

CLEAR TEXT:
WASO Ranger Activities'
Electronic Newsletter

January 29, 1993

SEMI-AUTOMATIC WEAPONS PROCUREMENT

The General Accounting Office has completed its review of the protest of the semi-automatic weapons procurement. Although the decision is in some respects inconclusive, the findings have momentarily stopped the procurement process. Representatives from this office and contracting are currently meeting with Departmental solicitors to determine our future course of action. We apologize for being less than direct regarding specifics, but we have been specifically enjoined from providing any details by both the solicitor and the contracting office. The issue is still under intensive legal review, and we are being very careful not to prejudice its outcome in any way. Although we understand your concerns, there is simply no more that we can tell you at present.

PROGRAM FUNDING

On January 19th, the Associate Director, Budget and Administration, advised the Associate Director, Operations, of a significant reprogramming effort which would dramatically reduce funding for drug and ARPA enforcement and other operational programs. The text of that memorandum follows:

"The National Park Service is currently submitting a major reprogramming to Congress. This reprogramming, if approved, will result in the transfer of \$20 million between budget activities and subactivities within the 'Operation of the National Park System' (ONPS) appropriation.

"This reprogramming is a response to funding shortfalls that we anticipate in the following areas:

U.S. Park Police Pay	\$ 3,300,000
GSA Space Rental at North Capitol Street	2,640,000
Departmental Drug-Free Workplace Program	132,000
'Fixed Cost' Items that cannot absorb the	
0.85 percent congressional reduction	287,000
Washington & Regional Office Funding	13,638,000
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Total	\$19,997,000

"The explanation of these shortfalls is reflected in the attached copy of the reprogramming letter. As shown in this letter, three sources of funding have been identified to cover these shortfalls.

Regionwide Project Programs	\$9,452,000
Servicewide Project Programs	6,215,000
Park Areas & affiliated areas	4,330,000

"We have attempted to reflect a minimal direct impact upon park areas. Therefore, the bulk of the funding to cover these shortfalls will come from project related funds. The regions will be assessing regional project dollars (Cyclic Maintenance, Repair/Rehab, etc.) and some park dollars to cover the regional office shortfall and the U.S. Park Police pay shortfall.

The GSA Space Rental shortfall and the Washington Office administration shortfall, along with the Drug-Free Workplace and 0.85 percent shortfalls, will be covered by assessing Servicewide project dollars.

"We have identified \$62 million of Servicewide project funds and have assessed each program 10 percent to achieve the required amount. Your [i.e., Operations] share of the \$6.2 million contribution amounts to \$2,165,000 and reduces the programs as follows:

Hazardous Waste Program	\$1,356,000
Drug Enforcement Initiative	532,000
Archeological Resource Protection Act	92,000
Volunteers-in-Parks Program	160,000
Maintenance Management System	10,000
Repair/Rehab	15,000

"Since this reprogramming requires approval by Congress, the actions we are proposing will not be effected yet. However, we will be withholding the above identified amounts from your Servicewide programs and you should proceed as if this reprogramming is approved. In other words, the regional distribution of these funds should reflect the proposed cuts.

"This reprogramming is to cover FY 1993 shortfalls. However, the need is recurring and we intend to request a permanent base increase to the shortfall areas. It is also our intention to propose restoration of the programs being reduced in FY 1993 to their previous levels as our first priority."

The attached letter to Senator Robert Byrd, chairman of the Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations, explains the reasons for the shortfalls listed above. Here are the portions of that letter pertaining to the three largest shortfall areas; although long, they appear in full because of the illumination they provide on the sources of some of our increasingly complex budget problems:

* Park Police pay shortfall - "The U.S. Park Police budget is inadequate to cover its estimated needs in FY 1993, due primarily to the new entitlement for Sunday and night differential payments and higher than expected FERS costs. This has produced a deficit of \$3.3 million for FY 1993. The largest component of this problem relates directly to the new entitlement for Sunday and night differential payments enacted in the Federal Law Enforcement Pay Act (P.L. 101-509, 11/5/90). The condition is further compounded by absorption of FY 1992 and 1993 pay increases, reduction to the appropriation in 1992 and 1993, and increased cost of FERS payments. In programming the police function at an optimum level, the deficit was projected at \$6.5 million. Through the implementation of restraints on premium pay, including strict management of overtime, and deferring supplies and equipment purchases, this projected deficit was reduced to \$3.3 million. If this \$3.3 million was not reprogrammed, then the Park Police would be in an untenable position of 100 percent personal services."

* GSA space rental costs - "During last summer, the Park Service was forced to move all its employees that were stationed at 1100 L Street NW to 800 North Capitol Street. This affected approximately 450 employees. The FY 1993 Budget contained approximately \$2.4 million for rent at 1100 L Street, however, we have been advised that rent costs at 800 North Capitol Street will be \$4.8 million. In addition, the GSA Space line item in our budget was reduced by \$164,000 due to the 0.85 percent across-the-board reduction. Accordingly, we find ourselves \$2.6 million

short in covering the space rental bill. The General Services Administration (GSA) provided the House Subcommittee staff a figure of \$3.9 million for rental costs at 800 North Capitol Street. This figure, however, does not include Joint Use Space and Parking Space (\$150,000), nor the Administrative Overhead cost (\$730,000) required by GSA."

* WASO and regional office shortfalls - "In the late 1970's, the Washington and regional offices were largely funded from a 'take-down' from each line item in the budget - as programs increased, so did support funds. But in FY 1981, all overhead programs in regions and WASO were directly funded in the budget, and, therefore, had to compete for funds with park programs. Throughout the 1980's, there was a reluctance at all levels to either request or grant increases for regional or central office functions. Almost all incremental dollars have gone directly for park programs of for 'fixed cost' items. As a result, Washington and regional office operating programs are severely underfunded, especially int he General Administration (GA) Account. We currently are estimating a \$13.6 million shortfall in FY 1993, of which 81 percent or \$11 million represents GA functions. In reality the need is \$15.3 million, however, through the freezing of vacancies and reduction of travel costs, \$1.7 million is anticipated to be saved.

"Since 1982, funding for GA activities (not including 'fixed cost' items) has increased \$9.3 million or 30 percent. These activities cover the administrative functions of accounting, financial management, budgeting, personnel management, employee relations, EEO, contracting, property management, congressional liaison, correspondence control, public information, ADP, and include staff and support costs for the Directorate. This is not a large increase (about 2.7 percent per year), especially considering that pay cost and benefit increases (FERS & Health Benefits) alone have increased 40 percent. As a point of comparison, the ONPS funding since 1982 has increased 98.5 percent. GA represented 6.3 percent of the 1982 ONPS appropriations, whereas it represents only 4.1 percent in 1993. Thus, while the NPS has grown, the relative cost of administering it has decreased. If the ratio of overhead to park operations had remained constant during that time period, then the 1993 funding for GA would be almost \$62 million compared to the actual availability of \$40 million. This reprogramming request will boost the 1993 funding to \$51 million.

"Several actions have occurred in the last eleven years that have negatively affected the GA budget. These actions...have resulted in the loss of approximately \$13 million through reductions and absorptions.... These reductions have come at a time when the cost of doing administrative business has gone up, not down. The Park Service has increased in size by adding an additional 32 park areas since 1982. Staffing has increased by 3,466 FTE's (22.5 percent). Program initiatives, such as Park Restoration Improvement Program (PRIP), have necessitated higher administrative costs. The need for automatic data processing hardware and software has risen dramatically in the past decade. In reality, there is less funding and people now than in the past with which to accomplish more administrative functions and requirements....

"The \$10.5 million regional office shortfall varies in its extent and in its solution from one region to the next..."

REGULATIONS

On January 22nd, Leon Panetta, the new director of the Office of Management and Budget, placed a freeze on the issuance of new regulations or similar documents pending review and approval by "an agency head or the delegatee of an agency head who, in either case, is a person appointed by President Clinton and confirmed by the Senate." The Department has not yet sent any specific guidance implementing this order to the agencies. This order should not have a major effect on the National Park Service regulatory program unless there is a lengthy delay in appointments. If you have any questions, please call Tony Sisto at 202-208-7675.

ALL-RISK INCIDENT QUALIFICATIONS

Several new, all-risk modifications to the qualifications system at the Service's fire center in Boise went into effect on January 25th. That system can now track experience and training associated with incidents other than wildland fire. An oil spill section has been developed in conjunction with other Interior agencies, and a specialized incident section has been created to track a variety of other types of incidents. Those incidents and the associated codes are as follows:

A = Special Events
B = Search and Rescue
C = Hurricane/Tornado
D = Earthquake
E = Flood
F = Law Enforcement
G = Other

The specialized incident section was developed by the Branch of Fire and Aviation Management in response to needs which arose during the Hurricane Andrew recovery effort and will serve as a prototype for future development for all-risk applications.

Employees who want to track experience and training in these areas should contact their local qualifications system manager. The position prerequisites for the specialized incident section mirror the ICS requirements for wildland fire, minus the fire-specific courses. The oil spill section also mirrors ICS, but has included EPA courses that are specific to each position. The oil spill section also contains positions that are unique to oil spill operations.

CIRS UPDATE

Progress is continuing in the development of the Servicewide criminal incident reporting system (CIRS) mandated by the Uniform Federal Crime Reporting Act of 1988. Helen Price's staff in WASO's Information and Telecommunications Division is moving forward in developing the final version of the software and in testing and resolving field problems.

New Servicewide incident codes were implemented on January 1st and a CFR/incident code cross reference was distributed to all parks via cc:Mail in late December. If you haven't received either the codes or the cross reference, please contact Joe Smith via cc:Mail (WASO RAD CIRS) or call him at 202-208-6381. The cross reference was developed by Bob Reid (Mid-Atlantic Regional Office), Trent Taylor (Colonial), and Bill Acree (Great Smokies); the final draft was composed by Acree. Thanks are due to all of them for their good work.

Areas now testing the reporting system are:

- * Western Region (Kathy Clark, coordinator) - Lake Mead, Golden Gate, and Yosemite.
- * Rocky Mountain Region (Kathy Clark, coordinator) - Glen Canyon.
- * Southeast Region (Bill Sturgeon, coordinator) - Everglades, Cape Hatteras, and Great Smoky Mountains.
- * Mid-Atlantic Region (Bob Reid, coordinator) - Colonial, Shenandoah, Valley Forge, Delaware Water Gap, and Independence.

A decision on Servicewide implementation of the system has not yet been made. The available budget will likely be the determining factor.

FIRE CENTER RENAMED

After 27 years of operating as the Boise Interagency Fire Center, the nation's logistical support center for wildfire suppression has changed its name to the National Interagency Fire Center at Boise (NIFC) "in an effort to more accurately reflect the national scope and responsibilities of the Fire Center..."

NOTES FROM THE PARKS

Nothing submitted by parks this go 'round....

PARK VACANCIES AND OPM REGISTER OPENINGS

Kaloko-Honokohau The park is looking to fill two seasonal GS-5 law enforcement positions (both have 15% COLAs). The park intends to start the selectees as soon as possible and extend them through the end of September. Applicants must have a seasonal law enforcement commission. Contact Jerry Case at 808-329-6881 for further information.

North Cascades The park is recruiting two positions located at Stehekin: a GS-9 subdistrict ranger (law enforcement) and a GS-5 administrative support assistant (district clerk). The announcement numbers are, respectively, PNR-93-18 and PNR-93-19. This is a good dual-career opportunity. For more information, please contact district ranger Phil Campbell or chief ranger David Spirtes at 206-856-5700.

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. 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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