

Accessibility Self Evaluation and Transition Plans

Summary Description

The Pacific West Regional Office collaborated with the Denver Service Center to develop a process to create Accessibility Self Evaluation and Transition Plans for parks, and to identify and document how parks can be improved to ensure visitors with disabilities can enjoy equal access to all park programs.

The planning process comprises a National Park Service (NPS) interdisciplinary team, including planning, design, and construction professionals, interpretive, resource, visitor safety, maintenance and accessibility specialists. The goals of the plan are to 1) document existing park barriers to accessibility, 2) provide an effective approach for upgrading facilities, services, activities, and programs, and 3) instill a culture around building in accommodations and creating universal access.

Parks are introduced to the SETP project and provided general accessibility training information to prepare them for the process. The project begins with confirming park experiences based on the values and resources associated with the park purpose. Park areas are then identified to understand the context of park experiences (such as level and types of visitation, topography, sensitive resources, uniqueness of area) and to document the range of facilities, services, activities and programs provided.

A week-long field assessment and training is conducted on-site for the park team. The team then assesses each of the identified park areas and associated facilities and programs. Specific barriers that prevent or limit access are documented, and the team discusses actions to determine the best overall solutions.

Findings are then compiled into a draft Accessibility Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan that include implementation strategies for each park area, annotated site plans with recommendations for specific actions, and target timeframes for work to be completed. Relevant codes, best practices and guidelines are referenced as applicable. An Executive Summary summarizes physical, programmatic and parkwide accessibility findings in addition to providing a process overview and addressing improvements to park policies, practices, communication, and staff training.

This information is then transferred to an Implementation Strategy Table (IST) for the parks use. The IST provides the park management team with a tool for integrating required and recommended actions into overall workplans over time. The IST is intended to be used as an action plan that includes 1) a section for documenting project notes and considerations, and 2) an implementation closeout section to document actions taken, date completed, and costs incurred.