

## BRIEFING STATEMENT

### The National Park Service and the Government Performance and Results Act

To improve our service to the American people, we are making changes in National Park Service management. These changes are part of our response to various mandates including *The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)*, *The Chief Financial Officers Act*, *The Federal Financial Management Integrity Act*, and *The National Performance Review*. While each is distinct, collectively they involve a new emphasis on strategic planning and performance measurement. They call for government agencies to set mission-related goals, measure progress toward them, and focus attention on achieving results -- in other words, performance management.

As we begin the process of creating a performance management system for the National Park Service (NPS), we are seeking participation from interested Members of Congress and their staffs. Section 3(d) of GPRA specifies that *"When developing a strategic plan, the agency shall consult with the Congress, and shall solicit and consider the views and suggestions of those entities potentially affected by or interested in such a plan."*

**Our process focuses on four essential elements:**

**1) Clearly articulate the NPS mission and goals in a strategic plan to be completed by September of 1997.** This plan will help set direction for the Service into the 21st century and will meet GPRA requirements (see attached summary of GPRA). The plan will look five years into the future and be updated every three years.

**2) Develop an efficient, integrated, NPS-wide system.** Park- and program-level goal setting and performance measurement must be firmly grounded in meeting the mission of the Service. We need to select the most meaningful measures ("vital signs") of our progress for policy makers without creating demands for huge amounts of new reporting by park and program managers.

**3) Develop a system useful to park and program managers.** Although they reflect the NPS mission, individual parks and programs have specific purposes and unique resources and conditions requiring varied management methods. Our system will accommodate these variations so it will be used daily as part of park and program operations, as well as a source of current information for reporting at the regional, field area, or national levels.

**4) Fully implement a system responsive to all mandates by Fiscal Year 1999.** We intend to consult with the Congress, the Executive Branch, and the public to ensure our system reports results at appropriate levels of quality, detail, and frequency. Performance plans and reports will be produced annually in relation to the budget process, ensuring continued responsiveness to the information needs of policy makers and the public.

**We have completed the following activities:**

- \* **Conducted a performance management workshop** with experienced park and program managers to provide training and to develop an approach to NPS compliance with these mandates.
- \* **Created a GPRA Task Force** with representatives from central offices and the field to organize and integrate our efforts.
- \* **Developed and field-tested prototype methods** for goal setting and performance measurement in six parks and three programs. These prototypes produced sample goals and measures for use in NPS-wide implementation and training activities.



## Summary of Legal and Administrative Requirements Related to Goal-Setting and Performance Measurement in the National Park Service

The Government Performance and Results Act, enacted in 1993, is the most recent of a string of laws and administrative policies directing the National Park Service to evaluate and report how well we are doing our job. Recently, the national concern about the cost of government has heightened public interest in issues of government accountability and performance measurement, with the result that we can anticipate serious attention being paid to these issues for the foreseeable future. Currently, we are directed to comply with the following legislative and administrative requirements.

The **Government Performance and Results Act** directs agencies to clearly state their mission, outline their methods, and account for their effectiveness through a series of reports, including

- a thorough and comprehensive *strategic plan* that clearly states the overall mission and outcome-related goals for all the major functions and operations of the agency (due by September 1997)
- an annual *program performance plan* establishing performance measures for each program activity set forth in the budget (first plan, for fiscal year 1999, is due in draft October 1, 1997)
- an annual *program performance report* reviewing success in achieving the performance goals (first report due by March 2000)

The **Chief Financial Officers Act** requires agencies to provide an annual financial report to OMB. The Chief Financial Officer's Report must contain an overview section presenting the agency's accomplishments in terms that tie "programmatic objectives" to "quantitative outcome measures." The Budget Division has completed three CFO reports and has been providing OMB with performance information as part of the annual budget requests. The current guidance indicates that this reporting requirement will eventually be satisfied by the annual program performance plans and reports required by the GPRA.

The **Federal Financial Managers Integrity Act** directs each agency (through OMB circular A-123) to operate a program of management controls. The purpose of the program is to reasonably ensure that programs achieve their intended results, that resource use is consistent with the agency's mission, that there is not waste or mismanagement, that laws and regulations are followed, and that reliable data are available for sound decision making. This program is managed by the NPS Management Officer in the Washington Office.

The **National Performance Review** directs agencies to improve their effectiveness and efficiency by cutting red tape, putting customers first, empowering employees to get results, and generally producing better government at lower costs. The NPR is also directing us to review which programs or functions are critical to our mission based on customer input. President Clinton has signed several Executive Orders implementing the NPR, including EO 12861, which calls for the elimination of one-half of the Executive Branch's



internal regulations, and EO 12862, which calls for customer service standards. The NPS is responding to the requirements of the NPR through a number of actions. Those directly related to performance measurement include

- work to set standards of quality for customer service that are equal to the best in business (to date this has included development of a *National Customer Service Plan* and *visitor center principles*)
- work to cut one-half of our internal regulations by September 1996
- institution of several reinvention labs, including one to redesign and reorient the operations evaluation program
- agency restructuring to place more responsibility and accountability at the field level

**The Operations Evaluation Reinvention Lab** was created under the auspices of the *National Performance Review* for the purpose of radically restructuring and enhancing the effectiveness of the current NPS operations evaluation process by refocusing it on customer service and results-oriented standards. Historically, these evaluations had a "compliance" focus on more than 1000 standards covering all aspects of park and program management. The mission of the Operations Evaluation Reinvention Laboratory is to develop a constructive, useful process for evaluating outcomes and suggesting improvements to better serve the National Park Service's customers. The new process, which is now being called the 'management assistance program' (MAP), should allow us to celebrate success and improve the overall effectiveness of our resource protection and customer service.



## SUMMARY

### Government Performance and Results Act of 1993

The following are the major provisions of Public Law 103-62, enacted August 3, 1993:

**Section 3** requires each agency to submit a "strategic plan for program activities" covering at least a five-year period.

These plans are to be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Congress by September 30, 1997, be updated every three years, and include

- a mission statement;
- general and "outcome-related" goals and objectives for the major functions and operations of the agency;
- descriptions of how the goals and objectives will be achieved;
- identification of key external factors that could affect achievement of the goals and objectives; and
- an explanation of how the agency has used and will continue to use program evaluations to establish or revise goals.

**Section 4** requires each agency to prepare an annual performance plan "covering each program activity set forth in the budget of such agency," and then, based on these plans, the head of each agency will prepare an annual "program performance report."

The first report for the previous fiscal year is due to the President and Congress by March 31, 2000, and will

- "review the success of achieving the performance goals of the fiscal year;"
- evaluate the current fiscal year performance plan in light of the previous year's results;
- describe why a goal was not met and current efforts to achieve it (or why it is considered infeasible);
- evaluate the effectiveness of waivers granted under Section 5 (described below); and
- summarize any recent program evaluations.

**Section 5** allows the agencies to request the waiver of selected administrative procedural requirements and controls in return for a commitment to achieve a performance goal.

Waivers could cover items such as

- specification of personnel staffing levels,
- limitations on compensation or remunerations, and
- prohibitions or restrictions on funding transfers among certain budget object classifications.

Statutory requirements may not be waived, but annual performance planning and reporting will provide an opportunity for agencies to identify legislative changes that could improve program performance.

**Section 6** provides for a series of pilot projects and OMB reports to Congress.

These pilot projects are intended to promote innovation and gain experience with the concepts and practices in the legislation to allow evaluation and possible modification by agencies, OMB, and the Congress during implementation. They will

- start with the performance plans and reports of Section 4 in fiscal years 1994, 1995, & 1996, then
- move to managerial accountability and flexibility waivers of Section 5 in fiscal years 1995 & 1996, and
- finally extend to performance budgeting fiscal years 1998 & 1999.

With respect to performance budgeting, the intent is to evaluate the feasibility of further legislation that would mandate this practice for the Federal government.

**Section 9** requires training in strategic planning and performance measurement.

OMB is to work with the Office of Personnel Management and the Comptroller General of the United States to develop and provide training in strategic planning and program performance measurement to Federal agency managers, but no date is specified.