6. FOUNDATION STATEMENTS

6.1 FOUNDATION STATEMENTS: WHAT THEY ARE; WHERE THEY FIT

Every park needs a formal statement of its core mission to provide basic guidance for all the decisions to be made about the park—a "foundation for planning and management." Increasing emphasis on government accountability and restrained federal spending make it imperative that all park stakeholders understand the park's purpose, significance, resources and values, primary interpretive themes, special mandates, conditions of the fundamental resources and values, and legal and policy requirements. This will help ensure that the most important objectives are accomplished before less important tasks not directly related to the park's mission are undertaken.

The primary advantage of developing and adopting a foundation statement is the opportunity to integrate and coordinate all kinds and levels of planning and decision making from a single, shared understanding of what is most important about the park. A well-prepared foundation statement can accomplish the following:

> If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.
>
> —Henry David Thoreau

- help ensure the park's most important objectives are accomplished or addressed before turning to items that are also important but not critical to achieving the park purpose and maintaining park significance
- provide a solid footing to participants for beginning a GMP process, including the legislative underpinnings of purpose and significance, the constraints of special mandates, how primary interpretive themes express the most important stories, and an understanding of fundamental resources and values
- better focus the purpose and need for a GMP
- ensure consistency in developing a GMP, strategic plan, annual work plans, implementation plans, core operations analysis, and all other park planning documents
- provide an understanding of the park's fundamental resources and values that can be used to anchor the GMP alternatives as the planning team examines various ways to manage and maintain park significance
- help determine if boundary changes need to be considered
- identify additional data and monitoring needs for use in management and planning decision making
- may indicate the need in some instances for a different type of plan than a GMP (i.e., an implementation plan or a program plan) or a combination of plans that would better and more efficiently meet the park's needs

The foundation statement is generally developed (or reviewed and expanded or revised, if appropriate) early in the general management planning process, as part of the public and agency scoping and data collection. Once a park has developed a complete foundation statement, it should remain relatively stable from one GMP cycle to the next, although new scientific and scholarly information may require expansion and revision to reflect the most current knowledge about what is most important about the park. General management planning is the most appropriate context for developing or reviewing a foundation statement because of the comprehensive public involvement and NEPA analysis that occurs. The foundation statement is reviewed by the park and the regional office. Under certain circumstances the foundation statement or elements of it also could be reviewed by the public (or stakeholders) before it is formally adopted as part of the GMP. (In addition, if a foundation statement is part of the GMP, it will be vetted through the agency and public review process.)

Parks that do not have current GMPs and do not expect to undertake general management planning in the foreseeable future will still benefit from developing a stand-alone foundation statement. Developing such a statement will clarify what is most important about the park and provide a strong framework for future planning efforts and decision making. Stand-alone foundation statements are not NEPA documents because they are not decision-making documents. However, care must be taken to ensure that no elements of a stand-alone foundation statement go beyond an analysis and interpretation of decisions that have already been made through law or policy. Any subsequent management decisions about priorities or balances among potentially overlapping laws and policies, or competing resources and values, require NEPA analysis.

In the process of developing foundation statements, it is desirable to include an interdisciplinary planning team that includes park staff. If appropriate, recognized experts, groups with strong cultural ties, neighboring agencies, partners, and other key stakeholders may also be enlisted to assist the planning team. However, the foundation statement must not make recommendations or decisions that would violate the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) or NEPA.

A park should never have more than one foundation statement. If the statement is expanded or revised, plans and decisions should also be reviewed, and revised if appropriate, to maintain consistency with the underpinning foundation. Again, general management planning is the most appropriate process for reviewing and possibly revising a park's foundation statement.

6.1.1 Elements of the Foundation Statement

The foundation statement, as identified in the *Park Planning Program Standards*, has the following elements at a minimum:

- purpose of the park unit
- significance of the park unit
- primary interpretive themes for the park unit

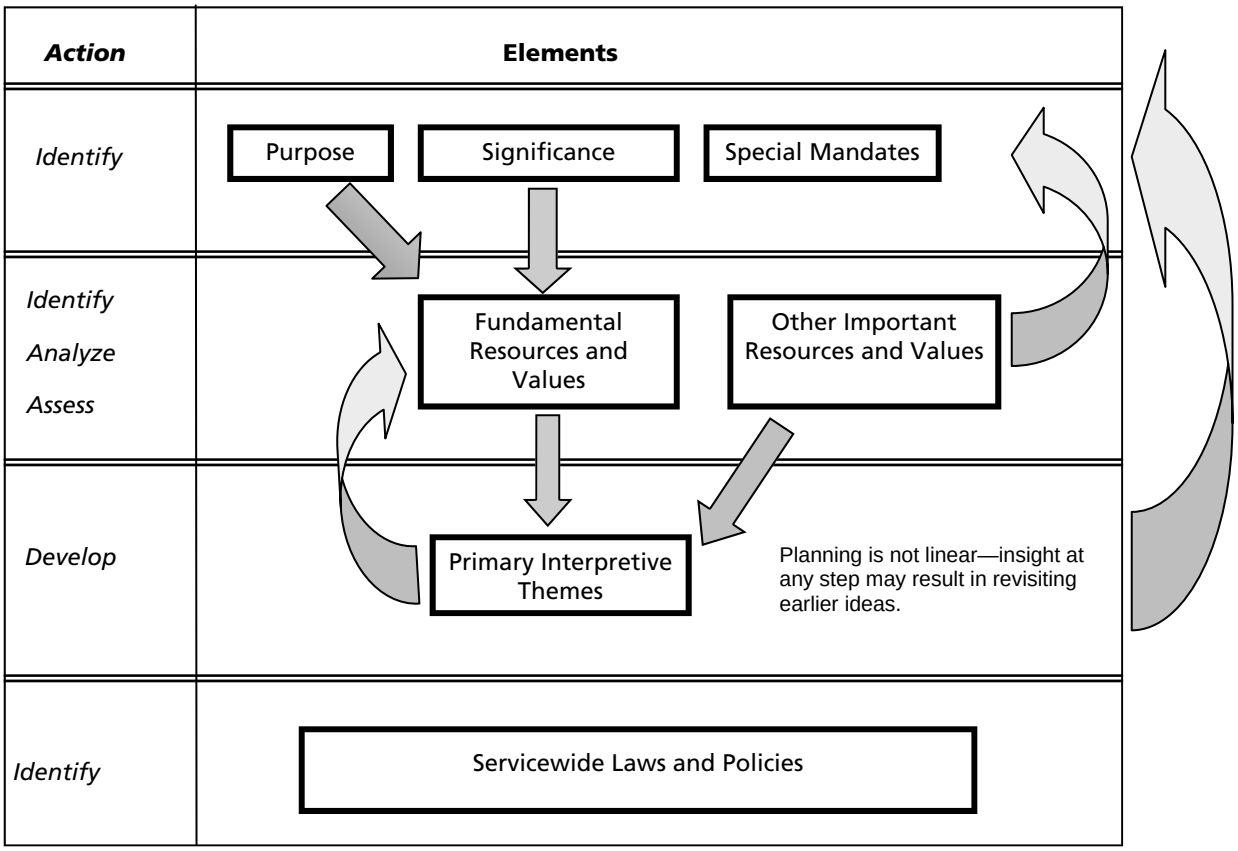
- special mandates for the park unit
- summary of NPS legal and policy requirements
- fundamental and other important resources and values
- analysis of fundamental and other important resources and values
- identification of policy-level issues

Other elements that may be included in a foundation statement are

- existing planning guidance
- planning needs
- data and analysis needs
- general law and policy guidance
- management directions within law and policy

The process identified in the following diagram and in the organization of this section includes all of the elements in the *Park Planning Program Standards*, but it has been reorganized to provide a logical flow that would likely be used by a planning team to build a foundation statement.

FIGURE 6.1: DEVELOPMENT PROCESS FOR A FOUNDATION STATEMENT



Many of the elements of a foundation statement may look familiar, such as park purpose, significance, primary interpretive themes, special mandates, and the summary of legal and policy requirements. What's new is the identification and analysis of fundamental resources and values. These elements are discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Also new is the identification of any other resources and values that are determined to be important considerations during general management planning even though they are not related to the park's purpose. Fundamental and other important resources and values provide a valuable focus throughout the planning process and the plan — they are the subjects of data collection, issues, area-specific desired conditions, impact assessments, and value analyses. How the elements of the foundation statement are carried forward into the development of alternatives is described in Chapter 7.

Examples of various elements of foundation statements are included in Appendix E. Portions of several foundation statements, including the identification and analysis of fundamental and other important resources and values, are included in Appendix E.1. It is important to note that the development of a foundation statement is an evolving process. Thus, there are some differences in the approaches taken by the foundation statements in the appendix.

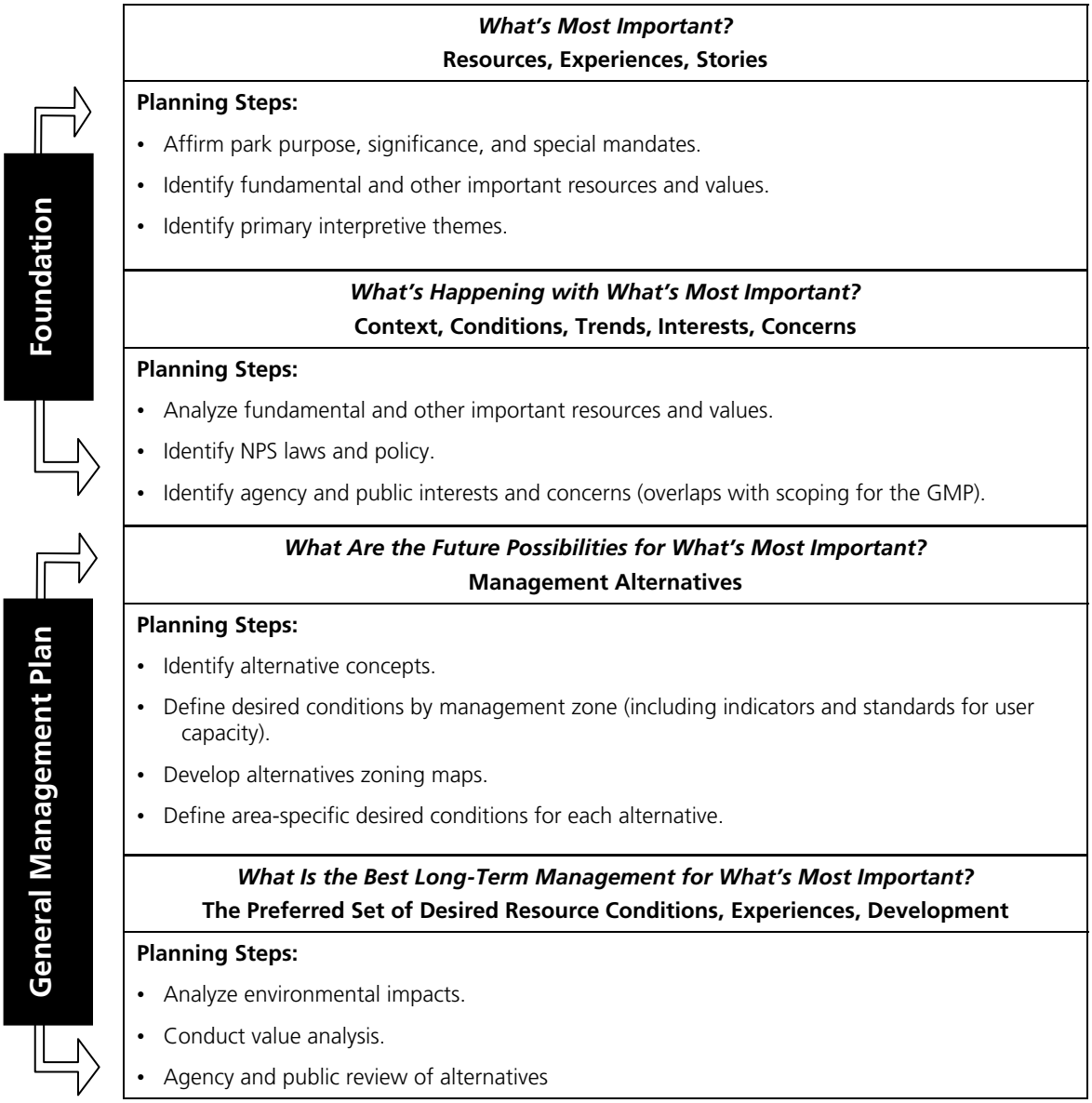
Parks that have recently completed foundation statements include Sagamore Hills NHS, Governors Island NM, Effigy Mounds NM, Grand Teton NP, Petrified Forest NP, Moccasin Bend National Archeological District in Chickamauga and Chattanooga NMP, City of Rocks NR, Klondike Gold Rush NHP, and North Cascades NP. (Several of these are posted on the Intermountain Region's planning website at http://inside.nps.gov/regions/custommenu.cfm?lv=3&rgn=1004&id=5657.)

6.1.2 Role of Foundation Statements in the General Management Planning Process

Foundation statements contribute throughout the general management planning process, as shown in Figure 6.2. The information in a foundation statement largely focuses on answering two questions: "What's most important?" and "What's happening with what's most important?" The answers in turn influence the issues addressed in a GMP, the impact topics, the development of the alternatives, the description of the affected environment, the analysis of the environmental consequences, and the selection of the preferred alternative.

It is important to note that the identification of issues by the public (gathered through "scoping") is a different step from the development of a foundation statement. The analysis included in a foundation statement can help identify and clarify issues that a GMP needs to address, as well as focus the scope of a GMP. But some important GMP issues raised by the public may not be included in a foundation statement, and not all issues identified in a foundation statement are GMP issues. Scoping issues plus the analysis included in a foundation statement need to be considered by a planning team in developing a GMP.

FIGURE 6.2: ROLE OF FOUNDATION STATEMENTS IN THE GMP PLANNING PROCESS



6.2 PURPOSE, SIGNIFICANCE, AND SPECIAL MANDATES

6.2.1 General Considerations

A park's purpose, significance, and special mandates are derived from and bounded by law and policy. Sometimes, the park's enabling legislation or executive order does not offer clear direction about a particular park's purpose and significance. It that is the case, these documents will require interpretation so that these elements can be expressed in a way that is broadly understood by all stakeholders. However, it is important to remember that new decisions are not being made through this process;

the park purpose and significance have usually been debated on the floor of Congress. This information only needs to be interpreted, expressed, and explained.

Most parks have purpose and significance statements that were developed as part of their strategic planning. As a starting point, the most current versions of these elements should be reviewed. If they meet the program standards, they will only need to be reaffirmed. If they do not fully meet all or some of the standards, they should be strengthened. To help ensure consistency in planning and management, and in communications with the public, it is important that each park have a single set of purpose and significance statements that it can refer to over a long period of time.

It is usually most effective to interpret and document the park's purpose and significance in a relatively small, interdisciplinary, facilitated group of park staff in consultation with various legal experts, scientists and scholars, and peer reviewers, as considered appropriate. All stakeholders should have the chance to review the park's statements of purpose and significance, and their comments should be fully considered, either as part of the park's ongoing civic engagement or as part of the public involvement strategy for the GMP. However, the purpose of the park should not be opened, or appear to be opened, to any public debate or revision that goes beyond an interpretation of the intent of Congress or the president in establishing the park.

If the enabling legislation or presidential proclamation establishing the park lacks specificity about purpose and significance, the planning team can also look to the overall mission of the National Park Service for guidance. The purpose of most national parks is to conserve and make available for public enjoyment some aspect(s) of the nation's natural and/or cultural heritage that (1) is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource, (2) possesses exceptional value or quality for illustrating or interpreting the natural and cultural themes of the nation's heritage, (3) offers superlative opportunities for public enjoyment or scientific study, and (4) retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of the resource. Statements of a park's significance usually include these values.

Additional guidance for identifying the park's purpose, significance, and special mandates is provided below.

6.2.2 Identifying a Park's Purpose

Definition and Program Standards

Definition	Program Standards
The specific reason(s) for establishing a particular park	Statements of the park's purpose • are grounded in a thorough analysis of the park's legislation (or executive order) and legislative history, including studies completed prior to authorization • go beyond a restatement of the law to document shared assumptions about what the law means in terms specific to the park • may be changed only by Congress (although assumptions about how best to interpret establishing legislation and legislative history may be updated through the park's foundation statement or GMP)

Suggested Tools and Methodology for Identifying a Park's Purpose

Suggested Tools	Methodology
☑ Look in the park's establishing legislation and the legislative history for the reasons that a particular park	While the mission of the National Park Service is quite broad, more specific reasons for the creation of a particular park are usually stated in the park's establishing legislation. Often, these reasons are vague and open to interpretation, and the purpose statement needs to do more than simply restate the law. A purpose statement needs to examine and document the National Park Service's assumptions and the best relevant, current scholarship about what the law really means, so that those assumptions can be understood by others. Information about the specific reasons for establishing a particular park can often be found in the park's legislative history or its historical record. When examining legislation for park purpose, do not assume that because something is mentioned in the legislation that it is necessarily part of the purpose for which the unit was established. There may be an exception or legal requirement to continue a traditional use, such as hunting, grazing, or oil and gas extraction, even though the purpose of the park might be the preservation of natural systems and processes. Requirements that are not related to the reason a park was created are treated as "special mandates." The distinction is important because it recognizes the preeminence of the park's purpose.
☑ Make sure the purpose statement is specific to the particular park.	Teams may find it useful to ask this question: If the purpose statement for this park was swept into a bin of purpose statements for parks throughout the national park system, would it be easily recognizable as the purpose statement for this particular park? The statement of purpose may be a single inclusive statement, or a set of statements. Generally, do not develop more than three to five purpose statements.

TABLE 6.1: EXAMPLES OF PURPOSE STATEMENTS

Weak	Stronger
Preserve the natural and cultural resources of the Big Dry Desert.	Perpetuate for future generations a representative sample of the natural and cultural resources of the Big Dry Desert.
Protect sites and remains associated with the American Colonial Period.	Preserve (for research) and interpret (for education and commemoration) landscapes, archeological resources, and buildings associated with the political, social, and economic processes that shaped the British North American colonies from 1607 to 1781.

6.2.3 Identifying a Park's Significance

Definition and Program Standards

Definition	Program Standards
Statements of why, within a national, regional, and systemwide context, the park's resources and values are important enough to warrant national park designation	Statements of the park's significance • describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context • are directly linked to the purpose of the park • are substantiated by data or consensus • reflect the most current scientific or scholarly inquiry and cultural perceptions, which may have changed since the park's establishment

Suggested Tools and Methodology for Identifying a Park's Significance

Suggested Tools	Methodology
☑ Consult with technical experts and with culturally associated groups.	Rarely are the park staff the only experts. Non-NPS experts often have important information and skills, and their participation is an essential and cost-effective means of improving planning. Outside expertise is particularly helpful in determining park significance because it can provide perspective. Groups who may have particularly strong cultural ties to a place or places inside the park, such as Indian tribes, survivors of a historic event, or residents of an inholding community, have unique and important perspectives on the park's cultural significance. The information base must be broad enough to support statements of relative significance within a regional, national, and global context.
☑ Refer to reports that address significance.	A park's legislative history may contain information about why it is considered significant. Some parks have a special resource study, completed before the park was established, that should contain a discussion of significance. If the park or its resources have been nominated as a national historic or national natural landmark, world heritage site, or biosphere reserve, the background reports for these nominations should contain information about significance.
☑ Consider new scientific discoveries and scholarship.	Although a park's legislated purpose normally remains constant over the long term, the park's significance related to that purpose may change as a result of major new scientific discoveries or scholarship. For example, it may be appropriate to update the significance of a Civil War battlefield park to include the importance of the battle in stopping slavery or other aspects of the war's causes and consequences. (The park's purpose would remain unchanged — to preserve the battlefield and/or to commemorate the battle, for example — but its significance related to that purpose would be expanded.)

Suggested Tools	Methodology
☑ Focus the significance statements on why the park's resources and values are included in the national park system.	Rather than simply listing important resources and values, describe what attributes make the park important enough to be included in the national park system. Consider the international, national, and regional context of the park's resources and values. Using language such as "the largest collection," "the most diverse representation," "the most authentic," "the oldest," and "the best remaining example," where appropriate, will help define the significance of park resources compared to other resources in the region or the country. Try to avoid using the word "unique." If the participants want to list resources rather than describe them, it may be useful to first develop a list of resources, and then describe what about those resources contributes to the park's significance as a unit of the national park system. Listing would also be helpful in the next step of identifying fundamental resources and values.
☑ For cultural resources, consider the NPS thematic framework's eight themes to help identify contexts and processes relevant to the park's significance.	This NPS framework describes major themes and concepts that help to both identify cultural resources and evaluate their significance in American history. For example, considering the theme of "peopling places" (family and the life cycle; health, nutrition, and disease; migration from outside and within; community and neighborhood; ethnic homelands; encounters, conflicts, and colonization) helps describe the significance of a place like Little Bighorn Battlefield as more than "the place where Custer was massacred." (See *History in the National Park Service, Themes and Concepts, National Park Service's Revised Thematic Framework,* adopted 1994, available at http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/history/categrs/index.htm.
☑ Avoid statements about the park that do not relate directly to the park's purpose of preserving a portion of America's heritage.	Significance statements are intended to help parks set priorities. They should not be so broad that they could justify all ongoing park programs. Many park programs are required by law or NPS policy, but this does not necessarily mean they are significant to the park's purpose. While it may be true that the park "provides a wide array of recreational activities" or that it "contributes significantly to the local economy," such facts do not represent the part of American heritage preserved at the park. Therefore, they are not good significance statements. Confining the park's significance to attributes related directly to the park purpose does not preclude the consideration of other important resources and values during planning. These additional qualities are identified in another section of the park's foundation statement.
☑ Test the quality of draft significance statements.	Some questions to ensure quality in significance statements include the following: • Do the statements go beyond just a listing of resources and include the context that makes the resources important representations of a part of the American heritage?

Suggested Tools	Methodology
	• Do the statements reflect current scholarly inquiry and interpretation, including changes that might have occurred since the park's establishment? • Do the statements describe why the park's resources are important within a local, state, regional, national, or global context? • Are the statements easily understood?

TABLE 6.2: EXAMPLES OF SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENTS

Weak	Better
Mauna Loa contains more material by volume than any other mountain.	Mauna Loa — measured from its base beneath the surface of the sea to its peak — contains more material by volume than any other mountain on earth.
Aztec Ruins NM contains structures representing cultures inhabiting the Four-Corners region from approximately 1050 to 1350 A.D.	Aztec Ruins NM is an integral component of 200–300 years of cultural cohesiveness and expression that occurred throughout the Four Corners region from approximately 1050 to 1350 A.D. The site is an important aid to understanding the earlier times of the Pueblo world in this area and, along with Mesa Verde, is an integral component of the larger Chacoan system.

6.2.4 Special Mandates and Administrative Commitments

Some park-specific legislative or judicial requirements, along with some administrative commitments, may be worthy of discussion and special consideration because (1) they are unusual (such as a special provision in a park's establishing legislation to allow grazing), (2) they add another dimension to an area's purpose and significance (such as the designation of an area in the park as part of the national wilderness preservation system, the inclusion of a river in the national wild and scenic rivers system, a national historic landmark designation for part of a park, or the designation of a park as a world heritage site or a biosphere reserve), or (3) they commit park managers to specific actions (such as an action required by a court order).

Definition and Program Standards

Definition	Program Standards
Legal mandates specific to the park that expand on or contradict a park's legislated purpose	Special mandates • are specific to the park, but are additional to those directly related to the park's purpose • are not an inventory of all the laws applicable to the national park system • identify any potential conflict with the park's purpose and significance

Suggested Tools and Methodology for Identifying Special Mandates and Administrative Commitments

Suggested Tools	Methodology
☑ Look for special mandates in the park's establishing legislation, in the legislation designating all or portions of the park as a unit of another national system, or in court orders.	A special mandate should be specific to the park. It is not the intent of this element to consider all of the legal requirements that apply to the national park system as a whole (these are identified in the "Summary of NPS Legal and Policy Requirements"). Be careful not to include servicewide policies and mandates in this section.
☑ Specifically note any inconsistencies between special mandates and the purpose of the park. Describe the implications that the inconsistencies have for park management and the extent of NPS management authority and flexibility in dealing with these mandates.	Examples include legislative language directing that grazing or mining is authorized to continue in the park. Most of the time these mandates are subject to regulations or permitting, and the National Park Service has some latitude to restrict the location, timing, and extent of these activities. This latitude may be described as part of ongoing flexibility in management, or different ways of implementing this management discretion may be explored in the GMP alternatives. For example, at Mojave National Preserve the legislation authorized the continuation of certain rights-of-way for powerlines and pipelines. While this was considered a special mandate, the park also recognized that it had a management responsibility for the resources on these lands. The GMP appropriately dealt with the NPS management responsibilities while recognizing the mandate from Congress to allow these activities to continue, subject to NPS management.
☑ Consider other administrative commitments, distinguishing between them and special mandates. Look for administrative commitments in park and other office files and through discussions with long-term park employees, regional office staff, and superintendents.	Generally, administrative commitments are agreements that have been reached through formal, documented processes. Examples include a memorandum of agreement to abide by the policies of an interagency management commission, or to manage fishing in cooperation with the state department of fish and game. Occasionally, commitments will be less formal understandings, such as a commitment not to ban motorboats or other traditional uses.
☑ Ask whether the item under consideration is revocable, negotiable, or subject to amendment. What is the extent of NPS management authority in this commitment?	Agreements that are revocable by the superintendent or regional director, or that are subject to renegotiation or amendment, are items where the public has a right to be involved in the decisions. Such commitments, although not legally binding, should be acknowledged and fully considered as part of planning and management; however, the planning alternatives may consider changing these commitments. People may have assumed that something is a mandate, when in fact the requirement is not real or is negotiable. A full and honest discussion of what must be done and what cannot be done often leads to a broader range of options than originally anticipated.

Suggested Tools	Methodology
☑ Include the source of the mandate or commitment in the statement.	Identify the specific law, regulation, court order or other legally binding document that is the source of the mandate. Include the date of the document and whether there are any time limits to the mandate (e.g. grazing must be allowed only for existing permit holders). It is important to separate "hearsay" commitments from real ones. Often there is a belief that a commitment has been made at some point in the past, but there is nothing to substantiate the assertion. These issues can be very sensitive, however, and must be handled with care.

TABLE 6.3: EXAMPLES OF SPECIAL MANDATES

Special Mandate — Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve
Hunting, fishing, and trapping shall generally be permitted on land and water within the preserve in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. Areas may be designated where, and limited periods established when, no hunting, fishing, and trapping are permitted for reasons of public safety, administration, or compliance with applicable law (Great Sand Dunes Act of 2000).
Special Mandate — Kalaupapa National Historical Park
At Kalaupapa National Historical Park, a cooperative agreement between the National Park Service and the Hawaiian Department of Health (DOH) states that the Park Service will maintain the Hawaiian DOH's historic structures and facilities within the park, and the Hawaiian DOH may transfer ownership of historic structures to the NPS by mutual agreement.

Additional examples of special mandates are included in Appendix E.3.

6.3 IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF FUNDAMENTAL AND OTHER IMPORTANT RESOURCES AND VALUES

6.3.1 General Considerations

The preeminent responsibility of park managers is to ensure the conservation and public enjoyment of those qualities (features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, etc.) that are critical (fundamental) to achieving the park's purpose and maintaining its significance. These qualities are called the park's *fundamental resources and values*.

Fundamental resources and values are closely related to legislative purpose, and are more specific than significance statements. Identifying and understanding the fundamental resources and values that are associated with each park purpose and/or significance statement will help focus planning and management on what is truly important about the park. It is these resources and values that maintain the park's purpose and significance, and if these resources are allowed to deteriorate, the park purpose and/or significance could be jeopardized. Indeed, a loss of or major impact to a park's fundamental natural or cultural resource could constitute an impairment, violating the 1916 NPS Organic Act.

A fundamental resource or value should be one that would not be questioned or easily questioned; it should be one that everyone agrees to. A pivotal question planning teams need to answer in identifying fundamental resources and values is this:

"What is the resource or value fundamental to?" Is it interpretation? Is it preservation of the resource? Is it history? Is it an overall understanding of the park? These are all different things.

FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES AND VALUES DEFINED

Those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to warrant primary consideration during planning and management because they are critical to achieving the park's purpose and maintaining its significance. A fundamental *value*, unlike a tangible resource, refers to a process, force, story or experience, such as an island experience, the ancestral homeland, wilderness values, key viewsheds adjacent to a park boundary, relationships among people, or oral histories.

Parks may also (but not always) have other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the park's purpose and significance but are nevertheless determined to be particularly important considerations for general management planning. These are referred to as *other important resources and values*. The identification of fundamental and other important resources and values should not be interpreted as meaning that some park resources are not important. This exercise is primarily done to separate those resources or values that are covered by the NPS mandates and policies from those that have important considerations to be addressed in the GMP.

Park managers are continually challenged to set priorities and allocate limited staff time and funding to adequately protect what is most important about the park while at the same time complying with the full array of legislative mandates, laws, and policies that cover all park resources and values. Many issues confronting parks can be characterized as potential or actual conflicts between preservation and visitor use. However, parks also confront real and potential conflicts between different resources and values relatively unrelated to visitor use. Great Falls Park, a part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Virginia, provides one example of how the GMP process and an understanding of "fundamental" resources or values can help resolve these questions.

Great Falls includes a segment of the Patowomack Canal developed by George Washington. The stone walls that lined the canal are being overgrown by vegetation, and tree roots can damage the structural integrity of these cultural resources. Natural resource specialists had noted that some of the plants and trees were significant. Cultural resource specialists had noted that the vegetation was damaging the historic stonework. A review of the park's legislative history confirmed that one of its purposes was to "preserve the Patowomack Canal." An analysis of significance also highlighted that the canal was one of the first built in the country and is directly associated with George Washington. This led to the conclusion that the canal was a "fundamental" resource, while some of the vegetation threatening the canal structures was not. Designation of a "canal zone" with emphasis on protection of cultural resources followed from this conclusion, while other areas of the park were placed in a zone that would seek to protect both natural and cultural resource values.

Similar conflicts can occur between different types of natural or cultural resources. For example, some Civil War battlefields have national register structures that may

be important but do not date from the time of the battle and might be considered an intrusion on the fundamental resources and values for which the park was established. Another example is an expanding deer populations that can damage natural vegetation or adversely impact endangered species.

The reasons for identifying fundamental and other important resources and values include the following:

- *Focus* — The guidance provided through the GMP and the analysis leading up to that guidance, are focused on what is most important about the park.
- *Elaboration* — Fundamental and other important resources and values elaborate on what is most important about the park to ensure that specific features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, etc., are adequately addressed in planning and management. The plan will describe the desired conditions for these resources.
- *Specific management direction* — The GMP considers and ultimately prescribes the conditions to be achieved and maintained in the park for natural and cultural resources and visitor experiences determined to be fundamental or otherwise important.
- *Continuity* — Many parts of the GMP, such as primary interpretive themes, central questions or decision points to be addressed, alternatives to be considered, impact topics to be assessed, values to be used in selecting a preferred alternative, and indicators and standards for measuring success are all based on what is most important about the park.

The planning team and appropriate park staff should initially identify the fundamental resources and values. This comprehensive analysis could include consultation with recognized experts and with federal, state, tribal, and local agencies whose jurisdiction may include park resources and values. Such consultation helps ensure that the most meaningful set of features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, etc., are identified as the focus for planning and management.

Planning teams need to be flexible in identifying fundamental resources and values and other important resources, particularly with American Indian tribes. Each park staff will have different views about what these resources and values are. In some cases fundamental resources may directly fit with and be nested under a park purpose or significance statement; in other cases a fundamental resource or value may not directly fit with the purpose or significance statements. There is not necessarily a 1-to-1 relationship between fundamental resources and values and significance statements. Some fundamental resources or values may relate to only one significance statement, or to three significance statements, or maybe only to the park purpose. After identifying the legislated purpose, consider identifying what is important about the park. Then begin sorting those into fundamental resources and values, significance statements, and other important resources and values.

In identifying the fundamental resources and values deserving primary consideration during planning and management, restraint is critical. The resulting list is useful only if it focuses on those relatively few things that are so important that they should be

the preeminent considerations in all park planning and decision making. The list of resources and values should not be interpreted as everything that is important about the park, or even everything that is nationally significant. It should be a relatively short list of resources or values considered to be critical to achieving the park's purpose and maintaining its significance. Identifying the fundamental resources and values helps ensure that all planning is focused on what is truly most significant about the park. It creates a tool that park managers and staffs can use to focus planning and management on highly significant resources and values and ensure that all the resources and values warranting preeminent consideration are adequately protected. It also helps ensure that limited funding is channeled toward those particular attributes that are fundamental to achieving the park's purpose.

Restraint is also critical in identifying other important resources that, although not directly related to the park's purpose, are determined to merit special consideration during general management planning. It should be stressed that the purpose of this part of planning is to focus on what is most important about the park, and that another part of planning addresses all the applicable laws and policies that must also be followed in all park management. (See "6.5. Summary of NPS Legal and Policy Requirements.")

Fundamental and other important resources and values should collectively capture the essence of the park. Analysis of fundamental and other important resources and values was added to the *Park Planning Program Standards* in 2004. As of the writing of this guidance, there has not been much opportunity for planners to gain experience with this subject. Methods will continue to evolve, and examples will be kept current on web links. One approach is to identify both fundamental and other important resources and values together, then analyze them both. The desired result of this analysis is to understand

- the importance of these resources and values
- the current state or condition and related trends
- potential future threats
- the interests of various stakeholders in the park's resources and values
- which laws and policies apply to these resources and values and what general guidance these laws and policies provide
- planning needs
- data and analysis needs
- additional information or actions needed for the GMP

(See also the program standards below.)

Definition and Program Standards for Fundamental Resources and Values

Element	Definition	Program Standards
Analysis of fundamental resources and values	Analysis, including current state of knowledge and optimum conditions based on NPS *Management Policies,* of those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other resources and values determined to warrant primary consideration during planning and management because they are critical to achieving the park's purpose and maintaining its significance	Fundamental resources and values • warrant primary consideration during planning and management because they are critical to achieving the park's purpose and maintaining its significance • may include systems, processes, features, visitor experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells or other resources and values • are identified by an interdisciplinary team in consultation with recognized experts and other agencies that share jurisdiction • are analyzed in terms of status of existing information; national/regional context; optimum conditions based on NPS policies; current conditions, trends, and factors affecting the trends; and range of stakeholder interests and concerns • are not constrained in describing optimum conditions by considerations of foreseeable fiscal or technical feasibility (which may change in a relatively short time)
Analysis of other important resources and values	Analysis, including current state of knowledge and optimum conditions based on NPS *Management Policies,* of those other resources and values that are determined to be important to park planning and management, although they are not related to the park's purpose and significance	Other important resources and values: • include those resources and values that are determined to be important in their own right even though they are not related to the park's purpose and significance • are identified by an interdisciplinary team in consultation with recognized experts and other agencies that share jurisdiction • are analyzed in terms of status of existing information; national / regional context; optimum conditions based on NPS policies; current conditions, trends, and factors affecting the trends; and range of stakeholder interests and concerns

Element	Definition	Program Standards
		• are not constrained, in describing optimum conditions, by considerations of foreseeable fiscal or technical feasibility (which may change in a relatively short time)
Policy-level issues*	Analysis of the potential for some resources or values to be detrimentally affected by discretionary management decisions designed to achieve conditions consistent with the park's purpose	Policy-level issues • identify where management discretion is required to resolve potentially incompatible conditions associated with the optimum management of the park's fundamental or other important resources and values • interpret NPS laws and policies as they apply to the park's resources and values, considering their interrelationships and conditions • are based on a scientific / scholarly analysis of context, conditions, trends, and factors affecting those trends, and the range of stakeholder interests and concerns

* The identification of policy-level issues can also be referred to as key or major issues that need to be addressed by future planning. As part of the analysis of fundamental resources and values, the team identifies the trends in condition and threats to the fundamental resources and values. A summary of the potential issues related to current trends and threats is the outcome of this analysis. It is likely that the major issues associated with fundamental resources and values will likely need to be resolved through a GMP process. However it could take a program or implementation plan.

Suggested Tools and Methodology for Identifying Fundamental Resources and Values

Suggested Tools	Methodology
☑ Involve experts.	Experts both inside and outside the National Park Service can broaden the discussion of potential fundamental resources and values, leading to better identification of them. The WASO and regional program offices offer services to supplement the expertise of the park staff. For example, the Natural Resource Program Center can provide specialized expertise in areas of air, water, biology, and geology in the form of past studies or needed research, which can be requested through the annual technical assistance call. Experts outside the agency can also provide valuable information. For example, the Northeast Region uses a technique called the "scholars' roundtable" to involve stakeholders outside the agency in generating useful information about what is important about a park.

Suggested Tools	Methodology
☑ Elaborate on those things that are critical to achieving park purpose and maintaining its significance.	Fundamental resources and values translate the broader concepts of park purpose and/or significance into resources and experiences on the ground that should be the focus of park management. In other words, for each purpose and/or significance statement, identify what resources and values support the assertion in the purpose and/or significance statement. Tying the fundamental resources and values to the purpose and significance statements helps show the necessary level of detail and connection to the other planning elements.
☑ To distinguish fundamental resources and values from the other important resources and values in the park, ask "What resources and values would be the most critical to study and manage to support the park's purpose and maintain its significance?"	This would be similar to the exercises some parks undergo to determine what is "mission critical" in order to streamline their operation. Without the resources that are "fundamental to supporting the park mission," the purpose and significance of the park would be lost.
☑ Resources or values beyond the park boundary may be identified as fundamental provided there is specific legislative reference.	Lands related to park purpose and significance outside the park boundary may have fundamental value. For example, a viewshed that is contained both in the park and outside it is considered a fundamental resource (in the park) and value (outside the park) if the park's enabling legislation specifically captured this value external to the park boundary. Park enabling legislation will occasionally refer to resources outside the park boundary, such as the scenic landscapes at Cedar Creek and Belle Grove Plantation NHP. In such a case, the National Park Service would not be managing a resource beyond the park boundary but would be cognizant of its fundamental value to the park, setting the stage for partnership strategies for protection, for example. A fundamental value may also represent resources adjacent to the park that are proposed for a boundary expansion.
☑ Consider using the idea list developed for identifying and describing desired conditions to expand on the features, systems, processes, experiences, opportunities, stories, scenes, etc., that might be considered to deserve special consideration during planning and management.	Although the identification of fundamental and other important resources and values usually tiers off park significance statements and begins with obvious resources (for example, the saguaro cactus ecosystem at Saguaro NP), the team may want to consider related processes and interactions in order to more specifically describe what is fundamental or otherwise important about the park (for example, the density of ground cover necessary to support early saguaro development). The idea list developed to guide the description of desired conditions can also be used as a checklist. As another example, at Colorado NM, where the geologic cycles of uplift, erosion, and deposition are central to the purpose and significance of the park, a discussion of *geoindicators*, such as the near-surface

Suggested Tools	Methodology
	geologic and hydrologic processes and resulting wetlands, led the team to identify these wetlands as fundamental resources deserving special consideration during planning and management. Some teams have found that discussions at this level of detail are counterproductive to the primary need to start by focusing on what is truly most important about the park. In these cases, the team is encouraged to stay at a relatively general level in describing what is fundamental or otherwise important about the park, and to defer the greater level of detail to describing the specific desired conditions the park will be managed to achieve. (See "7.3.3. Area-Specific Desired Conditions.")
☑ Define what was considered but determined not to be fundamental to the park's purpose and significance.	Keeping track of team discussions about what was considered but eventually determined not to be fundamental serves to remind the planning team of their decisions, and can help in explaining fundamental resources and values to the public.

TABLE 6.4: EXAMPLES SHOWING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES / VALUES AND PARK SIGNIFICANCE

Significance	Fundamental Resource / Value
***Gettysburg NMP* —** Significance is partly defined as encompassing the site of a battle that was "the largest and most costly in human terms, lessened the ability of the Confederacy to wage war, and contributed to the ultimate preservation of the United States."	• The geography, topography, and landscape features of the region, which directly influenced the conduct and eventual outcome of the campaign and battle
***Olympic NP* —** Significance includes the preservation of "the finest sample of primeval forests of Sitka spruce, western hemlock, Douglas fir, and western red cedar in the entire United States, . . . and permanent protection . . . for wildlife indigenous to the area."	• Glaciers/snowfields • Rivers, including salmon spawning and rearing habitats • Intertidal zones Based on the premise that these habitats have a broad influence on the primeval forest communities the park was created to protect.
***Saguaro NP* —** Significance is based in part on containing "a superb example of the Sonoran Desert ecosystem due to the density of saguaro cacti and the existence of many generations in the forest."	• The density of ground cover (due to its influence on supporting the early stages of saguaro development) • The opportunity for expansive views of the giant cactus and associated plants, animals and landforms of the desert
***Carl Sandburg Home NHS* —** Significance is based in part on being a place that "embodies the presence of Carl Sandburg more vividly than any other place he lived."	• The biotic systems that contribute to the cultural landscape, and the opportunity to see artifacts from the time of Carl Sandburg
***New Orleans Jazz NHP* —** New Orleans is widely recognized as the birthplace of jazz and the sites and structures associated with the early history of jazz remain in the city.	• The opportunity for people to visit and understand the significance of sites associated with the history of jazz in New Orleans and the context of that history.

Significance	Fundamental Resource / Value
Canyonlands NP — The park provides incomparable opportunities to view this colorful, geologically important wilderness from various perspectives.	• The opportunity for visitors to learn of methods, locations, and opportunities to experience solitude, natural sounds, long-range views, and a feeling of wilderness
Apostle Islands NL — Within the boundaries of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore is the largest and finest collection of lighthouses in the country.	• Lighthouses and historic structures associated with them • Cultural landscapes associated with the lighthouses (e.g., ground clearing, gardens, relationships to old growth forests due to lighthouse reservations, etc.) • Stories associated with the lighthouses and lightkeepers • Research values of the light stations' cultural landscapes • Views of the lighthouses from the water • Views from within the lighthouses
Yellowstone NP — Significance includes the largest contiguous wildlife habitat in the Lower 48 states.	• Habitat connectivity, which allows wildlife to roam freely across expansive areas

Suggested Tools and Methodology for Identifying Other Important Resources and Values

Some park resources and values, while not related to the park's purpose and significance, are still determined to warrant special consideration during general management planning. This category may be particularly useful for important cultural resources in primarily natural parks and for important natural resources in primarily cultural parks. It is the discretion of the planning team to decide whether something should be categorized as "fundamental" or "otherwise important." For example, regionally important historic structures at a park like John Day Fossil Beds NM could be determined by a planning team to be either fundamental resources or other important resources. The main point is that those things that warrant primary consideration during general management planning are identified and analyzed.

Suggested Tools	Methodology
☑ Focus on those things that are particularly important.	Remember that it is important to keep this list narrowed to solid reasons of importance, such as national historic or natural landmark significance, rarity, or particular importance to people (e.g., American Indian tribes or the general public). If it becomes inclusive of every plant and cultural resource, the usefulness of identifying these focal points is lost. All applicable laws and policies covering all park resources and values are acknowledged in the last section of the foundation statement. The park's resource stewardship strategy covers all park resources, including those not specifically mentioned in the GMP.
☑ Ask, "Are there strong support groups?" and "Is there a specific or critical planning issue that needs to be resolved?"	A checklist of considerations for identifying important cultural resources and values is included in Appendix E.2.

TABLE 6.5: EXAMPLES OF OTHER IMPORTANT RESOURCES AND VALUES

The significance of Petrified Forest NP is primarily related to its globally significant fossil formations. The Painted Desert Headquarters complex is a significant Mission '66 work designed by renowned architect Richard Neutra. The complex is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and is of great interest to the state historic preservation office, as well as the community of architects nationwide. The complex is considered a fundamental resource and value because it is not a reason that the park was created, but it would fit the category of other important resources and values.
Sequoia NP was established to protect giant sequoia trees and for other related purposes. A historic district of cabins and visitor facilities that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places was a very important resource to consider during planning. Because the historic district does not contribute to the purpose and significance of the park, it is considered as an "other important resource" to be analyzed.
At a national historic site whose significance is primarily related to cultural resources and values, a resource such as "the existing and potential habitat of an endangered species that exists in only three areas within the entire state" might be addressed as "an other important" resource because of its relative significance to the regional ecology and biodiversity. Other threatened or endangered species with only a small percentage of potential habitat inside the park would probably be addressed broadly in "other NPS laws and policies," where it would be noted that all threatened and endangered species would be protected in compliance with federal law as part of basic park management.

6.3.2 Analyzing Fundamental and Other Important Resources and Values

For every fundamental or other important resource and value, some basic analysis is needed to identify current conditions and potential threats, the level of stakeholder interests, and existing policy and planning guidance. This analysis is needed to identify basic management strategies that are in place and/or to identify issues that need to be addressed in a general management planning process (or possibly another planning process).

The intent of this analysis is not to be lengthy and exhaustive, but rather to summarize the basic information related to each resource and value needed to guide subsequent planning and management. This basic analysis may identify information gaps and further analysis needed to complete a GMP. Below are the questions that need to be answered for each fundamental or other important resource or value.

Some planning teams may have rather lengthy lists of fundamental and other important resources and values, which may make the analysis step seem daunting. The team should consider keeping the analysis as brief and succinct as possible to make this step efficient. In addition, the team may find it helpful to group some of the fundamental resources and values into larger categories for analysis purposes. For example, the Apostle Islands NL planning team listed many types of coastal features and processes (such as tombolos, sand spits, cuspate forelands, and barrier spits) that are fundamental to the park, but the analysis was conducted on the larger theme of coastal processes and features. If some of the resources and values are grouped, the analysis may call out conditions, threats, or interests that are specific to one of the individual fundamental resources or values. For instance, in the Apostle Islands example, the analysis included some specific discussion about threats to sand spits, particularly trampling of dunes and vegetation resulting from large amounts of visitor foot traffic on these particular resources.

The analysis of fundamental and other important resources and values assumes that basic inventory information is available, and that subject matter experts have helped identify and analyze these resources and values. In some cases, it may not be possible to complete the analysis section of the foundation statement until adequate information is available. (If important data and analysis needs are identified by the team, this should be noted in the analysis.) The following are some suggested sources of information for preparing the analysis:

- park staff specialists (or other experts)
- notes from internal scoping trip
- existing and older plans (e.g., a water resources management plan)
- PMIS statements and project agreements
- resource stewardship strategies
- national historic landmark and/or national register documentation
- cultural and/or natural resource databases and studies (see Appendix L)
- legislation and legislative history
- park-specific research
- inventory and monitoring data
- WASO Natural Resource Program Center resource reports
- scientific literature
- park brochures and websites
- NPS *Management Policies 2006*, reference manuals, etc. (for identifying applicable laws and policies)

Another important part of analysis preparation is to gather a summary of issues that have been identified to date, through internal scoping; consultation with agencies, tribes, or partners; or public scoping (if it has been initiated). These issues may assist in defining the threats or current trends in conditions affecting the fundamental resources and values. When full public scoping is completed, or as the GMP process proceeds, new issues are likely to be raised. In such a case, the analysis of fundamental resources and values will need to be appropriately revised. This part of the foundation statement will be updated as needed to reflect the most current information about conditions and threats, as well as stakeholder interests, which may be gained through GMP scoping, scientific or academic research, and other analytical processes. Using the example from Apostle Islands NL mentioned above, the current problems of trampling of dunes and vegetation as a result of large amounts of visitor foot traffic leads to the major issue to be resolved in a future GMP or implementation plan — how should visitor use be managed in these sensitive areas of the lakeshore?

The analysis may include sections on general law and NPS policy guidance and management directions called for by those laws and policies. Although these management directions may not all currently be implemented, they all should be based on and consistent with existing law, policy, and approved plans. It is also important that

these management directions not be controversial or require analysis and documentation under NEPA.

Asset management data may be considered in the analysis of resources. Fundamental and important resource designations ideally would be consistent with API ratios. If an API ratio for a fundamental resource does not reflect its standing as fundamental, the ratio may need to be adjusted or the designation considered more carefully. Asset data may help in assessing the condition of resources in the analysis.

The actual analysis of fundamental and other important resources and values may or may not be included in a GMP. Although the analysis may provide a wealth of information, it also may be long, particularly for a large park. Also, the analysis will change over time, and therefore it may not be pertinent throughout the life of the GMP. Thus, depending on the park and the detail, length, and time-sensitivity of the information, the planning team may decide to include the analysis in the GMP, or reference it as a document in the bibliography, or simply include it in the administrative record. (The analysis should not be confused with the fundamental and other important resource and values themselves, which should be included in the GMP.)

Suggested Tools and Methodology for Analyzing Fundamental and Other Important Resources and Values

Suggested Tools	Methodology
☑ Ask, "What is the importance of this resource or value?"	If the resource or value is directly tied to one of the park's significance statements, this step will likely be a brief elaboration on the thoughts already included in the related significance statement. It needs to be clear to the reader why this resource or value is fundamental to the purpose of the park. It may be helpful to consider and define the ecological, cultural, and/or social context of the resource or value. For example, the importance of wildlife encounters may be that there are few places for people to hear wolves howl. In other instances, the resource or value may be the key link to supporting one of the significant things about the park. For example, the natural soundscape might be a critical value supporting the opportunity to hear wolves howl; or habitat connectivity might be critical to supporting opportunities for observing wildlife in their natural habitat; or geothermal processes might be critical to supporting geysers and other geothermal features.
☑ Ask, "What are the current conditions and trends in the condition of the resource or value? Are there any current or potential threats to this resource or value?"	In examining the resource or value, consider what impacts have occurred, are occurring, or have the potential to occur in the future. Often, understanding a recent trend is equally or more important than observing the current condition. For example, water quality may be currently above a desired standard, but may be declining as a result of impacts from increased boating activity, such that it could be expected to fall below the standard in the near future.

Suggested Tools	Methodology
☑ Ask, "What, if any, stakeholder interest is related to this resource or value?"	Identify and define any public or political concerns associated with management of this resource or value. For example, methods for population management of a particular species may be of interest to different stakeholders. Identify and define any interests and concerns of traditional park users and others with special cultural ties to the resource or value. For example, American Indians, other traditional park users, or their descendants may have harvesting rights to a particular resource. Identify and define any interests and concerns of scientists, scholars, and other researchers. Identify and define any interest from other public land managing agencies related to this resource or value. For example, protection of migration corridors may require cooperation from nearby public land managers. Some or all of these concerns may be identified and defined during the public scoping stage of the GMP planning process.
☑ Ask, "Which laws and policies apply to this resource or value, and what general guidance do they provide?"	NPS *Management Policies 2006*, applicable laws, executive orders, and the *Code of Federal Regulations* provide the basic direction for the management of all classes of park resources and values, including opportunities for visitor enjoyment. Identify which are the major laws and policies that apply to these resources and values, and briefly summarize the management or condition(s) outlined by those laws and policies. For example, the NPS policies for watershed and stream processes (sec. 4.6.6) state that managers should protect watershed and stream features primarily by avoiding impacts to watershed and riparian vegetation, and by allowing natural fluvial processes to proceed unimpeded. However, when infrastructure (such as bridges and pipeline crossings) begins to affect natural resources (such as stream processes) in unavoidable ways, managers are directed to use techniques that are visually unobtrusive and that protect natural processes to the greatest extent possible.
☑ Ask, "What is the quality and comprehensiveness of the existing information about the resource or value? Is it adequate to proceed, or can the information be gathered as the plan proceeds?"	This step is critical and is one of the major reasons for completing a foundation statement — to allow for the evaluation of the adequacy of information about those things that are most important about the park. All park staff should have at least some information about their fundamental and other important resources and values. Those resources, which are the focus of the GMP, should be assessed to determine if the available data are complete and up-to-date or if there are critical gaps that need to be filled before proceeding. If the information exists and just needs to be gathered and analyzed from park files or publications, then the project may proceed.

Suggested Tools	Methodology
	If critical gaps may only be filled by new research or study, then the project should be delayed until this information is available. This is a judgment call by the planning team and park about whether the missing data are critical to the planning effort. Deficiencies in this information base should be identified and needs prioritized early in the process. The *Park Planning Program Standards* state that parks without a well-established program of data gathering and analysis may need to allow up to five years to ensure that adequate information is available to support planning and decision making. This estimate is based on one year to comprehensively and systematically identify fundamental and other important resources and values and to apply for supplemental program funds, if needed; three years to collect information (the minimum needed to survey sporadic events or to establish preliminary trend lines); and one year to analyze and synthesize the data into forms useful to planners and decision makers. **Foundation for Planning and Management** **Year 1** Identify fundamental resources and values **Years 2–4** Collect data **Year 5** Analyze and synthesize data
☑ Ask, "What planning decisions exist for the fundamental resource or value, and what is the current relevance or validity of those decisions?"	Guidance in recent planning documents (such as past GMPs, resource plans, comprehensive interpretive plans, or development concept plans) may provide management direction regarding fundamental resources or values. By ensuring an inventory of guidance that already exists and is still appropriate, the planning needs of the park can be further refined. A judgment call often may need to be made on how valid or useful these past decisions were. The foundation statement should note relevant decisions that still apply. The planning team might also want to note flawed decisions or decisions that are no longer relevant. These past decisions will either help focus the GMP on the most pressing, unresolved issues or perhaps identify the need for a different level of planning.
☑ Distinguish between information that is and is not critical to the GMP.	The National Park Service has many legal and policy requirements regarding resource inventory and monitoring. However, unless the missing information is critical to GMP-level planning decisions about fundamental and other important resources and values, the GMP should not be delayed to gather the data.

6.4 PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES

6.4.1 General Considerations

Primary interpretive themes describe what needs to be interpreted to provide people with opportunities to understand and appreciate park purpose and significance. The identification of primary themes is part of a park's foundation statement. Themes are derived from — and should reflect — park significance. Additional perspectives may be obtained from the identification and analysis of fundamental and other important resources and values. Primary themes should be few enough in number to provide focus for the interpretive program; but numerous enough to represent the full range of park significance.

The values and uses of primary interpretive themes include the following:

- In general management planning, primary interpretive themes may form the basis for alternatives and management zones that prescribe resource conditions and visitor experiences.
- Primary interpretive themes provide the base for the park's educational and interpretive program.
- Primary themes lead to the identification of services, resources, and experiences that should be accessible to visitors and the public.
- Identifying primary themes leads to recommendations for interpretive and educational facilities, media, and services that are core to the park mission and facilitate emotional and intellectual connections with park resources and values.
- Primary interpretive themes guide the development of interpretive media and programs that help visitors connect tangible park resources and experiences to larger ideas, meaning, and values.
- The development and interpretation of primary themes provide a framework for shared perspectives among visitors, stakeholders, and publics.

How does one recognize good themes? It is important that planning teams be clear about the eventual uses of the themes (see list above). Effective primary themes are important, understandable, concise, comprehensive, complete, and accurate thoughts. They should be

- *Important* — They relate to significance and represent the most important stories to be told.
- *Understandable* — Different people reading the themes will have the same understandings of their intent.
- *Concise* — They are stated simply enough to be comprehended singly and as a group by diverse readers.
- *Comprehensive* — They represent all of the most important ideas reflecting park significance.
- *Useful* — They accomplish the purposes for which they were developed.

- *Complete* — They present the whole rather than a part of an idea; they are generally stated in one or two complete sentences.
- *Accurate* — Information and contexts represent the latest scholarship.

Interpretive themes are written at many levels. The set of primary interpretive themes, which are included in GMPs and comprehensive interpretive plans, as well as the foundation statement, are the most general and should be identical in all three documents. More detailed and specific themes may tier off of the primary themes; these include the subthemes or secondary themes found in some comprehensive interpretive plans, and the program-specific and media-specific themes found in implementation plans.

Definition and Program Standards

Definition	Program Standards
The most important ideas or concepts to be communicated to the public about a park	Primary interpretive themes • are based on park purpose and significance • connect park resources to relevant ideas, meanings, concepts, contexts, beliefs, and values • support the desired interpretive outcome of increasing visitor understanding and appreciation of the significances of the park's resources

6.4.2 Suggested Tools and Methodology for Developing Primary Interpretive Themes

There are many ways to develop a park's set of primary interpretive themes. The examples and links below show some of the approaches. Planning teams should use the approach that works best for them to produce themes that meet the above criteria.

Suggested Tools	Methodology
☑ Have the necessary people at the table when developing primary interpretive themes.	These include (at the least) • a facilitator who is an experienced interpretive planner, familiar with general management planning and with long-range planning for interpretation, education, and visitor experience • park staff from various work units (not just interpretation — don't forget resources, protection and maintenance) and grade levels (front-line personnel and volunteers, not just the chiefs) • people with relevant subject-matter expertise and knowledge of visitors and interpretation/education/recreation
☑ Focus on the park's significance statements, and draw upon the park's fundamental resources and values statements. All play a role in developing themes that are important, understandable, concise, comprehensive,	Primary interpretive themes do not include everything a park may wish to interpret, but focus on the ideas that are critical to a visitor's understanding of the park's significance. A one-to-one correspondence between themes and significance is not required. The set of primary interpretive themes is complete when it provides opportunities for people to connect with all of the park's

Suggested Tools	Methodology
complete, and accurate thoughts.	significance, and its fundamental and other important resources and values. Consider using the NPS thematic framework for cultural resources (earlier in this chapter) to explore the holistic and interconnected story of resources when developing primary interpretive themes. Appendix E.6 provides an example of how primary interpretive themes can be developed from a set of park significance statements.
☑ Combine or divide statements to achieve an optimum number of themes.	Most parks find an optimal number of primary interpretive themes to be between three and seven.

6.4.3 Sources of Additional Information

Planning for Interpretation and Visitor Experience (NPS 1996b) — A summary of goal-driven interpretive planning approaches used by HFC staff, including relationships, descriptions, examples, and general methodology of planning elements.

http://www.nps.gov/hfc/pdf/ip/interp-visitor-exper.pdf

CIP Guide — A Guide to Comprehensive Interpretive Planning (NPS 2005e) — Contains detailed descriptive handouts and outlines used by Intermountain Region interpretive planners to organize and conduct comprehensive interpretation planning workshops. Also includes sets of significance statements and primary interpretive themes.

http://inside.nps.gov/regions/custommenu.cfm?lv=2&rgn=272&id=5830

Comprehensive Interpretive Planning: Interpretation and Education Guideline (NPS 2000e) — Provides NPS policy and guidelines for interpretive planning. Includes philosophy and recommended elements for comprehensive interpretive plans, including long-range interpretive plans, annual implementation plans, and interpretive databases. Leadership and oversight of interpretive planning is provided by the NPS chief of interpretation and the Harpers Ferry Center.

http://www.nps.gov/hfc/ip/cip-guideline.pdf

6.5 SUMMARY OF NPS LEGAL AND POLICY REQUIREMENTS

6.5.1 General Considerations

The purpose of identifying NPS legal and policy requirements is to assure stakeholders that park managers are aware of and working to comply with all laws and policies governing park management. This assurance takes on even more meaning with the identification of fundamental resources and values and other important resources and values, as there could be concern that park resources and values that are not “fundamental” or otherwise “important” to general management planning may be ignored. Certainly the 1916 NPS Organic Act and the numerous other laws, policies, and regulation that apply to all units of the national park system prescribe

many resource conditions and some aspects of visitor experience. Examples of requirements include mandates to protect threatened or endangered species, to identify and protect archeological resources, and to provide barrier-free access to public facilities. The National Park Service strives to implement these requirements with or without a GMP, within funding and staffing constraints. Thus, even though endangered species or archeological sites may not be identified as fundamental resources or values in a park or addressed directly in the GMP alternatives, the park staff still strives to protect these resources as prescribed by law and policy. This section of the foundation statement is intended to communicate that commitment.

6.5.2 Definition and Program Standards

Definition	Program Standards
Brief overview of the large body of federal laws, policies, and regulations governing all units of the national park system	The summary of servicewide legal and policy requirements • recognizes the body of federal laws, policies, and regulations that apply to all parks • may address the requirements of individual laws or policies related to natural resources, cultural resources, visitor use, facility development, or park operations if they are particularly relevant to issues of concern at the park

6.5.3 Suggested Tools and Methodology for Summarizing Legal and Policy Requirements

Suggested Tools	Methodology
☑ Summarize the body of legal and policy requirements that relate to the park, highlighting any specific laws or policies that are of particular importance to the specific park.	This summary should be as concise as possible, since it does not provide new information; however, it should be detailed enough to communicate that park management will comply with current laws and policies in the protection of resources and values that may be of particular concern to stakeholders.

There are many approaches to including NPS legal and policy requirements. Four different approaches are shown in Appendix E.7, illustrated by one topic area from four different GMPs. The approach should be chosen in the context of the complexity of the park, the interest and knowledge of the public, and the possible overlap with the analysis of fundamental resources and values. The chosen approach should avoid redundancy between this section and the analysis of fundamental resources and values.

6.6 Putting It All Together

The various elements of the park foundation statement may require separate processes to get them done, but in fact they are interdependent and should be developed alongside one another. Planning is iterative, not linear; there should be opportunities to revisit earlier ideas when new insights are gained. Large and complex parks are

likely to require more than one workshop to develop all of the elements of a foundation statement, while smaller or less complex parks may be able to develop the statement with just one workshop supplemented by additional staff time. With outside experts and partners strongly encouraged to participate, there could be variations in the composition of each workshop (as long as there remains a consistent core). Table 6.6 presents a few ideas of how to combine some of the elements and invite different participants.

TABLE 6.6: ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS FOR DEVELOPING PARK FOUNDATION STATEMENTS

Scenario 1 — Park with valid purpose and significance, new primary interpretive themes, no complex issues		
Advance Preparation	**Workshop**	**Follow-up**
Park staff and planners: • assemble existing purpose, significance, primary interpretive themes, special mandates • review the enabling legislation and legislative history	Peer park staff, associated scholars and scientists: • review existing purpose, significance, primary interpretive themes, special mandates • identify fundamental resources and values and other important resources and values	Planners and park staff: • analyze fundamental and other important resources and values • identify NPS laws and policies • prepare drafts for team review by e-mail and phone

Scenario 2 — Complex park needing a comprehensive foundation overhaul				
Advance Preparation	**Workshop 1**	**Interim Preparation**	**Workshop 2**	**Follow-up**
Park staff and planners: • assemble existing purpose, significance, special mandates • review legislative history • review current scholarship, research	Peer park staff, associated scholars and scientists: • review purpose, significance, special mandates • identify fundamental resources and values and other important resources and values	Planners: • finalize purpose, significance, special mandates • conduct draft analysis of primary interpretive themes • identify NPS laws and policies • prepare drafts	Neighboring agencies, tribes, cooperating association, civic leaders: • develop primary interpretive themes • review analysis of fundamental and other important resources and values • review NPS laws and policies	Planners and park staff: • integrate all pieces into foundation statement • prepare drafts for team review by e-mail and phone

6.7 SUGGESTED TOOLS AND METHODOLOGY FOR CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE WORKSHOPS

Workshops, while often highly effective, can also be relatively expensive in terms of time commitments and travel costs. Following are some suggestions to keep down costs and respect people's time.

Suggested Tools	Methodology
☑ Keep the number and length of workshops to a minimum.	Identify the purpose of each workshop and prepare an agenda that maximizes the interaction of participants in the minimum amount of time. Utilize e-mail, phone conferences, questionnaires, the sourcebook, training, and other communication tools before and after workshops for activities that require less direct interaction. Articulate the purpose and desired outcome of each workshop to all participants, and employ good facilitation skills to keep the workshop on track.
☑ Invite the right people.	Focus on the purpose of each workshop and make sure that the key park and regional staff are available, along with other recommended stakeholders. When possible, the same planning team members that participate in the development of the foundation statement should also be on the GMP team so they have a full understanding of the discussions that occur during the foundation workshop. While stakeholders are encouraged to participate, be careful to structure the invitations and expectations of what the workshop is about. Strike a balance between striving for a wide spectrum of participants and maintaining a manageable group size. Facilitation and consensus become increasingly difficult as the size of the group grows. Schedule workshops well in advance to ensure that the greatest number of desired participants can attend. Be clear that the workshop is not a broad public meeting and that no management decisions will be made.
☑ Do the homework.	Assemble bibliographies, legislative histories, previous planning documents, and other information well in advance of workshops. Sometimes it is helpful to summarize this material for workshop participants. Have an experienced planner draft elements in advance for review and revision by the team. Get appropriate materials to participants in advance. Require reading or training before workshops. Develop specific handouts to guide participants through the workshop, and organize them into a workbook or notebook to keep everyone on the same page. (The "Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park Foundation Workshop" booklet and the "Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site Stakeholder Foundation Workbook" are examples of such handouts.) Plan for accurate recording of the workshop discussions and decisions, and circulate notes to all participants following the workshop. If possible, hold an orientation for those team members not familiar with the park to experience a sense of the place. (If the foundation statement is being developed as part of the GMP, the foundation workshop could be held as part of an orientation trip for the full planning team or at a follow-up session.)

6.8 UPDATING FOUNDATION STATEMENTS

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, general management planning is the most appropriate process for reviewing and possibly expanding or revising a foundation statement. Table 6.7 indicates the stability envisioned for the elements of the foundation statement, and reasons that may necessitate expansion or revisions.

TABLE 6.7: STABILITY OF ELEMENTS OF A FOUNDATION STATEMENT

Element	Likelihood of Change	Possible Reasons to Revise
Purpose	Almost none	New legislation; major park expansion; major change in knowledge of ecological or cultural processes in the park
Significance	Little	New information or scholarship, new legislation or boundary change
Special mandates	Little	New legislation; new formal agreements or commitments
Identification of fundamental and other important resources and values	Some	New information or scholarship
Analysis of fundamental and other important resources and values	Some (after full scoping) Likely (if initially developed prior to full scoping)	Changes in trends, threats, stakeholder interest; changes to fundamental or other important resources and values. Identification of new issues that affect trends, threats, or stakeholder interest; changes to fundamental or other important resources and values
Primary interpretive themes	Some	New information or scholarship, changes in significance or fundamental and other important resources and values
Other NPS laws and policies	Little	Revised or new laws and policies