INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF A

DONOR RECOGNITION PLAN TEMPLATE

**A Donor Recognition Plan is a park or program area document that defines the criteria and procedures for acknowledging and thanking donors, and describes the form and duration of recognition for different types and levels of donations. All parks and programs that receive, or expect to receive, donations must have a Donor Recognition Plan. A Park Superintendent or Program Manager should develop the Plan in collaboration with their philanthropic partners. The Plan will help donors and philanthropic partners understand the methods and levels of recognition the NPS can give within the framework of NPS and Departmental ethics regulations.**

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**[BRACKETED TEXT] within the template provides explanatory information or direction and should not be included in the final draft plan. In the sections where options are provided that a Park may or may not wish to provide as recognition, those options may be deleted. All other text is pre-approved template language and should be included. Some provisions may not be applicable to your situation. In those cases, retain the Article number and heading, type in “N/A.” Please submit the final draft Donor Recognition Plan to your Regional Partnership Coordinator for review and routing to the Regional Director for approval.**

**NOTE: This instructions page (page 1) should be deleted prior to submitting your draft plan to your Regional Partnerships Coordinator.**

DONOR RECOGNITION PLAN

[INSERT PARK OR PROGRAM AREA HERE]

The NPS has long been authorized to accept donations pursuant to laws including [54 U.S.C. § 101101](https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/54/101101). Donations and contributions come to the NPS from individuals, families, organizations, foundations, corporations, businesses, and other entities as an expression of support, acknowledgment of need, or the result of organized fundraising efforts. Timely and appropriate recognition of donations and contribution is an important step to acknowledge their generous support.

This Donor Recognition Plan (Plan) defines the criteria and procedures for thanking donors, and describes the form and duration of recognition for different types and levels of donations. The Plan will help guide park staff, donors and philanthropic partners to understand the methods and levels of recognition [NAME OF PARK(s) or NPS PROGRAM(s)] ([Park or Program]) can give within the framework of NPS and Departmental ethics regulations.

# Background

This Plan focuses on recognition for donations of cash, assets, and in-kind services directly to the Park or through Park partner organizations for the benefit of the Park (see Article IX). These organizations include, but are not limited to, the **[Insert Primary Philanthropic Partner(s)]**. When mutually agreed upon by the Park and the philanthropic partner organization(s), donors to the Park’s philanthropic partner(s) may be recognized according to the provisions established in this Plan.

The Park and its partners will comply with [Director's Order #21](https://www.nps.gov/policy/DOrders/DO_21.htm): Donations and Philanthropic Support (DO #21), [Section 3054 of Public Law 113-291](http://uscode.house.gov/statviewer.htm?volume=128&page=3806) (National Park System Donor Acknowledgement), [NPS Management Policies 2006](https://www.nps.gov/policy/MP_2006.pdf), and the Departmental guidance in [374 DM 6](https://elips.doi.gov/ELIPS/DocView.aspx?id=1202), including the standards for review of donations to maintain the integrity and impartiality of, and public confidence in, the NPS and the Department of the Interior (DOI).

**[Provide any specific information your park or program should consider for donor recognition. You should address the following through your description:**

* **How do donations and philanthropic partnerships benefit your Park/Program?**
  + **List key projects or efforts in your Park/Program that were made possible through philanthropy.**
  + **Glean language from Director’s Order #21 Section 1.1.**
* **Are there any Park/Program-specific issues or concerns that you need to address through your Donor Recognition Plan? For example, if your Park/Program area contains a national cemetery, you can specify that no on-site donor recognition will take place inside the cemetery.**
* **Are there any specific donor recognition limitations or restrictions (i.e. wilderness areas, historic districts, etc.) that should be included to guide information contained in this Plan?]**

# Donor Recognition Levels and Duration

**[Donor recognition levels may vary based on multiple factors, including but not limited to: frequency of donations, average monetary value of donations, and staff capacity to recognize donors. Below are three suggested charts that Parks can use as a starting point to adapt to what they feel are appropriate donor recognition levels and types of recognition for their park or program. These different tables give suggestions for levels for Parks that anticipate limited, moderate, or substantial levels of anticipated annual philanthropic support. For the purposes of this example a “receives limited Donations” may be a Park or Program that receives under $1M each year in philanthropic support. A “receives moderate donations” may be a Park or Program that receives $1M-$5M or more each year in philanthropic support. A “Receives Substantial Donations” may be a Park or Program that receives $5M or more each year in philanthropic support. You may wish to consult the donor recognition plans of parks of similar size to develop your donor recognition levels.**

**These are strictly examples to spark the thought process around your specific park situation, and NPS staff may interchange the outlined forms recognition and/or add additional donor levels as they believe is appropriate for their respective Park. Parks may additionally have multiple categories with different bands of donor recognition depending on the purpose/intent of the donation (i.e. funding a position vs. capital improvement contributions). A Park may choose to establish different recognition levels and durations for both annual (total donations by an individual or organization during one calendar year) and cumulative giving (the total amount that an individual or organization donates over a multi-year period of time).**

**In crafting this section, it may be more helpful to finalize Articles III and IV before this section. The below donor recognition levels only include a sampling of the possible forms of on-site and off-site recognition, which are listed in Articles III and IV.**

**Please note that the table should indicate if each higher donor level includes the preceding forms of donor recognition. For example, if a donor gives $1,500 to a park with a low level of anticipated annual giving, then the donor would be recognized with a Thank You Letter, Recognition on the Electronic Donor Board, and Recognition in the Park Newsletter.]**

Donors will be recognized by the following levels, and recognition will include the following methods which may be cumulative:

[Adapt EXAMPLE 1 for a Park that receives limited donations]

| **Form of Donor Recognition** | **Donor Level** |
| --- | --- |
| Thank You Letter from Superintendent or Program Manager | $100 and above |
| Recognition in a Donor Book or Directory | $250 and above |
| Recognition on a Donor Recognition Board for Five Years (electronic and/ or traditional) | $500 and above |
| Recognition in Park Newsletter | $1,000 - $2,999 |
| Official Press Release | $2,999 - $4,999 |
| Recognition On-Site [park defines specifics] | $5,000+ |

[Adapt EXAMPLE 2 for a park that receives moderate donations]

| **Form of Donor Recognition** | **Donor Level** |
| --- | --- |
| Thank You Letter from Superintendent or Program Manager | $100 and above |
| Recognition in a Donor Book or Directory | $500 and above |
| Recognition on a Donor Recognition Board for Five Years (electronic and/ or traditional) | $1,000 and above |
| Recognition in Park Newsletter | $5,000 - $29,999 |
| Official Press Release | $29,999 - $49,999 |
| Recognition On-Site [park defines specifics] | $50,000+ |

[Adapt EXAMPLE 3 for a park that receives substantial donations]

| **Form of Donor Recognition** | **Donor Level** |
| --- | --- |
| Thank You Letter from Superintendent or Program Manager | $100 and above |
| Recognition in a Donor Book or Directory | $500 and above |
| Recognition on a Donor Recognition Board for Five Years (electronic and/ or traditional) | $1,000 and above |
| Recognition in Park Newsletter | $50,000 - $99,999 |
| Official Press Release | $100,000 - $499,999 |
| Recognition On-Site [park defines specifics] | $500,000+ |

# Off-Site Donor Recognition:

Most donor recognition will occur through letters of appreciation, press releases, mementos, and other items that commemorate a donation. The following forms of NPS recognition may be initiated at the discretion of the Park Superintendent subject to the wishes of the donor and in accordance with the donor levels established in Article II. Any type of off-site recognition not listed in this Plan must be agreed upon prior to utilizing by the signatories of this Plan in writing.

**[The forms of off-site donor recognition listed below are options with generic, standard language that Parks and Program Areas may use in identifying which forms of recognition are appropriate for their respective site. IMPORTANT NOTE: You are not required to include any or all of these bullets in your final Plan except for the Letters of Acknowledgement and Thank You Letters. You may omit, re-word, or add examples as seen fit for your park or program area.]**

## Letters of Acknowledgement and Thank You Letters

The Park Superintendent or Program Manager must acknowledge donations in writing through a letter of acknowledgement and/or thank you letter. The Superintendent's acknowledgement shall identify the type of donation, the donor, date of acceptance, reiterate any restrictions of the donation, the dollar amount (or description for in-kind gifts), and thank the donor. The letter will also list the NPS IRS Tax Exempt ID # 53-0197094 for the donor to cite in claiming a tax deduction for their gift. This letter will be provided as soon as possible but no later than **2 weeks** after the date the donation is received. In addition, the Park will work with its philanthropic partners to determine when the Park Superintendent will also provide a thank you letter to a donor who has provided a donation to a park partner that will ultimately benefit the Park.

## Park Websites and Social Media

The Park may include a page on its website to function as a virtual donor recognition board that acknowledges contributions and can tell donor stories about why they made a gift to the Park. The Park may post stories and other information on its website to celebrate and stimulate Park philanthropy. Park staff may generate and post social media content to recognize the contributions of donors as appropriate and tell a donor’s story, with their concurrence, to inspire others. Social media and Park web authors will consult with their Public Affairs Office and obtain the concurrence of Park leadership and donors as appropriate.

## Publicity

Press releases to media - including newspapers, magazines, web, radio, television, articles in Park and NPS newsletters, and articles in the donor's media (e.g. corporate employee newsletter, magazine, annual report) - are a few of the ways that the Park and the donor may publicly recognize donors/sponsors/cause marketing efforts that benefit the Park.

## Donor Appreciation Mementos

A photograph, book, park lapel pin, coin, or other park/project-related memento may be presented as an expression of appreciation and recognition for a donation. Items should be purchased by a philanthropic partner, as appropriated funds should not be used (PM 1443.70-01). These kinds of items can be sent to the donor or presented during a simple ceremony, media event, or other activity.

# On-Site Donor Recognition

In some cases, a gift may warrant on-site (in-park) recognition. The goal of on-site recognition is to tie the local accomplishment to the gift and to inspire others to support the Park. On-site recognition will not be distracting to Park visitors, detract from the visitor experience, nor imply commercial endorsement by the NPS. Where on-site recognition is determined appropriate, the following examples of in-park donor recognition may be authorized at the discretion of the Superintendent subject to the approval of the donor and in accordance with the donor levels established in Article II. Other forms of on-site recognition not described in this Plan must be agreed upon by the signatories of this Plan in writing and must comply with DO #21. Duration of donor recognition will be determined by the Superintendent if not specified in Article III.

**[IMPORTANT NOTE: You are not required to include any or all of these options in your final plan. The forms of on-site donor recognition listed below are intended to be options with generic, standard language that Parks and Program Areas may use in identifying which forms of recognition are appropriate for their respective site. You may omit, re-word, or add examples as seen fit for your Park or Program Area. Superintendents can and should consider costs for maintenance, lifecycle of the recognition, potential for vandalism, and preservation of a historic or cultural viewshed prior to including any of the options below in the parks donor recognition plan.]**

## Events

Media events, press announcements, photo opportunities, ribbon cuttings, or other recognition events, and other activities or forums in which donors are acknowledged or involved (e.g., annual meeting/convention of nonprofit organizations) may be used to provide high-profile donor recognition. The Park will follow guidance for holding special events featuring donor and partner recognition as found in [NPS Management Policies 2006](https://www.nps.gov/policy/MP_2006.pdf), [Director’s Order #53](https://www.nps.gov/policy/DOrders/DO53.htm) (Special Park Uses) and [Director’s Order #21](https://www.nps.gov/policy/DOrders/DO_21.htm) (Donations and Philanthropic Support) Section 8.9.

Special events will fall into two categories: non-NPS events allowed under a Park Special Use Permit and events wholly or partially sponsored by the NPS. In either case, the Superintendent may recognize donors and sponsors but may not allow recognition that suggests endorsement nor commercialization of the Park. The Superintendent may however recognize business sponsors by limited display of logos and name script on temporary event facilities, signs, banners, and literature at such special events. This is subject to Special Park Use regulations and policy, which state that any lettering or design identifying the sponsor "shall be no larger than one-third the size of the lettering or design identifying the special event." Events will not be "named" for sponsoring business entities or individuals, as in ''XYZ Corporation Heritage Festival." Event sponsors may not distribute product samples or give-aways that are intended to promote their product or product lines.

## Donor Appreciation Activities

Donors who give **[Donor Level established in Article II]** may be recognized through a special tour of the partnership projects or programs that were enabled through their donation. These tours may not disrupt Park operations or the visitor experience in any way. These may be conducted by Park staff, volunteers, subject matter experts, or partners as deemed appropriate by the Park superintendent.

## Interpretive and Educational Programs

When interpretive, educational, or other Park programs or products were accomplished through philanthropy, the program leader or product may highlight how this philanthropic support played a role and recognize primary donors to the project or program.

## Park Newspaper

Articles may be written in the Park newspaper, newsletter, or planner in order to highlight the contributions and recognize our donors and partners, such as the **[Friends Group or Philanthropic Partner]**. Donor recognition on printed material may include name scripts and logos where appropriate.

## Audiovisual (AV) Material or Computerized/Electronic Displays

Audiovisual material, computerized information kiosks, searchable directories, or other electronic displays will be developed and placed in [Insert name of facility/visitor center where these will be located] to recognize the name(s) or donor(s). A script and/or logo may be used within a credit line placed within the electronic screen and on related/associated printed information but may not be displayed on the kiosk or on another external casing. In recognizing business/corporate donors, displays may not include advertising content.

## Exhibits and Waysides

Traditional Park exhibits and waysides may include donor recognition. The donor name may be represented in the standard text and font used for that level of text within the wayside or exhibit - typically a similar size as a caption or photo credit. If the exhibit or wayside is intended to be a temporary installation (generally less than one year or the duration of the construction phase of a more permanent exhibit) installation, the credit line within the exhibit or wayside may include the donor's logo or name script.

## Donor Plaques/Plates

Donor recognition plaques at a significant project site, such as an exhibit inside a visitor center, major overlook, or primary outdoor exhibit area, will be placed in discreet ways so as to not interfere with the visitor experience. A classic bronze plaque or similar plaque/plate may be placed low along an overlook wall or similar site. These will be concentrated in the following areas – **[Insert high-traffic areas of the Park here]** – and not dispersed throughout the Park. These plaques may include content such as the project title, date, major donors to the project, and park partner name. Corporate logo or name scripts may not be included.

## Donor Walls/Boards

A donor board may be located within **[Designated Facility in Park or Program Area]** where generous donors to **[Park or Program Area]** are publicly recognized in a systematic and ongoing manner. This will serve as both a tangible and visible record of philanthropic support for the Park and an expression of appreciation for such support that will likely motivate others to give. This wall/board may include: the donor name, the year, and when appropriate, the type of donation. Corporate name scripts, logos, or other marketing tools will not be used. Anonymity will be respected, and only those donors wishing to be recognized will be acknowledged. Donor Recognition Walls/Boards will be unobtrusive and designed to blend in with the setting and **[Designated Facility’s]** decor. It will remain in place for a term of **[Insert timeframe here]** after which the Superintendent will conduct a review to determine whether it remains appropriate to leave in place. The Donor Recognition Wall/Board will be designated to thank all donors above a threshold of **[Donation Band Established in Article III]** in cash or equivalent value for a [insert Superintendent approved time frame] year period following the donation. **[Name of philanthropic partner and/or name of park]** holds the responsibility for maintenance of this Donor Recognition Wall/Board.

## Fixtures and Furnishings

Donor recognition may include a time-limited display of recognition attached to or engraved on Park furnishings or fixtures (e.g. benches). It is important to be able to ensure these forms of recognition are appropriate, sustainable, cost effective, and do not detract from the integrity of the Park resource or visitor experience. These forms of recognition may be deemed appropriate at a visitor center area or another developed area in the Park but not spread throughout the Park. The Park will reach an agreement with the donor as to the length of time that an engraved fixture or furnishing will remain in place prior to accepting the donation so that expectations are clear. This timeframe is generally for the lifespan of the fixture. The Park and donor will agree in advance who will pay for any damages to a fixture or furnishing or if it will be removed if damaged or vandalized.

## Planting of Vegetation

Planting of trees and other vegetation with donor funds is appropriate, but recognition will not be displayed directly on the plantings. See Donor Plaques/Plates (above) for language about placement of plaques near a planting site and Article II for levels of donations that warrant on-site recognition.

## Positions, Programs, and Endowments

NPS (educational, interpretive, research, recreational, youth, or other) long-term positions, programs, and endowments may be named to recognize a gift made to support a long-term program or position. (See [Director’s Order #21](https://www.nps.gov/policy/DOrders/DO_21.htm) Sections 4.2 and 8.6). The Director must approve specific naming opportunities before an offer can be made to a potential donor. Any naming must comply with all statutory, and regulatory requirements. In addition, hiring individuals for endowed, named positions must follow all applicable employment laws and procedures. When the Superintendent and donor are in agreement that a naming should be proposed, The Superintendent will submit and letter to the Director, through the regional office, requesting consideration. The letter should include the rationale for naming as well as the length of time this naming is proposed to remain. This guidance does not apply to programs occurring outside of the Park managed exclusively by the Park’s philanthropic partners. These will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

## Equipment, Vehicles and Other Assets

Equipment, vehicles and other assets (such as bicycles, watercraft, equipment trailers, and mobile information trailers) purchased with donor funds or provided as a direct donation of property may include an unobtrusive credit line using the donor’s name but not name script or logo. If the equipment includes a graphic wrap - the donor recognition should still be an unobtrusive credit line within that wrap, such as a text-only line that states, “Donated by \_\_\_\_\_.”

## Temporary Naming of Interior Spaces

The temporary naming of Park interior spaces is permitted only to recognize donations for the renovation of the facility or construction of a new facility. This form of donor recognition is a high honor that will only be explored in extraordinary circumstances. Temporary naming of interior spaces (tied to the length and impact of the investment) is only possible with Director’s approval. The Director must approve naming opportunities before an offer can be made to a potential donor. The naming opportunity value should be at a level commensurate with the Park budget and fundraising campaign for renovation of the existing facility or construction of a new facility. Naming is limited to a period of ten years, but may be extended by the Director. When the Superintendent and donor agree that a naming should be proposed, the Superintendent will submit and letter to the Director, through the regional office, requesting consideration. The letter will include the rationale for naming as well as the length of time this naming is proposed to remain.

## Temporary Items and Signage

Temporary donor recognition may be allowed on NPS printed materials and other items that are not intended to stay in the Park (e.g., brochures, newsletters, posters, table cards, cards, banners, and certain temporary signage). NPS temporary signage could include temporary construction signs placed on the fence at a construction site in the Park, temporary or portable exhibits, and temporary project displays. Donor name script or logo of partners, corporate partners, and lead donors may be included as part of temporary donor recognition provided it is embedded in a short, unobtrusive donor credit line at the end of the material or in an appropriate location on the signage. It is important to avoid any appearance or public perception of commercialization or product endorsement that would impair the park visitor experience ([36 CFR 5.1](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=9ff1b868d80e0c3d12b842e3a18ab521&mc=true&node=se36.1.5_11&rgn=div8)).

# Prohibitions

**Impact on Natural and Cultural Landscapes or Historic Fabric:** On-site recognition will not intrude on the character of the Park by detracting from its natural and cultural landscapes. Donor recognition must not be affixed to the interior or exterior historic fabric of structures or museum collections for any period of time.

**Naming of Resources:** The naming of natural, cultural, or recreational resources will not be used to recognize donations.

**Permanent Naming of NPS Facilities:** The Park is prohibited from permanently recognizing or identifying donors or Park partners for monetary contributions or other donations on any Park facility or asset. The temporary naming of rooms and interior spaces in NPS facilities might be permitted by the Director to recognize donations for the renovation of that facility or construction of a new facility. Acknowledgement of donations on other types of assets such as benches and viewing platforms is limited to the means outlined in previous sections of this Plan.

**Special Considerations:** Donors will not receive special treatment or consideration under any law, regulation, or policy. This includes preferential treatment on any applications for Special Use Permits, and the prohibitions and limitations on in-Park advertising including distribution of product samples. This does not preclude donors and partners from working together on events, programs and special use permits related to programs and projects identified in their Partnership Agreement and Annual Work Plan.

**Endorsement**   
Federal employees are prohibited by law from using or permitting the use of their position, title, or authority to endorse any service, product, or enterprise. Therefore, donor recognition cannot state or imply Department of the Interior, NPS, Park, or government employee endorsement of any business, brand, product, or service. Also, NPS employees may not appear in any corporate advertising. These prohibitions do not prevent the Park from acknowledging the assistance provided by a donor and how that assistance has benefited the Park. Park staff may be photographed in uniform accepting a donation. Any distribution of those photos in print or electronic media should be reviewed by NPS (per the agreement with the donor/partner) in order to ensure that the intention is not marketing or endorsement but rather to announce the acceptance of the donation.

**Use of the NPS Arrowhead or Images of NPS Staff in Uniform by the Donor**   
The use of the NPS Arrowhead is strictly regulated by federal law, regulation, and NPS policy. Park staff and philanthropic partners will follow policy specified in [36 CFR 11](https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/36/part-11) and [NPS Director's Orders #52D](https://www.nps.gov/policy/DOrders/DO_52D_45-day.pdf). Partners should consult with the key official identified in their Partnership Agreement to determine if use of the arrowhead or image of NPS staff in uniform is appropriate. An NPS staff may be photographed in uniform accepting the donation and this photograph could be used to announce the donation or thank the donor; however, this image could not be linked to a statement of endorsement or used in connection with any marketing or advertising. **Recognition for Corporate Partnerships**

The Park will follow the requirements pertaining to acceptance and recognition of corporate donations found in Section 8.8 of [Director’s Order #21](https://www.nps.gov/policy/DOrders/DO_21.htm). Corporate donors may receive recognition on the same basis as other donors, if the recognition does not suggest official endorsement or could be perceived by the public as in-Park advertisement. Additionally, the use of name scripts or logos for corporations or organizations are prohibited except as part of a credit line (and only as part of a credit line) on printed materials, temporary signage, other temporary items, and limited forms of digital media.

# Signatures:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Superintendent Date

[PARK OR PROGRAM AREA]

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Regional Director Date

[REGION]

**[Parks and programs may also add a signature line for the concurrence of the President/Executive Director of their main philanthropic partner(s). This may be beneficial if this Plan is developed collaboratively with that partner(s).]**