

CLEAR TEXT:
WASO Ranger Activities'
Electronic Newsletter

June 14, 1995

CLEAR TEXT is the monthly electronic newsletter of the Ranger Activities Division in WASO. It is distributed via cc:Mail to all ranger training and operations centers (FLETC, HOAL, STMA, NIFC), regional office ranger divisions, park chief rangers, and other interested parties. Short submissions for the last four sections of the report - Field Notes; Park Exchange; Resources; and Vacancies, Register Openings and Details - are welcome and encouraged.

6C RETIREMENT BENEFITS UPDATE - Bill Sanders, RAD/WASO

Thanks to the hard work of many folks, all past claims submitted by CSRS folks in 1989 have now been reviewed. The maximum possible law enforcement or fire fighting service claimed and documented was approved for each submission. Only those periods of time which clearly were not coverable were denied, and then only after very careful reconsideration and re-review by several folks.

All claims were subject to Departmental reconsideration, even those denied by OPM before OPM delegated the review authority to the Department. As previously denied claims are returned to the Department, Ranger Activities is contacting the claimants and assisting folks with their requests for reconsideration. Claims denied by MSPB or US District Courts are not included.

The Department has hired extra clerical help to get out the approval letters to claimants and we hope to notify everyone by the end of June. It will take a while longer for payroll to calculate the unpaid one-half percent contribution to the retirement program due for each covered period of service. The amount due from each employee is one-half percent of the then-current salary, which amounts to a low hundred dollar-per-year figure for most folks.

The employee then may be due back law enforcement salary and or overtime, back to 1992, if she or he then served in a now-covered position. The amount owed the government will be adjusted by the amount owed the employee. The employee will then be given the option of repayment method: lump sum, charge card, or interest-free payroll deduction in the smallest amount possible over the next three years.

At present, the current (or final in the case of retirees) benefitting account will be charged for BOTH the employees share and the Governments share of the unpaid contribution. The employee will then re-pay the benefitting account for the employees contribution via whatever option the employee elects, as above.

6C RETIREMENT - A THANK YOU TO DOI - Paul Berkowitz, RAD/WASO

On Thursday, June 8th, a small celebration was held at the Department's 6c office (that is, Ann Meroney's office) to commemorate the virtual completion of the long-awaited CSRS 6c claims evaluation process. Ann graciously

expressed her appreciation to all the special staff who have been detailed to her to assist in this process, and also expressed heartfelt thanks to the many NPS rangers who contributed their own time and effort to assist during the final weeks by working on the task force.

Those in attendance from Ranger Activities (Bob Marriott and myself) returned the compliment, noting the extraordinary effort and enthusiasm Ann Meroney has devoted to resolving this process, bringing a fair and compassionate resolution to what has been - and would otherwise have remained - a most aggravating and frustrating ordeal for nearly 600 NPS rangers. Ann and her wonderful 6c staff really made the difference, and nearly 500 rangers throughout the Service are the direct beneficiaries. The vast majority of the NPS claims that were reevaluated (some after being resurrected "from the dead") were awarded full credit. All rangers owe a debt of gratitude to Ann and her entire 6c staff - supervisors and subordinates alike - for breaking through the barriers and bringing a new, refreshing, and fair perspective to the 6c evaluation process.

REGULATIONS - JURISDICTION UPDATE - Dennis Burnett, RAD/WASO

President's Regulatory Reform Initiative: The first two phases of our response have been completed and submitted to OMB. OMB is reviewing all agency submittals and it is anticipated that the Administration will release the information through a press conference within the next two weeks.

R.S. 2477: The deadline for completion of this project by the task force, consisting of representatives from the Solicitor's Office, NPS, BLM and FWS, continues to be pushed back.

36 CFR Part 2: The final draft package is in Ranger Activities for internal review. Meetings that were scheduled with the NPS Directorate for the first of April were postponed and have been rescheduled for the latter part of June.

NCR T-Shirt Regulation: This final rule was printed in the Federal Register on April 7th. The rule governs the sale of certain items related to First Amendment activities on park land within the National Capitol Region. The rule became final on May 7th. A lawsuit was filed on behalf of seven permittees; they have been allowed to remain on the mall at their original locations. All remaining vendors have moved to a small plot of land adjacent to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. A hearing was held on June 1st in U.S. District Court on the suit by the seven permittees. A written decision is expected this summer.

Part 7 & 13 - Special Park Regulations: At least a dozen special park regulations are in the Department at some level of the review process.

Alaska Region Issues: The Glacier Bay vessel management regulations were printed in the Federal Register on June 5th. This proposed rule contemplates an increase in cruise ship use, to be offset by specific mitigation measures. The regulations would authorize a seasonal increase in cruise ship, charter and private vessel traffic during the months of June, July and August. However, there would be no increase in the maximum number of cruise ships permitted to use the bay on any given day (two). Rather, the increased traffic will be absorbed by authorizing more traffic in early and late summer.

Jurisdiction: The concurrent jurisdiction package for Appomattox Court House in has been approved and sent to Governor Allen for signature.

FEE PROGRAM UPDATE - Tim Stone, RAD/WASO

Fee Legislation: The Service's fee legislation, entitled "The Park Renewal Fund Act", is awaiting introduction in Congress. It's not yet known whether it will be introduced with bipartisan support or introduced by request on behalf of the administration. We hope to that there will be some action on the bill within the next two weeks. Meanwhile, alternative fee legislation has been prepared by the Republicans in both the House and Senate. The Senate version appears as part of an NPS omnibus bill; the preliminary House version proposes that a substantial percentage of the annual operating cost of NPS visitor services and recreational programs would have to be generated through entrance, user and concession fees. Stay tuned.

Servicewide Reservation System: A task group convened in Washington for two days late in April to discuss the Servicewide Reservation System (SRS). The group, which was comprised primarily of field personnel with many years experience working with the SRS, discussed the successes and problems associated with the system and ways in which the SRS can better serve the NPS in the future. Most participants agreed that the SRS has significantly reduced problems at their respective park areas and supported the concept of advance reservations for campground and cave tours. The national fee program will develop alternatives for a nationwide SRS and move forward in preparing a new statement of work and request for proposals, incorporating the results of the task group. National input will be solicited once the preliminary work is completed.

Fee Collections: Recreation fee collections are running approximately \$3 million ahead of last year at this point in time, with the bulk of the increase coming from fall visitation and additional collection activities supported by the 15% cost of collection funding. We hope that parks collect more revenue this summer than last summer, which should result in additional dollars released to support park collection activities. Contact your regional (or field office) fee program manager with any questions or funding requests.

SPECIAL PARK USES - Dick Young, RAD/WASO at COLO

There's nothing much to report at this time because everything in this arena is in a state of flux. There is a great deal of activity in the field of special park uses, but so far nothing has settled out in a form concrete enough to report to you. I still hope to make the initial publication of the draft revised NPS-53 by the end of this month, but even that's not certain. In the meantime, I keep getting calls from managers who are surprised when I tell them they can recover and retain costs incurred in managing special use permits. For those of you who haven't gotten this message yet, or have questions, please call me. We absolutely have to have consistency in what we charge for, how we go about doing it, and what we use the money for. You can reach me at 804-898-7846 or on cc:Mail at Young, Dick S.

CIRS/NIBRS UPDATE - Bob Reid, RAD/WASO at SERO

CIRS version 0.98 was sent out at the end of May over cc:Mail; everyone who is running the program should have received their update by now. The 0.98 update replaces both the 0.94 and 0.96 versions that we have been using. If you didn't receive the update, let me know and I will send it to you. If you need the full installation disks for version 0.98 in order to set up district computers, contact me in SERO or Kathy Clark in WRO.

We are steadily moving ahead with Servicewide implementation of the CIRS

program. Only Alaska area has yet to be introduced to the CIRS program, and a trip there is likely in August. Training has been scheduled for parks in the Badlands area during the last week in June. Anyone interested in attending should call chief ranger Scott Lopez.

After talking and working with the computer folks at Natchez Trace and Olympic, it's become apparent that we must move in the direction of making this program work on networks. This is now a priority for development. Work is now underway, but completion depends on receipt of necessary financial support. We believe that we can get it done and out to the parks along with all other major upgrades by June, 1996. That means that the CIRS program will be a complete package and will both accommodate future telecommunication technology and provide a good tool for the park to store and retrieve case incident data.

Please don't wait to get your park set up on CIRS, though. It's very good as is, and between now and the time we get the LAN version up and running your park can develop a good data base of case incidents. It will save time at the end of the year when all of those annual reports are due, and will give superintendents and park chief rangers some valuable statistics to draw upon when looking at the things that go on in the park.

Meetings with Departmental and NPS risk management folks have revealed that the DI-134 is no longer being used. They are accordingly looking at getting the information that they need from the CIRS program. At present, we input information into the CIRS system in a format that emulates the contents of the DI-134. Some of that information is needed by the Department and Service. Once we have determined what information is needed, CIRS will be the vehicle that will be used to collect the data and send it to various offices - another important use of the CIRS program.

If you have any comments or questions on the CIRS/NIBRS program, do not hesitate to call me either by phone at 404-331-3527 or by name on cc:Mail. There's still a lot of misinformation out there on the capabilities of the system.

FIELD NOTES

No submissions.

PARK EXCHANGE

Big Thicket

The park has seven Model 28 and six Model 686 .357s available for transfer to another Interior unit. If you're interested, please contact Bob Appling, chief ranger, via cc:Mail (by name) or at 409-839-2689 ext. 227.

RESOURCES

No submissions.

VACANCIES, REGISTER OPENINGS AND DETAILS

Big Thicket

The park has or soon will be floating a vacancy announcement for a GS-5/7/9 park ranger (protection). The position is located in the South District, based on Beaumont, Texas. The district comprises about 50,000 acres in seven

units. Duties require the use of a variety of boats, 4x4s and ATVs for patrol. Incidents encountered include subsistence poaching, hunting and fishing violations, alcohol and drug violations, and boat and ATV violations. Government housing may be available. Beaumont is located an hour east of Houston and four hours west of New Orleans and within ten minutes of the Gulf Coast. If you have specific questions about the position, contact chief ranger Bob Appling via cc:Mail (by name) or at 409-839-2689 ext. 227. We usually have to advertise park ranger vacancies twice due to lack of applications on the first issuance.

If you would like to get CLEAR TEXT but don't currently receive it, please advise Ranger Activities via a short cc:Mail message. Any office may receive it, including districts and subdistricts within a park. PLEASE pass it along to others in your division and park.

Prepared by WASO Division of Ranger Activities

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