

*Kate Bickert, Senior Director, Engagement & New Initiatives, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy:* Entering the 21st Century how can we ensure National Parks are relevant to our increasingly diverse and urban populations? What will inspire their participation in park experiences and motivate them to become future stewards of our natural and cultural resources? In turn, what do parks have to offer our communities in terms of quality of life, health and well-being, a shared understanding of our common history and humanity? The Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the nation's most heavily visited national park, has embraced the idea that parks can be catalysts for broader social change and that taking this approach can help people find their own connections to these public lands. Parks are also important civic spaces where we can explore together shared values and the important contemporary issues of our time. I will briefly review how our park-based research of visitation and visitor experience has informed the development of new programs and approaches to engagement. And I'll describe some specific new approaches the Parks Conservancy has used to take the "park out of the park" (e.g. Community Shuttles, Roving Ranger, Community Trailheads) and worked with unlikely partners such as artists and librarians to connect with both current and underrepresented audiences.