

## Our National Parks

### Knowing and loving these perfect places

The purpose of this seminar is for participants to know, understand and revel in the American institution that is the National Parks and Monuments. The goal is for participants to later pursue their own exploration of the parks, either personal travel, guided tours or armchair appreciation.

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| <b>Moderator:</b>     | Wendy Parrish   |
| <b>Co-moderator</b>   | Rich Parrish  |
| <b>Date and Time:</b> | Tuesday 9:30-11:30 AM<br>10 weeks, starting February 20, 2018 |
| <b>Format:</b>        | Seminar   |
| <b>Location:</b>      | Smith College Dewey Common, Northampton                       |

**Description:** The National Parks are splendid examples of the best that our country has to offer. We would like to explore them, and better understand society's role in their creation, use, and preservation. The moderators will begin with an overview of the park/monument system, and discuss its history from the 1870s to today. Participants will research and lead discussions on thematic elements of the collective parks (not simply individual park summaries); suggestions are below. Pictures will be an important element of most discussions; however the class is not intended to be a vacation slide show.

History, scenery, geology, activities, flora, and fauna: the goal is for everyone to leave with a personal urge to explore and enjoy the parks in their own way and appreciate their impact.

Possible topics include iconic geologic and scenic features; the great lodges, their role in the protection of endangered species, least-visited parks, fauna (including bird-watching), how the parks have changed over time, impact of the Civilian Conservation Corps, planning the perfect trips, politics and the national park system, park management/operation, and recreational activities.

**Role of participants:** Participants will make a 20-30 minute presentation on a topic on themes related to the parks and monuments and lead a discussion on that topic. Themes can be taken from the list provided, or a topic of their own choosing and discussed with the moderators.

**Resources:** This is a small selection. No books or videos are required – these are just entertaining and interesting. National park websites and literature should be sufficient.

“The National Parks, America’s Best Idea,” Ken Burns documentary; *Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America*, Douglas Brinkley; *Hey Ranger! True Tales of Humor & Misadventure from America’s National Parks*, Jim Burnett; The Great Courses (<http://www.greatcourses.com>); and *Wonders of the National Parks*, Ford Cochran.

**About the Moderator:** Wendy and Richard have between them visited 6 continents, all 50 states, 37 of the 60 US national parks and many national monuments over the past 40 years. Travel, hiking, and camping have always occupied their lives. Recent RV trips around the country and its parks bring an urge to share.

**Maximum number of participants:** 17      **Emeriti accepted:** yes

**Course #** 18SNP