

How to Implement the Assessment

The assessment process works best when it is facilitated by a third-party (or “outside of the park”) facilitator. This allows for all members of the park’s working group to participate in the discussion and keeps the discussion on track. The facilitator can be a colleague from another park, a consultant, or regional office staffer.

We offer the following advice as a successful strategy for implementing the rubric. You may depart from this if you wish, just know that there is a lot of content to get through, and it’s important to stay on task.

Tips for the Facilitator

- The park’s working group should be made up of people from all divisions at all levels. Everyone’s voice is equal, and front-line staff should be able to comment on leadership goals and vice-versa.
- Distribute the rubric to the working group ahead of the meeting so that people can read it.
- Schedule at least one full day to work through all four sections of the rubric. See the suggested agenda below.
- Knowing that not everyone will read it ahead of time, make time at your meeting for silent reading/scoring.
- Your role is to guide the park’s working group through the rubric, recording their scores and examples of what is in-process or in-place, by helping them approach consensus. Compel the group to score themselves and resolve each item.
- The examples in the last column (“Examples of what is in-process or in-place”) need to be concrete examples. They need to focus on what the whole park, or teams within the park, are doing (not individual work, unless the action item addresses personal work).
- At the beginning of the meeting, read aloud the statement of purpose for the rubric and the four touchstones and sub-topics. Also, be sure that everyone understands the scoring system and that their task at this point is to do a quick snap-shot assessment, not a long discussion about what they have done or could/should do.
- Keep the conversation focused on the action item up for discussion. Maintain a “parking lot” of topics that come up, knowing that they will probably be covered in other touchstones.

Diagnosis and Treatment Plan

Once you have assessed where you are, you can develop a plan to put action items into place. Look at your lowest-scoring goals. This will give you an idea of where the park needs to focus attention in the short term. Instead of trying to undertake all of them at once, consider prioritizing them and focusing on the top five goals that will help you establish a strong foundation for addressing the remaining goals. Assign a staff member or team to guide the development and implementation of a plan to accomplish the goal. Schedule regular check-ins with the whole the group to be sure that you maintain momentum.

This is not a one-time-only tool. Return to the full rubric on an annual basis to assess the park’s progress. When there is staff turnover, revisit the rubric to include new staff in the process. Using the action items as benchmarks will help you determine how to keep moving forward exploring the history and legacies of enslavement and race in NCA parks.

Suggested Agenda for Assessment (Times are approximate. It may take more time, but probably won't take less.)

15 min	Review statement of purpose, touchstones/sub-topics, and scoring process.
2 hours	Organizational Investment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read introductory paragraph aloud. (5 min) - Individual silent reading/scoring of the touchstone. (25 min) - Dialogue – Go through each goal/action item (reading them aloud), asking people to share what they scored, and come to a consensus on the score and examples. (1.5 hours)
2 hours	Staff and Volunteer Recruitment, Training, Assessment, and Mentoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read introductory paragraph aloud. (5 min) - Individual silent reading/scoring of the touchstone. (25 min) - Dialogue – Go through each goal/action item (reading them aloud), asking people to share what they scored, and come to a consensus on the score and examples. (1.5 hours)
1.5 hour	Research and Program Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read introductory paragraph aloud. (5 min) - Individual silent reading/scoring of the touchstone. (25 min) - Dialogue – Go through each goal/action item (reading them aloud), asking people to share what they scored, and come to a consensus on the score and examples. (1 hour)
1 hour	Community and Stakeholder Involvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read introductory paragraph aloud. (5 min) - Individual silent reading/scoring of the touchstone. (15 min) - Dialogue – Go through each goal/action item (reading them aloud), asking people to share what they scored, and come to a consensus on the score and examples. (40 min)
1 hour	Analysis (see “Diagnosis and Treatment Plan” below) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review rubric to see where you have the lowest scoring goals. (15 min) - Rank the goals in priority order based on what should be done first to establish a foundation. (30 min) - Select the top five items and generate ideas on what might go into an implementation plan, as well as who will lead the development and implementation of said plan. (45 min)