

CLEAR TEXT:
WASO Ranger Activities'
Electronic Newsletter

July 21, 1995

CLEAR TEXT is the monthly 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; Resources; and Vacancies, Register Openings and Details - are welcome and encouraged.

RANGER CAREER MANAGEMENT - Bill Sanders, RAD/WASO

It has only been a year since we implemented Ranger Careers on July 10, 1994, but, given all the organizational excitement of the last year, Ranger Careers already seems like old news. Volume II of Ranger Careers has been written, but we still require a couple of critical approvals before we can release it. In the meantime, we have launched what may become Volume III, developing classification logic and standard position descriptions for non-supervisory ranger positions above the journeyman level.

Please recall that in order to move the GS-025 park ranger series from a single interval series to a series having a two-grade interval career ladder, it was necessary to remove single-interval work (and persons performing such work) from the 025 series. Park ranger dispatcher, fee collector, information clerk, fire control aid, biological technician, guide, and other single-interval work was reclassified into appropriate series. Rangers subject to re-classification were counselled about the necessity for this action and were advised that the Service intended to deal equitably with them.

Parks were required to affirmatively seek opportunities (over at least the following three years) for former park rangers to return to the 025 series, if the former rangers so desired. Essentially, supervisors were asked to actively mentor such individuals, getting them prepared to successfully compete for the new 025 jobs. After one year (i.e., by July 10, 1995), parks were to notify their servicing field area personnel offices (formerly regional personnel offices) of individuals still seeking to return to the 025 series. Such action should now be undertaken. Servicing personnel offices should begin to actively assist parks in facilitating returns to the 025 series, referring qualified candidates both within and outside the current field areas. Some former rangers might need on-going mentoring, training, or experience-building details to help them qualify and compete for the new park ranger positions.

Former 025s will have to apply thorough merit procedures for promotion opportunities into the new 025 benchmark position descriptions. Applicants will have to meet basic qualifications, but we believe most applicants will have no difficulty doing so, especially if parks lend a hand.

Given the realities of the current outside hiring freeze, it would appear likely that former 025s would represent an attractive pool of applicants for ranger vacancies. Parks are encouraged to work affirmatively to meet 025

series diversity objectives, but are still specifically discouraged from establishing new 025 work below the GS-05 level and/or from using non-benchmark 025 position descriptions at grades GS-09 or below. Parks (or individuals) having questions about this process may contact me at 202-208-6380.

Some have inquired whether we intend to develop standardized performance appraisal criteria matching the ranger benchmark position descriptions. Under the old (current) performance appraisal system, the position descriptions described precisely (at least in theory) what the employee was expected to do. Benchmark Pds are not supposed to be all-encompassing and/or precisely tailored to each park situation. Under the new (proposed) Departmentwide appraisal system, "critical results" required of the employee will be measured (in "pass/fail" terms) rather than measuring the duties or activities undertaken by the employee. Therefore, we probably won't be developing generic position-description-based performance criteria unless the proposed new DOI appraisal system doesn't materialize. The new (Departmentwide) employee appraisal system is on hold awaiting OPM approval.

We are currently working with the DOI performance appraisal task force. A new, one-page form with a simplified pass/fail appraisal system is now largely complete and awaiting implementation. OPM approval is on hold waiting for new OPM enabling regulations to be finalized, maybe in August. It now looks like the new system MAY be ready this fall. In any event, we don't have any current plans to write standardized ranger performance appraisals, but parks might like to do so for identical positions in the park.

6C RETIREMENT BENEFITS - Bill Sanders, RAD/WASO

Parks should make a priority of designating ranger positions to be included in the enhanced annuity retirement system (6c). It appears that some parks have not yet assembled the necessary documentation and submitted all their "executive, managerial, technical, semi-professional, or professional positions for which experience in a primary law enforcement or fire-fighting position,... is a mandatory prerequisite" for DOI designation. Parks must submit the position description, classification evaluation (if available), organization chart, and performance standards to Marsha Lee in WASO personnel. Please do not delay, we need to get the position designation portion of the conversion to 6c behind us.

As was noted in the last issue of CLEAR TEXT, all past 6c claims from CSRS employees have now been reviewed by DOI. Most decision letters are now in the mail or have already been received by claimants. It will take a while before the extra .5% contribution and any off-setting unpaid back law enforcement pay can be calculated, which is a separate process.

Rangers who were previously denied 6c coverage by OPM may request a review of their claim by DOI if they now have new material evidence to submit which was not available to them when they submitted their original claim. We have attempted to reconstruct a list of rangers in this situation, but we are not sure we have a complete list. In addition, some folks have already retired or moved on. Contact me for more information, including a sample letter.

Instructions are being finalized by the personnel office which detail how FERS employees may claim previous law enforcement or fire-fighting service for enhanced annuity retirement (6c) coverage. Personnel intends this to be the FINAL opportunity for FERS individuals to claim past 6c service, other than for the previous year. (The past claims opportunity for CSRS employees closed

in 1989.)

We continue to address the need for funding the costs of 6c, but have virtually no hope of obtaining additional ONPS funding. We are actively seeking a mechanism to distribute the one-time 6c conversion costs equitably across the Service, which looks promising.

We still haven't completed the 6c conversion project, but we are working very hard to finish the conversion to the enhanced annuity system in the near future. Our objective remains to designate the positions within the ranger occupation which should be managed under 6c, then to cover the incumbents of those positions for all their law enforcement or fire-fighting service. To achieve anything less would frustrate the Ranger Careers objective of establishing and maintaining a vigorous, physically fit ranger force capable of accomplishing the rigorous duties of law enforcement and fire-fighting essential to the Mission of the National Park Service.

Rangers are grateful to ALL who worked long and hard to make 6c happen, including NPS managers, fellow rangers, personnel staff in parks and regions, detailees, officials of other agencies, regions, WASO, DOI, retirees, employee associations and fraternities, managers, Congresspersons, and other supporters. Projects of this magnitude can be spearheaded by one or two individuals, but it takes the combined efforts of many, many folks to bring them to completion.

REGULATIONS - JURISDICTION - Dennis Burnett, RAD/WASO

R.S. 2477: The proposed rule establishes the terms and conditions for the management of valid rights-of-way on and across National Park Service areas authorized pursuant to Revised Statute 2477 (R.S. 2477). This is not a popular item with Congress, and the legislative battle over R.S. 2477 has begun. In all probability, no action will be forthcoming in the near future.

36 CFR Part 2: The final draft package is being reviewed by Ranger Activities and others in the NPS Directorate. A meeting was held between Ranger Activities (Rick Gale and Dennis Burnett) and representatives of the Directorate from Natural and Cultural Resources, Concessions and Policy. Some changes were recommended for 36 CFR 2.5. Part 2 work group chairman Bruce McKeeman attended this meeting and will be drafting the necessary changes.

NCR T-Shirt Regulation: This regulation, which governs the sale of certain items related to First Amendment activities on park land within the National Capitol Region, became final on May 7th. A lawsuit was filed on behalf of seven permittees, who have been allowed to remain on the mall at their original locations. The remaining 400 or so vendors either left or moved to a small plot of land adjacent to the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum, which was set aside in a ruling by U.S. District Court Judge Green in a related 1993 case (ISKCON vs NPS). In this case (which the NPS has appealed but has not yet been decided), Judge Green enjoined the NPS from enforcing its regulation against "sales and solicitation" as a violation of the First Amendment and allowed ISKCON to continue its sales activity at the Smithsonian location. His ruling, however, was overly broad, which allowed for the influx of the recently displaced 400 vendors. At the request of ISKCON, the judge amended his original order on June 30th. The new order will allow only ISKCON to occupy the Air and Space location. On July 3rd, the 400 displaced vendors were ordered to vacate the Air and Space location and are no longer on the Mall. A hearing was held on June 1st in U.S. District Court on the seven permittees. A written decision is expected later this summer.

Policy on Sale and Distribution of Printed Matter: Ranger Activities is currently gathering and collating information from virtually every NPS unit concerning past (the last two years) practices regarding issuance of permits for the sale of "message bearing t-shirts" under 36 CFR 2.52, sale and distribution of printed matter. The opinion of the Solicitor's Office is that t-shirts do not constitute "printed matter" and therefore the sale or distribution of t-shirts under 2.52 should not be allowed. An official policy statement will be forthcoming.

Regulations Moratorium: Talk of a government wide moratorium has resurfaced in the Senate. A version of the related House bill is being reviewed by a Senate subcommittee. The specifics of any moratorium, if it is passed, will be the result of a conference committee between the House and Senate. Sally Katzen, administrator for the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs in the Office of Management and Budget, has recommended to President Clinton that he veto any moratorium containing the current language.

Part 7 & 13 - Special Park Regulations: Final regulations for Glacier NP and 36 CFR Part 68 have recently been printed in the Federal Register. At least 17 additional special park and Servicewide regulations are in the Department at some level of the review process.

Alaska Region Issues: At the request of several commenters, the NPS is reopening the comment period for the proposed regulations to implement Section 1307 of ANILCA for an additional 60 days. The proposed regulations are necessary to establish procedures for administering the statutory rights and preferences established by section 1307 for certain persons to conduct revenue-producing visitor services in certain units of the National Park System located in the State of Alaska. This rule would provide particular guidance on the solicitation, award and renewal of Alaska visitor service authorizations.

Jurisdiction: The concurrent jurisdiction package for Appomattox Court House National Historical Park, Virginia, has been approved and sent to Governor Allen for signature.

FEE PROGRAM - CAMPGROUND RESERVATION SYSTEM - Tim Stone, RAD/WASO

Fee Legislation: As has been noted in the morning report, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources' Subcommittee on Parks, Historic Preservation and Recreation will hold a hearing on S.964 (introduced by Senator Johnston of Louisiana) on July 27th. This is the Service's legislative proposal, entitled the NPS Fee Management Act. There will probably be additional legislation introduced by the majority. On August 3rd, the House Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Lands will hold a hearing on recreation fees. At present, it appears that Representative Richardson of New Mexico will introduce NPS fee legislation by request. The House Appropriations Bill included language directing the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture to develop "pilot" fee programs at from 10 to 30 sites per agency for four agencies in those departments (NPS, BLM, USFWS, USFS). These pilot programs would be demonstration sites that would be operated "notwithstanding any other provision of law." The pilot programs would be authorized for one year.

Benchmark PDs: Benchmark position descriptions for supervisory visitor use assistants (GS-303-06/07) have been approved by acting Chief Personnel Officer Alex Young. These PDs are meant to address fee collection activities at the park level in concert with the implementation of the Ranger Careers program.

Hard copies are being sent to field area human resource divisions, and a memo will be forthcoming regarding these PDs which will go to field directors and superintendents. The visitor use assistant PDs were developed to address the "real" duties performed by the Servicewide fee collectors and the importance of this function as the first contact point for many of the visitors to National Park Service units. The goal was to ensure that these positions were graded uniformly throughout the Service and that persons performing supervisory duties at the point of collection areas are compensated accordingly. These supervisory PDs are tied into the GS-303-04/05 visitor use assistant PDs, which were approved in March and distributed to the field. It should be noted that GS-04 is the benchmark level for the "fee collection" activities at the park level. We are working on obtaining a Servicewide waiver from OPM regarding the visitor use assistant PDs and the written test requirement for the 303 series. More on that will be forthcoming shortly. Anyone wishing more information on these PDs please contact me at 202-208-4205 or via cc:Mail.

Campground Reservation System: MISTIX (DESTINET), the Servicewide campground reservation system is now on the cc:Mail network. We hope that this change will help facilitate communication between Service areas and the reservation service. Direct your cc:Mail messages to Mistix and identify the person you want to reach.

SPECIAL PARK USES - Dick Young, RAD/WASO at COLO

A few quick notes to keep you up on what's going down.

ROW Regs: Work on 36 CFR Part 14 (Rights-of-Way) has been completed and the final regs are now ready to go into the pipeline.

NPS-53: The draft of the second edition of NPS-53 (release number 2) has been completed. A copy will be sent to each regional (SSO) special park use coordinator for editorial comments. If you are interested in this document, contact that person with questions.

SPU Survey: The final edition of the special park use survey results requested earlier this year is finished. It covers all uses for 1994. Anyone interested can request a copy from me via cc:Mail. Let me know if you want the full report (seven pages, giving a park by park breakout) or just the bottom line results.

Commercial Filming: We have been attempting to simplify some of the forms we use, at least as much as possible. One of those forms is the commercial filming permit. What is your opinion of using a special use permit form as a cover sheet and appending the rest of the information needed, including all requirements, conditions, and other information, as add-on pages? That idea has both advantages and disadvantages, and I would like to hear what you think. You can reach me on cc:Mail by name - Dick S. Young.

CIRS/NIBRS UPDATE - Bob Reid, RAD/WASO at SERO

In June, we continued setting up systems and training people at a number of parks. New system administrators were trained to implement the CIRS program at Badlands, Bighorn Canyon, Fort Laramie, Jewell Cave, Mount Rushmore, Theodore Roosevelt and Wind Cave. Additional training for rangers was conducted at Lake Mead and Redwoods, and district to headquarters links were set up via cc:Mail.

As we continue our efforts to get all parks up and running on the CIRS program, we are receiving requests from other parks for training or just to send software to them. If you do not have the CIRS program at your park, please contact either me or Kathy Clark (RAD/WFO) via cc:MAIL and we will schedule time for your park. We can't, however, send the software without some training on the initialization process.

CISD NEWS - Bob Marriott, RAD/WASO

National CISD team members have been involved in numerous stress interventions, meetings and training sessions, and have responded to several parks for various reasons. All situations involved park employees in need of assistance; so far, feedback from those who've been assisted has been very positive.

Team members recently helped coordinate the tenth annual basic peer counselor class in Tucson. This year, two folks from other agencies attended; the representative from BLM was auditing the class to determine if that agency should establish its own training curriculum. Fish and Wildlife is also interested in developing a program similar to the National Park Service's.

The national teams are available for dispatch through the National Interagency Coordination Center. Full rosters of team members (including phone numbers) are on file at the Grand Canyon and Shenandoah dispatch centers.

Sherrie Collins and Rick Obernesser will be stepping down as, respectively, Western and Eastern team leaders on August 1st, following completion of two-year commitments. They will now become active team members. The new team leaders are Mark Maciha from Death Valley (Western) and Jam Kirwan from Everglades (Eastern).

FLETC NOTES - Gary Rocklage, NPS/FLETC

The pace around FLETC occasionally slows a bit and it affords us the opportunity to reflect on some firearms issues. One of those issues, which appears continuously, concerns the proper clearing, loading, and carrying of the service shotgun and semi-auto rifle. To that end we, thought the following would be useful.

To begin with: EVERY WEAPON IS ALWAYS LOADED UNTIL THE USER PERSONALLY CLEARS THE WEAPON. Clearing the service shotgun is accomplished by pointing the weapon in a safe direction with the finger off the trigger. Depress the action bar lock/release and open the action. If a round is present, dump the round out of the weapon, then remove the rest of the rounds from the magazine tube one at a time by depressing the shell stop. Once the weapon is completely unloaded, leave the action open for storage in a vault or approved storage facility.

Clearing the AR-15 entails pointing the weapon in a safe direction with the finger off the trigger and the safety on and removing the magazine. Secure the weapon in the weak hand and with the strong hand grasp the bolt activating handle and open the bolt. The bolt release lever should be depressed at its base to facilitate engaging the bolt carrier, locking the bolt open when the action is fully opened. When the bolt is opened and locked opened, a round should be ejected from the chamber if there's one in the chamber. The weapon is then ready for storage. Due to the propensity for the bolt on an AR-15 to close with very little agitation, the proper storage for the weapon is with the action closed, no round in the chamber, and the safety on. When the action is closed on an empty chamber, it is very important that the user observe through the ejection port that no round enters the chamber (exaggerate for safety).

Preparing the service shotgun for carry in the patrol unit is accomplished by once again pointing the weapon in a safe direction and observing through the open ejection port that no live round enters the chamber as you close the action. Then load the magazine to capacity. The weapon is then ready to place in the electroloc. The trigger is not pulled. When the weapon is removed from the electroloc to use or clear, the action is opened through the use of the action bar lock/release. THE PULLING OF THE TRIGGER TO OPEN THE SHOTGUN HAS NEVER BEEN TAUGHT AT THE FLETC EITHER TO LOAD OR TO CLEAR THE WEAPON.

Preparing the AR-15 for carrying in the patrol vehicle is accomplished similarly to that of the service shotgun. The weapon is removed from the secured storage area, pointed in a safe direction with the finger off the trigger, and the bolt is locked open. The user once again checks the chamber through the ejection port as the bolt is closed to insure no live round is chambered. The magazine is inserted into the weapon and tapped and tugged to insure the magazine is properly seated. The weapon is ready to secure in the vehicle.

A properly loaded shotgun or AR-15 semi-auto rifle in the patrol unit will be found with no round in the chamber. This requires the user of the weapon to take the overt action of chambering the round prior to employing the weapon.

A further observation regarding security of weapons in vehicles parked overnight. With the current circumstances prevalent across the nation, it would be wise to remove the weapons from the patrol vehicles and house them

unloaded and safe in approved vaults or approved storage facilities at the end of shift. Park housing areas and maintenance facilities are not as secure as we'd like to think. Left overnight, an electroloc is easy pickings, and a weapon present is an invitation to car theft.

Just a few extra steps can provide a little more safety and training for us all. Should you have any questions contact NPS/FLETC senior firearms instructor Gary Rocklage at 912/267-2667 or via cc:Mail by name.

FIELD NOTES

No submissions.

PARK EXCHANGE

Jefferson National Expansion

The park has the following used law enforcement leather gear for immediate release via transfer of property. The majority of the items are in good condition, with some fair and some very good. All items meet NPS-9 standards for use. They are all in one package; the park will ship via Federal Express government package weekday service and will pick up the shipping tab. They'll also include the original DI-104 transfer of property form. The components:

- * Safariland cordovan velcro-lined duty belts - 27 small, 13 medium, 5 large.
- * Safariland cordovan velcro-lined inner belt - 7 in various sizes.
- * Safariland cordovan duty belt center loops - 16.
- * One-inch cordovan hidden hardware duty belt keepers - 60.
- * Safariland cordovan single handcuff cases - 9.
- * Cordovan hidden hardware snap key ring holders - 8.
- * Cordovan flashlight holders - 8.
- * Safariland natural cowhide shoulder holster for S&W frame revolvers with four-inch barrels - 4.
- * Safariland pant belt plainclothes holster, some in cordovan and some in natural color, for S&W frame revolvers with four-inch barrels - 6.
- * About a dozen miscellaneous pieces of plainclothes gear of various designs and functions, including holsters and speed loader cases in both cordovan and natural colors for S&W revolvers.

Please contact J.L. Weddle, criminal investigator, at 314-425-6156, or via cc:Mail. The first to call or get a message through gets all the stock.

RESOURCES

No submissions.

VACANCIES, REGISTER OPENINGS AND DETAILS

Indiana Dunes

The park is recruiting one GS-5 and three GS-4 firefighters for their fall and spring fire seasons. The park has 40 to 50 fires a 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. The announcements close August 1st. For more information, call the park at 219-926-7561. [Bill Gabbert, FMO, INDU]

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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SkyPager: Emergencies ONLY - 1-800-759-7243, PIN 2404843