



NLC Journal

Report of the January 14-16, 2008 Meeting of the National Leadership Council

The National Leadership Council (NLC) convened on January 14-16, 2008 at the American Geophysical Union building in Washington, DC. It was the fourth meeting under the leadership of Director Mary A. Bomar.

The meeting was facilitated by Linda Wright, NPS organization consultant.

Note: tab numbers in brackets refer to tabs in the binder prepared for the meeting.

Monday, January 14, 2008

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Opening Remarks
Mary Bomar, Director
- II. Training and Development Review
Jerry Simpson, Assistant Director, Workforce Management
Ernie Quintana, Regional Director, Midwest Region
Jill Hawk, Chief Ranger, Northeast Region
Cam Sholly, Deputy Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection
- III. Future Direction of New Superintendents Course
Sandy Taylor, Training Manager, Supervision, Management and Leadership, WASO
Training and Development
- IV. Wounded Warrior Project
Jackie Lowey, Consultant and former NPS Deputy Director
John Melia, Executive Director, Wounded Warrior Project
- V. NLC/NASPD Follow-up: Children in Nature
Lindi Harvey, Deputy Director, Support Services
Jon Jarvis, Regional Director, Pacific West Region
Ernie Quintana, Regional Director, Midwest Region
- VI. Centennial
Lindi Harvey, Deputy Director
Bruce Sheaffer, Comptroller

I. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Opening Comments from Director Mary Bomar:

Good morning, Happy New Year and welcome to our first National Leadership Council meeting for 2008! For the first time we have our leadership team in place. Today we have both our

Deputy Directors with us: Lindi Harvey, Deputy Director, Support Services and Dan Wenk, Deputy Director, Operations....again I say we have the "right time, right place and right people." January truly is a time for looking forward and also seeing how far we've come in the past year.

I begin with a recent news article which stated that our citizens are less satisfied with federal government services than they are with private sector services. Citizen satisfaction with the federal government is 67.8, while private-sector services score 74.

But far down in the article, there is a single sentence that says, "The Department of the Interior, home of the National Park Service, leads federal departments as a whole at 79." This is great news! After all, the study holds that we are doing a better job than our private sector counterparts—and a better job than any other federal agency in customer satisfaction.

It has been a great year in many other aspects as well. Visitation is on the rebound, and although the final numbers are not yet available, it looks like a 2.5 million increase in visitors—despite the drastic rise in gas prices. Truly we are re-engaging the American public with their parks!

The largest increases in visitation were at:

- Golden Gate National Recreation Area (+ 476,000)
- The Lincoln Memorial (+ 385,000)
- St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (+ 308,000)
- Yellowstone National Park (+ 277,000)
- The World War II Memorial (+ 264,000)
- Yosemite National Park (+ 234,000).

I have had great feedback from my emails to the field, but some have said, "Maybe we talk too much about the Centennial?" or "Why so much emphasis on the White House holiday decorations?" I will tell you: with the Centennial, we did get over a \$100 million increase in operations, and we had \$25 million more to "prime the pump" for the Centennial Challenge—that is more great news! Further, the Centennial—and the White House decorations—have given the Park Service huge publicity—positive publicity—across the nation. You could not buy these headlines!

But I am not finished yet—I want the earth, moon and stars for our parks and programs...and if you think that is overreaching my grasp, wait 'til I tell you all about the conversation I had last week with one of our NASA astronauts!

Each one of you in this room—and each member of your respective staffs—deserve credit for a great year of accomplishments in 2007. We will highlight those accomplishments for the past year in our first annual report which will be published in March, but let me share with you just a few of our 2007 successes:

- An extraordinary collection of 450,000 artifacts from Alaska's Gold Rush was saved when the National Park Service joined in a partnership to preserve the items for posterity.
- On April 23, Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site became the 391st national park. That, along with the progress on the President's House site in Philadelphia and the dedication of the memorial at the African Burial Ground, clearly show our commitment to telling the full story of our nation—a story for ALL Americans.
- We opened many new visitor centers to enhance the visitor experience, including ones at:
 - Washita Battlefield National Historic Site
 - Grand Teton National Park (The Craig Thomas Discovery and Visitor Center)
 - Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument

- Grand Portage National Monument
 - Homestead National Monument of America
 - Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site
 - Monocacy National Battlefield
 - Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site.
- The National Park Service awarded \$37.7 million in Land and Water Conservation Fund grants to 249 recreation projects in 46 states and territories.
 - The Historic American Engineering Record and its sister programs, the Historic American Buildings Survey and the Historic American Landscapes Survey, documented 477 places.
 - Our Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program coordinated the designation of 40 new National Recreation Trails, and helped 900 communities protect more than 336 miles of river, develop 2,198 miles of trail, conserve 62,000 acres of open space, and leverage \$40 million in project funding.
 - Parks in the Pacific West Region generated more than 500,000 kilowatt hours of power from renewable sources in 2007 – that's enough to power 13 small parks for one year, but that also avoided putting up to 500 pounds of nitrogen oxides, 350 pounds of sulphur dioxide, and 425 tons of carbon dioxide into the air.
 - As part of "Military Appreciation Day," on September 18, Denali National Park invited members of the military and their families to drive the Denali Park Road and experience the heart of the park. Permits were distributed through internal military channels; 245 families came out on the cold, clear day. Fifty park staff were stationed along the road to ensure that these special visitors had an enjoyable and safe visit.
 - The new America the Beautiful pass was launched on January 1, 2007. The National Park Service led the interagency team that developed the pass, and by the end of FY 2007, the NPS had sold nearly 220,000 passes generating more than \$18 million in revenue.
 - Through "citizen science" like the bio-blitzes, the National Park Service is engaging kids – and grownups – in understanding the world in which we live, and how we can all learn to be better stewards.
 - A photo by park scientist Dan Duriscoe was chosen as one of NASA's "Astronomy Pictures of the Year" for 2007. Dan is a physical scientist and a member of the NPS Night Sky Team that has worked hard to remind all of us of the importance night skies as a natural resource. Their work led the International Dark-Sky Association to designate Natural Bridges National Monument as the world's first International Dark Sky Park.

Clearly, this has been an amazing year on many fronts. But this is a time for looking forward as well. One year from now we will be looking at a new Administration, and there are some who would say we should hold off to see what the future will hold. In the military there is an acronym—FIGMO—which is translated in the non-profane version—as "Forget it—Got my Orders." While it would be easy to declare victory with the Centennial, visitation and other successes, it is not my style to rest on my laurels. With the forward progress we have made, marching in place will only lose ground for our parks and our employees.

But I do not think you, or any of the men and women of the National Park Service, want to stand still. Nor do our partners—not the National Park Foundation, which is considering a massive

effort to raise funds in anticipation of Centennial Legislation, nor NPCA, which is asking Americans to take personal steps to improve the parks in 2008. Indeed, all our partners who have sensed progress do not want to lose momentum even in this election year. We certainly cannot take a year off from preservation—that's not possible under the Organic Act; we must continue being faithful to the mission of the National Park Service, and that is a 24/7 job. We must continue to address many management issues; 21st century relevancy; reaching non-traditional users of our parks; climate change; technology and communications; border issues; conservation, preservation and education. Our parks are continually under many pressures—we must ensure continued vigilance that we keep our promise to pass the parks on unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations; and of course our people in the service....the list goes on and *so must we!*

That's also the reason I have asked Lynn Scarlett and Lyle Laverty to join us during the meeting—to hear from them on the Department's initiatives for the coming year. It is also your opportunity to glean their thoughts on issues we currently deal with.

We must consider how to continue our success with our trifecta of goals—continue to reengage Americans with their parks. But what are our next steps to ensure we move forward?

Lindi will tell us more about the initiative to bring our children back to nature, and how to go even further to engage young people and families with their parks. It is a wonderful concept to work with our colleagues at the National Association of State Park Directors—but does it go far enough? We have a host of efforts to focus attention on kids and families in parks, but that is only the beginning. Lindi will tell us how her team went beyond the basic charter with a host of projects and programs that will help take us to the next level in re-engaging our young people with their national parks.

While the Centennial Initiative has given us a huge boost in funding to help increase the capacity of the system, we must consider how to spend our operational funds wisely—there is the Centennial Business Plan to discuss, and how to effectively bring on thousands of seasonals to boost our visitor service and resource protection even more. We must show Congress and the American people that we can move forward with the “seed money” for the Centennial Challenge and show results as we stated in our report to the President last May. I am an optimist, as you know, and I see \$25 million as a very positive sign—to me it is a down payment on what's to come in the future.

That leaves the remaining leg of the trifecta—the people part. From the agenda you can clearly see that most of what we will focus on at this meeting are people programs: Training and Development, the Future of the New Superintendents Course, Human Capital Competitive Sourcing, the NPS Safety Leadership Council Report, and the Diversity Intake Program and Human Resources Update.

And that is as it should be. We have a customer satisfaction rate better than the private sector. The places we care for do not provide service—our people do. Our people ensure our parks are protected and preserved while providing our visitors with the services they want—whether it is clean campgrounds, safe trails, a great interpretive talk or a safe environment to enjoy the park. Our workforce, our volunteers, our partners, our concessionaires and cooperating associations work together to make it possible. All of us can take a great deal of pride in knowing just how well we do. Now it is time to take care of our people.

I know it will be an exciting year ahead, and before we begin I want to welcome some new additions to the team. It is hard to believe that this is Deputy Director Lindi Harvey's first NLC meeting, because she has taken on so many projects that it seems she's been with us for many months. As you know, she has over 20 years of private-sector experience in the financial

arena, but also has worked in government at the State Department and for Senator Elizabeth Dole. With her background in mind, I expanded her portfolio beyond the customary support services to include the Centennial and the Partnerships and Visitor Experience Associateship. Lindi is like us, a person used to getting things done, and she has hit the ground running since her arrival. Thank you Lindi.

I will welcome one very new face—our new Chief Information Officer, Larry Curran. Larry welcome! Also, I should welcome Dennis Reidenbach to his first NLC meeting as Northeast Regional Director, and Paul Anderson as Acting Southeast Regional Director. As you all know, we rearranged the NLC schedule so that Dan and I can travel to Atlanta and meet with the Southeast regional office employees on Thursday.

I think all of you know Cam Sholly, who is on detail as a Special Assistant and also Melissa Kuckro, who came over from Legislative Affairs to become Associate to the Director. Also welcome to Bert Frost as Acting Associate for Natural Resources, Stewardship & Science and to Mike LeBorgne as Acting Associate for Park Planning, Facilities and Lands. Thank you for filling those roles; we are moving ahead on filling those positions on a permanent basis. The Centennial Coordinator position is also on the street and will close very soon. Sam Whittington has been selected to head the Denver Service Center. We have an outstanding team in place now, and filling those positions will help move us forward for the remainder of the year.

As you recall, we chartered a group to look at our Training and Development in the Service, the first such comprehensive review in, I believe, 25 years. Today, we will hear the recommended actions and next steps with what decisions are needed to put the plan into action. Jerry Simpson, Ernie Quintana and Sandy Walter have led the effort, and with Sandy's retirement, Ernie and Jerry will lead the review.

II. Training and Development Review

The presentation summarized the work done by the steering committee which was charged with doing a comprehensive review of NPS employee training and development by Director Bomar. Ernie Quintana and Jerry Simpson reviewed the reasons for improving NPS training and development and introduced members of the T&D steering committee in attendance (George Price, Superintendent, Cape Cod NS; Mike Doherty, Facility Manager, National Capital Region; Steve Shackleton, Chief Ranger, Yosemite NP; Costa Dillon, Superintendent, Indiana Dunes NS). Jerry noted that the committee feels that perhaps a more accurate name for the discussion is Learning and Development. Jill Hawk gave a powerpoint presentation that covered the steering committee's findings and recommendations.

The committee had 3 meetings in 6 months and created multiple task forces responsible for a portion of the recommendation. The objective was development of a preferred alternative that moves NPS training to the highest level, building on the strengths of NPS's decentralized organization. The preferred alternative calls for:

- The 5-part NPS Fundamentals course (for every employee within his or her first two years),
- 7 Career Field Academies (Natural Resource, Cultural Resource, Protection Ranger, Interpretation and Education, Administration and Business Practices, Facility Management, and Specialty Professions)
- First 80 Hours of Supervision Training
- Emerging Leaders Training
- New Superintendents Training
- Instructor Training and Supervision
- Distance Learning
- Formal Relationships with Academic Institutions.

The preferred alternative includes a plan for implementation and recommends specific roles for the Washington office, the regional offices, and parks and programs. [Handout: binder entitled "Learning & Development Report to the NLC" and associated powerpoint; tab 1].

Cam Sholly discussed what could be done immediately, with 2008-2009 funding:

FY '08 – fully fund Fundamentals and New Superintendents courses

FY '09 – have redesigned entry level training for 700 employees, redesigned training for supervisors and mid-level managers, start the new superintendents academy, and do some executive development and career fields training.

Discussion, which included members of the steering committee as well as NLC members, covered the present and future costs of training, the need for a cultural shift in NPS, the importance of focusing first-line supervisors on training needs and getting their support, and the need to clearly define what "training" is. There was discussion of potential "virtual academies", i.e. using the Cooperative Ecosystem Study Units (CESUs), establishing core curriculum, and allowing employees to receive credit for training received from outside sources. Comments included the following: A comprehensive approach is needed. Some people are not looking to move up, just to gain more skills. Some fields require more training because the jobs have become more difficult, for example maintenance positions. There needs to be more crossover from specialty positions to leadership, and supervisory and leadership training need to be linked starting early in one's career. There needs to be a better understanding of the interaction parks need to do with neighboring communities, and with the parks and learning institutions around the world. We need to understand and better distinguish the different types of training centers we have. We need to think of improving skills as a course of study, not just a training program. Supervisors need to sit down with employees and discuss what they need. Training has been employee-driven, sometimes over resistance of supervisors; the proposal appears to shift responsibilities to first-line supervisors to help individuals get training and give them time to attend. Supervisors need to be mentors and counselors. First-line supervisors have been frustrated because of paucity of slots – they have not known how to navigate the maze. There are employees who want to be supervisors but don't know how to get there. Traditionally in the organization, employees needed to figure out their own path to leadership. Employees need to be exposed to different disciplines, and training is needed at every stage. There are concerns about young people not staying with NPS because they don't see a future – don't see how to get to a senior position. It was mentioned that the Alaska Region has launched an initiative to have every employee have an IDP.

Comments on the steering committee report were due to Jerry Simpson by the end of January; the report was to be final by the end of February.

Action Item:

The NLC members will all sign the final report to demonstrate their support and commitment to Training and Development.

III Future Direction of New Superintendents Course

Sandy Taylor (with Maia Browning, WASO Training and Development Office, and Gayle Hazelwood, Superintendent, National Capital Parks-East) gave a presentation on the efforts to improve the New Superintendents Course. Key points: it is needed as soon as a new superintendent is hired, not a year after being on the job; the focus needs to be on the whole person; we need to look at best practices and build a work force that can work across the system. The goal is to do a pilot class of 24 in March (from the backlog of new superintendents); then, assess needs, work to address capacity. [Handout: "National Park Service: New Superintendent's Academy"; tab 2]

Discussion covered ways to encourage more employees, especially minority employees, to aspire to superintendent positions; whether superintendents should be recruited from outside NPS; whether training should be a regional or national program. The presenters noted that the program is designed so that someone from outside of the NPS can succeed. Electives are used to tailor the program to the needs of the individual.

Comments on the New Superintendents Course were due to Jerry Simpson by the end of January.

IV. Wounded Warrior Veterans Project

Jackie Lowey and John Melia gave a presentation on the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) and their interest in pursuing a MOU with the National Park Service. [tab 3]. WWP is a non-profit which is helping severely wounded veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq in various ways, including sponsoring participation in outdoor activities. 30,000 returning veterans are injured and hundreds of thousands more have post-traumatic stress syndrome. WWP would like to work with NPS to use national parks as settings for retreats for the veterans and their families and caregivers because, as Jackie put it, "What better place to recover than in a National Park?"

Questions and comments from NLC members showed enthusiasm for pursuing this partnership. Kate Stevenson and the Partnership Office are working on a MOU which will be shared with NLC in draft form. The NLC also discussed establishing a pilot program for 2008.

The main need WWP has of NPS is information regarding availability of recreational opportunities and accommodations, rangers to lead hikes and/or give programs, and safety. The NLC recommended that WWP pursue a partnership with hospitality associations, as concessioners run the facilities in many of the parks.

Action item:

Submit ideas/thoughts about the MOU to Kate Stevenson.

V. Children in Nature Initiative: Followup on NLC/NASPD Meeting

Lindi Harvey, Jon Jarvis, and Ernie Quintana gave an update on the joint NPS/National Association of State Park Directors Children in Nature Task Force, an outgrowth of the joint meeting between NPS and NASPD on September 4-6, 2007, where the two organizations adopted a "Children and Nature Plan for Action." [tab 4] Jon is co-chairing the task force with Ruth Coleman, Director of California State Parks. Jon noted that state parks are well positioned to be involved in getting kids outdoors because they are more broadly distributed, more locally accessible, and can be used for some activities that are not suitable in national parks.

The task force is pursuing coordinated events and has identified a list of designated dates (Earth Day-April 22; National Public Lands Day-September 27, etc.) that offer possibilities for joint/coordinated events. A memo will be sent to the field requesting that superintendents contact their state park counterparts (or regional directors contacting state park directors, as appropriate). Contacts are to be made before the next NLC meeting in May.

In addition to pursuing collaboration at the local level, the task force is looking at a national marketing campaign for children in nature initiatives and a way to collect and share information on best practices. Jon noted that Richard Louv's *Last Child in the Woods* will be reissued with "100 things to do with your kids" and could be showcased in park bookstores. The next meeting of the task force, slated for January, will address these subjects.

Lindi briefed the group on other “Kids in Parks” activities:

- Cataloguing of programs and best practices for children, including best practices using technology (there will be a survey sent to the field);
- “First Bloom” events, bringing in kids to plant native flowers (project with First Lady Laura Bush and the National Park Foundation)
- National Park Week (April 19-27), which will include:
 - Spring cleanup,
 - Student Conservation Association *Earth Vision* event
 - Jr. Ranger Day event on the Mall (April 26) which will include targeting underserved youth, several walks, a “Build-a-Bear” workshop.
- Coloring book on stewardship, which will be launched at Macy’s, via NPF, which is also doing “shop for a cause” day for NPF.

Also in the works: an essay contest, a kid’s parks passport (Eastern National), Boy Scout/Girl Scout merit badges, new and improved NPS “Kids Center” website, high school volunteer opportunities, and a NPS booth at the Superbowl Outdoor Recreation Village.

Action Items

Lindi Harvey will prepare a memo to the field about making contacts with state park counterparts;

Regional directors/superintendents are to make contacts with state counterparts before the May NLC meeting to plan one or more coordinated activities geared toward children.

Lindi will report on the activities associated with the initiative at the May NLC meeting.

VI Centennial

Lindi Harvey and Bruce Sheaffer led the session. All regions had submitted their priorities for projects to be funded with the \$24.6 million Congress appropriated for Centennial Challenge projects for FY 2008. Members of the team that compiled the list of 201 eligible projects announced in August, 2007, were returning to narrow the list to projects that are regional priorities and that meet the criteria for funding with FY 2008 appropriations. Included were Mike Reynolds, Superintendent of Fire Island NS, Mike Tollefson, Superintendent of Yosemite NP, and Kate Richardson, Superintendent of San Francisco Maritime NHP.

Molly Ross, Assistant Solicitor, Branch of National Parks, discussed the legal considerations in selecting Centennial projects and programs. [Handout: “Selected Provisions of Law.”] After discussion about the distinction between cooperative agreements and procurement contracts and lack of clear guidance from the Department on the use of cooperative agreement authority, it was decided that potential Centennial projects would need to be reviewed further at the regional level to determine, among other things, whether they assumed federal money would be transferred to partners and what authority the agreement would use, and that NPS contracting employees would need to review the projects to ensure that they were appropriate for cooperative agreements rather than procurement contracts. Kate Stevenson was bringing in a team to do that.

Bruce discussed the Centennial commitment features of the FY 2008 appropriations. Due to reductions in the FY 2008 operations account that occurred in the final appropriations bill (\$45 million reduction in the final House-Senate agreement and \$31 million from the across the board cut), decisions had to be made about allocating the cuts. Negotiations with the Department and OMB resulted in a decision to maintain funding for the 3,000 seasonals, to fund flex park increases from the recreation fee program, and have a smaller increase in cyclic maintenance and targeted park increases than originally proposed. Parks would have to absorb an across-the-board cut of .86% (the total ATB cut was 1.56%; a portion was mitigated). However, in the

proposed FY 2009 budget, the across-the-board cut, most of the cyclic maintenance, and all of the flex park increases would be restored.

Dan Wenk noted that because of the proposed use of fee money for flex park increases, the proposed fee projects would need to be reviewed.

Bruce discussed the Centennial Initiative Business Plan [tab 5 and “Centennial Initiative Business Plan” handout]. The business plan was a response to the Inspector General’s Critical Point Evaluation of the initiative, which the Secretary requested. The strongest recommendation from the IG was for third-party review of the projects (either a Development Advisory Board-type group or a committee of the National Park System Advisory Board) to validate selections and ensure transparency. It was suggested that an external board not be used for FY 2008, but that DAB be considered for future years. The Department has concurred with this suggestion. The IG wants a performance track on every project.

Another item discussed was the need to reconcile the irrevocable letter of credit issue with the NPS contracting staff. Of concern is whether or not the FAR requirements will allow us to issue a contract with a letter of credit.

Regional centennial project contacts needed to respond to questions from WASO Centennial office about their submitted projects (including confirmation that funds could be obligated in FY 2008) by January 22.

Action Items

Regional Directors need to let Bruce Sheaffer know if there are any 20% fee projects in their regions that cannot be obligated because they are not ready to go.

Review the business plan and submit comments to Bruce.

Tuesday, January 15, 2008

Agenda

- I. Welcome/Call to Order
Mary Bomar, Director
- II. Discussion with Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks
Lyle Laverty, Assistant Secretary
- III. WASO Day at 2008 Conferences
Jon Jarvis, Regional Director, Pacific West Region
Jim Gasser, NPS Meeting Planner
- IV. Human Capital Competitive Sourcing
Jerry Simpson, Assistant Director for Workforce Management
Kate Stevenson, Acting Assistant Director for Business Practices
- V. NPS Safety Leadership Council
Jon Jarvis, Regional Director, Pacific West Region
Karen Taylor-Goodrich, Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection
- VI. Cooperating Associations
Lindi Harvey, Deputy Director, Support Services
Diane Chalfant, Assistant Associate Director, Visitor Experience

VII. Best Practices: Diversity Intake Program at Santa Monica Mountains NRA
Jon Jarvis, Regional Director, Pacific West Region
Woody Smeck, Superintendent, Santa Monica Mountains NRA
Fernando Villalba, Biologist, Fire Island National Seashore

VIII. Human Resources Update
Jerry Simpson, Assistant Director for Workforce Management
Nathaniel Deutsch, Chief of Human Resources

IX. DOI Presentation on the Southwest Border
Kim Thorsen, Director of Law Enforcement, DOI Office of Law Enforcement and Security Management

I. Welcome/Call to Order

Director Mary Bomar called the meeting to order and introduced Lyle Laverty, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

II. Discussion with Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Assistant Secretary Laverty spoke about the limited time available to get things done (“372 days until the lights turn out” for the current appointees) and the themes he would like to pursue in that time: Centennial, engaging kids, developing future leaders, and “setting the table” (cleaning up the junk so that the new folks coming in have a clean table with the good china). Like the characters from the Wizard of Oz, he is seeking the use of brains, heart, and courage in what we do.

He is concerned about losing special places – with 6,000 acres of open space disappearing daily, and about kids being afraid of the outdoors, and challenges partners are facing, such as the threat of closing 48 state parks in California due to budget problems.

Discussion covered big capital projects, expansion of the park system (he believes there should not be blanket opposition, but additions should make good resource sense). On guns in parks, he said we need to give the Secretary some options; with 50 Senators urging change, we can't just say no. On contract approvals, he said he would look at changes to the approval process. There was an exchange of information about where the FY 2008 Centennial projects stood, and discussion about the increase in the number of Departmental officials brought in to work on a problem which creates more work and costs more at the bureau level.

III. WASO Day at 2008 Conferences

The NLC had previously decided to plan three regional conferences in 2008: Pacific West/Alaska; Midwest/Intermountain; and Northeast/Southeast/National Capital. [tab 7] Jon Jarvis, who had agreed to serve as the NLC lead on developing an agenda for the day of national issues at each conference, led the discussion. Director Bomar gave her view on the concept of WASO Day – that it would focus on the theme of Professional Development – and the importance of focusing superintendents' attention on training throughout their ranks. Jon suggested that a team from the Washington office be set up to plan the “WASO Day” for each of the three conferences and that a point of contact be named, which Dan Wenk said he would get back to the group about. Director Bomar said she would help bring in the Washington hierarchy. There was general agreement that WASO Day should not include partners.

Jon suggested that the conferences include an auction to raise funds for Santa Monica Mountains NRA employees who lost their possessions in a fire in park housing.

Dan Wenk offered to designate a Washington-based point of contact and planning team for WASO Day at the conferences.

IV. Human Capital Competitive Sourcing

Jerry Simpson discussed the three components of the Human Resources transformation: competitive sourcing, automation, and reengineering, all being pursued concurrently. The changes will help with staff shortages and free up the HR staff to work at a more strategic level and will increase efficiencies and eliminate redundancies. [tab 8]

On competitive sourcing of HR functions, the timeline calls for announcing the selection of the MEO or an outside bidder by July 18, and transitioning to the new team by October 1, 2008. 122 FTE's will be affected. NPS is trying to avoid a RIF or directed reassignments as these are adverse actions, and is instead looking at nationwide placement programs. On funding needs - even if NPS wins the bid, funding will be required for the transition - to pay employees and the new service provider - \$1-2 million the first year, then will ramp up to about \$11 million - \$530/FTE. A portion of the \$530 will be required at the beginning of the FY 09 year. Over time, attrition will reduce the cost. Angela Hargrove, Human Resources, is serving as advisor to the field on this process.

V. NPS Safety Leadership Council

Jon Jarvis and Karen Taylor-Goodrich briefed the group on the NPS Safety Leadership Council (SLC), which met November 13-14, 2007 in Santa Fe. [tab 9]. The SLC's goal is to transform safety within the NPS from a discrete program to a leadership practice that is integrated into all activities and management decisions. Jon stressed that safety should be incorporated into the NPS mission - that the wording of the Organic Act should be understood to mean the NPS mission should be carried out safely; that safety should be an expectation; that no one should make the ultimate sacrifice for the mission. The SLC established 4 task forces: operational leadership, professional excellence, culture change, and NPSafe. Each will convene by teleconference and the SLC will meet again February 27-28. Bert Frost was added to the SLC as an interim representative for the Natural Resources Stewardship and Science AD, and it was noted that a US Park Police representative was needed.

Sue Masica distributed the memo from the Secretary directing Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett to chair a Health and Safety Task Force composed of heads of bureaus and offices to respond to recommendations of the IG on health and safety issues.

Action Item

Add US Park Police representative to the Safety Leadership Council.

VI. Cooperating Association Study

Lindi Harvey introduced Diane Chalfant, who is heading the steering committee that is looking at future roles and functions of cooperating associations. The steering committee was established following the September, 2007 NLC meeting where a commitment was made to define the relationship between the NPS and cooperating associations. The steering committee met for the first time January 10-11 and expects to provide a progress report to the NLC in March. [tab 6]

The steering committee has almost completed the scoping phase, identifying what NPS wants from cooperating associations and what they want from NPS. The committee has determined that cooperating associations would not support revenue-sharing outside their own organizations. There is a lot of concern about smaller parks. The committee wants to develop models and give parks the tools to determine which model to use.

Discussion included the issues of competition, revenue generation, relationship to concessions, legal constraints, park expectations, and need for flexibility.

Action Items:

Diane Chalfant will let Eastern National know about dates for workgroup meetings.

Diane will provide a progress report to the NLC in March and an update at the May NLC meeting with alternative models.

Regional Directors should let Diane know if there is a cooperating association in their region that should be heard as part of this process.

VII. Diversity Intake Program at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

Woody Smeck gave a presentation on the youth training and employment program at Santa Monica Mountains NRA, which has supported 51 diverse students since 2000 and will be expanded this year. [tab 10]. With him was Fernando Villalba, a graduate of the program, and of UC-Davis, now employed as a biologist at Fire Island NS. They believe the program could be replicated at other parks in urban areas.

The program is conducted in partnership with two school districts, which identify promising candidates and provide a portion of the funding needed to support the program. Beginning in their junior year in high school, students have the opportunity to return to a national park each summer through their college years for progressively more complex jobs. Fernando attributed the success of the program to the fact that someone had confidence he could do the job and gave him a lot of responsibility. He now wants to go to graduate school and also be more involved in minority outreach.

VIII. Human Resources Update

Nathaniel Deutsch gave an update on several key vacancies – AD for Natural Resources Stewardship and Science, RD for the Southeast Region, Chief of the Centennial Office, Chief of Policy, Chief of Training and Development, Assistant Director for Business Services, Deputy Regional Director for the Northeast Region, and Chief of Park Facility Management. He noted that the Workforce Management Plan is posted on the website; comments by email are welcome.

Jerry Simpson gave an update on the Human Capital Survey Team's response to the 2006 OPM survey. The team presented its report to the NLC at the May, 2007 meeting. Status of implementation of recommendations [tab 11]: On the recommendation to make the 2008 OPM survey accessible to all employees – that will be done when the survey is conducted in August. On expanding the availability of career counselors - each region needs to report on their career counseling programs. On conducting a semi-annual Tel-Net broadcast to employees – not done yet. On having Regional Directors conduct call-in broadcasts to regional employees – only Alaska has done. All other recommendations are being addressed through the Training and Development review.

The issue of pay for seasonal hires in law enforcement has been resolved, thanks to help from the Alaska Regional Office. The hiring for seasonals is going full speed; regions are getting help with hiring seasonals, and the NPS external website will be revised to make it easier to get information about getting a seasonal position.

The Department will be reviewing for quality 5% of employee performance plans.

Action Items

Regional Directors need to report to Jerry Simpson on their career counseling programs and on their efforts to conduct all-employee communication sessions.

Comments on the Workforce Management Plan (posted on line) should be submitted to Jerry Simpson.

VI. DOI Presentation on the Southwest Border

Kim Thorsen gave a powerpoint presentation on Departmental efforts to address resource protection and security issues on DOI lands along the U.S.-Mexican border that have been heavily impacted by illegal activity. As urban areas along the border have become more secure, activity has shifted to remote lands, many of which are managed by DOI. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has the lead in implementing the Secure Border Initiative, and DOI is among the other federal agencies working with DHS in such areas as ensuring the border fence allows for wildlife movement in critical areas, educating border patrol agents on resource protection, and collaborating with DHS on environmental compliance (DHS has the authority to waive compliance on the fence but is working to avoid doing so). Challenges DOI is facing include whether we allow infrastructure in wilderness, how we deal with cultural resource damage, and how to address Customs and Border Protection urging of a fence/access road at Organ Pipe Cactus NM.

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

Agenda

- I. Welcome/Call to Order
Mary Bomar, Director
- II. Dialogue with Deputy Secretary
Lynn Scarlett, Deputy Secretary
- III. DOI Initiatives and Priorities
Mary Bomar, Director
Sue Masica, Chief of Staff
- IV. Closing Remarks
Mary Bomar, Director
- V. Afternoon Session – Update on Various Topics

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Director Mary Bomar called the meeting to order and welcomed Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett.

II. Dialogue with Deputy Secretary

Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett discussed some areas she has been involved in during her seven years in Interior: management systems, performance measures, performance goals. She briefly went through Departmental priorities:

- Healthy lands initiative – a way to protect large landscapes (“conservation is not about saving isolated pockets”; “nature knows no boundaries”)
- Ocean conservation – how to integrate the 35,000 miles of coastline as we move forward,
- Cooperative conservation – the hallmark of conservation efforts; DOI has sent legislation to Congress
- Enhancing partnering - mentioned the new donations policy and the new cooperative agreement policy. Working on a construction partnership policy.
- Service first – needs to be permanent authority.
- Centennial initiative, which remains the centerpiece of the Secretary’s efforts on parks.
- Wild bird initiative – there has been a 70% decline in the 30 most common birds

--Water problems – which are spreading; it's not just in western states. We lack the tools for efficient management of water
--Climate change – there is no longer a question that climate change is occurring and there has been a human hand in causing it. The DOI Climate Task Force is addressing 10 categories of impacts.
--Energy – fossil fuels are necessary for the foreseeable future. How do we access but reduce landscape disturbances?
Homeland security – We have to enhance border security, but we need to do the fence in the least environmentally destructive way.

Most of the discussion with Deputy Secretary focused on the Department's determination of policy on cooperative agreements – and the varying views of the Solicitors Office, OMB, and the Contracting office. Further discussion of policy on cooperative agreements ensued after Deputy Secretary Scarlett left. There is an urgency for guidance on cooperative agreements so that NPS can determine the terms under which cooperative agreements can be used for the 2008 Centennial projects. It was restated that with the additional information about the projects due back from the regions on January 22, Kate Stevenson's team of contracting officers would work closely with Molly Ross in reviewing the projects.

III. Discussion of DOI Initiatives and Priorities

Sue Masica presented the matrix that was developed following a Departmental leadership retreat in November, 2007 to show the Department's priorities and initiatives for 2008 [tab 12]. She noted that bureau directors are trying to come together on a regular basis to discuss the priority issues. She also said that the list does not include all priorities; the potential Pearl Harbor National Monument, for example, was not on the list; nor does it include high-profile events and other activities where there will be an expectation of information or assistance from NPS. Sue asked the NLC to let her know if there was anything on the chart that did not show a NPS role that should.

There was discussion about other matters involving the Department, including the requests for faster responses on correspondence. Karen Taylor-Goodrich mentioned that comments were due to Assistant Secretary Jim Cason on the IG's report on health and safety by February 29.

Action Item

Let Sue Masica know of any issues on the DOI matrix where NPS is not listed as a key DOI player but should be.

VI. Closing Remarks

Director Bomar thanked the NLC and all the presenters and participants before she and Deputy Director Dan Wenk left to fly to Atlanta to meet with the Southeast Regional Office employees.

V. Afternoon Session – Various Topics

Updates were given on several ongoing issues, including:

The land acquisition function – needs, structure, staffing. There may be an initiative in the 2010 budget year. The Pacific West Region business plan will have the realty function defined and may be something that can be used/built on throughout the system. (Jon Jarvis)

NPS Advisory Board – the Board was administratively reconstituted; Congress also legislatively reauthorized the Board. Policy staff are working on a new charter and letters to the Board members. [tab 14; Appendix D] (Sue Masica)

Studies – Patrick Gregerson, Chief of Planning, has prepared a briefing document on current special resource and other authorized studies. Copies will be sent to regions with a request from the Director to verify that regions are on schedule to meet timelines in the document. (Sue Masica)

Ownership of specimen collections – planning is underway for a forum to be held in April to discuss issue of whether NPS should retain ownership of specimens collected in parks (current policy) or be able to convey ownership to museums and universities that do the collecting. The NLC was asked to let Bert Frost know if they would like to participate in the forum. (Bert Frost)

Information Quality Act guidance – NPS will soon be issuing interim guidance on complying with the Information Quality Act while NPS develops more specific guidance based on Departmental guidance. Bert Frost is the lead, and John Dennis is working with regional representatives and USGS. (Bert Frost)

Partnerships/Cooperative agreements – Department is working on a statement of principles for partnerships; legal and procedural requirements for cooperating associations need to be clarified; more guidance is needed on construction projects in parks built using donated funds; Department is working on changes to Departmental Manual on procedures for evaluation donations (changes will necessitate conforming changes to D.O. #21, which are currently in approval process); model partnership agreements are being finalized and the involvement of NPS and DOI personnel will be sought so that there is a unified approach to partnership agreements. NPS is pursuing streamlining of the partnership construction process through revision of the congressional notification process, raising the threshold for Washington review of projects to \$5 million, and streamlining the partnership construction process flowchart. John Piltzecker, Program Manager for Partnerships and Philanthropic Stewardship, was included in the discussion [tab 13]. (Chris Jarvi)

Stateside LWCF administration – Funding for 2008 is sufficient to cover 23 FTE, the minimum needed to handle the current workload, but only because of an anomaly which resulted in double funding. If administration funding is reduced to \$1.5 million, as was proposed for FY 2008 and will be for FY 2009, NPS won't be able to carry out the program. There was general agreement to work to maintain a minimum of 23 FTE and to make sure that the field understands the importance of this program and the connection to work in national parks. The NLC also engaged in a discussion about succession planning for the LWCF program. Twenty of the twenty-three employees of the program will be eligible to retire between now and 2012. Michael Wilson, Chief of State and Local Assistance Programs, was included in the discussion [tab 14]. (Ernie Quintana)

NPCA Activity – the National Parks Conservation Association is in discussion with NPS about partnering on development of university-based leadership training for NPS. NPCA is also planning to establish a Centennial Commission which would hold public meetings over 12 months, resulting in an agenda to propose to the next Administration. The NLC would like some guidance on how NPS should be involved. (Bruce Sheaffer)

#

Appendix A

List of National Leadership Council Members (updated March, 2008)

Voting Members

Mary Bomar, Director
Dan Wenk, Deputy Director, Operations
Lindi Harvey Deputy Director, Support Services
Sue Masica, Chief of Staff
Bruce Sheaffer, Comptroller
Dennis Reidenbach, Northeast Regional Director
Ernest Quintana, Midwest Regional Director
Mike Snyder, Intermountain Regional Director
Marcia Blaszak, Alaska Regional Director
Paul Anderson, Acting Southeast Regional Director
Jon Jarvis, Pacific West Regional Director
Joe Lawler, National Capital Regional Director
Edie Ramey, Acting Associate Director Park Planning, Facilities & Lands
Mary Foley, Acting 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
Larry Curran, Chief Information Officer
Tom Wolfe, Assistant Director—Congressional and Legislative Affairs
Kate Stevenson, Acting Assistant Director—Business Services
Jerry Simpson, Assistant Director—Human Capital
Melissa Kuckro, Associate to the Director

NLC Support Staff

Jennifer Lee, Special Assistant to the Director
Jim Gasser, Meeting Planner
Phil Sheridan, Assistant Regional Director, Communications, Northeast Region

Appendix B

NLC Meeting Schedule 2008-2009

January 14-16, 2008	Washington, DC
May 13-15, 2008	Washington, DC
November 18-20, 2008	Dayton, OH

January 13-15, 2009	Washington, DC
May 5-7, 2009	Washington, DC
August TBD, 2009	TBD
November 17-19, 2009	Washington, DC

Appendix C

Reference Section

Links to more detailed information on some of the topics discussed by the NLC:

2006 OPM Human Capital Survey Results – NPS

<http://inside.nps.gov/documents/2006%20Hum%20Cap%20Survey.pdf>

Cooperating Associations

http://www.nps.gov/interp/coop_assn/

Director's Order 21

<http://www.nps.gov/policy/DOrders/DO21-reissue.html>

Land and Water Conservation Fund

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

National Park Centennial Challenge

<http://www.nps.gov/2016>

[National Park Service Partnerships](#)

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

National Park Service Training and Employee Development Information

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

<https://doilearn.doi.gov/>

<http://inside.nps.gov/waso/waso.cfm?prg=63&lv=2>

National Park Service Workforce Management

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

National Park Service Workforce Plan

<http://inside.nps.gov/waso/custommenu.cfm?lv=1&prg=14&id=6583>

Wounded Warrior Project

<https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/>

Appendix D

National Park System Advisory Board Members

New Appointments:

David R. Anderson
Natural Resource Results, LLC
Arlington, VA

William T. Hardman
President & CEO, Southeast Tourism Society
Atlanta, GA

John Bridgeland
President & CEO, Civic Enterprises, LLC
Washington DC

Mary "Cisi" Canales Jary
Restoration Associates, Ltd.
San Antonio, TX

Gerald T. Halpin
President & CEO, West Group Management, LLC
McLean, VA

Reappointments:

William F. Baker (Chairman)
President and CEO
Thirteen/WNET
New York, NY

John Francis
VP for Research, Conservation and Exploration
National Geographic Society
Washington DC

Marie Greene
President, NANA Regional Corporation, Inc.
Kotzebue, AK

Jerry N. Hruby
Mayor of Brecksville
Brecksville, OH

Jake Louis "Jay" Parmer II
American Strategies, Inc.
Reno, NV

Larry E. Rivers
President, Fort Valley State University
Fort Valley, GA

George Willeford III, MD
Austin, TX