

Minutes for the 165<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the  
National Park System Advisory Board  
May 1-2, 2024  
(Certified as accurate by the Chair on 8/20/2024)

**The National Park System Advisory Board (Board)** convened for a meeting at 10:00 a.m. (Eastern), on Wednesday, May 1, 2024, and at 9:30 a.m. (Eastern), Thursday, May 2, 2024. In accordance with the provisions of Public Law 92-463 (5 U.S.C. Ch.10) the meeting was open to the public throughout its duration. Designated Federal Officer Alma Ripps, Board Chair Molly Ward, and Board Vice Chair Shane Douglas conducted the meeting from room 5160 in the Department of the Interior Building, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, D.C. The meeting was also publicly accessible virtually through video conference on the Microsoft Teams platform.

**Board Members Participating:**

Bowen Blair (via Teams, Day 2 only), Mayor Daniella Levine Cava, Theresa Coble, Aja DeCoteau, Shane Douglas (Vice Chair), Victor Galan (via Teams), Gwen Iacona, Robert Keiter, Thomas Kiernan, Breece Robertson, Lindsay Robertson, Jessica Thompson, Molly Ward (Chair), Reid Wilson

**Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Board:**

Alma Ripps, Chief, Office of Policy, National Park Service

**Other Participants:**

Charles “Chuck” Sams, Director, National Park Service (NPS); Shannon Estenoz, Assistant Secretary, Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior (DOI); Donald Leadbetter, Tourism Program Manager, NPS; Caitlin Worth, Partnerships Specialist, South Atlantic Gulf Region, NPS (via Teams); Adam Gresek, Director, Visitor and Community Engagement, Valley Forge National Historical Park, NPS; Mike Bowman, President, Valley Forge Tourism and Convention Board (via Teams); Astrid Liverman, National Historic Landmarks Program, NPS; Deanda Johnson, National Historic Landmarks Program, NPS; Serena Bellew, Preservation Assistance Program, NPS; Kirsten Tallman, Director, Visitor Services, Valley Forge Tourism and Convention Board; Maria Nardi, Director, Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department, Miami-Dade County; Tomas Alcala, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor, Miami-Dade County; Rose Fennell, Superintendent, Valley Forge National Historical Park, NPS (via Teams); Rachel Riley, Associate Vice President, Communications and Visitor Experience, Valley Forge Tourism and Convention Board; Samantha Cole, Director, Public Relations, Valley Forge Tourism and Convention Board; Rachel Leibowitz, Historian, National Register of Historic Places Program, NPS (via Teams); Michelle Diedrich, National Register of Historic Places, NPS (via Teams); Lisa Davidson, Program Manager, National Historic Landmarks Program, NPS; Heather Eggleston, Program Manager, National Natural Landmarks Program, NPS (via Teams), NPS; Lyn Causey, National Historic Landmarks Program, NPS (via Teams); Sherry Frear, Chief and Deputy Keeper, National Register of Historic Places Program, NPS (via Teams); Kathryn Smith, National Historic Landmarks and National Register Coordinator, National Capital Region, NPS (via Teams); Dena Sanford, Historian (Architectural), Historic Preservation Partnerships, Midwest Regional Office, NPS (via Teams); Beth Sciumeca, Partnerships and

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Community Assistance Program Manager, National Capital Region, NPS (via Teams); Eric Johnson, Historian, Alaska Region, NPS (via Teams); Leo Acosta, Natural Resource Specialist, Midwest Regional Office, NPS (via Teams); Sarah Pawlicki, National Historic Landmarks Program, NPS (via Teams); Roger Reed, Historian, National Historic Landmarks Program, NPS (via Teams); Lisa Deline, Senior Historian, National Register of Historic Places, NPS (via Teams); Kristen Leutkemeier, Historian, Heritage Partnerships Program, Intermountain Regional Office, NPS (via Teams); Rachel Franklin-Weekley, Manager, Historic Preservation Partnerships, Midwest Regional Office, NPS (via Teams); Carolyn Davis, National Natural Landmarks Program, NPS (via Teams); Thadra Stanton, Archeologist, Southeast Regional Office, NPS (via Teams); Poppie Gullett, Historian, Heritage Partnerships Program, Intermountain Regional Office, NPS (via Teams); John Wachtel, Historical Architect, Alaska Region, NPS (via Teams); Aaron Hood-Foster, Pacific West Regional Office-Seattle Unit, NPS (via Teams); Zachary Burt, Manager, Community Outreach and Grants, DC Preservation League (via Teams); Taylor Mann, Federal Policy Manager, Oceana; Hillary Lilly, Director, External Affairs, The Nature Conservancy; Glenn Storrs, Cincinnati Museum Center (via Teams); Dan Snodgrass, The Nature Conservancy (via Teams); Glen Charlton, Audiovisual Production Specialist, Office of Facilities and Administrative Services, DOI; Rob Hotakainen, Reporter, E&E News (via Teams); [Briandbooks@gmail.com](mailto:Briandbooks@gmail.com) (via Teams); Jeannine Kreinbrink (via Teams); Brandon Atkison, Court Reporter, Intellectix; Brooke Walters, Intellectix (via Teams); Oren Kwiatek, President, Intellectix (via Teams); Michael Donato, Chief of Staff, National Capital East, NPS (via Teams); Monique VanLandingham, Committee Coordinator, Office of Policy, New Solutions/NPS, Shirley Sears, Office of Policy, NPS; Roeger Kirk, Office of Policy.

The 165th meeting of the National Park System Advisory Board, was held as a hybrid meeting in Washington, D.C.

*Note: Meeting agenda, slide presentations, and documents shared at the meeting are posted to the Board's [website](https://www.nps.gov/resources/advisoryboard150.htm) (<https://www.nps.gov/resources/advisoryboard150.htm>).*

### **CONVENING the Meeting (Day 1) – May 1, 2024**

The meeting was called to order by Designated Federal Officer Alma Ripps at 10:00 a.m. (Eastern) on May 1, 2024.

### **Meeting Introduction, Logistics, and Roll Call**

- Ms. Alma Ripps, the Designated Federal Officer, opened the meeting by welcoming attendees, including Board members present in person and via Teams video, staff, and members of the public joining online.
- Ms. Ripps reviewed meeting protocols such as muting cell phones, using push-to-talk microphones, and participating via hand raising, both in person and virtually.

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- Ms. Ripps took roll and confirmed Board members present (see “Board Members Participating” list, above), ensuring a quorum. All Board members were present (either in person or online) except for Ms. Lisa Sumption and Mr. Bowen Blair.

### **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

- Chair Molly Ward welcomed all participants, acknowledging the presence of Board members, Director Chuck Sams, Interior staff, guest speakers, and members of the public.
- She expressed her gratitude to Director Sams for his participation and highlighted the importance of the Board's work in preserving public lands and sound stewardship of national park units.

### **Introductions**

- Attendees were invited to introduce themselves, starting with panelists representing organizations such as Valley Forge Tourism and Convention Board and staff from various NPS programs.
- Members of the public and additional staff introduced themselves, ensuring all present were acknowledged for the meeting record.
- Vice Chair Shane Douglas highlighted the significance of the meeting's timing, coinciding with National Park Week, and praised the Board's recent accomplishments. He noted the meeting agenda included various park-related topics, emphasizing ongoing projects and future initiatives.
- Board member Dr. Lindsay Robertson presented a historical artifact, a stereoscope, and discussed its significance related to national history and the evolution of photography during the Civil War era, and emancipation. The stereoscope showcased an aspect of American heritage linked to national parks and Dr. Robertson invited all attendees to examine it.

### **Remarks from Chuck Sams, Director, National Park Service**

- Director Chuck Sams greeted meeting attendees and expressed his gratitude to the members for their service.
- He provided extensive remarks on recent visits to various national parks across the country during National Park Week, highlighting his travels from Washington, D.C., to New York, Texas, Oregon, and California.
- He recounted interactions with park staff, community engagements, and the impact of recent natural disasters on parks like Chickasaw National Recreation Area.
- He emphasized the significance of diversity and inclusion in park management, mentioning the recent Executive Order [issued March 27, 2024, No. 14121] to improve recognition of women's history and other initiatives to enhance women's history representation in national parks.

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- He previewed the Board's site visit to Piscataway Park and discussed the importance of the Tribal history and culture there.
- Director Sams praised the ongoing work of the Tourism Committee and highlighted the need to update Director's Order #17, addressing the following tourism topics:
  - Current policies are outdated, crafted over two decades ago.
  - New policies need to reflect modern needs while promoting sustainable tourism.
  - The updated policies should address the management of increasing visitor numbers, especially with America's 250th anniversary in 2026 approaching, and the low and decreasing visitation at other park sites around the country.
  - Ongoing efforts in promoting smaller parks and regions like Ohio Valley.
- Director Sams also reviewed recent NPS grant awards such as:
  - Nearly \$1 billion annually in grants for community-based programs.
  - Over \$2 billion provided since 1977 through the Historic Preservation Fund for various preservation activities.
  - \$23.4 million awarded to 39 projects focused on African-American Civil Rights.
  - Over \$4 billion in grants for State and local recreation projects, supporting the purchase and protection of recreation lands.
- He emphasized the importance of the work of the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the NPS are doing to strengthen Tribal sovereignty and repairing nation-to-nation relationships and mentioned such activities as:
  - Partnerships with Tribal partners, to preserve and promote cultural and natural heritage.
  - Changes to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, emphasizing Tribal authority and informed consent.
  - Transfer of 125-acre property in California to the Yurok Tribe, highlighting the importance of returning land to original stewards.
- Director Sams invited Ms. Ripps to review the agenda.
- After reviewing the agenda, Ms. Ripps asked Chair Ward to introduce the next item on the agenda: the Tourism Panel.
- Chair Molly Ward introduced Mr. Donald Leadbetter, Program Manager for the NPS Tourism Program to moderate the Tourism Panel.

**Tourism Panel Discussion, Moderated by Mr. Donald Leadbetter, Program Manager for Tourism, NPS**

- Mr. Leadbetter discussed tourism as it relates to the NPS:
  - Highlighted the integral role of tourism in NPS activities. Explained the multifaceted array of relationships among parks and local organizations.
  - Emphasized the uneven approach across national park units in engaging with these organizations.

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- Explained that Valley Forge National Historical Park and its partners are a model for successful tourism partnerships, and “one of the best on-the-ground tourism relationships in the system.”
- Mr. Leadbetter introduced the tourism panel: NPS officials from Valley Forge National Historical Park and leaders of the Valley Forge Tourism and Convention Board (See meeting agenda on the Board’s [website](#).)

Introduction and overview:

- Ms. Rose Fennell, Superintendent of Valley Forge National Historical Park (via Teams), and Mr. Mike Bowman, President and CEO, Valley Forge Tourism and Convention Board (via Teams) expressed gratitude to the Board and Director Sams for their time and opportunity to present.
- Ms. Fennell provided an overview of her responsibilities as a park superintendent, emphasizing the importance of policy-based decision-making and efficient use of taxpayer money. She referenced the Organic Act, stressing its mandate for promoting national parks, an area where she feels the NPS could improve.

Valley Forge Partnership

- Mr. Mike Bowman, President of the Valley Forge Tourism and Convention Board (VFTCB) and his team discuss the longstanding partnership between VFTCB and Valley Forge National Historical Park.
- The partnership aims to promote the park, leveraging its historical significance to attract visitors and drive economic benefits for Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.
- It operates with a membership model, funded by a hotel tax, and collaborates closely with the park to enhance visitor experiences.

Economic Impact of Tourism

- The panel emphasized that tourism significantly contributes to the local economy, generating \$1.7 billion annually and supporting around 25,000 jobs in Montgomery County, PA.
- Ms. Kirsten Tallman and Ms. Rachel Riley of VFTCB noted that the tourism board uses the Valley Forge name for branding due to its national and international recognition.
- Valley Forge is marketed not only for its historical importance but also as a recreational destination. The park serves as a local green space for recreational activities, which has led to a need for better public education about its historical significance.

Challenges and Future Directions

- The panel discussed the evolving nature of the partnership and the need to adapt marketing strategies to continue attracting visitors and enhancing the park’s profile.

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- An example of a challenge was the NPS staff frequent use of acronyms that were unfamiliar to the VFTCB staff, which highlights the benefits of immersion and integration to build trust and shared language.

Revolutionary Five Mile Run as a Case Study

- The panel highlighted as a case study the Valley Forge Revolutionary Five Mile Run (“Rev Run”), an annual event during National Park Week. The panel explained that it has raised significant funds—\$80,000 this year and about \$700,000 since its inception. Those funds have been donated back to Valley Forge National Historical Park to enhance visitor experiences. This co-sponsored event attracts community leaders, local runners, and history enthusiasts who contribute to the park's preservation and education efforts.
- The Rev Run, integrated into the park's structure and communications, evolved from a fundraising race to a comprehensive visitor experience involving 1,200 participants, and approximately 75 volunteers. This evolution included virtual components introduced during COVID-19, broadening the race's reach and resulting in record registrations from many States and countries.
- Proceeds from the Rev Run have funded numerous park projects, such as new visitor infrastructure and programming, and the Von Steuben Plaza, bike repair stations, new water fountains, and the Patriots of African Descent Monument, which honors African American troops from the Revolutionary War.
- The partnership includes provisions for staff sharing. Examples of further collaboration included the Montco History Pass and the March-in and March-out events, where the tourism board assists with promotional materials and event logistics.
- The partnership also collaborates on community-centric initiatives, such as the Valley Forge Freedom from Hunger Drive, aimed at addressing food insecurity in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. This initiative began in 2015, inspired by Pope Francis’s visit to the area, and has evolved into an annual event in partnership with the MontCo Anti-Hunger Network.
- Mr. Bowman pointed to sports tourism as a significant economic driver for Montgomery County. Youth sports events bring numerous visitors, contributing substantially to the local economy. The marketing team uses data to understand visitor demographics and preferences, which helps tailor marketing strategies and event planning.
- Board member Dr. Victor Galan asked what the two organizations do for the hearing and visually impaired.
- Mr. Adam Gresek, Director, Visitor and Community Engagement, Valley Forge National Historical Park, and Ms. Rachel Riley, Associate Vice President, Communications and Visitor Experience, VFTCB, responded with a discussion of the park’s efforts to accommodate visitors with hearing and visual impairments through app-based systems

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that provide audio descriptions and transcriptions, enhancing accessibility for visually and hearing-impaired individuals.

- Ms. Fennell explained the administrative framework supporting the partnership including a general agreement and workplan, a philanthropic support agreement, and an intergovernmental personnel mobility agreement. These agreements allow resource sharing, staff collaboration, and mutual support between the park and VFTCB, ensuring both organizations effectively fulfill their missions.
- Ms. Fennell also previewed innovative ways to commemorate the Declaration of Independence's 250th anniversary including public readings of the Declaration in various settings, such as a restaurant, a mall, and a local park, to enhance community engagement and historical awareness.
- Ms. Riley and Mr. Gresek discussed the replicability of this tourism-based partnership across different parks and communities. The discussion highlights the need for adaptable approaches, recognizing the diverse characteristics and resources of various park sites and local communities.
- Board member Mr. Tom Kiernan asked whether parks are in the early stages of moving in this direction.
- Ms. Fennell suggested that parks are often good at creating friends and partnerships but are not as adept at promotion.
- Mr. Gresek noted that one of the challenges is shifting attitudes within the NPS, particularly regarding the perception of tourism. The aim is to foster a more welcoming and proactive stance towards visitors, recognizing them as vital to promoting and preserving park resources, and a more open attitude toward creative communications and marketing.
- Director Sams provided an example from the 1990s of the Intergovernmental Personnel Mobility Agreement between his Tribe and the Whitman Missions National Historic Site, and described how improvements in trainings for superintendents could help instill best management practices in partnering across the Service. He mentioned that with the NPS, the American people get a return 14 times higher than their investment in terms of economic impact.
- Chair Ward thanked Mr. Leadbetter and the panel. She adjourned the meeting for a scheduled lunchbreak.

**National Natural Landmarks Review, Ms. Heather Eggleston, Manager, National Natural Landmarks Program, NPS (via Teams), and Mr. Reid Wilson, Chair of the National Natural Landmarks Committee**

The meeting resumed after Ms. Ripps and Chair Ward welcomed the Board, staff, and public back. Chair Ward introduced Board member Mr. Reid Wilson, chair of the National Natural Landmarks (NNL) Committee.

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- Mr. Reid described the NNL program, which was established in 1962, and thanked the NNL committee and experts for the work on the NNL proposal and introduced Ms. Heather Eggleston, Program Manager of the NNL Program. Mr. Reid also mentioned that a member of the public would be commenting on the designation proposal during public comment period. The letter of support from The Nature Conservancy was published on the Board's [website](#) and a hard copy was given to each of the Board members.
- Ms. Eggleston introduced the NNL program and the nomination of the Independence Creek Preserve in Texas. The NNL program recognizes and highlights important natural features in the U.S. The program, which is less well-known than the National Historic Landmark Program, seeks to improve its visibility and public awareness.
- The NNL committee of the Board held its meeting on February 23, 2024, to consider the proposed designation of Independence Creek as an NNL. The committee, which includes Heather Eggleston, the program manager for NNLs, Board members and other experts examined detailed aspects of the nomination, including specific aspects of the site's geology and ecology.
- Ms. Eggleston provided a slide presentation on the Independence Creek Preserve, which is located in Terrell County, Texas, within the Great Plains bio physiographic province. The preserve spans about 21,000 acres and includes Caroline Spring and a perennial section of Independence Creek. Its spring-fed system is crucial for sustaining local wildlife and contributes to the Pecos River's water supply.
- The perennial flow in an otherwise arid environment and supports various vulnerable species. The site offers a rare example of a large spring complex and Chihuahuan Desert vegetation, making it a unique candidate for NNL designation. The comparative assessment found that Independence Creek Preserve, along with Devils River at Nolan Falls, was one of the top candidates for NNL designation due to its high-quality natural features and minimal human disturbance.
- Mr. Reid noted that the NNL committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Independence Creek designation.
- Mr. Kiernan asked about the possibility of the groundwater decreasing and threatening the flow of the springs. Board member Mr. Robert Keiter asked about the potential impacts of nearby oil fields. Ms. Eggleston acknowledged the concerns and mentioned that while the oil fields are distant, the region has seen a decline in oil and gas production. She volunteered to investigate the specific issue of groundwater levels further.
- In addition to discussing the site's natural features, there were process questions from Board member Theresa Coble about the potential for expediting the approval of other A-rated sites, and Board member Gwen Iacona, who asked whether multiple sites within a category can be designated as NNLs. It was noted that while there are often gaps in representation, and sometimes multiple sites can represent a particular theme,



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Independence Creek Preserve would introduce new representation for spring-fed streams within the Great Plains province.

**National Historic Landmarks Review, Dr. Lisa Davidson, Manager, National Historic Landmarks Program, NPS, and Dr. Lindsay Robertson, Chair of the National Historic Landmarks Committee**

Chair Ward introduced Dr. Lindsay Robertson, chair of the National Historic Landmarks Committee, and Dr. Lisa Davidson, Program Manager of the National Historic Landmarks (NHL) Committee.

- Dr. Robertson opened the review with a personal anecdote about visiting the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. He emphasized the historical importance of it as an example of boarding schools for Native children, noting that similar practices occurred internationally, including in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. In the U.S. these schools were part of the U.S. government's program to assimilate Native Americans starting in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Dr. Robertson pointed to the need for increased recognition and accessibility to these sites to learn from past experiences.
- Dr. Robertson presented several NHL nominations for the Board's consideration consisting of five new NHL nominations, nine updates to existing designations, and two withdrawals. He outlined the Board's review as a crucial step for the Secretary of the Interior to make informed decisions about these landmarks.
- He thanked the NHL Committee members, especially Dr. Victor Galan, for their diligent work in reviewing the nominations. The work involved extensive reading and a two-day meeting. He also commended the efforts of Dr. Lisa Davidson, the NHL program manager, for managing and coordinating the nominations and introduced her as the next presenter.
- Dr. Davidson presented an overview of the five nominations (see slide presentation posted on the Board's [website](#)). She provided a detailed description of each of the proposed candidates recommended by the NHL Committee to the Board for designation: Latte Quarry at As Nieves, Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; The Furies Collective, Washington, D.C.; Big Bone Lick Site, Union, KY; Kregel Windmill Company Factory, Nebraska City, NE; Charleston Cigar Factory, Charleston, SC.
- Dr. Davidson presented descriptions of the sites recommended for updated documentation for the following nine existing NHLs: Sitka Naval Operating Base and U.S. Army Coastal Defenses, Sitka, AK; Ladd Field, Fairbanks, AK; Pu'ukoholā Heiau, Kawaihae, HI; Quincy Mining Company Historic District, Houghton County, MI; Calumet Historic District, Calumet, MI; Watkins Mill, Lawson, MO; Fort Brown, Brownsville, TX; Cedar Creek Battlefield and Belle Grove, Middletown, VA; Wyoming State Capitol Building and Grounds, Cheyenne, WY.

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- During the Board member question and answer session, Board members raised a variety of questions about the nature and characteristics of the candidate sites. Mr. Reid asked how the Charleston cigar factory is currently used. Dr. Davidson explained that it is primarily used as a commercial property. Board member Dr. Jessica Thompson asked about the inclusion of stamp sands in the Quincy Mining District designation. Dr. Davidson clarified that these sands are included to represent the complete industrial process of copper mining.

After a scheduled break, Chair Ward welcomed the Board, staff and public attendees back. Dr. Davidson completed the presentation of the NHL candidates for documentation updates and moved to the review of withdrawal of designation reports for these two NHLs:

- Josephus Daniels House, Raleigh, NC, this house was designated an NHL in 1976 for its association with Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy. The property was demolished in 2021, and the NHL designation is recommended for withdrawal due to the loss of the original qualities that led to its designation.
- USS Clamagor: A WWII-era submarine designated an NHL in 1989, the USS Clamagor was scrapped in 2022. The vessel's deterioration, including structural integrity loss and removal of key components, led to a recommendation for withdrawal of its NHL status.
- During the Board member discussion, Mr. Wilson commented that he lives near the former site of the Josephus Daniels house and confirmed that the demolition of the house was completed. He pointed out that Daniels fomented one of the only successful violent coups in the history of the United States against a duly elected government in 1898. Mr. Keiter asked how the candidates for withdrawal come to the attention of the NHL program, and Dr. Davidson explained that the program receives the information from a variety of sources, but it most often comes via the program's regional offices.
- Dr. Davidson ended her presentation by briefly previewing the next 11 NHL candidates that the NHL committee will be reviewing and discussing at their meeting on May 14-15, 2024.

Chair Ward thanked Dr. Davidson and Dr. Robertson for the review of the proposed NHL designations and introduced the report out by the Board's Tourism Committee.

### **Tourism Committee Report**

- Board member Dr. Jessica Thompson provided the report on the work of the Tourism Committee on behalf of the committee's chair, Ms. Lisa Sumption, who had an unavoidable scheduling conflict and was not present.
  - The committee has been working toward an update of Director's Order #17 to address modern tourism trends, including its impact on parks, communities, and climate change. The committee, formed in October 2023, has been gathering information from experts and will provide draft recommendations to the Board at

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its winter meeting. In its recommendations, the committee intends to recognize the critical role of community partnerships and find sustainable solutions to tourism challenges. The committee's process includes bi-weekly sessions with subject matter experts to inform the forthcoming recommendations for revisions to NPS tourism policies. Dr. Thompson highlighted three main focus areas:

- **Innovative Visitor Research:** Emphasizing partnerships with agencies, organizations, and universities to share themes and issues, particularly highlighting parks as sites for public health benefits. Increasing visitor demographics research and visitation trends.
  - **Challenges and Opportunities:** Focusing on perceptions of tourism within the NPS staff and leadership, equity and inclusion, challenges in infrastructure and funding, and maintaining NPS brand quality and visitor experience.
  - **Future Topics:** Continuing bi-weekly interviews, exploring indigenous tourism, partnerships, climate change, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), sustainability, and public health. The committee aims to draft recommendations for future NPS tourism management beginning in early fall.
- During the Board question and answer session, several Board members asked about the Tourism Committee report:
    - Mr. Keiter inquired about interagency cooperation to manage park crowding and referenced his knowledge of parks in the western U.S.
    - In response, Dr. Thompson discussed collaborations with Utah Office of Tourism and Travel Southern Oregon. Mr. Leadbetter mentioned interagency approaches at Zion and Glacier to manage overuse at park sites.
    - Mr. Wilson suggested promoting lesser-visited parks through partnerships with local organizations.
    - In response Dr. Thompson and Mr. Leadbetter led a discussion on using sophisticated marketing and partnerships to better promote and manage park visitation across the National Park System.
    - Dr. Coble asked about the replicability of successful partnerships like Valley Forge.
    - Dr. Thompson and others acknowledged leadership and relationships as critical factors that are difficult to replicate. One solution is targeted training of superintendents and formalizing partnerships. Dr. Robertson added that understanding practices rather than defining best practices might be more beneficial. Dr. Robertson also proposed using game design to promote lesser-visited parks.
    - Dr. Thompson and others showed interest, recognizing the potential impact of gaming in engaging visitors.

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- Board member Ms. Breece Robertson noted Dr. Peter Newman's work on parks as public health spaces and the use of anonymized cell phone data for better visitor insights.
- Vice Chair Douglas pointed out the absence of AI [artificial intelligence] discussion in the meeting, suggesting potential technological advancements for tourism.

Chair Ward recognized Director Sams who discussed the development of a NPS app that will include elements of AI and that will help to highlight lesser-known parks. Director Sams then introduced Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Shannon Estenoz.

**Remarks from Shannon Estenoz, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks,  
Department of the Interior**

- Assistant Secretary Estenoz expressed her gratitude to the Board members for the work they are embarking on regarding the recognition of women's history.
- She emphasized the importance of recognizing and honoring women's history under Executive Order 14121, which entrusts the NPS with several tasks, including assessing sites of national importance related to women's history and updating interpretive exhibits, and recommendations to improve recognition of women's history. She noted the Administration's interest in this important work.

**Request to Establish the Committee on Recognizing Women's History**

- Director Sams acknowledged the underrepresentation of the women's history in the National Park System. He provided examples of trailblazing women and noted an anecdote related to the beginnings of misogyny in America.
- Director Sams requested that the Board establish a new Committee on Recognizing Women's History, aimed at providing recommendations to improve the recognition of women's achievements, and to tell a more complete story of women's contributions, in accordance with the Executive Order. The committee will explore proposals for new park units and Federal designations and enhance interpretive efforts at existing sites.
- Director Sams and Chair Ward express their gratitude for the Board's commitment and discuss the need for consistency and training within the NPS.

**ADJOURNMENT (Day 1) -- May 1, 2024**

Ms. Ripps concluded the first day of the Board meeting with a reminder about the next day's schedule and the importance of public comment. Chair Ward adjourned the meeting.

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**RECONVENING THE MEETING (Day 2) -- May 2, 2024**

Ms. Ripps welcomed the Board, staff, and public attendees to the second day of the National Park System Advisory Board meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting is a hybrid meeting and being recorded. She then introduced Chair Molly Ward.

- Chair Ward called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. (Eastern) on May 2, 2024, and greeted all attendees. Chair Ward asked that the roll be called.
- Ms. Ripps conducted the roll call, recorded responses and confirmed quorum of the Board was present. All Board members were present (either in person or online) except for Ms. Lisa Sumption.
- Ms. Ripps outlined the day's agenda, reviewed the rules for the public comment period and noted the start time at 9:45 a.m., emphasizing the time limit of three minutes per speaker. She invited written comments and described the process for submitting written comments post-meeting, which will be shared with the Board and published online at the Board's website. She mentioned that public comments are not for discussion but for Board consideration.

**Remarks from Chuck Sams, Director, NPS**

- Director Chuck Sams expressed gratitude for the previous day's discussions, highlighting the excitement of the improving practices and policies around tourism based on the Tourism Committee's work. He also expressed gratitude for the Board members' dedication to reading and providing feedback on extensive documents for the NHLs. He emphasized the importance of promoting parks by working with partners and engaging with communities beyond the usual 20-mile radius around parks.

**Board Member discussion and Reflections on the Previous Day**

- Mr. Kiernan asked about the promotion of parks and the philosophy of outreach beyond NPS's more traditional approach to outreach for building facilities, for instance.
- Director Sams noted the shift in strategy towards actively engaging communities and inviting them to parks rather than waiting for visitors to come.
- Mr. Keiter commended the NPS for their outreach efforts but highlights the dual challenges of collaboration and resource management issues like subdivision development near park boundaries.
- Director Sams agreed, mentioning the importance of working with local partners, and he emphasized the need for a holistic approach involving various Federal lands and focusing on ecosystem functions, despite the potential challenges of that approach.
- Ms. Robertson noted the high deferred-maintenance costs in parks and asked about how the \$80,000 raised by the Valley Forge public-private partnership (i.e. Rev Run) fits into

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the larger financial picture of the NPS and how these partnerships might address ongoing, substantial financial issues in parks.

- Chair Ward acknowledged the important point about the larger financial picture. She then opened the public comment period, reminding speakers of their three-minute limit and inviting written comments.

### **Public Comment**

- Hillary Lilly, Director of External Affairs, The Nature Conservancy began by introducing herself and her organization and its mission of conserving lands and waters. She expressed support for the designation of Independence Creek Preserve as a National Natural Landmark. She described the preserve's significant natural features, including diverse flora and fauna, and its importance to the Pecos River ecosystem.
- Taylor Mann, Federal Policy Manager of Oceana, discusses the issue of plastic pollution in oceans and national parks. She urged the NPS to accelerate the phase-out of single-use plastics and implement refill systems to protect natural spaces.
- Zachary Burt, Community Grants and Outreach Manager of the DC Preservation League expressed support for designating the Furies Collective, a historic LGBTQ site, as a National Historic Landmark. He remarked about the importance of preserving LGBTQ history and the collective's significant role in 1970s activism.

### **Concluding Remarks**

- Chair Ward invited further comments or questions.
- Mayor Cava raised a question about potential policy advocacy regarding tourism and community engagement, suggesting a more active engagement with communities, similar to Tribal engagement efforts.
- Dr. Thompson described the Tourism Committee's discussions and offered to share notes from their recent deliberations.

### **Decisions and Actions**

- Approval of Minutes: Dr. Robertson requested several minor corrections to the August 2023 meeting minutes, including correcting attribution. Chair Ward acknowledged the request for corrections, confirmed they had been made, and moved to approve the minutes as amended. The motion is passed unanimously.
- National Natural Landmark Nomination (NNL): The Board unanimously approved the recommendation from the NNL Committee to recommend to the Secretary the designation of one new National Natural Landmark.
- National Historic Landmark Nominations (NHL): The Board unanimously approved the recommendations from the NHL Committee to recommend to the Secretary the

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National Park System Advisory Board  
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(Certified as accurate by the Chair on 8/20/2024)

designation of five new NHLs; updated documentation for nine existing NHLs; and recommended withdrawal of designation for two existing NHLs.

- Establishment of Committee on Recognizing Women's History and Chair Assignment:  
The Board unanimously approved the Director's request to establish a new committee in accordance with Executive Order 14121, to be called the Committee on Recognizing Women's History (Breece Robertson and Theresa Coble assigned as co-chairs.)

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Ward thanked Director Sams, Board members, and other meeting attendees and adjourned the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 11:02 a.m. (Eastern), on May 2, 2024.