

CLEAR TEXT:
WASO Ranger Activities'
Electronic Newsletter

November 12, 1992

A New Mode for Communications...

For some time now, it's been apparent that The Ranger Activities Division's Information Exchange, our bi-monthly newsletter, has not been an effective vehicle for getting information to the field. It has taken too long to compile, longer to get printed, and still longer to get to you via the mails. Following discussions regarding communications at the recent regional chief rangers' meeting in Seattle, we decided to replace Exchange, now in its eighth year, with an electronic newsletter which we will be able to get to you more quickly and with greater regularity. We also hope to use it to provide you with more services, such as including listings of job openings in ranger divisions Servicewide and notices of OPM register openings. We're interested in your ideas on what else should be included in the publication.

The name, Clear Text, is of course derived from ICS terminology, and refers to the use of "plain English" in communications. We hope to keep it just that - clear. If we err, please let us know.

Clear Text will be distributed bi-weekly via cc:Mail to all ranger operations and training centers (BIFC, LEEDC/FLETC, AEDC, MEDC), regional office ranger divisions, park chief rangers, the Park Police, and other interested parties. We strongly encourage you to share it with your staffs. If you would like to get Clear Text but don't currently receive it, please advise Ranger Activities via a short cc:Mail message. If you'd like to receive it as a WordPerfect 5.1 file, let us know and we'll send you a second version in WordPerfect for downloading and local printing.

This first issue contains information on a number of topics discussed at the regional chief rangers' conference which was held in Seattle in October. Further excerpts from conference minutes will appear in the next edition.

Law Enforcement Issues

As always, there's a lot going on in law enforcement:

- * Personnel changes - Jack Schamp, the Service's law enforcement specialist for the past two years, has gone on to become deputy chief of the Park Police; his successor, Dale Dickerhoof, will be coming down from the New York Field Office and entering on duty later this month.
- * Twenty-year retirement - To the best of our knowledge, only one of the claims for credit for past service filed through the NPS has so far been returned from OPM (the employee got full credit for 20 years' covered service). Another 90 to 100 claims have gone from the Department to OPM; more will go in the near future.
- * NPS-9 - Comments and corrections are now being incorporated into the guideline, which will soon go out in final draft to the regions for

review. Regional law enforcement specialists will be reviewing and commenting on the draft next week. We hope to have it out to the field by early next year.

- * Badge and credential cases - Two different types of new badges - one for law enforcement rangers, the other for special agents and investigators - have been developed and will be issued to the field in the near future. Credential cases will be similar to those used by other agencies.
- * Semi-automatic weapons - Although the contract for the semi-automatic weapon procurement was awarded to Sig-Sauer, the award was protested by a competitor. As of this writing, that protest is still under review, and it's likely that no decision will be made for some time yet. Should the protest be resolved in favor of Sig-Sauer, weapon production will begin shortly thereafter. Delivery of the weapons will likely take place over a six to seven month period, and will be followed by transitional training. Funding is insufficient to fully train new instructors, so additional assistance will be sought. Arrangements have already been made to employ Park Police, Secret Service, FBI and other instructors in various areas. Transition will likely take quite some time. Joe Johnson, who works for our office, will be managing this program. In the meantime, LEEDC/FLETC advises that other agencies who've already converted have turned in a number of Model 66 .357's which are in good condition and available without charge. If you need a few more weapons during the transitional period, contact the NPS office at the Center.
- * NIBRS - Only limited funding for the system is available this year, but it should be enough to finish the software. A national system for tracking commissions is being developed for NIBRS.
- * Background investigations - A full field BI is required for all 1811's. It costs \$2,450 and takes 120 days to complete. When issued, the new DM 446 will require full BI's for all commissioned rangers and limited BI's for seasonals.

Health and Fitness

Following extensive work by Ranger Activities staff, the final version of NPS-57, the health and fitness guideline, was brought to the Director for signature in late October and will soon be printed and issued to the field.

The guideline contains a mandatory participation program for employees in arduous or hazardous emergency service positions, i.e. law enforcement, wildland and structural firefighting, SCUBA diving, lifeguarding, search and rescue and EMS. Employees in those fields are required to participate in the program, but not required to pass tests to remain in their fields. The program is incentive-based, goal-driven, and age and gender-adjusted, and contains graduated fitness scales for aerobic capacity, muscular strength, muscular endurance, body composition, and flexibility. Employees in the mandatory program are authorized three hours of duty time per week for exercise activities. NPS-57 also has a voluntary program for all other employees. A reassessment of the guideline's effectiveness will take place in two years.

Medical exams mandated by the guideline can be expensive, but less costly alternatives are available, including examinations at military medical

facilities and individual park contracts for on-site exams.

All-Risk Management

A lengthy discussion of all-risk management was held at the regional chiefs' meeting. The following decisions were made:

- * National Type 1 teams - The Service's initial Type 1 team has been an undisputed success. We accordingly plan to develop a second national team. Requests for nominees will likely go out after January 1, 1993.
- * Regional teams - The chiefs agreed to develop regional or inter-regional Type 2 teams to supplement the national Type 1 teams. Some regions, such as Mid-Atlantic, already have regional teams; others, such as Rocky Mountain and Midwest, are in the process of developing inter-regional teams.
- * Team training - Elmer Hurd, chief of the Branch of Fire and Aviation Management, has directed Rick Gale, NPS Type 1 team leader, to dedicate significant time this year to the development of ARM teams. Rick and staff from this office will provide as much assistance as possible in training new teams.
- * APT handbook - Ranger Activities and Type 1 ARM team staff members will work on the development of an administrative payment handbook for ARM operations next month.

Regulations

Some time ago, Ranger Activities solicited ideas from the field regarding revisions to the first five sections of 36 CFR. Over 100 comments were received, most of which concerned the sections on applicability and scope, alcohol and controlled substances, weapons, hunting, and boating activities. Some - but not all - comments:

Applicability/scope (1.2) Clarify section on hunting dogs entering parks from outside park boundaries; make regs applicable to all non-federal lands and/or roads within a park; clarify applicability of regs to intertidal closures for protection of species.

Penalties (1.3) Update the fine amounts.

Definitions (1.4) Define "mineral resource"; enlarge the definition of "weapon" to include other instruments; define "residency"; enlarge the definition of "pack animal" to include llamas; define "bicycle", "camping", "compendium".

Preservation of natural resources (2.1) Add "attempts" to prohibited acts.

Wildlife protection (2.2) Prohibit the calling of wildlife in areas closed by superintendent; prohibit calls, bugles, animal distress sounds and artificial lights in (a)(2); prohibit hunting dogs in (a)(4).

Weapons, traps, nets (2.4) Include carrying weapons on other modes of transportation, such as horses, in (b).

Research specimens (2.5) Add "archeological and paleontological

resources."

Camping/food storage (2.10) Change quite hours.

Pets (2.15) Allow superintendent to designate areas where no leash is required in (a)(2); require impoundment fee for dogs caught running at large.

Smoking (2.21) Ban all smoking.

Recreation fees (2.23) Revise to state that campsites paid for but not occupied for 24 hours are considered abandoned.

Report of injury or damage (2.33) Raise dollar value fore required reporting.

Disorderly conduct (2.34) Create separate subsections for domestic violence and assault; prohibit public nudity and public lewdness; prohibit nude sunbathing except in areas designated by superintendent.

Alcohol/controlled substances (2.35) Add "consumption" to (a)(1); add "drug paraphernalia" to offense; add "under the influence" to (b)(2); add "use" to (b)(2); make applicable to all lands and waters in parks with legislative jurisdiction.

Applicable regulations [under boating] (3.1) Remove or update USCG regulations; assimilate 33 USC (inland boating laws).

Unsafe operation (4.22) Add violation for riding improperly on a car in (b)(4).

Operating while under the influence (4.23) Abolish and assimilate state codes; revise to allow rangers to enforce state implied consent laws; remove (a)(1) and (2) so that stronger state felony sections may be used.

Commenters also suggested that a number of new subjects be added to the regulations, including sections on nude bathing and clothing optional beaches, dumping, climbing management, release of helium balloons, and use of personal watercraft. A task group will be brought together this winter to review these comments and the regulations and draft changes.

Other actions coming up on the regulatory front:

* Advance notice will be going out on a proposed special regulation for Part 2 on technical rock climbing.

* The Part 14 right-of-way regs rewrite is largely done. The draft is about to go out for review.

* A review of compendiums from around the NPS will be conducted in the near future to assure that they meet provisions of the Administrative Procedures Act.

Park Vacancies and OPM Register Openings

If you have an opening for a ranger position in your park or know of an upcoming OPM register opening, please let us know and we'll pass it on to the field. Submissions should be brief and should contain a phone number or address where more information can be acquired.

Questions?

Is there something you'd like to know about that we can answer? Let us know and we'll publish the question and answer in an upcoming edition of Clear Text. If you've got a question that needs answering, it's likely that other rangers will also be interested in the response.

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