



# RANGER ACTIVITIES INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Volume 7, Number 1

March/April, 1991

## Chief Ranger's Comments

Over the last several years, there has been a significant increase in national attention to decreasing the use of illegal drugs in the United States. The National Park Service has been a very active participant in the Department of Interior's effort to eliminate illegal drug activities on public lands. These efforts have been keyed to the interdiction of smuggling, manufacturing, cultivation, distribution, and use of these substances. Rangers and Park Police officers have done an outstanding job in meeting these objectives.

Over the last five years, we have made the point that there are a number of National Park Service areas that experience various types of recurring drug enforcement problems. In some areas, those illegal activities have posed an actual or potential threat to park visitors and employees. Although the number of commissioned permanent and seasonal rangers has increased slightly in the past few years, law enforcement efforts generally have been reduced due to the increase in the number of park areas and in our enforcement responsibilities. With your help, we were able to identify a need for additional personnel, equipment, training, and support, and were able to make the case that additional resources would be required in order to be effective and operate safely in drug enforcement operations. As a result of these efforts, we have received significant additional resources over the last two years.

We have stressed in all negotiations and representations that, as a rule, it was not the intent of the Service to set up separate drug enforcement operations or create dedicated drug enforcement positions. The purpose of our efforts has been to augment existing enforcement capabilities in order to more effectively and safely attain expanding drug enforcement objectives. An additional \$3,696,000 and 60 FTE's have been allocated to the Service. These have mostly gone to field operations. Additional needs have been identified and included in future budget requests.

Support for obtaining additional funds is to some extent dependent on successful use of the funds we currently are receiving. It has been made extremely clear to us that we do not have latitude to use these funds for other purposes, and we have accordingly been asked to document annually how the funds were distributed and used. While we have no latitude to utilize these funds to accomplish other important tasks, we have seen a general improvement in our protection capability because of the additional personnel and equipment we've been able to hire or procure with this money.

Many excellent cases have been made, a number of which you have read about in the Ranger Activities morning report. One of our best successes in the "War On Drugs", however, is one that you have not read about - the DARE program.

DARE is an acronym for Drug Awareness Resistance Education. This effort was begun in 1983 by the Los Angeles Police Department in that city's unified school district. The program primarily targets children in elementary school grades five and six. The purpose of the curriculum is to impart the following to students regarding drug use:

- To provide accurate information about drugs and alcohol;
- To teach students decision-making skills;
- To show students how to resist peer pressure; and
- To provide students with alternatives to drug use.

Initial effectiveness studies in Los Angeles indicate a 50% increase in grade point average and a very significant increase in overall cooperation and work habits in DARE graduates. There are now 8,500 officers trained to instruct the DARE curriculum, and over 4.5 million school children in the U.S. have received the instruction. The benefits are outstanding and the success rate has been remarkable.

Beginning with staff at the Grand Canyon, the Park Service has now trained over 50 instructors - ten Park Police officers and 40 rangers - and has presented the course to many thousands of students in and around NPS areas since 1987. The positive response to the parks from the local communities for this important service has been especially rewarding. In addition to the direct individual help given to participating students, the Service is seen as a very positive contributor to the well-being of the community in general.

While it does require an investment of time for a commissioned ranger, the benefits to the agency and the community seem to far outweigh the time requirements. The program is being implemented by more parks each year, and current local programs are being expanded. In distributing the drug enforcement funding, we have allocated additional funds to parks and to regions who are undertaking DARE training. In addition, DARE instructor training has been funded for the last two years. Serious consideration is being given to establishing a national DARE training coordinator to provide training and assistance to DARE instructors Servicewide.

The person who has been the principle leader in the NPS DARE program is ranger Beth Betts, who is currently stationed at Grand Teton. If you have an interest in learning more about this very important program, I would encourage you to give Beth a call. The benefits in relation to the investment seem to be great. Virtually every place that has initiated a program has received community financial contributions to help. We will continue to fund this program as a very high priority in the National Park Service's contribution to the "War On Drugs".

## REPORT ON REGIONAL CHIEF RANGERS' MEETING

Over the course of a week in the middle of January, the ten regional chief rangers and staff members from this office met in Arlington, Virginia, to discuss a number of operational issues. Although the primary emphasis was on law enforcement matters, participants also addressed a variety of other topics, ranging from uniform appearance to structural fire management. The following report summarizes the findings and recommendations that came out of that meeting:

### LAW ENFORCEMENT

#### Background Checks

Full field background checks will soon be required by OPM for all permanent employees with law enforcement commissions, and limited background checks will be required for all commissioned seasonals. OPM initially specified that seasonals would also need full field investigations, but agreed to reduce the requirement because of the logistical and economic burden it would place on the parks. The current cost for a full field is between \$2,100 and \$2,300; limited checks cost about \$1,600. Because of the time required to complete a full field, investigations for permanent employees will have to be initiated before the employee is nominated to attend FLETC.

#### Selection and Approval

The regional chief rangers recommended that we consider utilization of Park Police entry level procedures for hiring of permanent law enforcement personnel as a model for establishing entry level criteria for commissioned rangers. Under Park Police procedures, applicants must pass written, driver training and physical tests before hiring. Physical and psychological tests are conducted by medical personnel, and standards have been set for successful completion of each. The testing is followed by an oral review board and background check, with a six-month turnaround for the latter.

#### Inactive Commissions

Suspension and revocation of the commission is inappropriate for non-disciplinary action or injuries which may affect a park ranger's performance, such as pregnancies, line-of-duty injuries or medical emergency operations, since the ranger may be able to function in some law enforcement capacity in many of these situations. The regional chiefs recommended that the Service study the feasibility of adopting a policy which would allow such temporarily incapacitated personnel to perform law enforcement duties on a limited or restricted basis. The policy should address retention of commissions in cases where training requirements can be met and a statement can be obtained from a physician which would stipulate the restrictions under which the employee may work. A physical to determine fitness for duty might also be required. The Departmental physician should be contacted to ensure that employee safety concerns have been addressed, and the solicitor's office should review the liability issues associated with the policy.

## **Drug/ARPA/Poaching Enforcement Funding**

The National Park Service received a base increase in drug funding in FY 91 which brings the total specifically authorized for counter-narcotics operations to \$3,696,000. The money is being used to fund 60 FTE's and to pay for supplies, equipment and other operational needs.

There was also a base increase for ARPA which brought the funding level for archeological protection and enforcement up to \$500,000. That money will be used for 20 FTE's and for operational needs. The money for both counter-narcotic and ARPA enforcement must be used only for such operations. Areas needing money for either purpose must justify their needs. Audits will be conducted periodically, and areas allocating these funds to other purposes will lose the money.

Attempts were made to acquire \$1,000,000 for wildlife protection for FY 92, but were unsuccessful because of a priority funding need for another DOI agency. Chances look good for obtaining those funds in FY 93.

## **Resource Protection**

The National Park Service is responsible for a variety of nationally significant natural and cultural resources. The stewardship of those resources carries with it a positive duty to aggressively protect them from degradation and/or loss due to human activities.

Ranger Activities is in the process of developing a formal park resource protection program which will highlight resource protection concerns through a comprehensive Servicewide program to support the parks in the protection of both natural and cultural resources. The program will address a wide variety of protection needs, including ARPA, security of curatorial collections, wildlife poaching, trespass grazing, illegal plant gathering, boundary encroachment, unauthorized or inappropriate uses of the parks and visitor recreation management.

Ranger Activities will be seeking information from parks on resource protection problems and what they will need (FTE's, training funds, equipment and other necessities) to adequately protect these resources.

## **Counseling**

The regional chiefs recommended that the regions should investigate development of critical incident stress support teams to supplement employee assistance programs. The teams should be available within 24 hours and should be able to provide peer counseling and critical incident briefings and debriefings.

Southwest Region has a system whereby a team is sent to incidents such as shootings or disasters in which entire park staffs are psychologically traumatized. The support team facilitates the investigation of the incident and provides relief and support for the park staffs. Participants include and incident commander, investigator, photographer, public information officer, personnel officer, and additional rangers to assist in patrols.

## **Weapons Testing**

A variety of semi-automatic weapons are currently being tested to determine the model which should be selected for Servicewide use. As many as 200 rangers in various locations around the Service will employ specific evaluation criteria in the evaluation, and the results will be computerized for easy review. The budget proposal for 1992 includes a request for \$2,540,000 for weapons, ammunition, training, leather gear, vests and other equipment. Ranger Activities is also attempting to obtain funding for a central supply facility at FLETC with an armorer and clerk. Weapons would be issued to commissioned employees for the duration of their careers in law enforcement and would be maintained or replaced by the facility at FLETC.

Parks with special needs - such as larger caliber weapons for areas with grizzly bears - will be authorized to procure and carry those weapons.

## **Body Armor**

The regional chiefs recommended that the Service underscore the potential threat of armed individuals to employee safety and well-being by encouraging the provision of protective vests to all law enforcement personnel in the strongest terms possible. Protective vests constitute personal protective equipment (PPE) just as much as steel-toed shoes, hard hats and protective eyewear. A policy statement in NPS-9 strengthening the language concerning protective vests and other defensive equipment will be drafted for the consideration of NPS management in the near future.

Meanwhile, the NPS representative at FLETC is seeking guidance from other agency representatives regarding the issuance, wear and replacement of soft body armor. Information will also be sought regarding body armor designed to match an agency's uniform shirt in appearance.

## **Secure Telephones and Telefaxes**

Funds may be forthcoming from the military for secure telephones and telefax machines for counter-narcotics operations. It is critical that managers understand the importance of proper use of this equipment and of adhering to National Security Agency regulations and security procedures, since infractions of the regulations can result in jail sentences.

The request for the secure phones and fax machines is being accompanied by another request for \$4,000,000 to fund background checks and training for rangers who will be using the equipment.

## **NIBRS**

The Service received \$1,000,000 for implementation of the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) in FY 91. Of this sum, \$900,000 will be used for program development. Three regions - West, Southeast and Mid-Atlantic - received FTE's and funding to test the program within operations. Position descriptions are now being written for GS-11/12 NIBRS managers in the regional offices, and for a GS-13 coordinator in WASO.

The Service will receive \$1,500,000 of the \$2,000,000 requested for the system in FY 92. This will slow the implementation down somewhat, but NIBRS should be operational throughout the system within a few years.

### **Part-Time Magistrates**

The Magistrates Committee of the Judicial Conference is in the process of reviewing U.S. magistrate positions for possible consolidation into full-time magistrate positions. This means that some part-time positions could be consolidated into full-time positions which are generally located in more urban or populated areas, and that rangers in many parks would have to travel significant distances to attend court. Ranger Activities solicited comments from the parks on the potential impact of this decision on field operations, and has consolidated the 30 or so responses and brought them to the Department for action.

Representatives from the Department and from Ranger Activities have since met with representatives from the Judicial Conference to seek a remedy to this problem. The Office of U.S. Magistrates has given the Service assurances that there is no intent to eliminate all part-time positions; rather, their intent is to provide qualified magistrates. They were advised that the National Park Service needs the services of magistrates and that reductions in those services could impact NPS enforcement programs. Ranger Activities will continue to monitor the situation. It's equally important for park areas to develop communications with the chief judges in their local districts to assure that they are aware of NPS needs.

### **Law Enforcement Assessments**

A number of parks have reportedly been having difficulty developing the law enforcement needs assessments required by NPS-9. Major Schamp will be compiling examples of completed assessments and distributing them to the regions for reference.

### **Seasonal Recruitment**

The regional chiefs recommended that parks call or send vacancy announcements and requests to the various seasonal law enforcement schools when their registers of commissioned applicants are depleted. The school coordinators track their students' progress carefully, and know who of them have gotten jobs and who have not.

### **ALL-RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Service has had a "marketing" problem in getting the concept of utilizing incident command for non-wildland fire incidents across to our managers and employees. The regional chiefs agreed to support all-risk management by including it in forty-hour law enforcement refresher courses and superintendents' conferences and by actively working to inform managers of its appropriateness for managing incidents of all types. A recommendation will also be made to include an orientation to all-risk management in training courses for managers at FLETC and BIFC.

The all-risk concept is based on ICS and fire management principles and is intended to give the Service the capability for managing large, non-wildland fire events ranging from demonstrations and scheduled celebrations to natural and human-caused disasters. All-risk management teams can provide expert overhead management in situations where local parks either lack the necessary expertise or are not adequately staffed to manage an event. Two regions currently have all-risk capabilities and Ranger Activities has recommended that other regions develop such capabilities.

The regional chiefs recommended that a work group be brought together to develop standards for all-risk management teams and thereby assure Servicewide continuity in their use. A five-person workgroup will meet at FLETC later this spring to work on an all-risk management organizational framework.

## **TRAINING**

### **Basic Law Enforcement**

The basic law enforcement course at FLETC will be expanded to ten weeks in April. Topics which will be added included unattended death investigations, car clouting investigations, and an introduction to ARPA.

The PEB which is given upon arrival at the center became mandatory for students in the basic course in January. Students who don't pass the test upon arrival will be put on a mandatory physical training schedule which will continue through the eighth week of training. At that time, they will again be tested; if they fail, they will be terminated and sent home, possibly at the expense of the nominating park. Applicants for the law enforcement for land managers course at FLETC should also be physically fit and able to pass the PEB test upon arrival.

Although CPR certification is not required for a commission, it is a requirement for all participants in the basic course. All nominees must indicate that they have current CPR certification on their application forms.

### **All-Risk Management**

Those aspects of ICS and all-risk management which are pertinent to the management of law enforcement operations will be included in the curriculum of the law enforcement for managers course when it is next presented in November or December of this year.

Although the course on superintendency is not being offered by Mather in FY 91, the regional chiefs suggested that all-risk management responsibilities should be addressed the next time it is presented in order to correct misconceptions regarding loss of command and control of incidents within a park.

The regional chiefs also recommended that chief rangers and public information officers attend the law enforcement for managers course and both I-220 (basic incident command) and I-400 (incident commander), thereby facilitating their integration into these key positions in all-risk operations.

## **Law Enforcement Refreshers**

The regional chiefs discussed the training, content and direction of park and regional law enforcement refreshers and recommended the development of several refresher levels in order to meet varying needs:

- Level I - Field employees who are responsible for line law enforcement activities.
- Level II - First line supervisors who are responsible for the supervision of seasonal and permanent staff and for the planning and implementation of operations.
- Level III - Managers who are responsible for overall management and supervision of law enforcement programs.

Several regions have already established such tiered training programs and are using advanced law enforcement training money to put on 40-hour refreshers designed for chief and district rangers. These courses include sessions on management of law enforcement programs, internal controls, security of sensitive material, and other topics geared toward managing and supervising these programs.

## **WILDLAND FIRE**

### **Funding and Staffing**

Prior to 1989, there were 34 fire positions in the National Park Service. The people in these positions responded annually to an average of 779 fires which burned 70,895 acres and cost \$4.6 million to suppress. The ten-year average now shows that we annually deal with 798 fires burning 185,662 acres and costing \$11.4 million to suppress. Recent increases in FIREPRO funding have provided us with the resources to expand the program. Now, in FY 91, the Service has 133 permanent, full-time employees and 451 seasonal employees dedicated to fire management and suppression; the FIREPRO budget for FY 92 will likely have \$7.8 million for program management and preparedness and \$14.2 million for fire suppression.

### **Resource Management Plans**

Many resource management plans do not include detailed objectives expressing needs pertaining to wildfire or prescribed fire, despite the fact that many resource managers agree that fire management is part of resource management. The Branch of Fire and Aviation will be working to assure that resource management plans reflect resource management objectives for fire activity so that fire management personnel can construct defensible and accurate fire activity programs commensurate with resource needs. Chief rangers are encouraged to help expedite necessary revisions to park resource management plans.

## **Prescribed Fire**

There is a tremendous workload in prescribed fire, both in control of hazardous fuels and in meeting natural fire objectives. Important ingredients in attaining prescribed fire goals include thorough planning, the involvement of the public and park cooperators, application of the best fire behavior technology, and careful execution. Air quality will become even more of an issue in prescribed fire in the future. Dr. Rod Norum will be serving on the EPA committee which is developing regulations for prescribed fire for the air quality act.

## **Applied Research**

The FY 92 budget looks very promising for some funding for applied research projects from the Department's fire fund for fire-related research. Projects have been proposed by Interior agencies. The overview process will be formalized by Interior's fire coordination committee in the near future.

## **Personnel Management**

During the fire management meeting in Seattle last year, several issues were brought up regarding potential careers for fire clerks. Many clerks are performing duties that are not in their job descriptions, and some are frustrated that their career paths do not lead from clerk to FMO. Regions and parks should encourage career counseling and be honest about career opportunities. Reviews of fire clerk duties are recommended.

## **Professionalism**

The Department has provided new direction on fire management, OMB and GAO will be auditing our fire programs, and Congressional oversight committees, local legislators and special interest groups have all shown increased interest in NPS fire management policies and procedures. Because of this elevated attention, it is important that the Service's fire managers demonstrate a high degree of professionalism in the management of their programs.

The revised NPS-18 will be out this spring and will provide new standards and procedures for a number of aspects of fire management, including prescribed fire and the formulation of fire plans. These standards must be met. Professionalism in fire (and aviation) must be anchored on integrity and attitude - integrity in planning, execution, funding and personnel management; attitude toward being a professional. The objective of the national office is to provide the support and resources necessary for managers to do their jobs professionally.

## **STRUCTURAL FIRE**

Jim Farrell is the new structural fire specialist at the Branch of Fire and Aviation in Boise. The emphasis of the structural fire program will be on equipment and personnel training standards, construction engineering and design, maintenance, and prevention. Meetings have been held with safety and maintenance managers in WASO and with professionals at the Denver Service Center. Congress and OMB will be approached for funding once a needs analysis and standards have been completed.

## **AVIATION MANAGEMENT**

OAS requires that any agency with over 20,000 hours of annual air time have an aviation safety specialist. A position description has been formulated for such a position, which will be located in WASO in what will now be called the Branch of Fire and Aviation.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

The Service currently has a multitude of radio systems for communicating within parks and with local agencies where coordination and cooperation is deemed necessary. Much of the radio equipment is aging, and most (if not all) is in need of upgrading in order to provide the Service with a truly integrated system which will meet agency needs. Efforts to improve radio systems need to deal with both the daily operational traffic common to all park divisions and communications with other law enforcement and emergency service agencies.

The regional chiefs recommended that a comprehensive Servicewide survey of radio systems be conducted to determine needs, define problems and opportunities, and lay the foundation for an action plan to solve existing problems and meet current needs with today's technology. A request for funds for such an assessment will be made to the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). Should such funding not be available, a second option will be to fund the study with drug funds taken from each region's annual allotment.

## **SPECIAL PARK USES**

Guidance (NPS-53) currently exists for park managers to follow in deciding on a proposed park use or in renewing an existing, permitted use. The regional chiefs recommended that one of those special uses - rights-of-way - should receive more attention, as the present right-of-way permitting procedures are often time-consuming due to duplicate legal compliance checks at the regional and WASO level for even minor proposals.

Many special use permits now in effect also need to be converted to rights-of-ways as the terms of the permits expire. As now defined, such conversions will require the same work and time as any new right-of-way. The regional chiefs suggested that the process be reviewed and streamlined where appropriate to minimize delays while protecting the Service in carrying out its mission. Ranger Activities will explore the possibility of delegating authority to regional directors to approve some right-of-way grants - or, at least, the conversion of special use permits to rights-of-ways.

A much-needed revision of 36 CFR 14 on rights-of-way will be undertaken as soon as possible to provide better guidance in the right-of-way issuance process.

#### **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY**

The regional chiefs recommended that efforts be continued to assure that proper safeguards are in place for accountability in NPS operations, including completion of proper background checks for commissioned personnel and accountability in firearms and ammunition controls, training, use of fire and drug funds, fee collection, and use of sensitive information and/or equipment. Managers can expect audits of these programs either as part of operations evaluations or as independent audits. The need and requirement for program accountability will not diminish, and could become even more encompassing if significant deficiencies are found. It's incumbent on managers at every level to be aware of accountability requirements and assure that waste, fraud and abuse are eliminated in the programs they control.

#### **UNIFORMS**

Efforts to revise and update the uniform guideline (NPS-43) are underway. A work group met in WASO in January to redo the appearance standards section of the guideline, and work on other sections of NPS-43 will continue throughout the spring and summer. Current plans are to have a draft completed by the fall.

A new uniform catalogue, new order forms, and two posters depicting proper uniform appearance - one for Class A and one for Class B - will be released to the field in May. The catalogue will contain several new uniform items, including a London Fog overcoat to accompany the formal dress uniform, a grey Class A pullover sweater, a new windbreaker, and new and/or restyled maternity wear. Class A will be divided into three categories - formal dress, service dress and field - in order to accommodate the three substantially different uniforms now available in that class.

#### **AIRCRAFT OVERFLIGHTS**

In 1987, Congress passed Public Law 100-91, which requires that the Service determine the appropriate minimum altitudes for aircraft overflying units in the system. The law requires that the Service study a minimum of 11 areas, seven of which are specified in the law - Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Haleakala, Hawaii Volcanoes, Mount Rushmore, Glacier and Cumberland Island - and that the agency determine the impact of sightseeing, military, commercial and general aviation aircraft on the parks. The nature of impacts to be studied include impacts on the safety of park visitors, impairment of visitor enjoyment, and injurious effects on the natural, cultural and historical resources of parks.

The Service is required to report the results of these studies and recommendations to Congress for necessary legislative or regulatory actions. A task directive is now being prepared. Studies will be undertaken in the parks during the next two years so this report can be made to Congress in 1993.

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Service's contract with CompuServe will expire in September. At that time, the entire agency will shift to cc:Mail. Ranger Activities will begin implementing cc:Mail late this spring with regional offices, and will provide guidance on the new system to the parks well before the transition date.

### Chief Rangers' Directory Corrections

The following pen and ink changes should be made in your directory of chief rangers. If you have any corrections, please send them to us for the March/April Exchange.

- \* Page 10 - Reed Johnson is the chief ranger at Mound City Group. The phone number is 614-774-1126. The telefax number is 614-774-1140.
- \* Page 11 - James Webster is now the chief ranger at Arches. The correct telefax number is 801-259-8341.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Ranger Activities Information Exchange is produced by the Washington Division of Ranger Activities. Walt Dabney, Chief Ranger. Address letters, comments and inquiries to: Ranger Activities (650), Stop 3310, National Park Service, Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127; FTS 268-4874 or (202) 208-4874. Attn: Bill Halainen, Editor.