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# NLC Journal

Report of the January 23-24, 2007 Meeting of the National Leadership Council

The National Leadership Council (NLC) convened January 23-24, 2007 in Washington, D.C. for its first meeting under the leadership of Director Mary Bomar.

**January 23, 2007**

## Agenda

- I. Welcome and Call to Order  
Mary Bomar, Director
- II. Vision and Goals  
Mary Bomar, Director
- III. Remarks from Deputy Secretary Scarlett
- IV. Competitive Sourcing  
Dan Wenk, Acting Associate Director, Park Planning Facilities and Lands  
Jon Jarvis, Regional Director, Pacific West Region
- V. Accessibility  
Dan Wenk, Acting Associate Director, Park Planning Facilities and Lands
- VI. National Park System Advisory Board  
Sue Masica, Chief of Staff
- VII. Review of Partnership Construction Process  
Dan Wenk, Acting Associate Director, Park Planning Facilities and Lands
- VIII. Legislative Priorities for the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress  
Tom Wolfe, Assistant Director, Congressional and Legislative Affairs  
Don Hellmann, Deputy Assistant Director, Congressional and Legislative Affairs

## I. Welcome and Call to Order

Director Mary Bomar called the meeting to order at 8:00 am with a warm welcome to all of the NLC members. She also introduced Linda Wright, Organization Consultant, the meeting facilitator, before delivering the following remarks:

“For the past few weeks, I have shared my recollection of our NLC meeting in Olympic last year. I did not recount the issues or the discussions, but the story of our canoe ride on Lake Crescent.

I recounted how this city gal ended up in the front of the canoe, and how each time I stopped paddling, everyone else in the boat stopped as well. And I passed out this photo to show that a group of RDs and Associates could actually paddle a canoe on a lake without drowning!

As I told the folks in the National Capital Region office two weeks ago, I later thought about our excursion and realized it was a parable—or perhaps, a metaphor for any organization, including our Service. And two qualities stand out in this parable: leadership and teamwork.

Despite the many talents within the National Leadership Council, we only made progress when we worked together as a team. And we only worked together if the person in the lead showed the group what needed to be done.

The National Park Service is fortunate to have a vast amount of talent in many different fields; but we can only make progress when we work together. And, as Director—the one in front of the boat—I must lead from the front to show the entire team where we must go. If the team doesn't work together, we will tip over just like a canoe.

Of these, teamwork must come first, and is the first order of business for this meeting. The items on the agenda demand our attention—and honest input from each one of us. Many of you have heard before of the concept of shared leadership—that the best decisions are those that are made through the process of collaboration and open dialogue in a safe environment. That is my definition of shared leadership and my management philosophy.

With this safe environment come some simple rules: Courtesy—listening to one another, disagreeing without being disagreeable. No cell phone calls or under the table Blackberrying! No sidebars. I think our facilitator may have some other suggestions as well.

Yes, we will use a facilitator to help keep us on track, on time, on topic and toward agreement. All our plates are full, so we must make the best use of the short time we are together. Yes, we will make decisions here—**our** decisions.

That is the point where debate and dissensions leave the room—and leadership begins. As the senior managers of the National Park Service all of us have the obligation to lead our respective teams—at regions or in the associateships. And as Director, I too have a responsibility to lead—to keep rowing when needed and setting the example of what the others in the boat must do. I'm a good coxswain and will keep us focused— Why? Because, I love what I do.

But I cannot do it alone—I need all of you with me. We must row in unison, or the boat will tip over. Everyone on the team must support the decisions we jointly make over the next two days. After the decisions are made, there should be no nay saying, no dissension back in our offices, no carping at decisions made, no undermining of the path we have set together.

At each step of my career, I focused first on the team around me, whether division chiefs at Independence or Associate RDs in the Northeast. I needed technical expertise, of course, in many areas. But I also needed people who could support our efforts to move forward, by working together as a team AND by conveying the message to their own employees, both in words and in deeds—to exercise true leadership. Not everyone could do that—not everyone could row as I needed them to. So I found other boats for them—places where they could be successful. If you are uncomfortable in your role, I will help you find a boat that does fit.

Recently, I did a series of interviews with news media—while the articles were mixed, I was asked about my legacy as Director—and I replied that I am not concerned with my legacy, but about the mission of the National Park Service and preparing it for the second century of our

existence. And while my time here will not be long—in fact who of us here will be in the Service in 2016?

I believe we can, and must begin. A thousand forests can truly begin with a single acorn.

And so I have a simple mantra—my trifecta of goals that I have told the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee during my confirmation, the news media and our Park Service workforce: to re-engage the American public with our national parks; to increase the capacity of the National Park System, and to develop a new generation of leaders for the Service. My mantra will be a filter—and a framework, as we make decisions on issues throughout the Service.

On that final goal, I hope that 2007 will become for the National Park Service the “Year of the People” —a chance to renew our focus on our team. After all our talk about our natural and cultural resources, we sometimes fail to emphasize the 20,000 men and women who take care of America’s special places. I hope that we can all work together on those qualities that will make each one of us a valued, productive member of this great organization.

What are those qualities? First, shared goals. I hope that each and every member of our Park Service Team shares the commitment to the Park Service mission. I hope they will also come to share my “trifecta” of goals: re-engagement, increased capacity and succession planning for the future.

We must nurture Innovation and Imagination—the ability to bring unique experience to the table and coupled with the ability to work well with others. And rather than talk about the qualities, I’d like to read you this email—from one of our own rangers:

‘Dear Director Bomar:

This is only my second time of writing to a NPS Director. I simply could not contain myself when I read the AP article Park Service to Seek New Money Sources. I have been preaching this message for several years. After seeing the beating that our national parks are taking because of funding shortages, I started honing my skills and encouraging others to begin searching for outside funding to save what we as Americans hold dear.

Last year, at the newly-developing Selma-to-Montgomery National Historic Trail, I was able to write a series of grants totaling nearly one-million dollars. It took so little time to write those grants and the yield for this very small NPS unit will prove itself in 54 miles of wayside exhibits, 2 traveler information radio antennae at the head and foot of the trail, and \$500,000+ to help create the A & E plans of the Trail’s next interpretive center. I believe that if other parks could see just how easy it is to capture this funding, I believe that our primary mission of protecting and preserving this nation’s treasures would be quite a bit easier.

Anyway, I just wanted to let you know how thrilled I was to hear you express what I had been feeling for a while now. I’d be interested to hear about any initiatives that you have in the funding realm. And, I would be glad to help in any way possible.

Happy New Year and Glad Tidings to You,  
Carla Cowles Whitfield  
Park Ranger’

That letter captures the spirit of my trifecta: connecting people to parks with the waysides, travelers’ radio and planning for an interpretive center. She certainly has helped increase the

capacity of our system--and on her own, she is training herself to become one of those leaders for the Park Service of the 21st century. Shame on us if we do not encourage her and others like her.

This is, after all, the National Leadership Council...three words with meaning. We must all focus, not on our own interests but on the national picture; we must be true leaders of our regions and our programs. And we must act as counselors to act in the best interests of the Service and the special places we care for.

What is it that I need from you all? I need you to be a team... You must work collaboratively with one another—regions are not small kingdoms, but part of the national park system...

Second, to go back and share with your colleagues in your respective organizations...What as team players can we do to help meet the NPS goals...I am concerned about the perception of the NLC in the field...the field is looking to us for leadership, and we must be up to that task.

It is said that to understand someone, walk a mile in their shoes. What if I asked you to swap jobs with one another for two months?

What can you do to help me? Competitive Sourcing... Concessions and Contracting... Employee development... What do you want the NPS Advisory Board to do for us? ... in short, look at the agenda and you'll see where I need your help. Should we have a general superintendents conference in August 2008?

This is not only intended for the regional directors...it is for our associateships as well...We have wonderful work going on by our scientists [for example the bio blitz program]. We need to stop hiding our light under a bushel, and talk about that.

What do we do about the deplorable conditions in our parks along the border? Deplorable for both the resources and for people...for example at Organ Pipe. How do we address that serious issue? And is it only the problem of a single region? Can we use the Advisory Board to identify the potential solutions and provide recommendations?

We have a window in time that allows us to make strides to re-engage the public, increase the capacity and train the next generation of leaders for our Service... Right time, right place, right people.... We can begin today.

I would finish with this thought on leadership...a poem really...

Leaders are called to stand  
in that lonely place  
between the no longer and the not yet  
and intentionally make decisions  
that will bind, forge, move  
and create history.

We are not called to be popular,  
we are not called to be safe,  
we are not called to follow,  
we are the ones called to take risks,  
we are the ones called to change attitudes;  
to risk displeasures,

we are the ones called to gamble our lives,  
for a better world.

--Mary Lou Anderson, April 1970

[I would also like to share with you the characteristics of a good leader.]

A Good Leader

#1 Leaders relentlessly upgrade their team using every encounter as an opportunity to evaluate, coach and build self confidence.

#2 Leaders make sure people not only see the vision, they live and breathe it.

#3 Leaders get into everyone's skin exuding positive energy and optimism.

#4 Leaders establish trust with candor, transparency and credit.

#5 Leaders have the courage to make unpopular decision and gut calls.

#6 Leaders probe and push with a curiosity that borders on skepticism, making sure their question are answered with action.

#7 Leaders inspire risk taking and learning by setting the example.

#8 Leaders celebrate!!!!!"

## II. Vision and Goals

After Director Bomar's remarks, the NLC discussed the vision and goals for the future and covered several issues. It was emphasized that the NLC must work together as a strong and unified leadership team to provide the strategic direction for the Service.

### National Leadership Council

During the discussion, the NLC agreed to the following:

1. The NLC composition will change. The new composition is as follows:

#### *Voting Members*

Director

Deputy Director, Operations

Deputy Director, Support Services

Chief of Staff

Comptroller

Northeast Regional Director

Midwest Regional Director

Intermountain Regional Director

Alaska Regional Director

Southeast Regional Director

Pacific West Regional Director

National Capital Regional Director

Associate Director Park Planning, Facilities & Lands

Associate Director Natural Resources, Stewardship & Science

Associate Director Cultural Resources  
Associate Director Visitor & Resource Protection  
Associate Director Partnerships and Visitor Experience

*Standing Staff Members*

Chief, Public Affairs  
Chief Information Officer  
Assistant Director—Congressional and Legislative Affairs  
Assistant Director—Business Services  
Assistant Director—Human Capital  
Associate to the Director

\* Standing staff members are non-voting members who will attend DC meetings only, unless otherwise invited. Only the principal may attend meetings; actings or substitutes are not included.

*NLC Support Staff*

Administrative Program Specialist  
Program Specialist

*Invited Guests such as:*

Deputy Regional Director  
1 or 2 SES or Senior Park Superintendents  
Jones Fellow  
Bevinetto Fellow  
Special invitees as determined by the Director and agenda topics (e.g. USPP Chief, etc.)

\* Executive Sessions will only include the Voting Members.

\* Invited guests will be determined based on the agenda topics and meeting location. Associate and Regional Directors will work with the Deputy Director for Operations to identify potential guests.

\* The Deputy Regional Director and Park Superintendent(s) invited to attend will be given time on the agenda to raise concerns from the field.

2. The NLC will meet quarterly for two and one-half to three days depending on the agenda, and at least one meeting per year will be in the field. The meetings will focus on discussion and decision-making.
3. The NLC will be an accountable leadership team. An NLC member will be assigned to follow-up on all action items and the *NLC Journal* will be reinvigorated.
4. NLC meeting agendas will be distributed at least 10 days in advance. All agenda items should include clearly defined objectives and decision points and reports must include recommendations.
5. The NLC will come to consensus on all issues before moving forward. When needed, a formal vote will be taken.

Competitive Sourcing

The NLC touched briefly on the topic of Competitive Sourcing during this opening session. Everyone agreed that it is very important to be honest and transparent with employees, and to support the process.

### Development Advisory Board (DAB)

The NLC discussed the DAB and noted that it is one of a few programs that holds NPS staff accountable on a consistent basis servicewide. The DAB has also changed over time in response to emerging concerns and lessons learned. There was some concern expressed that attendance at the DAB meetings has possibly grown too large and that many Superintendents feel like they are on trial during their presentations. Others observed that superintendents should feel comfortable and prepared in front of their peers to explain and defend their project decision-making.

The NLC decided that if the DAB is meeting in DC, the Regional Directors should schedule time to come to the Washington Office and provide updates on key issues and projects.

### **III. Remarks from Deputy Secretary Scarlett**

Deputy Secretary Scarlett began her remarks with recognition of the intrinsic and iconic value of parks, and quoted General Tommy Franks who stated “We are as connected to our parks as we are to the stars and stripes because they preserve the core of what it means to be American.” She noted that the NPS mission is succinct and inspirational, but also very complex, expressing an understanding that NPS managers must prioritize among infinite possibilities with limited resources.

Deputy Secretary Scarlett organized her discussion around four themes:

1. The mutually entwined goals of the NPS mission
2. Cooperative Conservation
3. Management Excellence
4. Importance of Science in Decision-Making

She encouraged the NLC to pursue shared goals through partnerships noting that nature knows no boundaries. Partnerships are very important tools that allow the NPS to leverage resources and strengthen connectivity, and she emphasized the need for NPS managers to work closely with local communities. She also quoted Dr. William Isaacs who said “To listen is to develop an inner silence” to underscore the importance of a two-way dialogue with communities, partners, and visitors.

Deputy Secretary Scarlett commended the NPS for all of the strides made in management excellence citing Core Ops and other related analyses as empowering tools that have assisted the service with setting its vision and establishing priorities. Using the words of Bertrand Russell, she highlighted the need to continually re-evaluate our practices: “It is a healthy thing now and then to hang a question mark on the things you have long taken for granted.”

The Deputy Secretary closed her remarks by stating that success requires not only vision but also great people, and acknowledged the dedication of all NPS employees. She then opened the floor for questions from the NLC.

The first question posed to Deputy Secretary Scarlett was regarding A-76. There is a great deal of concern about the difference between A-76 as a concept and A-76 as it is currently being applied. The NLC members mentioned several examples of actions that have been taken within

the NPS that meet the requirements of A-76, but since they did not involve competitions, they have not been recognized as contributing to the government-wide efforts.

The Deputy Secretary offered to engage in conversations with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regarding NPS actions to accomplish the objectives of competitive sourcing, namely the greater efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of services. She asked that the NLC provide her with detailed information about NPS programs, including specific examples that she can use during her briefings. She also asked that the NLC identify positions and/or programs that may benefit from the competitive process.

The second question posed to Deputy Secretary Scarlett focused on the proposed new requirements for Cooperative Agreements. The NLC clearly defined for the Deputy Secretary all of the issues that will arise if the requirements are put into place. She acknowledged the issue and informed the NLC that she had already requested an in depth briefing on the subject. She also asked that NPS provide her information as soon as possible as this issue may require a legislative fix.

#### **IV. Competitive Sourcing**

The goal of the competitive sourcing discussion was for the NLC to come to consensus on the process and provide a recommendation to Director Bomar for the NPS “green plan” outlining the Service’s competitive sourcing strategy for 2007-2008. The Director emphasized that everyone needs to look at how they are doing business, and the key to success is figuring out how to be more efficient. Jon Jarvis provided an overview of the competitive sourcing process, and what the NPS requirements are as stated in the DOI Competitive Sourcing Green Plan. Regional Director Jarvis also presented a list of NPS initiatives that have been implemented to meet the objectives of A-76, but which have not been accepted by OMB as an offset for the competition requirement.

The NLC agreed to form a team led by Jon Jarvis to compile the information on NPS initiatives requested by Deputy Secretary Scarlett. Team members include Bruce Sheaffer, Dan Wenk, Kate Stevenson, and Pat Hooks. Mike Soukup committed to providing information about the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESUs).

After an in-depth discussion, the NLC decided that the NPS strategy for Competitive Sourcing would be to submit a package that includes 60 Job Corps positions, 45 Turf Maintenance positions, and approximately 122 Human Capital positions. In subsequent actions, NPS identified selected positions for review, including Harpers Ferry Center for competition, US Park Police guard positions in DC, and WASO information technology.

#### **Action Items:**

- An All Employees Memo will be sent by Director Bomar that discusses the NPS strategy for Competitive Sourcing.
- Jon Jarvis will work with Dan Wenk and Bruce Sheaffer to develop a timeline with milestones for assembling needed information regarding A-76.

#### **V. Accessibility**

The NPS, like all federal agencies, is subject to the requirements of the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, and the 1973 Rehabilitation Act. Additionally, NPS Management Policies 2006 and Director's Orders 16A and 42 address the issue of accessibility. In spite of current efforts, the NPS has had a significant increase in the number of formal complaints, the receipt of FOIA requests that are being used in accessibility related lawsuits, and an oversight hearing with the House Subcommittee on National Parks. The issues raised in the complaints have all been valid violations of legal requirements that need correction. Half of the complaints related to lack of architectural access, and the other half to the lack of required services for visitors with disabilities.

The NLC discussed four main issues of concern related to accessibility: new construction, repair and rehabilitation, interpretation programs, and continuing education. They agreed that ensuring that all of our facilities and programs are accessible is the right thing to do and that we need to hold ourselves accountable. They covered many ways to accomplish this including ensuring that accessibility is built into the planning, design, and funding phases of every project, regularly and carefully inspecting work as it is being performed, and providing information and education to all NPS employees.

The NLC raised the issue of the use of segways by persons with disabilities during their accessibility discussion. A memorandum allowing parks to make temporary decisions in order to study whether or not segways are appropriate for use in parks was sent out in December 2006. Additional guidance will be issued in a follow up memorandum in February 2007, as this issue is causing some concerns that need further study and evaluation. Acting Associate Director Dan Wenk informed the NLC that the Department of Justice Disability Rights Section is reviewing the issue and is expected to make a decision later this year, and that the NPS Risk Management Office has developed an issue paper containing the results of their research and recommendations.

Action Item:

- A follow-up memo containing additional guidance on the use of segways for persons with disabilities will be sent out from the Director's office.

## **VI. National Park System Advisory Board**

The legislative charter for the National Park System Advisory Board (NPSAB) expired on January 1, 2007. The NLC agreed that the NPSAB serves an important advisory role and recognized the requirement that the NPSAB review all proposals and make recommendations to the Secretary of Interior for all new National Historic and National Natural Landmark designations. Two possible solutions in which the NPSAB could be reconstituted were discussed; legislative reauthorization or administrative authorization. Chief of Staff Sue Masica informed the NLC that it was possible that the legislative reauthorization would be part of the FY'07 Continuing Resolution and that it would be retroactive to January 1, 2007. This would extend the NPSAB for one more year, during which time legislation for a 10-year extension could be pursued. The NLC agreed to wait until after Congress acted to initiate an administrative authorization of the NPSAB.

Director Bomar informed the NLC that the terms of three NPSAB members also expired on January 1, 2007, and that she is working with the White House Liaison to nominate new members. She also requested input on what role and function the NPSAB should provide and stated that she wanted the NLC to help shape the charter. The NLC agreed that the NPSAB should focus on big picture items at the policy level, that the conclusion of a committee's work should be the production of a report with clearly defined recommendations, and that it was important to ensure that the issues examined by the NPSAB relate to the trifecta of goals

defined by Director Bomar. The NLC recommended that the NPSAB be asked to work with NPS on the National Park Centennial Challenge and that there be a strong liaison assigned to coordinate between the NPSAB and the Director's office. Director Bomar expressed her commitment to filling the Chief of Policy position, which has historically served in this role.

UPDATE: The NPSAB reauthorization was not included in the Continuing Resolution. The administrative package has been assembled and the review process has begun.

Action Item:

- By February 7, 2007, all NLC members should send Chief of Staff Masica their thoughts on the role the NPSAB should play in the National Park Centennial Challenge.

## **VII. Review of Partnership Construction Process/Building Better Partnerships**

The NPS assembled a workgroup under the leadership of Acting Associate Director Dan Wenk and Associate Director Chris Jarvi to look at the guidelines for partnership construction projects to make the steps clearer and easier to accomplish. Many key NPS partners have articulated their concerns and frustrations with the current guidelines, and Secretary Kempthorne is also interested in seeing how they can be improved. The workgroup has evaluated the current guidelines, updated the existing flow chart, and made several recommendations to improve the process. The new draft guidelines will be reviewed by the NLC and then by NPS partners. Associate Director Jarvi also noted that waivers to the existing guidelines, as well as the new draft guidelines, are possible provided a justifiable rationale is presented.

The NLC discussed the current vetting limits which are based on DOI policies and guidance. It was requested that the vetting limit be raised from \$1 million to \$5 million. This request will need to be cleared and approved by the Department.

Acting Associate Director Wenk and Associate Director Jarvi also informed the NLC that the Office of the Solicitor is working on a standard agreement template that can be used for NPS partnership construction projects.

Action Item

- Acting Associate Director Dan Wenk and Associate Director Chris Jarvi will send the draft guidelines to the NLC for review by February 1, 2007. Comments from the NLC are due by February 15, 2007.

## **VIII. Legislative Priorities for the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress**

Assistant Director Tom Wolfe and Deputy Assistant Director Don Hellmann provided the NLC with an overview of the 51 legislative proposals for the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. Of the group of proposals, seven were applicable system wide and 44 were park specific. The Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs further evaluated the proposals and selected 10 that represented priorities assigned by the regional offices and those that had the best chance of being passed. The NLC reviewed the list and reached consensus to remove the Uinta Research and Curatorial Center and replace it with Canyon de Chelly Thunderbird Lodge Concession. The remaining nine proposals were all accepted.

After discussing the legislative priorities, the NLC briefly talked about the Bevinetto Fellowship. The new Fellow will be working with the House Natural Resource Committee staff this year, and

there has been consideration given to having the position alternate between the House and Senate annually. The NLC also discussed the possibility of having NPS staff gain experience by working with the staff of the House and Senate Appropriations committees.

Action Items:

- All NLC members were asked to read through the list of priorities and provide any necessary revisions to the proposals to Tom Wolfe, Assistant Director, Congressional and Legislative Affairs, as soon as possible.
- Clearly define the expectations for the Bevinetto Fellow.

**January 24, 2007  
Agenda**

I. Welcome and Call to Order  
Mary Bomar, Director

II. Harpers Ferry Center Recommendations  
Chris Jarvi, Associate Director, Partnerships and Visitor Experience  
Lisa Mendelson-Ielmini, Deputy Regional Director, National Capital Region

III. Workforce Development  
Chrysandra Walter, Acting Regional Director, Northeast Region  
Costa Dillon, Acting Chief, Servicewide Training and Development  
Nathaniel Deutsch, Human Resources Manager  
Dianne Spriggs, Equal Opportunity Manager

IV. Contracting  
Kate Stevenson, Acting Assistant Director, Business Services  
Heidi Ernst, Chief of Contracting  
Lorna Gunning, Deputy Chief of Contracting

V. National Park Centennial Challenge  
Steve Whitesell, Centennial Challenge Coordinator

VI. Remarks from Secretary Kempthorne

VII. A-123  
Bruce Sheaffer, Comptroller  
Dan Fletcher, Associate Director, DOI Office of Financial Management  
Don Striker, Special Assistant to the Comptroller  
Jack Blickley, Financial Analyst

VIII. Elwha Project Update  
Dan Wenk, Acting Associate Director, Park Planning Facilities and Lands  
Jon Jarvis, Regional Director, Pacific West Region

IX. Round Table/Open Discussion  
Sue Masica, Chief of Staff

X. Closing Remarks  
Mary Bomar, Director

**I. Welcome and Call to Order**

Director Bomar called the meeting to order at 9 am and introduced Superintendent Suzanne Lewis (Yellowstone National Park) who represented the NPS at the State of the Union Address on the evening of January 23, 2007.

## **II. Harpers Ferry Center**

Deputy Regional Director Lisa Mendelson-Ielmini opened this session by providing a brief history of Harpers Ferry Center and an overview of an October 2006 meeting between the Deputy Regional Directors, the regional Chiefs of Interpretation, and representatives from Harpers Ferry Center (HFC), Partnerships and Visitor Experience, and other associateships. The meeting was convened at the request of the NLC in response to a request from Chris Jarvi. Deputy Regional Director Mendelson-Ielmini requested NLC concurrence on a proposed steering committee charter and members who will closely examine the role and function of HFC and make reorganization recommendations.

Director Bomar noted that HFC should be a dynamic organization and expressed her desire that the reorganization bring a clear focus for the center. It was proposed that HFC be included for competition in the next competitive sourcing Green Plan, because through the reorganization process, the NPS is essentially completing an in-house review to develop the Most Efficient Organization (MEO). Regional Director Jarvis offered to work on this concept and submit it to the NLC and Director Bomar for review. (subsequently affirmed)

The NLC discussed the essential functions and goals for HFC, the outcomes of a successful new organization, the recommendations for a steering committee to oversee the reorganization, and the next steps as outlined by the Deputy Regional Directors. The NLC agreed to adopt the charter provided it is revised to include that the steering committee will incorporate the views and goals of the NPS program areas and ensure that there is good communication between HFC and the program areas. The NLC concurred on the proposed composition of the steering committee, and also asked that the steering committee review the proposed timeline for the reorganization to make sure it is aligned with the budget process.

### **Action Items:**

- Lisa Mendelson-Ielmini will revise the proposed steering committee charter.
- Jon Jarvis will work on the concept of including the HFC reorganization as part of the NPS A-76 package.
- The steering committee will review the proposed timeline for the reorganization and ensure that it is aligned with the budget process.

## **III. Workforce Development**

The goal of the Workforce Development session was to brainstorm ideas and kick off a process to overhaul and revitalize the NPS Workforce Development Program. Mr. Nathaniel Deutsch briefed the NLC on three external forces that currently affect the program: the President's Management Agenda; the Office of Personnel Management's emphasis on accountability; and travel guidelines and restrictions. The NLC agreed that one of their most important goals is to develop a new generation of leaders for the Service, and decided that Workforce Development will be a standing topic on the NLC agenda, much like Interpretation and Education was until the Business and Action Plans were finalized. During discussions, the NLC made several recommendations including utilization of existing programs outside of the service and the importance of details, acting assignments, and fellowships. It was also suggested that the issue

of Workforce Development be divided into three components: Supervision and Leadership; Technical Training; and Informal Development, which includes fellowships, coaching, mentoring, and details.

Mr. Costa Dillon and Acting Regional Director Sandy Walter thanked the NLC for their suggestions and informed them that they will be assembling a list of recommendations for next steps that will be presented at the May NLC meeting.

#### **IV. Contracting**

Acting Assistant Director Kate Stevenson, Ms. Heidi Ernst, and Ms. Lorna Gunning briefed the NLC on the results of the DOI review of the NPS Acquisition/Financial Assistance Program, in which the NPS received a “red” rating for all of the components evaluated. A “red” rating means that the “overall function lacks effectiveness and efficiency; presents a significant level of risk to successful operations; and provides little reasonable assurance that internal control objectives are being achieved.” In response, the NPS formed a workgroup to respond to the issues raised and to prepare a Corrective Action report.

Ms. Ernst presented the following corrective actions defined by the workgroup to the NLC:

1. The Acquisition Program must be “at the table,” i.e. involved in projects from their inception.
2. Acquisition FTE requirements are considered in project planning.
3. Acquisition staff have updated, consistent position descriptions and performance plans.
4. Managers must ensure that acquisition integrity is maintained. Funds must be obligated properly.
5. “Major Acquisition Buying Offices,” either physical or virtual, should be designated to allow for management at a higher level.

She then raised an issue for discussion by the NLC concerning the supervision of employees in the 1102 and 1105 series who have a warrant of \$25,000 or greater. According to new DOI guidance, unless a waiver is granted, all employees that fall into the category above must be directly supervised by a senior Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) certified GS-1102. This would remove the supervision authority from parks and transfer it to the regional contracting officers. The NLC recommended that NPS adopt the model used in the Pacific West Region in which the regional contracting officers manage the contracting workload and provide technical/functional supervision for the park contracting officers. Direct line supervision, however, stays at the park level. The NLC agreed that this model will be submitted to the Department as part of the Corrective Action report and that a waiver to the new policy will be requested.

Action Items:

- The NPS workgroup will define what is included in technical/functional supervision and what is included in direct line supervision.
- Acting Assistant Director Stevenson and Ms. Ernst will send the draft Corrective Action report component that deals with supervision out to the NLC for review before submission to the Department. (completed)
- All members of the NLC will sign an Assurance Statement by June 2007, documenting that corrective actions are underway.

#### **V. National Park Centennial Challenge**

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**EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA**

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Steve Whitesell briefed the NLC on the current status of the National Park Centennial Challenge. The National Park Service and the Office of the Secretary have made contacts with potential partners, philanthropists and organizations to assess their interest in and commitment to the Centennial Challenge, and a group of Superintendents and key program managers gathered in D.C. in November to help craft the initial Challenge message and provide advice on major opportunities, issues and pitfalls. NPS staff are currently working on the FY2008 budget, and the roll out is scheduled for February 5, 2007. After the budget roll out, NPS will be conducting a number of listening sessions to seek public input on the Challenge and the NLC were asked to help staff these efforts. A proposal for these sessions is in draft and will be shared when it is finalized. Of equal importance will be getting input from NPS staff and the public who are unable to attend the sessions. One tool that will be available is the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) program. These meetings and other outreach efforts will inform the 10-year goals for the Challenge as directed by the President in his initial announcement. The NPS also must submit a report by May 31, 2007 to the President clearly delineating the short and long term goals of the initiative, the role of the Federal government and partner organizations in funding the initiative, and performance standards by which program success will be measured.

The NLC discussed the importance of engaging all NPS staff and partners in the Centennial. Mr. Whitesell informed the NLC that a complete package with Q&As, talking points, budget cut sheets, and other detailed information is being prepared and will be sent to all NLC members. He committed to contacting everyone by Friday, February 2, 2007 with an update, but indicated that materials would not be distributed until after the budget roll-out on February 5.

A question was raised about the definition of "signature project/program." The NLC agreed that, in order to be considered a signature project/program, there must be private matching dollars available or the ability to leverage private matching funds. Mr. Whitesell also volunteered to send an email to all NLC members requesting further input.

The NLC also discussed the need for a strategy to address the workload associated with the Challenge over the next 10 years, and the need to continue to work closely with employees and partners.

#### Action Items:

- Mr. Whitesell will contact all NLC members by Friday, February 2, 2007 with an update on the Centennial Challenge and the FY'2008 Budget. (COMPLETED)
- Mr. Whitesell will send detailed information, talking points, Q&A's, etc. to the NLC on Monday, February 5, 2007. (COMPLETED)

## **VI. Remarks from Secretary Kempthorne**

Secretary Kempthorne's remarks to the NLC centered on the National Park Centennial Challenge. He informed the NLC that while he could not go into specifics regarding the FY'08 budget, he is anticipating a full launch of the Challenge on February 7, 2007. He emphasized that the challenge needs to be implemented immediately and not be just a ten-year planning effort. Secretary Kempthorne then challenged the NLC to be innovative in their thoughts, to select programs and projects that will produce deliverable results, and to create an atmosphere of total imagination.

Secretary Kempthorne opened the floor for questions from the NLC. Topics discussed include the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery program, the September 2007 joint meeting between the NLC and the National Association of State Park Directors, border issues, global warming, education, and land acquisition/new units of the National Park System. Secretary Kempthorne emphasized the importance of working with local communities, partners, and philanthropic organizations, and the need to create a synergy between NPS sites and state and local parks. He also added that a crucial part of ensuring the relevancy of the NPS in the next century is raising awareness about the system to attract new interest, while retaining current supporters.

UPDATE: President Bush, First Lady Laura Bush, Secretary Kempthorne, and Director Bomar met with NPS employees and partners at Shenandoah National Park on February 7, 2007 to launch the Centennial Challenge and to hold roundtable discussions.

## **VII. A-123**

OMB Circular A-123 requires management to have internal controls in place for financial management and programs. This includes policies, procedures, actions, and activities implemented to ensure that goals and objectives are met. Regional Directors and Program Managers must sign assurance statements in June and September of each year, which then feed into the assurance statements signed by the Director.

NPS needs to design a process to assess the effectiveness of all NPS programs. Any programs that are considered high risk, for example financial reporting and information technology, must be reviewed every year. Non-critical programs can be reviewed every three years.

The NPS Budget office has identified weaknesses in financial reporting internal controls and proposed to use a risk based approach to determine which should be addressed first. Five per year would be reviewed until the list is complete. The five financial reporting internal controls proposed for this year include Construction in Progress; Property inventories; Charge cards; Payroll; and Cash.

The NPS Budget office evaluated NPS programs using PART analyses, the Greenbook, core operations, business plans, etc and established a list of programmatic components for which there are internal controls. A risk assessment was then performed on these components to determine which are most important to address first. The recommendation to the NLC was to focus on the following components first: commercial services management; cultural resource stewardship; emergency services; facility operations; financial reporting; interpretation and education; information technology; maintenance; natural resource stewardship; protection; and wildfire. The recommendation included layering the components into a three year plan and having three regions evaluate each component. An alternative was to have each region test three to four components per year.

The NLC agreed that five financial reporting internal controls recommended for evaluation by the budget office should be the focus for this fiscal year.

### **Action Items:**

- Mr. Bruce Sheaffer and Mr. Don Striker will meet with the Associate Directors to evaluate the recommended programmatic component and their associated internal controls to ensure that each Regional Director will have enough information to sign the Assurance Statements. (COMPLETED)

- After the meeting with the Associate Directors, Mr. Sheaffer and Mr. Striker will send a revised chart to the Regional Directors. The Regional Directors will review the proposal and submit comments back to Bruce.
- Regional Director Quintana Quintana will work with the Associate Regional Directors for Operations to assemble a group to review the proposed standards. This group will include members that also worked on Toward Excellence.

### **VIII. Elwha Project Update**

The NLC discussed the cost escalation of the Elwha Project and the need for an estimated \$20 million per year for the next six years to accomplish project goals. Regional Director Jarvis noted that the restoration of the Elwha river system is a very significant and symbolic project that has the full support of the Pacific West Region (PWR). To that end, PWR offered to forego all line-item construction projects, except those needed to address health and safety concerns, until the Elwha project is complete. The implications of spending \$20M/year on the Elwha project include the possibility that other NPS projects may end up off the current 5-year plan.

The NLC agreed that the restoration of the Elwha River System is the right thing to do and that the needed funds should be obligated toward this project until it is complete. They also discussed the need to look at alternative funding sources for some line-item projects, including Recreational Fee Demonstration. Acting Associate Director Wenk and Mr. Sheaffer committed to revising the 5-year plan to reflect the agreed upon level of commitment to the Elwha project. The revised 5-year plan will be sent to all voting NLC members for review as soon as it is completed.

The NLC also discussed the need to brief the Department as well as any affected congressional delegations regarding changes to the 5-year plan. The 5-year plan will be discussed at the May 2007 NLC meeting.

#### **Action Item:**

- Acting Associate Director Wenk and Mr. Sheaffer will update the 5-year plan to reflect the increased funding for the Elwha project, and will distribute this information to the NLC. (COMPLETED)

### **IX. Round Table/Open Discussion**

Associate Directors Jarvi and Soukup and Acting Assistant Director Stevenson agreed to work together on the proposed new requirements for Cooperative Agreements. They will draft a memo and language for a proposed legislative fix and will work closely with the Department and Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett. (Memo and draft language for legislation - COMPLETED)

The NLC agreed to continue the bimonthly conference calls. The calls will be held on the first and third Thursdays of each month. A future topic of discussion on one of the calls will be the Wild and Scenic Rivers program.

### **X. Closing Remarks**

Director Bomar closed the meeting by noting that “Well done is better than well said.” She thanked the NLC for the good discussions and important decisions that were made and acknowledged that they all “rowed together” well. Director Bomar then requested that everyone

follow-up on the Action Items assigned to them and thanked everyone involved in the planning and execution of the meeting.

Next meeting

May 8-10, 2007, Washington, D.C.

## Appendix A

List of National Leadership Council Members (updated March, 2007)

### *Voting Members*

Mary Bomar, Director

Dan Wenk, Deputy Director, Operations

(*Vacant*) Deputy Director, Support Services

Sue Masica, Chief of Staff

Bruce Sheaffer, Comptroller

Chrysandra Walter, Acting Northeast Regional Director

Ernest Quintana, Midwest Regional Director

Mike Snyder, Intermountain Regional Director

Marcia Blaszak, Alaska Regional Director

Pat Hooks, Southeast Regional Director

Jon Jarvis, Pacific West Regional Director

Joe Lawler, National Capital Regional Director

Bill Shaddox, Acting Associate Director Park Planning, Facilities & Lands

Mike Soukup, Associate Director Natural Resources, Stewardship & Science

Jan Matthews, Associate Director Cultural Resources

Karen Taylor-Goodrich, Associate Director Visitor & Resource Protection

Chris Jarvi, Associate Director Partnerships and Visitor Experience

### *Standing Staff Members*

Dave Barna, Chief, Public Affairs

John Snyder, Acting Chief Information Officer

Tom Wolfe, Assistant Director—Congressional and Legislative Affairs

Kate Stevenson, Acting Assistant Director—Business Services

Jerry Simpson, Assistant Director—Human Capital

Phil Sheridan, Acting Associate to the Director

### *NLC Support Staff*

Jennifer Lee, Administrative Program Specialist

Jim Gasser, Program Specialist

## **Appendix B**

Agenda Items for the May NLC Meeting:

1. Workforce Development
2. 5-year Line-Item Construction Plan follow-up
3. Green Plan/Competitive sourcing progress

## Appendix C

### Reference Section

This section contains links to more detailed information on some of the topics discussed by the NLC.

A-76

[http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a076/a76\\_incl\\_tech\\_correction.html#b](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a076/a76_incl_tech_correction.html#b)

A-123

[www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a123/a123\\_rev.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a123/a123_rev.pdf)

Accessibility Management Program

<http://inside.nps.gov/waso/waso.cfm?prg=151&lv=3>

Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 and Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Overviews

<http://www.doi.gov/atc/architectural.html>

Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units

<http://www.cesu.org/>

DOI Competitive Sourcing Green Plan

[http://www.doi.gov/perfmgt/competitivesourcing/green\\_plan\\_approved.doc](http://www.doi.gov/perfmgt/competitivesourcing/green_plan_approved.doc)

Elwha Ecosystem Restoration

<http://www.nps.gov/olym/naturescience/elwha-ecosystem-restoration.htm>

Federal Activities Inventory Reform (FAIR) Act of 1988

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/procurement/fairact.html>

Greenbook

<http://home.nps.gov/applications/budget2/downloads.htm>

Human Capital Preliminary Planning Effort

<http://inside.nps.gov/waso/waso.cfm?prg=114&lv=2>

Information Technology Investment Council

<http://inside.nps.gov/waso/custommenu.cfm?lv=3&prg=396&id=303>

Land and Water Conservation Fund

<http://www.nps.gov/lwcf/>

National Historic Landmarks Program

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nhl/>

National Natural Landmarks Program

<http://www.nature.nps.gov/nnl/>

National Park Centennial Challenge

<ftp://ftp.den.nps.gov/incoming/Centennial%20Celebrations/>

National Park System Advisory Board  
<http://www.nps.gov/policy/advisory/advboard.htm>

Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC)  
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>

Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program  
<http://www.ncrc.nps.gov/uparr/>