

Foreword

The National Park Service holds in trust many of the nation's preeminent natural, cultural, and recreational treasures. We manage nearly 380 units of the national park system and cooperate with partners to preserve resources beyond park boundaries. The National Park Service is pleased and honored to have assisted thousands of communities in their efforts to preserve their cultural heritage through our cultural resources partnership programs.

In the management of the national parks and national programs, we are everyday reminded of the role of so many cultural groups that made their mark on the nation's history. This human story spans the living traditions of today's Native Americans to those who came to America from Africa, Europe, Asia, and other parts of the world. It encompasses the places associated with great national leaders, such as Frederick Douglass and Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as important surviving communities, such as the Nicodemus National Historic Site and places such as Manzanar National Historic Site, where we can contemplate the fragility of constitutional rights when society's fabric is stressed.

In order to do our important job for this and future generations, our staff must represent all segments of American society. Our parks and programs also must reflect and serve all of the American people. To achieve these goals, the National Park Service has adopted a Diversity Action Plan. This holistic plan is directed at increasing diversity within our workforce; improving our interpretive programs and materials; educating our employees, partners, and members of communities adjacent to our parks; and integrating diversity into the daily operations of the National Park Service.

The workplace is a key component in fostering diversity. Diversity focuses on inclusion of employees, not exclusion. It encompasses more than the differences in race, national origin, handicapping conditions, age, gender, religion, and sexual orientation. It includes the different values, cultures, and perspectives that individuals in different groups pose. Fostering a positive work environment with opportunities for advancement, training, and challenges will enhance the mission of the Service, benefit the employees, and enrich our parks and programs. Without a diverse workforce, our national heritage will suffer from a lack of broad perspectives.

As part of our educational efforts in this area, we are pleased to publish this special issue of *CRM* on diversity in cultural resources work. Cultural resources programs are a powerful force for attracting diverse persons to participate in the protection of our nation's heritage. The essays in this issue illustrate some of the creative and challenging work that is taking place in our national parks and in our communities nationwide. We are proud of the Service's role and that of its partnership organizations in transforming the narrative of American history.

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