

MOUNT RUSHMORE NATIONAL MEMORIAL

Dear Friends:

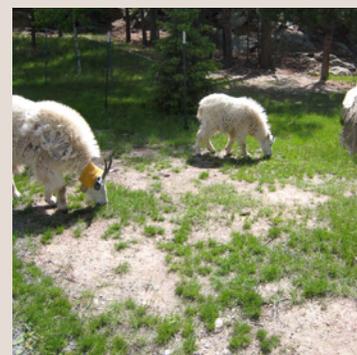
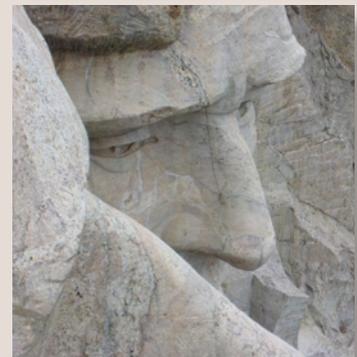
You are invited to participate in the planning and preservation of Mount Rushmore National Memorial. The Memorial protects the mountain sculpture, forests, wildlife and other natural and cultural resources, safeguards and interprets some of the area's cultural history, and provides for public education, appreciation, and the recreational use and enjoyment of these resources.

The last General Management Plan for the Memorial was completed in 1980. Since then, the Memorial has expanded, visitation has increased, security has changed for America's icons, and the Memorial staff has expanded the interpretation of the Memorial to encompass the rich diversity of the history of the United States. The park staff is also coordinating an environmental assessment of a proposed backcountry trail that would highlight the natural and cultural resources surrounding the sculpture.

These changes through the decades have created a somewhat different mission from that envisioned in the 1980 GMP. Finally, most of the facilities that were discussed in the 1980 GMP have been replaced by the facilities built in the 1990s. Thus, the Memorial's current plan is in need of revision. This year we will begin to develop a new General Management Plan to set long-term directions for the overall management and development of the memorial for the next 15 to 20 years. The new plan will help us make decisions on the direction of resource management, visitor use and interpretation, and facilities management. The plan should be completed in the next four years.

We are looking forward to working with you to craft a general management plan that will capture the connections visitors have had with Mount Rushmore National Memorial over the years and that will continue to protect and enhance the Memorial's resources and visitor experiences. We hope you will join us to express your thoughts, ideas, and vision so that together we can make the Memorial a wonderful resource for the future.

Gerard A. Baker
Superintendent



WHAT IS A GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN?

A General Management Plan (GMP) identifies the overall direction for the future management of units of the National Park Service (NPS). Such plans take a long-range, broad, conceptual view, answering the question “what kind of place do we want this area to be?” GMPs provide a framework for managers to use in making decisions about such issues as how best to protect resources, what levels and types of uses are appropriate, what facilities should be developed, and how people should gain access to the Memorial. All concepts, strategies, and actions in a GMP must be consistent with the reasons for the unit’s establishment — its purposes and significance. Laws such as the National Park Service Organic Act, Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and Wilderness Act, and NPS policies also direct what the plan can and cannot consider. The GMP will describe the general path the NPS intends to follow in managing the Mount Rushmore National Memorial (Memorial) during the next 15 to 20 years. The plan will identify what the desired resource conditions and visitor experiences would be at the Memorial. The GMP will not resolve all the issues facing the Memorial, provide detailed facility designs and management actions, or guarantee funding. Specific questions regarding how desired conditions will be achieved also will be answered in new or revised implementation plans — such as resource stewardship plans and backcountry management plans — that will be prepared after the GMP is completed. To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and NPS policy, the GMP will be combined with an Environmental Impact Statement. The *Mount Rushmore National Memorial General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* will identify significant issues and concerns, present a reasonable range of management alternatives, and analyze the environmental consequences of implementing each of the alternatives.



MEMORIAL PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE

At the beginning of the planning process, it is important to reaffirm the Memorial’s purpose and significance. We do this to establish a framework within which we can evaluate proposed actions to ensure that they are consistent with the mandate of the Memorial. Below are the Memorial’s purpose and significance statements.



PURPOSE

The purpose statement clarifies the reasons the Memorial was established as part of the National Park System and provides the foundation for the management and use of the Memorial. This statement is based on the Memorial’s enabling legislation and legislative history, other special designations, and NPS policies.

The purpose of Mount Rushmore National Memorial is to commemorate our national history and progress, and to preserve and protect the sculpture and the historic, cultural, and natural setting while providing for the education, enjoyment, and inspiration of the public.

SIGNIFICANCE

Significance statements identify the resources and values that are central to managing a unit of the National Park System and express the importance of the unit to our cultural and natural heritage. Significance statements do not inventory site resources; rather, they describe the area's distinctiveness and help to place it in regional, national, and international contexts. Understanding the Memorial's significance will help managers make decisions that will preserve the resources and values necessary to accomplish the unit's purpose.

Mount Rushmore National Memorial is significant as a unit of the National Park System because of the following:

- **Mount Rushmore is an internationally recognized symbol representing the ideals of freedom and democracy for all.**
- **Mount Rushmore preserves a diverse ecological landscape in a dramatic setting of granite walls and spires.**
- **Mount Rushmore preserves one of the largest contiguous stands of old-growth ponderosa pine forest and associated habitat remaining in the Black Hills region.**
- **The sculpting of Mount Rushmore is an early example of heritage tourism as an economic revitalization tool.**
- **Mount Rushmore is a marvelous engineering achievement.**
- **The carving is an artistic expression that forever changed the natural landscape to create a cultural icon reflecting the nation's history.**

HOW TO BE INVOLVED

You can begin providing feedback by completing the enclosed comment form. Please let us know your concerns, issues, and thoughts on what should be addressed in the GMP. Also, please let us know if you would like to be included on the Memorial's mailing list. After you have finished filling out the postage-paid form, just fold and tape it and drop it into a mailbox. You can also comment by logging on to the home page of Mount Rushmore National Memorial at <http://www.nps.gov/moru> or the National Park Service's planning web page <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/moru>. All newsletters will be posted on the website, along with a response comment form, for those who prefer to participate electronically.

PLANNING SCHEDULE

PLANNING ACTIVITY	DATES	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES
1. Set the stage for planning: Reaffirm the national memorial's purpose and significance; determine issues and concerns.	Fall 2008 to Spring 2009	Attend public meetings and voice your concerns using a response form.
2. Develop preliminary management alternatives: Identify a range of reasonable alternatives for the national memorial's future, assess their effects, analyze public response, and select a preferred alternative.	Spring 2009 to Winter 2009	Provide comments on the initial alternatives using a comment form. Attend public meetings and provide comments.
3. Prepare and publish Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement: Prepare draft plan describing the planning alternatives and impacts; distribute to the public.	Winter 2009 to Spring 2011	Provide written comments on the draft document. Attend public meetings and provide comments.
4. Revise and publish Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement: Analyze comments, prepare responses to comments, revise draft document, and distribute final plan to the public.	Spring 2011 to Spring 2012	
5. Implement the approved plan:	Summer 2012	Stay involved throughout the implementation of the approved plan.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DENVER SERVICE CENTER – GREG JARVIS, DSC-P
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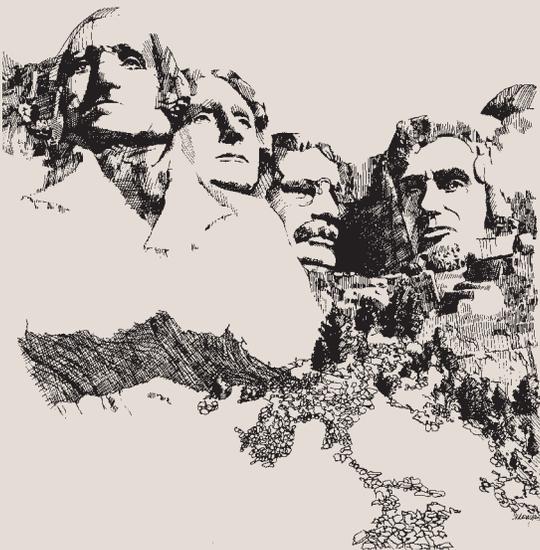
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A PUBLIC PLANNING EFFORT

The planning team has scheduled public scoping meetings in December 2008. The locations and times are listed. We welcome your comments and suggestions and hope to see you at one of the meetings. If you are unable to attend a meeting, you may comment by December 29. More information as that effort develops will be posted on the Memorial's home page at <http://www.nps.gov/moru>. Please check the site periodically for updates.



MEETING SCHEDULE

Wednesday, December 10, 2008

6:30PM to 8:00PM

Radisson Hotel, Sheridan Room
445 Mount Rushmore Rd.
Rapid City, SD 57701

Thursday, December 11, 2008

2:00PM to 3:15PM

The Mueller Civic Center
801 S. 6th Street
Hot Springs, SD 57747

Thursday, December 11, 2008

6:30PM to 8:00PM

Visitor Center, Theater-B
Mount Rushmore National Memorial
13000 Hwy 244
Keystone, SD 57751