

The Protection Ranger



The Newsletter of National Park Rangers Lodges, Fraternal Order of Police August/September, 1990

Western Lodge Board Meets With Director Ridenour

Pay, retirement, benefits and ranger morale were the topics of discussion when the Board of Directors of The Western Lodge met with NPS Director James Ridenour and Yosemite Superintendent Michael Finley in Yosemite on August 8.

Western Lodge President JR Tomasovic told Ridenour that the National Park Service was losing many of its best employees to other agencies because NPS is no longer competitive in pay, benefits and retirement.

Ridenour said that NPS was waiting for OPM's opinion on the retirement issue. Tomasovic responded by saying that OPM usually bases its decision upon the recommendation of the department. He also pointed out that, according to the affidavit of past-director Dickenson, some of Ridenour's top advisors on personnel issues historically have worked to oppose enhanced retirement for rangers.

The board also briefed the Director as to the activities of other agencies, such as the Forest Service and BLM, in actively pursuing enhanced retirement for their employees.

Concerns relating to "The New Ranger Workforce" directive were also expressed, specifically, the lack of a career ladder and the unanswered questions of pay and retirement.

After the meeting, the consensus of the board was that the Director has been seriously isolated from the concerns of the workforce.

The board hopes that this will be the beginning of a dialog that will resolve these issues promptly.

Yosemite Fires Delay Newsletter

Usually, The Protection Ranger is mailed near the 20th of the month, every other month. This issue may be well over 10 days late. We regret this delay.

July 1990 broke an 18-year old record for arrests in Yosemite. Fires in early August also kept Lodge staff busy. All lodge work is done on a voluntary basis, thus the delay.

The Protection Ranger is composed in Yosemite from articles written in a variety of NPS areas. The rough draft is sent to Los Angeles by modem where it receives final layout, and is printed and mailed.

We did find time to compose a letter that appears in the August 27 issue of Newsweek. It is in reference to the loss of quality NPS personnel due to economic hardships created by the NPS. Look for it.

President's Message

By JR Tomasovic, President, FOP West

Retirement News: Round 3

According to Ranger Activities, retirement packages have been returned to the regional offices for a regional evaluation. It appears that the regional directors want to be involved in the approval process.

In May, we wrote the Under Secretary of Interior Lou Gallegos expressing our concerns about the potential lack of conformity in the evaluation process among the ten regions. We thought that we had made progress when the regional offices were eliminated from the evaluation process. The possible lack of conformity re-opens the challenge process if your retirement package is denied.

The best we can determine, there is no Park Service timetable in which the evaluations are to occur. However, an OPM Letter dated July 3, 1990 asks all agencies to submit their employees' enhanced retirement packages for past coverage to them by September 30, 1990. I do not think the Park Service will meet this deadline. The question is, what will OPM do with packages submitted after this date?

We recently received a copy of the BLM justification for enhanced retirement for their Resource Protection Ranger 1801. The document goes into great detail as to why the BLM ranger meets the definition of enhanced retirement. BLM appears to try and distance any comparison to NPS law enforcement rangers. If you wish to receive a copy of this document, give us a call and we'll send you a copy. (Continued: page 2)

"The New Ranger Workforce" Focus Of Lodge Attention

Director Ridenour's "New Ranger Workforce" program for professionalization of the ranger workforce has taken most parks by surprise and has raised many questions about its goals, effects, intent, and methods. The plan received no pre-announcement discussion or publicity, and is currently NPS policy, and is in force in several NPS areas.

The plan calls for the review of all Park Ranger 025 series positions with the goal of reclassifying as many as possible out of the 025 series.

The plan was announced in a memo to all employees. So far, very few employees have seen it.

In this issue, we are enclosing a copy of the memo, and an article expressing the concerns of both lodges on this new program.

President's Message

Continued from front page

Professionalization Of The Ranger Workforce

At a recent lodge meeting, the consensus of the membership was that they did not support the document as currently written. Many felt that the Service was recreating a technician series using other classifications. There was also concern about career ladders into the professional series 025 from the lower-graded technical series. Everyone agrees that there is need to "professionalize" the workforce, but we need to make major modifications to this plan.

A positive degree requirement was strongly supported by the membership. According to Ranger Activities, nothing is cast in stone on this issue and we need to submit our comments.

Backcountry Time Study

The lodge members assigned to the Yosemite backcountry have been maintaining a time use log. The purpose of the study is to determine and document the actual hours worked while assigned to the backcountry. As many of you know, the actual backcountry workday is closer to 10 hours than the eight for which rangers are compensated.

We plan to take this time use study to the Chief Ranger and Superintendent in the attempt to get Administrative Uncontrollable Overtime (AUO) for backcountry rangers. The park's backcountry manager supports the project.

WASO's Physical Fitness Guideline

The second draft of the physical fitness guideline is due to hit the streets any day. A previous newsletter article discussed the first draft. It appears that this "first draft" was not actually a draft but a "working document" requesting comments from WASO personnel. We may have been a little premature on this issue and apologize to Butch for any heartburn we may have created.

The new draft has mandatory testing, but does not require persons to pass the test. Removal from position for failure to pass the test no longer exists. We are waiting to receive a copy of the draft and will keep you informed on the contents and the lodge's position.

The Rocky Mountain Regional Director is ready to sign a mandatory physical fitness memorandum for that region. Billed as a "dynamic document," this plan could serve as a blueprint for a nationwide program. It includes some tests that are not age or sex adjusted, which raises the question of the program's true intent.

Why WASO and regions are spending so much time on a physical fitness program for rangers when NPS already has a physical fitness program in effect is an interesting question. NPS's current program is for Park Police officers, who receive enhanced retirement.

How WASO intends to implement this program without giving rangers enhanced retirement is an interesting question.

Semi-Autos And Body Armor

WASO has approved law enforcement rangers carrying semi-auto's as a duty weapon. According to Ranger Activities, funding has been requested for fiscal '92 to allow the conversion over to the semi-autos.

No decision has been made on which weapon or type of round will be carried. WASO is hoping to approve pilot projects in those parks experiencing major law enforcement problems prior to fiscal '92.

A funding request for body armor for each law enforcement ranger has also been included in fiscal '92 submissions.

Both the Eastern and Western lodges have written to Ranger Activities on these issues in the past. It appears that the concerns are being addressed. We hope Congress supports the requests. The two lodges and the National Lodge will be contacting the members of the appropriations committee to let them know that we want these packages passed in their committee.

Special Pay Rates For Santa Monica Mountains

Special pay rates have been approved for NPS rangers working in Los Angeles and Ventura counties. Increases will be 30% for GS-5, 23% for GS-7 and 10% for GS-9.

Yosemite Update

The Chief Ranger recently announced that every law enforcement ranger including seasonals would be in body armor this fiscal year and receive hepatitis vaccinations. Chief Ranger Rudolph stated that it is imperative that the park provide its personnel with the appropriate safety measures to accomplish its work. We commend Chief Ranger Rudolph.

In addition to this, Roger has authorized the purchase of new structural fire turnouts. He hopes to acquire additional funding so that all personnel will receive new turnouts.

With Hepivax (value \$180), body armor (value \$250), and new turnouts (value \$400) the \$27 annual dues for FOP have proven to be an investment that pays off. Our goal is to bring these changes service wide.



Yosemite Ticketron

We've Been Camping With The Rangers Since 1979

By working together, Ticketron and Yosemite's rangers have made a Yosemite camping experience easier and more enjoyable for millions of park visitors.

As partners, we're making the great outdoors even greater.
Thanks.

Interested In Other Law Agencies? Other Agencies Are Interested In You!

By Jeff Lynn, Yosemite NP

Do you feel that the National Park Service is not serving your best interests? Are you frustrated by not getting a permanent job? Would you like to retire after 20 years of service? Do you feel the promotional potential within the NPS is not adequate? Would you like better pay and benefits?

If the answers to the above questions are bothering you, you should know that there are many other agencies out there that want you.

We all have heard of the large numbers of long-time employees leaving the Park Service. You've seen good, experienced seasonals unable to get a permanent job and go elsewhere. Well, some of these ex-service employees are going to other federal, state, county and city law enforcement departments, and are doing quite well financially and career-wise.

Let me share with you my experience attempting to gain employment with other agencies.

I'm a nine-season-experienced NPS law enforcement seasonal ranger. I've been involved in back country, front country, boat, horse, foot, and vehicle patrol. I'm a POST academy graduate and an EMT. I have a full commission. I've managed fee collection systems, supervised and trained other seasonals, given interpretive programs, dabbled a little in resource and wildlife management, am a wildland firefighter, have been involved in search and rescue, and have tried to be at least partly involved in many different aspects of traditional ranger duties.

I'm no more qualified than many of you, and have much less training than others.

I've applied with seven different agencies, most within the last year. Here are the results. I was offered jobs at two county sheriff's departments and a city police department. I have placed #3 on a university and city police department hiring list, and #4 on another. I was the most highly qualified applicant for a good-paying county park job, but was not offered the job after I told them I'd like to someday be an investigator. I worked for one of the county sheriff's departments, but was laid off due to lack of funds. I'm now back with the Park Service, but still pursuing other employment.

What I have found throughout the application processes is that there are many law enforcement agencies who want people with the skills we possess. Rangers' job skills are very much in demand. Agencies like the fact that we have public relation skills along with EMS, SAR, and law enforcement experience. They are getting an experienced employee, and are willing to pay for it.

Thank the Park Service for giving us a good opportunity for training and experience. If they don't want to keep the people they have put so much time, training, and money into, there are plenty of other law enforcement agencies who do.

Here's a suggestion. Work for the Park Service a couple of years or seasons, get as much training and experience as you can, go get a good job with much better pay and benefits where you are able to afford to buy a home, have a family, retire in twenty years, and come back to the Park Service working

seasonally. You'll be collecting your pension, will probably have a savings account, living in (or at least owning) your own home, and won't be worrying about where you are going to live in the winter when you get terminated or how you are going to pay your \$1200-a-month living expenses on \$1000 a month take home pay.

Mis-Directed Public Land Users Make 1989 A Bust

Summary of the 1989 NPS Law Enforcement Statistics:

| | |
|--|---------|
| Law Enforcement officers assaulted in the line of duty: | 72 |
| Part I offenses: | 6,532 |
| Part I arrests: | 2,783 |
| Part II offenses: | 61,472 |
| Part II arrests: | 27,468 |
| Traffic citations: | 145,593 |
| Traffic arrests: | 2,108 |
| DUI arrests: | 1,763 |
| Patrol Rangers with enhanced retirement, body armor, and autoloading weapons: | 0 |



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The Protection Ranger

Published BiMonthly By
The National Park Rangers Lodges
Fraternal Order Of Police
P.O. Box 944, Yosemite, CA 95389

For Parks West of the Mississippi:

National Park Rangers Lodge 23

President — JR Tomasovic

Vice President — Michael LaLone

Treasurer — Chris Cruz

Secretary — Greg Jackson

For Parks East of the Mississippi:

Eastern Rangers Lodge

Randal Kendrick (acting President)

Our Lodges are committed to improving the Ranger profession by joining Rangers together in a spirit of comraderie to seek a cooperative relationship with management, with the goal a safe working environment, with fair and competitive pay and benefits. FOP is a non-profit organization.

Application For Membership In The Fraternal Order Of Police

I the undersigned, a full-time regularly employed law enforcement officer, do hereby make application for active membership in the National Park Rangers Lodge, FOP. If my membership should be revoked or discontinued for any cause other than retirement while in good standing, I do hereby agree to return to the Lodge my membership card and other material bearing the FOP emblem.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ ZIP: _____

DOB(required): _____

Associate membership (non commissioned)

Please enclose a check for one year membership.
(Western lodge Permanent - \$27, Seasonal - \$18)
(Eastern Lodge \$20 all members.)

Enclose a copy of your commission.

___ I'm employed East of the Mississippi

___ I'm employed West of the Mississippi

NPS Area: _____

Mail to:
Fraternal Order Of Police

P.O. Box 944, Yosemite, CA 95389

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Paul & Kathy DeSantis

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Lodge Membership Passes 300

A campaign to double lodge membership that began in June has almost reached its goal.

The combined membership of the Eastern and Western lodges has passed the 300 mark.

The challenge still stands between the lodges — the one with the most members by Sept. 15 wins. The Western lodge is still larger than the Eastern lodge, but the east's explosive growth may put it over the top by the deadline.

Associate Memberships Available To Non-Commissioned Personnel

You don't need a commission to get involved with FOP. Just check the square on the application, and you'll be signed up as an associate member. You'll receive the newsletter, and be able to help improve the ranger profession.

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They Were Called Rangers

Seventh of an expanded eight-part series

by Bill Blake, Chief Ranger, New River Gorge NR

In 1989, law enforcement personnel working within the National Park system made in excess of 2,100 arrests related to illegal drugs. They confiscated in excess of \$524,000,000 (street value) in illegal drugs, and eradicated 308,715 marijuana plants from park areas. For those park administrators who are crying, "not traditional ranger work," let's go back to a time when this nation (and the park system) was faced with another illegal drug -- alcohol. In the 1920's park rangers found themselves faced with many problems associated with illegal use, possession and the making of alcoholic drinks. Many parks developed the reputation of having a "booze party" atmosphere. In response to complaints of disorderly behavior associated with "booze," rangers in Yosemite and Yellowstone conducted several undercover operations which resulted in many arrests.

Prohibition enforcement became the duty of many rangers. According to John W. Henneberger's unpublished manuscript, To Protect and Preserve, prohibition violations in National Parks were numerous. There were sufficient cases to make it necessary for the Department of Justice to issue special instructions on how to handle violations of the Volstead Act in National Parks. As a result, all Superintendents and rangers were declared to be Peace Officers of the Law and, therefore, Prohibition Officers.

Prohibition enforcement in each park was in the hands of rangers. The arrest records of many National Parks during the 1920's demonstrates that rangers were very aggressive in enforcing laws associated with the then illegal drug of alcohol. Superintendents were instructed that, if they could not get convictions in prohibition cases, they should throw those persons involved out of the parks.

Removing illegal substances from National Parks not traditional ranger work — hogwash!

By the mid 1920's, law enforcement problems associated with increased visitation were recognized as a service-wide problem. At the first Chief Rangers' Conference, held at Sequoia National Park in 1926, the attending Chiefs commented on the problems associated with law enforcement. Yellowstone Chief ranger Sam Woodring, who chaired the conference, made the following opening remarks: "Increased travel brings with it the increased duties and responsibilities. We are the police force of the National Parks and are charged with the enforcement of law and Department regulations which have the force of law and effect of law."

All the Chiefs who attended this conference addressed increasing visitation and law enforcement as a growing problem in their parks. The Chief Ranger of the Grand Canyon summed up his feelings by stating, "The police problem was particularly vexing." At this conference, the legendary Chief Ranger of Yosemite, Forest Townsley, spoke of his park's law enforcement problems. He attributed them to traffic, booze and a congested Yosemite Valley. He commented that his men faced their biggest challenges in traffic and police work. Townsley went on to say that many law enforcement problems stemmed for the numerous "booze parties" and from a "class of people found in any cheap beach resort." Revealing insight with regard to future problems, he predicted, "... and I expect them to cause considerable trouble in the future in Yosemite." Those of us who

have worked in Yosemite in the 70's and 80's would have to sadly congratulate Townsley on his forecast. Today, Yosemite Valley still has the "cheap beach resort" atmosphere and the abuse of "booze" makes it a world-class R&R spot. What's the old saying... the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Before leaving this era, those readers who believe that rangers today use the tools of law enforcement far more often than their predecessors, please consider this fact (courtesy of Ranger Hugh Dougher): In 1926, the arrest rate per 100,000 visitors in Yosemite was twice the rate of 1986. My favorite of the 1926 arrests was for "possession of a cat."

They may have been hard nosed, but they had class.

Reprints of the entire series are available by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope plus \$1 for postage to the lodge.

Application Packages Available

New lodge applications packages are hot off the press. The include the basic application form, plus information on lodge goals, history, and membership benefits.

They're an effective way of recruiting new members and promoting the FOP cause.

Applications may be obtained by calling the lodge's 24 hour number 209/372-9216, or by writing either lodge.

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A Response To Director Ridenour On "The Professionalization Of The Ranger Workforce"

On or about June 5 of this year, WASO issued a document referred to as ACTION PLAN, THE NEW RANGER WORK FORCE (Plan). In synopsis, the proposals in this Plan are a major (and we stress major) departure from the current status quo regarding classification and work issues affecting National Park Rangers. In critiquing this document and the Director's memorandum accompanying it, we must acknowledge that we were cautiously optimistic. It is evident to all concerned parties that the "Ranger Profession" is experiencing great difficulty and has been for some time. Generally, we believe the benefits listed in the plan have merit. However, we also have concerns. This plan should not be viewed as a document that cures all ills. In fact it may very well cause more problems than it solves if implemented in its current version. At best, this plan, which came out in final form, should be considered a "First Draft".

We are very disappointed that those employees and field managers potentially affected by this Plan did not have the opportunity to provide input into the Plan's development. As individuals and as an organization, we have become accustomed to the practice of major policies going to the field for comment and review with very short due dates. Often we get the chance to comment after the "Due Date". However, speaking for myself but believing many others agree, we view this Plan with a jaundiced eye. When the WASO Personnel Office prepares an Action Plan for Park Rangers and does not go to Superintendents, Chief Rangers, Regional Chief Rangers and affected employees for comments, RED FLAGS should start waving. (You may recall, this same group established and abolished the Park Technician Series. We believe this Plan is on comparable footing.)

The direction of the Plan (to reclassify many ranger positions into various specialist series and to "professionalize" those remaining) is appropriate and needed. However, we respectfully suggest that this be done with caution and in a manner that will not unduly intrude on the Ranger mystique so ingeniously developed by Directors Mather and Albright.

It is our firm conviction that the implementation of the Plan in its current form is an overreaction to the personnel management problems facing the Park Service. We will not contest the fact that the current state of the National Park Ranger is a sad affair. Nor would we disagree with the belief that we need to "Professionalize" the series. However, let us not forget that it was not the present field Park Ranger who, 10 to 15 years ago, started removing professional and grade supporting functions from his/her realm of work. The removal of resources management, fire management, concession management and other professional duties from the responsibility of the 025 series was the work of "Park Management". This has had a negative impact on professionalism and grade. Couple this management action with the infusion into the Ranger Series of a large number of technical duties once done by Park Technicians (another park management action) and it does not take a WASO Personnel Specialist to see why we have problems.

Our caution is, while we have problems, let's not throw out the baby with the bath water. It is reported that the National Park Service has a public support acceptance of 84%. This exceptionally high level was, for the most part, not generated by the extraordinarily large number of central office employees found in the Service who seldom if ever meet the public. It was not generated by the desk bound "professional" Supervisory Park Rangers found in many parks. This high public acceptance of the National Park Service has been and still is largely the product of its field sales force. This relatively small sales force is made up

of competent, motivated, and for the most part, college educated uniformed Park Rangers who view themselves as professionals. These individuals' major request of NPS management is that they be treated (pay & benefits) as professionals. Those managers who have read the book *In Search of Excellence* understand that an organization that does not take care of its sales force is an organization that is flirting with failure. This Plan offers little for most of the Service's sales force, the very force that Mather and Albright crafted into the "Ranger Mystique."

The following quote sums up the basic premise of the Plan. "Critical to the success of this effort is the premise that as far as the general public is concerned, "any employee" (emphasis added) wearing the Park Service uniform is going to be perceived as being a Park Ranger." It is my firm hope that every field level manager in the service would recognize that such a statement could only come from someone in a central office that has never been seriously involved in field level Ranger activities. The sales force put forth by Mather and Albright, the sales force that was and still is critical for the success of the Service's overall mission, was not and is not successful because of the uniform worn, but because of the type of people they were and are today. To think otherwise demonstrates a lack of field knowledge and is an insult to the thousands of Park Rangers who have served the National Park Service. The uniform did not make the Ranger, the Ranger made the uniform! It is critical, we repeat critical, that the WASO Personnel folks understand that if our collective management actions affect, in a negative manner, the quality and calibre of individuals we have working in Park Ranger uniforms at the field level (regardless of their series), it will affect our most effective sales force and it will, in time, be perceived by the visiting public.

It is our belief that the Plan's stated "premise" is inaccurate and thus the Plan itself is seriously flawed. It is for this reason that I strongly suggest that this document be viewed as a "First Draft" and suggest that WASO seek field input. While this plan may solve (and this needs to be seriously questioned) some of the problems facing the Ranger Series, it is imperative that managers recognize that it only solves problems for the Ranger Series by moving those problems someplace else. Overall, the problems identified will still be with the Service. Overall, the problems facing our sales force are not addressed in this Plan.

In fact, the problems facing our sales force will only be compounded by the implementation of this Plan.

Following are specific comments on the Plan.

1. While the Plan does not specifically state that future National Park Rangers will be required to have a degree, it does give a strong inference to this belief. We strongly support the concept of requiring a degree to become a Park Ranger. It is our position that if the Service is serious about "professionalizing" the Ranger Series, it must take the same steps that other park related professions have. On an educational basis, Rangers should join the ranks of other professionals working in the NPS such as Park Foresters, Landscape Architects, Wildlife Biologist, Resource Management Specialist, Historians, etc. We view this aspect of the Plan as a key. Without an educational requirement, we will not be viewed as "professional" and, in fact, Rangers will not be professionals.

2. The Plan discusses in detail how current 025 positions will be reclassified. It does not adequately address what role and function the remaining 025 positions will play in park management.

3. We are disappointed that the plan does not recognize "visitor management" as part of the professional duties of a Ranger. This is a traditional function associated with the mold Mather and Albright developed for Park Rangers. We define visitor management as that conglomerate of skills and abilities to include EMS, safety, SAR, law enforcement, patrol, structural and wildland fire, criminal investigation, resource protection, (Continued: Page 7)

Professionalization continued from Page 6

and influencing behavior and minimizing resource damage through personal contact (salesmanship). Visitor management has as much responsibility and complexity as many professions. Why can't the Park Service recognize it as such, especially since visitor use is such an important facet of the Park Service mandate?

Consider the following analogy: A research biologist (a professional series) combines variety of fields in the application of his profession. Statistical analysis, technical writing, use of computers, botany, anatomy and physiology, animal behavior and parasitology are some examples. The Ranger profession is identical in that it also involves a variety of knowledges, abilities and skills, which when combined create a unique profession. To re-classify these positions would be as incorrect as reclassifying research biologists as technical writers (even though they may spend the majority of their time writing and editing).

We have no problem with and in fact support the removal of the "non-ranger" functions from the Ranger Series. But failure on the part of this Plan to recognize the conglomerate of duties associated with visitor management as Ranger functions is to deny our Ranger traditions. We are trying to cure a cold by killing the patient!

4. The Plan infers that a majority of Ranger positions can be reclassified into specialties. We are not sure this is true, nor that it is desirable. Specialty positions are possible where specialty workloads support positions. But patrol Rangers, subdistrict and district Rangers are often multi-disciplined: responsible for management, law enforcement, emergency services, etc. These Rangers are area, not function, orientated. That is, most Park Service positions have a function responsibility, whether it be personnel management, procurement, building and utilities, roads and trails, interpretation, fire, research, resources management, etc. Below the level of Superintendent, only Park Rangers have area responsibility. They interface all these functions and their impacts with the public in geographic units of parks. This interface will be lost if these employees are converted to specialties such as police officers and biologists.

5. The Plan and the Director's memo both infer that for those Rangers and vacant positions that convert into "law enforcement occupations may have immediate and long-term impacts on basic pay and benefits." The strong inference here is that future positions in the 083 series will obtain "immediate" enhanced retirement and special pay. While we wish we could agree with this, we feel that someone should point out that the WASO Personnel Office is and has been holding the line that "police work" does not unto itself qualify for enhanced retirement. That is to say, the WASO personnel staff has been telling Rangers for the last five years that the "police work" they admittedly do does not qualify them for special retirement benefits. If this police work does not qualify, why would the same work in another series qualify? Is it possible that they have changed their position and will approve the 1000+ claims Rangers have filed for enhanced retirement? We would like to think this is the case rather than believing, as some do, that the WASO personnel staff purposely threw this into the Plan, knowing it not to be true, in an attempt to gain some field acceptance.

On the issue of pay, we are aware of and have been following the current concerns in the U. S. Congress regarding the pay and benefit problems associated with Federal Law Enforcement. However, it is important that managers in positions such as yours and the WASO personnel staff know at what level this concern is targeted. Congress, for the most part, is concerned about the substandard pay and benefits for it "professional", college educated law enforcement personnel. This concern is directed toward such positions as FBI Special Agents, Secret Service Agents, ATF Special Agents, DEA Special Agents and others classified in the 1811 series. There has been very little

concern or legislative action regarding the Zoo Police, GSA Guards, DOD Police, Base Police, etc. It is clear that this Plan calls for most of the law enforcement conversions to take place in the Police and/or Guard Series. It should be recognized that there is little, if any, support for targeting these positions for special pay. We find it hard to believe that those who developed this Plan believe that Congress' current concern will assist GSA Guards, DOD Police and Zoo Police or those Park Rangers the Plan turns into Guards and Police. The question needs to be asked, was this thrown into the Plan to "sweeten the pot?"

6. In the Plan can be found language (page 8 & 9 of "EXECUTIVE SUMMARY") that infers many of the positions now filed by Park Rangers performing the traditional functions of visitor management will be filled by changing the position to the 083 Police Officer or the 085 Security Guard Series. This section goes on to state that the Service must "alter the recruiting base for these positions to one based on local economies and persons who generally are not mobile". In essence, this is telling the selection officials who recruit and select the Service's primary sales force to identify local individuals who do not have professional aspirations and who are willing to work for 30 to 40 years in positions paying GS-5 wages and maxing out at the GS-7 level. Those individuals who believe this can be done without seriously impacting the quality and quantity of services offered to the visiting public, would also believe that the Park Ranger uniform makes the Ranger and not the Ranger the uniform. It is critical that WASO staff recognize and address the fact that hiring individuals at the GS-4/5 level and offering them a career that tops out at the GS-7 level will only allow us to hire the "best of the desperate". Our recruiting base for Police and Guards will be those local individuals who want to be "cops" but are not able to obtain employment with local or state law enforcement agencies. It needs to be recognized that these "want-to-be cops" will become a major part of the Service's primary sales force. If you would like to view the future public image of a "uniformed" Park Ranger you need only go the Washington Zoo (Zoo Police), the nearest federal facility using GSA Guards or the nearest military base using civilian guards and police. If you, like the authors of this Plan, believe that the uniform makes the Ranger, then you will not be alarmed. However, if you believe as we do that the Ranger makes the uniform, then you must question if the future public service mission of the NPS can be carried out with such individuals.

In several parts of the Plan as well as the Director's memo, it is inferred that we are and/or must follow "OPM's intent" for the Park Ranger Series. With all due respect, we, as well as many other Rangers in the Service, question why the National Park Service must bow to OPM's intent for a profession the NPS crafted. In fact, we question if this OPM pressure is really there. This is the essence of the problem. The NPS should be telling OPM what it wants from its Park Rangers not vice versa. With all due respect, this Plan will only complicate the adverse conditions our primary sales force is now working under and this does not speak well for the future of the National Park Service as it is perceived by the visiting public.

In summary, we are very disappointed with the communication failure of the NPS by not soliciting comments from the very employees and managers this Plan impacts. We believe that it can be demonstrated that the basic premise of the Plan is inaccurate. Thus, the Plan itself is faulty and if implemented will create more problems than it solves. It should be recognized that the Plan does not solve problems but rather moves them from the Ranger series to other series. It is a sad note to realize that the Plan takes the most traditional of all Ranger functions, that of "visitor management," and relegates it to the likings of the Zoo Police and GSA Guards. We respectfully suggest this Plan be viewed as only a first step and only be used as a "First Draft". Let's professionalize the Ranger series, but let's do it in a way that does not kill the patient as we try to cure the cold.

An Open Letter From National Vice President Gil Gallegos To Prospective Members

To All National Park Service Rangers:

The Fraternal Order Of Police invites you to join the largest and most progressive law enforcement organization in the United States. Our membership is comprised of 212,000 professional law enforcement officers in over 1,700 lodges.

Our goal as an organization is to strive for better working conditions for all members regardless of law enforcement tasks assigned, rank or agency. The FOP represents you on Capitol Hill and has significant influence with Senators and Representatives. We are the voice of law enforcement in Washington and state capitols around this country.

The FOP has established a line of communication on your behalf with high ranking officials in the Department of Interior. This is a significant accomplishment which will bring positive changes for you in the future.

The FOP makes no grandiose promises of commitments. Our commitment is to assist you in dealing with the entrenched issues and bureaucracy that confront you as a park ranger. Our commitment is to fight for you on Capitol Hill. Our commitment is to, when and if you deem appropriate, bring you into the National FOP labor council which will bargain collectively on your behalf.

Your complex problems can be solved. Not simplistically, but through a coordinated unified effort. Again, I urge you to join

the Fraternal Order of Police. The organization that stands ready to assist you, and all law enforcement officers. As National Vice President, I personally stand ready to assist you in resolving your problems.

Fraternally:
Gilbert Gallegos
National Vice President

Editors note: Vice President Gallegos has spread word of our concerns at FOP meetings throughout the country, in FOP publications, and, of course, in Washington, along with National President Dewey Stokes. His support, and the support of our brothers and sisters around the country, deserves our deepest gratitude.

Call us with your opinion!

You can now reach the Lodge by phone, 24 hours a day, every day. Please take the time to express your opinion on issues affecting you, and what you want the lodge to do about them.

You can also contact us at any time with questions about your membership, or to request applications. Whatever you need, we're here to help.

The lodge number is 209/372-9216.



National Park Rangers Lodge 23
Fraternal Order Of Police
P.O. Box 944
Yosemite, CA 95389

Next Meeting:

Monday, Sept. 10, 7:00 p.m.

Girls Club, Yosemite

Make a note to pay your dues promptly.
Your due date is on your mailing label.