

Title: Native American Involvement in the National Park System

Thesis: In an opinion piece in *The Atlantic*, David Treuer poses an argument for returning all of the National Parks to Native American tribes, based around the brutality of the parks' history. However, it is a more viable plan to continue focusing on recognizing Native Americans at the parks, as well as increasing involvement of Natives in the care plans for these protected areas.

- I. Reason: The National Park System is already cherishing Native Americans and their history in many parks. By increasing these parts of the parks, Native Americans are given greater respect. This kind of information should, however, be spread to other parks where necessary.
 - A. The MHA tribal area has many great ideas about how to do this- cultivating traditional plants, serving traditional foods, recording areas for tribal languages, and a research space. These can be applied to national parks as a form of reconnecting Native Americans and their culture.
 - B. <https://www.nationalparks.org/connect/blog/parks-celebrate-native-american-heritage> 11 parks celebrate Native American heritage (plus ones not included in this article, like Yellowstone and Yosemite, etc)
 1. <https://www.npca.org/articles/2742-this-land-is-their-land> there are 15 according to this article
 - C. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/2016npstribaltourismhighlights.htm> The National Parks encourage visitors to experience tribal heritage
 - D. Counterargument D here
- II. Reason: Greater involvement of Native Americans in planning preservation will make them feel a greater sense of responsibility and care for their natural spaces without handing over control in a nonviable way.
 - A. 27 tribes are formally associated with Yellowstone. "Since 2002, park managers have met periodically with tribal representatives to exchange information about park projects and ethnographic resources. The tribes have requested to participate in resource management and decision-making, to conduct ceremonies and other events in the park, and to collect plants and minerals for traditional uses" <https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/historyculture/native-american-affairs.htm> Continuing and expanding these kinds of collaborations is important. The article mentioned the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in 1990.
 - B. "Since November 2009, the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, the InterTribal Buffalo Council, and the Nez Perce Tribe have joined the Interagency Bison Management Plan and participate in the development of adaptive management strategies for bison and Brucellosis in the areas immediately outside Yellowstone National Park." <https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/historyculture/native-american-affairs.htm>
 - C. In the article- "Nor is it clear that the current system will adequately ensure the parks' future. That's something Indians are good at: pushing ahead while bringing the past along with us. We may be able to chart a better way forward." Native Americans can be used for their ideas and assistance. This would bring a new

path to fruition without handing over control. This would also help fix the author's view that the parks are making more "myopic decisions."

D. Counterargument B would work here- fixing communication issues will help Native Americans feel more involved and respected.

E. Counterargument E could work here

III. The National Park System is working on allowing increased tribal use of the National Parks for Native Americans.

A. According to the article, the National Parks allow plant harvesting through written requests, and people can hunt or trap within National Park borders in some cases. This is only for traditional purposes. The article also shared that at Roosevelt, anybody is allowed in who says they're there for ceremonial or spiritual purposes.

B. <https://cherokeesatlarge.org/2017/05/free-admission-to-all-national-parks/>
According to this post, members of the Cherokee Nation get into national parks for free for traditional activities. This can be expanded to other tribes as well (it might already be)

C. Counterargument A would work here, to the point of wanting "permanent, unencumbered access to our homelands." Could add counterargument F if it feels like it fits here.

IV. Counterarguments to possibly include

A. The "precedent for this kind of transfer" examples don't fit the claim that the author is making. In the example using New Zealand and Australia, the tribes were granted a "greater role in the conservation," not given full control. In the case of the Panama Canal, the canal was jointly managed for 22 years before the canal was fully transferred over to Panama. This is, yet again, not an example of full control given over.

B. Bureau of Indian Affairs having misunderstandings with the tribes. By communicating more often and more openly, these miscommunications can be helped. This makes involvement and awareness feel more complete and respectful for Natives.

C. MHA struggles with a variety of hardships. We all face these troubles; this isn't limited to one nation of people. Look at data to see if the numbers vary between other groups.

D. Little actions by park officials can "only do so much" and "reparations are partial, ad hoc, and tenuous." The little actions and progress matter the most, something that the author discounts.

E. In the example of using Bears Ears park as a "political football," the author uses the case to illustrate that the National Park System is turning lots of natural spaces into other, harmful things that are showing negatively for the future. This is one park out of 423 parks, so it's an unfair argument.

F. Handing over control of the parks to Native Americans would not decrease the overcrowding issue, something the author complained about.