

Western
National Parks
Association

WNPA | FY16
Annual Report

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Western National Parks Association Home Office in Tucson, Arizona

Optimizing the National Park Service Centennial Year

Western National Parks Association (WNPA) kicked off the National Park Service (NPS)'s Centennial year at the Rose Bowl Parade January 1-3, 2016. WNPA, in partnership with NPS, set up a mini-store highlighting the Find Your Park and Junior Ranger programs. In March, WNPA was a sponsor of the Tucson Festival of Books (TFOB), the third-largest book festival in the US with 130,000 attendees over two days. At TFOB, WNPA hosted a "Park Story" booth enabling 50 national park visitors to share their experiences on video. Those videos are available to view on the WNPA website. Centennial-themed merchandise, including hats, shirts, pins, and more sold well at TFOB and throughout the year. Of \$285,261 (including 8.5% royalty) in Centennial merchandise WNPA produced, \$110,794 was sold in FY16 in park stores, the National Parks Store in Tucson, Arizona, and in the online store. Through FY17, sales totaled \$264,214, 93% of total Centennial merchandise purchased.

Visitors enjoying WNPA's National Parks Experience Pavilion at Tucson Festival of Books



Growing and Strengthening the Partnership with NPS

In July, WNPA hosted the first ever “Forward Together” training conference for WNPA and NPS staff. This conference was the result of more than a year of planning in collaboration with NPS partners from the Washington Support Office (WASO), Pacific-West, Intermountain, and Midwest regional offices. The conference included presentations by WNPA, NPS, and Public Lands Alliance (PLA) leaders; panel discussions; working sessions; and a highly-successful vendor trade show. The 150 attendees were also introduced to WNPA’s new Intranet Toolbox that provides WNPA and NPS staff with easy-to-access documents, information, tools, and training videos. New Intranet-located tools include Sign Builder and Flyer Builder, which enable staff to craft their own signage and interpretation materials on demand while meeting brand standards and to request new materials as needed.

Highlights from the “Forward Together” conference booklet



What's Percolating at WNPA!

- New Park Partners**
 WNPA proudly welcomes **Guadalupe Mountains** and **Carlsbad Caverns National Parks** as our newest partner parks!
- Aid to Parks Update**
 As a result of the Aid to Parks Task Force and NPS feedback, WNPA has updated and streamlined **WNPA's Aid to Parks Program**. We'll roll out the new program during this training. The supplementary **Aid to Parks Handbook** is intended to be a comprehensive guide to the Aid to Parks Program and will be posted online and available electronically. In addition, WNPA operations managers have assembled **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** about the program.
- How-It-Works**
 The **How-It-Works** video is a visual narrative of WNPA's mission to support national parks. This video explains our financial story and what it takes to operate our stores.
- Intranet**
 WNPA will be rolling out an **Intranet** that will provide our field staff with sensible, intuitive access to important forms and documents, training, videos, new product info, ready-to-go marketing materials, and updates from the home office. After our first version of the Intranet has been tested, we intend to add an NPS portal with grant and research applications, payment requests, and all the Aid to Parks information that you could ever dream of wanting!
- E-commerce**
 WNPA staff has been working to update our **online Park Store** with an all new e-commerce platform, boasting modern styling and functionality, better analytics, more relevant products, better photos, and better descriptions. We can't wait to roll this one out!
- NPS Urban Agenda**
 The WNPA commitment to the **NPS Urban Agenda** marches forward with a ribbon cutting and sneak preview of our new **Gateway to Nature: Western National Parks Center, Los Angeles**, on August 27. Located at the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, LA's birthplace, this "urban gateway to nature" will open in early Fall 2016.
- Junior Ranger Products**
 You may have noticed a new Junior Ranger product catalog in your e-mail inbox. We've rebranded our **Junior Ranger line** with a fresh, contemporary look, and we're reconfiguring the product line to reflect the things that kids—and parents—really value. We're also taking steps to care for our children's future by considering issues of energy waste and recycling when making decisions about what products make the cut.

Supporting and Furthering the NPS Urban Agenda

In August, WNPA hosted a sneak preview event of its first major urban location. The Gateway to Nature Center is located in El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, the birthplace of Los Angeles. This site is in the heart of downtown LA and well situated to reach LA's diverse, multicultural population, as well as the approximately 400,000 students who visit El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument each year. A partnership of WNPA, the NPS, the USDA Forest Service, El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, and the City of Los Angeles, the Gateway to Nature's mission is to bring parks, forests, and public lands to all people. The Gateway to Nature is the result of more than five years of planning, partnership, and collaboration with the Gateway to Nature partners and area parks.



Junior Ranger Tigran, Smokey Bear, and visiting park rangers at El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument

Optimizing Direct Aid

WNPA awarded \$499,206.10 in Direct Aid to parks in FY16*. One beneficiary of Direct Aid funding was Clark County Colorado 4th grade science teacher Jackie Henry, who was able to acquire new skills in experiential learning through the NPS and University of Colorado Denver program, Teacher Ranger Teacher (TRT). The 2016 TRT project was to align field trips and their pre/post activities to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Ms. Henry shadowed Lake Mead National Recreation Area staff, assisted with visitor center operations, met park partners including WNPA, participated in interpretive tours of the park, and experienced land and water programming. Direct Aid funded Ms. Henry's stipend to participate in the program that not only enhanced her skills, but also provided Lake Mead National Recreation Area with programming lesson plans updated to NGSS standards. Ms. Henry is using her TRT skills to build the relationship her students have with Lake Mead National Recreation Area and Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument.

* Includes cash expenses of \$21,602 for utility costs at Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site and \$25,000 for sponsorship of Tucson Festival of Books, not reported on forms 990 and 1040



Jackie Henry at Lake Mead National Recreation Area