National Park Service
POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Policies represent the guiding principles that ensure NPS managers and staff have clear direction on management decisions and required actions.

Service-wide policy is issued by the NPS Director, with the NPS Office of Policy providing coordination and support to program offices and managers working to develop new, or revise existing, policies. Adherence to Service-wide policy is mandatory, unless specifically waived by the Director.

Policy development in NPS occurs at three levels. How each of these levels are related, and what role they play in supporting the NPS Mission, is illustrated on this diagram.

In general, NPS staff can participate in the policy development process by:

1) serving on a working group that has been assembled to develop new policy,

2) providing input as a Subject Matter Expert, and

3) offering comments through the formal review process.

LET'S BEGIN...

How do we know the APPROPRIATE USES of park lands and resources?

LEVEL 1 MANAGEMENT POLICIES

The ***Management Policies*** document sets the policy framework and provides the foundational direction and parameters for making management decisions.

How do we APPLY these policies to specific NPS functions and activities?

LEVEL 2 DIRECTOR'S ORDERS

Director's Orders provide broad guidance on applying policy to specific NPS functions, programs, and activities; they may prescribe operating policies, delegate authorities, and articulate new or revised policy between updates to the *Management Policies* document.

URGENT!

POLICY MEMORANDA

Policy Memoranda respond to specific, emerging issues needing quick guidance and attention; they are prepared by small working groups of Subject Matter Experts.

How will policies actually be IMPLEMENTED in the field?

LEVEL 3 REFERENCE MANUALS

Reference Manuals include manuals, handbooks, and other documents containing specific information and procedures for administering and implementing field and programmatic operations.

PARK + PROGRAM SOP'S

FLAT HAT OR BALL CAP?

One misconception about policy is that it varies from park to park. Standard Operating Procedures identify local conditions and circumstances where the DO and RM need more fine tuning. So, while at one park you may be required to wear a flat hat on duty, at another you might wear a ball cap. Both are policy compliant but reflect variations in local context.

DIRECTOR'S ORDER INITIATED
Program office consults with WASO Office of Policy.

WORKING GROUP ASSEMBLED
Team prepares initial draft of the proposed DO.

INFORMAL REVIEW
Draft DO undergoes several rounds of review by Subject Matter Experts, interested staff, Solicitor's Office, and Office of Policy.

Revise

Ongoing Field Testing

FORMAL REVIEW
Draft prepared for internal National Leadership Council / NPS field review and public review and comment; draft revised based on input and reviewed again by NLC.

DO RELEASED

DIRECTOR'S ORDER FINALIZED
DO prepared for Director's signature and release.

REFERENCE MANUAL UPDATED
Revised on an as-needed basis.

WORKING GROUP ASSEMBLED
Program leaders and Subject Matter Experts convene to prepare initial revisions and updates to the RM.

INTERNAL REVIEW
Draft RM revised based on field staff needs, changing technology, and other factors.

RM RELEASED

RM FINALIZED
RM prepared for Associate or Assistant Director's signature and release.

HOW TO ENGAGE

NPS staff engagement in policy development is not always through a formal process. Employees interested in participating should work with their park and/or program leadership to identify appropriate NPS points of contact and learn what policy development opportunities are in the works.

CONTACT: WASO and/or Regional Program Managers

CONTACT: Office of Policy

YES

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT?

CONTACT: Regional Program Mgr

NO

PICK ME!

I want a say! How can I help?

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.

FOUNDATION OF ALL NPS POLICY

#ProtectOurTreasures #PolicyRocks

For more information visit www.nps.gov/policy

policy_office@nps.gov 202-354-3950

LEARN MORE!

Policy infographic courtesy of FY19 NPS GOAL Academy Team Krewe de Gras (April Antonellis, Jamie Rinehart, Janet Kelleher, Juanita Bonnifield, and Patrick Johnston)