

The Protection Ranger



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

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REPRESENTATIVE GEORGE NETHERCUTT, Jr [WA] SUPPORTS NPS RANGERS

The National Park Service has promulgated and implemented an inappropriate policy of medical standards and attendant physical exams.

In addition, this program is not being implemented evenly and fairly throughout the National Park System. Representative George Nethercutt, Jr, from Washington state, has recognized this and has offered this statement of support.

Please make a copy of this and send it to your Representative in the Congress and tell him/her that you would like it if he/she would support the efforts of Rep. Nethercutt. This is extremely important to your career and should be done as soon as possible.

As an example of unequal implementation, Terrie Fajardo has allowed

high ranking supervisors and commissioned managers to receive waivers when rank and file rangers and first line supervisors have to go through the burdensome, slow, and often expensive appeal process the NPS has put in place.

We know of at least one instance, which we have passed on to Rep. Nethercutt's office, of a waiver being granted on the basis of one personal phone call to Terrie Fajardo.

Do you see that in RM-57? When a WASO group came to Cuyahoga Valley to explain RM-57, they told the rangers there that there was only one standard. That, by the way, is the way the Lodge reads RM-57 too. Do your career a favor - write your representative today with a copy of Rep. Nethercutt's statement supporting your Ranger Lodge.

*Signed,
Lodge Executive Committee*

Investigation of Medical Standards Implementation Warranted by Rep. George R. Nethercutt, Jr.

On behalf of U.S. park rangers nationwide, I have begun investigating apparent inequities in the implementation of the

medical standards program.

After gathering case complaints, I am now considering several options in an attempt to bring about fairness in the program and avoid the anxiety caused by the current implementation process. The National Park Service is aware of my serious concerns over the current implementation. It is my hope that by working with Fraternal Order of Police and other interested groups, NPS can re-evaluate its implementation of the program and establish a straightforward and fair process.

If NPS does not enact changes to the program quickly, I will ask the General Accounting Office to begin an examination of the program.

Editor's Note: Congressman Nethercutt (R-WA) serves as Vice-Chair of the U.S. House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee

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Send the Lodge your email address to receive the electronic Protection Ranger and to help with Lodge research.

randallfop@ls.net

Where Does the Money Go?

The National Park Service budget for Fiscal Year 2000 is: \$1,363,264,000. The NPS budget for FY 1995 was: \$1,077,900,000.

The Full Time Equivalents for the entire NPS were

. 2000: 17,043

. 1995: 16,895

The budget for RM&VS was:

. 2000: \$318,636,00

. 1995: \$250,323,000

RM&VS FTEs

. 2000: 4,292

. 1995: 4,874

RM&VS include interpretation, fee collection, search and rescue, EMS as well as law enforcement. There's no way to tell what percentage of this money goes to commissioned rangers and their equipment and training.

So, while funds allocated to RM&VS increased by 25% in this five year period, the FTE decreased by 12%! It's well known that a decrease of 12% in FTE for visitor services translates to a more substantial decrease in actual field rangers.

In 1975 there were less than 300 national park areas; in 2000, the figure is close to 400 - an increase of approximately one-third. In the past 25 years, recreation visitation to the parks has increased by 70%. Why is management of the NPS cutting ranger positions in the face of these hard statistics?

Legal Defense Insurance

There is a new player in offering legal defense insurance for law enforcement officers, and it's the 10-33 Legal Plan offered by the law firm headed by Stephen DeNigris. Mr. DeNigris was a law enforcement officer for many years in New York and Florida before he went to school to get his law degree. I have spoken with him a couple of times and am impressed with his dedication to

defending law enforcement officers at the local, state, and federal levels.

At present, the annual cost is \$120/year. One big advantage of this plan is that the lawyers are available 24 hours a day and seven days a week. With the plan offered through the Fraternal Order of Police, enrollees do not have access to an attorney until they are formally charged with something administratively, civilly or criminally. 10-33 offers free advice and consultation after the incident occurs but before you are charged with anything. It certainly allows you to plan what to do and gain an insight over the nature and type of problem you might be facing.

You can see the advantage right off: An incident occurs and you need advice right away on how you should react. This plan claims to fill this need. You don't have to scramble around to get the legal advice at this critical moment - you have an 800 number to call.

We have had one Lodge member invoke this plan and he reports that he was quite satisfied with the services rendered. This was an administrative procedure against him and the defense provided through 10-33 was prompt and comprehensive. In administrative actions, attorneys will defend the member in any case involving a proposed suspension, loss of pay, reduction in grade, or removal and will handle the matter either through a negotiated procedure or through the Merit System Protection Board. In court actions, the 10-33 plan will defend the member without any monetary cap and will pay incidental fees. The lawyers work throughout the fifty states.

The park rangers at Independence National Historic Park have switched their coverage to 10-33 from the Hylant-Maclean carrier. They are satisfied with their choice. The Lodge does not endorse any legal defense insurance plan. We think all commissioned rangers need coverage and are making this plan known so that you can be aware that a choice exists and can decide on your own.

Call 800 791 9908 for more information.

A brochure is available. This plan should also be eligible for 50% reimbursement from your agency just like the FOP Hylant-Maclean plan.

The Internal Struggle in NPS

The Civil War was, in part, a struggle between states of the South that wanted to be able to manage themselves in a loose confederation, and the North, that wanted Union and a centralized Federal government. That battle is being fought today within the NPS. The central question is this: Is the authority that is vested in local superintendents to modify virtually any national policy to fit their concept of local park needs superior to the need to have a consistent national Service?

This issue impacts a huge variety of things such as selections, classifications, commissions, uniforms, grooming standards, discipline, training standards, backgrounds, medicals, equipment, and on and on across the entire spectrum of "standard" vs. "customized" park-by-park.

Are we a national service or a confederation of quasi-independent parks? Do "Park Rights" trump "Service Standards," or vice-versa? The new "Messaging" project recognizes how the lack of unity between parks - the individuality of signs and printed media - has harmed the NPS in the eyes of the public. But the harm of this disunity in terms of law enforcement and resource protection is not yet seen in the broader perspective by our leaders, partners, or by the people we are sworn to protect.

The issue is largely hidden from view until rangers from different parks come together, like during law enforcement training, a ranger's funeral, or a major event. Then, we are almost always surprised and embarrassed by what some parks are doing or allowing to exist as "normal." In many ways, Ranger Careers was an attempt to comprehensively pursue a premier park ranger workforce by standardizing ranger personnel

practices. The Ranger Careers concept was strongly resisted in many quarters, and for the last few years, a counter-movement has moved us away from a strong central leadership culture and towards "Park Rights." Maybe the IACP can save us. But more likely, the IACP will only be able to throw us a lifering. It will be up to the leadership of the Service to grab it or let it drift away.

Chief Doesn't Know What To Do With \$82 Million - We Do

NPS Chief Ranger Chris Andress recently sent out an e-mail stating that the NPS may receive an additional \$82 million in funding for ranger services in 2002. He was soliciting advice as to how to spend it -- he said that he didn't know how! Many of you are aware of the OFS budget call earlier this year for LE funding. What good is it to gather this information, and have the chief either disregard it, or be unaware it was gathered at all!

Memo to the Chief:

1. See our previous list of 10 things the NPS can do to keep rangers from getting killed. Implement them.
2. You've already decried the sad state of NPS communications systems. Fix them, and get in compliance with DM-446.
3. Remember when the NPS paid for body armor for everyone, one time, but never paid for replacement costs? Replace all old and obsolete body armor.
4. If the money is available for personnel, fix the staffing crisis you and the present administration caused.
5. Everyone has seen the GAO report on the hazardous structural fire program you are running. How about some safety equipment? And, the training to go with it.

Randall Kendrick, Lodge Secretary

WASO Not Commissioning New EMS Coordinator Job

Plain for everyone to see, the new NPS EMS Coordinator position on USAJOB proudly announces that the position is not 6c covered. What is going on here? This looks like a "bag job" for someone outside of the field and therefore not as qualified as one who's spent his/her career doing this exacting work.

The current NPS EMS Coordinator, Sherrie Collins, would do an excellent job in Washington, full-time, having done well on the job piecemeal. But to take the job, she or other candidates from the field would have to give up their retirement. Not much of an incentive for getting the best of the best, is it? A downright disincentive in our opinion.

Why is this an issue? The previous EMS coordinator was in a covered position. Why not now? Why roll the Uniform Coordinator position in with EMS and SAR? What is this a fix for? Was something broken?

The lodge believes that the EMS coordinator for the NPS should have experience as a park medic or in ALS care, and have experience in managing an EMS or SAR program at a major park, or, if we hire outside the agency, managing a nationwide EMS program. We also believe that the position merits 6c coverage, and could be covered if WASO-RAD desired it. Is this just another slap at 6(c) covered employees?

PROPOSED RANGER LODGE AWARD, Or What's a Cycad Anyway?

On October 21, 1921, President Warren Harding used his authority under the Antiquities Act of 1906 to proclaim and set aside Fossil Cycad National Monument in South Dakota. This 320 acre site had the largest concentration of cycad fossils in the world. They were the remains of a Cretaceous forest and made up a large part of the diet of huge herbivorous dinosaurs. Fossils of these plants were as common on the surface of the site as petrified wood used to be at Petrified Forest.

The site had been studied since at least 1892 and numerous articles appeared in scientific journals. In 1920, a scientist named George Weiland obtained the property under the Homestead Act in order to keep it preserved for scientific study. He offered it back to the federal government if it would get national monument status to protect it forever.

[As a personal note, I have grown cycads for years and they are one of the earth's most interesting plants. They were probably the first true cone bearing plants and evolved well before pines, spruces and other conifers of today. A couple of tree sized cycads living in Africa have cones that weigh up to 80 pounds.]

Virtually all cycads today are endangered owing to their relict disjunct distribution, slow reproduction, and poaching by plant collectors. They are hardy and long lived and conservation efforts are underway in most countries where they exist. The American species is not considered endangered.

Fossil Cycad National Monument was placed under the management of the superintendent of Wind Cave National Park. This august gentleman and his staff embarked on a mission of indifference and neglect and the fossils were stolen from the park faster than nature could expose new specimens and eventually, nothing remained - no more surface fossils of Fossil Cycad NM.

Local ranchers were reportedly asked to look after the monument and no report was made of the monument's status in annual reports until 1933. Park employees seldom visited the site.

On September 1, 1957, the Congress, following the recommendation of the National Park Service, voted to deauthorize Fossil Cycad National Monument. The reason was that since all of the fossils were gone, there was no reason for the monument. [This fails to take into account that many fossils probably remained underground - how many fossils do you run into today at Dinosaur? Not many, but it's still a great

national park and important scientifically.]

The National Park Service at its web site says merely: "Fossil Cycad National Monument later disclosed few of the fossils for which it was named." I hope that some day the NPS Director won't say the same for Petrified Forest National Park but with cutbacks in ranger staff it's not out of the question, is it?

So given this truly sorry history of mismanagement, which NPS manager do you want to nominate for the first Ranger Lodge "Old Fossil Cycad" award? Who among many worthy candidates is the leader in short-staffing, ancillary-duty assigning, and anti-law enforcement and anti-resource protection? Which parks are well on the road to having few of the resources for which they was named? Send in your nominations and suggestions for the award.

Randall Kendrick, Lodge Secretary

IACP Study

Tim W. Younce is the immediate past president of the US Rangers Lodge. He gained a deep knowledge of both the FOP and the workings of government during the years he was president.

Last week a representative from the IACP visited Shenandoah National Park. To show you how "seriously" the NPS is taking this study, he spent four hours with management and a whole hour (!) with field rangers. Reports that I got were that he was very noncommittal and unresponsive when it came to answering questions about the overall management of the NPS LE program and just wanted to hear about safety issues. While officer safety is an important issue and should be discussed the real solutions to our problems lie much deeper. The real safety questions should focus on the "why's" and not the obvious. I believe that questions and concerns about safety should be looked at from the proper perspective: "Why don't we have enough equipment?, Why don't we have uniform implementation of policies and

guidelines?, Why is it that some rangers are not receiving adequate training over and above their annual in-service?, Why is it that the training budget is always the first to be cut?

No real change in the law enforcement program of the NPS can be accomplished without these three things happening, in this order:

1). Creating a "stovepipe" organizational structure for law enforcement. In a 1996 report, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, State, Justice, and Related Agencies requested that the Office of Investigative Agency Policies (OIAP) examine the problem of increasing crime on federal public lands. It requested that: "The OIAP, in consultation with the agencies that have jurisdiction over federal public lands i.e. the Departments of Interior and Agriculture, recommend methods for dealing with this increase in criminal activity." The Director of the IAP asked the US Marshals Service to coordinate preparation of the report. The final report, which was released in 1997, had this recommendation: "Land use law enforcement agencies should examine the benefits of a centralized law enforcement command structure as recently adopted by the Forest Service. It goes on to cite the recommendations of yet another study, the ..."President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency suggested in 1990 that a centralized law enforcement command structure should be considered for both the Park Service and BLM." As a side note, check out the GAO study US Forest Service: Independence Still Lacking in Law Enforcement Organization, October 1993. In it the GAO has outlined the principles that should be considered in developing land use law enforcement management structures.

You know it, I know it. The problem with the law enforcement program of the NPS is not the program itself. IT IS THE MANAGEMENT OF THAT PROGRAM. We should no longer tolerate interference in the management of our program from non-law enforcement personnel. Nor should we continue to allow vital parts of our

program to be administered by the USPP. An organizational structure of this type would ensure that we maintained, in WASO, a strong, dedicated voice whose sole purpose was to support and defend the law enforcement program.

2). Create a line item budget request for the law enforcement program. This would ensure that the law enforcement program gets adequate funding. A separate line item would open up the door for more direct and effective lobbying by a (now) strengthened WASO-RAD, and other interest groups, such as the FOP. This would also insure that the money appropriated for the law enforcement program would not be subjected to the NPS's system of "Robbing Peter to save Paul".

3). Taking control for law enforcement training out of the hands of WASO and putting it into the hands of NPS-FLETC. Again, this would ensure that there would be money, specifically obligated for law enforcement training, that would be "hands off" to others. As it stands now, someone in WASO is deciding whether or not it is more important for you to have advanced law enforcement training, or if the Chiefs of Interpretation get to hold a seminar on saving the endangered Snipe. With the deck already stacked against us, who do you think will win? If this study does not address these issues or give them any mention there must be a hard effort, on the part of the FOP, to get the GAO involved. Which brings up another point. Why bring in an outside entity to study our LE program? Especially since several have already been done by governmental agencies? Here are two last things to ponder: 1). The IACP is a management-oriented organization The International Association of CHIEFS of Police. Who makes up the FOP and FLEOA? 2). There can be no "official" repercussions if none of, or only part of, the recommendations of the study are implemented. The Director will merely have to dust off more shelf space to accommodate the binder. The NPS would certainly be more forthcoming in implementing any recommendations

made in a GAO report. As proof, take a look at how quickly the NPS is moving to correct the deficiencies cited in the GAO study of the NPS Structural Fire Program.

Please don't expect any earth-shattering changes to occur as a result of this study. At least not from management. If this study should turn out the way that I think it will, it will be incumbent upon groups like the FOP and FLEOA, and all law enforcement rangers, to finally say: "Enough is enough!". There must, finally, be meaningful change where change is most necessary. To do anything less would be to dishonor the names of Joseph Kolodski and Steve Jarrell and every other ranger who has made the ultimate sacrifice.

The Return of the Non-Commissioned Chief Ranger

Here's a brain teaser for you: Quick, name one police department where the chief isn't a law enforcement officer. Absurd, right?

It looks like the NPS is moving to turn this absurdity BACK into reality. The Lodge has seen the recent vacancy announcement for the Chief Ranger job at Hot Springs and it's a sad example of a growing trend: Chief Rangers without commissions and without a law enforcement background.

"This position is not covered under 6C retirement. Law enforcement commission is not a prerequisite for position." This and other recent chief ranger hires are raising questions about how much of the job these "Chief Rangers" can do without a commission, especially under DO/RM-9.

Who will be called upon to fill in the position of Senior Law Enforcement Officer? Who will evaluate district rangers in their law enforcement capacity when the chief ranger can't look at the raw data obtained in criminal investigations? Who will represent the

park in inter-agency law enforcement meetings where intelligence data are shared?

It surprises many, and should be a shock to all, to find out that the Chief Ranger of the National Park Service is not commissioned, and that the Senior Law Enforcement Officer for the agency is now the LE Program Manager. This command structure puts managing the law enforcement function a rung farther down the management ladder and farther away from top decision makers. While this may be personally desirable for the incumbent, it is bad news for the ranks of park rangers. The same will be true in parks where chief rangers will not have commissions.

Who will be the SLEO? The LE Specialist? A district ranger? The assistant chief ranger? More importantly, what will non-commissioned Chief Rangers do on the job? Without a commission, drug testing, or background check, how can they review criminal incident reports when by policy they can't even be privy to NCIC printouts and criminal histories? Can they receive sensitive law enforcement intelligence? If they can, then why can't maintenance workers, supply clerks and concession specialists? Can they direct law enforcement incidents, or criminal investigations? How can they when experienced Level II rangers can't perform these roles? Can they order investigations to be terminated? Can the mayor of a city or town order the termination of a police investigation? Can the caretaker at the visitor center? Can they effectively meet with "peers" in other LE agencies, when there are no non-commissioned peers in these other agencies?

Since the positions don't require a background check, can a criminal conviction or two, or more, or drug use and abuse, or DUI convictions legally prohibit them from occupying the job? Does the law enforcement code of ethics apply to this non-sworn person? Probably not. Why should it? They have no commission and have never withstood the scrutiny and training it takes to get

and maintain one. What will prohibit this person in a non-covered position from working into their 60s, 70s, or beyond?

As one observer pointed out, this could never happen in the Fire program, where current qualifications are stringently monitored. As others have stated, this could never happen in any agency that was serious about quality law enforcement, security, resource protection, and a safe working environment. The question would never even arise in an agency that is serious about its law enforcement program. With Ranger Careers, WASO-RAD implemented 6c-covered benchmark position descriptions on field level rangers, with medical, fitness, drug testing, and background standards, thus preventing Chief Rangers and Superintendents from tinkering with the law enforcement program at the field level.

What you may not know is that there were benchmark PD's for Chief Rangers drafted, too, requiring commissions, background checks, medical standards, etc. These PD's would have put an end to this issue. The behind-the-scene politics from the same anti-law enforcement clique of managers of the day prevented the benchmark Chief Ranger PD's from being implemented. So now Superintendents and other managers are tinkering with the only LE positions they have left to manipulate - the Chief Ranger program and Law Enforcement management.

Why? Is it to save money on 6c? Or is it out of a fear or contempt for professional law enforcement? Is it "political correctness?" Is it the NPS quota program? Or is it just ignorance of how to manage a law enforcement program? Unless the agency can evolve to the point where using law enforcement for short term political ends and minor cost savings are not seen by our very top managers as being far more important than the issues of fielding a premier law enforcement program, things will not change.

The Lodge is now in the process of contacting local superintendents who allow non-commissioned employees to be hired as chief rangers.

North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers & Association

Article by Jerry Claassen, NAWEOA District Region 4

On July 12, 1980, in Great Falls Montana, 16 fish and wildlife enforcement officers met. Their purpose was to organize a grass roots professional wildlife enforcement officers association. Other associations existed, however, this was the first to actively solicit membership from all officers in North America.

Since that humble beginning, the North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association (NAWEOA) has grown in membership of over 7000 officers and 60 jurisdictions in the United States and Canada. The objectives of the association are to:

- Secure greater recognition for the members of the Association.
- Encourage and promote high standards of professional wildlife and fisheries enforcement.
- Encourage and develop "esprit de corps" among wildlife and fisheries officers
- Encourage and provide opportunity for discussion of and unique problems facing wildlife and fisheries enforcement
- Organize and initiate social functions for the benefit of the membership, in conjunction with business and professional training

The program and projects of the Association have been diverse. They include:

- Annual conference to exchange information and ideas.
- Maintain a library on professional wildlife and fisheries papers.
- Publish a biannual newsletter for membership
- Establish a "Journal of Wildlife Law Enforcement" aimed at assisting and

educating field officers in various techniques proven successful in investigations.

- Establish a memorial fund for families of slain officers.
- Maintain a reward fund to assist in the capture and prosecution of individuals who take the life of a conservation officer.
- Act in support of issues and events that further the objectives of the organization.
- Coordinate and distribute an officer "Tips" manual.
- Design and Construct a museum and education center devoted to the role of the wildlife and fisheries enforcement officer. Including a "Hall of Honors" for those officers who have given the ultimate sacrifice in protecting our natural resources.

Membership in NAWEOA is not limited to state and provinces. The US Fish and Wildlife Service, Canadian Park Service and the Federal Indian Tribes, to name a few are also who are included.

All commissioned Rangers within the National Park Service are eligible for membership to NAWEOA. At one time the NPS joined as a jurisdictional membership, this is not possible at the time because of other commitments of FOP dues. We would like to invite those Rangers interested in joining or learning more about the NAWEOA to contact our web site at www.naweo.org for an application or write: NAWEOA, P.O. Box 22, Holidaysburg, Pa. 16648. Welcome to NAWEOA!

Tales from the Other Side

The other day I received a short note from Randall Kendrick asking if us ORFs (old retired farts) could write a piece in the newsletter detailing the exploits and pitfalls of retirement for those of you on the good ship NPS TITANIC. I'll do my best to pepper you all with my twisted adventures, advice and philosophy.

One of the first things you undoubtedly hear from the recently retired is that they

got out just in the nick of time because the agency was going to hell. My grandfather left the army after 30 years in 1947 because "it had gone to hell". Rest assured that the Park Service has not gone to hell, it's just been on the waiting list. Money is the other hot topic. Relax, whatever you retire with, \$16,000 or \$60,000, you always want 50% more; it's human nature. I handle it by doing cheap things that I like to do, riding my bike into town (35 miles), reading East Coast Liberal Rags in a West Coast aging hippie coffee house, swimming at the local hot springs and smoking small bore macanudos while the shadows climb up the White Mountains. I've never had the weakness for various toys (new cars, motorboats, motorcycles, motorhomes, electric toothbrushes) of modern America. If you do have a hankering for money siphons, then I would like to suggest that before you turn in the SIG, make use of all that firearms training and carefully put each of your expensive toys out of its misery.

Part time work is another hot topic. Everyone wants to know what you are doing. My basic response is "anything I damn well please, thank you". The truth is, there is a wealth of jobs out there for the reliable warm bodies. Notice I said reliable, not talented. I like the short-term-no-head-no-headache-don't-put-me-in-charge-of-anyone job. Since I have retired I've cored snow for water content in Sierra Nevada, taken care of guinea pigs at a high altitude research station, electroshocked trout, and recorded vegetation density readings. There are these short-term eclectic jobs out there that pay fair (about \$12/hr.), are interesting and end. Volunteerism is the evil flip side of the job circuit; everyone out there figures that now you're retired you'll be glad to do these projects gratis. If that's your bag, cool, but for myself, the roots are blue collar trash. I have this quaint idea, I work, you pay.

There are few things you're really going to love about retirement. Remember going back to the residence at the end of your shift and getting ready to settle down for a fresh salad and medium rare tri-tip off the barbee, trying to relax, aching for that

second beer, but always in the back of your mind is that Dorkasaurus wandering in the woods as out of place as a ballerina at the rodeo? Well, you don't have to worry about him anymore. Here's another one, The spontaneity of being able to go places on a moment's notice is wonderful. Those art shows, slide shows, field trips, late night movies and Jazz Jubilees are now on your agenda if you want them, and you don't have to plan light years ahead to do them. The all time high though, right up there with sex, drugs and rock and roll is.... that's right, NO MORE PAPERWORK!

Now to bring you back down to earth a bit, if you have a significant other (and I don't mean a Golden Retriever) and he or she is your same age and not retired there is going to be a bit of hell to pay. You better get used to the "Well what did you do today?" or the ice-tinged "It must be nice to have the time to read". My learned response to the first query always includes something to do with laundry or dirty dishes. The second comment you will note is a statement, not a question so you're not obliged to answer. At this time I really have no solution to the relationship dilemma other than to tread lightly, listen diligently, don't let them know about the afternoon naps, and get them to retire as soon as possible. This is Walt Hoffmann, located in that little town that time and the railroad forgot (Benton Station CA.) signing off. Happy dreams campers and see you at the next Rainbow Family gathering.

Henry Tunks' Version of Retirement

Retirement is a great deal! It was the best thing I did in my entire life. Retirement is like working. If you want to work there is plenty to do. I have no trouble staying busy. The best part is when the job gets done, today or tomorrow, you can call the shots.

There are always jobs that need to be done around the house. I help out my neighbors on my street with their projects. I also have a house and land in Kentucky that I have to tend to and I go

there about once a month. I have a son and grandchildren and great grandchildren in North Carolina that require a visit quite often. I also have a son and grandchildren in south Alabama that require equal time. I have trouble trying to understand how I ever had time to work. I go to sleep just as fulfilled as I ever did when I worked and there are no phone calls at 2am to disturb my slumber. That is great not to hear the phone or the radio.

My only advice to those who are near retirement, make sure that you are ready. You will always hate to leave and you will miss the people that you work with. If you are ready, things will work out fine. Watch year five. I don't know why

but things seem to happen that year! With me it was heart surgery, I had a quintuple bypass on the 11th day of September, 1998 (David Letterman has nothing on me!). It takes a lot out of you but it was not nearly as bad as I thought that it would be. The doctors say I am doing great! To all, retirement is a great adventure. Look forward to it and enjoy it when the time comes.

I would love to hear from my old friends, my email address is htunks@aol.com. I live at 115 Johnson Dr. Cherokee, AL. 35616 and my phone number is (256) 359-4453.



FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE NATIONAL PARK RANGERS

P. O. BOX 151
FANCY GAP, VA 24328

July 19, 2000

Mr Robert Stanton
Director, National Park Service
1849 C St NW Room 3130
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Sir:

We have noticed that at recent NPS memorial services for park rangers, that the color guard has been furnished by the US Park Police. They have done an excellent job and look quite professional but we would like to see rangers form the color guard at memorial services to rangers.

The National Park Rangers Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police wonders why rangers aren't allowed to serve the National Park Service and honor the memory of its rangers in this manner.

The service makes much of the ranger image and we believe that much of its public relations success with the American people is based on the contribution of park rangers; but, the agency can't seem to make the effort to find rangers to provide this service.

If requested, we can provide your office with a list of commissioned park rangers who will be willing and able to be part of an NPS color guard.

Sincerely,

Randall Kendrick
Executive Director



FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE
NATIONAL PARK RANGERS

P. O. BOX 151
FANCY GAP, VA 24328
June 22, 2000

Hon. George Nethercutt
555 South Main St
Colville, WA 99114

Dear Representative Nethercutt:

Thank you for taking an interest in commissioned rangers of the National Park Service and their plight in relation to the NPS's medical program.

A broad medical surveillance plan for commissioned rangers only, was developed by the National Park Service with no mechanism to ensure uniform implementation throughout the agency. This plan excludes officers of the US Park Police who make up nearly 50% of the law enforcement officers of the NPS. It has been two years since the first rangers have been sent for medical screenings and only now is the NPS developing a tracking method to determine who has had a medical exam and where that individual is in the review and appeal process.

Methods to notify a ranger of a finding of a medical "issue" are inadequate or illegal. We have documented instances where highly confidential medical information has been faxed to unsecure offices where virtually anyone would have access. Medical information sent to the review board by rangers with "issues" has taken six to eight months to be reviewed; conversely, medical issues have taken six to eight months to be reported to the individual and park management. Rangers have been placed on light duty or had their law enforcement commissions suspended during this time. This placed additional burdens on park staffs at the home park.

How seasonal commissioned rangers will be handled is still under review. As of June 20, 2000, the issue was unresolved leaving local management to treat or maltreat these employees - some with over twenty years of service - as they wish. Even though 5CFR339.204 mandates that applicants and employees cannot be nonselected based on medical history alone, the NPS does not want returning seasonals and new permanent hires to have the ability to exercise their rights of appeal.

Rather than implement this program on new hires only, the NPS is applying these standards on every commissioned park ranger. This is extremely rare in the federal government; in fact, we know of no other case where this has been done.

5CFR339.204 states that if an employee can reasonably be expected to perform the duties of a position safely, he/she cannot be removed from the position based on a medical finding. The NPS ignores this law in its implementation of this program. Senior program officials have stated that NPS policy overrides federal law in this (and other) cases.

There is no clear and centrally directed standard of operation for implementing the NPS medical surveillance program. The program is not being managed according to 5CFR, and the medical review boards appear to be extremely subjective and allow veteran rangers to be removed from their law enforcement duties despite documented successful performance in their current positions.

This program should be halted immediately. If the NPS wants a program of this type it should hire expert consultants in this field and classify rangers jobs park-by-park and position-by-position. There is too much variance in ranger positions even within a park for a "one size fits all" approach. Any such program must be based on federal law.

It is our belief that the damage caused by the implementation of this ill-conceived program could have been avoided if the Director of the NPS would have answered any of our letters and entered into a discussion with us.

This program is fatally flawed in its conception; its disregard for guiding laws and regulations; and its implementation. It should be withdrawn immediately and all rangers returned to duty.

Thank you for giving us the chance to be heard.

Sincerely,

Randall Kendrick

Randall Kendrick
Executive Director



FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE
NATIONAL PARK RANGERS

P. O. BOX 151
FANCY GAP, VA 24328
July 19, 2000

Mr Robert Stanton
Director, National Park Service
1849 C st NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr Stanton:

Your program of medical and physical standards (RM/DO-57) for commissioned park rangers is in crisis and demands your immediate attention. The issues include, but aren't limited to:

- * Different policy application between primary and secondary rangers: The NPS employs rangers in primary and secondary law enforcement positions. Although the policy set in RM-57 does not vary in its application between these two levels, the incumbent managers have been granting waivers to secondary level commissioned rangers while restricting primary level rangers with similar conditions.

- * An effort is being made to deny appeals to applicants, including seasonal rangers who have many years of successful performance for the NPS.

- * Inconsistent enforcement of RM-57 within the NPS: The Lodge is aware that RM-57 is being selectively enforced across the nation's parks. While rangers in some parks are being forced into suspension, alternate work assignments, and light duty for conditions that have not affected their performance, rangers in other parks are not being tested or not being notified that they are considered to have a medical "issue". A condition that results in suspension of law enforcement duties in one park is ignored in another.

- * Inconsistent application of a particular medical standard: Rangers said to be suffering from similar medical conditions are being handled differently depending at which park they work. We have seen this with blood pressure readings for an example.

- * Attempts to set RM-57 as the "controlling legal authority" over the presiding laws in 5CFR. The WASHO Human Resources department says that RM-57 is the final word on employee medical standards and dismisses 5CFR339 as a law that the agency may disregard with impunity. Even a cursory review of 5CFR339 will show that these regulations are mandatory for an agency's medical standard's policy. 5CFR339.204 requires an agency to provide for a worker to be returned to work, or be hired, based on a safe work history. The HR staff professes to believe that the policy known as RM-57 takes priority over federal law.

The Lodge wants the current program suspended and re-written to take into account 5CFR339.204. The program also needs to recognize that ranger jobs vary in physical demands from park to park and often within parks.

Sincerely,

Randall Kendrick



FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE
NATIONAL PARK RANGERS

P. O. BOX 151
FANCY GAP, VA 24328
July 19, 2000

Superintendent, Hot Springs NP
PO Box 1860
Hot Springs AR 71901

Dear Sir:

Your park is contemplating hiring a chief ranger who is non-commissioned and not in the 6(c) retirement program. This action has many ramifications of which you may not be aware.

- * Having a non-commissioned chief ranger is unprofessional and puts your park in opposition to standard police practice. Few if any towns, cities and state police departments would hire a non-professional for such an important law enforcement managerial position.

- * A review of the relevant laws and policies convinces us that a non-commissioned chief ranger cannot review ongoing criminal investigations by the park staff. They cannot even view NCIC printouts and criminal histories.

- * We do not believe that a non-commissioned chief ranger can initiate or terminate a criminal investigation.

- * A non-commissioned chief ranger cannot attend meetings with the heads of cooperating law enforcement agencies because he/she cannot be privy to police intelligence which is usually a topic discussed at these meetings. As a matter of fact, this chief ranger would not have a peer because all the other heads of police agencies would be commissioned.

- * We do not think a non-commissioned chief ranger could offer meaningful annual evaluations of his/her subordinate staff because much of the rangers' work would be forbidden to him/her.

- * With a non-commissioned chief ranger, many decisions and much of the liability would be shifted from that position to yours.

With these and other considerations in mind, we respectfully urge you to reconsider hiring a non-commissioned park ranger for your next chief ranger and hire a professional law enforcement person in this important job.

Sincerely,

Randall Kendrick

Randall Kendrick
Executive Director



U.S. Park Rangers Lodge
Fraternal Order of Police
POB 151
Fancy Gap, VA 24328



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 & 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