Sierra Club Handbook for National Park Activists

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John Muir, in founding the Sierra Club in 1892, recognized the important role National Parks play in protecting our natural world. Now nearly 120 years later, we, members of the Sierra Club are continuing in his footsteps, seeking to use our National Parks—a unique American contribution to the world—to forge closer connections between people and nature and better preserve our nation’s threatened natural values.

I. INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed to help activists plan, organize, and conduct a campaign related to a National Park or Parks. Your campaign’s goal can be as grand as creating a new National Park, or as targeted as solving a single management problem in a portion of a National Park.

The list of potential park issues is long, reflecting the budgetary constraints of recent years, the mounting pressures for commercial activities in or around parks, and a variety of management problems. Keep in mind that when parks were first established proponents mainly sought to preserve cherished scenic highlights; they did not have concerns about biodiversity or global climate change. Boundaries typically reflected contemporary political pressures rather than scientific considerations. Early park, advocates did not anticipate the growth of "external impacts" from outside sources. So there is a multitude of ways to bring our national park system in line with today’s concerns - some parks are too small to protect habitat; the park planning process is often flawed; and many parks have not yet completed their wilderness reviews.

In these pages, we give a brief overview of the national park system and why its units differ from other public lands in how they are established and managed. We will make use of the standard Sierra Club “campaign planning matrix,” which has been used successfully in many prior campaigns, adding examples and references that provide more specific information. We hope the result is a useful guide to the planning and execution of many more successful campaigns.

1. The National Park System

The words “National Park” evoke images of Yellowstone, the Grand Canyon, or Yosemite. There are currently 58 of these iconic National Parks in the continental United States, Alaska, and Hawaii, as well as in American Samoa and the U.S. Virgin Islands. They vary in character from the swamps of Congaree in South Carolina to the alpine slopes of Wrangell-St. Elias in Alaska to Death Valley—the driest and hottest spot in North America. But the national park system is much larger, and includes many units noted primarily for their cultural and historical significance.

When Congress created Yellowstone, the first National Park, in 1872, the President assigned the Army to manage it. For the next forty years this pattern continued. Not until the passage of the
National Park Service Organic Act of 1916 was an actual agency established to manage the parks. For more information on this act users should visit http://planning.nps.gov/document/organic_act.pdf. The 1916 Act spelled out the new agency's mission

"To promote and regulate the use of the . . . national parks . . . which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

Units of the national park system have different designations depending upon the resource being protected and the way the particular unit was established. Among the major designations are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Unit</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| National Parks     | These are generally large natural places having a wide variety of attributes, at times including significant historic features. Hunting, mining and consumptive activities are not authorized. Established by Acts of Congress. | Acadia (Maine)  
Isle Royale (Michigan)  
Carlsbad Caverns (New Mexico)  
Haleakala (Hawaii) |
| National Monuments | Intended to preserve at least one nationally significant resource. They are usually smaller than National Parks and lack the diversity of attractions. Can be proclaimed by the President under the 1906 Antiquities Act. Monuments created by the President do not include wilderness. | Dinosaur (Utah)  
Devil’s Tower (Wyoming)  
John Day Fossil Beds (Oregon)  
Admiralty Island (Alaska) |
| National Preserves | A Park or Monument, but hunting is permitted.                               | Big Thicket (Texas)  
Hoatok (Alaska)  
Big Cypress (Florida) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Reserves</th>
<th>Similar to National Preserves but administered by state or local authorities.</th>
<th>City of Rocks (Idaho) Pinelands (New Jersey)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Lakeshores/Seashores</td>
<td>Preserve shoreline areas and offshore islands while providing water-oriented recreation.</td>
<td>Cape Cod (Massachusetts) Apostle Islands (Wisconsin) Point Reyes (California)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Recreation Areas</td>
<td>Originally areas surrounding reservoirs but now include other lands and waters set aside for recreational use.</td>
<td>Lake Mead (Arizona/Nevada) Chickasaw (Oklahoma) Curecanti (Colorado)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Historic Sites</td>
<td>Include areas of prehistoric or modern historical significance, archaeological sites, and historic structures.</td>
<td>Harry S. Truman (Missouri) Fort Union Trading Post (North Dakota)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Historical Parks</td>
<td>Similar to Historic Sites but usually areas of greater physical extent and complexity</td>
<td>San Juan Island (Washington) Hopewell Culture (Ohio)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Memorials</td>
<td>Commemorative of a historic person or episode; they need not occupy a site historically connected with its subject.</td>
<td>Mount Rushmore (South Dakota) Johnstown Flood (Pennsylvania)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, there are National Parkways (Blue Ridge), Wild and Scenic Rivers (Upper Delaware), and National battlefields (Antietam). There are also hybrid designations such as Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve in Colorado and Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve in Louisiana with distinct portions of the unit managed differently. For Nomenclature of Park System Areas, visit [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/hisnps/NPSHistory/nomenclature.html](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/hisnps/NPSHistory/nomenclature.html).

Some National Monuments and National Recreation Areas are managed by the Bureau of Land Management, a Department of the Interior bureau, or the Forest Service, which is part of the Department of Agriculture. We will be primarily concerned with units managed by the National Park Service which is also a Department of the Interior bureau.

In developing a campaign for a new or expanded park, it is important for activists to consider the type of designation best suited for a particular site. Designations may change as park units are
added, changed, or removed from a particular park unit status. Some recent examples include the “promotion” of Cuyahoga Valley National Park from a national recreation area and the decommissioning of the Oklahoma City National Memorial. The most common change, however, is the shift from National Monument to National Park. Many Sierra Club campaigns have had this as a goal, often with dramatic success. The Alaska Lands Act of 1980 and the California Desert Act of 1994 are among the most notable examples. Next to persuading the President or the Congress to create new National Monuments, the “promotion” of National Monuments to National Park status, often with expanded boundaries, has often proven a convenient way to expand system of National Parks. As noted above, National Parks are usually larger and more diverse, and have greater public visibility than other units of the national park system.

2. How Parks Are Established

Most units are designated by an Act of Congress. The exceptions are National Monuments, which can be established by Act of Congress or by presidential proclamation under the Antiquities Act of 1906. To minimize bureaucratic rivalries, Presidents usually assign new monuments to the agency that previously administered the land. For example President Reagan designated Mount Saint Helens as a Forest Service National Monument and President Clinton proclaimed Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument under BLM management.

The National Park Service has established a screening process for the establishment of new park units—“to assure that only the most outstanding resources are added to the National Park System. Regardless of economic considerations or other factors, a new national park area must meet criteria for national significance, suitability and feasibility.” The National Park Service provides Criteria for New National Parks. Park activists should familiarize themselves with this page at http://planning.nps.gov/document/Criteria%20for%20New%20Parklands.pdf.

National Park status might not be the most suitable designation for a particular area. Together with greater visibility and more visitors, there are likely to be greater pressures for infrastructure to promote tourism. Activists should consider the possible consequences for biologically sensitive areas when planning park campaigns. In recent years, environmentalists have devoted more attention to designating wilderness areas (see below), which preclude most development and can be created on any federally owned land.

Regardless of National Park Service policy, it is still up to Congress and the President to decide which sites become national park units. There are many cases where Congress, persuaded by citizen lobbying, has overruled the National Park Service or ignored its recommendations. The President's authority under the Antiquities Act of 1906 also permits the executive to circumvent Congress. The process is thus highly political, for good and ill. Activists should carefully assess the ecological and cultural merits of a park designation before launching a campaign.

An important consideration in dealing
with many park issues is the landmark Wilderness Act of 1964, which provided for the designation, by Congress, of "wilderness" areas within national parks, national forests, wildlife refuges, and after 1976, lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Wilderness areas are off limits to most construction, road building, and mechanized transport and other mechanized activities. Many National Parks include wilderness areas, though park service personnel, (like other federal administrators) may oppose wilderness designation on grounds that this designation reduces management flexibility. In fact, wilderness is perfectly compatible with the mission of the National Park Service. At present, the U.S. has 107 million acres of wilderness. More than half is in Alaska, but 45 states have some wilderness land. National Park Service units currently include 43 million acres of wilderness.

3. The Value of National Parks

National Parks preserve many of the most interesting, dramatic, naturally quiet, and spectacular North American scenery and landscapes. Yet apart from this contribution, they have other functions that are of great value but often overlooked. They include:

- Preservation of large, biologically diverse areas of the natural world. National parks will inevitably play a large role in the creation of genuinely resilient habitats in North America.
- Maintenance of habitat for animals and plants.
- Preservation of settings in which plants and animals can adapt to environmental changes, such as global climate change.
- Creation, in some cases, of large areas of wilderness, set aside for primitive recreation, scientific study, solitude, and other purposes that require large undisturbed landscapes.
- Provision of unparalleled opportunities to observe, study, and understand the complexity of nature and the interrelationships that are essential to its survival.

National Parks differ from National Forests and National Wildlife Refuges because they:

- Are more restrictive, prohibiting economic activities such as logging and mining, and with few exceptions, hunting, downhill skiing, and off-road vehicle use;
- Welcome the public and offer abundant opportunities for hiking, nature study and other forms of non-mechanized recreation;
- Emphasize public information, education, and interpretation, in the form of publications (maps, signs, brochures, books, etc.) expert presentations, guided walks, and related activities such as ranger and naturalist programs.

4. Management of Parks

Overall management is headed by the National Park Service Director who reports to the Secretary of the Interior through the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. The National Park Service in turn is divided in regions each headed by a Regional Director. Day-to-day management of individual parks is usually by a Superintendent who reports to the Regional Director. The Superintendent manages a staff organized in divisions, typically: Administration; Maintenance; Resources Management; Interpretation; and Protection. The largest staff group is

General Management Plans (GMPs) articulate the management philosophy and establish the framework for long term decision making of units of the national park system. GMPs describe the park administrators' plans for managing the natural, cultural, and recreation resources of the park and for public use and enjoyment of those resources. Influencing the content of GMPs is among the most important roles Sierra Club members can play. More information about how planning is accomplished is available at the National Park Service Planning web site [http://planning.nps.gov/](http://planning.nps.gov/).

For park planning issues the first point of contact is usually the park Superintendent and the park planning staff. It is important for park advocates to develop rapport with those individuals. In many cases other members of the park staff with the US Geological Survey which has staff and programs in many parks and can also be influential. For specific issues it may be necessary to contact the Denver Service Center, the regional office, and even the Washington office staff.

5. National Parks and Tribal Lands

Our National Parks came from lands that were once lands of the native North American tribes. Native peoples valued many of those lands as sacred places or as sources of food and shelter. Notable examples include Grand Canyon, Badlands, and Denali national parks. This background should be factored into land-use decisions when campaigning for new national parks. Ceremonial uses by native peoples and should be incorporated into the interpretive design of new park units. Some native names, such as directional names, are appropriate for use in interpretive signs.

II. NATIONAL PARK CAMPAIGN PLANNING

Utilizing the standard Sierra Club “campaign planning matrix,” we review the elements of a successful campaign, adding examples and references that provide more specific information. Our comments appear at the beginning of each section in *italics*. 
1. Issue Focus

- What is the main focus of your campaign?
- What environmental problem are you seeking to address?
- How does it relate to the Sierra Club’s national conservation priorities?

Your campaign could focus on one or many goals. You may wish to establish a new park, expand the boundaries of an existing park, expand habitat in buffer areas of the park, control development within a park, set up education programs and partner with schools or universities, facilitate research projects, control air pollution and overflights, and deal with a multitude of other external threats. One of the Sierra Club’s major initiatives is sustainable energy—we should work to make national parks net-zero energy users. We also want to encourage lodging and provision of other services not essential to public enjoyment to be placed outside park boundaries.
2. Campaign Goals

A. Conservation Goals. These are the goals your campaign seeks, when all the elements of the campaign are implemented.

- What are the short-term and long-term conservation goals of your campaign?
- What exactly do you want the public to demand and the decision-makers to deliver?
- What will you deem a victory?
- How will you qualify your success?
B. Organizational goals. These are the goals you seek to achieve to activate existing and recruit new members to the Sierra Club, to create awareness among the general public, to promote public action, to stimulate a change in commercial and government priorities and actions.

- What are the overall organizational goals for your campaign?
- How will this campaign help strengthen your chapter or group?
- How will this campaign recruit and develop new activists?
- How will you involve Sierra Club members in the campaign?
- How will you quantify success?

Goals might include establishing or enlarging a park, protecting a wildlife corridor, preventing additional road building, or improved trail maintenance. It is important to identify a means by which you can measure success. Be realistic and remember you may have to compromise some of your ancillary goals in order to assure that your resource management goals are accepted. Be clear about what actions you want people to take to achieve these goals. Keep in mind that some park goals might take decades to accomplish.
3. The Lay of the Land

A. Organizational strengths and weaknesses. It is critical to make an honest assessment of your organizational strengths and weaknesses.

- What resources do you have?
- What resources do you need?
- What are the current strengths or resources that your chapter or group can bring to this campaign? Think in terms of people, money, time and connections.
- What are the current weaknesses or organizational needs of your group or chapter as you launch this campaign?
B. Allies and opponents. Identify your friends and enemies.

- Which special interest groups or community organizations are likely allies in this campaign?
- Who shares your campaign goals?
- What are their strengths and weaknesses?
- What resources can they bring to this effort?
- Which special interest groups or community organizations are likely opponents of your efforts?
- What are their strengths and weaknesses?
- What will they do or spend to oppose you in this campaign?

Define what you want. Make up a checklist and sign-up sheet. Be sure to provide plenty of recognition and appreciation. Think of those in your group who are experts in particular areas (e.g. botanists, web programmers). Acknowledge your weaknesses and try to recruit additional people who can supply the desirable skills.

Other environmental groups, such as Audubon, Defenders of Wildlife, and the Wilderness Society are obvious allies. The National Parks Conservation Association is particularly important for national park campaigns, despite occasional differences with the Sierra Club on policy issues. There are a multitude of local organizations that support parks. The Coalition of National Park Service Retirees is another group that can assist you.

Other allies might include government agencies such as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or state game agencies, religious groups, native tribal organizations, local chambers of commerce, and student organizations at colleges and universities.

Look outside of the traditional groups to broaden appeal. Seek support from local businesses and civic organizations. Some groups may be your opponents on some issues but you may be surprised that they support you on others. Groups such as the hunters and anglers may join with you on an issue. Local, state, and federal legislators may also support or oppose you.

Traditional opponents include the oil and gas and timber industries, and developers. Private landowners with inholdings might also oppose changes in park policies. Remember the most successful campaigns are ones that can win over opponents. Try to form alliances with non-traditional allies.
4. Strategy

- How will you win?
- In what political venue do you hope to accomplish your conservation goals (pass a bill, change a regulation, win an election, etc.)?

*Primary Targets (Decision-makers)*

- Which individual or group of individuals has the power to deliver your conservation goal?
  - Who will make this decision?
- Which specific individuals will you target to secure victory?

*Secondary targets*

- Which individuals in your community can help you influence your targeted decision-makers?
- Who can you enlist to help you influence their decision? How might their involvement impact this effort?

*Think in terms of geography, demography, and constituencies.*

- Who among the general public, outside of Club members, are you attempting to reach with your message?
- Who are your most likely supporters in the community at large?
- Who can provide the greatest help?

*Since National Parks involve federal lands, your primary targets will most likely be Members of Congress. The support of the local Representatives is often essential. Other federal agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and EPA may also have a stake in the changes you propose.*

*Your secondary targets may include Native American representatives, religious and civic leaders, and state and local legislators. It is helpful to address an issue that is important to these groups and establish common ground.*
5. Campaign Communication

A. Message/slogan

- What is the central message you plan to deliver through this campaign?

Draft one clear, concise, and compelling phrase (10 words or less) which will be reiterated throughout all of your campaign communication to summarize your position.

Be brief and try to be catchy—your message might be: “Parks Preserve Nature,” “Space. Solitude. Silence,” “Keep it wild,” or “Parks are for people.” Once adopted the slogan should be used over and over to stay on message. Try to create a story that affects people. Show how this change will affect people. Be positive and provide solutions.

B. Story. In just a few compelling sentences, tell the story of your campaign.

- What is the local story you will tell to communicate with your targets?
- Who is the villain?
- Who is the victim?
- Who are the heroes?
- What is the problem?
- What is your proposed resolution?
C. Media outlets

- Which specific media outlets will be most effective in communicating your message and story to your targets and public audience(s)?

_Determine what media sources will be best, and find ways to get noticed._
6. Tactics and Timeline

- What actions (tactics) will your campaign take to put pressure on your target(s)?
- What specific activities do you intend to undertake?
- What will you do to ensure the media covers your issue?
- In what sequence/order will you implement your tactics?
- When exactly will you do each activity?

*Use a variety of tactics to make your point with primary and secondary targets, including press releases, press conferences, testimony before government agencies, letters to editors, and public meetings. Because National Parks contain attractive and often spectacular scenery, photos and films often are influential. The Sierra Club has a media office and chapter and field offices also have media experts who can serve as advisors. Take advantage of opportunities and be sure to follow-up.*
7. **Resource management**

A. **Campaign budget**

- How much will this campaign cost?

Once you have assessed your organizational resources, the resources of your allies, and the cost of implementing your tactics, create a campaign budget.

B. **Donor management/fundraising.**

If your anticipated expenses are greater than your financial resources, ask yourself whether you need to pare back your campaign effort, or how you can raise the additional revenue.

- If you chose to raise funds, who will you ask for money?
- How will you implement the ask-inform-involve-thank cycle?
C. Volunteer recruitment and stewardship

- Reviewing your tactics and timeline, how many volunteers will you need?
- What are your plans for recruiting, training, and supervising your volunteers?
- How will you use this campaign to strengthen your volunteers’ sense of connection to the Sierra Club?
D. Grant Writing Guidelines

- Develop a list of possible foundations to approach

Hint: Think local! The more specifically a foundation fits your program, the more likely it is not to be supporting another Sierra Club entity or already targeted as a possible funder for another Club project. Generally, national Sierra Club projects target foundations with a national or regional focus and Chapter projects target foundations with a local, state, or regional focus. So look for foundations interested in not only your issue, but the appropriate region or area as well.

Where to start your search?
The Foundation Center provides on-line resources, as well as collections at libraries across the nation. Accessing the information at libraries is free, but the on-line service is not. Foundation Center resources are especially helpful because they contain information on smaller foundations that may not have Web sites and would otherwise be hard to locate.

Other useful links:
http://www.tgci.com/funding/community.asp
http://www.guidestar.org/
http://www.fundsnetservices.com/

If you need help with your search, contact the national office staff, at present Roger-Mark DeSouza, 202-675-6692.

Send your list of possible funders to Roger-Mark De Souza or Steve Griffiths. They will carefully review your list to ensure that your project is a good match for the foundations, that the foundations you have identified are currently accepting applications, and that no other Sierra Club project has been targeted for any of the foundations on your list. They will get back to you within 2 weeks. DO NOT CONTACT ANY FOUNDATIONS BEFORE YOU HAVE APPROVAL FROM THE STAFF.

Note: If you have a personal/social connection to a foundation staff person or board member, informal discussions about the issues you are tackling and your strategies can be a good way to develop funding opportunities. You are certainly welcome to pursue such professional networking; however, it is imperative that you contact the national staff to coordinate programs.

Develop a relationship with at least one possible supporter.
A simple phone call to a foundation's program director or a foundation's board member with whom you have some contact will let you know if your program really fits with the foundation's current interests and if it is worthwhile to send them a letter or a formal proposal. The staff will be glad to help you prepare to make this call.

Review the possible funder's guidelines to find out how they want to be approached. Some foundations prefer a letter-of-inquiry first; others require a full proposal. Contact Steve Griffiths to let the national office know who is interested, what your proposal will be for, and what you have learned about their submission process and deadlines.
Grant Submission Process and Timeline Overview
At least 6 weeks before a possible funder's deadline: submit a list of possible funders to Roger-Mark De Souza, or Steve Griffiths for their review. You will get a response within two weeks.
At least 1 month before a possible funder's deadline: draft a project proposal and budget, and e-mail them to Steve Griffiths steve.griffiths@sierraclub.org. At this point, you will be assigned to a proposal writer who will work with you throughout the submission process.

For the next two weeks: work with staff to edit the proposal, format it to fit the funder's requirements, get it checked for compliance, draft a cover letter, and gather necessary attachments. You will also work with the financial staff to finalize your budget. During the last two weeks: the Sierra Club Foundation will review and approve the proposal. As the fiscal sponsor, the Foundation must approve your project BEFORE it begins fundraising for it. If the project is not approved before fundraising begins, the IRS can cause problems for the foundation you are soliciting. Therefore, projects must be approved before fundraising can occur.

The Foundation will also generate a cover letter that explains their role as fiscal sponsor and must accompany the submission to an outside funder.
Submit the proposal: the national staff will submit proposals for national projects. Chapter staff and volunteers submit their own proposals, once they have received all required attachments and final approval.

An important note on approaching corporate funders (including corporations and corporate foundations).
Experience has shown that obtaining grants from corporations is often especially time-consuming and generally results in small grants, if any at all. However, if you still feel that approaching a corporate funder makes sense, here are some things to consider:
In acquiring funds, we must preserve the Sierra Club's reputation for integrity, as well as its ability to pursue its goals without making compromises imposed by donors. While the Club may pursue corporate relationships for financial purposes, it is important that the Club retain and strengthen its reputation as an organization whose strong-minded policies and approach are not affected by corporate support or the apparent desire for corporate collaboration.

For this reason, you can NOT submit proposals to corporations that are:
- Recognized major polluters;
- Consistent violators of environmental laws;
- Major producers/vendors of products that are unusually damaging to the environment; or
- Major antagonists of environmental organizations,
unless special circumstances would make the application of these guidelines unfair.
If you wish to solicit a gift of $1,000 or more from a corporation that you think fits the above criteria, you must get approval from the Corporate Relations Committee, which generally takes two weeks, before proceeding with the proposal process outlined above. Visit the Corporate Gifts Acceptance page http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/fundraising/grants/corporate-gift-acceptance.aspx. You will need to fill out this form at http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/fundraising/grants/corporate-gift-acceptance-form.pdf. Please
send a copy to Roger-Mark DeSouza.

III. CASE STUDIES

In this section, we outline three specific examples of successful campaigns. We use three types of campaigns— a new park, a park expansion, and an issue affecting the management of a park.

1. Establishing a New Park—California Desert Protection Act of 1994

In the 1980’s, activists pored over maps and traveled extensively throughout the California desert to identify areas that were still wild and roadless and that deserved protection - generally the mountain ranges. They then drew up a campaign plan, recruited allies, and prepared legislation. They put all these places into their proposal for California desert wilderness and parks protection, assuming some would be omitted from the final legislation. They were amazed that almost all the areas initially included survived the legislative process virtually intact. Contrary to initial expectation, what drew most of the fire was the single proposal for a new National Park - the proposed 1.5 million acre Mojave National Park. It was controversial to move this much land from BLM administration to the National Park Service. In the end this did happen, but as a compromise, hunting was allowed in the new area and it became the Mojave National Preserve. In fact, not much hunting occurs there and it is a National Park in all but name.

2. Expanding a Park—Carbon Canyon Addition to Mount Rainier, 2005

The campaign began with a landslide, caused by clearcutting on land adjacent to Mt. Rainier National Park that pushed a loaded school bus into the creek. Local people, shocked by the tragedy, then began to agitate for a park to protect the canyon. The Sierra Club soon became involved, together with other environmental groups- Audubon, the Mountaineers, the Native Plant society, Cascade Land Conservancy, several Native tribes, and local governments. As support grew and the groups worked together, their objectives also changed. Instead of a county park, the original objective, the ultimate result was the addition of Carbon Canyon to the National Park and the formation of a local park that extends to Tacoma, thirty-five miles away. The coalition effort also encouraged the national park administrators to become more active. They took advantage of the public support to design a new campground, a trail for mountain
climbers, and a new visitor center.


Since the mid-1970s, the lucrative air tour industry has been robbing Grand Canyon National Park of a transcendental resource--its profound natural quiet--making it very hard for back-country users and others to experience the park's vastness, timelessness, mystery, and wonder.

In 1987, the National Parks Overflights Act (P.L. 100-91) resulted from a campaign stimulated by the fatal collision of two loaded tour helicopters above the heart of the park. For the last twenty years, the Sierra Club--in coalition with environmental partners-- has worked persistently to force the park staff to fulfill the law's promise of "substantial restoration of the natural quiet."

But, in spite of longstanding specific executive directive, and equally longstanding, explicit agency representations in higher court, the law has remained largely blocked. Air tour operators, other national aviation actors, together with the National Park Service and the Federal Aviation Administration, have stalled or blocked final decision, continuing stark non-compliance with the original intent of Congress. The required final environmental impact statement and Rule have still not appeared.

The issue will come to a head, soon after the Obama Administration and the 111th Congress assume office. The Sierra Club's Grand Canyon Chapter (Arizona) has authorized a comprehensive campaign that will require local, regional and national support.

IV. RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

The following are general resources for National Parks and national park issues. There are also countless resources for specific parks or regions that are too voluminous too list here.

Web sites:

National Park Service official Web site http://www.nps.gov
National Parks Conservation Association: http://www.npca.org

Books:


Tom Turner, Sierra Club: One Hundred Years of Protecting Nature (Harry N. Abrams, 1991)

National Geographic Guide to National Parks