

Ken Burns' Series Celebrates National Parks Across America and in Nebraska

LINCOLN, Neb. (Sept. 16, 2009) -- Usually, when people think of national parks, they think big - Yellowstone in Wyoming, the Grand Canyon or maybe Denali National Park and Preserve in Alaska. But, right here in Nebraska are six national park sites, stretching from the banks of the Missouri River to towering Scotts Bluff in Western Nebraska.

Nebraska's sites are part of a national system that is as uniquely American as the Declaration of Independence and just as radical: that the most special places in the nation should be preserved, not for royalty or the rich, but for everyone. And thus, America's best idea -- to create a system of national parks -- was born.

Produced by filmmaker Ken Burns, the 12-hour, six-part series "The National Parks: America's Best Idea" premieres Sunday, Sept. 27, at 7 and 9 p.m. CT on NET1 and in high definition on NET-HD. The series will continue Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday (Sept. 28, 30, Oct. 1 and 2) at 7 and 9 p.m. CT, and at 8 and 10 p.m. CT on Tuesday, Sept. 29.

The first three parts of the series repeat Saturday, Oct. 3, beginning at 12:30 p.m. CT, and episodes four, five and six air Sunday, Oct. 4, beginning at 1 p.m. CT on NET1 and NET-HD. Episodes one through six will air each day from Monday, Sept. 28, to Saturday, Oct. 3, at 7 a.m., 1 and 5 p.m. CT on NET2.

Filmed over six years in some of nature's most spectacular locales -- from Acadia to Yosemite, and the Everglades of Florida to the Arctic of Alaska -- the series not only covers the history of the national parks, it also spotlights the people involved in their preservation: scientists and soldiers, natives and newcomers, idealists, artists and entrepreneurs. The group is comprised of people who were willing to devote themselves to saving some precious portion of the land they loved, and in doing so, reminded their fellow citizens of the full meaning of democracy.

"The National Parks: America's Best Idea" traces the birth of the national park concept in the mid-1800s and follows its evolution for nearly 150 years. Using archival photographs; first-person accounts of historical characters; personal memories and analysis from more than 40 interviews; and stunning cinematography, Ken Burns chronicles the steady addition of new parks through the stories of the people who helped create them and save them from destruction. It is simultaneously a biography of compelling characters and of the American landscape.

To coincide with the premiere of "The National Parks: America's Best Idea," NET Radio will present a story about a Lincoln, Neb., couple who is featured in the series. Senior Producer Jerry Johnston interviews Jill Koelling, a former Nebraska Historical Society employee who is writing a new book about Edward and Margaret Gehrke and their travels to America's national parks from 1915-1939.

The interview will air during NET Radio's "Weekend Edition" Saturday, Sept. 26, at 8:30 a.m. CT, repeating Sunday, Sept. 27, at 9:30 a.m. CT. It will also be available on NET Radio's Web site and as a podcast at netNebraska.org/radio.

As part of the Ken Burns' series, NET Television wants to hear about viewers' national or state park experiences and memories. Download vacation photos and videos, and post journal entries on the Share-Your-Story section of the NET Television Web site for the series at netNebraska.org/nationalparks.

NET1 and NET2 are part of NET Television. NET Radio and NET Television are services of NET. For complete program schedules, visit NET's Web site at netNebraska.org/television.

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NET Television:

NET1 is Nebraska's first public television broadcast service and includes PBS and award-winning, locally produced public television programming; **NET2** offers live coverage of the Nebraska Unicameral and other news, public affairs, history and science programs; **NET3** is a 24-hour channel featuring the most popular how-to, travel and lifestyle series; and **NET-HD** presents high-definition digital broadcast programming displayed in a wide-screen format.