

CLEAR TEXT:
WASO Ranger Activities'
Electronic Newsletter

July 11, 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 three sections of the report - Field Notes; Park Exchange; and Vacancies, Register Openings and Details - are welcome and encouraged.

Next issue: August 5, 1994
Submission deadline: August 1, 1994

RANGER CAREER MANAGEMENT

At one minute past midnight yesterday morning, Ranger Futures - now referred to as Ranger Career Management - went into effect, successfully culminating many years of concerted and arduous efforts by many, many people to "fix" the GS-025 ranger series. At that moment, the 2500 or so permanent rangers in the National Park Service gained a career ladder, a career management system, a coherent operational philosophy, and all the benefits associated with a grade structure that at last correlates with the professional demands of ranger work.

Ranger Activities expresses its deep and sincere appreciation to all the people who helped make Ranger Futures a reality - people from all grades, positions, areas and professional specialties who put their hearts and souls into this effort. Ranger Career Management will have a major, positive effect on rangers, their families, their parks, and the National Park System. Because of your efforts, the National Park Service has taken a major step forward in improving its ability to meet the challenges of coming years and in its treatment of its employees.

The additional good news is that Ranger Futures/Ranger Career Management has broken ground for similar improvements in other series - maintenance, administration, and cultural and natural resource management. We are actively and aggressively supporting and assisting those occupations in their efforts, and strongly encourage you to offer your assistance whenever and wherever possible to our brethren in other series.

Much work must still be done on Ranger Career Management, and we are moving forward in several directions. We are currently allocating funds for Ranger Career Management for FY 94, and are working with Congress on FY 95 funding. Indications are very positive that coverage of base pay costs will be assured in FY 95 funding.

This week, we will be sending instructions to the field on designating commissioned ranger positions for primary or secondary coverage under the twenty year retirement system. The Department has approved benchmark protection position descriptions under Ranger Career Management which include such coverage, and we are going to move quickly to designate such positions

within the NPS.

We are also continuing work on volume two of Ranger Career Management, which will address management of seasonal positions and career entry and management for the entire ranger occupation. A position paper will be completed and transmitted for field review this fall.

Two closing thoughts. The first is that Ranger Career Management will provide rangers with considerable freedom to develop themselves and improve their career prospects, but that this freedom comes with an AFFIRMATIVE responsibility to take the initiative to bring about change. The Service isn't going to manage your life for you; you need to employ the tools provided by Ranger Career Management to control and improve your own destiny.

The second is that all rangers must become resource educators. We have three responsibilities in the ranger ranks - to protect resources, to educate visitors and the public on our resources, and to serve as ambassadors for the resource to the public. Resource education is critical to the success of all three. If you don't have resource education abilities, now is the time to seek them.

ADMINISTRATIVE CAREERS WITH AMERICA

We are providing the following information in response to several questions that have been raised as a result of OPM's announcement that the ACWA examination had been abolished.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) gave a very short deadline for filing applications for the Administrative Careers with America (ACWA) examination. The National Park Service has no control over OPM's decisions to open or close the ACWA register. Some federal agencies have used the ACWA examination to competitively select applicants for positions at the GS-5/7/9 levels. However, a total of only 439 hires were made from this list throughout the federal service in 1993. The National Park Service has made little, if any, use of the list of eligibles established as a result of the ACWA examinations. There are approximately 46,000 candidates on the list, and the top of the list contains the names of several veterans-preference eligibles with scores of 100 and above.

In order for a candidate to be considered for a permanent position through the ACWA examination, it would be necessary for that person to have scored extremely highly in the written examination and to be referred to a federal agency as one of the top three candidates on the list. Veterans-preference eligibles are given consideration ahead of non-preference eligibles within their rating groups. Compensably-disabled veterans who pass the test with a score of 70 are automatically placed at the top of the register ahead of all candidates, regardless of their scores. Needless to say, it is extremely difficult to obtain a score that is sufficiently high enough to be within the top three and be referred to a federal agency for consideration.

The National Park Service has been successful in using the "Outstanding Scholar Provision" of ACWA in making selections for park ranger positions. This provision permits agencies to hire candidates with overall grade point averages of 3.5 or above into ACWA positions. These outstanding scholars need not take the ACWA examination. The NPS has used this provision as a method for converting some of our temporary and seasonal employees into permanent positions, and we will continue to use it whenever possible.

The Service is currently working with OPM in an attempt to establish an NPS

register, or list of eligibles, for park ranger positions. If we are granted this authority, OPM would delegate to the National Park Service the authority to recruit, examine (if necessary), rate and rank, and refer candidates to selecting officials in score order for permanent positions. The register would be maintained in WASO and would be used for filling positions throughout the Service. It would, of course, be open to all interested citizens.

INCIDENT REPORTING

Just a short reminder that incident reports are to be transmitted to WASO Ranger Activities (and to regional offices where required) via cc:Mail, as per the June 13, 1994 memorandum from Mike Finley, Acting Associate Director, Operations. The morning report, which is the primary vehicle for communicating incidents to all offices, including the Department, is now being produced at various locations, depending on travel itineraries and work requirements. Faxes must be retransmitted to those locations, and sometimes get lost in the shuffle. Reports sent by cc:Mail, however, can be read anywhere, and individual submissions can also be redistributed immediately to other interested parties if circumstances warrant.

FIELD NOTES

Saguaro

Saguaro is the first park in Arizona to utilize the Arizona Site Steward Program in conjunction with its ARPA program. The former is an organization of volunteers who are trained and certified by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in monitoring archeological sites on public lands in Arizona. Eight site steward volunteers monitored the Signal Hill petroglyph in the Tucson Mountain District for a three month period this spring. They observed and reported three instances of vandalism to petroglyph panels - all ARPA infractions - as well as numerous minor violations. Because of the project's success, site stewards will be monitoring two other major petroglyph sites in the park this summer.

PARK EXCHANGE

No entries...

VACANCIES, REGISTER OPENINGS AND DETAILS

Indiana Dunes

The park will be recruiting three GS-4 firefighters during early August for their fall fire season. The park has 40 to 50 fires per year and has an active prescribed fire program. It's a good place to get fire experience, as well as training on their three engines (Type 7 and 3) and water tender. For more information, call the park's fire management office at 219-926-7561, ext. 333.

DIVISIONAL TRAVEL

**** JULY ****

7/15	Hurd	NPS fire staff briefing, Boise, ID
7/11-7/15	Stone	Regional fee coordinator training,
Glacier NP, MT		
7/12-7/14	Halainen	Work projects, Delaware Water Gap NRA, PA

7/18-7/21 Halainen Work projects, Delaware Water Gap NRA, PA
7/25-7/28 Halainen Work projects, Delaware Water Gap NRA, PA

**** AUGUST ****

8/1 - 8/12 Erskine Annual leave
8/8 - 8/11 Broyles NWCG training working team meeting,
Denver, CO

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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