

**STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE
EMPLOYEES AND ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
2006-2011**

It is clear that the Employees and Alumni Association (E&AA) has been consistent to the purposes for which the Association was formed fifty years ago. There are five important activities that address the purposes of the Association:

- The Arrowhead publication is a professionally developed, quarterly communication tool which is available to all current employees of the National Park Service (NPS) and to retirees.
- All NPS members of E&AA have access to apply for college financial support through E&AA trust funds.
- Every two years E&AA organizes and plans a reunion that is open to all members of E&AA.
- In times of great hardships such as natural disasters, E&AA responds financially to help with the needs of NPS employees and/or retirees.
- A membership directory with contact information is available to the members of E&AA.

The purpose of this plan is to review the six purposes of E&AA and to outline a five year plan that would improve the service and relevance of E&AA consistent with its purposes. Outlined below are each of the stated purposes of E&AA and the goals for the next five years:

Goal 1: To provide services and benefits to Association members.

1. While the Arrowhead is an excellent communications tool, there is a need for quicker, less costly communications methods that take advantage of the electronic infrastructure that is available to most employees and alumni.

Recommendation: With E&AA membership input in terms of content, a sample e-newsletter will be distributed in 2006 with a request for additional input. A decision will be made in 2006 as to the timeliness, frequency, and value of an electronic/web hosted newsletter

2. There is an interest by some E&AA members for more events and activities, i.e. travel and touring opportunity, educational programs, etc.

Recommendation: E&AA should explore linkages with related organization such as, the George Wright Society, Friends groups, NPCA, etc. for joint activities of the membership. Travel opportunities are often less expensive for the individual when the groups are large. Also, some pre-planning with related organizations should be initiated relative to the 2016 celebration.

3. The Annual membership Directory is of great benefit to our dispersed membership and is looked upon as a valued service to maintaining contact with friends and former associates.

Recommendation: Membership Directory format be revised to incorporate a more complete Personal Data Inventory of members and spouses (for example: email address and phone number). Members must opt in for this information to be published.

Goal 2: To improve the morale through fostering close ties between the National Park Service and its former employees (Alumni).

1. There are numerous cooperators/Extended partners/contractors/suppliers and volunteers that have long standing relationships and ties with the National Park Service. These allies should be extended an invitation to become associate members of E&AA.

Recommendation: Revisit the categories of membership and establish a category for extended partners, cooperators, and volunteers. Consider giving a premium for new memberships.

2. It is important for E&AA to establish a recognition and awards protocol to thank employees of the NPS for exceptional service. Ideas that were discussed include:

- Simple “thank you” notes from E&AA leaders.
- Inexpensive “care packages” as a token of appreciation.
- Phone calls/emails from E&AA leaders.
- E&AA would develop press releases or letter to the editor of local newspapers recognizing the achievements of retirees, NPS employees, or volunteers.

Recommendation: Establish a protocol of the top 5 types of services that E&AA will recognize; who will initiate the recognition; and what form the recognition will take, i.e. call, letter, etc. Goal is to recognize 100 acts of service annually.

3. It is important to the morale of the service to see retirees present and active at significant events and activities of the NPS. The concept of “family” is important to NPS and where possible retirees should be asked to participate.

Recommendation: Request that the Director and other key service wide leaders and Superintendents contact E&AA to have retirees present at appropriate field events.

4. Retirees with significant past experience in the NPS are valuable to the NPS in meeting its goals and objectives. To see retirees engaged in current work on behalf of the NPS improves the morale of current employees.

Recommendations: E&AA will develop an inventory of knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests of its retired employees. This could be used by the NPS in the following ways:

- Involvement in international park and conservation efforts on behalf of the NPS.
 - Involvement in state and local parks on behalf of the NPS.
 - Involvement with sister federal agencies that require NPS involvement.
 - Development and presentation of specific topics, courses, or training services at Harpers Ferry or Grand Canyon training centers.
 - Conservation studies institute
 - New Superintendents Training
5. It is important to existing and potential members that benefits to membership are available and readily recognized.

Recommendation: Additional item of benefits and/or service should be evaluated and where feasible and potentially revenue generating be implemented.

6. current sources of revenue for the Association are dues, Newsletter proceeds, donations and Trust Fund investment income

Recommendation: They full array of potential sources of revenue should be fully evaluated and where appropriate implemented as part of an overall fundraising program. A committee should be appointed to address this objective.

Goal 3: To keep members of E&AA informed of significant activities, events, or discussions with the NP system.

1. E&AA as an organization will not take public positions concerning controversial activities, events, or discussion within the NP system. E&AA will identify information sources relative to a particular activity, event or discussion within the NP system so the membership can educate themselves and develop individual positions. Recognizing that discussion of the past and formulation of new ideas are critical to understanding, it is important for E&AA members to get together more frequently than the 2 year reunion cycle.

Recommendation: E&AA will assist members in forming regional and/or local “chapters” of E&AA where frequent “mini-reunions” can occur.

Goal 4: To encourage individuals to enter the NPS and to assist those with high career potential for greater responsibilities in the service.

1. Most demographic studies indicate that federal agencies will increasingly have difficulty recruiting top new graduates from our colleges and universities. Furthermore, the demographics indicate the need of a more diverse workforce to serve American changing demographics. As the NPS continues to recruit top employees, the E&AA can contribute.

Recommendation: Offer to the NPS the membership of E&AA to participate in college recruitment days, career fairs hosted by the federal government, etc. Not only is it a very low cost manner for the NPS to participate, it demonstrates that retirees are part of the NPS family which will impact positively the way that potential employees look at the NPS.

2. Many of the past leaders of the NPS are members of E&AA. While circumstances of their rise to leadership are different and the environment is different today, there are still some basic principles of success that will hold true in the future.

Recommendation: E&AA will establish a pool of retired E&AA members that will offer career mentoring services and advice to any employees of the NPS.

Goal 5: To support NPS Family through a college financial aid program and emergency relief.

1. In fifty years E&AA has developed an endowment of about \$500,000. The concept is that dependents of E&AA members can borrow “interest free” funds to assist with undergraduate or graduate studies. Over the years these funds were raised through life membership fees, golf tournaments, auctions at superintendents’ conference, etc. With the increasing cost of college tuition and the dramatic increases in numbers of high school graduates going to college, the endowment fund must be increased substantially.

Recommendation: By 2007, the endowment must increase to about \$3M to serve the expected needs. The additional \$2.5M will be raised by:

- selected major gifts
- membership growth
- new/sales items for volunteers
- establishment of an electronic auction (necessary since superintendents’ conference are less frequent than in the past)

(The issue of fairness in allocating limited resources for college costs needs to be addressed. While a review of past practices have no irregularities, there is a perception by some that the most needed have not received support. Operational recommendation is that the Federal Financial Aid forms be used by all applicants and E&AA would have the numerical basis to justify its decisions).

2. In response to need to assist NPS employees who have experienced losses from natural disasters the E&AA has stepped up to provide assistance. E&AA collected over \$129,000 dollars and distributed it to 190 NPS families affected by the hurricanes of 2005. Request for assistance in such times of major disasters has emphasized a need for readily available help and an organizational structure and policy to respond.

Recommendation: E&AA needs to define its policy with regard to Disaster Relief. And announce it. EAA should develop a fundraising plan to meet the future needs.

Goal 6: To encourage public understanding of the NP concept.

The skills inventory document mentioned under Goal 2, would serve as the information to create a speaker bureau. This bureau would list a few hundred individuals across the country that would enjoy sharing the NPS with the general public.

Recommendation: On an annual basis, E&AA would develop a power point framework that individuals in the speaker bureau could use to share images of historical, national, cultural, and recreational resources of the NP system. The intended audiences would be civic groups, school programs, and other general public gatherings.

Next Steps:

1. Review by the E&AA Board of Directors (January 2006).
2. Spring 2006 issues of Arrowhead would list a website to review the final draft.
3. Final approval of E&AA Strategic Plan (June 2006).