

Instructor Manual

Interdisciplinary Resource Protection and Law



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDENT MATERIALS

INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS AND TEACHING TIPS

LESSON PLANS

Introduction

UNIT ONE: WHAT ARE THE RESOURCES TO BE PROTECTED?

AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH

Natural Resources: An Ecosystem Approach

Cultural Resources

Visitor Enjoyment

UNIT TWO: WHY PROTECT NPS RESOURCES?

Constitutional Law and the NPS Resource Mission

NPS Policy

UNIT THREE: HOW TO PROTECT RESOURCES? LEGAL TOOLS

Wilderness Act

Wildlife Laws

Effective Interdisciplinary Group Work

Additional Resource Protection Laws

Archeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA)

Park System Resource Protection Act: 16 USC 19jj

UNIT FOUR: WHEN INJURY OCCURS—ACTIONS TO PROTECT RESOURCES

Responding to Resource Injury

Injury Assessment

Assessing Group Work

Public Information

UNIT FIVE: PREVENTIVE ACTIONS FOR RESOURCE PROTECTION

NPS Planning and Compliance

Visitor Management

Planning for Response

Post-class Assignments, Course Evaluation and Course Conclusion

Interdisciplinary Resource Protection and Law

Introduction to the Course

Interdisciplinary Resource Protection and Law is a 40-hour course designed to provide National Park Service (NPS) employees with the competencies necessary to recognize resource injuries and take action to protect national park resources.

This course is the second in a series of five courses designed to promote the protection and stewardship of national park resources. *Interdisciplinary Resource Protection and Law* is a rigorous course that focuses on teaching NPS employees to recognize the natural, cultural and legal framework for resource stewardship and protection in the National Park System. This awareness will help NPS employees take appropriate actions for stewarding and protecting resources.

This is not an introductory course. Students should already have a basic knowledge of resource stewardship and protection issues before taking this course. Ideally, students will have learned the basics about resource stewardship and protection by taking *NPS Fundamentals II* and/or *Introduction to Resource Stewardship*. To ensure all the students have the necessary foundational knowledge for this course, instructors may briefly review basic elements of a topic before starting a session.

Mission and Goals of the Resource Stewardship and Protection Curriculum

The mission of the resource stewardship and protection curriculum is to develop and strengthen the knowledge and competencies of all National Park Service employees by connecting them to the resource, and to build proactive capabilities through interdisciplinary collaboration and partnering for resource protection.

It is hoped that, following the participation in one, several, or all of the courses in the resource stewardship and protection curriculum series:

- NPS employees understand the relationship between their individual responsibilities and those of fellow employees and partners in implementing the agency's mission and providing high-quality public service.
- NPS employees are inspired and take action to implement resource protection and stewardship in a collaborative forum.

Course Objectives for *Interdisciplinary Resource Protection and Law*

In this course, you will:

- Develop a comprehensive knowledge of the environmental and legal framework that safeguards natural and cultural resources in the National Park System.
- Recognize that knowledge of interrelated natural and cultural resources in their parks is central to their duty of protecting those resources.
- Understand that resource protection, prevention, and visitor education are important components of taking action to ensure resources are protected in park unit daily operations.
- Demonstrate adequate group processes to ensure effective interdisciplinary and cooperative actions among NPS staff, partners, and the public.

Course Flow for *Interdisciplinary Resource Protection and Law*

For pre-class work, students must do the following:

- Bring a copy of their park-enabling legislation to class
- Read the abbreviated GMP for Sea Otter Island National Park.
- If available, bring a copy of *Management Policies* (2001)

Course Overview

Interdisciplinary Resource Protection and Law is focused around the general themes of recognizing special NPS resources requiring protection, responding to resource injuries, and learning to take action to prevent future injuries of these NPS resources. The class begins with a general review of the resources that the law directs the NPS to protect. These resources include natural elements that are integral to an ecosystem as well as cultural resources. The level of enjoyment experienced by visitors to the national parks is also a resource that requires protection.

The course then focuses on the laws passed by Congress to protect these NPS resources, including foundational information linking Constitutional laws to the resource mission of the NPS. It also explains why and how NPS policy provides guidance for the protection of NPS resources.

The next section of the course focuses on the legal tools available to the NPS for the protection of resources. Students will learn the specifics of the Wilderness Act and various other wildlife laws including the Lacey Act and the Endangered Species Act. This unit also provides details about the Archeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA) and the Park System Resource Protection Act: 16 USC 19jj. During this section of the course, students will work in small groups on various resource stewardship and protection scenarios. Throughout the course, instructors will provide guidance for how to work effectively in interdisciplinary teams, as well as how to assess the quality of group work and communication within a group.

Once the instructor team clearly establishes the legal foundation for resource stewardship and protection, the focus of the class shifts to those actions NPS employees can take to protect resources after an injury has occurred. Students will learn about how to respond to resource injuries, including drafting an injury assessment as well as guidance on how to share information with the public when a national park resource is injured.

The course concludes with a review of preventive actions the NPS can take to protect natural resources, cultural resources, and the visitor enjoyment experience at national parks. Students will learn about NPS planning and compliance processes as well as visitor management guidelines designed to promote resource stewardship and protection.

Serving both as a capstone session for this course and a prelude to the next, the last main session presents information on how to plan for a resource injury response at a fictitious national park. This session will model best practices with planning and preparing for resource injury situations while providing a bridge to *Intermediate Resource Protection for Interdisciplinary Teams*, the next course in the Resource Stewardship and Protection curriculum.

Post-class Assignment

Students must complete the post-class assignment to receive full credit for the course. This assignment provides students the opportunity to begin to investigate a critical issue at their parks using the concepts learned throughout the course.

Students must answer the following questions in written form and submit this back to the instructors, who will review and comment.

1. Interview coworkers from other divisions and identify a critical resource stewardship and protection issue in their parks. This issue must be one that requires a specific approach.
2. Attend an interdisciplinary meeting dealing with resource protection issues. You must answer the questions from class after the meeting concerning the group process.
3. Answer a list of questions on preparing a response plan for the issue chosen. Questions include:
 - Who responds?
 - Who gets notified and how?
 - Who is in charge of what during a response?
 - Who does the injury assessment?
 - What laws/policies would apply or need to be taken into account?

Competency-based Learning Objectives

This *Interdisciplinary Resource Protection and Law* course has been designed with specific knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) in mind. These KSAs are also referred to as “competencies.” NPS employees must receive training directly focused on the competencies needed to perform their jobs successfully.