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Brand Analysis: NPCA

The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) is a century-old nonprofit dedicated to protecting, defending, and enhancing America's national parks. Since its founding in 1919, the NPCA has operated as both watchdog and advocate, ensuring that national parks remain preserved for future generations. Its work spans policy advocacy, environmental defense, scientific research, legislative action, grassroots mobilization, and public education. Environmental challenges intensify; such as climate change, habitat loss, development pressure, and underfunding. NPCA continues to position itself as one of the nation's premier guardians of public land.

Main Audience (Current User Base):

NPCA's primary audience consists of people aged 35-70 years old that are long-time supporters of conservation and national parks. These people are very nurturing and genuine. They are also environmentally conscious and value adventure. They tend to be donors, members, or individuals who value preservation, environmental stewardship, and intergenerational legacy. They could be currently or were outdoor enthusiasts that hiked and camped in these parks.

Nonusers or Infrequent Users:

However, with this advertising campaign, the audience will be shifted to a much younger demographic, 18-35-year-olds (Gen Z and Millennials) that value adventure and preservation of the United States National Park system. They may follow environmental legislation and want expert-led organizations to influence decisions on these parks. Additionally, these people enjoy activities such as hiking and camping. They are naturalists and travelers who have emotional or experiential connections to national parks. They view NPCA as a trusted source for park information and advocacy updates.

Additionally, individuals without regular access to public lands may not see NPCA's work as relevant to their lives. Representation in outdoor marketing is improving, but there needs to be improvement in messaging in urban culture. When there is a message, its emotion is heavy and overwhelming, which does the opposite effect by desensitizing the audience instead of calling for action.

Thus, making these nonusers a memorable opportunity for NPCA to expand awareness and relevance.

Physical & Functional Brand Attributes:

NPCA's physical, operational, and functional attributes include:

- Over 100 years of conservation experience
- Nationwide impact
 - Advocates for 400+ park units
- Scientific reports, research, and environmental data
- Legislative advocacy and policy influence
- Legal action against harmful development
- Partnerships with communities, tribes, scientists, and lawmakers
 - At the local, state, and federal levels
- Member-supported funding structure
- Storytelling through blogs, newsletters, and reports
- National recognition and credibility
 - They are known for their loyalty to protecting the national parks, a very secure non-profit from their actions.

Overall, the NPCA is known as a highly capable, knowledgeable protector of public lands.

Emotional Brand Attributes:

- Pride in America's natural heritage
- Awe and inspiration through scenic imagery
- Nostalgia
 - Family trips
 - Outdoor memories
- Responsibility and stewardship
- Hope for the future
 - Optimistic
- A sense of belonging to something larger than oneself
 - Community focused
- Trust in a consistent, longstanding organization
 - Security

These attributes fuel emotional connection and donor loyalty.

Functional Benefits:

Functional benefits NPCA provides include:

- Protecting parks from threats
 - Drilling
 - Development
 - Pollution
 - Federal Cuts/Policies
- Creating and influencing environmental policy

- Delivering science-backed advocacy and research
 - Climate Change
- Enhancing Park access, air quality, and wildlife protection
- Offering expert analysis and updates to the public
 - Educational resource to the public
- Making conservation accessible through petitions, campaigns, and memberships
 - Advocacy focused

Overall, these functional benefits distinguish NPCA as an essential advocacy institution rather than a passive supporter of public lands.

Emotional Benefits:

NPCA offers emotional benefits such as:

- Feeling empowered and hopeful about environmental action
- Pride in contributing to national heritage
- Emotional connection to landscapes, wildlife, and cultural sites
- Relief knowing parks are being defended
- A sense of belonging to a mission-driven community
- Motivation rooted in beauty, identity, and memory

Branding Construct Approaches:

NPCA fits primarily within:

1. The Authority

- a. NPCA has over a century of experience, legal influence, expert-led research, and policy credibility.

2. Wholesomeness

- a. The brand highlights nature, beauty, family trips, and intergenerational protection.

3. Spirit

- a. NPCA's imagery and storytelling evoke inspiration, awe, emotional resonance, and national pride, such as freedom.
- b. The national parks are a true American treasure from history, as Theodore Roosevelt was the key founder of the national parks.

However, the organization has not adjusted to younger audiences as much as their primary, thus the additional branding construct approaches could work.

1) **Attitude**

- a) A bolder tone, calling out environmental threats directly, a direct call to action.

2) **Rebel / Anti-Authority**

- a) Positioning NPCA as the defender against corporations, development, and political negligence, fueling advocacy and an audience that feels heard.

3) **6. Irony**

- a) Embracing humor. The discussion of environmental advocacy is heavy and feels unattainable to some people. Therefore, using memes and sarcastic commentary could modernize the brand's voice and increase shareability.

NPCA's brand story traditionally leans on authority and wholesomeness. It needs to be adjusted for the future. The relevance of adopting more of a rebellious, ironic, and attitude-driven personality creates conversation and action, especially in digital environments.

Core Brand Story for the Campaign:

NPCA exists solely because national parks cannot protect themselves. The preserved landscapes hold truth about history, climate change, wildlife, and the health of the nation. The sad truth is that these parks are constantly under threat. NPCA is the voice, defender, and fighter ensuring that wild places remain wild and true to their story.

For a Gen Z campaign, the north star and hashtag become apparent:

Nature has wild truths — and the NPCA is here to defend them.

#WILDTAKES

This positions nature as the outspoken, truth-telling protagonist, and NPCA as the powerful force ensuring those truths are heard.

Opportunities for Expanded Audience Reach:

To increase relevance, NPCA can:

- Use humor, memes, and ironic messaging (#WildTakes) to break through activism fatigue.
- Collaborate with outdoor influencers, BIPOC nature groups, and youth-focused communities.
- Reframe conservation as a bold, rebellious act rather than passive stewardship.
- Highlight the threats to wild spaces using emotional storytelling and dynamic visuals.
- Create interactive digital campaigns that allow young people to “give nature a voice.”