Planning in America's National Parks: 
Opportunities and Challenges for the Boston Harbor Islands

by

Ruth E. Harrington

B.A., The Growth and Structure of Cities
Haverford College, 1994

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master in City Planning

at the

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
June 1998

© Ruth E. Harrington 1998. All Rights Reserved

The author hereby grants to MIT permission to reproduce and distribute publicly paper and electronic copies of this document in whole or part, and to grant others the right to do so.

Author.............................................. Department of Urban Studies and Planning
May 21, 1998

Certified by........................................ Dennis Frenchman
Professor of the Practice of Urban Design
Thesis Supervisor

Accepted by................................. Professor Lawrence S. Bacow
Chair, MCP Committee
Department of Urban Studies and Planning
Planning in America’s National Parks:
Opportunities and Challenges for the Boston Harbor Islands

by

Ruth E. Harrington

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
on May 21, 1998 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of City Planning

ABSTRACT

In November 1996, the United States Congress passed legislation creating a new unit in the National Park system -- the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area. This new park includes 30 islands and approximately 50 square miles of water in Boston Harbor. By November 1999, the National Park Service and the Boston Harbor Islands Partnership, the official managing body, are required to develop a plan that will guide future development and management of the park.

Planning for the Harbor Islands is taking place in the broad context of park planning and design, in the more focused context of the challenges and opportunities facing America’s National Parks, and in the specific context of the character and historical uses of the Islands themselves. These three factors will shape the future of the Islands as a new National Park unit.

The legislation creating the Harbor Islands National Recreation Area describes several purposes for the park. These goals, like those of other National Parks, are to preserve and protect park resources, improve visitor access, and provide educational and recreational opportunities. Unlike other National Parks, the Boston Harbor Islands will not be managed by the National Park Service; a Partnership, whose membership is defined in the enabling legislation, will be responsible for park management. Additionally, the federal government will be only partially responsible for funding the development of the park. For every dollar of federal funds invested in the Islands, three dollars of non-federal funds must also be contributed.

An examination of three case study parks -- Gettysburg National Military Park, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and Cape Cod National Seashore -- shows that while the Boston Harbor Islands NRA is the first park mandated to be managed by a Partnership and required to develop alternative sources of funds, other National Parks have been developing partnerships and seeking non-federal funding sources "voluntarily" in response to pressures placed on the system as a whole. An analysis of the experiences of these three parks is thus useful for informing the planning process for the Harbor Islands.

A study of the three contexts in which planning for the Harbor Islands is taking place, and of the three case study parks, results in the development of numerous principles that can be used to guide future planning efforts for the Harbor Islands. These principles address five of the major planning issues that face the Islands: image and identity, access, visitor experience, conservation, and park management. The principles provide suggestions for interpretation, programming, management, and design of the Islands.

Thesis Supervisor: Dennis Frenchman
Title: Professor of the Practice of Urban Design, Department of Urban Studies and Planning
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am truly indebted to numerous individuals for the time and energy they so generously shared with me through the trails and trials of this thesis.

It is with great appreciation that I thank the many members of the National Park Service who shared their experiences with me. Their determination to overcome today's challenges inspired me and their undaunted enthusiasm for the parks inspired me more.

The contributions of both my advisor, Dennis Frenchman, and reader, Terry Szold, have been tremendous. I am grateful to Dennis for his ever-present excitement and for sharing so openly his considerable talents. To Terry I say thank-you for your simultaneous commendation and criticism that formed both a base of support and a challenge to do more.

Finally, I thank most my family and my friends.
# Table of Contents

## Introduction
- Purpose .......................................................................................................................... 9
- Park Planning and Design ............................................................................................... 11
- Trends in America’s National Parks .................................................................................. 12
- Methodology .................................................................................................................. 19

## National Park Planning and Policies
- Key Issues Facing the System .......................................................................................... 25
- Evolution of National Park Policies ................................................................................ 27
- Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 29

## Case Studies
- Gettysburg National Military Park.................................................................................. 35
- Golden Gate National Recreation Area ........................................................................... 57
- Cape Cod National Seashore ......................................................................................... 74

## Boston Harbor Islands: Description and History
- Description .................................................................................................................... 99
- Legislative History ......................................................................................................... 103
- Key Issues ..................................................................................................................... 107

## Boston Harbor Islands: Planning Principles
- Image and Identity ......................................................................................................... 113
- Access ............................................................................................................................ 117
- Visitor Experience ......................................................................................................... 121
- Conservation .................................................................................................................. 125
- Park Management ......................................................................................................... 129
- Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 133

## Boston Harbor Islands: Conceptual Planning Framework
- Island Categories ............................................................................................................. 135
- Organizational Concept ................................................................................................. 139
- Visitor Centers ............................................................................................................... 143
- Access ............................................................................................................................ 147
- Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 151

## Bibliography ................................................................................................................ 155
INTRODUCTION
**INTRODUCTION**

During the summers of 1991 and 1992, I worked for a concessions company in Yellowstone National Park. For these two summers living in the park, not a day went by that I didn’t feel fortunate to have Yellowstone’s beautiful mountains and valleys as my back yard and its buffalo, moose, and bear as the creatures that crossed my path as I walked to work.

While the scenery of the park never failed to inspire me, the tremendous crowds and inadequate facilities often diminished the pleasure of the experience and brought to my attention the challenges of planning for a National Park. I saw first-hand how Americans (and others) are “loving our National Parks to death.” Since that time, I have followed with interest new programs and policies instituted in America’s National Parks aimed at balancing the often conflicting goals of providing visitor access and at the same time protecting and preserving unique and delicate resources. This thesis has allowed me to examine these policies more systematically, to ponder the problems that the parks face, and envision a future that promotes the preservation of park resources for the enjoyment of both present and future generations.

**PURPOSE**

In November 1996, the United States Congress passed legislation authorizing the creation of a new unit of the National Park system – the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area. This thesis asks the question: How can the Harbor Islands be developed into a successful national park unit? The future of the Islands will be shaped by the initial planning process through which development and management policies are established. An examination of previous park planning experience, on local, regional, and national park levels, is helpful in providing context for the creation of a successful plan for the National Recreation Area.

The Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area (BHINRA) contains 30 islands covering approximately 1,200 acres of land in approximately 50 square miles of ocean (Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands p.1). Like other National Parks, the purpose of the BHINRA is to “preserve the natural and cultural resources of [the park] for the public’s use and enjoyment”(NPS 1998a).

The enabling legislation for the Boston Harbor Islands mandates the purposes, administration and partnership structure of the Park. While the requirements for resource protection and visitor
accessibility are consistent with other National Park units, the administration and management of the Boston Harbor Islands are structured according to a new model. Building upon previous examples, such as Lowell National Historic Park, the Boston Harbor Islands are to be managed through a complex arrangement of public and private partnerships.

The law also establishes restrictions and caveats for the provision of federal funds to the Park. While the legislation authorizes the appropriation of federal monies to carry out activities in the Boston Harbor Islands, it prohibits the use of these funds for the purposes of land acquisition. Furthermore, for each federal dollar disbursed on park operations and improvements, three dollars of non-federal money must be spent.

The National Park Service, in cooperation with the managing Partnership, is required to produce an Integrated Resource Management Plan to guide operations and development in the park. This plan must be completed within three years of the enactment of the enabling legislation. Thus, by November 1999, the NPS and the Island Partnership must establish principles to shape the future of the Boston Harbor Islands. The Integrated Resource Management Plan must include recommendations providing for resource conservation and improving visitor access and educational programs.

The purpose of this thesis is to assist this process by developing principles that can be used to guide the management and development of the Boston Harbor Islands. These principles are generated through an understanding of the specific issues facing parks in the National Park System and a study of how three individual parks are dealing with these pressing challenges. An examination of broader park planning issues and philosophies provides an extended context in which to evaluate options for the development and programming of the Harbor Islands.

PARK PLANNING AND DESIGN

The development and management of the Boston Harbor Islands is taking place in a broad context of previous park planning experience. In order to better understand how planning and design of the National Recreation Area can reflect and enhance the role of the Islands in the recreational and tourist activities of Boston, it is useful to examine park planning and design at many levels. The Harbor Islands are a National Park unit, but are also inevitably linked to the urban parks of Boston and the larger regional park system of the metropolitan area. It is the context of the planning and
design philosophies for these three park levels in which ideas for the development of the Islands will
be formed. An overview of principles guiding park planning and design for these various park types
can help inform decisions made about the future of the Islands.

The following discussion will provide a brief overview of ideas about the roles of urban,
regional, and national parks. However, it is first important to understand how the different park types
are being defined for the purposes of this discussion. Urban Parks are those that serve the most
localized communities in the city. They range from basic neighborhood parks to larger systems of
parks still focused on the open space and recreational needs of the surrounding residents. Regional
parks, often called peripheral parks in this discussion, are those that bridge between several
communities. They are part of the regional open space network and draw visitors from a much
broader distance than urban parks. Finally, national parks are those that are incorporated into the
National Park System and which are charged with protecting resources that have been determined to
be of national significance. Unlike urban and regional parks, the constituency of National Parks is the
whole of the American public.

Frederick Law Olmsted and Boston's Park System

The role of parks in urban areas has a long history and depth of philosophy. It has long been
thought that parks in urban areas provide a needed escape from the stresses of urban life. Frederick
Law Olmsted, one of the most prominent park designers of the 19th century, promoted the
establishment of parks in American cities for the calming influence that parks have on users. He
believed that sculpted natural environments and pastoral landscapes offer park visitors an opportunity
to remove themselves from urban ills such as pollution: parks act as “an antidote to urban
life” (Beveridge 1989 p.41).

Olmsted also promoted the philosophy that parks act as civilizing agents on those who visit them.
He believed that parks provide places where people from all classes can meet and intermingle. The
opportunity provided for lower classes to relate with the working and upper classes helps promote
proper and appropriate behavior in those from less fortunate backgrounds. He felt that parks, over
everything else, should be inclusive (Kalfus 1990 p.278).

In order to best achieve the beneficial effects of urban parks, Olmsted insisted that the sense of
the city be excluded from the park environment to the greatest extent possible. The hardness and
rigidity of 19th century urban form and the stressful commercial environment were to stop at the park entrances. Buffers were created to minimize the impacts of the city on park users (Hull 1995).

In the 1880's, Olmsted became involved with creating a system of parks for the City of Boston. Boston has a long history of park planning and design. In 1630, Boston Common was established to reserve land for common grazing of livestock. It was used for this purpose until 1830 when it became a public park. Adjacent to the Common, the Public Garden was created to fill a second niche in park design and use, providing a “more elaborate botanical garden for the enjoyment of Bostonians” (Nakano No Date p.10-11). The new system of parks that Olmsted designed, known as the emerald necklace, links Boston Common and the Public Garden with the Back Bay Fens, Olmsted Park, Jamaica Pond, Franklin Park, and Arnold Arboretum in the southwest section of Boston. An additional section of the necklace was to link Castle Island and Pleasure Bay with Franklin Park by way of Columbia Road. Olmsted also recognized the potential of the Boston Harbor Islands to provide added open space and recreational opportunities for Boston’s residents. In the late 1800’s, he suggested that they be incorporated into the city’s park system. At the time, however, the Boston Parks Commission failed to appropriate the funds needed to purchase the Islands from private owners (NPS 1994a).

In Art of the Olmsted Landscape, Bruce Kelly writes that Olmsted’s landscapes develop out of the English Romantic style of landscape design. He explains that this style, characterized as “a celebration of nature without being natural itself,” consists of four sub-styles: the Sublime, the Beautiful, the Picturesque and the Gardenesque. The Sublime has little to do with human design and is based around the inspiration of vast and grand natural features such as mountains or oceans. The Beautiful is a pastoral style which appears to be “nature at perfection.” The Picturesque takes the Beautiful and adds elements to break the pure perfection of the scenery. Finally, the Gardenesque is the most formal style with carefully organized and arranged landscaping (pp.12-14). Olmsted uses these four styles in the parks of the emerald necklace to create unique and different pieces that together make the whole of the park system.

In addition to incorporating the four aspects of the English Romantic style of landscaping, Olmsted’s parks were characterized by numerous other elements. According to Kelly, these elements included: “a strong contrast with the city,” “the use of bold land forms,” “a balance between the spatial elements of turf, wood and water,” the use of “vistas as an aesthetic organizing element,” “a
Introduction

series of planned sequential experiences,” “the separation of traffic,” “the provision of visitor
services,” “the integration of architecture into the landscape,” “the provision for a formal element,”
the characteristic of variety, and provision for recreation (pp.8-9). These design elements address
issues of park planning and reflect Olmsted’s philosophies on landscape design. While Olmsted’s
original park designs have been altered to varying degrees since they were initially implemented,
these elements still overwhelmingly characterize Boston’s emerald necklace park system.
Additionally, while much has changed since Olmsted created Boston’s emerald necklace, these
elements continue to be used in park design today.

The various pieces of the emerald necklace each highlight aspects of Olmsted’s design
philosophy. Within the system, each park is unique and has a specific role to perform. “Each has a
different kind of site, a different function, and a different visual effect” (Zaitzevsky 1982 p.136).
However, as a whole, the parks are woven together “into a pattern of discreet activity areas” (Nakano
No Date p.7). All areas are interdependent and, as parks in a series, each provides those activities that
are best suited the existing landscape.

Franklin Park, specifically, is a good example of several of the above principles. Olmsted
provided two parks in one at Franklin Park. The larger park is of the beautiful style with a pastoral,
rolling landscape. The smaller was designed to accommodate active recreational pursuits. By
separating the two functions, Olmsted met the needs of several user groups in a single park
(Zaitzevsky 1982 p.137). This separation of active and passive uses also acted to enhance the sense of
calm Olmsted found so important in park functioning (Beveridge 1989 p.41). Additionally, Olmsted
provided many pathways for different modes of travel. Carriage routes, pedestrian walkways, and
horse paths were all separated for ease of movement and minimization of conflict (Hull 1995 p.230).

Creativity in developing partnerships for managing public parks was not unknown during the
period of Olmsted’s work in establishing the emerald necklace. Arnold Arboretum was created on
land owned by Harvard University. Negotiations resulted in the agreement that the land would be
donated to the City of Boston and all but the roadways would be leased back to Harvard for the
purposes of maintaining an arboretum. The park would be open to the public and would serve the
dual purposes of providing a landscaped open space for the use of city residents and offering a setting
for the University students and faculty to conduct biological and other scientific research. Through
this agreement, the park is publicly owned, but privately maintained (Hull 1995 p.228).
Chapter One

Olmsted's philosophies on the role parks play in the life of a city and his design strategies for creating successful parks provide one template by which the programming and design of the Harbor Islands can be developed. His belief that each unit in the park system should be unique transfers well to the case of the Harbor Islands park which is a collection of detached islands that combined make the whole of the system. Further, his differentiation between landscape types can be used to enhance the naturally occurring characteristics of each island. Olmsted’s original recognition of the potential for including the Boston Harbor Islands in the city’s park system can be realized by incorporating his design philosophy and ideas into the plans for the development of the Islands.

Peripheral Parks

The Boston Harbor Islands represent a category of park that may be more appropriately characterized as a regional or “peripheral park.” As Francisco Asensio Cerver describes, peripheral parks are located, “…between urban areas and the natural environment, in an ambiguous no man’s land” (Cerver 1994 p.7). He notes that the location between the developed lands of cities and the natural landscapes of rural areas impacts the goals and design of such parks. An examination of 23 parks around the world that fall between the city and the country shows that they all maintain “the common objective of defining the interrelationship between the city and its surroundings, between the urbanized and the biological, between the artificial and the natural”(Cerver 1994 p.7).

Cerver notes that these peripheral parks deal with a unique set of issues, quite different from those that face pure urban parks. Rather than creating a place of nature within an urban setting, peripheral parks deal with making a successful transition from urban to rural, built to natural. They occur in “marginal” areas and are responsible for managing the transformations that occur in areas where both urban and natural systems hold influence.

In these marginal areas, the environment is torn in two directions. The influence of the city and the rapid urbanization that has been characteristic of this century has led to the inefficient development and unpleasant destruction of the natural landscape that surrounds many historic city centers. One of the goals of peripheral parks is “to reduce the negative environmental impact of urban growth, trying to ensure that the peripheries cease to be artificial and chaotic limits and that they become free and spontaneous areas of transition that connect the city to the landscape once more”(Cerver 1994 p.8).
Introduction

In order to aid in this transition, he argues that it is important that the parks maintain some traditional elements of urban design, such as “an axis, pedestrian routes, plazas, etc.,” while at the same time incorporating natural “ecosystems that will, with time, attain ecological and aesthetic maturity” (Cerver 1994 p.8-9). Through the use of both elements, the parks combine formally designed areas with districts that showcase rehabilitated natural environments. It is a combination of many design elements that make these parks successful in their quest to link the urban with the rural. This distinction between several landscape types is similar to Olmsted’s own division of park designs.

Peripheral parks do share some goals with urban parks. Like Olmsted believed, Cerver notes that parks provide a location where all people can come and be welcome. It is through use and enjoyment that the parks meet their primary goal (Cerver 1994 p.8).

The location of the Harbor Islands between the very urban setting of Boston and the vast, wild ocean means that its development as a park must incorporate the notions expressed above concerning the need to foster a graceful transition between built and natural environments. The proximity of the Islands to the shore fosters a sense of connection between mainland communities and the Islands themselves. In contrast, the harsh winter weather and extreme seasonality of Island use seem to push the Islands beyond the reach of local communities. It is precisely this juxtaposition that places the Islands in the no-man’s land that Cerver describes. Plans for the National Recreation Area must recognize these opposing forces and alleviate the tensions between the two by providing transitions that ease the change from urban to wild that characterizes the Islands.

Historically, the Islands have been treated as this no man’s land and as such have been host to many of society’s ills. The ability of the Islands to reconnect the city with the ocean will depend on successfully reusing and reinterpreting the remains of these unwanted uses. The important role that peripheral parks play in providing the transition from urban to rural is a second template by which the design of the new park can be structured.

Parks as Tourist Destinations

National Parks differ from both urban and peripheral parks in their appeal to broader visitor base. By definition, America’s National Parks are of national significance. As a result, the “public” for which national parks must plan is much broader than that for urban or even peripheral parks. As tourist destinations, planning for National Parks combines issues of park planning with tourism planning.
Chapter One

Standard texts in tourism planning address the unique issues that face major park areas. Edward Inskeep introduces a number of basic principles related to park planning, particularly to the location and design of visitor facilities. He notes that “the best principle for development of visitor facilities is to concentrate the major facilities in one area as an integrated well-designed complex” (Inskeep 1991 p.274). This facility is generally located on the main park access road and contains a range of visitor services and interpretive facilities. It is meant to be the starting point where visitors are oriented to the park and from which visitors leave to explore the features of the park. The architecture of the facility should reflect the setting in which the building is placed. In parks highlighting natural environments, natural materials such as wood and stone are preferred (Inskeep 1991 p.274).

The last few decades have seen a change in the philosophy of how and where some visitor services should be provided. Major accommodations for overnight visitors are being more and more frequently provided outside park boundaries rather than within the protected areas of the park. Removing them from within the park is an attempt to reduce congestion and pollution -- problems that are facing many major park areas today (Inskeep 1991 p.274).

In particular, visitor facilities are being removed from critical park areas. Specifically in natural park settings, new buildings are being constructed so as not to interfere with the visitor experience of the sites and resources of the park. The construction of a new visitor center in Uluru National Park in Australia highlights this new philosophy. In the mid 1980’s, a new facility was constructed halfway between the two major features of the park -- Ayers Rock and Mt. Olga. The new complex was carefully sited so that it is not in the site lines between the two features. It infringes upon the natural setting of the major features to the least extent possible. After the construction of this facility, which includes accommodations, visitor information services, commercial, and recreational activities, existing facilities located at the base of Ayers Rock were removed (Inskeep 1991 p.274). The elimination of these intrusions on the natural landscape heightens the visitor experience of the important features of the park.

Inskeep also addresses the importance of promoting resource conservation in park planning and notes that in critical areas, conservation and preservation should be valued more highly than visitor use (p.273). In order to assess the conservation needs of areas, carrying capacity studies should be completed. These allow park managers to understand the sensitivity of various park resources and plan for different levels of conservation and use. Once the different degrees of sensitivity are
understood, the park areas can be divided into different zones of use. Design and development in each zone can then respond to the different needs for protection (p.272).

Inskeep also notes that conservation of park resources can be achieved by encouraging a greater distribution of park visitors throughout the park. Rather than limiting attractions to a single location, parks should provide a range of interpretive facilities and visitor experiences in many distinct areas. Access to particularly sensitive areas can be limited through the use of permits (p.276).

The Islands, as finite land units in the middle of Boston Harbor, are particularly susceptible to problems if carrying capacity is exceeded. While current visitation levels do not threaten park resources, any plans for the future of the Islands must keep in mind strategies for minimizing the impacts of crowds. Inskeep’s suggestion that numerous destinations are desirable for the purpose of distributing visitors throughout the park may have important implications for the Islands. His description of a park visitor center should also be kept in mind when developing facilities for the Islands.

**TRENDS IN AMERICA’S NATIONAL PARKS**

Planning policies for America’s National Parks have been evolving in response to several trends. First, visitation to America’s National Parks has been increasing almost steadily since the end of World War II. Between 1980 and 1996, the number of visitors to the National Parks increased 34%, by over 67 million. As Figure 1.1 shows, more than 265 million people visited the 375 parks, monuments, and reserves included in the national park system in 1996 (Buccino and others 1997 p.2, p.96).

Second, the growing environmental consciousness, begun in the 1960’s and continuing through today, has led to a changing attitude toward protecting America’s natural and cultural resources. Previously accepted development policies and practices are no longer in favor and environmental advocates promote preservation above all else. Increasing pressures are being placed on the National Park Service to protect fragile resources more completely.
Chapter One

Figure 1.1: National Parks: Visitation and Funding Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Visits</th>
<th>Park Service Appropriation</th>
<th>Constant (1978) Dollar Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>222,184,026</td>
<td>1,265,378</td>
<td>1,265,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>205,369,794</td>
<td>1,251,711</td>
<td>1,152,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>198,014,710</td>
<td>1,173,610</td>
<td>989,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>210,050,610</td>
<td>793,719</td>
<td>611,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>213,704,970</td>
<td>770,781</td>
<td>558,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>216,893,310</td>
<td>1,072,971</td>
<td>746,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>218,092,830</td>
<td>910,649</td>
<td>610,699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>216,040,450</td>
<td>924,345</td>
<td>598,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>237,094,440</td>
<td>825,805</td>
<td>521,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>246,408,690</td>
<td>914,480</td>
<td>560,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>250,466,250</td>
<td>899,004</td>
<td>531,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>256,100,470</td>
<td>1,022,091</td>
<td>579,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>263,234,120</td>
<td>1,080,119</td>
<td>587,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>267,840,999</td>
<td>1,347,889</td>
<td>705,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>274,694,549</td>
<td>1,437,036</td>
<td>731,451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>273,120,925</td>
<td>1,386,283</td>
<td>687,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>268,636,169</td>
<td>1,451,637</td>
<td>703,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>269,564,307</td>
<td>1,367,436</td>
<td>646,863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>265,796,163</td>
<td>1,360,759</td>
<td>630,233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Buccino and others 1997)

These two trends are taking place in the context of a third, and no less significant, trend -- one in national policy. Over the past 20 years, funding levels for America’s National Parks has been decreasing in real dollar terms. “In constant dollars, annual funding for National Parks decreased by over $600 million over the past two decades”(Buccino and others 1997 p.2). As a result, parks are seeking alternative sources of funding to support the maintenance and operations of the park as well as the development of capital projects.

 METHODOLOGY

This goal of this thesis is to develop ideas for how the Boston Harbor Islands can be developed into a successful National Recreation Area. In order to do this, it explores both the broad issues facing National Park planning today, as well as recent planning efforts of three specific case study parks. The above description of the various philosophies of park planning and design provides a broader context in which to evaluate planning alternatives for the Harbor Islands. The information gathered from the case study parks is then analyzed with respect to the noted philosophies and complex planning issues to determine how the plans for the Boston Harbor Islands can benefit from previous experience.
The three case study parks -- Gettysburg National Military Park, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and Cape Cod National Seashore -- were chosen because they share several common characteristics with the Boston Harbor Islands. These common characteristics include: the size of the parks; the inclusion of both cultural and natural resources in the parks; the development of innovative park partnerships at each park; and the presence of numerous and diverse user groups at each park. These case study parks are examined for their historic place in the national park system and for their current planning practice and policies. The evaluation of the parks is based on personal observations and experiences, National Park Service reports and reviews done by outside agencies, as well as information gleaned through a series of interviews with Park Service employees and others involved with planning in the parks.

Armed with the experiences of these three parks, this thesis then works to develop principles that might be used to guide planning for the Boston Harbor Islands. The principles draw on the lessons learned from the case study parks as well as the broader experience of park planning for urban, regional / peripheral, and national parks. They range in their application and include implications for design, interpretation, organization, and policy. Both the lessons learned and the proposed principles are organized around five major issues facing the Boston Harbor Islands:

- **Image and Identity** -- The image and identity of a park is how visitors perceive the park as a whole. For the Harbor Islands, both their dispersed form and the lack of a single prominent interpretive theme draw away from an understanding of the Islands as a unified system. Developing a prominent image and identity for the National Recreation Area will provide several benefits to the park. It will make the park more visible to potential users, encouraging increased use. It will also enhance the visitor experience by improving the perception of the park and an understanding of the recreational and educational opportunities the Islands provide.

- **Access** -- All but four of the Harbor Islands are detached land units in the middle of Boston Harbor. In order to attract visitors, a dependable and extensive water transportation system must be developed. Both the modes visitors use to travel to the park and the routes they follow will affect the visitor experience. The ability of the Park Service to establish transportation to the Islands is crucial in achieving the mission of preserving the Islands for public use and enjoyment.
Chapter One

- **Visitor Experience** -- The visitor experience is the key to the success of the park. In order to draw visitors, the Islands must offer enjoyable and educational activities. The visitor experience is based on the interpretive themes and elements of the park and the types of activities available. The quality of visitor services provided at the park is also important in enhancing the visitor experience.

- **Conservation** -- One of the missions of the National Recreation Area is to preserve and protect the natural and cultural resources found in the park. Several Islands are host to bird breeding grounds and sanctuaries that would be adversely affected by human use. Other Islands contain historic structures that are threatened by neglect. The Park Service must seek mechanisms for ensuring that these resources receive the proper levels of attention to protect them into the future.

- **Park Management** -- The formal structure of the Partnership responsible for managing the Islands has been described in the legislation creating the National Recreation Area. However, the ability of the Partnership to successfully develop appropriate management principles will be determined as the planning process proceeds. Park management is also affected by issues of ownership of land and the need to find alternative sources of funding. The ownership of the Islands is divided among several state, local, and private agencies. The coordination of this mixed ownership structure is one the major challenges facing the park.

An examination of the case studies shows that while the Boston Harbor Islands represent a new legislative model of park management, they are, in reality, simply the institutionalization of the innovative practices that other parks have been developing in recent years to deal with the complex pressures facing National Parks today. It is appropriate then, that the case study parks have much to offer the Islands as a result of their experiences. The issues above have been separated to help organize ideas for how the Islands can be developed. However, it is important to remember that each principle developed will likely impact more that one aspect of park planning.

Three of the general concepts for planning the Harbor Islands that develop out of the contextual planning framework and the study of the three specific parks are:

- Each Island should be planned as a unique element within the whole of the park system.
Introduction

- Connections between the Islands and the mainland need to be made in order to overcome both the psychological distance and physical inaccessibility of the Islands.

- The interpretive themes of the Islands should be extremely broad and be conveyed to the visitor through interactive experiences based on the resources of the Islands.

These general concepts are then supported by additional principles that have further implications for how and where development of interpretive elements and visitor facilities occurs on the Islands.

Finally, this thesis proposes an illustrative concept for the programming and development of the Boston Harbor Islands. The ideas developed in this final section result from a combination of the lessons learned from the case study parks and from work conducted in the Boston Harbor Studio during the fall of 1997 at MIT. The focus of the studio was the potential of the newly cleaned Boston Harbor to contribute to the life and economy of the City of Boston.
CHAPTER TWO

NATIONAL PARK PLANNING AND POLICIES
NATIONAL PARK PLANNING AND POLICIES

This chapter provides an overview of the National Park System and the major policy changes that have affected the development of the system over its 126 year history. It is not meant to be an exhaustive history of the National Park Service, which has been recounted in numerous books. Rather, this chapter provides an overview of the evolution of key issues and policies that are important to present day planning for National Parks.

KEY ISSUES FACING THE SYSTEM

In 1872, Congress declared Yellowstone, an area in northwest Wyoming, as the first National Park in America. By the end of the century, several other areas had been designated as National Parks, including Yosemite and Sequoia in California. These early parks primarily focused on the preservation and conservation of unique natural resources. They were created from vast federally owned tracts of land and were well removed from major population centers in the young, early industrial America. Their location in remote areas and the lack of adequate transportation methods made these parks “almost wholly inaccessible to visitors” (Wirth 1980 p.4).

Initially, the national parks were managed by the Secretary of the Interior. In 1916, a new agency was created to care for America’s protected resources. The National Park Service, under the leadership of Stephen Mather, its first director, became responsible for managing the national parks, monuments, and historic sites. The act establishing the Park Service assigned the agency the mission of both conserving the park resources and providing for public enjoyment of the resources for generations to come (Wirth 1980 p.18). In its first year, the National Park Service was responsible for twenty national monuments and fourteen national parks (Wirth 1980 p.17). Over the past 82 years, the National Park System has grown to include over 375 park units (Buccino and others 1997 p.2).

This tremendous growth of the system has lead to some key issues being faced in planning for individual parks. Three of the most pressing issues are described in following paragraphs.

- Visitation -- Over the course of the history of the National Park System, visitation to the parks has increased significantly. In the first years, the relatively small number of parks, combined with their inaccessibility, led to a limited number of visitors. The expansion of the park system and the growing prevalence of the automobile has lead to greatly increasing levels of visitation. In 1996,
the number of visitors to all parks in the system totaled nearly 266 million. The effects of this increase in the number of visitors to the National Parks include overcrowding in popular park areas and increased demands for visitor services. Further, overuse and abuse threaten the exact resources that the parks are supposed to protect.

- **Funding** -- At the same time that both the number of park units and the number of visitors have increased, the level of funding appropriated to park operations, maintenance and capital projects has decreased. "In constant dollars, annual funding for National Parks decreased by over $600 million over the past two decades" (Buccino and others 1997 p.2). It has been estimated that the backlog of projects that has accumulated as a result of inadequate funding would require $8 billion to complete (Buccino and others 1997 p.viii). The lack of adequate funding for America’s National Parks has meant that the Park Service is neither prepared to keep pace with the demand for visitor services nor is it adequately able to initiate programs to protect park resources from overuse and the resulting degradation that occurs.

- **Conservation** -- Further complicating the pressures on the National Park Service has been the growth of the environmental movement. While environmental advocates in the early years of the National Parks fought for resource protection policies and opposed development in sensitive park areas, they were not generally successful. The more recent strength of the movement, however, has forced the NPS to reevaluate its original attitudes toward park development. "The Sierra Club and other environmental groups claim that the park visitor is a threat to the parks, and that development to accommodate visitors degrades the natural environments of the Park System . . . ." (Foresta 1984 p.3). Just as the threats of overuse to park resources are increasing and funds to support resource protection programs are decreasing, the Park Service is being pushed to do more to conserve the significant park sites and features.

The NPS’ dual mission of conserving the park resources and providing for public enjoyment of the park areas has been deeply affected by the trends noted above. The parks require facilities to accommodate the crowds at the same time that provisions must be made to insure that resources are not adversely affected by the people or the facilities designed to welcome them. As pressures from these needs increase, the lack of federal funds available to support park activities requires that the National Park Service seek alternative and innovative methods for dealing with contemporary park management and planning.
EVOLUTION OF NATIONAL PARK POLICIES

There have been several major policy changes that have marked the history of the National Park system. These policies affect park planning and management in terms of funding, land ownership, and facility development. The following is a brief overview of major policies that have both influenced individual parks and shaped the park system as a whole.

**Land Ownership**

During the first 50 years of existence, the NPS policy was to plan, manage and control park lands through ownership. Full ownership allowed the Park Service to exert the greatest control over activities on park land. This policy was popular because it kept the Federal Government out of the business of purchasing land from private individuals. Additionally, the Government found it generally unnecessary to purchase land because most early parks were created either from land already held by federal agencies or from land donated to the government by states or wealthy philanthropists (Foresta 1984 p.237).

However even in the early years, the National Park Service was developing alternative methods of preserving park resources that did not require acquisition of land. Without Congressional approval to use funds for the purchase of land, the Park Service had to seek alternatives that would support the park mission without outright ownership of land. In the 1930’s, the NPS sought to protect views and vistas along the Blue Ridge and Natchez Trace Parkways. Without dedicated funds to purchase the critical land areas, the NPS pursued the alternative of purchasing development rights on key parcels. The agreements with property owners “prohibited erecting billboards, establishing dumps, cutting trees, or constructing nonfarm buildings”(Foresta 1984 p.225).

The policy prohibiting the purchase of private lands became known as the “beg, borrow, or steal” method of land acquisition (Wirth 1980 p.260). Its effect was that the Park Service was severely limited in its ability to protect lands not already included within park boundaries. The Park Service was restricted to negotiations with adjacent land owners and could not guarantee the protection park resources when private activities on land outside the park were threatening the parks’ attractions.

**Access**

For most of its past, the NPS promoted access to the parks as one of the major park missions. From its beginnings, the NPS sought to improve park accessibility, first through rail and then by
automobile. Continuing through the 1950’s and 1960’s, the Park Service took advantage of the mass highway programs in this country to build roads to and through the national parks. Bringing people to the parks and increasing visitation was a primary goal.

At the same time as the major automobile boom in this country, in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, the Park Service promoted park improvements through the Mission 66 program. In preparation for the 50th birthday of the NPS, the agency dedicated vast amounts of funds to the construction and improvement of park facilities. Throughout the park system, roads, visitor centers, and interpretive facilities were built. Remaining consistent with the goal of providing visitor access to park resources, the roads brought visitors to the most significant areas of the parks where visitor centers accommodated park users and provided educational and interpretive exhibits.

This focus on access has recently come under fire. As both scientists and citizens begin to recognize the damage caused to park resources by overuse, and particularly by too much automobile traffic, alternatives are being sought to balance access with preservation and conservation. Several parks are seeking to implement alternative methods of transportation. Proposals at both Grand Canyon and Yosemite National Parks suggest constructing remote parking areas and providing access to the parks through shuttles and light rail systems. Opportunities for biking and walking are being implemented in other parks.

**Historic and Cultural Resources -- Gettysburg**

Beginning with the establishment of Yellowstone and continuing through the first third of the 20th century, America’s National Parks were primarily focused on the country’s spectacular natural features. Historic preservation and cultural resource protection were only minor aspects of the work of the National Park Service. Only Mesa Verde, the Native American cliff dwellings in Colorado, was among the original sites included in the National Park system. This changed, however, in 1933 when the system was expanded to include the Civil War battlefields. It was at this time that management of the battlefields, including Gettysburg, was transferred from the U.S. Army to the National Park Service. Historic preservation and the protection of America’s past became a significant issue for the Park Service. The NPS “became a keeper of the flame of patriotism, the overseer of the sacred American places” (Foresta 1984 p.130).
The Seashores -- Cape Cod

As early as the 1930’s, studies were made of the need to establish protected areas along America’s coasts. The reports recommended a total of fifteen areas as being appropriate for protection through the National Park System. However, the economic and political realities of the Depression and second World War prevented extensive actions from being taken, and only Cape Hatteras was officially dedicated as a new park unit (Wirth 1980 p.192). The Mission 66 program in the late 50’s and 60’s allowed the NPS to revisit the Seashores as potential new park areas. As a result, the Cape Cod National Seashore was created.

Cape Cod was a major turning point in National Park policy. It was the first park for which Congress authorized the use of federal funds for land acquisition. Cape Cod also presented some unique challenges specifically because not all land was federally owned. The National Park Service was placed in the position of dealing directly with private property owners as well as numerous municipal land owners in order to promote the goals of resource conservation and visitor access. “It took from March 1, 1872, the date Yellowstone National Park was established, until August 7, 1961, the date of authorization of Cape Cod National Seashore -- a period of eighty-nine years -- to recognize that the preservation of our national heritage for the benefit of the people, present and future, is an important federal responsibility that deserves spending federal money to buy the land that will make such preservation possible”(Wirth 1980 p.109).

Parks for the People -- Golden Gate National Recreation Area

In the decade of the 1960’s, criticism of the National Park System increased. Individuals and groups criticized the National Park System as being too inaccessible for the majority of the American public, particularly the urban poor. Primarily remote natural areas, the national parks were seen as vast tracts of land being preserved through federal subsidies for the enjoyment of America’s middle class. In order to remedy the perceived problems, the National Park Service began implementing a new policy of “Parks for the People.”

The Parks for the People program focused on creating parks closer to America’s cities; providing natural spaces and recreational opportunities for a broader segment of the country’s population. As a part of this policy, the “Gateway Parks” -- Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco and Gateway National Recreation Area in New York -- were created. While popular with many, this movement had its own critics. Some were opposed to the National Park Service, a federal entity,
Chapter Two

taking over what had traditionally been a municipal function: providing recreational opportunities to urban residents. These urban parks presented new challenges to the Park Service. Most rangers and other Park Service Employees were trained to work in remote wilderness areas. They were not skilled in dealing with the many problems of urban America (Smith 1972).

Golden Gate and Gateway National Recreation Areas were both created out of lands already held by public agencies and transferred to the National Park Service. Both parks contain large tracts of land that were previously used for military purposes. The government took advantage of the fact that it already owned the major parcels comprising these parks. The struggles that faced Cape Cod National Seashore would not have to be repeated in order to assemble the needed lands for the Gateways. The government was able to bring the parks to the people with little expenditure of funds for the purposes of land acquisition.

**Partnerships**

Further evolution of the policies of the National Park Service and the types of park units included in the system came in the 1970’s when the urban landscape in Lowell, Massachusetts became the focus of a new national park. Expanding upon the themes of historic and cultural preservation, Lowell National Historic Park was created to protect an environment representative of early industrial America. The management of Lowell was based on partnerships between the public and private sectors. Initial investment by the federal government was used to stimulate additional spending by other levels of government as well as by private businesses to create an urban system preserving a portion of America’s cultural history. Lowell has become a model in which parks contribute to the revitalization of the local community.

Within the last 12 years, the NPS has become involved in the management of National Heritage Corridors. While not officially considered park units, the National Park Service contributes to their management and planning operations. Going a step beyond the Lowell model, the NPS owns no land in the corridors and is only one contributor of funds to support the operations of the heritage areas.

**CONCLUSION**

It is the legacy of these policies that forms the context in which the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area was created. With the Islands, the National Park Service continues to evolve its policies and practices in the areas of land ownership and funding. The Harbor Islands have
become the first official park unit that is expected to meet the standards of the National Park Service, a federal agency, without the benefits of owning the land in the park or receiving guaranteed levels of federal funds. The implications of this new policy include the need to provide intense coordination between the thirteen members of the Boston Harbor Islands Partnership to insure that decisions concerning the Islands are made under the unified management structure rather than at the level of individual Island owner.

The shifting policies concerning funding, resource conservation, and development in national parks have further implications for the Harbor Islands. Because the Islands are required to receive three dollars of non-federal funds for every federal dollar appropriated to the park, there is a need to develop income-producing activities on the Islands. This shifts the burden for park support from the public in general (through tax dollars) to the park users. The Islands are then dependent upon drawing visitors, and their money, in order to pay for park maintenance and operations. At the same time, conservationists warn against overcrowding on the Islands and many of the parks local constituents oppose significant increases in the level of visitation (Audience Comments 1998).

An examination of the planning and policy context in which the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area was created provides great insight into the challenges that now face the park. It is also useful to consider these policies when examining the planning activities that are taking place in the case study parks. The following chapter will show how the National Park Service is dealing with some of the same issues in the three case study parks. While it is evident that each park is unique, there are common elements that tie the parks together and make it possible for the experiences of these older parks to inform the future planning and development practices of the Harbor Islands.
CASE STUDIES

This chapter examines three national parks in order to develop an understanding of how the National Park Service can learn from previous experience and apply this knowledge to the planning for the Harbor Islands. The three case studies chosen for the purposes of this research are: Gettysburg National Military Park, Cape Cod National Seashore, and Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

There are several characteristics that the three case study parks share with the Boston Harbor Islands, and it is for these reasons that these specific parks have been chosen. First, like the Islands, they are all large in area and cut across political boundaries. Gettysburg National Military Battlefield literally surrounds the Town of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania and has a prominent position in the county as a major land holder. Cape Cod National Seashore has been a particularly noteworthy park because of its relationship with the six Cape towns in which it is located.

Second, like the islands, they all contain both natural and cultural resources. Unlike Yellowstone, the Grand Canyon, and other parks, the three case study parks and the Harbor Islands all contain significant cultural resources as well as important natural environments. These parks all seek to protect the natural conditions found within their boundaries. However, the National Park Service is also called upon to preserve the buildings and landscapes that have both resulted from human intervention and shaped human history within each park.

Third, each park is developing partnerships to provide innovative mechanisms for creating new sources of funds for park use. In Gettysburg, the Park Service is negotiating with a developer to construct a new visitor center and other visitor facilities. At GGNRA, a close relationship with the cooperating association, Golden Gate National Parks Association, works to keep park income in the park. GGNRA also has dozens of Park Partners that work with the Park Service on everything from concessions to providing educational and social programs in park areas. Cape Cod has also developed partnerships with organizations such as historical societies and area universities.

Also, each park has been struggling to deal with various user groups that have opposing views of what the park should provide. Local users and the national public can come into conflict when expectations of the experiences that parks should provide differ. Additionally, some park visitors
Chapter Three

participate in activities that other groups of park users feel diminishes their experience. Each of the case study parks has dealt with these conflicts. It is important for the Islands to learn how to work with diverse user groups because they already have multiple constituencies who are concerned with their future. Many current users have already expressed opposition to seeing increases in the number of visitors to the Islands. They are likely to speak against new development and new uses.

Finally, all of the parks are, or have been, in the process of developing new plans for park areas. In February 1998, Cape Cod National Seashore released the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Final General Management Plan for the Seashore. Gettysburg is currently in the process of developing a new General Management Plan and just two years ago, published a Draft Development Concept Plan for the proposed visitor facilities. The National Park Service at GGNRA published the General Management Plan for the Presidio in 1993 and is currently in the process of planning for other sites in the park. The experience of developing these plans can inform the preparation of a plan for the Boston Harbor Islands.

The results of the examination of the three case study parks shows that while each park faces its own unique challenges, there are several approaches to park management, interpretation, and planning that are being used across parks to address overarching issues. In particular, the case study parks show that the National Park Service is greatly expanding the number and type of stories that are told about park histories and resources. They are reaching out to a broader audience by expanding the interpretive themes of each park. Additionally parks are seeking to provide multiple modes of access to the parks to reduce the stress of the automobile. Other findings indicate that parks, which are competing for visitors with other destinations such as Disneyland, must provide entertaining experiences for visitors. While the educational element of park experience should not be lost, it must be packaged in ways that appeal to visitors today. The following descriptions of the parks and the accompanying lessons learned show how and where the Islands can build upon the experiences of other parks.
GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

Gettysburg National Military Park is currently in the process of developing both an updated General Management Plan and plans for a new visitor facility complex. Major issues facing the park include overcrowding and traffic problems during the peak summer season, inadequate interpretive facilities and poor display and storage provisions for the park’s collection of artifacts. The primary resource at Gettysburg is the land upon which the Battle of Gettysburg was fought nearly 135 years ago. The landscape itself is crucial to understanding the events of the Battle and is believed by many to be sacred as the ground upon which the bloodiest battle ever fought on American soil occurred. How the National Park Service preserves the landscape is not a simple question.

The experiences of Gettysburg highlight the importance of the visitor center in the development of the park. The visitor center helps shape the image of the park, is crucial in forming the visitor experience, and impacts development and traffic patterns in communities outside park boundaries. Gettysburg is currently struggling with the complexities of permitting commercial development to occur as a part of a new visitor center complex. This venture has been undertaken in an attempt to meet the park’s need for visitor and administrative facilities in a time when federal funds are not available for such projects. The controversy that has been sparked over this project provides great insight into both the role of the visitor center and the implications of allowing commercial development within park boundaries.

The current plans and activities at Gettysburg are also useful in understanding how the changes in policy described in the previous chapter have affected park planning and development. Past decisions made concerning development and preservation in the park are now considered to be damaging to park resources and the visitor experience. The park is now faced with the challenge of moving toward a future that redresses the problems created by past mistakes and better meets the demands of National Park planning today.

The Story

Gettysburg National Military Park (GNMP), located in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, contains approximately 5,900 acres of land and welcomes more than 1.7 million visitors each year (NPS 1996b p.1). Gettysburg Military Park is charged with preserving and protecting the land upon which one of the bloodiest and most important battles of the American Civil War was fought (Buccino and others
The Battle of Gettysburg is seen the turning point in the Civil War. The Confederate troops were forced back from their invasion of Pennsylvania and the North began to successfully fight the remaining two years of America’s Civil War. At GNMP, the landscape itself is deemed nationally significant as well as more than 1300 monuments in the Park commemorating military troops and leaders that fought in the battles during July 1-3, 1863.

Creation of the Park

Almost immediately after the Battle of Gettysburg, the nation recognized the significance of the battlefield. “As early as six weeks after the battle in 1863, efforts were made to preserve the topographic features of the Gettysburg battlefield. Little Round Top, Cemetery Hill, Culp’s Hill – names familiar to most Americans after 1863 – were purchased and preserved by a concerned citizenry who wished to understand and commemorate the battle” (NPS 1996a p.2). Landscape architect William Saunders was commissioned to design a National Cemetery at the battlefield where the fallen soldiers could be properly buried. In November of 1863, with the cemetery only partially built, President Abraham Lincoln came to Gettysburg and delivered his famous Gettysburg Address. Monuments in honor of those who lost their lives in the Battle began to be erected almost immediately by surviving soldiers and other concerned citizenry.

The National Battlefield was officially created in 1895 under the management of the Department of War. The purpose of the creation of the National Battlefield was “to preserve and mark the lines of battle of troops engaged in the Battle of Gettysburg, to provide
Figure 3.3: Gettysburg National Military Park

Source: National Park Service
convenient access to its monuments and grounds, to acquire lands upon which the battle was fought, and to establish and enforce necessary regulations for protection of park resources and property" (NPS 1996b p.29). To help commemorate the Battle, the War Department built a series of formal avenues through the lands of the battlefield. These avenues follow the positions occupied by both Union and Confederate Troops during the three days of battle. As formal elements in the landscape, they are often lined with trees or artillery and provide engaging views of the battlefield. They combine these formal elements with gently curving routes that follow the topography of the land to enhance natural vistas. These avenues brought carriages and pedestrians to the significant sites of the Battle. Views of the landscape were provided to help visitors understand the troop activities and battle action. These avenues and the monuments constructed to fallen soldiers became the early elements of a visitor destination and commemorative site.

In 1934, the Park was transferred to the Department of the Interior under National Park Service control. It was among the first wave of historic sites to be assigned to the management of the Park Service. Prior to the transfer of Gettysburg and other battlefields to the NPS, the agency had been almost solely concerned with natural environments. With these new responsibilities, the National Park Service took on the challenges of historic preservation and protection of America’s “sacred” sites and patriotic past.
Chapter Three

Because Gettysburg was so close to the centers of population in the northern states, and because the rail transportation of the Union was advanced, families of the fallen men found it possible to visit Gettysburg. They first came quickly to identify their fallen loved ones; later others came to visit the National Cemetery, and finally, over the next 75 years, veterans of the war returned to commemorate the lives of their fellow soldiers who died in the bloody battle. Thus, since shortly after the battle that brought a small Pennsylvanian farming community to the forefront of the nation’s attention, it became a destination for people seeking to understand the Battle of Gettysburg and the meaning of the Civil War.

Mission 66 and a New Cyclorama Building

In the 1960’s, Gettysburg benefited (although many would not say that now) from the National Park Service’s Mission ’66 Program. This program promoted new development in parks throughout the National Park system in order to prepare for the Park Service’s 50th anniversary in 1966. In the decade before the celebration, funds were made available to many park units to build visitor centers and improve park facilities. In total, 114 visitor centers were built in America’s National Parks, including one at Gettysburg (Wirth 1980 p.269).

At the time this program was initiated, the prevailing philosophy of the National Park Service was to bring visitors to the core of the resources in each park. In order to best showcase each park’s attractions and resources, access to the “highlights” was improved. Major developments to accommodate visitors and interpret the resources were constructed in parks throughout the national park system.

Figure 3.5: Nuetra’s Cyclorama Building
At Gettysburg, Mission 66 funds were provided for the development of a new Visitor Center and Cyclorama building. Designed by architect Richard Nuetra, the visitor facility was placed at the “high water mark” of the Civil War. The tract of land includes the ground upon which Pickett’s Charge occurred and which is understood as the site at which the tide of the war turned. The Northern armies forced the Southern troops back from their advances. From this point forward, the Union began to defeat the Confederacy until the war was won two years later.

The Mission 66 Program provided billions of dollars of funding for projects and development in the parks. The ease of funding, combined with the desire to complete projects quickly for the Park Service’s anniversary, led to rapid and poor planning and design at Gettysburg. Despite the protests of many conservation and preservation groups, NPS in Gettysburg proceeded to construct the visitor center at the heart of the site of the third day of the Battle of Gettysburg. Further, poor design preparation and planning led to the construction of a building that was immediately a failure at some of its primary goals.

Nuetra’s Cyclorama building (Figure 3.5) was commissioned to house the famous 360° painting “The High Tide of the Confederacy.” However, the constructed building did not provide the proper space for the 1884 painting of Pickett’s Charge. Since the building was completed in 1962, the painting has been hanging improperly, becoming damaged as a result. The piece of art is wrinkled and cracked, and the painting is in danger of peeling off the canvas.

Planning for a New Visitor Center

In 1971, the Rosensteel family donated their 1921 family home and privately established Civil War museum and artifacts to the National Park Service. The family also donated an electric map that tells the story of the Battle. At this time, the NPS moved the visitor center to this location, just 1,000 feet from Nuetra’s visitor center and cyclorama building. This move was made with the understanding that within 7 years, a new museum and visitor facilities would be constructed and the family home torn down to aid in the restoration of the 1863 landscape on the site. However, a location for the new facilities was never chosen, and the funding for the facility was never provided.
Chapter Three

In 1982, after thirteen years of work, the Park Service at Gettysburg completed a new General Management Plan. The development of the GMP proved to be highly contentious when initial plans proposed moving the park’s visitor facilities to a site in the northern section of the park, where the first day of battle was fought. This plan was seen as advantageous because it would allow the Park Service to remove the facilities from the critical site of Pickett’s Charge and restore that site to its original landscape. However, many members of the local community opposed the plan because it “might isolate the Steinwehr Avenue businesses that had grown up next to the existing park Visitor Centers” (NPS 1996a p.4) and which depended greatly on tourist business. In response to these concerns, the Park Service rejected the move. Instead, the 1982 GMP recommended continuing the operation of the existing visitor facilities and making those improvements that were possible to that complex. Although the continued use of non-historic structures on critical parcels in the park was contrary to accepted management policy, the National Park Service had been unable to find alternative sites for locating new visitor facilities.

In order to meet the needs for increased space for visitor services and park administration, the 1982 GMP suggested two small development zones. These areas, the only two that were deemed appropriate for new construction were the site containing the existing facilities and a second site called the Fantasyland site, just 1500 feet south of and across the street from the first. This second site was part of a recently acquired parcel that contained a small amusement park (NPS 1996a p.4). Development on these two sites would have little impact on traffic circulation patterns and nearby businesses. Centrally located with respect to the park lands as a whole, the sites are both found in the area of the third day of battle to the south of the City and east of Steinwehr Avenue. The configuration of the park around the City of Gettysburg also means that these two sites are situated near park boundaries and thus non-park lands.

“In 1989, NPS completed a Development Concept Plan (DCP) that recommended [the development of] a new 60,000 square-foot building for curatorial storage, park administration and maintenance operations at the Fantasyland site” (NPS 1996a p.4). This proposal would provide the much needed improvements in collections storage and administrative facilities. However, the submission of this proposal by the Gettysburg staff to the National Park Service’s national administration never resulted in the receipt of funds for the project. In fact, the proposal didn’t even rank on the service-wide list of the 200 top construction priorities (NPS 1997b).
In the time since, the park service has continued to work with the existing facilities as best possible. However, initial problems as well as new ones continue to cause distress for the NPS in Gettysburg. The existing museum facilities are severely inadequate for displaying the museum’s collections; a mere 10% of the park’s collection of Civil War artifacts is on display at a single time. Additionally, both display and storage conditions are insufficient to protect the artifacts from damage and ruin. The facilities are neither temperature nor moisture controlled and the artifacts are suffering damage as a result of storage and display without such protection.

A Public-Private Partnership

In 1994, a local developer, Robert Monahan, approached the Park Service with a proposal to build a new visitor center, cyclorama facility, and museum on the Fantasyland site. He proposed the creation of a partnership between himself, the National Park Service, and the Friends of Gettysburg National Military Park. The new facility would include a privately owned and operated theater. The entire complex would be built without the use of public funds.

After considering Monahan’s partnership proposal, the NPS at Gettysburg, the public, and others expressed several concerns about proceeding with the proposal.

“Reviewers questioned the suitability of the park’s development zones for large-scale visitor facilities, and suggested that the park consider other sites, both inside and outside the current park boundary. Others questioned the scope of the project, and felt that NPS should look at a broader range of options to improve collections storage and visitor facilities. A third concern arose from the fact that the partnership had been offered directly to NPS, and was not the result of an open solicitation. Reviewers asked NPS to develop a process that would consider a greater range of partnering mechanisms and allow an open, nationwide search for potential partners.” (NPS 1996a p.1)

The Park Service then embarked on a process of developing new guidelines for both the requirements for the construction of a new visitor center and museum facilities and for the process through which a public-private partnership for the purpose of developing, funding, and managing the new complex would be formed. In April 1996, the Park Service published a Draft Development Concept Plan Environmental Assessment for Collections Storage, Visitor & Museum Facilities (DCP). The DCP described four options and highlighted a Preferred Option for improvements of the park’s visitor and museum facilities. This option proposed to “develop a new complex to house the park’s visitor center, museum, cyclorama painting, collections storage, and associated bookstore and
Chapter Three

office space. [And to] remove the existing Visitor and Cyclorama Centers, and rehabilitate their sites to reflect the setting of the historic battlefield." (NPS 1996a p.34). The process behind the development of the DCP included significant public input through a series of public meetings and other opportunities for those concerned to provide feedback to the Park Service on all aspects of the plan.

The Development Concept Plan then served as the basis for a nation-wide Request For Proposals (RFP). The proposals submitted would be judged according to criteria such as: cultural resources are enhanced; cultural landscapes are protected; natural resources are enhanced; the visitor’s experience is strengthened; new facilities are adequately screened; facilities will be easily accessible for visitors; traffic disturbances will be minimized; and existing neighborhoods will be protected. The RFP also explained that there would be additional considerations, particularly with respect to the financing of the project. The NPS noted that its goal is to have a facility that is completely self-supporting. “At a minimum, the Complex must come on line at no direct or anticipated increase in cost to the park’s current operating budget” (NPS 1996b p.9). While the Park Service admitted its preference for a proposal that requires the construction of only the visitor center and museum facilities, it recognized, given the lack of potential funders willing to work within these limits, the probable necessity of incorporating related facilities, that would produce an income stream, into the new complex. The RFP opened up the process of developing new park and visitor facilities, as well as related commercial facilities, to a nation-wide competition. The group submitting the proposal selected as the best would then be invited to enter into negotiations with the Park Service for the implementation of the development. The ideas in the proposal would be used only as a starting point in developing an acceptable strategy for creating a new visitor complex.

The Park Service received six proposals in response to the RFP. A selection committee, consisting of Park Service staff from parks other than Gettysburg, reviewed the proposals and, from four finalists, selected a proposal by Kinsley Equities as best meeting the numerous goals outlined in the RFP. The proposal by Kinsley suggests building a new facility on what is called the LeVan tract - a 45 acre privately owned parcel located within park boundaries to the south and east of the existing visitor center and cyclorama buildings. Near the corner of Hunt Avenue and Baltimore Pike, the proposed site is within close proximity to the existing facilities, but is neither located on land upon which fighting occurred, nor is located in the sight lines of the most significant portions of the battlefield. In addition to the visitor and museum facilities required by the NPS, the proposal suggests
building a new cyclorama and bookstore, a tour center, an orientation theater, a large format cinema, restaurants, a National Geographic store, a gift shop, and a Civil War arts and crafts gallery. Additional partners proposed for contributing to the new facility include National Geographic Television, Destination Cinema, and Gettysburg Tours, Inc. (Adlerstein 1997).

The funds for the development of the complex would be raised through a combination of fundraising efforts and through conventional debt financing. The operation of the facility would be funded by a combination of revenue generated by fees for current interpretive exhibits, entrance to the National Geographic film, sales from related commercial facilities, and parking fees. Entrance to the visitor center and museum would continue to be free (Adlerstein 1997).

According to the evaluations of the selection committee, this proposal was selected because it best met the criteria established in the RFP. The site is not significant to the understanding of the Battle of Gettysburg, and the facilities will be well screened from major interpretive areas. However, the location of the facility will be close enough to the park highlights to enhance visitor understanding of critical aspects of the Battle and improve the overall visitor experience. Additionally, the selection committee felt that the combination of fundraising and debt financing would adequately support the construction of the complex. The related facilities, including movie theater, gift shop, etc., were also seen as appropriate for inclusion in the National Park (Adlerstein 1997). Finally, the proposal included provisions for returning the site of the existing facilities to its historic 1863 landscape. At that time in the future that the private partner has received in return all initial investments, the land and the building will be donated to the National Park Service for full ownership.

The Park Service officially announced the selection of the Kinsley proposal on November 6, 1997. While the National Park Service had already come under fire for its willingness to work with a private developer in the construction of the new visitor services, the controversy surrounding the proposed visitor center heightened as numerous groups contested the Park Service’s decision. Criticism of both the principle and process by which the plans for the proposed visitor complex are being developed is being voiced by groups such as Civil War buffs, some preservationists, and two submitters of non-winning proposals.

Opponents to the new facility insist that no commercial development should be allowed on the hallowed ground of America’s bloodiest battle. They express concern that permitting this facility to be built in a National Park will set a dangerous precedent for other parks. It is in complete contrast to
the work that the Park Service and others have done over the past 135 years to protect the battlefield from commercial development.

Despite this opposition, other interested groups are providing tentative support to the innovative public-private partnership. The National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Parks and Conservation Association, and the Friends of the National Parks at Gettysburg have all expressed support for the project, as long as it is well monitored and controlled by the National Park Service and not permitted to overwhelm the historic meaning and messages of the park. Richard Moe, President of the National Trust testified before Congress:

"The fact that the new facilities will be built within the park boundaries should not by itself disqualify the plan from consideration. The question is whether it can be built in such a way so as to not intrude upon but rather to enhance the visitor experience while maintaining the integrity of the battlefield itself. In the end, the test is whether this new plan offers a significant net benefit for the preservation of the battlefield and the artifacts and an improved visitor experience" (Moe 1998 p.3).

The original proposal has already been altered as a result of negotiations between the Park Service and Kinsley as well as in response to public input. The complex will now include a public library and research space, and the related facilities will be decreased in size by approximately 45-50%. The Park Service and Kinsley Equities are continuing to move forward with the plans for the visitor center and related facilities.

In conjunction with the development of plans for the new visitor complex, the Park Service has been proceeding with the process of creating a new General Management Plan. This new Plan will update the now outdated 1982 GMP and will provide support for the development of the proposed visitor center. In addition, the GMP will address issues of park access, interpretation, and landscape preservation and restoration, all key factors affecting the visitor experience.

**Lessons Learned**

The experience of Gettysburg illustrates both the complexities of the role of the visitor center in the development of a park and the challenges involved when engaging in public-private partnerships to accomplish park goals. The story of Gettysburg is not yet fully told. The final plans for the visitor center as well as the new GMP are still being developed. Despite the ongoing nature of the current planning processes, there are already several lessons that can be learned from the activities thus far.
An examination of the issues facing the park today reveals how deeply the layers of past decisions regarding park planning and development affect current problems and challenges involved in promoting park goals.

**Image and Identity**

- **Visitor Center** -- The concern over image and identity is different at Gettysburg than at the other case study parks. For Gettysburg, there is a single theme that ties the various park areas together: the Battle of Gettysburg and the Civil War. The avenues and monuments throughout the park successfully unify the park and provide a strong image of the Gettysburg landscape despite the physical separation of the park lands into three different sites.

  The struggle with image and identity at GNMP is more closely related to the interpretive facilities in the park. The battle over the visitor center that is currently being waged is partially a battle over park image. Those in support of the plans for the new complex imagine the new facility will act as a gateway to the park, providing visitors with an introduction and orientation to the park, the events of the Battle of Gettysburg, and the importance of the Civil War in American History.

  Opponents to the plans foresee the “Disneyfication” of the park. They express concern that the inclusion of commercial activities within the park’s boundaries will intrude upon the sanctity of the ground upon which more than 51,000 American soldiers were killed, wounded or captured. They fear that image of the park as hallowed ground will be damaged by the proposed complex. One can learn from the experiences at Gettysburg the importance of the visitor center in enhancing the desired image of the park.

- **Peripheral Development** -- The other threats to image and identity at Gettysburg are the “strip of hamburger stands, faux relic shops and low-budget museums”(Johnson 1997) that are adjacent to the park and visible from key interpretive locations. Adding to the intrusions of the commercial strip development, and far more damaging to Gettysburg’s image as a preserved 1863 landscape is the National Tower, a 307 foot tower, constructed amid controversy in 1974, that literally towers over the park lands and proves to be obtrusively visible from nearly all locations in the park.

  It is these developments that jar the visitor’s experience of the park and hinder a greater understanding of the role the landscape played during the three days of battle in 1863. While it is
unlikely, and not even desirable, that the Park Service can eliminate this type of commercial growth from its periphery, improved design guidelines and zoning standards could reduce the negative impacts of such development. By working with local governments, the Park Service could help develop guidelines that are more sensitive to the historic setting of the park and would enhance the image of the park as a preserved Civil War battlefield.

Access

- **Alternatives to Private Automobiles** -- Like many National Parks, Gettysburg is struggling with traffic jams during peak summer months. Because one of the main experiences for visitors to the park is to drive along the formal avenues following the lines of battle, there is a significant component of the park experience that occurs in the automobile for many visitors. The result is car lined avenues and the intrusion of 20th century problems on a 19th century landscape.

  The park is now seeking alternatives to decrease the problems associated with excessive automobile use. One method of reducing the visitor dependence on the private car is to provide alternative means of travel through the park. A range of bus and walking tours are already being offered by groups such as the Licensed Battlefield Guides and other for-profit businesses. New plans suggest further improving the pedestrian access to major sites. The provision of shuttle service throughout the park is also being discussed.

- **Restrict Access to Key Sites** -- The Park Service is also beginning to recognize the potential benefits of limiting automobile access to some key areas. Within the last few years, sections of the formal avenues were closed to automobile use because of maintenance and resource protection issues. The Park Service discovered that many visitors expressed a preference for these areas when cars were prohibited. The experience of the battlefield was improved when the intrusion of traffic was eliminated.

  The Boston Harbor Islands, for the most part, do not have to deal with issues of automobile traffic in sensitive areas of the park. Moon, Long, and Deer Islands are the only three connected to the mainland that provide automobile access. However, the accessibility of these three islands makes it critical that visitor access is not concentrated at these sites. The results of such development would be traffic congestion and high demand for parking facilities, detracting from the experience of the Islands.
**Case Studies**

- **Impacts on Surrounding Areas** -- One of the major concerns over where to locate visitor services in GNMP is the affect it will have on traffic patterns in the Gettysburg area. While some of the concern is similar to that at Cape Cod where local residents complain about the traffic caused by the park, locals in the Gettysburg area also recognize the role that park visitors play in the economy of the region. Proposals to move the visitor center to different locations have met with resistance because the travel and access patterns of park visitors would be altered. Businesses that have located near the existing visitor facilities on Steinwehr Avenue might suffer if the primary tourist access to the park visitor center is relocated away from Steinwehr Ave.

**Visitor Experience**

- **Tell the Story, the Whole Story** -- Katie Lawhon, Public Affairs Specialist for the park, describes the interpretive experience at Gettysburg as “woefully inadequate.” The NPS continues to believe that in order to best advocate for the park into the future, a broad base of support in the American public must be maintained. This support can be best promoted through visitation. It is believed that park visitors leave Gettysburg with a greater sense of the importance of the battle and the need to preserve the cultural landscape.

  Additionally, the Park Service recognizes the changing understanding of history. Until recently, history was often understood from only one viewpoint. In the case of Gettysburg, the accepted viewpoint was that of the military general. Now, however, there is greater recognition of and appreciation for multiple viewpoints. History can best be understood when the experiences of all participants in an event are chronicled. One single experience can provide only a fragment of what happened at any given time.

  Lawhon noted the need to diversify the base of support for the park and commented that this might be accomplished by introducing new viewpoints of the Battle into the interpretative experience. Specifically, interpretation might be expanded to describe how the Battle and the War affected blacks, what the experience of women was during the War, and how the Battle affected the Town of Gettysburg. These are not stories that have traditionally been interpreted by the Park Service. Recommendations in several of the initial alternatives proposed for the new General Management Plan include the ability for visitors to “personalize” their tours of the park. In this way, they can choose how they spend their time and which aspects of the story of the
Battle of Gettysburg they hear. They can view the Battle and the War through a lens that matches their own personal interests.

**Conservation**

- **Mitigate the Negative Effects of Overuse** -- In his testimony before Congress, Richard Moe referred to the challenges facing Gettysburg National Military Park:

  A hundred years ago the park was designed for only 70,000 people. The sheer number of people who come to the park is now a significant problem that directly affects the visitor experience. Everyone wants to go to the same places, and the landscape is showing signs of wear” (Moe 1998 p.2).

In order to ease the pressures on the landscape that the 1.7 million visitors each year impose, the Park Service is seeking to provide numerous and diverse attractions. Linked to the concept of providing more stories, the principle of expanding the number of interpretive sites is aimed at the goal of dispersing visitors throughout the park rather than encouraging all visitors to congregate in a few overcrowded areas.

One such future interpretive site may be an historic farmhouse that, during the time of the Battle, was home to a freed black family. While this site may not attract all park visitors, it will become a destination for some. Because Gettysburg is tied together by a single major theme, the central visitor facility will likely continue to be the focus of the visitor experience where nearly all park visitors begin their tours. However, the expansion of the number of stories told and the interpretive sites associated with these stories will result in more personalized tours through the park and a decrease in the pressures placed on the few key sites that are the focus of interpretation today. The park will better be able to accommodate the 1.7 million visitors to the park each year.

- **Zones of Sensitivity** -- The experience of Gettysburg illustrates the need to rank park areas for their sensitivity to use and development. In the 1960’s, a lack of understanding of the effects that development on one of the most critical sites in the park would have led to the construction of the cyclorama and the complete destruction of the 1863 landscape at the site of Pickett’s Charge. While the purpose of siting the visitor center and Cyclorama as this location was to bring visitors to the scene of the critical events of the Battle, the construction of the buildings completely altered the landscape and impaired the interpretive value of the site.
Case Studies

Today, the Park Service is working with a more developed understanding of various levels of sensitivity of different park areas. At Gettysburg, the importance of different park areas is primarily determined by the events of the Battle that occurred in that area. Land on which battle action occurred is deemed most critical and should be conserved in the form of the 1863 landscape to the greatest degree possible. The issues used to determine the desired level of conservation will vary differently from park to park. Historic events and natural environments and features are generally the key aspects used to rank park areas from most sensitive to least sensitive.

Park Management

- **Trust is Critical** -- One of the most important lessons to be learned about park management from the experiences of Gettysburg is that the Park Service must always work to maintain the respect and trust of its constituents. Throughout the park system, the NPS faces highly contentious conflicts on a regular basis. In the past, the Park Service at Gettysburg failed to successfully deal with constituents when critical decisions have been made. Mistakes made in the past have fostered an environment of distrust that hinders present attempts by the Park Service to promote park goals. This is gradually being overcome by an intensive program of community outreach and participation in the planning process. While the Harbor Islands are being developed in an atmosphere of relative trust, the Park Service and the Island Partnership must be constantly aware of the importance of maintaining that trust into the future.

- **Control in Partnerships Is Important** -- The story of Gettysburg illustrates the consequences of the need to find innovative sources of funding in an era of limited government spending. The Park Service has been unable to move forward in achieving park goals on its own because appropriated budgets do not meet even the basic needs of park maintenance. As a result, the Park Service at Gettysburg has decided to seek alternative sources of funding. At GNMP, this has resulted in the plans to enter into a partnership with a private developer. While partnerships with non-profit organizations have long been common in the National Parks, this new mechanism for creating the financial ability to construct a visitor center is a new model.

In order to insure that the ideals of the Park Service are not relegated a secondary position behind the goals of profit, the NPS must constantly oversee the project and insure to the greatest extent possible that the goals of the developer and those of the park are one. Because the visitor
complex is yet to be constructed, the full implications of this partnership are not yet known. Only after the facilities are built will the full implications of including commercial development in the park be known.

The success of the Boston Harbor Islands will depend on the ability of the Island Partnership to work as a unified organization in making decisions about park development. The Park Service is not the sole decision-maker. For the Islands, the control that is important at Gettysburg is transformed into the role of coordinator that the Park Service must embrace in the Island Partnership. It is the Island Partnership that must maintain the control in additional partnerships that are formed for the purpose of advancing park goals.

The funding requirements for the Boston Harbor Islands place pressure on the Island Partnership to explore all options for creating opportunities to advance park goals while minimizing the level of federal investment. The challenges that the Park Service has faced at Gettysburg, and how the agency has addressed the challenges can greatly inform the future experience of the Islands.
GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) has been cited by the National Park Service as an appropriate model to use for the development of the Boston Harbor Islands. Located in San Francisco, GGNRA has many characteristics in common with the Harbor Islands. Three of the key factors that make GGNRA and the Harbor Islands similar are their proximity to dense urban populations, their inclusion of both land and water resources, and their incorporation of very distinct sites and attractions that are not tied together by a single unifying interpretive theme.

Two of the major contributions that an examination of Golden Gate makes to improving an understanding of the issues facing the Harbor Islands are how to deal with the distinct park attractions and how partnerships can be developed to accomplish nearly any park initiative. The Park Service at GGNRA has put great efforts into creating a unified image of the park in order to overcome lack of visitor recognition of the value of the park as a whole. This benefits the park by encouraging visitors to use the lesser known park areas, by raising awareness of park issues, and increasing the constituency concerned with stewardship of park resources.

Additionally, the Park Service has been innovative and strategic in developing partnerships with numerous agencies, primarily non-profit organizations, in order to achieve park goals. Through this process, the Park Service has been able to take advantage of the talents and abilities of organizations and individuals from San Francisco community. The Park Service has recognized the benefits of working with organizations that specialize in activities that support the park mission. From YMCAs to Youth Hostels to discovery museums, the Park Service seeks to work with organizations that are able to provide services and activities that are beyond the means of the Park Service itself. These partnerships enhance the value of the park and improve the visitor experience.

The Story
Parks for the People

Golden Gate National Recreation Area was created in 1972 as one of the first urban National Parks in the country. GGNRA was a part of the movement to bring National Parks to the people. Many of the existing parks were located in rural areas and were seen as inaccessible for most of the nation’s urban poor. The maintenance of the existing National Park system was criticized as being provided as subsidies to America’s middle and upper classes. In order to increase the opportunities
for inner city residents to explore and appreciate the country’s natural and cultural resources, a new type of park unit was created. These National Recreation Areas, including Golden Gate, Gateway in New York, and Cuyahoga Valley near Cleveland, Ohio, were created with the dual goals of preserving open spaces near major urban populations as well as preserving historical and cultural sites.

At the time of the introduction of the legislation creating Golden Gate and Gateway, critics of the inclusion of the Recreation Areas in the National Park System contended that the National Park Service, a federal agency, was taking over “the operation and management of . . . essentially a municipal function - city park and recreation programs”(Smith 1972 p.213).

**The Park and Its Resources**

Golden Gate National Recreation Area consists of approximately 76,500 acres of land and water near San Francisco California. It contains approximately 28 miles of coastline. The features of GGNRA include: urban beaches along San Francisco’s western shores; Muir Woods National Monument featuring California’s famous Redwood trees; Fort Point, Fort Mason and Fort Baker, all historic military facilities; the Marin Headlands, preserved natural hills overlooking the city of San Francisco; and Alcatraz, the famous former Federal Penitentiary. One of the most recent additions to the Park is the Presidio, the former Army Base that was closed as a result of the 1989 Base Realignment and Closure Act and transferred to the Park Service on October 1, 1994.

GGNRA contains many distinct sites. The Park is relatively contiguous from the northern areas of Marin and Muir Woods, to the southern reaches of the park near the City of Pacifica. The official boundary of GGNRA extends to include Point Reyes National Sea Shore, Angel Island, and the San Francisco Watershed. Not all properties are currently owned or managed by the Park Service. As a result, the control the park has over development on non-park owned sites is limited. The Park Service must rely on local zoning regulations and the cooperation of land owners to ensure that park goals are met.

**Visitation and Budget**

GGNRA is the most visited park in the National Park System. Official numbers suggest that nearly 20 million people each year visit the park. However, because the park is not an isolated entity, the counting methods may be subject to significant inaccuracies. For example, included in the park visitation figures are local commuters who use roads within the park boundaries as their travel routes.
Figure 3.7: Map of Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Park reaches from Point Reyes in the north to Palo Alto in the south.

Source: National Park Service
On the one hand, these people are park users and affect the park resources and infrastructure, on the other hand, they are not visiting the park for its attractions. The Park Service depends upon a combination of counts from visitor centers, roadways, and tour operators to determine best estimates at park visitation levels. Relatively accurate counts indicate that Alcatraz receives 1.3 million visitors each year and Muir Woods welcomes 2.5 to 3.0 million visitors each year.

As the most visited National Park unit, GGNRA also has one of the largest budgets. The 1997 base operating budget was approximately $37 million. Of this, nearly $25 million was specifically allocated for the operation of the Presidio. The $25 million budget for the Presidio is already significantly less than the operating budget for the base when in was under the control of the U.S. Military. And, it is mandated in law that the Presidio be self-sustaining within 25 years. Thus the current budget for the Presidio, higher than that provided to some of the largest parks, will disappear over time. In addition to the federal appropriations, the Park has also benefited from over $20 million in support from the Golden Gate National Parks Association over the past 15 years (Reynolds 1998b, National Park Service 1997b).

Recently Implemented Plans and Policies

In the fall of 1997, GGNRA celebrated its 25th anniversary. Over the past 25 years, the park has grown and become one of the premier destinations for tourists from around the world visiting San Francisco. Twenty-five years of existence has given GGNRA time to grow and to develop both its relationships with park partners and municipal governments as well as to gain experience in providing visitors with a range of activities and developing funding mechanisms that enable the park to function effectively with limited federal funding.

One of the projects currently underway at the park is the development of a new visitor center in the City of Pacifica. Not actually in the Park, this Visitor Center is the result of a partnership between the City and the Park Service. Pacifica recently began a campaign to promote tourism in the city. The Chamber of Commerce offered to provide space to the National Park Service to develop displays about GGNRA. Included in the agreement is the provision that the Chamber of Commerce will be responsible for staffing the Center. Through this arrangement, the NPS is able to provide interpretive facilities for GGNRA at an additional location, welcoming and attracting more visitors and conveying park messages, without significant spending for buildings and staff.
One of the biggest attractions at GGNRA is Alcatraz. The island and its history as a fort, military prison, and, most notoriously, a federal penitentiary, attract visitors from around the world. Contributing to the appeal of Alcatraz as a tourist destination has been its portrayal in several major movies. Because Alcatraz is an island, visitation and access to the site can be strictly controlled. Ranger tours of Alcatraz have always been a part of the visitor experience at the island. For the past several years, the ranger tours have been supplemented by a tape recorded tour of the cell house. This award winning recorded tour guides visitors through Alcatraz' main cell house and describes what life was like for inmates as well as details some of the stories of events at the penitentiary. It is narrated by former guards and inmates and incorporates sound effects to enhance the stories told. The use of the audio tour allows greater number of visitors to hear of the island’s history than would be possible with just ranger tours. The lower cost of providing the tour through audio tape adds to the profits made from the tour, which can be wholly returned to the park.

GGNRA has between 8% and 13% of all the historic structures within the National Park System. The Presidio, Fort Mason and Fort Baker each contain significant numbers of historic structures. GGNRA has been actively seeking to reuse many of these old buildings. Non-compliance with Codes has added to the cost of reuse. However, GGNRA has been successful at finding partners who are interested in being located within the park. GGNRA generally works to seek either non-profit, or not for profit companies that share goals that are common to those of the park service. Organizations are
charged market rents for the space and many are willing to pay for the needed repairs, restorations, and modifications of the space. One of the major tenants on the Presidio is a group of businesses whose primary focus is sustainability.

When preparing bids for the buildings on the Presidio, the NPS themed the various parts of the military post. The Park Service determined that the development of certain areas of the base would be guided by specific ideas that support the Park's mission. For example, the Draft General Management Plan proposes that:

- The main post will serve as the central visitor area, a focal point for multicultural and international exchange and education
- The Letterman complex will be devoted to issues of health, life, and earth science.
- Fort Scott will house programs, training and research activities, and conferences on local, national, and global issues (NPS 1993 p.vi).

Using these themes, the Park Service sought to lease buildings to organizations that support the concepts determined for each area. Currently, 1.4 million square feet of space on the Presidio has been filled with tenants.

One of the conflicts that has arisen in GGNRA has been because of the Park's desire to tear down some of the non-historic structures. Advocates for the cause of homelessness opposed the demolition of any housing units when homelessness is such a problem. As a result, the Park is now doing a structural analysis of the buildings to determine the potential for moving the units to Native American Communities rather than tearing them down.

Another conflict that has faced the Park Service at GGNRA has been between user groups. Dog walkers and environmental advocates came into conflict when it was shown that dogs running in the park contributed to damage caused to park flora and wildlife. Before the Presidio was included in GGNRA, local residents used the open space on the base for walking their dogs. Once the base was transferred to the National Park Service, new regulations prohibiting unleashed dogs from running in the park were put into effect. These laws are standard for all National Parks. Dog owners who had been using the Presidio for years were opposed to restrictions limiting their ability to let their dogs run. However, the dogs were damaging park resources. For example, the snowy plover which roosts and feeds on a section of the Presidio's beach that has long been open to dog walkers, was being frightened and disturbed by the roaming dogs. Environmental groups insisted that rules be enforced
keeping dogs leashed. Ultimately an agreement was reached that restricted the times and places where dogs would be allowed off leashes, provided they are kept under voice control.

**Lessons Learned**

The experience of GGNRA illustrates both the complexities of managing a park comprised of many sites and attractions and the importance of recognizing the park’s role in the greater tourist and entertainment economies. Developing strategies that highlight all features of the park can benefit the recognition of the park and expand the base of visitor appeal. The similarities between GGNRA and the Harbor Islands make the lessons from Golden Gate particularly valuable for the Islands.

**Image and Identity**

- **An Overall Identity** -- One of the problems with which GGNRA has struggled is the lack of identity. In 1995 the National Park Service hired a firm to do visitor surveys. The results of the survey indicated that frequently, park visitors were unaware that they were in Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Visitors knew the names of individual sites within the park, such as Alcatraz, Fort Point, and Muir Woods, but many visitors did not know that all these sites were included in Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

  In order to address this, the Park Service and the Golden Gate National Parks Association worked on projects aimed at creating a unified image for the park. The projects included several

![Images of GGNRA sites](Source: Postcard, Golden Gate National Parks Association)
identifying features. First, while the official name of the park is Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the Park has adopted the alternative names of Golden Gate National Parks or The National Parks at Golden Gate for its merchandise and promotional information. Using either of these names highlights the fact that several of the individual sites within the park are units within the National Park System in their own right. “GGNRA has more National Historic Landmarks than any other unit in the National Park Service” (Okamoto 1995 p.8). Additionally, Fort Point National Historic Site, Muir Woods National Monument, and San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park are all within GGNRA. By incorporating all of the individual sites under a more representative name, GGNRA has expanded its visitor recognition of the National Recreation Area as a whole. Also, using the wording National Parks, gives GGNRA greater name recognition and enhances the appeal.

Within the last year, other projects have also been initiated to add to the image and identity of GGNRA. In 1997, a local graphic designer, Michael Schwab, created images of each of the sites within GGNRA. The images use similar graphic designs for each site as well as one for the park as a whole. These images are used throughout the park at sites, on merchandise, and on the web pages of the park sites. The images indicate the commonality of the sites through the similar graphic designs, but also highlight all of the variety in the park by showing the various attractions. An initial 12 images were released last year. Local advertising companies donated space on bus stops to place the images around the City of San Francisco. An additional 5 images will be released later in 1998. In addition to the images of the sites themselves, graphic representations of activities within the park are also being developed. A hiker, biker, and hang glider, among others, will provide information about activities in GGNRA. Not only will visitors quickly see the number and variety of sites within the park, but will also be able to quickly see recreational activities that can be enjoyed at the various locations in the park.

A second project that has been geared at improving the identity of GGNRA has been the Golden Gate National Parks Entrance Sign Project. As the Introduction to the project report states, “From Sweeney Ridge in the south to Tomales Bay in the north, 36 new park entrance signs have been installed, creating a cohesive, recognizable, and memorable identity for Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The sign’s style and look complement the Park’s diverse range of landscapes” (p.1).
Marketing -- Rich Weideman, South District Ranger for the Park, notes, “we market ourselves.” He admits that the marketing activities of the park are controversial within the Park Service, but feels that promoting the park has been successful in developing a greater network of park supporters. The NPS has traditionally avoided commercial marketing activities, and GGNRA has been criticized for participating in marketing activities, but Weideman supports the park’s role in marketing and attracting visitors.

Three years ago, representatives of GGNRA and the other western national parks attended the annual Travel Industry Association of America International PowWow, the largest tourism convention in the US, for the first time. Tour operators and visitor attractions from across the
country attend the convention to promote themselves. Prior to this, the NPS was noticeably absent from the convention. Most of the major concessions companies in the parks had been attending the convention for years. Weideman notes that as a result, tour operators were getting only partial information about the parks, and the information they were receiving was often inaccurate. The information also failed to convey the central messages of the National Park System; that preservation of the resources is critical.

The NPS found several advantages to participating in the PowWow convention. First, the NPS could relate to tour operators information that included the message of the National Park System. Additionally, the NPS can promote lesser known areas of GGNRA as well as lesser used units in the western region of the National Park System. Connecting with the tour operators is critical for affecting visitation. By promoting the National Parks through partners, the NPS can insure that the messages about the parks are relayed. Also, visitation to the parks as a whole can continue to increase without placing the entire burden on the already most popular sites.

Weideman tells of the Park’s promotion of Fort Point. A 20% increase in visitation to Fort Point occurred as a result of the Park Services promotion of the site. New visitor facilities, including bathrooms and coffee shop helped make the Fort a new stop of tour bus routes. Money made from these stops is then returned to the park.

Weideman noted that the National Parks compete with such destinations as Disneyland for their visitors. The National Parks can be highly competitive by providing packages for the visitor. Additionally, the Park Service should not be too afraid to charge for some of the attractions and sites, because when compared to places like Disneyland, the price is still quite affordable, especially when sold and promoted as a package.

The National Park Service also promotes the park through familiarization tours. The Park welcomes the press, tour guides, representatives from the convention and visitor bureau, and concierge associations to visit areas of the park particularly when new exhibits or attractions are established. The park also provides these groups with sample itineraries that include a number of sites in the park. These tours help get the word out about the park and its services, activities and sites.
Chapter Three

Working with the media has been an integral part of GGNRA’s functioning. When the press asks to film programs on a park property the Park Service agrees, but is also willing to ask for favors in return, such as promotional time for new exhibits or activities when they open. The park has a general media campaign when new events and exhibits open.

Access

- **Alternative Transportation Modes** -- The size and shape of GGNRA along with its location near a major population center make it a relatively accessible National Park. Access to the park is easily achieved by car and many areas are accessible by bike. Public transportation is available to portions of the park on bus routes of varying frequency. However, access to the park is still one of the issues with which GGNRA is struggling. The park is seeking to improve alternatives to areas that remain accessible solely by the automobile. Shuttle service and a water transportation program are being examined for their potential success in bringing visitors to various park sites while at the same time decreasing the negative effects of excessive automobile use.

- **Alternative Fuels** -- In addition to providing an expanded array of travel options, the Park Service at GGNRA is working to reduce the negative impacts of the transportation systems by incorporating vehicles powered by alternative fuels. Decreasing the use of fossil fuels in buses and boats benefits the park by minimizing the pollution produced by the vehicles and improves the quality of the park experience. It also advances the mission of the park to promote systems of sustainable development.

Visitor Experience

- **Expand the Interpretive Topics** -- Like Gettysburg, GGNRA has expanded the number of stories it tells about the historic and cultural sites in the park. The most recent example is at Alcatraz. A portion of the history of the Island is that of the Native American occupation for approximately 2 years in 1969 through 1971. The Federal Penitentiary had been closed due to high operations costs, and the island and prison lay unoccupied and unused. Native Americans landed

Figure 3.12: Signs on Alcatraz are reminders of the Native American occupation of the Island.
on the island and claimed it for their own. The occupation lasted nearly 2 years and is still seen as the beginning of the civil rights movement for American Indians.

This story is not the traditional story told by National Monuments and Historic Sites. Pieces of the story tell of the oppression of Native Americans in this country. A new exhibit at Alcatraz describes the events surrounding the occupation. It is told by people who were involved in the events, either as Native Americans on the island, or as government officials opposing the occupation. Including this story in the activities on the island opens up the park experience to an even wider audience. The exhibit, with video presentations and displays, won awards, and the National Park Service has been honored by the Native American community for the exhibit.

GGNRA has also put effort into reaching out to increasing numbers of people by providing information materials in several languages. The audio tour at Alcatraz is currently offered in six languages.

- **Match Visitor Interests** -- The Park Service at GGNRA recognizes that it must compete for visitors and for the money they spend. Weideman sees the National Parks as attracting people who are tired of the Disney experience, but at the same time, are used to being entertained by high quality productions. As a result, NPS must convey its message, story, and information in an interesting and entertaining format. The audio tape tour on Alcatraz was the first of its kind. The innovation of including sound effects and first person orations increases the entertainment value of the tour. For Weideman, this is particularly appropriate for Alcatraz because the visitors to the island are often attracted to the site specifically because of its fame through Hollywood films.

Additionally, the Park Service at GGNRA recognizes the value of using other forms of technology and computer graphics and presentation materials to tell visitors the stories of the park. They have found that traditional fireside chats are no longer the best vehicles for conveying information about the park. In some cases, talks might be accompanied by slide shows or computer generated programs. Weideman concedes that each park unit and site must decide for itself what formats are most appropriate for conveying information to visitors. The methods used on Alcatraz may not be appropriate for describing ecosystems to travelers to Cape Cod National Seashore.
Chapter Three

The Park Service has to be careful, however, that the messages do not lose their meaning when conveyed as entertainment. As Weideman says, the park deals in “infotainment.” Visitors expect to be entertained as the messages are conveyed. In order to compete, the Park Service has to keep up with other tourist destinations in terms of the technology used in presentations.

- **Educational Programs**-- GGNRA currently estimates that over 3,000 school children participate in educational programs in the park each year. The park actively promotes educational programs that go beyond simple field trips. Rather, the park is involved with developing curriculum-based educational programs. Through these, students from elementary school through high school learn about different aspects of the park in the classroom and then visit the park to enhance the learning experience.

  The Park Service has found that these programs benefit the park in several ways. First, the programs promote the educational goal of the park. Second, the programs frequently reach underprivileged inner-city students - a population that the original program of “Parks for the People” was aimed at serving. Finally, the program builds a constituency for the park. Children become interested in the Park and bring parents to share in their experiences. The Park gains supporters in several generations of area residents.

**Conservation**

- **Using Restoration as the Basis for Conservation** -- Golden Gate National Recreation Area, like the Harbor Islands, contains many areas that have at one time been the sites of human activities, but which have for years been abandoned. The Crissy Field area of GGNRA was once used as a runway for the Presidio. After being abandoned, the natural habitats of the area began to return. This mix of crumbling concrete and struggling habitat decreased the appeal of the area. However, current plans for the area call for controlled restoration of the site to a more natural state. Native grass species are being grown to aid in this restoration process. The experience of GGNRA shows that despite years of abuse and neglect, park areas can be redesigned to support park goals of environmental conservation. The experience at GGNRA can inform the design of several of the Harbor Islands which contain the abandoned remnants of past uses.

**Park Management**

- **Partnerships Make the Park** -- By law, each National Park is permitted to have a single cooperating association. This non-profit organization can aid the Park Service by conducting
fundraising efforts, applying for grants, and contributing to interpretation and visitor services in the park. For GGNRA, the Golden Gate National Park Association is the cooperating association that was chartered by congress.

The role of these cooperating associations is significant for the national parks. These non-profits can participate in activities that are not possible for the Park Service itself. The NPS is not allowed to actively seek funds and cannot apply for grants from foundations. The Park Service is limited in its funding sources to the appropriations from the federal budget.

Additionally, the cooperating associations can participate in activities within the park, similar to the work of concessions companies. GGNPA is responsible for audio tape tour at Alcatraz. As a result, all profits from the tour are returned to the park to help pay for other projects. In contrast, activities and programs offered by many for-profit concessions companies only return a percentage of the profits to the park. Commonly only 12% of the profit goes to the park, and this is up from percentages as small as 2% in the last 10 years.

GGNPA and other cooperating associations also provide benefits to the park because they are exempt from the traditional bidding process that is required of all federal contracts. GGNPA can operate programs without having to compete for them. Further, GGNPA has the advantage of not having to award contracts to the lowest bidder in a bidding process. Working with the Park Service, the Parks Association can contract out for the implementation of projects. At GGNRA, one of the current projects is an evaluation of the stability of Alcatraz and its ability to withstand a seismic event. GGNPA has been responsible for hiring a consultant team to evaluate the structures on the island. The chosen team was not the lowest priced, but the advanced technology used by the team provides the highest quality of work. In this instance, as well as others, it is in the best interest of the Park to pay more for quality rather than simply take the lowest bid. By issuing the requests for these services through the Parks Association, the park can be more selective in awarding the project contracts.

In addition to the Parks Association, the National Park Service at GGNRA maintains relationships with dozens of other park partners. These partners provide services for the park, work concessions facilities, and develop programs that help support the parks educational, recreational and conservation goals.
Chapter Three

The experience of GGNRA shows that the park can benefit dramatically from the development of innovative partnerships. While the legislated partnership structure of management entity for the Harbor Islands presents coordination challenges, the automatic inclusion of numerous agencies provides significant opportunities for the Islands to make the most of the specializations that each partner brings to the table. Each agency has unique strengths and abilities that can add to an array of mechanisms available to the park for developing and implementing unique programs.

- **Be Innovative and Constructive in Contract Negotiations** -- The National Park Service at GGNRA puts out to bid the leases for buildings that it wishes to rent. Frequently, the Park Service suggests the types of uses that it would like to see occur in the building. Throughout the process, the NPS maintains a strong position in negotiating with potential tenants. The Park Service is always seeking to construct agreements that benefit both the Park and the tenant.

  Recently, the YMCA organization expressed an interest in operating a facility within the park’s boundaries. The Park Service believes that the club promotes activities that would appropriately support park goals. However, the Park Service was not satisfied with the YMCA’s policy of only allowing members to use the facilities. Through negotiations, the Park Service worked to develop an agreement with the YMCA that would allow non-members to use the YMCA facilities if they are guests at one of the conference centers or other sites in the park. The Park Service is aggressive in promoting the park’s mission to the greatest degree possible.

  One of the elements of the Presidio is a Golf Course. The planning process for the Presidio revealed that people wanted the course to be open to the public. The Arnold Palmer Golf Courses company expressed an interest in operating the club. The park agreed to work with Arnold Palmer and finds this relationship desirable for several reasons. First, the agreement mandates that the golf course be operated under sustainable design and maintenance practices. Additionally, Arnold Palmer Golf promotes golfing opportunities for the disabled community. Thus, the park accomplishes two of its goals through this relationship: the goal of developing and promoting sustainable development practices and the goal of providing opportunities to underprivileged groups.

  The Island Partnership structure and the requirement that alternative sources of funds be found at the Boston Harbor Islands suggest that partnerships of all types will play a critical role in
the development of the National Recreation Area. The Island Partnership must willing to seek opportunities that best advance the park mission. Like Gettysburg's story, the experience of GGNRA shows the need to be in control of partnership negotiations and demand that the purposes of the park are always the highest priority.
CAPE COD NATIONAL SEASHORE

The case of Cape Cod National Seashore (CCNS) is a strong example of how overuse and abuse of park land is degrading the very resources that parks are called upon to protect and which people come to enjoy. Like the Islands, much of the land in Cape Cod National Seashore is fragile. The millions of visitors that come to the park each year to enjoy the scenery and the sense of isolation are literally destroying those very characteristics of the park. The simple act of walking in areas with sensitive landscapes can do irrevocable harm. Cape Cod has struggled with the challenge of ensuring the protection of the resources while at the same time working to permit visitors to experience the resources.

Cape Cod also illustrates the complexities of creating a park out of land that is held by numerous public agencies and private individuals. While the Park Service at Cape Cod has purchased significant pieces of land, there continue to be large holding that are not federally owned. The legacy of the park as a compilation of separate parcels continues to affect the image of the park and the ability of the Park Service to control land uses on non-federal parcels within the park boundaries.

The challenges facing the Harbor Islands are similar to those facing CCNS. Several Islands contain sensitive bird habitats and other rare natural ecosystems. In order to protect these resources, the Islands must develop special plans for these areas that place preservation as the sole priority. Additionally, the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area is a compilation of islands under diverse ownership. A unified image of the system as a whole does not exist -- it must be created.

The Story

Creation of the Park

Cape Cod National Seashore was established by an act of Congress in August, 1961 as one of the first protected seashores in the National Park System. The inclusion of the Cape Cod beaches and upland features into the system represented a change in park policy and thinking. Located on the east coast, Cape Cod is within hours drive of large population centers. Just 5 hours from New York City and 2 hours from Boston, the National Seashore is readily accessible to significant numbers of Americans. Cape Cod represented the first step in preserving large, undeveloped, natural areas within close proximity to America’s largest cities.
Figure 3.13: Map of Cape Cod National Seashore
Source: National Park Service
As early as the 1930’s, studies were made of the need to establish protected areas along America’s coasts. The reports recommended a total of fifteen areas as being appropriate for protection through the National Park System. However, the economic and political realities of the Depression and Second World War prevented extensive actions from being taken, and only Cape Hatteras was officially dedicated as a new park unit (Wirth 1980 p.192). The Mission 66 program in the 50’s and 60’s allowed the NPS to revisit the Seashores as potential new park areas. A new study, entitled “Our Vanishing Shoreline,” told of the rapid development of the nations coastal areas. It brought attention to the implications of private development, namely loss of public access to the coastal resources and beaches on America’s eastern seaboard. It cited the Outer Cape as being the “most outstanding undeveloped shoreline along the Atlantic Coast” (NPS 1994c). As a result, the Cape Cod National Seashore was created.

The enabling legislation for Cape Cod National Seashore indicates that the purpose of the park is to preserve the natural and historic features of the Cape Cod shore and to promote their use and enjoyment in appropriate manner. As is the case with other national park units, natural landscapes and historic sites are to be protected into the future. Additionally, the “landscape of settlement” that existed on the Cape is to be preserved. Going a step further, the proponents of the bill were also interested in preserving the qualities of life on the Cape. They, “articulated a special ambiance or feeling on Cape Cod that they wanted to preserve, including the continuation of favorite pursuits, such as

Figure 3.14: The landscape of CCNS
beachcombing, clamming, fishing, access to areas of great scenic beauty, and maintaining the sense of remoteness and tranquillity that had been largely lost elsewhere along the eastern seaboard” (NPS 1998b p.8).

The creation of Cape Cod National Seashore was a major turning point in National Park policy. It was the first park for which Congress authorized the use of federal funds for land acquisition. Prior to this, all National Parks were created from lands already owned by the federal government or from lands donated to the government. Former National Park Service Director Conrad Wirth writes in his memoirs, “It took from March 1, 1872, the date Yellowstone National Park was established, until August 7, 1961, the date of authorization of Cape Cod National Seashore - a period of eighty-nine years - to recognize that the preservation of our national heritage for the benefit of the people, present and future, is an important federal responsibility that deserves spending federal money to buy the land that will make such preservation possible” (Wirth 1980 p.109). With the ability, and need, to purchase land came the conflicts and concerns that arise when private property ownership is threatened. The National Park Service was given the authority to purchase parcels of land at fair market value. However, recognizing that the Park Service may require additional power in order to insure the successful future of the park, the legislation gave the NPS the ability to take land through eminent domain.

The “threat” to land owners that the National Park created caused controversy and antagonism toward the park. Because the Seashore was to be created in an area that already contained private development, the government was forced to deal with many and diverse property owners. Local residents and Cape communities were concerned with the effects of federal ownership and control of significant lands. The National Park Service was placed in the position of working directly with private property owners as well as numerous municipal land owners in order to promote the goals of resource conservation and visitor access.

The Park and Its Resources

Cape Cod National Seashore extends for forty miles along the Outer Cape of Cape Cod in Massachusetts and contains approximately 44,600 acres of land and water. The Seashore includes portions of six towns: Chatham, Orleans, Eastham, Wellfleet, Truro, and Provincetown. The features of the park include beaches, dunes, and historic lighthouses. The area is geologically significant as a part of the largest glacial peninsula in the world. Additionally, the seashore is significant for its Great
Case Studies

Beach, located on the eastern side of the Cape. This stretch of beach is the “longest expanse of uninterrupted sandy shoreline on the East Coast” (NPS 1998b p.4).

In order to create the Seashore, public and private lands had to be acquired by the federal government in the entity of the National Park Service. Congress initially provided $16 million dollars for the specific purpose of purchasing privately held parcels within the park boundaries. An additional $17.5 million has been authorized and spent for the purpose of property acquisition in the years since (NPS 1994c p.312). Still, however, there are approximately 550 private residential properties and 10 commercial properties located within the national seashore (NPS 1994c). Additionally, there are some 25 privately owned parcels that are as yet undeveloped, but are of a size and scale that would permit development and thus threaten the conservation of park resources (NPS 1998b p.28).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Ownership Within the National Seashore as of December 1993</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seashore, Fee title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic easement held by Seashore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public (state, town, other federal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.15
Source: (NPS 1994d p.319)

The National Park Service never intended to purchase all of the land within the park boundaries. Rather, it was determined that only properties developed after September 1, 1959 would be acquired. Properties developed prior to this date could continue to be held in private ownership, so long as future development was regulated by federally approved municipal zoning codes.

In the 1970’s, the National Park Service reached agreements with property owners to purchase 66 parcels of land located within park boundaries. At that time, contracts were negotiated to allow property owners to continue to own and occupy their homes for 25 years. Many of those contracts are
Chapter Three

now approaching their 25 year expiration. In 1998, 32 houses are set to be transferred from private owners to the Park Service. The National Park Service plans to remove the structures and return the properties to a natural state. This process is not occurring without challenges. Property owners are contesting the original contracts and are seeking opportunities to continue to maintain their homes within the Seashore boundaries. According to Lauren McKean, Management Assistant and Park Planner, this process poses the greatest challenge for the Seashore this year.

Commercial properties that existed before the park was created are permitted to continue operation in the park with the receipt of a certificate for operation. These certificates are reviewed and renewed every five years so that the NPS can be sure that the businesses meet appropriate standards for operation in a national park unit (NPS 1998b p.182).

Visitation and User Groups

Visitation to the Cape Cod Seashore grew quickly after its inclusion in the national park system. In 1964, there were 1.8 million visitors. Just five years later, in 1969, the number of visitors had risen to more than four million. Visitation has fluctuated mildly over the course of the history of the park in conjunction with the cycles of the economy. For the last 20 years, the number of visitors has varied between 4 and 5.4 million per year. In 1996, more than five million people visited Cape Cod National Seashore. During that year, it was the ninth most visited park in the national park system (NPS 1998b p.165).

The crowds at Cape Cod have affected overall use and visitation at the park. Recent years have seen an increase in the numbers of visitors coming to the park in the spring and fall seasons and a slight decrease in the numbers of visitors in peak summer months (NPS 1998b p.165). Some of this shift in visitation may come from the doubling of the number of both seasonal and year-round residents. “While the impact of these additional residents on overall annual visitation at the national seashore has been inconclusive, it has clearly contributed to traffic congestion, site-specific use pressures, and resource degradation” (NPS 1998b) The park must deal with both summer tourists and area residents.

Visitors to Cape Cod National Seashore fall into several different categories. As noted above, local residents and vacationing tourists make up two distinct groups that often desire different experiences in the park and affect park resources in different ways. Both groups seek recreational opportunities in the park, but local residents also seek the opportunity to continue pursuing activities,
such as shell fishing, that were a part of Cape life prior to the establishment of the National Seashore. Additionally, other user groups occasionally come into conflict concerning park activities. For example, animal right advocates voice opposition to the hunting which is permitted in the park. Groups often perceive others as affecting the quality of experience while in the park.

One of the most antagonistic issues that has faced the park in recent years has been the use of Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs) on park beaches. Environmentalists concerned with the nesting habitat of the Piping Plover, an endangered bird, sought to eliminate all ORV use in the park. The ORV users, however, fought to maintain their access to areas of the park. The conflict became so hostile that park facilities were burned in protest. In order to deal with the issue, the NPS finally turned to a rule-making process based on consensus building between all interest groups. The resulting regulation will be implemented this year.

Access to the Park

Although major activities in the Seashore include biking and hiking, the primary means of access to the park is by automobile. In fact, more than 95% of the park’s visitors use private cars as their means of transportation (NPS 1998b p.162). Visitors travel along Route 6 through the towns along the outer cape and enter the park from this main route. Traffic congestion is a major concern in the National Seashore as well as on the Cape as a whole.

The National Seashore alone is not the cause of the traffic problems on the Cape. And the work of the Park Service alone will not solve the problems. However, it is becoming critical that the NPS work (with other agencies) to reduce the reliance on the automobile. Currently, the Park provides several remote parking lots with shuttle access to beaches. Additionally, bike and pedestrian trails are common in the park. However, connections to population centers are lacking.

Funding Alternatives

Like other National Parks, Cape Cod struggles to maintain park facilities and continue park operations and programs with limited funding from the government. In order to supplement its federally appropriated funds, the Park does pursue alternative sources of money. For example, the Seashore received a $200,000 grant to pay to help move the Nauset Lighthouse away from the eroding cliffs. Additionally, the Park Service has been taking advantages of a newly created mechanism for leasing space in park owned buildings. The Historic Property Lease allows the Park Service to rent properties to individuals or groups and use the funds raised for the maintenance of historic properties.
Chapter Three

Through this program, the income from property leasing remains in the park rather than being given over to the general treasury, as is usually the case with park income.

The implications of this new policy are broad and far-reaching. It will allow Cape Cod to make direct connections between income sources and expenditures on various projects and programs. The actual users of the park, at least those leasing properties in the park and benefiting from location in the park, will directly contribute to the support of the park. The burden is partially shifted from the taxpayer in general to the park users more specifically. This type of funding may lead to a shift in the focus of the park. Because park users are the source of income, park planning may support programs that benefit these groups. The protection of the resources in the park that have been declared nationally significant may take second place behind providing for the needs of groups whose spending directly supports the park. One of the NPS approaches that may help alleviate these pressures is to seek groups whose purposes are in line with those of the Seashore. Like GGNRA as described previously in this chapter, the Park Service at Cape Cod tries to find groups whose focus is on educational or environmental issues that support the park's mission in those areas.

Management/Partnerships

The operation and management of the Seashore has depended heavily on developing cooperative relationships and partnerships with local communities. The management of beaches, in particular, has been primarily the responsibility of individual towns. Additionally, the Park Service and local municipalities as well as the regional planning association have found cooperation critical when dealing with regional issues such as the Cape's water supply.

The Park Service has also worked to establish relationships with other groups that contribute to the experience at the Seashore. Eastern National Parks operates the book store at the visitor center and the Friends of Cape Cod National Seashore aid in raising money for specific projects, such as restoration of a cranberry bog and bog house. Additionally, the Park Service has established agreements with Universities interested in conducting research in the park. Unlike the relationship that GGNRA has with the Parks Association, as will be described later in the chapter, Cape Cod depends on numerous groups to assist the Park Service in providing for the maintenance and enhancement of the Seashore. As McKean notes, different groups “pick up the pieces” of support for the Park.
Development in the Park

The enabling legislation for the Cape Cod National Seashore states, “In order that the seashore shall be permanently preserved in its present state, no development or plan for the convenience of visitors shall be undertaken therein which would be incompatible with the preservation of the unique flora and fauna or the physiographic conditions now prevailing or with the preservation of such historic sites and structures as the Secretary may designate…” (NPS 1998b p.9). It is thus the responsibility of the Park Service to determine how and where to place facilities in the park.

Currently, there are two visitor centers, one located near the Southern end of the main portion of the park at Salt Pond, and one located at the northern end, near Provincetown. Additionally, Park Headquarters with administrative and maintenance functions are located in the park near the Marconi Site. Recommendations developed during the current planning process suggest that no new facilities for visitor accommodation be constructed. Rather, existing facilities should be enhanced and improved. No artificial landscaping, except that which is necessary for safety and fire protection, will be added to facility grounds, and where possible, such landscaping will be removed.

Lessons Learned

Similar to Gettysburg, Cape Cod is faced with the exceptional challenge of preserving a landscape that represents a particular period in time. Also like Gettysburg, privately owned parcels of land exist within park boundaries. The lessons that can be learned from Cape Cod National Seashore highlight the need to provide clear information to visitors and the need to work with user groups to mediate conflicts when they arise.

Image and Identity

- Importance of Signage -- Cape Cod National Seashore lacks a unified image and identity. In a large park with distinct sites such as Cape Cod, common design elements, particularly signs, can act to inform visitors that they are within park boundaries. The directional signs, in addition to being inadequate, do not have a consistent design. Some signs include the Department of the Interior seal. Others use the official emblem of Cape Cod National Seashore. Still others contain no graphic representation at all. This lack of consistency diminishes the ability of the Seashore to present a clear image to park and Cape visitors.
While road signs lack consistency, wayside exhibits and interpretive signs at seashore sites are consistent throughout the park. Visitors to specific attractions perceive the connections between the distinct sites, but the physical links between the sites are not well defined. Particularly because visitors must leave the park to travel between sites, consistent and adequate signs would aid to advance visitor recognition of the park as a whole.

Lauren McKean agreed that signs are inadequate, but commented that it is not important to the Park Service that visitors be aware that they are within the park at all times. She suggested that the landscape itself communicates to visitors that they have entered the park. While this may be true for those familiar with the Cape area, non-residents may find it more difficult to distinguish properties within the boundaries of the seashore from those outside it. The visual distinction between lands in the park and those in the park is not always obvious. The inclusion of private lands within the Seashore exacerbates this difficulty for tourists. Those unfamiliar with the area and the nature of the park may not know how to determine what areas are within the park unless there is adequate signage.

One of the problems that may result from the lack of a unified image for the Seashore is that visitors are unaware of other parts of the park. When visiting, they congregate in the most visible areas and do not know what other areas of the Cape are included in the Seashore. Signs don’t provide any indication what attractions are at the different sites.
• Impacts of Mixed Management -- An additional obstacle to creating a unified identity for the park is the mixed management of park resources. Some of the most popular attractions in the Seashore are its beaches. Because the local towns manage many of the beaches, they are associated with the individual towns rather than the National Seashore. This lack of connection between the beaches and the park hinders the overall identity of the Seashore.

The Boston Harbor Islands are organized as a partnership management structure. Learning from the experiences of Cape Cod and the difficulties that this can create, the Harbor Islands should prepare mechanisms for overcoming the different practices of each partner in order to form a unified management strategy for all of the Islands.

Access

• Wayfinding -- Signs guiding visitors to sites in the National Seashore are insufficient. Signs along Route 6 indicate turn-offs for the park, but once off the main road, signs providing direction are very inadequate. Sections of the park that are along the western portion of the arm of the Cape are particularly poorly indicated. The result of inadequate signage is that visitors concentrate in some areas of the park while others areas remain more isolated and underused. This experience is in direct contrast to that of Golden Gate where signs guiding visitors to park attractions are common.

• Shuttles, Biking, and Hiking -- One of the most pressing issues facing the Seashore and all of Cape Cod is the congestion that clogs Cape roads during the summer months. In order to ease the pressures of the traffic, the park is providing alternatives to the automobile for reaching park attractions. Bikeways and walking trails are common. A shuttle service is available to bring visitors to Seashore beaches.

Figure 3.17: Brochure promoting bicycle trails at Cape Cod National Seashore
Chapter Three

Visitor Experience

• Interpretation: Meeting the Desires of the Visitors -- The National Park Service at Cape Cod is finding that it needs to provide programs and activities that match the interests of the park users. While it used to be that museums and slide shows were popular, they no longer attract crowds. Rather, Park Rangers are finding that visitors are more interested in hands-on activities. Unlike the experience at Golden Gate, Cape Cod is finding that camp fire talks are more popular now than they were in the past. This is quite logical given the different types of resources and stories being told at the different parks. For Cape Cod, playing off the sense of remoteness and the historic / nostalgic atmosphere preserved on the Cape, Rangers can successfully promote programs that are more traditional and highlight the natural resources of the Park.

The experience of Cape Cod is that visitors want to be outside, learning about the environment. They appreciate the opportunity to participate in activities that they might not otherwise do. Nighttime walks and canoe trips are particularly popular (Whatley 1998h).

Additionally, the Park Service at Cape Cod has found that slide shows are not popular with tourists. Competing with videos, movies, and other forms of entertainment, the slide shows do not adequately entertain visitors. The standards of visitors have been raised by advances in technology and the Park Service has been unable to keep up. This is not to say that it can’t, as the success at GGNRA shows, but rather that in order to be competitive, the Park Service must use advanced technologies.

The most important lesson to be learned is that the types of programs offered must match the interests of the visitors. Activities that relate to the visitors’ own reasons for being in the park will enhance the experience they have. Each park must evaluate its resources, examine its visitor profile, and then develop programs and activities that will both entertain and promote the underlying messages of preservation and conservation that are basic to the mission of the Park Service.

• Broaden Interpretive Focus -- Like Gettysburg and GGNRA, current planning efforts at Cape Cod are promoting the expansion of the interpretive function of the park. Proposals include broadening “the interpretive focus to link the national seashore with the region [and] interpret the significance other cultures have had on Cape Cod’s character and history…”(NPS 1998b p.40).
The story of the life of the early European Settlers will be connected to the experiences of other cultures on the peninsula.

- **Visitor Center as Gateway** -- The role of the visitor centers at Cape Cod is to orient visitors to the park as a whole. Rather than being located at each site, such as those in GGNRA, the visitor centers at Cape Cod are located at the two ends of the Seashore and provide opportunities for those entering the park to learn about the range of activities and resources in the park. The experience of Cape Cod, combined with the other parks, shows that the form and location of park visitor centers depends on the specific circumstances of each park.

**Conservation**

- **Access to Sensitive Park Areas** -- Throughout the National Seashore, fragile environments must be protected from overuse by park visitors. Walkways, fences, and signs are pervasive throughout the seashore instructing visitors to avoid sensitive areas within the park. These elements are meant to protect the resource, but they also detract from the visitor experience by invading the natural landscape.

While at Cape Cod, these signs and fences may be seen as a necessary evil, the Boston Harbor Islands have the opportunity to learn from the experiences at Cape Cod and develop less invasive methods of controlling visitor access to different parts of the park. Because the Islands are isolated sites in Boston Harbor, the Park Service can control visitor access to a great extent by determining the water transportation system. However, once visitors are on the islands, the Park Service must provide well-designed landscapes and paths that allow visitors to enjoy the resources on the islands while at the same time protecting sensitive areas on the islands.
The Harbor Islands are affected by some of the same natural processes that are common at Cape Cod. Wind and water erosion affect daily the island environment. Rather than copying the fences and signs at Cape Cod, the Park Service should take greater advantage of other design options for guiding visitors away from fragile areas. Topography, buildings, and landscaping can be used to discourage and / or prevent access to certain sites.

- **The Meaning of Conservation** -- The landscape that is protected at Cape Cod is ever changing. Winds and water currents erode beaches, and trees mature, blocking spectacular views. In addition to natural changes, human influence shapes the landscape. One of the lessons that Cape Cod teaches is the importance of allowing natural activities to continue while mitigating the artificial effects human use of park lands. Conservation does not mean eliminating all change. It
is crucial that natural processes are permitted to continue unimpeded in order to encourage the development of wholly natural landscapes.

**Park Management**

- **Public Participation** -- Cape Cod National Seashore was established in an area that was largely in private ownership and which was experiencing significant amounts of development prior to its incorporation into the national park system. When the Park Service became involved in managing the land, it had to overcome the historical uses of the land and, more difficultly, the public memory of the land. Residents of the Cape felt ownership of many park sites and have expressed opposition to controls that the Park Service has implemented over the years. In order to develop support, the Park Service has had to balance the need to implement regulations to protect resources and bring the park up to National Park Standards with the need to accommodate the demands of Cape residents.

The creation of a National Recreation Area on the Boston Harbor Islands similarly has a history and memory of use that must be taken into account when plans are made. Current users enjoy the isolation of the Islands and their relatively low levels of use. An extensive process involving public participation can help overcome the sense of ownership that many current users may feel and promote the development of the Islands in a manner that best meets its full public purpose.

Additionally, the Island Partnership must work to overcome the institutional history behind the management of the Islands. Because ownership of the Islands will remain with the agencies that have owned them for years, and because several of the Islands are already organized into a State Park, the new management structure for all Islands will inherit existing systems for implementing projects on the Islands. An understanding of the past processes and inclusion of all decision-makers in the development of new processes will be critical.

- **Creating Consensus** -- Cape Cod National Seashore exemplifies the struggle that parks are dealing with today of having to satisfy multiple and diverse stakeholders. One of the biggest conflicts at the National Seashore has been over the use of Off-road vehicles traveling over the sand and dunes. In developing new regulations regarding these ORV’s, the National Park Service engaged in a process of consensus building with the interested parties. Through this work, the NPS was able to develop a new rule that will regulate ORV use. Vehicle owners and
environmental advocates involved in the process are all in support of the outcome. While implementation is just beginning, the broad base of support that exists suggests that the process will have provided a successful solution to a highly contentious issue.

This process should be remembered for its general applicability to issues of all kinds. While it is not appropriate for daily conflicts because of the extensive work and high costs of preparing for the meetings and discussions, conflicts that are intense and pervasive may best be resolved through this type of process.
BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS: DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

In November 1996, the U.S. Congress passed legislation creating the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area. This new unit in the national park system includes thirty islands in Boston Harbor. The islands range in size from less than one to more than 200 acres. Scattered across 50 square miles of harbor, the islands have played various roles in the life of Boston and other surrounding towns throughout history.

This chapter will provide an overview of the history of the Islands in Boston Harbor. It will include a description of the Islands, including their historical uses and the process by which they were made a new National Park. It will also describe the legislation creating the park and discuss some of the implications of particular aspects of that legislation. Finally, it will highlight the several complex issues that face the Islands and their development as a National Recreation Area.

DESCRIPTION

Geology

The Islands in Boston Harbor are unique geological features. Each island is a drumlin, created from glacial deposits as glaciers alternately expanded southward and receded north with the cycles of warming and cooling of the earth. Shaped like upside-down teaspoons, the islands are the only example in the United States of a drumlin field that intersects a coastline. In fact, nowhere else in the U.S. is there a system of islands so close to an urban area.

Several islands have, over the years, been connected to the mainland through the filling process that has been common in the Boston area. Among these, some have disappeared completely, such as those that were connected by fill for the expansion of Logan Airport. Others, such as Deer, Moon, and Nut Islands are included within the boundaries of the National Recreation Area.
Historic Uses

Evidence found on the islands indicates human presence back to pre-historic times. Scientists have determined that the islands have been used by humans for at least 8,000 years. In the 1960's, a woman living on Peddocks Island found the skeletal remains of a human body while working in her garden. The results of tests on the bones indicate that the remains were over 4,100 years old.

The Islands have also provided evidence of extensive Native American use. The Islands were designated an Archaeological District on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986 because of the extensive and significant evidence of American Indian activity on several of the Islands. Indications are that Native Americans used the islands for both clamming and agriculture.

After the arrival of Europeans, the Islands became home to a variety of uses. They were initially used for farming and grazing purposes. Their history over the last three hundred years has been extremely diverse.

In 1716, Boston Light was built on Little Brewster Island. The first lighthouse in America, Boston Light helped guide ships into and out of Boston Harbor. The original light was destroyed during the Revolution and was rebuilt in 1783. It is the only lighthouse in America that continues to be manned. Owned by the Coast Guard, the Island and Light are staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Boston Light is a designated National Historic Landmark. Two other islands, Long and Graves, are also home to lighthouses.

Beginning with the Revolutionary War, the islands were used for military purposes. In fact, several small battles between British and American troops actually occurred on islands in the Harbor. The military use of the islands continued through World War II. While they did not see active fighting in any wars after the Revolution, military forts were built and troop training activities were common at war times. Fort Warren on Georges Island was built in the 1830’s and is another Island attraction listed on the National Historic Landmark Register. Other islands that contain the remains of military installations include: Peddocks, Long and Lovells.

During the 1800’s and early 1900’s the islands were also used for recreational purposes. Some islands were vacation destinations with major resort facilities. Others were said to be the sites of gambling houses and illegal boxing matches. Some were simply owned and occupied by individuals
Figure 4.2: Boston Harbor and Islands
Source: Boston Harbor Access Guide, Coastal Zone Management Office
and families. These owners were often unique characters and stories about them provide intriguing
tales of island life and activity.

One of the common themes for island uses has been the social ills of American cities. Islands
have been home to quarantine hospitals, prisons, reformatories, hospitals, homeless shelters, drug and
alcohol treatment facilities, asylums, and poorhouses. Additionally, islands have been used for dumps
and sewage treatment facilities. Even today, these types of uses remain. Deer Island is home to the
new Massachusetts Water Resource Authority wastewater treatment facility and Long Island provides
a site for a homeless shelter and a drug and alcohol treatment program. Spectacle Island was a major
city dump until recently. It is now being capped with dirt from the Big Dig and plans for a
recreational park and visitor facility are beginning to be implemented. Other current uses that have
been relegated to the islands include an outdoor police firing range and a firefighter training facility,
both located on Moon Island.

**Conditions Today**

Today, the islands range significantly in level of existing development. While most have at some
time or another had major structures, many of the historic uses are marked only by ruins. Long Island
has a significant number of standing structures. A few of the approximately two dozen buildings on
Long Island are still in use, but most are in a state of severe disrepair. Peddocks Island also contains numerous buildings. Some small houses continue to be used as summer homes; two are actually occupied by year round residents. Many of Fort Andrews’ buildings also remain on Peddocks, but are being irrevocably damaged by poor maintenance and lack of protection against the elements. Fort Warren on Georges Island is another major structure. Partially restored and the only building in the islands currently open for guided tours, Fort Warren covers nearly the whole of Georges Island.

Other developments on the Islands include an educational facility with dormitory accommodations operated by the Outward Bound Program on Thompson Island, the police firing range and firefighter training grounds on Moon Island.
Chapter Four

Island, the Coast Guard lighthouse watchmen’s house on Little Brewster, and the MWRA sewage treatment facility on Deer Island. Many of the islands also contain the remains of structures as reminders of their past uses.

While most islands have a history of some level of human influence, several islands have been isolated enough or abandoned long enough that they are now in a relatively natural state. Features such as the salt marshes on Long and Peddocks Islands are unique in urban areas. Heron rookeries are now found on Middle Brewster Island and Green Island is a nesting site for gulls and cormorants.

The Harbor Cleanup

One of the most important recent events that is shaping the future of the Islands has been the cleanup of Boston Harbor. Pollution in the Harbor has been a problem since World War II. In the 1960’s local beaches were closed due to the dangerous levels of pollutants in the waters. By the 1980’s, Boston’s Harbor was considered one of the dirtiest in the nation. In 1985, the Environmental Protection Agency successfully forced the initiation of the cleanup of the Harbor. “Forty-three communities were regularly dumping inadequately treated waste into [the Harbor] and countless ships discharged toxic pollutants” that also added to the dirty waters (NPS 1994a p.14). Running against Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis, George Bush visited Boston during his 1988 presidential campaign. On a boat in Boston Harbor, Bush brought national attention to the abominable condition of Boston’s waters.
The federal mandate led to an investment of $3.5 billion dollars in the cleanup of the Harbor (NPS 1994a p.14). The MWRA wastewater treatment facility on Deer Island will provide secondary treatment to sewage water from Boston as well as communities to the north and west of the city. The results of the project, which is scheduled to be complete in 1999, are already significant. Waters are cleaner, beach closings are fewer, and marine life is returning to Boston's waters. The cleanup of the Harbor has brought renewed interest in the Islands and the recognition of their value as recreational spaces for the area's dense population.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

In the 1970's, Massachusetts passed legislation authorizing the Commonwealth to acquire the islands for public ownership. The Islands were seen as providing the opportunity to maintain open space for recreational use by the residents of Boston and surrounding communities. In order to protect the islands in perpetuity, the Boston Harbor Islands State Park was created. The state purchased many of the islands from private owners so that nearly all islands were owned by state and local public agencies.

In 1979, just 8 years after Golden Gate National Recreation Area was established, Senator Ted Kennedy sponsored legislation calling for the creation of the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area. The bill did not pass in Congress, and the Islands continued to be managed by state and local agencies. Thirteen years later, in 1992, Representative Gerry Studds sponsored a bill in Congress requesting that the National Park Service examine the Islands for their national importance and evaluate the appropriateness of including them in the national park system. Congress approved the bill and in 1994, money was appropriated for the study. The result of the study, Boston Harbor Islands: Report of a Special Resource Study, recommended that the Islands be incorporated into a new national park. "This study concludes that the Boston harbor Islands meet the Secretary of the Interior's criteria for national significance, suitability, and feasibility for inclusion in the national park system. Their configuration, their assemblage of significant natural and cultural features, and their
proximity to a major metropolitan area create a resource that has no parallel in the United States” (NPS 1994a p.4).

Guided by this recommendation, the National Park Service developed legislation creating the new National Recreation Area. With the support of Representative Studds and Senator Kennedy, the bill passed on November 12, 1996.

**Boundaries**

The legislated boundaries of the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area include the land and waters of Boston Harbor. (Figure 4.5) Officially, 30 islands are included in the National Park. Additionally, “landside points required for access, visitor services, and administration” for the park are included within the National Recreation Area. Specific sites in Boston, Quincy, Hingham, Hull, Salem, and Lynn are defined as being within the Park.

One of the compromises that the National Park Service had to make in order to get enough support to pass the legislation in Congress was to remove Castle Island from the official boundaries of the park. The original feasibility studies included Castle Island. However, political bargaining ultimately led to a change in the legislation within days of its submission to Congress. As a result, Castle Island with Fort Independence, and one of the Islands with the most developed infrastructure to support visitor facilities, is not a part of the National Recreation Area.

**Purposes**

The enabling legislation for the Boston Harbor Islands NRA clearly states the purposes of the BHINRA. These purposes include:

1. To preserve for public use and enjoyment the lands and waters that comprise the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area;
2. To manage the recreation area in partnership with the private sector, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, municipalities surrounding Massachusetts and Cape Cod Bays, etc.

3. To improve access to the Boston harbor islands through the use of public water transportation

4. To provide education and visitor information programs to increase public understanding of and appreciation for the natural and cultural resources of the Boston Harbor Islands, including the history of Native American use and involvement.

**Planning**

Additionally, the enabling legislation describes a process by which a management plan must be developed and what the contents of the plan must be. According to the legislation, the plan should include policies and programs for:

1. Enhancing public outdoor recreational opportunities in the recreation area.
2. Conserving, protecting, and maintaining the scenic, historical, cultural, natural and scientific values of the islands.
3. Developing educational opportunities in the recreation area.
4. Enhancing public access to the Islands, including development of transportation networks.
5. Identifying potential sources of revenue from programs or activities carried out within the recreation area.
6. Protecting and preserving Native American burial grounds connected with the King Philip's War internment period and other periods.

The plan should also include “a policy statement that recognizes existing economic activities within the recreation area.”

**Land Acquisition**

The legislation for the Boston Harbor Islands represents another change in National Park policy. Reversing the policy originally instituted with the creation of Cape Cod National Seashore, the National Park Service and the Island Partnership are not given the authority to spend funds for the purpose of acquiring land for the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area. Although the NPS initially requested to have the ability to purchase land in order to promote the goals of the park, this authority was removed in compromises made to insure that the legislation was passed by Congress.
However, the legislation does allow the National Park Service to use federal funds for the development of park facilities on non-federal lands.

**Management**

The legislation creating the National Recreation Area specified the structure of a Partnership that would be formed for the purpose of managing the new park. The Boston Harbor Islands Partnership must work to coordinate the work of the numerous Federal, State and Local government agencies, as well as the private sector, involved in park activities and land ownership. The membership of the Partnership is specifically described in the legislation and includes representatives from land owners, the National Park Service, and other stakeholders such as MassPort and the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

The legislation also provides for the establishment of an Advisory Council. With a broader membership, the Council is meant to represent a greater breadth of groups with an interest in the recreation area. This group will review Partnership activities and make recommendations concerning the development of the park.

**Funding**

The legislation creating the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area is significant for several reasons. As noted above, the National Park Service and the Island Partnership are restricted from using federal funds for the purchase of land. Additionally, the management structure of the Partnership itself is unique and attempts to unite various levels of government with private entities to promote the best future for the park.

In addition to these two points, the legislation mandates that for every one dollar of federal funds appropriated for work in the park, three dollars must come from non-federal sources. These matching funds can be in the form of cash, services, or in-kind contributions. They can come from other government sources, grant awards, or private investment.

This requirement that federal funds be matched by funds from other sources puts into law what has essentially been occurring throughout the National Park System. The National Park Service has been struggling to develop innovative means of maintaining funding levels when government contributions have been declining. As discussed in previous chapters, Gettysburg is seeking to do this by partnering with a private developer for the construction of a new visitor center. Cape Cod is using
new laws allowing park properties to be leased to private groups and the income from the rentals to be kept within the park. GGNRA and the Golden Gate Parks Association have also partnered on several projects, most notably the audio tape tours of Alcatraz, so that funds remain within the park rather than being returned to the general treasury or alternatively having the profits absorbed by a for-profit business enterprise. The Harbor Islands are required to find such alternative sources of funds by legislative mandate.

**KEY ISSUES**

**Ownership**

The Boston Harbor Islands are not to be owned by a single entity. While most islands are under public ownership, the intent of the legislation is not to have them all transferred to the Park Service. Rather, the National Recreation Area will continue to operate with multiple land owners. State and local agencies own many of the islands and private non-profits own others. Figure 4.6 shows the ownership of each of the islands.

The implication of this system of dispersed ownership is that the individual island owners focus primarily on their own islands. The management and development of the National Recreation Area becomes subordinate to the activities on each island. The National Park Service and the Island Partnership must coordinate the efforts of the various owning agencies in order to overcome this tendency.

![Image of ownership map](image-url)

*Figure 4.7: Ownership of Boston Harbor Islands*

*Source: Boston Harbor Islands: Report of a Special Resource Study, NPS*
Access

The Boston Harbor Islands are within close proximity to a major urban population. The Special Resource Study for the Islands notes that approximately seven million people live within a fifty mile radius, or one hour's drive, of the Downtown Boston ferry departure point. Forty million people live within a radius of 250 miles - a half day's drive. Train, bus, commuter rail, and subway routes provide rapid access from surrounding areas to Downtown. Additionally, the Islands are just minutes away from Boston's Logan International Airport.

Currently, access to the Islands is provided through a contract with a single ferry service provider. Boats leave Long Wharf in Boston and drop passengers at Georges Island. This service operates from April through October each year. From Georges Island, visitors can take free water taxis to Lovells, Gallops, Bumpkin, and Grape Islands. Construction of a new pier on Peddocks should make that island accessible to the public ferry in the near future. Other islands are accessible only by private boat.

Visitation and Users

Visitation levels to the Islands have fluctuated between 84,000 and 120,000 over the past 20 years. The National Park Service now proposes to promote the Islands and raise the number of visitors to 500,000 or more each year.

A 1997 survey of visitors to the Harbor Islands showed that 80% of the visitors live in Massachusetts, and 75% had been to the Islands less than five times before. The survey also asked visitors how they heard about the Islands -- 45% heard through word of mouth and another 25% were part of an organized group visiting the Islands. This indicates the lack of visibility the Islands have, even with residents from Massachusetts. Additional results of the survey indicated that 91% of the people visited Georges Island. The next most visited Island was Gallops Island which received only 14% of the people surveyed (Harbor Visions Crew 1997). The implications of this concentration of
visitors on one Island are dramatic if the Park Service’s is able to increase overall levels of visitation as they propose.

**Conclusion**

The Islands have a complicated past of both historic uses and political power struggles. Many of the characteristics of the Islands, such as their inaccessibility and dispersed ownership, must be overcome in the process of creating a successful National Recreation Area. However, it is also just these characteristics that can act as the underlying infrastructure upon which new interpretations, programs, and activities -- the keys to the visitor experience -- are based. The pieces of the story told in this chapter will be instrumental in determining appropriate implementation strategies once general planning principles are established.
CHAPTER FIVE

BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS:
PLANNING PRINCIPLES
BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS: PLANNING PRINCIPLES

As the National Park Service and the Island Partnership work over the next three years to develop plans for the National Recreation Area, they should keep in mind the experiences of other parks as well as the broader philosophies of park design and incorporate successful elements of planning, design, and management where appropriate. The following is a collection of principles that might be used to guide the development of the Harbor Islands as they make the transition from State Park and unconnected Islands to National Recreation Area.

IMAGE AND IDENTITY

One of the primary challenges facing the Harbor Islands is the development of a single unified image and identity for the park. The distance between each of the Islands and the lack of physical connections linking the separate land masses hinders the understanding of the Islands as a single system. Much like Golden Gate, the Harbor Islands incorporate numerous and varied resources ranging from natural wildlife habitats to historic military installations to examples of how Americans have dealt with society’s unwanted land uses. The lack of a single theme tying the Islands together as a unified entity is a second obstacle to creating a unified image. A third impediment to creating an identity for the islands is the multi-ownership structure of the island system. Each agency tends to be concerned with the facilities on only the islands that it owns and maintains the decision-making power for activities that occur on those islands. This structure of dispersed decision-making is not conducive to an understanding of the Boston Harbor Islands as a whole. The following principles can help the Park Service and the Island Partnership overcome these obstacles and foster a unified public image for the Islands.

Include Common Design Elements on All Islands

In order to promote a single image of the Islands, a number of common design elements should be included at all visitor facilities, both on the mainland and on the islands. Gettysburg overcomes its division into several park areas by incorporating avenues and monuments throughout all park areas. These common features promote a unified image of the park to visitors. Alternatively, GGNRA uses entrance signs to inform visitors that they have entered the park. The diverse range of attractions at GGNRA makes it difficult to provide more extensive common design elements at all sites. In
contrast, Cape Cod fails to provide common features in all areas of the park and as a result, visitors are not always aware of when they are within park boundaries.

In the BHI National Recreation Area, a combination of several features that are standard on all islands and at all landside departure points will facilitate the recognition of the Islands as a single unit in the National Park System. These features can include signs, pathways, landscaping design, furniture style, etc. The inclusion of these elements at all visitor facilities can help overcome the lack of unity the islands have in physical form to create unity in image and identity.

Additionally, it is important to remember that the trip to, from, and between individual islands is a part of the experience. In order to support a unified image of the park, the water transportation should maintain a common symbol with the islands. Incorporating the park symbol or elements of key visual features of the islands on the boat logo and brochures would enhance the link between the boat ride and the park experience.

**Develop a Marketing Program that Promotes the Islands as a Unified System**

The public’s perception of the Islands will depend primarily on how the park is promoted and marketed. The experiences at GGNRA are informative for how the Island Partnership can develop a unified marketing program for the Islands. The example of Michael Schwab’s graphic design images of GGNRA’s sites could be replicated for the diverse attractions and activities found on the Harbor Islands.

Additionally, all promotional materials for the Harbor Islands should contain the BHINRA official symbol. While information pertaining to each individual island will likely also contain the symbol of the agency owning the island, it is critical that this symbol be given secondary status in relation to BHI park symbol. Similarly, all information about the Islands should be available from a single source. The current management of the Park requires that people seeking information about the Islands must call each ownership agency for information about individual islands. A single source of information about all islands will help visitors plan their time on the Islands. This source should be promoted on all park brochures and marketing material.
ACCESS

As a group of islands, isolated from the mainland by the waters of Boston Harbor, BHINRA must overcome major challenges of access to bring visitors to the park. For the most part, visitors cannot drive, bike, or walk to the Harbor Islands. This places a greater burden on the Island Partnership for developing a water transportation system to provide the needed access to the Park.

In addition to the obstacle of the physical isolation of the islands, the Island Partnership must work to overcome the psychological isolation of the islands from Boston and the surrounding communities. For years the Harbor was known primarily for its polluted waters. It has been only within the last 15 years that the City of Boston and other harborside communities have begun to recognize the extensive resource of the Islands and the recreational opportunities available in the Harbor. Local knowledge of the Islands is still limited and must be overcome in order to ensure the success of the park.

Provide a Single Primary Departure Point and Many Secondary Departure Points

In order to provide access to many islands, and to insure that visitors are dispersed throughout the park, there should be numerous departure points to the Islands. Each departure point will be able to serve a segment of the visitor population. A major regional departure point should be located in or near downtown Boston. Other departure points along the 180 miles of coastline can serve Boston’s neighborhoods as well as North and South Shore communities.

Whenever possible, these departure points should be connected to other visitor destinations along the waterfront. Developing relationship with other shoreside attractions will act to enhance the visibility of the islands and reduce the perceived isolation of the Islands from area communities.

Allow Visits to Several Islands Without Having to Return to a Single Point of Departure

The distance to and between many of the harbor islands will permit most visitors to explore one to three islands in a day. In order to encourage visitors to see more than one island and to promote the dispersion of peak summer crowds across the islands, access to the islands should be through a ferry system consisting of loops connecting several islands in a series. These loops may be organized by interpretive theme or by island location. The frequency at which ferries visit the islands will be determined by the desired levels of use for each island. Sites with major visitor facilities will be
visited more frequently by ferry service than sites that remain in a more natural state. An example of one possible ferry route is a loop that stops at Islands and mainland points that were significant in the military history of the Harbor.

**Promote the Use of Water Transportation to All Islands**

Many of America’s National Parks are known today for their traffic troubles. Each of the three case study parks faces challenges in dealing with automobile congestion. Traffic jams and overcrowded parking lots act to detract from the visitor experience of the parks. In order to alleviate the problems, the parks are seeking to provide alternative forms of access and movement for park users. Biking and walking opportunities and shuttle bus services are becoming popular alternatives to private automobile use.

Of the thirty islands included in the National Recreation Area, four are connected to the mainland either by bridge or landfill. The fact that most Islands are inaccessible by private automobile is both a challenge and an opportunity for the park. As a challenge, the inaccessibility of the Islands by private automobile will be an obstacle to getting people out to the islands. However, the park will benefit from not having to accommodate private automobiles. The experience on the Islands will not be affected by traffic jams and the development of large parking lots.

These four islands connected to the mainland, Deer, Moon, Long, and World’s End, are thus accessible without the use of water transportation. BHINRA should learn from the experiences of the case study parks and, if major visitor facilities are developed on these sites, promote access by alternative modes of travel. Not only does this eliminate the problems that accompany crowds arriving by car, it encourages the inclusion of a boat ride in the visitor experience.

**Provide Many Types of Water Transportation**

Just as landlocked parks are expanding the opportunities for several modes of travel, so should the Harbor Islands. While biking and walking are being accommodated in all three of the case study parks, the Island Partnership should promote various modes of water transportation. Tours on sailboats and sea kayaks as well as on traditional motorized boats can add to the visitor experience of the park.

The desire for active and interactive experiences that has been observed at Cape Cod National Seashore sets a good example for offering opportunities for kayaking and sailing out to the Islands.
Just as the canoe trips have become popular, at Cape Cod, one can imagine the success of guided kayak trips to the Islands. Rangers or volunteers could paddle with park visitors out to the Islands. Arrangements could be made so that visitors have the opportunity to kayak in either one or both directions, using the regular ferry service to complete the trip if desired.

**VISITOR EXPERIENCE**

Over the next three years, and well beyond, the Park Service and partners will develop ideas about what the experience of the Harbor Islands as a National Recreation Area will be. Unlike Gettysburg, the Islands do not present a single theme around which to build the visitor experience. The challenge then, is to create an exciting and interesting group of experiences that will make a trip to the Islands unique and memorable. Moreover, the provision of many different experiences will encourage visitors to return to the Islands many times, promoting enjoyment of the Islands and a concern for their stewardship into the future.

**Develop Interpretive Elements that Describe the Diverse Stories Told by the Islands**

Each of the three case study parks has begun to expand the range of stories told in the park. The expansion of the number of stories told is notable particularly because it is resulting in the inclusion of aspects of American cultural and social history that have not been traditionally told by the Park Service. Increasing the number of stories told helps the parks to appeal to a broader segment of the public. The Islands naturally have the opportunity to tell stories that incorporate multiple cultures and communities. For example, the role of the Islands in the King Philip’s War as internment camps will be an important interpretative element in the park. While the story is one of sadness and cruelty, the time seems to have come for America to face all aspects of its past. Like the Holocaust Memorial in D.C., an interpretive site dedicated to the American Indians could provide the respect and commemoration that a persecuted people deserve.

In the Islands, there are vast opportunities to provide attractions for numerous groups of visitors. Like Olmsted’s emerald necklace parks, each unit in the island system can provide a different experience. With so many Islands and so many stories as well as so many recreational opportunities, the islands can appeal to a great number of visitor groups. The layers of stories that can be told include:
Chapter Five

- **Native American Experiences** -- Evidence of Native American use of the Islands is so extensive that they have been designated an Archaeological District on the National Register of Historic Places. It is believed that Indians used the Islands for clamming and agriculture. Additionally, the Islands were used as internment camps for Native Americans during the King Philips War.

- **Military History** -- The Islands have been used as the location of defensive fortification since the earliest days of the country. Several Islands were the sites of fighting during the Revolutionary War. Their use as military defenses and training grounds continued through the Civil War, World War I, and World War II. The remains of many of the fortifications still remain on the Islands.

- **Maritime History** -- Boston Harbor has played a major role in the economic life of Boston and the region through shipping and fishing. America's first lighthouse was built in 1716 on Little Brewster Island. In the following years, several other lights were built to help guide vessels through the dangerous channels of the Harbor into the port at Boston.

- **Environmental Cleanup of the Harbor** -- In the 1980's, Boston Harbor was known as one of the dirtiest harbors in the country. As a result of pressures brought on by law suits, the state was required to improve the water quality. In 1996, the first phase of the new MWRA treatment plant on Deer Island was completed. Today, the water quality is so improved that marine life is returning to the harbor.

- **Natural Ecosystems and Processes: tides, water, erosion, animal habitats** -- The Islands provide the opportunity to learn about naturally occurring ecosystems and processes. They are constantly under siege by environmental forces that alter their shapes and characters. They also provide habitats for wildlife that might not otherwise be found in this part of the country.

- **Social Issues** -- The Islands have been used in the past to house many of societies unwanted land uses. Several Islands have been home to jails, poor houses, homeless shelters, and quarantine hospitals. Remnants of several of these structures still remain.

- **Recreational History** -- During the 1800's, several of the Islands were used for popular vacation resorts. Summer months found Boston's residents vacationing at prominent hotels on Spectacle, Gallops, Peddocks, and Rainsford Islands.
Activities Should be High Tech or Low Tech, but Not Medium Tech

The experience of the case study parks shows that park visitors enjoy activities that incorporate either very little technology or a very high level of technology. Activities that are based on older, traditional technologies do not draw visitors. The Harbor Islands should focus on activities that are based around the resources of the Harbor and Islands. It is through interactive experiences that visitors are likely to learn the most and gain the greatest appreciation for the resources of the park.

If the Islands do include technology in various visitor programs, it must be of such a caliber that it can compete with other entertainment opportunities that are available for park users. For example, on a broad scale, the Islands compete with Disneyland, on a more local level, they compete with the Science Museum and Omnimax Theater. As a result, simple slide shows do not adequately entertain visitors. Films using advanced special effects or computer aided graphics are more likely to satisfy visitor interests. The extreme costs of these technologies may be prohibitive to their use on the Islands. Regardless of whether the Park uses high technology or low technology, the Park’s message of conservation and stewardship should be conveyed through the various activities.

Plan to Make Activities Accessible to Non-English Speakers

Connected to telling the whole story and appealing to a broad population base is providing information in multiple languages. In order to appeal to non-English speakers, information pamphlets should be provided in other languages. While it adds to the cost of producing the pamphlets, the ability to provide information and direction to visitors in Spanish, German, Japanese, and other languages can increase the appeal of the Islands as an international destination.

Protect the Sense of Isolation that Exists on the Islands

One of the characteristics of both GGNRA and Cape Cod that supporters identify as being critical to the enjoyment of the parks is the sense of isolation that can be felt in a place so close to a major metropolitan area. The Marin Headlands in Golden Gate provide remote areas where park users can hike and bike in serenity. While located only miles from the center of San Francisco, the lack of development in the area provides a quality of remoteness that park users enjoy. Similarly, Cape Cod National Seashore provides this sense of isolation, and it is even this sense that was hoped to be preserved by those supporting the creation of the park.

Continuing Olmsted’s philosophy of parks as providing an escape from the stresses of urban life, the Boston Harbor Islands naturally possess this sense of isolation to an extreme degree. Their
inaccessibility and the lack of development on the islands contribute to a quality of remoteness despite the fact that they are located within miles of Boston’s Financial District. This quality should be protected as the park develops. Increasing visitation will reduce this sense on some islands, but others islands should be consciously preserved for serene enjoyment and the contrast they present to the urban environment of the surrounding areas.

**Include the Journey to the Islands in the Visitor Experience**

As the saying goes, getting there is half the fun. The journey, not just the destination, is an important park of the visitor experience. In Gettysburg, traveling along the historic avenues through the battlefield enhances the visitor’s understanding of the Battle. At Cape Cod, scenic drives through the park highlight spectacular views of park lands and ocean vistas. The use of movement, and the affect it has on changing perspectives, is a major factor in the visitor experience of these parks.

The Islands have obvious opportunities to take advantage of the unique water access to provide this experience of movement through the park. For the islands, the use of water transportation of all types can create unique experiences in and of themselves. The constantly changing views of the islands as well as of the Boston skyline can enhance the understanding of the Islands as a system and improve the overall visitor experience. The incorporation of narratives on the boats can help orient visitors to the park and enhance the meaning of the journey to the Islands. Brochures available on the boats detailing the sites visible along the journey can also help visitors understand the various qualities of the Park.

**Each Island Should Be Unique**

While several Islands share common characteristics, none are exactly alike. Landscape features, harbor views, and remnants of human use make each Islands different from the rest. Building upon Olmsted’s philosophies of park design, the Islands should continue to be unique. Each Island can meet the needs of one or more user groups, providing activities specific to that Island. No Island need be all things because it is the Islands together that make the whole of the system and make the park complete.

**Provide Educational Programs**

The stories on the Islands lend themselves naturally to educational programming. The case study parks show how the educational aspects of America’s National Parks can be incorporated into classroom teaching. Golden Gate, in particular, offers expanded opportunities for students of all ages
Boston Harbor Islands: Planning Principles

in the Bay Area to learn from the unique resources in the park. The programs that have been developed go beyond field trips to park sites. The Park Service has worked to develop curriculum based programs through which students study aspects of the park at school and then actively participate in educational activities in the park itself. GGNRA has found several advantages to promoting these programs. First, donors are likely to provide support for park projects that enhance educational programs. Second, the students become involved in the park and develop a concern for its future. They learn about stewardship and become park advocates. They also introduce their parents to the park, further expanding its constituency base.

The Islands have the distinct opportunity to create similar programs for school children in and around Boston. Some educational programs exist already, but expansion of these programs will further enhance the ability of the National Recreation Area to meet its educational mission.

**Establish a Hierarchy of Visitor Centers**

The experiences of the case study parks show that each park must determine for itself how and where visitor centers will be located and what role they will play in the visitor experience. Gettysburg supports the tourism planning theory that a single major complex should be located near park highlights, but so as not to intrude upon the experience of the park resources. Alternatively, the example of GGNRA indicates that a single complex serving all park visitors is not absolutely necessary. Smaller visitor centers located throughout the park can adequately orient visitors to park attractions. Cape Cod is yet another example where visitor centers, placed near park entrances, act as gateways to the park.

While each of the three case study parks has a main visitor center, only in Gettysburg is this visitor center critically connected to the visitor experience of the Park. Through the electric map and other exhibits, the facilities at Gettysburg orient tourists to the battlefield as a whole and convey the story of the battle and its role in the Civil War. However, visitors do not experience the park solely through the visitor center. After stopping at the central facility they then travel to various sites and points throughout the park to understand the landscape that is being interpreted. In GGNRA, the central visitor center is located on the Presidio. However, it is not intended that all park visitors come to this single location. Rather, many of the distinct park sites have visitor centers that tell primarily about the single site, but also connect that site to the other pieces of the park. In Cape Cod, the two visitor centers are located near the two ends of the park. Visitors can stop to get information on their
way to other sites. The visitor centers are not located at major attractions themselves. The Salt Pond visitor center welcomes visitors and acts as a departure point for walking and biking on some of the park’s trails. The facility at Province Lands in Provincetown is located near trails through the area dunes.

The Harbor Islands will best be served by a combination of the concepts of park visitor centers. Because the Islands must develop and promote a strong image and must overcome their inaccessibility, a gateway visitor center that orients visitors to the entire park and promotes the connections between the mainland and the park should be developed in an accessible and visible location on the waterfront near the center of Boston. This visitor complex should not be as extensive as that proposed in Gettysburg, but it should be more visible and more impressive than the primary visitor centers in Cape Cod and GGNRA. This main visitor center will serve as the identifying gateway to the Islands. It should contain interpretive boards that highlight the activities on the Islands as well as provide brochures about each of the Islands and the options for traveling to them. Park Service staff or volunteers should be available to answer questions and guide visitors to activities that best match their interests.

In addition to this one gateway visitor center, neighborhood visitor stands should be located at each of the neighborhood departure points to the Islands. Initial installations may only contain basic orientation materials, maps, and ferry schedules, and may not be staffed. Additional interpretive boards should explain the relationship of the neighborhood to the Islands. In the future, as park visitation grows and income and funding increase, the services at these neighborhood visitor stands may be expanded, but should remain relatively minimal in their provisions. The Park Service should seek to develop partnerships with other destinations in each neighborhood in order to reduce the cost of providing the numerous visitor facilities.

Finally, each Island destination should contain a welcome center. Like those in GGNRA, each can provide information primarily about the attractions of the Island on which it is located. Just as Alcatraz, Muir Woods, and Fort Point each have a small facility to orient visitors, provide information, and sell park souvenirs, so can Georges, Long, and Peddocks Islands offer specialized visitor facilities.

Providing these numerous visitor facilities can be expensive. While the provision of many is ideal, they can be constructed in phases as needed, and as funds are available. In order to minimize
the operational expenses of the visitor centers, the Island Partnership should work with the numerous existing volunteer groups concerned with the Islands to provide staffing support. Partnerships such as that developed between GGNRA and Pacifica should also be explored.

**CONSERVATION**

As with all National Parks, the Park Service is charged with the responsibility of protecting the resources of the Boston Harbor Islands. For the BHI, this includes the preservation of natural ecosystems, historic structures, and cultural landscapes. Some islands are home to important breeding ground of threatened species of wildlife. Other islands are have been completely shaped by human influence. The struggle with conservation in the National Parks is critically tied to overuse. Now is the time for the BHINRA to examine the levels of sensitivity of various park areas and determine appropriate levels of use. The experiences of the three case study parks can inform the planning for the Harbor Islands with respect to shaping visitor use patterns and the implications for resource conservation.

**Disperse Visitation to Minimize Overuse**

Like GGNRA, the Islands are a collection of separate and unique sites. The presence of these multiple destinations aids in the conservation of the park by encouraging visitors to go to many different park sites rather than congregate at a single major attraction. This scattering of visitors fosters lower intensities of use at many locations in the park rather than a very high intensity of use at a single location. The carrying capacity of each Island will not be exceeded if visitors are dispersed to many Islands.

The future development of the park must alter the current patterns of use. Today, 91% of the visitors to the Islands go to Georges Island while other Islands have visitation levels of 14% or less (Harbor Visions Crew 1997). As park visitation increases, Georges Island will not be able to support the same percentage of visitors. Other attractions must be developed in order to ease the burden of providing services for increasing numbers of visitors.

**Provide Opportunities for Off-Season Use**

Cape Cod has been experiencing an increase in visitation during spring and fall months while summer use levels have been declining. The effect of this change is that the Park can better accommodate all visitors because the pressures of overcrowding are decreased. The use of the Islands
is limited to an extent by their extreme seasonality. Winter weather makes travel to the Islands difficult at times, and the experience of being on the Islands can be cold and unpleasant. However, the Park does have the opportunity to expand the seasonal use beyond the traditional summer months. The proximity of the Islands to the large population of the metropolitan area makes the Islands ideal for quick day trips during the off-season. One possibility for attracting visitors during the colder months is to provide special events. The Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands already sponsor a special Halloween party for children on Georges Island. This could be expanded to include haunted tours of Islands for adults, or other special nighttime activities. A Christmas festival might be developed that takes place each December. These are just two possible examples of activities that might expand the seasonal use of the Islands.

Restrict Access to Sensitive Areas

Signs and fences throughout Cape Cod limit access to sensitive areas in the park where overuse will damage the resources. Similar restrictions of activities have been implemented in both Gettysburg and Golden Gate in order to protect park resources. The Park Service should immediately conduct studies of the carrying capacities of the islands and determine the ability they have to support visitor activity. Those areas that are most sensitive should be noted and all park planning should discourage activity in these sites. Some entire islands may be determined to be critical environments. Access to these islands should prohibited or restricted to permit only.

PARK MANAGEMENT

The enabling legislation for the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area defined a complex management structure for the park. As a new model, the experience of the Harbor Islands will be different than all existing parks. However, much of what the legislation mandates is merely requiring the park to follow management practices that are already being used in parks throughout the National Park System. All of the case study parks illustrate how partnerships and new funding mechanisms are being used to achieve park goals. It will be by learning from the combined experiences of other parks that the Islands will be able to successfully implement plans and programs developed through this newly defined management structure. The following are a few of the specific principals that should be used to guide the park management.
Promote the Primacy of the Park Unit in all Decisions

While a single emblem has been developed for the entire park, each island continues to be referred to individually, and as being primarily connected to the owning entity. DEM, MDC, as well as the state park and others must cooperate and subordinate their roles as Island owners and managers to the unified image of one whole. This does not mean that the National Park Service or any single agency will take responsibility. Rather, the Island Partnership will be the entity promoted as being responsible for the Islands. Visitors will only be confused if each individual agency insists on being recognized for its own Islands.

Keep Income in the Park

Because the Harbor Islands are required by law to find three dollars of non-federal funds for every one dollar of federal money provided to the park, the Island Partnership must be very innovative in developing programs and activities that generate money that can be kept in the park rather than returned to the federal treasury. Looking to other parks, BHINRA can learn many innovative ways to establish projects itself, as well as to work with park partners to retain as much of the income from programs as possible. The use of historic leases in Cape Cod and the creation of the Alcatraz tour tape by the Golden Gate National Parks Association are both examples of how the National Park Service is developing mechanisms for insuring that income generated by the park and park activities remains in the park. The numerous groups that have historically supported the Harbor Islands are already in place. Now, the challenge is to work with the groups to create fluid and dynamic partnerships in all types of projects.

Develop Partnerships That Make the Most of the Skills of the Partners

The NPS at Golden Gate is involved with dozens of partnership agreements. These agreements play a large role in advancing the goals of the park. The Park Service recognizes the ability of other organizations to undertake projects in a more successful manner than the Park Service itself could. The future of the Harbor Islands will depend on the partnerships of the park. The Island Partnership itself provides an opportunity for partner agencies to contribute their specialized skills to the development and management of the park. For example, the Park Service specializes in interpretation and should thus be responsible for the interpretive elements of the Islands. The Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center specializes in educational programs and can play a leading role in developing programs for the whole of the Recreation Area. The thirteen members of the Island Partnership, as well as the eighteen members of the Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council, can
each offer specialized skills to help promote the mission of the park. Additional organizations in the Boston Areas, such as the many universities, may become key partners in developing other park programs.

**CONCLUSION**

The above principles reflect an attempt to examine several existing National Park units that share common characteristics with the Harbor Islands and apply the knowledge gained from the experiences of these parks, where appropriate, to future plans for the BHINRA. It must be noted that the list above is neither complete nor exhaustive. The collection of ideas simply provide valuable insight for how the Park Service and Island Partnership can address the major challenges facing the development of the Harbor Islands as a National Recreation Area. Armed with this set of planning principles, the following chapter will propose an illustrative conceptual framework for the development and programming of the Harbor Islands.
CHAPTER SIX

BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS:
CONCEPTUAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK
BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS
CONCEPTUAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Based on the principles developed in the preceding chapter and the formal purposes and goals described in the enabling legislation, this chapter will put forth an illustrative conceptual framework for the future development of the Boston Harbor Islands. This proposal represents one possible implementation strategy that illustrates how the preceding principles can be applied specifically to the Harbor Islands in order to address some of the specific challenges that face the development of the Islands as a National Park unit.

ISLAND CATEGORIES

The proposed concept for the development and programming of the Islands is based upon a layering of uses on top of each other to promote the Islands as a multi-faceted system of sites and attractions. The varied histories and current characteristics of the Islands naturally enhance the opportunities to provide a diverse range of educational, cultural and recreational activities. The proposed concept enhances the existing qualities of the Islands and builds upon an underlying history of environmental change and human use.

The Islands can be classified according to three landscape types: wild, composed, and built. The wild environments are areas consisting of native plant species and natural ecosystems. These are the most representative of what the Islands would have looked like over 400 years ago. Composed environments are those that are based on natural features, but have been distinctly shaped and altered by human use. They are generally found on islands which have been well used by humans over the years, but which have little structural evidence of this use. Finally, built environments are those that still contain significant built structures. These are not exclusive categories, but represent a range within which the various Island environments lie. It is these landscapes that form the basis for determining what the future development and programming of each Island might be. Figure 6.1 provides an overview of the existing features of the islands and indicates the landscape category or categories found on each.

The preservation of the range of these landscape types on the Islands will act as a transitional element that bridges the gap from urban to natural. The different landscapes will tie the Islands to
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Island</th>
<th>Size (Acres)</th>
<th>Manager</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Landscape Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bumpkin</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>ruins of farm house and children's hospital, trails, wooded areas</td>
<td>composed, wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Button</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>Hingham</td>
<td>rocky shoreline</td>
<td>wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calf</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>ruins of mansion, freshwater pond, tidal marshes</td>
<td>composed, wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>MWRA</td>
<td>sewage treatment plant, connected to mainland</td>
<td>built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallops</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>ruins of hospital and military radio school, gun batteries, wooded area, salt marsh</td>
<td>composed, wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georges</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>MDC</td>
<td>Fort Warren (National Historic Landmark), food concession</td>
<td>built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grape</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>camp sites, wooded area, salt marsh</td>
<td>composed, wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Graves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>U.S.C.G.</td>
<td>automated lighthouse, rocky terrain</td>
<td>built, wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Brewer</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>military ruins, salt march, tidal pools, trails</td>
<td>composed, wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>bedrock outcrop, bird sanctuary</td>
<td>wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hangman</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>bedrock outcrop</td>
<td>wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langlee</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hingham</td>
<td>sandy beaches</td>
<td>composed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Brewer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>U.S.C.G.</td>
<td>Boston Light (Nat'l Historic Landmark), staffed keeper's quarters, outbuildings, rocky terrain</td>
<td>built, wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Calf</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>bedrock outcrop, bird sanctuary</td>
<td>wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>hospital campus, Fort Strong, lighthouse, beaches, dunes, salt marsh, densely wooded areas, automobile access</td>
<td>built, composed, wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovells</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>MDC</td>
<td>camp sites, ruins of Fort Standish, gun batteries, woods, salt marshes, meadows, dunes, trails, beach</td>
<td>composed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Brewer</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>rocky terrain, fresh water marsh, foundations of summer homes, heron rookeries</td>
<td>composed, wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moon</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>remains of old sewage treatment tanks, training area for police and fire departments, automobile access</td>
<td>built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nut</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>MWRA</td>
<td>old sewage treatment plant, automobile access</td>
<td>built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer Brewer</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>bedrock outcrop, treeless, remains of quarries, gun batteries</td>
<td>composed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peddocks</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>MDC</td>
<td>private cottages, remains of chapel and Fort Andrews, camp sites, salt marsh, beaches</td>
<td>built, composed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raccoon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>rocky terrain, gravel beaches</td>
<td>wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ragged</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hingham</td>
<td>natural setting</td>
<td>composed, wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainsford</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>open field, gravel beaches, ruins of quarantine hospital/poorhouse/reformatory</td>
<td>composed, wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hingham</td>
<td>natural setting</td>
<td>composed, wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>natural setting, subject to extensive erosion</td>
<td>composed, wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slate</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>slate ledges, dense thickets, remains of quarries</td>
<td>mainicured, wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spectacle</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>DEM and Boston</td>
<td>former dump, being capped by dirt from Central Artery / Tunnel project</td>
<td>composed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thompson</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>Thomp. Isl. Outw. Bnd. Ed.Center</td>
<td>Outward Bound campus with historic buildings, visitor services, meadows, salt marsh, pond, wooded areas</td>
<td>built, composed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World’s End</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>The Trustees of Res.</td>
<td>gravel paths and formal tree plantings based on Olmsted design, salt and freshwater marshes, meadows, automobile access</td>
<td>composed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.1: Description of Islands in Boston Harbor
Sources: National Park Service and Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands
their context between the city and the ocean. Islands containing buildings and historic structures share a more urban and developed image. In contrast, wild landscapes are reminders of the wilderness of the Atlantic Ocean that lies beyond the Islands. Between these two is the composed landscape that acts as an urban green and aids in the graceful transition from artificial to natural.

The Islands have historically been on the margin's of the life of Boston as a city. Their proximity to the city and yet their inaccessibility and climatic inhospitableness to year-round use, as well as the past pollution of the Boston Harbor, have resulted in the isolation of the Islands and their use for society's unwanted activities. The incorporation of the range of the three landscape types provides the opportunity to improve the image of the Islands as a peripheral park, reconnecting Boston with the ocean, rather than as a marginal zone betwixt and between the city and the ocean.

**ORGANIZATIONAL CONCEPT**

The proposed organizational concept calls for the selective development of the islands based on their historical uses, current uses, sizes, and accessibility. Like GGNRA, the Islands will be a collection of distinct sites that offer numerous attractions, each providing a different experience and
unique activities in the middle of Boston Harbor. The landscapes described above will form the infrastructure upon which the stories about the Islands are overlaid. The Islands will be organized thematically into three core areas:

- **A Historic Core** -- The development of a series of pedestrian bridges linking Georges, Lovells, and Gallops Islands together will create a focal point for a historic core. Using Fort Warren, a National Historic Landmark on Georges Island, as an anchor, interpretive facilities on the three islands will explain the military history, Native American experience, and marine activity of the Islands and the Harbor. Museums of different types will be the primary mechanisms for informing visitors about the histories of the Islands. While islands outside the core are also important to stories, the bulk of interpretation will be consolidated within the historic core. For example, rather than repeating a story by rehabilitating every military fort that exists on the Islands and explaining their roles on site, Fort Warren will be rehabbed more extensively than any other military installation and will be home to a museum interpreting the role that all of the Islands have played in protecting Boston Harbor and providing training grounds for soldiers during numerous wars.

Creating a total loop of approximately 2 miles, these three connected islands will provide a series of experiences for park users. Georges Island will continue to be one of the primary destinations in the park and the most built of the three Islands in the historic core. Tours of Fort Warren and a museum and interpretive stations showing the evolution of military activity throughout the Harbor will introduce visitors to one aspect of the Islands. Interpretation should go beyond the traditional tales of military history and include stories such as the presence of the Mass 54th Colored Regiment on the Islands during the Civil War. The incorporation of this story will also be important in taking advantage of the fame that the Regiment received as a result of being featured in the movie “Glory.” Just as Gettysburg NMP benefited from the attention it received as a result of the movie “Gettysburg,” so too can the Boston Harbor Islands draw upon the public recognition of this historic military unit to enhance its appeal to a broader public.

A welcome center will provide information about the three Islands in the historic core. Additional services will include a food concessions and a museum store. The setting of Fort Warren on Georges Island is a nearly pure example of the built landscape type found on the Islands. It is thus logical that the Island, despite being only 28 acres in size, be one of the primary
destination points in the Harbor. This also builds upon the existing use of the Island as the core of the State Park.

From Georges Island, visitors will be able to walk across the pedestrian bridge or take a small shuttle boat to Lovells Island where a Native American interpretive facility will be located. Designed to intrude minimally on the landscape, a collection of individual sites will be created to tell about American Indian life on the Islands. Evidence shows that Native Americans used Lovells Island for fishing, agriculture and as a trading post. Their activities as well as their influence on the land will be detailed in interpretive exhibits. The existing conditions of Lovells, as a composed environment containing woods, beaches, salt marshes, and meadows makes it an appropriate location in which to explore the relationship between Native Americans and landscapes of several types. Additional stations will describe the relationship between the native Indians and early American settlers. The history of American Indians and the Islands would not be complete without exhibits commemorating those who died while being held as prisoners at internment camps on the Islands during the King Philips War. The experiences at other National Parks of developing interpretation that deals with non-traditional stories can be valuable in informing how the interpretive elements on Lovells Island might be developed.

From here, visitors will be able to walk or take a water shuttle to Gallops Island. Stories of pirates on the Island and its location near one of the main shipping channels in the Harbor make Gallops a logical Island on which the maritime history of Boston and the Harbor can be told. Add to this the historic use of the Island as a maritime school and it becomes the ideal site for interpretation of this history. However, the wild and composed landscapes on the Island do not lend themselves to major construction. A heron rookery makes the Island particularly sensitive to development. Therefore, the Island itself will remain largely undeveloped. Instead, a pier will be constructed where the Lightship “Nantucket I” will be seasonally docked. This old ship, currently owned by the Metropolitan District Commission will house exhibits and activities related to the marine history of the Harbor.

Visitor services will be concentrated on the “Nantucket I.” However, trails will allow visitors to explore some of the less sensitive areas of the Island and enjoy the dramatic views of the Harbor. The small swimming beach will continue to open to the public, but no associated facilities will be constructed so that use will be kept to a minimum.
In addition to the three primary historic themes of these Islands, additional interpretive boards will be placed around the Islands describing other important natural and cultural features of the Islands and Harbor. The pedestrian bridges can play an important and unique role in highlighting some of the other issues that are important in the history of the Islands. The movement of visitors along the bridges can be used to convey stories that are closely connected to the passage of time. One possible interpretive story that can be unfolded as visitors walk from one Island to another is first the polluting of Boston Harbor, followed by the cleanup of the waters. The unique perspective of the Harbor one would have when standing between two Islands would provide a spectacular setting for how the health of the harbor has changed. Descriptions of the marine life that have returned to the harbor, and may even be seen from the bridges, would be poignant reminders of the effects of investing in pollution control.

- **Cultural Core** -- A second core area will focus on the arts, cultural activities, and educational richness that a city such as Boston has to offer. Long Island's characteristics make it an ideal site on which to develop a popular park destination. Its size (214 acres) and its connection to the mainland via bridge make Long Island both able to support large crowds and very serviceable. The presence of a significant built landscape on the Island -- including over two dozen buildings from a former hospital and existing homeless shelter and drug and alcohol treatment center (both of which should be relocated) -- further enhances the ability of the Island to support intensive use. Roads and other basic infrastructure are already in place to support use and development of the Island.

The facilities in the cultural core will take advantage of the combination of built, composed and wild environments that exist on Long Island. By layering a new interpretive theme on top of the existing landscapes, a unique park attraction can be created that links the Islands to the city. Adaptive reuse of the hospital buildings will result in the development of a fully equipped conference center and hotel. It is recommended that, like precedents at GGNRA, the conference facility be a major site for the discussion of environmental, scientific, and cultural issues that are both local and global in nature. Conferences can draw on the extensive resources of local universities, high-tech companies, medical research facilities, etc.

In addition to providing a place for the discussion of complex issues facing the world today, the cultural core will provide opportunities for park visitors to enjoy theatrical performances, and
musical concerts. Using the natural shape of the Islands, an amphitheater will be constructed so that audiences can enjoy views of the Harbor as they are entertained by music and theater groups. The immense crowds that attend events at the Hatch Shell in the MDC’s Esplanade park indicate the popularity of such outdoor summer events.

The development of a sculpture garden on what was once the parade ground for a military fort will be a creative reinterpretation vehicle for providing a unique setting on the Islands. Rather than the traditional approach of renovating portions of the fort and repeating a story that is already being told on another Island, the use of art and sculpture in coordination with traditional elements of park design can create a formal park area comparable to Olmsted’s Arnold Arboretum. Rather than showcasing trees, the park will showcase sculpture.

In order to minimize traffic and parking problems, automobile access to Long Island should be limited. The bridge connecting it to the mainland should be maintained for service vehicles, but most park visitors should arrive at the Islands by boat. This sense of arrival by water is an important characteristic of the experience of the Islands and should be maintained across all Islands that are not immediately connected to the mainland.

- **Recreational Core** -- The recreational core of the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area will provide opportunities for local residents and park visitors to participate in a vast array of active sports and water-related activities. A new park on Spectacle Island will form the base of this core and will become the primary park destination for those interested in participating in activities such as kayaking, sailing and swimming. Like the Ante-Park in Olmsted’s Franklin Park, the recreational core will provide opportunities for visitor to enjoy these activities without interfering with others who seek experiences of solitude and contemplation in the Islands.

The capping of Spectacle Island, a previous dump site, and the following development of a traditional recreational park will highlight the engineering feat of restoring once toxic land to a safe environment for public use. This will be one interpretive theme that will add to the layers of information and use shaping the experience of visitors to Spectacle Island.

Facilities on the Island will support a range of visitor uses and promote the types of active experiences that the Park Service at Cape Cod has found to be popular with park visitors.
Chapter Six

Equipment rentals and seasonal lessons might be offered for kayaking, sailing, wind-surfing, etc.
A bathhouse, beach with lifeguard, and concessions stands will serve visitor needs.

An overarching presence of both educational activities and natural settings will be intertwined with the core areas. Most Islands not included in the core areas will remain primarily undeveloped. Based upon the existing characteristics of each of these Islands, they will either be maintained as controlled and more formal park elements, or they will be restored to a more purely natural landscape – the “wild” landscape. Regardless of whether they are composed or wild, they will both provide the sense of isolation that will distinguish the park so completely from the surrounding urban and suburban areas. They will also be key sites for developing research and educational programs based on environmental studies. Islands that are larger in size, more easily accessible, and have recent histories of use are more likely to be representative of the composed landscapes and should be open to the public in general. Access to Islands smaller in size and more sensitive to human disturbance, those that are more wild, should be restricted through permit requirements.

These three core areas and the Islands that are to be either composed landscape or wild landscape park elements represent three of the distinct park types that together will make up the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area. The creation of the major destinations, serving different user groups, follows Olmsted’s belief that each unit in a park system should be unique. The particular attributes of each Island are used as the foundations upon which the new park areas are built.

Additionally, the creation of three major destinations, as well as many minor destinations on other Islands, will help disperse visitors throughout the park. The expansion of the number of destinations will help ease the burden that is currently placed on Georges Island as the only major attraction in the State Park. This will be particularly important as visitation levels increase.

The process of analyzing the Islands for their development potential that is used to support the above concept of creating three core areas can also be applied to the remaining Harbor Islands. Evaluating each Island, however, is beyond the scope of this thesis. The above programming and development suggestions can serve as examples of how the principles developed in the previous chapter can be applied in order to meet the numerous park goals.
VISITOR CENTERS

A gateway visitor center for the Boston Harbor Islands should be located on land that becomes available as the result of the depression of the Central Artery in Downtown Boston. A site within the proposed parkway, adjacent to the Long Wharf area would achieve several goals for the park. First, the location is highly visible and centrally located near other major tourist and recreational destinations such as Faneuil Hall and the New England Aquarium. A parcel large enough to support a gateway visitor center and redesign of a promenade leading to Long Wharf would provide the opportunity for the visitor center to be a landmark facility that would enhance the image of the Islands.

The proximity of this location to the hub of Boston’s extensive transit network provides easy access to the site. This location further advances the principle of discouraging alternative modes of travel to the private automobile. Area residents and visitors alike can enjoy the Islands without the hassle of dealing with traffic and parking. Recognizing the need to have nearby parking for those who do choose to drive into the city, the suggested location is also ideal because the peak days for Island use are Saturday and Sunday, while peak parking demand in the city is during the work week. Little additional parking would be required to serve specifically the visitor center.

A third advantage of this location is the links that can be created with other sites in Boston. One of the most important of these links would be the connection to Olmsted’s emerald necklace. Current proposals for the development of linear parks on the land cleared by the depression of the highway will link with Olmsted’s parks in the southwest parts of the city. Constructing a visitor center for the Harbor Islands as part of this linear park will help link the Islands back to the city and reflect their connections to the historical development of Boston’s park system.

The purpose of this gateway visitor center is to orient visitors to the Island system. It should not be where the stories of individual Islands are told, but where important characteristics common to all of the Islands are presented. It should give brief overviews of the activities and attractions found on each Island, but should not serve as the major portion of the visitor experience. This is important because the experience of the park should be gained through an actual trip to one or more islands.

A scale model of the Islands, similar to the electric map at Gettysburg, may be used to show visitors the form of the Islands and their relationship to each other as well as the mainland. An
Chapter Six

exhibit of historic maps may be used to show how the shape of the Harbor has changed over time, particularly as a result of filling activity around Boston’s waterfront and erosion of the Islands. Park Rangers and volunteers should be available to answer questions and direct visitors to the various Islands. Ferry schedules and routes should be prominently displayed so that visitors can easily determine how to make the most of their day in the park. This main visitor center need not be large, but should be of an architectural style that provides an identity to the park.

Secondary neighborhood stands and ferry stops should be located in Boston’s waterfront neighborhoods as well as in both North and South Shore communities. Potential sites for these smaller facilities include: East Boston, Charlestown Navy Yard, Castle Island in South Boston, Harbor Point, Quincy, Hingham, Hull, Deer Island, Lynn, and Salem. The interpretive facilities at these locations should include a minimum of a map of the entire island system with a description of the attractions and activities available, a historical overview of the relationship between that community and nearby islands, and maps and schedules showing ferry routes and times. Through the repetition of design elements found at the main visitor center, these secondary facilities can enhance the image of the National Recreation Area. These neighborhood stands need only be small, covered gazebo-like structures located on or near the dock from which ferries to the Islands depart.

Additional welcome centers and visitor facilities should be located on the major destination Islands, including Georges, Long, and Spectacle. Like the visitor centers in Golden Gate National Recreation Area, these facilities will focus on key characteristics and attractions of the Islands on which they are located. Programs associated with these visitor centers will vary depending on the types of attractions found on the Island. Major elements may include museums, areas for video displays, interpretive boards, and interactive computer stations.

ACCESS

It is likely that visitors to the Islands will be able to go to one or two Islands in a day. More would be taxing. Like GGNRA and Cape Cod, most visitors will probably not have the goal of visiting the entire park. Rather, specific sites will be destinations on any given day. Users will return to the park to visit more areas if the initial experiences are enjoyable. As the 1997 visitor survey shows, the majority of the visitors to the park are from Massachusetts. It is reasonable to assume that
this will continue into the future. Area residents could easily visit the Islands for several day trips during the year and each time have a different experience.

In order make the Islands more accessible to these visitors, a water transportation system will link the islands to each other as well as to sites on the main land. The complexity of solving the problem of providing access to the Islands is too great to solve within the scope of this thesis. Rather, the proposal here is to be understood as conceptual only. The most important aspect of the proposed transportation system is that it will consist of a number of circular boat routes that follow regular routes around the harbor.

Examples of potential ferry routes include: one that circles between the three major core areas, and one that links Islands that contain the remains of military ruins. The ferry linking the three core areas with the mainland would run frequently, bringing large numbers of passengers to these Islands. The military history loop could leave from Charlestown Navy Yard, stop first at Georges Island where Fort Warren is located, then travel to Peddock’s Island to where the buildings that were once a part of Fort Andrews still stand, stop at Pemberton Point in Hull where the remains of Fort Revere are found and a water tower provides dramatic views of the Harbor and Islands. The military history boat loop could finish by stopping at Long Island, where Fort Strong’s gun emplacements and parade ground are still prominent features, and finally return to Charlestown Navy Yard, by way of Long Wharf. This loop would allow visitors to choose how many of the Islands and mainland attractions they would like to see, and would offer a tour of the entire Harbor, even if visitors choose to stop at as few as

Figure 6.3: Water Transportation for the Boston Harbor Islands: Potential routes and departure points.
one, or even none, of the Islands. Additionally, while each of the Islands has connections to the military past, most of the Islands will provide additional activities and attractions. Visitors can choose to visit those Islands that provide activities that most match their interests and do not have to follow the loop only because they want to learn about the military history of the Islands.

The role of the public water transportation system, as already discussed is greater than simply providing access to the Islands. It also contributes to the experience and image of the park. Incorporating identifying symbols in the design of the boat logo will help underscore the impression that the journey across the Harbor is a part of being in the park. In order to improve the economic feasibility of the system, it may be used as commuter service during peak morning and evening rush hours. Combining the commuter and visitor services would increase ferry use throughout the day. Commuter and visitor use times would complement each other because peak usage for the two uses occurs at opposite times of the day and week.

Travel to and through the Islands can help tell the stories of the Islands. Movement and changing views can be utilized to reveal the multiple levels of use and misuse that have affected the Islands over the years. The incorporation of a narrative that tells the various stories of the Islands can be a unique experience for visitors. This on-board interpretation would highlight for the visitor that they are not traveling to the park, but through the park.

CONCLUSION

The above suggestions address just a few of the many issues that face the Harbor Islands and their development as a National Recreation Area. While the future of the Islands is uncertain, the tremendous potential of the Islands to serve both the recreational needs of the surrounding residents and to become a major tourist destination is tremendous.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Personal Interview with Lauren McKean, AICP, Management Assistant / Planner, Cape Cod National Seashore. National Park Service, 1998e.

Personal Interview with Lucia Vasak. ICON Architecture, Inc., 1998f.


Bibliography


National Park Service. Citizen's Summary of the Final General Management Plan Amendment, Presidio of San Francisco, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, California. No Date.


Western Heritage Center. "Yellowstone Heritage Partnership Home Page." 199?
