



# Residential Environmental Education at Prince William Forest Park

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Managing By Network  
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# Chopawamsic Recreational Demonstration Area

15,000 Acres, 35 miles south of Washington, D.C. in Triangle, Virginia



**1936** **Chopawamsic RDA** – created through the Resettlement Administration, to provide healthful outdoor recreation facilities for impoverished inner-city children.

**1936-1942** **Civilian Conservation Corps** built 5 rustic organized group cabin camps (housing 150-200 campers each).



**1936** **Chopawamsic was retained by the NPS**  
*"Because of the lack of camping and recreational facilities in the National Capital, the development of the Chopawamsic area is indorsed by all the social service agencies of Washington and the various organizations dealing with the youth movement" Washington Star, July 2, 1939*

**1936-1982** **Non-profit youth oriented organizations held long-term camp leases** - providing recreation & education to Washington, D.C. area youth.



**1941-1945** **Office of Strategic Services (O.S.S) Training Facility** (War Department)

**1948** **Name change to Prince William Forest Park to show partnership with Prince William County.**



## NatureBridge

*Outdoor, Residential, Environmental Education Programs Serving 40,000+ Students/adults Annually*

*“We envision a world where every student learns about the science of nature, is inspired by its beauty, and is motivated to take action to protect the natural world.”*

- NatureBridge Vision



**1972**

**Yosemite Institute was founded at Yosemite National Park; since then over one-million students/adults lives have been changed.**

**National Park Service Campuses: Yosemite, Olympic, Golden Gate, Santa Monica Mountains & Channel Islands.**

**Individual NPS Partnership Authorities (at least one per park).**

**Demonstration program east of the western coastal states – Prince William Forest Park in Triangle, Virginia.**



# NatureBridge at Prince William Forest Park

*Bringing Outdoor, Residential, Environmental Education Programs to the National Capital Region*



**2008** Yosemite Institute visits Prince William Forest Park

**2010** Yosemite Institute targets Prince William Forest Park as future

**East Coast Campus** – conducting an extensive Feasibility Study to determine viability of a long-term program.

**2011** Yosemite Institute rebrands all five campuses – NatureBridge

**NatureBridge receives three-year \$4 million Google Grant**

(\$500,000 to be used for Prince William Forest Demonstration scheduled for April of 2012)

**NatureBridge partners with Prince William County Schools** agreeing to provide 4-day, 3-night environmental education programs for two under-served 7<sup>th</sup> grade classes - partially funded by the Google Grant.

**Prince William Forest Park staff begins educating the NatureBridge educators on park resources.**



# NatureBridge at Prince William Forest Park

*Bringing Outdoor, Residential, Environmental Education Programs to the National Capital Region*



## 2012

**NatureBridge & Prince William Forest Park sign Memorandum of Intent**

**NatureBridge partners with NPS National Capital Region concessionaire Guest Services** to provide food services for two, four-day residential events and one VIP event

**Prince William Forest Park hosts the NatureBridge** education team for four-weeks in April at Camp Goodwill

**NatureBridge provides programs for the original PWC schools**, plus two one-day programs for two other Virginia schools

**NatureBridge hosts Career Night** for students, introducing them to NPS and conservation partners

**The April 2012, four-week demonstration program touches over 200 Virginia students!**

**NatureBridge and Prince William Forest Park host 60 + hand-picked VIPs** on the final day of the program to demonstrate the value of the NatureBridge brand of outdoor education



**GUEST  
SERVICES™**  
*Legendary Hospitality*

## Fundamentals to the Success of the Partnership



### Defining our goals from the beginning:

Partner together to provide a viable education program to elevate the mission of the National Park Service to *“conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”*

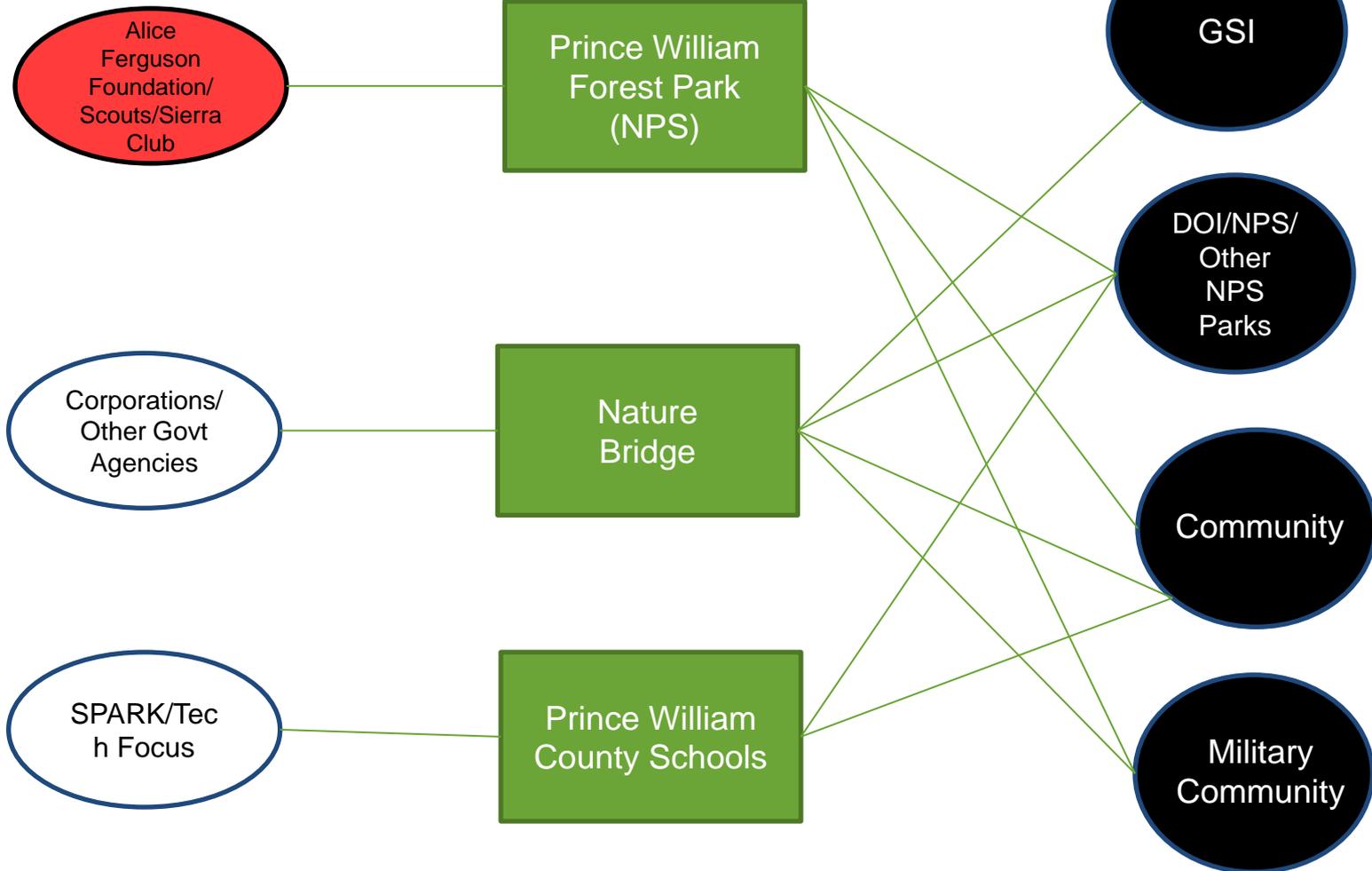
- 1916 Organic Act



- Provide quality outdoor environmental education to National Capital Region Schools.
- Weave the National Park Service mission into every aspect of the NatureBridge education program.
- Use place based education to create future NPS, Prince William Forest Park stewards and stewards of the environment.
- Include NPS staff expertise in the program when needed.
- Seek outside partnership opportunities to meet the education objectives and build relevance within the community.
- Diversity of students and within the program is essential.



## Network Partners





## Evaluating Network Potential & Performance

Evaluation Criteria	Comments
<p><b>Advance the NPS goals stated in Director Jarvis' 2011 "Call to Action"</b></p>	<p>#2 Step-by-Step – Work with education partners to provide youth education programs</p> <p>#7 Next Generation Stewards – Create a new generation of citizen scientists &amp; future park stewards</p> <p>#8 Eat well &amp; Prosper – Work the healthy living message into the goals of the program</p> <p>#16 Live &amp; Learn – Provide ways for K-12 students to learn about National Parks</p> <p>#18 Ticket to Ride – Expand Opportunities for students to directly experience national parks</p>
<p><b>Advance the goals of Prince William Forest Park Climate Friendly Parks Initiative</b></p>	<p>NatureBridge uses a Leave no Trace policy. Programs also include composting, energy conservation &amp; a citizen science curriculum that will measure the effects of global warming on park resources</p>
<p><b>Advance the Name Change &amp; other park initiatives as outlined in park guiding documents</b></p>	<p>NatureBridge leadership &amp; local staff are politically connected. They have embraced the initiatives of the park and raised them to a higher level within the NPS and the political community</p>
<p><b>Advance the park goal of long-term year-round occupancy of the cabin camps</b></p>	<p>This is a long-range goal and one that requires a lot of support from outside both organizations</p>

## Managing the Network as we go forward



NatureBridge plans to conduct two one-month demonstrations in 2013 (April & October)

The groundwork for the program is solid and has strong processes in place to resume programming.

Leadership is committed to the success of this program at Prince William Forest Park.



The schools are already planning their return in 2013. NatureBridge is hiring a new local staff member to work with potential schools.

Funding, as always, is the question. NPS faces a significant budget deficit in operations funding. The budgetary concerns are the most significant issue in this relationship. The Google grant will dry up in late 2013, so scholarship money will not be as plentiful.

Prince William Forest Park has a significant maintenance backlog on the historic buildings being used by NatureBridge. The park continues to seek project funding. Without a source of funding a major infrastructure malfunction could be a serious problem for the program and partnership.





## For more information:



Visit [www.nps.gov/prwi](http://www.nps.gov/prwi) for more information about Prince William Forest Park.

Like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) Prince William Forest Park

Visit [www.naturebridge.org](http://www.naturebridge.org) for more information about NatureBridge.

Visit [www.naturebridge.org/prince-william-forest-park](http://www.naturebridge.org/prince-william-forest-park) for specific information about the 2012 Prince William Forest Park demonstration program.

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for more information about the Prince William Forest Park - NatureBridge Partnership

