
WebRangers Bring the National Park Service into a Child's World

SCRANTON, PA – Their grandparents grew up with the Lone Ranger and their parents dreamt of being a Space Ranger. Now, today's youth get to be WebRangers, courtesy of the National Park Service. This is the name for the nationwide Junior Ranger Program on the web. Activities on the site, www.nps.gov/webrangers/, highlight themes common to many National Parks, and allow kids to peek into the world of a Park Ranger.

A recently revised version of the WebRangers Program debuted on August 25, which is NPS Founder's Day. President Woodrow Wilson established the National Park Service on that date in 1916. The best part of the program is the chance to visit numerous types of National Parks in one sitting at your computer. One moment you are driving a team of sled dogs, and then experiencing the life of migrating salmon. There are three age groups in the web-based program, all of which are informative and challenging. This leads to better understanding on what the NPS is all about in its 388 units.

An NPS WebRangers field team created the story concepts and researched the new activity background. D'Vinci Interactive of Hagerstown, Maryland created much of the artwork and programming for the new site and completely revamped its look, navigation and underlying structure.

The expansion of the WebRangers site was sponsored in part by the National Park Foundation, through a generous grant from the Best Buy Children's Foundation.

National Park Service Director Fran Mainella, while visiting the Steamtown National Historic Site in Scranton last July stated how important she feels it is to involve children in the National Park Service. She believes that talking with them in an exciting new way, with programs such as WebRangers and the Junior Ranger Programs helps to gain a new generation of potential Park Rangers. Steamtown has offered a Junior Ranger

Program for many years.

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Upon completion of the Junior Ranger Program, each child receives a certificate of achievement and a replica ranger badge. Additional information is available at www.nps.gov/stea/pphtml/forkids.html.

Located in Scranton, Pennsylvania, Steamtown is open daily from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. From I-81, follow exit 185 (Central Scranton Expressway); then, follow the signs to the main entrance at Lackawanna and Cliff Avenues. Admission cost for the Park is \$6.00 for each adult aged 17 and over. Under 17 requires no charge. Access to the WebRangers website is free.

Additional details regarding interpretive and educational programs and activities may be obtained by calling (570) 340-5200 or toll free (888) 693-9391, or by visiting the Steamtown web site at www.nps.gov/stea.