural resources associated with those patterns. Popular synonyms include
35 “ancestral” and “customary.”

1 **Traditionally associated peoples**—for purposes of these Management Policies, social/cultural
2 entities such as tribes, communities, and kinship units, as well as park neighbors, traditional
3 residents, and former residents who remain attached to a park area despite having relocated, are
4 “traditionally associated” with a particular park when (1) the entity regards park resources as
5 essential to its development and continued identity as a culturally distinct people; (2) the
6 association has endured for at least two generations (40 years); and (3) the association began
7 prior to establishment of the park.

8 **Traditional cultural property**—a property associated with cultural practices, beliefs, the sense
9 of purpose, or existence of a living community that is rooted in that community’s history or is
10 important in maintaining its cultural identity and development as an ethnically distinctive people.
11 Traditional cultural properties are ethnographic resources eligible for listing in the National
12 Register.

13 **Unacceptable impacts**—are impacts that, individually or cumulatively, would

- 14 • be inconsistent with a park’s purposes or values, or
- 15 • impede the attainment of a park’s desired future conditions for natural and cultural
16 resources as identified through the park’s planning process, or
- 17 • create an unsafe or unhealthful environment for visitors or employees, or
- 18 • diminish opportunities for current or future generations to enjoy, learn about, or be
19 inspired by park resources or values, or
- 20 • unreasonably interfere with
 - 21 ○ park programs or activities, or
 - 22 ○ an appropriate use, or
 - 23 ○ the atmosphere of peace and tranquility, or the natural soundscape maintained in
24 wilderness and natural, historic, or commemorative locations within the park.

25 **Unit**—see “park.”

26 **Universal design**—the design of products and environments to be usable by all people to the
27 greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

28 **Value analysis/ value engineering**—an organized, multi-disciplined team effort that analyzes
29 the functions of facilities, processes, systems, equipment, services, and supplies for the purpose
30 of achieving essential functions at the lowest life-cycle cost consistent with required
31 performance, reliability, quality, and safety.

32 **Visitor**—anyone who physically visits a park for recreational, educational or scientific purposes,
33 or who otherwise uses a park’s interpretive and educational services, regardless of where such
34 use occurs (e.g., via Internet access, library, etc.).

35 **Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) framework**—a visitor carrying capacity
36 planning process applied to determine the desired resource and visitor experience conditions, and
37 used as an aid to decision-making.

1 **Waiver (of policy)**—an exemption from a particular policy provision. A waiver may be granted
2 only by the Director of the National Park Service or a higher authority (e.g., the Secretary of the
3 Interior).

4 **Wilderness (designated)** – federal land that has been designated by Congress as a component of
5 the National Wilderness Preservation System.

6 **Wilderness (eligible, study, proposed and recommended)** – federal lands that have been found
7 to possess wilderness character based on the criteria specified in the Wilderness Act. The four
8 categories reflect different stages of the wilderness review process, and all are managed to
9 preserve the wilderness resources and values that make them eligible for wilderness designation.
10 Differences in the management of these categories are specified in Chapter 6.

11 **Wilderness (potential)** – federal lands that are surrounded by, or adjacent to, lands proposed for
12 wilderness designation but that do not themselves qualify for designation due to temporary, non-
13 conforming uses or incompatible conditions. Potential wilderness is a subset of the other
14 wilderness categories (it can be eligible, study, proposed, recommended or designated potential
15 wilderness).

16 **Wildland fires**—unplanned fires that burn vegetation in parks. Wildland fires occur from both
17 natural and human sources of ignition, and may contribute to or hinder the achievement of park
18 management objectives.

19 **Wildland fire use**—the application of an appropriate, prescribed management response to
20 naturally ignited wildland fires under prescribed circumstances to accomplish resource
21 management objectives in predefined areas outlined in approved fire management plans.