



Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.

DEFEND OUR NATIONAL PARKS

Position Statement

Adopted May 10, 2012

Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. is committed to sustaining our national parks in their natural unimpaired condition forever and keeping them open and accessible for the enjoyment of all.

Created by an act of Congress to preserve our most treasured national landscapes—glacier capped mountains, majestic stands of old-growth forests, breathtaking canyons, the world's most active volcanoes, geysers, hot springs and mud pots, painted deserts, wild rivers, crystal clear sapphire-blue lakes, rugged coastlines, white sand beaches, mangrove and cypress swamps—our national parks offer stunning world-renowned panoramic views that captivate sight-seers and instill a sense of wonder for all of Creation. These conservation areas are the remaining bastions of what once was a vast and varied wilderness stretching the breadth of our continent. They are often the last strongholds of many indigenous animal and plant species that have all but disappeared from the wild.

Our national parks are relatively unspoiled natural areas offering exceptional opportunities for scientific investigation, outdoor recreation and enjoyment of nature. Drawing scientists from all over the world, national parks are living laboratories for ongoing research and investigation. Ecologists, biologists, botanists, geologists and archeologists study ecosystem functions and processes, plant and animal communities, geologic formations, fossil records, archeological evidence, hydrology, climatic variations and environmental changes. Our national parks allow us all to pursue adventure and recreation in the great outdoors. Magnificent natural resources are available to everyone for camping, boating, fishing, swimming, hiking, climbing and skiing. Our national parks are quiet retreats where we can relax and attune to the natural world in our own ways. They are wilderness sanctuaries of transcendent beauty in which we can hope to renew ourselves and restore our peace of mind. Preserving natural heritage for public purposes is a uniquely American concept and a major contribution to world culture. It's been said that it is "the best idea we ever had."

For a nearly a century, Americans have had the opportunity to explore our most revered natural sites thanks to the remarkable efforts of the National Park Service. The National Park Service endeavors to provide visitors an enjoyable experience in harmony with nature by featuring low-intensity public access facilities while incorporating science-based best management practices to preserve its enormously complex natural communities.

Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. recognizes that our national parks are a cherished gift from past generations that we must protect for generations to come. To sustain our national parks in their natural unimpaired condition and keep them open and accessible to the public, Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. supports the following:

To Defend Our National Parks

- Strengthen the laws that protect the parks and support new legislation to address issues and challenges confronting the parks
- Increase federal appropriations to meet the cost of more sustainable operations and infrastructure (eliminate the annual operating deficit and the infrastructure maintenance backlog)
- Continue federal conservation and resource management leadership through programs like the Centennial Challenge Initiative, the Natural Resource Challenge, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Applaud the Integrated Resource Management Applications project to make reports, articles, conference proceedings, theses and dissertations, gray literature and other documents that contain information on park natural resources accessible to park conservation and environmental constituencies, scientific institutions and the broader community
- Expand acquisitions to include terrestrial, aquatic and marine ecosystems of adequate size and configuration to constitute a comprehensive network of nature preserves and the provision of critical pathways for wildlife movement
- Provide a national forum for open dialog on the future of the park system to better forge productive relationships among federal agencies, state, tribal, and local governments, organizations, landowners and the broader community

To Provide Good Stewardship

- Conserve natural biodiversity and the rich variety of ecosystems critically important to species survival
- Develop and implement outreach programs to engage youngsters in outdoor recreation and hands-on learning experiences
- Offer vital ongoing educational programs that foster stewardship for national parks

Charter Member of National Garden Clubs, Inc.

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