

Destination Scorecard: National Park Regions

U.S. and Canadian national parks today face modern pressures inside and outside their borders—pollution, budget cuts, development, soaring visitation, ecological decline. Using the same Stewardship Index pioneered in last year's global Destination Scorecard, *National Geographic Traveler* magazine and the National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations teamed up to evaluate the condition of park destinations, including the gateway towns you visit on the way in and out.

Over 300 experts in sustainable tourism, destination stewardship, and related fields surveyed 55 North American national park destinations. The results, reported in the July/August 2005 issue of *Traveler*, yield a Destination Stewardship Index, on a 100-point scale, for 55 park regions. For more information, see <http://www.ngtraveler.com/traveler/> or <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/>.

ON TOP

- 88 Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site, British Columbia
- 78 Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Wisconsin
- 78 Cape Breton Highlands National Park, Nova Scotia
- 78 Gros Morne National Park, Newfoundland
- 77 Great Basin National Park, Nevada
- 77 Kootenay/Yoho National Parks, British Columbia
- 77 Wrangell-St Elias National Park & Preserve, Alaska
- 75 Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Hawaii
- 72 Chaco Culture National Historical Park, New Mexico
- 72 Crater Lake National Park, Oregon
- 72 Point Reyes National Seashore, California
- 72 Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta
- 71 Denali National Park & Preserve, Alaska
- 71 Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve, Alaska
- 71 Jasper National Park, Alberta
- 70 Kenai Fjords National Park, Alaska

STILL DOING OKAY

- 69 Big Bend National Park, Texas
- 69 Olympic National Park, Washington
- 69 Theodore Roosevelt National Park, North Dakota
- 68 Fundy National Park, New Brunswick
- 68 Redwood National and State Parks, California
- 68 Zion National Park, Utah
- 67 Death Valley National Park, California
- 66 Antietam National Battlefield, Maryland
- 66 Glacier National Park, Montana
- 65 Black Canyon Of The Gunnison National Park, Colorado
- 65 Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah
- 65 North Cascades National Park, Washington
- 65 Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, British Columbia
- 64 Acadia National Park, Maine
- 64 Petrified Forest National Park, Arizona
- 63 Joshua Tree National Park, California
- 63 Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado
- 63 Mount Rainier National Park, Washington
- 63 Tallgrass Prairie National Park, Kansas
- 62 Arches and Canyonlands National Parks, Utah
- 62 Cumberland Island National Seashore, Georgia
- 62 Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, California
- 60 Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Michigan

FACING TROUBLE

- 59 Colonial National Historical Park (Yorktown/Jamestown), Virginia
- 58 Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky
- 56 Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado
- 56 Yosemite National Park, California
- 55 Banff National Park, Alberta
- 55 Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas
- 54 Mount Rushmore National Memorial/ Badlands National Park, South Dakota
- 53 Carlsbad Caverns National Park, New Mexico
- 53 Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona
- 53 Point Pelee National Park, Ontario
- 51 Gettysburg National Military Park, Pennsylvania
- 51 Yellowstone/Grand Teton National Parks, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming
- 50 Cape Hatteras National Seashore, North Carolina

ROCK BOTTOM

- 48 Shenandoah National Park, Virginia
- 40 Great Smoky Mountains National Park, North Carolina, Tennessee
- 34 Everglades National Park/Big Cypress National Preserve, Florida

WHAT PANELISTS WERE ASKED

Round one: Pick from this list of national park regions in the U.S. and Canada each one that you personally know, skipping all others. For each destination you select, enter a brief comment to note the factors you think most important. Comments are anonymous. Evaluate the destination as a whole, weighing the importance both of the park and of the neighboring region according to their relative significance.

Round two: Review the comments for each destination you selected and then assign an overall score for each on the 1-to-10 scale shown below. Please weigh thoughtfully the following six aspects of sustainability.

A - Environmental and ecological quality.

B - Social/cultural integrity.

C - Condition of built heritage (archeological, historic, and current structures).

D - Aesthetic appeal, both natural and human-made.

E - The nature of tourism development: To what degree is it of appropriate character? Does it benefit local people in a way that encourages protection of the locale? How well are tourists informed about the locale and their proper role in it?

F - And, perhaps the most important, the future outlook for the destination in terms of sustainability, taking into account

all prevailing stewardship practices and policies.

Then, assign an overall score for each destination using this scale:

1 to 2: Catastrophic: all criteria very negative, outlook grim.

3 to 4: In serious trouble.

5 to 6: In moderate trouble: all criteria medium-negative or a mix of negatives and positives.

7 to 8: Minor difficulties.

9: Authentic, unspoiled, and likely to remain so.

10: Enhanced.

(Note: For readability, published scores moved the decimal point to the right, for a scale of 1-100.)

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