

Our goal is to preserve, protect, enhance, and understand air quality and other resources sensitive to air quality in the National Park System. Good air quality in parks cannot be taken for granted. Most of the air pollution affecting parks comes from outside park boundaries. This presents an interesting challenge because the NPS has no direct authority to control sources of pollution located outside of parks. Responsibility for developing air pollution control plans rests with the States, Tribal governing bodies, and EPA. In order to carry out our responsibilities, the NPS is involved in a variety of policy and planning activities related to our mission of preserving and enhancing park air quality and related values. We monitor and comment on proposals of other federal and state agencies that have the potential to affect our resources. We also work in partnerships (link to next section on Partnerships) with States, Tribes, and stakeholders to help develop pollution control and prevention strategies.

Activities within parks may also affect air quality. Therefore, there are also many internal NPS policies and directives that guide our actions, and individual park management plans provide the opportunity to address concerns regarding air quality and related values. The NPS Management Policies and guidelines encourage the NPS to "assume an aggressive role" in promoting and pursuing measures to protect air quality related values - internally and externally. This includes integrating air quality objectives into internal operations and planning, participating in the development federal, state, and local air pollution control programs and permitting processes, and promoting public understanding of air quality issues.