

CLEAR TEXT:
WASO Ranger Activities'
Electronic Newsletter

May 23, 1994

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. Short submissions for the last four sections of the report - Field Notes; Park Exchange; Vacancies, Register Openings and Details; and Calendar - are welcome and encouraged.

Next issue: June 3, 1994
Submission deadline: June 1, 1994

6(c) CLAIMS

The Department of the Interior Personnel Office now has the authority to decide 6(c) claims. OPM has returned 236 claims which they had not even looked at. The claims remaining in OPM are those on which they had made an initial decision and given reconsideration rights; they will make a final decision on appeal rights to MSPB.

Claims are beginning to move through the Department. Departmental staff have devised a streamlined 6(c) process which we think is very encouraging. Formerly, there was no NPS or DOI process for claimants to add evidence to their claim if part or all of the claim was not recommended for coverage. DOI will now be offering a 60-day opportunity to add evidence - including affidavits, investigative reports and other information - to support claims for periods not recommended. Here's how it will work:

Each claimant will be sent a memo from the new Director of Personnel. Those whose cases did not get to OPM will be provided a copy of the unsigned letter to OPM. This letter is actually the NPS recommendation to the Department; the Service prepared these letters in final for DOI signature so that additional typing would not be needed if the Department agreed with NPS recommendation. The letter will show specific periods of service and the recommendation for or against coverage. CLAIMANTS WILL HAVE 60 DAYS TO SUBMIT ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE FOR PERIODS OF SERVICE NOT RECOMMENDED FOR COVERAGE. Replies must be post marked within 60 days of the date of the letter. Additional evidence received will be added to the original case and DOI will review all at the same time to make a final decision. Claimants will be given 25 days to appeal to MSPB if they don't agree with the DOI decision.

Each claimant will be asked to reply so that there is a record indicating whether or not he or she had additional evidence. No further opportunity to add evidence will be given before the Department makes its final decision. A form letter will be provided for the claimant's response.

DOI will be sending out these 60-day opportunity letters in the near future. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THEY HAVE UPDATED MAILING ADDRESSES. If you have moved since submitting your claim, please send an updated address to Bill Halainen via cc:Mail. We will assure that the Department gets these address changes.

SEASONAL PARK RANGER ISSUES

We have been notified that it may be very important for persons seeking permanent employment with the National Park Service to be able to demonstrate that they could have competed successfully under OPM's Administrative Careers with America (ACWA) written examination (park ranger career positions fall under ACWA). We think OPM will rule that any person placed in a competitive appointment at grades 5 or 7 must be selected or at least be within reach on the ACWA register. Since the ranger careers system provides no positions below GS-5, all new hires will have to demonstrate that they could have successfully competed under ACWA or were outstanding scholars.

OPM indicates they will CLOSE the receipt of applications for the ACWA examination before the end of May, 1994. It might not be re-opened to new applicants until the current backlog of over 58,000 applicants has been significantly reduced. Only about 58 persons were hired off the ACWA register last year, so it might take awhile to reduce the list. We STRONGLY recommend that seasonals interested in a permanent appointment and other potentially desirable applicants be encouraged to visit their local OPM office and sign up for the ACWA examination in the next week or so! We think postal applications for the exam MAY be excepted if received by May 27th. Further details will be sent from the WASO Personnel Office to regions soon. Interested persons should be advised to act immediately.

On the topic of "what's happening with seasonals," we'd like to share some information with you. Please keep in mind that much more work must go into the seasonal park ranger program, and that we haven't finished implementing Ranger Careers for permanent employees yet.

As you know, Ranger Careers does not cover seasonals this summer. Eventually, all GS-025 jobs will fall under the benchmark position description system, including temporary park ranger positions. Full performance park ranger work is classified at the GS-9 grade, whether performed by a permanent or a seasonal ranger. Grades below GS-9 are training and development grades only. All persons must meet the qualifications for the work they perform, which, for the park ranger series, means spending at least the equivalent of two years acquiring the knowledge and skills required to perform satisfactorily at the full performance level.

We are aware that the Service has a great need for temporary employees, and that seasonals have long been the means by which the Service has met a large portion of its mission. The dedication and competence of the seasonal work force has been outstanding. We are working very hard to insure the best possible programs are developed to meet the needs of the Service and of our dedicated temporary workers.

DEPARTMENTAL HOUSING INITIATIVE

As you are probably aware, the National Park Service and Department of Interior are working on a housing initiative to remedy many of the problems we have Servicewide. The following presents some statistics on the scope of the problem and an update on the status of that initiative.

More than half of all housing units in the Service (2,863 out of 5,107) have

been rated substandard. In 1988, about 14.5% (736 units) of the inventory was in poor or obsolete condition; today, that number has reached about 20% (1,050 units). Among those housing units are 659 trailers, many of them in poor to dreadful condition. This downward spiral continues despite the appropriation since 1989 of \$57 million for repair, rehabilitation, or replacement of substandard housing, and \$43 million for construction of new or replacement housing.

The immediate goals of the NPS/DOI housing initiative are:

- * the removal and replacement all 659 trailers by December, 1996;
- * the targeting of up to a dozen parks for significant housing improvements; and
- * the exploration and development of new approaches to housing in terms of private construction, modular housing, uniform plans, internal and external financing, innovative uses of federal land, employee equity, and concessioner involvement.

The National Park Foundation, has agreed to take on a significant role in this effort. On May 6th, the foundation's board met at Grand Canyon and voted unanimously to take on the role of serving as a managing partner in this public/private housing partnership. The foundation will select a group of target parks on which to concentrate initial efforts, and will serve as a catalyst for a large and diverse group of partners, including engineers, lawyers, financiers, congressional staff members, and material suppliers.

Many organizations have already agreed to help support this housing initiative, including the National Association of Home Builders, the Cooperative Housing Foundation, Fannie Mae, the National Parks and Conservation Association, Jim Barna Log Systems, Ward Log Homes, Burson-Marsteller, and Beveridge and Diamond.

One of them, Jim Barna Log Systems, has already helped; along with a number of associate donors and volunteers, they provided and constructed a 2,000-square-foot log home in Great Smoky Mountains in one day in a modern day equivalent of a barn raising. Secretary Babbitt and a number of other Departmental and NPS employees joined in the effort, many on their own time. The building will serve as a dormitory for eight park employees.

We'll keep you posted on further developments as they occur...

YOUNT CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

At a ceremony at the White House this evening (May 23rd), President Clinton will present Rick Gale, fire suppression specialist and chief of wildfire operations for the NPS, with the first Harry Yount Lifetime Achievement Award, which is given to a park ranger who "exceeds normal expectations" in his or her work, and who has displayed the attributes of "initiative, imagination, perseverance, competence, creativity, resourcefulness, dedication and integrity" throughout his or her career.

Among other things, Rick will receive the award for being "at the cutting edge of innovation in almost every major ranger program area over the last two decades, a period when ranger work became truly professionalized in the NPS." Here are some of Rick's accomplishments in his 36 years in the Service:

Law Enforcement

- * Served as first law enforcement specialist at Lake Mead.

- * Served as protection team leader for the Alaska Task Force in 1979.
- * Served as member of task force that rewrote most of 36 CFR in 1980 and 1983.
- * Developed first formal advanced multi-agency law enforcement training program (while at Lake Mead).
- * Participated in task force to rewrite NPS-9.
- * Developed one of the first SOPs for park law enforcement programs.
- * Developed the first NPS special events team advanced training course while the chief ranger at Santa Monica Mountains.

Wildfire

- * Rose through fire overhead/ICS ranks to the top level in command, operations and logistics; currently qualified as Type I area commander and incident commander.
- * Led the Department of Interior/interagency Type I wildland fire incident management team as incident commander for three years and on a dozen assignments.
- * Served seven weeks as area commander on the Greater Yellowstone Area fires in 1988; supervised 13 national incident management teams with a total of 9,550 personnel.
- * Lead the revision of NPS-18, the Service's wildfire guideline.
- * Serves as the steering committee chair for S-520 (advanced incident management) and S-620 (area command) courses.
- * Co-developed literally countless fire suppression courses in command, operations, logistics and ICS.

Search and Rescue

- * Served as incident commander on extensive, multi-day searches at Lake Mead and Grand Canyon.
- * Co-developed the first managing the search function training course.
- * Co-developed SAR courses for incident commanders and planning section chiefs.
- * Received commendations of merit for mine shaft rescues at Lake Mead.

All-Risk Incident Management

- * Serves as the first national all-risk Type I incident management team commander; assigned to the 50th anniversary commemoration of Pearl Harbor and the response to Hurricane Andrew in the south Florida parks.
- * Developed all-risk incident management team training courses for regional Type II incident management teams and trained from seven of the Service's ten regions.

Resource Management

- * Developed the first NPS resource management training course for superintendents while serving as a training specialist at Albright in 1980.

Aviation

- * Lead the effort to develop NPS-60, the Service's aviation guideline.
- * Co-developed the first NPS aviation management course.

In his capacity as a principal, and, for the past seven years, as president of the Association of National Park Rangers, Rick has also addressed many employee and system issues:

* Initiated the so-called "endangered ranger" study in 1988 that led to Congressional hearings on ranger pay and benefit problems and to subsequent efforts to improve housing, correct abuses of seasonal and temporary employees, and improve ranger pay, grades and professionalism. Also testified before Congress on housing and temporary employee benefits legislation.

* Testified before Congress on the critical need to maintain the integrity of the National Park System, to protect its irreplaceable natural and cultural resources, and to assure sufficient funds and staff to achieve those ends.

* Testified at Vail hearings and has repeatedly pressed the NPS for clear goals and management plans.

* Established links with rangers throughout the world through joint formulation of a world ranger organization with peers in Scotland and England.

The Yount Lifetime Achievement award is the first such award given. It will be followed by annual Yount awards to outstanding rangers, as per the memorandum issued earlier this spring from this office. We again thank Midwest Region in general and John Townsend in particular for their outstanding leadership in devising and establishing this award.

PROPOSED REVISION OF 36 CFR § 1.2

Comments on the draft revision to 36 CFR § 1.2, which were published in CLEAR TEXT on April 22nd, will continue to be accepted through May 27th. The revision affects parks with navigable waters, Indian lands or non-federally owned lands under NPS administration. Requests for copies of or questions concerning the draft revision should be directed to Steve Shackelton or Russ Wilson by cc:Mail or telephone at ARO (907) 257-2644, or to WASO RAD Regulations by cc:Mail or telephone (202) 208-7675. Thanks to the few who have taken time to comment.

FIELD NOTES/PARK EXCHANGE

Several field notes and items for "Park Exchange" were submitted for this issue, but inadvertently misplaced. If you sent something along, please send it on again. We'll get it into the next edition...

VACANCIES, REGISTER OPENINGS AND DETAILS

Mount Rainier

Because of the current departmental hiring freezes restricting competitive recruitment for positions, the park is soliciting applications from current employees with career or career conditional status who are lateral or downgrade eligible candidates interested in a non-competitive reassignment as a GS-7 park ranger in protection at the Carbon River Ranger Station (May-November) and Longmire (December-April). Housing is available at Carbon River, and may be available at Longmire. The position is subject to furlough - 22 pay periods of work and four of furlough. The park expects to upgrade the position to the GS-9 level, effective July 10th. If EOD is on or prior to June 26th, GS-7 candidates may be considered as non-competitive lateral reassignment eligibles. After that date, only those at the GS-9 level may be considered as lateral reassignment candidates. The incumbent is responsible for frontcountry patrol, enforcement, EMS, SAR, structural and wildland fire; he/she supervises three to six seasonal protection, fee collection, interpretive and campground rangers. Interested candidates should send and SF-171, most recent performance appraisal and most recent SF-50 to Personnel

Office, Mount Rainier NP, Tahoma Woods, Star Route, Ashford, WA 98304.
Applications must be received no later than COB on May 31st. Questions
should be directed to personnel at 206-569-2211, ext. 2374 or 2363.

DIVISIONAL TRAVEL

**** MAY ****

5/21-5/25	Gale	Harry Yount career achievement award ceremony, Washington, DC
5/23-5/25	Hurd, Farrel	NWCG meeting, Salt Lake City, UT
5/26-5/27	Hurd	Annual operating plan review, Boise, ID
5/23-5/27	Broyles	NWCG safety and health working team, Salt Lake City, UT

**** JUNE ****

6/1-6/2	Gale	ICS program presentations, NASAR conference, San Diego, CA
6/1-6/2	Henry	Meeting with Canyon Country Coalition on aircraft overflight management, Moab, UT
6/2-6/6	Dickerhoof	Annual leave
6/7	Henry	Presentation on aircraft overflight management, Rocky Mountain Region regional superintendents' conference, Denver, CO
6/6-6/8	Marriott	In-service refresher, Cape Cod, MA
6/6-6/10	Gale	S-520/620 cadre meeting, NARTC, Marana, AZ
6/6-6/10	Martin	Annual leave
6/8-6/10	Zimmerman	Fire danger rating group meeting, Ashville, NC
6/13-6/17	Gale	Type III incident management team development training, Everglades, FL
6/18-6/22	Farrel	Hazard fuel removal project planning and review, Mesa Verde, CO
6/20-6/23	Broyles	Southeast Region FMO meeting, Knoxville, TN
6/20-6/24	Zimmerman	Fire behavior analyst steering committee meeting, Atlanta, GA
6/20-6/24	Clark, Berg	Regional audit, PNRO, Seattle, WA
6/22-6/24	Botti	Southeast Region FMO meeting, Knoxville, TN
6/27-7/1	Broyles	Steering committee meeting, Fire Management for Agency Administrators training course, San Diego, CA
6/28-6/30	Dickerhoof	TENTATIVE: VRAP quality control training, Denver, CO

**** JULY ****

No listings yet

If you would like to get CLEAR TEXT 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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