

National Park Research Project

On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed a bill that mandated the agency "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and wildlife 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."

Since 1872 the United States National Park System has grown from a single, public reservation called Yellowstone National Park to embrace 401 official natural, historical, recreational, and cultural areas throughout the United States, its territories, and island possessions. These areas include a diverse variety of areas – National Parks, National Monuments, National Memorials, National Military Parks, National Parkways, National Recreation Areas, National Seashores, National Scenic Riverways, National Scenic Trails, and others.

Your task is to research one of these designated areas and create a written report identifying all of the following:

1. **Basic Info** – Give a detailed history of the park, identify when it was established, explain how the park received its name, and distinguish what biome it would be associated with. Also research its location, average temperatures, precipitation, map coordinates, address, operating budget, how many visitors a year, available lodging, and the area of the park (and area of designated wilderness if applicable).
2. **Special Features** – *Identify special features* of the area. Glaciers? Mountains? Monuments? Volcanoes? Waterfalls? Lakes? Historical landmarks? Give a detailed description and history of the feature, including a description of how visitors view or experience it. Helicopter? Hike? Guided tour?
3. **Uniqueness** – What makes the area unique? Why do people travel from all over world to see the park? Explain why it was important for this specific area to be protected. Include some interesting facts about your area and explain why you chose this particular park.
4. **Activities** – *Identify at least 5 different things to do* at the park. Camping, fishing, ranger programs, guided tours, hang gliding, trail maintenance, skiing, kayaking, historical education, bike rentals, rock climbing, outdoor education, visitor centers, art classes, internships, etc. Choose one of these and describe the steps you need to do before participating in the activity – do you need a permit? A rope? An application? A ticket? Designated amount of time?
5. **Issues** – *Describe in detail at least 2 issues* that currently affect the park or area and what is being done to address these issues. Invasive species? Urban sprawl? Too many visitors? Dwindling budget? Natural disasters? Lack of enforcement? Air pollution? Safety concerns? Eutrophication? Acid deposition?
6. **Maps** – *Create 3 maps* of the park or area. You can choose what kind of map you pick: political, hiking/trail map, resource map, historical map, climate, topographic, road map, etc.
7. **Pictures** – *Include at least 5 pictures* of the park. Pictures can be landmarks, animals, waterfalls, monuments, insects, flowers, or anything you would like, but provide a variety of images (do not have 5 pictures of leaves for example). Next to or under each picture give a brief description of the picture.

Some links to help you get started...

List of Official NPS Units

http://www.nps.gov/news/upload/CLASSLST-401_updated-03-27-13.pdf

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_the_United_States_National_Park_System_official_units

Basic info on National Parks

<http://us-national-parks.findthedata.org>

<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/national-parks/>

Maps

<http://www.nps.gov/hfc/cfm/carto.cfm>

http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/national_parks.html

Photos

<http://www.nps.gov/photosmultimedia/photogalleries.htm>

<http://www.terrageria.com/parks/>