

In the Beginning

In 1918, the first female park ranger set foot in Yosemite National Park.

She was a California school teacher by the name of Claire Marie Hodges.

During this time, female park rangers were only a temporary change. Like

Claire many park rangers' positions were filled by women during WWI. In

today's world female rangers share the same job titles as male rangers but

this was not always the case. Most female rangers only held job titles such

as naturalist or visitor youth assistants. As time progressed many women

would go on to have many achievements in the National Park Service.

Important Positions Held by Women In the National Park Service

- **Early Superintendents**
- Gertrude S. Cooper, Supt. Vanderbilt Mansion NHS, 7/16/40 to 5/31/45
- Margaret J. Patterson, Supt. Andrew Johnson NHS, Acting Supt. 10/7/42 to 3/3/43; Custodian 3/4/43 to 4/24/43
- Wilhelmina S. Harris, Supt. Adams National Historic Site, Supt. 11/27/50 to 1/10/70 (retired)
- Carol A. Martin, Supt. Tuzigoot National Monument, 4/26/71 to 8/17/74
- Kathleen L. Dilonardo, Supt. Fort Caroline N. Memorial, 11/14/71 to 11/23/75
- Elizabeth Disrude, Supt. Perry's Victory & Interna. Peace Memorial Natl. Monument, 3/1/72 to 4/8/75
- Doris I. Omundson, Supt. John Muir NHS, 1/21/73 to 5/31/80
- L. Lorraine Mintzmyer, Supt. Herbert Hoover NHS, 7/8/73 to 8/16/75
- Marjorie M. Hackett, Supt. Fort Point NHS, 4/14/74 to 3/12/77
- Ellen Lang, Supt. Sitka NHP, 5/12/74 to 4/30/78
- Janet Wolf, Supt. Fort Frederica NM, 9/18/74 to 1/25/80
- Georgia Ellard, Rock Creek Park (1977-1988)
- **Deputy Regional Directors**
- Lorraine Mintzmyer, Southwest Region, appointed by John Cook
- Mary Bradford, Southwest Region, appointed by John Cook, 1992-post 1993
- Sandy Walters, National Capital Region, 6/92-post 1993.
- **Regional Directors**
- Lorraine Mintzmyer, Southwest Region. Aug. 12, 1979, Rocky Mountain Region, April 6, 1980, and Mid-Atlantic Region, Oct. 6, 1991 appointed by Director William Whalen in both cases
- Marie Rust, North Atlantic Region, 1/92 to present, appointed by Director Ridenour
- B.J. Griffin, Mid-Atlantic Region, 8/8/93 to present, appointed by Director Kennedy
- Karen Wade, Intermountain Region
- **Secretary to the Director**
- Isabelle Story (1888-1970) was secretary to Director Steve Mather.
- **Director**
- Fran P. Mainella was the first woman director of the National Park Service (the 16th director), named by Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton.
- Mary A. Bomar was appointed the 17th director in 2006. She served through the end of President George W. Bush second term.

The Press



Isabelle Story helped the National Park Service by using her writing skills. Every stroke of the keys helped the National Park Service establish a better identity. She wrote press releases about the National Parks and Monuments from 1919 to 1954.

*J*ohn Muir knew how important it would be to save the beauty of the National Parks like Yosemite, but also many women nature groups would help with this dream. Groups like the National Women's Club had thousands of women sign the bill to establish the National Park Service in 1916. Other clubs like the Garden Club for women helped maintain the parks. The Garden Club's goal was to instill history in the minds of the everyday American. Other key women that played a part in preserving the National Parks were anthropologists Alice Fletcher and Mathilde Coxe Stevenson. Along with their group the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Associations they strived to preserve archeological sites.

The First Female Superintendent



Gertrude S. Cooper
Vanderbilt Mansion

*A*ppointed by Franklin Roosevelt Gertrude S. Cooper was the first female superintendent in the National Park Service. She served five years at the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site. Some believe that Wilhelmina S. Harris was the original first female superintendent, because she was appointed by the National Park Service in 1950.

The Title VII Law of 1964



In 1991 Barber A. Booher became the first Native American Superintendent at Custer National Monument and in the National Park Service.



Gary Matlock with Hispanic and Native American seasonal guides at Pecos National Monument [now Pecos National Historical Park], 1971.

As time progressed different minorities benefited from the title VII law. This law states that Title VII prohibits discrimination by covered employers on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. Before this law was put into place, the old laws of 1870 limited federal job offerings by sex.

The Uniform Then and Now

Some of the traits that people associate with the National Park Service uniform is conservation, preservation, and integrity. Everyday visitors encounter these traits in every ranger that wears the uniform but at one time not all male park directors thought this way. In the past male park directors believed that women should not wear the park service badges or hats, because women were usually appointed as secretaries and naturalist.



Known as the "Buffalo Chip" design this hat had a more pleasing appearance for the public.

The 1970 Uniform Standards

“A distinctive uniform worn with pride, dignity, and demeanor promotes the ideals of the organization it represents. The National Park Service uniform immediately identifies the wearer as a representative of a service whose employees have dedicated themselves to preserving the superlative natural, cultural, and recreational areas of the United States and presenting them in a manner which brings appreciation and enjoyment through understanding.”

First and Foremost



In 1918, Yosemite National Park hired its first rangerette Clare Marie Hodges. Claire was originally a school teacher that was hired into the National Park during the Great War. She worked at Yosemite through May 22 to September 7, 1918.



In 1916, Marguerite "Peg" Lindsley became the first female naturalist and permanent employee at Yellowstone National Park. She grew up shadowing her father and superintendent Chester A. Lindsley.



Fran P. Mainella A Clemson graduate became the first female park director in National Park Service. She has over 40 years of service in parks and recreation.

A Park Service Wife



Eva Cora McNalley and her husband Charles A. were a husband and wife team of temporary rangers at the Tuolumne Meadows checking station, Yosemite National Park.

By 1964, the National Park Service had changed tremendously. Female park rangers were able to wear the official uniform and even become park superintendants. On the other hand, the rangers wives were expected to act a certain way. At the yearly superintendants' conferences for the Southwest parks the attending wives developed a "National Park Service Wives and Women Employees Handbook."

**"....Just one word of caution. The job is his, not yours. Don't intrude into official duties."
"Whatever your husband's position, how he looks on the job is important. . . As a Park Service wife, it is your responsibility to see that his clothes are ready when needed, clean and neatly pressed. He will appreciate this more than you'll ever know..."**

National Park Service Wives and Women Employees Handbook

"You are married to a very special man, or you would not be reading this letter. The Park Service challenges men who are intelligent, able to communicate and get along with people, and who also have a special love for our USA wonderlands, the National Park areas. As the wife of such a man, you are also challenged!"

"Most men choose the Park Service as a career because of a special interest or skill. They quickly become involved in their work. If you don't want to be left out, share his interests, read everything you can get your hands on that pertains to his field of work, listen to him."

"Just one word of caution. The job is his, not yours. Don't intrude into official duties."

"Whatever your husband's position, how he looks on the job is important. . . As a Park Service wife, it is your responsibility to see that his clothes are ready when needed, clean and neatly pressed. He will appreciate this more than you'll ever know."

"A park community differs from most communities because the people not only must live together, they also work closely together. It is not fair for wives to burden husbands with complaints about a neighbor when he has to work with the same man all day. Practice patience and understanding and try not to let coffee chats degenerate into gossip sessions or comparisons of advancement and careers."

"Wives, sometimes more than husbands, color the community's impression of the NPS. There may be a place where you will have to live down or make up for mistakes of wives who've gone before you. This isn't easily done. Be yourself, be honest, and try very hard to avoid self-centeredness."

"There will come times when you will want to conk your beloved on his pointed little head for ever getting you into this NPS way of life! You will wonder if he'll ever come home in time for dinner, just once even, but fire season, ski patrol, or rains which bog down unwary visitor's cars shall pass, and you'll have plenty of time to subdue and arrange your feelings and laugh at it together."