

Our American Cultural Heritage

by Russell E. Dickenson, Director,
National Park Service

The National Park Service welcomes you to the annual Festival of American Folklife. We are pleased to co-sponsor with the Smithsonian Institution this celebration of our nation's heritage. The Festival site is the National Mall, which is administered by the National Park Service. The Mall is administered by the National Park Service; it is particularly significant that the Festival is held on such lands, as National Parks are set aside to provide a full representation of the American story and to relate the achievements, customs and cultures of its people. The Festival serves this purpose, telling the American story through music, crafts and celebrations.

The National Mall was set aside in 1790 under the L'Enfant Plan for the city of Washington. Extending from the Capitol to the Washington Monument, the Mall comprises 146 acres and is bordered by dynamic monuments, memorials and magnificent museums and art galleries which pay tribute to America's place in the arts, sciences and history, and reflect the cumulative genius of its people.

Among the more than 330 areas in the National Park system, the Alaska parks include some of the newest and the oldest and certainly some of the most spectacular parks. In addition to preserving their natural beauty, the Alaska parks also conserve much of the Alaskan native lifestyle related to fishing and other subsistence occupations. Many of these traditions from the state of Alaska and the contributions its native peoples have made to America will be seen on the National Mall as you visit this year's Festival.

We hope your visit will be enjoyable and will include a few moments to partake of the natural beauty found in the parks of our Nation's Capital.

