

Jan da Silva accepts new New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park position

Park Superintendent Jennifer Smith has selected Jan da Silva as the new Program Manager Visitor Experience and Resource Stewardship. The Program Manager is a new position for the park combining two program areas, Visitor Experience/Community Engagement and Resource Stewardship, and Jan will serve as member of the park's Leadership Team. Jan starts in her new role May 8.

"We are excited to fill this brand-new position at the park," states Superintendent Jennifer Smith. "Jan's work, since joining the park staff in 2008," Smith continues, "has centered around the intersection of resource management and interpretation, connecting the "stuff" with the stories, if you will. Further, Jan is the right person to lead the park's interpretation and education team into the next phase of park operations increasing our virtual reach and expanding partnerships in support of enhanced park programs."



New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park photo.

“Jan is a compassionate, strategic, and collaborative leader who, with her years of experience as a Historian, Cultural Resource Specialist, and Chief of Interpretation and Education for the park, has demonstrated a deep understanding of the mission of the National Park Service and our responsibility to care for the park’s resources while engaging with our community partners and visiting public,” Smith remarks.

da Silva remarks on this opportunity, “I am excited to be the first Program Manager Visitor Experience and Resource Stewardship at the park. My work in this new position will lead to increased collaboration between park staff, New Bedford citizens, community partners, and visitors allowing the park to reach a greater number of people through the stories of the whaling industry, Underground Railroad, and the growth of New Bedford as an industrial city during the 19th century.”

Jan earned an AB in History in 1981 from Princeton University (NJ), a BS in Historic Preservation in 2000 from Roger Williams University (RI), and worked in the social service sector and as a consultant for local non-profits before joining the National Park Service in 2008. She volunteers her personal time for many local organizations and serves as chair of the New Bedford Community Preservation Committee. Jan and her partner, Ira, live in New Bedford.

Established on November 12, 1996, New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park serves as a model for community partnerships in the National Park Service.

Located in the urban setting of downtown New Bedford that spans over 13 city blocks, the park and its partners preserve, protect, and interpret the cultural resources associated with the history of the American whaling industry. The park is more than whaling as it includes stories of global immigration, Underground Railroad, women’s history, cultural diversity, architecture, art, and their relevance to current topics.

The Visitor Center is located at 33 William Street in downtown New Bedford and is open every Thursday – Sunday, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM. Park Rangers and volunteers offer orientation to visitors, maps, and brochures on the surrounding area.

The building is wheelchair-accessible and is fee-free. For more information, call 508-996-4095, visit nps.gov/NEBE or follow our social media accounts on Facebook.com/NewBedfordNPS and Instagram.com/NewBedfordNPS.