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“Connected networks of parks, historic places and open spaces have enormous potential for the nation. They increase efficiencies of service and availability of information while expanding the spectrum of recreation opportunities and protecting our natural and cultural heritage. The ways we do this are limited only by our imagination. We must all step forward with our ideas; none of us has all the answers. This is something that can and will only be done with partners.”

—Fran Mainella, Director, National Park Service

The National Leadership Council (NLC) met on September 16 -19 at Acadia National Park to address a range of park and program operational issues and to meet jointly with the Board of the National Park Foundation. Director Mainella welcomed Jon Jarvis, the new Regional Director of the Pacific West Region, to the NLC, saying that he brought to the job a wealth of park experience and a talent for leadership. She noted specifically his success, while Superintendent of Mount Ranier National Park, in establishing a “system of parks” planning process with county, state, regional and city park and recreation providers.

The Director also welcomed Golden Gate National Recreation Area Superintendent Brian O’Neil and Joshua Tree National Park Superintendent Ernie Quintana, each serving 120-day details in the Washington Office. O’Neill is Acting Associate Director for Partnerships, Interpretation and Education, Volunteers, and Outdoor Recreation, and Quintana is Acting Associate Director for Resource and Visitor Protection (Chief Ranger). Both associate positions are new, created in the recent realignment of WASO leadership portfolios. The Director expressed appreciation to both superintendents for helping get the two offices up and running while permanent appointments are sought.

The National Leadership Council (NLC) is a forum to unify the National Park Service and to provide consultation and strategic leadership on major policy and program issues.

Managing America’s Heritage Legacy

Deputy Director Don Murphy reported on progress in reducing the maintenance backlog, the top Administration priority, and reviewed the Service’s strategy for on-going budget commitments and planning for future year project funding. Director Mainella emphasized the importance of the backlog reduction effort, recounting strong Presidential interest, and Murphy spoke of the opportunity this attention affords to communicate broadly about the larger mission of the National Park Service. He said plans are being readied for a public outreach campaign this fall that will address the issue in the context of the Service’s management of the nation’s heritage legacy.

Building an Effective Law Enforcement Program

The National Leadership Council voiced considerable concern about increasing resource and visitor protection demands, and their impact on protection rangers who are carrying out mission functions of law enforcement, wildland and structural fire protection, emergency services and other protection duties. Over the past four years, reports from the Congress, the Department of the Interior’s Inspector General, the International Chiefs of Police and the National Academy of Professional Administrators have spoken to the issue, articulating a need for increased numbers of program personnel, new training and support resources. The NLC affirmed its responsibility to tackle chronic program deficiencies

- **National Leadership Council**
- **Fran Mainella**
Director
- **Randy Jones**
Deputy Director
- **Donald W. (Don) Murphy**
Deputy Director
- **Bill Walters**
Associate to the Director
- **Sue Masica**
Associate Director
Park Planning, Facilities,
and Lands
- **Bruce Sheaffer**
Comptroller
- **Teresa Chambers**
Chief
United States Park Police
- **Katherine (Kate) Stevenson**
Associate Director
Cultural Resources
- **Michael (Mike) Soukup**
Associate Director
Natural Resources
Stewardship and Science
- **Richard (Dick) Ring**
Associate Director
Administration, Business
Practices, and Workforce
Development
- **Brian O’Neill**
Acting Associate Director
Partnerships, Interpretation
and Education, Volunteers,
and Outdoor Recreation
- **Ernie Quintana**
Acting Associate Director
Resource and Visitor
Protection
- **Robert L. (Rob) Arnberger**
Regional Director, Alaska
- **Karen P. Wade**
Regional Director
Intermountain
- **William (Bill) Schenk**
Regional Director
Midwest
- **Terry R. Carlstrom**
Regional Director
National Capital
- **Marie Rust**
Regional Director
Northeast
- **Jon Jarvis**
Regional Director
Pacific West
- **Jerry Belson**
Regional Director
Southeast

and offered unanimous support to Director Mainella, who committed the NPS to a comprehensive strategy bolstering program management and operations.

To provide increased focus on the ranger function, the Director has already created a new leadership position in Washington (at the Senior Executive Service level) titled Associate Director for Resource and Visitor Protection. The incumbent will be considered the Chief Ranger of the NPS. In collaboration with the Chief, United States Park Police, the Associate will provide coordination, oversight and policy direction for the cadre of multi-specialist professionals carrying out the protection ranger function.

It was agreed that the NPS Law Enforcement Task Force, chaired by Deputy Director Don Murphy, will develop the program reform strategy the Director has called for. It will contain both a multi-year, phased budget proposal and a communications plan to promote understanding. The Department and OMB will be integrated into all aspects of the effort, ensuring support for an approach that is consistent with other priorities within the Service and the Department.

Regional Directors, working with budget staff at the regional and national level, agreed to review ONPS budget priorities for FY 2003 and 2004 to assure that the highest priority is given to meeting protection needs. A commitment was made to enhance funding for training at FLETC and in the regions.

To expand this important dialogue, the NLC will hold its next meeting in conjunction with the Association of National Park Rangers during the week of November 18. The intent is to engage the Association in discussion about present and future program directions.

Providing Leadership in the Global Community

The National Leadership Council initiated a review of NPS international programs, hearing from Sharon Cleary, Chief, Office of International Affairs, who recalled that the Service has a

distinct role in the international arena articulated in its mission statement:

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

Since its earliest days, the NPS has interacted with international partners to facilitate its domestic responsibilities, meet U.S. treaty obligations, and support America's foreign policy objectives. Countries around the world look to the United States and the National Park Service as a leader in park and protected area management. Numerous park systems, ranging from Costa Rica to Saudi Arabia, were created with significant assistance from the NPS, and the majority of today's world park leaders have visited U.S. national parks and/or received NPS training. The NLC expressed considerable pride in this record and about the Service's role in encouraging the park movement worldwide. The NLC acknowledged that the NPS benefits substantially from this work, and that it has incorporated many park management ideas and procedures learned from other countries into its own practices. In considering the range of commitments the NPS has with other nations, and the importance of these activities to advance our mission, it was decided that the Office of International Affairs would develop a first-ever strategic plan for the NPS international program, working with the regions and various program areas. It was agreed that follow-up discussions would be scheduled for the next NLC meeting.

Reaching Out to Create a Seamless System of Parks

The NLC reviewed strategies to advance the vision that the National Park Service would, working with its partners, help build a "seamless national network of parks, historic places and open spaces." Creating a vast network of connected parks and protected areas has been an

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interest of park managers and conservationists for nearly a century. It contemplates close collaboration among an extensive web of partner agencies, individuals and organizations to improve the delivery of public services and significantly enhance resource protection. Director Mainella has declared the network idea integral to the NPS mission, values and goals, and she reiterated that it is an NLC responsibility to encourage its development. Members endorsed a “Case Statement” essay which expands thinking about the network and identifies a sampling of existing network partnerships (www.nps.gov/ncrc/seamlessnetwork.pdf).

The NLC considered planning that is underway for a national partnerships conference to be held in November 2003, which will spotlight the central importance of partnerships in carrying out park business and in building the network of parks.

A National Leadership Council workgroup was established to oversee network development strategies, recommend NPS actions, incentives and programs to encourage network development, and coordinate this work with that of the Partnerships Council and the planning team for the partnerships conference. Chaired by Acting Associate Director O’Neill, the workgroup will include Regional Director Jon Jarvis, Associate Director Mike Soukup and Comptroller Bruce Sheaffer. It was agreed that a core group of strategic partners would be convened as soon as possible to discuss roles in advancing the network vision.

Strengthening Our Partnership with the National Park Foundation Board

The National Leadership Council met in joint session with the Board of the National Park Foundation (NPF) to consider that organization’s new strategic plan and its concentration on promoting (1) volunteerism, (2) outreach, (3) visitor experience, and (4) education. Director Mainella thanked Board members and NPF staff for their commitment and hard work in support of the National Park Service mission, and Board Vice Chairman David Rockefeller, Jr., expressed appreciation for the opportunity to engage NPS leadership in discussion about joint activities.

Deliberations focused on the use of NPF resources to advance the four areas identified above, and on enhancing communications between the two organizations. The NLC conveyed its support for the NPF strategic plan and areas of emphases. Rockefeller announced that the Board will establish a committee to work with the NPS to develop joint strategies to implement the plan. It was agreed that the NPS and NPF are working in harmony to connect the American public with its parks, and that the two leadership groups should meet jointly on a regular basis.

Implementing the National Park System Advisory Board Report

Renewing Our Education Mission

Inspired by the conviction that parks are powerful educational resources and the learning they offer significantly advances NPS purposes, the NLC has devoted a portion of each meeting over the past half year to examine current thinking and practices in the field of education and to consider new directions. Coordinating the effort, Associate Directors Dick Ring and Kate Stevenson worked with a cross-section of park, program and regional staff nominated by the NLC to propose a strategy “to renew the Service’s commitment to its education mission.”

Recommended actions respond to NLC direction that NPS education be defined broadly to include all kinds of learning opportunities, including formal and informal programs, interpretation, public outreach, exhibits, publications, the Internet, films, life-long learning, volunteer programs and research. Goals of the strategy are to: (1) build organizational capacity in education; (2) create new opportunities to engage the American people; (3) and expand partnerships with organizations sharing a common vision. Actions propose to:

- map the Service’s educational assets, from its employees to its programs, media, education centers and education partners, this to identify strengths and gaps in our overall program;
- conduct a Servicewide evaluation of NPS education;
- identify strategic partners and develop new alliances with those who have professional

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- expertise in creating and distributing content to mass and targeted audiences;
- create a “Business Plan for Education” that identifies funding priorities, supports decisions about staffing and resources associated with workload requirements and recommends opportunities for new investments;
- develop systems to share best practice innovations Servicewide;
- expand use of the Internet throughout its entire range of audio, visual, interactive, search, instant linking and other capabilities;
- link the content of NPS educational programs to each State’s curricula to make it more useful to educators in classrooms and home-school settings;
- develop a comprehensive communication strategy to reach both internal and priority external audiences with this story.

The National Leadership Council enthusiastically embraced the proposed strategy and Director Mainella complimented Associate Directors Ring and Stevenson and the team that developed it. The Director stated her intention to engage the Department in discussions about the issue and the opportunities that this mission offers the America people, after which she said the Park Service should launch a carefully-crafted public roll-out of the national parks education story.

Growing Our Capacity for Science-Based Resource Management

Associate Director Mike Soukup reported that the National Park Service is making progress in responding to the Advisory Board’s recommendation to increase Servicewide emphasis on marine issues. A new Marine Management Specialist position and a marine scientist in the Washington Office are bringing greater focus and attention to the NPS marine program, as well as increased coordination with agency counterparts in the Department and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on coral reefs and marine protected areas. He said Natural Resource Stewardship and Science personnel are meeting with coastal park superintendents to consider the Board’s core recommendation for establishing marine reserves in coastal parks, in addition to building partnerships with state marine resource managers to address depletion of coastal fisher-

ies, water quality and other issues. No-take marine reserves have been set aside at Dry Tortugas National Park and the new Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument, and through expansion of Buck Island Reef from 880 to over 18,000 acres. The California Commission of Fish and Game is considering a proposal to establish a network of reserves at Channel Islands NP and National Marine Sanctuary. A Memorandum of Understanding and a cooperative fisheries planning process have been established with the State of Florida to address over-fishing at Biscayne National Park, the largest coral reef park. The park is considering no-take reserves in the development of its general management plan.

Director Mainella expressed strong support for this work and asked Regional Directors to continue emphasizing to superintendents that national parks are places to support scientific inquiry. She said the NPS cannot accomplish its resource protection mission alone, that it needs the partnership of the scientific community. She said the NPS wants parks to be viewed as hospitable places for research, and requests for research permits should be regarded favorably, and responded to within two to three weeks when routine and sixty to ninety days when compliance is warranted.

Nurturing Living Cultures and Communities

Regional Directors Rob Arnberger and Karen Wade reviewed the Advisory Board Report’s recommendation that the National Park Service take steps to affirm anew the connections native cultures and traditional communities have with national parks. Living cultures are park assets, and the Service is coming to understand that parks are richer when seen through the cultures of people whose ancestors once lived there. The NLC believes that assisting rural and indigenous people to conserve their traditions is an important organizational goal, but replete with difficult legal and policy issues, as the context of many issues is quite value laden, and in many cases subject to religious interpretation. Arnberger and Wade proposed that, to address this issue in an informed manner, the National Leadership Council should first commit to a course of study similar to what it did through the education seminar series. Responding positively to the

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proposal, the NLC agreed to meet in the spring at Canyon de Chelly National Monument to examine cooperative management strategies and tribal consultation approaches, and in the summer in Alaska to focus on ANILCA and the special relationships Native Americans are assured through subsistence activities. An additional set of discussions is proposed for the Northeast Region focusing on issues relating to Heritage Areas, Affiliated Areas and National Historic Landmarks to examine the effectiveness and reach of national partnership programs and NPS work with communities.

Looking to the NPS Workforce of Tomorrow

Associate Director Ring and Regional Director Marie Rust briefed the NLC on the Department of the Interior's Strategic Human Capital Management Plan, which was submitted with the Department's new fiscal year budget request to the Office of Management and Budget on September 9. The Plan describes key challenges facing the Department in achieving its mission, including an aging workforce and insufficient numbers of people with needed skills in information technology and business. They reported that these and other issues have long been of concern to the National Park Service, and the subject of "ensuring our institutional capacity" for the new century was a principal focus in the Report of the National Park System Advisory Board. They said that discussions are underway to prepare a workforce strategy that is consistent with the Department's Plan, and it would be presented to the NLC early next year.

Welcoming A New NPS Partner and Vision

The National Leadership Council was briefed on a new, non-profit organization based in Denver, Colorado, the National Park Society. Society president Dr. LaRue Boyd represented the vision and purpose of the Society, saying it is an educational and volunteer organization dedicated to increasing the knowledge, appreciation and enjoyment of our national parks. A professor at the Daniels School of Business, University of Denver, Dr. Boyd said the Society seeks to share the experiences and lessons of the parks with people beyond park boundaries, and will deliver these stories through a variety of

media, including the Internet, film, and print, as well as external volunteer opportunities and unique education-based travel-learning experiences. Dr. Boyd displayed mock-ups of a proposed broad-circulation magazine and a website that will both inform about and celebrate park natural, cultural, historic and recreation resources and stories. Director Mainella thanked Dr. Boyd and welcomed the National Park Society to the family of partners working with the NPS to protect parks and make them available for the enjoyment of the American people.

Other Business

- DOI Director of Communications Eric Ruff addressed the NLC, sharing perspectives on dealing with the media. Ruff reprised his experience as a journalist and offered insights about developing relationships with, and communicating effectively to the press. He encouraged frequent contact with members of the press and routine notification of Washington when park and regional personnel deal with national media.
- The NLC reviewed issues and perspectives about NPS planning and conveyed strong interest in the current revision of Director's Order #2, which outlines strengthened procedures to ensure public involvement and participation in the planning process.
- It was agreed that the NLC will participate in developing justification statements for new and/or revised Director's Orders.

Next Year's Meeting Schedule

- (1) Week of January 27, in Washington, D.C., for 3 days, jointly with Deputy Regional Directors.
- (2) Week of March 24, in Washington, D.C. for 2 days.
- (3) Week of May 19, at Canyon de Chelly National Monument, for a full week.
- (4) Week of July 14, in Washington, D.C., for 3 days, jointly with Deputy Regional Directors.
- (5) Week of August 25, in Alaska, for a full week.
- (6) Week of November 17, in Los Angeles, for 1 day, in conjunction with the NPS Partnership Conference.

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