



Theodore Roosevelt National Park © NPS

FACT SHEET

National Parks in North Dakota

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site •
Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site • Lewis &
Clark National Historic Trail • North Country National
Scenic Trail • Theodore Roosevelt National Park

North Dakota's national parks capture the history of the interactions between settlers and native peoples. Archaeologists are still uncovering remnants of villages belonging to the Northern Plains Indians. Many of these tribes traded with settlers at the Fort Union Trading Post and welcomed Lewis & Clark during the expedition's cross-country explorations.

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site - John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company built Fort Union Trading Post in 1828 near the junction of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers. In its heyday, the post was a busy place and employed up to 100 people. It became the headquarters for trading buffalo hides and other furs with the Assiniboine, Crow, Cree, Ojibway, Blackfeet, and Hidatsa Tribes.

Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site - Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site was established October 26, 1974. The 1,758 acre site preserves historic and

archaeological remnants of the culture and agricultural lifestyle of the Northern Plains Indians. More than fifty archaeological sites suggest a possible 8,000 year span of inhabitation, ending with five centuries of Hidatsa earthlodge village occupation. The circular depressions at the three village sites are up to 40 feet in diameter and are a silent testimony to the people that lived here.

Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail - In 1804, Meriwether Lewis & William Clark began a voyage of discovery. They departed from Camp Wood located in what was to become Illinois. The President Jefferson had privately requested Congress to fund the expedition shortly before the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. They traveled over a three-year period through lands that later became 11 states. Most of the 3,700 mile-long trail follows the Missouri & Columbia Rivers.

North Country National Scenic Trail - Links scenic, natural, historic, and cultural areas in seven northern states. The approximately four thousand mile long trail includes a variety of hikes from easy walking to challenging treks. When completed the trail will become the longest continuous hiking trail in the United States.



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Theodore Roosevelt National Park - Roosevelt first came to the badlands in September 1883 on a hunting trip. While there he became interested in the cattle business and invested in the Maltese Cross Ranch. He returned the next year and established the Elkhorn Ranch. Whenever he managed to spend time in the badlands, he became more and more alarmed by the damage that was being done to the land and its wildlife. Conservation increasingly became one of Roosevelt's major concerns. During his presidency, Roosevelt established the US Forest Service and signed the 1906 Antiquities Act under which he proclaimed 18 national monuments. He also established five national parks, 51 wildlife refuges, and 150 national forests.

Key Issues Facing National Parks in North Dakota

Taking care of America's national parks should be a national priority. With the 100th birthday of the National Park System approaching in 2016, it is more important than ever to address the ongoing problems that our parks are facing. The National Park Service is suffering from an operations funding shortfall now exceeding \$800 million annually. In addition, several billion dollars are needed to protect archaeological sites and historic buildings, and repair the extensive backlog of maintenance projects. Many park friends in Congress have spent years highlighting the fiscal crisis in America's national parks. The Administration has responded with a budget request for 2008 that would increase the National Park Service operating budget by \$258 million -- a strong step in restoring our parks and improving the experiences of visitors. This budget also launches the National Park Centennial Challenge, which if properly framed and enacted could help restore the parks for their 100th birthday and for generations to come. In addition to the operational shortfall, the National Park Service has a \$1.9 billion land acquisition backlog consisting of over 11,000 tracts of land and covering more than 1.8 million acres. In many instances, failure to acquire these lands makes operating the parks more complex and costly. Unfortunately, funding for national park federal land acquisition has declined dramatically in recent years, from \$130 million five years ago, to only \$23 million in the fiscal year 2008 request.

- Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site lacks the funding necessary to adequately protect its natural resources. Evasive, non-native species and a tree-killing fungus threaten the park's cultural landscape and river-bank erosion is putting archaeological resources at risk.
- Fort Union Trading Post has a collection of 800,000 museum items with only one curator on staff to care for these treasures.
- There is currently no trail-wide inventory of the archaeological resources found along the Lewis & Clark Trail. As a result, it is impossible for trail staff to accurately assess the threats faces and to adequately protect them from destruction, desecration, looting, and vandalism.
- Many buildings at Theodore Roosevelt National Park are in need of a facelift. However, budget constraints have made it extremely difficult for the park to take much-needed steps towards restoration. Fortunately, Telecom Pioneers of America, a volunteer group, has donated their time and money to complete some of the jobs that the Park Service was unable to do on its own.

Park Visitation in North Dakota

In fiscal year 2005, the national parks in North Dakota welcomed 549,996 visitors.

Budget Information

In fiscal year 2006, the operations funding for the five national parks in North Dakota was \$3.7 million. For fiscal year 2008, the Administration is proposing a 14 percent increase, which would bring operations funding to \$4.3 million.

Contact Information

For more information on the national parks in North Dakota, please contact NPCA Legislative Director Blake Selzer at 202-223-6722, ext. 250.



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