

EVOLUTION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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- 1849 Congress establishes the Department of the Interior.
- 1864 Congress passed an Act authorizing a grant to the State of California of the "Yosemite Valley" and the land embracing the "Mariposa Big Tree Grove."
- 1866 The State of California accepted the historic federal land grant and established the nation's first grand park - Yosemite and The Mariposa Big Tree Grove and finalized the land transfer on April 2nd. The State Act authorized:
- the Commissioners to (a) make and adopt rules and regulations and (b) appoint a guardian,
 - to prescribe laws designed to protect the new park against trespass, wood cutting, defacement of natural objects, setting fires or injuring buildings or structures,
 - set penalties and fines not exceeding five hundred dollars or by imprisonment not to exceed six months or by both such fine and imprisonment.
 - the first appointment as guardian of Yosemite was issued in May to 52-year-old explorer, Galen Clark; America's and possibly the world's, first "park ranger."
- 1870 Galen Clark makes his first arrest. He charged two men with illegally cutting down a large tree near one of the hotels. A county judge convicted the men.
- 1872 Yellowstone established as the first national park.
- 1880 Superintendent P .W. Norris hired Harry S. Yount as a year-round gamekeeper at Yellowstone - the first park ranger in a national park. He resigned a year later complaining the park was too large for one man to patrol.
- 1883 March 3, 1883, War Department troops authorized to prevent trespassers and intruders from entering the Yellowstone.
- 1886 August 6, 1886, Secretary of the Interior Lucius Lamar requests troops from the War Department.
- August 18, 1886,Captain Moses Harris with Troop "M"of the U. S. Cavalry rides into Yellowstone.
- 1894 Congress passes the Lacy Act forbidding hunting in national parks. DOI begins hiring civilian scouts and rangers.
- 1897 The Fifty-Fourth Congress enacted legislation empowering all "superintendents and guardians" to the national parks to enforce applicable rules and regulations. The Act proclaimed:
- "That the superintendent or any guardian of such park is authorized to arrest forthwith any person engaged or who may have been engaged in committing any misdemeanor named in this Act, and shall bring such person before any United States commissioner or judge of any district or circuit court of the United States..."

- 1898 Charles A. Leidig and Archie O. Leonard appointed as first permanent rangers to a national park as "forest rangers" at Yosemite.
 ---Military units designated for the parks are sent to Secretary of State John Hays' "splendid little war" in Cuba and the Philippines. Civilians hired as temporary forest rangers.
- 1905 The Fifty-Eighth Congress:
 ---modified the authority of the 1897 congressional action, stating in law that: "... all persons employed in the forest service and national park service of the United States shall have authority to make arrests for the violation of the laws and regulations relating to the forest reserves and national parks, and any person so arrested shall be taken before the nearest United States commissioner ..."
 --- and on February 1, 1905 transferred the forest reserves from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture. Along with the transfer of the land went the money to pay rangers in the parks, thus in effect, making them among the first employees of the new Forest Service.
- 1906 Congress creates Mesa Verde National Park to preserve impressive archeological ruins.
 Congress passes the Antiquities Act in June:
 --- Making illegal the unauthorized taking of antiquities from federal lands,
 --- Legislating penalties for punishment of violators and,
 --- Providing for the creation of "national monuments."
- 1907 Superintendent Albert Greene of Platt stated, "his rangers had been wearing a uniform of sorts for several years. It consisted of blue denim or olive drab wool shirts and khaki canvas breeches and leggings, at the cost of \$8.80, for summer.
- 1908 In letters to superintendents regarding uniforms, Assistant Secretary Wilson referred to Interior employees working in the parks as "National Park Service employees" and their badges as "National Park Service badges" even though there was no official organization.
- 1911 Major William R. Logan, superintendent at Glacier National Park arranged for Parker, Bridget & Company to supply uniforms for his rangers. Bowing, at last, to the parks, the DOI decided to sanction, but not require, uniforms to be used throughout the parks.
- 1915 In 1915 Mark Roy Daniels, general superintendent (1913 - 1915), a position roughly equivalent to the later director, addressed the superintendents' conference. He declared an urgent need to develop national parks for tourism; "There are roads to be built, and there are bridges to be built, and there are trails to be built, and there are hotels to be built, and sanitation must be taken care of." Earlier he told the same conference that the only two justifications for the national parks were "economics and esthetics."
- 1916 On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed legislation creating the National Park Service - "...to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such mean as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."
 --- Congress sanctioned tourism and public use since legislation establishing Yellowstone and other early parks authorizing accommodations and road and trails to facilitate public enjoyment. This authority was reaffirmed in the National Park Service Act of 1916, with its emphasis on public use.
 --- Colonel Brett, the last of Yellowstone's Military Superintendents, issued his last annual report to the Secretary of Interior, on October 1, 1916. He said in part, "In 1886 troops of the Cavalry Arm of the military service marched into the Park, pitched camp, and took up the important duties of making this magnificent reservation a pleasant place for people to visit and a home for the wild game. Many officers and men look back upon their service here with great pleasure. Their duties have been well and creditably performed, and the 30 years of military control will be memorable ones in the history of Yellowstone National Park."

- 1917 Stephen T. Mather became the first director of the new National Park Service.
- 1918 Temporary Ranger Claire Marie Hodges was the first woman ranger and one of two to fill ranger positions left vacant in 1918 by men going into the Army. Helen Wilson at Mount Rainier National Park was the other. While Ms. Wilson basically worked the main gate checking-in traffic, Miss Hodges did actual ranger patrols.
- 1920 On March 20 Director Mather signed the first "official" uniform regulation covering rangers employed in the national park service-wide and ultimately brought rangers under the Civil Service's competitive examination system.
- 1927 On March 12, 1927, Park Ranger James Carey became the first NPS ranger to be shot and killed in the line of duty, while making his rounds at Hot Springs National Park.
- 1929 By the time Mather resigned in early 1929, the rangers and superintendents had come together as a distinctive group with a strong sense of identity and a common understanding of how national parks should be managed. Proudly wearing the dark green field uniform, they became the chief bearers of the Park Service family tradition and the forerunners of today's "green blood" employees.
- Perhaps most important for morale was Mather's efforts to improve the rangers' status as government employees. When the Park Service was established, employment was tied to individual parks, rather than the park system. Thus rangers had no official "transfer rights" and had to resign from one park and pay their own moving expenses to the next location. For low salaried rangers, such fragmented employment opportunities severely restricted chances of career advancement. Furthermore, they fostered a provincial view, causing rangers to focus only on the parks they served, rather than the park system as a whole. Mather encouraged the rangers to consider their national park work as a career rather than a mere job; and his lobbying won salary increases and transfer rights - including moving rights - and ultimately brought rangers under the Civil Service's competitive examination system.
- 1950s Over time, accommodations for tourism in the national parks would become truly extensive and have enormous consequences for parks. It is a significant, underlying fact of national park history that once Yellowstone and subsequent park legislation codified the commitment to public use and enjoyment, managers of the parks would inevitably become involved in design, construction and long range maintenance of park roads, trails, buildings, and other facilities. Allowing tourists to stay overnight in the parks meant that hotels, restaurants, campgrounds, garbage dumps, electrical plants, and water and sewer systems would sooner or later be seen as indispensable. The practical necessities for accommodating thousands, then millions, of tourists (the primary constituents of the national parks and a key source of political support) would increasingly demand park management's attention and seriously affect allocation of funds and staffing.
- 1953 NPS Law Enforcement Manual published.
- 1964 An internal Park Service study recommended reorganizing the ranger division and renaming it "Resource Management and Visitor Protection." The title of the new unit helped ensure that the rangers would continue to be in charge of resource management in addition to law enforcement.
- 1970 Even the traditional national parks like Grand Canyon, Yellowstone and Yosemite began to experience urban kinds of law enforcement problems, owing largely to crowded conditions. A DOI report on law enforcement compared Grand Canyon Village to a small city, with an average overnight population of 6,000 people, plus a daily transient population of 12,000. Similarly, figures for Yellowstone's Old Faithful Village were 5,000 overnight plus 10,000 transient. Yosemite Valley topped them all with 15,000 overnight and 18,000 transient for a daily total of 33,000.
- Another internal report revealed that "major offenses" - homicides, rape, assault, robbery and larceny - had doubled in the national park system in just a few years, jumping from about 2,300 incidents in 1966 to about 5,900 in 1970.

--- In the summer of 1970, a riot in Yosemite brought greater focus on law enforcement. The riot, by mostly counterculture youth in Yosemite Valley's Stoneman Meadow on July 4, emphasized to Park Service management leadership that the bureau's law enforcement capability needed serious attention.

---A critical factor (in the early 1970s) that park rangers did not understand the youth of this era - their concern for free expression and their challenge to authority. The rangers were separated in years and point of view from the youth of the 1960s and 1970s.

- 1971 Hartzog "parlayed" the American public's concern about law enforcement into big bucks, and in March, announced the establishment of a law enforcement office in Washington.

The director began a "comprehensive" law enforcement-training program, to include 225 entry-level rangers and selected management personnel. He anticipated that by the beginning of the 1971 summer travel season, 50 rangers from throughout the national park system would have completed 540 hours (17 and a half weeks) of police training.

- 1973 On August 5, 1973, just three years after the Yosemite Riot, Park Ranger Ken Patrick was killed at Point Reyes while conducting early morning poaching patrol when he contacted a car full of men driving through the area. Unknown to Ranger Patrick, the occupants of the vehicle were hardened criminals and members of a militant terrorist group.

---The Board of Review concluded, in part, "The major share of the responsibility for Ranger Patrick's death must rest with the Service."

- 1975 At Minute Man National Historical Park the U.S. Park Police were charged with providing law enforcement coverage at a major gathering and celebration. Widespread disturbances and civil disorder marred the celebration. They were criticized for their "over reactive and excessive law enforcement practices." The U.S. Park Police withdrew for any further Bicentennial celebrations outside of Washington, D.C. and the NPS took up the challenge of providing law enforcement coverage during the 1976 celebrations.

- 1976 The "General Authorities Act" (PL 94-58) was signed into law on October 7, 1976 and codified as 16 USC, Section 1a-6. It provided, among other things, the first consolidated law enforcement authority applicable to the National Park Service. Section 10 of the this law (16USC 1a-6) stated that the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to "designate ... certain officers or employees of the Department ... who shall maintain law and order and protect persons and property within the areas of the National Park System.

--- The Bill authorized rangers to: bear firearms, enforce all Federal laws, execute process, investigate offenses and cooperate with other law enforcement agencies.

- 1980 The NPS tried to identify, catalog, and describe threats to park resources in a "State of the Union" report. Sadly the NPS had very little reliable information about the nature and condition of natural resources under its stewardship. The 1980 report listed 4,300 threats, but could describe the nature and extent of only 25% of them.

--It is fascinating to note that some of the same issues Mather and Albright addressed nearly three quarters of a century ago -- visitor and scenery management and predator control - are still with us, but from a profoundly different perspective. Those early NPSers were not concerned about too many visitors, but rather too many predators. The tide has turned; park managers now worry about too many visitors and too few predators.

- 1983 The threat of crime has caused a substantial shift of emphasis toward the direction of law enforcement. Ranger now receives 400 hours of intensive law enforcement training at FLETC, plus periodic refreshers.

- 1989 Release of #3 (October 1989) of NPS-9, the Law Enforcement Policy and Guideline replaced Release #2 (April 1984, as amended in March 1986) in its entirety. Release #3 constitutes both a major revision and a complete reorganization. Revisions to the guideline generally clarify responsibility, strengthen program accountability and reduce the administrative burden on park and regional office staffs related to the issuance of law enforcement commissions.

- 1990 In 1990 the year before the Vail Conference, an internal Park Service magazine published a special issue on the Environmental Policy Act. The commenters criticized the 'attitudes of park managers and decision makers' and reported that too many times the Park Service approached compliance "grudgingly" - with the intent merely of going "through the hoops."
- 1993 A reversal of the NPS historical posture occurred when Director Ridenour expressed its support and commitment to the law enforcement program of the rangers and signed a policy - "Organizational Position on Law Enforcement." In the policy he declared that law enforcement was an indispensable component of overall NPS operations and that rangers constitute the core of the NPS protection workforce.
- 1994 July 10, 1994, found many rangers instantaneously promoted to the GS-9 level, designated to positions of "enhanced annuity retirement" and their position descriptions designated as "coverable" under the provisions of enhanced "20 year law enforcement retirement."
- 1995 The reorganization substantially changed the hierarchical system in place since 1937, in which park reported to regional offices, which in turn reported to Washington. In the new arrangement the parks gained more autonomy and oversight capabilities were sharply reduced and diminished.
- 1998 NPS-9, Law Enforcement Guideline revised.

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