**OUR VISION:**

EVERYONE WILL HAVE AN AMERICAN PARK EXPERIENCE

**OUR MISSION:**

TO CHAMPION THE ACQUISITION AND PRESERVATION OF AMERICA'S CRITICAL PARKLANDS THROUGH EDUCATION, PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

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Dear Friends and Supporters:

As the nation’s only organization dedicated to the completion of the American system of national and state parks, National Park Trust continues to identify key land acquisition needs and to convene potential funders to acquire these lands. Equally important is our vision that ‘everyone have an American park experience,’ ensuring that future generations are familiar with and experience our unique national heritage. In preparation for this Annual Report, we’ve reflected on our many accomplishments this past year in advancing this mission; in short, 2008 has been an extraordinary year full of milestones!

In June we honored Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid with the 2008 Bruce F. Vento Public Service Award for his important work in establishing Great Basin National Park, in protecting millions of acres of wilderness areas, and in creating the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, as well as numerous other critical efforts to protect America’s parks. More information about Senator Reid’s work and the Vento Award reception is presented in News Briefs on page 3.

This past fall, we welcomed four new outstanding board members: Michael DeSantis, Fran Mainella, Diana Taylor, and Lee Verstandig. They bring a wealth of diverse experience and expertise to the Board in areas including strategic planning, national and state park administration, public relations, education, and legislation. In a short time, they have made a significant positive impact on NPT!

In 2008, we also welcomed Jeannette Mendonca as NPT’s new development director. Jeannette’s experience, energy, and creativity are significant assets to the NPT team. Brief biographies of our new Board and staff members can be found on pages 4 and 5 of this Report.

Our lands committee has been working closely with Kit McGinnis, NPT’s land projects manager, on our projects in West Virginia, Florida, Minnesota, California, Alaska, Arkansas, and Kansas. In addition, we have an important new inholding project in Colorado at the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness Area that we expect to complete in 2009. We hope that you will enjoy reading updates on these land projects.

With our important initiative to ensure that successive generations understand and experience our nation’s parks, wildlife refuges and historic monuments, NPT has created the Youth to Parks National Scholarship program. Partnering with organizations across the country including the Children & Nature Network, the National Hispanic Environmental Council, and For Love of Children, our goal is to provide unique educational experiences for our underserved youth that focus on our parks, conservation and environmental stewardship.

As a result of the recent historic election, members of our Board and staff met with the Obama-Biden Department of Interior Transition Team to discuss our priorities and were invited to present our formal recommendations to the new Administration. We have been encouraged to continue our dialog with the new Administration in order to promote our Youth to Parks initiative and to protect our critical public lands.

Finally, in an effort to keep you better informed about our important work we have revised and rolled out our new website and electronic newsletter, NPT News. We encourage you to visit the site often (www.parktrust.org) and to subscribe to our newsletter to learn more about our land projects and youth education programs. In addition, we hope that you will join our “Where’s Your Buddy Bison Been?” campaign, described on page 5 of this report.

Our deepest and heartfelt thanks to you for your continued loyal and generous support that has made all of our work possible. We hope that you will be there for us in 2009 as you have been in 2008.

Sincerely,

F. William Brownell  Grace K. Lee  
Chair, Board of Trustees  Executive Director
Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid Receives 2008 Bruce F. Vento Public Service Award

Capitol Hill was the backdrop for NPT's 2008 Bruce F. Vento Public Service Award honoring Senator Harry Reid of Nevada. As he accepted NPT's highest honor on June 10, Senator Reid shared a moving story about how his close friend, Bruce Vento, gave him the idea to create Nevada’s first National Park, the Great Basin National Park.

Senator Reid said, “I was a new member of the House of Representatives and Bruce and I were walking across Independence Avenue to vote and he said, ‘You’re from Nevada, right?’ And I said, ‘Yes, I’m from Nevada.’ And he said, ‘You should have a National Park in Nevada. You don’t have one...’ And every time I would see him in the next month or so, he kept talking to me about this.”

After several years of town meetings and tours through Nevada with Vento and other legislative leaders, Senator Reid went on to say “I’ll always remember Bruce Vento because...he gave me the idea to do our National Park and as a result of that we have this beautiful National Park which has all of the elements of the Great Basin in it.”

In 1986, Senator Reid authored legislation that created the Great Basin National Park. According to NPT board chair William Brownell, “Senator Reid was also instrumental in helping to pass in 2000 the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, which authorized $300 million over ten years for restoration efforts at the lake. Since coming to Congress in 1986, Reid has been a major champion for the designation of wilderness helping to designate nearly 3.3 million acres of wilderness in Nevada.” Reid is working to protect Great Basin National Park from being polluted by a proposed coal plant and is striving to make Nevada the leader in renewable energy.

NPT established the Bruce F. Vento Public Service Award in 2000 to honor the memory and legacy of Bruce Vento, a 12-term Member of Congress from Minnesota and former Chair of the Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forest, and Public Land. Vento passed more park legislation when he was chair of the committee than any other previous chairman. Each recipient of the Vento Award has expanded the nation’s understanding of what it means to have a lifelong legacy and commitment to protecting America’s heritage.

Sue Vento, chair of the Vento Leadership Committee and wife of Bruce Vento, referred to a quote from John Burrows in speaking about Senator Reid “I go to nature to be soothed and healed and to have my senses put in tune once more.’ Tonight we recognize a maestro who because of his work we have places where we can go in this country regularly to be healed and soothed. Senator Reid has always been a strong supporter of environmental protection.”

Sue Vento also thanked the attendees and sponsors for their extraordinary generosity that makes “not only this event possible but most importantly the work that the National Park Trust does.”
NPT Meets with Obama Administration’s DOI Transition Team

NPT is eager to work with the new Secretary of Interior on implementing our vision that ‘everyone will have an American park experience.’ This past year, a group of NPT representatives met with President Obama’s Department of Interior Transition Team. We discussed our priorities and were invited to submit formal recommendations. NPT’s recommendations are based on our belief that a very important priority for the Department of Interior should be to connect Americans to our nation’s parks. This should be a number one challenge to ensure the long-term protection of our natural resources and the overall health of our citizens.

Our recommendations include:
• Making our nation’s parks a top priority by creating a seamless national system of parks;
• Advancing efforts to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the National Parks and including matching funds for critical land acquisition in subsequent centennial efforts;
• Utilizing an economic stimulus package to rebuild park infrastructure and create job opportunities;
• Promoting diversity by expediting the hiring of qualified people with diverse backgrounds;
• Convening a national conference to determine the best ways to publicize, enhance and expand current youth programs to reconnect our youth to parks; and
• Linking America’s to our nation’s parks by creating a user-friendly clearinghouse for external communication via the park service website.

Our efforts complement and support the new administration’s interests in promoting the National Parks through improved diversity, expanded youth programs, and the protection of strategic lands.

NPT Board Chair, William Brownell says, “NPT looks forward to working with the new Interior Secretary and his team to strengthen the integrity of our nation’s parks and our children’s connection to them.”

NPT Welcomes New Board Members

National Park Trust is pleased to announce that Michael DeSantis, Fran Mainella, Diana Taylor and Lee Verstandig have been elected to join the NPT Board of Trustees. “These four new Board Members bring a wide range of experience, expertise, and a passion for park conservation that will help NPT expand its important work,” says NPT Executive Director, Grace Lee.

Michael DeSantis brings a sharp strategic and legal mind to the NPT Board. DeSantis was a Senior Executive and Chief Legal Counsel for Choice Hotels International, one of the largest hotel companies in the world franchising more than 5,000 hotels worldwide. He also served on the Board of the Choice Hotel Foundation for 8 years, which distributes $1 million per year to provide food and shelter to those in need. His enthusiasm and focus will be vital as NPT implements its new strategic vision. “I am pleased to bring my years of experience in the business world and more recently in philanthropic endeavors to help National Park Trust achieve even higher levels of support and progress towards its strategic goals,” says DeSantis.

Fran Mainella brings invaluable national and state park experience to the NPT Board. Currently Mainella is a visiting scholar at Clemson University. She recently served six years as the Director of the National Park Service, the first woman to lead that organization. Prior to her years at NPS, she directed the Florida State Park system. Mainella serves on many boards that effect park policy and youth involvement in parks. Her extensive network and commitment to preserve and protect our nation’s parks will be invaluable to NPT’s mission. “I have worked with the National Park Trust in managing the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, a unit of the National Park system. Also I am pleased that NPT is a partner with the Children and Nature Network where I serve as an advisor. I am honored to now be joining such a leadership Board as the National Park Trust,” says Mainella. She is the first National Park Service Director to serve on the NPT Board.

Diana Leon Taylor brings marketing expertise to the NPT board. She is the founder and principle of Sage Group Consulting, which specializes in developing operating and marketing strategies for small to mid-size businesses, non-profit organizations and academic institutions. She plans to use her expertise to help NPT develop a more robust PR and marketing plan for its land acquisition and youth programs. Taylor dedicates much of her free time to organizations that promote and support the education and betterment of children. She says, “I admire the National Park Trust for bridging the life and beauty of the parks to the lives and experiences of children. We can discover so much about who we are by connecting with nature.”

Lee Verstandig brings a love of historic preservation and a passion for youth education to the NPT Board. According to Verstandig, “advocating and communicating about American institutions and heritage are extremely important to me.” He also has decades of experience working in the Executive and Legislative branches including acting administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and Assistant to the President of the United States for Intergovernmental Affairs. He has also worked with Congress where his extensive bipartisan relationships will be an important asset to NPT. Prior to his career in Washington and politics, Verstandig earned his Ph.D. in history from Brown University and served both as a college professor and Academic Dean at Brown in the 1970s.
**New Development Director**

Jeannette Mendonca comes to NPT with a solid fundraising background and a passion for community service. In 2000, Jeannette successfully nominated the first D.C. winner of Oprah Winfrey's Angel Network Use Your Life Award. At the time, Jeannette was a volunteer for the Our House organization, which is a residential job training center for at-risk young men. Jeannette was so inspired by its founder, Benny Bienvenue, that she wrote a letter to Oprah's Angel Network. She was invited to Chicago for the Oprah Show where Benny was awarded a check for $50,000.

She became Our House's first full time development director where she managed the transition of Our House from a temporary location to its permanent home, a 140-acre farm that houses 16 young men. She oversaw the fundraising drives for final purchase as well as the capital campaign for renovation and restoration of the main buildings. She followed that with national partnerships to further the educational mission of the program with corporate sponsorships and the cultivation of individual donors.

NPT's Executive Director, Grace Lee says, "Jeannette brings commitment, enthusiasm and experience to NPT. She'll use that drive to help us implement our vision that ‘everyone will have an American park experience!’"

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**Where's Your Buddy Bison Been?**

NPT launched a new initiative this year to encourage park enthusiasts of all ages to share their stories about their love of our nation's parks and public lands. We're calling the initiative “Where's Your Buddy Bison Been?”

To kick off the project, we highlight a couple who gave us the inspiration for this feature: Pat Simons and Rusty Vaughn. Out of the blue, they sent us photos of their ‘Buffy’ Bison in various parks and wilderness areas across the country and, along with the photos, shared stories of their adventures.

**Here is Pat's story:**

The greatest gift my father gave me was a love of and appreciation of the outdoors, and of our National Parks and wilderness areas. Although not particularly “fit” himself, he made sure that I and my brother spent every school holiday camping, hiking, and just being outdoors. My biggest regret in life is that no one told me, oh so many years ago, that I could have been a park ranger - and I guess I've been trying to make up for that ever since.

For the last few years, my partner Rusty and I have traveled with our Bison Buddy 'Buffy' who has joined us in many adventures. Buffy likes best to ride on the front dashboard of the car where he can see the road ahead, and yes, he is also very fond of having his photo taken at scenic overlooks – oblivious to the curious looks of bystanders. He also enjoys peeping out of the back of a backpack! Having returned recently from a fantastic trip to southeastern Utah, we are already starting to think about where to go next summer – which park should we visit for the first time, or which should we revisit? Right now, Buffy is leaning towards Yellowstone – I think you can guess why!

Editor's note: Each month in our NPT News eNewsletter and on our website, we are highlighting a new story of Buddy Bison's park adventures. Please tell us your story – with or without Buddy. We'd love to hear it. If you are interested in getting your own Buddy Bison or sharing your story, contact us at npt@parktrust.org, or call us at (301) 279-PARK.

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**New NPT Website and eNewsletter**

Please check out the new NPT website at www.parktrust.org! Kit McGinnis, NPT's land projects manager, worked with Board Members Gil Castle and Diana Taylor and the creative services of Hybrid Studios LLC to design the new site that includes many new features. Also our eNewsletter has been redesigned. Now known as NPT News on the American Park Experience, our monthly eNewsletter features all of NPT's latest developments on our land projects and youth education programs.

We hope that you will visit the website often and if you do not already subscribe to NPT News, please do so using the website or by emailing Kit McGinnis at kit@parktrust.org.
We Know Enough to Act... Reconnecting Children and Nature

Many of us have childhood memories of running freely outside, playing in creeks, catching bugs, and reveling in the beauty of nature. However, many of today's children are not connected to the outdoors in the same way. Attendance at America's parks and forests has declined steadily each year since the late 1980s.

As reported in U.S. News and World Report, a growing body of evidence shows that ‘videophilia’ or sedentary electronic-based activity is largely to blame and leading to the declining health of our children and families. There is also concern that the downward trend in park attendance may lead to a society that is less committed to conservation. People must be exposed to natural areas as children if they are to care about them as adults.

“We know enough to act” – that's the conclusion made by many experts given the current data illustrating the benefits of reconnecting children and nature.

NPT is taking action. Our vision is that ‘everyone will have an American park experience’. We've taken several steps this past year to implement that vision.

NPT established a partnership with the Children and Nature Network (C&NN), a national organization reconnecting children with nature through its peer-to-peer network of researchers, educators, and child health and well-being organizations. C&NN is chaired by author Richard Louv. His book Last Child in the Woods, Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder, is widely acknowledged as sparking the national and international movement to reconnect children and nature.

NPT also instituted the Youth to Parks National Scholarship Fund, partnering with several organizations around the country to bring underserved youth to our parks and to cultivate future conservationists and environmental professionals. The Fund provides scholarships to:

• Reconnect children and nature,
• Educate and foster future conservationists, and
• Provide park opportunities to underserved youth

Our partners include:

The National Hispanic Environmental Council (NHEC)
The NHEC sends youth through a rigorous 10-day environmental leadership training for Latino students aged 16-18. Students are taught at a variety of sites, including National Parks, wetlands and historic ruins, and exposed to many different environmental professions.

For Love of Children (FLOC)
FLOC's Outdoor Education Center facilitates healthy character development for youth through adventure challenges, environmental education, and sustainability practices in a powerful outdoor classroom.

Board Chair, William Brownell says, “By implementing our vision that ‘everyone will have an American park experience’, NPT is reconnecting children and their families with nature and nurturing the next generation of conservation leaders.”
Rocky Mountain High – A New Partnership to Protect a Colorado Wilderness Area

The Maroon Bells–Snowmass Wilderness Area may exemplify Rocky Mountain splendor better than any other Wilderness Area in the country. It was designated in the 1964 Wilderness Act and now comprises more than 180,000 acres. There are more than 100 miles of hiking trails crossing nine passes over 12,000 feet. Rugged peaks – six of them above 14,000 feet – rise dramatically above verdant green valleys, turquoise blue lakes dot the landscape, and striking red cliffs frame the views. The unique, jagged symmetry of the Maroon Bells, reflected in Maroon Lake, is perhaps Colorado’s most often photographed mountain scene.

The National Park Trust and the Wilderness Land Trust have formed a new partnership to protect a 10-acre mining claim inholding perched on a high ridge within the Maroon Bells–Snowmass Wilderness. This pristine property is located in the beautiful mountain ranges between Aspen and Crested Butte, Colorado. It is in the Copper Creek drainage above the old mining town of Gothic and sits a few hundred feet from a popular hiking trail. “By protecting this inholding, we will prevent any development or mining of the property within this designated Wilderness Area,” says NPT Executive Director, Grace Lee. A Wilderness Area is defined as “where the Earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain” (The Wilderness Act of 1964).

NPT is proud to be a part of this critical preservation project. NPT often partners with other organizations to help raise funds to protect critical inholdings. The Wilderness Land Trust is a small, highly specialized nonprofit organization established to buy and protect wilderness land. Once funds are raised, the property will be conveyed to the U.S. Forest Service and protected within the designated Wilderness Area.
NPT Board ‘Reaches the Peak’ at Lassen Volcanic National Park!

Lassen Volcanic National Park started as two separate national monuments designated by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1907: Cinder Cone National Monument and Lassen Peak National Monument. After the last volcanic explosion at Lassen Peak in 1915, the area was officially designated as a National Park. Today, more than 35,000 people a year hike the Lassen Volcanic Peak Trail during the Park’s short four month season. The trail provides a unique opportunity to view the top of the largest plug dome volcano in the world.

Given the Park’s short season, visitors often hike the trail before the snow melts and climb all over the mountain in search of a way between the intermittent snowfields; the narrow trail often forces hikers to take short cuts between switchbacks; and when the trail gets to the top, it terminates in an unlikely spot and hikers are left to find their own route to points that interest them. Today, the Park’s flagship trail to Lassen Peak shows significant erosion to the unique, fragile volcanic habitat.

NPT has been working with the Park Service since 2006 on a plan to raise funds to rebuild the trail. In 2008, NPT held a board meeting at Lassen Volcanic National Park’s newly opened ‘green’ visitor center. As part of the meeting, Park Service staff, NPT Board Members and NPT staff hiked the Lassen Volcanic Peak Trail. The hike gave us a first-hand look at the popular trail and its need for restoration.

The trail starts at 8,500 feet and winds up 2.5 miles to the 10,500-foot summit. Views along the trail and at the summit are spectacular. With the help of knowledgeable, patient and friendly Park Service staff, nearly all of us ‘Reached the Peak’, which also happens to be the name for our fundraising campaign.

This ‘Peak’ experience garnered NPT Board interest in raising funds to help rebuild the trail. The project will likely take five years and cost about $2.2 million dollars to complete. NPT is moving into a full fundraising cycle to raise funds to help restore this much beloved trail.

NPT’s Executive Director, Grace Lee says, “We’re looking forward to a fruitful partnership and thank Lassen Volcanic National Park for hosting us and our intrepid board members who donate their time and resources to advance our efforts to preserve our National Parks.”

Editors note: If you’d like to support this project, contact NPT at 301-279-PARK or email Jeannette Mendonca at jeannette@parktrust.org.
John Denver wrote the song Country Roads extolling the beauty of West Virginia after visiting the Blue Ridge Mountains and Shenandoah River Valley, located in the state’s eastern panhandle. The songwriter was not the only one taken by the area’s natural beauty. George Washington appreciated it as well and played a significant role in the area’s history.

George Washington first surveyed the land as a teenager and bought his first property there. He bathed in the mineral waters at Berkeley Springs, WV. His brothers and their descendants built magnificent homes there, many of which are still standing.

After the Revolutionary War, General Washington envisioned the area as the gateway to the west for the young nation by building a canal along the Potomac River. He established the first federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, and met with his advisors at his brother’s home, Happy Retreat, in Charles Town, WV to plan westward expansion. At one point, he considered making Shepherdstown, WV the new nation’s capitol.

To fully appreciate the area’s significant Washington Family history, NPT has embarked on several initiatives to preserve and celebrate the Washington Family Legacy.

The Washington Family Legacy National Historical Park Initiative
NPT has partnered with a coalition of historic preservationists and landowners to protect and celebrate this Legacy. Congressional legislation was introduced in the 110th Congress for authorization and appropriations for the Park Service to study the suitability and feasibility of adding four of the Washington Family estates to the National Park System. The study would be the first step to determining whether the project merits inclusion within the National Park System.

The four properties in the study legislation include Claymont Court and Blakeley Mansion, built by George Washington’s grand-nephews on land inherited from George’s brother John Augustine; Happy Retreat, which belonged to the first president’s youngest brother, Charles; and, perhaps the most significant, much of George Washington’s Bullskin Plantation, the first property he bought with his hard-earned wages as a surveyor for Lord Fairfax. These homes represent a significant portion of the Washington Family Legacy. Four inter-connected Washington Family estates available simultaneously represent a tremendous opportunity for preserving these national treasures.

NPT has cast a wide net to gain input and advice for how to best protect this Legacy, bringing the president of the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association and a board member to visit the properties. Several developers, historians, and an Editor from the book division of National Geographic have visited the sites as well.
Happy Retreat is under a purchase option to be acquired and converted into a cultural center and become the site for the George Washington Institute of Living Ethics. NPT helped extend the option by donating funds so that the nonprofit friends group can continue to raise funds for its purchase.

**Washington's Way West: A Vision for a National Heritage Area**
NPT co-sponsored a summit to build momentum for creating a National Heritage Area, which would include transportation routes along the Potomac River and the Washington Family Homeland. The area would also incorporate themes from the C&O Canal and Harpers Ferry National Historical Parks, which are contiguous to the planned Area. Local leaders, heritage groups, business people, and arts associations attended the summit held at the Washington Family Home, Claymont Court, which NPT has been working to protect and restore.

A National Heritage Area is authorized by Congress to encourage the preservation of history in areas of distinctive human impact on the landscape. National Heritage Areas seek to promote tourism and to conserve natural, cultural, historic, and scenic features and preserve the traditions and customs that are a valuable part of the national story.

The National Park Service provides assistance in establishing the areas but has no ongoing role. National Heritage Areas are managed by a local entity in partnership with various stakeholders. These stakeholders include individual citizens, local, state, and federal governments, and nonprofit and private sector groups. Currently there are 40 National Heritage Areas.

**Preserving Claymont Court, the Crown Jewel of the Washington Family Homes**
NPT is also working to restore Claymont Court, one of the eight Washington Family homes still standing. NPT was awarded grant funds from the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) to complete a comprehensive fundraising plan for the restoration of this magnificent 16,000-square-foot mansion built in 1820 by George Washington's grandnephew, Bushrod Corbin Washington.

Monarc Construction generously donated its services to complete a comprehensive conditions assessment of the building. The assessment served as the cornerstone for various grant applications. So far, NPT has been awarded restoration funds from the 1772 Foundation.

“The people of the Shenandoah Valley and Washington scholars have long realized what a national treasure the Washington Family homes and the traditions associated with them are, and the time has come to share that treasure with a much wider audience, because of their importance for the development of George Washington's character and thought, and because they tell the story of a remarkable American family that should be as well known as that of the Adamses,” states Philander D. Chase, editor emeritus, The Papers of George Washington, University of Virginia.

**NPT Assists Preservation Groups**
NPT works in many ways to protect and create parkland. NPT staff often assists nascent preservation groups in developing and implementing their vision and plans for preservation of critical lands. Over the past year, NPT has provided technical assistance and advice to several newly formed groups, including recommendations on zoning initiatives and preservation options.

- **The Shenandoah River Blueways Water Trail Initiative**
The Shenandoah River was listed as one of the nation's most endangered rivers in 2006 because rapid development has increased polluted runoff and has over-burdened sewage treatment and water supplies. However, along its short stretch through West Virginia, there is little residential development. The downturn in the housing market has created a window of opportunity to protect public access to the river there. The citizens organizing this initiative will work with the local Parks and Recreation Department and seek outside funding to acquire targeted parcels as they come up for sale. The end goal would be to create a Blueways Water Trail System, which would link the sites all the way to the confluence with the Potomac River at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park and provide multiple public access points along the river.

- **Cool Springs Farm** is a 60-acre property with historic houses and natural springs owned by an ardent conservationist. She wants to create a nonprofit craft school set in a sustainable nature center environment.

- **Friends of the Blue Ridge** is a newly formed advocacy nonprofit organization whose mission is to protect the Blue Ridge Mountains from incompatible development along the Virginia and West Virginia borders. The steep slopes of the Blue Ridge and the independent nature of those who choose to live there provide unique preservation challenges.
Native Trees Donated to the Vento Nature Sanctuary

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree...

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the sweet earth’s flowing breast...

Those timeless words written by poet, Joyce Kilmer, describe the importance that trees play in our lives. In an urban environment, trees provide many benefits from cleansing the air to preventing soil erosion and providing habitat for wildlife. NPT received a grant to plant 300 native trees at the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, located in Saint Paul, MN. The Apache Foundation donated the trees; and Sanctuary volunteers will plant them in the spring of 2009. The tree donation will help the Apache Foundation Tree Program achieve its goal of planting 1 million trees across the nation.

Through the tree program, the foundation purchases and donates native seedlings or young trees for beautification projects. The Vento Sanctuary will be responsible for planting and caring for the young trees after Apache has delivered them. NPT applied for the donation to help complete the Sanctuary’s habitat restoration. NPT also plans to help raise funds to develop educational materials for adults and children.

The Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary is a 27-acre natural area located in the Mississippi River flood plain just east of Saint Paul downtown district and within the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, a unit of the National Park System. The Sanctuary, part of the Lower Phalen Creek Project, provides an important model for communities that seek to reclaim their critical environmental resources and provide opportunities for the area’s residents to experience and learn about their native habitats and history. The ecological and cultural resource is being transformed from an old industrial eyesore to a beautiful scenic park.

The Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary is named in honor of Bruce Vento, a native of Saint Paul, MN. Vento loved the natural world and worked hard for its protection. The Sanctuary is, among other things, a memorial to him as a person, to what he valued, and to what he worked so hard to protect.

NPT will continue to seek projects and funds that will help the Sanctuary achieve its mission of being an ecological and cultural resource for the area’s urban residents.
Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve Update

Since the National Park Trust purchased the 11,000-acre Z-Bar Ranch in the Flint Hills of Kansas and created the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve (TPNP) by act of Congress in 1996, this unit of the National Park System has opened more of its treasures to the public every year. And 2008 was no exception:

- In April, three ponds in Two-Section were opened to the public for fishing. Any fisherman—and so far there have been more children than adults—may simply “walk in” at the kiosk and enjoy the excellent fishing in these ponds. Catch and release, of course, is required so as not to diminish the enjoyment for those who come later.

- The Arts and Education Contest, now in its eighth year, continues to grow in popularity as an event held annually at the preserve.

- Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, Living History and Historic Ranching demonstrations took place every other weekend at the TPNP.

- A new Junior Ranger program was initiated, with a bilingual handbook and the completion of the Junior Ranger station in the barn.

- During the summer, a new “leave no trace” scavenger hunt program and a night sky program were initiated at the Preserve. Also, a new official National Park Service brochure was produced for the TPNP.

- This past fall, the Preserve acquired three bio-diesel buses decorated with prairie scenes. The buses are used to transport tourists out into the prairie and up to the high ridges where the grass-covered hills appear to roll endlessly into the horizon.

- Most important, planning and fundraising continues for the proposed new Visitors’ Center to be located just south of the historic farmhouse and barn. Paul Duffendack, former Chair of NPT’s Board of Trustees and a retired architect living in Kansas, is taking the lead on the Visitor Center Steering Committee to select a firm to develop the design for the new center. The announcement of the winning architect should be made in early 2009.

While these developments have been enhancing the visitor experience, a major change in leadership at the Tallgrass Preserve has occurred. Steve Miller, who served as the TPNP’s first Superintendent for the last eleven years, retired from the National Park Service in August 2008. Following the celebrations of Miller’s great accomplishments and visionary leadership, his successor, Wendy Lauritzen, took over as the new superintendent in November. Lauritzen is a native of Arkansas City, Kansas and most recently served as Superintendent of Washita Battlefield National Historic Site in Oklahoma.

Look for more new programs to be initiated at Tallgrass in 2009 and beyond. Thanks to the NPS and support of the Preserve by the Kansas Park Trust and its energetic Executive Director, Louise Carlin, we can expect much more. For example, in the fall of 2009 there could be a pasture devoted to the native bison for the first time since the 19th century when they roamed freely across the Flint Hills.

J ohn W. Rollins, Jr.

Editor’s Note: John Rollins is a founding Board Member of NPT where he serves on the Finance Committee. He, along with NPT Board Chair, William Brownell, represents NPT on the Kansas Park Trust Board of Trustees. Rollins is a Professor of Entrepreneurship at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C.
This past year, Wendel Witkay passed away leaving a large bequest to support NPT’s mission. NPT is very thankful for this generous legacy gift that will allow us to advance many of our important land preservation and youth education programs. We interviewed Wendel and Lucile’s son, Paul Witkay about his inspirational parents.

“My parents met on a camping trip in Missouri during their college days. They both loved to hike and the outdoors. My mother was a member of the Hoofers Club at the University of Wisconsin. They climbed mountains, hiked, camped, and canoed.

We visited many of the National Parks while I was growing up with my three brothers. My parents loved the Rocky Mountains, Tetons, Grand Canyon, Yosemite and all of the parks in Utah. After they retired, they traveled many parts of the world and my father became an accomplished photographer. They put together travel logs of their slides to show at various travel and photography clubs.

My mother was a very talented artist and musician as well as an outdoors enthusiast. I believe it was in Estes Park where she demonstrated a talent that we didn’t know she had. We saw a small herd of moose across a valley from the trail we were hiking on. My mother asked us to stop and be quiet. She then put her hands to her mouth and let out an incredibly loud two-toned bellow using a sort of “open-throat yodel”.

The first time she bellowed, several males turned their heads and looked to see where the sound was coming from. The second time, they started walking towards us from across the valley. When it appeared that they were determined to find the source, my mother suggested we get moving down the trail. My mother explained that it was a moose mating call.

My parents worked very hard to raise their family and took great joy in experiencing the wonders of God’s creation.”

Editor’s note: To learn how you can leave a legacy gift to NPT, contact us at 301-279-PARK or email us at npt@parktrust.org

Through Land Preservation, NPT works

- To protect threatened, privately owned land or inholdings located within the existing boundary of parks, forests or refuges. There are 4 million acres of privately held inholdings in the National Park System alone, so our work is cut out for us!
- To protect privately owned land adjacent to parklands. Many of these parcels are key viewsheds, wildlife habitats or historic structures, which could drastically alter a park experience if developed.
- To establish new parklands. The 11,000-acre Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve is a prime example. Key to our success is working closely with the National Park Service and other agencies to determine acquisition priorities for each region of the country.
- To protect wildlife areas and areas with historical significance through purchase, conservation easement or by providing technical assistance from our experienced staff and dedicated Board Members. We do not limit our mission to the preservation of National Parks alone, but work to protect and expand state and local parks as well.

Ultimately, the National Park Trust works to exchange or give the land it acquires to suitable organizations, which agree to preserve and manage those resources as parklands in perpetuity. Land purchases are made using funds raised by the National Park Trust.

Through Reconnecting Children with Nature

As we spend more time indoors and as successive generations grow up with less of a connection to nature we need to build greater awareness and appreciation for the importance of our country’s public lands and parks.

Our vision is that ‘everyone will have an American park experience’. To achieve this we seek to champion the acquisition and preservation of critical national, state and local parklands and to build a greater awareness through education–focusing on our youth, especially those that are underserved and at-risk.

In 2008, NPT instituted the Youth to Parks National Scholarship Fund and established a partnership with the Children and Nature Network. With our new partnerships, NPT is working to reconnect children and their families with nature and to nurture the next generation of conservation leaders.

Our Vision is that ‘Everyone Will Have An American Park Experience’

The National Park Trust is the nation’s only organization dedicated to the completion, and the full appreciation, of the American system of national and state parks through the identification of key land acquisition needs and opportunities, the convening of potential funders to acquire these lands, as well as increasing efforts to ensure that future generations appreciate and experience this national heritage.

Your contribution assures NPT’s continued leadership in protecting America’s treasured parklands and in providing environmental education for our youth. Thank you for believing in what we do!

Gifts of Cash or Credit Card
This is one of the easiest ways to contribute to National Park Trust. You can send a check made out to National Park Trust, donate by credit card, or online at www.parktrust.org.

Refer a Friend to our website www.parktrust.org, tell them what a difference they can make when they join as a member of National Park Trust!

Donate Monthly
Contribute monthly, quarterly, or annually on an ongoing basis. Make your initial donation online at www.parktrust.org and future donations will be automatically charged to your credit card. You can change your options at any time and an email receipt will be sent for each gift.

Honor a Family Member or Friend
Make a gift to NPT to honor family and friends. NPT will prepare a special card to notify them of your thoughtful gift (see story below).

Gifts of Securities
Appreciated securities will allow you to make a donation and enjoy significant tax benefits. You will receive an income tax charitable donation for the full fair market value of the securities and avoid all or part of your capital gains tax. Your broker can transfer securities electronically to NPT.

Workplace Giving
Federal employees can designate a portion of their paycheck to NPT through the Combined Federal Campaigns (CFC). Our CFC number is 12213. NPT also participates in many State Employee Campaigns.

Corporate Matching Gifts
Many employers match charitable gifts made by employees, enabling you to double or even triple your donation. Check with your personnel office about your company’s matching gift program.

Gifts by Will: Bequests
Bequests enable you to provide for NPT’s work in perpetuity. You can donate a specific dollar amount, personal property, real estate, a percentage of your estate’s value, or a part or all of the remainder of your estate. Contact us for further details on how you can give a legacy gift (see story on opposite page).

Planned Gifts
Popular life income gift options include charitable remainder trusts and charitable gift annuities.

Life Insurance and Retirement Plans
You can designate NPT as the owner and beneficiary of a life insurance policy. Premiums on such policies may be tax deductible. Retirement plans are another asset that you can leave to NPT, especially since both estate and income taxes can be avoided when NPT is named a beneficiary.

Get the card that supports parks!
By using the NPT Visa Card, you can easily support our projects with no annual fee. Visit the NPT website at www.parktrust.org or call 1-800-853-5576, ext.8383 and ask for the NPT card.

Notify NPT about important property for sale in and around parklands.

NPT is a non-profit charitable organization exempt from taxation. All contributions to NPT are 100% tax deductible. Please contact your tax attorney or accountant to determine which options are best for you.

CREATIVE GIFT GIVING

For the past three years, Richard Adler and his wife, Susan Ivory, have surprised their family and friends with gift memberships to NPT to celebrate the Holidays. Their creative generosity has delighted their recipients and increased NPT’s membership rolls! In 2008 their gift brought NPT 36 new members!

“We truly appreciate what NPT is doing to protect our nation’s parks, and we want our friends and relatives to know about the organization. We hope other people will join us in starting a new gift giving tradition,” says Susan Ivory.

Her husband, Richard Adler, is a Tony award winning co-composer of Damn Yankees and The Pajama Game. He also served as a Trustee of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts for 13 years. The Department of the Interior commissioned Mr. Adler to write a symphony based on his experience touring America’s parklands. His Wilderness Suite, premiered in 1983 and was played by regional symphonies all over the country and in Europe. As a result of his symphony, Richard Adler received the coveted National Park Service Honorary Park Ranger Award. NPS Director Mary Bomar says that, “Park Ranger is a title normally earned by a career of patrolling the back country, conducting interpretive tours for visitors, or maintaining the trails, campgrounds, and historic buildings within National Parks. The title of ‘Honorary Ranger’ is bestowed on special friends and partners who demonstrate by virtue the same spirit of hard work and absolute dedication to the National Parks,”

This prestigious award was first given to President John F. Kennedy. Other recipients include Ansel Adams, Lady Bird Johnson, Barbara Bush, Walter Mondale and Congressman Bruce Vento.

Thank you to Richard Adler and Susan Ivory for their continuing support and inspiration!
GIVING: JOIN THE NPT CIRCLE OF SUPPORTERS

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NPT is most grateful for the generous financial and in-kind support of the following individuals, corporations, and foundations for our park preservation and youth education programs (July 1, 2007-June 30, 2008). We are pleased to recognize the following leadership donors. Thank you!

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J. ohn M. argraf
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J. ohn M. artin
J. ohn M. artinez
Dawn M. athews
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M argaret H. Zube

NPT thanks those who support our mission through these campaigns.
CFC #12213
## Statement of Activities (Audited)

**Year Ended June 30, 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total 2008</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support and Revenue</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions and Grants</td>
<td>899,250</td>
<td>97.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td>1,023</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Income</td>
<td>24,421</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
<td>924,694</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Services</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Conservation</td>
<td>164,688</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Education</td>
<td>320,956</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>229,990</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Program</strong></td>
<td>715,634</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting Services</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Development</td>
<td>103,647</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; General</td>
<td>65,419</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>27,919</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Supporting Services</strong></td>
<td>196,985</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>912,619</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Net Assets before Non-operating items</td>
<td>12,075</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realized and Unrealized Gain (loss) on Investments</td>
<td>(10,695)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change in Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>1,380</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</strong></td>
<td>3,565,742</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets, End of Year</strong></td>
<td>3,567,122</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Statement of Financial Position (Audited)

**June 30, 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>June 30, 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Assets</td>
<td>349,979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>531,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property &amp; Equipment (Net of Depreciation)</td>
<td>1,381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate and related holdings</td>
<td>2,855,701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td>3,738,301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Liabilities</td>
<td>171,179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term Liabilities</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
<td>171,179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>3,567,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>3,738,301</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A complete copy of our audit is available upon request.

---

### Support and Revenues

**$924,694**

- Contributions and Grants: 97.3%
- Other Income: 0.1%
- Investment Income: 2.6%

### Expenses

**$912,619**

- Programs: 78.4%
- Membership Development: 11.4%
- Management & General: 7.2%
- Fundraising: 3.1%