

The Protection Ranger



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The Newsletter of the U.S. Park Rangers Lodge, Fraternal Order of Police

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Call to Action

The IG report will be ignored by the NPS only if you do nothing. Letters are needed to your Representative and two United States Senators and to Gale Norton, at Hon Gale Norton, Secretary of Interior: 1849 C St NW Washington, DC 20240

You should consider language to convey these points

- The Inspector General of the Dept of Interior has found that management of law enforcement in the Interior Dept has resulted in..."a disquieting state of disorder in the structure and operation of law enforcement..."
- The IG has recommended a management structure that works throughout the law enforcement profession, namely, straight line authority.
- The National Park Service is flaunting its disregard for the IG report by recommending a "solution" which consists of commissioning superintendents and assistant superintendents.
- This system was tried before in the NPS and failed
- The main problem in the NPS now is the lack of accountability by these superintendents and ass't superintendents in the management of law enforcement. The NPS proposal not only does nothing to address this problem, but makes it worse and harder to correct
- Officers of the National Park Service are the most assaulted policemen in the

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federal service as compiled by the Dept of Justice. The NPS proposal does absolutely nothing to address this sorry state of affairs and will make it worse because it diverts resources from the men and women who are in the field everyday, enforcing the laws and regulations of the country.

You must be responsible for contacting your congressional representative and senators and Secretary Norton. Secretary Norton's reputation and credibility is on the line here; she has accepted and endorsed the IG report; she needs to hear from field officers urging her to do what she has said she's going to do. Remember, the IG is on our side; the IG has lauded us, saying, "The overwhelming majority of law enforcement professionals in DOI are capable and loyal officers who recognize that their programs are in need of considerable change." Write today; if Secretary Norton follows through on her promise, all officers in the Interior Dept will soon be much better off.

Congress Needs RM57 Data

MEDICAL STANDARDS PROGRAM: The United States Park Ranger Lodge continues to work on your behalf to have the medical standards program evaluated and revised to include grandfathering of all rangers who were in their positions at the time this program was implemented; salary and grade retention; no loss of 6(c) retirement; and job retraining for rangers who may be removed due to serious medical conditions that prevent a ranger from safely performing the job. Members of Congress have been working with the Lodge to get the NPS to make changes to the program and have strongly recommended a review of the program and grandfathering. The NPS has not responded to this call placed in the 2002

Department of Interior Appropriations Bill. The Lodge was contacted last week by members of congress who are asking for recent impacts of the medical standards program on park rangers across the United States.

THE LODGE NEEDS UPDATED INFORMATION FROM RANGERS

NOW: How have you been impacted by the medical standards program? Where do you work? Are you seasonal or permanent? We need dates and ramifications of the impacts. How was your position affected? For how long was it affected? How was your park and the law enforcement program affected? How were coworkers affected? How has your personal life been affected? How many years do you have in the service? Have you passed your training and qualifications? Do you have performance awards and satisfactory performance appraisals? Are you willing to be contacted for more information by a congressional aid? (this doesn't mean anyone will publicly use your name). We ask for your name and a contact number/e:mail but your information will remain highly confidential. Please send this e:mail to every ranger you know and ask them to provide input to the United States park Ranger Lodge. Send your information to Randall Kendrick at randallfop@ls.net and he will forward it on to the Lodge Medical Standards Committee Chair. Thank you for your help! NPS rangers must not let the Medical Standards Program continue to impact the careers of highly successful rangers who have already proven that are able to do the job.

**DONATIONS NEEDED
NOW! SEE PAGE SIX!**

Arguments Against Stovepiping Ranger Law Enforcement? Make Them Prove It

NPS managers react to the concept of direct line management of the law enforcement program like Superman reacts to a gift of kryptonite.

For those who make claims that line management of law enforcement will destroy the service, and that there are better alternatives than direct line management, we ask only one thing: Prove it.

Throughout their statements, proposals, and disagreements with recognized studies, they offer no proof, no evidence, not even theories or examples. Just weak ideas, straw man arguments, and unproven claims.

Rangers have been waiting, and dying, for want of managers with courage to change. They deserve the reforms proposed by the Inspector General and the International Association of Chiefs of Police. What they don't deserve is the pabulum being fed to them instead.

From Left Field: Commissioning Superintendents

NPS Deputy Director Don Murphy, in an interview with Knight Ridder news, said that rather than stovepiping NPS law enforcement, he wanted to turn all NPS superintendents in to law enforcement officers like he had done in the California State Parks system.

First, we should study the ramifications of this change on the National Park Service, analyze the evidence that this system worked in California State Parks, and determine whether implementing this experiment is worth the risk in the National Park Service.

The ramifications and costs of converting all NPS superintendents and deputies into law-enforcement- commissioned rangers are many and great.

First, the decision is to be made on the level of commission of the superintendents. The standard level I commission means that all 375 or so superintendents, plus 300 or so deputy superintendents, will get sent to the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center for 17 weeks. This will fill up all NPS slots at FLETC for the foreseeable future, at a time where retirements will begin to deplete ranger workforce. The present shortage in the workforce has been acknowledged by management studies and the IACP. The NPS is already facing a cut in its training program. Budgets for FLETC are at 1970s levels. The effect of this on the ranger program will be devastating. Instead of training rangers for the field and to serve the public, and to meet identified needs for backup and increased ranger safety, the NPS will have to train superintendents with skills that will largely go unused while in the comforts of park headquarters, or on the many travel days the job requires.

What goes along with attendance at FLETC? First, medical clearance, then mandatory passing of the PEB fitness test. Those two screens should wash out a good number of superintendents. Then there is the background check. There goes a few more.

The NPS also has to make a decision on law enforcement "6c" retirement for these individuals. If superintendents are to be in 6c-covered positions, many over age 37 may be forced into other jobs or retirement. "Forced" retirement may be a blessing for those who have saved up and are ready to retire, or it may be a burden for those who believed they were 10 years from retirement and had just finished putting kids through college. And as far as "other jobs" go, what other jobs are there? When commissioned rangers were placed in the 6c program, they could retire in their 50s because they had 20 years of covered service in. This is not so for the newly commissioned resource manager superintendent.

The easy decision, then, is to make these positions non-6c, level I positions. This raises the problem of 6c covered Chief Rangers wishing to move up into LE management but having to give up 6c coverage -- or will they be allowed to move into the superintendent ranks and keep their coverage? Will the lack of 6c coverage for superintendent positions prevent the most

senior law enforcement officers from moving into the highest level of law enforcement - the commissioned superintendency. This issue, too, makes 6c covered superintendents more expensive than non-covered superintendents, creating a financial burden on the agency. Why hire a covered superintendent when you can get a non-covered one on the cheap? You'd have to be crazy.

Speaking of crazy, there is the issue of psychological screening. Despite NPS's failure to implement it, DOI, like all sane agencies with a law enforcement function, requires psychological screening for law enforcement personnel. The Secretary was shocked to find that the NPS has ignored this policy, (actually she's been shocked quite a bit lately by the NPS LE program.)

We think it must be mandatory that inexperienced, senior-level personnel being compelled into law enforcement roles be psychologically screened in compliance with departmental policy to see if they have the stability to function in a law enforcement role, and the will and ability to make critical life-and-death decisions.

Another concern is the little matter of the personal wishes of the superintendents themselves. Some, if not many, may not want to do law enforcement training, not to mention law enforcement itself, even if they are capable. Taking on a role in law enforcement is not a decision that should be forced on anyone; conscientious objectors, the disabled, maintenance supervisors, interpreters, fire managers, scientists, or administrators, or those that just don't like it. How does Mr. Murphy plan on dealing with this?

The easiest way for the NPS to try and implement the commissioned superintendent program is with a type of Level II commission -- meaning a shorter stint at training and non 6c coverage. Perhaps even a watered-down level III commission may under consideration. This would create a weird class structure that seems to do nothing to solve current problems. Placing a seasonally commissioned ranger with no field training or experience at the top of a law enforcement command structure is not the stuff of rocket science. And the burdens of

seasonals today, from medical screening to background checks, still will fall on the Level II superintendents if there is any fairness in the system. Even placing a rookie officer with a full commission at the head of the organization seems unsound, but a rookie with a lesser commission is bound to cause problems.

Any variation with the commissioning process will require from the Department of the Interior, as will NPS plans to comply with the IG report. Based on the tone of IG report, Interior doesn't look like it's willing to play along with unproven ideas any more.

Where is the proof that the Commissioned Superintendent system works?

Mr. Murphy offers the California State Parks as an example of how commissioning superintendents solves the type of law enforcement program management problems that have plagued the NPS as documented by the IACP and IG studies. We have been unable to locate any study, and Mr. Murphy has offered none, that shows that the California example as a model for overcoming these type of problems.

In fact, four reports -- both IACP reports, the IACP Implementation report, and IG report -- never mentioned this model as a viable alternative. Why? Because there is no evidence to believe that this model will work, and these study groups didn't bring forth recommendations that they thought would not work. In NPS history, superintendents have had law enforcement authority, as did all NPS employees. The concept is not foreign to anyone with knowledge of the agency. In fact, the commissioning of superintendents was ditched because of the problems in law enforcement management that led to the General Authorities Act. You've gotta give it to the green-minded NPS - they recycle.

Anecdotal evidence gathered by the Lodge from California State Park rangers show that commissioning superintendents offered little benefit to the agency, as it does to the NPS, and comes with an extensive cost.

The results of the experiment in California

show that an inexperienced, often reluctant, law enforcement rookie, is placed at the head of a law enforcement program as the superintendent, never having made an arrest, or even written a citation. Nobody with any expertise in managing successful law enforcement programs has ever endorsed this model. Just because it has been done in California doesn't mean that it has been done well, or done successfully. There is nothing to prove otherwise.

Is This Experiment Worth It?

A more efficient structure of the existing law enforcement staff (i.e. stovepiping) is endorsed by all managers of successful law enforcement programs across the country. It's also endorsed by managers of all national land management law enforcement programs, from the BLM to USFS, except for the NPS. Even state parks like Mississippi have adopted the stovepiped model.

The IACP report recommends this if the NPS isn't able to solve its problems through the current structure, it should examine restructuring. In two years since that report, the NPS has done nothing to change the LE program. We submit that this is sufficient grounds to indicate that the problems aren't going to be solved, and that it is time to adopt the IACP's recommendation to move on to direct line management. The IG report leaves little wiggle room for bureaus to do anything else.

If Murphy wishes to offer a claim that the rest of the world is wrong, and that he is right, we only ask him to prove it. If not, at least offer some evidence. Why isn't there a call in the NPS for a comparative study between state parks that have stovepiped law enforcement, and those that do not? Because the facts are irrelevant to those managers who have formed an opinion. Why waste time on another report that won't say what they want, and that will have to be ditched?

The potential cost of the commissioning plan - from buying over 600 new firearms, 600 new sets of body armor, 600 trips to FLETC, 600 background checks, will could bankrupt the NPS LE program if Mr. Murphy's unsupported theory is wrong. As Al Gore would say, it's a risky scheme.

The Regional Chief Rangers' Illogic

The Regional Chief Rangers, in a recent memo to the Director's Law Enforcement Task Force, stated:

"We strongly endorse the multi-skilled resource-based ranger described in the 'Ranger of the 21st Century' documents and the Ranger Careers benchmark position descriptions. However, this is an 'endangered' ranger, unless deliberate decisions are made to forestall a singular focus on law enforcement.

They also said this:

"However, we must avoid solutions that appear logical from the perspective of a police organization, yet would prove disastrous to parks and the park ranger profession by gradually diminishing the relevance and value of rangers to the parks."

Where on Earth is this coming from?

Flawed Logic Based on A Flawed Paper

Let's address the first issue. The "Ranger of the 21st Century" document was a concept put forward by none other than former Deputy Chief Ranger Rick Gale, among others, to guarantee that the ranger of the 21st century look exactly like the ranger of the 20th century. It was put together with no scientific method, with no review from the field or outside experts, and now is given endorsement as something that is supposed to have credibility. Most rangers, and many Chief Rangers, have never seen this document, yet are supposed to support it, if not accept it as a road map to their future. This document is the product of a small group of like-minded individuals who haven't seen the field in years. It has been instituted and approved by a management system that has opposed significant change for decades, as documented by the IG report, and IACP report.

As is typical for the NPS, internal studies where the outcomes are pre-determined to go with the party line are ALWAYS given more credibility than outside studies. That's why Mr. Gale contracted with former NPS employee, personal friend, and

now business partner Bill Wade for a study on how to manage the fire program, with the results being a mirror of the recommendations of Mr. Gale - and nobody in NPS management questioned this until the report was done and the check was cashed. These inbred, unscientific, prepared-in-the-dark documents are suspect at best, and a damaging to the credibility and health of the agency at worst. They are only an underhanded way of putting an official label on the personal opinions of the NPS upper echelon - propaganda in a government-approved wrapper.

Based on A Misleading Example

The Chief Rangers play their readers as fools by claiming that the ranger of the 21st Century (i.e. the traditional ranger) is "endangered" unless the agency forestalls "a singular focus on law enforcement."

Where did THIS come from! No report - not the IG, nor either IACP report, or anything ever proposed, advocates a singular focus on law enforcement for rangers. The Fraternal Order of Police Lodge is the most vocal advocate of law enforcement in the NPS, yet we have never promoted the idea of a singular focus on law enforcement. Nobody has. So simply, the Chiefs are setting forward a scare argument of their own creation, the proverbial straw man. More disturbingly, they are re-characterizing the IG's recommendation toward centralization of law enforcement management into something it is not - a recommendation of a singular focus on law enforcement.

This is not an honest statement of the IG's recommendations. It suits the needs of the establishment nicely. After multiple murders, numerous assaults, and unending claims that help is on the way, the least rangers deserve is an honest discussion of the issues based upon a fair characterization of recommended changes. The Chief Rangers, by mischaracterizing the argument, have not served the rangers well. Rangers deserve better.

Based on No Evidence

Second, Regional Chiefs bluntly claim that if centralization of LE management (the "singular focus on LE" in their

definition) goes through, that rangers are automatically endangered - and they claim this without offering a shred of proof! Rangers deserve better.

The facts actually prove the opposite. Under the current system, with no central focus on law enforcement, rangers are being murdered and assaulted at an unprecedented rate, according to the NPS's own figures furnished to the Department of Justice. Studies by the IG and IACP have thoroughly discredited management of the NPS law enforcement program, and held it, in essence, as a model of how NOT to manage a law enforcement program. Yet the chiefs claim that a failure to continue down this ruinous road is a formula for disaster! And again, they say this without offering evidence, proof, or examples!

There's nothing like taking the party line as Gospel without the burden of having to think about it. Rangers deserve better.

This leads to a value question: Are the lives of NPS rangers more important than maintaining a dysfunctional but traditional management system?

The "Core Values" card all NPS employees received in the mail at home states that one of the agency's core values is tradition, but that tradition is something that doesn't bind us. Nonsense. The card ought to say that the NPS will stick to tradition in lieu of facts, and the opinion of experts, even if it kills rangers.

An Empty Claim On The Value Of Rangers

The Chief's second point, "... we must avoid solutions that appear logical from the perspective of a police organization, yet would prove disastrous to parks and the park ranger profession by gradually diminishing the relevance and value of rangers to the parks," is offered without telling us why this would happen, or offering a reason.

Chiefs: You made the statement - prove it.

Why would logical solutions from LE professionals gradually diminish the relevance and value of rangers to the parks? The Chiefs offer zero proof. This is known as an empty claim, and should be given zero

value.

Clearly, under the current system, the value of rangers to the parks has been diminished tremendously. Cutbacks in the number of rangers have been documented, while specialties in the NPS have been allowed to flourish. At one park, for example, where field staff used to outnumber headquarter staff 10-1, the number broke even 10 years ago, and now there are more headquarters staff than rangers. Why are rangers so valuable that non-rangers (e.g.: maintenance chiefs) are allowed to wear the "Park Ranger" badge? When everybody who works for the NPS becomes a pseudo-ranger, and the number of real rangers is cut drastically, the true value of rangers is diminished far more than is possible than by changing the ranger management system.

Why weren't rangers diminished or rendered irrelevant by 6c? By the General Authorities Act? By changing the color of the badge? By Interpretive Futures? By Mission 66? By changing firearms? By the 1970 IACP report? Just because "endangered ranger" rhymes, doesn't make it a viable theory. You need to prove it, or at least do the field the courtesy of offering an example.

Look at the NPS itself. The U.S. Park Police maintains a functional line authority for law enforcement, yet in field offices reports to the Superintendent for general operations. Why doesn't anyone propose a limited functional line authority for law enforcement operations, that leaves non-commissioned superintendents in line for management of all things protection rangers do that don't involve law enforcement? They can still have a consultative role, much like they have today. The fire, EMS, SAR, visitor services, interpretation and education duties of rangers are a full plate for any superintendent without them having to get in to the management of law enforcement investigations. Yet in this dispute, it's all or nothing at all for NPS management.

Now Aren't We Special?

The theme of this type of argument, that "nobody can fix the NPS other than the

NPS" is a recurring one, and is based on visions of self-delusion by managers. The IG and IACP saw this, everyone who has studied the agencies unwillingness to change sees this brought up again and again. "Nobody understands us, and nobody can make recommendations that work for us." Poppycock. Whiney spoiled child poppycock. What that means is that we DON'T WANT anyone to understand us, and we WON'T consider their recommendations, we want to have it our way. Boo hoo.

Well, it's time to grow up. The IG and IACP fully understand the NPS. Our managers just don't like what they have to say about it, so they have to try and discredit them. Nice try, but the IACP and IG have far more credibility than those responsible for managing one of the worst enforcement programs in the federal system.

When the NPS can boast a superior safety record, an adequate level of staffing, a workforce with a high level of morale and confidence in management, a superior case closure record, and is known for its integrity and ethics, THEN it can feel free to take shots at the IACP and IG's ability to evaluate its efforts. Until then, it's just another vacuous argument by defenders of the status quo.

Conclusion: These People Have Nothing To Stand On

When your case against direct line law enforcement is boiled down to alternatives that are risky schemes, arguments that are nothing more than unsubstantiated opinions and straw men, and attempts to claim that recognized experts in evaluating a variety of law enforcement programs in a variety of types of agencies aren't capable of understanding the NPS, you have no case -- not a leg to stand on.

Such is the plight of the NPS manager. They're down to this to maintain the status quo. It's sad.

For them, the bad news is that we're on to them, the field is on to them, the IG is on to them, the Secretary is on to them, Congress is on to them, the press is on to them, and like quicksand, the more they flail away in

panic, the more pitiful they look.

This time, they will not stand. For those whom have gone before us, and those who will follow, rangers deserve better.

Donations Needed: Lodge Needs A Consultant - If You Play the Game You Have to Pay the Price

The Lodge has not raised dues in eight years and has no plans to raise dues. We have called for donations from time to time, mainly to fund worthwhile projects. Here's where we need to raise extra money right now. We need to hire a consultant/lobbyist who has entree into the managerial level at the Department of Interior. This person needs to be able to open doors for us. As you have read in the Protection Ranger, the director of the NPS and Secretary of Interior not only don't answer our letters, they probably never see them in the first place. As a reminder, virtually everything we ask for has been endorsed by the Inspector General and the International Chiefs of Police...We have been reasonable and measured in what we ask for BUT that does not get us a hearing at levels that can effect change. Our reasonable proposals, which have been confirmed over and over again, deserve a fair hearing. It will cost money - sad to say - to get this hearing. We recommend sending the equivalent of six months dues to the Lodge - \$25 for this one time project. There are qualified people who believe in resource-based law enforcement and will work for us on this educational project and open the doors that have been unfairly shut. The Lodge needs the money to open doors! Please be generous and send what you can. We need and want the recommendations of the Inspector General implemented. We see this as an opportunity of a generation.

Thank you,
Randall Kendrick, Executive Director

Member Input Needed

The most successful news release the Lodge has put out was last year's "10 Most Dangerous Parks" release. It appeared in dozens of papers, was picked up by the AP, and was the basis for several TV news stories. The IG noted the stories that appeared and it helped us. The Lodge needs member input for this years release on the 10 Most Dangerous Parks.[And by this we mean areas where officers of land management agencies work: BLM, COE, NPS, USF&WS, USFS, and state and local agencies] In your park, refuge, impoundment, or forest, are there problems such as:

- poor radio communications
- no professional dispatch service
- hazardous material dump[s] that are not properly contained or identified
- lack of law enforcement staff which allows resources and visitors to be at risk
- lack of backup, or unreasonably long response times for aid to arrive
- old or obsolete or unsafe equipment that you must use
- management burdening officers with trivial ancillary duties that take away from investigations
- management forbidding late night shifts when many resource based crimes are perpetrated
- management not allowing patrols into backcountry or remote areas on a routine basis
- any other practices that compromise officer safety and/or your ability to protect the resources and the visitors

We cannot have an effective news release without accurate and complete information. Reporters follow up our release with phone calls to Lodge officers and we have to be confident of our facts. Unsupported claims only hurt the Lodge's credibility and do nothing to further Lodge goals.

Please do not put up with unsafe working conditions. Contact the Randall at the Lodge. Your identity will be protected. No names will ever be given to the press without the expressed consent of the member. Email: randallfop@ls.net or call 800 407 8295.

Lodge Website

Brother Duane Buck has built and maintains the Lodge website. We keep it updated with notices and links to other sites that we think are interesting and/or helpful to resource based law enforcement officers. Visit it often between issues of the Protection Ranger to keep current on things that affect you and your job. The address is www.rangerfop.com

Application for Membership

I, the undersigned, a full-time regularly employed law enforcement officer, do hereby make application for active membership in the U.S. Park Rangers Lodge, FOP. If my membership should be revoked or discontinued for any cause other than retirement while in good standing, I do hereby agree to return to the lodge my membership card and other material bearing the FOP emblem.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

DOB: _____

Permanent Rangers: \$52/year

Seasonals and Retired Active Members: \$35/year

Associate (non-Commissioned) Membership (Newsletter only): \$35/year

Renewals: You do not need to send in this form to renew. Enclose a copy of your Commission (new members only).

Agency and Work Unit: _____

Mail to: FOP Lodge, POB 151, Fancy Gap, VA 24328

Phone: 1-800-407-8295 10am-10pm Eastern Time or email randallfop@ls.net



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