



# Rock Creek Park Long-Range Interpretive Plan



# Rock Creek Park

## Long-Range Interpretive Plan

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## The Planning Process

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan outlines recommendations for future interpretive services, facilities, and media. Park staff, historians, partners, and stakeholders worked together to develop a comprehensive tool that outlines educational and recreational opportunities for visitors to develop intellectual and emotional connections to the natural and cultural resources found within Rock Creek Park. Our goal is to promote Rock Creek Park's resource values through specially planned visitor experiences and excellence in interpretation.

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) recommends actions that should occur over the next seven to ten years. It identifies park themes, describes visitor experience goals, and recommends a wide variety of personal and non-personal interpretive services and outreach activities that will best communicate the park purpose, significance and themes. Developed in concert with the park Annual Implementation Plan and Interpretive Database, it completes the Comprehensive Interpretive Plan for the park, as established in Director's Order 6. This planning process has been customized to meet the needs for Rock Creek Park, as well as the conditions and special circumstances that exist there. The ultimate product is a cost-effective, tightly focused, high-quality park interpretive program that achieves management goals, provides appropriate visitor opportunities, and facilitates desired visitor experiences.

The original Project Agreement was signed in 2001. A Foundation workshop and a Recommendations workshop were held between 2001 and 2005. The park requested a delay in 2005. In 2008, a new Chief of Resource Management and Visitor Services was hired. She requested that the plan be completed and a new planner was assigned to the project in March 2009. Two day-long scoping trips were conducted in April and May 2009. A Confirmation workshop was held at the park in June 2009 with 18 participants representing park staff, partners, concessions, local community groups, the cooperating association, and other regional NPS staff.

Barring legislative changes or major new revelations, the foundational elements expressed in this LRIP – purpose, significance, themes, and visitor experience goals – will remain constant over the life of the plan. Specific recommendations about media and programs may need to be updated as staffing, funding, technology, or resource conditions change. Further design documents must be produced to implement some of the goals and recommendations in this plan.

## Plan Highlights

Rock Creek Park is currently engaged in extensive restoration and rehabilitation projects that should be completed early in the life of this plan. All planning participants recognized that each of these resource-specific projects include interpretive elements. During the next ten years, Rock Creek Park interpretive services will provide visitors with opportunities to increase their understanding and appreciation for the park and its resources, to engage in local and regional educational opportunities, and to participate in nationally significant events.

### Improve Marketing & Research

- Establish an outreach program for commuters and to connect to local communities through schools, clubs, businesses, non-profits, and universities.

### Upgrade and Improve Interpretive Media

- Emphasize the use of interpretive media at Civil War Defenses of Washington, Dumbarton Oaks Park, Montrose Park, Meridian Hill Park, and the other outlying sites within the park.
- Develop a parkwide wayside exhibit plan.
- Develop an Exhibit Concept Plan to upgrade or replace the exhibits in the Nature Center.

### Improve Personal Services

- Use new planetarium technology to provide curriculum-based programs and to address critical resource issues such as climate change.
- Incorporate current resource management studies, such as the 2008 archeological investigation, and other projects, such as the paving of Beach Drive, into interpretive programs and temporary exhibits.
- Prepare outreach activities related to the upcoming Deer Management Plan.
- Park staff and partners will work together to present programs that target commemorative events including the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Old Stone House, Peirce Mill Bicentennial, War of 1812 and Star Spangled Banner Bicentennial, Civil War Sesquicentennial, and the National Park Service Centennial.
- Explore opportunities to increase interpretive opportunities for active recreational park users.
- Develop relationships with Girl Scouts of America and Boy Scouts of America to provide opportunities for service and education.

### Expand Existing and Develop New Partnerships

- Recruit and hire a partnership coordinator.
- Strengthen partnerships with community groups and partners to provide activities and programs that foster sound environmental stewardship.
- Establish working relationships with neighboring universities to develop adult learning opportunities, marketing strategies, volunteer base, and studio projects.

### Retain Current & Recruit New Volunteers

- Create a full-time volunteer coordinator position.
- Improve retention and recognition of current volunteers.

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## **Foundation for Planning**

## Site Background

Collectively, the sites and landscapes managed by Rock Creek Park reflect a diversity of social needs and reasons for creating parks. These needs range from exercising and communing with nature, to memorializing and contemplating people and events in history that have influenced the culture of this nation. The park offers opportunities to learn about and ponder the area's 5,000 year human history; to explore and gain an appreciation of native plant and wildlife; and to develop an understanding of environmental issues and the importance of the National Park system in preservation.

The features that are administered by Rock Creek Park include numerous additional sites and parks that radiate out from the Rock Creek Valley. Rock Creek Park is both a specific place, a park established by Congress in 1890, and an administrative unit of the National Park Service established in 1977. The park superintendent oversees the care of 99 park areas, which spread across the northern portion of the city from the Georgetown Historic District to Barnard Hill. These sites include Rock Creek Park, Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, Dumbarton Oaks Park, the Old Stone House, Meridian Hill Park, Glover-Archbold Park and various Civil War fortifications.

For most visitors, Rock Creek Park is a green oasis within the concrete and asphalt that is our Nation's Capital. It serves the important purpose of providing the people of the Washington, D.C. a retreat from the hustle and bustle of the urban environment. It is easily accessible for those wanting a quiet and green place to walk, run, ride, or drive. Natural features of Rock Creek Park include streams, flood plains, woodland, and meadows. It supports a variety of native vegetation and provides a refuge for many animals that cannot normally flourish in the urban landscape.

Visitors to Rock Creek Park can find ample resources and opportunities for family picnics or reunions on the lush green open spaces shaded by the thick canopy of the Rock Creek Park trees. Within its dense understory and dark forest setting, one can actually explore the mysteries and treasures of Rock Creek Park's flora and fauna.

While Rock Creek Park provides visitors the opportunity to commune with nature, the land within Rock Creek Park reflects a human history spanning over 5,000 years. Over the years, different cultures have had an array of relationships with the landscape and have had an impact on its appearance. Mills, civil war fortifications, memorials, and monuments are just some of the cultural sites found in the park. Today, Rock Creek Park is a managed landscape reflecting our culture's appreciation for natural surroundings.

In addition to ball fields, a golf course, tennis courts, riding stables, and open play areas, Rock Creek Park offers many active and organized recreational opportunities.

## Park Enabling Legislation

On September 27, 1890 the Rock Creek Park Authorization was signed by President Benjamin Harrison.

*“Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That a tract of land . . . shall be secured, as hereinafter set out, and be perpetually dedicated and set apart as a public park or pleasure ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the United States, to be known by the name Rock Creek Park.” (Chapter 1001, 26 Stat. 492)*

In order to facilitate public use of Rock Creek Park, the enabling legislation directed the Commissioners of the District of Columbia and the Chief of

Engineers of the United States Army “to lay out and prepare roadways and bridle paths, to be used for driving and for horseback riding, respectively, and footways for pedestrians.”

Rock Creek Park’s legislation states that regulations are to be established which “provide for the preservation from injury or spoliation of all timber, animals, or curiosities within said park, and their retention in their natural condition, as nearly as possible.”

Peirce Mill and Klinge Mansion are within the original park boundaries and have been administered accordingly since the 1890s.

*The Public Buildings Act* of March 4, 1913 (Sec. 22) authorized the development of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway by calling on the Washington, D.C. Commission to acquire land “for the purpose of preventing the pollution and obstruction of Rock Creek and of connecting Potomac Park with the Zoological Park and Rock Creek Park.”

Since its inception, Rock Creek Park has grown in size through the addition of tributary parks and boundary expansions for the purpose of preserving the watershed, forest and natural scenery in Washington as well the preservation of a diversity of monuments and historic sites. These additions to the park have occurred through an equally diverse number of administrative actions, mandates, and acquisitions including:

- In 1936, a memorial committee added the Jusserand Memorial. Beginning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, golf courses, tennis courts, and a horse center were added to increase recreational opportunities. Carter Barron Amphitheater was built in 1950 to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Washington as the seat of federal government.

- The National Capital Parks reorganization in the 1970s and 1980s greatly increased the number of areas administered by Rock Creek Park to include Glover-Archbold Park, Montrose Park, Dumbarton Oaks Park, Meridian Hill Park, and sections of the Civil War Defenses of Washington. Each area was authorized for its own unique features and significance and was not part of the original Rock Creek Park legislation.
- Historically a 16-acre rural estate, Montrose Park was purchased in 1911 (Pub. 441, 61<sup>st</sup> Congress, March 2, 1911, 36 Stat. 1005) by congressional appropriation to be “forever held as a park for the recreation and pleasure of the people.”
- Dumbarton Oaks Park was given to the National Park Service in 1940 by Mildred and Robert Bliss. A house, its furnishings and upper formal gardens were given to Harvard University. The division of the estate has resulted in limited cooperation in maintaining the property as a complete unit as intended by the Bliss family. The naturalistic garden is representative of the “pleasuring ground” concept that had been developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and remained popular into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Within this setting, Robert Frost read the writings of Thoreau in a public program in 1962.
- A portion of the land for Glover-Archbold Park was donated as a gift in 1924 by Charles Glover. In 1925 Anne Archbold donated the rest of the land as a gift to preserve this natural setting as part of the park system of the Nation’s Capital and prevent further development.

- Meridian Hill Park was authorized on March 4, 1911 and was dedicated in 1936 after twenty six years of development. Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1994, it is a highly designed public landscape that was inspired by the Italian villas of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is considered one of the finest examples of Neoclassicist American park design in the United States. All Meridian Hill Park sculptures were authorized by special legislation of Congress and approved by the President.
- The Civil War Defenses, also known as the Fort Circle Parks, were acquired primarily between 1930 and 1965 through purchase, transfer, and donation. Rock Creek Park administers eight fortifications: Battery Kemble, Fort Bayard, Fort Reno, Fort DeRussy, Fort Stevens, Fort Slocum, Fort Totten, and Fort Bunker Hill. These sites were established to guard against threats to the water supply as well as invasion from the west and north during the Civil War. In 1981, Battleground National Cemetery was transferred from National Capital Parks-East to Rock Creek Park.
- The Old Stone House was authorized as part of the National Park System on September 25, 1950. It is one of the last surviving examples of 18<sup>th</sup> century architecture in Washington, D.C. and is an example of a middle-class dwelling. During the 1980s, management of the Old Stone House and land at the mouth of Rock Creek, including the Georgetown waterfront and Thompson Boat House, was transferred from Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park to Rock Creek Park.



Rock Creek Park Map

## Mission, Purpose, and Significance

### National Park Service Mission

The National Park Service mission is to preserve unimpaired natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

### Park Purpose

Park purpose statements describe why an area was set aside and what specific purposes exist for a park. Purpose statements are derived from legislation, legislative history, public participation, and public rule making. Purpose statements may reflect upon traditional purposes of preservation and enjoyment, the linkages between the management unit and its cultural and natural resources, connections with groups and areas external to the park, and language of the enabling legislation. Additional purposes may have emerged since this area was originally set aside.

The park's 2005 General Management Plan states that:

- Rock Creek Park exists to provide opportunities for recreation appropriate to the park's natural and cultural resources.
- The Parkway exists to connect Rock Creek Park and the National Zoo to Potomac Park with a scenic road.
- Park areas that contain tributaries to Rock Creek exist to preserve forests and natural scenery in and around Washington, D.C.
- Rock Creek Park exists to preserve and perpetuate for this and future generations the ecological resources of the Rock Creek Valley in as natural a condition as possible, the archeological and historic resources in the park, and the scenic beauty of the park.
- The Parkway exists to prevent pollution and obstruction of Rock Creek.
- Park areas that contain tributaries to Rock Creek exist to preserve the flow of water in Rock Creek.
- Park areas that contain tributaries to Rock Creek exist to prevent the pollution of Rock Creek and the Potomac River.
- Rock Creek Park exists to provide opportunities for the public to experience, understand, and appreciate the park in a manner appropriate to the preservation of its natural and cultural resources.

### Park Significance

*Park significance statements describe the distinctiveness of the combined resources of a park. The statements can reflect upon natural, cultural, scientific, recreational, inspirational, and other resources. The statements embody the power of the place through a factual representation of what makes this place special. Usually stated as facts placed in relevant context, these statements summarize the essence of the importance of this park's resources to our natural and cultural heritage. Significances may evolve over time as a result of discoveries and updates to our knowledge about this place.*

These statements were developed during the 2009 LRIP workshop. They are based on the significance statements outlined in the 2005 General Management Plan and include *all* of the sites that comprise Rock Creek Park.

- Rock Creek Park is one of the last remnants of wild scenic landscape in the Nation's Capital.
- Rock Creek Park preserves an exceptional collection of designed landscapes that are exemplars of a variety of significant trends and movements illustrative of American park and landscape philosophies.
- Rock Creek Park's forests and open spaces help define the character of the Nation's Capital.
- Rock Creek Park is the first urban national reserve managed as a national park.
- Rock Creek Park helps protect Rock Creek and its tributaries and offers an important opportunity for watershed education.
- Rock Creek Park preserves over 2000 acres of plant and wildlife habitat, providing protection for a variety of flora and fauna species within the Nation's Capital.
- Rock Creek Park preserves evidence of a 5,000 year continuum of human interaction with the environment.
- Rock Creek Valley was important in the development of the Nation's Capital, and cultural properties in the park illustrate that history.
- Rock Creek Park is an urban oasis offering opportunities for recreation, refreshment, and revitalization in the Nation's Capital.
- The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway is the first federally constructed parkway and an excellent example of early parkway design.
- Located in the heart of a densely populated metropolitan area, Rock Creek Park serves as an ambassador for the national park idea, providing outstanding opportunities for education, interpretation, and recreation to foster stewardship of natural and cultural resources.



Rock Creek Park is a wild, scenic landscape located in the heart of the Nation's Capital.

## Interpretive Themes

Primary interpretive themes are those ideas or concepts about Rock Creek Park that are keys to helping visitors gain an understanding of the park's significance and resources. The themes, which are based on the park's purpose and significance, provide the foundation for interpretive programs and media in the park. The themes do not include everything that may be interpreted, but they do address the ideas that are critical to a visitor's understanding and appreciation of the park's significance. Effective interpretation is achieved when visitors are able to associate resources and their values and consequently derive something meaningful from their experiences.

See Appendix D for a complete listing of themes, sub-themes, and associated stories.

### Theme #1: Evolving American Ideas of Parks

*Rock Creek Park reflects evolving American ideas of parks as natural and cultural landscapes.*

### Theme #2: Window for Understanding the Natural World

*Rock Creek Park is a window for understanding the natural world we live in, from the stars to the ecosystems that are embodied within the park.*

### Theme #3: 5,000 Years of Dynamic Cultural History

*For five thousand years, different groups of people have used the biological and physical resources of the Rock Creek Park area for survival and commerce, leaving evidence of changing technologies. These changes are preserved in the tangible evidence of human interaction with the natural environment.*

### Theme #4: Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Wellbeing

*The resources of Rock Creek Park provide opportunities for nurturing human physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing.*



Rock Creek Park is a window for understanding the natural world.

## Management Goals

### 2008-2012 Strategic Plans:

How well a park is achieving its visitor-related goals is measured annually at every unit of the National Park System through survey forms that are distributed to visitors at each NPS unit. Visitors send their completed survey forms to the University of Idaho, where the data is collected and compiled for each NPS unit. The survey results reflect visitor opinion about each park's facilities, services and recreational opportunities, as well as measures visitor understanding and appreciation of each NPS unit's significance.

In accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993, Rock Creek Park developed a strategic plan and management goals through 2012. The following goals address recreation, interpretation, and visitor experiences.

Park management has set the GPRA long-term goal that by September 30, 2012, 96% of visitors to Rock Creek Park are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.

The actual percentages for visitor satisfaction (2005 = 95%, 2006 = 94%, 2007 = 94%, and 2008 = 93%) reflect a consistency of service and satisfaction. However, the projected goal has not been met and the trend indicates that satisfaction is decreasing rather than increasing.

The long-term goal - that by September 30, 2012, 81% of Rock Creek Park visitors understand the significance of the park - was also set.

With the exception of 2006, the actual percentages for visitor understanding of the significance (2005 = 75%, 2006 = 86%, 2007 = 74%, and 2008 = 78%) have not met or exceeded the projected goal.

## Desired Visitor Experiences

Desired visitor experiences describe what physical, intellectual, and emotional experiences should be available for visitors to Rock Creek Park. These experiences will be available to the degree possible to visitors of all abilities, including those with visual, auditory, mobility, or cognitive impairments.

Visitors to Rock Creek Park will have the opportunity to:

- Feel safe to recreate and explore the park.
- Easily access historical, cultural, and natural resource information.
- Experience the beauty and grandeur of the forest and stream.
- See wildlife.
- Discover the park's natural and cultural resources through a variety of interpretive programs and media.
- Find and speak to a knowledgeable park ranger and/or NPS employee.
- Participate in and enjoy children's programs.
- Have a family picnic.
- Escape the city and life's challenges on park trails.
- Be alone and enjoy solitude and natural quiet.
- Access park facilities and historic buildings using a wheelchair. At those sites where historic and preservation standards determine the level of access, experience the resource using an alternative form of interpretive service.
- Go to the planetarium and learn about stars and planets.

- Discover the importance of the park and the history of the park and parklands.
- Participate in a range of events, programs, and activities in order to appreciate, respect, and care about the park.
- Choose from a selection of quality, affordable, interpretive sales items in a wide range of prices.
- Attend a show at Carter Barron.

(2,562). Less than five percent of the total park visitation goes to these sites.

While visitation appears to be increasing over the past three decades due to changes in data calculation, the actual number of visitors to the primary interpretive sites has significantly decreased. The present formula reflects that visitation to Rock Creek Park has almost doubled, rising from 1,150,000 visitors in 1979 to 2,076,466 in 2008. During this same time period, the interpretation and education staff has been reduced from twelve to five. The Nature Center visitation, measured by actual visitor contact, has decreased by more than one-third: 49,000 visitors in 1979 to 32,321 visitors in 2008. Peirce Mill has been closed for renovation and few people (2,562) visit the Barn. The reduction in visitor contact over the past three decades is attributed to the reduction in staffing these two primary contact points, closing buildings two days per week, a reduction in scheduled interpretive and education programs, and the loss of flexibility in providing

## Visitation and Visitor Use

More than 2,000,000 visitors come to Rock Creek Park annually. This figure is based on a five-year average of monthly public use data taken during calendar years 2004-2008. June, July and August are the peak visitation months. During FY2008, a total of 103,131 visitors came to the three primary visitor contact sites: Nature Center (32,321), Old Stone House (68,248), and Peirce Barn



In FY2008, more than 3,700 students participated in curriculum-based education programs.

roving interpretation throughout the park. Conversely, even with limited hours of operation, the Old Stone House visitation has more than doubled from 31,000 visitors in 2000 to 68,248 visitors in 2008. Visitation at Meridian Hill Park has also increased from 230,000 in 2000 to an estimated 300,000 in 2008.

Ten years ago, a NPS Visitor Services Project study conducted by the University of Idaho Park Studies Unit found that 89% of the visitors were from the local DC-MD-VA area; 40% were alone; 74% of visitors identified themselves as white; 24% of visitors identified themselves as black or African-American; and almost all of the visitors were from the United States. The 1999 study revealed that 59% of the visitors spent one to two hours in the park and 75% were making a repeat visit. The majority of visitors said they came to exercise, escape the city, spend time with family and friends, and find solitude. The most visited sites were Carter Barron Amphitheatre, Nature Center/Planetarium, and Peirce Mill. The most used services were the Nature Center information desk and the park brochure. The most important facilities, according to the visitors, were garbage collection/recycling, Carter Barron Amphitheatre, and trails. Most visitors to the interpretive centers, concessions and picnic areas drive to the park in private automobiles. However, many trail and Beach Drive users arrive on foot, bicycle or in-line skates.

Upper class, and upper-middle class, predominantly white and African American residential neighborhoods border Rock Creek Park on its west side and the lower and upper parts of its east side. A more diverse economic

distribution is characteristic of the park neighbors on its east border, especially along 16<sup>th</sup> Street in the Mount Pleasant and Columbia Heights areas. These areas are some of the most diverse in the city with people from a wide variety of racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. A number of foreign embassies are also found along park borders.

During the June 2009 confirmation workshop, participants identified seven different visitor groups using park resources. These groups come to the park for specific reasons and their needs while visiting the park would be similar: locals, visitors from outside the D.C. metro area, recreational users, education groups, incidental business groups (camps and organized groups), resource “threateners”, and permittees.

## Targeted Visitor Groups

The park will continue to provide services to all visitors, but the following groups were identified as targeted so that programming, media, and facilities can be shaped to address their interests and needs. Further, identifying visitor groups helps in evaluating the effectiveness of interpretive programming.

- Partners and volunteers
- College students
- Children
- Tech-savvy visitors
- Bicyclists
- Twelve million commuters
- Community gardeners
- Mill enthusiasts, including the Society for the Preservation of Old Mills
- Anniversary visitors
- Herring watchers

## Issues and Challenges Affecting Interpretation

Rock Creek Park has many assets upon which to build an effective interpretive program, including evocative and compelling stories, outstanding natural and cultural resources, ongoing research, and dedicated staff and supporters. It also faces a number of challenges. Each one of these challenges will require additional time, money, and staffing that will stretch already overstretched resources. Well-designed programs can build on interpretive strengths to help overcome these challenges.

A primary concern is the lack of National Park Service identity that Rock Creek Park has within the community. With 99 separate administrative areas, it is difficult to define the park. Many commuters see the park as scenery on the way to work and weekend users feel that the park is a local picnic and recreational area. Most people do not understand or recognize the national significance of the park.

Strengthening the current partnerships and developing new partnerships is a park priority. Establishing an umbrella partnership organization will help to consolidate efforts and increase cooperative opportunities.

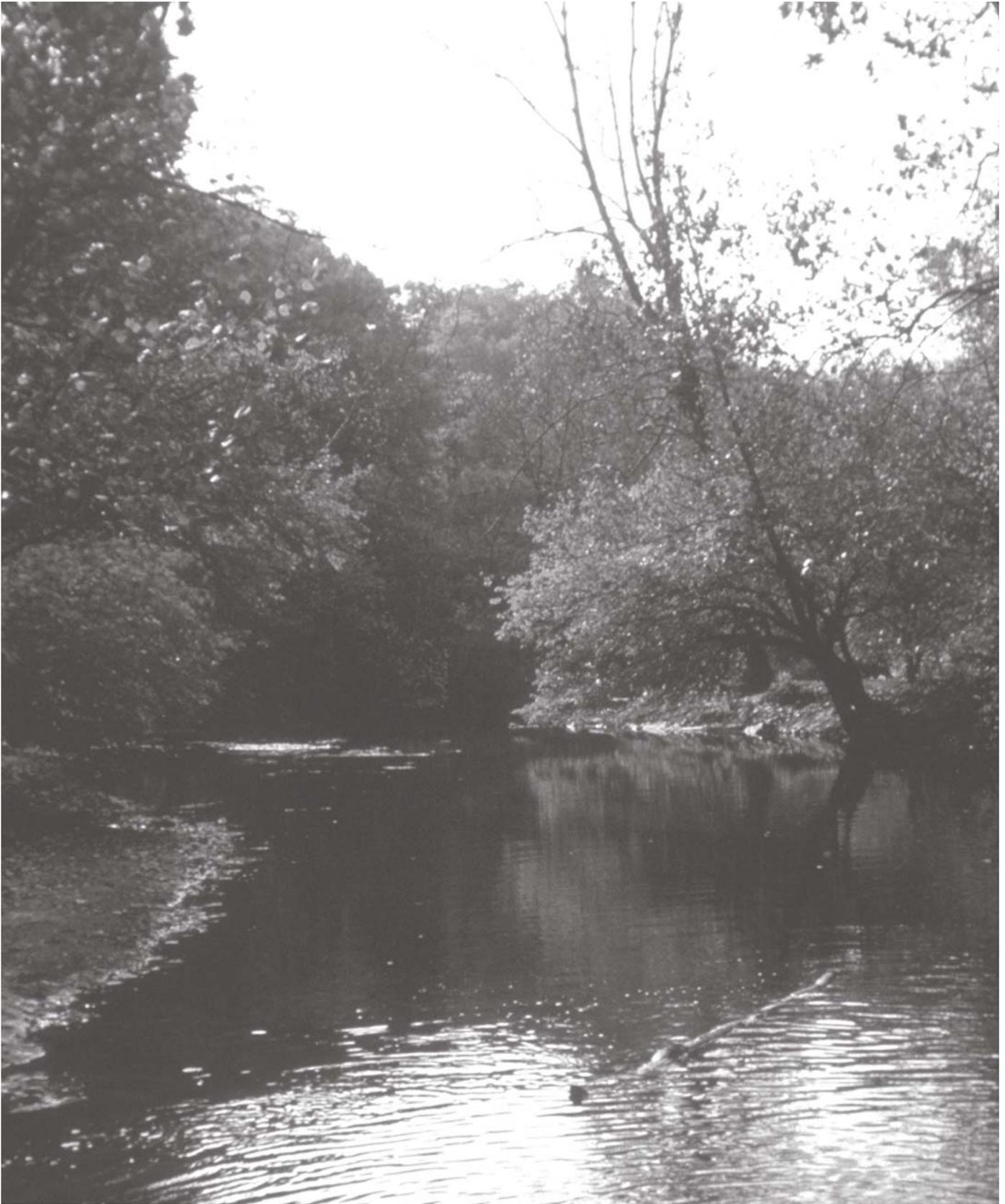
Collaborating with constituencies within the local community will be important to the success of this plan. The number of immigrants and young adults moving into the surrounding area is increasing. Overcoming the language barrier with the immigrant communities may help to create greater opportunities for them to become park stewards. Recognizing the different ways young adults recreate and value parks today compared to a generation ago will be important to help protect the park for future generations.

Five major anniversary events will occur during the life of this plan: the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Old Stone House, the re-opening and Peirce Mill Bicentennial, the War of 1812 and Star Spangled Banner Bicentennial, the Civil War Sesquicentennial, and the National Park Service Centennial.

An increase in visitation is an issue because new areas like the Georgetown Waterfront Park are opening, local visitors are vacationing at home, and budget cuts are causing local community recreation centers to close. Repaving Beach Drive will impact visitation with an increase in the volume of traffic and noise within the park.

The park will need to address fee versus free programming. Most programs in Rock Creek Park are free; however, programs at Carter Barron Amphitheater are for a fee. A question that park staff must consider is why do some visitors pay for programs and others do not?

The location of Rock Creek Park within the Nation's Capital creates issues. Park staff must work to provide interpretive services that complement and do not duplicate services being offered within Washington, D.C. and the surrounding communities. The scrutiny and demands of the Washington Office of the NPS, the United States Congress, and local politicians can stretch resources even more.



## **Existing Conditions**

*The following is a brief and generalized description of visitor experiences and interpretive services that existed in FY2008-FY2009. The purpose of this section is to provide a baseline assessment that can help to justify some of the plan's proposed actions.*

## **Information and Orientation**

### Marketing

The park informs the public of upcoming events and special programs through public service announcements sent to area newspapers, radio stations and television stations.

The park receives information requests on a daily basis via letters, phone calls and e-mail messages. Most requests are for basic information about the park and/or directions to the park. Brochure requests are decreasing, as the park website becomes more popular.

### Signs

There are multiple entry points into Rock Creek Park. Many of them are poorly marked and lack orientation. Consequently, there is no assurance that visitors understand the various options for gaining orientation and information about the park.

There are presently a great number of directional signs in the park. The park does not have a Master Sign Plan to ensure that first time visitors have a clear understanding of where visitor contact stations are, illustrate the range of interpretive opportunities that exists, and tie them all together under the NPS identity.

Throughout the park, in pullouts and in parking lots, there are upright waysides that provide basic orientation to the park. Virtually every trail user throughout the park passes a trail entry sign that orients them to park regulations. However, these signs

do not provide interpretive or trail orientation information. These trail head signs and roadside orientation waysides have been placed as funding, need, and/or opportunities have presented themselves. In some cases, the collection of signs in an immediate viewing area reflects various generations of design for way-finding or interpretive signs. There are currently 20 bulletin boards within the park, which are all maintained by interpretive staff. The bulletin boards feature an area map, identify day-use destinations, and provide information about safety, public programs, and pertinent park regulations. In 2009, park staff members began reviewing bulletin board construction, location, and NPS messaging project identification standards.

### Orientation

There are two bulletin boards at the Nature Center, but there is no orientation kiosk or wayside to provide visitors basic information and interpretation when the center is closed. There is no orientation to the immediate site or other sites within walking distance of the Nature Center, such as Fort DeRussy.

### Website

The park website is a very popular way to gain information about the park. Virtual visitors access the website to learn about park history, interpretive programs, hours of operation, and to find directions to the park. The park recognizes the importance of the website as a tool to reach "armchair" visitors and long-distance researchers, and as a pre-visit information opportunity.

One interpreter maintains and updates four separate websites: Rock Creek Park, Old Stone House, Meridian Hill Park, and Peirce Mill. From each site's home page, which offers an

overview of the site, the visitor can link to interpretive and performance schedules; management and planning updates; volunteer opportunities; and pages concerning various areas of the park. The four websites are linked and information is not duplicative. Current staffing levels and employee turnover make it a challenge to keep all of these sites current.

## Facilities

### Nature Center

The Nature Center includes the planetarium, Eastern National sales area, exhibit hall, auditorium, staff offices, and a discovery room. It is open Wednesday through Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is closed January 1, July 4, Thanksgiving, and December 25. Metrobus serves the Nature Center and Planetarium.

Often a visitor's first and only contact with park staff is at the front desk. Basic orientation materials are available for those visitors seeking park orientation. Planetarium programs, children's programs and guided walks and hikes are offered year-round.

The discovery room is intended for preschool users. It features hands-on activities on the walls and on the floor levels. The Nature Center has no designated classroom, so there are times when formal groups interfere with other visitors' experiences and vice versa.



"Seymour", the planetarium projector, simulates the night sky and celestial phenomena, and also shows movies and multimedia presentations.

The planetarium is the oldest in the D.C. area and the only one in the National Park System. It is one of the most popular visitor experiences in the park. The forty-year-old A4 projector was replaced with a Spitz SciDome video projector in February 2009. This new system uses the latest technology and is capable of showing movies and curriculum-based productions. While the new planetarium projector requires less mechanical expertise than

the previous project, it does require interpreters to have a higher level of technological skill. There is no fee for the planetarium programs, so there are no additional funds available to acquire new planetarium productions. The bench-style, in-the-round seating in the planetarium restricts use of the room for other interpretive and educational opportunities. The planetarium emergency exit is not accessible. Outside of the planetarium is a static solar system exhibit.

In the mid-1980s, the natural history of Rock Creek exhibit was installed. This exhibit is similar to one prepared for Great Smokey Mountains National Park. It is not specific to Rock Creek Park and does not adequately reflect the interpretive themes or critical issues of the park.

An auditorium is located in the basement, seats 100 people, and is only used 10 to 20 times per year. The room includes a projection room, stage, and a large screen. Lighting has been installed and the walls are currently used for rotating temporary photographic exhibits. The park film "A Homecoming" is shown in the auditorium infrequently. The projector room stores a great deal of unused and obsolete audiovisual equipment. The fixed seating, dim lighting, and slanted flooring in the auditorium limits the potential uses of the room unless a major rehab is done.

Discover Rock Creek is an interactive bilingual (English and Spanish) exhibit located in the Nature Center basement outside of the auditorium. The exhibit features multi-sensory discovery elements designed for middle-school students.

Behind the Nature Center, along the path leading to the Woodland Trail, there is a bird and butterfly garden and a large patio.

Staff offices and storage are located on the main level and in the basement. Cubicles, used by the four GS-9 Park Rangers, are located on the main level. The Supervisory Park Ranger and Education Specialist have separate offices adjacent to the cubicles. Seasonal staff desks and lockers are located in the basement. Museum collections that were stored in the basement have been moved to the Museum Resource Center. Interpretive props and teaching collections are stored in the same area that formerly contained the museum collection. This configuration of storage and office space does not meet staff needs.

### Peirce Mill and Barn

Peirce Mill is closed and is undergoing its third rehabilitation, which should be completed by 2011.

While hours of operation vary depending on the season, during the summer months Peirce Barn is open Wednesday through Sunday from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. A park interpreter

staffs the wagon barn located across from the mill. The barn is now used as an information station and Eastern National bookstore. In 2002, two permanent interpretive exhibits entitled “Peirce Estate” and “Mills of the Rock Creek Valley” were installed. Dated wayside exhibit panels tell the story of Peirce Mill and Peirce Plantation. While the mill is closed, cultural history talks and guided walks are offered mostly during the summer season.

Peirce Mill offers opportunities to discuss human use of the land for social and economic purposes and the environmental effects of industrial and agricultural land use. The mill is the last of eight mills originally located along Rock Creek. It is the major surviving structure of the Peirce Plantation. Restoration projects are in progress using the 2009 Cultural Landscape Report recommended treatment alternative.

In 1904, a new spillway dam was constructed just upstream from the mill. It was designed to be a picturesque



Peirce Barn, formerly the “Art Barn,” is now the primary visitor contact facility in the mill area.

water feature and park enhancement rather than a source of waterpower. However, just like milldams of the past, the spillway stops the passage of spawning fish. In 2006, a fish ladder was built into Rock Creek at Peirce Mill. Visitors can now watch the herring run. Two wayside exhibit panels on either side of the creek interpret the ladder and herring run.

Because of its central location within Rock Creek Park, the parking lot for Peirce Mill is a popular destination for joggers and bicyclists, many of whom do not desire an interpretive contact. Consequently, visitors wishing to enjoy interpretive opportunities at Peirce Mill find themselves competing for parking spaces. Many repeat visitors were very disappointed when restrooms behind the barn were closed. It may be that lowered visitor satisfaction numbers, as indicated in the 2008 GPRA rating, reflect this dissatisfaction. Two other parking areas are nearby. The Grove 1 picnic area with restrooms and large parking lot is located across the street

from the mill and barn. A high volume of traffic makes crossing the street a challenge. There is a trail that goes under the street, but a blind spot under the bridge creates an unsafe condition. The upper section of the trail is paved for bicyclists; the lower section for joggers is unpaved. These two sections join at the blind spot.

### Old Stone House

The Old Stone House is open daily from 12 p.m. until 5 p.m. except for Thanksgiving, December 25 and January 1. The first, second, and third floors are historically furnished based on middle- and upper-middle-class living arrangements for mid- to late-eighteenth century citizens. The service presented in the dining room is reflective of period kitchenware excavated on-site. The majority of furnishings are on permanent loan from Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial. An Eastern National staffed sales outlet is located in the room historically used as a store, just



Completed in 1765, the Old Stone House is one of the oldest structures in the Nation's Capital.

inside the front door. The outdoor garden is a very popular local lunchtime and wedding location. Ironically, the garden is not historically accurate to the house so it is not used for formal interpretation, and does not reflect historic plantings or uses. Informal interpretation is provided by the maintenance staff working in the garden.

A park interpreter is stationed in the kitchen area at the back of the house and primarily provides orientation and stationed interpretation. Fifteen minute talks and house tours are offered daily and during the summer Georgetown walking tours are offered weekly. Discolored and torn paper signs describe the historically furnished rooms and are taped outside of each room. Temporary exhibits are attached to the walls of the historic kitchen rather than as stand-alone displays. A cell phone tour stop is available.

The greatest assets of the Old Stone House are its antiquity, location within Georgetown, proximity to the Georgetown Waterfront Park, and access to large numbers of local, national, and international visitors. Visitation fluctuates dramatically depending on the season and many visits are incidental to a day of shopping in Georgetown. During the spring there may be more than 600 visitors per day and during the winter very few. An accurate count is difficult to obtain, because visitation is tracked by an Eastern National employee, who may not see the visitors entering through the garden and going directly into the kitchen.

Limitations of the Old Stone House include the lack of parking, no public restrooms, and size. The carrying capacity for the house is 55 people, with 35 on the first floor, and 10 on both the second and third floors. Only the first floor is accessible to mobility impaired visitors. Storage space and small office space are located on the third floor.

A Historic Furnishings Report for this building was completed in 1986. An Historic Structures Report for the house is anticipated to be completed in the winter of 2009-2010.

### Miller Cabin

Originally built by poet Joaquin Miller on Meridian Hill in 1883, the Miller Cabin was moved to its present location in 1912. Joaquin Miller was a colorful character in Washington's social circles at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and shared the values of John Muir. The cabin was moved in conjunction with the development of Meridian Hill Park. Fans of the poet wanted to preserve the cabin and its rustic appearance that was in keeping with the romantic landscape of Rock Creek Park.

The cabin has never had any degree of functional value to the park. Consequently, it suffers from lack of maintenance, has no utilities, and is not considered safe for public use.

Despite its deficiencies, the cabin is near one of the most popular parking lots in Rock Creek Park and across the street from public rest rooms. While parts of Beach Drive are closed to automobiles on weekends, these stretches are used by skaters and bicyclists. The parking lot and road to Miller Cabin are open at all times and are heavily used by these recreational visitors.

### Georgetown Waterfront Park and Francis Scott Key Park

Georgetown Waterfront Park is a green space located along the Potomac River. There is a dock that is capable of accommodating approximately 15 recreational boats. Paved walkways and benches invite visitors to stroll or relax along the waterfront.

Adjacent to the Waterfront Park and located at the approach of the Key Bridge is Francis Scott Key Park. Key's

house once stood nearby. The house was dismantled during the construction of the bridge with intentions of rebuilding the house at some other location at another time. Because all the materials from the house were not securely stored, they were gradually pilfered, resulting in the loss of the house. The Francis Scott Key Memorial Association owns property across the street from the park and provides the flags that fly over the park.

Interpreters infrequently rove the Waterfront and Key Parks. A wayside exhibit panel and a cell phone tour stop are the other available interpretive services.

### Civil War Defenses of Washington

During the Civil War, a system of fortifications was constructed around Washington, D.C. to defend the city from enemy attack. This complex resulted in a thirty-seven mile defensive line around the city consisting of sixty-eight forts and batteries. Eight of these fortifications (Battery Kemble, Fort

Reno, Fort Bayard, Fort DeRussy, Fort Stevens, Fort Slocum, Fort Totten, and Fort Bunker Hill) are under the jurisdiction of Rock Creek Park.

Interpretation, education, and visitor services at the sites within Rock Creek Park are inadequate and inconsistent. Many visitors do not know that they are within a unit of the National Park System or that the sites are part of a larger system of Civil War defenses. Visitor services are extremely limited, with few restroom facilities, no staffed buildings, and few directional signs. Very few interpretive and educational programs are offered at the sites. Special events, such as Fort Stevens Day, are the primary means to contact visitors. Most sites depend on wayside exhibit panels that are more than fifteen years old to serve as the primary interpretive media. In 2009 new wayside exhibits will be designed for all of the forts and should be installed in 2010 or 2011. These wayside exhibits are part of a regional and “universal” design which should unite all of the existing Civil War fortifications located in and around



As part of a circle of forts around the city, Fort Totten is one of the eight Civil War fortifications managed by Rock Creek Park.

Washington D.C. that are under NPS administration. There is a Fort Stevens self-guided walking tour podcast available for download on the park's website.

### Battleground National Cemetery

After the Battle of Fort Stevens in 1864, forty-one Union dead were buried in what is now known as Battleground National Cemetery. Battleground National Cemetery is one of the smallest cemeteries in the National Cemetery system. Following the tradition of National Cemeteries, the cemetery has a pavilion and Superintendent's lodge. Other elements of the cemetery include a display of The Gettysburg Address, a flagpole and two naval cannons. The cemetery has been the site of memorial services and Grand Army of the Republic ceremonies; however, the cemetery is closed to burials.

The condition of the lodge, flagpole and rostrum declined over the years despite the entire site being listed in the

National Register of Historic Places. Then in 2009, 20% recreation fee funding was used to restore the flagpole, tablets and plaques. The rehabilitation of the rostrum and the Superintendent's Lodge, an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act-funded project, will begin in 2010.

Special events are held annually and two wayside exhibit panels, placed in 2009, are the only on-site interpretive media. There is a self-guided walking tour podcast available for download on the park's website.

### Meridian Hill Park

Meridian Hill Park is a highly designed public landscape inspired by the Italian villas of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is considered one of the finest examples of Neoclassicist American park design in the United States. Meridian Hill Park is currently used as a neighborhood park and its users reflect the diversity and high density of cultural groups living in the immediate area. Activities in the park include rest



The 41 headstones of Union soldiers interred at Battleground Cemetery.

and solitude, pick-up games of soccer, planned concerts, and routine informal gatherings of neighbors. It is also one of the designated sites for first amendment rights demonstrations or events at Rock Creek Park.

Meridian Hill Park contains a collection of statuary including a bronze statue of Joan of Arc, a marble memorial of President James Buchanan, a bronze statue of Dante, and a marble sculpture named “Serenity”.

In 2009, the lodge house was rehabilitated to provide ADA-accessible restrooms and to establish a United States Park Police contact station. The lodge is anticipated to open in FY2010. There is only one ADA accessible entrance to the park at 15<sup>th</sup> and Euclid Streets. The lower section of the park cannot be reached without climbing steps, so wheelchairs cannot enter without assistance.

A seasonal interpreter roves Meridian Hill Park once a month and provides informal interpretation. Cell phone tour stops are available for each of the sculptures; however, visitors must either get information from the park website or see an 8 ½” x 11” paper poster

attached to a regulatory sign at one of the park entrances and the 15<sup>th</sup> Street parking lot to get the number.

### Montrose Park

This landscaped park includes gardens, walking paths, tennis courts, a playground, picnic tables and restrooms.

There are presently no interpretive programs offered at the park. A wayside exhibit gives information on the establishment and history of the park and the rope making factory that existed there in the 1800’s. A cell phone tour stop is available.

### Dumbarton Oaks Park

Dumbarton Oaks Park consists of twenty-seven acres of a naturalistic garden. It is a stellar example of a designed private American country place landscape of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and is one of the last remaining landscapes designed by notable landscape architect Beatrix Ferrand. Currently, Dumbarton Oaks Park is used as a local park by Georgetown residents. It is a popular place to walk dogs, hike trails, and jog.



Joan of Arc is one of the four statues located in Meridian Hill Park.

Occasionally, a ranger-guided tour of the site is offered. The paths through the park are confusing and there are no directional aids such as signs or brochures to facilitate use. There is no orientation to the site that establishes the relationship between the site and other sites within Rock Creek Park. A cell phone tour stop is available.

### Glover-Archbold Park

Glover-Archbold Park straddles Foundry Branch, which flows into the Potomac River. The park is located in a heavily populated residential area. Once threatened by an initiative to build a bridge and connecting parkway through the area, it has survived as an example of a natural environmental island within an urban setting. There is a three-mile trail with a number of feeder trails that runs through the park along the Foundry Branch. There are no trailhead waysides or interpretive signs along the trail. Within the park is a community garden.

### Palisades Park and Conduit Road School House

Palisades Park is a green space adjacent to Battery Kemble that follows a natural drainage located between Chain Bridge Road and 49<sup>th</sup> Street. Like Glover-Archbold, Palisades Park was set aside with the specific purpose of preserving green space in the urban environment. The one-mile trail within the park is popular with hikers, joggers, and dog walkers. There are no interpretive waysides or trailheads, and interpretive programs are rare.

The Conduit Road School House on MacArthur Boulevard is the last remaining one room school house in Washington, D.C. Discovery Creek Children's Museum of Washington, Inc., leases the building and offers early childhood environmental education programs. Discovery Creek also offers a summer camp program that contacts

an estimated 12,000 students annually. There is no interpretation of the history of the school house and no indication that this is a National Park Service site.

### Monuments and Memorials

Rock Creek Park administers monuments and memorials that are scattered throughout the city along roadsides, at intersections, and at traffic circles. (See a complete list in Appendix C.) These monuments and memorials reflect a diversity of themes, events, and people that have helped shape the character of the nation.

Presently, there is no concise finding or informational aid for the monuments and memorials under Rock Creek Park's jurisdiction. Rock Creek Park does have a site bulletin to assist visitors in finding the monuments and memorials and there is information on the park's website.

Because most of the sites are located along busy city streets, there is little opportunity for visitors to stop and view them closely. In the spring of 1999, a wayside exhibit panel was placed by the Jusserand Memorial through a partnership with Alliance France. There are cell phone tour stops available for the Asbury, Marconi, McClellan, and Jusserand memorials.

### Carter Barron Amphitheatre

Carter Barron Amphitheatre has a seating capacity of 4,000. It was constructed in 1950 to provide a variety of cultural and performing arts programming for Washington, D.C. residents, as well as to honor the Sesquicentennial of the Nation's Capitol. The programming at Carter Barron is family-oriented and uses the backdrop of Rock Creek Park to offer the people of Washington a theater under the stars.

For most visitors it is not apparent that Carter Barron is operated by the National Park Service. There are no interpretive programs or services available to indicate a connection to Rock Creek Park or any park themes.

### Klinge Mansion/Linnaean Hill

The Klinge Mansion was constructed in 1823 and was purchased by the federal government when Rock Creek Park was established in 1890. The Klinge Mansion has been used as staff housing and for non-profit organizations office space. It also housed the Rock Creek Park Nature Center from 1950 to 1960, and, currently, serves as the park's headquarters. An old wayside exhibit panel on the grounds describes the Peirce-Klinge family connections and history. The panel will be updated to meet NPS identity standards in FY2010.

### Lodge House

The Lodge House was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s and has served a diversity of administrative functions over the past 60 years. Currently, it is a U.S. Park Police substation. The interior

of the house includes a small public information vestibule, dispatch center, offices, locker rooms, workout room, and lockup. Park Police provide visitors to the substation with basic information and orientation services.

### Tennis Courts, Stables, Thompson's Boat House and Golf Course

Rock Creek Park offers a diversity of recreational opportunities including tennis, horseback riding, canoeing, kayaking, and golf. Ranger-led horseback tours were offered in 2008 and 2009. Tours are also provided by Horse Center staff.

### Park Trails

There is an extensive system of trails in Rock Creek Park. The trails are used for hiking, bicycling, jogging, and horseback riding. Visitors pass by a variety of cultural sites and through deciduous woods. Park trails generally have trailheads located near parking lots and picnic areas. Many trails have multiple points of access.

The park trail map is informational only. There is no consistent parkwide trailhead orientation. With a few



Visitors can access information about the Marconi Memorial through their cell phone.

exceptions, such as the short Nature Center loops, there are no interpretive wayside exhibit panels along the trails. At the Nature Center, visitors used to be able to borrow an unadvertised Discovery Pack that included binoculars, a magnifying glass, bug box, field guides, and a compass which visitors could use in their exploration of the park trails.

Three trails lead from the Nature Center. None of the trails are advertised or clearly marked. The Edge of the Woods Trail is a one-eighth mile paved and accessible trail that winds through three habitats. A rope leads the length of the trail. An audio MP3 player with headset is available for use on the trail, but no information is posted about this option. Most of the wayside exhibit panels have deteriorated and have been removed. The Woodlands Trail is a one-half mile, semi-strenuous, self-guiding loop trail with an accompanying brochure and numbered stops. Trail guides are available only inside the Nature Center because the outside brochure box is damaged. The paved Western Ridge Trail passes near the Nature Center and goes north and south through the park.

## Roads

Over 12 million commuters use the roads through Rock Creek Park annually. To accommodate these visitors all lanes of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway travel south in the morning and north in the afternoon. Beach Drive is closed to vehicles on weekends for visitors to walk, jog, roller blade, and bicycle. In 2009 the “Ranger on the Road” was successfully initiated as interpreters provided informal interpretation along Beach Drive.

## Picnic Areas

Twenty-nine picnic areas are located in Rock Creek Park. During peak visitation months nine are available by reservation only. During autumn 2008 and early spring 2009 a campfire program was periodically presented at picnic grove 13.

## Community Gardens

Nine community gardens are located in Rock Creek Park: Mamie D. Lee, Blair Road, Peabody, Whitehaven, Glover-Archbold Park, Melvin Hazen Park, Fort Stevens, Fort Reno, and Rock Creek Park. A bulletin board is located



Community gardens provide green space and nourishing food for nine adjacent neighborhoods.

at Rock Creek Park and Fort Totten. There are no other interpretive services associated with the gardens.

## Interpretive Media

The existing interpretive service by theme matrix, located in Appendix D, includes a comprehensive listing of media available during FY2009.

### Audiovisual

“A Homecoming” is a 20-minute Hasselblad slide show with DVD narration that is shown upon request in the Nature Center auditorium. The program was produced by Harpers Ferry Center during the 1980s. While esthetically beautiful, this program is rarely used as a standard experience for visitors. It is generally regarded as outdated and does not significantly contribute to a quality visitor experience. The film introduces visitors to the park’s resources and is primarily used as a holding strategy for groups. It is not audio described and there are no assisted-listening options. There are closed caption capabilities, and there is a closed caption monitor mounted from the ceiling to the right of the stage.

With the new SciDome projector the planetarium now has the ability to show 360 degree movies. There is currently only one 360 degree movie, titled “Oasis in Space,” that is available.

Cell phone tour stops of outlying areas are available. These stops were not produced for core park areas like the Nature Center and Peirce Mill because staff is present and visible there.

Two self-guided walking tour podcasts are available for download on the park website. These audio programs were produced in 2007 and feature Fort Stevens and Battleground National Cemetery.

Audiovisual equipment is available but used infrequently. MP3 players are available for visitors to borrow while walking along the “On the Edge” trail. In the Nature Center auditorium there is a video projector and VHS/DVD player as well as 30 VHS movies on a variety of nature and astronomy subjects. The video projector is also capable of connecting to a computer for PowerPoint presentations. Portable video projectors are also available. The park currently has no DVDs that can be shown. Peirce Barn currently has a monitor and VHS/DVD player but only a few relevant VHS tapes and only one DVD that was made by Friends of Peirce Mill. There also is an old 16mm movie projector and several good 16mm movies on milling. However, the barn does not have a good location to set up and use the movie projector. The Old Stone House has no audiovisual capability.

### Publications

- The Official Park Map & Guide provides an orientation to the park with a map and brief descriptions of visitor services and site interpretation.
- *Civil War Defenses of Washington, Old Stone House, and Peirce Mill* brochures need major revisions and additional brochures need to be developed for other park sites such as Meridian Hill Park and Dumbarton Oaks Park. In addition, there is no interpretive handbook for Rock Creek Park or other similar site-specific publications.
- “The Respite,” the park newspaper, is published twice annually. The newspaper highlights park stories and interpretive programs.
- *Battle of Fort Stevens* is being reprinted.



Signs in outlying areas throughout the park indicate a cell phone accessible audiocast is available.

- *Ancient Native Americans in Rock Creek Park* was published in 2009.
- *The Sarah Whitby Site and African American History* was published in 2009.

Less formal hand-outs are printed and distributed, including:

- Exploring the Sky schedule
- Bicycle Trail User's Guide
- Schedule of Events monthly calendar
- Rock Creek Park Horse Center
- Explore the Woodland Trail
- Invasive Non-Native Plants
- Field List of Birds of Rock Creek Park
- Presidential Cell Phone Tour
- Woodland Trail Hike
- Black Georgetown
- Education Programs

Several hand-outs, which are not created by Rock Creek Park, are being distributed in rack card holders and include:

- Junior Birder (multi-agency)
- Silent Green Invasion
- Greater Washington National Parks

## Junior Ranger

According to the FY2008 Servicewide Interpretive Report, 135 Junior Ranger booklets were completed. In FY2008, the Junior Ranger booklet for younger children was redesigned. There is a Junior Ranger activity booklet and an advanced Junior Ranger journal available. The journal is primarily for children ages 10 to 15. Visitors completing the program receive a badge. During the summer, park rangers hold five free, two-day Junior Ranger camps. One of the camps is offered in Spanish language.

## Wayside Exhibits

In May 2009, park staff completed a comprehensive review of park wayside exhibit panels. Currently there are a total of 47 interpretive waysides located throughout Rock Creek Park. Thirty-one of the waysides were installed during or before the 1980s. The other 16 were installed between 2006-2008 (ten waysides for the Herring Highway, six waysides for Forts DeRussy, Stevens, Totten, and Battleground National Cemetery). Fourteen waysides interpret the natural resources of the park (Forest Ecology and the Herring Run), whereas the other 32 are focused on the cultural



In FY2008, neighborhood children participated in five free two-day Junior Ranger camps.

aspects of the park. The Jusserand wayside is the only bilingual (French) wayside in the park.

Throughout the park, in pullouts and in parking lots, there are upright waysides that provide basic orientation to the park. Virtually every trail user throughout the park passes a trail entry sign that orients them to park regulations. However, these signs do not provide interpretive or trail orientation information. These trail head signs, roadside orientation waysides and interpretive waysides have been placed as funding, need and/or opportunities have presented themselves. In some cases, the collection of signs in an immediate viewing area reflects various generations of design for wayfinding or interpretive signs. The park has never developed a Comprehensive Wayside Exhibit Plan.

It should be noted that a coordinated National Capital Region (NCR) program was instituted in 2009 to create a more uniform Civil War wayside design for all NPS sites in NCR. Eight waysides are designated to be fabricated for Rock Creek Park. These waysides will either accentuate or replace the existing upright waysides.

Communities surrounding Rock Creek Park have designed and installed wayside exhibit panels. The Brightwood Heritage Trail, for example, is located in the same area as Fort Stevens and Battleground National Cemetery. Panels are located along the street adjacent to both park resources. Even though the stories and images presented in the wayside exhibits are similar, the community and the NPS worked independently to produce the panels.

### Exhibits

The “Natural History of Rock Creek” exhibit located in the Nature Center is a general natural history exhibit and not specific to the interpretive themes, resources or issues of Rock Creek Park. In 1987, Harpers Ferry Center produced and installed the exhibit. It is based on one that was created for Great Smoky Mountains National Park and allows the visitor to see wildlife close up. The exhibits do not meet National Park Service accessibility standards and do not offer learning experiences that correspond to different learning methods. The text in the exhibit is in a script style font and is difficult to read. A wildflower section illustrates flora but does not comment on which are invasive exotic species.

The exhibit is not interactive, so a touch table was created. Live amphibians and reptiles are also on display in the exhibit hall.

An archeology exhibit was developed to display artifacts recovered from a quarry that was once located behind the Nature Center.

“Discover Rock Creek” is an interactive bilingual exhibit located in the Nature Center basement outside of the auditorium. The exhibit features multi-sensory discovery elements designed for middle-school students.



Over 40 wayside exhibit panels are located in the park interpreting both natural and cultural history.

## Historic Furnishings

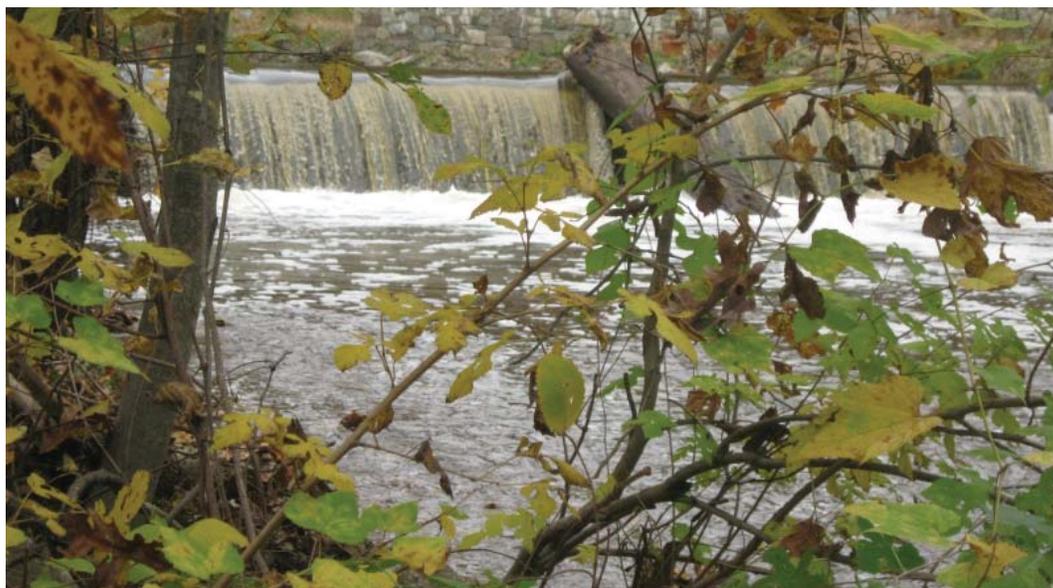
In 1986, the Historic Furnishings Report (HFR) for the Old Stone House was completed, and furnishings were installed by Harpers Ferry Center. The first, second, and third floors are historically furnished based on middle and upper middle class living arrangements for mid- to late-eighteenth century citizens. The service presented in the dining room is reflective of period kitchenware excavated on-site. The majority of furnishings are on permanent loan from Arlington House. Upstairs bedrooms have been furnished since the original installation, but they were not included or discussed in the HFR.

## Archaeological Resources

A four-year archeological investigation of the park was conducted from 2003 to 2007. The project was funded through the NPS Systemwide Archeological Inventory Program, and the work was conducted by The Louis Berger Group. In 2008, the final report -- "Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque": Archaeological Identification and Evaluation Study

of Rock Creek Park, Vol.1 -- was approved. The NPS Archeology in the Parks website features a page "Archeology and History in Rock Creek Park" (<http://www.nps.gov/history/archeology/sites/npSites/rockCreek.htm>) that offers a synopsis of the study. The Rock Creek Park website links to that page. There is an archeology exhibit in the Nature Center exhibit room displaying artifacts recovered from a quarry that was once located behind the Nature Center.

In 1996 and 1997, an archaeological excavation of the Whitehurst Freeway Corridor for the D.C. Department of Public Works was conducted. The excavations at the eastern end of the roadway, near the location where Rock Creek drains into the Potomac River, yielded both prehistoric and historical archeological resources. The National Capital Region Regional Archeology Program features a website "Rock Creek Park: Prehistoric Landscapes of the Nation's Capital" (<http://www.nps.gov/rap/exhibit/rocr/text/WH00.htm>) that is a multi-page web tour of the excavations. The Rock Creek Park website links to the main page.



Peirce Mill Dam

## Personal Services

The park staff offers a variety of personal services at the Nature Center, the Old Stone House and Peirce Barn. These services include education programs, guided walks and talks along park trails and at historic sites, stationed interpretation of historic structures, special events, and informal interpretation.

## Education Programs

In FY2008, 122 education programs were presented to 3,754 students, teachers, and chaperones. The GS-9 Park Rangers take turns giving on-site programs. The Education Specialist conducts 98% of the off-site programs as well as Bridging the Watershed program field studies. Anecdotally there seems to be a decrease in formal school visits, possibly due to budget cuts and a lack of funding for buses to transport students. However, home school visits seem to be increasing. A Civil War traveling trunk is available for loan. It does need to be updated as do the three Urban Wildlife kits.

April, May, October, and November are the primary months for school visits.

The programs are mostly held at the Nature Center. Picnic Groves 1 and 6 are used as field study sites.

## Interpretive Programs

During FY2008, over 80,000 visitors attended interpretive programs and demonstrations. The majority of the programs were presented at the Nature Center, Peirce Barn, and the Old Stone House.

The park's Division of Interpretation offers a variety of interpretive programs. These programs include planetarium programs, children's programs, guided walks and hikes, ranger-led horseback tours, Spanish language programs, history talks, house tours, and historical arts demonstrations. During the summer, the widest range of topics and the most public programs are offered due to the addition of seasonal staffing. Throughout the year, planetarium programs, children's programs, house tours, and history talks are presented daily.

The existing interpretive service by theme matrix, located in Appendix D, includes a comprehensive listing of programs presented during FY2009.



Children's programs are held throughout the year.

## Special Events

Potomac River Watershed Cleanup – Annual event held in April and sponsored by the Alice Ferguson Foundation

Fort Stevens Day – Annual event commemorating the Battle of Fort Stevens, usually held on the weekend closest to July 11 and 12. Activities include an encampment, bands, the “Night Sky to Freedom” program, and a wreath laying ceremony at Battleground National Cemetery.

Rock Creek Park Day – Annual event held on September 26. Activities are usually held at or near the Nature Center and include a trash clean-up, guided walks, and planetarium programs.

## Staffing

The GS-025-13 Chief of Resources Management and Visitor Services manages two large and very different divisions. The interpretation staff includes one GS-025-12 Supervisory Park Ranger, one GS-1710-11 Education Specialist, three GS-025-9 permanent Park Rangers, and,

until 2009, one GS-025-9 term Park Ranger. In FY2008, seven GS-025-5 Park Rangers (Centennial Seasonal) and one GS-090-3 Park Guide (STEP) worked for 6 months, primarily staffing information desk, roving Beach Drive, and presenting interpretive programs. Having these additional positions allowed the three GS-9 park rangers to provide more programs and complete more collateral duty assignments. The FY2008 statistics reveal the impact of having these additional seasonal positions. All three interpretive sites (Nature Center, Peirce Barn, and Old Stone House) were open seven days per week, May through September, for the first time since 1995. Twenty-three new interpretive programs were developed and presented. Sixty-one additional programs were presented in FY2008 than in FY2007, and 1,800 more visitors were contacted.

The three GS-9 Park Rangers have many collateral duties assigned to them including:

- Calendar of events
- Press releases
- Bulletin boards
- Park newspaper
- Eastern National coordinator



Fort Stevens

- Bookstore operation
- Websites
- Monthly visitor use statistics
- Volunteer coordinator
- Live animal care

In addition, the three Park Rangers are assigned to oversee each one of the interpretive facilities: Nature Center, Peirce Mill and Barn, and Old Stone House. Oversight duties include developing program schedules, staffing the building, and presenting programs. All offices are located at the Nature Center; the two rangers working at Peirce Barn and Old Stone House must travel daily to both locations.

## Partnerships

### Potomac Appalachian Trail Club

Conducts trail workshops in Rock Creek Park and helps to maintain the trail system.

### Alice Ferguson Foundation (Bridging the Watershed)

The Bridging the Watershed program held within Rock Creek Park provides

educational experiences for high school teachers and students as well as for a few middle schools. The program focuses on the connections between people, the natural environment, and the cultural heritage of the Potomac River Watershed, leading to personal environmental responsibility.

### Friends of Peirce Mill

Supplies volunteers to staff the mill, raises awareness about the mill, and raises funds to restore and preserve the mill.

### Friends of Rock Creek's Environment (FORCE)

Works to promote a healthy and sustainable Rock Creek Watershed through conservation, education, and restoration projects.

### Friends of Georgetown Waterfront Park

Works to raise awareness of the park and support its construction through fundraising.



The Friends of Peirce Mill are raising funds to restore and preserve the Mill which is scheduled to re-open in 2011.

## Eastern National

Eastern National (EN) sales areas are located in the Old Stone House, Nature Center and Peirce Barn. Eastern National personnel staff the one-room sales area at the Old Stone House, and complete remittances and inventory daily. The staff includes a full-time site supervisor and part-time associate. The information desk at the Peirce Barn serves as the sales desk for the Eastern National outlet. In 2008, a separate sales area opened at the Nature Center. EN provided a new information desk at the Nature Center and the bookshelves are scheduled to be replaced in FY2010. The rangers on duty at Peirce Barn and the Nature Center are responsible for operation of the sales outlet, remittances, and inventory.

Annual sales during FY2008 were \$90,557 (Nature Center is \$16,340, Peirce Barn is \$871, Old Stone House is \$73,346) and the park receives approximately 6% in annual percentage donations. From FY2006 through FY2008, the park did not spend any percentage donation funds. In FY2008, EN published the park-produced “Why are There No Bears in Rock Creek?”



Most interpretive programs and activities, as well as staff offices, are based at the Nature Center.

The Scope of Sales identifies primary and secondary themes that connect to the park primary interpretive themes revised during the June 2009 workshop. There is no date on the Scope of Sales, so it may be helpful to review and update the scope with the Eastern National Regional Manager.

### Primary themes:

- Recreational opportunities
- 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century cultural history and related attractions including the Old Stone House and Peirce Estate
- Performing arts events and concerts at Carter Barron Amphitheatre
- Rock Creek Park Nature Center and Planetarium – environmental education, astronomy program/ events

### Secondary themes:

- Native American History (Piscataway Indians)
- Civil War History
- Presidential History

## Volunteer Program

During FY2008, volunteers provided 10,578 hours of service for interpretation. Volunteers staff the Nature Center desk, participate in trash pickups, help with invasive plant control, conduct bike patrols, provide trail maintenance, and assist at the Nature Center and Peirce Mill and Barn. The FY2008 volunteer program was funded at \$18,283.



## **Recommendations**

*The following recommendations are based on the “Foundation for Interpretation,” on existing conditions detailed in the first two sections of this document, and on the ideas generated by the June 2009 workshop participants. Together, they outline a vision for Rock Creek Park’s future interpretive services and the steps necessary to achieve that vision.*

Interpretive planning supports the park’s 2005 General Management Plan (GMP). It assesses current conditions and formulates recommendations that will provide direction and focus to achieve the desired future interpretive program as prescribed in the GMP. A long-range interpretive plan analyzes all needs and recommends a wide array of interpretive services, facilities, programs, and opportunities for partnerships to communicate in the most efficient and effective way the park’s purpose, significance, and values.

The Rock Creek Park GMP focuses on the “core” park lands and resources. It does not cover many outlying sites because they are “not within the park proper,” because they “have significant management and design needs,” and/or

because “their public uses are different from those of Rock Creek Park.” In several cases, cultural landscape reports and individual management plans have served as planning documents for these sites. Some of the outlying sites include Dumbarton Oaks Park, the Old Stone House, Meridian Hill Park, Montrose Park, Glover-Archbold Park, and the Civil War Defenses of Washington.

For the purposes of this LRIP, both core sites and outlying sites will be considered collectively in terms of interpretive value. The considerations of location within or outside of the “park proper,” “management and design needs,” and various “public uses” will have importance to this plan to the extent that those elements influence visitor experience.

Rock Creek will serve as the tangible resource connecting all of these “tributaries” or outlying sites within the watershed and managed park sites. This approach will help park staff better integrate the cultural and natural resources interpretation. Another metaphor that could be used is Rock Creek Park as a physical as well as a cultural watershed. For example, Fort



Boulder Bridge

DeRussy is usually recognized as a Civil War defense that was established to protect Washington, D.C. The fort also protected the mill run and Rock Creek watershed, a little recognized link between the cultural and natural park resources.

The Recommendation section is a description of programs and media proposals designed to realize these visions, objectives, themes, and visitor experiences for Rock Creek Park. These suggestions should not limit creativity in the development of personal services or media design.

The following principles will apply to all interpretation at Rock Creek Park:

- All interpretation will address physical and programmatic accessibility.
- Where possible, interpretation will use reproduction objects and documented personal stories to bring the story alive for visitors.
- Where possible, the park will partner with neighboring institutions to develop programs, media, and share research.
- The park will follow the standards of the National Park Service Graphic Identity Program as signs and interpretive media are upgraded.
- Interpretation will include examples and perspectives from diverse points of view. It will respond to diverse audiences, varying levels of interest, and different lengths of time for a visit.
- Where possible, “virtual visitors” will have opportunities to view key park vistas and access to new research, studies, management plans, and historical information.

## Information and Orientation

Due to a lack of controllable points of entry, Rock Creek Park has very different challenges than many other parks. It can be a challenge to ensure that the information on how to safely enjoy the park and park resources is easily accessible to visitors. Because of the multiple entry points, visitors using park trails may not ever make contact with park staff. Due to the distance between the various contact points, orientation will be necessary at all sites. The primary method of information dissemination will be through printed and digital media that is made available in locations convenient to visitors.

## Marketing and Outreach

Establish an outreach program to connect to local communities through schools, clubs, businesses, non-profits, and universities. This program will be an effective way to share information about park events and activities. The park staff will also learn more about how the communities view and use the park. Building strong relationships will benefit everyone.

Establish an outreach program to connect to commuters.

Create and deploy portable information stations to onsite areas of high-visitor concentration such as Beach Drive and offsite to community celebrations and events.

Explore the utility of social networking for park outreach. Build contacts and community through sites such as Facebook and Twitter to communicate news quickly to a large number of visitors, and build a virtual constituency of stewards for the park. Text messages can be used to alert visitors to park programs and events.

Make public service announcements encouraging visitors to “Volunteer and Make a Difference,” and to attend special events using a variety of media including television, radio, and movie theaters.

**Signs**

Develop a parkwide master sign plan to analyze the sign needs of the entire park and recommend solutions that will bring the park into compliance with the NPS Sign Management Program. Installation of comprehensive park signs will bolster the identity of the park as part of the National Park System, and improve the on-site visitor experience with wayfinding and site identification signs.

Specific recommendations include:

Develop and install orientation panels at primary visitor access points to provide 24-hour visitor information, orientation and interpretation of the park.

Develop and install consistent, non-intrusive interpretive trailhead

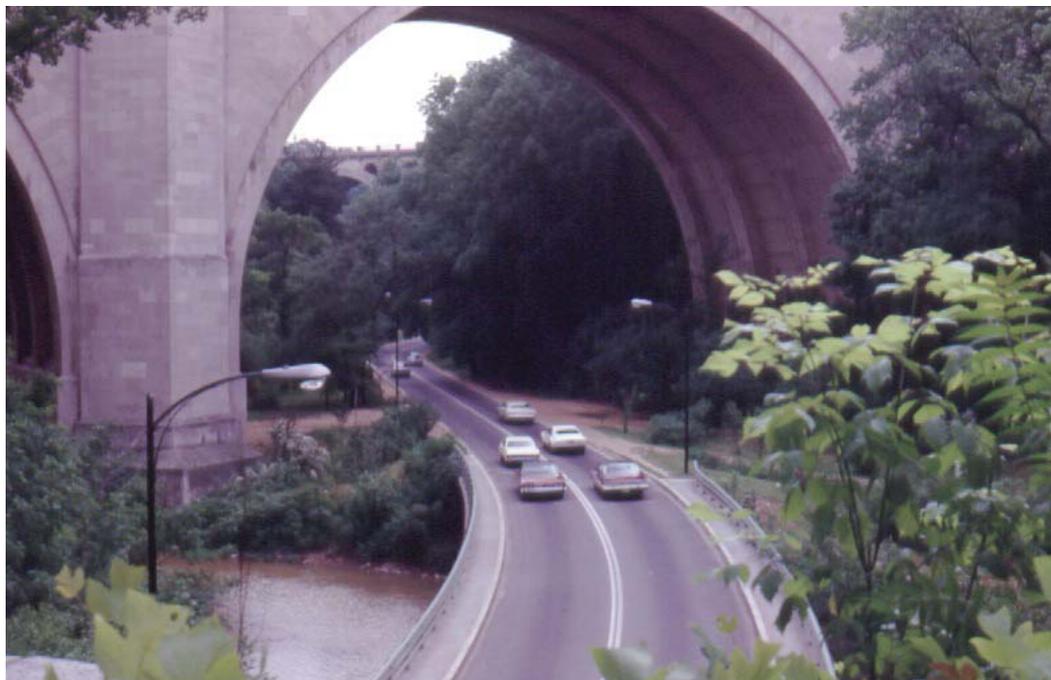
signs that provide visitors with the regulatory, orientation, and interpretive information necessary to have safe and enjoyable visits.

Install signs on Beach Drive that encourage the high number of commuters to visit Rock Creek Park from the “other side of the windshield.”

**Website**

An ever-increasing percentage of park visitors are seeking information from all four websites administered by Rock Creek Park ([www.nps.gov/rocr](http://www.nps.gov/rocr)). Many of these “virtual visitors” never actually come to the park, but have their needs met solely through the website. As use of the websites spreads to all ages and ethnicities, park staff will ensure that the online information is thorough and up to date, and is as creative and interactive as the NPS system permits. Given the speed of change and information dissemination, park staff will use the most accessible digital technologies.

Website content does not always have to be generated by park staff. A “nature



A park priority is to connect to the many commuters that travel through the park to the park’s significance and numerous resources.

watch” webpage will be established using visitor photos and finds within the park. Visitors can also use established social networking systems such as Facebook to share experiences and memories. Using NPS Focus or developing a local web-accessible database would provide a central depository for continued research on the monuments and memorials.

## **Facilities**

Current planning documents prescribe future services and visitor experiences at some of Rock Creek Park’s interpretive facilities. The June 2009 workshop participants were vigilant to ensure that interpretive media and personal services recommendations outlined in the next sections of this plan reflect the vision of those planning documents. In addition, the workshop participants identified some site-specific recommendations.

### The Nature Center

According to the 2005 GMP, the Nature Center will serve as the park’s primary facility for environmental education and natural history interpretation. Visitor experiences will inspire a sense of discovery and promote a smooth transition from the urban environment to the natural world. This will be accomplished through an atmosphere that promotes a continual learning experience from the parking lot through the Nature Center and on the trails.

### Peirce Mill and Barn

According to the 2005 GMP, 2009 Cultural Landscape Report and the 1998 Cultural Landscape Inventory, revised 2003, the mill will be furnished without apparent modern intrusions. Visitors will experience living history interpretation and demonstrations reflecting mill operations, the history of Rock Creek Valley, and the significance

of the Rock Creek Valley in to the capital city. The surrounding landscape will have consistent interpretive waysides to facilitate orientation and interpretation to the site and trails. School program offerings will be aligned with the D.C. elementary school curriculum. The Historic Structures Report (Draft 2000) provides a detailed look at the history of Peirce Mill’s construction and the evolution of the building’s uses.

### Old Stone House

The Historic Structures Report for the Old Stone House is being completed by the National Capital Region’s Historic Architect’s Office. It is anticipated that this document will be available in FY2010.

### Civil War Defenses of Washington

The 2004 Fort Circle Parks General Management Plan and 1996 Cultural Landscape Inventory recommend that while many of the sites now function as community parks, interpretation and education programming needs to be provided so that visitors will have opportunities to make personal connections with the historic events these sites commemorate.

### Meridian Hill Park

The 2001 Cultural Landscape Report recommends guided and self-guided tours as well as passive recreation, and suggests that the NPS “foster a sense of safety by use.”

### Montrose Park

According to the 2004 Cultural Landscape Report, Montrose Park will continue to be used as a neighborhood park. A site brochure, minimal (no more than two) wayside exhibits, and a bulletin board would be appropriate interpretive services.

## Dumbarton Oaks Park

Only Part 1 of the 2000 Cultural Landscape Report has been completed and a preferred treatment has yet to be determined. Possible treatment options include maintaining and managing Dumbarton Oaks Park as a neighborhood park. It also has the potential for another constituency: the garden/preservation visitor who visits the upper garden at Dumbarton Oaks. Encourage use of Dumbarton Oaks Park for its intended purpose – contemplation.

## Carter Barron Amphitheatre

Increase National Park Service ranger presence in a welcoming and program introduction capacity.

## Tennis Courts, Stables, Thompson’s Boat House and Golf Course

Provide training to stable staff and other concession operators who are in contact with park users and ultimately become park representatives.

Provide and post interpretive program information at each concession location.

## Park Trails

Revise the Rock Creek Park Discovery Pack and make them available at multiple locations.

## Community Gardens

Establish “Plant a Row for Poverty” and encourage community gardeners to share produce with local food banks.

## **Interpretive Media**

During the June 2009 workshop, participants determined that interpretive media will be the primary method to tell the stories associated with the Civil War Defenses of Washington, Dumbarton Oaks Park, Montrose Park, Meridian Hill Park, and the other outlying sites within the park. Staffing limitations and some physical resource locations prevent personal services from being provided at all Rock Creek Park sites. Depending on the location and associated community, bilingual media should be developed. Interpretive media should build upon and connect to Cultural Tourism DC and other non-NPS interpretive media within and adjacent to the park.

Throughout this section, thematic connections will be shown in parentheses.

## Audiovisual Media

Audiovisual media are well suited to the presentation of chronological and sequential material. They can capture realism, provide emotional impact, and create a mood or atmosphere. Also they can reach many visitors at one time and be posted on the park website. Audiovisual elements may be included in exhibits, posted, in addition to being shown in dedicated auditorium spaces.

To upgrade the audiovisual media at Rock Creek Park, the staff should take the following actions:

- Update the media delivery system in the theater and evaluate the usefulness of the existing cameras, projectors, and audio equipment.
- Update “A Homecoming” production and technology (Theme 1).

- Improve the audio accessibility of the Nature Center, Old Stone House, and Peirce Mill exhibits (PMIS #149618).

### Portable Audiovisual Opportunities

Portable audio programming can provide opportunities to connect to resource meanings while walking, running, or riding along the roads and the trails. The park’s staff should discuss, research, and determine the best method to offer “individualized” audio and/or audiovisual opportunities utilizing the most current technologies including the following:

- Develop new podcasts for sites that currently do not have these services (Theme 1-4).
- Expand podcasts offerings by partnering with a local university (Theme 2 and 3).
- Provide a link to trail maps and information using iPhone applications.
- Develop an audio and video tour of the Civil War Defenses of Washington (Theme 3).
- Continue limited use of Guide by Cell (Theme 3).
- Develop downloadable tours and global positioning system (GPS)-cued information stations (Theme 2 and 3).
- Investigate the technological feasibility of installing a fish cam to capture images of the herring run. (Theme 2).
- Develop a monthly radio program or establish a Traveler Information System (TIS) that people could tune in to as they drive through the park. This could include seasonal

interpretive information, updates on park programs and safety messages for driving through the park. (Theme 1-4).

### Publications

Visitors typically use publications in two ways: for information and orientation during their visit, and for in-depth interpretation following their visit. To best meet these needs, the following actions should be taken:

- Ensure that revisions and new NPS publications provide up-to-date information and further reference resources about monuments and memorials. (Theme 1 and 3)
- Ensure park trail maps that provide an interpretation of the trail are available at all visitor contact stations. Make the location more noticeable and provide them at more locations.
- Explore alternate and perhaps more relevant ways to reach out to the traditional media audience. Explore development of a digital newsletter.
- Complete and print a Meridian Hill Park brochure providing residents and other visitors with an understanding of the park’s history and the issues it currently faces. (Themes 1-4)
- Update and print the existing Dumbarton Oaks Park - Montrose Park brochure. (Theme 1-3)
- Develop and print Fort Stevens, Fort DeRussy, and Battleground National Cemetery brochures. (Theme 3)
- Develop a walking tour brochure of the Georgetown waterfront and surrounding area (Themes 1-4).

- Develop a site bulletin for the Conduit Road School House (Theme 3).
- Develop new park literature in cooperation with Eastern National, including an archeology booklet and Battleground National Cemetery research.
- Develop and install wayside exhibits and an orientation kiosk at Georgetown Waterfront Park (Themes 1-4).
- Develop and install a Montrose Park orientation panels and interpretive wayside exhibits about the establishment and history of Montrose Park (Themes 1-3).

### Wayside Exhibits

Wayside exhibits tell the park story on location. They “caption the landscape” and help visitors make direct connections to resources and their meanings. Wayside exhibits provide round-the-clock information and interpretation. With appealing high-quality design, writing, and graphics, they can serve to instill and reinforce respect for important resources.

In association with good graphics, waysides can show what a site looked like at different points in time. In addition, temporary waysides can be developed inexpensively to interpret construction and restoration/preservation projects.

A parkwide wayside exhibit proposal is recommended to ensure the development of a complete and unified system of waysides with an NPS identity. The proposal will provide an in-depth assessment of all potential wayside exhibit sites. It will include informational and interpretive exhibits. The document also can set priorities to guide wayside development in phases as funding allows. The proposal will describe the purpose of each wayside exhibit, identify graphics available for use, show thumbnail design concept drawings, and determine exact exhibit sizes, base styles, and locations. A detailed budget estimate also would be part of the document. Specific areas of emphasis include:

- Update and install interpretive waysides at Peirce Mill (Themes 1-3).
- Develop and install orientation panels at Dumbarton Oaks Park entrances and interpretive wayside exhibits about the history and philosophy that shaped Dumbarton Oaks Park (Theme 1).
- Develop and install trailhead and interpretive waysides along the nature trail at Glover-Archbold Park (Theme 2).
- Develop and install trail waysides concerning the geological history parkwide (Themes 1-2).
- Develop and install waysides at the Conduit Road School House (Theme 3)
- Develop new waysides as appropriate for sites that currently do not have these features. Care should be taken with these waysides to not mar the landscape (Themes 1-4).

### Exhibits

Plan, design, and fabricate new exhibits for the Nature Center (PMIS #150740). These exhibits should create one visitor flow pattern, present one cohesive message, and offer a unified visitor experience. The exhibit plan must address current themes, remove ineffective messages, and upgrade the exhibits to meet NPS accessibility and exhibit standards.

- Develop, fabricate, and circulate a traveling archeology exhibit (Theme 2-3).

- Create a portable interpretive exhibit that will be displayed seasonally in high-use areas (Theme 1-4).
- Develop a web-based exhibit using the museum collections to showcase Rock Creek Park resources.
- Better organize the displays and hands-on activities in Peirce Barn (Theme 3)
- Develop Exhibit Concept Plans for Old Stone House and Peirce Mill that reflect the diversity of historic and cultural sites within Georgetown and the National Park Service. Include exhibits on architecture, historic preservation, and building evolution that will encourage visitors to become involved in the restoration and preservation efforts (Theme 3).
- Upgrade and replace aging tree identification signs on nature trail (Theme 2).

- Renovate the Discovery Room to engage pre-school age children in creative and educational activities. (Theme 1-4).

### Historic Furnishings

Research, update, and expand the 1986 Historic Furnishings Report for the Old Stone House. Acquire and install the historic furnishings necessary to implement the plan.

Park staff will need to answer the following questions within the plan to determine how best to use historic furnishings:

- Should the areas be fully furnished or accessible reproductions?
- How should the park address an environment that cannot support historic fabric or original artifacts?
- Should areas that are not accessible be used?
- Are there any opportunities to consider adaptive re-use?



The “Bridging the Watershed” programs bring hundreds of students annually to the park for scientific field studies.

## Personal Services

### Education Programs

An effective park education program requires adequate staff for planning, development, implementation, and assessment. The resources and themes of Rock Creek Park offer great potential for the development of dynamic and popular education programs in partnership with local area schools.

With a strong program and ties directly to local, state, and national curriculum standards, more schools will see the value of using the park to help meet their needs. Specific actions will include:

- Continue the relationship with the Alice Ferguson Foundation and its teacher institute to provide more educators and community groups with environmental education skills.
- Continue to provide signature programs such as Bridging the Watershed, Junior Ranger Camp, and Weed Warriors.
- Update and strengthen the curriculum-based programs to integrate with D.C., Virginia, and Maryland school standards of learning. Develop and improve pre- and post-visit activities for all curriculum-based programs. Develop new curriculum-based programs including “Colonial America: Life in Georgetown” (PMIS #101001); “Native Peoples of Rock Creek Valley” (PMIS #109404); “Climate Change” (PMIS #149502) and the Civil War.
- Establish a Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program (PMIS #149401).
- Use new planetarium technology to provide curriculum-based programs and to address critical resource issues such as climate change (PMIS #149381 and #125633)
- Increase the number of curriculum-based education programs presented.
- Develop relationships with Girl Scouts of America and Boy Scouts of America to provide opportunities for service and education.



Exploring new ways to connect with horseback riders and other recreational park users is a future recommendation.

- Offer distance-learning opportunities through the continued development of educational traveling trunks and expanded opportunities through the development of environmental education websites. Utilize the latest distance-learning technologies for education programs.
- Implement an evaluation system to continually assess the formal place-based learning programs held in the park, guided and self-guided programs for school classes visiting the park, and informal field trips.
- Develop a relationship with the Latin American Youth Center to provide opportunities for engaging Latino audiences in informal education.

### Interpretive Programs

Interpreters are the best interactive tool to enable visitors to experience, understand, appreciate, and make personal connections with the resource. Park staff should be committed to providing national interpretive development program training, meeting certification standards in interpretive competencies, presenting interpretive services, and auditing and evaluating these services.

Rock Creek Park interpretive staff continually work to improve interpretation and to tell interpretive stories more effectively. Seasonal staff members bring a variety of interpretive styles and interests, new scholarship, and interest that open the door to a new interpretive focus, topics and/or projects.

Interpretive program opportunities that the park will explore include:

- Provide occasional interpretive programs at the outlying sites, including Montrose Park, Kahlil Gibran Memorial, and Battleground National Cemetery. Continue public programming at Meridian Hill Park that is reflective of the diversity of cultures living in the surrounding area. Increase interpretive programming at Dumbarton Oaks Park and Meridian Hill Park. Provide new interpretive services at Georgetown Waterfront Park.
- Increase informal ranger roves throughout the park including at the picnic areas.
- Explore ways to increase interpretive opportunities for active recreational park users.
- Expand interpretive components into clean-up events and invasive pulls within the park.
- Increase programming that addresses “green” living. Develop programs and classes related to community and formal gardening. Work with the Friends of Peirce Mill to explore ways to interpret the relationship between health and whole grains.
- Develop outreach activities related to Deer Management Plan. Incorporate current resource management studies, including the 2007 archeology study and projects such as the paving of Beach Drive, into interpretive programs and temporary exhibits.
- Offer more adult programs at the Nature Center.

- Develop concession-led boat tours at Thompson Boat House, similar to the horse-riding tours, where everyone has their own boat and the concession employee talks with them through a microphone.
- Partner with the Friends of Peirce Mill to provide more interpretive programs on the Peirce family estate and the industrial history of the Rock Creek Valley.
- Partner with the Latin American Youth Center and the Brightwood Community to provide more interpretive programs relevant to contemporary issues and audiences.

Since personal services interpretive programs are relatively easy to change, the activities should be evaluated on a regular basis to discontinue those that are not effective, modify and improve those that require it, and validate those that are successful.

### Special Events

All special events must relate to established purposes, significance, and themes. They must also provide interpretive opportunities. Park staff should develop and present interpretive programs once a quarter focused on different themes, such as landscape architecture, archeology, historic preservation in the park, and cultural landscapes. Park staff and partners will work together to present programs that target commemorative events in outlying areas:

- 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Old Stone House
- Peirce Mill Bicentennial
- War of 1812 and Star Spangled Banner Bicentennial
- Civil War Sesquicentennial
- National Park Service Centennial

With the number of upcoming special events, park staff will make a decision about whether to hold Rock Creek day annually or less frequently.



Five major special events will provide opportunities for visitors of all ages to discover the historic significance of Rock Creek Park’s resources.

## Partnerships

Interpretive partnerships play a key role in the delivery of essential programs and can provide opportunities for enhanced interpretive products and services.

Effectively managing all of these partnerships may depend on establishing a Partnership Coordinator position. This role has been a collateral duty assignment for the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and Chief of Interpretation and Resource Management. To be truly effective, though, it should be a full-time position. The primary role of the coordinator will be to facilitate the development and growth of these and future partnerships.

Future growth of interpretive partnerships is contingent largely upon hiring a Partnership Coordinator. This would allow the park to:

- Strive to be involved in healthy 50-50 partnerships that meet both NPS and partner goals. Good

communication, in both directions, is essential.

- Conduct an assessment of partnership needs. Determine what skills, capacity, and assets the park needs from partners and clarify what the park partners' needs and goals are.
- Evaluate current partnerships using the recent General Accounting Office review.
- Establish working relationships with neighboring universities to develop adult learning opportunities, marketing strategies, a volunteer base, and studio projects.
- Strengthen partnerships with community groups and partners to provide activities and programs that foster sound environmental stewardship. Increase training opportunities for partners and friends groups including NPS mission and interpretive skills. Provide reciprocal training for park staff to include partners' missions



Carter Barron Amphitheater provides family-oriented cultural and performing arts programs.

and resources. Build upon and expand interpretive programs and activities being offered by partners and friends groups. Establish a link to all partners' websites.

- Coordinate friends groups' efforts to assist with parkwide projects.
- Develop a friends group specifically for Carter Barron that will assist in fundraising and conducting benefit programs for Carter Barron and other Rock Creek Park projects.
- Work with the Friends of Peirce Mill to revise the curriculum-based education program. Provide program outlines and training to the Friends of Peirce Mill volunteers.
- Work with the Latin American Youth Center, through a collaboration of Environment for the Americas, home of the International Migratory Bird Day and the NPS Flight Migratory Bird Program, to connect with Spanish-speaking visitors.

### Cooperating Association

Rock Creek Park interpretation managers will work with the Eastern National Regional Manager and National Capital Region Cooperating Association Coordinator to review and update the scope of sales, and ensure the park themes will be represented through a diversity of sales items and price points.

Park staff and Eastern National will work together to establish a venue for author programs and book signings.

### Volunteer Program

The Volunteers-In-Parks (VIP) program could be enhanced with dedicated NPS supervision and an increase in VIP funding. A well-designed and well-run park volunteer program generally

depends on establishing a Volunteer Coordinator position. This role has been a collateral duty assignment for the Supervisory Park Ranger, but to be truly effective it should be a full-time position. The primary role of the coordinator will be to facilitate the retention of current volunteers as well as the development and growth of the volunteer program.

Future growth of the park volunteer program is contingent primarily upon hiring a Volunteer Coordinator. This would allow the park to:

- Develop and implement a retention strategy that will include creating and maintaining a database of volunteers; updating position descriptions and determining how many volunteers are needed for each task; communicating the length of assignment when recruiting volunteers to minimize turnover; developing a standard VIP uniform to provide consistent visual cues; working with partners to reduce competition for volunteers; and working with park staff to ensure that there is adequate oversight and support for volunteers.
- Update a needs assessment for volunteers. Identifying what tasks park staff need volunteer help with will provide the coordinator with the necessary information to successfully recruit. The assessment also would help identify potential individuals or group skills that might be needed. For example, youth groups may be identified who have an interest and skill in developing web-based services. Amateur photographers and regular local visitors may be available to contribute to or perhaps even manage a nature watch site on the internet.
- Recognize volunteer achievements and host a volunteer appreciation day.

## Research and Evaluation Needs

Research is important in the development of specific media and programs and will be planned as part of all substantial media projects and special programming. The park is planning many different types of media projects during the life of this plan, and each will demand its own research and evaluation. Front-end evaluations would query potential visitors before products and activities are developed. This type of research is targeted so that practical use can be made of the results. Formative evaluations would be conducted during conceptual design and would test inexpensive mock-ups of interpretive media and programs before fully investing in final products. Summative evaluations are valuable in helping to determine the effectiveness of final media, facilities, and programs – i.e. whether the intended themes are being communicated, if people are actually making use of the information, and if visitor behavior is affected.

The recommended media projects and interpretive programs will also benefit from the following research projects:

- Research and interpret the African-American history associated with the Battle of Fort Stevens and the fort system.

### Evaluation

- Coordinate a charette for the Nature Center and Planetarium to determine how to best use the facility.

## Staffing and Training Needs

For a staff of three full-time permanent interpreters, the sheer number of sites within the park that require interpretive services is staggering. Year-round staffing, much less providing minimal personal services, at park sites other than the Nature Center will be challenging until additional funding is provided.

In 2009, the park received an OFS increase to provide visitor services at Georgetown Waterfront Park. One term (GS-025-7) and two permanent (GS-025-5) interpreters will be hired to research and develop interpretive materials and provide ranger talks during peak visitation periods.

Three other funding requests are pending which would increase staff and presence at Peirce Mill (OFS #10238), Meridian Hill Park (OFS #13285), and Battleground National Cemetery (OFS #4934). There is also a request for an additional interpreter to work on developing interpretive services based on the archeological investigation (PMIS #149614).

Due to collateral duty responsibilities, the Education Specialist is not able to devote 100% of her time to developing, presenting and evaluating education programs. A park education staff is needed to provide curriculum-based education programs Monday through Friday during the school year (September through June). If the Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program is funded, the park may be able to increase the number of curriculum-based programs offered by revising existing programs and developing new lesson plans.

A full-time volunteer coordinator position is needed to facilitate the development and growth of the volunteer program.

In anticipation of the Civil War Sesquicentennial, a GS-025-13 Civil War Defenses of Washington Coordinator has been hired. The Coordinator will work with park staff, partners, and volunteers to expand existing programming and services, and develop new ones.

Interpretive staff would benefit from the following:

- Sharing information within the park to increase resource knowledge.
- Quarterly brown bag lunchtime meeting sessions held across divisions.
- Increased access to skills training in:
  - Interpretive coaching
  - Current software and technology
  - Volunteer program management
  - Leadership
  - Planetarium

- Creating a “Rock Creek Park Fundamentals” training to improve orientation to the park and its resource.
- Increased cross-training opportunities.
- Including contractors in “Rock Creek Park Fundamentals” training.
- Establish funding and procedures that will allow staff to attend conferences and other training outside of the National Capital Region.



An operating fund increase will provide staffing to increase opportunities for visitor contact at Georgetown Waterfront Park.

## Implementation Priorities

### One – Three Years

#### Marketing

- Establish an outreach program to connect to local communities through schools, clubs, businesses, non-profits, and universities.

#### Interpretive Media

- Emphasize the use of interpretive media at Civil War Defenses of Washington, Dumbarton Oaks Park, Montrose Park, Meridian Hill Park, and the other outlying sites within the park.
- Provide access to park using the most current technologies.
  - Provide a link to trail maps and information using iPhone applications.
  - Develop GPS-cued information.
  - Update media delivery system in the Nature Center auditorium. Review cameras, projectors and audio equipment.
  - Develop new podcasts for sites that currently do not have these features.
  - Develop a parkwide wayside exhibit proposal incorporating the Civil War Defenses of Washington and Georgetown Waterfront Park.
  - Ensure that revisions and new NPS publications provide up-to-date information and further reference resources about monuments and memorials.

#### Personal Services

- Continually update and strengthen curriculum-based education programs to align with D.C., Virginia, and Maryland school standards of learning.

- Continue the relationship with the Alice Ferguson Foundation and its teacher institutes for teaching educators and community groups environmental education skills.
- Use new planetarium technology to provide curriculum-based programs and to address critical resource issues such as climate change.
- Continue to provide signature programs such as Bridging the Watershed, Junior Ranger Camp, and Weed Warriors.
- Incorporate current resource management studies including the 2007 archeology study and projects such as the paving of Beach Drive into interpretive programs and temporary exhibits.
- Prepare outreach activities related to upcoming Deer Management Plan.

#### Partnerships

- Conduct assessment of partnership needs. Determine what skills, capacity, and assets the park needs from partners and clarify what the park partners' needs and goals are.
- Evaluate current partnerships using the recent General Accounting Office review.
- Recruit and hire a partnership coordinator.

#### Volunteers

- Create a full-time volunteer coordinator position.
- Improve retention and recognition of current volunteers.
- Update the needs assessment for volunteers.

### Three – Five Years

#### Marketing

- Establish contacts through social networking sites including Facebook and Twitter.
- Make public service announcements encouraging visitors to “Volunteer and Make a Difference” and to attend special events using a variety of media including television, radio, and movie theaters.
- Establish an outreach program to connect to local universities.

#### Interpretive Media

- Develop an Exhibit Concept Plan to upgrade or replace the exhibits in the Nature Center.
- Develop new media and update “A Homecoming” production and technology.
- Develop a web-based exhibit using the museum collections to showcase Rock Creek Park resources.
- Create and publish brochures for outlying sites.
- Create a portable interpretive exhibit that will be displayed seasonally in high-use areas.
- Develop new park literature in cooperation with Eastern National including an archeology booklet and Battleground National Cemetery research.

#### Personal Services

- Increase numbers of curriculum-based education programs presented.

- Park staff plan for upcoming commemorative events:
  - 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Old Stone House
  - Peirce Mill Bicentennial
  - War of 1812 and Star Spangled Banner Bicentennial
  - Civil War Sesquicentennial
  - National Park Service Centennial
- Increase informal ranger roves throughout the park, including at the picnic areas.
- Explore ways to increase interpretive opportunities for active recreational park users.
- Expand interpretive components into clean-up events and invasive pulls within the park.
- Provide additional occasional interpretive programs at multiple outlying sites, including Montrose Park, Kahlil Gibran Memorial, and Battleground National Cemetery. Increase number by 10%.
- Increase programming that addresses “green” living.

#### Partnerships

- Strengthen partnerships with community groups and partners to provide activities and programs that foster sound environmental stewardship.
- Establish working relationships with neighboring universities to develop adult learning opportunities, marketing strategies, volunteer base, and studio projects.

## **Five – Ten Years**

### Marketing

- Establish an outreach program to connect to commuters.

### Interpretive Media

- Investigate the technological feasibility of installing a fish cam to capture images of the herring run.
- Create a “nature watch” website using visitor photos and finds within the park.
- Develop and print a site bulletin and develop and install waysides at the Conduit Road School House.

### Personal Services

- Develop and give interpretive programs once a quarter that are focused on different themes including landscape architecture, archeology, historic preservation in the park, and cultural landscapes. Park staff and partners will work together to present programs that target commemorative events.
- Develop relationships with Girl Scouts of America and Boy Scouts of America to provide opportunities for service and education.

### Partnerships

- Build upon and expand interpretive programs and activities being offered by partners and friends groups.
- Develop fundraising opportunities with partners.



## Appendices

## **Appendix A: The Planning Team**

### **National Park Service**

#### **Rock Creek Park**

Adrienne Applewhaite-Coleman, Superintendent

Cindy Cox, Deputy Superintendent

Ricardo Perez, Supervisory Park Ranger

Dan Winings, Park Ranger, Interpretation

Maggie Zadorozny, Education Specialist

Ron Harvey, Park Ranger, Interpretation

Deanna Ochs, Park Ranger, Interpretation

Rita Gunther, Park Ranger, Carter Barron Amphitheater

Simone Monteleone Moffett, Cultural Resource Specialist and Acting Chief of Resource Management and Visitor Services

Bill Yeaman, Natural Resource Specialist

Lora Williams, Facility Operations Specialist

Andrew Seacord, Park Ranger, Interpretation (retired)

Bob Ford, Natural Resources Management Specialist (retired)

Dwight Madison, Supervisory Park Ranger (retired)

Stephen Strach, former Cultural Resources Management Specialist,

Perry Wheelock, former Cultural Resources Management Specialist

Meghan Kish, former Chief of Resources Management and Visitor Services

Laura Illige, former Chief of Resources Management and Visitor Services

Julia Washburn, former Chief of Resources Management and Visitor Services

Aly Baltrus, former Park Ranger, Interpretation

Anne O'Neill, former Park Ranger, Interpretation

#### **National Capital Region**

Sue Hansen, Chief of Interpretation and Education

George Vasjuta, Interpretive Planner (retired)

Maureen Joseph, Landscape Architect

Stephen Potter, Archeologist

#### **Harpers Ferry Center**

Toni Dufficy, Interpretive Planner (Team Captain)

Peggy Scherbaum, Interpretive Planner

Tom Tankersley, former Interpretive Planner

Bill Justice, Chief of Interpretation, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park

Sandy Weber, Interpretive Specialist, Washington Area Support Office

Elizabeth Hoermann, Director, NPS Center for Teaching and Learning

Nat Kuykendall, Planner, Denver Service Center

#### **Park Partners**

Dr. Phil Ogalvie, Historian, Friends of Peirce Mill

Richard Abbott, President, Friends of Peirce Mill

Steve Dryden, Vice President, Friends of Peirce Mill

Beth Mullin, Executive Director, Friends of Rock Creek's Environment

Anna Wadhams, Educator, Bridging the Watershed

Stacy Maddalena, Regional Manager, Eastern National

Lee Petty, Assistant Regional Manager, Eastern National

Jody Smolik, Education Director, Discovery Creek Children's Museum of Washington

## Appendix B: Accessibility Guidelines

Every attempt will be made to provide full access to interpretive media and programs to ensure people with physical and mental disabilities have access to the same information necessary for safe and meaningful visits to national parks. This is in compliance with the National Park Service policy:

*“...To provide the highest level of accessibility possible and feasible for persons with visual, hearing, mobility, and mental impairments, consistent with the obligation to conserve park resources and preserve the qualities of the park experience for everyone.”*

*NPS Special Directive 83-3, Accessibility for Disabled Persons*

All interpretation will follow general standards for accessibility as described in the Harpers Ferry Center Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media <http://www.nps.gov/hfc/pdf/accessibility/access-guide-aug2009.pdf>.

## Appendix C: Rock Creek Park Memorials and Statues

1. Guglielmo Marconi Memorial, 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NW
2. James Cardinal Gibbons Statue, 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NW
3. Francis Asbury Memorial, 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NW
4. Newlands Memorial Fountain at Chevy Chase Circle, Connecticut Avenue, NW
5. Meridian Hill Park-Dante Memorial Statue
6. Meridian Hill Park-Serenity Statue
7. Meridian Hill Park- James Buchanan Memorial
8. Meridian Hill Park-Jeanne D’Arc (Joan of Arc) Statue
9. Battleground National Cemetery-150<sup>th</sup> Ohio National Guard monument
10. Battleground National Cemetery-122<sup>nd</sup> New York Volunteer monument
11. Battleground National Cemetery- 25<sup>th</sup> New York Volunteer Calvary monument
12. Battleground National Cemetery-98<sup>th</sup> Regular Pennsylvania Volunteer monument
13. Fort Stevens-Sixth Army Corps Monument
14. Rock Creek Park-Jules J. Jusserand Memorial Bench
15. Major General Artemas Ward Monument, Ward Circle
16. Montrose Park- Sarah Rittenhouse Memorial
17. Francis Scott Key Park- Key Memorial
18. Major General George McClellan Monument, Connecticut Avenue, NW
19. Kahlil Gibran Memorial, Massachusetts Avenue, NW at Normanstone Parkway
20. Peter Muhlenberg Memorial, Connecticut Avenue, NW
21. Garden Club Monuments at Westmoreland Circle
22. Robert Emmet Statue, Massachusetts Avenue, NW (Please Note: This statue is on long-term loan from the Smithsonian Institute and is not owned by the National Park Service).

## Appendix D: Interpretive Themes, Sub-themes, and Associated Stories

A team of park staff and partners worked together to develop these themes during the workshop held in 2009. They are based on the themes identified in the 2005 General Management Plan and the earlier Long-Range Interpretive Plan Foundation workshop. Each theme's sub-themes are identified by diamond-shaped bullets and the associated stories and concepts are identified by round bullets.

### Theme #1: Evolving American Ideas of Parks

Rock Creek Park reflects evolving American ideas of parks as natural and cultural landscapes.

- The changing value of parks in our culture.
- A work of art for the people to enjoy.
- Europe's influences and our borrowed traditions.
- Our desire and need to memorialize.
- Nature converted to cultural landscape.
- The Beatrix Farrand story at Dumbarton Oaks Park.
- Olmstead Brothers planning at Rock Creek Park.
- The role of the McMillian Commission and how the subsequent plan for open space shaped the legacy of the Civil War Defenses of Washington.
- Differing views on nature.
- NPS cultural resource preservation movement started at Peirce Mill.

### Theme #2: Window for Understanding the Natural World

Rock Creek Park is a window for understanding the natural world we live in, from the stars to the ecosystems that are embodied within the park.

- Rock Creek Park contains viable, yet vulnerable, urban streams which maintain diverse ecosystems, despite significant adverse impacts.
- Rock Creek Park preserves a remnant of the biodiversity of the eastern deciduous forest that once characterized the entire region.
- The integrity of Rock Creek Park's nature is threatened by the occurrence of exotic species and human impacts, including climate change and light pollution.
- Rock Creek Park exhibits evidence of dynamic and even catastrophic geologic change.
- Rock Creek Park is a link in a global network of migratory routes, stopovers, and destinations important to the survival of a variety of species and resulting in an ever-changing faunal array.
- Rock Creek Park's open space/sky is an avenue for celestial observation and revelation leading to understanding.
- Rock Creek Park Planetarium is a tool for understanding the night sky and exploration of the heavens.

### Theme #3: 5,000 Years of Dynamic Cultural History

For five thousand years, different groups of people have used the biological and physical resources of the Rock Creek Park area for survival and commerce, leaving evidence of changing technologies. These changes are preserved in the tangible evidence of human interaction with the natural environment.

- Locating the federal district at the boundary between the Piedmont and the coastal plain has resulted in diverse use of the Rock Creek Park area ranging from economic and agricultural development, military defense, and recreation. In turn, the Rock Creek Park area has influenced the development and character of the nation's capital.
- The rich cultural diversity of the nation's capital is reflected in the myriad of ways in which people use and view the park.

- Geography and topography have shaped 5,000 years of dynamic cultural history in the Rock Creek Valley.
- Rock Creek Park is a living laboratory and museum of natural and cultural history that enriches human intellect, stimulates curiosity, and enables reflection upon individual and/or national values.
  - Human relationship to water.
  - Non-point source pollution.
  - Native American history.
  - The role of the river in the selection and development of the capital city.
  - Francis Scott Key.
  - The procurement and processing of food.
  - Technology.
  - Economic and industrial history.
  - Human adaptation to and of the land and natural resources.
  - Peirce family history and slavery.
  - Georgetown's history, its people and places.
  - History and myths of the Old Stone House.
  - The Old Stone House occupants' history.
  - The domestic life and children's lot, urban slavery.
  - Preserving local history – your role.
  - Defending the Nation's Capital – the system of fortifications.
  - Topography shaping history – history shaping the landscape.
  - The effects of war – natural and cultural/ biological and psychological.
  - Campaign of 1864.
  - Lincoln under fire.
  - Enjoying the dynamics of the natural world through exploring and understanding.
  - The past and the future.
  - Stewardship: What you can do to help.
  - Development and evolution of transportation technology.
  - African-American history.
  - Women's history.
  - Architecture.
  - Landscape design.
  - Archeology.

#### Theme #4: Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Wellbeing

The resources of Rock Creek Park provide opportunities for nurturing human physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing.

Rock Creek Park allows us to connect with nature and our past both physically and spiritually.

- Biophilia and the human need for green space.
- The need for creating comfortable nature.
- Our need for places to recreate.

## Appendix E: Existing Interpretive Services by Theme

Theme 1: Evolving American Ideas of Parks			
Publications:	Advanced Junior Ranger	Buildings/ Monuments:	Meridian Hill
	Respite		Dumbarton Oaks Park
	George Burnap (W)		Exhibits:
	John J. Earley (W)		
	Horace Peaslee (W)		
	Ferruccio Vitale (W)		
Mary Henderson (W)			

### Locations Key:

W = Website  
 NC = Nature Center  
 EN = Eastern National  
 PM = Peirce Mill/Barn  
 OSH = Old Stone House  
 MH = Meridian Hill  
 DO = Dumbarton Oaks Park  
 MP = Montrose Park  
 CW = Civil War Defenses of Washington  
 T = Trails  
 BTW = Bridging the Watershed

FORCE = Friends of Rock Creek  
 FOPM = Friends of Peirce Mill  
 P = Planetarium  
 PG13 = Picnic Grove 13  
 CR = Conduit Road School House  
 HC = Horse Center  
 MC = Miller Cabin  
 FSK = Francis Scott Key  
 TB = Thompson's Boat House  
 CB = Carter Barron Amphitheatre

Theme 2: Window for Understanding the Natural World				
Publications:	Junior Ranger	Waysides:	Herring Highway (9 locations)	
	Advanced Junior Ranger		Forest Food (NC-Edge of Woods)	
	Respite		Giants of the Forest (NC-Edge)	
	ROCR Official Map & Guide		Meadow's End (NC-Edge)	
	Woodlands Trail Booklet (NC)		Living on the Edge (NC-Edge)	
	Invasive Non-Native Plants (NC & W)		What Happened Here (NC-Edge)	
	Bird Checklist (NC & W)		Chesapeake Bay and its Rivers (TB)	
	Rock Creek Park Geology (W)		Exhibits:	Natural History of ROCR (NC)
	Coyote FAQ (W)			Touch Table (NC)
	Monuments and Memorials (W)			Solar System (NC)
	Local Guide to Birds (EN)			Bee Hive (NC)
	Why Are There No Bears...(EN)			Live Animal Exhibit (NC)
	Story of Space Exploration (EN)			Discover Rock Creek (NC)
				Wildflowers (NC)
Buildings/ Monuments:	Fish Ladder (PM)	Bird and Butterfly Garden (NC)	Community Gardens	
Personal Services:	Women in the Stars (P)	Education Materials:	Discovery Room (NC)	
	Exploring the Sky (P)		Summer Teacher/Ranger Institute (BTW)	
	Our Solar System (P)		Potomac River & Chesapeake Bay Issue Investigation (BTW)	
	Oasis in Space (P)		Discovery Creek (CR)	
	A Closer Look at the Sun (P)		Natural History of ROCR Activity Sheets (NC)	
	The Native American's Night Sky (P)		Pre-K Nature Tales (NC)	
	Creature Feature (NC)		Sensory Stroll (NC)	
	Nature Walks (NC)		Meet a Tree (NC)	
	Children's Programs (NC)		Flower Power (NC)	
	Junior Ranger Camps (NC)		Magical Seeds (NC)	
	Ranger on the Road		Habitat Hunt (NC)	
	Fireside Chat (PG13)		Be a Junior Naturalist (NC)	
	Who Dung It? (NC)		Adaptations (NC)	
	Exploring Mars (NC)		Aquatic Ecology (NC)	
	Senior Stretch (NC)		Layers of the Forest (NC)	
	Backyard Science (NC)		Protecting Our Park (NC)	
	The Forest (T)		Forest Ecosystems (NC)	
	Woodland Trail Hike (T)		Water Quality (NC)	
	Migratory Bird Walk (T)		Animal Viewing (NC)	
	Rapids Bridge Hike (T)		Seasons in the Park (NC)	
	Riley Spring Bridge Hike (T)		Watershed Watchdogs (BTW)	
	Pieles, Curernos y Mas (PG23)		Don't Get Sedimental (BTW)	
	Special Events:		Rock Creek Park Day (NC)	Alien Invaders (BTW)
River Cleanup (BTW)		Talkin' Trash (BTW)	The Sky Above Us (P)	
Clean-ups(FORCE)		Wonders of the Sky (P)	Our Universe (P)	
Stream Restoration (FORCE)		Searching the Solar System (P)	Night Sky to Freedom (P)	
A-V:	"A Homecoming" (NC)	Astronomy Activity Sheets (P)	Giants of the Forest Hike (PM)	
	Edge of the Woods Trail Audio Description (NC)	River Runs Through It (PM)	Protecting Our Park (PM)	
	Rock Creek Park Scenery (W)	Protecting Our Park (PM)	Impacting Our Watershed (PM)	
	Oasis in Space (P)			

Theme 3: 5,000 Years of Dynamic Cultural History			
Publications:	Junior Ranger	Waysides:	Fish Ladder (PM)
	Advanced Junior Ranger		2 panels at Fort Stevens (CW)
	Respite		2 panels at Fort DeRussey (CW)
	ROCR Official Map & Guide		Fort Totten (CW)
	Peirce Mill Official Map & Guide		Fort Slocum (CW)
	Old Stone House		Fort Reno (CW)
	Civil War Defenses of Washington		Fort Bayard (CW)
	Archeology and History in ROCR (W)		Fort Bunker Hill (CW)
	George Burnap (W)		Battery Kemble (CW)
	John J. Earley (W)		2 panels at Battleground National Cemetery (CW)
	Horace Peaslee (W)		Parrot Rope Walk (MP)
	Ferruccio Vitale (W)		Klinge Mansion
	Mary Henderson (W)		Jusserand Memorial
	Native American Legends (EN)		Adams Mill
Buildings/ Monuments:	Peirce Mill	Blagden Mill	
	Old Stone House	Lyon's Mill	
	Fort Stevens (CW)	Mt. Zion Cemetery	
	Fort DeRussey (CW)	Female Union Band Cemetery	
	Fort Totten (CW)	Peirce Mill (PM)	
	Fort Slocum (CW)	Peirce Plantation (PM)	
	Fort Reno (CW)	Rock Creek Park (PM)	
	Fort Bayard (CW)	Spring House (PM)	
	Fort Bunker Hill (CW)	Modern Wheel/Flowing Stream (PM)	
	Battery Kemble (CW)	Water Power (PM)	
	Battleground National Cemetery (CW)	Woodly Lane Bridge 1888-1897	
	Joan of Arc (MH)	Old Stone House 1766 (OSH)	
	"Serenity" (MH)	Francis Scott Key Park (FSK)	
	Dante (MH)	Star-Spangled Banner (FSK)	
	Buchanan Memorial (MH)	Francis Scott Key (FSK)	
	Jusserand Memorial	Exhibits:	Archaeology/Quarry (NC)
	Francis Scott Key		Height of Colonial People (OSH)
	Traffic Circles		Mills of Rock Creek Valley (PM)
Lime Kilns	Peirce Estate (PM)		
Personal Services:	Night Sky to Freedom (P)	Historic Furnishings:	Old Stone House
	Native American Night Sky (P)		Education Materials:
	Women in Stars (P)	A Mill or Grocery Store (PM)	
	Black Georgetown Walks (OSH)	Cornucopia From the Farm to Fingers (PM)	
	Historical Hikes (NC)	Native Woodland Peoples of Rock Creek Valley (PM)	
	Women of the Colonial Period (OSH)	Life at the Peirce Mill Plantation (PM)	
	By Dawn's Early Light (OSH)	Powered on Water and Gravity (PM)	
	Colonial Kids (OSH)	Industrial Revolution Hits Home (PM)	
	Shadows of the Past (T)	Special Events:	Fort Stevens Day (CW)
	Milkhouse Ford Hike (T)		Fort Stevens Cleanup (CW)
	Theodore Roosevelt Hike (PM)		Peirce Mill Open House (FOPM)
	Ranger on the Road	A-V:	Cell Phone Stops (MH,DO,MP, CW)
	Battleground Cemetery Talk (CW)		Fort Stevens Self-guided Walking Tour (W)
	Hunting Methods of Native People (PM)		Battleground National Cemetery Self-guided
	Did Washington Sleep Here (OSH)		Historic Rock Creek (W)
	Star-Spangled Fourth (FSK)		Construction of Meridian Hill (W)
			Historic Photos (W)
		Park Statues (W)	

Theme 4: Physical, Mental and Spiritual Wellbeing			
Publications:	Respite		Recreation:
	ROCR Official Map & Guide 60 Hikes in 60 Miles (EN)		Glover-Archbold (T)
	Dora Camping (EN)		Battery Kemble/Palisades Park (T)
	Outdoor Escapes (EN)		2 Exercise Trails (T)
Personal Services:	Woodland Trail Hike (T)		Tennis
	Migratory Bird Walk (T)		Boating
	Rapids Bridge Hike (T)		Golf
	Riley Spring Bridge Hike (T)		Picnic
	Milkhouse Ford Hike (T)		Exercise
	Senior Stretch		Bicycling
	Trail Rides (HC)		Roller Blading
	Summer Day Camp (HC)		Hiking
	Summer Performances (CB & Fort Reno)		Walking
	Drum Circle (MH)		Cross-country skiing
	Poetry Readings (MC)		Sledding
Exhibits:	Bird and Butterfly Garden (NC)		Tai Chi
	Community Gardens		Ballfields
Special Events:	Rock Creek Park Day (NC)		Playgrounds





## Rock Creek Park

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[www.nps.gov/rocr](http://www.nps.gov/rocr)