

National Park System Advisory Board

NURTURING NPS LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION

May 21, 2014

The Board is committed to helping advance the NPS vision to create a 21st-century culture that is adaptive, resilient, and sustainable, with leaders who are good learners, innovate, and collaborate on solving complex issues. The basic orientation of our work continues to be supporting and nourishing those NPS leaders who are already engaged in 21st century leadership as the means to shift the entire culture in that direction. The work focuses on park superintendents, staff, and the systems and resources within NPS that are critical to their well-functioning. To that end, since January:

Status of Activities

- Completed an on-line leadership development video series for superintendents, *The Three Essential Acts of Leadership*:
 - Restoring Thinking
 - Developing a Strong Root System of Relationships
 - Finding Peace in the Storm's Center

The series is live on the Conservation Study Institute (CSI) website, and includes questions for team conversations, as well as a guide for hosting conversations. Eighteen superintendents have signed up for a four-part "Tuesdays with Meg" training event (by phone) to explore the concepts and practices in the videos. The event runs from May 20 to July 24.

- Work with staff of CSI (soon renamed the Stewardship Institute) in several areas:
 - With members of the team surveying 25 parks with highest scores on the Employee Value Survey (EVS);
 - Developing a webinar series for superintendents on leadership issues and skills they've identified, using outside experts;
 - Supporting CSI Director Michael Creasey as he embeds participative, collaborative processes in the work of NPS, especially with special projects such as Large Landscapes, Urban Matters, and others to come.

Of Note: Last Fall the expertise of CSI with Communities of Practice (CofPs) was engaged to support NPCA Southwest staff in planning the November *Utah Gateway Communities* event. Seven CofPs are now active in the state, exploring multiple ways to develop and strengthen Gateway Communities. Other States are now interested in convening their gateway communities using this highly participative process.

Next Steps

1. Respond to a request from the new NPS Associate Director for Workforce, Relevancy and Inclusion Michael Reynolds (formerly Midwest Regional Director) to

provide perspectives and mentoring in a thorough rethinking and redesign of the HR function within NPS.

2. Focus on the continuing decline of EVS scores. Initial assessments support a belief that the current survey gives insufficient data and perhaps is skewed to the wrong factors, thus impeding NPS' ability to understand root causes of the decline. Working with Associate Director Reynolds and staff, propose applying refined statistical methods that have sufficient granularity (rather than composite data) to reveal more useful information. Continue to contribute to the EVS studies going on at CSI with best parks, and with the NPS Organizational Development function that is examining lower performing parks.

3. Meet with CSI staff in late May to review work on the variety of projects in motion.

I am feeling very positive about this work. There is now sufficient momentum, relationships, and shared perspectives and theory that the work can now progress quite rapidly. We are well out of the starting gate and have the skills and staff able to move this forward now with clarity and speed.

Meg Wheatley