

NPS NEXT

A SECOND CENTURY OF SERVICE

VERSION 1 | 2020



NPSNEXT STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP
PARTICIPANT GUIDE

DRAFT
8/19/20

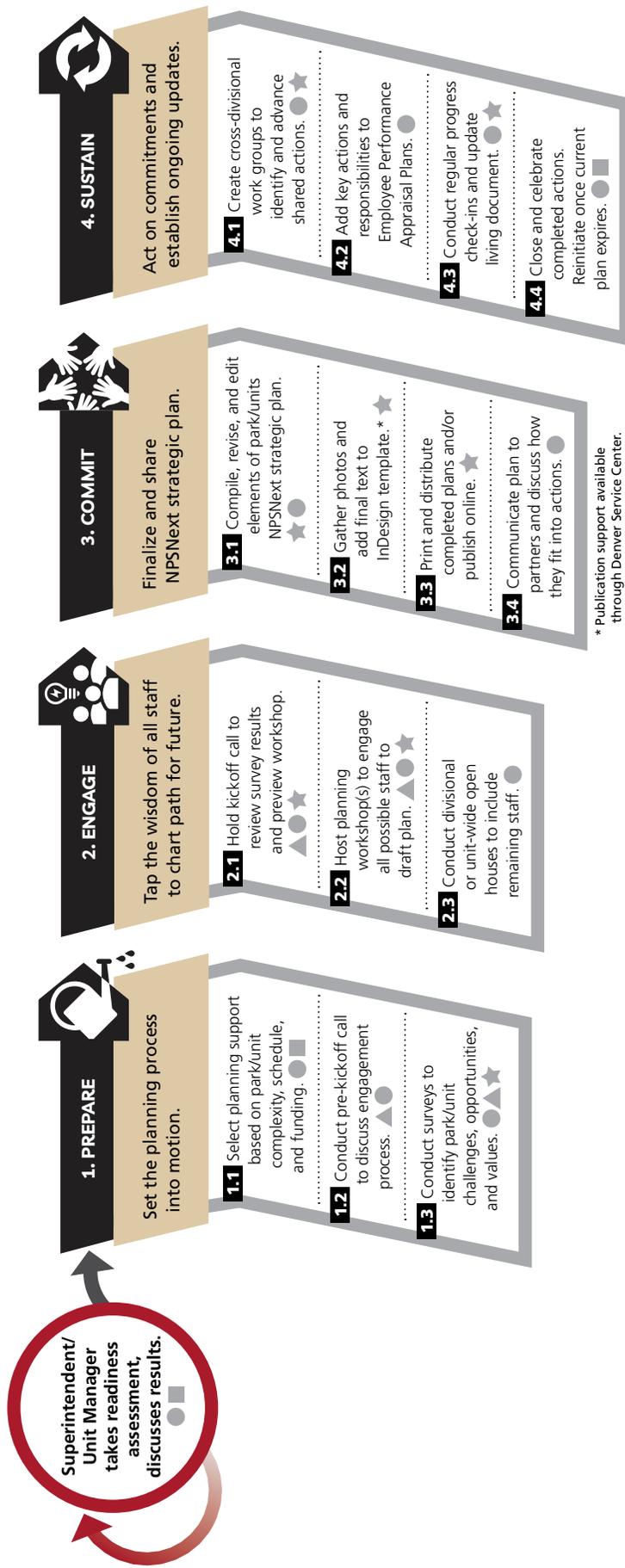
Agenda

Purpose of work session: Draft a strategic plan for your park/unit. The strategic plan will help guide the park/unit operations for the next three to five years.

DAY 1	1
Session A: Welcome and Purpose of Strategic Planning	1
Session B: Mission – Who are we?	6
Session C: Vision – Where do we want to be?	8
Session D: Core Values – What guides us?	10
DAY 2	13
Session E: Pivotal Issues – Where are we now?	13
Session F: Emphasis Areas – What will success look like?	14
Session G: Outcomes	16
DAY 3	19
Session H: Key Actions – How do we get there?	19
Session I: Implementation – How do we track progress?	21



NPSNext Workflow Diagram



LEGEND

- Park/Unit Leadership
 - Regional/Program Leadership
 - ★ Park/Unit Employees
 - ▲ NPSNext Facilitator
- * The task leader is the first shape for each step.

DAY 1

Session A: Welcome and Purpose of Strategic Planning

Purpose of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning helps answer three questions:

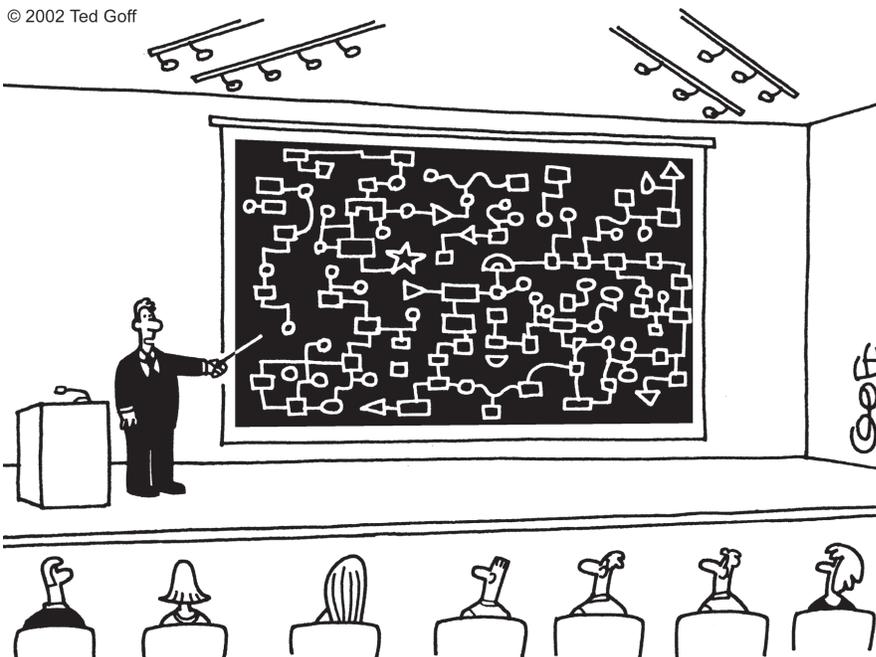
- **Where are we today?** An honest assessment of the current state of affairs for the park/unit.
- **Where do we want to be?** This question is answered through a vision statement and selecting emphasis areas.
- **What are the most important things we need to do to get there?** This question leads us to the heart of a strategic plan—outcomes and key actions.

The strategic plan is typically written for a three- to five-year window and should provide *focus* for programs, operations, staff, etc. This focus should help park/unit teams manage the budgetary and personnel challenges felt widely in the National Park Service (NPS).

So remember:

DON'T DO THIS!!!

© 2002 Ted Goff



"This is our plan for
the next 1,000 years."

STRATEGIC PLANNING

*"Keep it simple, because if you chase **two** rabbits, you won't catch **one**."*

~ Russian proverb



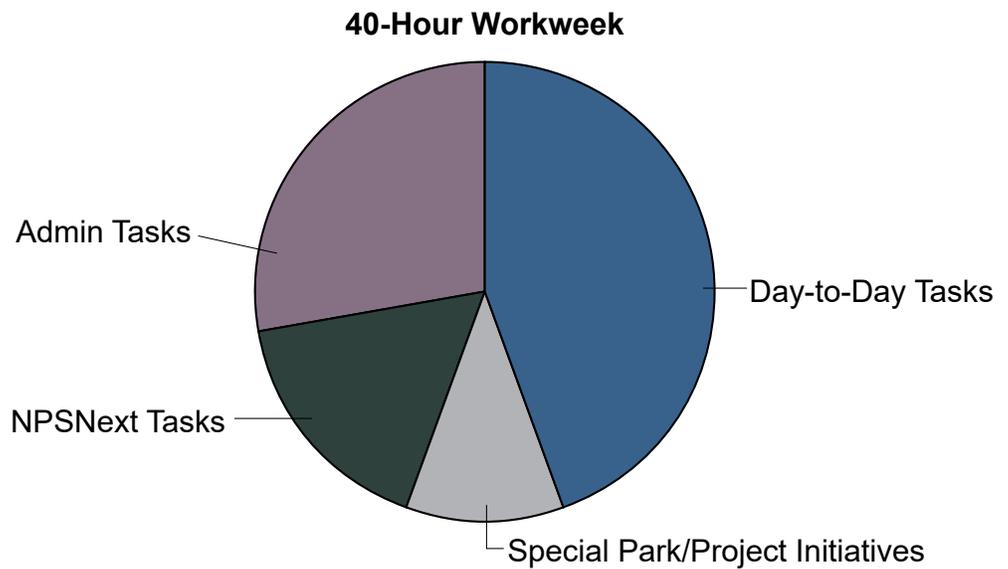
How does Strategic Planning Impact Daily Work?

Some people think strategic planning exercises will result only in “additions” to their existing workloads. This feeling makes them hesitant to engage in strategic planning processes and reluctant to take on the major issues facing an organization. Implementing the strategic plan will not simply add to workloads, it will change them.

Outcomes and key actions should be incorporated into the annual work plans of the park/unit employees. The goal is for every employee to see themselves somewhere in the strategic plan, which is accomplished in part by them contributing to its creation. Sometimes strategic items make up a big part of someone’s workload. Other times, they account for very little.

When it comes to an individual’s workload, the exact mix of strategic actions to normal actions (operational duties, regular projects, day-to-day functions, administrative) is a matter of management discretion and the time/resources available.

How an employee might spend their time during a 40-hour workweek:



Purpose of NPSNext

NPSNext is a streamlined version of strategic planning with a three-fold purpose:

- To provide renewed focus and alignment for our second century of service
- To increase engagement by including all employee voices in planning for the future of our agency
- To build our long-term capacity for planning and strategic thinking throughout the service

The conversations required to complete this streamlined strategic planning process ensure employees at all levels of the organization contribute to our direction as an agency—as parks and programs undertake their own plans and add their own voice to our collective vision. You will establish a clear, shared direction for the park/unit and then select the emphasis areas and actions that will move the park/unit in that direction.

The NPS leadership team is committed to an organizational culture that is increasingly inclusive and participatory that values the diverse ideas, experience, and background of every individual, and empowers an innovative, flexible, and resilient National Park Service to embrace future opportunities and challenges.

Your Associate, Assistant, and Deputy Directors created Washington Support Next (WASONext) as the first, guiding product of NPSNext. It lays out five emphasis areas that represent the priorities that drive our work. We hope the priorities in this plan offer a starting place for identifying your own path forward.



Objectives and Ingredients for the NPSNext Strategic Planning Workshop

Objectives

- Discuss and adopt park/unit mission, vision, and core values that guide staff toward the desired future.
- Understand the pivotal issues facing the park/unit and begin to leverage strengths and opportunities.
- Engage all possible park/unit staff to select key actions to fulfill identified outcomes.
- Leave each session with 80% to 90% drafts of strategic plan elements, which are shown in the graphic below.
- Identify park/unit champions to carry forward and move the components to 95% complete draft in the first step (3.1) of the NPSNext Commit phase.



Ingredients

- **Mission** – The statement that captures the overall purpose of the park/organization and has three components: why the park/unit exists, who it serves, and the benefits
- **Vision** – The vivid description of the park/unit at a future point in time, what the organization will become. It is concise, inspiring, and aspirational and may not be 100% achievable. Vision should be relevant for 5 to 20 years.
- **Core Values** – What the organization recognizes and rewards—strongly held beliefs that are freely chosen, publicly affirmed, and acted upon with consistency
- **Pivotal Issues** – The biggest issues the park/unit faces. Pivotal issues can substantially improve or worsen conditions in the park/unit—they are often framed as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or challenges.
- **Emphasis Areas** – Broad, longer-term priorities that focus an organization’s time, effort, and financial resources to accomplish the mission and move the organization towards its vision.
- **Outcomes** – Define how the emphasis areas will be addressed, what the park will work toward over the next three to five years. They will define what progress toward achievement of the emphasis areas looks like.
- **Key Actions** – Represent measurable, on-the-ground activities that drive progress toward outcomes and may take one or more years to accomplish. Key Actions will be used to develop the park/unit’s annual work plan and will be reviewed and updated annually. Key Actions will roll down into employee EPAPs and work plans.
- **Plan Implementation** – A clear procedure for enacting the plan’s emphasis areas, outcomes, and key actions, as well as monitoring and updating the plan.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

“a deliberative, disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it.”

~ John M. Bryson,
Strategic Planning
for Public and Nonprofit
Organizations



OUR MISSION

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the 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.



Session B: Mission – Who are we?



Mission—the mission statement captures the overall purpose of the park/unit. The textbook definition of a mission statement involves three components:

1. it describes what you do
2. for whom you do it
3. the benefits

The mission statement should be clear and simple and be recognizably yours.

- **Distinction between mission and vision**—our mission (why are we here) versus a description of an ideal future.
- **Do mission statements already exist for park/unit?** Foundation documents or previous planning efforts can provide a starting place.

Example mission statements from NPS parks/units:

- **Catoctin Mountain Park** – The purpose of Catoctin Mountain Park is to provide meaningful recreational opportunities and serve as a setting and buffer for the Presidential Retreat while protecting and interpreting the park’s natural, historical, and cultural resources in the regenerative spirit of the 1930s New Deal conservation programs.
- **Golden Gate National Recreation Area** – The purpose of Golden Gate National Recreation Area is to offer national park experiences to a large and diverse urban population while preserving and interpreting the park’s outstanding natural, historic, scenic, and recreational values.
- **Grand Teton National Park** – The purpose of Grand Teton National Park is to preserve and protect the spectacular scenery of the Teton Range and the valley of Jackson Hole; protect a unique geologic landscape that supports abundant diverse native plants and animals and associated cultural resources; protect wildlands and wildlife habitat within the Greater Yellowstone area, including the migration route of the Jackson elk herd; and to provide opportunities for enjoyment, education, inspiration, and scientific investigation compatible with these resources for present and future generations.
- **John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway** – The purpose of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway is to commemorate the many significant contributions of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. to the cause of conservation and provide both a symbolic and desirable physical connection between Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park.
- **Prince William Forest Park** – Connect people to nature and history through recreation, education, and preservation.
- **Denver Service Center Planning Division** – Collaboratively, the Denver Service Center Planning Division advances the stewardship of resources and visitor experiences by providing servicewide planning expertise and products for parks and programs.
- **Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division** – The Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division preserves and restores acoustic and photic environments, increases scientific understanding, and inspires public appreciation of soundscapes and dark night skies.

Example mission statements from nonprofit and business sectors:

- **Nike** – Create groundbreaking sports innovations, make our products sustainable, build a creative and diverse global team, and make a positive impact in communities where we live and work.
- **Ducks Unlimited** – Unlimited conserves, restores, and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America’s waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people.
- **Google** – To organize the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful.
- **The Nature Conservancy** – To conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.
- **National Association for Interpretation** – Inspiring leadership and excellence to advance natural and cultural interpretation as a profession.
- **American Alliance for Theatre & Education** – The American Alliance for Theatre & Education serves and inspires a growing collective of theatre artists, educators, and scholars committed to transforming young people and communities through the theatre arts.
- **National Association of State Procurement Officials** – To help our members achieve success as public procurement leaders in their states through promotion of best practices, education, professional development, research, and innovative procurement strategies.
- **Mary Kay Cosmetics** – To enrich women’s lives with ‘an unparalleled business opportunity.’
- **Sony** – To be a company that inspires and fulfills your curiosity.
- **Walmart** – To save people money so they can live better.
- **Walt Disney** – To entertain, inform and inspire people around the globe through the power of unparalleled storytelling, reflecting the iconic brands, creative minds and innovative technologies that make ours the world’s premier entertainment company.
- **3M** – 3M is committed to actively contributing to sustainable development through environmental protection, social responsibility and economic progress.

Questions to consider when drafting the mission statement:

1. Does the mission help you to decide what activities to not pursue, to eliminate from consideration?
2. Can you envision this mission being as valid 100 years from now as it is today?
3. When telling your loved ones what you do for a living, would you feel proud in describing your work in terms of this mission?



Session C: Vision – Where do we want to be?



Vision – The vivid description of the park/unit at a future point in time, what the organization will become. It is concise, inspiring, and aspirational and may not be 100% achievable. Vision should be relevant for 5 to 20 years.

The vision statement should be clear and simple and avoid elaborate language and buzz words.

Example vision statements from parks/units:

- **Antietam National Battlefield** – We maintain Antietam National Battlefield as a sustainable historic landscape and tell stories in innovative ways that resonate with all people.
- **Catoctin Mountain Park** – Is an extraordinary place that inspires employees to ensure high quality visitor services, sound resource management practices, and recreational opportunities for all.
- **Prince William Forest Park** – Recognized for workforce satisfaction, excellence in resource stewardship, and rich visitor experiences.
- **Denver Service Center – Planning Division** – A thriving future for the National Park Service and our partners through state-of-the-art planning.
- **Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division** – Natural parks are enduring sanctuaries for natural sounds and dark night sky environments, where current and future generations have the opportunity to experience undisturbed soundscapes and unimpeded view of the cosmos, and where the ecological roles and cultural values of acoustics and photonics are understood and appreciated.

Example vision statements from the nonprofit and business sectors:

- **The Nature Conservancy** – Our vision is a world where the diversity of life thrives, and people act to conserve nature for its own sake and its ability to fulfill our needs and enrich our lives.
- **Ducks Unlimited** – Wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever.
- **Google** – To provide access to the world’s information in one click.
- **National Association for Interpretation** – National Association for Interpretation is the recognized voice of interpretation.
- **Educators Rising** – By elevating the image of teaching, Educators Rising will attract dynamic and diverse students who will become tomorrow’s great educators.
- **Nike** – (current) Bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete* in the world. *If you have a body, you are an athlete.
- **Nike (1960)** – Crush Adidas.
- **Ford (1900)** – Democratize the automobile.
- **Sony (1950)** – Become the company most known for changing the worldwide poor-quality image of Japanese products.
- **San Diego Zoo** – To become a world leader at connecting people to wildlife and conservation.

Questions to consider when drafting a vision statement:

1. Do you find the vision exciting?
2. Is the vision clear, compelling, and easy to grasp?
3. Does this vision connect to the mission?
4. Will this vision be exciting to a broad base of people in the organization, not just those with executive responsibility?
5. Do you believe the organization has less than a 100% chance of achieving the vision (50% to 70% is ideal) yet believe the organization can achieve the vision if fully committed? The vision is not intended to be 100% achievable.
6. Will achieving the vision require a quantum step in the capabilities and characteristics of the organization?



“Can you make it larger?”



Session D: Core Values – What guides us?



Core Values – What the organization recognizes, and rewards – strongly held beliefs that are freely chosen, publicly affirmed, and acted upon with consistency.

Core values, practices and behaviors guide intentions, words, thoughts and behaviors. Identifying core values and putting those into practice guide productive and thoughtful decision making.

The role of strategy and culture in an organization:



“Living into our values means that we do more than profess our values, we practice them. We walk our talk—we are clear about what we believe and hold important, and we take care that our intentions, words, thoughts, and behaviors align with those beliefs.”

~Brené Brown,
Dare to Lead

Example Core Values:

NPS Draft Core Values from WASONext

- **Integrity.** We deal honestly, ethically, and fairly with the public and one another.
- **Stewardship.** We provide and inspire exceptional care of the places entrusted to us by the American people.
- **Respect.** We embrace our differences and treat each person with dignity.
- **Engagement.** We each participate fully, extend genuine invitations, and remove barriers to inclusion.
- **Collaboration.** We succeed by engaging beyond our silos, tapping new ideas, and expanding our community.
- **Accountability.** We earn the public’s trust each day by competently and transparently fulfilling our responsibilities.

NPS Current Core Values

- **Respect.** We embrace each other's differences so that we may enrich the well-being of everyone.
- **Integrity.** We deal honestly and fairly with the public and one another.
- **Tradition.** We are proud of it, we learn from it, we are not bound by it.
- **Excellence.** We continually strive to learn and improve so that we may achieve the highest ideals of public service.
- **Shared Stewardship.** We share a commitment to resource stewardship with the global preservation community.

DOI Core Values

- Respect
- Teamwork
- Honesty
- Fairness

Golden Gate National Recreation Area Core Values

- **Safety.** We believe all visitor and employee injuries can be prevented and do all we can to prevent them.
- **Respect.** We value and respect our colleagues as whole people and champion personal and professional growth.
- **Service.** Our team exemplifies the best in service to the public and our colleagues and we believe volunteers are integral to our success.
- **Sustainability.** We demonstrate environmental leadership by pursuing sustainable practices in all aspects of our operations of the park.
- **Innovation.** We admire and promote creativity and try new things in the pursuit of excellence.
- **Partnership.** We embrace collaboration, trust, and open communication with our partners in order to achieve shared goals.
- **Community.** We strive to understand the values, aspirations, and concerns of community members, promoting better understanding.
- **Inclusion.** We stretch and change in order to promote equity, accessibility, and multiculturalism in our park programs and at all levels of our organization.
- **Well-being.** Visitors and employees leave our national parks feeling better in mind and in body than when they arrived.

Catoctin Mountain Park Core Values

- **Teamwork.** We work collaboratively with park staff, partners, volunteers, and local communities to accomplish common goals.
- **Integrity.** We work honestly and transparently with each other and the public to ensure operational accountability.
- **Respect.** We embrace a wide diversity of opinions and perspectives in defining and pursuing our goals.
- **Stewardship.** We responsibly manage the natural, cultural, financial, and human resources entrusted to our care.
- **Empowerment.** We value and invest in our employees and their development in order to promote creativity, adaptability, and a high caliber of expertise and service.
- **Wellness.** We believe the park can elevate well-being by providing for the safety, health, and enjoyment of park staff and visitors.

Prince William Forest Park

- **Workforce Investment.** We value our employees as our greatest resource. We invest in our employees' professional development and their safety, health, and wellness.
- **Professionalism.** We will conduct ourselves with the highest degree of accountability, efficiency, and civility.
- **Shared Stewardship.** We are committed to superior stewardship in collaboration with our community, partners and the visiting public.
- **Integrity.** We are honest, respectful, and fair with the public and one another.

Questions to consider as you evaluate core values for the park/unit:

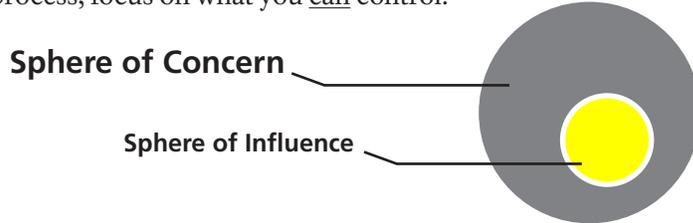
1. Would you want your organization to continue to stand for this core value for years into the future, no matter what changes occur in the outside world?
2. Do you believe that those who do not share this core value – those who breach it consistently – do not belong in your organization?
3. Would you change jobs before giving up this core value?
4. Would you know and care if this core value were not followed?
5. Are there examples of and stories about this core value at work?

DAY 2

Session E: Pivotal Issues – Where are we now?



Pivotal issues – These are the biggest issues the park/unit faces. Pivotal issues can substantially improve or worsen conditions in the park/unit—they are often framed as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or challenges. Pivotal issues should inform your emphasis areas and outcomes but do not have to appear in the strategic plan. For the NPSNext process, focus on what you can control.



Review issues identified from the SWOC analysis. Identify three to five pivotal issues that could be addressed through the strategic planning process.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



Questions to consider for each pivotal issue identified:

1. What is the issue? The issue should be one about which the organization can do something.
2. Why is this an issue? Why does the issue exist? How is it related to the park/unit's mission, vision, and external opportunities and challenges?
 - Mission
 - Vision
 - Opportunities
 - Challenges
3. What are the consequences of not addressing this issue?
4. If this issue were addressed, what could be the outcome?

(Adapted from *Creating Your Strategic Plan*, Third Edition. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 2011)

Session F: Emphasis Areas – What will success look like?



Emphasis Areas – Broad, longer-term priorities that focus an organization’s time, effort, and financial resources to accomplish the mission and move the organization towards its vision.

Why develop emphasis areas?

- Emphasis areas can serve as a marker to show members of your organization, outside partners, and the greater community what you are working toward.
- Emphasis areas will define and focus the use of the park’s discretionary time, effort, and financial resources.
- Ideally, they should be limited to no more than five or six key areas and should be cross-cutting; i.e., not specific to only one division/branch.
- The emphasis areas will not cover all of the work being done by the organization; they are intended to be steps to move toward the vision, not capture all of the “everyday” work. That said, there should be something that every employee can see themselves in.

The Balanced Scorecard Approach to Strategic Planning

To ensure a balance of priorities and perspectives in the organization, emphasis areas typically cover the following areas:

- **Employee Satisfaction, Growth and Learning** – providing employees with things necessary to foster excellent performance, attitudes and motivation.
- **Operations** – operational indicators that represent the high leverage points within the organization.
- **Financial** – ensure all financial and budgetary decisions and actions add value to the mission.
- **Customer Satisfaction** – know what our customers want and do our best to satisfy them.

Example NPSNext Emphasis Areas:

WASONext Emphasis Areas

- Thriving Workforce
- Providing 21st Century Visitor Experience
- Stewardship in a Changing Environment
- Modernizing our Business Practices
- Advancing Partnerships

Catoctin Next Emphasis Areas

- Thriving Workforce
- Exceptional Visitor Experiences
- Resource Stewardship
- Operational Excellence and Sustainability
- Relevant Collaboration

Grand Teton Next Emphasis Areas

- Thriving Workforce
- Exceptional Visitor Experiences
- Organizational Excellence
- Meaningful Engagement
- Resource Stewardship

Prince William Forest Park Next Emphasis Areas

- Thriving Workforce
- Visitor Experience
- Improve Financial Management
- Resource Stewardship
- Identity and Outreach

Golden Gate National Recreation Area Next Emphasis Areas

- Thriving Workplace
- Operational Excellence
- Inspiring and Well-Planned Visits
- Meaningful Community Engagement
- Catalysts for Change



“Strategy is future oriented; strategy is a game plan for getting from one point to another. Strategy is the approach an organization takes to achieve its vision.”

*~Howard Rohm,
Is there Any Strategy
in Your Strategic Plan*

Session G: Outcomes



Outcomes – Outcomes define what progress toward achievement of the emphasis areas looks like, what the park/unit will work toward over the next three to five years. Focus on high-level, organization-wide outcomes. They are more specific than emphasis areas and easier to measure. Although you may not measure outcomes, it does not mean they are not measurable. A single outcome is typically accomplished through a series of interrelated key actions. Key actions will be specific and measurable.

Example Outcomes:

WASONext: Thriving Workforce Emphasis Area

- The work environment is respectful, inclusive, safe, and engaging (RISE).
- Communications between WASO and the field are more frequent, regular, and interactive.
- Employee wellness and resiliency is promoted and prevalent.
- Leaders listen to and respond transparently to employee feedback.
- NPS employees experience improved park service housing.
- The National Park Service effectively trains and develops its people to assume leadership roles and to achieve the agency’s mission.

Catoctin Next: Operational Excellence and Sustainability Emphasis Area

- We use available staffing and financial resources efficiently and effectively.
- We prioritize long-term value and sustainability in managing infrastructure, operations, and personnel.
- Prince William Forest Park Next: Thriving Workforce Emphasis Area
- Employees are supported through a work/life balance and are provided tangible opportunities for growth and career development.

Grand Teton Next: Thriving Workforce Emphasis Area

- We coordinate and collaborate to accomplish our work.
- We have supervisors who effectively manage, lead, support, and inspire their workforce, now and with a focus on their future endeavors.
- We encourage and demonstrate work-life balance.
- We provide quality and safe residential and work areas.
- We have a respectful, accountable and safe work environment, promoting employee well-being.
- We have the training, work experience, and tools to succeed in our jobs.

Nike, Inc.

- **Focus on disruptive innovation and development of patented technology.**
- **Branding based on the vision, “If you have a body you are an athlete.”**
- **Increased and more efficient use of working capital.**
- **Transparency in manufacturing/supply chain management.**
- **Focus on growth in the Direct to Consumer segment.**
- **Expansion and growth into Asian markets and other emerging markets.**
- **Focus on sustainability in all forms of operations and business practices.**

National Association of Interpretation

- **Review Board Member/Organizational Unit leader roles and responsibilities, and strengthen leadership management and operational procedures, to reduce inefficiencies, sharpen focus, and strategically allocate internal resources.**
- **Ensure financial sustainability, mission impact, and organizational accountability.**
- **Assess and promote effective technology, communication, and collaboration among Board, workgroups, membership, and staff.**
- **Reach out to past leaders, foster continued organizational commitment, and elicit engagement with ongoing organizational leadership and development programs.**
- **Develop and implement an internal volunteer and leadership development program.**
- **Foster and support volunteer and leadership development opportunities within the National Association of Interpretation.**

Questions to consider when drafting outcomes:

1. What do we like about the examples provided above?
2. What will we aim for when developing outcomes? What will we avoid?
3. Are there any sideboards we would like to establish?
4. How many outcomes do we want to end up with?
5. What will the time frames be for starting outcomes?
6. How will we address outcomes that involve different divisions?
7. What targeted questions can we be asking ourselves to be sure we are staying on track?

“People think focus means saying yes to the thing you’ve got to focus on. But that’s not what it means at all. It means saying no to the hundred other good ideas that there are. You have to pick carefully. I’m actually as proud of the things we haven’t done as the things I have done. Innovation is saying no to 1,000 things.”

~ Steve Jobs, 1997

OPTIONAL

Prioritizing Emphasis Areas and Outcomes

Typically, groups will identify a large number of emphasis areas and outcomes to pursue as part of the strategic planning process—too many to achieve at once or perhaps even during a three to five-year period given limited time, funds and staff. It, therefore, is necessary to prioritize which strategies the organization will pursue. In setting priorities, keep these points in mind:

- Take a big-picture view in assigning emphasis areas and outcomes, not just your group’s priorities. Remember that ultimately this list of prioritized strategies will help the park/unit to address its most important management issues and achieve its mission and vision.
- Consider whether these priorities are appropriate for the present as well as the foreseeable future.
- Consider sequencing and scope in setting outcomes for each emphasis area.
- Have a rationale you can document for setting an outcome for a given emphasis area.

DAY 3

Session H: Key Actions – How do we get there?



Key actions – Key actions represent measurable, on-the-ground activities that drive progress toward outcomes and may take one or more years to accomplish. Key Actions will be used to develop the park’s annual work plan and will be reviewed and updated annually. Key Actions will roll down into employee EPAPs.

Keep in mind:

- Each outcome usually consists of a series of smaller interrelated actions. These are specific, measurable tasks with a definitive start and end time.
- Each outcome and/or key action needs a champion—a lead who is responsible for its completion. Assigning champions is a critical step to make sure you don’t go down the road of simply saying “somebody should. . .”
- Focus on an approach you can take, not on reiterating what you want to do or proposing approaches for which you do not have resources. Be realistic and practical when deciding on key actions.



Exercise 1: What makes a good key action?

Before moving to individual or small group work, try to agree on some of the important elements of a key action, such as the time frame, measure of success, and who will champion that action.

Things to keep in mind – it is important to think about the SMART framework when drafting key actions: **S-specific, M-measurable, A-attainable, R-relevant, T-timely**

Exercise 2:

Together, draft some key actions you think could be taken under one outcome.

Outcome:**Key Actions:**

Once you have drafted a few key actions, double-check that they meet the criteria you set in Exercise 1. Also, discuss whether there are opportunities for synergy, pooling resources, or engaging in complementary efforts.

OPTIONAL

Refine and Prioritize Key Actions

You may feel like you need more time to continue refining your key actions and/or there may be others who you need to include in identifying key actions. Consider adding a session after the workshop that allows others to add to or hone your key actions. The Optional Exercise to Refine and Prioritize Key Actions session is included in the facilitator's guide on the Common Learning Portal.

Session I: Implementation – How do we track progress?



Strategic Plan Implementation – A clear procedure for enacting the plan’s emphasis areas, outcomes, and key actions, as well as monitoring and updating the plan.

Many high-performing organizations ensure their own success by establishing protocols to regularly review their strategic plan and their progress toward emphasis areas, outcomes, and key actions. This allows them to make needed course corrections, reallocate resources, and do effective and efficient work planning.

If there is not a plan for implementation it is likely that the plan will sit on the shelf and not be used. There is no strategy without execution and there is no execution without commitment.

Take a moment to reflect on and answer the following questions before establishing a review protocol as a large group:

Who drives completion and follow-through?

Things to consider

- Who will be part of the core team to complete and monitor the plan?
- Who is responsible for updating the written plan?
- Who is the lead for the strategic plan?



How will further staff engagement and communication be handled?

Things to consider

- If all employees have not been involved in the planning process, how will you capture their suggestions and comments, get their buy-in? It will be particularly important to get the input of all employees on the Key Actions.
- What will be communicated to all employees following this workshop about what occurred during the workshop and what the plan is for involving them?
- Who will be responsible for communicating the plan to all employees and how often will they get those communications?

How will we ensure accountability?

Things to consider

- How often should we meet to review the plan and our progress and adjust as needed (i.e., quarterly, biannually)?
- Who should be part of the review process?
- What kind of reporting and information collection should be done before each meeting?
- What is the process to incorporate key actions into annual work plans?
- How will Key Actions be reflected in employee EPAPs and work plans?
- How will we acknowledge and celebrate our successes? Note, it is important to celebrate successes! Don't skip this part of the discussion.



Monitoring Progress

One way to monitor progress on outcomes and key actions is to identify Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) questions that are appropriate for monitoring progress. Following this workshop, here is a suggestion for how to do this.

Here is an example of one way to use FEVS questions to monitor progress on an outcome or a key actions:

These Employee Viewpoint Survey Questions:

1. I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization.
18. My training needs are assessed.
26. Employees in my work unit share job knowledge with each other.
27. The skill level in my work unit has improved in the last year.
29. The workforce has the job-relevant knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish organizational goals.
47. Supervisors in my work unit support employee development.
68. How satisfied are you with the training you receive for your present job?

Connect to Outcome 6: We have the training, work experience, and tools to succeed in our jobs.

Through these Key Actions...

- **Key Action:** All permanent and term employees are trained to create meaningful Individual Development Plans that are implemented and reviewed annually as part of performance reviews. (All Supervisors)
- **Key Action:** Identify common employee developmental needs and provide training. (Leadership Advisory Council/Chief of Business and Administration)

Do a Reality Check

While there may not be time to do this during the workshop, consider adding a session after the workshop that allows others to add to or hone your key actions and help to do a reality check. The Reality Check session is included in the facilitator's guide on the Common Learning Portal.

Next Steps

After this workshop, further discuss your initial prioritized actions. The outcomes and actions created in this workshop may benefit from additional research, discussions with staff responsible for translating outcomes into results on-the-ground, discussions with stakeholders, and discussions about costs and feasibility.

In the coming weeks, the draft strategic plan developed throughout this workshop will be refined based on comments and additional discussion between park staff and workshop participants. You will decide who will prepare the document for final review and approval, if needed. Once the document is finalized, it will remain an internal document to be shared with the stakeholders as you decide.

In the future, use the strategic plan as a tool to assist in work planning and decision making. Other parks and units have used their strategic plan to open regularly scheduled management team meetings or instituted an annual review of their strategic plan to track progress, remove completed actions, and reprioritize.

Make sure your NEXT steps get you to where you actually want to be.

“If you don’t know where you are going, any road can take you there.”

*~ Lewis Carroll,
Alice in Wonderland*



Participant Notes

Participant Notes

