

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



**George Washington Memorial Parkway**

# **Priorities & Actions Handbook**

**2nd Edition**

2022-2025



# *Welcome...*

The George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) is consistently listed as one of the top ten most visited National Park Service (NPS) units. Our team of 100 employees, numerous park partners, and the United States Park Police do an amazing job of connecting visitors with our natural and cultural resources, park programs, monuments, and memorials.

We have created this document for all NPS employees, partners, and volunteers who work with and support the park. We developed this handbook by engaging park leaders, supervisors, and our partners. We have four emphasis areas—Your Voice Matters, Robust Workforce, Stewardship, and Partnerships. Based on the reality of our current capacity in an ongoing effort to provide excellent customer service, these emphasis areas help us understand where to focus our energy and priorities. Gandhi is credited with saying “action expresses priorities.” Our priorities are what we put the most time and effort into. We can achieve great things with actions that support stewardship, partnerships, and a robust workforce, and actions that give employees a voice.

This is the second edition of our handbook. We have included a highlights section to reflect the great work the team has done in bringing reality to these words. We cannot appreciate their professionalism, commitment, and genuine love for the park enough. We celebrate our team members who have advanced in their careers, who received regional awards for specific achievements, and who retired from public service. We also have team members who experienced significant injury, loss, sickness, or disease which impacted their lives. We lift all of them up as we journey through life together.

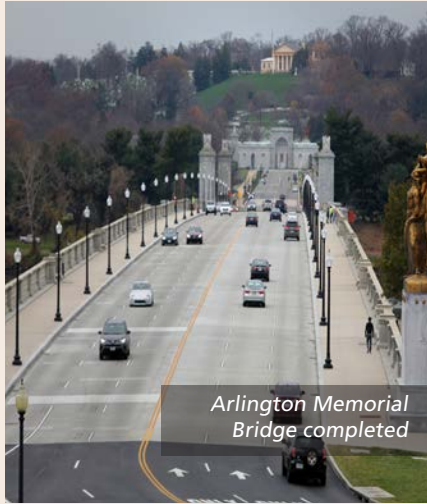
We encourage you to work within the four emphasis areas to improve park operations and develop new innovative examples with your supervisor, through your division and individual work plans. These four areas align with national and regional priorities and help us move forward as a stronger team. We work within our mission and vision to provide quality services to our local communities, international visitors, and millions of park visitors, while also protecting our natural and cultural resources.

Thank you for joining the noble profession of public service.





Graffiti removal by volunteers Great Falls



Arlington Memorial Bridge completed



Discovery of four glass bottles clustered in historic period soils below the South Dependency west room slave quarters



Construction of a breakwater to protect Dyke Marsh

# *Highlights*

*Action expresses priorities.*

— Gandhi



## NPS Mission

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

## NPS Core Values

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**Shared stewardship:** We share a commitment to resource stewardship with the global preservation community.

**Excellence:** We strive continually to learn and improve so that we may achieve the highest ideals of public service.

**Integrity:** We deal honestly and fairly with the public and one another.

**Tradition:** We are proud of it; we learn from it; we are not bound by it.

**Respect:** We embrace each other's differences so that we may enrich the well-being of everyone.



*Osprey nest*



*Mount Vernon Trail*

## Park Vision

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We lead the NPS in fostering stewardship, building community, and providing premier recreation, learning, and adventure in an urban area.

## Park Mission

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The mission of the GWMP is to create and sustain an engaged organization that works collaboratively with stakeholders/partners to provide transformative experiences and conserve this urban national park for current and future generations.

## Park Purpose

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The GWMP is a scenic roadway honoring the nation's first president, that protects and preserves cultural and natural resources along the Potomac River below Great Falls to Mount Vernon, and is part of a comprehensive system of parks, parkways, and recreational areas surrounding the nation's capital.





Sailing Potomac River

# Emphasis Areas

Your Voice Matters

Robust Workforce

Stewardship

Partnerships

## Park Core Values

**Accountability:** Holding self and others accountable for honoring commitments and in implementing agreed-upon solutions to achieve project goals.

**Committed to Employees:** Developing the next generation of leaders and providing tools to support the continual development of a highly efficient, effective, and engaged workforce.

**Resource Centered:** Protecting GWMP's resources in accordance with the NPS Mission and the Organic Act.

**Respect:** Embracing each other's differences and enriching the well-being of everyone.

**Trust:** Creating a collegial workplace by treating each other the way we want to be treated. Building meaningful relationships by listening to each other and seeking first to understand.

**Honesty:** Speaking openly, using relevant facts to support assessments, and always testing assumptions.

**Innovation:** Actively exploring creative and more efficient ways to accomplish GWMP's mission while respecting our traditions. Utilizing the expansive talent pool of park staff.

**Integrity:** Doing the right thing even when no one is looking. Engaging with each other in a manner that is authentic and demonstrates our core values.

**Communication:** Delivering accurate, timely information in such manner that helps things "go right" and fosters positive interactions amongst our staff and colleagues.

**One Park—One Team:** Working together as one park—one GWMP/NPS team focused on preserving and protecting the parkway for future generations. Embodying the mindset that our success as a park depends on us reaching across divisions and districts to accomplish our mission.



Syphax Family Visit  
Arlington House

# Your Voice Matters



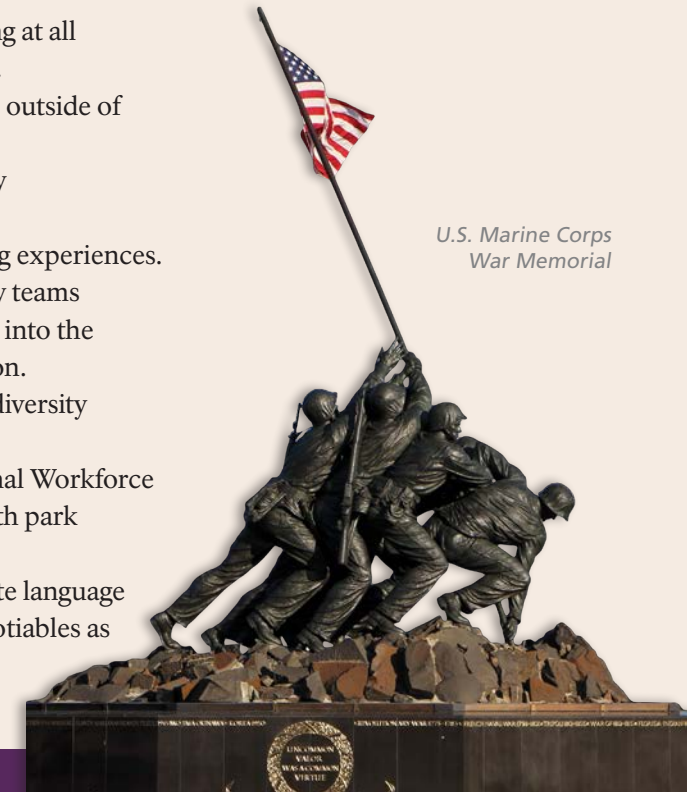
100th Anniversary Glen Echo  
Park's historic Dentzel Carousel  
1921-2021

*Your voice holds immense power. Use it to:*

- ▶ Make a difference.
- ▶ Create mutual understanding of each other's operational needs.
- ▶ Demonstrate empathy and compassion.
- ▶ Grow an inclusive environment.
- ▶ Increase staff collaboration, cohesiveness, and actions.
- ▶ Foster a respectful, accountable and safe work environment, promoting employee well-being.

## Specific Actions

- Establish or deepen programs and communication channels to improve collaboration, information-sharing, and feedback throughout the organization.
- Create and offer on a recurring basis new employee orientation that incorporates our core values.
- Incorporate roundtable discussions as part of team meetings.
- Provide networking at all employee meetings.
- Facilitate “mixers” outside of work.
- Sustain bi-monthly lunch-and-learns.
- Provide job sharing experiences.
- Use green and gray teams to blend work skills into the maintenance division.
- Support the park diversity advisory group.
- Support the regional Workforce Advisory Group with park representation.
- Adopt and integrate language resources/non-negotiables as park lexicon.
- GWMP Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion efforts incorporate the regional Trail Map to Diversity.
- Engage employees in the Future of Workforce.
- Facilitate interpretation co-production with descendant community at Arlington House.
- Pilot a project delegation letter to express function, responsibilities, authorities, and limits.



U.S. Marine Corps  
War Memorial



# Robust Workforce

*Foster a work environment where employees thrive.*

- ▶ Foster a ready and resilient workforce.
- ▶ Recruit and retain a diverse, dynamic workforce that addresses our priorities.
- ▶ Seek youth, non-profit, and other non-traditional staffing options to increase capacity and introduce people to careers within the federal government.
- ▶ Sustain a regular, proactive, and customized safety training program to meet the staff's varied needs.

## Dynamic

*Positive in attitude  
and full of energy  
and new ideas.*

## What is a Ready and Resilient Workforce?



Clara Barton National Historic Site  
Space and Program Round Table

### A Ready workforce is:

- ▶ Trained with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to perform the mission.
- ▶ Properly equipped with tools and protective equipment to support the mission.
- ▶ Healthy and fit to endure the environmental conditions required for the mission.
- ▶ Guided by strong and effective leaders.

### A Resilient workforce:

- ▶ Is ready to perform its roles and mission.
- ▶ Withstands and copes well with stress.
- ▶ Adapts and adjusts to challenging conditions.
- ▶ Rebounds and grows from experience.

## Specific Actions

- Ensure all employees attend Operational Leadership training. Incorporate risk management assessment and practices.
- Develop a records management and archival plan.
- Focus on the following committees: Safety, Environmental Stewardship, Structural Fire, and Awards & BMM.
- Upgrade bandwidth to improve internet connectivity at key work locations.
- Replace or dispose of obsolete equipment.
- Upgrade microwave and radio infrastructure.
- Clean up clutter and complete property survey twice a year.
- Provide youth and alternative hire opportunities.
- Improve Safety E-Tool by auditing Tier 1 and completing Tier 2.
- Enhance digital platforms to augment the visitor experience, virtual museum, and trip planning.
- Complete a space utilization study/action plan that adapts to a return-to-work status.
- Make improvements based on audit findings and corrective actions.
- Improve staff contracting skills and abilities.
- Integrate Geographic Information Systems (GIS) as a business skill for park operations.
- Focus efforts to reduce maintenance vacancies.
- Strengthen cross-functional, cross-divisional work planning and execution.



The Hiker,  
Memorial Avenue

# Stewardship

*We seek out and consider input from divisions and partners on decisions that will impact the park.*

- ▶ Protect, preserve, and restore cultural, natural, and historical resources.
- ▶ Create interest and engagement through stories that inspire people of all backgrounds to visit and care about these treasures for now and future generations.
- ▶ Understand and communicate the GWMP history and significance to metro Washington, D.C.



Park staff at Dyke Marsh

- ▶ Improve accessibility throughout the park.
- ▶ Invest in essential infrastructure.
- ▶ Reduce deferred maintenance backlog by focusing on and prioritizing projects.
- ▶ Align our work with key resources and visitor needs.
- ▶ Ensure the park's focal areas are safe and sustainably managed.
- ▶ Protect resources and reduce criminal activities using problem-solving strategies, community policing, and progressive law enforcement methods.

## Specific Actions

- Conduct visitor-use survey.
- Create a climbing management plan for Great Falls.
- Engage the whole park in supporting Legacy Restoration Funded projects.
- Implement and adapt our comprehensive five-year plan using strategic investment plans, project mixer, and partner engagement.
- Continue to sustain river safety education and injury reduction efforts.
- Improve the overall condition of the recreational driving experience.
- Collaborate with the U.S. Park Police to create a speed management plan.
- Improve stormwater management.
- Focus on customer service to provide responsive, timely and quality service, information, or action.
- Create and implement a preventive maintenance plan/schedule.
- Renew expired concessions contracts to meet current laws and customer service needs.
- Conduct vista management planning and treatment.
- Complete Dyke Marsh Restoration Project Phase II.
- Create GWMP interpretive plan.
- Create GWMP wayside plan.
- Activate South Turkey Run.
- Create and implement tree management plan.
- Align Interpretation Program delivery with each monthly emphasis.
- Initiate the Self Examination Transition Plan to improve accessibility.
- Complete the Great Falls Visitor Center Toolkit.
- Evaluate park opportunities to earn designation as part of the African American Civil Rights Network.
- Go green and reduce facility footprint and eliminate underused buildings.
- Go green and renew the Climate-friendly Parks Program using the Green Parks Plan.
- Be good stewards by advancing projects that have design aesthetics appropriate for a park setting.
- Implement interim maintenance measures for the Jones Point Lighthouse.



# Partnerships

*We embrace collaboration, trust, and open communication with our partners to achieve shared goals.*

- ▶ Strengthen and sustain coalitions and partnerships to focus on our priorities.
- ▶ Enhance our ability to provide quality services and experiences through partnerships and external opportunities.
- ▶ Create the next generation of park volunteers, advocates, and patrons.
- ▶ Make contact with the public at key intercepts to answer questions and help them plan their visit.
- ▶ Identify, build, and strengthen partnerships with city, county, state, and federal agencies, as well as tribal governments, members of Congress, and state and local elected representatives.
- ▶ Develop management styles and staff accordingly to support a culture of partnership and relationship building.



*Volunteer contributions have an impact!*

## Specific Actions

- Work with Arlington House Foundation to apply for National Park Foundation funds and grants.
- Add GWMP volunteer opportunities to the webpage.
- Conduct interpretation and education programs to appeal to new audiences.
- Implement “Find Your Park” engagement at Great Falls Park promoting park and local experiences.
- Continue the Weed Warriors program.
- Complete the Langley Forks-Langley Oaks Land Exchange.
- Foster recurring engagement and collaboration with the Great Falls Citizen Association.
- Encourage the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club to become more engaged on GWMP trails.
- Identify opportunities for the Friends of the Mount Vernon Trail to assist with trail maintenance.
- Identify opportunities for engagement with the Potomac Heritage Trail.
- Focus on creating and strengthening emerging relationships – Native American/Tribal, MVCCA, Arlington County, institutional partners affiliated with Arlington House, and South Fairfax Tourism Task Force.
- Refresh volunteer opportunities at Arlington House, Arlington Ridge, and Netherlands Carillon.
- Explore requests for expressions of interest to leverage park opportunities – Clara Barton National Historical Site.
- Complete the Legacies of Enslavement and Race Rubric.
- Emphasize anniversary and commemorative events.



*Owen Hammett, 2020 Regional George and Helen Hartzog Award for Enduring Service*

## Back to Basics

- ▶ Demonstrate pride of ownership in our duties with every employee wearing the uniform properly and representing the park positively.
- ▶ Maintain a safe work environment by maintaining situational awareness, avoiding shortcuts, and keeping an organized workplace. Further safety measures through properly using vehicles, mechanized tools, and personal protection equipment.
- ▶ Conduct ourselves in a manner, that if we were on camera all day, we could be proud of our actions.
- ▶ Strive to become a model of sustainability by recycling, turning off lights, taking steps to reduce energy and water consumption, and not wasting the available resources.
- ▶ Perform our duties with pride and strive for excellence in our work and service.
- ▶ Be Park advocates and give an honest day's work for the pay we receive.

## Where Do I Fit In?

It is our desire to have everyone connecting with our priorities and actions. To that end you are asked to identify where you fit in. Using annual work plans, we will track our progress. In addition, performance reviews will aid in holding ourselves accountable for achieving results. Finally, we want to use the park's core values as a filter for hiring and significant decision making.

List three ways you can implement these priorities and actions into your work plan.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Our Partners



**Potomac Appalachian Trail Club**  
*Serving the hiking public since 1927*



**GLEN ECHO PARK**  
 Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture



*Friends of*  
**Theodore Roosevelt Island**



**Jones Point Park Gardens**





## **Legislated Park Units Managed by George Washington Memorial Parkway:**

Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial  
Clara Barton National Historic Site  
George Washington Memorial Parkway  
Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove on the Potomac  
Theodore Roosevelt Island  
Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve  
More than 7,300 acres  
More than two dozen associated sites



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