

The Protection Ranger

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

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President's Message Greg Johnston

Veronza Bowers Jr.

As many of you are aware, Veronza Bowers, convicted murderer of Ranger Kenneth Patrick; was scheduled to be released on February 21st. Thanks to the diligence of a Lodge member, we discovered in time to gather support and with the help of the Grand Lodge of the FOP, we were able to convince the U.S. Parole Commission stop Bowers release in order for Ranger Patrick's wife to present evidence to the Commissioners hearing the case.

We have presented our case to the Parole Commissioners and are eagerly awaiting their decision. We are unsure if we will be able to keep Bowers in prison to serve the remainder of his life sentence. Due to a sentencing technicality, there was a chance that Bowers could go free after only serving 30 years of his life sentence.

I would like for everyone to keep Tomie Patrick Lee and her family in your thoughts

and prayers during this ordeal. If not for her strength and conviction, Bowers would already be back on the street, poised to commit another brutal crime.

FLERT and 6c issues

For the past several years, FLERT has been working feverishly under the radar trying to undermine the victories that properly compensated the NPS Law Enforcement Rangers. By misconstruing the Watson decision, they have consistently held the opinion that NPS Rangers do not deserve LE enhanced pay or retirement. The most recent attack came with the rescission of coverage of the seasonal LE position descriptions.

Now FLERT is going back over previous awarded claims and are revoking periods of coverage that are affecting a large number of employees. Employees with 15 years of service in current supervisory LE positions are getting their primary coverage positions denied and because they moved into a secondary LE position from this no longer covered position, they lose their secondary coverage also. This is a horrible way to treat your employees and not the way the DOI or the NPS should be doing business in a time where professionalizing and reforming the LE function are allegedly in progress.

The lodge is encouraging all members to submit a FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) request to the Department of Interior to gather all information that FLERT has on your claim or position description. A sample letter is printed in this newsletter and the document is available for download on the Lodge Webpage. Submit your letter to the DOI to get copies of all documents maintained, created, or collected for consideration of your claim. Carefully review the documents for irregularities or

information on how they are making their determinations. You can request the documents to be sent to you in an electronic or hardcopy format.

If every member were to send in a FOIA request, our voice will be heard by the highest levels in Washington D.C. We need to send a clear message to FLERT and the DOI that we are going to fight this battle with an unparalleled effort and commitment. The Lodge is also interested in hearing from members that have received any information from FLERT regarding rescission of coverage or upcoming MSPB hearings. Please forward this information on to either Randall or myself.

Fraternally,
Greg Johnston

Computer Malfunction

The Lodge's computer crashed and we lost all our membership data. Fortunately, I have paper records of all the money sent in for dues and donations. And, the files were backed up on disc as of two months ago. What we are lacking are changes of address that have been sent in since December. If you get your issue with the wrong address please let the Lodge know at: randallfop@ls.net or 800-407-8295. If you hear of a member commenting that he or she did not receive this issue, please have them contact the Lodge so we can replace the issue and make sure that the name and address are in our database. We regret the inconvenience.
Randall Kendrick

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Editor's Note

In several articles in this issue you will see the 6[c] situation addressed. It is good to have varying views. One thing is certain however and it is that 6[c] coverage for park rangers is no longer certain and is no longer NPS guaranteed through the position descriptions.

It is our understanding that top managers in the NPS-WASO are supportive of rangers' being in the 6[c] system and we are thankful for that. They need to do more: They need to put before the Congress an agency backed bill that writes into law our 6[c] coverage. You will also see reference to a FLERT official's comments that appear at face to be prejudicial to rangers' 6[c] coverage and vindictive to those who exercise their rights under Merit Systems and win. This information is by way of a Lodge non-member who occupies a senior position in a regional office. His first hand reports of his conversation with the FLERT official is to be found in the members-only section of the Lodge web site.

We have written to the Hon Earl Devaney, IG of the Interior Dept, asking him to investigate these comments and subsequent actions. It is a fact that park rangers have had 6[c] coverage taken from them even when that coverage was not part of an MSPB or other quasi-judicial process. To us, this is very wrong and goes against due process provisions of the constitution.

On another note, April marks the 15th anniversary of the founding of the Eastern Rangers Lodge of the FOP. At that time we were not allowed by the Grand Lodge or have a nationwide organization so the country was divided at the Mississippi River for administrative purposes. From the original 37 charter members, this Lodge quickly grew to many hundred and eventually was allowed to merge with the Western Lodge which was 3 years its senior.

Thirdly, with the 6[c] crisis and the NPS's continuing atrocious record of assaults on rangers, we are unable to give the time to resource protection that we want and need to. There is a lot of expertise in the Lodge on the subject of modern methods of

protecting our resources but our priority has to be for the safety of our members.

Randall Kendrick,
Editor and Lodge Secretary

Sample FOIA Letter to DOI

Below you will see a sample letter to FLERT to file under the [F]reedom [O]f [I]nformation [A]ct This FOIA letter will get you the information you need to better prepare your case before the MSPB to defend your 6[c] status. The Lodge Executive committee strongly urges you to file this letter as soon as possible if you have a case challenging your 6[c] past credit or you have not gotten a ruling on your application for past retirement credit.

(insert your name)
(insert your address)
(insert your phone number)

(insert date)

Department of the Interior
Departmental FOIA Officer
MS-5312, MIB
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

FOIA REQUEST

Dear FOI Officer:

Pursuant to the federal Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552, I request access to and copies of all information contained, maintained, or collected by the FLERT office regarding the consideration and pending approval or denial of any portion of my retirement claim with the National Park Service and Department of Interior.

I agree to pay reasonable duplication fees for the processing of this request.

If my request is denied in whole or part, I ask that you justify all deletions by reference to specific exemptions of the act. I will also expect you to release all segregable portions of otherwise exempt material. I, of course, reserve the right to appeal your decision to

withhold any information or to deny a waiver of fees.

I look forward to your reply within 20 business days, as the statute requires.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

(insert your name)

Goodbye Tony, and Good Luck!

Long time Lodge Treasurer Tony Macri has left his position with the Lodge after years of excellent service. Tony was the Treasurer and member of the executive board. In addition to his treasurer duties, Tony traveled several times to Washington, DC, on behalf of Lodge members, meeting with DOI, NPS & Congressional officials as well as meeting with our Brothers and Sisters of the US Park Police and officers of the FOP's DC office.

The Lodge cannot replace Tony and he will be missed. Tony is leaving the NPS for a police officer job in northern New Jersey. We wish him the best: He had been recruited for years and finally put career and family first and took the job. It is interesting to note that Tony will be making more money as a police officer with a municipality than he did as a GS-11 supervisor with fourteen years service in the NPS.

Tony spent his career at Valley Forge and the Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway East. He and the other rangers at Sandy Hook have a case load as great as any in the NPS because "The Hook" has the longest stretch of public access beach in the New York City metro area. Although the agency probably will not admit it, the NPS will also miss a dynamic officer in the prime of his career.

So, Tony, Best of Luck; your Lodge Sisters and Brothers thank you for the years of dedicated service to us and to the ranger profession in general. We know you'll do well in your new position and wish you a very successful career.

NPS WASO Letter

To: Karen Taylor-Goodrich
NPS WASO

Dear Karen:

I hope this first day of spring finds you well and preparing for the upcoming visitor season. We do have several major concerns however.

The Lodge is dismayed over the delay in reaction to the NAU study on assaults on NPS rangers. Has there been any reaction from WASO at all?

The report has never been officially released. Neither you, Don, nor anyone in the chain has expressed an opinion on it to the field through an official channel. And, we have not seen an action plan for implementing changes in the agency operation, training, and culture needed to improve safety of rangers in the field, which includes the hundreds of members of our Lodge.

We are deeply disappointed in this apparent lack of concern for ranger safety. Seasonal park rangers are about to begin their summer assignments. Many parks have begun, or will soon begin, their law enforcement refreshers. Yet because of this delay, the NPS has no analysis of how to improve training, staffing, operations, etc. based on the report, and therefore the training offered this year will not be based on the latest research. This is appalling, and embarrassing and dangerous.

The Lodge first offered the idea of a study of ranger assaults to the Secretary over two years ago. We are glad to see it accomplished. However, to leave the study on how to improve ranger safety a secret does no good at all. In years past, the Ranger Activities operation communicated regularly with the field. Those days have disappeared, much to the detriment of operations.

We urge you to formally release this document to the field, and instruct NPS Law Enforcement leadership to develop a plan to improve ranger safety.

Last October, we offered a

recommendation to DOI that the NPS increase its annual LE training requirement to 80 hours until the safety record of NPS rangers improves. We would urge you to look at this recommendation, and to examine the quality of the curriculum that rangers are being taught in refresher training. Obviously, it isn't working now

We also would like to know why Bill Sanders is not on the NPS 6[c] study team. We think his expertise would be a big asset.

Please try and help make 2005 a safe and effective visitor season for NPS rangers.

Sincerely,
Randall Kendrick
US Park Rangers Lodge
Fraternal Order of Police

Letter to the Honorable Earl Devaney, Inspector General, DOI

To; Hon. Earl Devaney - Inspector General,
DOI

Dear Sir:

We are writing to you because the situation for law enforcement rangers in the NPS has become dire.

FLERT, which you have previously investigated, is doing two things [among others] that are causing rangers morale to tank and cause many of them to apply for jobs in other agencies.

FLERT is over-riding previous DOI rulings giving 6[c] credit to individual rangers and FLERT is opening 6[c] cases and taking away 6[c] time even when such time is not at issue on appeal. No rangers' retirement is safe under FLERT's new regimen.

What do you think this does to morale?

In addition, FLERT is spending extravagantly on legal fees to challenge rangers' appeals. The typical FLERT team which shows up at MSPB hearings consists of two lawyers and up to four paralegals. That's some high-priced personnel to fly around the country, especially since the National Park Service is supportive of 6c retirement for rangers. This political

infighting within DOI is a massive waste of tax dollars. In addition, the cost to individual employees to fight the FLERT attack dogs is often overwhelming. This petty infighting is causing rangers to leave the agency, or to retire early -- costing the agency valuable senior employees.

Attached is a copy of an MSPB decision regarding NPS ranger Detterline. You will see how the court ruled against the DOI lawyer team, and how the DOI lawyers arguments appear to be petty and vindictive, lacking common sense. FLERT is doing whatever they can, no matter how absurd, to oppose legitimate retirement coverage for rangers.

This infighting within the DOI is a classic example of government waste and abuse of authority.

We encourage you to contact the Chief Ranger of the Intermountain Region of the NPS, Kevin Fitzgerald. He will be able to give you first-hand information regarding a personal comment he heard from the head of FLERT -- that if FLERT lost a specific case, they would re-open the previously adjudicated 6c cases of all NPS rangers with the intent of denying them. This goes beyond efficiency of operation -- and goes directly to a personal vendetta of one individual.

We ask that you investigate FLERT officials for abuse of authority, damaging the ability of the NPS to enforce federal law on NPS property, and mis-spending public funds.

Here is an in depth analysis documenting why FLERT is wrongly interpreting recent federal court decisions. We will be glad to discuss this matter with you and provide names of cases where FLERT took back previously granted 6[c] credit and cooperate with your investigation in any way we can.

Sincerely,
Randall Kendrick
Executive Director,
US Park Rangers Lodge

[NOTE: the Detterline case and the memo from the Chief Ranger of the Intermountain are in the library of the Members Only section of the Lodge web page]

Filner Bill Progress

Lodge Past President Pete Tortorell is working with the DC office of the FOP to try and get commissioned rangers' 6[c] status written into federal law. The FOP office is headed by Chris Granberg. A bill has once again been introduced, this time by Rep Filner, to give Customs agents at the border 6[c] status. This has been in the legislative hopper for years but this time there's a Republican sponsoring and writing it.

HR-1002 was introduced by Representatives Filner and McHugh and seeks to extend to the Customs and Border Protection Inspectors and IRS revenue agents the 6[c] benefits other federal officers have. Although this type of bill has been introduced before, it is believed that it has the best chance of passage in this Congress.

Granberg advised that the Filner bill has been introduced twice before, but it is believed that this is as good a chance as it is going to get to go forward with it. The FOP plan is to get as many cosponsors as possible for Filner especially Republican cosponsors, since it is a Republican congress.

The FOP plan on the Filner Bill is to get as many cosponsors on the Republican side as possible - it's a GOP show, remember - while adding commissioned rangers to those the bill already wants to cover. The FOP is also spending time on pay and benefits for federal LE officers in the Government Affairs committee. If what we want fails there, and the FOP has gotten a lot of cosponsors for the Filner bill, then some of the best features from the other committee might be tacked on to the Filner Bill. Mr Granberg said the FOP's highest priority is getting all federal LE officers covered under 6[c]. That's great news for us rangers.

The Lodge is indebted to brother Tortorell for working so closely with the FOP's DC office This is one very positive thing to come out of the trips Pete and others have made to Washington over the past three years: getting to know personally the members of the FOP's DC office and to learn what they need from us to be

effective on our behalf. Many thanks to Pete for a job well done. Of course much needs to be accomplished, but the DC office is aware of our problems - including the huge FLERT imbroglio - and is actively on our side. These matters - including FLERT - are brought up in conversation with Congress people and their staffers. You can't buy this kind of personal access; it has to be earned and there has to be clout behind it. When members of the FOP's DC office visit a member of Congress's office, over 300,000 FOP members are there in spirit and it helps.

Letter From Retiree Jerry Grubb

Jerry Grubb has been a dedicated member of our Ranger Lodge since day one. He had a remarkable career with the NPS and in his later years management decided his dedication to safe and efficient law enforcement wasn't "proper" and he was subject to petty nit-picking and worse. There's not another ranger you would want to show up if you called for backup than Brother Grubb. As with all the articles that are signed, the thoughts and opinions expressed by Jerry are his and his alone. editor

I have just read the latest FOP newsletter and find things haven't changed since I retired almost a year and a half ago. The continued verbiage of 6c-Le-Law enforcement—job descriptions - 51%-arrest-investigation- and on and on and on is nothing more than a stuck record. It is pretty clear law enforcement rangers are going to continually be harassed while the departmental do gooders are rewarded for keeping the pressure on people like Teresa who had a little common sense and tried to make a difference. The fraternity of rangers in the NPS is quickly becoming a bunch of misfits due to leadership that will not and cannot comprehend pure common sense and constantly ignores the qualities that good rangers possess and continually places misfits in management and leadership positions. This is all for personal, selfish career enhancements because of political and social favors accomplished by the kiss the tush hiring process. As for 6c and law enforcement investigations and the whole 51% BS, I cannot forget my own career and the lessons learned and the price paid in the

law enforcement division of the NPS. Out of the past four law enforcement rangers that have been killed in the line of duty, I have worked with personally three of them being Bob McGhee, Joe Kolodski and Kris Eggle. While I only knew and worked with Kris while he was a "hog hunter" at the Great Smokies, I knew Kris for the type of person he was and his desire to be in the front lines as a national park Ranger. Kris was one to be counted on in the time of any emergency and his sacrifice proves his devoted efforts and personality to place himself in harms way to be one of the best law enforcement rangers in the country. Kris was definitely performing in an area of 51%, arresting and investigating. An area of high risk and known dangers that should have been accounted for by managers and leaders to protect the rangers at all cost. While I was not there and never been there and not planning to go there, it is pretty clear Kris was left in a hostile environment without back-up, but Kris's drive and motivation to be a great park ranger, he paid the price.

I met and knew Joe Kolodski at FLETC where we were classmates. Several years after FLETC, Joe and I were reunited again at the Great Smokies where we worked together in different districts but met regularly at the top of the mountain that was the district line. Joe had a strong law enforcement commitment and pursued this commitment without a doubt. I know this because Joe caught me speeding in my POV in his district. Rather just saying HI or I didn't know it was you, or don't worry about it or anything to the contrary, I was lectured on speeding (50/35) in the park. He took his job very seriously. When Joe was gunned down and murdered, I was at my house nailing shingles on my roof when the dispatcher called and asked if I could respond to the shooting. When I asked how bad it was the dispatcher said the shooting was still going on and Joe had been shot. I only know of seconds before I was in my cruiser and enroute to Joe's district. It was about 50 miles to the location and to say the least I was speeding. Another ranger was with me and the entire trip was in silence. The yelp of the sirens squealing tires, engine roar and ongoing radio traffic wasn't even heard and Chip didn't say a word about us running 100 mph. Our concentration and thoughts were completely focused on getting there and getting Joe out of trouble. As we

approached the scene I can only remember passing Joe's bullet riddled patrol car, coming to a stop and meeting another ranger who came up to me and said it looked like Joe had been killed and the suspect was still at large. I remember almost falling to the ground because my knees were so weak from the shock. No doubt, 51%, investigation, arrest, dead officer! The suspect was captured and I had the pleasure of transporting the murderer to the Ashville jail late that night. I often wonder to this day what it would have been like for him to try to escape, but the stinking south end of a north bound mule just sat without movement while I got him safely stored in the jail.

Joe's death was uncalled for and the factors and events and truths have yet to be disclosed. While I cannot comment on Kris's situation, I cannot help to think his death as well as Joe's could have been prevented. The leadership, animosities and malfeasance and nonfeasance by the managers at the Great Smokies was a large factor in the death of Joe Kolodski in my opinion, and without a doubt his death could have been prevented. The Smokies is definitely an area of high risk and an enormous amount of law enforcement incidents and rangers that work this area know and should know the consequences. While the ranger takes the risk on his own, it is no need for the law enforcement program to suffer any needless political and social ramifications to satisfy certain peoples career aspirations that is the interference causing the law enforcement program to be handled in such a sloppy and inefficient manner. These horrific events should be a wake up call to the NPS to shape up but instead I still hear of continuous malfeasance and nonfeasance throughout the NPS. Not about the rangers, but the managers and supervisors who continually cause the field rangers to stress out and make mistakes that most likely will cause another fatality. Respect and gratitude for Joe has been totally ignored. How many times do we drive down the interstate to see a section of the roadway named in honor of fallen law enforcement officers that was killed in performing his duty? Joe also did this by responding to a popular overlook in the park that should be to this day named in his honor. Rather than honor his legacy by renaming the overlook, or placement of a monument, his legacy is remembered by a bug that was found in the

parked and named after Joe. Yes, that is correct, a stinking bug, insect, larvae that no one had ever seen and will probably never find again and this is the way the NPS has honored Joe. This should be a hint to all NPS law enforcement officers where they stand in trying to maintain their 6c status and be professional and why there are so many officers being assaulted and killed in the NPS. More emphasis is placed on counting hoppy toads and saving the lives of insects and is more important than the lives and well being of park visitors and law enforcement officers. Joe's radio number was retired for the time being but sooner and later someone is going to come along and the number will be used again just as his blood stained, bullet riddled patrol car that was patched up and back in service with a visible bullet hole still left in the cage. Pretty pitiful and very insulting to the rest of us.

I worked and trained with Bob McGhee on a regular basis. This was early on in my career and way before the 6c, 51% investigation BS and so forth. We were just at the stage of getting to actually wear your .38 caliber revolver rather than carry it as a brief case. I worked in an urban area with high crime, involving extreme incidents of murder, rape, assaults and overwhelming misdemeanors involving drunken out of control idiots. Bob worked in an area that was not much larger than our campground, a city park environment with mostly picnics and campers. Crime at a minimum, although there was a knife murder one night in the campground. Bob was probably one of the most friendly people and laid back rangers I knew. He was also very hardworking and caring. He drove one of the infamous K-cars and a little Kojack blue light, with the light cord running out of the cigarette lighter and over the top of the roof top. Made criminals stop and take notice, that Officer Fife was probably on patrol in the area and they quietly got the hell out of there. This was acceptable at the time because the NPS did not want to intimidate any citizen or criminals by looking like dreaded cops and I guess it was also acceptable to Bob and knowing the area as a small quiet city park, and I guess at the time one would expect this. On the other hand I was outfitted with a full size Chevy Caprice, shotguns, bullet vest, and an oversized law enforcement ego that put me in the same arena with Eastwood and Fife. The very early days of NPS law enforcement that was going to make the difference in the

upcoming modern NPS law enforcement program sanctioned by legislation, mandates and policies, that was all condensed into a great publication called NPS 9. It was not out of anything other than new (and law) that made our managers apprehensive about law enforcement, and they still wanted to leash rangers from performing law enforcement but had the common sense to realize the need for some support and the liabilities from no support. The difference between Bob's job and my job was nothing Different except environmental difference. The threat was still there. His support from his supervisors was exceptional. There just was not a lot to do in this little park that would require constant law enforcement attitudes and the job sure wasn't 51%. Maybe a stolen cooler investigation and a dog off leash warning.

Point being, it just did not take investigation, 51%, arrest, moperly with intent to creep or felonious hiebotchery to get Bob gunned down and murdered. An authority, wearing a uniform, carrying a gun is a threat to all misfits of society. An officer of the law who is fixing to violate some dirt bag's desire to take advantage of the citizens of a society that cannot comprehend there are hairballs and scrotes, out there and these citizens need people like Bob McGee and Kris Eggle and Joe Kolodski. The managers and leaders of the NPS are none other than the "citizens" that ain't got a clue and quite frankly could care less. The very day Bob was gunned down should have changed the attitudes of the NPS to maintain a professional and full time law enforcement division and keep from spending needed funding in trying to reinvent law enforcement. Professional managers with superb conduct, rather than drunken and perverted superintendents we all know about, should be leading and not managers with serious ethics and conduct backgrounds that have been places in charge of law enforcement to oversee the law enforcement operation.

My career was very exciting and rewarding for the first twenty years, I took my chances because I was stupid and full vinegar. I did it for the love of the job and profession and would have probably worked for free although we did work for free more than one can know. I was later exposed to the very parasites that are

killing the rangers and the ranger profession. While there are some very great rangers out there, they are overshadowed by the few that in my opinion are children playing with guns. Unfortunately the children are the ones that end up trying to supervised and lead. When the criminal element finds out there are children in charge and especially during these times of terror, they are going to go for the weakest link. In my opinion, the NPS law enforcement program is the "weakest link"! Everyone that knows me and knows of my difficult departure from the NPS probably knows I am very biased about the NPs but I think I speak of the truth and I am witness to the destruction of some good friends and good people because of sloppy and inefficient leadership and management. It is about time or I should say past time that the NPS should stop trying to re-invent law enforcement procedures, policies and programs, and stop worrying about the mule going blind and just load up the damn wagon. I think some people are in place that would like to see the mess over with but they are worried about the mule going blind if they speak up they are going to overturn the wagon. I can speak out, but rangers know they have to keep quiet if they want to keep their jobs. Ask Teresa. It was not suppose to be that way, but I endured 27 years and after finishing the FOP newsletter and seeing the ongoing problems associated with the law enforcement division I guess I was lucky to just get out alive with a little bit of sense to go along with my forever good looks. Anyone wanting to comment, just email me at lilsmokyrangersta@hotmail.com and as LE rangers always support gun control. (i.e.-sight alignment and trigger control.)

Jerry Grubb
NPS Retired!

Lodge Letter to Karen Taylor-Goodrich

The Lodge has written Karen Taylor-Goodrich regarding the NPS's failure to release Northern Arizona University's report on rangers assaulted in the line of duty.

The report has been complete for months, and is available on the Lodge's website.

However, it has never been officially released by the NPS.

The report details the primary reasons that rangers get assaulted. A logical outcome of releasing the report is that training could be created or adapted to take account of the report, and work on remedying the causes of the assaults.

Because WASO failed to act in a timely manner, the report is not out to the field in time for training for the summer season. This means seasonals -- our most under-trained component of the workforce -- will not have the benefit of improved training that the report would have fostered.

WASO has taken a load of liability on itself by failing to act on these important safety issues in a timely manner.

Last fall, the Lodge recommended to DOI that the NPS increase LE training to 80 hours a year until the assault rate on rangers reaches a level comparable to other agencies. The Lodge is itself responsible for the NAU report -- it was created in response to our recommendation for an FBI study of assaults on rangers after the Jarrell murder.

Not releasing this important safety report to the field as soon as possible is nothing short of negligence. Imagine the outcry if WASO failed to forward a recall notice on vehicle brakes to the field, or held on to it for months. This is exactly what is happening to the ranger safety study.

The Lodge asks WASO to formally release this study immediately, to instruct FLETC to develop a national training strategy for the Service based on the report, to double ranger training hours until the assault statistics drop to a level comparable to other agencies. This proposal is more than reasonable, yet the continued lack of leadership in ranger activities means that none of us should hold our breath.

Be safe out there.

NPCA & The Rangers Lodge

The full report is to be found at the NPCA website. This venerable organization has done a lot of good work on behalf of the

national parks and is deserving of your support. Please check out their site and their accomplishments. If you type in NPCA on a google.com search, you will find the link to their site...Editor

One of the things I wanted to accomplish was to establish firm links with conservation organizations such as the Sierra Club and the National Parks Conservation Association. Over the years our approaches to them had either been ignored or rebuffed. This is baffling to me: How can you protect the resources in park if you don't protect the protectors and provide enough protectors to be truly effective? Anyway, we persisted in our efforts and finally have had a success. We worked with the NPCA and provided much background information for their recent Top Ten Threats to National Parks. We did not get the slant we pitched but much of our information was used. It was a positive experience and one upon which we hope to build. The NPCA report is found at their website and it is very thorough and well researched. A lot of Lodge work went into it; we did not get exactly what we wanted but we did work closely with NPCA and that's a good first step.

Below are excerpts from the NPCA report. If you don't have time to read the whole thing, then here's some information that is law enforcement oriented. It is good to see an organization like the NPCA boldly state that the NPS needs to re-order it's priorities and that there are significant areas where improved management is needed immediately.

The 850,000 acres in Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks are some of the wildest country in the Sierra Nevada range-so much so that law enforcement rangers in the National Park Service have nicknamed these parks the "Wild, Wild West." It is here among California's tall sequoias, soaring mountain peaks, and narrow canyons that the Park Service is fighting a war with organized crime.

Between January and September 2004, the Park Service and local and federal law enforcement agencies tracked down and removed \$176 million worth of marijuana plants - exceeding the 2003 yearly total. The clandestine marijuana gardens and their guards - men armed with AK-47s - are polluting rivers and streams with

fertilizer, trampling delicate soils and disrupting natural drainage, piling trash, laying miles of irrigation tubing, and poaching wildlife.

Sequoia and Kings Canyon are understaffed and underfunded, but rangers are doing their best to protect the parks by coordinating multi-agency raids and alerting the parks' 1.5 million annual visitors to the dangers that might exist just off the trail-or alongside their campsite.

These parks are not alone. Over the past year, rangers have seized illegal drugs at several parks, including Organ Pipe Cactus and Coronado national monuments in Arizona, and Padre Island National Seashore and Amistad National Recreation Area in Texas.

Law Enforcement Needs are System-Wide

The chronically understaffed Park Service is increasingly challenged to protect visitors, cultural artifacts, and wildlife. In 2002, the agency recorded 11,000 violations of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, which among other things, prohibits destruction or removal of rare or valuable artifacts from parklands. This is a permanent loss to the American public. In its fiscal year 2005 budget, the administration raised concerns that,

"the illegal removal of wildlife from the parks is suspected to be a factor in the decline of at least 29 species of wildlife, and could cause the extirpation of 19 species from the parks."

In Shenandoah National Park in Virginia, black bears are poached so that their body parts can be resold as aphrodisiacs. An intact black bear gall bladder, for example, can easily fetch up to \$3,000 on the international black market. Brown bears are poached from Katmai National Park and Preserve in Alaska. Moss is poached from Olympic National Park in Washington and ginseng plants are removed from their natural range from Shenandoah south to Great Smoky Mountains National Park. This year, eight grizzly bears were shot or poisoned in and around Glacier and Yellowstone national parks.

Additional rangers are needed in marine

parks such as Dry Tortugas and Biscayne in Florida to prevent illegal fishing and coral poaching, and enforce boating safety and navigation laws. In 2002, National Park Service Director Fran Mainella told Congress that "poaching, overfishing, and improper fishing, boating, and diving practices" were among the "activities that contribute to the degradation" of Virgin Islands National Park's fragile marine ecosystem.

In 2003, the Interpol Working Group on Wildlife Crime reported that "globally, wildlife smuggling is estimated to be worth \$US6 billion to \$US10 billion a year, ranking third behind narcotics and arms smuggling."

But poaching and drugs are only two reasons the Park Service needs greater law enforcement resources and capacity. The agency estimates that it needs approximately 60 new law enforcement rangers in Alaska - double the current number on staff - to conduct search and rescue and provide emergency medical services for visitors, and patrol the immense national parks in that state.

At Mojave National Preserve in the California desert, inadequate funding and staffing limit the ability of park rangers to investigate illegal off-road vehicle use, hazardous material dumping, and archaeological crimes that degrade the park. Additional capacity is also needed to rein in the rampant speeding on park roads that kills desert tortoise and other wildlife.

And finally, the NPCA recognized us as the experts in the field of national park law enforcement and the source for accurate information on the state of resource protection when they included the following:

Contact the U.S. Park Ranger Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police, an association of Park Service law enforcement rangers, for more information about law enforcement needs in the national parks.

This is yet another example of our assertions calling for change has been investigated and found to be accurate. We cooperate with a wide variety of organizations and involved citizens and are recognized for both our efforts and the accuracy of our information.

This is a credit to all Lodge members and the work they have performed over the years.

Randall Kendrick

Regional Chief Ranger Reports on FLERT

03/01/2005 09:45 AM EST

To: Don_Coelho@nps.gov

Karen_Taylor-Goodrich@nps.gov

cc: Scott_Wanek@nps.gov

Mary Martin/MOJA/NPS@NPS

Subject: Fw: Great 6c case!

This is a must read before your meetings with general law, Miller, etc today. It affirms virtually everything we have been arguing about this matter.

This is the case in which Gilmore, off the record, but in the presence of ROMO Ranger Kurt Oliver, told the judge that if she ruled in favor of the employee (which she did!!!) that he would personally re-open all

past adjudicated claims and seek to overturn them. When I questioned DOI Sol Suzanna Beck about this, she eventually admitted that he did say something to that effect.

Two interesting points on page 20. The first, at the top of the first paragraph, repeats what I have been saying about the difference between a level I and a level II commission being tied to supervision and based upon experience and circumstance, not restricted by policy. The second paragraph points out the issue of the agency having given credit to others previously for the same job and duties. This is significant for many reasons.

Kevin

Kevin FitzGerald
Intermountain Region Chief Ranger
303-969-2641 Office
303-919-0710 Cell
303-969-2037 Fax

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



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

