

THE  
**FUTURE**  
OF  
**AMERICA'S**  
**NATIONAL**  
**PARKS**

First Annual  
Centennial Strategy for

# Wright Brothers National Memorial

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



**Site:** WRBR

**Year:** 2007

**Vision Statement**

Wright Brothers National Memorial is located on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. The wind, isolation, dunes, and unobstructed open space made this an ideal location for Wilbur and Orville Wright to perfect and implement the basic principles of flight. The brothers first visited the area in 1900 to test their gliders and eventually achieved the first successful powered flight on December 17, 1903.

Over 500,000 visitors per year visit the park. The 428-acre site contains a large granite boulder at the historic point of take-off, a 60-foot granite monument (1932) atop the Big Kill Devil Hill, and reconstructions of the brothers' 1903 living quarters and hangar. The park's visitor center has been designated as a National Historic Landmark.

Wright Brothers National Memorial was originally designated as the Kill Devil Hill Monument National Memorial on March 2, 1927. The park was transferred to the NPS from the War Department on August 10, 1933 and redesignated as Wright Brothers National Memorial on December 1, 1953.

The Centennial Vision for the park will include the removal of the temporary pavilion structure and the rehabilitation and expansion of the current historic Visitor Center. This work will be done in partnership with the First Flight Foundation.

**Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager**

Michael B. Murray

Site: WRBR

STEWARDSHIP

Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Wright Brothers proposes to develop and implement an accessibility plan for the use and enjoyment of special populations of NPS visitors. The plan will be based on an Accessibility Assessment of deficiencies and will identify each eligible site, develop conceptual designs, cost estimates, and list necessary compliance actions. Upon completion of the Plan the park will develop an Implementation Plan to phase in the recommendations as funding becomes available.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WRBR

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.

Wright Brothers National Memorial will rehabilitate and restore the historic Wright Brothers Visitor Center. The building is in serious condition and this project will improve it to good condition. The park proposes a complete rehabilitation of the Visitor Center constructed in 1960 which serves 500,000 visitors annually. This project is linked to a partner-funded project. In 1997 the park entered into a Fundraising/Development Agreement with the First Flight Centennial Foundation to improve facilities at the park site in preparation for the centennial. An NPS study of Mission 66 Visitor Centers determined that the current WRBR visitor center is architecturally significant and worthy of protection. The NPS plans to retain the historic facility and incorporate it into the needed expansion of the visitor services facilities. Any rehabilitation to the existing visitor center will require NPS funding. Construction of a possible annex to the Visitor's Center and exhibitry for both structures will be funded by the Foundation.

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Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.

The Outer Banks Group, which includes Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, and Wright Brothers National Memorial, will develop a Predator Management Plan. The three parks each have issues relating to negative predator impacts on the natural resources. The majority of these negative impacts may have been brought about by increased development on the Outer Banks over the past twenty years. The park will develop a plan for sustained reduction of predator species. This plan is primarily to assist in the protection of endangered species breeding and germination. It will enhance survival of the young and protect vegetation to allow growth through the seed production stage. There will also be a component of limiting predators that have a benefit due to area development.

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Improve high-priority assets to acceptable condition, as measured by the Facility Condition Index.

Wright Brothers will complete and implement a comprehensive Sign Replacement Plan. Signs installed along the Outer Banks are exposed to extreme ultraviolet conditions, almost constant blasting with sand and hurricane force winds, all of which reduce the life expectancy of the signs. These signs are well past their useful life, most needing to be replaced several years ago. These signs provide information to approximately 500,000 visitors annually.

Site: WRBR

**STEWARDSHIP**

**Improve the condition of park resources and assets.**

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

**Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.**

Wright Brothers will provide for vegetation screening and viewshed management by planting, removing/thinning vegetation at First Flight Airstrip and along Highway 158. This project is identified in the park's GMP and has two components. One is safety, due to the presence of a small air strip with limited facilities. Increased safety is expected with increased visibility for pilots and visitors on the ground. This also enhances the visitors experience by relating present day flight viewed on the airstrip with the Wrights achievements. The second component is limiting the visible intrusions to the viewscape of the site. These intrusions may be passing vehicles, the five lane highway itself, or the many structures that have been put up along the park borders.

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**Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.**

Wright Brothers will research, write and print a Historic Structure Report for two (2) historic structures, the Wright Brothers Monument (Pylon) and the Power House located at Wright Brothers National Memorial. The Wright Brothers Monument (Pylon)(4) and the power house were built in 1932. These structures are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Much of the original documentation on these structures still exists today in the park. However, it is important that this information be compiled into a useable document for future work that may occur. The completion of this study will enable park management to fully assess the current interpretation, protection, and preservation practices related to these structures. This critical baseline information will aid the park by providing factual information to the park's interpretive, resource management, and maintenance personnel. Documented research will result in interpretive programs that are based upon facts rather than guesses, opinions, and conjectures.

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Site: WRBR

STEWARDSHIP

Serve as the Preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Wright Brothers will develop and implement a Water Drainage Management Plan. The park contains over 200 acres of significant habitat for park wildlife and vegetation. It also has some of the heaviest visitor use in the area and contains upland forest and related habitats. A section of the park is a large upland and marsh habitat. A Drainage Management Plan is needed to protect wildlife and vegetation, and to preserve the natural processes in the area.

This project will serve as an example of how to eliminate and reverse the negative impacts created by past and present development. In addition, the restored approximately 200 acres will provide a model for the native barrier island upland habitat that is fast disappearing from the region. This large tract will be an excellent Environmental Education and Interpretation tool with the results (an active barrier island upland habitat) being key ingredients for these programs.

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Site: WRBR

**ENVIRONMENT**

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.

Wright Brothers will prepare a Water Drainage Management Plan. Under a CESU contract a hydrologist will identify water drainage issues at Wright Brothers National Memorial. The hydrologist will develop a water drainage management plan that will allow the site to follow natural processes as much as is possible. The plan will take into consideration the effects of nearby development and high energy weather events such as hurricanes and northeasters. The plan will discuss the methods for returning the area to as close to natural processes as possible while under the negative influences of extreme weather and human development.

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Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Wright Brothers will complete a General Management Plan which will provide for the preservation of the natural and cultural resources and meet the needs of increased visitation. Interrelated issues of visitor use and operational functions, indicative of today's complex demographic expectations need to be defined, discussed, and resolved at the park-community level. Thus a partnership of local, county, state, and federal entities can develop and execute a plan reached by consensus and agreed to in principle to meet increasing visitor use of the area. This General Management Plan will guide park management in successfully protecting park resources, provide for visitor satisfaction, and work in partnership with the surrounding community.

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Site: WRBR

**ENVIRONMENT**

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

Serve as a model for energy efficiency, under Executive Order 13423, by ensuring Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards.

Wright Brothers National Memorial is currently scheduled to rehab the historic Visitor Center in 2011. This project is to rehabilitate the existing 9,600 square foot historic visitor center, constructed in 1960 which serves 500,000 visitors annually. The project will begin with a comprehensive planning and design effort to develop a plan to preserve/rehabilitate the historic structure. The proposed work will include the installation of new electrical, lighting, fire alarm, security, telephone, HVAC and plumbing systems; expansion of restroom facilities to meet ADA requirements; repair of cast in place concrete structural system; repair of exterior concrete wall panels; installation of new energy efficient window systems; upgrade of insulation systems; improvement of interior layout; installation of new auditorium seating; painting of interior walls and ceilings; and installation of new floor coverings including new carpeting and tile. All work will be done in accordance to LEED Standards.

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Site: WRBR

**RECREATION**

Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

Wright Brothers will build a new trail connecting the Monument Hill trail to the Visitor Center. This will address a current safety hazard as visitors have been using the vehicular road to walk to the Visitor Center from the bottom of Monument Hill. Two accessibility ramps will be included at either end of the trail.

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Site: WRBR

**EDUCATION**

Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Wright Brothers National Memorial produce a full and complete Comprehensive Interpretive Plan. The plan will include a Long-Range Interpretive Plan, Annual Work Plans and Media Inventory. It will specify park themes, desired visitor experiences, clarify the park's purpose and significance and make recommendations on park facilities, landscapes and interpretive media. The plan will outline a more professional level of interpretive services for the over 500,000 visitors who visit Wright Brothers National Memorial, and be the primary planning and resource document for the park's interpretive operation.

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Site: WRBR

**EDUCATION**

Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

The Outer Banks Group began a publicity campaign to encourage Junior Rangers with a kick-off press release on Junior Ranger Day, April 23, 2007. Children can actually become three different kinds of junior rangers: a Seashore Ranger at Cape Hatteras National Seashore, a Flight Ranger at Wright Brothers National Memorial, and a Roanoke Ranger at Fort Raleigh National Historic Site. These program are provided in partnership with The North Carolina Beach Buggy Association, the First Flight Society and Eastern National Parks Association.

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Site: WRBR

**EDUCATION**

**Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.**

**Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.**

Wright Brothers will produce a full and complete Comprehensive Interpretive Plan for Wright Brothers National Memorial. The plan will include a Long-Range Interpretive Plan, Annual Work Plans and Media Inventory. It will specify park themes, desired visitor experiences, clarify the park's purpose and significance and make recommendations on park facilities, landscapes and interpretive media. The plan will outline a more professional level of interpretive services for the over 500,000 visitors who visit Wright Brothers National Memorial, and be the primary planning and resource document for the park's interpretive operation.

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Site: WRBR

**PROFESSIONALISM**

**Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.**

**Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.**

Although the Outer Banks Group reflects many of the faces of America at this time, it wants to increase the diversity of its employees. In order to do so the park will create a recruitment committee to develop a Recruitment Strategy for the three park areas. Action items for the plan might include recruitment trips to traditionally Black colleges and universities and to typically Hispanic colleges and Universities, holding open house/recruiting sessions in various locations throughout the community, more structured education for supervisors, and researching the use of recruitment incentives and educational payback incentives. Once the plan has been developed the park will identify funding needs and funding sources and implement the plan.

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**Attain the highest employee satisfaction rate of all federal agencies, as measured by Office of Personnel Management surveys.**

The Outer Banks Group, which includes Wright Brothers National Memorial, will develop a Task Force to create a groupwide Awards program that will both standardize award requirements and encourage all employees to participate in the program. The task force will be made up of a complement of employees from different divisions, different park areas and diverse grade levels and the ultimate goal of the task force will be to develop a Standard Operating Procedure for encouraging Awards within the Outer Banks Group.

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Site: WRBR

**PROFESSIONALISM**

Use strategic planning to promote management excellence.

Establish a structured professional development curriculum to provide park managers with the skills to apply best business practices and superior leadership.

The Outer Banks Group, which includes Wright Brothers National Memorial, will develop a internal park training program to target and train mid-level managerial employees. This program will include the development of an annual selection procedure which will allow employees in the targeted group to compete for the opportunity. Approximately \$5,000 annually will be reserved for this program and the selected employee will be assigned a manager mentor who will help develop a curriculum of training courses which best prepare the employees for upper management positions based upon their planned career goals.

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Site: WRBR

**PROFESSIONALISM**

Model what it means to work in partnership.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Wright Brothers National Memorial has an ongoing partnership with the First Flight Foundation. In 2011 the historic Visitor Center will be rehabbed and in conjunction with this project the park will work with the Foundation in constructing a new Museum and Learning Center adjacent to the historic visitor center. This facility will improve the visitor experience by providing for a much-needed increase in interior spacing, state-of-the-art exhibits, and a feature film. None of which are provided in the current historic facility. These two projects (historic rehabilitation and new facility) are integrally linked in that the visitor experience between both structures is being designed as a singular experience. In addition to funding the new facility, the Foundation is also funding all exhibitry and visitor interior spaces that are planned for the historic visitor center.

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