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## Partners in the Parks: Field Guide to an Experiential Program in the National Parks (1st edition)

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# NCHC Monograph Series

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Photo by Todd Petersen

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	5
About the Authors	7
Partners in the Parks Projects to Date	11
Foreword by Matt Nickerson	13
Chapter 1: Origin of Species	17
Field Notes:	
<i>A Delicate Balance</i> (Rebecca Cole-Will)	27
Chapter 2: Scouting Parties	35
Field Notes:	
<i>Growing From Within</i> (Bill Atwill and Kathleen King)	45
Chapter 3: Think Camping is a Getaway?	59
Field Notes:	
<i>A Theme Runs Through It</i> (Heather Thiessen-Reily)	65
Chapter 4: Ducks in a Row	75
Field Notes:	
<i>Thinking with a Photographer's Eye</i> (Joan Digby)	85
<i>Encountering a Bear at Bryce Canyon</i> (Rony Enriquez)	97
Chapter 5: Group Soup	101
Field Notes:	
<i>Sitting There in Silence</i> (Andy Grube)	111
Chapter 6: To Boldly Go . . .	115
Field Notes:	
<i>Partners in the Parks and the Wilderness Aesthetic</i> (Joy Ochs)	125
<i>My Incredible Journey to Zion National Park</i> (Angela Calise)	131
Chapter 7: Nature as Text—Text as Text—Self as Text	137
Field Notes:	
<i>Philosophy in the Parks</i> (Greg Fahy)	145
Chapter 8: Creature Discomforts	153
Field Notes:	
<i>Water Rights</i> (Pavel Goriacko)	159
<i>Time Management and the Experience of</i> <i>Partners</i> (Sarah L. Fann)	161

<b>Chapter 9: Hosts and Guests</b> .....	165
Field Notes:	
<i>My Experience as Guest and Host</i> (Elizabeth O'Donnell) .....	169
<i>Field Notes from a Coordinator</i> (Kathleen King) .....	171
<b>Chapter 10: City Slickers</b> .....	179
Field Notes:	
<i>Circles</i> (James Clarke) .....	191
<b>Chapter 11: May the Circle Be Unbroken</b> .....	199
Field Notes:	
<i>Denali 2010</i> (C. P. Price) .....	207
<b>Chapter 12: Sharing the Experience</b> .....	211
Field Notes:	
<i>Some Sample Assessment Models</i> .....	217
<b>Appendix A:</b>	
Partners in the Parks Best Practices Manual .....	225
<b>Appendix B:</b>	
Equipment .....	239
<b>Appendix C:</b>	
Sample Project Proposal, Letter and Application for Academic Park Fee Waiver, Program Agenda .....	241
<b>Appendix D:</b>	
Generic Application, Insurance and Release Forms and Comportment Agreement .....	249
<b>Appendix E:</b>	
Sample Budget .....	261
<b>Appendix F:</b>	
Sample Brochure and Fliers .....	263
<b>Appendix G:</b>	
Key to Animal Tracks in the Field Notes .....	267

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## Photo Credits

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Photo by Bob Spurrer



Joan Digby received her doctorate from New York University in eighteenth-century British literature, specializing in period animal fables. Animals—real and fictional—are her abiding interest. She is Director of the Honors Program and Merit Fellowship at the C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University. A past president of the National Collegiate Honors Council, she serves as co-chair of NCHC's Publications Board.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Andy Grube is a sophomore studying chemical engineering at Northeastern University. He is actively involved in the honors program and also participates in Wind Ensemble, Pep Band, Orchestra, AIChE, and NU *Science Magazine*. He is currently planning to attend graduate school after he finishes his degree. In his free time he enjoys biking, camping, going to concerts, and playing guitar. His current adventure is a year of study abroad in Scotland.



Kathleen King, Executive Assistant to the President, University of Maine at Augusta, has organized two Partners in the Parks programs in Acadia National Park. She has been a part of developing multidisciplinary cluster classes on the UMA campus and has also been active in the National Collegiate Honors Council, where she serves on the Partners in the Parks Committee.

Photo by Laura Markowitz



Matt Nickerson brings to PITP a diverse background in science and the arts. He followed his bachelor's degree in biochemistry at Brigham Young University (1986) with an MFA in Acting at the National Theater Conservatory (1988). After working professionally in theater and biomedical design, he returned to academia as Director of the Honors Program and Special Collections Librarian at Southern Utah University. He co-chairs the NCHC Partners in the Parks Committee with SUU colleague Todd Petersen. Together they lead several of the PITP adventures.

Photo by Fred Ochs



Joy Ochs is Professor of English at Mount Mercy University, where she also directs the honors program. She has been involved with the Zion Partners in the Parks program since 2008 and formerly worked as a park interpreter for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Elizabeth O'Donnell graduated with a B.A. in political science from the C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University and is currently a graduate student in political science with a focus on international relations. She has been a presidential scholar in Italy, where she studied Italian and archeology before participating in the Cedar Breaks PITP program.



C. P. Price is Interim Director of the Honors Program at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. He has degrees in physics from Caltech (1976) and UCSB (1981) and is a member of the physics department at UAF. Camping, kayaking, and photography draw him away from campus; closer to home, he is a member of the Linux Users Group and faculty advisor to both the Society of Physics Students and UAF's student radio station, where for the last sixteen years he has hosted a weekly radio show featuring "live" music by the Grateful Dead.



Heather Thiessen-Reily received her B.A. from the University of Saskatchewan and her M.A. from Flinders University of South Australia. She completed her Ph.D. from Tulane University. She was a Fulbright-Hayes Scholarship recipient in Kenya and a participant in the 2009 NEH Summer Field Institute, "Teaching Nature and History on the Nation's Edge." She is currently Professor of History and Director of Honors at Western State College in Gunnison, Colorado. She teaches topics in Latin American studies, US-Mexico borderlands, and African history.

# **PARTNERS IN THE PARKS**

## **PROJECTS TO DATE**

Acadia	Kathleen King, University of Maine at Augusta (2008, 2009)
Black Canyon of the Gunnison	Heather Thiessen-Reily, Western State College of Colorado (2009, 2010)
Bryce Canyon	Matt Nickerson and Todd Petersen, Southern Utah University (2008, 2009)
Cape Hatteras	Bill Atwill, University of North Carolina Wilmington (2010)
Cedar Breaks	Matt Nickerson and Todd Petersen, Southern Utah University (2009, 2010)
Denali	Channon Price, University of Alaska, Fairbanks (2010)
Fire Island to Ellis Island	Joan Digby, John Lutz (2010), Cris Gleicher, James Clarke, Long Island University–Brooklyn and C.W. Post Campuses (2008, 2010)
Grand Canyon/Parashant	Matt Nickerson and Todd Petersen, Southern Utah University (2008, 2009, 2010)
Joshua Tree	Matt Nickerson, hosted by Arizona University (2009)
Zion	Joy Ochs, Mount Mercy University (2008, 2009, 2010)
NCHC Borders Institute Saguaro/ Organ Pipe	Matt Nickerson, Southern Utah University (2008)
Mini-PITP Excursions at NCHC Annual Conferences San Antonio Missions (2008) Washington, D.C. Mall (2009)	



# FOREWORD

MATT NICKERSON  
SOUTHERN UTAH UNIVERSITY

When Joan Digby first proposed taking collegiate honors students into our national parks, I jumped at the chance. Within minutes of reading her email, I not only responded with an enthusiastic “Yes!” but went so far as to volunteer the resources of the Southern Utah University Honors Program to get things started. Nestled among 5 national parks in southwestern Utah, I felt our campus would be a natural focal point for the kind of program Joan envisioned. Within weeks we had laid the groundwork for a proof-of-concept pilot project at nearby Bryce Canyon National Park. Little did I know at the time, but I was taking the first steps on a nationwide journey that would introduce me to 11 amazing national parks, some 47 park rangers, and over 100 outstanding college students—with the prospect of these numbers growing annually.

The aim of Partners in the Parks (PITP) from its inception has been to introduce, or reintroduce, collegiate honors students to this country: not the transformed environment that we have constructed on its surface but the bedrock world upon which it rests. Like de Toqueville, Jefferson, Thoreau, Emerson, and so many others, we recognized that the unique place that is America cannot be separated from the land upon which it was built. One valuable way to study and understand it, then, is to visit places where the bones of America lie exposed, often without the veneer of civilization, cultivation, or modernization: places protected by the people to preserve for this and future generations, original American landscapes, and important historical landmarks that illustrate and define what America was, is, and can be. PITP takes students deep into America’s national parks.

PITP is a see-America-first program. While we recognize the importance of a global perspective in an overall honors education, our goal is to help students see and understand America before or in addition to going abroad. Indeed, for students without the desire or resources to leave the country, PITP offers many of the same kinds of personal development that make study abroad so valuable. In the Field Notes to Chapter 2, “Growing from Within,” Bill Atwill and Kathleen King, share their experience in Acadia National Park, observing how their students demonstrated valuable growth in the same four key areas that researchers of study abroad programs have identified in their alumni: personal discovery, academic commitment, cultural development, and



career development. The student writings in this volume, such as Andy Grube's "soul expanding" talk with Juste Gatari on the rocky coast of Mount Desert Island, aptly illustrate this important facet of the PITP experience. (See the Field Notes to Chapter 5, "Sitting There in Silence.")

Similar to students who study abroad, PITP participants consistently find themselves in unfamiliar places surrounded by diverse groups of interesting people led by informed locals who can provide both formal and informal learning opportunities. Participants meet new people, eat new foods, see new vistas, and experience new cultures. They expand their horizons, find personal strength, and imagine new futures.

I have found Partners in the Parks to be experiential learning at its finest. Others may point to the more structured seminars and projects that are an integral part of all PITP projects. These on-the-ground opportunities within the park reflect the hands-on learning that has long been a major component in honors education. How PITP has expanded NCHC's place as text learning model is described effectively in Chapter 7. But for me the learning within the experience is much more primitive and raw boned.

Since so much of life in the 21st century comes to us secondhand, I feel a great need to provide students with opportunities to meet the world face-to-face. More and more of modern life is mediated by constructs that separate us from each other and the world we live in and on. Electronic telecommunication may be the most obvious. But just as telephones, email, texting and the like separate us from the people we are communicating with, a myriad of other modern and not so modern conveniences further separate us from direct interaction with everything that surrounds us. Our campus curricula asks students to read, hear, watch, and discuss but rarely requires them to touch, taste, feel, and do. To get to know this place where we live, PITP asks students to turn off their TVs, shut down their computers, and (dare I say it?) put away their books. With PITP we seek to know and understand our country and ourselves through the simple and direct experience of living.

For me, then, the greatest value and joy in *experiential learning* is much more basic than what I usually find under that title in peer-reviewed journals and at academic conferences. It is found in firsthand sensory integration with the universe that surrounds us, and that is what I find most challenging, enjoyable, and inspiring about Partners in the Parks. A PITP project is not an escape from curriculum. Students cannot zone out, daydream, or watch YouTube when they should be listening to the lecture. Being eight miles up the trail puts students into

## FOREWORD

“the learning” in a special and important way. The park is everything. It is the course, it is the textbook, it is the curriculum. It is the classroom, the library, the laboratory. It is the department head, the instructor, the TA. The park and the participants become partners; they become one.

Students waking in a tent, hours from the nearest road, and thrusting their heads from the zippered door into frosty air filled with snow. That is experiential learning that teaches and inspires. Directly observing trees and cliffs and sky. Communicating with each other from mouth-to-ear and back again. Experiencing. Being. Learning.

\* \* \* \* \*

At our first project in Bryce Canyon National Park, we purposefully arrived in the late afternoon and kept the students busy setting up tents, learning camp-stove safety, making their first meal, and then gathering for their introductory seminar. Soon enough night descended and the brilliant swath of the Milky Way stretched across the black sky, close enough to touch. Their mostly urban sensibilities were moved to a respectful, almost sacred silence by the intimacy of the universe. Then to bed for their first night in a tent.

The next morning, after a quick breakfast, the students were waiting anxiously, with notebooks and water bottles, still unsure of what it meant to be part of a Partners in the Parks project. The sun rose in front of us as we walked the half mile or so to Sunrise Point. The soft, almost palpable light of morning streamed from the east as we approached the rim of the canyon. A pale yellow glow illuminated the cliffs, towers, and rounded hoodoos, slowly filling the vertical fissures and horizontal cracks that had created this millions-year-old masterpiece. The nervous chatter of new friends slowly subsided as we approached the rim. A chilly breeze washed our faces, and we arrayed ourselves at the edge. Awed students struggled for the appropriate superlatives to describe the natural beauty of the wakening wilderness before them.

Kaitlyn, from Connecticut, gasped, “It’s not just another country; it’s like a different planet.”

Welcome to America.

Welcome to Earth.

Welcome Home.



# CHAPTER 1:

## ORIGIN OF SPECIES

At the time of writing, Partners in the Parks (PITP) is the newest species of honors adventures in experiential learning. Its weeklong immersion seminars are predicated on a three-fold purpose: **to educate** students about the national parks, **to engage** them in recreational activities that are the essence of park experiences, and ultimately **to urge stewardship** of these treasured spaces through a lifetime of involvement. Partners in the Parks is a program designed to inspire commitment to America's national parks among honors students who will become professionals, parents, and leaders with a conscience.

PITP began as a core idea presented in 2006 by email to the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) membership. Among those who responded with considerable enthusiasm were two seasoned hikers and campers, the honors director, Matt Nickerson, and his faculty colleague, Todd Petersen, at Southern Utah University (SUU), an institution at the hub of Utah's red rock canyons. For them the project was ideal, speaking to the core of their imagination, passion, and expertise. There they were, teaching at a university with a major in survival training, a rental shop filled with camping gear, and a support team of



Matt Nickerson (left) and Todd Petersen

students and faculty willing to be our Sherpas. The SUU administration embraced the program as a sponsor and a home base. Matt and Todd had previously led many student explorations to Utah parks. Within an hour of sending the email, I essentially had the reply that they were excited and ready to dig in and get started.

It was their inspiration to discuss the project with their “parks guy,” Paul Roelandt, Park Superintendent at Cedar Breaks National Monument, who responded with an offer of assistance that has proven invaluable. He remains for NCHC the National Parks Service Key Official. In 2009 in Washington, D. C., I finally had a chance to meet Mr. Roelandt and to thank him for all the help that he has extended. Through his sponsorship, we were initially able to present PITP to the National Park Service, which boosted the launch with a \$63,000 challenge grant from the 2016 Centennial Initiative. This grant was met by matching funds and in-kind contributions from NCHC, including the member colleges and universities that hosted PITP programs. As it turned out, PITP was one of very few projects in higher education to be funded by NPS.

Every species on earth has needed some help in getting started. We could not have been better served. Southern Utah University, the National Collegiate Honors Council, Cedar Breaks National Monument, and the National Park Service have all proven to be excellent, cooperative parents. One idea and four shepherding organizations have, over a short three-year period—no time at all by geologic measure—transformed theory into praxis.

This evolutionary process began with a big bang inside my head. It happened just after the planning meeting for the National Collegiate Honors Council Denver (2006) conference. I was standing on a peak at Rocky Mountain National Park, looking across a sea of pines at a mountain range in the distance, when the thought came to me that few of my Long Island students had ever seen this spectacular place. In the split second after that personal explosion caught me unaware, I felt the after-shocks. If my students had never been here, then other students might not have been here either. As the circles widened, I thought about how honors students from all over the country might be enriched and impassioned by the influence of this vista as well as other unique and staggeringly sublime landscapes that characterize America’s national parks.

Ken Burns experienced a similar blast even earlier. In a July 10, 2009, live chat hosted by PBS, he responded to a question about his inspiration for *The National Parks: America’s Best Idea* by saying, “I’ve always been interested in how my country works; all of my films have asked the

Photo by Heather Thiessen-Reilly



Vista at Black Canyon

deceptively simple question, ‘Who are we?’ I think our landscape, that is the physical geography of our country has been most revealing of character, good and bad, and to my mind the National Parks represent our best selves, a place at least for this filmmaker where we can come the closest to deepening that simple question.” By 2009 Burns was already seven years into his photographic documentary, which we hope will be utilized in honors programs and honors colleges to inspire student participation in PITP. Although I knew nothing about his project at the time I conceived of this program, I was already on the same wavelength—thinking about the parks as “America’s Best Idea.”

When I returned home, I took a straw poll in my English classes. Fewer than 10% of the students had ever been west of the Mississippi. All of them were conscious of our local beaches, but none knew that they were part of a national seashore under the administration of the National Park Service. Because of early school trips, many knew that Theodore Roosevelt, so critical to the inception and founding of the national parks, lived only six miles from campus in a presidential home, Sagamore Hill, but few were aware that the house is a national historic site administered by NPS. The students who had been to national parks, primarily on the east coast, were thrilled at the prospect of going west to visit these preserves and wanted to sign up to attend. Their enthusiasm was contagious, and so PITP was born.



## CHAPTER 1: ORIGIN OF SPECIES

The program's birth came at a decisive moment. During the summer of 2006, the Department of the Interior released a disturbing report on the decrease in per capita visits to America's national parks. Since 1966 park attendance has dropped a significant 4%, with the implication that unless visits increase among this and future generations, the preservation of national park lands will be in jeopardy. The October 2006 issue of *National Geographic* is devoted to "Global Places We Must Save." The cover makes the point by showing Utah's Glen Canyon with looming smokestacks on the horizon, and Lynn Warren's feature story, "Our National Parks in Peril," drives the truth home. The damage and neglect coming from industrial pollution, urban encroachment, and loss of funding that she discusses will only become worse if future generations stop feeling invested in this heritage. Oliver R. W. Pergams, Patricia A. Zaradic, and Amy Sofka, who have written about the demographics of park attendance, have cited the shift from active recreation to computer games, from nature travel to nature TV, among causes for a decline in recent years. Economic factors also come into play: the rise in gasoline prices, the increase in family working hours, and on the affluent end of the scale the move from luxury holidays in the United States to exotic global adventures. Ironically, America's national parks are exotic adventures for overseas visitors, who now constitute a significant percentage of annual visitors. Because the national parks are America's greatest environmental heritage, building a new generation of enthusiastic Americans may be key to their survival. No one who has seen our oldest



First hike into Bryce Canyon

living tree, the bristle cone pine, would consider cutting one down. No one who has camped beside a silent lake or forest would vote for natural gas or oil drilling on those lands. No one who has walked the trails of the Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Bryce, Zion, Acadia, Denali, Yellowstone, the Everglades, and so many other parks across the nation can ever forget the grandeur and beauty of unspoiled nature or the excitement of seeing elk, pronghorns, eagles, bears, alligators, wolves, or other species of wildlife. Indeed, no better way exists to hear echoes of the Big Bang and experience time travel back to earth's crusty origin than standing on lava at Volcanoes National Parks or on the rim of the Grand Canyon. Every impulse that excites our nerve endings as we look over the precipice of these vistas commands us to protect and preserve them.

Thus the immediate purpose of Partners in the Parks is bringing together member institutions of NCHC in a student/faculty program **to educate, to engage, and to urge stewardship** of these special places. Within the parks students engaged in workshops with park rangers and participating faculty learn about everything from fire management and photography to geological formations and philosophy. They also discover what it means to be on a personal journey in nature. And finally, they give back to the park as volunteers. They have counted prairie dogs, recorded archeological remains, mapped fire hydrants, and built trails. Every moment of service learning makes the parks more deeply part of a philosophical consciousness that is the ultimate goal: to cultivate so deep an appreciation of America's natural heritage that honors students and their families will become regular visitors to and protectors of these places that so define this country.

From their inception the national parks were intended to serve the general population as destinations for affordable recreation. Initially, Partners in the Parks was planned in the same spirit as an inexpensive 5–7 day immersion based on the “Sleeping Bag Seminar” model developed by the Northeast Regional Honors Council. In these programs students essentially camped out, usually as dorm guests, for a few days in order to explore an issue related to the geographic or historic setting of the host campus. For PITP, host colleges or universities, typically situated reasonably near the park, utilize their faculty and students as local experts and guides. During the weeklong adventure, hosts get to know honors students from other regions as they explore the park with them—often in a new light. Camping, cooking, hiking, photography, storytelling are all part of the primal experience of being out in nature for these honors students just as for all the other visitors in campsites and lodges around the parks.

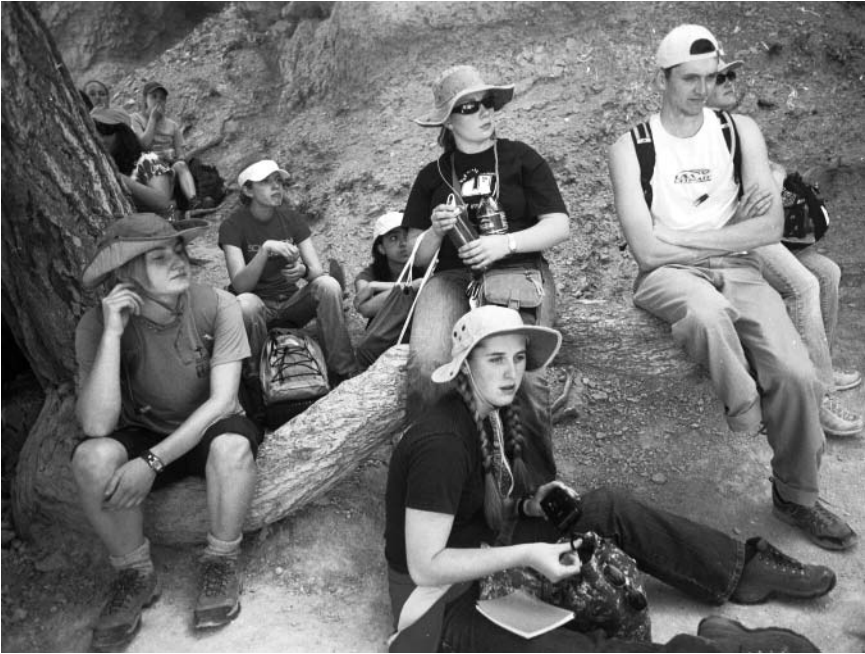


## CHAPTER 1: ORIGIN OF SPECIES

Keeping this opportunity affordable is essential to making the program work. Over the past three years, a \$500–\$600 land cost for the week, including food, transportation, and fees has been standard. During this time the National Park Service grant has enabled scholarship funding for some student travel. The Northeast Regional Honors Council established an annual scholarship allotment of \$2,500 per year to be expended for travel funds of up to \$500 per student. The Southern Regional Honors Council soon offered similar support, as did the Florida Collegiate Honors Council. Many colleges and universities have since underwritten travel costs and/or registration fees to enable their students to participate in PITP adventures. Students apply for travel funds by using the application at the PITP website. (See Appendix D2.) Support for student travel underscores the confidence in this growing program, but this support is meaningful because PITP remains true to its origins by remaining affordable. Working on a shoestring requires calculating a precise budget that takes into account every possible expense. (See Chapter 2 and the *Best Practices Manual* in Appendix A.)

Partners in the Parks was originally conceived as a non-credit educational excursion of 5 to 7 days. But as in nature, the single species has already branched into unique, local adaptations. The shaping of Black Canyon as a credit-bearing seminar is discussed in Field Notes to Chapter 3. Additionally, some colleges and universities grant credit for other PITP programs as independent study or short-term immersion courses. Indeed, PITP is intensive. Students receive a collection of readings before they rendezvous for a park exploration. And from the moment the group forms, they are living and learning together from dawn to late evening every day of the trip. Within any PITP group, some students may be participating for their own enrichment while others are earning credit. Thus far, the sub-species are sharing the territory in harmony. All students are required to join in reflective circles, keep journals, take photographs, and construct a group record that some will share on their home campus or at their regional meetings.

Designed for a maximum cohort of 20 students, PITP adventures already have over 150 alumni and have been held in more than a dozen parks: Acadia, Black Canyon of the Gunnison, Bryce Canyon, Cape Hatteras, Cedar Breaks National Monument, Denali, Fire Island, Grand Canyon-Parashant, Joshua Tree, and Zion, as well as many urban NPS sites including Ellis Island. Within the first two years, it had also branched into viable sub-species. PITP sponsored a faculty development seminar for potential leaders and hosts of PITP adventures on the



Nature as classroom, Bryce Canyon

Texas/Mexico border at Saguaro/Organ Pipe and two mini-PITP urban park day trips at the National Collegiate Honors Council annual meetings. The first was at the San Antonio Missions, and the second focused on the war memorials on the Mall in Washington, D. C. As the program evolves, other permutations will certainly occur.

Anyone who wants to develop a PITP program will find in the chapters that follow and the appendices at the end of the book all the information, forms, and contacts necessary to get started, including a *Best Practices Manual* with an 18-month timeline of preparation and detailed suggestions for every step of the way. Although this monograph presents several models and ideas, program directors can always twist the original DNA. For that reason, this book is structured as a field guide. This narrative contains essays written by trip leaders, faculty, students, and park rangers who have participated in PITP programs and have insights to share. Partners in the Parks, as its name suggests, functions by having the participants and the directors listen to all voices and encourage each other's enthusiasm, interests, and expertise to emerge as guides.

Information about current and future PITP adventures is available at the official website hosted by Southern Utah University <<http://www.partnersintheparks.org>>. Partners in the Parks is a standing committee

of the National Collegiate Honors Council. Anyone wishing to propose a PITP program can visit with the committee during its open meeting at the annual conference or contact the members by email at any time during the year. Many of the greatest national parks have yet to be explored in PITP adventures, so members will likely meet all suggestions for potential sites with enthusiasm. As the program evolves and matures, the PITP Committee hopes to include not only every major national park and monument in the country but all the lesser-known and less-traveled gems protected by the National Park Service as well. These sites offer hidden treasures and unique resources.

When framing a program, organizers should keep in mind the student-focused goals and outcomes central to Partners in the Parks:

### Goals

1. Introduce students to the national parks.
2. Teach the No Trace Left Behind philosophy of being in nature.
3. Teach students how to camp, cook, and work in groups. Since students in each program come from a number of different honors programs and colleges, states, regions, and cultural and ethnic backgrounds, learning to work together has multiple implications beyond the immediate experience of camping and will necessitate resolving the interpersonal conflicts that necessarily arise in such situations.
4. Foster an interest in the flora, fauna, geology, and geography of the area.
5. Encourage students to expand their abilities at reflective writing, oral storytelling, and photography.
6. Create an association between the park experience and civic engagement through volunteer work in the park that will provide immediate support for the long-term goal of protecting America's natural environments.
7. Create a positive experience that students will take home to their honors programs and colleges and share as presentations on campus or at their regional honors organizations, thus encouraging other students to participate in future Partners in the Parks programs.

## Outcomes

1. Students gain an appreciation of the national park and with that a desire to visit others in the National Park System or continue to make camping, hiking, and exploring natural places part of their lives, utilizing the No Trace Left Behind philosophy in all their natural explorations.
2. Students encourage their honors colleagues to participate in a PITP program.
3. Students encourage family and friends to vacation in the national parks.
4. Students continue to develop their interest in the fauna, flora, geology, and geography of the places that they visit in years to come.
5. Students continue to develop their skills in group dynamics and their creativity in writing, drawing, photography, and storytelling.
6. Students become politically aware of national parks issues, engage in preservation organizations, and use their voting power to take a stand on these issues as informed citizens.

This monograph is addressed to all those people who might wish to propose, lead, or participate in a PITP adventure at any of the more than 380 NPS parks, forests, seashores, museums, monuments, and



Ranger Cole-Will discussing archive collections, Acadia

historic sites around the country waiting to be explored in depth. While the immediate audience for this model is obviously undergraduate honors students, faculty, and program directors, many elements of PITP might be adapted by other groups of all age levels with an interest in developing experiential programs in the national parks. Park rangers and other NPS professionals will also find in this monograph a sense of how much their work is appreciated and how great an educational impact their seminars can make.

*Each chapter of this book will be followed by one or more reflective essays entitled Field Notes, written by people who have engaged in PITP programs. These begin with the reflections of Park Ranger Rebecca Cole-Will, one of our guides at Acadia National Park in Maine, who, as an archeologist, is keenly conscious of protecting the park's cultural resources.*

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## **FIELD NOTES**



# **A DELICATE BALANCE: MANAGING CULTURAL RESOURCES IN A NATIONAL PARK**

**REBECCA COLE-WILL**  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

*National parks are America's best idea.* Those of us working in parks hold this truth to be self-evident and take our responsibilities for protecting parks seriously.

The Organic Act (1916) and the park's implementing legislation are the twin mission statements from which all else follows. The Organic Act states that the National Park Service will “conserve the scenery and natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and . . . provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired of the enjoyment of future generations” (16 USC 1).

Acadia National Park was created in 1916 as Lafayette National Monument under the authority of the Antiquities Act. Passed into law by Congress in 1906, the Antiquities Act was an extraordinary piece of legislation that gave the President the authority to “declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest . . . as national monuments . . .” (Harmon, McManamon, and Pitcaithley 1). Thus, with a signature, President Woodrow Wilson set aside the first 5000 acres of the park for preservation.

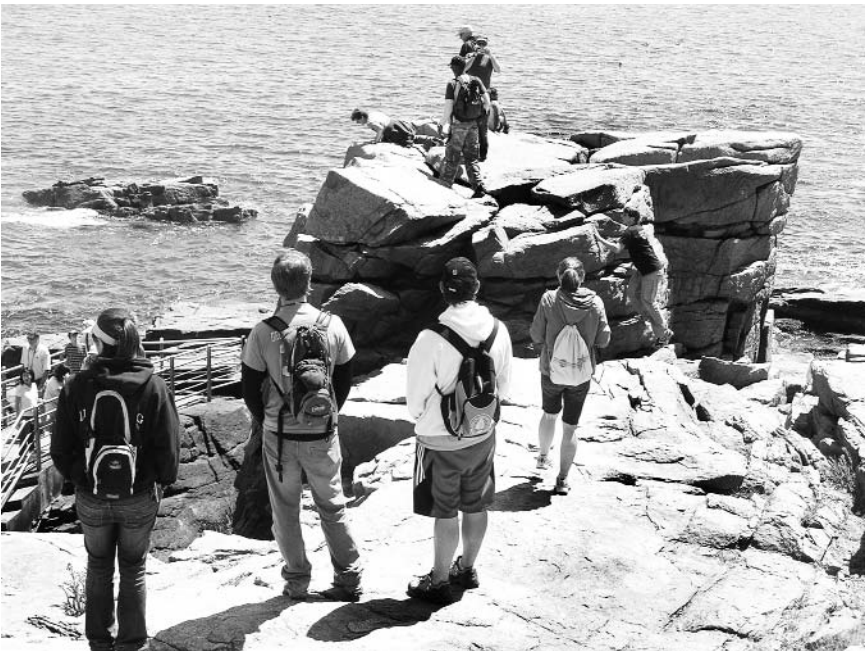
National parks encompass every aspect of the American experience. Often, however, the limelight is grabbed, and rightly so, by the amazing natural places that parks protect. For many people, national parks are pristine wilderness areas untouched by human action, interference, or agency. But national parks are also iconic places where the full sweep of American history from the ancient Native past to contemporary events can be remembered. The core of the National Park Service mission is



## FIELD NOTES: A DELICATE BALANCE

preserving and protecting these cultural resources, and across the NPS system, these resources are as diverse as they are numerous.

Acadia National Park, where I work, is widely viewed as a natural park beloved by visitors for its wild, rocky shorelines; crashing surf; and mountain summits scraped bare by glacial ice a millennium ago. People view the rocky shoreline, however, from a beautifully crafted, historic road system built from 1930–1960. They venture close to the crashing surf at Thunder Hole, a viewing platform that must be repaired and reinforced with concrete and steel regularly because storm surges and ice take their toll. People trek across the mountain-tops along a hiking trail system carved out of the living rock and maintained today by a highly skilled crew of master craftspeople.



Thunderhole

On a regular basis, I make a plea to my colleagues to remember that Acadia is also a cultural park. In the NPS system, management of resources is divided into two realms: natural and cultural. The park's website reflects that dichotomy through its page for Nature and Science and its page for History and Culture. That dichotomy is carried upwards throughout the structure of the NPS: from parks, to divisions (geographically based collections of parks), to the Washington office serving as the national umbrella of the Service.

I work within the Resource Management Division at Acadia. Here, technical experts and scientists are charged with preserving the integrity of natural resources and cultural heritage and maintaining quality visitor experiences. Threaded throughout this charge is that we manage park resources and apply the results of scientific study and use professional expertise to form solutions to park threats.

As the park's primary cultural resources specialist, I am responsible for developing, coordinating, and implementing the park's cultural resources program. The world of cultural resources is divided into five program areas: archeology, ethnography (anthropology), cultural landscapes, museum collections, and historic structures. The program areas often overlap considerably, and managing these resources necessarily requires interfacing with natural resource issues, visitor use and access, and park-wide management. The remainder of this essay will discuss one case study that balances culture and nature in the park while providing a learning opportunity for engaging youth.

The Carroll Homestead is a nineteenth-century farm complex within the park. It is a place where I have taken Partners in the Parks groups for a field experience because it offers multiple lessons about resource management, visitor experience, and the value of authentic history.

John Carroll arrived in North America from Ireland in 1814. In 1820, he took passage from Newfoundland, heading for Washington, D.C., where he hoped to find work as a mason helping to rebuild the new capitol after the devastation of the War of 1812. When the vessel laid over on Mount Desert Island, John remained behind. He later married a local girl, Rachel Lurvey, the daughter of one of the founding families of the island. John and Rachel built a simple Cape Cod-style residence (the Mountain House) at the foot of Dog Mountain in about 1825. There, they raised six children, cleared fields, pastured sheep and a milk cow, and cultivated subsistence gardens. John worked as a mason, and Rachel and the children worked the farm.

Over the years, the family waxed and waned. Rachel's father moved to the Mountain House in about 1844 after the death of Rachel's mother. Then, a small addition was made to the house to provide a bed/sitting room for Mr. Lurvey. John Carroll died in 1867 at age 77; Rachel continued to live at the farm with her son Jacob and his family until her death at age 90 in 1881. Jacob, a sea captain, had acquired the farm from his father before his death, and he married a cousin, Rebecca Lurvey, in 1870. Jacob and Rebecca, in turn, raised six children there. A year after Jacob's death in 1899, Rebecca moved down the hill into Southwest Harbor. Her son John remained at the





Studying artifacts at Carroll Homestead

Mountain House until 1917, when the farm was finally abandoned for year-round residence.

The house was never upgraded with modern conveniences: it remained without electricity, running water, or an indoor bathroom. The walls are still uninsulated, with a huge open fireplace in the main room, two tiny bedrooms, and a sitting room on the main floor. The unfinished attic provided two small rooms for the children. Outlying buildings and structures included a privy, at least one barn, a hand-dug well, numerous stone walls, stone spoil piles, wooden rail fencing, a quarry, several garbage dumps, and garden plots.

Once the house was deemed no longer suitable for year-round occupancy, that might well have spelled its end. Thousands of such abandoned farmsteads probably exist throughout northern New England. Most of these properties are now reduced to foundations, an odd stone wall running through the woods, or a scatter of debris from a household dump overtaken by forest succession. The park, alone, has several examples that are managed as archeological sites.

What is unique about the Carroll Farm, however, is that the house is still standing. The Carroll family continued to use the Mountain House for family reunions and as a summer rental property for several years. In 1974, Acadia National Park received a conservation easement on the

property and then acquired it outright in 1982 from the Maine Coast Heritage Trust. The property was an important land acquisition, for one, because it was a wedge of land bounded on all sides by the park, but the park managers also recognized that the farm represented an opportunity. A draft park Master Plan of 1976 suggested situating the property in the period from 1820–1850 and using it to illustrate “our pioneer heritage and the simple rural life of the 19th century” (National Park Service). Nearly a decade of planning, study, and discussion between the park and regional staff took place. At times, the exchange was emotional. The crux of the debate centered on the issue of authenticity. What was the best and highest interpretive program for the farmstead? What should be the frame of reference for the Carroll Farm within the contexts of the site, park, and island histories? And, finally, what would be the implications for restoration if this plan was adopted?

The park held to the original planning documents to restore the farm to its iconic nineteenth-century period. Restoration would necessarily entail a fairly ambitious plan of work because restoration is a historic preservation process in which a property is managed or restored to a specific historic baseline: “Restoration accurately presents the form, features, and character of a historic structure as it appeared at a specific period. It may involve the replication of missing historic features and removal of later features, some having cultural value in themselves” (NPS Directors Order 28). The issues became complicated. Park managers articulated a desire for a sustainable program of site management that would interpret the homesteading era of the farm’s history. Regional managers countered that rehabilitating the house to represent a continuum of time—the full sweep of the Carroll family’s occupancy—would best serve the interests of the site and history. While this debate may seem esoteric, the full implications for site management, visitor experience, and the park’s program and ultimately its budget were real. Depending on the target date, an accurate early nineteenth-century restoration could require removing the 1844 addition; applying stucco to the exterior because John, a mason, had originally applied stucco to the exterior of the first small house; removing deteriorated asphalt roofing shingles in favor of cedar; stabilizing much deteriorated wallpaper throughout the house; restoring the collapsed barn; removing vegetation that had overtaken the outlying pastures and fields; and completing many other technically complex projects.

After much discussion, in 1984 the park agreed to the regional recommendations to maintain the house as it was when acquired in 1979.

It would be treated to reflect a continuum of occupation of nearly 150 years. The full implications of that decision hit home once rehabilitation began, as described here by Superintendent Ronald N. Wrye, writing to regional historian Cynthia Kryston in November 1984:

The Park staff has had second thoughts since [a 1984 planning meeting] because they didn't realize immediately the implications of the expression 'continuum' as used in that discussion. They didn't realize, for example, that a 1940's asphalt roof, a significant part of the exterior, would be retained as part of the historic fabric and thus detract from the building's historic integrity relative to its 19th century rural imagery. . . . [W]e hope your office will reevaluate the possibility of unburdening the Carroll Farm of its latter day fabric and letting it stand as a vignette of our New England pioneer heritage. (Correspondence from unpublished archives on file at the William Otis Sawtelle Curatorial Center, Acadia National Park.)

And in response, Kryston commented in November 1984:

The interpretation of arduous and isolated farm life is not best done through wood shingles and wallpaper. The average visitor will not know whether a farmhouse has asphalt shingle or clapboards. . . . The 1979 resource [date of acquisition] is not a '1970's vision of a historic continuum.' It is exactly what history has left us. Trouble begins when we start adjusting the existing resource to some partial vision of 19th century rural life. (Correspondence from unpublished archives on file at the William Otis Sawtelle Curatorial Center, Acadia National Park.)

The debate continued for some months and is reflective of just how seriously park service staff take their responsibilities for protecting park resources, designing the visitor experience, and managing parks in sustainable ways. Any program must be planned in such a way that, a decade or two later, both resources and visitor experiences remain unimpaired for the future.

Now, more than twenty-five years after that 1984 decision, I believe the park service successfully achieved the delicate balance of protecting cultural resources and making them available for visitors to experience. I came to reflect on this case example because of my role in doing both those things—protecting cultural resources and making them available for visitor experiences. For the past two years, I have had the privilege of leading a Partners in the Parks field trip. I took both groups to two significant and vastly different resources: the Carroll Farm and a

pre-contact Native American archeological site dating back 3,000 years. At each site, we discussed the issues of managing resources and the role and significance of historic places in the National Park Service.

The contrast between the two sites is wide and deliberately selected. The Native American archeological site is now an open landscape fronting Somes Sound. One can stand along the shore and perhaps gain an understanding of why people might have chosen to live there many lifetimes ago, but the cultural resource value of the site is more about the important scientific data that the scientific excavations have yielded. While I can tell students about the time of year when people lived there, what they ate, and to some extent where they went, and with whom they interacted, I cannot tell them much about their family life, how they might have dressed, or their language.

At Carroll Farm, in contrast, we know much about the family. Living descendents still come to the farm—a grandniece greets visitors and displays an antique family possession, a doll belonging to Mary Ann Carroll, who lived in the house more than a century ago. Old pictures and family objects such as the doll provide a direct link with the life of the place for the past 150 years. Students wander through the small



Carroll family descendant with 100 year old doll

house to see the tiny rooms, the meat hooks sunk deep into the ceiling where the family kept slaughtered animals cold for processing, and the scribbled inscriptions left on an upstairs door jam. The farm house still stands. It still has asphalt ceiling shingles and perhaps the look and feel of an abandoned 1970s-era structure; nevertheless, students do make the authentic connection with a historical past that is so important to the park to preserve.

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## **CHAPTER 2: SCOUTING PARTIES: PREPARATION FOR A PROGRAM**



Hoodoos at Bryce Canyon

## Pilot Program

The pilot program for Partners in the Parks occurred in Bryce Canyon during May of 2007. The group that gathered for that first experience essentially served as a scouting party for the model that has been evolving during the last few years. We learned a great deal from that trip, much of which has been condensed into the PITP planning timetable in the *Best Practices Manual*. (See Appendix A.) As helpful as these guidelines might be, they cannot convey the interpersonal factors and the experiential elements that are the most interesting, surprising, amusing, emotional, and challenging aspects of PITP. For that, storytelling is better.

Bryce was my own personal choice for a pilot site. It was a park I had visited as a child and remembered as the most impressive of all the national parks I had seen. I also had a mission. I remembered taking a horseback trip into the canyon with my father, and I wanted to repeat that trip to honor his memory. Since I had conceptualized the program, Matt Nickerson and Todd Petersen, who had taken on responsibility for PITP, were happy to accommodate my wish to begin with Bryce. Making use of an important aspect of Partners in the Parks, solo explorations, I left the group early one morning in order to take my nostalgic journey. Along the way I recognized the exact place where someone had taken a photo of my father and me fifty years ago. The trail guide obliged by taking my photo in front of the same red rock, and when I returned to camp, I wrote the following poem about the impact of my experience. I later read it to the group during our presentations.

### BROWNIE SHOT

Fifty years ago my father and I rode horses  
down Bryce Canyon's narrow paths.  
Now that he is dead, a picture—  
a Brownie shot in black and white—  
makes me long to take the trip again.

This time I ride a mule,  
awkward at first but then responsive  
and quick to trot along the outer edge  
close enough to make me quiver.  
Just half an hour into our trek  
we pass Seal Rock—the very spot

JOAN DIGBY

our photo was snapped so many years ago.  
Bryce has not changed.  
The fragile arches and hairpin switchbacks  
still stop a heart.  
Along the trail my mule flares up,  
rearing like Trigger against a backdrop  
of pink hoodoos.

I flush to think myself a cowgirl of the West.  
Hearing my father's voice say,  
"Must you do this?"  
"Aren't you too old?"  
Finally I have the courage to reply—  
"Not now, not yet—I do it  
because it is the heart of me,  
the one who was with you as we were then."

I tell this story as a lead-in about what to expect on a Partners adventure. Everyone comes with a personal narrative, a memory, a hope, a possibility for finding something deep inside the experience. Leaving enough space, enough down time and individual time for every participant to find what is really important about the journey is a critical element for directors to consider when planning a PITP program. The Bryce trip generated many self-discoveries: a Brooklyn student, Rony Enriquez, met a bear when he was out on a solo walk and found his courage to photograph it. (See his Field Notes at the end of Chapter 4.) Claire Campanella, who had never hiked before, chose to participate in an arduous thirteen-mile overnight expedition and made it through with the encouragement of others: "I learned that I had it in me to push myself through miles of desert and then sleep in a tent for the first time in 30-degree weather in seven layers of clothing. . . . I'm proud of myself, because I had no idea that I could do this."

The following year, when the Bryce adventure was repeated during the same week of May, everyone awoke on the morning of the hike to discover falling snow. A student asked Matt, "What do we do?" He replied, "We hike; that's what we're here to do. Nature is our classroom; let's get going." And they did. Embracing the unknown is the root of inspiration in experiential-learning adventures such as this. Although the snow hike may have seemed spontaneous to the students setting out, 12–18 months of planning went into bringing the program to this moment. Snow was—in this case quite literally—the frosting on the cake.





Pumping up for the big hike at Bryce Canyon

### **When and Where**

While sudden quirks of nature, like that unexpected spring snow in Bryce, may become a part, even a highlight, of the experience, the main decision about timing involves a broader consideration of seasons. Since many of the western parks are open only during summer months, Partners in the Parks generally schedules programs in that region either at the end of the spring semester (May) or the end of the summer (August). This timing is important not only in consideration of student summer jobs, but also because the parks become crowded later in the summer and are unable to give special attention to our groups when tourism is at a peak. The same early-spring or late-summer blocks of time also work well for parks on the eastern seaboard. The Everglades and other parks open during the winter are available for mid-year (January) or spring break programs. For every location, timing and accessibility must come first.

Choosing a national park or national monument close to the host institution yields the benefit that faculty and students familiar with the park will come forward with enthusiasm for the plan. Some may already be doing research on site or be regular campers in the places chosen. Especially if the host campus is near a small, less-visited NPS site, the

choice of that special place will add a significant dimension to PITP. The National Park Service is keen to promote lesser-known sites under its jurisdiction in order to encourage tourism and generate enthusiasm for these places. Anyone scouting a site should be thinking about its unique aspects and at the same time be looking for local artists, poets, geologists, botanists, musicians, and philosophers with imaginative ideas that they can bring to the program. The weeklong agenda is made most exciting by diverse workshops and presentations. Viewing a park from many perspectives and academic disciplines enriches the experience of being there, hiking and learning. Creative students think in many media; getting them to use their creativity to grasp national park sites as special places is the ultimate goal of PITP's experiential-learning model. This goal is critical no matter what the choice of park.

Program leaders should encourage colleagues and students to become part of the adventure. Apart from their day jobs, people might also be willing to drive, carry, cook and tell stories. University officers must be in the loop. Early in the planning stage, they should know that a project is shaping up that has the potential for national recognition and honors recruitment advertising. As the plan develops, institutional support, waiver forms, media releases will play some role in defining the program. Involving the administration during the early stages of the process offers the program leaders the latitude of enlisting institutional assistance and garnering support for the project. Institutional support for the project should be in writing before the proposal and dates have been approved by the PITP Committee. (A sample proposal appears in Appendix C1.)

The written proposal for institutional and PITP review should include the following:

- NPS park site(s) and dates
- Proposed registration fee and group size
- Names and credentials of at least two project leaders
- Ideas for educational, recreational, and stewardship goals/opportunities in the park(s) that should be keyed to the unique character of the park
- Ideas for service projects in the park
- Ideas for faculty workshops and presentations
- Ideas for park ranger involvement and programming
- Proposed itinerary

## CHAPTER 2: SCOUTING PARTIES

Although many of these components will be refined and altered during the course of discussions with the park staff, at this point, the proposer should not make those contacts. Following institutional approval, the first step is presenting the initial proposal to the PITP Committee for review. If the proposal is approved, the PITP Committee will send the proposal to the NPS Key Official, who is the contact point for PITP and the person who will open discussions with the park superintendent and facilitate introductions on behalf of those planning to lead the excursion. After three years of working with the National Park Service, Partners in the Parks has developed an excellent rapport with many superintendents, who have welcomed us, been generous with their attention, and been highly receptive to our plans. In due time, meeting on site with an administrator of the park and giving her or him some idea about the level of intellectual interest that students and faculty will bring to the program and the potential for engaging in a service activity that will fulfill a park mission will be important. What will become clear to the administrator is that PITP is not a tourist group and that the participants want to learn in depth and give back something by way of volunteer work. Then doors—even canyons and fountains—will open.

Project leaders should plan to have two or three on-site meetings with NPS staff to refine the ground needs, including parking and campsite location; the focus of explorations and projects undertaken within the park; and the involvement of park rangers. Getting to know those who will be working with the group as speakers, guides, and service-learning coordinators is extremely important. Once an agreement on dates and site is finalized, a scouting party of local students and faculty should visit the site to begin mapping the trip; they should travel there off-season when rangers have significant time to be helpful. Introducing rangers to both students and faculty will give everyone a good idea of expectations and personalities and establish a smooth working relationship. This scouting party should shoot photographs of the park for advertising that will attract students to the project. The park rangers will likely recommend the most photogenic landscape views.

National Park Service rangers are essential to PITP. They are passionate about their parks, and they are the ones who can arrange to take groups into the backcountry and to provide access to the curatorial archives that tourists never see. Working with rangers and exploring behind the scenes are exciting and memorable elements of these experiential adventures. During the NCHC 2009 Washington conference, PITP explored the fountain at the center of the World War II Memorial. After we had observed it from above, side by side with all the tourists,



World War II Memorial

our park ranger guides, Bethany Bagent and Terry Branzell, who is a plumbing engineer, opened a trap door and led us into the underground water system. He explained how this massive fountain works as we climbed over pipes and stood in awe of the gigantic machinery.

## **Budget:**

### **Accounting for Every Nut and Raisin**

Having locked in dates and location, directors can now construct a preliminary budget. This should include every conceivable cost from student pickup at the airport to impromptu urges, such as the irresistible wild-blueberry ice cream treat that we sprang for on a warm summer afternoon in Acadia National Park. Every PITP program is entirely funded by participant fees unless a local business or the host college or university can be persuaded to sponsor some component of the journey. Since knowing a year in advance exactly how many students will apply or attend is impossible, fourteen is a reasonable base number of participants. Calculating the cost per participant provides a clear idea of the number of students necessary to cover all expenses, including unexpected incidentals, and the break-even point. These

## CHAPTER 2: SCOUTING PARTIES

figures will determine if 12 will allow the program to go forward, or, alternatively, 16 would be necessary in order to succeed. The maximum cohort, in any case, should be 20. Working with a spread sheet will facilitate the process. (A sample budget is provided in Appendix E.)

Anyone who begins with the premise that camping is cheap will be in for a big surprise. The costs for transportation to and within the park, camping gear rental, and the quantity of food that college students consume in a week are all considerable.

The parameters of a PITP program must fall within the \$500–\$600 range/per student for all land arrangements: transport, camping gear, food, park entrance fees, museum or special event fees, salary, wages, honoraria, and donations to the park. The budget should include a cushion for incidentals like the ice cream, a bottle of Advil, sunscreen, the boat ride that presents itself as a great last-minute option, and disposable digital cameras for students who do not have cameras of their own. Unexpected expenses and opportunities will always arise. Perhaps a host institution will contribute some support. When we ran the pilot program at Bryce Canyon, hired vans were the most costly single item in the budget. We needed three and had to rent them for a week. When, on the other hand, we ran Fire Island to Ellis Island, my home institution, Long Island University provided university vans at no cost, which was an enormous savings. The university, pleased to support



Students at breakfast in Denali



cooperation between the C.W. Post and Brooklyn honors programs, also paid for one NPS-run museum admission (the Lower East Side Tenement Museum—an extraordinary place not to be missed) and one restaurant meal in New York. These contributions from the university enriched the program we designed. Institutional support may be available and graciously given. Corporate support, including in-kind gear or food, is equally welcome and equally helpful. Acadia's first program enjoyed the support of L. L. Bean, which generously provided the students with knapsacks.

The National Park Service has also been generous with PITP. It has in some cases waived park fees or opened museum doors on days they are usually closed to the public. (See Appendix C2–3 for a sample request letter and the waiver application.) In the case of Ellis Island, the early morning staff boat transported the group free of charge, which was an exceptional courtesy for which we are most grateful to Park Ranger Katherine Craine, the island's Education Specialist and most ebullient and enthusiastic guide.

While such generosity is welcome, calculating the full cost of running the program is best. Then it will be a relief later if something is gifted or proves to be free. The essential categories are these:

- Transportation for pickup and delivery of students from arrival at airports or bus and train stations to and throughout the days in the park.
- Food, food, food—enough for three meals a day, trail mix and snacks in between, and S'mores when the embers die down.
- Equipment, including camping gear rental as necessary and probably more propane than anticipated.
- Salary, wages, and honoraria for facilitators, trip leaders, seminar leaders, and student interns. Samples of suggested wages in each category are listed in the PITP *Best Practices Manual*. (See Appendix A.) These are variable. Some program directors are not entitled to wages if the program takes place during their regular school term. Some faculty decline honoraria or payment, preferring to join the expedition as a mini-getaway
- Gifts to the park. NPS rangers and interpreters work for the United States government and are not entitled to fees. They are, on the other hand, most appreciative of donations to the park because they help them pursue important projects. They also love photographs of themselves in action. One can never say “thank you” enough to these kind, generous, and knowledgeable people.

## CHAPTER 2: SCOUTING PARTIES

Directors should project a daily budget based on the in-progress program as it develops but allow for some cushion. Tapping a university or honors account for advance payments that need to be made will prove useful. If registration fees are administered through Southern Utah University (SUU), reimbursement to the host institution will be made once invoices and bills have been submitted at the end of the trip; of course reducing reimbursement to a single payment will simplify the process. After constructing a preliminary budget, directors should discuss the mechanics of payments with the people at SUU, who can also review the budget and identify any potential costs or categories that may have been omitted.

Once a proposal and budget are on paper, the time is right to think about the impact of a PITP adventure on participating students.

*In the Field Notes that follow, Bill Atwill and Kathleen King, seasoned leaders of the Acadia National Park adventures, draw an interesting analogy to study abroad. The benefits they describe may encourage institutional support and even scholarship support for PITP as an alternative learning experience.*



## ***FIELD NOTES***



# **GROWING FROM WITHIN: COMPARISONS BETWEEN PARTNERS IN THE PARKS AND SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD**

**BILL ATWILL**

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA WILMINGTON

**KATHLEEN KING**

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT AUGUSTA

They all have that look that first morning. Here in the hotel lobby among the families and the older businesspeople in suits, sipping coffee and reading, a dozen or so college-age students sit, separate and apart, but watching each other warily. In this new place, they look at each other's backpacks, footwear, and clothes for signs they are fellow travelers, and they wait for something, some catalyst to begin the coalescence of the next chapter in their education . . . in their lives. Where they sit now is a junction between the familiar and the unfamiliar. They are not yet fully immersed; they are still connected by phone and text to the familiar. They still could go back, but they won't. They are here because they want the adventure and they want the experience, and because, on some level, they have already learned that the only growth that really matters happens beyond the comfortable.

In the next hour, the shift from a nervous uncertainty to tentative community begins as program directors show up, identify themselves, and start pulling the disparate students into a group. They begin with introductions: names, hometowns, the colleges or universities they attend, and their majors. These markers, after all, define a cultural map of where they are from and where they think they are going. The duration of this new experience will provide an exotic side-trip, they believe,



but few, if any, realize how many compass points off their imagined destination it may take them over the course of their lives.

What begins with name tags and a packed van of gear and unfamiliar travel companions, seeing only postcard vistas of a new place, is a journey that will exceed the miles traveled and the striking scenery of the landscape. By the end of the journey, they will know a place intimately and complexly, and their shared experience in a new environment will bring them close to each other. They will know themselves somewhat better, and they will not see their world or this place quite so simply ever again.

This description might serve as a generic account of what we all know to be the desired dynamic of any study abroad experiences for our students in a diverse and global society, and it holds up as valuable what we hope for all experiential-learning opportunities. Throughout the twentieth century, the educational gold standard was the year-long study abroad experience for cultural immersion. Predictably, the expense and logistical challenges for students in some majors restricted the number of American college students studying abroad to single-digit percentages and to the privileged—primarily an affluent middle-class demographic. More recently, short-term study abroad experiences (one to eight weeks in duration), according to the Institute of International Education, have increased dramatically, from 3.3% of all U.S. students studying abroad in 1996–97 to 55.4% in 2006–07. These short-term programs are less expensive, are usually organized around a course taught at a particular institution, and are led by faculty from that school who are familiar links to home, while providing a focused and structured introduction to a new environment. A recent study by R.M. Paige et al. (2009) asserts that these short-term experiences have many of the same lasting effects as the semester and year-long programs on the degree of civic commitment and volunteerism, both global and domestic.

These experiences, however, are still beyond the budget and perhaps beyond the comfort zone of some students. So the question arises whether intermediary programs might provide some of the same benefits of short-term study beyond the campus borders and even include components that replicate, in part, the interpersonal dynamics of individual study abroad. At least one program has shown real promise in this area. For sheer cost benefit, finding a program more economical, better subsidized, and more successful for honors students than the National Collegiate Honors Council Partners in the Parks projects would be difficult.

Participants in these weeklong projects use a specific national park site as a multidisciplinary learning experience. They arrive from all over the United States and other countries. (The Acadia National Park project had students from California, Texas, Iowa, South Carolina, North Carolina, Maine, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and New Hampshire, as well as Rwanda, Azerbaijan, and Viet Nam.) Working cooperatively, they take charge of setting up a campsite, distributing food supplies, creating cooking groups and clean-up responsibilities, and planning explorations. National Park staff and selected faculty provide workshops on natural resource management, local geology, local anthropological research, ecological issues, regional literature and the environment, philosophy, and other topics.

Because the honors students collectively represent an interdisciplinary enthusiasm for learning, some of the best interaction is the informal teaching that takes place around the campsite as biology majors explain the local flora to English majors, philosophy majors add their ethical insights to ecological issues, or history majors stand alongside geology majors mutually informing each others' sense of the significance of a particular rock formation.

As faculty/staff participants on the first two Acadia National Park trips, we observed many of the same transformative changes in student growth and sensibility as are typically identified with study abroad. For example, the following list based on selling points used by Brown University, Boston University, and Notre Dame to market the impact of their study abroad programs could equally describe the benefits of participation in Partners in the Parks:

- Increased self-confidence.
- Increased ability to function in a foreign environment far from their comfort zone.
- Increased exposure to new social and academic customs.
- Increased maturity, both personal and intellectual.
- Increased understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses.
- Increased ability to solve problems creatively.
- Increased opportunity to learn more about their own heritage.

It is as true of Acadia National Park and New England, as of anywhere else in the world, that any great understanding of the complex historical, cultural, and environmental forces shaping a place must come from living some part of that experience. Simply studying it from afar or catching a glimpse from the window of a tour bus is not sufficient. For

this reason, living closely with the place and closely with others is part of the necessary design.

During that first day drive along HWY 1 up the coast of Maine, the students glimpse harbors and headlands, but the trip does feel a bit excursionary, a seascape with separate soundtracks from personal listening devices but filled with shared postcard scenery and quaint communities new to these honors students from other parts of the United States and elsewhere in the world. Before long their delight with the landscape opens them up, and they begin to compare it with other places they have been and to share their previous travel experiences. By the time the group reaches Acadia National Park and Blackwoods Campground, the iPods are put away and the conversation is constant. Still, they want to tell others back home about their trip, but to their initial dismay, they discover that cell phone service is not available this far out on Mt. Desert Island. They are off the grid.

As they pile out of the vans and survey their home for the next week—a graded campsite set among trees with enough space for 7–8 tents and cooking tarps, the sense of displacement deepens. The leaders draw them together and entrust them to layout the campsite and to divide the food that will comprise their meals for the week among cooking groups. They are not sharing a hotel room in some city with a classmate from school on this trip; they are sharing a tent on hard ground with someone they just met four hours ago. Not only will they need to negotiate tight quarters in the tent, they will also need to collaboratively plan and cook meals and clean afterward. Few have much experience camping and some have little or no experience cooking on their own. They still do not know each other's strengths and weaknesses, but leaders and organizers emerge and begin to assume the responsibility deferred to them. During the course of the week, they will teach the others a great deal about planning meals creatively and cooking. The students will try food they have not eaten before.

Part of what makes this settling-in period so successful is the hands-off approach of the leaders during this phase of the project. Although the instructional modules for each day are carefully scripted and slotted into morning, afternoon, and evening sessions, organizing the daily life in the campground is up to the students. This component closely resembles individual study abroad experiences because the diversity of the students and their interdependent autonomy allow for growth. Faculty-led programs that ask students only to show up for shared meals and embark on the structured experiences of the day are rich in academic content, but do little to alter the social structure brought from the

home institution. In traditional long-term study abroad programs, individual students far from home usually find themselves rooming in an apartment complex or similar shared quarters with other exchange students from diverse backgrounds, and this proximity creates the first community in the new environment. That the Partners in the Parks projects actively seek this diversity and enable the mutual interdependence of the living/learning component has a profound effect on the participants even in such a short time. When asked to name what aspects of the experience have had the most lasting effect on them, many will list the friendships formed in close cooperation.

Hands down the people I met and connected with. It was a wonderful, unforgettable week because I met wonderful people and made lifelong friends. Who knew not showering for a week and sharing a tent could bring people so close together?

—Sarah L. Fann, UNCW

I established long-term friendships. During a short period of time, several people and I got very close and still keep in touch!

—Togrul Quliyev, Texas A&M, Corpus Christi  
(International student from Azerbaijan)

Without question, enlisting the assistance of faculty who have a passion for sharing their intellectual exploration of place and disciplinary topic is critical to the success of any program where students and instructors will be sharing so much time together. Becoming comfortable as fellow travelers exploring the often unexpected and unscripted territory of new experience in an unfamiliar landscape is a step into the unknown for all. Field experience requires teachers who are prepared to be innovative and agile in their delivery, and they are all the stronger in classroom settings for having this experience. This is particularly true for the pedagogical objectives of PITP projects, which do not focus solely on one subject, but seek, instead, to offer an interdisciplinary exposure to the complexity of a place. After the University of Maine at Augusta faculty from Philosophy, Art, Literature, Architecture, and Biology led their particular sessions in Acadia, they eagerly stayed to share in the discussions from other disciplines and to join in the physical and intellectual explorations of the national park. Their commitment impressed the students. For example, when two students measured the diameter of a culvert, a philosophy professor from UMA assisted. Greg Fahy did not need to be at this field session, but he wanted to be part of the team. For the first time, many students were seeing faculty as approachable and genuinely interested in their ideas and

## FIELD NOTES: GROWING FROM WITHIN

insights. At night, the conversation after dinner often led to the kind of intellectual exchange we hope the university inculcates in our students:

The fireside talks with the faculty members raised issues that I had never considered before, such as the ethics of having national parks: if the value they have to the visitors is worth the detrimental effects those visitors are causing on the land. I also really enjoyed these chats because it made me feel more comfortable talking with and expressing my opinions with faculty members of a college. I now feel like I can go to professors' office hours and ask questions more freely since I know that they are probably just as approachable as these professors were.

—Gina Lento, Northeastern University.

As part of the PITP experience and as a way of offering something back to the National Park Service for what they provide, a service component is always built into the time spent in the park. This is not just some superficial gesture: it is carefully integrated into the needs and ongoing design of the park. Trail maintenance in all of the national parks is a constant obligation that depends on volunteer help as well as a dedicated staff of park personnel. As honors students work alongside each other and the park rangers, they learn about the access trails give to scenic and environmentally sensitive areas of the park and of the challenge to balance preservation of those areas against that guided access provided by trails. Students become aware of the community that exists within a park and what sustains that community. They become a part of the system that serves as their host.

We also had the opportunity to volunteer with Friends of Acadia and clean up the carriage roads that run throughout the park. It was nice to hear the compliments of passersby as we were working. I felt good giving back to the park after all it had given to me.

—Julianne Grubb, Rowan University

Experiencing the place. We did not just visit our park: we experienced the park as an integrated part of its state's history and society. We participated in the maintenance of the park, which helped me to personally connect to not only the park but also the state. I'm very fond of the place—and I only spent two weeks of my 21 years there.

—Sarah L. Fann, UNCW

Integrating the students participating in the PITP project into the workings of the National Park Service and its role in managing the



Carriage trail, Acadia

resources of Mt. Desert Island and Acadia National Park is at the core of this educational experience. They are not just touring the park; they are discovering the environmental and cultural tensions at work in any natural or manmade ecosystem. For this reason, the hands-on learning that takes place during the structured sessions is provided by expert members of the NPS staff as much as by faculty. Rangers with advanced degrees in astronomy, anthropology, geology, climatology, fisheries management, and fire ecology present detailed introductions to the challenges of both research and effecting policy changes to protect key resources. These were not lectures, but field excursions, tests, and measurements with the necessary instruments. Students and faculty came away not only with new knowledge about how the data are collected, but also with a more complex understanding of the cost/benefit challenges involved in advocating change. They learn, for instance, that the cost of enlarging one culvert beneath a road to allow for increased fish passage to spawning grounds might cost \$30,000, and there are hundreds of culverts. Knowing what needs to be done is not enough; how one persuades taxpayers that this improvement is not just desirable but necessary became the next topic of discussion.



## FIELD NOTES: GROWING FROM WITHIN

I found the educational aspects of the trip particularly interesting. I learned a lot from the park rangers that I hadn't previously known, such as the purpose of controlled fire in the forests and the importance of "leave no trace." It was also interesting to learn how much effort goes into air quality testing, and that Maine actually has the most polluted air in the United States, which is really surprising.

—Gina Lento, Northeastern University

Each day consisted of two or three seminars in which park rangers or University of Maine at Augusta professors held interactive lectures and discussions about various subjects. This academic aspect of the trip not only kept our minds stimulated but made this a truly honors experience. Out-of-the-classroom lessons are extremely beneficial because I learned so many new things and exhibited critical-thinking skills without even realizing it. I gained a newfound appreciation of the northern lights, microorganisms in the Atlantic Ocean, and the energy-saving techniques used in sustainable architecture. Other topics



Students measuring a culvert

covered included environmental philosophy, fire ecology, and recurring themes within Maine short stories. Although I generally gravitate toward science-related material, each presentation deeply struck my interest, and I was eager to take home as much information as I could from each seminar and share it with my parents.

—Julianne Grubb, Rowan University

The experiential design of Partners in the Parks encourages personal reflection by structuring time and opportunity for reflection into each day. The Acadia institute provided small 4 x 6-inch spiral journals for note taking during the presentations and for personal observations. Honors students are attuned to documentation, and their photographs, drawings, and written insights quickly become part of the shared narrative of their time together. Each night after dinner and the last session, time is set aside to ask and reflect on pertinent questions concerning the day's events. Common prompts might be: What was a surprise today? What was important to you? What did you learn? What did you see? Those reflections last for an hour or so and end before the quiet hours at 10:00 p.m. in Blackwoods Campground, but they do not end for the students. Most nights, after the leaders retire to their tents, the students walk quietly to the granite cliffs overlooking Otter Point and talk among themselves in the intimacy of trees, rock, and moonlit ocean.

The last evening reflections are the culmination of these guided and unguided expressions. That night, students give presentations following the last evening meal. As preparation, the afternoon is set aside as "free prep time." Students present individually or in groups. No guidelines or expectations exist other than that presentations reflect on what they find most valuable in the week's experience. The multiple talents and interests of the students always make these presentations a delightfully revealing glimpse into the impact even a short-term immersion can have on a student's outlook. And this sense of having shared something special stays with them. In the case of the Acadia projects, the reflection has continued on Facebook, where the students have built an online community that offers immediate reflection, photo exchanges with virtually hundreds of photos, and friendships that continue regardless of distance. They also visit one another in their travels and generally continue to network with each other. They know that their experiences are precursors to larger adventures.

A few interesting things that I have been doing more often were influenced by PITP: I have been spending more time outside whenever I can, even at just small city parks and trails. When



## FIELD NOTES: GROWING FROM WITHIN

friends want to hang out, I now suggest getting dinner and going to the river just to enjoy being outside and talking instead of watching a movie or such. Also, I have always exercised somewhat, but Beaumont is having its first marathon in May, so my sister and I decided to start training for it and are planning on running it! I may have done this anyway, but I don't think I would have had the same determination if I had not done PITP because, after hiking Cadillac Mountain at 3:00 in the morning, I now think I can handle training for a marathon.

—Rebekah Maxwell, Lamar University

I learned to think beyond myself and leave enough for others. I learned that you have to watch out for your neighbors' back and make sure that you keep each other safe. I learned how to take care of the land and leave it beautiful. Learning in the classroom without walls is a great experience, and I would suggest it for anyone. When I went on this trip, at first I was nervous. I didn't know most of the people who were going, and getting to know people is hard for me. I'm not always the bravest person when it comes to saying "Hello." At this point, I can't wait to go on my next trip.

—Adriana Love, University of Maine at Augusta

Knowing how much any one experience contributes to the overall growth of a student's sense of adventure and civic engagement during their undergraduate years is difficult, but the anecdotal responses we have received from Acadia have validated its contribution to the participants. One student has gone on to study abroad in Ecuador; another participated in a mission trip to Guatemala to build cook stoves in impoverished highland areas; another has accepted a Fulbright to study marine ecology in Australia; and another is working with AmeriCorps in Oregon. All learned something more about the natural and cultural resources of a place as unique as anywhere else on the planet. One cannot ask for more from any experience at home or abroad.

Something else grew out of those shared experience in Acadia for me (Bill Atwill), a desire to try a similar project along the Cape Hatteras National Seashore on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. I was concerned that the Acadia experience might be unique to that place and to the leadership of UMA, and I wondered whether the weeklong partnership among students, faculty, and park staff would be a transposable dynamic. The students, however, had given me the courage to step out of my comfort zone and try this.

Partners in the Parks—Exploring the Outer Banks began May 15, 2010, much like all the other projects; 14 students from 10 different universities piled into two vans headed for Cape Hatteras amidst camping gear, food, and well-planned itineraries. However, a life along the littoral zone of barrier islands had taught me enough about fluidity to know that the itinerary would alter, so we stressed flexibility. Sometimes weather, sometimes circumstance, sometimes pure serendipity prompts a change, and it was not long before we found the opportunity for an unplanned adventure.

On Monday, as UNCW biologist Paul Hosier was delighting the participants by conducting his barrier island transect discussion deep inside a thicket beneath a salt-sculpted canopy, my cell phone rang (for once I was happy to have service). NPS biologist Michele Bogardus was calling to ask if, instead of her talk on sea turtle conservation that afternoon, we might be interested in observing a necropsy on a juvenile humpback whale that had stranded and could not be saved. The Marine Mammal Stranding Network researchers were beginning their work on the beach at the Hatteras Coast Guard station in one hour. I asked the students if they wanted to see it after Paul finished his presentation. They shouted, “Yes!” and Paul said, “Why don’t we go now? I can talk about this later.” This was an amazing opportunity for honors students, many of them science majors, to observe not simply a stranded whale close up, but to see, also, how researchers conduct a thorough necropsy to determine cause of death and to collect scientific samples for multiple marine laboratories. They had full access; researchers took the time to explain procedures and to let them handle various tissue samples as they were being preserved for later analysis. A recent UNCW honors student now



Photo by Bill Atwill

Beached Whale, Cape Hatteras

working on her graduate degree in marine mammalogy was part of the team and added another dimension to the experiential quality of this unexpected and unplanned addition to the schedule.

There were also contingency plans for inclement weather that would utilize any of an array of historic landmarks, natural wildlife preserves, and planned recreational areas the National Park Service oversees on the island. The first test for that came the third night when squalls blew in off Diamond Shoals during the hours before dawn, driving rain around, under, and into some of the tents. This was to be an early morning start down to Ocracoke Island to catch a boat to Portsmouth Island. Students scrambled to secure gear in drier locations, mop water out of tents, and grab something to carry for lunch later. The rain was relentless for the next hour as we talked back and forth with the boat captain about the wisdom of making the crossing in rough seas. Instead of cancelling the trip to Portsmouth, we decided to push the departure time back to 11:30 a.m. to see if the system cleared. There was a little surplus in the budget and there were 14 wet hungry college students, so the logical solution was to descend on the Pony Island Restaurant for breakfast. Spirits brightened and laughter flowed as stomachs filled and the sky cleared south and east of us. We added a spontaneous exploration of the Ocracoke Lighthouse, and by the time we assembled at the dock, the sun shone brightly on the smooth blue expanse of the open water between us and Portsmouth Island.

At week's end, when participants reflected on the most meaningful experiences of the past few days, all agreed the whale necropsy was one of the most memorable—an event no one could have imagined being on the schedule—but more than a few also listed the day that started so wet and dreary, yet ended with a sublime walk along a pristine beach on a deserted island. Spontaneity, flexibility, and an openness to the unexpected added to the growth of us all. Not only is the design of the Partners in the Parks experience replicable in any park, but I think all who have led a project will agree that it always feels as if, somehow, exactly the right students elected to participate and even if it had been possible to handpick a group, they could not have been better than the close-knit friends who had been strangers a week earlier.

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## **CHAPTER 3:**

# **THINK CAMPING IS A GETAWAY?**

## ***THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM PAPERWORK!***

Although the preliminary paperwork for PITP excursions is extensive, the NCHC Partners in the Parks Committee and Southern Utah University (SUU) offer a great deal of help. SUU hosts the official PITP website, processes student registration and scholarship applications, serves as liaisons with NPS, and if desired collects fees and sets up program accounts for payment.

As soon as the project has been approved by the PITP Committee and the park and dates are confirmed, the PITP Committee will post the program description and other essential information, including fees, suggested clothing and equipment, proposed itinerary, and photos on the PITP website. The photos taken during preliminary visits to the park will be extremely useful for advertising.

Everyone who has led a previous adventure is hoping for a breakthrough in innovative advertising methods. So far coordinators have walked mostly well-worn paths:

- Announcements in the NCHC E-Letter.
- Announcements in regional and state honors newsletters.
- Workshops at honors conferences.
- Listserv announcements with posters attached. (The Acadia National Park program used color flyers in two sizes; small ones that could be sent out embedded in email messages and a large size that was sent as an attachment for honors directors to reproduce and hang in the office or student lounge. (See Appendix F for samples of the posters from Acadia and from Fire Island.)
- Brochures. (These can be sent as attachments to be printed locally at NCHC member institutions. They can be distributed at regional conferences. Other programs have used double-sided tri-folds. (See Appendix F for the single-sheet Cape Hatteras flyer.)

Because of the potential of using new social networking technologies, group leaders are invited to test these waters and help PITP reach potential participants. Students might well be the key to reaching broader honors student population. Ultimately PITP is trying to

### CHAPTER 3: THINK CAMPING IS A GETAWAY?

encourage a mixture of students from various regions and home institutions. The more diverse the group, the more exciting the conversations that will take place during the adventure.

Diversity of ethnicity is of particular interest to the National Park Service. Its data reveal little ethnic diversity in the population of current park visitors, which makes NPS especially eager to expand its outreach to ethnic minorities. That NCHC typically brings an ethnically diverse contingent of students on PITP adventures has assisted in building the relationship with NPS. Scholarships to encourage students from ethnic minorities would be a welcome outreach. Where these are made available, they should be advertised.

To date, PITP relies largely on honors program directors and deans to disseminate information. Involving faculty and honors advisors might also be helpful, along with publicity posted through internal honors Listservs or social-networking channels. Since no honors student network exists, these strategies remain the best methods for the moment.

When students see a flyer or go to the PITP website and then express an interest in a program, coordinators should communicate with them via e-mail to answer questions, to establish a connection with the students, and to give them a personal sense of the expectations. A coordinator's enthusiasm and direct contact can be strong factors in helping them choose to join in the adventure. Currently students are able to register and pay their fees using forms posted online by SUU, which will process these payments and facilitate record keeping. Host institutions may prefer to register students and collect fees locally. In either case SUU remains a locus of administration for PITP and will be helpful.

Among the information gathered at registration are important details about the physical condition of the students. This includes stamina or the ability to walk or hike for several miles or hours and specific health issues such as breathing, joint or back problems, low or high blood sugar, food allergies, special diets, or a history of seizures. Reading this information carefully is critical because of the accommodations that must be made for people with special needs. The same form requests that students with Red Cross, Life Saving, or First Responder training also identify themselves; thus students in the group can provide help or back-up support if necessary. Knowing the levels of capability among the participants will facilitate constructing a program with alternative activities that satisfy everyone. Of course, nothing is perfect. Someone afraid of the dark or of heights might be too embarrassed to put that down on an application; an obese student in denial



might be unable to self-report. We have had experiences with both and have worked around them. I can remember crawling out on a ledge at Bryce Canyon in order to take the hand of a girl paralyzed in her tracks. In the other situation, we had to remove a student by boat from a hike she was physically unable to complete. The data from the forms help but do not supplement the vigilance by students, faculty, and rangers, who come together in ways that amplify the power of the experience.

As with any student travel program, risk management is a legitimate concern worth repeating in full from the PITP *Best Practices Manual*. (See Appendix A.)

Institutions that have participants in this program must provide proof of liability insurance coverage in the form of a Certificate of Insurance. The Certificate of Insurance is produced by the institution's insurance provider upon request by the insured entity. The Certificate will include the amount of liability insurance coverage provided and a description of what the coverage is for [example: student, John Doe's participation in the academic adventure program at Denali National Park, August 7–15, 2010, under the auspices of University of Alaska, Fairbanks]. The Certificate must name Southern Utah University and the National Collegiate Honors Council as additionally insured. The completed document must be sent by mail to the PITP Project Director at least two weeks prior to the event. The Project Director should forward a copy to the SUU Program Coordinator. Both the PITP Program Coordinator at SUU and the Project Director should keep file copies of all Certificates of Insurance to insure that all participants have the appropriate coverage from their home institution.

The home institution, SUU, and NCHC will not be responsible for medical, health, or accident-related expenses that are not liability related. Having this type of insurance is the responsibility of the participant. Therefore, every participant must also complete and sign the PITP Waiver of Liability and the Waiver, Release and Indemnification Agreement. (See Appendix D3–4.) Among other information this document asks for the participant's health insurance carrier and policy number.

Another important document is the Photo Release Form (Appendix D6). Everyone on the adventure will be taking photographs throughout the journey. PITP as well as NCHC and all the student home institutions may wish to use photos for future advertising, articles, and website and

### CHAPTER 3: THINK CAMPING IS A GETAWAY?

other postings. The National Park Service may also be interested in some of the photographs taken on the trip. If corporate sponsors are involved, they, too, might wish to use photographs in their own advertising. Procuring signed photo releases from all the participating students and faculty prior to the start of the trip will alleviate any concerns about permissions and copyrights. Do it before the start of the trip. Students asleep in the van may make for some engaging first photos!



Typical student travel mode

The students, one can hope, might just be resting from their late-night, last-minute reading of the materials sent to prepare them for the trip. Actually, most of the students do the readings well in advance of their arrival. Of all the paperwork connected to PITP, the readings are what coordinators and faculty colleagues most enjoy hunting and gathering. Putting together a packet of materials—best delivered electronically a few weeks before the program—can also bring faculty together as a bonded teaching cohort. Some of the most exciting evenings in Acadia were spent quite literally around the campfire, talking about Sarah Orne Jewett’s “The White Heron” and Thoreau’s essay on “Walking,” which is a classic worthy of inclusion on every adventure.

The trick is to encourage the teaching faculty to choose essential texts that will generate lively discussions. The wider the range, the more interesting the conversations are likely to be. Faculty presenters should range freely. Some selections may be about the park or the history of the area, but works by regional poets, fiction writers, anthropologists, philosophers, and artists also generate exciting reflections. Most

important is that students and faculty receive the complete collection as electronic attachments some weeks before the program and have a chance to read the pieces in advance or at least in transit to the meeting point. The readings provide both depth and commonality to park explorations. Intellects blazing during heated discussions are a great thing on a cold night around a campfire!

Once the program falls into place, gaining the assurance of commitment from faculty and park rangers, the coordinators can block the actual itinerary. Meals, travel to various park sites, park ranger talks, faculty workshops, hikes, river/harbor/lake adventures, volunteer work, recreation, and downtime need to be blocked into place. The Black Canyon itinerary, which was constructed in block units, made the full plan visually transparent. Color coding each type of session distinguishes and emphasizes the varieties of experience.

A week is a long time for people to be in close quarters virtually 24 hours a day. Variety is essential. The Acadia program, for example, is divided into three daily group learning experiences—morning, afternoon and evening—that are separated by breaks and recreation. Bryce combined group experiences with solo opportunities that enabled people to explore on their own for blocks of time. Since every national park offers a great many options and exciting places to see, the tendency is to over-schedule. Among the most consistent student comments at the end of a program is that the downtime to write and reflect is insufficient. Although some changes will occur on site, the finalized program should be sent electronically with the readings so that the students have a clear idea of what to expect during each day of the week. Going into the unknown produces some anxiety, so having the program spelled out like a syllabus will allay both student and parent concerns about the nature of the trip. Printed copies should be distributed as well when the group first gathers. Everyone will be referring to them throughout the trip.

The itinerary can also be used to introduce students to the rangers and faculty who will be joining them throughout the week. Brief biographies of rangers and faculty, with their backgrounds and areas of expertise, will help students anticipate workshops from presenters who are distinguished professionals in their fields. Since PITP seminars are part of a program that is thoroughly integrated with recreation, introducing the academic components in a way that will encourage the students to become fully engaged in these sessions is important. Introductory biographies of the presenters establish a serious and respectful tone.

### CHAPTER 3: THINK CAMPING IS A GETAWAY?

During the year-and-a-half process of preparing for a PITP program, a journal or log can be extremely useful in organizing ideas. Presuming that a program will be offered more than once, directors should keep a record of events leading up to the first program. This will enable the second version to fall more easily into place. Moreover, because program coordinators are completely absorbed during the trip, they are unlikely to find time to jot down more than the barest scraps of notes between flipping pancakes, driving to trail heads, or locating the next ranger. For coordinators who produce a report at the end of the adventure, preliminary notes will jog the memory of how everything came together. By that time, they should also have some reflective writing from the students to fill in the blanks and keep the adventure alive with all the voices and personalities that made it rich.

My own experiences have compelled me to write articles about PITP adventures on flights home and during the following days as I was downloading photos and reminiscing. My university likes to post articles about honors on the website and in alumni communication, so the administration has always appreciated these illustrated pieces. Many other universities take pride in having students participate and include PITP in newsletters and advertising. I always find pleasure in stumbling upon PITP adventures on the Internet.

*In the Field Notes that follow, Heather Thiessen-Reily provides samples of the readings she chose for Black Canyon of the Gunnison, along with her discussion about shaping PITP as a credit-bearing program. The itinerary she distributes indicates clearly when in the course of the week the readings will be discussed.*



## **FIELD NOTES**



# **A THEME RUNS THROUGH IT: OFFERING PITP FOR ACADEMIC CREDIT**

**HEATHER THIESSEN-REILY**  
WESTERN STATE COLLEGE OF COLORADO

“Rain. Clouds, Water.... Here the last rainmaker with pin-wheels, smoke sticks, bells, stands singing on a stone, and conjures clouds.”

—Jane Candia Coleman, *The Rainmaker*

And that is what it felt like—as if we were conjuring something simply out of enthusiasm and a deep belief in the idea of sacred places. It was not as if we were unprepared: I had participated in the “US-Mexico Borders, Barrios, and Boundaries” PITP program; Angela Fioretti, our honors student assistant, had returned from PITP Grand Canyon-Parashant as a true believer; and my colleague Jerry Frank had not only grown up near the Black Canyon but had written his master’s thesis about it.\* In many ways we were well prepared to develop our own PITP Program for the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. Of course we could not just use the already-tested and successful model that Matt Nickerson and Todd Peterson had developed for PITP: we had to incorporate a National Recreation Area and offer this PITP program FOR ACADEMIC CREDIT.

As our intrepid little band began the discussions of how to organize the PITP Black Canyon experience, we agreed that we wanted to develop a program that could be offered for academic credit. We made this decision for many reasons besides the obvious appeal it might have for recruiting students to the program. By offering the program for credit, we hoped that students would be able to use financial aid and

Photo by Heather Thiessen-Reilly



On the rim of Black Canyon

thus, in effect, encourage the widening of program participation in the spirit of the democratic ideology that has been so central, according to Roderick Nash, in the development of the national parks system from its beginning (726). Working with our Extended Studies Office, we easily set up the course for academic credit. The other benefit of working through Extended Studies was that we avoided the in-state/out-of-state issue of college tuition. We could still restrict registration to honors students, but they could come from around the country and would earn 3 upper-division academic credits for only \$550. The structural issues of setting up PITP for academic credit turned out to be no barrier at all. Yet, however easy this part was, what academic credit would mean in the context of a weeklong camping experience in a national park was less clear to us.

Few people would argue that one's experiences do not add to one's knowledge or understanding of the world; however, there is greater debate about whether an experience in itself is worthy of academic credit. Over the last decade there has been a greater acceptance in higher education of experience-based epistemology; although one might acknowledge the value of such experiences, questions still surround assessment of actual student learning. Clearly, spending a week at one of America's most awe-inspiring natural wonders has an intrinsic

value, and PITP programs have indeed challenged students' perceptions and led to personal transformation, but these often highly individualized experiences present challenges in determining whether such personal experiences can be assessed and measured within existing assessment models of academia. Some of our colleagues better versed in experiential education and outdoor leadership may express justified and outright rejection of our concerns; however, for two historians who come from an academic field where experiential learning is limited to collecting oral histories or to inhaling that odd-tasting aroma that lingers in archives, the idea that simply the experience itself was enough to earn academic credit created a quandary. Offering and accepting credit for our own honors students would be one thing, but we suspected that the experience, no matter how personally transforming or informative it could be for the participating student, might not be enough to warrant other honors programs accepting the credit.

Being academics, we immediately decided to require the students to read. Clearly, many profound discussions can and have taken place around campfires and inside tents, but we needed to ensure that these conversations were grounded in more than just what the students experienced during the day. We needed to prepare them to participate in the conversations with all those amazing park rangers rather than just be recipients of information. We wanted to combine the experiential approaches of NCHC's City as Text™ or what we refer to in our honors program as "Place as Text," with content knowledge built into a collection of academic readings that would inform the students and enhance their experience. We thought about the purpose of PITP, the history of national parks, and what was unique and important about our park, the Black Canyon; from there, we developed a set of themes for our program. These themes were intended to contextualize the students' experiences without restricting or overly directing them. We also wanted to explore themes that would complement the sessions offered by the park rangers. Ultimately we decided upon three major themes: "Conceptualizing National Parks," "Whose Story Is It Anyway?" and "Watering the West." My colleague, Dr. Jerry Frank, then pulled together some choice readings and created a brief discussion guide to provide a basis for evening sessions around the campfire. We emailed the packet of readings to all the participating students well in advance of the course. We also created three folders of the readings to take with us during the week so students could access them as needed.



## ***Conceptualizing National Parks and Whose Story Is It Anyway?***

These two themes often interacted through the week. While each PITP experience is as unique as its location, we felt that it was important for the students not only to have a basic introduction to how and why the national park system was formed but more importantly for discussions, also to be able to consider how the parks have been understood and conceptualized through time. We felt very strongly the need to incorporate lost voices in the consideration of national parks, especially those of First Nations peoples, and these readings gave students the opportunity to consider not only what is gained by the creation of national parks but also what may have been lost. The theme of “Whose Story Is It Anyway?” also informed the discussions concerning the issues involved with preservation and conservation as well as the implications of areas designated as Wilderness within National Parks. Returning to some of these readings at the end of the week was especially interesting. Students’ responses and analyses clearly developed over the course of the week, so this turned out to be a useful learning assessment mechanism.

### **Excerpts from the 2009 PITP Black Canyon of the Gunnison Reading List:**

**Conceptualizing National Parks:** The following readings are intended to frame the historic background of national parks, to address their complex meaning and significance, and to offer a look into how Americans of generations past understood such places.

Nash, Roderick. “The American Invention of National Parks.” *American Quarterly* 22.3 (1970): 726–735.

In this important piece, historian Roderick Nash offers insight into the unique set of social, economic, and institutional circumstances that allowed for the development of the national park concept in the United States prior to any other place in the world. After reading this article, you should be able to identify and discuss each of those factors responsible for the creation of national parks, ponder any trends or factors that Nash failed to mention, and think about how modern American society relates to our national parks.

Spence, Mark David. *Dispossessing the Wilderness*. New York: Oxford UP, 2000. 53–76.

For decades, Nash and other historians interpreted national parks as reflections of the best our society had to offer. Amidst rapid industrial growth—according to many—men and women of the United States had the foresight and wisdom to set aside places of great natural beauty. In this piece, historian Mark Spence complicates our understanding of national parks by highlighting their relationship with Native Americans. Take the major points made by this chapter and compare them to the main points made in Roderick Nash's article. What do national parks tell us about democracy in America? How does this piece shed new light on national parks and their place in modern American society? Their relationship with historically marginalized people?

Ross-Bryant, Lynn, "Sacred Sites: Nature and Nation in the U.S. National Parks." *Religion and American Culture* 15:1 (2005): 31–62. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4140106>>.

Geographer Yi Fu Tuan argued the simple equation: space + culture = place. This challenging reading deals with the messy process of designating socially significant spaces. Try not to get tied up in the language, but rather strive to understand how we use national parks as sacred spaces and the important consequences of that process.

**Indians of Western Colorado: This set of readings is intended to offer you general information about this region's earliest human inhabitants, a smattering of stories they used to understand the universe and their place within it, and a local example of Native displacement as a necessary precursor to the creation of American sacred sites like Black Canyon National Park.**

Ubelaker, Douglas, William C. Sturtevant, and Dennis Stanford, eds. *Handbook of North American Indians*. Washington: GPO, 2007: 3: 336–367.

Kroeber, A. L., "Ute Tales." *Journal of American Folklore* 14:55 (October–December 1901): 252–285. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/533352>>.

## **Deadheading the Exotic: How Three Hours of Pulling Weeds Along a Roadside Can Lead to a Provocative Discussion of Who and What Belongs**

One of the most rewarding and important elements of PITP is the chance for the students to give back to the parks through a meaningful service project. Since our course was in August, the service project the park asked us to take on was deadheading several exotic plant species along the roadside near the park entrance. We met with Ranger Danguole Bockus who instructed us on how to deadhead and what to deadhead, and then we were set loose along the road with our bright orange vests, leather gloves, huge garbage bags, and deadly looking garden shears. She told us to do as much as we felt like; any amount of help would be appreciated. Being typical honors students, over three hours and a number of very heavy and full garbage bags later, we considered it a job well done. Having known that the service project would be exotic weed control, I had added to the reading list John Rodman's "Restoring Nature: Natives and Exotics" from Jane Bennett and William Chaloupka's *In the Nature of Things: Language, Politics and the Environment* (U of Minnesota P, 1993). Since the essay was about the restoration of California coastal dunes, the choice may have been risky. But around the campfire that night, the students seized on the article's introduction, when Rodman observes that "the control, removal, and sometimes eradication of exotic species of plants and animals is the negative moment in the dialectic of ecological restoration, in complement to the positive moment of planting, reintroduction, and so on. But what does it mean to be an exotic, as distinct from a native, and why is this important?" (139). Having just spent the albeit enjoyable afternoon participating in the "negative moment of the ecological restoration dialectic," the students were intrigued with the challenge of determining how one designates an exotic and establishing the moment when being an exotic becomes a problem. The conversation moved from exotic and native plant species to the human dimension, which brought the group full circle to the theme of "Whose Story Is It Anyway" and the experiences of First Nations Peoples within the national parks. The students were quick to follow up with Ranger Bockus later in the week when they met with her to talk about Wilderness and Fire Management in the Black Canyon; the students had read excerpts from Stephen Pyne's classic

work, *Smokechasing* (Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2003). The inclusion of the Rodman article and the ensuing discussion allowed us to meet all three criteria of a successful service-learning project according to the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993: the project not only met the needs of the community (in this case the National Park) and helped foster civic responsibility on the part of the students, it also integrated an afternoon of deadheading exotics into an academic curriculum.

## **Whiskey's for Drinkin' and Water's for Fightin'**

Of all the themes developed for PITP Black Canyon, "Watering the West" was the most important to us. For this theme we consciously organized sessions and experiences that related to western water issues. The Black Canyon National Park, the Gunnison River and its dam systems, the Diversion Tunnel, the Blue Mesa Reservoir, and the Curecanti National Recreation Area tell the tale of water in the West. During the week, we had the students above the water, beside the water, on the water, and in the water. The students learned about the nineteenth-century Torrence and Fellows expedition through the canyon, the construction of the diversion tunnel to make the surrounding high altitude desert bloom, the damming and regulating of the river, and the creation of the reservoir. They met with Ranger Ken Stahlnecker to learn about water resource issues in the West and in the national park, enjoyed a guided boat tour on the river through the canyon, learned how to test for an invasive mussel species from the park's marine biologist, explored the reservoir via a pontoon boat, and toured the inside of one of the dams constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation. Readings about humans' attempts to shape the surrounding environment through the harnessing, control, and redirection of water supplemented these experiences. (See the section of Pavel Goriacko's essay appearing in the Field Notes to Chapter 8 for an assessment of the impact of using water as a theme for PITP Black Canyon.)

### **A Sample from the PITP Black Canyon of the Gunnison Reading List:**

**Watering the West: As we explore Black Canyon National Park, you will quickly see that the desire to set aside such breathtaking landscapes has existed side by side with another equally powerful impulse in the American West. Beginning with some of the earliest Native American inhabitants and continuing to the present, humans have spent considerable time, energy, and**

**capital addressing one stubborn reality of the West—its aridity. In places like the Black Canyon, the impulse to preserve (i.e., the creation of national parks) has operated in tension with the impulse to conserve natural resources like water so that a very specific type of western settlement could exist. The following readings are intended to introduce you to the broad significance of resource development in the West, exploration of the Black Canyon, and the diversion of the Gunnison River to promote agricultural development and settlement on the western slope of Colorado.**

Worster, Donald. "Hydraulic Society." *Under Western Skies: Nature and History in the American West*. New York: Oxford UP, 1994. 53–63.

Donald Worster is one of the foremost western/environmental historians and has written often and thoughtfully about the relationship between water and our unique western society. Drawing from the concepts initially put forth by historian Karl Wittfogel, Worster explains how and why he believes the American West to be a good example of a hydraulic society. By article's end, you should be able to define and discuss what a hydraulic society is and be able to explore the political and social consequence of a society so ordered. Does the Gunnison Tunnel reflect a hydraulic society?

Beidleman, Richard G. "The Gunnison River Diversion Project." *Colorado Magazine* 36.2 (1959): 187–201.

As was the case with the Mark Warner article, Beidleman's article was included to give you a sense of how many Americans thought about the development of water in the West. Bearing in mind that Beidleman wrote this article in an era characterized by the most ambitious, expansive, and expensive water development projects in human history, what does his essay tell us about resource development and the "American mind" at mid-century? How—and why—has our understanding of resource use changed since this article was penned?

Tennesen, Michael. "A River Runs Through Them." *National Parks* (Winter 2006): 40–46.

In what ways is the Black Canyon exemplary of the legal, social, and ecological tensions between resource protection and conservation (i.e., the desire to develop water resources)?

The final assessment piece for ensuring the PITP Black Canyon deserved to award students three academic credits was requiring student presentations, either individual or group based. At the beginning of the week, we told the students they would have to develop a short presentation based on anything they experienced or learned during the week and present it on the last afternoon of the course. We expected to see a thoughtful consideration and analysis of whatever topic they chose as well as the incorporation of relevant information from the course readings and discussions. The students did a good job, and a number of the presentations sprang directly from the readings reinforced by the students' national park experiences.

Ultimately we felt that identifying relevant themes for our PITP program and carefully choosing related readings ensured that evening discussions moved beyond simple chats about the day's experiences to conversations about experiences grounded not only in academic content but in larger philosophical issues. The only thing we would recommend doing differently is leaving out the readings that covered what the rangers and park interpretive staff did so well in person. The readings that elicited the most thoughtful discussion tended to be those that raised larger issues such as those by Nash, Rodman, Ross-Bryant, Worcester, and Tennesen. The readings also prepared the students for a more productive interaction with the park rangers and ensured that the students could, in a sense, own rather than just receive information. We developed assessment mechanisms that allowed us to justify awarding academic credit and circumvent those inevitable comments about getting "3 credits for camping?!" Even the two reluctant historians felt very much at home in a classroom whose walls simply melted away into the spectacular scenery around us.

*\*Special thanks to my amazing colleague Dr. Jerry Frank and to our wonderful honors student assistant Angela Fioretti, an alum of the PITP Grand Canyon-Parashant program.*

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# CHAPTER 4:

## DUCKS IN A ROW

### Packing for the Trip

Students regardless of gender do not always pack light. Those with experience camping may already have the good sense to abide by the list of clothing and equipment posted on the PITP website, but it does not hurt to strongly remind students that designer logo items and color coordination of trendy T-shirts are less important than comfort, warmth, and protection from the elements. The number of changes of clothes students can pack into a weeklong trip is amazing. In spite of the suggested clothing list, which fits on a third of a page, they stuff towels, cosmetics and hair dryers, soaps and shampoos, flip-flops and bathing suits, jackets and jeans, and laptops and iPods into gigantic rolling suitcases. Here is the list:

#### CLOTHING

- Hat(s) (brimmed for sun protection, wool/fleece for cool weather)
- Shirts (T-shirts and some long sleeved for cooler weather and sun protection)
- Jackets (windbreaker/rain jacket and fleece/wool jacket)
- Pants (loose fitting and light colored—Nylon/polyester fabrics are best; jeans are not recommended for hiking.)
- Long underwear (polypropylene recommended)
- Boots/shoes (Sturdy footwear is highly recommended; lightweight boots are great.)
- Socks (lightweight inner socks with thicker, preferably wool or wool-blend outer socks)
- Shorts (option for warmer weather)
- Bathing suit (option for programs that include water sites)

This list seems simple enough, but directors should be prepared for colorful pajamas and expensive designer jeans rather than the nylon/polyester fabrics recommended for hiking. Favorite pillows and stuffed animals have taken part in PITP adventures. Coordinators should also expect some stupid shoes, not enough socks, and even underwear issues!

## CHAPTER 4: DUCKS IN A ROW

The expedition will offer absolutely *no occasion for dressing up*; the trip leader should advise students to leave their club clothes home. There will be *no* time for laundry, so spelling out and repeating the important items to bring may be one of the most helpful communications to prepare students for the trip. Depending on the program site, scarves, gloves, sunglasses, or an umbrella and foul weather gear may also be essential items added to the list.

Everyone who packs for this trip must be made conscious and respectful of limited space. Because each student must bring a daypack as well as a larger bag or suitcase, keeping luggage to a reasonable, even minimal size, is a great help. Vans taking the group to the park will need to carry all the food—and sometimes water—for a week. Tents, sleeping bags, camp stoves, and other gear also have to be carted by van into the campground. The more luggage, the more everyone becomes a sardine in the mobile tin. Indeed, packing the vans is an art in itself; often faculty members who join the caravan in their own cars may need to bring along some of the goods.

On the morning that students were preparing for their 13-mile hike along the boardwalk of Fire Island, I agreed to take all of their gear back to the mainland through the courtesy of a park ranger with a boat. Whenever I think of luggage, I am reminded of the hour I spent on the dock, applying more and more sunscreen and thinking about how I intended to transport all this baggage to the van parked on the other side. Fortunately, a student opting out of the long hike decided to join me.

Emphasizing that students should bring the following is critical:

- **THE PACKET OF DOWNLOADED READINGS.** There is no room for “I left my book at home” on this journey.
- A camera and binoculars if they have a pair.
- Only the clothing they will need—with sensible extras in case of rain, rips, or other unforeseeable events. For example, extra hats are good. Hats have been known to fly over canyon rims in a strong wind.
- No liquids beyond what is permitted by law if they are traveling by plane.
- No camp stoves if traveling by plane.
- Enough batteries to power whatever needs powering. Electric outlets may be rare and far between. Hair dryers and laptops should remain at home.

JOAN DIGBY

- No suitcase, backpack, or duffle bag so heavy that the student cannot manage it alone. No bag should be so big that it will make traveling by crowded van and sharing space in a small tent uncomfortable for others. There is no valet service on a PITP trip. In fact, students should anticipate fewer conveniences than when they travel with family or friends in other situations. (See Chapter 8, Creature Discomforts.)



Look at all the “stuff” they brought for just one night of camping!

## How Much Equipment is Enough?

This reasonable question is answered in part by the Basic Trip Equipment list in Appendix B. Students who have their own tents and sleeping bags will almost certainly be more comfortable in them than in rented equipment. This was clearly the case for a seven-foot Eagle Scout who came on the pilot PITP adventure! Sharing a tent would have been impossible for him. On the other hand, if a student's tent is large enough for house guests, the owner may be willing to share it with one or two other students. Most students enjoy group tent living, but the program should accommodate people who prefer, for whatever reason, to camp alone in a single tent. Whoever leads the excursion should seek a rental service (some universities have them on site) with a variety of options for tents as well as sleeping bags and pads.

Beyond the basics, campers, it turns out, have quite an individual sense of comfort and style. Two of the faculty participants in Acadia brought a string of colorful night lanterns and inflatable mattresses, making their tents five-star accommodations in a fashionable neighborhood. Other experienced campers knew to bring inflatable mattress pads and pillows to ensure a good night's sleep cushioned from the hard ground. Novices figured out how to adapt clothing and towels. This is all part of the adventure.

Among the most essential equipment that everyone will need are water bottles, plate, cup, bowl, eating utensils, a flashlight, bandanas, toilet paper, plastic baggies, insect repellent, lip balm, sunscreen, notebook, pens/pencils, and a knapsack or day pack. Students who take regular medications should bring enough for at least a week. In all probability, getting to a pharmacy once the group reaches the park will be difficult if not impossible. In Denali, a student on antibiotics had come to the end of his supply without getting well. Fortunately, a most compassionate Park Ranger, Education Specialist Kristen Friesen, volunteered to accompany him back to park headquarters to get medical help and bed rest. In no small measure she saved his trip and ours. The sensible strategy is encouraging students to pack twice the medications needed for a week and stow half of each supply in a different bag. Having a bag lost or stolen is not unknown. A student who misses the flight home will be glad to have extra medications in a handbag or backpack.

While each student may not need to bring the following items, someone, presumably the group leaders, should be responsible for packing them:

- First-aid kit(s)
- Matches, lighter, or other fire-starter tool
- Easy fire-starter material
- Compass
- Extra flashlights and batteries
- Disposable digital cameras
- Pocketknife
- Map and/or GPS unit—also useful for finding the students!

## **Rounding Up the Students**

Students converge on a PITP adventure from all across the country. Directions for how and where to meet the group should be posted on the website describing the program. Some may drive or be driven to the meeting place. Others will take a bus, train, or plane, arriving throughout the course of a day. It happens a little like Hitchcock's *The Birds*. First there is one, then another, and another until the space fills up with students and their gear. Like the seagulls, they do not communicate with each other immediately as they land. All seem a bit nervous and unsure, eyes peering everywhere, until the first wave, the first greeting, the first acknowledgment that they have come to the right place. Cell phones, admittedly, do make rounding students up at these first meetings a much easier process than it would have been a decade ago. Obviously, the students should have the cell phone numbers of the leaders, and the leaders should have the students' phone numbers before the travel period begins. Knowing that they can also receive a message with instructions for meeting the group is reassuring. Students generally make the first contact and then come looking for the waiting car or van after their plane lands.

Many participants in the first Fire Island to Ellis Island adventure got to know each other well as we circled New York's John F. Kennedy Airport, waiting for late arrivals. I had thought to pack the van with hardboiled eggs, bagels, grapes, and water; thus we were able to picnic and chat between arrivals. (That day I learned something new; there is a free cell-phone parking lot that is densely populated with limousines and cabs. Never again will I be conned into paying a surcharge to a taxi service that claimed they paid to wait for my plane! As Martha Stewart would say and I complete, "You can learn something new every day . . . [from *Partners in the Parks*].")

The rendezvous for Bryce, Zion, and Acadia involve coming into town or campus a day prior to departure for the park. At those sites, participants are assisted in making their own arrangements for shared, low-end hotel rooms for that one night. This layover is a great time for a final hot shower since the opportunity (little do they know) might not present itself again for several days. If arriving participants can be rounded up, that first evening also offers a good time to break bread together: perhaps a pizza party in an honors lounge or dinner at an inexpensive local restaurant. How true it is that the taste of a first Maine lobster roll whets the appetite for everything that is to come.

## Breaking Bread

The night before we departed for Acadia, students and faculty members shared a meal at a local restaurant. “Shared” is the operative word. We each ordered something different and made offerings to each other. The process itself is community building, family building, trust building. Having just read Michael Pollen’s *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, I was reminded of the section on mushroom tasting in which the author comments that the human ability to distinguish edible plants from poisonous ones is “one of the most critical tools of survival” (372). On this occasion the message was not about surviving but passing along qualitative taste in gestures of friendship: “See, it’s delicious. Try it.” Since we would be cooking and sharing food over the next week, acknowledging what is delicious and that we are willing to try new dishes makes for a good starting point.

Food is also the great leveler. Students and faculty may relate to each other formally or informally at different institutions. First names are common in art schools but not in business colleges. In the PITP setting the group is by nature informal, so first names are totally appropriate. In many situations, moreover, the professors are learning while the students—experienced campers and majors in ecology, marine biology, and geology—are often the teachers. Around the table, sharing dinner on that first evening is a good way to put faculty and students perfectly at ease with each other as an unstratified community.

Establishing such a community also means transcending identification by academic class. The students who came to Acadia ranged from rising sophomores to graduate students. On their home campuses they might feel vastly separated from one another, but spearing a chunk of lobster as it passes around the dinner table shifts attention to the shared experience of the new society that will come together during

the excursion. There is a good reason that King Arthur made his table round.

Bringing the group together in a warm, hospitable atmosphere also alleviates other concerns. Some participants may be experiencing their first flight or trip away from family, their first camping adventure, or their first time mingling with honors students from other universities. Everyone who has arrived has stepped into The Great Unknown. Leaders should be especially cognizant of those who appear naturally shy or anxious. Since the whole adventure will last only a week, this first coming together is an essential step in team building.

Student interns can be really helpful in talking about plans, showing students the campus and honors digs, and generally playing host. "Where do you go to school? What year are you in? What's your major? Did you ever go on one of these before? What music is on your iPod?" The conversation will start to flow before too long. I can remember card games and Scrabble naturally emerging on those first evenings. Cell phones and Blackberrys, which would soon prove useless in a canyon, emerged from backpacks to be circulated as electronic photo albums of friends and family.

## Thinking About Tomorrow

After the pizza party that opened the first Fire Island to Ellis Island trip, my colleague Joan Harrison, professor of photography, gave an hour's illustrated talk about photographing nature in our region. Having just published a book about the history of a local city, Glen Cove, and its natural environs, she was able to use her photographs to discuss many of the key elements that would help students as they used their cameras to photograph nature during our explorations. Since students had just viewed the clipped heads, out-of-focus dogs, and all the other grab shots in cell phone albums, her presentation provided a useful introduction to the journey and the expectations for capturing it. Because the group would be hauling sails aboard the *Christeen*, a historic gaff-rigged oyster sloop, and sailing past Billy Joel's house in Oyster Bay harbor the next morning, I wanted them to see the landscape through focused lenses, thinking as they composed their photographs. I had already told them that they would be choosing a selection of their images to download in our computer lab for the presentations that they would make later in the week. It takes some time to think about nature through a photographer's eye. Harrison's presentation was a good beginning.





Aboard the oyster sloop *Christeen*

Two years later in Acadia, I presented my own nature photography session. Because we were already in the park and had no access to a projector, I produced a small book of sample images and gathered the students around a picnic table to talk about them. This adaptation worked perfectly well. (See the Field Notes at the end of this chapter.)

Whether the first evening is spent purely at dinner or includes a presentation, the important thing is to eat, enjoy, and get to know one another. Ending early is advisable so that everyone gets a good night's sleep.

## Count Off

In the morning when the group gathers with packed bags at the designated meeting place for departure, all of the necessary paperwork submitted weeks ago (medical, liability, and photography forms) should be reviewed one last time for completeness. At this point, any missing forms can be filled out and signed. The program leader should collect and safely stow these documents in a glove compartment so that they are readily available in an emergency.

## JOAN DIGBY

When the vans were packed for the drive to Acadia, Kathleen King called all the eager participants around and gathered them into the first magnetic circle. We touched elbows and let our eyes flow from person to person. She explained that every day we would form a circle, quiet our thoughts, come into the moment, and reflect on our experiences together.



Magnetic circles

Then she distributed copies of the schedule. “You need to use it. I don’t wake you, tell you when it’s dinner time or when the vans are pulling out. You are on your own from now on.” Then she gave each of us a number, and we counted off around the ring. We used this exercise throughout our travels to make certain that we never left anyone behind. All the ducks were now in a row and mother led the way!

*From the very start of a PITP adventure, people begin to take photographs. How to think photographically is the subject of the next Field Notes. This is followed by a “decisive moment” when Rony Enriquez shot one of the most memorable photographs in the history of PITP.*

### Work Cited

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## THINKING WITH A PHOTOGRAPHER'S EYE

JOAN DIGBY

LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY—C.W. POST CAMPUS

*First presented as a photography workshop in Acadia, 2009, then revised for  
Fire Island to Ellis Island and Denali in 2010*

Years ago good photography was much more about equipment than it is today. The greatest photographer of America's national parks, Ansel Adams, was known for setting his tripod and large format camera on top of his car roof at Yosemite and waiting days for the perfect light to make El Capitan glow. Until quite recently serious photography required expensive cameras and lenses, light meters, flash units, tripods, and hours of intense darkroom work spent trying to capture black and white images on silver gelatin papers. The digital age has changed all these elements. Not only the single lens reflex (SLR) but even tiny point-and-shoot cameras can produce large, sharp images in black and white or color, adjust for various atmospheric situations, and switch to moving picture mode with sound. Poor results are now inexcusable. With a good eye and virtually any camera on the market, everyone has the potential to take fine photos without investing in equipment or working in a darkroom.

In fact, photos have always had more to do with the eye than with the tools. Photography is about what the observers see, when they see it, and how they structure or frame it. Here we are, camping in the Maine woods surrounded by potentially brilliant images. Learning to observe elements of our immersion in nature and transform them into balanced photographic images is the subject of this workshop.

Some time ago, I spent a week with another group of students in Hawaii. In my experience, when students get together, they are keen to

## FIELD NOTES: THINKING WITH A PHOTOGRAPHER'S EYE

make friends and capture the excitement of every moment in pictures. At the outset of a journey, they mainly see each other and therefore photograph each other. In Hawaii my students took group pictures at every scenic spot and portraits of what they were doing virtually around the clock. These pictures are what we generally call “record shots.” Many were also what I call “ego shots,” pictures taken posing and smiling, performing for the camera. (Try taking one right now!) What would you do with it?—put it on Facebook, send it to parents, make a scrapbook of the journey. Sharing images has been done since the beginning of photography. We treasure historic record shots; they become part of our life's history.



Classic ego shot

One aspect of this kind of shooting is useful. In making ego portraits, the photographer gets very close to the subject and fills the camera frame. These are both good ideas that can be applied to the photography we will do on this trip.

Poor photography is often the result of shooting from a distance too far away from the subject. When the subject is people, shooting from a

distance is often prompted by shyness or the desire not to intrude. When the subject is landscape, shooting from a distance is generally prompted by the desire to show a panorama. In most situations, the photographer does better by closing in on the subject and photographing it in detail.

## **What Enables the Photographer to See is LIGHT— And This is the First and Most Important Consideration**

Photography is all about LIGHT—where it is coming from, how it falls on the subject, whether it is soft, diffuse, stark, or casting shadows. Digital cameras allow us to shoot photographs without special filters in both natural and artificial light—day and night, outdoor and indoor. Nevertheless, we still have to think about where the light is coming from and how it affects the picture. When we photograph people standing in front of a window, for example, the backlight darkens their faces, and we have to compensate for that with a fill flash. When backlight



Fern leaves in back light

illuminates the leaves of a plant, on the other hand, we have the potential to show great details and see elements of structure that would otherwise be hidden. Photographers must always be conscious of where the light is coming from and how it affects the picture they want to shoot.

## **Photography is Also About THOUGHT— Pictures Happen in the Eyes and Mind Before the Shutter Ever Snaps**

A composition is essentially a visual idea about representing the essence of a place, a person, an activity, a shape, a moment. The process of constructing a composition involves photographers moving themselves and their camera into the best possible place to catch the image they are seeking. Three ideas should come together:

1. positioning yourself with respect to the light;
2. filling the camera frame with your intended subject in a balanced composition;
3. catching the moment before the light or subjects move.

## **You Can't Always be Sure the Image You Shoot is Perfect, So if You Really want to Preserve the Picture That is in Your Mind, Take it a Few Times, Trying Different Angles and Exposures**

**Get close to your subject.** You can do this in many different ways. Walk up to your subject; use a zoom lens; use your camera's portrait setting; use a macro lens. Digital cameras give you all of these possibilities, and they can be used quickly. Each has a certain benefit and a certain negative potential. If you go directly up to people to shoot photos of them, your very presence may change the mood of the situation or interrupt the action you were hoping to catch. When they see a camera, people often turn to pose and smile, destroying the candid composition you were hoping to photograph. While posed portraits may have something to say in their own right, if you are intending to take candid portraits, you will need to become invisible. Using a tiny point and shoot digital makes it is easy to disguise your intent until the very second that you snap the picture. (There are, of course, some ethical questions about the invasion of privacy that are justifiably raised about this



approach. They are the same questions that have been raised throughout the history of photography.)

If you feel uncomfortable walking up to people and pointing a camera, try using a zoom lens. It allows you to frame the subject from a distance, which means you might not be noticed at all. The zoom shot does not eliminate the ethical issues, but it might take the edge off discomfort and allow you to gain the confidence necessary to move closer. Another feature that encourages close-up photography is the macro lens. While it is not useful for portraiture, the macro lens provides the ability to get very close to flowers and insects. And they don't care at all about your presence. Just be sure not to block the light!

In moving from panoramas to flowers, you are essentially shifting your sensibility from what Edmund Burke in eighteenth-century aesthetics identified as the Sublime to the Beautiful. Nature is composed of both, and as a photographer you should train your eye to search for images in both ranges. One good exercise is to stand in one place with an open vista for five minutes. Look out and try to frame landscape compositions in your mind. Then look down. Notice everything on the ground—the leaves, the grass, the bark of a tree against which you are perhaps leaning. Again, frame photographs in your mind's eye. As we move from place to place during the week, think about photographs in terms of the Sublime and the Beautiful. It may be that the essence of the trip will be a blueberry rather than a vista.

Still, if you are composing a landscape panorama, which you will probably do many times this week, be sure to take your time. Let clouds move into shapes that add to the composition. Wait for the birds to wheel in the sky or the wave to crash on the rocks. Most cameras have multiple frame features that allow the photographer to take several pictures in rapid succession. This feature can be useful if you are trying to capture elements in motion.

Traditional panoramic landscapes are, despite such features, very hard to photograph with a point and shoot camera because they do not have a significant depth of field, meaning a sharp focus over a long distance from the camera's lens. The result is that digital landscapes often appear very flat, and the image fails to convey the distance to a far horizon. It is possible to compensate for this by framing panoramas using some traditional techniques. Landscapes both in painting and photography show scale and depth with markers of the foreground, midrange and distance; notice the cameras, people, and mountains in the next photo. You can communicate scale by including elements such as people, trees, a lighthouse, or boat as markers of fore and middle ground.

## FIELD NOTES: THINKING WITH A PHOTOGRAPHER'S EYE

These structural elements will help the viewer grasp the scope of the picture.



Playful markers of fore and middle ground

Landscapes are best photographed mid-morning and mid-afternoon or very early morning and late afternoon, depending on the effects and mood that you wish to achieve. Noon is about the worst time to shoot because the light is stark. Try to avoid extremes and shadows. An overcast, even a rainy day can often result in moody landscape compositions. Storms provide drama! Digital cameras also have nighttime options. Try them.

Once you have shot your fill of breathtaking landscapes (to show others where you have been), focus your attention on single elements within the panorama. The same tree that was a foreground marker in a previous image might have a distinctive shape of its own. A clump of seaweed and mussels clinging to a crevice might turn out to be more structurally interesting than the shape of the bay. Get close and look. Trees, flowers, birds, nests, rocks, and all their inhabitants might make excellent photos if you simply look closely and frame your compositions. If you think you will disturb the birds, try the zoom; if you want to look inside a flower, use your macro lens. Training your eye to see what is in front of you is the most important development of a

## JOAN DIGBY

photographer. Your eye is the creative force behind the tool. Remember:

- compositions need not be symmetrical;
- compositions need not be realistic;
- compositions may be about color, texture, and line;
- they may express an idea, an irony, a feeling.

Spend some time eliminating people from your photos. See what this environment says about itself. Wait until the people walk off—then shoot. On a hike, walk away from the group and isolate yourself so that you can think more clearly with your eyes.



Isolate an image



Photo by Caroline Malouse

Botany student Reagan Lee, Denali

Look, compose, and shoot. If your first shot does not capture what you imagine, then try it again. Since you are working in digital format, you do not need to buy film or pay for developing. That means you can shoot more and delete what does not work. Be open; be experimental. You might be setting up a perfect landscape when a fox wanders into your frame. Forget the tree and get the fox. I was once shooting the skyline of Manhattan when a wedding party came along. So I joined their



Photo by Casey Cox

Fox, Denali



photographer and took a picture. Then a stranger—shall we say dressed like a bar hostess—drifted into range, and the photo that I took of the wedding party and the woman was far more amusing and eye catching than either of my original shots. Dare to change your plan and shoot the unexpected. No one knows what you see in your mind’s eye, and most people are flattered that you turn your camera on them. Say thanks and be gone.



Brooklyn wedding, a “decisive moment”

The kind of group portrait that I described above is what we call a “grab shot.” The wedding picture itself was intended to be a “formal portrait” posed by the photographer. When I came in and included the “other woman,” my photo was very different from the one the wedding photographer captured, and I had only one second to “grab” it because in the next second that woman was already walking away. We call the

## FIELD NOTES: THINKING WITH A PHOTOGRAPHER'S EYE

moment I took the picture the “decisive moment.” Sometimes a photographer can anticipate this; other times—as in shooting animals or athletes in motion—the photographer has to take many photos in a row in order to capture that moment.

Both grab shots and formal portraits can be interesting. Both are about people related to environments. This history goes back to painting—to portraits of aristocrats painted on their lands, with their prize horses, in front of grand estate houses. When you deliberately take pictures of people or animals within an environment, the relationship between the two is the essence of your subject. Try to tell that story. (When you do, remember not to cut off the subject's hands or feet as I did of Amy standing on volcanic lava. Whenever you look back on those images you will always notice the defect!)



Environmental portrait—with hands cut off!

In fact, whether you are shooting portraits, group shots, or landscape you are creating a structure that is abstracted from a much wider field of vision. One acid test of structure is whether it holds up in black and white. Since Photoshop and other programs allow us to covert images from color into grayscale, this is an easy test to perform. It is best to make a duplicate of your image so that if you are not happy with the black and white version, you can revert to your color original.

## JOAN DIGBY

Whether you are saving your photos in color or black and white (mix it up), you still may want to do some digital darkroom work to adjust colors, fine-tune contrast, burn areas that are too light, or lighten areas that are too dark. The beauty of digital photography is that you can do all this work very easily (without inhaling darkroom chemicals!), and your pictures will be much better as a result. That is, if you have created strong compositions. If you find that you have to crop too much of an image in order to make it work, then you need to concentrate more on composition when you shoot next time.

During the course of this week, everyone should think consciously about shooting the several kinds of photographs that I have discussed: panoramas, details (portraits) of nature, abstracts, portraits of people, group shots, grab shots, and decisive moments. In some of our circles and in presentations at the end of the week, we will be discussing your photography.

Students who attended the Fire Island to Ellis Island PITP in May 2010 and Denali in August 2010 heard this talk at the start of the program. By the time we made our first foray into nature they were already thinking with a photographer's eye and shooting with a focused sense of purpose. Among the excellent results of their work were these photographs.

Photo by Laura Bristol



Lighthouse beam

Photo by Lauren Klein



Annie

Photo by Laura Bristol



NY Skyline from Brooklyn Bridge

Photo by Lauren Klein



Aboard the *Christeen*



FIELD NOTES: THINKING WITH A PHOTOGRAPHER'S EYE

Photo by Lauren Klein



Sagamore Hill

Photo by Shantelle Ford



Patrick

Photo by Casey Cox



View from tent, Denali

Photo by Rachel Mahler



River, Denali

Photo by Caroline Malouse



Roasting marshmallows

Photo by Casey Birmingham



Muldrow Glacier, Denali



## ***FIELD NOTES***



# **ENCOUNTERING A BEAR AT BRYCE CANYON**

**RONY ENRIQUEZ**

**LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY–BROOKLYN CAMPUS**

What I witnessed in the backcountry at Bryce Canyon National Park will stay with me forever. Growing up in the inner city in Brooklyn can be tough and scary, but nothing in the city can prepare one for some encounters with nature. Because I enjoy challenges, I chose to participate in the longest hike: four miles downhill and eight miles uphill in burning-hot weather. I was excited and motivated by the challenge as the group hiked downhill the first day towards Yellow Creek. The next day was a different adventure.

The night before that strenuous hike, I overheard Todd Petersen, the camping adviser, speaking to another honors student about his encounter with several bears when hiking with a group of friends. It was some time ago, Todd explained, as he acted out the way the black bears had attempted to intimidate him by making “intense breathing noises” similar to the sound of a bull when it pushes air out of its nose. When the bears started their loud huffing and puffing, Todd and his camping friends, using physical gestures, tried to appear to the bears as if they were bigger and more aggressive. They made louder breathing sounds and body movements such as “Big Foot” might in order to intimidate the bears. Although they huffed and puffed at the bears with greater intensity, their tactics did not work; the bears did not run away. Next, they picked up stones and rocks and threw them at the bears to scare them off. Finally, a stone hit a bear in the head and all of them ran away. I had no clue that eavesdropping on Todd’s interesting conversation one night before my overnight backcountry hike would help to save my life.

## FIELD NOTES: ENCOUNTERING A BEAR AT BRYCE CANYON

Most of the experienced hikers were getting up the hill faster than the rookies. Soon a gap emerged between the slow and quick hikers of our group, and we decided to transition to solo hiking. I felt, as the experienced hikers must have, as though the slower ones were holding me up. I disliked losing time, waiting for them to catch up, time that I could use to move forward. Nor was I aware at this point of the importance of sticking together. Four of us guys were well ahead on the solo hike early that morning; I was third on the trail. The two guys ahead of me were ten to twenty minutes in front of me, and I had no idea how far behind the fourth person was.

As I walked peacefully and joyfully up the hill, I heard a noise, similar to people crushing leaves beneath their feet. I looked up slowly, and there it was, a black bear cub playing by the bark of a tree. All I thought was, “darn it!” It must have sensed me. Here I was, the Brooklyn kid about to be charged and devoured by a bear who might possibly be assisted by mother bear somewhere out of my sight. Why me? The bear was approximately 100–150 feet away from where I stood, and I froze. The bear, standing on its hind legs, seemed 6 to 7 feet tall and must have weighed between 300 and 400 pounds. Here we stood, man and beast staring at one another eye-to-eye and waiting to see who would make the first move.



Photo by Rony Enriquez

The bear

The bear huffed and puffed near the tree as it continued to stare into my eyes. I remained still as if my feet were glued to the rocky road beneath me. Although horrified, I noticed myself thinking: “What should I do?” I am a city guy; the closest animal I could relate this bear to is a pit bull or rottweiler. I assumed that if I ran away, the bear, like a dog, would chase me. I have heard that dogs can sense fear, so I did not want to exhibit any behavior that would express it. Millions of thoughts were going through my mind as I stared at the bear. How would I defend myself? Why did I have to encounter the bear first and all alone? What if momma bear is around and believes I plan to harm her cub?

My first physical reaction was based on defense; I slowly reached for my pocketknife and picked up a stone. For close to ten minutes, it seemed, I stood still with a knife in one hand and a stone in the other. The bear was on four legs and stared right back. Luckily, my wishes for help were answered as my camping buddies, one by one, slowly appeared. First, my friend Ritchie came up behind me and gave me a

## RONY ENRIQUEZ

bit of courage to deal with the bear. We both started to throw rocks to scare the bear away. When Kate, a more seasoned camper, came along soon afterward, she advised us to stop throwing rocks and back away slowly. The bear eventually ran away.

I never would have imagined how happy and thankful I could be to have my camping friends show up. I realized the importance of having a support system and sticking together. Students like me felt at peace solo hiking. After encountering the bear, however, I did not want to be alone during the remainder of the hike. I learned a life lesson through this experience. Although I believe overcoming challenges and obstacles on my own is satisfying, asking for or accepting help from others is often advisable and necessary. I also learned that being alone during a time of fear verging on despair, whether in the city or in the woods, is not a great position to be in. At least the city prepared me for coping with tension.



## CHAPTER 5: GROUP SOUP

Typically, honors classes are small seminars with a maximum of 15 to 20 students. When they are sitting in a classroom, they generally constitute a pretty stable and manageable group. But taking twenty students on the road, putting them in tents, floating them down a river, or organizing them for hikes of varying levels of difficulty changes this single group into isotopes of an unstable element. At least these isotopes rarely cause explosions. Still, groups on the road are continually shifting and realigning. Over the course of a week, tents change inhabitants, friendships form and dissolve, chefs defect from cook groups, and the coordinators play the endless game of “Who’s on first.” The dynamics of grouping and regrouping are among the most interesting aspects of interpersonal relations in PITP. Bruce Wayne Tuckerman’s classic four-stages: forming, norming, storming, and performing are inevitably realized as the journey progresses.

At the PITP circle that opens an adventure, everyone would seem to be in this together as a unified band; that, after all, is the goal of bonding over dinner the first evening. But even in the van ride to the park, subgroups form. One might be composed of students from a single



Photo by Bill Atwill

Cape Hatteras, Kayaking Pamlico Sound

institution; another might be listeners to NPR, guitarists, marine biologists, or any such self-selection. The program coordinators, who are likely to be the van drivers, are for this stage of the journey flies on a wall, getting glimpses in the rearview mirror of subsets in formation. Where possible, during the van ride, people should be moved around so that students and faculty can continue the mixing that went on at dinner. For example, students from the same institution should sit with those from other schools or regions. Passing around snacks will arouse the ones who are sleeping and promote conversations.

## Tent Mates

By the time the vans arrive at the park, some people may already have made a tentative choice of tent mates. The actual groupings will depend on the size of tents. Most important is that students appear to be content with the arrangements at the outset. Their attitude may change during the course of the week, but starting out happy is always a good idea. The groups should choose their own tent site and cooperate in the building of their house and the houses of their neighbors. The more hands-on the more vested everyone will be in the space and appointments. Small bag and big bag, perfumed and unscented, neat and sloppy all have to negotiate during the setting up of the tent city. Amazingly, although all the tents may look relatively alike, the décor can turn out to be different in the extreme. Camp chairs may appear at the doorway of one, laundry lines between poles of another. Hats and hammocks, lights and other luxuries will surface as the different tent groups establish their style.

On no occasion was style more dramatic and visible than in the 2009 Acadia PITP trip. One of the faculty participants, architect Rob Sherman from the University of Maine at Augusta, arrived with a canoe on top of his car. In order to avert the tent floods of the previous year, he came prepared with multicolor tarps, cables, and poles to erect a camp based on what he calls “tarpitecture.” Within an hour of the group’s arrival, he and his graduate student, Juste Gatari from Rwanda, began to teach us all about tension. Before long, every tent was protected by beautiful canopies of winged tarps that were the envy of the campground.

The teaching happened naturally and with an electricity that made everyone grab cameras to photograph the abstract sculptures that we had created. Sherman (we had 3 faculty Robs on the trip) was inspiring, and when he gave his presentation on tension and bridge construction,





Rob Sherman securing tarps in Acadia

everyone was motivated, pencil in hand, to draw creative bridge designs for a project he actually has in mind to build. His wonderful session serves as a reminder that any subject proposed by a creative professor might be an inspiring PITP session. There is no left field in the woods! P. S. The tarps warded off the rain. It was a beautiful week of warm summer weather.

Day after day campers from other groups came by to find out who the people were with the outer space tents. On those occasions we clearly needed magnetic Partners in the Parks signs for our vans and big banners to hang at our campsites.

Another consideration in setting up a campsite is the physical distance between student and faculty tents. The site itself can never be so big as to create any significant distance, but creating some impression of privacy is important. Just as students living in dorms would not wish to be supervised by faculty, so at a campsite having faculty intrude on late-night conversations, card games, or after-hours walks to an overlook by the sea would be awkward. Students need space, and in the percolation of group dynamics, they need space in which to reflect on personal concerns, frustrations, tiffs, homesickness, or disappointments. All these happen over the course of a program, and some result in tent shifting among residents. Unless asked to intervene, coordinators

should just let it happen. Student interns may be better able to resolve conflicts than faculty. Privacy and peer mentoring might be the solution. Once the groups realign, things will be calmer in the morning by the time someone wakes up to make the first pot of coffee.

## Food Groups

Of all the grouping and regrouping on a Partners expedition, food groups are perhaps the most interesting and sometimes the most creative and competitive. Depending on the region from which students come, they will have a wide range of experience preparing meals—a range from chefs to clueless. On a PITP adventure, everyone plans meals, everyone cooks, and everyone does the dishes. The look of horror on the faces of some students when they realize that they must cook and clean up if they want to eat is priceless! By the end of the week, all the students have dishwater hands and at least a few favorite recipes that they can try on their families and the dog.

Taking responsibility for cooking begins with dividing up the bulk ingredients that the program coordinators have purchased in advance of departure for the park. The National Outdoor Leadership School publishes an extremely useful book entitled *The NOLS Cookery: Experience the Art of Outdoor Living*. Early chapters take up ration planning and required food poundage per person based on numerous factors including group size, duration of journey, exertion level, weather, altitude, and means of transport for packing food into wilderness. Cooking equipment, fuel, and environmental concerns are also considered in detail. With novices in mind, the authors describe basic foods and offer a glossary of cooking terminology as a prelude to a fine assortment of recipes for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks along with some excellent suggestions for the use of herbs and spices. Since the book is just over a hundred pages, it is worth packing and sharing among food groups as a source for helpful culinary ideas.

Because Southern Utah University has tremendous experience in teaching survival training, the students were in expert hands during the pilot program at Bryce. The hours spent measuring and dividing cereals, flour, rice, pasta, couscous, cake mix, pancake mix, sugar, powdered milk, cocoa, coffee, nuts, dried fruit, granola, bread, fresh fruit, vegetables, butter, peanut butter, cheese, jam, syrup, ketchup, mustard, spices, canned meat, and fish were just an introduction. Nothing came with recipes or instructions! That was to be the great fun of it all.

The groups packed their own boxes of food, which had to last for the duration of the trip. Thus each group had to devise menus for the number of days that we were camping. The activity included assigning chefs for each of the breakfasts and dinners. Clearly, with only a few coolers, all the fresh food on ice had to be cooked and eaten first. Lunch would be on the run between sessions, so that would mean sandwiches for as long as the bread held out and fruit or granola bars. For everything in between, each group made trail mix from the ingredients provided: nuts, granola, raisins, and—at the high end—the much cherished M&Ms. These concoctions were downloaded into baggies at the beginning of each day. In the van were also the makings of S'mores, which are the greatest reward possible on a camping trip!

Although shopping for a PITP adventure includes purchases from all the USDA food groups, they never account for particular tastes and aversions that will naturally surface. Most important is to have enough fresh or dried/canned vegetables and fruit for the vegetarians and vegans in the group. Not surprisingly, an increasing number of students and faculty have dietary needs that must be accommodated. Whether they stem from allergies, medical situations, ethical or religious roots, special dietary requirements can shape meals enjoyed by the group. At Bryce we were particularly fortunate in this respect. My Brooklyn colleague and tent mate, Srividhya Swaminathan, is a fantastic cook of Indian food. At the bottom of the canyon on a 22-degree night testing our survival skills in camping out with no tents, she made the most



Without a tent on a cold night

aromatic and delicious lentil-based vegetable stew imaginable. We all recorded this recipe in our journals.

One cook group for that program was designated vegetarian. Originally the group included a few people, like me, who were not vegetarians, but several people agreed to join for the sake of collegiality. Over the course of the week, some people who hungered for meat jumped ship. Others in omnivorous groups heard that we had some good cooks and joined our team, thus getting to feast, for example, on the fantastic pancakes made by Jessica Molloy, whose parents owned a diner in which she was a short-order cook and pancake flipper extraordinaire.

Shifting food alliances are fairly common on Partners excursions. This should not be at all worrisome. The Acadia PITP experimented with flex groups that shifted as people simply decided to cook together for a certain meal. That program also featured an impromptu lunch team of students who voluntarily decided to be sandwich and wrap makers, providing everyone with lunch before we pulled out of the campsite each day. During that week we had to make a vegetable run when provisions ran low. This was easy because the park is unusual in having several towns contained within its boundaries, so more corn, carrots, lettuce, beans, and potatoes were available nearby. Since access to convenient shopping is not typically the case, making certain to bring sufficient fruit and vegetables will keep the vegetarian and vegan participants happy.

Not everyone, of course, will be happy all of the time. One student nearly had a temper tantrum when another student took a piece of cheese from a stack of slices with her fingers. More common are students simply afraid to try something unfamiliar. That was a lesson I learned when I made a huge pasta salad as part of the opening dinner for Fire Island to Ellis Island. Bits of alien vegetables, olives and celery in this instance, made several of even the hungriest students recoil in horror. At the end of the week, bowls of that pasta salad still floated around—and it was good pasta salad! Eventually seagulls were the beneficiaries.

Enticing students to try new foods is an art that best begins with some familiar ingredients and a sweet flavor. When I asked the students to save their orange rinds and to give me a few of their raisins so that I could make couscous when it was my turn, they seemed fascinated. The end result was that everyone tried the dish. Similarly, one night at Bryce Canyon trip leaders Matt Nickerson and Todd Petersen made Thai chicken using canned chicken, peanut butter soy sauce,



Andy and Rebekah making breakfast, Acadia

and their private stash of hot pepper. Almost everyone likes peanut butter, so people were quite interested in tasting the dish. That trip included several phony foodies, guys who had never cooked and tried to evade that responsibility by visiting other food groups on the pretext of tasting whatever they were making. Their plan failed after a few days when people got wise to the scavengers and sent them packing back to their own food groups, where they were eventually compelled to cook an evening meal.

Some students genuinely have never had any experience cooking. They stare at dry rice, pasta, even potatoes, carrots, and onions without having the faintest idea about how to turn them into soft, edible food. Their pleas for help are sad commentaries on American foodways. Many students have grown up in households where no one cooks, where fast food and microwaveable entrees are the norm. Students and faculty who do cook find it difficult not to take over and do the job. Of course, faculty should restrain themselves, letting the students who know how to cook encourage and help those who do not have any experience. Over the course of a week, a great deal of culinary education occurs around the camp kitchens. The basics of dicing, frying, and boiling register, and if the program leaders pack a variety of dried herbs and spices, it is possible to move taste buds beyond salt and pepper. On



## CHAPTER 5: GROUP SOUP

the Zion trip, for example, the group leader packed a bottle of pesto to see what students would make of it. Fortunately my own participant, Angela Calise, who comes from an Italian family, knew exactly how to transform pesto into an aromatic pasta dish that she taught her group to make and enjoy. Making a group soup enables ideas about what to throw in come from the entire cook group. With a little creativity, students will recycle leftovers, adding spices that result in dishes with some complexity, flavor, and nutritional value. And these concoctions certainly beat pasta with ketchup! Not surprisingly, students with scouting experience are often natural leaders as cooks; they know how to put together a camp stove, light a fire, and cook in foil. They are also good teachers of these survival skills.

By the end of every PITP program, students with no prior experience in the kitchen have cooked at least one meal. The smile on Kyle Robisch's face after whipping up wild blueberry pancake batter and then serving this excellent breakfast with tremendous pride still remains a delightful memory. Cooking is an activity in which everyone can learn something. For me, it was baking with a Dutch Oven, which is an optional but recommended piece of equipment. (See Appendix B.) Since I come from New York and had camped only once before, it



Cooking in Dutch ovens

seemed miraculous. On one of the first nights at Bryce, a cook group composed mainly of young women from Utah decided to make brownies. One of the mottos of the trip was “desserts with every meal,” but making cakes in cast iron pots over charcoal was pure magic to my mind. When the lid opened and the aroma of chocolate filled the

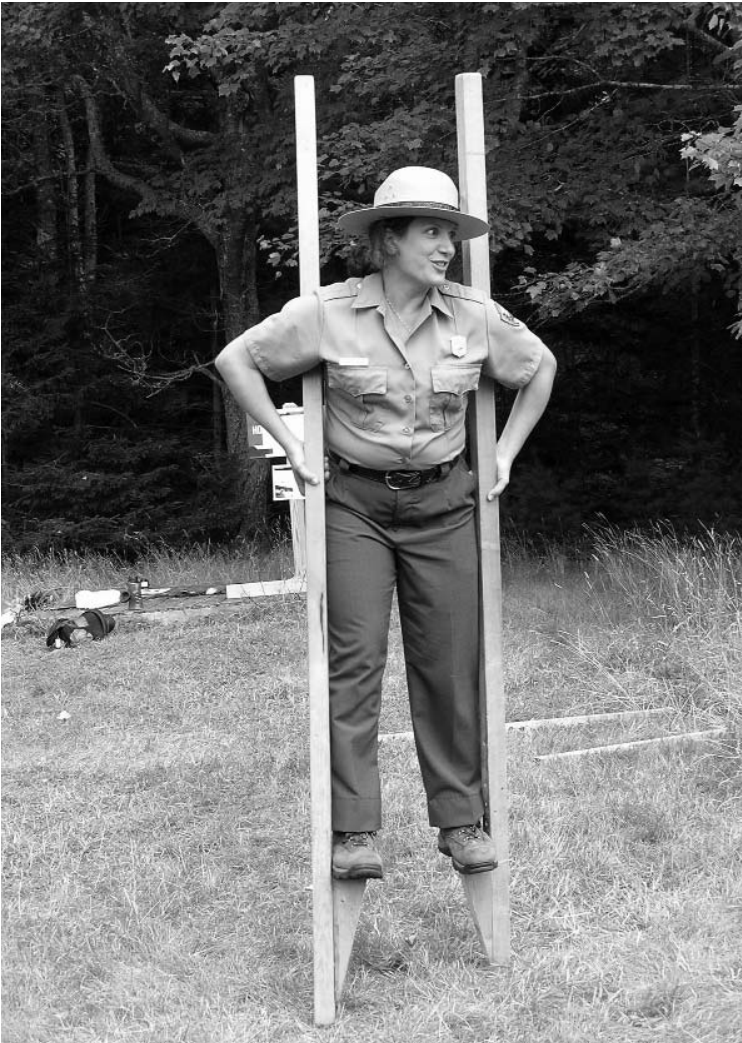
air, all the other groups rushed back to their Dutch ovens, searching frantically for cake mix and lumps of hot charcoal.

Such occasions serve as good reminders that PITP adventures create an environment in which leadership can shift at any moment. Some of the most thrilling events in the course of a program happen spontaneously when someone unexpectedly takes the lead. A knowledgeable birdwatcher could point out a nuthatch, a geography major could pull out a map to lead the way out of the woods, a kayaker could teach a helpful maneuver, a gregarious storyteller could recount the morning's adventure, or a ranger could walk on stilts to illustrate the games that nineteenth-century children played. The dynamics of

shifting leadership will energize the whole group in surges of excitement and discovery.

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Stilt-walking demonstration, Acadia







## **FIELD NOTES**



# **SITTING THERE IN SILENCE**

**ANDY GRUBE**

**NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY**

When people talk after coming back from an event or vacation about the exciting things they have done, they often mention that the experience was unforgettable. Readers may very well be expecting this claim from me in this essay about my time in Acadia with the Partners in the Parks program, but they would be wrong. For me, much of the week I spent in Maine last summer was not memorable, and I have indeed forgotten most of it. I only have a handful of memories of those seven days. In fact, before writing this essay, I looked through the pictures I took that week to establish an accurate chronology of the events of the program and to ensure that I was not completely fabricating memories. The mind is a fickle thing; I have learned not to trust it.

I had originally applied to participate in Partners in the Parks last March after seeing a poster in my dorm. My top choices were Zion National Park, Black Canyon of the Gunnison, and one other that I cannot recall. I had been out west two summers previously, hiking for ten days in Philmont with the Boy Scouts, and I desperately wanted to return. Months passed, and still I did not receive an acceptance letter; I thought that was that. Then my phone rang.

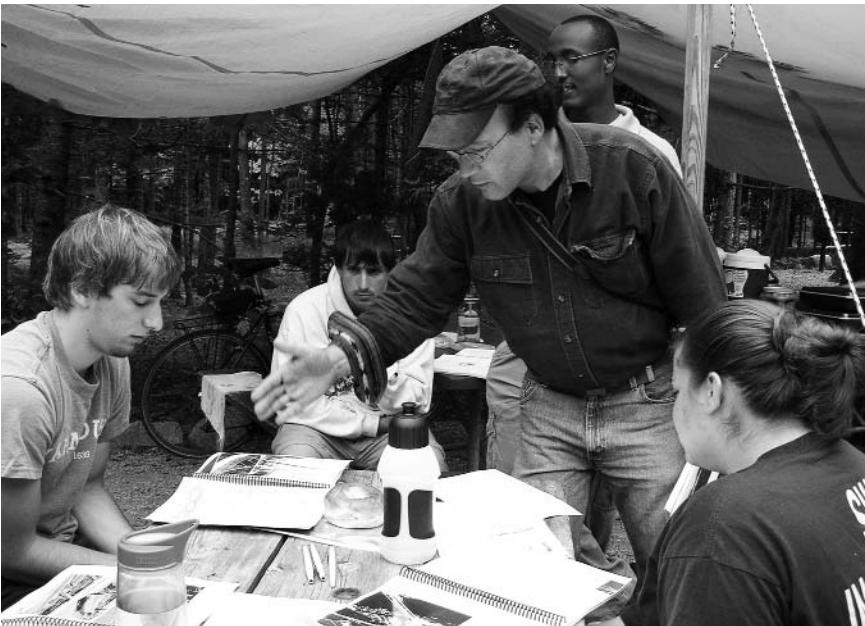
The Northeastern University Honors office was calling. Someone had to drop out of the Acadia trip at the last minute because of an emergency, and I was offered the slot. I immediately accepted, knowing full well that my boss would gladly give a hard-working young man such as me a week off to go to Maine, a place where he often vacations.

A great deal happened to me that week in Acadia, so much that it is difficult to know where to begin when someone asks me about Partners in the Parks. While I could meticulously go through all my pictures and catalog every single activity of the trip, I know that this effort would not produce an accurate representation of my experience. Instead, I will concentrate on the moments that defined the trip for me.

## FIELD NOTES: SITTING THERE IN SILENCE

On one of the first nights at the park, we journeyed to the top of Cadillac Mountain to take a small lesson in astronomy with the park staff. We compared modern telescopes with a replica of Galileo's. I had never observed Jupiter before, but that night I saw not only the gas giant, but also a few of its moons. The drive back to camp was almost as amazing as the mountaintop observatory. To one side of the mountain were the lights of Bar Harbor. To the other was the pitch blackness of Acadia. The juxtaposition of winding down the road and getting to experience one and then the other as we switched back was powerful.

When we were first setting up camp, an architecture professor from the University of Maine, Rob Sherman, brought out a bunch of tarps and ropes to construct what he endearingly coined "tarpitecture." I was dubious. Having been on many trips with the Boy Scouts, I thought this would be a frivolous activity to partake in as night was beginning to fall and the camp still needed to be set up. At this point I realized that this trip would not be like the ones I was used to taking. Then, later in the week, came a lesson that I recall vividly, perhaps because I was actively engaged in it: an architecture design workshop with "tarp-prof" Sherman. The assignment was to help design a footbridge, which was going to be proposed for a town in Maine to consider building. Despite my lack of artistic ability, I felt capable of sketching some bridges that I could take pride in, if not for structural integrity, for creative design.



Designing bridges in architecture seminar

After lunch one day I took a walk with Juste, a towering Rwandan studying architecture at the University of Maine. We ended up going down to the rocky shoreline about a half mile from our camp. Together we discussed where we were in life and where we wanted to go. I remember thinking to myself that he is the most precocious and wisest student I have ever talked to, and I told him so. Of course he humbly declined to accept this praise. For me, this exchange was the most soul-expanding part of the trip. I know that more than anything else, this helped me grow into a deeper person, more conscious of the world, and definitely better prepared for whatever life has to throw at me.

Because I am a scientist at heart, my favorite activity in Acadia was having the opportunity to accompany some biologists employed by the park to track fish populations in streams near bridges. We used some computer simulations to assess the quality of the passage under the bridge and to determine whether a culvert would be necessary to maintain a stable environment for the fish. The best part of the day came when we watched the rangers electro-fish. This process involved wearing a backpack straight out of *Ghostbusters* and delivering a small electric charge to the water. The charge would stun the fish and allow the staff to collect them in buckets to be measured and counted. I think that the park rangers had just as much fun as we did, and they seemed genuinely excited to be doing their jobs, something many people cannot say.

The hike up Cadillac Mountain in the early morning to see the sunrise is surprisingly absent from my memories despite my having the pictures as a reminder. This gap is most likely because I was not entirely awake, and there was not much to see in the dark of the early morning. I do, however, remember the sunrise itself. Sitting there in silence, I watched the light inch up the horizon and finally break through like a sigh of relief. Being able to enjoy it with Sadie Lang—a fellow student from Northeastern whom I had never met until this trip—made the sunrise even better.

The defining memory of Acadia that will always stick with me, though, is sitting along the rocky shoreline at night, watching the stars and the Perseid Meteor Shower. When we all first started doing this early in the week, everyone selected a solitary place to sit and stare. We would each be lost in our own thoughts, and rarely did we speak. I cannot speak for everyone, but these first evenings underneath the stars and the full moon were a time of self-exploration and discovery. As the week progressed, we returned night after night to the shore. We gravitated closer and closer to each other, like a cloud of dust in space being

pulled together into one body, becoming more comfortable with ourselves and the others around us. On the final night, we all gathered on one rock. At that moment, I think we all realized how special this trip and the connections we had made with each other truly were.

This handful of memories is all that remains of that week of Partners in the Parks in Maine; I would estimate that I have forgotten over ninety percent of everything that I did there. The individual things that I did in Acadia National Park were mostly forgettable. This observation, however, is irrelevant. Quantity of memories speaks nothing to quality. I can say that, without a doubt, Partners in the Parks was one of the greatest experiences of my life, but not when dissected into fragmented memories to be counted and chronicled like an encyclopedia. The depth and impact of that week in Acadia can only be appreciated as a whole.

The people who participated in Partners in the Parks affected me in their own way. I believe that being with such a diverse group of individuals in the natural beauty of Acadia was the most intellectually stimulating environment I have ever experienced. The breadth of knowledge and openness to new ideas truly made Acadia a place where everyone could teach, be taught, and share ideas, experiences, and knowledge. Everyone contributed, and the mutual respect that we had for each other created an atmosphere like no other I have ever experienced.

Individually, I think Juste had the greatest impact on me. He inspired me to reassess myself and to strive to do what I love to do. He taught me about the wonderful opportunity I have in life and not to squander it. I was able to take what Juste said to me and express it to others on the last night in Acadia during a brief presentation about setting and achieving personal goals using a system of setting short- and long-term goals that I had learned in high school. My talk addressed personal goals that I had established for six weeks, six months, and a year. This was a great moment for me. I was able to take Juste's inspiration, combine it with my life experiences, and share them with others. I cannot think of a more rewarding sequence of events in my life. At the end of the night, I realized how much I had grown in that one short week.

I find that almost every day I return to my selective memories of Acadia, just as I returned to the rocky shoreline each night. Something will happen that sparks a flicker of a memory of my time in Maine. For a moment I will be lying once again on a rock, listening to the ocean crash sonorously below me. Then, in another instant I will return to reality. Some day I will return to Acadia to rekindle what was a defining week in my life.

## CHAPTER 6: TO BOLDLY GO . . .

According to the National Park Service, the average duration of a tourist visit is about an hour and a half. Most tourists are drive-by observers of the grand vistas, coming with a bus group or by car, stepping out at the overlooks, snapping photos, and moving on. By extreme contrast, PITP generally spends several days to nearly a week in an immersion living/learning experience. Before groups enter the park, all the participants have signed Comportment Agreements to abide by park regulations and engage in activities with a conscious view to safety and appropriate decorum. (See Appendix D5 for the Comportment Agreement form.)

PITP adventures are not designed as tourist excursions. Understanding the nature of honors students and the purpose of these learning adventures, the National Park Service has given PITP expeditions unique access to back areas of the park where tourists never venture. While visiting a park is exciting, understanding how a park runs is even more exciting. PITP adventures address key issues of park management: what it takes to keep trails open; track wildlife; ensure the flow of streams and rivers; manage fires; curate a museum; dig and record archaeological discoveries; cope with plant and animal disease; protect nesting birds; educate volunteers and visitors; run a weather station; handle medical emergencies; produce brochures and signage; provide lodging, campgrounds, and food service—in short, keep everyone and the park itself safe and operational.

PITP has gone to all kinds of back-park areas. At Grand Canyon—Parashant, which offers a clear view of the Colorado River from the cliffs above, the program has taken students with considerable outdoor skills and experience into rough canyon terrain that few people ever have the opportunity to explore. This is certainly the boldest of the journeys, and it is not for everyone. Yet even first-time campers can enjoy the privilege of going behind the scenes into back-park areas that are perfectly thrilling.

Professor Robert L. Eves, a chemist and geologist from Southern Utah University, led the first hike of the pilot program at Bryce Canyon, and he introduced us to the dramatic red hoodoos composed of soft sedimentary rock eroded by wind and water. Following his lead, we hiked along a narrow ledge straight into looming overhangs appropriately called Wall Street. There we seemed to be at an impasse because



Crossing Wall Street, Bryce Canyon

a rock fall of huge boulders clearly blocked the way. Yellow caution tape made it perfectly clear that the hike ended right there and that the entourage would have to turn back. Then Dr. Eves lifted the tape and climbed over the fallen rocks, signaling for everyone to follow. Amazingly, the park rangers on the other side of the tape were awaiting our group and approved of our crossing. Once we passed through the narrow opening and found ourselves in a meadow beside a river, Dr. Eves discussed the way that boulders sheer off the cliffs and how this affects the changing structure of Bryce. The group followed the river bank, where he showed us many other aspects of the geological environment. When we arrived at the trail returning to the canyon rim, we came upon many hikers, even people wheeling baby carriages, who had taken other routes open to the public. By this time, we were aware that our experience was extremely privileged.

On that same trip students were asked to make a choice of overnight hikes according to their assessment of physical strength as well as their desire to push themselves or remain in a comfort zone. Having alternative overnight options and leaders willing to shepherd each is important. At Bryce, the one-mile option that I chose was named by the students “the-stop-and-smell-the-junipers hike.” We did not go far, but we had a wonderful experience that included spending time with bristlecone pine trees, which are the oldest species on the continent. Their twisting shapes, rising over the canyon rims, are positively haunting.



Photo by Vidhya Swaminathan



Bristlecone pines

The closer we came, the more we noticed abstract patterns in other tree barks made by insects that we were able to observe as well.

This observation raises a further point about the purpose of the journey. It is not all about observing only the sublime elements of nature: the canyons, the sweeping vistas, the night sky illuminated by an unimaginable number of stars. Being in nature is also about the beauty of fine detail, the sort one photographs with a macro lens, getting as close as possible to the veins in a leaf or a glistening beetle. “Stop and smell the junipers” is a perfect distillation of slowing down to experience nature with all of our senses: taking in the fragrance of the trees, looking for animal tracks, listening to birds and insects or for the steps of a cougar that we were told had been near our campsite but never appeared despite our waiting up half the night, anxiously listening in anticipation.

For the program at Black Canyon of the Gunnison, the newest of America’s national parks, Heather Thiessen-Reily has developed particular assignments keyed to honing observation skills. Her assignments below can be adapted to virtually any location.

**Sense and Place (30–60 minutes, the time can be modified)**

Students find a spot within walking distance. They sit quietly for 5 minutes with no other focus than just being quiet. Then they are asked to shift attention to their senses and answer the following questions:

What can you hear with your eyes closed?

What can you smell?

What can you feel on the ground around you?

When you open your eyes, what do you see?

Students should write about their sensory observations in their journals.

The session leader sounds a whistle at half-time and then at the end of the exercise, when students need to complete the task and reconvene.

**Mapping a Hike**

Students are instructed to make a map of the hike and be prepared to share it with the group at the end. Students receive no directions about methodology; they can map the hike any way they like but should be ready to explain how and why they mapped it in the way that they did.



Photo by Heather Thiessen-Reilly

Mapping the journey

## JOAN DIGBY

In a sense, PITP programs foster the making of personal maps at every step of the journey. The choice and arrangement of photographs taken along the way are maps of observation and engagement that reconstruct the trip from an individual perception. Storytelling is also a narrative map of the adventure. Since NPS prefers us to move through the parks in small groups so as not to disturb other visitors or damage trails, coming together for a circle roundup at the end of these adventures provides a natural time to recount and reflect on experiences and encounters. Everyone has a story to tell. Everyone is on a personal journey. In the absence of media, storytelling also makes for a rich and often bonding evening activity around a campfire.

Although students are encouraged “to boldly go,” the nature of their boldness might have as much to do with self-revelation and self-expression as with wilderness adventures. Indeed, not all back-park adventures are journeys into a literal wilderness. One of the most exciting takes place at arguably the most defining urban NPS monuments in America: The Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. It is impossible to visit them without thinking of the boldness it took those immigrants who risked their lives and futures in coming to this shore!



Early morning at Liberty Island

## CHAPTER 6: TO BOLDLY GO . . .

No matter what time of year or time of day, people stand in long lines in Battery Park to buy tickets for the ferries that will transport them to Liberty and Ellis Islands. Boatloads of tourists empty every few minutes. When we first planned a full day's exploration at Ellis Island, the Education Specialist, Park Ranger Katherine Craine, offered to put us on the 7:30 a.m. staff boat and meet us at the Statue hours before the tourists arrived. It was breathtaking to arrive, as the only visitors, at the base of the giant lady standing alone and silent in the harbor. We were ushered without waiting into the museum, where Ranger Craine spoke to us beside an exact replica of Liberty's torch. We walked at leisure among the models and then onto the observation deck atop the statue's plinth, where we could peer upward through protective glass at the towering structure that supported the great icon. To be alone with Liberty while reflecting on all those who had passed her on their way to



Park Ranger Katherine Craine with a replica of Liberty's torch



a new life in America made our landing on Ellis Island later in the morning all the more passionate an experience. There we were introduced to another Park Ranger, Dennis Muligan, who took us behind the scenes to view the as-yet-unrestored wards and hospital buildings that may one day be transformed into a conference center and hotel. Walking through the tall grass and peering into the dark halls, we had opened a window to view those poor, ill souls standing before the imposing halls of Ellis Island.



Behind the scenes on Ellis Island

After a hiatus of almost two years, I called Ranger Craine to let her know that PITP would be coming to Ellis Island again this year. She remembered our trip vividly and without prompting offered to take us behind the scenes and allow us to witness the latest stages of restoration. Once again we were most eager “to boldly go.”

On the same trip we also returned to Theodore Roosevelt’s presidential summer home, Sagamore Hill, in Oyster Bay, New York. It is a fine example of Victorian clapboard domestic architecture, which cost an extravagant \$16,000 to build in 1885–1886. Most visitors to the home are riveted by the animal heads and skins in the imposing parlor and by the intimate sense of the Roosevelts that emerges from furniture and

## CHAPTER 6: TO BOLDLY GO . . .

artifacts in this extraordinary home, which has remained in the family for a century. What it takes to do curatorial work and historic research happens in basement offices never seen by tourists. “No one visiting national monuments thinks much about what it takes to keep them running—much less dusted, cleaned, and seemingly lived in,” said Park Superintendent Tom Ross, who considers the underground operations offices among the most interesting parts of the site.

On this occasion we arrived just as bulldozers were ripping up the presidential lawn in order to restore the gardens and landscape to the Roosevelt era. Superintendent Ross greeted us over the din of tractors. Serendipitously, the architect was on property and met with us on the iconic porch to explain some of the difficult decisions to be considered in restoring this historic house. Ranger Scott Gurney, who had taken us on a tailored house tour, distributed book-length management plans for restoration that we were graciously permitted to keep as mementos. Then he handed us loppers and saws, with an invitation to help the restoration project by taking out invasive Norway maples. We attacked with gusto, clearing a wood where native species would now have light to grow. It will be wonderful to return in a few years to see the results of our labor.



Removing Norway maples, Sagamore Hill

## JOAN DIGBY

By going behind the scenes, students learn about possibilities for internships and even professions in the National Park Service. Every NPS professional we have worked with has encouraged students of all majors, from accounting and business to psychology and zoology, to consider a career in the NPS. Opportunities are clearly not limited to the sciences. Many park rangers began in what they thought of as temporary, seasonal jobs during college and became so enamored of the place and of their work with the public that they have spent their professional lifetimes in the parks. (Anyone interested can find out more at <http://www.nps.gov/personnel>). Perhaps some of our Partners in the Parks alumni will be similarly inspired and bold enough to take this leap.)

*Joy Ochs, Honors Director at Mount Mercy University and leader of the PITP Zion program, brings to our adventures her personal experience working for the State Park System in Michigan. Her Field Notes focus on the process of teaching students to be in wilderness. Her essay is followed by a second set of Field Notes, the reflections of Angela Calise, a student who participated in the Zion program and changed her own life as a result. All students must complete the physical condition section of the Student Application Form (Appendix D1). Angela revealed her back problems and concerns in these documents and knew that she might not be able to complete every section of the trip. What actually happened is the essence of her essay.*







## **FIELD NOTES**



# **PARTNERS IN THE PARKS AND THE WILDERNESS AESTHETIC**

**JOY OCHS**

**MOUNT MERCY UNIVERSITY**

We were about two hours into a 14-mile hike on the first day in Kolob Canyon, Zion National Park. All signs of civilization had long since disappeared behind us; road noise was replaced by the gurgle of the creek and our own footfalls on the sandy track. In the stillness of the canyon, the local fauna appeared unconcerned by our human presence, and I casually pointed to them, a habit from the years when I worked as a park interpreter for the state of Michigan: a jackrabbit quivering its nostrils behind a creosote bush, swishy tracks in the sand where a lizard had passed. Just ahead a skink sunned itself on a rock. After I spotted another lizard, a student exclaimed, “How do you do that?” “Do what?” I asked. “How are you seeing these animals? I can’t even see them when you point them out.” We walked farther into the canyon, beneath soaring walls of red Navajo sandstone. I asked the students what they were seeing and experiencing. They were taking in the spectacular cliffs and snapping panoramic photos. They were imagining scaling the rock faces with ropes and crampons. They were thinking about supper and what an accomplishment it would be to complete this hike. In other words, while they were enjoying the experience, they were missing the more intimate aspects of this living, breathing ecosystem. They were interacting with this wilderness as an item for their consumption: a place for rock climbers or hikers to conquer or for photographers to capture, a recreational area to be used.

This attitude is normal. It is what brings 3 million visitors a year to Zion National Park and 285 million annually to the National Park System as a whole. Rock climbing, canyoneering, hiking, and photography draw visitors to spend time in the park. Many more tourists, passing through, spend fewer than three hours in Zion—just long enough to ride the shuttle up the canyon, take a few snapshots, comment on

## FIELD NOTES: PARTNERS IN THE PARKS AND THE WILDERNESS

how beautiful it is, visit the gift shop, and speed on their way. All the students in my group had visited national parks in this way in the past. They liked the parks. They liked being outdoors and exploring and seeing new things, but they had never really examined what they were looking at when they looked at wilderness. It was beautiful, yes. It was pleasurable to be immersed in it. But something was missing. Insofar as the wilderness was an aesthetic experience for them, it was a vague one. They liked the wilderness in the same way that someone unable to distinguish between the works of Beethoven and Mozart might like classical music. What the students needed was a course in wilderness appreciation, akin to music appreciation or art appreciation or any other academic course that imparts the knowledge needed to add an intellectual understanding to their emotional response to an aesthetic experience. They needed to deepen their ability to see and name what was before them.



Photo by Joy Ochs

Searching for turtles at Zion

Since the time when John Muir first fought to save Yosemite Valley from development, wilderness in America has passed from being a product of nature to being a human artifact. Nature provides the raw materials, but wilderness areas are created by policies and protected, preserved, or restored through the work of agencies including the

## JOY OCHS

National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forestry Service, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife Management, as well as countless independent scientists and volunteer groups. At the most basic level, these agencies might help to produce wilderness by keeping development out and letting nature take its course. But the production of wilderness is seldom this passive. In the case of Zion National Park, for instance, the natural areas are heavily and actively managed in order to provide its visitors with the experience of being in a wilderness untouched by human hands. During our two-day hike in Kolob Canyon, for example, we walked into a breathtakingly beautiful valley accessible only by foot along a barely discernible sandy trail. With the exception of a group of park rangers we had arranged to meet, we encountered only six other human beings during the two-day period. We drank water filtered from the creek, carried our food in and our garbage out, slept in an undeveloped campsite marked only by a numbered post, and penetrated the steep canyon so deeply that even the satellite phone we carried could not get a signal. For two days, we experienced living in the wilderness. The rare, occasional sound of an airplane passing high above the canyon was the only beacon from the technological world we had left behind.



Photo by Joy Ochs

Zion stream crossing, 2009

Taking this wilderness experience for granted is easy. We went into nature, full of juniper, sandstone, tumbling meltwater, and lizards, and we came back out again. Every aspect of this experience, however, was the result of human management, from the annexation of the Kolob section in 1937 to the decision to limit access to foot traffic only. The trail is designed to control access and keep hikers away from ecologically sensitive areas while appearing minimally constructed. Even the number of visitors who have access to the area is managed through a backcountry permit system. Encountering crowds of people would diminish the experience of walking through a pristine area, so numbers are purposely kept low through a complicated algorithm that determines how many people is too many people if the perception of solitude is to be preserved. Finally, the visitor's very interaction with the natural ecosystem is managed, as we learned, when we rendezvoused with the crew of park rangers on the second day. They were in Hop Valley, spraying weeds to reclaim land from invasive plant species to create a place where native species could be reintroduced. Later, we talked with the horticulturalists who cultivated native plants in the greenhouse and the wildlife biologist who was monitoring habitat and breeding patterns of an endangered species of owl in Kolob. Birds, plants, clean water, sandy trail, sense of isolation—our entire experience was made possible by the teams of people producing an artifact called wilderness.



Photo by Joy Ochs

Horticulture talk at Zion

The students did not know any of this at first. They walked out of Kolob Canyon having had a mostly emotional experience. They were moved by the beauty, as one is moved by fine music or art. They were proud of themselves for meeting the physical challenges of a rigorous two-day hike. They were in a reflective mood after being asked to sit quietly and experience the valley with all their senses: wind, water, heat rising off a rock, the call of a bird, the grit of the sand. The wilderness provides, above all, a sensual experience. The students had fallen in love with Kolob Canyon, and like any new lover, they were fiercely protective of the pristine Kolob when we reemerged into the bustle of Zion's gateway town, Springdale, full of tourists driving RVs and motorcycles, flocking to souvenir stands, and munching on fast food. They suddenly found this kind of tourism distasteful. Their response was strong and emotional. Not surprisingly, many of them admitted to being this type of tourist before their immersion experience.

Only afterwards, in the course of the next three days spent behind the scenes in the company of park rangers, did the students gain the intellectual apparatus to talk about their wilderness experience. In ranger-led seminars they learned about the park management plan, the



Photo by Joy Ochs

Learning about back country management



revegetation efforts, the hours spent to protect endangered species, the calculated balancing of recreation and preservation, and the urban planning needed to handle peaks of up to 30,000 visitors a day—enough people to populate a small city—who needed access to food, parking, sanitation, emergency services, and information while entering into the illusion that they were visiting a natural area. The students' appreciation for Kolob deepened the more they understood it as an artifact. One of the most enthusiastic rock climbers, who had been sizing up Kolob's rock faces throughout the hike, said to the group: "I would never want to climb in Kolob now. Climbing would ruin it for me." His previous consumerist attitude no longer fit with his appreciation of the craftsmanship that went into our Kolob experience. Paradoxically, his new understanding of the wilderness as a construct made him more willing to appreciate it as an aesthetic experience and less willing to put it to his personal use. He had come to appreciate wilderness for its own sake.

One of the objectives of Partners in the Parks is cultivating a sense of stewardship for America's natural areas. That stewardship transcends a cursory desire to participate in a clean-up day or make a donation to the park's natural history association. If wilderness is really to be preserved for future generations, it must be continually produced. Wilderness needs a critical mass of wilderness artists whose task is to produce wilderness just as painters produce canvasses and composers produce music. By offering students a glimpse into what it takes to produce wilderness, by exposing them to the idea that it is produced at all, Partners in the Parks trains a new kind of steward, one who understands the relationship between the parts. If today's young people suffer from nature-deficit disorder, then Partners in the Parks offers an antidote, bringing up a cadre of future scientists, teachers, business people, and citizens who now see the inter-relationship of policy, economic practice, biological preservation, and outreach in offering the wilderness to future generations, as surely as they came to see the hidden wildlife in the park just by paying attention.

On the last day in Zion, the students rose early for a sunrise hike in the main canyon. Few other visitors were stirring. A flock of wild turkeys was grazing by the river. They were camouflaged in the long grass, but I did not need to point them out: the students saw them clear as day.





## **FIELD NOTES**



# **MY INCREDIBLE JOURNEY TO ZION NATIONAL PARK**

**ANGELA CALISE**

**LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY—C.W. POST CAMPUS**

A year ago I would have never imagined that I could be in Zion National Park, overlooking its magnificent canyons, where everything is huge, and I, in contrast to its vastness, appear to be a speck amidst its majesty. A year ago I had spine surgery for a herniated disc. Before the surgery I could barely stand, and I could not walk. After the surgery I wanted to walk, to run, to climb a mountain! And that is exactly what I did.

My journey began on a Monday morning. I met seven other honors students as well as the group leaders in Cedar City, Utah. We rationed the food and headed off on our adventure. During the first section of the trip, we trekked in the backcountry for two days. I will be honest: it was a physical challenge for me because of my medical history. Thankfully, the male students in my group were more than happy to lighten my load. I never realized how kind complete strangers could really be. Hiking uphill was definitely not my strong point. I was always lagging behind because I could not walk as fast as the others, and the group leader generously walked with me, and we enjoyed conversing although I still found keeping pace and traveling with the group for extended periods a hardship. Getting to the campsite after seven miles was a joy at first, but problems quickly surfaced. It took some teamwork to find the lighter and start a fire and then the water filter was not working and had to be cleaned. What a relief when those issues were solved!

Camping in the tent was an experience in itself. I had never camped before except in my backyard. Our tent at Zion was basically two tarps with a disconnected floor, which meant that small creatures could creep into the tent. How scary that was! Waking up the first morning was simply dreadful. Our makeshift tent had flooded, and I awoke in a puddle. I unzipped my sleeping bag, and to my amazement I saw



Snowy morning Zion

snowflakes falling from the sky. I just could not believe it had snowed in Utah in May! The snow was falling so heavily that a hot breakfast with coffee was not an option. We grabbed some trail mix and headed out on our final seven miles of hiking the backcountry. Just five minutes into our hike, we confronted our next challenge. The path stopped at a river that was raging past us. The tree bridge we were to use to cross the river had washed downstream, and the only way to get across was to



Zion stream crossing, 2010

jump. The other female students and I could not believe what was happening; how could we jump! We took our packs off and watched the men leap across the raging water. Then we threw our packs to them. I was designated to be the first of the women to cross the river. Many thoughts were running through my mind: What if I fall in? Am I going to die? I am crazy for doing this! Despite my fears and concerns, I knew that I could do it. I mustered the courage to bend my knees and hurl myself over the water to Justin, who was waiting at the other bank to brace me. We all made it over unharmed, but what an experience that was: virtually total strangers were helping each other to safety. What a wonderful feeling to experience their kindness and concern.

Although the snow made every task and activity difficult, still the group was enthralled by this winter wonderland, so beautiful and perfect yet beyond my power of description. Not even a picture could capture the purity of the scene.

The last mile of the hike was the hardest for me. My back ached. I just wanted to make it out, to accomplish this impossible journey. Seeing the road flooded me with mixed emotions. I was joyous to have made it, angry at how strenuous it was, and proud that I accomplished so many formidable challenges.

The next part of my journey was in the front country—the section visited by most tourists—which was much different from the backcountry, I must say. For one, I actually had cell phone service. Moreover, the group had access to a bathroom facility and could build a campfire. I suddenly resented my cell phone because it seemed intrusive in this environment, and it reminded me how often it was a source of stress at home. Thus, after assuring my parents that I was alive, I kept my phone off for the duration of the trip. Being detached from my life at home and its stresses allowed me to immerse myself in the natural world and to enjoy the beauty of the outdoors.

We met with park rangers, who were a treat. They are really passionate about the parks and the wildlife living within them. I never realized how tough maintaining a national park is: protecting animals, planting and replanting vegetation, and even preserving the land itself take considerable work.

Throughout the week we were offered a choice of diverse workshops. I went on a psychology and sound seminar, which made me aware of the sounds around me and showed me how much they affect not only humans, but the animals as well. Different sounds, like planes or birds, produce different sound signatures. An acoustic specialist, Mike Walsh, explained to the group how he records a certain area for about a

## FIELD NOTES: MY INCREDIBLE JOURNEY TO ZION NATIONAL PARK

month to see what noises occur in those places. In any one area, he may record planes, birds, mountain lions, and even sheep. Listening to the sounds of the animals was amazing. I loved learning that the sheep make a burping sound.

The next seminar was about watching Peregrine Falcons. After a luckless hour without spotting this bird, the students changed the observation site: the group saw this wonderful bird. Seeing a falcon in its natural habitat, soaring above the canyon was just remarkable. The group learned that falcons have a favorite perch, which the students could see clearly through the park ranger's high-tech binoculars.

During the various circles that were held, the participants eagerly shared their amazing experiences and what they had learned in the park. I could not believe the knowledge I had acquired, and having fun doing it was a great plus! I learned how to spot a falcon, I looked through powerful binoculars, and I asked the park rangers questions.



Looking for Perigrine Falcons

The hands-on learning helped me to absorb more information than I ever thought possible. A Partners in the Parks adventure definitely beats sitting in a classroom and passively hearing about a subject. To learn more fully, people should seek knowledge from experiences that allow them to become immersed in a subject and to gain insight.

My favorite experience by far was hiking up Angel's Landing. At first I was not going to hike it at all. People have fallen to their deaths there. The hike is strenuous and dangerous, and I did not want to fall. The group talked me into climbing half way, but by the time I reached the hard part, I thought, I have come this far, I jumped over a raging river, I hiked 17 miles in the snow, why can't I get to the top of Angel's Landing! I inched along slowly most of my way up, and I did lose my footing in some areas. Was I scared! I am deathly afraid of heights, but it was impossible not to look down. How small I felt compared to the vast canyon. I pulled myself up, holding on to chains set into the trail to assist climbers. How much I wanted to get to the top in spite of my fear. I had my new friends telling me I could do it. Their encouragement and physical assistance were help enough to urge me on. Reaching the top was indescribable. I felt alive. I had done something most people would never have the opportunity to do; I was on top of the world, risking my life in the process nonetheless. The whole group sat for some time, taking in the view, experiencing a flood of emotions. The group felt like it had conquered the world, and maybe the group had. The hike down was even more difficult than the ascent, but I knew now that I could do anything I was determined to do. If I wanted something, I could attain it; despite my size and the health issues I have endured, I am a strong-willed individual.

Leaving Utah was something I did not want to do. I kept telling myself that I will return, that I will go on a trip with these amazing individuals again, that I will take what I have learned and become a different person. I held back my emotions when I landed at J.F.K. airport. How I longed for the beauty of the mountains, the crisp air, the sound of the grass rustling beneath me. As I approached the glass doors, I saw my father jumping up and down, for his baby girl was home. It made me realize how blessed I am to have a wonderful family, how I want them to experience the beauty of our national parks with me because, in all honesty, telling my story does not adequately convey the experience. Although I do miss Utah, I am still in touch with my wonderful friends. Most importantly, I am a changed individual. I see the world differently, I know the wonders of nature, I realize the strength of a person, and I have experienced the kindness of a stranger who in just a few

## FIELD NOTES: MY INCREDIBLE JOURNEY TO ZION NATIONAL PARK

days can become a great friend. I feel strongly that people need to experience the wonders of this earth for themselves. The national parks are an American treasure with an accessibility that few people realize exists. I hope to pass on the word, to make it a necessity for my friends and family to want to visit these incredible parks, to experience what I have experienced, to be changed by those experiences and ultimately become better people because of it. My character has certainly been transformed by my journey.

# CHAPTER 7: NATURE AS TEXT— TEXT AS TEXT— SELF AS TEXT

The National Collegiate Honors Council has developed a number of experiential-education models over the last several decades. Undoubtedly the most well-known and widely applied is City as Text™, which is utilized at every annual conference to engage students and faculty in learning to interpret urban neighborhoods: architecture, history, demographics, and culture in the broadest sense. Many honors programs and regional organizations have adapted the model to construct local interpretive workshops, study abroad options, and other special programs. In addition, NCHC has employed similar explorations in faculty development workshops. Other experiential models have included Sleeping Bag Seminars—weekend adventures hosted by one institution drawing students from regional colleges to study some unique aspect of the local environment, history, or culture. These and other models are explored in the NCHC monograph *Place as Text*, which is extremely useful reading for anyone developing a Partners in the Parks program.

At the core of all experiential models is the opening of a door that leads students out of a classroom bounded by walls into open space. The sense of awe is practically unimaginable when that space is a vast canyon, a misty harbor, or a seemingly endless desert. In PITP nature is the primal classroom without walls. Using Nature as Text is the first principle of PITP. During the course of a week of land and water voyages, participants learn to observe and interpret the landscape they encounter. For anyone from a frenetic culture, such as contemporary American culture, slowing down to meet nature is a difficult first step. In his essay “Walking,” Thoreau provides some useful instruction: “you must walk like a camel which is said to be the only beast which ruminates when walking.” With three stomachs, camels naturally chew their cud with greater deliberation than any human being digesting a meal. Of course Thoreau is not speaking literally about rumination, although chewing our food slowly rather than gulping down handfuls of trail mix and moving on would help us all. Walking daily around his local environs was for Thoreau a mode of cultivating reflection, and this is the meaning of his injunction to ruminate.



Photo by Matthew Roy



Grand Canyon Parashant

During the first walk or hike on a PITP excursion, students are still wrapped up in bonding and comparing their school lives, their families, their pets, and their friends. They hardly notice the trail or the woods. They are excited by the newness of the landscape but focused on each other. They are eager to see everything and are therefore moving too quickly from place to place. They are not yet still enough within themselves to ruminate on the nature around them. Over the next few days, the excitement of simply being in nature will cool, and as the group engages with park rangers and faculty on specific topics, their eyes will focus on their surroundings. Then they will walk slowly and ruminate.

Walking with a botanist who was training volunteers for the forthcoming tourist season at Bryce, students learn to distinguish among pine, spruce, and fir. Later, when students see the decimation caused by white pine rust, they sigh in anxiety for the forest. Walking along an estuary beach with Peter Precourt, a Maine environmental artist, they gather driftwood, seaweed, shells, and pebbles to create their own organic sculptures, which the tide will soon carry out and bring back to shore in altered forms. Walking with Park Ranger Justine Stefanelli along the dunes at Fire Island, students discover and delicately handle the carapace of a horseshoe crab, as mysterious and ancient as a dinosaur. Learning to walk with eyes fully concentrated on the environment is one of the most meaningful acquisitions of the journey, possibly the beginning of a lifelong habit.

In writing about his walks, Thoreau raises a provocative question: “When we walk we naturally go to the fields and woods; what would



Ecological sculpture on the beach



Park Ranger Justine Stefanelli talks about horseshoe crab biology

become of us if we walked only in a garden or a mall?” Needless to say, his “mall” is a tree-lined promenade, like the Mall in Washington, not the shopping centers that blight our landscape. He is asking about the difference between walking in planned spaces and walking in the wild. Thoreau greatly prefers the wilderness because it harkens back to humankind’s primal roots and needs. A question such as this might lead to an excellent group discussion. Thoreau invites consideration of the ethical issues connected with a disappearing wilderness. In his day the transformation was already beginning. Today Americans must consider what “would become of us” if this country had no national parks, no wild landscape—only private gardens, designed spaces, and shopping malls.

Thoreau’s essay was one of the readings assigned by Bill Atwill for the literature workshop at Acadia. As can happen when colleagues from different disciplines come together, the ideas presented by Thoreau were cross-fertilized by a philosophical discussion that absorbed the group near the end of the week. Students exploring Acadia, even in the light of the readings assigned prior to our arrival, did not necessarily connect their explorations of nature with the texts. But *Nature as Text* inevitably led the group to *Text as Text* when philosophy professor Greg Fahy gave his workshop session. One of the young women in the group admitted that she had dreaded a session on philosophy. “I took a philosophy class last year and hated it. I didn’t understand anything; . . . it was so

abstract.” After reading the essays, she feared a repeat. When the evening came, however, Fahy turned the discussion to such immediate and tangible issues as whether we can actually think of the national parks as pristine nature and whether park lands should be preserved as unspoiled environments or altered by building campsites, trails, and parking lots for public use. The debate heated up. Everyone got involved, presenting cases for both sides. By the end of the evening, the same student admitted that after taking part in the discussion, she was thinking about taking another philosophy course to give the discipline a second chance. (Fahy’s enlightening presentation appears as Field Notes at the end of this chapter.)

All manner of texts can inform energetic discussions. At the Black Canyon, workshop leaders included native Ute tales as well as historic perspectives from early survey teams and Jane Candia Coleman’s volume of western poetry, *No Roof But Sky*. Her title is a reminder of our place of engagement, nature’s vast classroom that is the locus of these adventures. While students may bring to the readings some perspectives that come from their major disciplines, the bedrock of these reading groups meeting out in the open is a liberal education that allows them to ruminate (that word again) on the ideas that inform the land surrounding them. And if students take these texts seriously and to heart, then they can contribute to the transformative experience we hope for.



Mapping the Cadillac Mountain hike

In that way both Nature and Text as Text can lead inward to some contemplation of self. Among the first questions around the campfire are the following: What prompted you to make this trip? What interests you about this place? What do you hope to get out of this adventure? Some students have simply responded to advertising—an attractive poster or brochure—or the lure of an inexpensive trip. Others have always imagined going west or east or to a swamp, a desert, a cave, a mountain, an ocean, the Statue of Liberty, or the Lincoln Memorial.

No matter what the reason, the students have all come for themselves since none of these adventures are required. Thus the likelihood of expanding their perceptual and intellectual horizons is great. Sandy, who is no hiker but who arose at 2 a.m. in order to climb Cadillac Mountain and witness the sun come up over the most eastern point in America, was simply thrilled with her accomplishment. She never thought she could do it, but, encouraged by the group, she pushed onward in the darkness so that dawn on a mountaintop changed her sense of what she is able to achieve. On the flip side, Bill Atwill, who was leading the group, knew from the moment he saw me stumbling over rocks on the first short hike that I would probably not be able to scramble up the mountain in darkness and would hold the group back if I tried. Sensibly, I had already reached the same conclusion and let him know well in advance that I would not be coming along. Learning to accept personal limitations is another dimension of Self as Text that happens along the journey.

People may enter into a PITP adventure for particular reasons, but no one can ever preconceive what will generate the most impact on self. In Acadia, for example, Charlie Jacobi, a park ranger at Acadia with a specialization in park use and visitor impact, engaged the students in an ethics game. He arranged the group in a circle and then asked everyone to rate the most offensive behavior in a park by standing next to the person who was tagged as representing some particular offense. He called them out one by one: using cell phones on trails, picking wildflowers, leaving garbage in fire pits, talking loudly in the woods, leaving human waste, dumping trash in streams, and stealing arrowheads. People clustered in different groups and then jumped from one group to another as the impact of each was explained in depth. The result of this game was that environmental impact became internalized in a way that might have a long-range impact on personal and political behavior.

Cultivating the future stewardship of the national parks is one of the long-range goals of PITP. Tending the land, so to speak, even during a





Ranger Jacobi's ethics game



Installing an art exhibition, Lamoine State Park

## JOAN DIGBY

short period of time, puts that goal into focus. Two very different volunteer components are excellent examples. In the first, under the guidance of art professor and photographer Robert Rainey, our group installed a University of Maine student photograph exhibition along a trail in Lamoine State Park. Each double-sided panel had a black and white photograph on one side and a color image on the other. Students and faculty working together chose the sequence of the photographs; they considered how they would look to people walking down the trail from both directions. Then the group drove rods into place and hung the show. Almost immediately, a woman with two children came down the path and stopped to look at the photographs one by one. The pride that the students had in seeing the public enjoy the outcome of their aesthetic decisions made several of them remark that they had never thought about an art exhibit from the perspective of a curator. This idea will undoubtedly interest them in art in public spaces and even museum exhibitions in the future. On the second occasion, they were all busy helping Friends of Acadia complete a section of a trail. Along came a man with a pair of binoculars. In an offhand way I said to him, "Wouldn't you like to help us build a trail?" To my amazement, he put the binoculars down and began shoveling gravel. Then he said, "I have come to Acadia every summer for the last twenty-five years, and every



Building a trail, Acadia

summer I work as a volunteer in the park. I was feeling guilty that I am only on a short vacation this time, but now you gave me a chance to do some work, and I feel better about my visit.” He shoveled for at least an hour and then bid farewell. This incident was a wonderful public lesson for everyone about moral responsibility and how it can improve the decisions we make every day. Transforming experiences are often serendipitous, like the people walking through the art exhibit or the man, who was an honors program graduate by the way, suspending his birding to help build a trail.

Planning or conceiving all the ways that PITP will shape students and faculty is impossible. The hope is that one experience will make them want to engage in a second and a third or come back to the parks with family and friends throughout their lifetime. Perhaps students will discover that learning happens as part of the natural course of life. Faculty may even become more attached to teaching in honors after they have seen a group of disparate honors students from institutions of every kind and region live, learn, and work together. For all who gather for these adventures in a national park, PITP deepens the reflections and commitment.

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## **FIELD NOTES**



# **PHILOSOPHY IN THE PARKS**

**GREG FAHY**

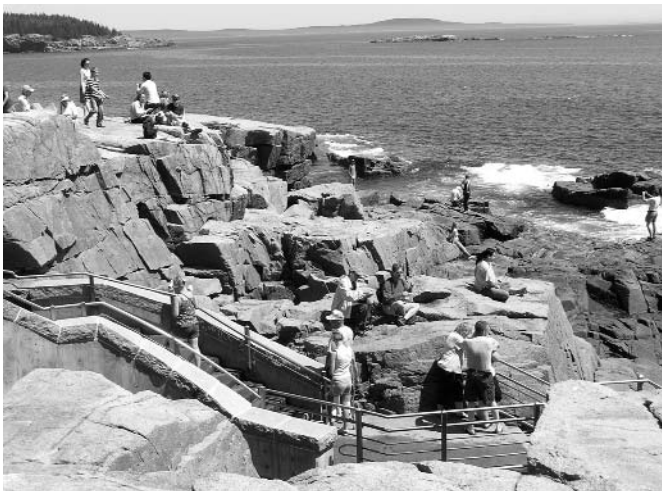
**UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT AUGUSTA**

Philosophers usually consider applied ethics to mean the application of abstract ethical principles to concrete practices, such as in medical or business ethics. Because of this, applied ethics can be a formal and mechanical process of working through practical results of particular ethical theories. The Acadia Partners in the Parks program encourages philosophers to practice another kind of applied philosophy, one in which students consider, discuss, and debate the value of having national parks and wilderness. These discussions are applied philosophy because they are informed by a week of concrete experiences living in and learning about Acadia National Park. Students have been studying the biology, the air quality, and the hydrology of the land. They have been camping on the land and volunteering to build trails. They have been caring for and caring about Acadia in a variety of ways throughout the week. This lived experience of Acadia informs the philosophical discussion, and the discussion makes explicit what students have felt implicitly about the value of Acadia. Here philosophy is the natural outgrowth of students sitting around a campfire, contemplating what they value about such places. The philosophical questions are not applications of principles but rather an articulation of the value of having national parks. The discussions do not move from abstract principles to practical applications, but rather from practical and lived experiences to these abstract ideals and back again in a dialectical movement that is philosophically rich.

I have participated in Partners in the Parks in Acadia National Park both in 2008 and 2009 to engage honors students in an ongoing philosophical debate about how to value natural ecosystems. My goals for these discussions are threefold. I want students to understand the ethical debates surrounding the environment, particularly the debate between anthropocentrists, who value the environment solely for the

sake of human beings, and ecocentrists, who value the ecosystem for its own sake. I want students to see the limitations of both of these approaches and think about which approach they favor. I also want students to begin to articulate an aesthetics of the natural world. Finally, I want students to have a clear understanding of their own position regarding how and what they value in the natural world. In our democracy, effective advocacy for national parks requires clarity of understanding of what people value in these ecosystems.

To begin the discussion, I raise a general question about the value of national parks, why we set aside land to be national parks. I assume that students do think that it is better to have parks than not; it is a self-selecting group. To encourage creative thinking, however, I make a case that we should not have national parks. Playing devil's advocate, I argue that delimiting a specific area as a national park greatly damages the natural ecosystems of the area. In Acadia, for example, hosting more than two million visitors a year causes significant air pollution, noise pollution, and light pollution. Sand beach and Thunder Hole are two of the park's natural resources that have been significantly rebuilt to accommodate such a large number of tourists. Further, I argue that creating national parks has a detrimental effect on the way Americans enjoy nature. They often think that nature is something that is to be enjoyed only in isolated and sublimely beautiful places. As a result, they ignore the more mundane natural world nearer to their homes and work. These more mundane ecosystems can be just as spiritually refreshing to visit and often are just as ecologically rich and diverse as are national parks.



Thunderhole path

I expect to get a variety of responses to this question about the value of national parks, and their responses always contain latent contradictions. For example, the preservation of ecosystems often runs contrary to the public enjoyment of the natural world. Surely, parks are there for both, but delineating just how to balance these two competing goods is difficult. Our discussion about this balance is much richer and more well informed than comparable classroom discussions because it begins with the concrete experiences of students.

Students' own recognition of the contradictions inherent in achieving all of their listed values turns the discussion to a ranking of values. Often these contradictions relate to the dispute between anthropocentrists and ecocentrists. The question that is at the heart of this dispute is whether an ecosystem, or a national park like Acadia, can have intrinsic value: in polluting or damaging an ecosystem, am I harming the park itself, or is all my damage to the ecosystem indirectly damage to current or future generations of human beings? In the past, many Western philosophers were convinced that people could not directly harm a cat or a dog, but the attribution of sentience to many animals suggests that they can be harmed over and above any harm to humans. Intrinsic value is the gold standard of ethics because it implies that something is valuable even though humans might not value it at any particular time. If human beings did not have intrinsic value, philosophers worry, they could be used merely as instruments or as slaves. This instrumentalism has been the dominant attitude of the Western world toward natural ecosystems, but that attitude may be changing. This change of attitude, however, has been slowed by the difficulty in articulating the intrinsically valuable characteristics that an ecosystem possesses.

So my second challenge to participants was to respond to William Baxter's arguments supporting an anthropocentric approach to the natural environment. I articulate his arguments: (a) the natural world cannot speak for itself and therefore cannot express its own value; it is always necessary to have a human being express the values of the ecosystem; (b) nature is not normative; it is not the case that changes to the natural world are moral changes: they simply are changes; and (c) this approach is the way people actually think about ecosystems; when they push hard enough for justifications for preserving the wilderness, it is almost inevitable that they will articulate a value that is anthropocentric, that relates to human beings (Baxter 1–13).

In response to Baxter's challenge, I ask students to explain which of the values that they earlier articulated are anthropocentric and which are ecocentric. Further, I ask them to articulate a value for national

parks that is not reducible to instrumental value to human beings. Often students present ecological values such as diversity and richness as intrinsically good. Alternatively they describe aesthetic values, such as beauty and sublimity. J. Baird Callicott, following Aldo Leopold, has articulated three such values: beauty, stability, and integrity. I ask students (working together in small discussion groups) to evaluate the prospect of developing a land ethic based upon these principles or others that they have chosen. At one point in the deliberations, a student commented: "Philosophy is hard." No wonder. Ecocentric philosophers who have thought about these issues for years and tried to articulate such values have had limited success. Other philosophers can usually demonstrate that these supposedly intrinsic values are actually instrumentally valuable to human beings. Here is where our discussions often get heated as students make the case for a particular value or others challenge their claims.

Finally, students grapple with the question of how to define beauty in a way that could provide a basis for an ecocentrist approach. Callicott has suggested that a land aesthetic could be more palatable than a land ethic "since it emphasizes assets and rewards. Yet it also fosters conservation" (239). He argues that a valuing of ecosystems for their intrinsic diversity and beauty may be a more practical approach than an approach based upon obligations and duties because many people value natural ecosystems precisely for their beauty.

Beauty is certainly one of the primary motivations for setting aside land for national parks. The number of cars that pass through the Park Loop Road of Acadia National Park and the number of tourists taking photographs suggest that many visitors to Acadia are interested in seeing beautiful vistas and picturesque landscapes.

Of course, people appreciate works of art aesthetically in a variety of ways; not surprisingly, they have just as many ways to appreciate nature aesthetically. As Callicott points out, romantic and picturesque landscapes, while initially easy to appreciate, do not always stand up to a subtler aesthetic appreciation. He writes, "Ecology, history, paleontology, and geology each penetrate the surface of direct sensory experience and supply substance to scenery" (241). In all my discussions with students around the campfire, none of them have referred to the romantic vistas that Acadia provides as an example of the aesthetic beauty of the park. Rather, they acknowledge the aesthetic beauty of individual objects, such as rocks or trees. Or they discuss the aesthetics of the ecosystem as a harmonization of a variety of complementary and

compositional elements, which returns the discourse to the values of diversity and ecological and evolutionary interrelations.

To enhance this discussion of the appropriate way to appreciate natural beauty, students have read Allen Carlson's "Aesthetic Appreciation of the Natural Environment" in which he argues that the appreciation of individual natural objects is not appropriately described as an appreciation of nature *per se*, but rather of works of art. According to Carlson, "Natural objects are granted what is called 'artistic enfranchisement' and they, like artifacts such as Marcel Duchamp's famous urinal, which he enfranchised as a work called *Fountain* (1917), become works of art" (528). The danger is that in aesthetically separating objects from their environments, humans are using the natural world as an instrument. They are not valuing it for its own sake, but rather as a means to inclusion in the art world. As Carlson points out, rocks on our mantelpiece can be appreciated simply as aesthetic objects. Thus he argues that the aesthetic value of individual natural objects cannot provide a basis for inherently valuing an ecosystem.

Carlson supports a model of the aesthetic appreciation of nature that he calls the "natural environmental model" (532). This model "takes natural and environmental science to be the key to aesthetic appreciation of the natural environment" (532). This understanding brings a degree of objectivity to aesthetic judgments based upon the ecological and evolutionary relationships among things in the ecosystem. In this way, aesthetic judgments can avoid the anthropocentrism and radical individualistic subjectivism that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. This perspective also avoids reducing the aesthetic appreciation of the natural world to a romantic appreciation of landscape vistas. Finally, this perspective fits in well with the ethical approach that values the richness and diversity of an ecosystem for its own sake. Last year, I stopped the discussion when students articulated a model of beauty based upon harmonization of a variety of elements because of this natural connection to Callicott's ethical approach based upon biodiversity.

The Partners in the Parks experience offers some unique qualities that enable these philosophical discussions to be much more meaningful than corresponding discussions of environmental philosophy in the classroom. I enjoy having these particular discussions near the end of the students' week for two reasons. First, many earlier discussions contribute to the ideas that are raised in this environmental philosophy session. The literary discussion of Thoreau's "Walking" led to questions about how to appreciate nature and about the implications of attitudes

toward nature as expressed by Thoreau. The photography discussion raised issues about the limitations of romantic and picturesque aesthetic and provided ideas to students for alternative ways of photographing the national parks. The “Leave No Trace” discussion raised issues of people’s ethical obligations to environments, and ultimately whether they should value environments for their recreational use or for their own sake. Any time humans venture into the wilderness, they do leave a trace. These previous conversations prepared students to apprehend the philosophical distinction between ecocentrism and anthropocentrism. Secondly, students have enjoyed the richness of aesthetic experiences in traveling within the park, hiking around, and looking at ecosystems with specific goals in mind. After completing a fish count in a small creek, students can see how the natural and built environments affect the health and existence of brook trout. They experience the ecological relationships, resulting in a much greater appreciation of these interrelations. The entire week of camping and learning about Acadia has been excellent preparation for a more abstract and philosophical discussion about valuing such a place.

John Dewey describes education as growth. Growth is so often stifled not just by educational traditions that were built for an agricultural and industrial social order but also by the physical confines of a classroom. According to Dewey, “The current philosophical dualism of mind and body, of spirit and mere outward doing, is ultimately but an intellectual reflex of the social divorce of routine habit from thought, of means from ends, practice from theory” (52). Partners in the Parks reintegrates what has been divided in traditional educational institutions. Students discuss aesthetics while taking photos of the natural world. They spend time creating trails as means to achieving these ends of aesthetic appreciation and then enjoy trails that others have created. A philosophical discussion of values is contained within experiences of biological, ecological, artistic, astronomical, and other experiences that motivate this discussion. Traditional classroom settings of rows of desks militate against both a thoroughgoing experiential discussion and also signify levels of stability that are inconsistent with education. Education requires a plasticity of habit. While camping, students are out of their comfort zone. As a result, they are much more likely to reconstruct their habits in educational ways. They are much more likely to grow in such environments.

The Partners in the Parks program also enables teachers and students to camp, eat, and work together throughout the week. Although an informality and comfort with teachers are critically important for



successful education to occur, the structures of the academy also militate against this, which is why the best teachers break through these structures to invite students to dine with them, to interact outside of the formal structures of class times and office hours. Partners in the Parks fosters this kind of comfort, and as a teacher I am happy when students are willing to challenge me throughout the week on issues, or even to poke fun at philosophy. I am confident that these students will not be intimidated by the philosophical questions I raise and will be comfortable enough to say that they think I am wrong about ecocentrism or that philosophy is really difficult. This instruction is rewarding for a teacher because it means that students are engaging not just with their mind, but with their social, physical, emotional reactions. They are doing philosophy not because it provides three credits towards their academic degree, but because it matters to them how they value Acadia National Park. Philosophy then becomes a natural result of experiencing these different values and, in turn, the process of clarifying values that they begin in this discussion should inform their practical work on behalf of the national parks.

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## CHAPTER 8:

# CREATURE DISCOMFORTS

Like other Americans, the students who participate in PITP are accustomed to living with amenities beyond the most basic creature comforts: clean drinking water, an extraordinary variety of food and beverages, a daily shower, a flush toilet, changes of clean clothes, a comfortable bed, a certain amount of privacy, transportation of some kind nearly on demand, television and movies on demand, a computer, a cell phone, and gadgets galore. Taking these away cuts to the essence of the Partners in the Parks experience.

Paring down to the minimal makes people squirm and think. Among the learning experiences of PITP, the subtraction of conveniences people take for granted provokes some of the most serious reflections on self and community. The absence of communication technologies, for example, is particularly disturbing to students; they use their cell phones as perpetual lifelines. They talk to family and friends, text and twitter, check out sports results, watch TV, listen to music, shop, and game around the clock. When that lifeline is cut, they feel isolated, alone, sometimes even deprived, worried, or depressed. Without cell towers and within canyon walls, cell phones have no reception at all. The phone is dead. That parents and friends will have to wait for communiqués is often the first lesson that students learn on a PITP adventure. Without electronic communication students have no alternative but engaging in face-to-face conversations with the people right there walking alongside them. Thus conversations become lively when cell phones have no juice.

In a national park all sorts of gadgets that require electricity or charged batteries to operate, such as electric shavers, hair dryers, cameras, or computers, typically become extraneous. In bathrooms at group campsites, electric outlets are at a premium. All night long, while people sleep in their tents, camera batteries are charging for the next day's photography. On overnight hikes or in remote areas without electric outlets—such as the backcountry in Alaska's six-million-acre Denali—no such luxury exists.

Talk of bathrooms makes hikers long for showers. For the first day or two of an expedition, waiting to have a shower does not seem like a serious deprivation. But after dust and mud, saltwater and charcoal, peanut butter and dirty dish water accumulate like a new layer of skin, the prospect of a shower becomes first a dream and then an obsession.

Some campers and guides like to go the whole week, letting beards and hairy legs grow with pride to show that they can take it. Others walk the long road to public showers, willing to rise even an hour earlier than daybreak to bathe before the first morning activity. Personal hygiene is a matter of some importance for people tenting together in close quarters. As dirty laundry fills backpacks and less than immaculate bodies stuff themselves into sleeping bags, tolerance is an issue worth special consideration. One good time for such reflection is in the middle of the night when sounds of snoring fill the cold air.

The listener is, of course, lying on the ground, very possibly thinking about the soft bed that waits at home. The real campers are asleep, having made peace some time ago with tents and sleeping bags. They are enjoying themselves. For novices the experience may be uncomfortable. Warnings like “stay away from the tent walls in case there is condensation in the night” or “close the zipper to keep the bugs out” will send shivers of concern that make falling asleep on the hard, cold ground even less possible. Restless campers lie in the dark, perfectly quiet so as not to awaken anyone or invite animal curiosity. Every once in awhile there is the soft zipper sound of a tent opening and someone with a flashlight stealing out go to the bathroom. A cold or rainy night exacerbates the lack of creature comforts.

Still, discomfort cements friendships, creates verve, and steels determination. In 2010 both the Cape Hatteras trip and the Fire Island trips met with walls of rain. On Fire Island, Park Ranger Paula Valentine generously moved the group into staff housing since it was clear that tenting would be impossible. The weather did not prevent our two seasoned leaders from attempting to sleep out. When their tents collapsed, they willingly took over in the kitchen, grilling burgers and S'mores that almost had the taste of an open fire.

Dressed in ponchos and foul-weather gear, the determined hikers hit the trail the next morning and completed the seven-mile planned hike. Once back at campus, they pitched tents outside the dorm and spent the night catching up on the full camping experience. Of course showers and toilets stood nearby, which is not the case on backwoods trips that rely on the ritual of Leave No Trace.

Experienced campers know all about this regimen. Novice campers on the pilot Bryce trip recoiled in horror when its full meaning became clear. The packing list included toilet paper and baggies, but few novices put together the two items; these two items allow campers to abide by park regulations for toilet use in the wilderness. In fact, the survivor training team for this expedition had to do some actual toilet



Ready for Rain Fire Island

training, showing some female students how to dig cat holes to bury their waste before zipping the used toilet paper into the plastic bag so that they could carry it out of the woods and dispose of it properly at the campground. This adaptation is not easy for shy and squeamish students, but everyone got used to it.

Leave No Trace constitutes a very broad program of ethical behavior in park settings that promotes responsibility to the landscape. It includes walking only on marked trails to avoid damaging vegetation or disturbing the wilderness. It prohibits the removal of any rocks or archeological fragments found along the trails. It provides clear instructions about what sticks if any may be used for kindling campfires, which may be made only in pits provided and must be fully extinguished at the end of use. The philosophy of Leave No Trace balances preservation of wilderness with responsible use by people who are committed to leaving the most minimal footprint of human activity possible.

Watching students informed by that philosophy approach other campers who violate it is fascinating. One evening in Maine, new arrivals at the next campground began to gather wood to build a fire; however, the gathering of kindling is not permitted at that site. A party of PITP students went over to explain the regulation. Their advice was heeded, and the campers started their fire with the newspaper and

charcoal they had packed. In general people who use the parks appear to be conscious of their value and willingly abide by regulations when educated. There is much to be learned about a civil society in the context of such encounters. In its broadest context, Leave No Trace is an attitude that can apply to personal decorum in virtually every habitat, including college campuses. (Indeed, this philosophy should be taught as a freshman introduction to campus etiquette. As a result of PITP, I have added it to the curriculum of Honors College 101.) After the experience of putting out fires, cleaning up after meals, throwing garbage and trash only in proper bins, and taking no relics out of nature, people often transfer these behaviors into lifelong habits that inform their consciously ethical practices. (For more information about the details of outdoor ethics, with a full list of responsible camping practices, go to <http://www.lnt.org>.)

A similar transformative experience is the goal of volunteer work in the park. Engaging in a project encourages participants to understand that the national parks are spaces that belong to everyone, and therefore everyone must care for them. Since most visitors arrive in large tour buses to observe the landscape from scenic lookouts, this sense of stewardship is highly unlikely to register with them. But living in a park for the duration of a week and helping rangers with projects for the benefit of the park invest participants with a strong sense of both ownership and pride. Getting one's hands dirty, whether shoveling gravel and leveling a path or learning to dig neat trenches and sift earth in search of pot shards, has many benefits. Detailed program planning enables park officials to devise a service project that enables students to contribute meaningful work. Students were amazed to discover, for example, that Zion National Park had no survey of its fire hydrants. Park rangers mobilized students with a GPS unit into a team that mapped the hydrants, producing a record that might turn out to be a literal lifesaver. Imagining any student involved in this project not paying more attention to fire hydrants and fire safety as a matter of habit from this time forward would be hard.

Every engagement in volunteer work is designed as site specific. The benefit to the park is paramount although it might not be so immediately fulfilled as the benefit to the students and faculty. They roll up their sleeves and put in a good morning or afternoon of concentrated labor that they comprehend as service in aid of the park's future. Honors students do well at getting their hands dirty. They pull weeds, shovel grit, or push wheelbarrows, and they rarely complain about their tasks. On the contrary, they thoroughly enjoy the physical exercise and



find the volunteer component among the most satisfying and memorable experiences of PITP.

On occasion, students may opt out of one volunteer project or another. Someone with severe plant allergies might not want to risk pulling invasive weeds. Someone with lower back pain should not be shoveling gravel or pushing a wheelbarrow. Headaches, menstrual cramps, muscle pulls, or the common cold may all be unexpected encumbrances during a PITP program. As long as participants feel comfortable about expressing their own creature discomforts or health issues, accommodating them should be easy. Rest, remedies, and relaxation are sometimes in order. A cup of hot chocolate, one of the great essentials on these journeys, might be the magic restorative.

Even when people are not exactly feeling under the weather, but are aching and tired from the sheer intensity of the trip, comfort food greatly offsets discomforts of every kind. Peanut butter and jelly, macaroni and cheese, mashed potatoes, trail mix and Cheerios, marshmallows and brownies are staples that keep campers happy. When the stores of cheese, Cheerios, and chocolate run low, students' emotions run high. At that point, food groups barter or exchange supplies and fabricate exotic meals based on whatever is left in the boxes. At times stale-bagel French toast can really hit the spot. Creature discomforts foster team building, resourcefulness, and creativity. Although everyone is ready to return home by the end of the journey, they do so with greater cognizance and appreciation of all the quotidian comforts and amenities they took for granted. And they can cook!

*After watching the great river run through a Colorado canyon, Pavel Goriacko, a student who attended the Black Canyon of the Gunnison program, reflected on the meaning of water, a creature comfort that no one on Earth can afford to waste. His observations appear in the Field Notes to this chapter, followed by those of Sarah L. Fann, who writes about how the immediacy of a Partners experience, pruned down to essentials and cut off from the familiar, changes students' consciousness of time and how they spend it.*





## **FIELD NOTES**



# **WATER RIGHTS**

**PAVEL GORIACKO**

**LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY—BROOKLYN CAMPUS**

The dry climate and high mountain altitude of Colorado constituted a completely different environment than the one I am used to, having lived all my life at sea level where rainfall is abundant. The arid climate made me realize the importance of water, which I had taken for granted all my life. Of course, as I later learned, water is one of the most important issues facing the West right now. The Black Canyon of the Gunnison program included extensive discussions about the role of water in the West, which ranged from building dams and assigning water rights to growing native vegetation like sagebrush instead of green grass on lawns. These discussions opened my eyes to a major problem affecting almost half of the United States. I knew about problems such as global warming and pollution, which relate to our increasing demand for natural resources, but I was completely oblivious to water issues. Recently, I read an article in the *Wall Street Journal* entitled “In Arid West, Thirsty Lawns Get Cut from Plans,” which concerned designing new lawns in Colorado that would conserve water usage. I felt great because I fully understood the issues presented in the article. I felt like my knowledge of the world expanded thanks to the PITP trip.

Another thing that I learned on this trip is the importance of national parks and their role in American culture. It feels great to be exposed to this amazing resource, which is available to the public, but one that few people take advantage of. They are among the most beautiful and culturally enriching sites in America; furthermore, they have a historical significance that extends back to before they were designated national parks. Near the Black Canyon, the group visited an archeological site where workers were excavating traces of winter homes of the Ute Native Americans. These parks preserve from human exploitation the history of America.

Photo by Heather Thiessen-Reilly



Gunnison River, Black Canyon

The trip had such a profound effect on me that I decided to volunteer as a PITP intern to help other students gain a similar experience and expand my own familiarity with national parks. The opportunity arose in May 2010, when I served as an intern for the PITP program at Fire Island/Ellis Island in New York. The adventure opened my eyes to NPS sites only an hour away from home: Roosevelt's house at Sagamore Hill and the Fire Island National Seashore. More importantly, interning enabled me to share my knowledge and passion for historic sites in New York City. By conducting a guided tour of the Lower East Side, a residential neighborhood of many immigrant groups, I conveyed to the visiting students the importance of immigration to the history of New York City, thus enhancing their appreciation of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. I also talked with the students about the role of city and state parks in the daily lives of New Yorkers, which led to an important discussion on how they differ from the national parks. It felt rewarding to apply my knowledge and passion for New York's historic sites, making certain that PITP participants in New York have a very personal and memorable experience.



## **FIELD NOTES**



# **TIME MANAGEMENT AND THE EXPERIENCE OF PARTNERS**

**SARAH L. FANN**

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA WILMINGTON

I am “that” honors student: the one whose minimum course load consists of 17 hours but considers an overload of 19 or 20 credit hours standard fare. I am majoring in marine biology and statistics, and I almost have enough course work to merit a minor in mathematics. I work part time, volunteer, conduct research, participate in clubs, serve as a leader in honors, and regularly attend honors conferences.

I am nothing special; every honors program or college has students like me. We have yet to learn the value of saying no, and many of us never will. We live through a planner, be it digital or hardcopy. The calendar is always full, yet we are always squeezing in additional commitments. Stress is a constant part of life, always at maximum capacity, and we leave no room for accidents such as a cold or car trouble. In a way we are killing ourselves, sacrificing our youth, and we do not even realize it.

At least, I did not realize it until I experienced a week when everything was erased: calendars, commitments, cell phones, and internet. The adventure was reduced to a few honors faculty and an eclectic group of honors students that included me.

To some people, having no internet might be a terrifying prospect. After all, they are drawn to check emails, update Facebook, read favorite web comics, and organize their life electronically. The cell phone, a most basic tool, is widely regarded as indispensable. It is a social vector that keeps people connected to loved ones near and far. During my weeklong adventure at Acadia National Park, once I turned the cell phone off, I came to realize that it—and other electronic devices—can also deter genuine social interaction.

Meeting new people is stressful to me, especially if I am going to be surrounded by people I have just met for a prolonged period of time.

Needless to say, I was worried about interacting with the other students joining me for the Partners in the Parks experience, and the first day was a little nerve-wracking. Even in the best of these situations, meeting new people, even if they turn out to be lifelong friends, involves peaks and valleys. During stressful encounters or times when I am feeling isolated, the cell phone becomes my worst enemy. I typically reach for the cell phone to give my close friends a quick buzz when I feel marginalized or out of place. This is my escape from the current stressful situation; I digitally flee into the arms of my safe, comfortable friends, who may be hundreds of miles away. This tactic, however, creates a barrier to overcoming the difficulties of getting to know potential new friends. By stepping away from the situation, I unintentionally send a signal that I am not interested in reaching out to new people. Of course that is not how I really feel, but retreating into the cell phone cuts me off from others and prevents me from fostering new relationships. During that week in the woods without cell phone service, I would find myself in stressful social situations, wishing I had my cell phone. After a few of these encounters, it hit me. I realized that I had been using my cell phone as a shield and that I needed to join the live conversation before me.

Nowadays, whenever I am at conferences or other events where many new people are present, I rarely talk on my cell phone. Instead, I engage with people and make an extra effort during those sub-optimal social encounters. The message I send now is clear: I am *here in the present moment*, and I am interested in connecting with others. As a result, I have made new friends and enjoyed the overall experience at conferences.

In the same way that losing cell phone service taught me valuable lessons and helped me grow as a person, so too did losing internet service and, with it, my access to email, calendars, and day planners. In its place, I had a week focused on me.

For an entire week, I did not have to show up for academic and organization meetings; check for emails at breakfast, lunch, and dinner; or get bogged down by the myriad commitments in a typical day. For once, I found my own needs and thoughts on the front burner. I had time to reflect, relax, and revitalize and that was an incredible experience. Instead of driving myself from task to task, I could stop and smell the roses. In fact, that was really my only responsibility.

Maybe this realization is common sense for some people, but participating in Partners in the Parks taught me the importance of putting myself first once in a while. In fact, I did not even realize that I had been shortchanging myself and behaving in an unsustainable manner until I had that camping experience. That week in the woods renewed



SARAH L. FANN

my spirit and prepared me for my final years in college. I learned that time management is more than organizing events and tasks to fit in more responsibilities; it requires balancing time for oneself with time dedicated to others.



## CHAPTER 9:

# HOSTS AND GUESTS

One of Albert Camus' most well-known short stories is "The Guest," a poor English translation of the French word *l'hôte*, which actually has the Janus-faced meaning of both host and guest. The story itself is about the ambiguous relationship between an Arab prisoner *en route* to his trial for a murder of passion and a French Algerian schoolteacher who refuses to accept responsibility for delivering the prisoner put in his charge to the police. As the story progresses, it becomes clear that these two men are somehow mirror images of each other and that the lines between guest and host are as unclear as shifting desert sands.

Some of the same shifting ambiguity characterizes relationships and etiquette in PITP excursions. Those who are guests sometimes become hosts while hosts sometimes are guests. Seeing through both perspectives is therefore important, and people must be ready to act in either context.

Every PITP adventure has several sets of hosts: Southern Utah University, which hosts the PITP website and manages trip accounts; PITP, which is a standing committee of the National Collegiate Honors Council; NCHC itself; the regional honors councils, which provide some scholarship assistance to participating students as well as advertising for PITP programs; Cedar Breaks National Monument, through which PITP is introduced to the park officials at every program site; the host colleges responsible for the PITP program and program leaders; the national park where the adventure will take place; and the National Park Service and all the park rangers who graciously present programs to PITP groups. Of course it is natural that hosts and guests mingle. Even remote host institutions might wish, on occasion, to send representatives to a park site to see firsthand how the program is going, and these hosts are certainly welcome guests!

The operative word is *welcome*. PITP is indebted to a great many people who would all be welcome visitors. Just as nature provides students a classroom without walls, it offers guests a living room without doors where no one need knock. Visiting faculty, park rangers, and neighbors from nearby group campsites are all invited to join in whatever activities engage the group. The etiquette that these explorations cultivate begins with openness, inclusiveness, sharing, appreciation, and graciousness. Welcoming visitors to a PITP campsite enables the student guests to play host on these special occasions. Sometimes guests even

bring food—pasta and bread, ketchup and jam—that they wish to leave behind as they break camp. These gifts are most welcome. They encourage PITP participants by their example to do the same when they leave. Often visitors open the discussion with queries about where the group comes from and what the students are doing there. To most people who encounter PITP, the participants do not seem to be the ordinary sort of visitors or tourists, which is perfectly true. These discussions about PITP occasionally reveal that these new acquaintances are attending college in an honors program.

Park rangers are also interested in our field-based learning program, especially when students show genuine interest in the work they do. Many rangers have indicated that they like working with PITP because the students ask the most thoughtful questions. Getting to know the park rangers allows students to expand their sense of place through the eyes of those most passionate about it. One afternoon at Eileson Visitor's Center in Denali, our two devoted guides, Ranger Rachel Jencks and Intern Christine Forbes, opened the trunk of their car to reveal a treasure trove of bread and sandwich fixings. It was Christine's birthday, and we all tucked in to an impromptu celebration overlooking a vista of glaciers. That evening, Rachel and Christine appeared at camp with bags of lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, and quite amazingly avocados. Students joined them in preparing fresh salad as they engaged in a lively conversation that positively made the park seem like our home as well as theirs.

On every PITP adventure we have occasions to engage with rangers on a personal level that often reveals the quality of their professional lives in the park service. Ranger Scott (Dusty) Walker, who taught the principles of fire management around the campfire one evening in Acadia, was coming to the end of his long career. When asked what he planned to do for his retirement, he said, "visit the national parks of course," and his eyes lit up with enthusiasm for adventures yet to come. Standing in front of the Washington Monument, Park Ranger Robbin Owen spoke with the group about the hundreds of political and social protests that take place on the Mall every year. She works with organizations, helping them apply for permits to stage gatherings and marches, then manages their demonstrations. Like many park rangers, she began as a summer intern with no thought of a professional career in the National Park Service. Her college major was psychology. When the opportunity arose to apply her training to working with the public in what might be tense and emotional situations, she discovered her calling. As we walked down the Mall toward the several war memorials,

JOAN DIGBY

she reminded the group of how many people suffering from grievous personal histories come to visit the Washington sites. Her presence and tone clearly communicated that she understood these people and served their needs with tremendous respect and compassion. Speaking from her personal experience and with great professional satisfaction, she encouraged students to apply for summer positions or internships related to their major fields of study. The students, of course, thanked her for that advice.



Fire-management talk with Ranger Walker



Ranger Robbin Owen with group at Washington Monument

## CHAPTER 9: HOSTS AND GUESTS

Between hosts and guests meaningful tokens of appreciation are sometimes exchanged. All the students received “Utah Rocks” T-shirts from the Bryce Canyon Superintendent at the end of our stay; University of Maine at Augusta also dressed the students in Maine T-shirts. Friends of Acadia presented the PITP volunteers with logo water bottles to remind them of their labor on behalf of the park. The groups say “thank you” in return in many ways. They make donations to the parks or send formal letters of appreciation to the park rangers who teach seminars and guide the adventures. The participants also send photos of the rangers with the group and grant the National Park Service the right to photograph the group or use the photographs taken during the PITP sojourn for their own purposes.

Moderating the relationships between ever-changing hosts and guests are the program coordinators, generally faculty and staff members from one or more host NCHC institutions. The personal contacts they establish with the park staff in preparation for the journey enable the program to run smoothly. Providing van information; arrival time; projected schedule of events, especially those involving park rangers; and campsite confirmation makes life easier for park administration. In effect, people on site come to know the PITP group and feel comfortable with the enterprise even before the participants arrive. Preparation and enthusiasm pave a smooth road. On site, meeting rangers on time is essential and at the location posted in the schedule. As courteous guests, the group must acknowledge that the PITP program cuts into an already busy day, so being prompt and respectful is of the utmost importance.

As guardians of the parks, rangers are extremely sensitive to the behavior of the public. Since PITP adventures emphasize the etiquette of campsite and trail behavior and the courteous interaction with other visitors, rangers, and staff, students emerge from the program knowing the decorum of being, by turns, good guests and good hosts.

*The two sets of Field Notes that follow address many of the issues of etiquette raised in this chapter. The first is written by a Long Island University—C.W. Post student, Elizabeth O'Donnell, who participated in the Cedar Breaks National Monument winter program. The second is contributed by Kathleen King, University of Maine at Augusta, who has twice been the program chair and organizer of PITP at Acadia.*





## **FIELD NOTES**



# **MY EXPERIENCE AS GUEST AND HOST**

**ELIZABETH O'DONNELL**

**LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY—C.W. POST CAMPUS**

As a political science major, I attended my honors program's 2009 conference, which focused on an environmental theme. The last seminar of the day was one that gave me insight into a volunteer role that I could play to help protect America's national parks. Listening to motivational stories and seeing vivid pictures, I decided that I was ready to take on that role.

The Partners in the Parks trip that I decided to attend was at Cedar Breaks National Monument in Utah. This trip, three nights and four days, was shorter in length than PITP's usual weeklong adventures. The journey's specific purpose was to test the value of a winter-setting trip for visitors to a national park and to assess the functionality of a short-term stay in a yurt. I was excited to participate in such a project.

Traveling has always been a passion of mine. Despite my experience backpacking overseas and living in Italy for two semesters, I nevertheless had little hiking and camping experience. I was looking forward, however, to traveling to a natural marvel within my own country. Going to a national park *with a purpose* was important for my own personal fulfillment and cultural immersion. Partners in the Parks gave me the opportunity to witness unspoiled nature and inspired me to be an environmentally conscious citizen.

Along with a small group of students from Southern Utah University, I hiked to the park's yurt, a wood-framed and plastic-covered structure containing a wood-burning stove. Sharing the yurt among ten individuals, for both sleeping and eating, proved a manageable task. The situation itself fostered friendships, comfort, and trust. The yurt's coziness and functionality proved that it was durable enough for an overnight

stay and would be wonderful to implement as a dwelling option for tourists during the winter.

Each morning following breakfast, we set up hot beverages for skiers, visitors with snow shoes, and snowmobilers who would stop for information, a place to rest, or a warm drink. During visitor hours, our job was to make the park more welcoming. Essentially, we were the park's hosts. Our other task as student volunteers was monitoring the number of skiers, snowmobilers, and people with snow shoes who passed the yurt during the day and into the evening. We documented the results in a journal, which was used by all the volunteers, to generate information about the park. The data we collected while at the yurt will aid the park in maximizing its winter use and accommodating more visitors.

After visitor hours, I explored the park and experienced nature: star gazing, hiking through Cedar Breaks' native trees, sleeping in a snow cave built out of Utah's snow, and standing 10,457 feet above sea level while staring into a spacious amphitheater of wild rock formations resembling castles with rich, warm reddish sediment colors highlighted by a glowing sun were some of the park's magnificent features that I will never forget. These experiences left an everlasting impression and reinforced my desire to protect nature's wonder.

The short time spent at Cedar Breaks National Monument opened my eyes, allowing me to understand and commune with the environment. I felt content that I was able to volunteer my time to assist the park during the winter. I will always remember how beautiful every glimmering star was, how peaceful the silence was during the night, and how I learned to function with minimum resources. These aspects showed me how important preserving the environment for future generations is. I will forever live by the motto that preserves our national parks: "Leave only footprints, but take only photographs."



Yurt at Cedar Breaks



***FIELD NOTES***



## **FIELD NOTES FROM A COORDINATOR**

**KATHLEEN KING**

**UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT AUGUSTA**

The sense of place is one of the most powerful lessons in the Partners in the Parks project. Art in nature, photography, journaling, Maine literature, the ethics of land preservation, site-specific architecture, marine biology, archeology, and astronomy illustrate the interdisciplinary application of topics to a specific place.

Nowhere is this sense of place more evident than in the interactions with the park rangers as they share their expertise or with faculty as they apply a variety of disciplines to the natural surroundings. Eager to work with bright, willing students, the National Park Service staff contribute their valuable time to meet privately with students during the PITP program. The staff learn quickly that regardless of the topic presented to the students, they respond with great acceptance and enthusiasm. For faculty and park staff alike, working with these students is a treat. For faculty, especially, it is a treat and a retreat.

A project coordinator's largest struggle from year to year is managing the enthusiasm of faculty and park staff who want to be included in the program. The time is insufficient to accommodate all requests—even for fascinating workshops. Over-scheduling students can result in too much stress and not enough down time. Coordinators should limit sessions to no more than three each day with a duration of approximately 2 to 3 hours each.

Students must be reminded that, although they do not see all of a park or do all of the activities they hope to, the program offers them an essential sense of the place and the prospect of returning and doing much more in the future, perhaps throughout a lifetime. Of course, students are not the only learners; faculty, park staff, and area campers also learn a great deal.

## **We Learn**

### **Park Rangers Are Our Friends**

They are ever watchful and always respectful. As we lay sleeping in our tents one night, I awoke to the melodic sound of a woman walking through the neighboring site, announcing herself: “Park ranger . . . park ranger . . . park ranger. . . .” When people from the site responded, she calmly reminded them that their campfire should be out when unattended and asked that they take care of this obligation. What occurred to me, and what we found humorous in the morning discussion around breakfast was that, since we were all in tents, the park ranger had no place to knock. Her announcement was her way of entering the privacy of a group site. “Park ranger . . . park ranger” became the sing-song refrain we used all week to remind one another of the care and concern of the NPS staff. To this day the Acadia alumni still conjure the memory of nighttime in the park under watchful eyes by chanting this code phrase and familiar greeting.

## **We Learn**

### **Conversations Can Lead Into Unexpected Territory**

One excellent example comes from a morning in Acadia, which is described in a memorable vignette written by Bill Atwill, Co-Director of the program:

Morning in Acadia begins as a gray filtering of light and chattering of birds. In the cool dampness I try to slide open my tent door as quietly as possible, but nothing in nature sounds like the tearing noise of a plastic zipper. Stepping quietly away from the tent area, I walk to where the picnic tables and cooking area lie in shadow beneath the tarp. I am the coffee maker in the morning by default. I wake up early, and I have mastered the right flame setting for percolating coffee in those classic blue porcelain pots. Shortly after, UMA faculty members Greg Fahy and Rob Sherman are stirring and edge into the cooking area, speaking in low whispers. Students slowly emerge. The morning begins in earnest once University of Florida student Kyle Robisch has emerged from his tent, ready to heat up the conversation over a first cup of coffee.

The spirit of cooperation is contagious and natural in this morning transition from unusual sleep on hard ground to anticipation of another day exploring the park. Conversation

is, by turns, desultory, solicitous, and barbed because the easy camaraderie has bred trust and familiarity that transcend the student/faculty divisions too often present in campus settings. The repartee is quick, delightful, and ever-shifting, but the conversation also turns serious at times. This past summer in early August, the question of health reform hovered in the air as we left for Acadia, and even though we were cut off from the constant clamor of nightly news on television, conversation often returned to the topical issues. This morning, as I am starting a second round of coffee, Kyle and Greg are cooking on the other camp stove when Kyle disagrees strongly with Greg's position on the role of government and a public option. The disagreement was not uncivil, but the positions were antithetical. Kyle speaks freely with no trace of student reticence. Nor is Greg falling back on any professorial persona in his questioning of Kyle's premises. They interact as reasonable, intelligent adults engaged in serious civic discourse, and I find myself smiling as I listen to other students and faculty chime in as equals. Here we are, surrounded by forest and rocky shoreline, a natural setting as splendid as anyone could hope for in early August, and still the complexities of public policy intrude. After the conversation lulls for a moment, I cannot help but say, "You sure know you're camping in the woods with honors students when the topic at breakfast is health care reform." That discussion struck me as emblematic of how the PITP experience allows a company of bright undergraduates and engaged faculty, both slightly out of their normal environs, to engage happily in a most natural intellectual discourse.

## **We Learn**

### **All Academic Disciplines Can Connect To And Contribute To PITP**

Our most recent PITP student group took to gibing our philosophy/ethics professor by suggesting that his field offered no urgent or pressing connection to people's careers or daily life. "No one ever calls out, 'Is there an ethics professional in the house?'" when there is an emergency," one student quipped. Then, it happened. The coordinator hit the rearview mirror of a parked car as we squeezed past a particularly congested area. While there was no evidence of damage, questions arose: "What do I do? Do I stop? If a car is hit and no one knows, is it an accident? If it is hit but not scratched or otherwise damaged, can I

drive away?” Then the call rang out, “Is there an ethicist in the house?” We laughed when our professor answered calmly, quietly, “Do what you think is right. . . .”

## **We Learn**

### **Leave No Trace Means**

#### **Do Not Leave Anything And Do Not TAKE Anything**

I collect heart rocks. The collecting is important, but giving them away is even more important to me. I do not try to see them; they simply appear as I stroll. Sometimes I go for months and never see them; sometimes I can be walking down a city street and spot one in the middle of the sidewalk. On both Acadia experiences, I found heart rocks everywhere. I intentionally take only as many as the number of program participants and only those rocks I find in the gravel roads; I never take rocks found on the beaches or natural paths. I have to be careful, however; at the last evening presentation, as I was dispensing my treasures, attaching stories to each individual rock that I gathered throughout the week, the call of “Park ranger. . . . Park ranger” sounded the arrival of a guest coming down the path. The group was caught off guard. For a frozen moment in time, we all thought that I might be carted away in NPS handcuffs for passing out illegal contraband. What a relief it was that we were just being reminded by the park ranger that 10 p.m. marks quiet time in the park. The little stones were quite legal after all.

## **We Learn**

### **Faculty Are Human**

Travel from one session or event to the next always includes jovial conversation or helpful advice passing among students and faculty. Topics range from the intimate to the intellectual. Students are pleased to find that dinner conversation is multigenerational and that everyone makes important and wise contributions to a variety of topics. Faculty members may offer advice on scholarship or learning opportunities while students offer updates on social networking or their thoughts on what makes for an engaged professor.



## **We Learn**

### **The PITP Coordinator Is The Bad Cop In A Good Way**

Beyond the regular instruction throughout the week, a camaraderie develops among the faculty and students. The willing and accepted bad cop is the coordinator, who keeps the schedule moving smoothly along, which is essential since we are meeting educators at various sites around the park. It is entertaining to watch as everyone is kept on task and on schedule and how the group reacts to calls to action. Although students are expected to be punctual and are good at keeping on schedule, planning when to get up in the morning, preparing meals, cleaning up, and utilizing free time, coordinators must occasionally issue gentle reminders. The coordinator is the one with the watch, giving five-minute warnings, announcing schedule changes and alerts, and coaxing all to manage time responsibly. Accepting the bad cop's good messages generally happens in the right spirit and without question.

## **We Learn**

### **We Eat Because We Are Hungry**

No one complains about the food. It is prepared by the group and consumed by the group. If it is not tasty or runs out, the group has no one but themselves to blame. And, interestingly, wonderful recipes emerge from combining couscous and pancake mix or canned tomatoes and rice. No one really misses soda although some people crave certain favorite foods by the end of the week. The consolation: anticipation and deprivation make the experience all the sweeter.

## **We Learn**

### **We Have Much To Accomplish**

Participants are never bored. Students relish and often request free time. Between the scheduled sessions (learning components, meals, travel to various sites), hour-long gaps can provide space for last-minute escapes to a lake or a quick hike. Late-night chats can become seashore explorations. Most of the participants are pleased to rise at 3 a.m. to climb a mountain in order to see the sunrise before facing a packed day of biology, archeology, and literature. Often the strenuous hike or the surprise swim is the favored activity.

## We Learn

### Service Returns As Much As It Takes

The service component is valuable. Be it laboriously working on a carriage trail, rebuilding a washed-out walking path, or measuring and planning culverts so that fish can navigate from one stream into another, the benefits to giving are immeasurable. The work of honors students builds good will with the park; it enables students to appreciate the management and behind-the-scenes labor it takes to maintain and improve a national park; and it embodies the good feeling of giving to something greater than oneself.

## Tips

- Give as much lead time as possible for choosing reading selections and creating a complete program agenda.
- Complete as much of the paperwork, such as release forms and insurance, as possible ahead of time.
- Tell participants and session leaders to leave computers at home. Cell phones should not be used.
- Distribute the full schedule at the start and tell everyone that they are responsible for being on time and on task.
- Schedule time at the beginning of the expedition for people to get to know one another. Consider the possibilities of exchanging names; going on an initial hike; having a group meal; or discussing interests, schools, and disciplines from the very beginning.
- Inventory the equipment needs early on and have extra tents, sleeping bags, and mats available.
- Allow participants to make their own sleeping arrangements. Some will not want to share a tent; others are less concerned about their personal space. Allow some flexibility but encourage tenting together.
- Discourage faculty from helping too much, whether setting up the site, cooking, or planning free time. Put the students in charge of food and meals. Students benefit from being in control of certain aspects of the program, especially feeding their session leaders. They take the responsibility seriously.
- Debrief students about the day's events every evening without fail. Ask questions: What surprised you today? What did you see? What was important? What do you think about lessons learned?

KATHLEEN KING

- Schedule student presentations for the last night and make the expectations about them clear at the beginning of the week. This early alert allows the students to think about what is important to them throughout the program.
- Be flexible in guidelines for the presentations. Allow individual or group presentations and suggest the use of written, oral, and/or visual material. Recommend that each presentation be about 5 minutes. Time goes quickly.



## CHAPTER 10:

# CITY SLICKERS

The greatest number of Partners in the Parks adventures have occurred in wilderness settings; however, the National Park Service also operates a significant number of parks, monuments, and affiliated museums in urban locations. These include the Mall, with its iconic rows of museums and monuments, in the nation's capital; Ellis Island, Governor's Island and Liberty Island in New York harbor; and twenty additional NPS sites including the African Burial Ground, Grant's Tomb, Castle Clinton, Federal Hall, and St. Paul's Church in New York; the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park; and the *USS Constitution*, the *USS Cassin Young*, and the Freedom Trail in Boston. Many of these and others throughout the nation are still to be explored by PITP.

National parks and monuments in urban settings can be the basis for extremely interesting excursions although they may not always include camping, cooking, or the same kind of hiking as one experiences on wilderness trails. On city explorations participants may walk for many hours a day, but they are likely to stop for quick meals and find themselves engaged in significantly different explorations. The purpose of PITP is to encourage visits to the greatest possible range of national parks across America, so people living in urban centers with NPS sites should consider constructing local adventures. These might be shorter than a week and use dormitory housing. They might compare national parks with state or city parks. They might raise the question of how NPS-administered museums, presidential homes, monuments, or even seashores contribute to the interpretation of American history.

For students coming from rural areas, the canyons of New York might be as exotic as Grand Canyon would be to a Bostonian. Something is to be gained by traveling to a different part of the country and a completely different landscape that is also inherent in the PITP program. Urban parks invite some of the same techniques as the NCHC hallmark program *City as Text*<sup>TM</sup>: using public transportation; learning to observe historical, cultural, and demographic aspects of the neighborhood in which the park is situated; and talking both with residents of the area and with visitors about the personal significance of place. In urban parks as well as in the other national parks, PITP recommends that participants move about in small, low-impact groups of four or five and observe the decorum of quiet conversation. This practice is an important element of the Leave No Trace philosophy.

## CHAPTER 10: CITY SLICKERS

During the 2008 annual conference of the National Collegiate Honors Council, PITP ran its first urban exploration at the Missions Historical Park in San Antonio. Only a bus ride away from the hotel along the River Walk, Mission Concepción (below) was more than 250 years away from the modern city in sensibility. Since the cathedral never lost its ceiling over its long history, the group saw frescoes from the early 18th century, which is relatively unusual in the United States. Park rangers guiding the tour discussed the restoration of these paintings as well as the work in progress to restore paths and other structures around the remains of this large, enclosed village that housed both Spaniards and native converts. Walking the grounds with those impassioned by the preservation of place focused our attention on every detail from masonry to flowering cacti and unusual specimens of trees. Although the original intent was to walk for only a few hours, the more we asked questions, the more we inspired the rangers to expand their discussion and venture into additional sections of the park. By the time the tour concluded, the group had developed a keen sense of how earlier inhabitants lived and worked within the walls of the missions; honing those sensibilities prepared the group to refocus on their descendants now living in the neighborhood just outside the park. The expedition ended with the participants stopping for an excellent meal in a typical, inexpensive local restaurant and enjoying a sweet watermelon drink.



Cathedral at San Antonio Mission Concepción



Along the Washington Mall, the food offerings were limited to hot dogs and ice cream, but most of our group had brought along snacks. For city excursions, as in the wilderness, carrying food and water saves a great deal of money and time. Once again this urban exploration took place during the 2009 annual National Collegiate Honors Council Conference. Although this program had a full complement of twenty people, on this occasion the group had to move together as a single unit in order to rendezvous with the park rangers at particular landmarks along the way. Although the focus of this exploration was exclusively monuments and memorials, the time was insufficient to visit them all. Indeed, when planning most PITP explorations, coordinators must leave room for solo explorations. On this occasion we walked from the Washington Monument down the reflecting pond to the Lincoln Memorial. Being guided by a ranger brought to mind the historic image of Dr. Martin Luther King delivering his “I have a dream” speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, with a white park ranger by his side. We sat down at that very place and reflected. Since it was Halloween, some visitors at the monument were people in costume *en route* to evening revels. Clearly education and recreation share space in the national parks. Every person enters with a private purpose; even the “pumpkin” and “litter bin” stopped to pay respects and stand in awe below the towering, seated Lincoln.



Architecture talk at San Antonio Mission



Ranger Bagent with group at Lincoln Memorial

Focusing on the architecture of the various monuments revealed changes in American sensibility over time. The classical wreaths, columns, and fountains of the World War II monument ceded to the minimalism of the Viet Nam wall of names and the sculptural realism of the Korean War memorial, with its troop of life-size soldiers seeming to edge forward across the field. Each fixed the program participants in a different kind of reverence and reflection. The ranger turned our attention to those visitors whose personal histories and losses were framed in these monuments, and this awareness had a strong impact. Even when students took photographs, they appeared to be trying to preserve the moving atmosphere of place. They were not photographing each other. In other programs more time would be scheduled for circles in which to share experience, but this condensed PITP experience ended with a brief gathering to thank the ranger and to consider what we had seen.

Among the PITP programs that utilize urban parks, only one thus far, Fire Island to Ellis Island, has been a weeklong exploration. First offered in 2008 and then repeated with variation in 2010, it begins in a suburban waterfront, moves to a national seashore, and then travels into New York City. The program presents a number of challenges and models that can be applied to other locations. This adventure:



Korean War Memorial

- Has two host campuses and honors programs, the Brooklyn Campus and the C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University, which have different dormitory arrangements and fees.
- Has two pairs of co-leaders involved, so that identifying the ultimate program leader is important.
- Includes one overnight hike.
- Requires both university vans and public transportation.
- Requires city food costs that are generally higher than those for a wilderness project.
- Engages students in a place—namely New York City—that offers infinite distractions, which means the possibilities for disengaging from the program are exponentially increased.

That being said, the first successful exploration encouraged us to plan a second with revisions to some of the agenda. In May 2010 we cut the length of the Fire Island hike and replaced some of the Manhattan sites that students found dull with new ones. We added the recently opened urban park, the High Line, built on overhead railroad tracks in the old meat-packing district of Manhattan, and we added a walking tour of Harlem linked to a program held in Central Park on writers of

the Harlem Renaissance. Both urban park sites proved extreme opposites of rural Fire Island, which made for some thoughtful discussion. New sites and new ideas are essential to keeping programs vital. Indeed, every PITP program should adjust, alter, add, and subtract elements in order to improve as well as involve different leaders and faculty each time around. Itineraries must never become stale or repetitious.



Harlem Walk

In planning the original Fire Island to Ellis Island exploration, all of the coordinators were conscious at the outset that costs were likely to run higher than for other programs and that, if they wanted students to really enjoy the New York experience, they would need to find additional sources of money rather than relying on student fees alone. Fortunately, Long Island University underwrote the cost of some meals and the entry fee to the Tenement Museum, which is affiliated with NPS. After having visited Ellis Island, the students needed to see how immigrants actually lived in New York. Thus the Tenement Museum became an essential addition. As it turned out, the museum guide, himself a recent immigrant from South America, lived in the tenement next door to the museum, and he verified the authenticity of the museum apartments and provided a most current sense of New York as a continuing locus of arrival.



In order to create unity in a weeklong excursion that has a 60-mile spread of multiple locations, moving from suburbia and seashore to inner city, the leaders implemented a thematic approach. Clearly New York is an epicenter of immigration and ethnicity, so those areas became the focus of the city component. But Manhattan is also an island, and so are all of the boroughs except for the Bronx. For this reason, water—Long Island Sound, Fire Island National Seashore, New York Harbor, the East River, and the Hudson—is critical to the New York environment. Thus water served as a second organizing theme. Not every program lends itself to a thematic approach, but this one does.

When structuring the first offering of this program, the coordinators considered the sequence of locations, as any program leader will have to do when making up an itinerary. Since students coming from a distance fly into one of the New York airports, which are on Long Island, the leaders determined that doing the Fire Island and related events first and then moving into the city made the most sense. Scheduling the city explorations during the second half of the week would leave students some free time to visit New York, possibly for the first time, and pursue their own agenda.

Although most PITP trips will involve students in solo explorations relatively close to a campsite, knowing where students will go if left alone in a big city is impossible. Using local student interns as guides and shepherds will alleviate most concerns. Collecting cell phone numbers of the students and making sure that all the students have the cell phone numbers of each other as well as the program leaders have proven helpful. City adventures are not ones in which it is a good idea to discourage electronic communication. Providing access to assistance means that everyone will worry less and sleep well. Shopping, museums, theater, Central Park, Coney Island, and 42nd Street have an undeniable magnetic force, so leaving time for the pull to exert itself is best: directors must let the students go! Students will then return home fulfilled, having experienced the planned trip and explored a bit of the city on their own.

After the New York adventure, students also tend to go home a little bit heavier. The city is no place to eat trail mix. Every corner has a food vendor of ethnic delicacies, so visiting neighborhoods without thinking about food is impossible. Again, on this program the week broke in two. On Long Island the students more or less grabbed food—bagels, pizza, subs—and kept going. In the city dim sum in Chinatown, pastrami sandwiches on the Lower East Side, and soul food in Harlem reasonably and deliciously punctuated the theme of immigration and



Katz's delicatessen, Lower East Side

ethnicity. For city explorations food groups mean something quite different from what they mean at a campsite.

Another difference is programming daily itineraries. While wilderness trips quite naturally break down into three to four discrete presentations or events a day, city trips may be more variable. (See the Zion itinerary in Appendix C4.) For the Oyster Bay segment of Fire Island to Ellis Island, the morning/afternoon/evening model clearly works on the first day. The morning is spent sailing on the *Christeen*, a historic oyster sloop, and discussing water quality and oyster cultivation. The afternoon takes place at Sagamore Hill, the presidential home of Theodore Roosevelt. The evening is spent at C.W. Post, where participants download photographs and talk about presentations that will follow near the end of the week. On the second morning, the group travels to Fire Island, where the next day and a half are spent hiking and exploring the environment without very clear demarcations of time.

What is meant by camping is also somewhat irregular on this trip. On the first occasion, the group bunked in the superintendent's house, where the students were asked to eat cold food rather than build fires. In a sense this was fortunate because it rained that day and night and they were able to observe a family of foxes living under the porch. The house was replete with board games, so the evening was spent getting



An evening of board games on Fire Island

to know one another, playing games, and telling stories. Despite the serendipity, and the unlikelihood of a repetition, the Fire Island experience almost repeated itself in 2010.

Indeed, on the second occasion we consciously planned to tent and cook on Fire Island, but heavy rains intervened and, once again, the National Park Service came to our rescue, putting the group into staff housing. We spent the evening telling stories and playing “ecology bingo,” using words acquired from the lecture of our guest faculty member, marine biologist Kathleen Nolan from St. Francis College.

Experience suggests that planned evening presentations by faculty on ecological, philosophical, historical, or literary subjects constitute an excellent counterbalance to daytime explorations. When planning an itinerary, coordinators must keep in mind the reality that nature may force changes in plans and that variety is critical to maintaining group enthusiasm. A storm provides an excellent opportunity to catch up on journal writing and sleep.

While the impetus is always to keep going, coordinators should resist trying to do too much. On Fire Island the full hike from the point of entry to the lighthouse at Robert Moses Park is 13 miles. The first time this program was offered, we presented the long hike as an option. The whole group completed a four-mile dune hike on the first day, so it



appeared that the next day's nine-mile completion—much of it on boardwalk—would be reasonably easy. Those who completed it, however, thought it too long and without enough variety to make it compelling. As the van driver on the mainland, I was able to pick up students who decided to shorten the hike and cross by ferry when they had the opportunity. The growing number in the van had plenty of time to climb the lighthouse and visit all the exhibits in its interactive museum. Those who completed the full hike arrived exhausted just as the museum was closing. Although no one was terribly disappointed, and some people actually felt victorious, the next iteration of this trip reduced the Fire Island hike in light of experience.

Every PITP excursion needs to be evaluated and revised in response to the actual experience of the group. Student responses to the places they visit, to lectures and workshops, to volunteer activities often come to the foreground in reflective circle gatherings. Although these are not so easy to structure among the bustle of a city, it is important to leave time and find space to include them. On the first Fire to Ellis trip, students were really moved by the mosaic memorial “Imagine” dedicated to John Lennon in Central Park, but by the time they formed a reflective circle on the grass, they were so exhausted that they fell asleep. When programs are based at campsites, retreating to the tents to catch an hour's nap is possible. That is not an option in the middle of a city; thus alternatives need to be creative.

Creativity and flexibility are useful guiding principles whether a program brings country mice to the city or city slickers to the wilds. Some parks or sites would be best developed as 3 to 4 day programs rather than a week. Some are so extensive that they could accommodate a weeklong program every year without repeating the same explorations again and again. The ideal is tailoring the program to the place and to its unique resources while always leaving room for change. No matter what the itinerary, it should bend like Aesop's reed in the wind rather than break like a rigid oak. There will be times when a ferry is late, a park ranger is called to an emergency, the road is closed, a student feels ill, visibility is minimal, the rain is too heavy to take photographs, the snow becomes a blizzard, the birds have flown, the van breaks down, or the event takes up only half of the planned morning session. Whatever the situation, program coordinators must be prepared to improvise and to help the students find excitement in the spontaneous change of plans.



“Circle” in Central Park



“Imagine” mosaic at Strawberry Fields

## CHAPTER 10: CITY SLICKERS

*James Clarke and Cris Gleicher, Co-Directors of the University Honors Program on the Brooklyn Campus of Long Island University, coordinate the New York segment of Fire Island to Ellis Island. In 2009, Clarke took part in “Borders, Barrios, and Boundaries,” an NCHC faculty development institute on the Mexico-Texas border. His Field Notes on the borders experience and its shaping influence on reflective circles offer many useful suggestion.*



## **FIELD NOTES**



# **CIRCLES**

**JAMES CLARKE**

**LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY—BROOKLYN CAMPUS**

The experience of a Partners in the Parks seminar has been aptly described as a classroom without walls. Indeed the wall-less feature of the outdoors and the open feel of wilderness, enticing as these are, especially when juxtaposed to the institutional feel of the traditional college or university classroom, pose specific challenges for the creation of a learning environment. One feature of a class, even minimally defined, is the gathering of bodies and minds for the express purpose of exchanging ideas. This distinguishes the academic setting of the classroom, no matter how varied its environmental conditions, from, say, a social gathering or a crowd attending a public lecture. In short, it is the ability for a group to reflect through discussion structured by questions and responses. Of course all of this is rather ideal; we have all probably sat through a dull lecture that ends with the obligatory solicitation “Any questions?”—to which the natural response is dead silence. But that is not, in principle, the way of honors education. The organizers of PITP seminars have responded to the challenge of a “classroom without walls” by instituting what they call “the circle.” The circle is obviously not new, but I would argue it has been used to great effect and in some novel ways by Partners.

My introduction to Partners in the Parks was the spring 2008 Arizona-Mexico NCHC/PITP faculty field institute: “Barrios, Barriers, and Borders.” Our group spent two days camping in the desert wilderness of Arizona’s Organ Pipe National Monument and a day of primitive camping (i.e., no washroom facilities) on the volcanic ash of the Pinocate Biosphere Reserve in Sonora, Mexico. I recall the first evening in Organ Pipe. As night fell and we pitched our tents in the dark there was some anticipation in my mind: “Okay, what now? Do we just eat and go to sleep?” I am a late-night type and used to reading myself to sleep. It was going to be a *long* night! Our seminar organizers, Kevin Bonine,

Matt Nickerson, and Todd Petersen, delivered some prefatory remarks about the circle and its uses right after we settled in around a set of picnic tables. Circles can have a specific focus—"a prompt," as Todd called it—or they can just be a way to take everyone's temperature, to see that everyone is basically okay (to check that no one is cold or hungry, fatigued or anxious). It was clear at the start of the institute that we were a somewhat random collection of individuals, like any class, and that over time the circles should facilitate the connection necessary for us to work as a group, to be productive. The smaller cooking groups have a similar social function. We were reminded by the organizers that tensions within a group are an expected part of any group dynamic and that working through those tensions is itself productive and valuable. I had already seen trouble brewing between some of the stronger personalities in our group. With faculty it is highly unlikely that such tensions will ever result in anyone withdrawing from the group. But all instructors have had the experience of a student sitting through a class and not participating. The goal of a productive group is to have everyone contribute. The circle—which is a symbol of unity, continuous motion, and equality—makes it difficult to avoid participation. Each person in the circle is asked to speak. Making the focus of the first circle a simple question, nothing too abstract or big, is a good idea. The group needs practice.

Our first circle was rather dreamlike. The classroom "walls" were the embrace of the nighttime darkness (no campfire) and the canopy of the stars. The night air was cold and sharp. The night desert holds little of the intense heat of the day; it is a place of extremes. Our prompt was to recall the events of the day and to recount at least one occurrence or image that struck us as capturing an experience of the border. The first day had been packed. We passed the daylight hours traveling from Tucson, where the day began with a walking exploration of the city, through various roadside stops (a gourmet grocery store and delicatessen for supplies, a gas station that happened to have an outdoor taco stand and grill frequented by hordes of students going to and coming from spring break on the Sea of Cortez), and then on to the Tohono O'odham reservation and its wire-fence border with Mexico, before finally arriving at the campsite. Aside from the lead of the prompt, no one was leading or directing the discussion. There was simply the expectation that each person would speak. In the semidarkness faces were not distinct; each voice began after a suitable pause from the previous speaker. After we had gone around once, a few members of the group offered comments on something said or expanded on a



Photo by Matt Nickerson



The border fence

point made. The session concluded, however, with no wrap-up and no set of take-away points. Everyone had contributed. There were clearly different kinds of minds at work in the group, different disciplinary perspectives, and different interests. Everyone had established an initial voice. And that, surprisingly, was how the first circle ended.

Over the next few days the circles would take different forms. Many were structured by writing exercises that preceded them. At one point we all composed haikus and read them. Some circles took place early in the day, some later. The group seemed to enjoy the circle exercises for a time, and various members developed personalities (the funny one, the storyteller, the person who could be relied on for an analytic and critical comment, the historically or culturally informed one). We learned from one another. But as the week progressed, the circle sometimes became a duty. “Do we have to? Can’t we skip it tonight?” Despite the grouching, we never missed holding a circle each day. It was a chance to reflect on and process what we were seeing and experiencing.

Two of the circles from the “Borders” field institute stand out in my memory. One involved a poem from Ofelia Zepeda’s *Ocean Power*, which was read aloud just before we began crossing on foot the Pinocate Dunes to get a glimpse of the distant ocean. The poem captured the

## FIELD NOTES: CIRCLES

experience of a desert people who journey to the sea, the difficulty of the transition, and the experience of a natural barrier. We had done quite a bit of reading to prepare for the seminar, but most of it was not discussed. The poem was so poignant and its timing so perfect. It entirely shaped the experience to come, which might otherwise have been just an interesting hike to a spectacular sand dune. I have rarely experienced a piece literature used so effectively.

The second circle that made a strong impression on me took place at the top of a ridge overlooking the expanse of Organ Pipe towards the Mexican border. After the climb we were asked “to circle,” which meant finding a piece of rock to sit on that would not tear a hole in one’s pants. Getting comfortable was out of the question. We gathered around a park ranger who had agreed to meet us there to talk to the group about his work and his understanding of the problems of the border. This circle had more of the feel of a traditional classroom. The ranger explained the challenges of conservation in the area, especially ones created for migratory animals by the government’s plan to erect a new 15-foot-high border wall. He discussed the increase of trafficking, of both drugs and human beings, through Organ Pipe, its mounting human toll (he recounted the emotional impact of finding children’s shoes in the desert), and the recent death of a park ranger in a gun battle with drug dealers. His shifting job description did not please him;

Photo by Matt Nickerson



Lecture on the border



he had not signed up for law enforcement, but park rangers were increasingly conscripted into the dangerous work of enforcing border security. We questioned him for more than an hour. “What did he think should be done?” It is possible to imagine having the same talk by a guest speaker in one of my classes. But when he pointed to a mountain ridge off in the distance, he said, “Right now we have surveillance teams up there”; then he gestured to another ridge, saying, “and I’m sure the traffickers are watching from over there. We find their equipment occasionally. It’s very sophisticated. Night vision scopes and radios.” I knew this experience was unique. The classroom without walls is filled with living instructional materials. The circles can bring this in at any point in the seminar. They are mobile classrooms.

I have made good use of the lessons from the “Barrios, Barriers, and Borders” faculty institute. Following the 2008 institute, I helped to organize a summer PITP seminar, Fire Island to Ellis Island, with my colleagues from Long Island University, Cris Gleicher and Joan Digby. We repeated that experiment again in summer 2010. The circles are essential to creating the learning environment of the PITP seminars. As in a classroom, the participants can use them for spontaneous discussions, for focused explorations of a topic that they have prepared for through readings and/or writing exercises. They can have guest speakers and group presentations. Why call them “circles” and not just “discussion groups”? The circle is rich metaphorically and symbolically, conveying powerfully the process of gathering and drawing in. Its geometry expresses formally the standing of each participant on the same plane; its shape suggests an active linking of the points to form a continuum. These features of the circle are especially important for a disparate group that spends much of the seminar on the move and engaged in the world. In the wall-less classroom, the circle represents the creation of a space with both an inside and an outside, where the outside needs to be temporarily pushed away, much as a classroom space takes us away from the distractions of the everyday world. That kind of focus is all the more difficult to achieve when a group is surrounded not by four walls but by the objects of their interest. In one circle held on a sunlit summer day in crowded Central Park during the 2008 Fire Island to Ellis Island program, the distractions proved too powerful—the circle failed. I now recommend finding places to hold circles that are as quiet and devoid of other humans as possible. Obviously PITP seminars held in wilderness areas offer the group ample opportunities for solitude; the Fire Island to Ellis Island seminar, which takes place in both national parks *and* urban spaces, poses another set of problems.

Organizing a second Fire Island to Ellis Island adventure in 2010 gave me and my colleagues an opportunity to redress some of the problems we noted in the first seminar of finding places to circle in the city. We decided to structure the excursion in Central Park as a walking tour. At the end of it, we arranged to use a classroom in the park's Dana Discovery Center (110th Street near Fifth Avenue) that could accommodate our large group of twenty-three. This permitted us to work in small groups, to read pieces of literature aloud, and to carry on a conversation with the group as a whole. But in order to accomplish these tasks, we had to restore the classroom walls. The charm of outdoor spaces in New York City is precisely the constant interactions, personal and impersonal, of bodies, sounds, and sights. This vibrancy is not something that can be turned off or tuned out easily. One is privy to all manner of private conversations and scenes of others interacting. Proximity to strangers is a given. In the park, we had strangers sidle up to our group on the chance that they might catch something interesting from our guide, Cris Gleicher. At another point an elderly couple sitting nearby began listening in as Cris discussed the history of the terra cotta sculptures around Bethesda Terrace. Soon they began to comment on what was said and to add their own account. They turned out to be a well-known painter and an art historian. Temporarily they became part of our group. Twenty minutes before this encounter, our entire group had quite literally wandered into and got absorbed into a larger group surrounding a troupe of break dancers. These two instances illustrate the difficulty of concentrating the group in an urban space, but also the different sort of opportunity when interacting with an environment of people versus a natural one. Perhaps urban circles just do not work so well. I attempted to draw the group into a circle before our exploration of NYC's latest park, the Highline. We gathered under the trestle by a wall where graffiti and some of the metal hangers from a meat factory had been purposely preserved. As a way of introducing a writing assignment on the "romance of the ruin," I began to talk about the oddness of preserving a meatpacking district as a historical landmark. I found myself shouting over the noise of traffic and shouting to keep the attention of the students who were looking at and being looked at by passersby. In one sense the circle was not effective because we did not have a conversation. But the quick gathering and framing of the assignment did succeed. The students went off to explore on their own and to write. My thought at the moment was "I hope we have time in our last meeting to reflect on this and perhaps read a few of the writings."



Poetry reading Central Park circle

The location of the final circle of any PITP seminar is of special importance. For the “Borders” seminar, our last circle was held in the Tumamoc Hill Observatory and Laboratory in Tucson. We participated in what Matt Nickerson and Todd Petersen referred to as “the great harvest,” a downloading of each person’s trove of digital photographs onto a storage drive. From this bounty we were assigned to pick three of our own photographs and discuss them with the group. The need for electrical outlets, projection equipment, and a dark space means the last circle is best held indoors. We were also asked to read aloud one (more or less) polished piece of writing. The use of image and text served to reinforce the memory of our itinerary and stimulate reflection on its unfolding; it made manifest the variety of perspectives of the participants who had gazed upon the same objects and shared the *same* experiences. Our *differences* of outlook, interpretation, and perspective proved to be one of the most stimulating aspects of the seminar. But by then we had bonded sufficiently so that the differences were not sources of tension but of learning. For Fire Island to Ellis Island, the last meeting proved to be essential to bringing a sense of closure to the seminar: it was a final goodbye and, like the “Borders” final meeting, a chance to remember the highlights of the week and to share photographs. Fire Island to Ellis Island, however, does not have

as specifically focused a theme as the “Borders” institute. We explored multiple themes: Southern New York as a place shaped by water (bays, ocean, islands, and harbor); the contrast between national parks (Fire Island and Ellis Island) and city parks as public-private ventures (Central Park and the Highline); immigration (Ellis Island, the Lower East Side, and the Tenement Museum); and the promise of new freedoms (Fire Island’s Cherry Grove and the Harlem Renaissance). There was no way to pull together the various threads of the past few days explorations. What the students loved most or thought most important varied widely. But one salient feature of the seminar emerged: all of the participants spoke movingly about getting to know one another as the most satisfying and enjoyable feature of the seminar. Camaraderie turned out to be the theme of the final meeting. I was reminded that all learning, under its best auspices, should be a form of friendship. Joan Digby put it well when she announced that we are now all alums of the aptly named program of *Partners*.

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## CHAPTER 11:

# MAY THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN

This journey has been as dreamlike as the falling of Alice down the rabbit hole into Wonderland. “Curiouser and curiouser” the students, the rangers, the leaders become as Partners in the Parks evolves. Vistas widen, knowledge deepens, imagination explodes like shooting stars. We find ourselves drawn to primal nature on these adventures. Along canyon trails and winding rivers, we listen to the voices of wind and water asking us, as the caterpillar did Alice, “Who are you?” Indeed, who are we?

We shed and gain multiple selves during a Partners exploration, and as strangers in a strange land, we forge bonds that make it almost painful to part and go our separate ways at the end of a week. Who we are at the beginning is never the same as our identity at the end of the journey, conscious that we have emerged from a dream, yet certain of its palpable and profound impact.

Almost from the inception of PITP, someone breathed the name Denali, as if that remote Alaskan wilderness might become the ultimate destination. That was how it seemed two years ago at the NCHC San Antonio conference when Dr. Channon Price, Honors Director and



A rare sight: Mt. Denali—The Great One—reveals itself

Professor of Physics at University of Alaska, Fairbanks, offered (with some ecstatic prodding) to lead a Denali trip. His passion for Alaska, for camping, hiking, and the outdoor life, made him the ideal leader of this exploration. A warm, intellectual spirit he leaped over all the hurdles necessary to garner university support and bring a party of sixteen students and faculty from Florida, New York, Connecticut, Georgia, and Massachusetts to UAF Honors House where the adventure began.

Students pitched tents on the front lawn and gathered low bush cranberries on the verge of the garden as we assembled to pack food, cook and share our first meal. Channon (frequently hailed as “cp”) smiled like the Cheshire Cat when asked for an itinerary. We hoped, like Alice to discover “which way . . . to go from here.”

“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.

“I don’t much care where—” said Alice.

“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” said the cat.

“—so long as I get somewhere,” Alice added as an explanation.

“Oh, you’re sure to do that,” said the Cat, “if you only walk long enough.”

We were of Alice’s mind. It did not matter which way we went (though in Denali there was only one road to travel), and we were glad to walk long enough! What we might see along the road was inspiringly presented in the University of Alaska Museum of the North, a post-modern igloo with a spectacular collection of Alaskan history and natural history presided over by a towering stuffed grizzly bear and the largest copper nugget on earth. After seeing this eye candy, we were ready for the appropriate news that our final destination would be Wonder Lake.

Along the hundred plus mile ride to the headquarters of Denali National Park and Preserve, we passed expansive vistas of the Alaskan range, where brushfires that would burn through the icy winter sent up clouds of smoke. In the blue distance, we could see the faint image of Denali—known locally as “The Mountain”—beckoning. It was surreal.

At Park Headquarters we met Education Coordinator Ranger Christie Anastasia, who welcomed us, and Education Specialist, Ranger Kristen Friesen, who would become our spiritual guide over the next few days. She read from a number of inspired writings about Denali, creating a heightened awareness of the special nature of this place. She also introduced us to Park Ranger Rachel Jencks and Murie Science and Learning Center Intern Christine Forbes, who would be joining us as naturalists and hike leaders.



JOAN DIGBY

After we set up camp at Teklanika, Todd Petersen led us in our first circle at the edge of darkness. He opened with a prompt: “What thresholds did you cross to get here?” The students talked about their journeys, the plane connections from the east, the letting go of cell phones, of noise, traffic, claims against personal time. Then C.W. Post student Rachel Mahler said, “the need to change clothes,” and we all sighed and relaxed into the ultimate comfort of paring down to the minimal.

It was almost 11 p.m. when the circle ended and Ranger Kristen led our first walk to the river. Then, as we caught a glimpse of the flowing water and dark willows against a towering backdrop of mountains, we knew there was nothing minimal about the wealth of nature and of this privileged experience. Here we were at the brink of nightfall, walking in the habitat of bears, moose, perhaps even wolves. We were cautioned not to walk alone but with “buddies,” a gesture of bonding that would make it more difficult than ever to break the connection, decompress, leave the circle, return to our individual identities, and go our separate ways. On our walk back to camp that first night, a snowshoe hare stood in the path. I thought of Alice and how easy it was for her to abandon her books and follow nature. I wondered where this adventure might lead us.

The refrain of an old folk tune, “May the circle be unbroken,” became my mantra throughout the week. *En route* to Wonder Lake, we drove up a switchback that opened into Polychrome Pass, a vista of

Photo by C. P. Price



Dusk at the Teklanika River, Denali



mountains that might—for all I know—be made of big rock candy. Their layers spoke of glacial history and riveted our eyes to the thrilling landscape.

Our service project was to document sightings of the “big five” animals seen close to the road: Dall Sheep, caribou, bear, moose, and wolf. The sheep were mostly white dots in the distance, but a majestic caribou showed his profile, and then through binoculars we began to catch glimpses of moose, a sitting wolf, and a passing grizzly. As the week progressed, we found the animals more easily but with equal excitement every time. A fox, a wolf, and a grizzly did us the honor of passing by the side of our vans. Moose walked along with young calves. “May *their* circle be unbroken,” I thought. Every encounter gave us the impulse to protect them and the landscape they inhabit. We hoped their numbers would grow.



Photo by Laura Markowitz

Grizzly

We arrived at Wonder Lake in sheeting rain and were greeted by Phyllis Hassinger, the park’s legendary volunteer host, an 85-year-old woman who had spent 20 years hiking in this region. She welcomed us with a hug, oblivious to the weather, which was yet another prelude to one of the great truths we would learn by the end of the trip: Denali requires its visitors to “get comfortable with the feeling of being insecure.” This life lesson surely extends beyond the park, which must be one of the experimental laboratories of experiential knowledge.

During our nightly circle, Todd reiterated the stages of group dynamics, which apply perfectly to a PITP expedition: forming, norming, storming, and performing.

## JOAN DIGBY

A University of Florida botany student, Reagan Lee, alluded to interpersonal storms that had been brewing—as they always do—throughout the journey. But because they were still repressed, the storming was unfulfilled, which meant that the group was not yet ready to perform. This idea provoked several of the group to defend their performance at daily tasks, and their eruptions moved the discussion toward open storming. The following day would be a true test of performance because we needed to be awake at 7 a.m. for a hike across the tundra to Muldrow Glacier.

The walk took us through the soft, deep tundra rich with diversity of willow and berry bushes, grasses, and flowers. Our guides, Ranger Rachel and Intern Christine, reminded us to talk and sing as we walked, calling “We’re here bear,” so that we might not surprise animals feeding on the soap berries, cranberries, and blueberries that would sustain them through the coming winter. At Muldrow Glacier we came upon bear, wolf, and moose tracks in the soft river mud. The animals had moved on as we must, nearing the end of our adventure.



Tundra hike with Ranger Rachel Jencks

Driving back over the park road, we recognized the landscape as familiar though no less awesome. On the penultimate night we camped at the Murie Science Field Station in walled cabins with tented roofs and bunk beds, though still no electricity or showers! Some of our group embraced the luxury, others felt it a guilty pleasure, and “cp” put up his tent. We met in the camp yurt to hear from two local young women—

sisters Anastasia and Emily Brease—one a park intern, the other a high school student. Both had grown up locally and told us about their daily life in Denali, where children go to school by snowshoe and snowmobile in dramatically sub-zero weather. For most us it is an incomprehensible lifestyle that nevertheless explains their passion for the land as well as the extraordinary hospitality extended by Alaskan people, who know that survival might depend on extra food or clothes. We were treated to both and expressed our gratitude, though never enough.

Hearing firsthand about the extreme conditions in which Alaskans thrive helped us understand the generosity of rangers, who mysteriously appeared with breakfast cereal, fresh milk, and salad. It also prepared us for our meeting with the Vice Provost, Dana Thomas, at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. He was to be our rafting guide on the Nenana River, and he arrived with grapes, strawberries, French bread, and brie! Few in the group had ever done river rafting or kayaking, so we received instructions about a rope rescue throw with some trepidation. No one looked forward to falling into icy water. Once in the boats, however, our insecurity melted, and we deeply enjoyed finally performing in unison as Todd and Matt called the strokes and led us through mellow white water. The trip was both satisfying and thrilling.

That night Provost Thomas joined us for our final circle gathering near the riverbank campsite at the BLM Brushkana Creek campground. On the last evening of every PITP adventure, students present their reflections. Often these are formulated around slide shows, but since we were moving from camp to camp almost every night and staying in places with no access to electricity, we decided on a simple conversation—projected against the background music of the murmuring river. Students spoke from the heart about what they had learned and how they overcame fears related to so many of the experiences that engaged them during a week that seemed a month. We all spoke: students, trip leaders, and those of us who came to gather our own needs from Denali. I brooded on this chapter and tried to imagine how to persuade more honors directors to live a week of PITP so that they might formulate and lead an expedition in a national park near their institution.

Dr. Lydia Lyons, Past President of NCHC, came on the adventure to Denali for the express purpose of conceptualizing a PITP adventure in the Everglades. Here are her reflections on how the extreme north of Alaska gave her inspiration to develop a program in southern grasslands and the ultimate American swamp:



Brushkana Creek: the last circle gathering

*In honors, we are accustomed to locating connections among various ideas and places; no surprise, I easily found the mosquito to be the common connector between the recent Partners in the Parks adventure in Denali National Park and what I hope to develop—a new PITP program in the Everglades.*

*I admit I am not a camper. Nevertheless, I needed to experience first-hand the camping component of Partners in the Parks as part of my research in designing a proposal for the Florida swamp wilderness. As honors directors, we understand the importance of research and homework. As a participant in PITP Denali, I recommend that anyone who is interested in designing a PITP exploration experience a program situated in a totally different locale than the site that may be planned. In traveling with the group to an extreme opposite of the Florida park, I was able to cast myself and my thoughts into the total experience of the unknown. This is precisely what others will experience when they attend a Partners in the Parks adventure. We look, listen, feel, and envision: in so doing, we can know what will be important, or not, to the Partners in the Parks we may design. I strongly encourage honors directors interested in experiential learning and finding opportunities for our students to consider participation in and later to design a Partners in the*

## CHAPTER 11: MAY THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN

*Parks program in their own region. Just as I was aware of the mammals in the wild in Alaska, so too will the Everglades participants be transfixed by reptiles in the wild. A bug hat from Denali will be quite in fashion for an Everglades Partners in the Parks. In fact, the mosquitoes will be the deciding factor for the dates to schedule an Everglades adventure.*

It only takes one immersion in PITP to see the benefit of these experiential-learning expeditions. As other honors directors witness students absorbing the wonder of a national park, processing and growing from within as spontaneously as Alice's filling the white rabbit's house, I am certain that they will, like Lydia, become committed to designing further adventures. Expressing this hope was my contribution to the final circle we held in the glowing twilight of Alaska, an injunction to all who participated: "May the circle be unbroken.' Go home, inspire your director or dean to grab the golden ring and carry it forward into the future. The land and the animals need our protection; we need the inspiration that they give us to keep hope alive."

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## ***FIELD NOTES***



# **DENALI 2010: A STUDY IN CONTRASTS**

**C. P. PRICE**

**UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA, FAIRBANKS**

America's premier wilderness national park. Ten honors students from East Coast institutions, most of whom had never camped out before. Herds of caribou silhouetted on the ridgeline. Wet tents. A bull moose with a harem of five cows. Group cooking over two small Coleman stoves. Dall Sheep grazing steeply sloped hillsides. Wet shoes. Glacier climbing. No showers. Staggering vistas. One lane unpaved roads bordered by sheer dropoffs. Grizzly bears ambling across the road. Sharing a small tent with a total stranger. A wolf marking the road as part of her territory, ten feet from the van. No cell phone service for six



Photo by C. P. Price

A she-wolf ignores guests in her home, Denali



days. The friendliest park rangers you could imagine. No showers for six days. Rafting down a pristine canyon on a wild glacier-spawned river. Sharing food equitably, even if it seems that there can't be enough. Becoming part of a tribe.

For the participants on the Denali 2010 Partners in the Parks project, expectations were a pale precursor to reality. Most would give up things that they probably considered both basic and essential. The process began with the divestiture in the hours before departing in vans for the park: "There isn't room for everyone to have a 40-pound suitcase. You need rain gear, long underwear, a change of clothes, extra socks, and a warm hat. Bring binoculars and a camera if you have them. Leave everything else—you won't need it." Most initially view the prospect of no showers for a week with extreme caution. During a midweek circle discussion, the women students express pleasant surprise that not having to change clothes and not showering are liberating—when all stink, no one stinks! (You aren't what you have, or what you wear.)

The second night in the park is spent at the Teklanika campground. Although we are only 30 miles from the park entrance on the main highway, virtually all connections to the world left behind have been severed. Mute cell phones quickly fall to the bottom of bags, forgotten talismans of a place called "civilization." The visitors have entered a new world, their connections to humanity reduced to this small party, most of whom were strangers less than 100 hours before. After dinner, the circle discussion centers on making transitions and passing through barriers. What might be a purely academic topic has direct and immediate meaning when you are sundered from your social network and your day-to-day comforts. (You aren't who you know, or what others expect of you.)

For nearly all, the change in the sense of time is pervasive and acute. It starts with the extended daylight hours and barely twilight nights of August in interior Alaska. The students are thoroughly dislocated ("OMG, it never gets dark.") Those who lack watches (because they use their cell to tell time) are cast completely adrift, completely suspended in the time that comes when they are seeing something genuinely and categorically new, when their senses absorb everything because there is no commonplace against which to file it. I am struck by this on Thursday morning on my way to boil water for a quick breakfast. It is only a few hundred feet from the tent to the cooking shelter. Although it takes but a few minutes, I am suddenly reminded of my perception two nights before, the first time I walked this way: not knowing then exactly where I should go or how far I'd be walking, it had felt

significantly longer. It was the same path, but I was not the same person. The lack of a firm itinerary is inverted to a benefit: everything is scheduled on “-ish” time. We pause to absorb the otherworldly panoramas at Polychrome Pass. Riverine floodplain, glacier moraines, and up-thrust cliffs bear direct witness to geological scales of time as vast as the vistas afforded at each turn of the road. (You aren’t what is on your calendar, or when your next break is scheduled.)

Wonder Lake is the first campground where we see no motor homes or campers—and all agree when one of the students points out that it finally feels like the wilderness. (We are so far from the park entrance that even the concessionaire buses make only half the round trip, pausing overnight before returning.) This highlight of the distinction between expectation and reality is illusory as well. On our last evening in the park, we take a short hike to an archeological site. Native Americans used this vantage overlooking two valleys to scout before the hunt. These lands supplied everything they needed. As we return, there is discussion of our place in this land. Outwardly an undisturbed “wilderness with a capital W,” Denali National Park is the careful product of decades of care, as completely managed as virtually every other square foot on spaceship Earth. On our last morning in the park, Ranger Kristen Friesen eloquently presents the call to this need by



Photo by C. P. Price

The Pyramid Peaks mirrored on reflecting pond, Denali

reading from Paul Hawken's University of Portland commencement address. (You are not an explorer; you are part of a team of stewards responsible for the preservation of this special place and of all other parts of our home.)

A repeated theme at circles is the hero's journey: the transformative passage that the hero undergoes during an individual encounter with mythic agents and the subsequent return to the ordinary world. What begins with an emphasis on transitions and passing through personal barriers (the very stuff of experiential learning) concludes when we ponder the difficulty of the end of the hero's journey. Eyes finally tuned to see wildlife in the vast spaces unmarked by humans will now be retuned to sixteen distinct quotidian realities. We now must re-enter the ordinary world and take up the task of relaying what we have learned, knowing that we can only really do so with those who have made that journey. As daunting as any of the physical challenges were, the greatest task the participants face will be to convey the sense of passing through perceived barriers and suspending an ordinary sensibility of the world, and the sense of wonder and awe that they felt in the land of the mountain known to Alaskans as Denali. (You are not who you were last week.)

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## CHAPTER 12:

# SHARING THE EXPERIENCE

As participants travel the journey of Partners in the Parks, they naturally engage in conversations of every kind. It is impossible to look out over cliffs, see an eagle in flight, or watch a fox with her cubs without wanting to share the moment. People take photographs, call each other to the water's edge, or simply converse as they walk along the trails. They also tell stories, write in their journals, and ask and answer questions that interest everyone.

In addition to these informal, unscripted modes of sharing, PITP uses a number of scheduled meetings during which everyone is expected to share some aspect of the adventure. The most frequent of these are simply called circles. (See James Clarke's reflection in the Field Notes to Chapter 10.) These daily gatherings of everyone, either standing or sitting at camp or at any place along the way that is conducive to an intimate, quiet time, provide the opportunity to communicate feelings or ideas. Directors might prepare the group by mentioning that the circle's topic will be what people will remember about today, what people photographed today and why, or what concerned them during the day. To some degree the events and presentations of the day often influence these circles. Everyone should know the time and place of the meeting and arrive as scheduled. On more than one occasion, some students have walked away or avoided participation in group circles. Bringing loners into these gatherings is important to maintain the shared dynamics of the adventure. At least once during the week, directors should ask if anything is bothering people or if they would change things.

In effect, the circles provide a comfort zone for sharing excitement and discussing issues that might result in some modification of the program. Although they are not specifically designed for assessment and evaluation, they do tell program leaders a great deal about what is working and whether or not the program is meeting student expectations.

Circles can provide opportunities to share assignments. For example, after visiting the Statue of Liberty, students were given a copy of the Emma Lazarus poem inscribed on the base and asked to think about what they might want to inscribe were the statue dedicated today. They discussed their journal reflections on this theme during one of the circle meetings. Circles can also be of a philosophical nature if the questions posed encourage abstract thought. Students

might be asked questions like the following: “Why do you think early people considered this place spiritual?” “How has seeing so many stars in the night sky changed your sense of the universe?” “Do you think you will want to return here to observe changes in the park over your lifetime?” Such questions move beyond the comfort zone into personal reflections of a deeper nature. In terms of outcomes assessment, the circles provide some insight into how their journal writing is evolving, whether they are learning to share anecdotes and issues, and how they are negotiating group dynamics. The ancient Greeks considered the circle a perfect geometric form. It is certainly the perfect form in which to gather people for a conversation and assessment without hierarchy or moderation by any authority figure. The circle is a grand shape under the sun or moon.

Reading student journals or having students read aloud from their journals provides a tangible measurement of their ability to document and write about their experiences. During the weeklong program, leaders encourage participants to expand on what they have to say. By comparing entries from the beginning and the end of the program, they can determine how the journaling has evolved during this time period. The journal may also be a record submitted to honors programs or colleges granting credit for PITP. The same kind of analysis can, of course, be applied to drawings or photography.

Some programs with a strong focus on visual arts ask students to choose a selection of their work for presentation at midpoint in the program and then a final selection for the summary presentation. Assessing significant changes in students’ ability to photograph or draw from nature is possible. During the week they may become somewhat more adept at composition or observation of detail or capturing color and light. Students particularly interested in flora, fauna, or geology may reflect these interests in their visual work. Assessment of any program should take into account student writing and art.

Of a more formal nature are the presentations that each student or group of students must deliver on a set evening near the end of the program. Letting students know early in the week that they will be expected to make a presentation and should spend some time considering what they would like to do is important. If photography has been a big part of the program, coordinators might ask students to select a certain number of their photographs and use them to talk about what the journey has meant to them. Journal readings or reading aloud from creative writing that students have done on the trip is another possibility. Performance art is another format. Some students are

natural storytellers. Others are shy but could take part in a group presentation of one kind or another. Mimetic reenactments of cooking and hiking adventures, even charades using words that trigger memories of shared experiences, can provide the basis for a presentation.

That everyone presents or at least takes part in a presentation is incredibly important. If at all possible, coordinators should invite the park staff. They are extremely interested in what visitors gain from being in the parks, and because students often devise some extremely original modes of expressing the meaning of these experiences, rangers and other staff members enjoy the evenings as well as final opportunities to visit with the groups.

The presentations clearly demarcate the impending conclusion of an adventure. In some ways they are summary statements intended as a prelude to the farewell. Thus they can convey a range of emotions and evocations or reveal a nostalgic tone, even a tinge of sadness.

Early in the week, when the subject of presentations first arises, the program directors should let the students and other participants know that they will be asked to complete written evaluations at the end of the program and a survey sent by electronic communication from PITP immediately following. They should be advised that they are also welcome to convey in a private written statement (email is fine) intended only for the program leaders their open thoughts about the adventure. Evaluations of every kind provide opportunities to comment on which elements worked and which did not, what participants would like to see altered or replaced, and whether the program fulfilled their expectations and made them feel a deeper connection to the national parks that might influence their future. Knowing that they will have various opportunities to provide some assessment of the program will free their imaginative spirit to do something creative for the presentation itself.

Program coordinators should encourage participants to fill out the official online evaluation survey at the PITP website because it provides data that will accumulate over the years and provide the basis for modifying and improving the program. Students as well as faculty and staff should take part in this and other evaluations.

In addition to the generic questionnaire, program leaders often conduct a survey of their own that is keyed to specific aspects of their program, such as workshop presenters. Participants generally fill out the forms during the last day before the group breaks camp or disperses to airports, cars, or reunions with family members. Each program is welcome to develop a template addressing the events and activities it



provided. The evaluation form should present for rating, according to some clear scale, the major elements of the program: transportation, meeting arrangements, hotel accommodations if applicable, camping or other housing arrangements, outdoor activities, workshops, lectures, recreation, food and meal arrangements, leadership, and safety. Students, faculty, and staff should also have an opportunity to discuss personal impact and personal issues in a narrative form. Learning whether the program met the goals of students, faculty, and staff is important. Ultimately the program leaders would like to know what works well, what does not, what should be changed, and whether students would recommend the program to others. The program leaders should contact participants if they wish to discuss the matters raised or involve them in reshaping elements of the program.

The results of the evaluation are utilized in two other contexts. Since PITP leaders work closely with each park superintendent and staff in preparing for the program, sharing the results of the survey with them following the program is a good idea. This feedback will help everyone agree on aspects of the program that should remain in place and others that should be altered in future collaborations. PITP leaders will also have an opportunity to share the program evaluation, as well as photographs and narratives from the program, with the PITP Committee at the annual National Collegiate Honors Council conference. The committee meeting brings together not only leaders of programs that took place during the previous year, but also colleagues coming forward with proposals for future programs. Assessment information can be extremely helpful to those who are designing new PITP adventures.

Questionnaires completed at the end of a PITP program can only assess the short-term impact of the experience. By the end of a program, students have shared cell phone numbers, email addresses, and photographs. The Bryce group and the Acadia group opened Facebook accounts that maintain their social network. PITP headquarters manages a Picasa posting of photographs from all the adventures. Some faculty members have continued to work with each other in promoting and expanding PITP offerings. Some students and faculty have attended more than one PITP program.

Gathering the following data would be helpful for assessing and developing PITP expeditions in the immediate future:

- What percentage of students maintain contact with each other for a year or more?

- What percentage of participants attend a second or third PITP adventure?
- Do national parks hosting PITP programs wish to do so on a regular basis?
- Has the growing reputation of PITP opened access to additional parks?
- Do faculty presenting in one program seek to present at or attend another?
- What percentage of program leaders run a program more than once? Do these program leaders make alterations based on suggestions and comments in the evaluations?
- Do institutions that have sent students to a PITP program continue to send students in subsequent years?

Over time, many of these questions will be answered. At present the online assessment survey is already generating meaningful data about the physical and emotional difficulty of the experience and about satisfaction with cost, duration, educational benefit, recreational experience, and service work. Only in years to come, if students remain in touch, will the PITP Committee members know whether visiting national parks through PITP has a long-term transformative effect. The PITP Committee members hope that the students will, at some future date, communicate to them that they have returned to the park or visited other NPS sites with family or friends, or that they have voted for preservation policies that will maintain the integrity of and ensure the future of the national parks.

*The final set of Field Notes provides samples of program assessment models that have been used previously.*



Photo by Lauren Klein

The Ranger's Hat



## ***FIELD NOTES***



## **SOME SAMPLE ASSESSMENT MODELS**

Participants completing a Partners in the Parks program are urged to complete the evaluation form on the website, which is reproduced at the end of this section. A link to the form is sent to all students completing a PITP adventure. To date, approximately 30% of all participants have been providing useful data by answering the survey questions. In order to be certain of receiving some immediate feedback, program leaders might wish to conduct a written assessment while the students are still together. The following models have been used.

### **Model A**

Each component of the program is listed on a sheet with space for commentary. The instructions are as follows: “For every session please describe why you did or did not find this session interesting/engaging/inspiring with any comments for improvement in the future. Constructive criticism is most welcome. Please comment particularly on your best experience and your worst experience.” This structure can also be adapted to a rating scale.

### **Model B**

Participants are given a block of time to write about the experience. This exercise might be put into the context of writing an article for their honors newsletter or website or as preparation for a conference presentation.

### **Model C**

Another alternative is focused writing in which students might be given lead questions such as the following:

1. What did you personally find most memorable?
2. What surprised you the most on this trip?

## FIELD NOTES: SOME SAMPLE ASSESSMENT MODELS

3. Which elements of the program gave you the most to think about?
4. Which element(s) of the program do you think should be changed or eliminated in the future?
5. How will you use what you experienced in this program?
6. If you returned to this site, with whom would you come and where would you go?
7. What did you find out about yourself?
8. Have your ideas about the American landscape changed as a result of this trip?
9. Will you read about other national parks or plan trips to them?
10. Do you think you will donate time, money, or both to national parks in the future?

Students who receive stipends enabling them to attend PITP programs are often asked to write an essay for an honors newsletter or present their experiences at a regional or state honors conference. Writing during or at the end of the program will be helpful to them since they will become busy with courses or summer jobs once they return home. Capturing the moment will enable them to produce whatever they are required to submit at their home institutions.

### **Model D**

Other questions focused on arrangements and organization may be included in an assessment survey:

1. Was the program the right length of time? too long? too short?
2. Were the background readings helpful?
3. Were the living accommodations satisfactory?
4. Was the food satisfactory?
5. Were your anticipated learning objectives met by the quantity and quality of the explorations?
6. Would you recommend this adventure to other students in your honors program?
7. Among the various visits to sites or activities, which in particular did you like or dislike? Which locations would you visit again?
8. What, if anything, would you change if you were redesigning the seminar for another group?

## Model E

One exercise that has the potential of strengthening the relationship between NPS and PITP involves having the students compose letters of thanks to the park rangers whose presentation they found the most exciting or memorable. Letting park rangers know directly how students value their time and expertise is another way that PITP can give something back to the park itself.

## Model F

### ***PARTNERS IN THE PARKS*** | ONLINE PARTICIPANT SURVEY

This survey is voluntary. Respond only to the queries that you are comfortable addressing. The demographic information is for statistical purposes only and will be saved separately from the evaluation that follows. Your responses to the evaluation are anonymous.

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### DEMOGRAPHICS

**What is your permanent place of residence?**

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

**Where do you attend college?** \_\_\_\_\_

**You are?**  Female  Male

**What is your race?**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aleut                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian        | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American | <input type="checkbox"/> White/Caucasian        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eskimo                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Some other race        |

**You are?**  Undergraduate  Graduate  Faculty

**What is your class standing?**

- First year
- Second year
- Third year
- Fourth year
- Fifth year



**What are your ultimate educational goals?**

- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Master of Fine Arts
- Ph.D.
- J.D.
- M.D.

**Field of study?** \_\_\_\_\_

**PROJECT EVALUATION**

**Which park did you visit?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Did your college/university sponsor you financially in any way (travel, registration, etc)?**  Yes  No

**If so, how much did they contribute? \$**\_\_\_\_\_

**Were you asked to complete any project(s) or assignment(s) as part of your support?**  Yes  No

On a scale of 1–6, rate the following program areas.  
1=LOWEST 6=HIGHEST

**Was the program reasonably priced?**

- 1 Too Expensive
- 2 A Little High
- 3 More than I expected
- 4 About what I expected
- 5 Less than I expected
- 6 A bargain

**How was the duration of the program?**

- 1 Too Short
- 2 Not quite long enough
- 3 Satisfactory
- 4 Just right
- 5 Long
- 6 Too long

**How was the duration of the backcountry experience(s)?**

- 1 Too Short
- 2 Not quite long enough
- 3 Satisfactory
- 4 Just right
- 5 Long
- 6 Too long

**How would you rate the overall mental/emotional difficulty of the program?**

- 1 Overwhelming
- 2 Taxing
- 3 Difficult
- 4 Not an issue
- 5 Not bad
- 6 Easy

**How would you rate the overall physical difficulty of the program?**

- 1 Overwhelming
- 2 Taxing
- 3 Difficult
- 4 Not an issue
- 5 Not bad
- 6 Easy

**How would you rate the travel to and from the park?**

- 1 Burdensome
- 2 Pretty bad
- 3 Satisfactory
- 4 Fine
- 5 Nice
- 6 Perfect

**What did you most enjoy about the program?**

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FIELD NOTES: SOME SAMPLE ASSESSMENT MODELS

**How might we improve the program to make it a richer, more valuable experience?**

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**Describe how you feel the program changed/benefitted you as a person.**

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**Would you recommend that others participate in a Partners in the Parks program?**  Yes  No

**Are you interested in participating in another Partners in the Parks program?**  Yes  No

**OVERALL EXPERIENCE**

**EDUCATION:** Briefly describe your learning experience. Was the instruction well done, valuable, and interesting? What are your overall comments?

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**RECREATION:** Briefly describe your recreational experience. Were the outdoor activities fun, enjoyable, and/or challenging? What are your overall comments?

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**STEWARDSHIP:** Briefly describe what you learned about park administration and operation. Did you gain a new or broader understanding/appreciation for our national parks, conservation efforts, or environmental issues? What are your overall comments?

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JOAN DIGBY

**FUTURE PLANS:** Briefly describe any future plans you have for visiting national parks or other federal/state sites. How can your college/university cooperate with a site in your area to benefit students, faculty, and other community members?

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**Thank you for completing the survey. Your feedback is very important and will assist us in improving the program and in accurately reporting our efforts to our stakeholders: the National Park Service and the National Collegiate Honors Council.**



# APPENDIX A:

## Partners in the Parks Best Practices Manual

### Overview

*Centennial Challenge:* Launched on August 25, 2006, the National Park Service Centennial Initiative is a 10-year effort to prepare the national parks for another century of conservation, preservation, and enjoyment by the agency's 100th anniversary in 2016. Congressional appropriations in support of Centennial Challenge projects are combined with matching funds 1:1 in cooperative efforts with corporate, educational, and other partners committed to advancing NPS values into the next century. In 2008, Partners in the Parks (PITP) was one of only 110 projects selected in the first round of the Centennial Challenge.

PITP is a collaboration between Southern Utah University (SUU) and Cedar Breaks National Monument in cooperation with the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC). These program leaders organize, support, and facilitate academic adventures throughout the country in support of the five NPS Centennial Initiative values: Education, Professional Excellence, Stewardship, Environmental Leadership, and Recreational Experience. Projects are hosted by collegiate honors programs in cooperation with a regional park(s) to offer students weeklong, in-depth experiential-learning opportunities. Students interact with park rangers and university faculty in both instructional and recreational seminars for park experiences that go well beyond the standard tourist fare.

Although mindful of the overall goals of the Initiative, PITP projects are designed to provide specific and meaningful experiences in the areas of Education, Stewardship, and Recreation.

NOTE: For simplicity within this documentation, all NPS sites will be referred to as "parks" regardless of their official designation. All NPS sites are appropriate venues for PITP projects.

### Developing New PITP Projects

*Program and Projects:* The Partners in the Parks program is a coordinated series of projects in which sponsoring universities are linked with neighboring NPS sites. Proximity is crucial to a successful project because a fair amount of planning and development with NPS partners is involved. Plan for at least 2–3 meetings with NPS staff to develop the focus of your project, to involve park staff, and to plan for your on-the-ground needs.

## APPENDICES

*Partnering with a Park:* The NCHC Partners in the Parks Committee has the responsibility of reviewing proposals and recommending projects to be sponsored each year. The committee will make recommendations to the co-chairs, who will coordinate with the NPS Key Official. Serious candidates should submit their proposal 12–18 months in advance. A template for proposals is available on the PITP website.

The committee will contact the program coordinators to let them know if their proposal has been selected to move forward. A representative from the PITP Committee will work with the candidates and the NPS Key Official assigned to PITP to create an outline of the project's goals and the key talking points.

The NPS Key Official will then contact the park superintendent on behalf of the candidate. This introduction will happen at the highest levels of administration, and submitting to this process insures that the staff and administration at the proposed NPS site understand that this project is part of a nationwide program and that the organizers are functioning with the approval and support of the NPS national office.

After this initial introduction, the NPS site will usually begin preparations on its end to assist with the project, and an administrator at the park will be assigned to serve as the official liaison and contact person. These steps will set the stage for the first meeting with the park.

### *Partners Time Line*

1. Honors program administrators or faculty members contact the Partners in the Parks Committee with an idea for a future project.
2. With approval, the hosting institution prepares an executive summary of the project with goals, objectives, suggested time, and reasons for choosing the proposed park sites, including unique resources and possible seminar topics.
3. Paul Roelandt, the NPS Key Official, will make the initial introductions to the park.
4. Paul Roelandt and the PITP Committee organizes a telephone or video conference call so that all the stakeholders can meet and discuss the possibility of hosting a PITP Project. The group will include the NPS Key Official, a PITP Committee representative, the project co-directors, other university representatives, and park officials.
5. The co-directors and the liaison from the park will begin to develop seminar topics, a project schedule, and plans for sharing responsibilities.



6. As many stakeholders as possible will hold a face-to-face meeting.
7. The project directors will maintain contact with the park liaison about all developments.

### *Experiential Education*

#### Field Seminars

In planning project seminars, the coordinators should keep in mind these important elements: (1) unique park resources, (2) the skills and expertise of park staff, (3) the knowledge and expertise of faculty, and (4) the required travel to and from seminar sites.

#### Park Resources

Every NPS site was selected because of valuable and unique resources deemed worthy of preservation as a national treasure, and so projects should always be designed with these resources in mind. Every PITP project should offer experiences that could not happen elsewhere. Even general training sessions, such as Leave No Trace, can be tailored to take advantage of specific local traits.

#### Ranger Seminars

As PITP projects are carried out across the country, the PITP Committee and NCHC are developing a special relationship with the parks and the great individuals who administer and protect them. Rangers are passionate about what they do, and their love of the land and their place in it is infectious. Initial planning sessions should include discussions with the park liaison about the specific skills, interests, and expertise of the staff. Usually the rangers who want to participate are the ones who are the most outgoing and the best at speaking and working with groups. Park liaisons can be trusted to work with directors to create seminars that take advantage of park strengths.

Because rangers are generally busy people with many responsibilities, creating clear expectations and schedules for ranger-led seminars is imperative. Expeditions should be arranged so that students will be on time and prepared for all seminars and activities. Arrangements should be made in advance so that the PITP coordinator can contact the park liaison or rangers if problems with keeping to the itinerary emerge. If students will be late or cannot make a scheduled seminar, the coordinators must notify the park ranger or the park liaison. Experience has shown that ranger seminars are among the most powerful, meaningful, and enjoyable experiences that students can have. Everyone involved in this expedition should be courteous and active participants in seminars and discussions. Directors should encourage

students to ask questions when appropriate. In their day-to-day work, rangers rarely have the opportunity to fully share their extensive knowledge of the park and the particular resources in their charge. Feedback from past projects confirms that rangers love teaching and talking with honors students.

Thanking rangers for their time is important, but the PITP Committee also suggests that project coordinators write letters of appreciation to the rangers, their supervisor, the park liaison, and the park superintendent. Beyond common courtesies, these letters are significant because each PITP project is part of a nationwide enterprise and reflects on the PITP program as a whole. Its long-term viability depends upon maintaining a friendly, professional, and appreciative relationship with every park involved with a project and with the NPS as a whole.

#### Faculty Seminars

Whenever possible, honors faculty should be involved with the PITP project. One of the key elements that differentiates PITP from other outdoor programs is the level and rigor of the instruction provided. PITP is a cooperative effort between national parks and university honors programs; the contributions made by faculty are a critical part of the dynamic. Academic adventure is the hallmark of PITP enterprises. Faculty can participate as seminar leaders or trip guides or both.

When inviting or choosing faculty to participate, coordinators should not limit their search to those in the natural or physical sciences. PITP experiences should be interdisciplinary, so seminar leaders should represent a variety of departments and interests. Understanding park sites through a variety of perspectives is an excellent way to approach both the educational and stewardship goals.

PITP's policy is to compensate faculty seminar leaders. The PITP Committee recommends providing travel reimbursement, a per diem, and a modest honorarium. The project coordinators should always thank faculty members for their participation in letters of appreciation that are copied, where appropriate, to their dean or department head.

#### Recreational Seminars

In order to meet fully the goals of PITP, participants must experience the recreational side of the national park site. That component is vital. In outdoor/wilderness settings, this will entail a backcountry experience led by qualified trip guides. National parks limit the size of groups allowed into the backcountry, and safe outdoor practice requires that two qualified leaders travel with every group. Thus

bringing in additional leaders for the recreational seminars is usually necessary. Co-directors can also serve as trip guides if they possess the requisite experience and expertise.

Trip guides need to be chosen with care and should be closely allied with the university or National Park Service whenever possible. Honors faculty or other university faculty or staff are also ideal candidates if they possess the necessary skills and training. Trip guides should be familiar with the area, have the requisite outdoor skills, and have appropriate first-aid training. Generally, NPS personnel are too busy to participate in these extended activities, but they should be invited. An overnight backpacking trip with a backcountry ranger is a fabulous experience and one that the PITP Committee wants to foster when possible.

### *Travel*

Geographical distances are an important factor when considering or planning a project. For most projects travel is the single-biggest expenditure in the overall budget and will often be the most expensive part of the students' participation. Three travel components are key: (1) distance from the park to the hosting institution, (2) distance from the closest airport to the host institution, and (3) distances to be traveled within and without the park during the project for seminars, service projects, and recreational experiences. Travel both to the park and within the park during the expedition must be as efficient as possible.

Because transportation can be the most costly part of any project, public transportation should be used when possible. Locating seminars within easy access can reduce costs and the time spent journeying from one activity to another. Careful planning will allow the group to move as efficiently as possible.

### *Proposing a Project*

The endeavor of choosing a park partner and developing a project is exciting. As with any large, complex project, an organized approach is necessary. The initial investigation into developing a PITP proposal should include contacting the NCHC Partners in the Parks Committee for input, direction, and advice. Before making a formal proposal, the project director must make some preliminary decisions; they include identifying a possible park partner, assigning supervisory roles, reviewing campus resources, and creating an Executive Summary. (See Appendix C1.)

### Research National Park Sites

The NPS oversees over 300 sites around the country. Some of the smaller, lesser-known areas are remarkable venues that should not be overlooked. If no NPS sites are near the campus, partnering with another NCHC honors program that neighbors an NPS site is an option. The project coordinators should learn as much as possible about the park, but they must not approach the park administration about the project plans during this preliminary phase. Contact must be initiated by the PITP Committee.

Because this effort is a cooperative one, coordinators must get to know the park and its people well, probably visiting the park several times during the planning process. Travel time is demanding, and travel expenses are usually the most costly part of any project; thus working with a park near the host campus is prudent. Also, faculty seminar leaders may be reluctant to travel long distances to participate. A major goal of the PITP program is to assist hosting institutions to develop a lasting relationship with the park as a result of their project. This relationship will be stronger and more valuable if the park is within striking distance of the campus.

### Leadership

The hosting institution is in charge of organizing the leadership for a PITP project. Every PITP project requires two dedicated leaders to oversee the overall experience as co-directors and at least one of the co-directors must be from the hosting institution. One of the co-directors must be designated as the Project Boss and have ultimate responsibility for all aspects of the project. The Project Boss must come from the host institution. The expectation is that the co-directors will cooperate on all phases of developing, budgeting, scheduling, managing, and evaluating the project. Both directors should fully participate in all activities throughout the duration of the weeklong experience. Directors are usually honors program administrators or faculty. A pair with different but complementary skills and expertise relating to the project is ideal. Gender balance is encouraged but not required. Finding passionate, energetic, and dedicated co-directors is an important part of the initial proposal process.

### Campus Resources

Although firm commitments or decisions are not required at this stage, the director should match park resources and project goals with campus resources, including investigating whether relationships already exist between the campus and local or regional NPS entities.

The PITP effort should include the following resources and programs:

- accounting;
- administration (Provost's/Chancellor's Office);
- colleges/departments/faculty already working with NPS;
- faculty seminar leaders;
- honors program;
- motor pool;
- outdoor recreation center and/or rental.

As part of the preparation for constructing a proposal, the directors should make initial contact with the campus people and programs that will be needed to work effectively.

#### Executive Summary

After completing the appropriate preliminary work and carefully reviewing the basic park and university resources, the directors should craft an initial outline of project objectives and goals. The objectives and goals should focus on the unique resources of the park and the three principle facets of a PITP academic adventure: Education, Stewardship, and Recreation. These values, of course, reflect core elements of the Centennial Challenge Initiative. The directors should create an Executive Summary of 1 or 2 pages about the project. This summary should include the following information:

- name of proposed NPS site(s);
- name of partnering institution and honors program;
- proposed dates, group size, and registration fee for the project;
- educational, recreational, and stewardship goals or opportunities;\*
- ideas for both ranger and faculty seminars;\*
- ideas for service projects;\*
- names and credentials of at least two project leaders, one being the project director.

\*These details may be developed later in cooperation with the Park Liaison.

A formal proposal for hosting a PITP project is submitted by sending the Executive Summary with a cover letter to the NCHC Partners in the Parks Committee. If the project is accepted, the Partners in the Parks Committee and their colleagues within the NPS will make initial introductions and assist in making the preliminary proposal to the park. Again, following this procedure is important so that the park is assured that the project is an official National Park Service/NCHC Partners in the Parks collaboration.

*Risk Management*

PITP is an academic adventure program, but participants attend projects as representatives of their respective institutions. Institutions that have participants in this program must provide proof of liability insurance coverage in the form of a Certificate of Insurance. The Certificate of Insurance is produced by the institution's insurance provider upon request by the insured entity. The Certificate will include the amount of liability insurance coverage provided and a description of what the coverage is for [example: student, John Doe's participation in the academic adventure program at Denali National Park, August 7–15, 2010, under the auspices of University of Alaska, Fairbanks]. The Certificate must name Southern Utah University and the National Collegiate Honors Council as additionally insured. The completed document must be sent by mail to the PITP Project Director at least two weeks prior to the event. The Project Director should forward a copy to the SUU Program Coordinator. Both the PITP Program Coordinator at SUU and the Project Director should keep file copies of all Certificates of Insurance to ensure that every participant has the appropriate coverage from their home institution.

The home institution, SUU, and NCHC will not be responsible for medical, health, or accident-related expenses that are not liability related. Having this type of insurance is the responsibility of the participant. Therefore, every participant must also complete and sign the PITP Waiver of Liability and the Waiver, Release and Indemnification Agreement. (See Appendix D3–4.) Among other information this document asks for the participant's health insurance carrier and policy number.

*Budgeting*

Funding for PITP projects comes primarily from registration fees paid by the participants; seeking outside funding from the university, corporations, foundations, and other sources is encouraged. NCHC's relationship with NPS can be a significant factor when seeking additional financial support.

Formulating a detailed, reasonable budget is critical. Registration fees will be based on the budget, and initial estimations should be made based on 14 participants. The budget should be adequate but not lavish; inflating costs or cutting corners when estimating costs is counterproductive. Here are the major areas of expense that should be accounted for in the budget:

Wages/Salaries

- Organizing Director(s)
- On-the-Ground Director(s)
- Trip Leaders
- Seminar Leaders
- Student Interns

Travel

- On-the-Ground Director(s) to/from the park (planning as well as for program)
- Participants to/from the park
- Seminar Leaders to/from the park
- Participants to/from seminars within the park

Food

Housing (dormitories, camping fees, etc.)

Equipment (van rentals, tents, sleeping bags, cooking equipment)

Sample Salary & Wages

Organizing Director(s) . . . . .	\$500
On-the-Ground Director(s) . . . . .	\$200/day
Trip Leaders . . . . .	\$100/day + travel
Seminar Leaders . . . . .	\$100 + travel
Student Intern(s) . . . . .	\$200

SUU provides a secure online credit card payment option for registration fees. If a project director chooses to register students through SUU, budgets must cover the 5% credit card fee.

*Website*

The official PITP website <<http://www.partnersintheparks.org>> is hosted by Southern Utah University and maintained in cooperation with the SUU Honors Program and the NCHC Partners in the Parks Committee. Projects are posted to the website as soon as all arrangements with the park are confirmed and all other basic information regarding the project is available. The initial posting should include dates, registration fee, hosting institution, contact person, basic overview, tentative schedule, explanation of accommodations, equipment list, and travel tips. The project's web pages should also include 5–10 copyright-free photographs of the park.

The directors should keep their websites up to date and alert the SUU PITP office whenever changes need to be made.



## APPENDICES

The website also includes an online registration system with a credit card payment option. Directors should review the basic registration form and contact the Partners in the Parks Committee if the project requires additional information not included there.

### *Project Timeline*

This timeline provides a general chronology for developing and implementing a Partners in the Parks project. The details and intricacies of any specific project may require deviation from this outline, but every Project Boss (one of the Co-Directors) must develop and follow a schedule in order for the project to proceed efficiently and with a minimum of hassle and panic.

#### 18 Months

- Research possible NPS sites.
- Identify unique resources.
- Match park resources with campus expertise.
- Choose a park(s).
- Identify project co-directors.
- Review basic project support needs with appropriate campus departments.
- Identify at least two options for tentative dates.
- Draft a 1–2 page Executive Summary.
- Review with campus stakeholders.

#### 12 Months

- Submit final Executive Summary to the Partners in the Parks Committee.

— — — Continue if project is selected for implementation. — — —

#### 12 Months

##### *Campus:*

- Alert all relevant administrators and departments of the pending project.
- Obtain any approvals that are necessary, such as time off or overload contracts.
- Make sure the project is on the campus master calendar.
- Make any necessary reservations for housing or vehicles.
- Work with the PITP Committee to further develop the Executive Summary, which the PITP Committee will submit to the NPS Key Official.

*Park:*

- Request the Key Official introduce the project overview to park administration and lay the foundation for park-university partnership.
- Identify a park liaison as the main contact point for project development. The park administrator at the program site and the Key Official will be helpful in making these arrangements.
- Make initial contact and introductions with the park liaison.
- Discuss deadlines for reserving park facilities, such as campsites, amphitheaters, or classroom space.
- Begin submission process for all park forms, including reservations for campsites and other facilities.

9 Months

*Campus:*

- Develop a basic schedule and finalize dates.
- Develop a basic budget and set the registration fee.
- Discuss accounting policies and procedures with appropriate campus entities.
- Send basic project information to the PITP Committee.
- Review the website for accuracy and changes. (See website section above.)
- Work with NCHC, the PITP Committee, and campus experts to market the project.
- Put the website and marketing efforts in place before the NCHC national conference preceding the project.
- Adjust the timeline accordingly.

*Park:*

- Hold a face-to-face meeting with park personnel including the Park Liaison.
- Work with them to identify possible on-site activities, recreational experiences, and seminar topics.
- Assign initial responsibility for these topics to either park or university personnel.
- Be mindful of deadlines and work with the Park Liaison to meet them.
- Reserve desired park facilities and apply for backcountry permits, entrance fee waivers.

## APPENDICES

### 6 Months

#### *Campus:*

- Identify tentative Faculty Seminar Leaders and Trip Guides.
- Continue marketing efforts.
- Confirm travel plans and availability of vehicles.
- Complete preliminary budget.

#### *Park:*

- Finalize schedule, including seminar topics, park activities, and main recreational experience.

### 3 Months

#### *Campus:*

- Continue marketing efforts and update website as needed.
- Communicate directly with participants as they register.
- Finalize seminar topics, Faculty Seminar Leaders, and Trip Guides.
- Select the required and suggested reading list.
- Provide the PITP Committee with digital copies of any readings that are to be distributed through the website. (Readings may also be distributed directly from the host institution.)
- Develop a more detailed budget.
- Identify any developmental costs that will need to be paid before all the registration fees are collected and alert the PITP Committee.
- Monitor registrations and alert the PITP Committee if required numbers are not being met. (The decision to cancel a project will be made by the Project Boss in consultation with the PITP Committee and must be made at least 6 weeks prior to the starting date.)

#### *Park:*

- Finalize ranger seminar topics and leaders.
- Keep the Park Liaison apprised of the plans and any ongoing developments.
- Confirm park permits and reservations.

### 1 Month

#### *Campus:*

- Maintain communication with registered participants.
- Contact any registrants who have not paid the registration fee and confirm their commitment and subsequent payment.
- Collect and log in all necessary forms from students participating in the program.
- Distribute required and suggested readings to the participants.

*Park:*

- Send the project schedule to the Park Liaison for final arrangement and review.

1 Week

*Campus:*

- Confirm attendance, travel plans, and arrival time for all participants.
- Send the final project schedule to all of the Faculty Seminar Leaders and Trip Guides.

*Park:*

- Send the final project schedule to the Park Liaison and confirm all park commitments.

*Accounting*

Southern Utah University was the primary partner in the Centennial Initiative Challenge award throughout the duration of the grant and was designated as the fiscal agent for managing the funds through a Colorado Plateau Cooperative Ecosystem Unit (CPCESU) contract. During this period, all registration fees were paid to SUU; hosting institutions were then reimbursed for project expenses. In most cases, this arrangement entailed host institutions carrying much of the cost during the development and implementation phases of the project since reimbursement was generally made at the close of the project when all expenditures had been made and all the receipts had been gathered. Because SUU remains the administrative locus of PITP, these arrangements continue. They are especially useful to institutions that do not have the capability of receiving credit card payment for PITP registration fees. Some host institutions, however, are experimenting with direct registration and payment and setting up a local bank account in order to pay program bills as they are generated. SUU has been extremely flexible in working with host institutions to accommodate various alternative modes of handling registration and payments. Ultimately each PITP program should be able to report and be reimbursed as best suits the accounting policies and procedures on their own campus.

*Reporting*

The project director must account for every expenditure. The final Project Budget Report should include a breakdown of all expenses organized according to the original proposed budget. The report should show the original proposed costs and the actual final expenditures. Every expenditure in the report must be accompanied by a

## APPENDICES

corresponding receipt. The Project Budget Report will be included in the PITP final Centennial Challenge report to NPS and may be shared with other appropriate government officials and legislatures. The quality of the report will directly affect future government funding of this valuable NCHC program. (See Appendix E for Sample Budget.)

# APPENDIX B:

## Equipment

**REMINDER: Participants should NOT travel on commercial airlines with backpacking stoves or fuel.**

In addition to basic outdoor clothing and equipment, participants will need equipment for an overnight backpacking experience. Therefore, every participant needs to have the minimum equipment necessary for that activity. Every student should review the equipment lists provided on this page to make sure that all needs are met. Except for stoves, students are encouraged to bring their own camping/backpacking equipment. For those who do not have equipment or do not want to travel with their equipment, the [Name of Host College/University] will make arrangements for rental and post prices.

### Clothing

- Hat(s) (brimmed for sun protection, wool/fleece for cool weather)
- Shirts (T-shirts and some long sleeved for cooler weather and sun protection)
- Jackets (windbreaker/rain jacket and fleece/wool jacket)
- Pants (loose fitting and light colored, nylon/polyester fabrics are best; jeans are not recommended for hiking)
- Long underwear (polypropylene recommended)
- Boots/shoes (sturdy footwear is highly recommended; lightweight boots are great)
- Socks (lightweight inner socks with thicker, preferably wool or wool-blend outer socks)
- Shorts (option for warmer weather)
- Bathing suit (depending on location of trip and time of year)

### Basic Trip Equipment

- Knapsack or daypack
- Towel
- Water bottles (at least 3 liters)
- Garbage bag (large)
- Zipper food storage bags (pint or quart size)
- Lip balm and sun block
- Bandana
- Toilet paper
- Cup, plate/bowl, utensils
- Notebook and pen/pencil

## APPENDICES

- Insect repellent
- Nylon cord\*
- Watch\*
- Camera\*
- Binoculars\*
- **RENTALS AVAILABLE** to be organized by [Name of College/ University] and paid for after arrival [add fees next to each item]
  - Backpack
  - Tent
  - Sleeping bag
  - Sleeping pad
  - Stove (shared among four people)

This list is not all-inclusive or site specific. It should be adapted to the needs, requirements, weather, and season of each PITP program.

\*These items are considered optional.

### 12 Essentials

- Map (provided)
- Compass
- Flashlight
- Extra clothing
- Pocketknife
- Matches (lighter)
- First-aid kit
- Sunglasses
- Water bottle (at least 1 quart)
- Water purifier (depending on trip)
- Candle (or fire starter)
- **GROUP EQUIPMENT** (per cook group provided by program coordinators)
  - 1 tarp (rain fly)
  - 1 camp stove (at least 2 burners)
  - fuel (1 gallon can per camp stove)
  - 1 griddle (fits over 2 burners)
  - 1 cook set, pots (frying pan, large pot, 2 medium pots)
  - 1 bucket and/or washtub
  - 1 cook set, utensils (serving spoon, slotted spoon, spatula, sharp knife, peeler, can opener)
  - 1 water cooler (5 gallon)
  - 1 food cooler
  - 1–2 food bins (sturdy cardboard or plastic boxes)
  - A Dutch oven, charcoal, and/or firewood is optional



# **APPENDIX C:**

## **Executive Summary of Project Proposal Letter and Application for Academic Fee Waiver Program Agenda for Zion National Park**

### **Appendix C1: Executive Summary of Project Proposal**

Partners in the Parks  
PROPOSAL  
Joshua Tree National Park

Partners in the Parks (PITP) is a Centennial Initiative Project taking collegiate honors students into America's national parks for weeklong academic adventures. These programs are hosted by select university honors programs working in cooperation with a regional park. Projects focus on three important Centennial Challenge goals: Education, Recreation, and Stewardship. In 2008 PITP projects were held at Acadia, Bryce Canyon, Fire/Ellis Island, Grand Canyon-Parashant, Organ Pipe Cactus, and Zion.

#### **Proposed Project**

Cal Poly Pomona and Southern Utah University are interested in hosting a PITP project at Joshua Tree National Park in March 2009. The project will attract students from across the country for a one-week academic adventure in the park.

Dates: March 16–20, 2009

Group size: 12 students, 4 faculty

Accommodations: Group Camp Site

#### **Education**

The educational components of the project are 1–3 hour seminars led by university faculty and/or park rangers. These seminars are held throughout the week and focus on select natural, cultural, and historical resources protected by the park. Our schedule would include time for up to 4 seminars led by park staff, depending on their availability, park schedules, and workloads. Other seminars may be led by faculty from the hosting universities. Possible topics include archeology, astronomy, desert ecosystems, endangered species, geology, herpetology, mining, Native American history, nature writing, settlement, and

## APPENDICES

water issues. Organizers will work with the park to create a program schedule that is amenable to everyone involved. Experiential learning is an important part of all PITP projects. We would like to organize a service project where students can gain hands-on experience working approximately a half day on a park-approved project. Past PITP projects have included revegetation, trail maintenance, endangered species study, eradication of invasive plants, field archeology reports, GPS mapping, and recycling.

### **Recreation**

We would like the project to include at least one overnight camping experience in the backcountry. We recognize there are group size restrictions, special precautions required for desert hiking, and a need to protect sensitive day-use areas. If possible, we would also like to include a hike to Munson Canyon as part of our schedule. We will work with park officials in choosing appropriate hike options and getting all required permits. A Leave No Trace ethic is part of all PITP projects.

### **Stewardship**

While learning about the unique resources protected by the park, we also want students to gain a greater appreciation for the behind-the-scenes work that keeps a park running smoothly. We hope a park administrator will be able to meet with students for a seminar on important areas of park management. We also want students to learn how each park fits into the big picture of the National Park Service and their important role in maintaining and protecting the cultural, historical, and natural treasures of our country.

JOAN DIGBY

**Appendix C2:  
Sample Request for Academic Waiver of Park Fee**

Honors Program  
Southern Utah University  
351 West University Blvd  
Cedar City, UT 84720  
435-586-1955  
435-865-8152 (fax)

March 23, 2009

Attn: Fee Clerk  
Zion National Park  
Springdale, UT 84767-1099

We are looking forward to visiting and studying in Zion National Park, May 11–16, 2009. Our weeklong seminar is part of the Partners in the Parks program, a nationwide 2016 Centennial Initiative Project sponsored by Southern Utah University and Cedar Breaks National Monument in cooperation with the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC). Major teaching/learning objectives for the program include the following:

- (1) recognizing a citizen's stewardship of the resources protected by national parks and other federal/state resource agencies;
- (2) understanding the complex human and natural systems at work in and around our national parks;
- (3) studying Zion National Park's unique geological, biological, historical, and environmental resources; and
- (4) extending outdoor experiential education into a university, academic setting.

The ZNP program will be led by SUU and other university faculty and will be attended by collegiate honors students from across the country. Because students will be coming from a variety of colleges and universities, credits earned through participation in the project will be awarded by each student's home campus.

SUU faculty will be working closely with ZNP rangers and staff in an interdisciplinary educational program that will include experiential-learning opportunities in geology; ecology; cultural heritage/history;

## APPENDICES

and the design, operation, and purpose of our national parks. Please see the accompanying daily activity schedule for more details. We have included Kristin Legg in our planning and appreciate her assistance and expertise in designing the program activities and curriculum. She can provide more details concerning ZNP's participation.

[We request that you consider the waiver of all park fees and append the necessary application to that end.]

Sincerely,

Matthew Nickerson  
Director, Honors Program  
Southern Utah University

JOAN DIGBY

**Appendix C3:  
Application for Academic Fee Waiver**

Sample

(Note: applications are site specific.)



United States Department of the Interior  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Zion National Park  
Springdale, UT 84767



Submit this application and all required documentation at least three weeks prior to your arrival (see Fee Waiver Guidelines for detailed information on required documentation).

Mail or fax application to: Zion Fee Management Office  
Attn: Fee Clerk  
Springdale, UT 84767  
Fax 435-772-0281

Name of Institution \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Official in charge of group/Instructor \_\_\_\_\_  
Arrival Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Departure Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of Students \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of Faculty/Chaperones \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of Vehicles \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of vehicles \_\_\_\_\_  
Class/Course Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Specific Park Area(s) to be visited \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCFA) of 1965, as amended by P.L. 99-951 in 1986, allows exemption from entrance fees for academic credit as outlined in 36 CFR, Chapter 1, part 72, Section 71.13. I hereby certify that the above detailed trip meets requirements outlined in the National Park Service Regulations (NPS-22).

Signature of Official sponsoring group \_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDICES

**National Park Service Approval**

Signature of Park Service Official \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**This approved fee waiver must be in your possession when arriving at Zion National Park. Each vehicle needs to have a copy of the approved waiver; otherwise normal entrance fees will be charged. Groups arriving without an approved fee waiver will be charged the non-private fee of \$12.00 per person. Refunds will not be granted.**

- Fee waivers do not include camping fees.
- Travel into Zion Canyon is by shuttle bus only April through October.
- All vehicles at or above 136" high (11'4") and/or 94" wide (7'10") require an escort for passage through the Zion Mt. Carmel tunnel. The fee for this service is \$15.00. The following vehicles are prohibited from passing through the park: Vehicles over 157" tall (13'1") and combined vehicles over 50' long.

JOAN DIGBY

**Appendix C4:  
Sample Program Agenda**

# ***PARTNERS IN THE PARKS***

**Zion National Park**

## **Monday May 11**

Morning     Introductions, paper work  
                  Equipment check and rental  
                  Backpacking 101/Leave No Trace  
                  Pack for backcountry trip

Noon            Lunch

Afternoon    Travel to Zion-Kolob  
                  Hike to La Verkin Creek

Evening       Dinner/clean up  
                  Kolob Arch  
                  Circles

## **Tuesday May 12**

Morning       Hit the trail  
                  Hike to Hop Valley  
                  Seminar: ZNP Exotic-Plant Management  
                  Meet on the trail

Noon            Lunch

Afternoon    Hike to Virgin Road Trailhead  
                  Travel to Main Canyon  
                  Set up camp, Group Site

Evening       Dinner  
                  Decompress  
                  Circles

## **Wednesday May 13**

Morning       Breakfast  
                  Seminar: Peregrine Falcons

Noon            Lunch

Afternoon    Seminar: ZNP Interpretation (1:00 PM)  
                  Ron Terry  
                  Seminar: ZNP Wilderness (2:00 PM)  
                  Ray O'Neil  
                  Meet at Group Site



## APPENDICES

Evening      Dinner  
                Personal/Group free time  
                Seminar: Park Management (7:00 PM)  
                        Kristin Legg  
                Circles

### **Thursday May 14**

Morning      Breakfast  
                Seminar: Environmental Psychology (9:00 AM)  
                        Dr. Britt Mace  
                        Meet at Group Site

Noon          Lunch

Afternoon    Seminar: ZNP Service (1:00 PM)  
                1-Trail maintenance, Dan Rhode  
                        (5 students maximum)  
                        Meet at Watchman Arch Trailhead  
                2-Native Plant Nursery, Carrie Wyler  
                        (4 students maximum)  
                        Meet at Nursery

Evening      Dinner  
                Personal/Group Place As Text  
                Circles

### **Friday May 15**

Morning      Breakfast  
                Seminar: ZNP Global Information Systems (8:30 AM)  
                        Dan Alberts  
                        (7 student maximum)  
                        Meet at Group Site

Noon          Lunch

Afternoon    Prepare Presentations  
                Shuttle, free time

Evening      Dinner  
                Presentations

### **Saturday May 16**

Morning      Breakfast  
                Break camp, clean up  
                Return to Cedar City

# APPENDIX D:

## Generic Forms

### Appendix D1: Student Application Form

**Partners in the Parks**  
*Name of Program*  
*Name of College/University*  
*Dates*

#### Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers: home \_\_\_\_\_ cell \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Sex:  M  F U.S. Citizen:  Yes  No Date of Birth \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

I am an honors student at (name of university/college) \_\_\_\_\_.

**Payment/Cancellation Information:** The cost of the program is \$\_\_\_\_\_. This includes food, transportation to (site of program) \_\_\_\_\_, park fees, and program activities. Program cost does not include individual travel to the starting point of the trip or other activities outside the established program schedule. Application with payment is due by (date) \_\_\_\_\_. A full refund, less \$\_\_\_\_ processing fee, will be made if written notice of cancellation is received by (date) \_\_\_\_\_. No refunds will be made after (date) \_\_\_\_\_ nor will refunds be made to students not present for the program or for those who drop out after the program begins. Full refunds will be processed if the program is cancelled or if you are not accepted.

#### Method of Payment for \$\_\_\_\_\_ Program Fee

(Payment must accompany this application to register.)

Cash  Check or Money Order Payable to (*Name of Institution*)

MasterCard  Discover  Visa Card

Number \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**You will receive a confirmation once your registration and payment have been processed.**

APPENDICES

**Physical Condition Information:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**WALKING/JOGGING**

Check the highest level of physical activity that you can comfortably reach walking and jogging:

- 2 miles/40 min.
- 4 miles/80 min.
- 6 miles/120 min.
- Unsure
- 1 mile/12 min.
- 3 miles/36 min.
- 5 miles/60 min.

**PLEASE SELF ASSESS**

Swimming:  beginner  intermediate  advanced

Boating experience:  canoe  kayak  raft  sail boat

Please indicate any physical conditions or restrictions you have:

- Respiratory
- Joint problems
- Back problems
- High blood sugar
- Low blood sugar
- Seizures
- Allergies to plants, wasps, bees

List all medications that you require and will bring on the trip.

\_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate if you have allergies or other diet restrictions.

- Lactose intolerant
- Sugar restricted
- Vegetarian
- Vegan
- Food allergy (e.g., peanuts, shellfish, etc.)

Please indicate if you have adverse reactions to any of the following:

- High altitude
- High temperatures
- Low temperatures

**Equipment (If institution has rentals, indicate rental cost per item.)**

Please indicate the equipment you plan to bring:

- Tent
- Sleeping bag
- Sleeping pad (not an air mattress)

**Safety Training**

Please indicate if you are currently certified in any of the following:

- Red Cross First Aid (or equivalent)
- Red Cross Life Guard (or equivalent)
- Wilderness First Responder

**Appendix D2:  
Partners in the Parks Travel Stipend Application Guidelines**

The student stipend provides \$200 toward the travel costs to attend a 2009 Partners in the Parks project. We hope this funding opportunity will assist financially challenged students to participate in the academic adventures hosted through Partners in the Parks, and we hope honors administrators will be selective and encourage qualified candidates to apply. Making application for a student stipend is independent from the Partners in the Parks registration process. Receiving a stipend does not assure a place on a project, and space is limited. Applicants must comply with the project registration deadlines even if the ability to attend is dependent upon receiving a stipend.

**Applying**

- Stipends are only available to students enrolled and actively participating in NCHC-affiliated honors programs.
- The form must be filled out completely and accurately.
- The completed form must be signed by the student and the honors advisor, director, or dean.
- Stipend applications must be received at least 3 weeks before the starting date of the project to which it applies. This is a delivery deadline not a postmark. Applications that arrive by fax or attached to email by the deadline will qualify but must be followed up by a signed original. Send to:  
Partners in the Parks  
Attn: Matt Nickerson  
Honors Program  
351 W. University Blvd  
Cedar City, UT 84720  
fax: 435-865-8152  
[nickerson@suu.edu](mailto:nickerson@suu.edu)
- Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

**Awards**

- Student stipends are \$200 and must be applied toward travel costs.
- Stipend recipients will be notified by email.

**More Information**

If you have questions or need more information, please contact:  
Matt Nickerson, 435-865-8451, [nickerson@suu.edu](mailto:nickerson@suu.edu).

Student stipends are provided through support from the National Collegiate Honors Council.

**Partners in the Parks Travel Stipend Application**

**Applicant Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Status:  Fr  So  Jr  Sr

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_ College/University: \_\_\_\_\_

**Project**

Desired Project:  Black Canyon  Cape Hatteras  Denali

Desired Project:  Fire/Ellis Island  GC-Parashant  Zion

Project Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

**Why Partners in the Parks?**

In the space provided, explain why you want to participate in Partners in the Parks and why you are interested in the specific project you have chosen.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Budget**

In the space below, provide an itemized budget summarizing travel and registration expenses and identify the source and amount of funding received from outside sources such as grants, awards, scholarships, etc. PITP funds can only be used toward travel expenses.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Amount Requested:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Signatures**

Student:

My signature below indicates that the information I have supplied on this form is accurate and complete.

Signature of applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Honors Director/Advisor:

My signature below indicates that the applicant is an active honors student in my program and that he/she requires financial assistance in order to attend a Partners in the Parks project.

Signature of the director: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**For PITP Office Use Only**

Did the applicant receive a grant:  Yes  No

Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Awardee Notified: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix D3:  
Waiver of Liability**

*Name of Host Institution (College/University) and PITP program*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am a student enrolled in the Partners in the Parks Program (“the Program”) located at (site of program) \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ *Name of Host Institution* (College/University). I understand and hereby acknowledge that my participation in the Program is wholly voluntary. In consideration of being allowed to participate in the Program, I hereby agree as follows:

1.) I hereby represent and warrant that I am and will be covered throughout the Program by a policy of comprehensive health and accident insurance that provides coverage for injuries and illnesses I sustain or experience overseas, and, more specifically, in the country in which I will be living and/or traveling while on the Program. By my signature below, I certify that my health insurance policy will adequately cover me through the duration of this PITP program, and I absolve the College/University of all responsibility and liability for any injuries (including death), illnesses, claims damages, charges, bills, and/or expenses I may incur while I am participating in the PITP program. I agree to report to the College/University all physical or mental conditions I have that may require special medical attention or accommodation during the Program at least thirty (30) days prior to departure.

2.) I understand the College/University reserves the right to make changes to the Program itinerary or to cancel all or part of the Program at any time and for any reason, with or without notice, and the College/University shall not be liable for any loss whatsoever to me by reason of any such cancellation or change. If all or part of the Program is cancelled, prevented or rendered impossible or unfeasible by any act or regulation of any public authority, or by reason of riot, strike, act of God, epidemic, war, civil unrest, terrorism, or declaration of disaster by federal or state government and the Program is cancelled (in whole or in part), it is understood and agreed that there shall be no claim for damages by me or on my behalf and the University’s obligations as to the Program shall be deemed waived by me.

3) I understand and acknowledge that the College/University assumes no responsibility or liability for any delays, delayed or changed departure or arrival times, disease, injuries, losses, damages, weather, strikes, acts of God, circumstances beyond the control of the College/University, force

## APPENDICES

majeure, war, quarantine, civil unrest, public health risks, criminal activity, terrorism, accident, injuries, damage to property, bankruptcies of airlines or other service providers, inconveniences, cessation of operations, mechanical defects, failure of negligence of any nature howsoever caused in connection with any accommodations, food, and transportation. If due to weather or other uncontrollable factors I am required to spend additional nights, the College/University will not be responsible for my hotel, transfers, meals, or other expenses. My baggage and personal property are at my risk entirely throughout the Program and any travel incident thereto. The right is reserved by the College/University, in its sole discretion, to cancel the Program or any aspect thereof prior to departure if the University determines or believes that any person is or will be in danger if the Program or any aspect thereof is continued.

4) The College/University reserves the right to dismiss me from the Program at any time should my actions or general behavior impede the operation of the Program or the rights or welfare of any person. Similarly, if my conduct violates any policy or procedure of the University, which I hereby agree shall apply to my conduct while I am engaged in a Partners in the Parks trip, I understand that I may be required to leave the Program at the sole discretion of the University, and I may be referred to the appropriate College/University officials for further disciplinary action. I understand and hereby acknowledge that I will be subject to discipline by the College/University, as well as by any institution I attend or in whose facilities I reside or learn in connection with the Program, if I violate either or both institution's rules, policies, or student conduct codes. I hereby consent to the jurisdiction of all such institutions to discipline me, separately and cumulatively, for any instance of misconduct during the Program. I agree not to challenge in any forum or proceeding the authority or jurisdiction of the College/University to discipline me at any time for my misconduct, during or in connection with the Program or any travel related thereto.

5) I am aware of and understand the risks and dangers of travel to, in, and around (*site of program*) \_\_\_\_\_ including but not limited to the dangers to my own health and personal safety. I hereby assume, knowingly and voluntarily, each of these risks and all of the other risks which could arise out of or occur during my travel to, from, in, or around (*site of program*) \_\_\_\_\_.

6) I agree not to use or possess any illegal drugs or substances, understand that doing so will place me and others at risk, and I agree not to consume alcohol while participating in this Program. I agree that if I fail to abide



JOAN DIGBY

by agreements herein, I will be prohibited from further participation in this program. I agree to conduct myself in a manner that will comply with the regulations of the Program.

7) This is a release of liability.

8) As lawful consideration for being permitted by College/University to participate in this Program, I do hereby release from any legal liability, agree not to sue, claim against, attach the property of or prosecute and further agree to defend indemnify, and hold harmless the Honors Program of \_\_\_\_\_ *College/University Name* and all of their officers, directors, member, organizations, agents and employees of any injury or death caused by or resulting from participation in this Program, whether or not such injury or death was caused by negligence or from any other cause. This agreement, made in the State of \_\_\_\_\_, shall in all respects be governed in accordance with the laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_. Any action brought by either party to enforce any of the terms or conditions of the agreement shall be brought only in such counties. Each party consents to the jurisdiction and venue of the appropriate court in such counties. I acknowledge that I have read and understood this Waiver of Liability and have signed it voluntarily in consideration of the Trustees agreement to allow me (or my minor child or ward) to participate in this program and acknowledge that by signing below, I am giving consent for medical treatment to the coordinator and medical personnel in an emergency situation. It is understood that such treatment shall be solely at my expense, and I agree to reimburse *Name of College/University* for any expense it might suffer as a result of said injury or treatment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Printed)

Emergency Contact Information (please list two contacts)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Return application with completed forms and payment to:  
Address/Phone/Fax

APPENDICES

**Appendix D4:  
Waiver, Release and Indemnification Agreement  
(required of all PITP participants by Southern Utah University)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Activity \_\_\_\_\_ Date(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

**By Signing Below:**

I agree to assume all risks associated and promise to indemnify (pay back) and hold harmless the State of Utah, Southern Utah University (“SUU”), the Southern Utah University Outdoor Recreation Program, their employees, volunteers, and other participants from any and all claims (legal or financial), including, but not limited to: Lawsuits, Insurance Claims, Search and Rescue Costs, Medical Expenses, Personal Damages, Pain and Suffering, Losses, Injuries, and Expenses (including lost income or opportunity) arising out of or related in any way to my participation in the above Outdoor Recreation TRIP. I further agree for myself, my family, and my heirs to release, forever forgive, and promise not to sue SUU for any action for damages, harm, or remedy (legal or equitable) arising out of or in any way related to the TRIP or the Outdoor Recreation Program.

I agree that any suit filed in reference to this TRIP or to interpret this document will be filed in Iron County, Utah, and be governed by Utah Law. This agreement shall continue in effect after the TRIP has concluded.

Should SUU, its employees, volunteers, or participants be forced to defend a claim, suit, or other legal action, taken on my behalf, that of my heirs or executor, or my family, I agree to pay SUU, its employees, volunteers, or participants any costs and attorney’s fees they may incur if they successfully defend such claim, suit, or action.

Should a court of competent jurisdiction declare any paragraph or part of this Agreement to be legally unenforceable, the remaining parts shall remain in full force and effect. A copy of this Agreement can be used as an original.

**Fill In:**

I have Medical Insurance.

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy Number: \_\_\_\_\_

JOAN DIGBY

- I give permission for transportation to any medical facility or hospital and authorize any qualified medical provider to give me the medical care judged to be necessary.
- I do not have any medical or physical condition that would prevent my participation in this TRIP. I feel the group should know about: (voluntary disclosure) \_\_\_\_\_
- I am over 18. Birthdate: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Emergency Contact \_\_\_\_\_  
Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Night Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, of my own free will, for my family, my minor children, my heirs and executors, and myself have read, understand, and acknowledge the risks and liability for myself this date of \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Appendix D5:**  
**Partners in the Parks—Comportment Agreement**

*The Partners in the Parks program is being developed to help honors students and faculty across the nation learn about and take stewardship for the national parks of America. Most Partners programs take place outdoors and away from civilized settings. Some seminars involve self-sufficient travel in primitive areas, and professional medical assistance, if needed, may be hours away. As a participant, you must understand and agree to behave in an appropriate manner as outlined below.*

As a participant of Partners in the Parks, I

- agree to provide a true evaluation of my ability to complete program activities.
- understand that I am responsible for all clothing, equipment, and supplies required for the activity.
- agree to utilize the equipment list provided to ensure the safety and comfort of myself and the other members of the group.
- agree, as part of the group, to assist and help others whenever reasonable, and I can expect the same help from my group members.
- agree to follow all instructions and guidelines given to me by the Partners in the Parks trip directors and guides and to act in a safe and responsible manner toward all participants.
- am sufficiently fit (physically, mentally, socially) to participate in this activity.
- have completed the Heath History and Waiver Release forms with information that is accurate, complete, and true to the best of my knowledge.
- agree to notify the Partners in the Parks leaders of any change to my health or fitness during the activity.
- give permission for the Partners in the Parks leaders to seek emergency medical or rescue services for me, at my cost, should I become injured.
- understand that Southern Utah University and (host College/University Name) do not provide medical or liability insurance, and therefore, I am totally responsible for my own personal coverage.
- agree NOT to use drugs or alcohol during any part of the activity, in accordance with SUU and (host College/University Name) policy, and understand that such use may lead to dismissal from the activity.

Partners in the Parks is a cooperative learning experience. We expect that you will help us maintain a friendly and cooperative atmosphere.

---

Name (Print)

---

Signature

---

Date

JOAN DIGBY

Appendix D6:

# ***PARTNERS IN THE PARKS***

## Photo Release Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_, give my permission to Southern Utah University (SUU), (*Name of Host College/University*), \_\_\_\_\_ and Partners in the Parks (PITP) to use photographs taken of me during the (name of park) \_\_\_\_\_ Partners in the Parks project to be used in marketing and other publications.

I understand that by signing this waiver I will not be paid to have my image used, nor will I be expected to pay to have my image captured. Should I wish to have copies of any photographs, I will contact PITP directly to inquire about the process of acquiring and using said photographs and will follow the process outlined by PITP.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# APPENDIX E:

## Sample Budget

**Partners in the Parks | Cape Hatteras–OBX**  
**May 15–22, 2010 | University of North Carolina Wilmington**  
 Partners in the Parks | 2008 Centennial Challenge Cost-Share Task  
 Agreement J1360080127  
 Cooperative & Joint Venture Agreement H1200-004-002 between the  
 U.S. National Parks Service and Southern Utah University

### Income

Student Registration Fees	\$7,150.00
Less: Credit Card Processing Fee	(136.45)
Total Cash In	\$7,013.55

### Expenses

#### *Equipment, Food & Supplies*

Meals	\$ 696.38	
Food & Supplies	511.73	
Equipment	357.49	
Water Bottles for Students 17@\$12.99	220.83	
Tent Rental	140.00	
Sub-total		\$1,926.43

#### *Transportation & Lodging*

Van Rentals	\$1,748.28	
Portsmouth Boat Tours	360.00	
Gasoline	343.66	
Kayak Rentals	300.62	
2 Hotel Rooms for one night	270.72	
14 Hatteras Journal books/Jan DeBlieu	220.54	
Camp/Park Fees	75.00	
Sub-total		\$3,318.82

#### *Stipends & Honoraria*

Lankford	\$ 305.60	
Buerger	305.60	
Underwood	305.60	
Privott	305.60	
Bruce	285.90	
Hosier	253.80	
Sub-total		\$1,762.10

Total Expenses	\$7,007.35
Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 6.20





# APPENDIX F:

## Brochures and Fliers

# ***PARTNERS IN THE PARKS***

## Exploring the Outer Banks

May 15–21, 2010

**Project:** May 15–21, 2010

**Cost:** \$550/person

**Host:** University of North Carolina Wilmington  
601 S. College Road  
Wilmington, NC 28403

**Contact:** Dr. Bill Atwill; [atwillw@uncw.edu](mailto:atwillw@uncw.edu)  
office: (910)962-3679

Visit the website: <<http://partnersintheparks.org>>

**Partners in the Parks** is an experiential-learning program sponsored by the National Collegiate Honors Council in cooperation with the U.S. National Park Service. In 2010 we will host seven projects at national parks across the country, offering unique opportunities for collegiate honors students and faculty to visit areas of the American landscape noted for their beauty,



significance, and lasting value. Seminars led by university faculty and park personnel will include historical, scientific, cultural, and other important areas unique to a given park. Projects will also take advantage of exciting recreational opportunities in the parks to broaden participant's understanding of the overall value of national parks to our country and its citizens.



**Cape Hatteras National Seashore**, the nation's first national seashore, was established to preserve significant segments of unspoiled barrier islands along North Carolina's stretch of the Atlantic Coast. The Outer Banks are rich in American maritime and aviation history and are a favorite resort destination for beachgoers, fishermen, surfers, and wildlife enthusiasts.

**Cape Lookout National Seashore** protects the southern-most section of this barrier island system. Within the seashore's boundaries, the islands are without the usual manmade trappings of paved roads, resort facilities, or bridge connections to the mainland. Participants must find transportation to Raleigh, NC. The group will depart Raleigh on Saturday morning, May 15. The return to Raleigh will be mid-afternoon on Friday, May 21.

# ***PARTNERS IN THE PARKS***

## **THE ACADIA EXPERIENCE**

**AUGUST 8–14, 2009**

**Project:** August 8–14, 2009

**Cost:** \$550/person

**Host:** University of Maine at Augusta, 46 University Drive, Augusta, ME

**Contact:** Kathleen King: [kathleen.d.king@maine.edu](mailto:kathleen.d.king@maine.edu), office: (207) 621-3299

*Visit the website: <http://partnersintheparks.org>*

**Acadia National Park** is located on Mount Desert Island along the beautiful coast of Maine. Rocky shores, breathtaking vistas, and numerous natural wonders greet the visitor. The natural environment just begs to be explored—from the carriage paths accessible by foot, bicycle, and wheelchair, both sandy and rocky beaches teeming with marine life, hikes that lead to spectacular views, and of course the ocean, which can be explored and studied by boat, camera, paintbrush, and plain old wading in!



Much of Acadia National Park neighbors Bar Harbor, a coastal town complete with a working port, a strong tourist trade, and a fascinating history, both of the seafaring natives and the summer visitors who built magnificent “cottages” for their summers in Maine.

Participants must find transportation to Portland, Maine. The group will depart Portland on Saturday morning, August 8. The return to Portland will be mid-afternoon Friday, August 14.



**Partners in the Parks** is an experiential-learning program sponsored by the National Collegiate Honors Council in cooperation with the U.S. National Park Service. In 2009 we will host seven projects at national parks across the country, offering unique opportunities for collegiate honors students and faculty to visit areas of the American landscape noted for their beauty, significance, and lasting value.

Seminars led by university faculty and park personnel will include historical, scientific, cultural, and other important areas unique to a given park. Projects will also take advantage of exciting recreational opportunities in the parks to broaden participant’s understanding of the overall value of national parks to our country and its citizens.

JOAN DIGBY

# Partners in the Parks

a totally New York park experience

MAY 16-23, 2010

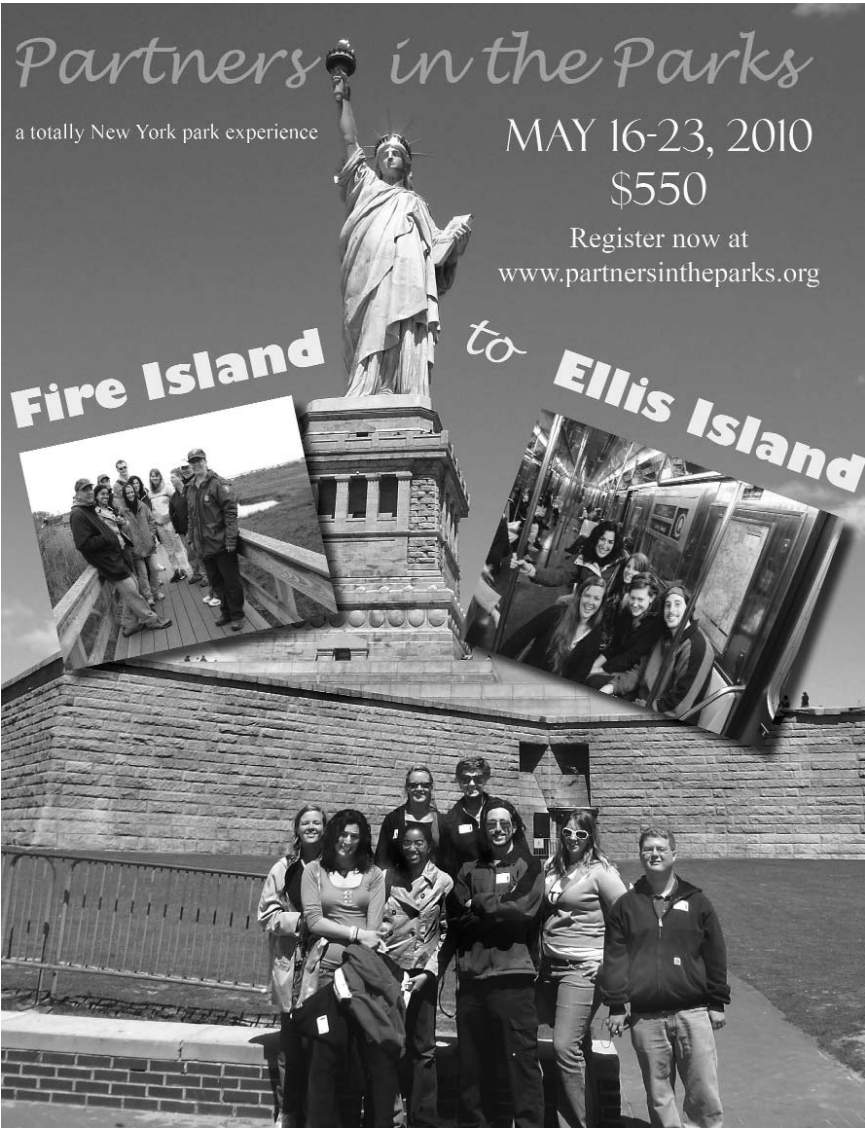
\$550

Register now at  
[www.partnersintheparks.org](http://www.partnersintheparks.org)

Fire Island

to

Ellis Island





## APPENDIX G:

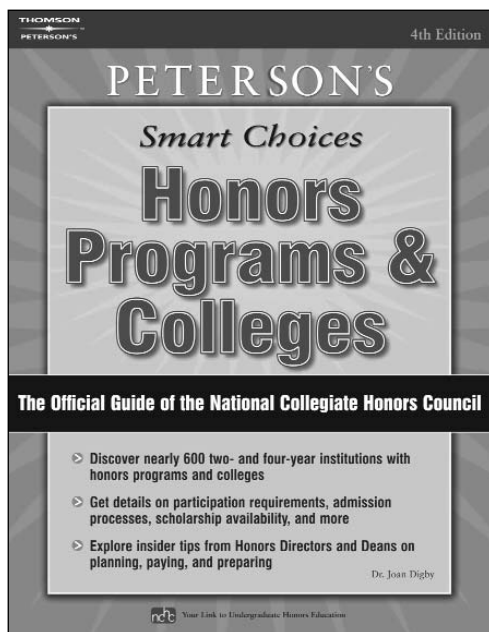
### Key to Animal Tracks in the Field Notes

Field Notes	Animal	Page
Chapter 1 . . . . .	Raccoon . . . . .	27
Chapter 2 . . . . .	Grey Squirrel . . . . .	45
Chapter 3 . . . . .	Caribou . . . . .	65
Chapter 4 . . . . .	Camel . . . . .	85
Chapter 4 . . . . .	Black Bear . . . . .	97
Chapter 5 . . . . .	Pronghorn Antelope . . . . .	111
Chapter 6 . . . . .	Rabbit . . . . .	125
Chapter 6 . . . . .	Sheep . . . . .	131
Chapter 7 . . . . .	Guess! . . . . .	145
Chapter 8 . . . . .	Duck . . . . .	159
Chapter 8 . . . . .	Beaver . . . . .	161
Chapter 9 . . . . .	Deer . . . . .	169
Chapter 9 . . . . .	Eagle . . . . .	171
Chapter 10 . . . . .	Coyote . . . . .	191
Chapter 11 . . . . .	Grizzly Bear . . . . .	207
Chapter 12 . . . . .	Fox . . . . .	217

## NOTES



## NOTES



The official guide to NCHC member institutions has a new name, a new look, and expanded information!

- Peter Sederberg's essay on honors colleges brings readers up to date on how they differ from honors programs.
- Lydia Lyons' new essay shows how two-year honors experiences can benefit students and lead them to great choices in completing the bachelor's degree and going beyond.
- Kate Bruce adds an enriched view of travels with honors students.

These and all the other helpful essays on scholarships, community, Honors Semesters, parenting, and partnerships make the 4th edition a must in your collection of current honors reference works. *This book is STILL the only honors guide on the market*, and it is your best tool for networking with local high schools and community colleges as well as for keeping your administration up to date on what your program offers.

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- Assessing and Evaluating Honors Programs and Honors Colleges: A Practical Handbook
- A Handbook for Honors Programs at Two-Year Colleges
- Honors Programs at Smaller Colleges (2nd Ed.)
- Inspiring Exemplary Teaching and Learning: Perspectives on Teaching Academically Talented College Students

## NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL MONOGRAPHS & JOURNALS

*Assessing and Evaluating Honors Programs and Honors Colleges: A Practical Handbook* by Rosalie Otero and Robert Spurrier (2005, 98pp). This monograph includes an overview of assessment and evaluation practices and strategies. It explores the process for conducting self-studies and discusses the differences between using consultants and external reviewers. It provides a guide to conducting external reviews along with information about how to become an NCHC-Recommended Site Visitor. A dozen appendices provide examples of "best practices."

*Beginning in Honors: A Handbook* by Samuel Schuman (Fourth Edition, 2006, 80pp). Advice on starting a new honors program. Covers budgets, recruiting students and faculty, physical plant, administrative concerns, curriculum design, and descriptions of some model programs.

*Fundraising for Honor\$: A Handbook* by Larry R. Andrews (2009, 160pp). Offers information and advice on raising money for honors, beginning with easy first steps and progressing to more sophisticated and ambitious fundraising activities.

*A Handbook for Honors Administrators* by Ada Long (1995, 117pp). Everything an honors administrator needs to know, including a description of some models of honors administration.

*A Handbook for Honors Programs at Two-Year Colleges* by Theresa James (2006, 136pp). A useful handbook for two-year schools contemplating beginning or redesigning their honors program and for four-year schools doing likewise or wanting to increase awareness about two-year programs and articulation agreements. Contains extensive appendices about honors contracts and a comprehensive bibliography on honors education.

*Honors Composition: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Practices* by Annmarie Guzy (2003, 182pp). Parallel historical developments in honors and composition studies; contemporary honors writing projects ranging from admission essays to theses as reported by over 300 NCHC members.

*Honors Programs at Smaller Colleges* by Samuel Schuman (Second Edition, 1999, 53pp). How to implement an honors program, with particular emphasis on colleges with fewer than 3000 students.

*Inspiring Exemplary Teaching and Learning: Perspectives on Teaching Academically Talented College Students* edited by Larry Clark and John Zubizarreta (2008, 216pp). This rich collection of essays offers valuable insights into innovative teaching and significant learning in the context of academically challenging classrooms and programs. The volume provides theoretical, descriptive, and practical resources, including models of effective instructional practices, examples of successful courses designed for enhanced learning, and a list of online links to teaching and learning centers and educational databases worldwide.

*Partners in the Parks: A Field Guide to an Experiential Program in the National Parks* by Joan Digby with reflective essays on theory and practice by student and faculty participants and National Park Service personnel (2010, 272pp). This monograph explores an experiential-learning program that fosters immersion in and stewardship of the national parks. The topics include program designs, group dynamics, philosophical and political issues, photography, wilderness exploration, and assessment.

*Place as Text: Approaches to Active Learning* edited by Bernice Braid and Ada Long (Second Edition, 2010, 128pp). Updated theory, information, and advice on experiential pedagogies developed within NCHC during the past 35 years, including Honors Semesters and City as Text™, along with suggested adaptations to multiple educational contexts.

*Setting the Table for Diversity* edited by Lisa L. Coleman and Jonathan D. Kotinek (2010, 288pp). This collection of essays provides definitions of diversity in honors, explores the challenges and opportunities diversity brings to honors education, and depicts the transformative nature of diversity when coupled with equity and inclusion. These essays discuss African American, Latina/o, international, and first-generation students as well as students with disabilities. Other issues include experiential and service learning, the politics of diversity, and the psychological resistance to it. Appendices relating to NCHC member institutions contain diversity statements and a structural diversity survey.

*Shatter the Glassy Stare: Implementing Experiential Learning in Higher Education* edited by Peter A. Machonis (2008, 160pp). A companion piece to *Place as Text*, focusing on recent, innovative applications of City as Text™ teaching strategies. Chapters on campus as text, local neighborhoods, study abroad, science courses, writing exercises, and philosophical considerations, with practical materials for instituting this pedagogy.

*Teaching and Learning in Honors* edited by Cheryl L. Fuiks and Larry Clark (2000, 128pp). Presents a variety of perspectives on teaching and learning useful to anyone developing new or renovating established honors curricula.

*Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council (JNCHC)* is a semi-annual periodical featuring scholarly articles on honors education. Articles may include analyses of trends in teaching methodology, articles on interdisciplinary efforts, discussions of problems common to honors programs, items on the national higher education agenda, and presentations of emergent issues relevant to honors education.

*Honors in Practice (HIP)* is an annual journal that accommodates the need and desire for articles about nuts-and-bolts practices by featuring practical and descriptive essays on topics such as successful honors courses, suggestions for out-of-class experiences, administrative issues, and other topics of interest to honors administrators, faculty, and students.

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