



Inventory and Monitoring Operations:

National Park Service's North Coast and Cascades Network

North Coast and Cascades Network (NCCN) consists of three mountainous National Parks located in western Washington: Mount Rainier (MORA), Olympic (OLYM), and North Cascades (NOCA)—including Lake Chelan and Ross Lake National Recreation Areas, and five sites in western Washington and northwestern Oregon with Historical or Historic designations: Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve (EBLA), Fort Vancouver National Historic Site (FOVA), Lewis and Clark National and State Historical Parks (LEWI), San Juan Island National Historical Park (SAJH), and Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park—Seattle Unit (cultural site without natural resources). These parks are diverse in their historical importance to the region and in preserving unique and ecologically significant environments—from rugged Pacific coastline to active volcanic peaks exceeding 14,000 ft in elevation. NCCN parks cover 1.87 million acres, 99% encompassed in three National Parks, where vast landscapes are dominated by alpine, subalpine and old-growth forest ecosystems. Hundreds of glaciers, many massive in size, cover nearly 5% of these parks. Ninety-four percent of these Parks are designated “wilderness” by the Washington Park Wilderness Act of 1988.

The Inventory and Monitoring (I&M) Division funds NCCN primarily to develop, implement, and communicate results of Vital Signs monitoring. All 16 of NCCN I&M's monitoring protocols have been approved and published; this was completed in FY 2012 and 2013, respectively. NCCN's current operational plan is to implement 14 (of 16) Vital Signs protocols. The 14 protocols (11 Vital Signs and Water Quality monitoring) are to be implemented across Network parks “44” times as shown in Figure 1 (protocols x parks).

At NCCN, the I&M is integrated into operations of the Network's parks; this approach is substantially different from how other I&M networks function. Annually, park personnel based in NCCN's parks take on most of the responsibility for accomplishing the I&M Program goals and objectives. To implement the integrated approach, NCCN maintains two distinct operational branches that work in close collaboration: (1) Program and Information Management and (2) Inventories and Vital Signs Monitoring.

The Program and Information Management Branch consists of six positions, the Network I&M Program Manager and five positions assigned to the Information Management Team (IMT). The Network I&M Program Manager leads the Network to ensure that all Network staff collect, manage, analyze, interpret, and report long-term monitoring data effectively and according to expectations directed and communicated by National and Regional Program Leads of the I&M Division. IMT is responsible for developing and maintaining databases; certifying, storing, and distributing monitoring data; creating and distributing spatial data; developing and maintaining NCCN websites and specialized computer infrastructures; and managing the Network's publication process, among many other functions. The Network I&M Program Manager supervises the IMT Lead, who supervises the other employees in IMT positions. The superintendent of Mount Rainier National Park is authorized to supervise the Network I&M Program Manager. These six positions have I&M-coded position numbers. The Pacific West



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Region I&M Program shoulders the Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) for these positions. Funding for this Branch is allocated in separate Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) accounts for Program Management and for Information Management.

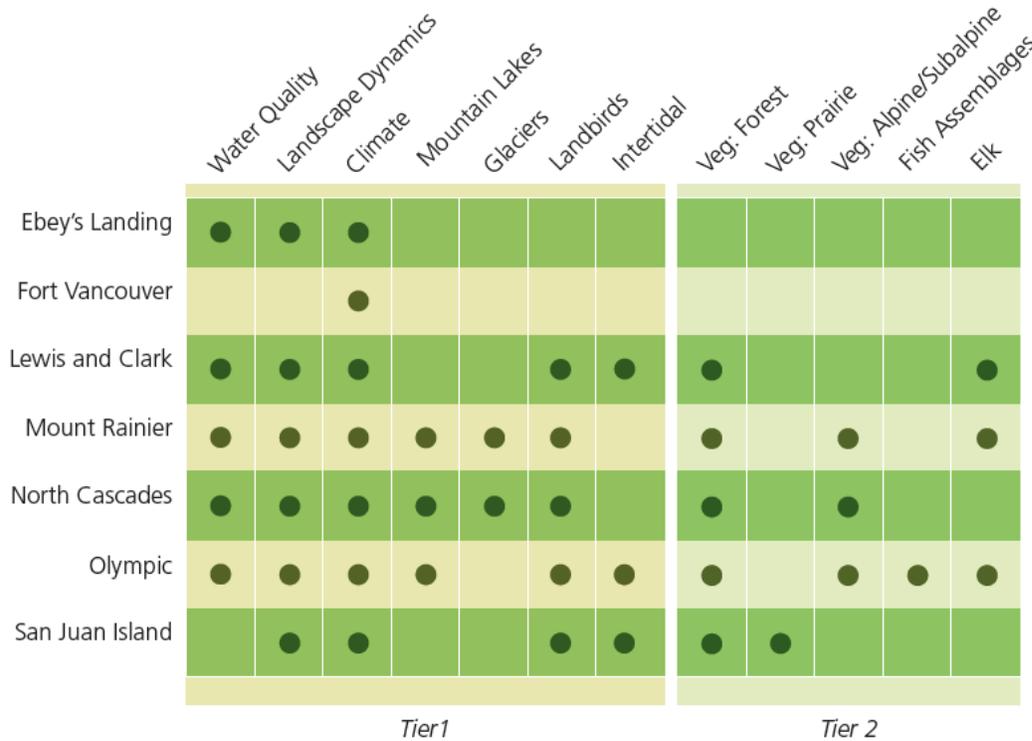


Figure 1. NCCN I&M national parks and monitoring Vital Signs shown in an implementation matrix (filled circles), divided into two priority categories: Tier 1, the highest priority for annual Network funding, and Tier 2. Vital Signs Glaciers (MORA and NOCA) and Elk (OLYM-MORA and LEWI) each have two separate protocols to accommodate sampling challenges posed by different parks.

For all other Network operations, the Network I&M Program Manager provides an annual allocation to Network parks to conduct inventories and Vital Signs monitoring (Inventories and Vital Signs Monitoring Branch). The annual allocation covers staffing, contracts and agreements, travel, equipment, and related expenses. This allocation to Network parks is about 65-70% of the Network's total annual funding and is retained in NCCN I&M's Cost Center account PWRPWIM10. The funds are reallocated to Network park staff by using a set of NCCN I&M WBS accounts linked to specific functions (e.g., field operations of various Vital Signs and core staffing) that park staff has the authority to spend. The Network I&M Program Manager is responsible for routinely checking the WBS accounts to make sure spending by park staff stays within designated allocations and that the PWRPWIM10 account is on track to be balanced at the end of the fiscal year.

Employees within the Inventories and Vital Signs Monitoring Branch have park-coded positions. As many as 45 park-coded positions are funded by NCCN I&M in a given fiscal year. The duties assigned to these positions are often shared between park- and I&M-funded projects. While many of these employees routinely travel between Network parks to implement Vital Signs



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protocols and inventories, each employee is assigned a single park as her/his duty station. Once assigned, FTEs for these positions are carried by the parks where employees are duty-stationed.

Park (organizational coded) positions funded by NCCN I&M are supervised by park staff. The Network I&M Program Manager oversees operational effectiveness of these positions via a collaborative working relationship with park Natural Resource Chiefs and with other supervisory staff. This is accomplished primarily within the structure of the I&M Steering Committee, consisting of the Natural Resource Chiefs, Network I&M Program Manager, and Network Science Advisor, which meets on a monthly basis to provide direction, guidance, and expectations for staff involved with implementing Vital Signs monitoring and inventories.