

CLEAR TEXT:
WASO Ranger Activities'
Electronic Newsletter

January 15, 1992

CHIEF RANGERS' COMMENTS

I'm both hopeful and optimistic that 1993 will be a year of major, productive change for ranger operations Servicewide. We will clearly be dealing with both planned and negotiated and reactive change. It has already started.

Today, the Director signed a new law enforcement policy statement which will clarify our overall agency position on law enforcement and includes an agency position on what constitutes a National Park Service law enforcement ranger. The document has direct ties with the Vail recommendations and the "Ranger Futures" initiative. It will help with efforts to improve our collective abilities to protect resources, improve ranger pay, and modernize ranger career management programs. As with any complex issue, it answers some questions while raising others. The policy statement will be out in the field shortly.

During the coming year, we will be taking steps to implement this policy. It's going to entail a lot of work and commitment from all of us, so get ready to roll up your sleeves. We owe a strong "thank you" to the Director, Associate Director Jack Davis, and all ten of the Regional Directors for their concern, ideas and support.

The "Ranger Futures" concept paper is now undergoing final review prior to submission to the Directorate for field release. We have incorporated the preliminary review comments received from OPM, the Department, and NPS work group members. We were slowed somewhat by the holiday period, and now anticipate a February field release. We've also formally submitted a \$17 million budget proposal for FY94 to OMB to fund the expected costs of implementing the "Ranger Futures" initiative. This was done, I might add, at their request.

Work also continues on the parallel "Ranger Futures" work management study. Results are now being formalized along with preliminary work on draft, generic position descriptions. While still early in the process, the prospects for major career management improvements appear promising. OPM has sent the FLEPRA law enforcement pay proposal to Congress, and ranger law enforcement work is included in the proposal.

The "Ranger Futures" project will also involve some difficult decisions, both for the organization and the work force, but this is the year to do it. Such decisions are long overdue. As we begin work with a new administration, we will be taking the necessary steps to build the support and commitment necessary to achieve our program goals.

It's going to be a terrific year. Let's make it happen!

SEARCH AND RESCUE

On February 23rd, a work group comprised of some of the top search and rescue people in the Service will meet in Seattle to review the Service's policy on

search and rescue, as requested by the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, and to develop some strategies regarding administration of search and rescue throughout the agency. A report on NPS SAR activities is due to the Assistant Secretary on April 1st.

Among the topics to be discussed are the following:

- * the sufficiency of current NPS policy statements on SAR;
- * the Service's moral and legal obligations to search for and/or rescue park visitors;
- * whether or not victims should pay for rescues, and, if so, which victims; and
- * the need for insurance or bonding for those involved in activities in extreme locations (such as climbing El Capitan or Mt. McKinley) or engaged in extreme activities (such as running the length of Death Valley in summer).

DOI FIRE PLANNING SESSION

Representatives from the fire management offices of the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Indian Affairs, together with the fire coordinator for the Department, recently met in Boise to develop a long-range program direction strategy. The objective was to identify elements of agency fire programs that the agencies could work on together for the next five years and beyond. The agency reps identified many areas of common interest where it will be possible to improve program and operational efficiency.

An agenda has been set for the coming year, during which a joint plan will be developed. A core planning team will be identified which will serve under Interagency Fire Coordinating Committee (IFCC) direction. Team members will contact managers and employees from all levels from the Directorate to the field, and will also contact cooperators and special interest groups. The product will be a multi-year plan which will demonstrate the cohesiveness of DOI fire programs and set priorities for program changes and improvements and subsequent requests for funding increases.

TRAIL BIKE REGULATION SUIT

On December 11th, following two years of public meetings and public involvement, regulations regarding bicycle use were published in the Federal Register (57 FR 58711). The regs, which went into effect on Monday, designate routes open to bikes, set speed limits (15 mph in general, but 5 mph when on blind curves or passing any other trail user), prohibit possession of bikes on other than designated routes, and require proper lights and/or reflectors on bikes when operating at night.

On January 4th, the Bicycle Trails Council of Marin (BTC) filed a suit in federal court against the Secretary, the Director and the park superintendent, alleging that the NPS failed to comply with a variety of laws and guidelines in developing and promulgating the regulations. BTC proposed that bikes be allowed on all park roads and trails, since it is a recreational activity in a national recreation area. We'll keep you posted on the status of the suit.

ALL-RISK MANAGEMENT

The National Park Service is currently the only federal agency with a national Type I all-risk management team. Because of the team's proven effectiveness, the Service has been asked to provide input and expertise on

all-risk teams to other DOI agencies and programs. The Service is also embarking on an expansion of the all-risk management program which will include:

- * the development of a second national Type I all-risk management team;
- * an assessment of the merits of developing a "long" all-risk management team;
- * the development of an NPS supplement to the Interagency Fire Business Management Handbook with procedures for all-risk incidents;
- * the creation of additional regional Type II all-risk management teams, either independently or in conjunction with adjacent regions;
- * the development of a database of technical specialists at Boise for all-risk incidents;
- * the expansion of ICS training to include new employees and program management staff; and
- * the creation of either a dedicated, all-risk appropriation, or procedures for efficient transfers of money for all-risk operations under Section 102 authority.

A memorandum recruiting for five positions on the new Type I national team was sent to all regional directors on January 5th. The positions being filled are operations section chief, planning section chief, logistics section chief, finance section chief, and information officer. A candidate is also being sought to replace Bill Pierce on the existing Type I national team. Assignments to the teams are for three years, contingent on approval by the applicant's manager. Replies to the memo are due on February 15th.

CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT

Over the next few months, several Conservation Law Enforcement Association (CLEA) conferences will be held at widely varying locales nationwide (listings appear on the Morning Report calendar every other Monday). CLEA evolved some five years ago in Arizona when concerned officers from several agencies sat down to discuss common problems in natural and cultural resource conservation law enforcement. The idea has now spread to four conferences in several states. CLEA has proven to be one of the most effective means for getting together a broad cross-section of law enforcement personnel who share the same resource conservation and protection goals. The conferences are invaluable for their excellent panel discussions and presentations, for the information sharing that goes on among participating agencies, and for the personal contacts which are developed among those agencies. The latter have enhanced interagency communications and helped further trust and acceptance among participants. Attendance at CLEA conferences counts toward annual refresher training requirements in most agencies. Rangers interested in establishing a CLEA group and conference/workshop within their state should contact Dwayne Collier of SOAR at 602-640-5256.

WILDERNESS COMMUNICATIONS

With this message, Ranger Activities begins regular transmission of news and information on wilderness management to regional and field personnel through the Morning Report, Clear Text, and separate messages on cc:Mail in an effort to facilitate wilderness management on lands administered by the National Park Service.

In order to encourage communication among Service personnel with responsibilities for wilderness and backcountry management, Ranger Activities has also developed a database of wilderness and backcountry contacts throughout the Service which includes addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers

and cc:Mail addresses for each of them. Disk copies of this database will be distributed to regional wilderness coordinators; additional copies may be obtained by contacting your regional coordinator or by requesting a copy from Wes Henry, the national wilderness coordinator in Ranger Activities. His mail address is Mail Stop 3310, Ranger Activities (650), NPS, Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127. If you have wilderness information that you need to communicate to others in the Service, please contact Wes at the above address, or call 202-208-5211, or send a message via cc:Mail to WASO RAD Wilderness.

CC:MAIL CONTACTS

All WASO Ranger Activities Division staff members are now on line on cc:Mail, though some have not familiarized themselves with the system to date and are therefore not yet logging on. NOTE: Jim Brady's address is, generally speaking, for transmission purposes only; all messages to him should go either to the main RAD address (WASO Ranger Activities) or to his secretary's address (WASO RAD CR Secretary). Incident reports and any general traffic for Ranger Activities should continue to come through WASO Ranger Activities, the main divisional address.

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

Comments on the draft guideline on bloodborne pathogens have been received by WASO Safety and are being incorporated into a final guideline which should be out soon. The intent of the guidance will be to protect workers who are at risk on the job due to exposure to blood and other substances that can carry dangerous organisms, such as the viruses that cause AIDS and hepatitis B.

NOTES FROM THE PARKS

Joshua Tree On January 12th, Paul Henry, the park's chief ranger, received the Secretary's Stewardship Award for "his outstanding contributions to eradicating drugs on public lands." The award was presented at a ceremony in Washington. Among other things, Paul was cited for:

- * pioneering NPS involvement in Operation Alliance;
- * recognizing and utilizing the military resources of JTF 6, an effort that led to their utilization in other parks;
- * conducting over 50 joint interdiction operations in the park; and
- * developing and teaching counter-narcotics and SET training programs.

Dinosaur Ed Pontbriand, the Yampa District Ranger at Dinosaur, is interested in contacting other rangers with SAR dogs in order to establish closer ties with other teams, forge communication links, prepare an article for RESPONSE on SAR dogs in the NPS, and possibly establish some base line data for future agency use. Please contact him at Box 203, Dinosaur NM, Dinosaur, CO 81610, or via his address on cc:Mail (listed under name).

PARK VACANCIES AND OPM REGISTER OPENINGS

Coulee Dam The park will be issuing a vacancy announcement for the position of subdistrict ranger (GS-9) for the Fort Spokane Subdistrict this month. This is a dual-career opportunity - the park will also be issuing announcements for the resource specialist (GS-401-5/7) and cultural resource specialist/archeologist (GS-193-9/11). Contact South District Ranger Gil

Goodrich at 509-725-2715 for additional information.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: What's the latest on the \$2,500+ background checks that are supposed to be mandated in the new DM? Any WASO recommendations on implementing or dates? Should we set aside those dollars for FY 93, or is staggered implementation still a possibility? [Carl Newman, Bandelier]

A: It's not yet possible to answer your questions with certainty, because the Departmental Manual is still under revision. It is likely, though, that single-scope background investigations (SBIs), which now cost about \$2,700, will be required for permanent commissioned employees. We anticipate that there will be a phase-in period of several years for this new requirement; that is, managers would do a certain number of SBIs each year for a certain number of years until all are completed. We'll let you know as soon as possible.

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Q: Now that many of the tasks park rangers perform have a physical fitness requirement associated with them and a certain amount of exercise time is or will be allowed during duty hours, don't you think it's time to offer an official exercise short in the uniform catalogue? [Petersburg]

A: The primary purpose of the uniform is to identify the wearer as an employee of the National Park Service while on duty and in public contact. Although exercise may occur during duty hours, identification with the NPS is not an important enough concern to warrant uniform exercise shorts - particularly when considering the serious economic constraints that the parks are now facing.

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. Please be sure to specify that the question is for response in this newsletter, as questions also come in via cc:Mail which are for individual staff member response. If you've got a question that needs answering, it's likely that other rangers will also be interested in the reply.

Clear Text is the bi-weekly electronic newsletter of the Ranger Activities Division in WASO. It is distributed via cc:Mail to all ranger training and operations centers (FLETC, AEDC, MEDC, BIFC), regional office ranger divisions, park chief rangers, and other interested parties. If you would like to get it but don't currently receive it, please advise Ranger Activities via a short cc:Mail message. Any office may receive it, including districts and subdistricts within a park. PLEASE pass it along to others in your division and park.

Prepared by WASO Division of Ranger Activities

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