

PROPOSED MINUTES
149th MEETING
National Park System Advisory Board
August 16, 2012
Teleconference

The 149th meeting of the National Park System Advisory Board was conducted by teleconference. Space for public attendance was provided in Meeting Room C of the American Geophysical Union, 2000 Florida Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tony Knowles at 2:00 p.m., EDT, presiding from Anchorage, Alaska, and Mr. Loran Fraser facilitating from the American Geophysical Union in Washington, DC.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Hon. Tony Knowles, Chairman
Mr. Paul Bardacke
Prof. Linda Bilmes
Ms. Leonore Blitz
Hon. Judy Burke
Dr. Rita Colwell
Ms. Belinda Faustinos
Mr. Ronald James
Dr. Margaret Wheatley

MEMBERS ABSENT

Dr. Milton Chen
Dr. Carolyn Finney
Ms. Gretchen Long

OTHERS PRESENT (at least part of the time)

American Geophysical Union

Mr. Loran Fraser, Senior Advisor to the Director, NPS
Dr. Gary Machlis, Science Advisor to the Director, NPS
Ms. Alma Ripps, Acting Chief, Office of Policy, NPS
Ms. Shirley Sears Smith, Office of Policy, NPS
Mr. James Nations, National Parks Conservation Association, Washington, DC
Mr. John Mongoven, Neal Gross Court Reporters and Transcribers, Washington, DC

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OPENING THE MEETING

CHAIRMAN KNOWLES called the teleconference meeting to order and asked Loran Fraser to call the roll. In addition to the Chair, present were Linda Bilmes, Leonore Blitz, Judy Burke, Rita Colwell, Belinda Faustinos, Ronald James and Margaret Wheatley. The CHAIRMAN noted there was a quorum available for the meeting.

Loran Fraser reviewed the teleconference agenda, which was to accept and discuss a report of the Science Committee and to review plans to develop an Advisory Board report to the Director on the status of its various tasks.

REPORT OF THE SCIENCE COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Rita Colwell

RITA COLWELL stated that the 1963 Leopold Report, Wildlife Management in the National Parks, has had a tremendous influence on resource management policies and practices in the National Park System. Since that time, environmental and social changes have challenged many of its principles and recommendations.

She recalled that in 2010 that the Director of the National Park Service charged the Board through its Science Committee to revisit the report. The Committee Members include conservation scientists, retired Park Service professionals, members of the National Academy of Sciences, a Nobel laureate, and two recipients of the Presidential Medal of Science. We went to the National Parks. We met several times over the past year to develop the report.

She said key findings are as follows. The environmental changes that confront the national parks are widespread, complex, volatile and accelerating. Management based on historically successful practices cannot be assumed to be effective going into the future. Increased scientific knowledge is essential to manage parks for change, while at the same time confronting uncertainty. We have to construct contemporary tactics to allow for good park stewardship of the parks.

The Committee felt that management of natural and cultural resources has to occur interdependently. Dividing the Park System into natural and cultural parks is artificial. The iconic species, animals,

plants and so forth, and the very large grand land and seascapes, depend on what are difficult to observe, but essential characteristics, as well as processes in healthy ecosystems.

The Committee also focused on cultural resources, noting that they extend well beyond buildings and historical sites to include landscapes, indigenous values and diverse cultural knowledge, as well as past history. Park stewardship requires the land and the seascape strategies be done at the regional scale.

Key recommendations are as follows. The overarching goal of NPS resource management has to be stewarding resources for continuous change; this to preserve ecological integrity and cultural and historical authenticity, and to provide visitors with transformative experiences. These are words that are not terribly different from those of Leopold; but for future ecological integrity, we recommend focusing on the quality and health of ecosystems, not just on individual species. Cultural and historical authenticity focuses on accurate representation of place, time and/or historical context. We feel that in the modern day, transformative experiences have to educate and inspire the public. So, a national land and seascapes conservation strategy includes this continuum of applications and uses from working lands to wilderness; and this is within the context of Park Service units, as the anchors of conservation.

Management strategies have to expand beyond park boundaries to the larger landscapes, longer time horizons, and this means that collaborative and efficient partnerships are really essential if the park system is going to be successful. It's a practice that has to integrate what we have called precautionary principles in decision-making at every level, which is to emphasize science-informed prudence and restraint. It requires the National Park Service to err on the side of preservation. Decision-making must be based on the best available sound science, as well as accurate fidelity to the law, as we have done before. It's always to keep the long-term public interest in mind.

Current resource management policies should be revisited by the Park Service and revised as necessary, because they should align with the overarching goal of the park system, and maintain or increase the current restrictions or any actions that may impair resources. The NPS should develop broad technology innovation policy that encourages adopting new technologies, of which there are many, and establish coherent strategies to share data. The NPS must expand its scientific capacity, station more scientists in parks, and support critical research to protect the parks.

Monitoring resource conditions is essential, if we are going to manage for change; and it needs to be expanded and integrated into educational outreach and research. NPS should require training and communication, critical thinking, analysis, science, technology, mathematics. Superintendents themselves require significant scientific literacy.

Finally, the Committee recommends the NPS establish internally a standing scientific or science advisory board that represents the diverse scientific and scholarly disciplines so the Director can be advised of science issues and policy.

RITA COLWELL concluded by asking the Advisory Board to take action to approve the report.

CHAIRMAN KNOWLES thanked RITA COLWELL and the Committee for preparing the report and asked Members of the Board if they had questions to pose, after which he said he would entertain a motion for adoption and to send the report to the Director.

LINDA BILMES asked how the report might best inform the ongoing NPS economic valuation study.

RITA COLWELL answered that she would like to speak further about this off-line, but immediately it occurred there is value in the Service's resource inventories. She thought, however, it may be difficult to assign monetary value to the integrity of ecosystems and to aesthetics. LINDA BILMES responded that she would follow-up on this and get someone started addressing the inventory issue.

BELINDA FAUSTINOS said she found the report understandable and compelling and she was struck again by the observation that natural parks and cultural parks are integrated systems, and the approach to their management must be holistic.

MEG WHEATLEY commended the report's writing clarity. She noted that while it wasn't the purpose of the call, she wished to urge LINDA BILMES to include mental and physical health factors in her NPS economic valuation. LINDA BILMES said health was a factor in the study framework.

RON JAMES said it was a wonderful report, but he was concerned about use of the word "primitive," which occurs twice. He noted it is in quotes, so he knew it was from the original Leopold report. He said it's become a flash point for Native American people now, because they don't regard their use of the environment as primitive. And, of course, no one now, from a modern scientific point of view, regards their interaction with the environment as without consequence. They did plenty of modification, and my Native American friends would say that our approach to the environment is the one that's primitive. What they did was, in fact, very advanced, though they did modify the environment. He suggested "pre-contact" might be better used here than primitive.

Looking at this sweep of time, we know there are two phases. One is before humans arrived on the continent, and that pre pre-contact environment was not modified, and then there's the pre-contact before Europeans arrived, when the environment had been modified, but in a way that people would regard as more pristine, in a pre-human sense, or more sensitive to the environment.

RITA COLWELL said RON JAMES articulated very briefly what consumed nearly an afternoon's discussion of the committee. And, we finally concluded that we would pay deference to the Leopold Report, and that's why it's very sharply in quotation marks.

Gary Machlis offered that the quote does not represent the views of the Committee. It is reporting the historical core argument that Leopold had. The Committee's view, which corresponds exactly to what RON JAMES said, is the last paragraph on the section under what should the goals be, and it reads: "Contemporary understanding of environmental history and diverse American cultures has enriched our appreciation for the interaction between human and natural systems. The NPS should embrace continued traditional and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources by indigenous communities and tribes within the broader goal of preserving ecological integrity and cultural authenticity." He said that is the view of this Committee.

RON JAMES asked if it was possible to add a clause after the quote "a national park should present a vignette of primitive America" stating that the terms of the day describing the pre-contact continent. MEG WHEATLEY supported the proposal saying a simple parenthetical comment would prevent any prospect that readers might be pushed away by the original wording and not be open or accepting to what comes next. RON JAMES said he understood the reluctance to change this because the Committee had already wrestled with the issue. But the Board was being asked to accept the report and he wondered what would happen if you would put in quotation marks a reference to the history of

colored America, the colored people of America, or something like that. He thought in that case we would definitely be either paraphrasing the quote or we would be explaining the use of the term.

Gary Machlis shared that the Committee had the Curator of the Museum of the American Indian involved in the discussion, that the core goal of the recommendations has to do with historical authenticity and we felt that it is necessary to put the actual language of the Leopold Report in there briefly, once, so that everyone could see how the new report moves beyond it.

CHAIRMAN KNOWLES suggested the Board hold the discussion of amending the report until after entertaining a motion to adopt and transmit the report to the Director.

BELINDA FAUSTINOS offered the motion and JUDY BURKE provided the second.

RON JAMES stated that he did not intend to push the issue further, that a good defense had been offered. He was pleased to hear that a representative of the American Museum for the Native American participated in the decision to use the original report language.

MEG WHEATLEY said she would have liked to know before reading the actual language from the Leopold Report that one of the purposes of including this term is to show how far we have come. The report might have explained this before the reader arrived at the passage. She said doing this would be her recommendation, but she was not insisting on it, thinking however it's just good practice to explain your rationale at the beginning, rather than assume people are going to stick with you until they get to the end.

CHAIRMAN KNOWLES asked Loran Fraser to call the roll for adoption of the report.

All Board members participating on the call voted in the affirmative. The Science Committee report was adopted by the Board and will be forwarded to National Park Service Director Jarvis.

DESIGN OF THE BOARD'S SUMMARY REPORT TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Chairman Knowles and Loran Fraser

CHAIRMAN KNOWLES asked Loran Fraser to summarize planning for the Board's summary report to the Director of the National Park Service.

Loran Fraser recalled that the Director has requested a report from the Board summarizing its work and accomplishments; that this was discussed at the Board's meeting in May in Denver, and that Loran had begun preliminary conversations with Members individually about the effort. The audience for the report is the Director, Secretary of the Interior, NPS professionals, stakeholder groups and Congress.

The Board has been active and very productive, and with committees and workgroups addressing 10 separate tasks there is much to share; so much, in fact, we are challenged to put it into a package whose size is not daunting. Our concept to do this is to develop a report that is sort of an Executive Summary; a short document that outlines each task briefly, but provides a link to a special website where interested readers can access all committee and subcommittee reports, and any relevant supporting materials like case studies, research papers, and literature reviews that Members think is needed.

Report introductory narratives will emphasize that the Board's work is shaped to help the NPS act on priorities in stewardship, education, relevancy and workforce renewal.

We have initiated discussions about this product with designers and editors at the Harpers Ferry Center who the Director has made available to help. In terms of a schedule, we are looking to work with the committees and task leaders to confirm a development process in September, develop initial design and draft content in October, discuss and approve committee or task summary statements at the November meeting. The Director has asked that the final document be ready for release in mid-January.

OTHER BUSINESS

CHAIRMAN KNOWLES asked Leonore Blitz to review the status of work and discussions in the Centennial Campaign Committee.

■ Update from Centennial Campaign Committee Chair Leonore Blitz

LEONORE BLITZ thanked Members PAUL BARDACKE, MILTON CHEN, GRETCHEN LONG AND CHAIRMAN KNOWLES for participating in numerous Committee conference calls. She said there had been much progress since the Board discussed the campaign idea at its last meeting. The National Park Foundation collaborated with the Park Service to prepare an RFP to send to a small group of advertising and marketing agencies in New York and Washington, D.C. The Advisory Board Centennial Committee participated in reviews of the RFP during its development.

On July 30 and August 1 agencies responding to the RFP came to Washington to present proposals for how they would approach, design and manage a Centennial campaign. The group that met with the agencies included representatives from the NPF Board, Director Jarvis and a small group of senior NPS executives, and Advisory Board members PAUL BARDACKE AND LEONORE BLITZ.

After all the presentations had been made and the pros and cons of each had been discussed, the NPF/NPS/Advisory Board group voted and two agencies were selected as finalists, Grey Advertising and TBWA, both of New York City. A set of questions will be developed to send each agency to answer for a another meeting with each in New York to make a final selection

PAUL BARDACKE offered that he had been impressed by all the agencies and the significant effort they had made to do this. He said eight was the average number of people attending from each agency, and most of them participated in the actual presentation. Most of the agencies had prepared material and videos showing the kind of work they envisioned doing. Many of these presentations were very impressive, but the two agencies that were selected were clearly the best, and there wasn't much disagreement in the group about that. While our Committee had concerns about the RFP, the process was productive.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Nations with the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA) praised the Science Committee report, saying it presented a very enlightened set of recommendations, crucial to the survival of America's national parks as we enter the Service's second century. He said once the report is made public, NPCA will help promote its recommendations and turn them into positive actions.

ADJOURNMENT

The teleconference meeting was adjourned by Chairman Knowles at 2:57 p.m.

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National Park System Advisory Board
SUMMARY OF DECISIONS/ACTIONS
August 16, 2012

The Board adopted and approved for transmittal to the National Park Service Director the report of its Science Committee, a review and “revisit” of the 1963 Leopold Report, Wildlife Management in the National Parks.