



# THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

FUNDING THE FUTURE OF AMERICA'S PARKS  
THROUGH EDUCATION AND INNOVATION

Abbey Venable - ICC 622

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# COMMUNICATION INNOVATION



# The Pitch

It's an undeniable fact that the environment all over the world is changing. Even in America's backyard, we can see the effects that a changing environment has on the landscape. The National Parks were created to protect our lands as well the environment that allows us to thrive and live. The National Parks need a way to advocate for all these things in an appealing and interesting way, so that individuals and the government will understand the important role that the National Parks play.

This communications innovation is a sum of two parts. The first part is a multi-media campaign to inform people about the budget cuts to the National Parks System, how taxpayer money and funds are allocated within the parks and other ways in which the American public can help support the parks. The second part of the innovation is a continued education plan. After the initial launch raises awareness, builds trust and improves transparency, a continued education program will launch to deepen the relationship between the parks and the people - it is America's backyard after all. The program will teach individuals the rich history of the National Parks and educate them to be conservationists who take pride in the environment and their National Parks.

In the end, the innovation aims to increase funding to support the National Parks for generations to come, while also show people that they play a role in keeping these protected lands looking their best by whatever means possible. However, money isn't everything, so the education aspect will teach Americans how to contribute in many different ways as well as advocate for others to do the same.

# Innovation Impact

The goal is encourage people to do whatever they can, by whatever means available to them, so that they can help the National Parks.

The impact would be a positive relationship with not only the National Parks, but also the environment. The innovation will lead to a better understanding, awareness and action for a healthier and more sustainable National Parks System.



# Benefits



## **Funding**

Keeping the parks looking their best and allowing future generations to enjoy the wonder of America's backyard.



## **Education**

Building a lasting relationship with people so they better understand the parks and the role they play in protecting them.



## **Transparency**

Instilling trust in a government agency while showing people where budgets are allocated and how donations are spent.



# BIG PICTURE TRENDS AND ISSUES

# PARK CHANGES OVER THE YEARS

- Even with wildlife and conservation as NPS goals, they're often neglected due to infrastructure and maintenance costs
- The budget for parks has historically been unstable due to politics, war and power struggles between party lines
- An increase in visitors wanting an experience has led to deteriorating parks, issues with litter, animal endangerment and vandalism to park property
  - With the rise of social media, National Parks have become desired backdrops for Instagram posters showing their outdoor experiences



## **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

big companies choosing a cause to advocate for that aligns with the audience as well as the brand/org.

## **NATIVE ADVERTISING**

Advertising that looks like it belongs in the medium it's shown in.

## **GPS TECHNOLOGY**

Using the location of people via mobile phone device to send alerts, messages and gather data about the person.

## **DATA VISUALIZATION**

Telling a story with data to make it more understandable and relatable. Good data visualization inspires action.

People want an experience they can relate to and understand quickly. They're tired of in-your-face advertising and expect more useful ads presented to them. Social advocacy is also a recent trend as organizations and brand try to relate with their audiences.



# CONTEXT

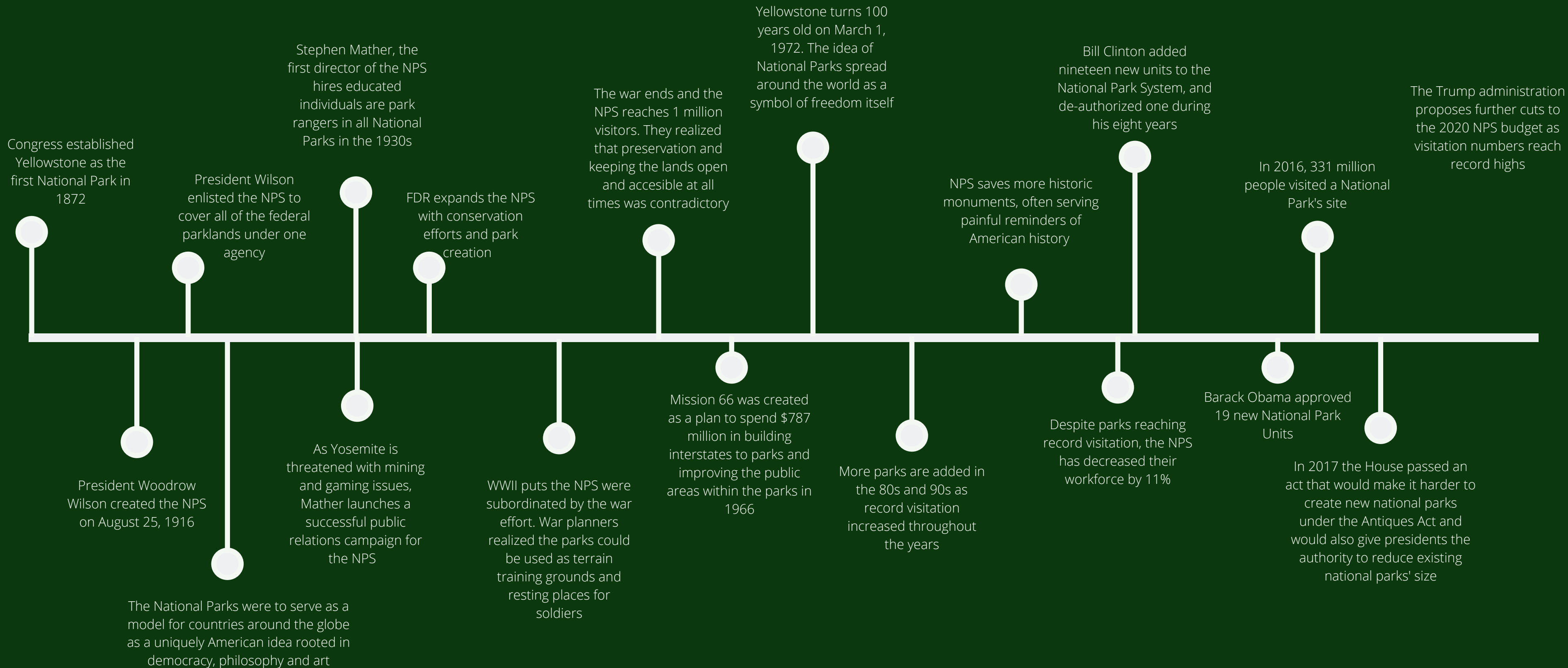
# HISTORY OF OUR NATIONAL PARKS



- Congress established Yellowstone as the first National Park in 1872
- President Woodrow Wilson created the NPS on August 25, 1916
- President Wilson enlisted the NPS to cover all of the federal parklands under one agency
- The National Parks were to serve as a model for countries around the globe as a uniquely American idea rooted in democracy, philosophy and art
- In 2016, 331 million people visited a National Park's site
- The parks contribute about \$35 million a year to the U.S. economy
- Despite parks reaching record visitation, the NPS has decreased their workforce by 11%
- In 2017 the House passed an act that would make it harder to create new national parks under the Antiquities Act and would also give presidents the authority to reduce existing national parks' size



# Eras Map





A photograph of two wolves in a natural setting. One wolf is standing and looking towards the right, while the other is lying down in the foreground, looking towards the left. The background shows some trees and a path.

# SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

- Politics play a major role in the success and failures of the National Park System
  - Specifically, how elected officials vote on National Park budgets
- The parks have always been really focused on getting people in them and making the parks for the people - lately people are flooding the parks
- Even with wildlife and conservation as NPS goals, they're often neglected
- The budget for parks has historically been unstable due to politics, war and power struggles between party lines



# The Current Environment

Individuals want to explore the National Parks and enjoy the spaces that are designated to the public. However, according to Pew Research, 57% of Americans think the government is doing too little to protect our National Parks and nature preserves.

As the fight for climate change and sustainable energies continues to gain momentum, many people have lost trust in the government to protect the land we pay taxes towards. Even when it costs the average American about the price of one cup of coffee/year to fund the national parks, budget cuts still increase. How much have budgets decreased?

- 7% reduction to operations of parks over the last 5 years
- 12% reduction in total budget in last 5 years
- Trump administration proposal was a 14% cut to the budget





The communications aspect for the National Parks innovation is split into two parts: an initial campaign launch and a continued education plan.

The campaign launch will include a multi-media campaign that informs people of the dwindling budget dollars as well as how they can help. The information will be presented in ways that inspire action and inform the public

The continued education program will partner with schools, libraries and other stakeholders in order to provide a continued relationship. The education program will teach people about the National Park's rich history and how their lives play a role in keeping the parks at their best.

## **COMMUNICATIONS ASPECT**



# STAKEHOLDERS

## OUTDOOR LOVERS

Outdoor lovers breathe the life into National Parks. They advocate, support, donate and do whatever they can to make sure that the National Parks can thrive. National Parks are a sanctuary for them.

Specifics: campers, hikers, bikers, outdoor enthusiasts, travelers

## THE GOVERNMENT

Once the National Parks proposes a budget, that proposal gets wrapped into the Dept. of Interior budget and sent to the executive branch. Once edits are made there they go to Congress for vote.

Specifics: congress members, cabinet members, president, lobbyists

## NONPROFITS

Whether the nonprofit advocates for or against National Parks, it's important to appeal to each. Nonprofits like the NPCA work to raise awareness about National Parks budget cuts and the effects they have on the parks and people who enjoy them.

Specifics: NPCA, Sierra Club, Natural Resource Defense

## PARK STAFF

Park staff are affected by budgets and the overuse of National Parks directly. They are a very important stakeholder due to their knowledge, expertise and personal connection to the National Parks.

## U.S. CITIZENS (TAX PAYERS)

U.S. citizens want to know where their tax money goes. Taxes are inevitable, but it helps when the organizations receiving our monies, are transparent about funding allocations. It's the peoples' land, and they deserve to know how and why it's funded.

Specifics: people who don't mind paying, people who do, people who think the land should be used for personal benefits

## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers play a vital role in keeping parks clean and running smoothly - the best part is they do this because they want to and they do it for free. Volunteers, like park staff have stake in the National Parks.

Specifics: litter pickers, event volunteers, nature volunteers, conservationists

## AD AGENCIES

Ad agencies have assisted in National Parks Service ads in the past and in the past two years, outdoor ad signs were allowed inside National Parks. Ad agencies and media companies also have data collection abilities that can help support National Parks initiatives.

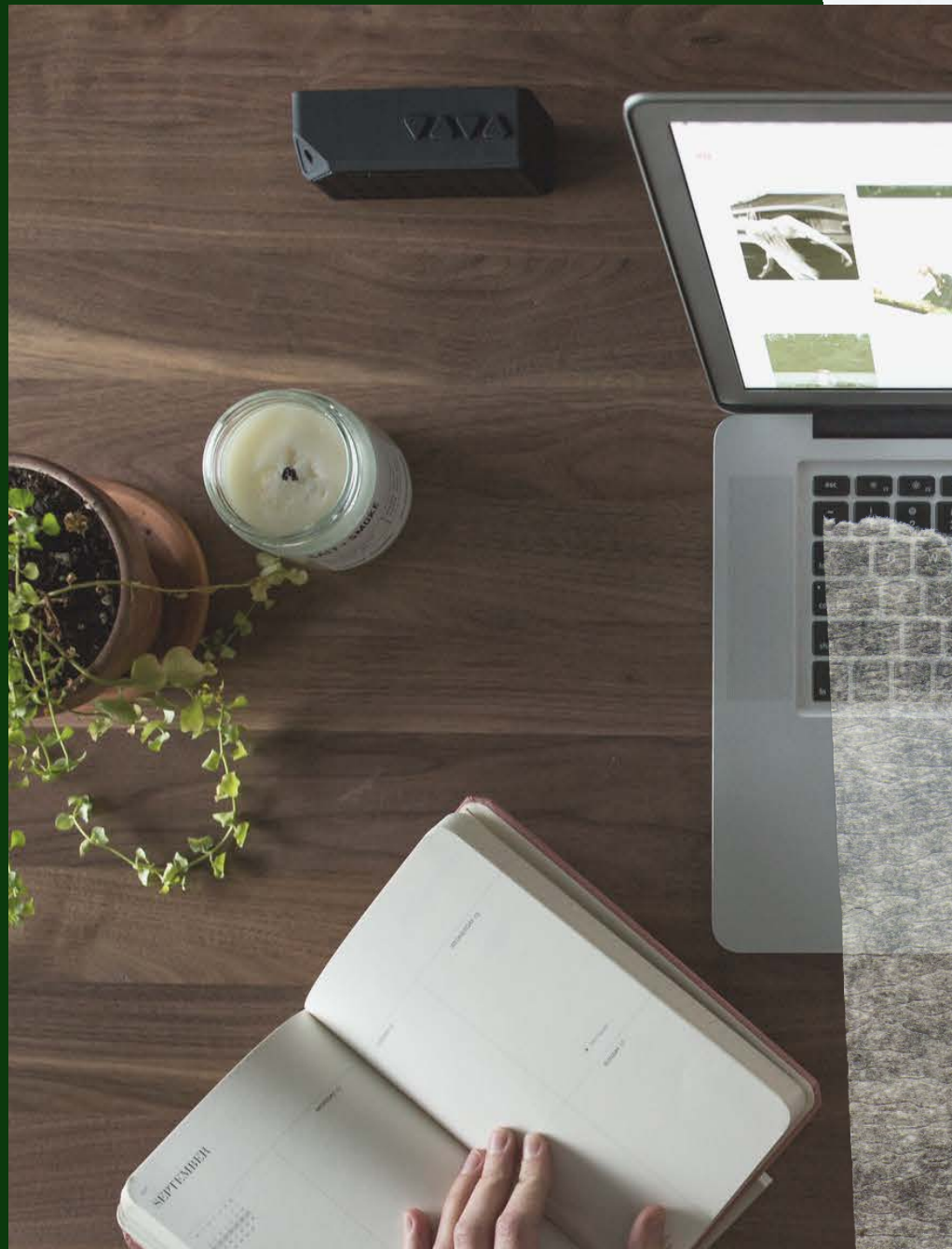
Specifics: AdCouncil, ProBono agencies, agencies that work with partner corporations

## OUTDOOR COMPANIES

Outdoor companies such as REI, Patagonia and North Face have taken a stance for the outdoors and National Parks. As large data collectors as well as key audience outfitters, they have a stake in the National Parks.

Specifics: REI, Patagonia, North Face, travel companies, hotels





# BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS



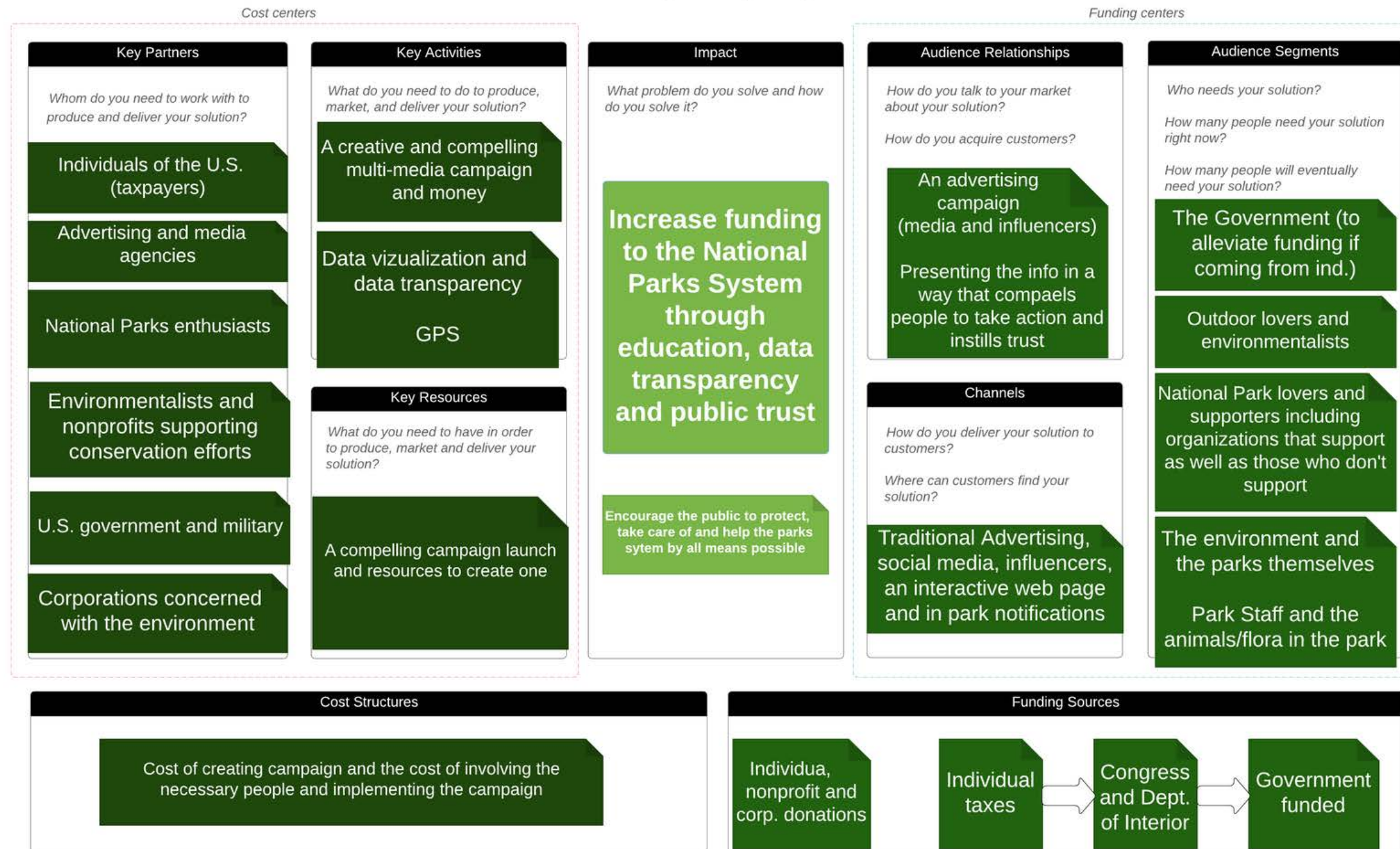
**INITIAL LAUNCH**

**BMC**



# Business Model Canvas - Inital Launch

Abigail Venable | June 10, 2019





## Key Partners

- **Individual taxpayers of the U.S.** - Taxpayers deserve to know how the National Parks uses funding as well as how funding the parks works.
- **Advertising and media agencies** - Agencies like the AdCouncil and other agencies that do work for nonprofits would be great to work with in terms of building an effective campaign.
- **Park enthusiasts** - Park enthusiasts are the influencers for the National Parks system and they have a deep relationship with the parks themselves. They have stories to tell and it's important that they're told.
- **Environmentalists and nonprofits supporting conservation** - Environmentalists and nonprofits supporting conservation are dedicated to assisting with education and funding. They have a lot of resources that will be needed for the campaign.
- **U.S. government and military** - The U.S. government, politicians and the military have historical relevance with the National Parks. Everything needs to be in compliance with government regulations. The military can also be used as a partner since the military has used the parks as terrain training facilities in the past.
- **Corporations aligned with the goals of the NPS** - American companies like REI and Patagonia have shown corporate interest in conservation and their partnership is key to funding as well as pushing the message effectively.







## Key Activities

- **A creative and compelling media campaign** - Creating an effective campaign will require manpower and strategic expertise. Making sure that the campaign has video, image and copy that effectively pushes the message is vital to its creation.
- **Money** - Securing funding in order to properly secure the campaign is a large part of one of the key activities - Whether money is secured through donations, volunteering or grants.
- **Data visualization and transparency** - As part of the campaign to instill trust and transparency, data will need to be presented in a clear and interactive way to grab the audience's attention and make them want to take action.
- **GPS technology** - GPS technology will be used to gather data, as well provide an opt-in messaging system that can alert park visitors about important information when they come close to the park boundaries.

## Key Resources

- **A compelling campaign and resources to launch it** - A campaign has many parts and they all involve different resources. Resources such as cameras, videographers, copywriter and editors will all be needed in some form to make sure the campaign is effective.

## Cost Structure

- **Cost of campaign and resources** - As stated above, the many parts and pieces of the campaign have manpower, expertise and costs involved. Costs will be funded through corporate sponsorship, donations and volunteerism.



## Audience Relationships

- **An advertising campaign** - Presenting information and creating a relationship that shows trusts and transparency exist. As a government entity, the parks face a unique problem with lack of trust. By creating trust and showing transparency, a stronger relationship with the audiences can be formed.

## Audience Segments

- **The government** - As the government passes funding for the National Parks, they're also burdened by trillions of dollars of debt. The government needs a solution to better fund the parks that have been neglected for too long.
- **Outdoor lovers/environmentalists** - Outdoor lovers and environmentalists want a solution so that they can enjoy the parks for years to come. They're passionate supporters who want to see the parks thrive.
- **Organizations supporting parks** - Social responsibility is major trend with corporations and what's a better responsibility than the parks that America calls home? Corporations need the environment to thrive.
- **The environment and the parks themselves (including staff, animals and flora/fauna)** - The parks need funding and awareness more than ever to make sure that the damaged ecosystem within can recover. Park staff have been underpaid and cut in recent years causing a lot of stress on park safety and conservation.

## Channels

- **Traditional Ad, social media, influencers, an interactive webpage and in-park communications** - In order to spread the message, all of these channels will be employed to ensure that that message is heard.

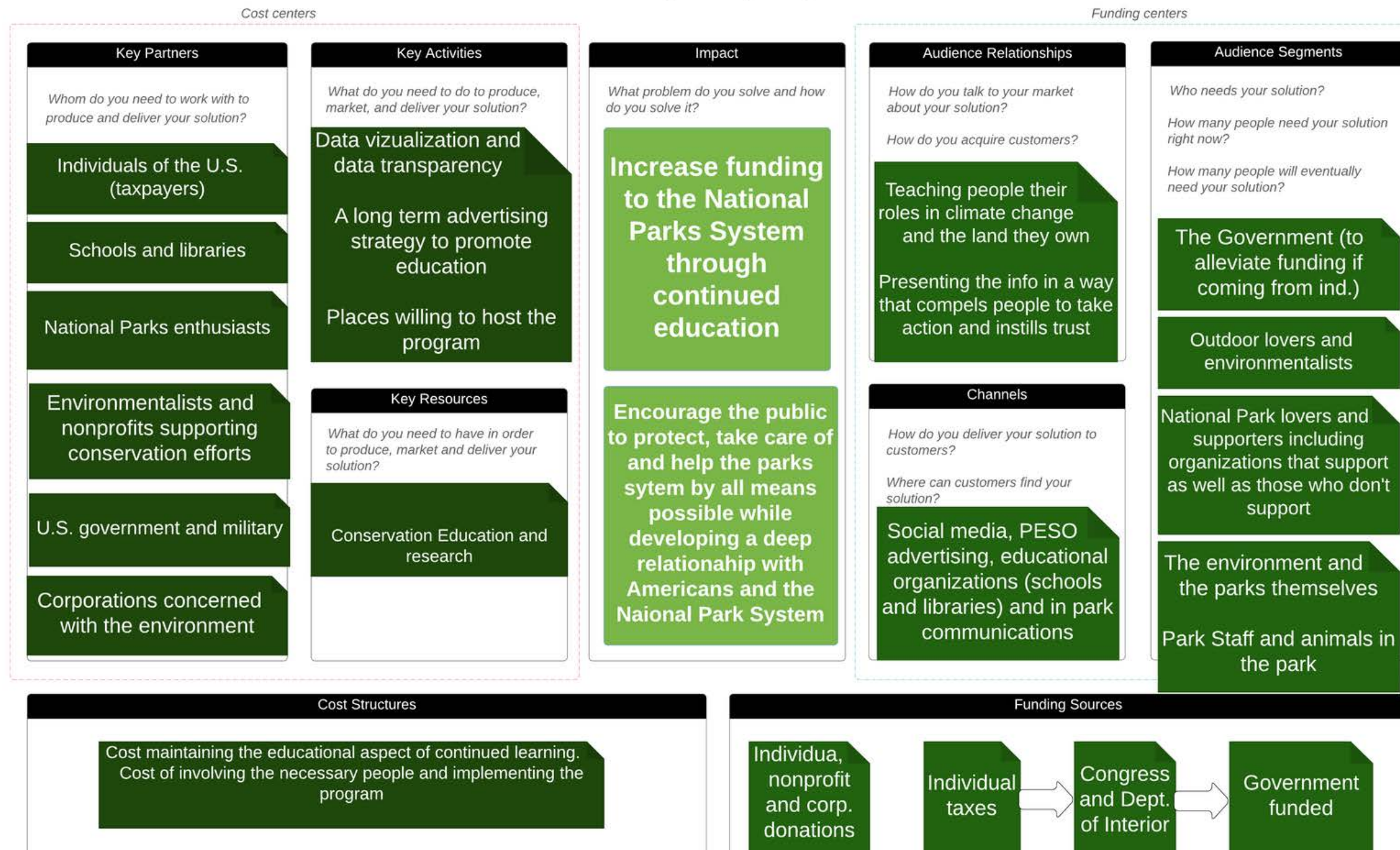


**EDUCATIONAL  
PROGRAM BMC**



# Business Model Canvas - Education Program

Abigail Venable | June 10, 2019





## Key Partners

- **Individual taxpayers of the U.S.** - Taxpayers deserve to know how the National Parks uses funding as well as how funding the parks works.
- **Schools and libraries** - Schools and libraries are always looking to spread knowledge to other people, which makes them the perfect partner for the educational program.
- **Park enthusiasts** - Park enthusiasts are the influencers for the National Parks system and they have a deep relationship with the parks themselves. They have stories to tell and it's important that they're told.
- **Environmentalists and nonprofits supporting conservation** - Environmentalists and nonprofits supporting conservation are dedicated to assisting with education and funding. They have a lot of resources that will be needed for the program to make it a rounded experience.
- **U.S. government and military** - The U.S. government, politicians and the military have historical relevance with the National Parks. Everything needs to be in compliance with government regulations. The military can also be used as a partner since the military has used the parks as terrain training facilities in the past.
- **Corporations aligned with the goals of the NPS** - American companies like REI and Patagonia have shown corporate interest in conservation and their partnership is key to funding as well as providing additional platforms to raise awareness.



## Key Activities

- **Money** - Securing funding in order to properly secure the program is a large part of one of the key activities - Money can be secured through donations, volunteering or grants.
- **Long-term ad strategy** - As part of the continuation of the campaign, awareness about the education program
- **Organizations and people willing to host the program** - Organizations like libraries and schools will be needed to host the program and teach it to people.

## Key Resources

- **Conservation information, education and research** - The program will need to be as informative as possible for many ages and learning groups. People will also be needed to organize the program and teach it if needed. Research will be done to make the program better understood with relevant information.

## Cost Structure

- **Cost of program and resources** - As stated above, the many parts and pieces of the program require manpower, expertise and money. Costs will be funded through corporate sponsorship, donations and volunteerism and education grants.

## Audience Relationships

- **Education** - Teaching the public the role they play in keeping the parks at their best for years to come is empowering. By showing them they have a stake in the parks, it will compel them to take action by whatever means necessary. Showing them data, ways to help the parks and how their politicians are voting for the parks budgets will build trust and create a deeper relationship that will inspire ownership of their parks.

## Audience Segments

- **The government** - As the government passes funding for the National Parks, they're also burdened by trillions of dollars of debt. The government needs a solution to better fund the parks and inspire people to do whatever they can to take responsibility for the National Parks.
- **Outdoor lovers/environmentalists** - Outdoor lovers and environmentalists want a solution so that they can enjoy the parks for years to come. They're passionate supporters who want to see the parks thrive.
- **Organizations supporting parks** - Social responsibility is major trend with corporations and what's a better responsibility than the parks that America calls home? Corporations need the environment to thrive.
- **The environment and the parks themselves (including staff, animals and flora/fauna)** - The parks need educations and awareness more than ever to make sure that the damaged ecosystem within can recover. Park staff have been underpaid and cut in recent years causing a lot of stress on park education.

## Channels

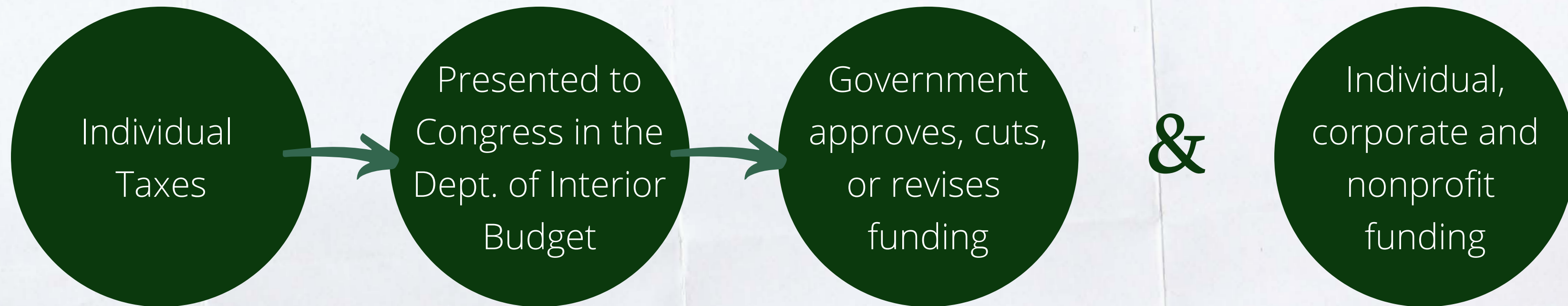
- **Traditional Ad, social media, influencers, and organizations** - In order to spread the message, all of these channels will be employed to ensure that that message is heard. Schools, libraries and other organizations will provide additional channels for the education program to exist.





**FUNDING FOR  
BOTH BMC MODELS**

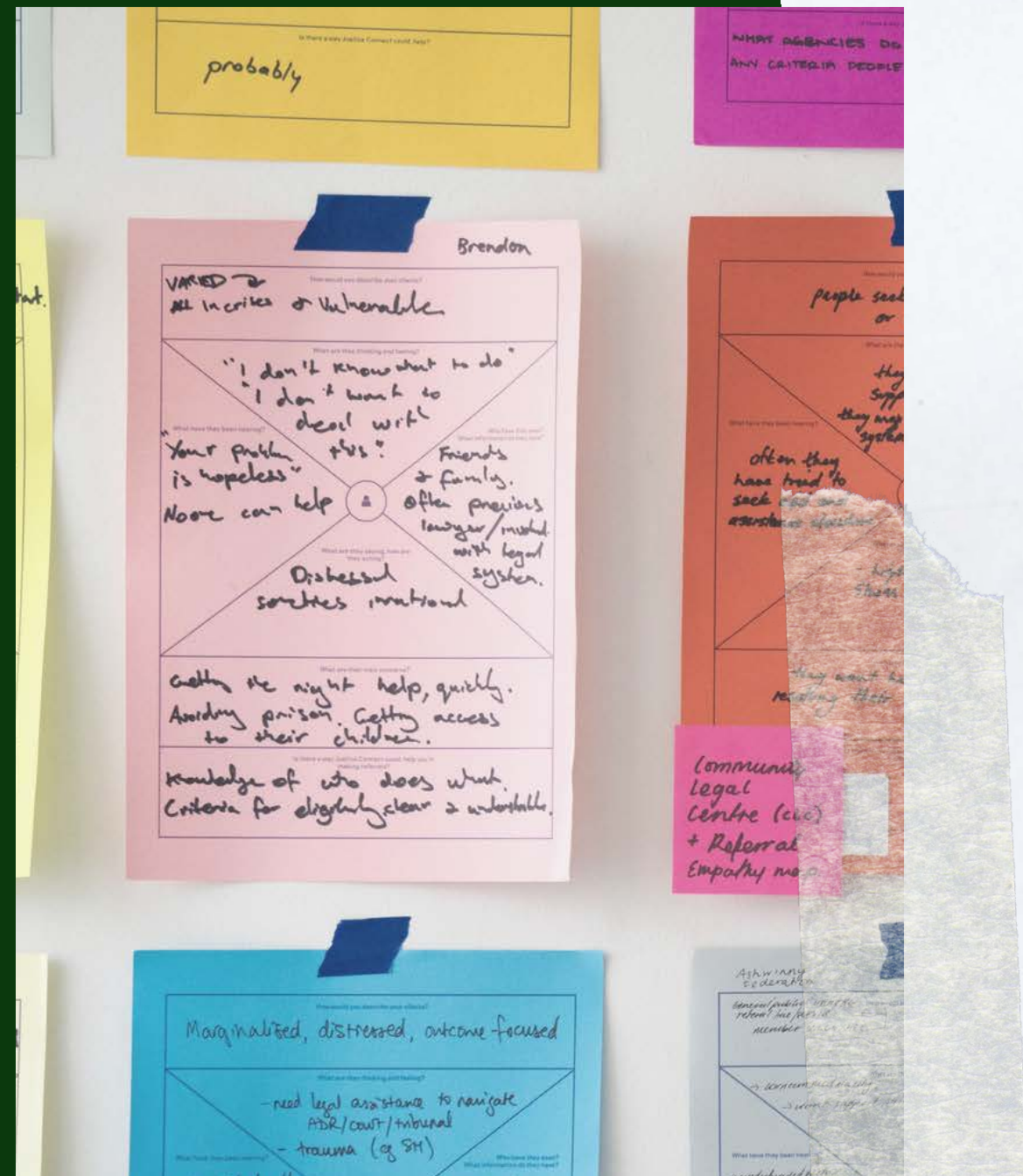
# Funding Structures



Since the National Parks is government funded, the budget needs to be approved by several levels. The budget is rolled into the budget of the Department of Interior which has been humorously labeled "the department of everything else" because of the broad range of responsibilities it has. This broad range causes funding for National Parks to be undermined.

Similar to other non-profits, the parks rely on Individual, corporate and nonprofit funding to fill in the gaps that lack of government funding has left.





# THE PROCESS





# The "Why"

When I started brainstorming an innovation, I wanted to provide a communications innovation for something not only meaningful to myself, but also the world around me. The thought to create a communications innovation for the National Parks came to me as I was visiting my family at Lake Michigan.

As I looked across the shimmery water, I realized the lake looked different from years past. My father explained the the great lakes have had extreme cuts to their budgets. The beach I'd come to love now suffered from erosion and the picturesque sunset was now hazy with the shadows of steel mills.

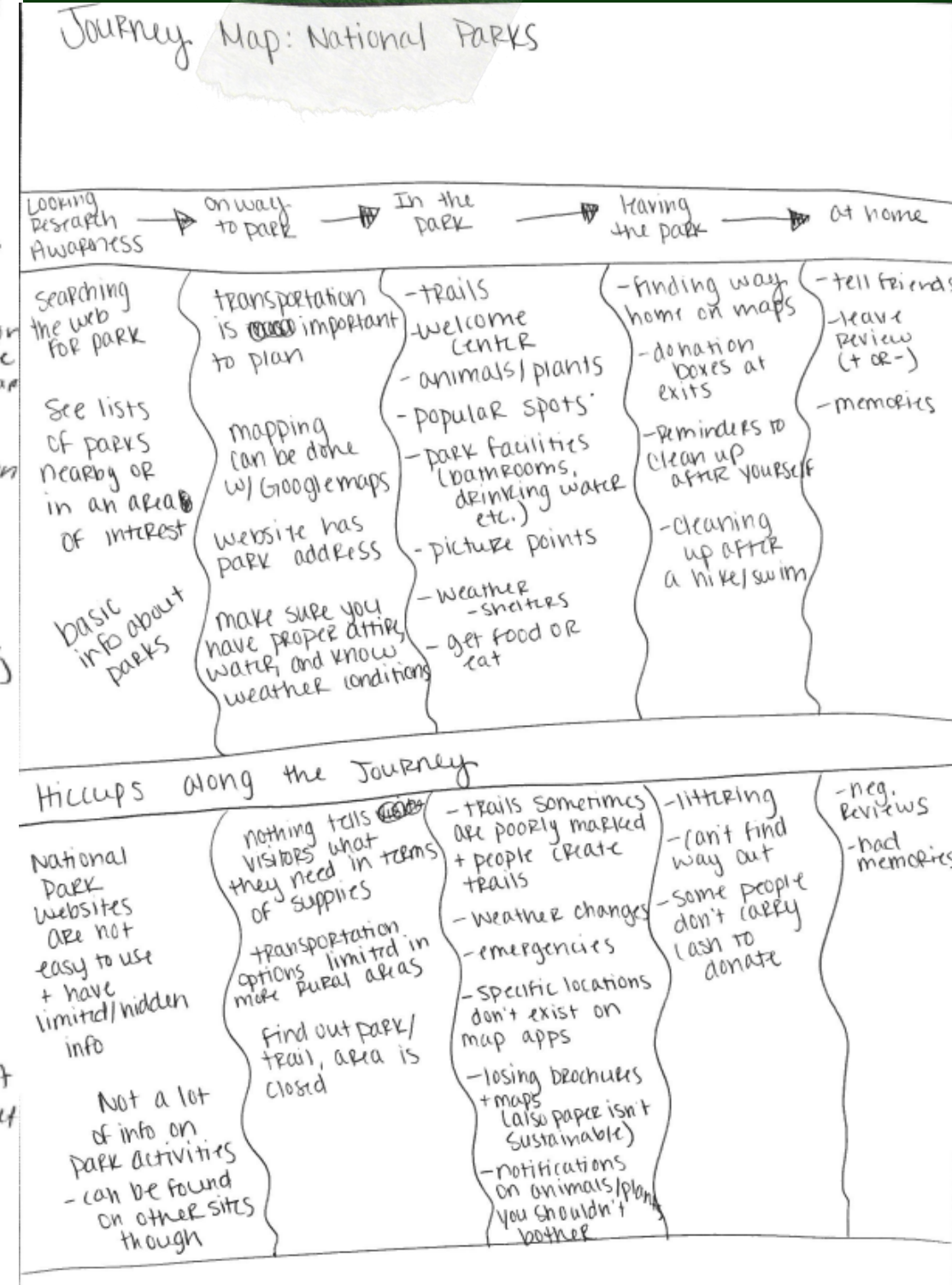
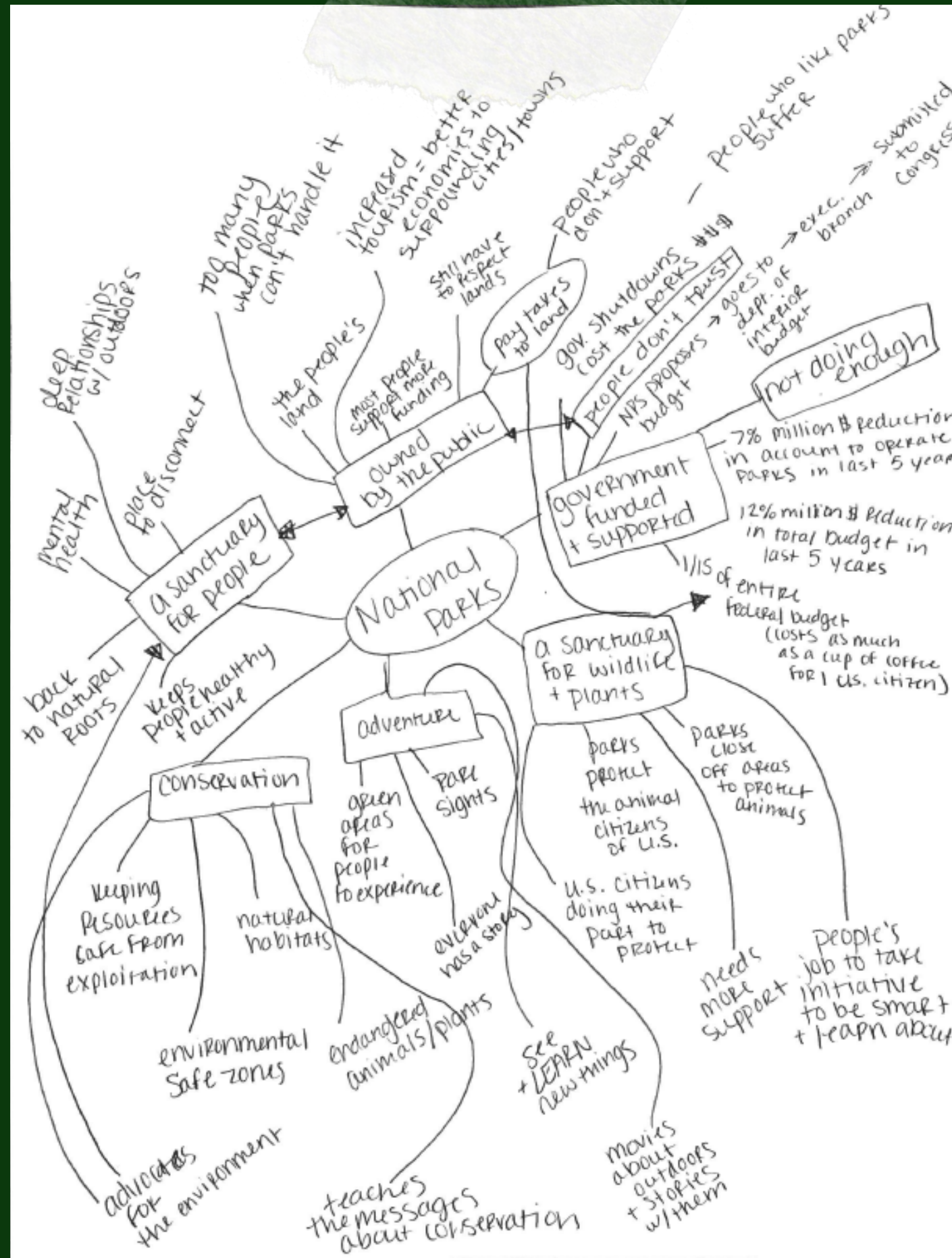
On a larger scale, our climate is changing. The National Parks were created to protect our lands as well the environment that allows us to thrive and live. The National Parks need a way to advocate for all these things in an appealing and interesting way, so that individuals and the government will understand the important role that the National Parks play.



# Brainstorm

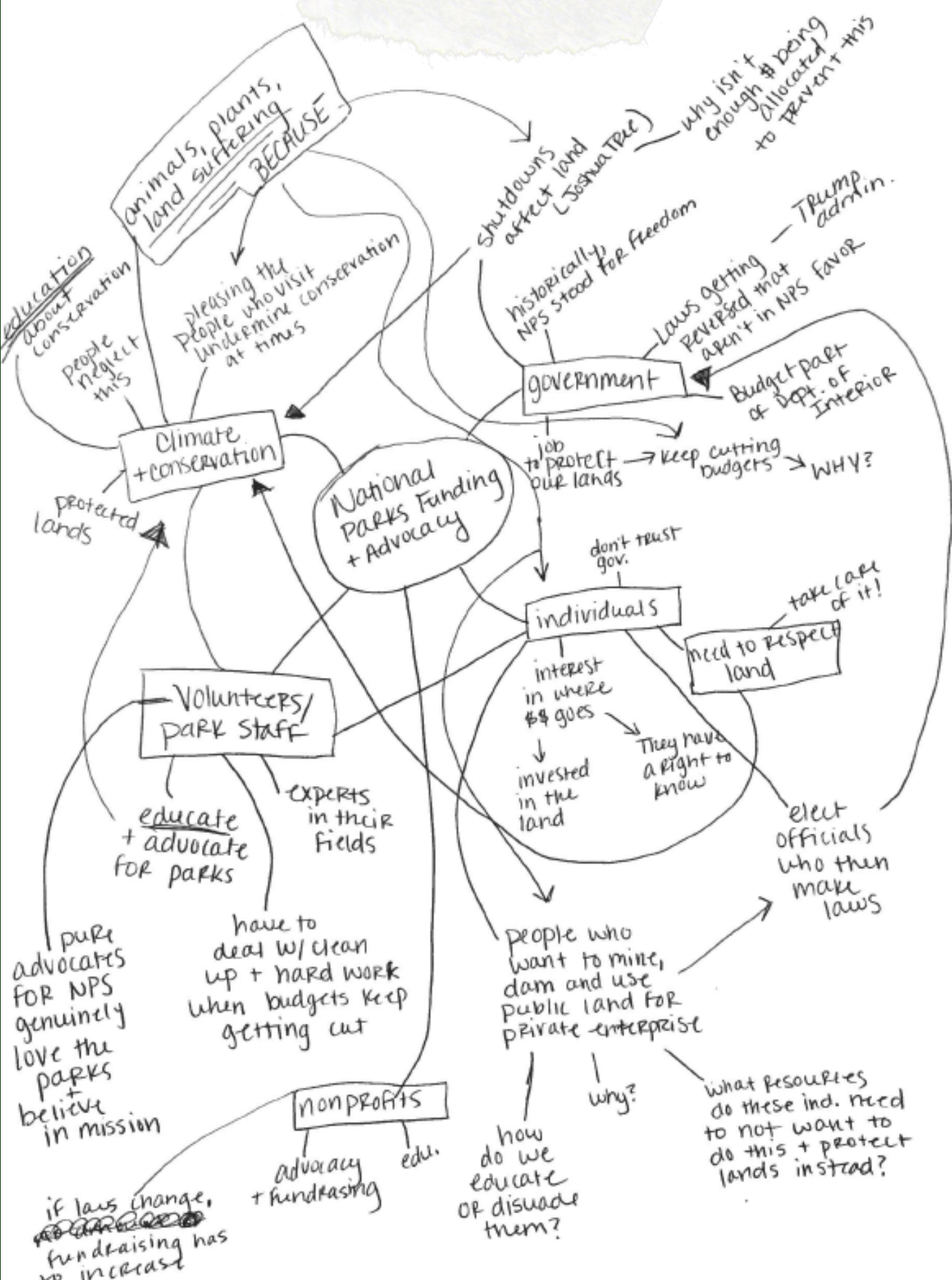
When I started, I wanted to explore what the National Parks were and the problems they faced. In order to do this, I mapped out everything associated with the National Parks and found a lot of similar issues that stemmed from each other.

Then I completed a journey map which gave me insights into how effective communication was with people who visited the parks. I found that in terms of donating and transparency, there was a lot of room for confusion.





# Funding



## Donation Journey

- Search how to donate to NPS
  - find NPS website
  - not 1st search result
  - not a specific landing page
- Look at NPS homepage
  - no prominent donation page
  - look under menu
    - Donate link is under "Get involved" in the megamenu
- Donation Page
  - 5 options:
    - donate to your favorite park
    - donate to a park friends group
    - buy something at the bookstore
    - no link
    - Donate to National Park Foundation - better website
    - support national programs - prominent donate button
  - the page isn't compelling OR even persuasive as to why one should donate
- Donation page
  - easy form
  - no compelling story OR data telling someone why they should donate
  - the site is very centered around human experience and not conservation

After learning from my brainstorming that funding was a root issue, I decided to brainstorm one step further with the focus solely on funding and advocacy. As you can see, a lot of parts and pieces are involved in funding the parks and a challenge presented itself - how do we get all these pieces to effectively communicate together for a common good.

To further investigate I mapped out the step I had to take to find National Park donation information. The NPS website was difficult to navigate and wasn't exactly clear about how to donate and donation allocation.



# SCAMPER

As I began to understand the complexities of NPS funding, I used the SCAMPER method to create possible solutions that would lead to an effective innovation. My first SCAMPER had the visitors in mind first, which I realized wasn't going to solve the issues that I had originally set out to solve. My second SCAMPER was completely dedicated to improving funding and advocacy for the parks.

## SCAMPER

### National Parks Communication

1. Stop outdoor ad inside the parks and transfer to less intrusive medium like website - Modify
2. Combine message of funding w/ message of National Parks importance
3. Adapt maps to better show whats in National Parks.
4. Modify the website to provide more relevant, attractive info
5. Combine ad with big data to get a better sense of audiences
6. Substitute a website for an app/ combine the two so that visitors have an on-the-go resource
7. Eliminate paper pamphlets at welcome centers
8. Substitute normal data collection w/ blockchain data collection
9. Substitute annual reports with maps that show individual impacts
10. Adapt by making donating easy + seamless
11. Combine ~~the~~ stories with data to increase awareness about National Park funding.
12. Adapt by using geomapping technology (think Disney Parks) to guide people through National Parks
13. Adapt by partnering w/ mental health initiatives to show importance of parks on mental health
14. Combine environmental research w/ data to tell a story about National Parks dwindling funds
15. Modify advertising to make it more useful + relevant to all visitors
16. Combine fitness tracking with park trail tracking to show trail maps, length, etc.
17. Adapt to a more attractive website.
18. Combine to highlight more NPS resources available
19. Modify how funding allocation is displayed - make it easy to understand.
20. Modify show + highlight conservation efforts of NPS + why it matters
21. Substitute direct ad for native advertising within NPS mediums.

## SCAMPER #2

### NPS Funding + Advocacy Comms.

1. Combine funding w/ advocacy to create stories
2. Adapt by focusing on land conservation funding instead of funding human damage to parks w/ too many visitors
3. Combine data w/ visual storytelling
4. Modify website to be more persuasive for donors
5. Eliminate the narrative that parks are for people to use as they please whenever
6. Combine and adapt Smokey Bear campaign with a campaign focused on protecting land, animals, + plants
7. Combine climate crisis w/ NPS crisis
8. Substitute in-person experience w/ digital experiences when parks are overused
9. Reverse campaigns to get more people in parks
10. Eliminate rule to have parks open at all times
11. Adapt conservation efforts into programs like DARE for kids
12. ~~Combine~~ Adapt w/ virtual reality to show how damage effects parks
13. Modify park goals to be more involved in wildlife
14. Adapt with comm + ad that resonates w/ park lovers + haters alike
15. Adapt by providing better persuasion to donate
16. Adapt by making website more interesting
17. Combine NPF efforts + highlight their work more
18. Substitute people first to parks first message
19. Modify how NPS budget is proposed
20. Eliminate the need for gov. laws to dictate whether parks will or won't have enough funding
21. Combine NPF + NPS so funds are more direct.



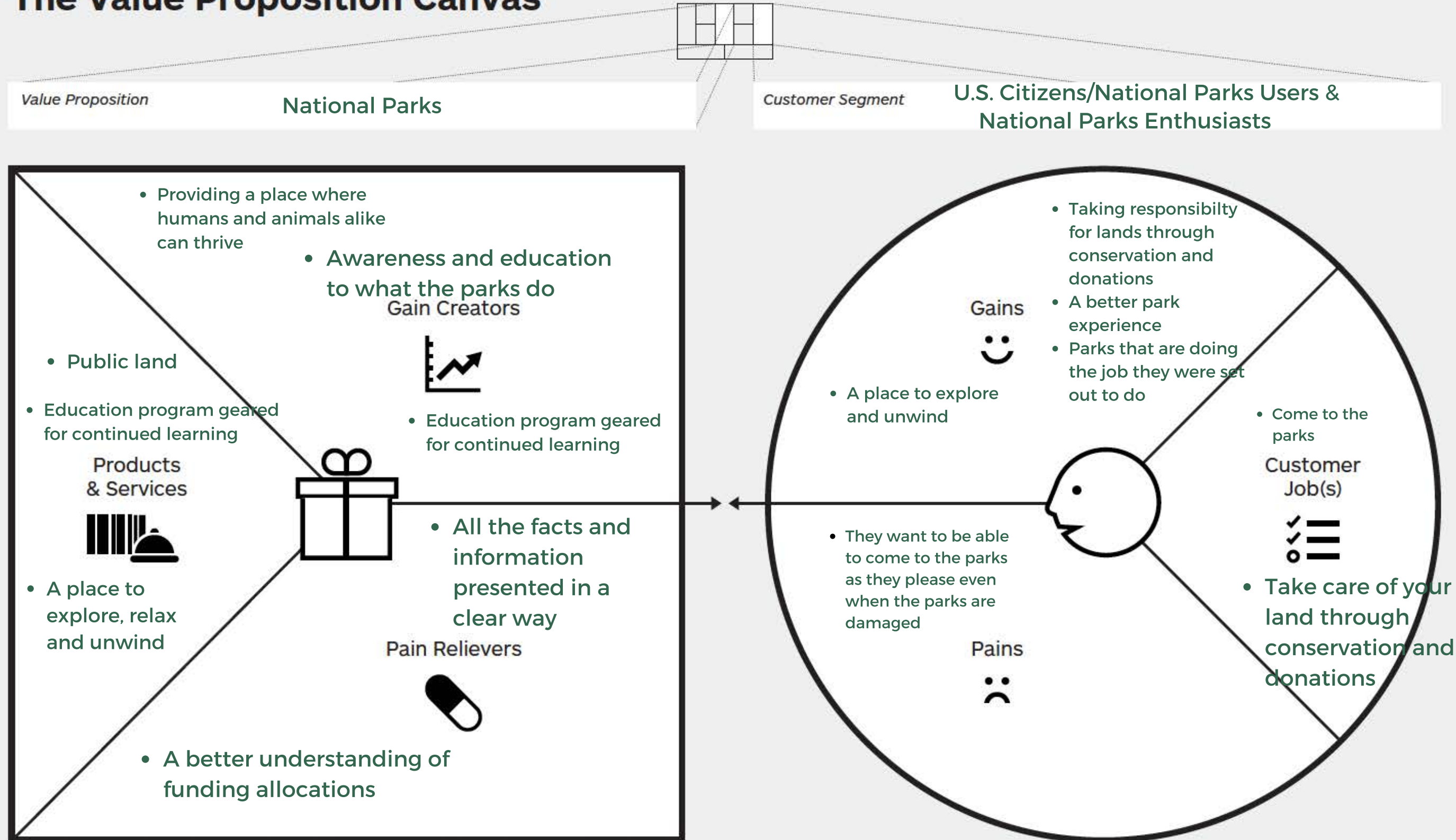
# Value Propositions

The value propositions were valuable ways in which I made sure the relationship between the NPS innovation and the stakeholders was beneficial for both parties. In order to ensure the relationship was beneficial for each, I filled out a value proposition canvas for each of the stakeholders listed in the BMCs I created.

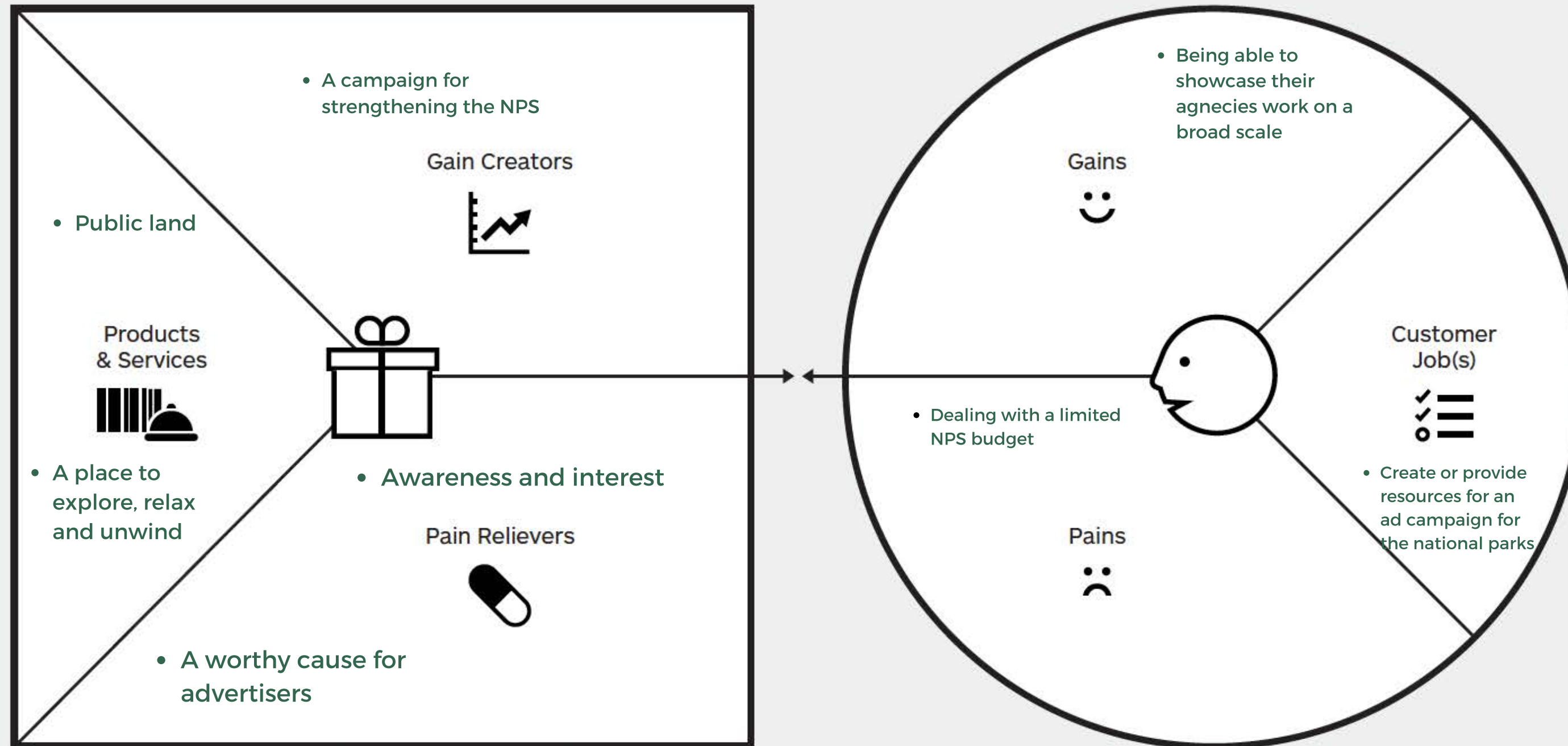
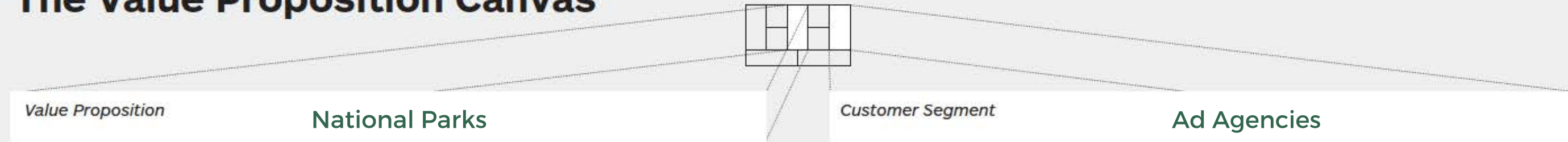




# The Value Proposition Canvas



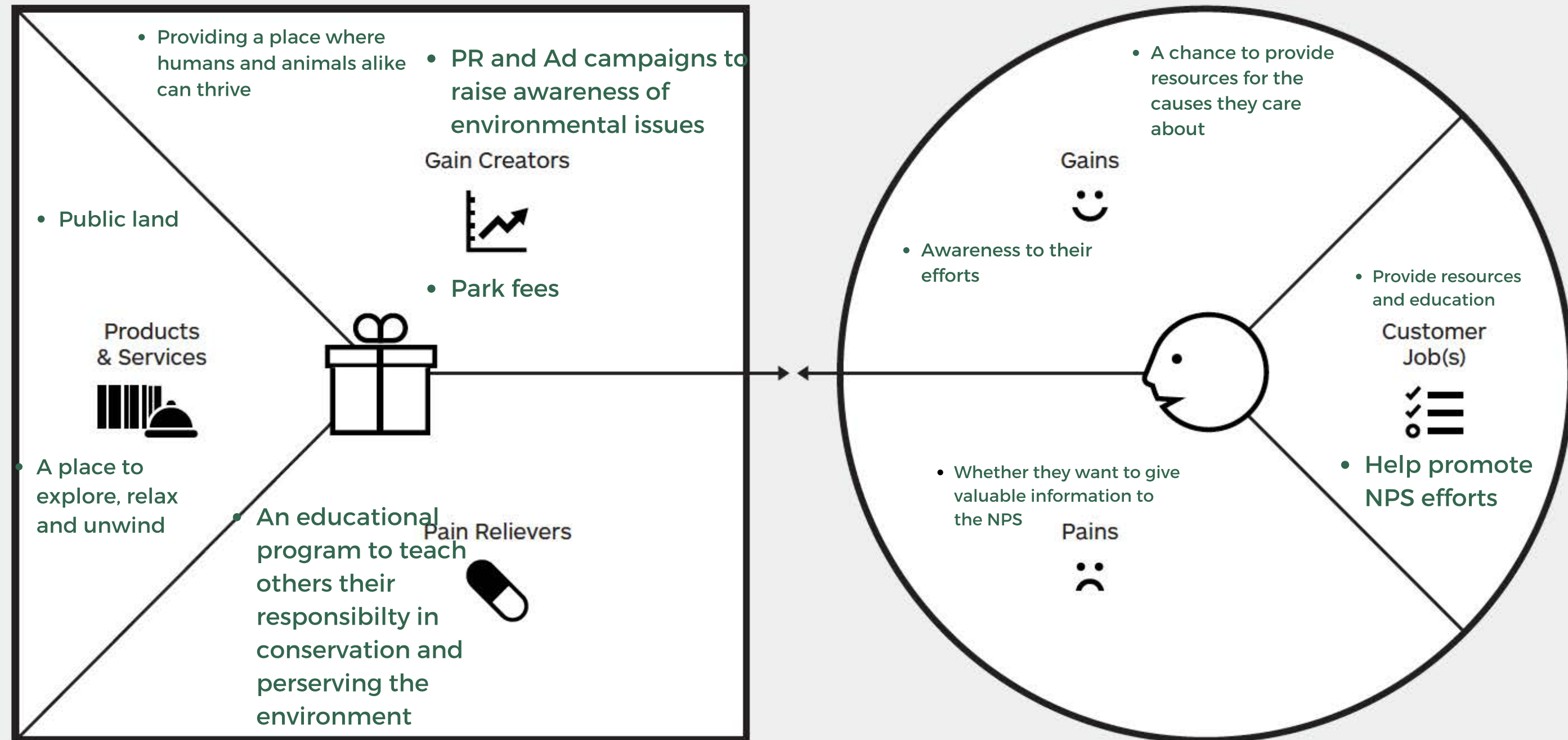
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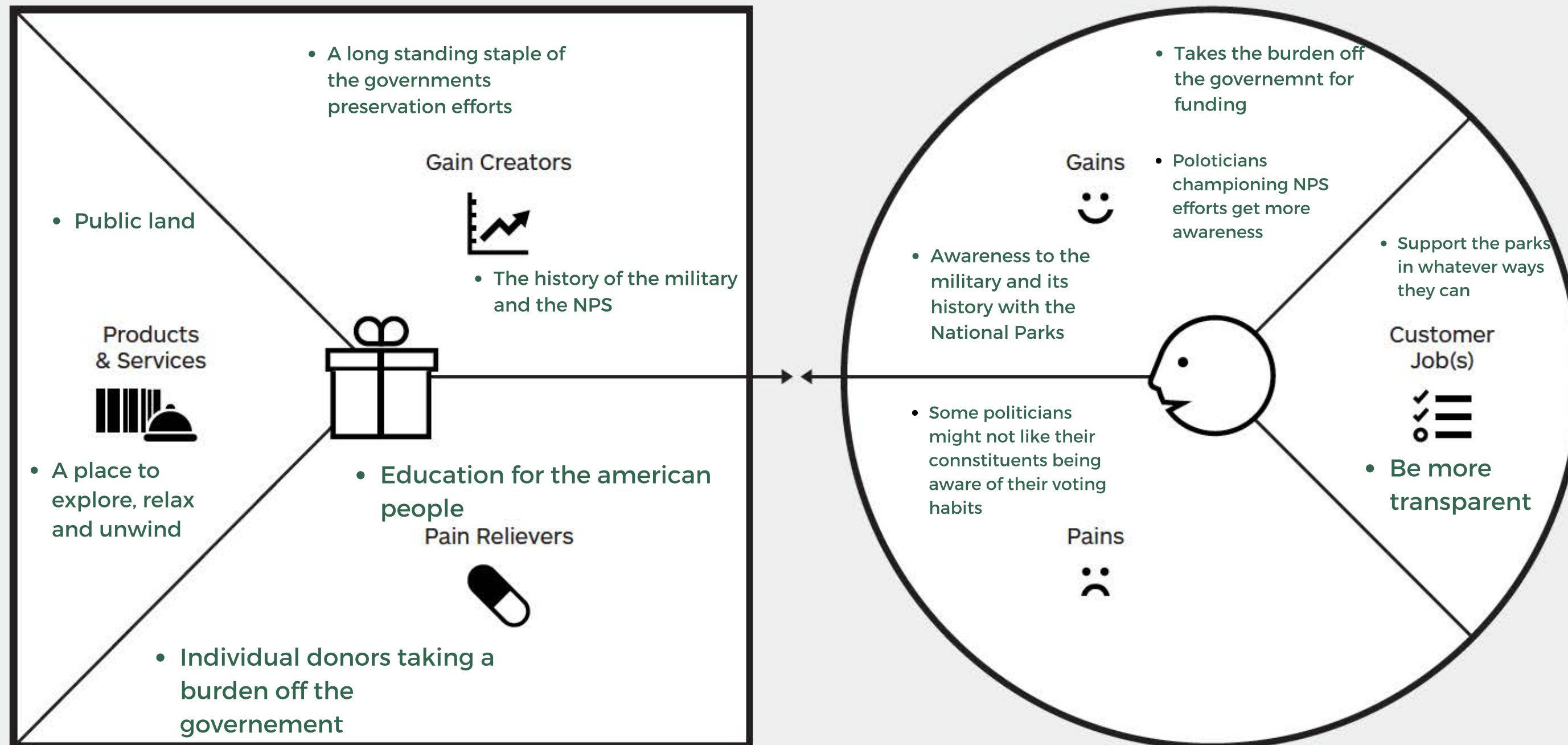
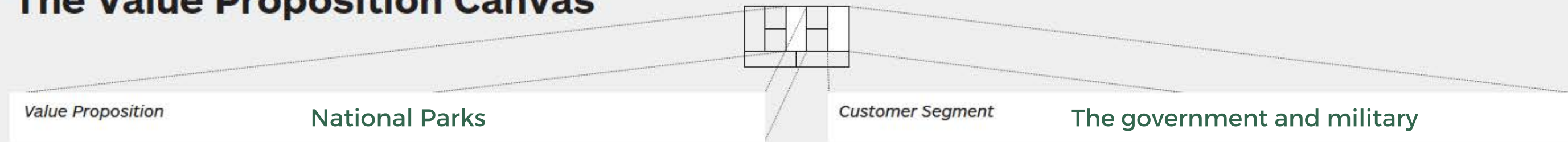


# The Value Proposition Canvas

Value Proposition: National Parks      Customer Segment: Environmentalists and Conservation nonprofits

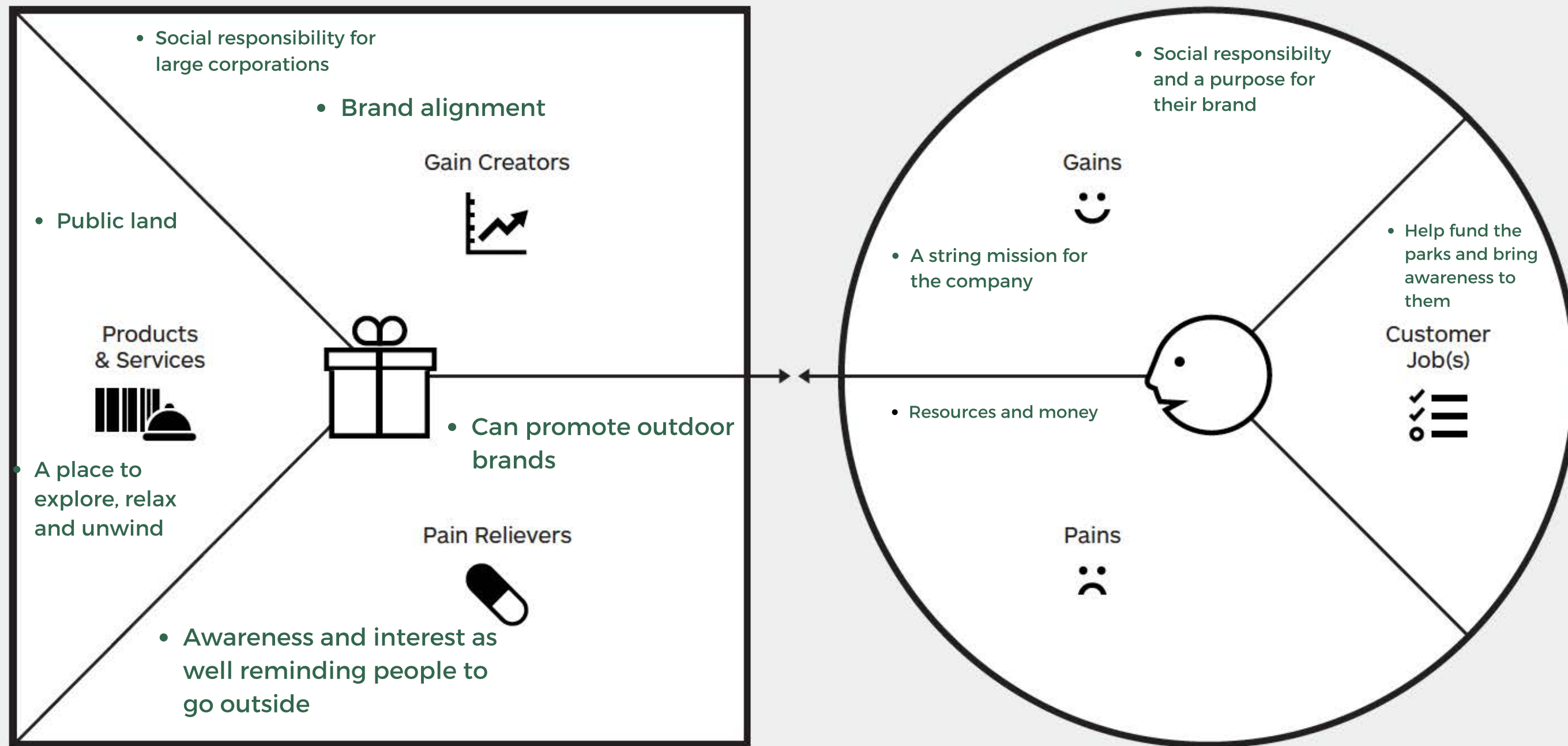
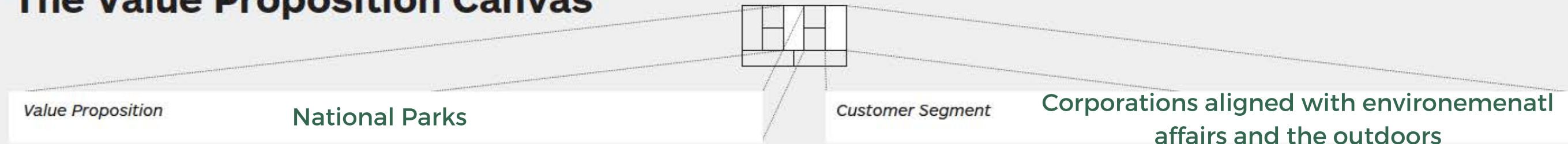


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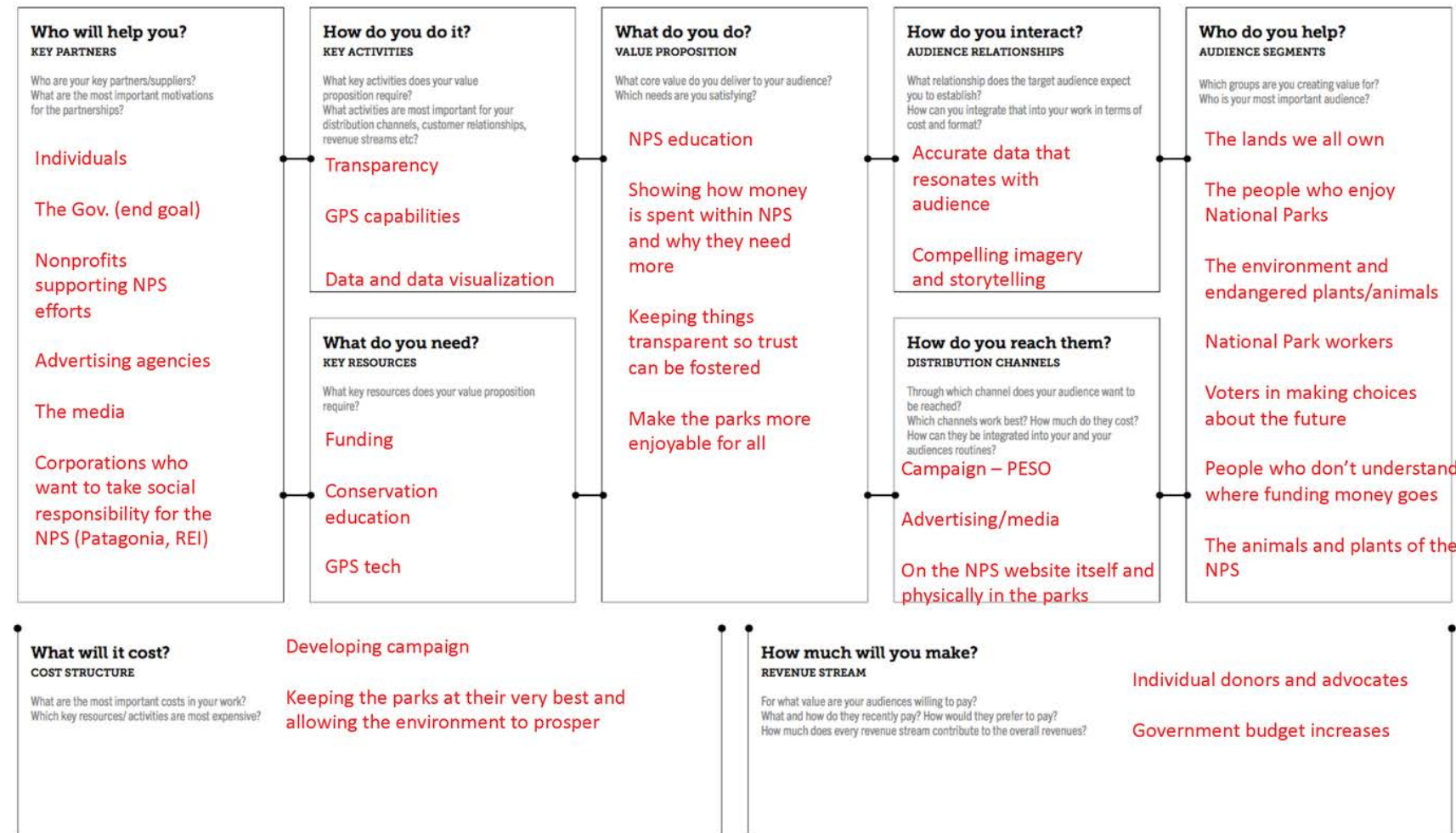


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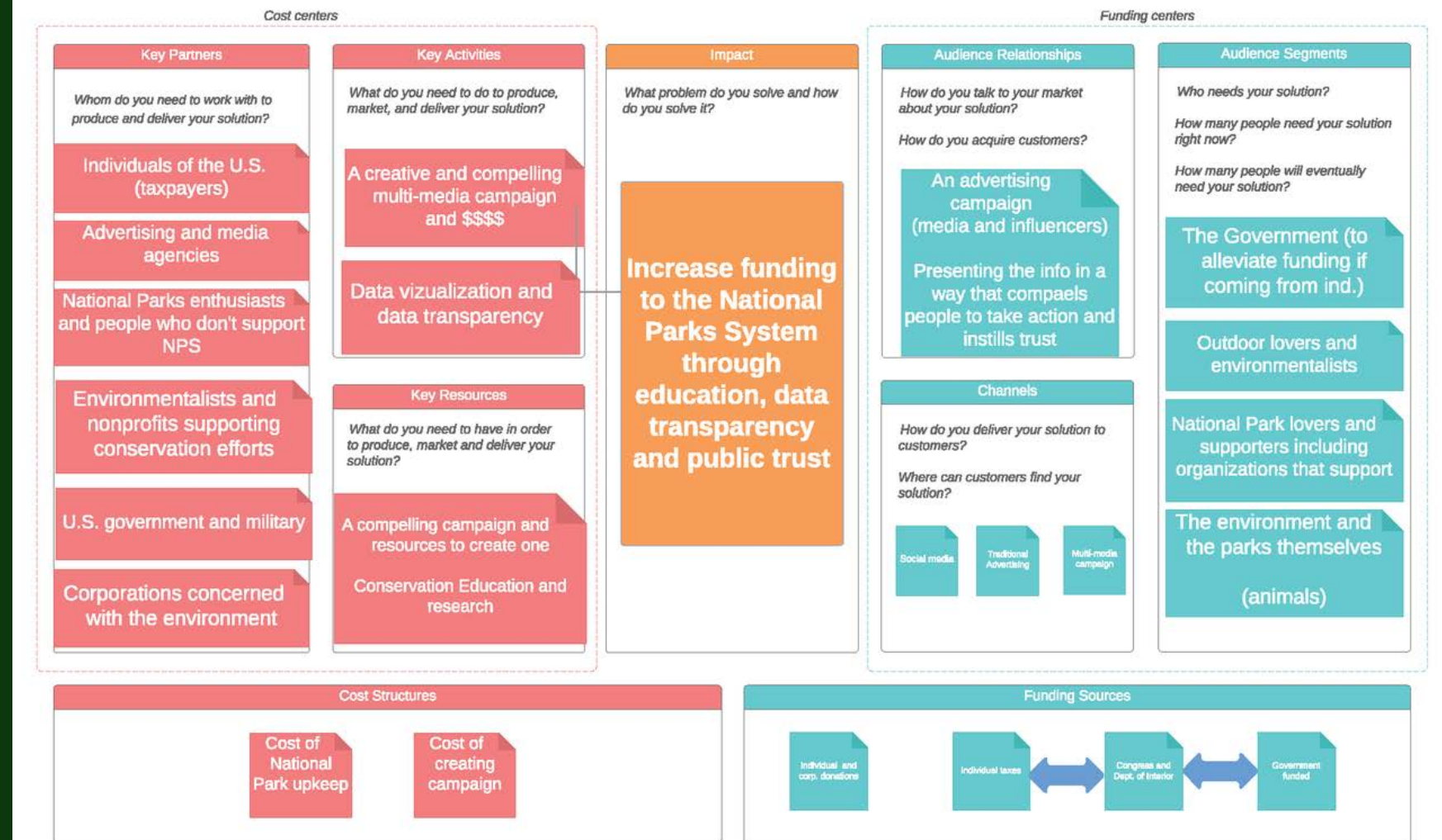
I want to develop a clear plan  
on how to grow my idea into something bigger

## BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS



## Business Model Canvas

Abigail Venable | June 3, 2019



# Business Model Canvas

At first, my business model was really simple and contained some brief ideas on what I thought the innovation would look like. As I completed several business models and continuously added, subtracted and modified, the idea became more and more clear. The business model helped me shape what the innovation would look like in terms of what was needed, who was needed and the complex relationships that need to be nurtured and fostered in order to make the innovation successful.



# THE POSSIBILITIES

# FINAL IDEA

The final idea is launching a multi-media campaign that will link back to a new, interactive webpage. The webpage will feature visual and interactive data about National Park funding. The webpage will also feature ways that individuals can donate, volunteer or help the parks in other ways. Lastly, the webpage will have an opt-in that allows the parks to use GPS location to send park updates and alerts right to your mobile device.

After the launch of the initial funding campaign, the education program will launch. The education program will be similar to the Smokey the Bear campaign. The National Park education campaign will feature endangered animal mascots by park region and each one will teach the audience about climate change, park history and how everyone has a role in keeping our National Parks at their best for all generations. The program will be spread through the media, schools and libraries.



# Landing page (mock)



## Education Program

### Gen. education

ecos.fws.gov

- Split into Regions
  - Alaska - Blue whale
  - Northeast - Atlantic Puffin
  - Intermountain - Sierra Nevada Bighorn sheep
  - Midwest - Indiana bat
  - ~~National Capital (concerns monuments)~~
  - Pacific - West - Columbia Basin Pygmy Rabbit (the cutest thing you'll ever see) OR green turtle
  - Southeast - leatherback sea turtle
- Each region has a mascot, which will be an endangered or rare animal of that region to bring awareness to conservation.
- Each region will have a brief history, animal, plant + fauna information, as well ways in which everyone can help make the specific region thrive.

### Funding Education + history

- in order to really understand the NPS, you have to understand how it's funded and how/why the national parks exist.
  - interactive ERAS map w/ park history
  - historian interviews about park history
  - animal + plant expert interviews

### Environmental + climate change Education

- History of NPS
- Funding (how parks get funded + how allocation of funds occurs)
- What people can do to help (many creative ways)

# Resources

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# Resources

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