

What can the National Park Service do to ensure national parks are inclusive, accessible, and relevant?

Western National Parks Association (WNPA) invites you to participate in an essay contest. The essay contest promotes the continuing significance of national parks in our ever-changing world.

As WNPA works to ensure national parks remain relevant to new generations, we invite you to compose a 500–750 word essay answering the following question: What can the National Park Service (NPS) do to ensure national parks are inclusive, accessible, and relevant?

Consider these questions:

- What can the NPS do to ensure national parks are inclusive of and accessible to everyone, regardless of differences in age, race, socioeconomic background, intellectual ability, mobility, or other factors?
- What are barriers which could prevent someone from visiting a national park?
- Have you visited a national park? If yes, what was your reason for visiting? If no, what has prevented you from visiting?
- How can national parks remain relevant to new generations and different populations?
- If you don't frequently visit national parks or public lands, what would make you want to or be able to visit more frequently?
- Why are national parks important? Why should we continue protecting them?

Essays will be read and evaluated by a review committee. The top three essays will receive cash prizes of \$500 for first place, \$350 for second place, and \$150 for third place. Selected submissions will be featured on the WNPA website, in the WNPA biannual newsletter, and on WNPA social media.

Prize-winning students will read their essays at a special awards presentation in WNPA's The National Park Experience Pavilion at the Tucson Festival of Books. Winners will have their photograph taken at the awards presentation and may be featured in a video produced by WNPA.

About Western National Parks Association: WNPA helps make the national park experience possible for everyone. As a nonprofit partner of the National Park Service, WNPA supports parks across the West, developing products, services, and programs that enrich the visitor experience, understanding, and appreciation of national parks. Since 1938 WNPA has worked to connect new generations to parks in meaningful ways, all with one simple goal: create advocates who want to preserve and protect these special places for everyone, for all time. Learn more at www.wnpa.org/TFOB.

Essay contest sponsored by:



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Contest Rules

Participants must be in grades 9–12 (or homeschool equivalent) and reside or attend school in Tucson, Arizona.

Limit one entry per student. Please do not submit duplicate essays.

Essay must be received at the email or mailing address listed below by **Monday, February 19, 2024.**

Participants must be available to read their essays, accept awards, and have their photograph taken at the Tucson Festival of Books in Tucson, Arizona, at 4:00 PM on Sunday, March 10, 2024.

Entries must be the original work of the student and free of plagiarism. Quotations or copyrighted material used in the essay must be appropriately identified.

All entries will become the property of WNPA. WNPA will have the right to reproduce the essay or any portion thereof in any format or for any purpose, including but not limited to promotional, reference, or research.

Decisions of the review committee are final.

WNPA reserves the right to cancel, modify, or delay the contest.

Format

Entries must:

- Be between 500 and 750 words.
- Include an essay title.
- Have one-inch margins.
- Be doubled spaced.
- Be typed in 12-point font.
- Be in Microsoft Word or a compatible format.

Resources for Entrants

Here are some examples of organizations working to raise awareness of the need for diversity and inclusion among the visitors of national parks.

Brown People Camping: www.brownpeoplecamping.com

Diversify Outdoors: www.diversifyoutdoors.com

Latino Outdoors: latinooutdoors.org

NPS Accessibility Task Force:
www.nps.gov/aboutus/accessibilityforvisitors.htm

NPS Office of Relevancy, Diversity and Inclusion:
www.nps.gov/orgs/1244/index.htm

OUT There Adventures: www.outthereadventures.org

Outdoor Women's Alliance: outdoorwomensalliance.org

Outdoor Afro: www.outdoorafro.org

Outdoor Asian: www.outdoorasian.com

Internship Opportunities with the NPS:
www.nps.gov/subjects/youthprograms/jobs-and-internships.htm

Entry Form

Your name and address:

Your email address and/or phone number:

The name and address of your school:

Your age and current grade level (or homeschool equivalent):

Signed parent/legal guardian consent (if under 18 years old):

_____ Date: _____

I certify that this submission is entirely my work. I understand that my entry and photographs and video taken of me at the event become the property of WNPA, and WNPA will have the right to use these items on social media and in digital and print media in alignment with WNPA's mission to generate support for national parks.

Signed and dated by student:

_____ Date: _____

Please email your submission to caroline.lochner@wnpa.org with the subject line "Essay Contest" or mail your submission to:

Western National Parks Association
ATTN: Essay Contest
12880 N Vistoso Village Dr.
Tucson, AZ 85755

If submitting electronically, you will receive an email confirming our receipt. If submitting by mail, you will receive a phone call confirming our receipt.

If you have questions about the contest, please call Caroline Lochner at 520-789-7325. For more information, visit www.wnpa.org/TFOB.