In an interview with NBC anchor Brian Williams, filmmaker Ken Burns notes the history, beauty and value of America's National Parks, and shows excerpts from his new PBS series on the nation's parks system.

Keywords
Citation

MLA
"Best Idea America Ever Had" --Ken Burns on the National Parks." Brian Williams, correspondent. 

APA

CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE

Transcript
"Best Idea America Ever Had" --Ken Burns on the National Parks

ANN CURRY, anchor:
The filmmaker Ken Burns' latest project is coming soon to a TV screen near you, a history of America's national parks. Along with some breathtaking sights, it is also an argument that this country's national park system is the best idea America ever had. Brian Williams talked with Ken Burns about how the parks came to be, how they're protected and what's in their future.
(Clip from "The National Parks: America's Best Idea")

BRIAN WILLIAMS reporting:
It's a stunningly, stunningly beautiful project.
Mr. KEN BURNS: Thank you.
WILLIAMS: Here's a counterintuitive question for you to start off. Is there still a chance we can screw it up?
Mr. BURNS: Yes, of course. You know, people always assume the parks have been there, and they haven't, therefore they're threatened. They've assumed the National Park Service has always been taking care of them. They haven't been. And they think they'll always be there. And of course they won't. And like liberty, it requires a kind of vigilance to keep all of those acquisitive and extractive, some would say rapacious, forces at bay. And that's the great news about the national parks. The parks represent our best selves or our best impulses. But, you know, when that flags, they're gone.
( Clip from "The National Parks: America's Best Idea")
Mr. BURNS: The parks begin saving spectacular scenery, and all of a sudden they're saving archaeological sites and historical sites that record our historical, and political and social history. They're saving places of shame. You know, we have Manzanar, where Japanese-American citizens were interned. Central High School, still a working high school in Little Rock, Arkansas, is a unit of the National Park Service. So is Shanksville, PA. So is Oklahoma City. So are sites of Indian massacres. If there were no national parks, you know, the Grand Canyon would be lined with mansions of the rich. If there were no national park, Zion and Yosemite, two of the most beautiful places in the world, would be gated communities. If there were no national parks, Yellowstone would be Geyser World. And it isn't just spectacular scenery, it's who we are that's at the heart of the national park experience.