

CLEAR TEXT:
WASO Ranger Activities'
Electronic Newsletter

April 23, 1993

RANGER FUTURES

The paper outlining the Ranger Futures Initiative is now in final draft and will be presented to the WASO and regional directorate next Wednesday. Prompt concurrence is expected. The paper will then be distributed to the field via both hard copies and cc:Mail for a 60-day review. We plan to get it out early in May.

LAW ENFORCEMENT PAY AND RETIREMENT

Representatives from the Service and the Department are currently conferring on an enhanced annuity retirement package which would endorse such benefits for law enforcement rangers under both FERS and CSRS. Details are not currently available, but will be provided as soon as possible.

In accord with the requirements of the Federal Law Enforcement Pay Reform Act of 1990 (FLEPRA), the Office of Personnel Management concluded its study of federal law enforcement pay last December and made a number of specific recommendations (see the December 18, 1992, CLEAR TEXT for details). These recommendations were forwarded to the Office of Management and Budget for comment, and are now back at OPM awaiting the new director's review. We have not been made privy to the text of OMB's comments.

SEMI-AUTOMATIC WEAPON PROCUREMENT

The statement of work for the semi-automatic weapon procurement is still being developed. Once it is completed, a Commerce Business Daily notification requesting proposals will be issued. No date has yet been established for the CBD notice.

SEARCH AND RESCUE REVIEW

A group of 17 search and rescue professionals met in Seattle in February to review the relatively high number of climbing deaths which occurred at Denali last year and to review the agency's search and rescue policies.

Although there were 11 deaths on Mount McKinley in 1992, there was not enough evidence to indicate any trend. The record shows that there were no deaths on the mountain during the previous year, and that there had been similarly sharp increases on two years in the past - 1967 and 1980, each with eight fatalities. Despite the lack of a pattern, valuable ideas were identified for improving climber safety.

The group also came to a number of conclusions about search and rescue in general in the NPS:

* National Park Service regulations and guidelines are generally adequate

and provide reasonable protection to participants in hazardous activities. Parks should be encouraged to periodically assess these needs and make necessary adjustments.

* The Service is providing adequate and timely information regarding hazardous conditions, such as weather and altitude.

* Rescuers are sometimes exposed to significant risks. A revised policy on search and rescue which stresses the need for risk takers to assume more responsibility for their actions was drafted and forwarded to Ranger Activities for review.

* People involved in high-risk activities need to assume a greater degree of financial liability.

* Search and rescue training needs to be supported and standardized at the local, regional and national levels. There's a critical need for both basic and advanced SAR training throughout the Service.

FIRE SEASON OUTLOOK

NOAA's April fire weather briefing shows a general improvement since last year due to the precipitation that fell across much of the West this winter. The numbers (all of which are through March 31st) are revealing:

	% of Normal Precipitation	% of Normal Snowpack
Washington	74	76
Oregon	96	108
California	123	149
Nevada	112	111
Idaho	95	87
Montana	75	74
Wyoming	88	86
Utah	129	124
Colorado	121	129
Arizona	195	202
New Mexico	148	149

Because of this moisture, however, fine fuels are in abundance, and the potential for large, rapidly spreading fires exists late in the season after they dry and cure. While dead and down thousand-hour fuels have likely recovered much of their normal fuel moisture, live large fuel stands may still be susceptible to fire because of stress, disease and infestation from previous years of drought.

At this time, the only NPS areas in drought condition are North Cascades, Coulee Dam, Mount Rainier, and, to a lesser degree, Glacier and Olympic. To date, we have not received any requests for severity funding, but anticipate that some will come in from northern PNR parks.

NOTES FROM THE PARKS

Glen Canyon

Every Memorial Day weekend, Glen Canyon has disorderly crowds at Hobie Cat Beach at Bullfrog and Lone Rock Beach at Wahweap. This year, the park is asking for assistance from other parks in an effort to gain control of these

areas. The disorderly character of these beaches and the numbers of people who are under the influence of alcohol and drugs is beyond the capacity of the present staff. Any chief ranger who could provide rangers to assist should contact Laura Van Inwagen at 602-645-8305. Glen Canyon will cover the cost of overtime, per diem, travel and lodging. Rangers will participate in patrol, medical, arrest and custody teams. [Larry Clark, Chief Ranger, GLCA]

UMass Ranger Academy

About 15 to 20 recent graduates of the seasonal law enforcement ranger training program at the University of Massachusetts are still seeking seasonal employment in the NPS. For further information, contact program coordinator Dave Swendsen at 508-392-0171, or write to him at 62 Pleasant Street, Westford, MA 01886. [Matt Poole, MIMA]

PARK VACANCIES AND OPM REGISTER OPENINGS

No listings this week.

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, HOAL, STMA, NIFC), 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

Telephone: Branch of R&VP - 202-208-4874
 Branch of F&A (WASO) - 202-208-5572
Telefax: Branch of R&VP - 202-208-6756
 Branch of F&A (WASO) - 202-208-5977
cc:Mail: Branch of R&VP - WASO Ranger Activities
 Branch of F&A (WASO) - WASO Fire and Aviation