United States Department of the Interior
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
STEPHEN T. MATHER TRAINING CENTER
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

P8615(284)

Memorandum

To: Chief of Training, WASO

From: Park Ranger/Instructor, Stephen T. Mather Training Center

Subject: Report by Task Force for Curricular Review of NPS Interpretive Training Programs

On August 6-7, 1984, a Task Force for Curricular Review of NPS Interpretive Training Programs met in Washington, D.C. Its objectives were to:

- recommend a course of action for interpretive training for the next three years (1985-1988);
- examine the interpretive core curriculum, identifying redundancies, topics for addition, topics for revision, and topics for exclusion;
- recommend ways to best utilize the interpretive skills teams over the next three years.

Members of the task force were:

- Reginald (Flip) Hagood, Chief of Training, WASO
- Dave Dame, Chief of Interpretation, WASO
- Martha Aikens, Interpretive Specialist, WASO
- John Tyler, Chief of Interpretation, Valley Forge NHP
- Cynthia Kryston, Interpretive Specialist, NARO
- J.T. Reynolds, Park Ranger/Instructor, Albright Training Center
- Mike Watson, Park Ranger/Instructor, Mather Training Center
- (Lucia Bragan, Training Specialist, WASO, attended portions of the meeting)

On the first day of the meeting, the task force met with various resource specialists to examine what they thought interpretive training should deal with in the areas of cultural resources management, natural resources management, and park operations. Ed Bearss, Chief Historian and Tom Vaughan, Staff Curator, represented CRM; John Reed, Chief of the Biological Resources Division, represented NRM; and Stan Albright, Associate Director for Park Operations, and Dan Sholly, Chief of the Ranger Services Division, represented park operations.

The rest of the two days was spent defining the task before the group, organizing the task into a logical sequence of components, writing draft recommendations for each component, and discussing and refining the recommendations. This report summarizes those recommendations under the following headings:

I. Recommended Minimum Core Training for NPS Interpreters

II. Content Revision of Minimum Core Curriculum

III. Future of Interpretive Skills Teams

IV. Regional Roles and Responsibilities in the NPS Interpretive Training Effort

V. Recommended Minimum Core Training for Seasonal NPS Interpreters

VI. The Need for Cross-Training in Interpretation

VII. A Plan of Action for Implementation of the Interpretation Correspondence Training Programs

VIII. Miscellaneous Issues/Recommendations

It is the task force's hope that these recommendations can guide the NPS interpretive training effort over the next three years (1985-1988).

I. Recommended Minimum Core Training for NPS Interpreters

The task force examined the minimum core training concept for NPS interpreters and found it to be valid for the next three years. Use of this concept the past three years has defined a logical sequence of training events in an interpreter's career. Field interpreters are largely aware of the sequence, and are planning their Individual Development Plans accordingly. The task force was told by several resource specialists that the core training program has boosted field morale and improved performance. The members of the task force concurred with these assessments based on their own experiences.

Very few changes are recommended regarding the original concept of the minimum core training for interpreters. The following guidelines clarify the concept and should be used to orient the NPS interpretive training program over the next three years.

RECOMMENDED MINIMUM CORE TRAINING
FOR INTERPRETERS

APPRENTICE LEVEL GS-4 to GS-7

Ranger Skills: an introduction to the full range of knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for the operation of a national park. (220-280 hours)

Interpretive Skills: development of the basic knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for the planning, formulation, and delivery of park interpretive services, and motivation of interpreters to experiment with innovative interpretive techniques. Includes communications, principles of human behavior, cultural and group

dynamics, the use and maintenance of media, and an introduction to the variety of techniques and services used in interpretive programs; taught at the regional level. (80 hours)

JOURNEYMAN LEVEL GS-5 to GS-9

Interpretive Operations for First-Line Supervisors: identification of the overall picture of interpretive operations and analysis of the various parts of that operation; the application of the "nuts and bolts" of interpretive services and their appropriateness to the park's overall operation; concentration is on developing supervisory and training skills. (80 hours)

Administration Skills for Interpreters: development of the basic administrative skills necessary for the operation of an interpretive program; a self-teaching workbook coupled with OJT or formal training such as the Administration for Line Managers course.

MANAGEMENT LEVEL GS-9 and up

Interpretation Program Management: the development of effective program managers sensitive to the needs and values of interpretation and its role and responsibility in overall park management; covers advanced personnel management and human resources development as well as the development, operation and evaluation of a balanced, integrated interpretive program designed to meet the current needs of park management and of Servicewide goals and objectives. (40-64 hours)

These are the minimum required courses. Other training is also needed but is not considered mandatory in the development of minimum interpretive competencies. The completion of these courses, before or as soon as possible after entrance on duty, and upon reaching Journeyman and Management levels, (or the certification of comparable knowledge, skills and abilities gained through experience or OJT) should be considered in the selection of individuals for Chiefs of Interpretation and/or Chiefs of combined Interpretation and Resource Management/Protection positions.

ADDITIONAL DESIRED TRAINING FOR INTERPRETERS

Additional desired training for interpreters can be divided into the following general categories.

1. The use of interpretation as a programmatic operation for achieving park management objectives.

Examples: Interpretation for Visitors Participating in High Risk Recreational Activities (Safety)
Interpretation for Special Populations (Visitor Services)
Interpretation as Resource Management (Resource Management)

2. The design, development and production of interpretive media.
   Example: Site Bulletins Workshop
   (information/orientation)
   Self-guiding Facilities Workshop
   (Visitor Service)
   Interpretive Writing Workshop

3. Interpretive planning - the development of useful planning documents by field interpreters.
   Example: Interpretive Planning Workshop

4. Interpretation for Managers - to develop management understanding and support for the role and responsibility of interpretation.
   Example: Role of Interpretation in Park Management
NOTE: this course should be considered a high priority for park managers and senior division chiefs responsible for the management of interpretation in their areas, especially in situations where they have not had the recommended minimum core courses.

Additional training in subjects and disciplines not offered as interpretive training is encouraged as part of a well-rounded Individual Development Plan. To assist in this process WASO Interpretation is revising the career plan for NPS interpreters first developed in the early 1970's.

II. Content Revision of Minimum Core Curriculum

Appendices A-D of this report contain previous outlines and objectives of Ranger Skills (Appendix A), Interpretive Operations for First-Line Supervisors (Appendix C), and Interpretation Program Management (Appendix D). A curriculum outline for Interpretive Skills I & II is found in Appendix B.

The course content for Interpretive Skills I and II has withstood the test of time and is considered valid for the next three years. The Ranger Skills course content was revised in May of this year, and will be tested this coming fall.

An outline for an independent study course on administration skills (Appendix E) for interpreters was reviewed and endorsed by the Interpretive Training Task Force. WASO Interpretation expects to have the package ready for distribution sometime in FY85.

A. Recommendations for the "Interpretive Operations for First-Line Supervisors" course are as follows:

Session 2, "Progress Report - One Who Has Already Been There" - the concept for this session is good, but the decision on whether to include the session in the next course should be made as the agenda develops; the presenter should be a member of a Skills Team and should have attended both the "Operations" and "Management"

courses; this session should also be scheduled for the last week of the course, after the class has had time to congeal as a unit.

Session 3, "Evolution of Interpretation in the National Park Service" - an introduction to the new NPS-6 should be included in this session.

Session 4, "Class Presentations" - there should be two class presentation areas rather than four. The subject areas should be, "Using Interpretation to Manage Parks" and "Supervision." Appropriate subthemes under each area can be used to produce four groups.

Session 5, "Management Documents and Reports" - should include a general overview of management documents as they relate to interpretation, which also covers the preamble to 36 C R, the national registry form, and a detailed discussion of the Statement for Interpretation.

Session 8 - "Everything You Wanted to Know About Getting Money" - should be restructured to provide an overview of the budget cycle with a concentration on preparing basic budgetary documents; practical exercises should be the primary component of this session.

Session 9 - "Everything You Wanted to Know About Spending Money" - should be transferred to the "Management" course.

Session 10 - "Outside Sources of Money - Grants and Donations" - should also include how to obtain grants and get a donation into the system.

Session 11 - "Interpretive Personnel Management: Adverse Actions, Awards," - should include a general overview of personnel management, concentrating on common employee relations problems (identified before the class arrives); writing special achievement awards; practical exercises will be the mainstay of this session.

Session 14 - "Washington, D.C., Field Trip" - The format for the 1100 L St. segment would work better by having: (1) a three-minute overview by division chiefs to all participants; and (2) participants schedule a ten to fifteen minute appointment with the division chief or a division staffer of his/her choice; these appointments will be arranged at least a week in advance; the participants will make their appointment selections from a list of division chiefs and subject area specialists.

Sessions 16 & 17, - "Interpretive Personnel Management: IDP's" and "Careers" - should become one session and concentrate on the seasonal employment program (i.e., performance appraisals, hiring, etc.); should also include a summary of the training cycle and how it relates to field interpreters.

Session 22 - "Making Magic in Interpretation" - should become an optional evening session.

Session 24 - "Interpretive Personnel Management: PD's and Classification" - should address position descriptions and classification for Seasonal and V.I.P. positions; an overview of the NPS personnel management program relative to position descriptions and classification would serve as the introduction to this session.

Session 25 - "The First-Line Interpretive Supervisor in the Computer Age" - the time slot for this session should be increased to allow small groups of students to rotate through a "computer center" spending 2-4 hours on a computer with a "How to Operate a Computer" program and an instructor. It might be possible to give them the ability to track 10-575's on a computer.

The Task Force also recommended a group leader or instructor review of participant action plans before the students leave the training center, and a needs assessment of the class before students arrive.

B. Recommendations for the "Interpretation: Program Management" course are:

Sessions 3 & 4, "Interpretation: A Superintendent's View" and "Interpretation: A Regional Director's View" should be deleted from the forty hour course; however, should the course be increased to sixty-four hours, these two sessions should be included.

Session 7, "Team Projects: Problem-Solving Through Interpretation" - actual case studies appear to be more successful than cases with general application; consequently, actual cases or specific problems will be used for this session; law enforcement will be substituted for fee interpretation as the fourth category.

Session 9, "The NPS Publications Program" - in addition, to an overview of this program, it is recommended that a discussion on site bulletins and what to look for in a good product be part of the presentation.

Session 10, "Budget Realities and Mechanics" - should be divided into the customary overview of the federal budget by a WASO budget official; the second part of the session should be on contracting/procurement, cooperative agreements, and reading print-outs.

Session 11, "Personnel Management Update" - a briefing on what's happening in personnel management should still be the hallmark of this session but it should be expanded to include a discussion on various hiring authorities, performance appraisals for permanents, difficult adverse actions such as reprimands and/or suspensions, and writing a superior performance award.

Session 12, "New Directions: The Future of NPS Interpretation" - should be included in the agenda during regular classroom hours.

Session 13-17, - the "accepted" management efficiency components should be treated in a panel discussion with each panelist using 10-15 minutes to summarize his/her subject area with discussion and questions following; an estimated time for this approach is 1 hour and 40 minutes; fee interpretation should also be discussed under the management efficiency initiative.

Session 20, "Progress Report: An Interpretive Survey" - should be replaced by a session on the NPS Employee Survey and Interpretive Research.

Session 21, "Potpourri" - should become a general close-out session; it could be called "My Thoughts and Yours."

A session on "Public Relations" and "Dealing with Controversial Issues" should be added.

Should the course be increased to sixty-four hours, sessions on leadership skills, trends in management and other types of training dealing with current issues and developments should become part of the course.

It was the general consensus of the Task Force that the schedule should have related sessions or sessions that build on each other more closely.

Preparing assessments for each class is desirable in order to continue to respond to the needs of the participants.

III. Future of Interpretive Skills Teams

The Task Force discussed the Interpretive Skills Teams program, looking at its past accomplishments. It agreed that the skills teams have been largely successful and have accomplished the objectives set forth two years ago. About thirty-five regional workshops have been conducted by the teams during the past year and one-half. Approximately 1100 interpreters have participated in the programs.

Skills I workshops have been conducted twice as many times as Skills II workshops. All Regions except Alaska have programmed at least one interpretive skills workshop in FY85. At this writing, seven Skills I and seven Skills II courses are scheduled across nine Regions for FY85, as well as a skills-team-led interpretive skills/publications course (SWR), an oral history techniques workshop (NAR), and several others.

The task force and subject area representatives addressing the task force agreed that the interpretive core curriculum generally, and

the regional skills programs specifically, have boosted interpreters' morale in the field. The program was first viewed by the field with some skepticism, but in two years it has built a solid reputation across the Service. There exists competition to become a skills team member.

Approximately 90% of the workshops have accomplished the stated goals. Ten to twenty percent of them have been outstanding; ten percent have missed the mark to some degree.

Some Regions are close to accommodating their backlogs for Skills I; none has probably reached its backlog for Skills II. Although most of the 1100 people who have participated in the programs are permanent NPS interpreters, many cross-over participants have been involved including seasonal interpreters, protection rangers, resources managers, maintenance workers, concession interpreters, cooperating association personnel, and personnel from other federal, state, and local agencies.

The task force agrees that the regional skills teams have a definite future in the interpretive training program for the next three years and makes the following recommendations:

(1) Interpretive Skills Workshops (1985-1989) - interpretive skills workshops should be offered in all Regions as needed. At least one workshop per year per region should be offered to maintain momentum, interest, and a high profile. As backlogs continue to disappear, Skills I and Skills II might be alternated on a yearly basis. Each Region will have to assess its needs and plan accordingly.

(2) Use of Skills Team Members for Other Training Programs - The task force encourages Regions to use skills team members for other training events, especially when the pace of Skills I and II slows down. A great pool of training talent has been developed and should be nurtured by keeping it active. Specific ideas for using the skills teams beyond Skills I and II are:

a. Seasonal Training - offer the training skills of the skills team members for seasonal training events; what they are doing with the skills workshops could easily be utilized in seasonal training (as outlined in part of this report).

b. Special Interpretive Training - The experience of the teams shows that the skills workshops, especially Skills II, whets the appetite of the participants for more in-depth training in specialized areas; the task force encourages the use of skills teams to develop specialized courses in interpretive skills, such as publication preparations, exhibit preparation, contracting for interpretive exhibits, etc.

c. Other Training Projects - Regions and Training Centers are encouraged to utilize skills team members to train in other training programs, especially in cross-training

situations (See Part 6). Again, the NPS should not allow the developed talents to be wasted.

d. Miscellaneous - Skills team members can also be used in a variety of situations, depending on needs; examples are as consultants, operations evaluation team members, park assistance advisors, and critiquers at park programs. North Atlantic Region is doing this with its skills team members with a high degree of success.

(3) Time Away From Job - When the skills teams were first organized, an agreement was reached with each member's supervisor that he or she would be allowed up to two weeks per year away from the normal duties to perform the skills training; skills team members and their supervisors should be asked to renew this agreement each year to insure participation and to avoid problems of overuse of team members.

(4) Interpretive Skills Audiences - During the next three years, the task force feels that the audiences for the skills workshops can and should be broadened, especially after the backlog of permanent interpreters has been satisfied. The task force endorses the inclusion of other operational personnel who have visitor contacts (maintenance, protection, resources management, concession and cooperating association employees, and VIP's).

(5) Servicewide Instructor's Workshop - with 50 interpretive skills team members in place, it is felt that another instructors' workshop is not needed, unless a severe attrition of team members occurs. An apprentice system is already established to help Regions whose teams become deficient due to transfers (see appendix F). It is felt, however, that a yearly gathering of some sort should occur to regenerate the enthusiasm of the teams; to give Mather Training Center staff, WASO interpretive management, and the teams a chance to communicate in person about what is going on and how it can be improved; and to validate apprentices as bonafide team members. These gatherings will probably be sponsored by WASO Interpretation with assistance from STMA. Minimally, one member from each Regional team should attend the 3-5 day meeting.

(6) Skills Teams Management - the task force still believes that the central guidance and control of the skills teams should come from STMA and WASO Interpretation. It does not wish to see the skills teams wander far from the overall concept of a unified, consistent interpretive skills program across the Service within the ten regions.

(7) Other Potential Trainers - In the past two years, two Fundamentals of Training courses and an Instructors' Workshop in NPS Cataloging have been held at STMA, using a format similar to the two Instructors' Workshops in Interpretive Skills. Nearly sixty other NPS employees beside the skills team members have received similar instruction on "How to Teach Grown-ups," and have had

experience in their Regions with training. They include cultural and natural resources management specialists, protection rangers, administrators, and maintenance personnel. Interpretive skills teams should be made aware of who these people are so they might help them to expand the expertise of the skills teams and to validate the idea of cross-training. Likewise, the non-interpretive teams should be made aware of the interpreters so they might accomplish similar results.

(8) Regional Support - The task force encourages Regions to continue support for the skills teams through the Regional Training Officers and Regional Interpreters. It is imperative that the teams receive this support to maintain credibility and momentum in the program (see Part 4). Regional training monies, not team member's park monies, should be used to support the efforts of the skills team members.

(9) Inter-Regional Programs - As backlogs are met, it may be logical for two or more Regional teams to sponsor workshops together. The task force endorses this concept where it makes sense.

(10) Accounting System - A better accounting of how many workshops, how many people, and who are participating in the skills workshops needs to be made. A retroactive accounting should be made, and a system be put in place for future accounting. STMA and WASO Training should work on this task together.

IV. Regional Roles and Responsibilities in the NPS Interpretive Training Effort

The task force discussed the roles and responsibilities of the Regional offices in carrying out the revision of the NPS interpretive training effort. A series of guidelines/recommendations follow, Part A for the Regional Interpretive Division, and Part B for the Regional Training Office.

A. The Role and Responsibilities of Regional Interpretive Divisions

The role and responsibilities of the Regional Interpretive Divisions are to:

(1) formally identify (through Regional Skills Teams) interpretive training needs to the Regional Training Officers and informally identify these needs to WASO Training and the Training Centers; Interpretive Skills I & II are presented by the team as needed.

(2) monitor dissemination of NPS training information to the field - e.g. formal training announcements, outside training opportunities, etc.

(3) create training opportunities, both formal and informal - e.g. arranging details to Regional Office and other parks.

(4) arrange courses to meet specific needs - e.g. on subject matter, management topics, and administrative areas.

(5) monitor training background of interpreters in region to assure participation in core training.

(6) make non-personal training aids available on a Regionwide - loan basis - e.g. films, videotapes, and slide programs.

(7) maintain professional contacts for possible interagency or private sector training opportunities, particularly updated "state-of-the-art" training.

(8) provide information on competent subject matter instructors and training aids as requested.

(9) support training opportunities outside NPS by encouraging interpreters to apply.

(10) serve as instructors as requested.

(11) provide in-park seasonal training assistance to parks above and beyond in-park training programs (see Part 5).

(12) serve as leading advocate of interpretive training in Regions.

(13) meet with appropriate Regional staff in formulation of training needs and courses to meet those needs.

(14) arrange interdisciplinary training as Regional needs determine.

(15) contact superintendents regarding training needs of interpretive staffs.

(16) assure that a member of the Regional Interpretive Division is on the Regional Training Committee.

(17) use regularly scheduled Chief Interpreters' Conferences as a training vehicle.

(18) assure that members of the Interpretive Skills Team are receiving the training needed for development as trainers.

(19) encourage non-interpreters to be members of the Interpretive Skills Team.

(20) use Regional meetings, courses and conferences to educate regarding the interpretation function of the NPS management team.

(21) keep Regional Director aware of the status of interpretive training for the Region.

(22) regularly check the participants' training evaluations of courses.

B. The Role and Responsibilities of Regional Training Officers

The role and responsibilities of the Regional Training Officers are to:

(1) seek Interpretive Office input in formulating Regional training priorities.

(2) balance interpretive priorities fairly and objectively with other Regional priorities.

(3) disseminate interpretive training information as completely and timely as possible.

(4) urge support of Regional Interpretive Skills Teams with a funding base.

(5) maintain WASO and Training Center contacts and keep Interpretive Division informed of courses, dates and all pertinent information.

(6) encourage participants from formal courses to conduct training presentations back at parks.

(7) allow Interpretive Division to rate nominees for interpretive courses.

(8) meet with appropriate divisional personnel to rate and evaluate effectiveness of courses.

(9) maintain contact with other Regional Training Officers.

(10) meet with the Interpretive Skills Team regularly or serve as a member.

(11) correlate identified training needs from regional park areas for forwarding to WASO.

(12) make the Regional Director aware of training needs and programs for the region.

(13) monitor documentation of employees' training.

(14) keep an updated list of all qualified instructors in disciplines other than interpretation.

V. Recommended Minimum Core Training for Seasonal NPS Interpreters

During each visitor-use season the Service relies on the knowledge and skills of talented people who must perform critical public service jobs within a concentrated period of time. The performance of these people is the interface between the visitor and the park which determines the quality of the visitor experience and the preservation of the park's resources.

While many temporary/seasonal employees have a general resource information background, the knowledge of park-specific resource information is needed to present effective activities.

Many temporary/seasonal employees are working for the National Park Service for the first time. Visitors may expect all employees to be knowledgeable about the history, philosophy and goals of the Service, as well as the park they are visiting.

It is the NPS responsibility to provide these employees with training to develop their communication skills and provide them with the information to effectively serve visitors and the Service. They must know Service history, philosophy and goals. They must be able to deal effectively with issues of religion, politics, personal values, and park-specific management.

While each park may need to provide training in a variety of other knowledge and skill areas to have full performance employees, a minimum core of training for temporary/seasonal employees is required. The task force endorses the following recommendation:

Minimum Core Training for Seasonal Interpreters

1. Organizational Information (suggested minimum of four hours of formal instruction).

    a. history and organization of the National Park Service - how it fits into the Executive Branch, Department of Interior, etc.
    b. overview of the National Park System
    c. philosophy and goals of the NPS
    d. role and responsibility of interpretation

2. Communication Skills.

    a. to conduct informal communications with visitors which provide accurate information/interpretation in a positive, congenial, and supportive manner (suggested minimum of four hours of formal instruction in informal communications.)

b. to present interpretive activities that are accurate, have a central theme, introduction, logical development of ideas, and conclusion and to perform interpretive activities that are positive, with clear enunciation, adequate volume, proper diction and genuine enthusiasm.
(suggested minimum of six hours formal instruction in presentation skills and style with four hours of practice and critique.)

c. to respond to controversial issues, religious, political and personal values with accurate information, balance and tact. (suggested minimum of three hours of formal instruction in dealing with value judgements and controversy.)

3. Resource Information

a. current resource information to supplement employee's knowledge of subject area.

b. accurate information of park preservation/development issues and potential areas of controversy.

(suggested minimum of four hours of formal instruction- may require days depending on park and employees)

4. Audio-visual skills - proper operation and preventive maintenance of equipment used in standard interpretive programs.
(suggested two hours of formal instruction)

Sources for Assistance:

The greatest need is to find the person who can best prepare the seasonal employee for their jobs. It may be a supervisor, it may be an interpreter from another park, or it may be another seasonal. It should not automatically be the person "in charge". It must be the person who can best accomplish the training.

The Regional Interpretive Skills Teams are a valuable resource of accomplished interpreters with the ability to train others. They can help provide seasonal training (see Part 3).

In some subject areas, nearby professionals may serve as resources to help prepare seasonal employees.

The need, though, is to provide the seasonal employee with the skills to become an effective interface between visitors and the park.

VI. The Need for Cross-Training in Interpretation

The overriding concern of the resource specialists who addressed the task force was the need for interpretive training to cross traditional boundaries and encompass broad, cross-discipline subjects. Tom Vaughan went so far as to provide an "Outline of Essential Knowledge in CRM for Interpretation" (Appendix 6). John Reed nearly pleaded with the group to make certain that NRM issues be included, and Stan Albright and Dan Sholly said firmly that in past times, interpreters have become parochial and need to be more of the park team.

The task force advocates cross training both among employees and in subject matter areas. Specifically, at the following levels, a series of cross-training opportunities might be:

(A) Park Unit Level

(1) Annual Refreshers - i.e., law enforcement: involve employees with or without commissions whose primary duties are not law enforcement.

(2) Orientation - i.e., divisionally or unit-initiated: encourage mutual sessions for all employees and have employees from one division/unit attend another's session.

(3) Details - i.e., exchanging divisions: encourage on-the-job training in other disciplines through assigned job details or special projects.

(4) Ride-a-Longs - i.e., protection patrols: encourage employees to accompany employees from other disciplines during daily activities; have employees participate in activities they and the "ride-a-long" supervisor feels he/she can manage.

(5) Trainee Positions - i.e., vacancy announcements: encourage Regions to develop and announce positions that other discipline employees may compete for; encourage development of general KSA's.

(6) Career Development Training (Formal/Informal) - encourage courses slated for specific employees; open courses to employees whose PD's do not require them to have the training in their present positions.

(7) VIP Program - encourage employees to volunteer for experiences to accomplish tasks in other disciplines.

(8) In-Park Workshops - encourage Park Division/Unit Chiefs to prepare in-park workshops for entire staff in specific disciplines.

(9) Informal Study Groups - encourage study groups that are interdisciplinary in nature.

(10) Release Time - encourage creative use of release time to allow employees to get outside education in areas which give broader experience or education regarding park operations.

(B) Regional Level

In addition to those areas listed above which are applicable to a Regional Level, some other opportunities for cross-training might be:

(1) Details - encourage a variety of regional operations to detail field interpreters at every opportunity.

(2) Career Development Training - encourage formal Regional training to help interpreters assess career opportunities and potential.

(3) VIP - allow local park employees (e.g., NCR) to volunteer their time in a regional operation which gives regional and other disciplinary perspectives.

(C) WASO Level

(1) Directorate - encourage the Directorate to endorse the idea of cross-training to give it strength.

(2) Training Centers - encourage Training Centers to include specific sessions on cross-training in interpretive courses.

(3) Details - encourage field details to the WASO office.

VII. A Plan of Action for Implementation of the Interpretive Correspondence Training Programs

A. Background

As many people are aware, the WASO Branch of Interpretation contracted the development of three independent study courses for NPS interpreters. Two of these courses are complete, a third near completion. They were developed at the first-year graduate level, equivalent to three semester hours of graduate course load.

The two completed courses, "Basic Historical Research" and "Interpreting the Historic Scene," were both developed under contract to the National Park Service by the American

Association for State and Local History. Dr. Lanny Wright of Cooperstown developed the first course; Ms. Barbara Carson of George Washington University and Dr. Cary Carson of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, the second. Both courses work to integrate the traditional concerns of historical study with the needs of public historians, specifically interpreters at historical sites. Both courses reflect current scholarship, and approaches to site-related historical research and interpretation. A third course, "Cultural Resources Management for Interpreters," is nearly complete. It is being developed by Laura Feller of NPS. (A fourth course, "Administration Skills for Line Interpreters," is proposed.)

These three courses were developed to be administered by a college or university, including all logistic, grading, and counselling support. The proposed scenario for launching these programs has been: (1) advertisement through Mather Training Center; (2) participant selection through normal NPS training procedures, using course selection criteria; (3) provision of study guides, readings, and other course materials by NPS Training; (4) funding of university administration by WASO Division of Training; and (5) funding of graduate credit by individual or park resources.

Criteria for selection of an instructor - college/university are as follows:

1. Commitment of the institution to the principles of professional education through independent study, and flexibility in working with the NPS.

2. Transferability of credit from the institution to other schools, so that a student would complete these courses and then transfer credits to another institution to work further towards the M.A.

3. Cost per student.

The task force endorses the earliest possible implementation of these programs. It feels a high need to strengthen the academic background and professionalism of all park interpreters.

(B) Options for Implementation

For the past six months, several people have tried, so far unsuccessfully, to implement these completed programs. The problem has been how to enter into agreements with a college or university to administer the program.

During the task force meeting, the Chief of Training decided to take the responsibility of securing a proper agreement with an appropriate college/university. The proposed time frame is to complete an agreement by the second quarter of FY85 so that

the two completed courses can be advertised in time to be given during the third and fourth quarters of FY85.

The Chief of Training will explore three options. They are listed below in order of preferred outcome:

(1) Cooperative Agreement - the preferred option based on similar cooperative agreements such as seasonal law enforcement certification or the Cooperative Parks Study Unit administered by PNWRO; causes the least red tape.

(2) Grants - an option in which a grant to administer the programs is provided by a cooperating association, the National Park Foundation, or other sources; prevents need for bids.

(3) Contract/Bid - advertise the administration of the courses to all interested parties, taking bids, and choosing best proposal; requires an RFP (Request for Proposal) following the rules of FAR (Federal Acquisition Requests); opens up the bidding to non-university educational organizations; the most difficult in terms of red tape and time, but at present time is most compelling option legally and policy-wise.

(C) Schools

Several schools have expressed interest in administering the programs, including the University of West Virginia and George Washington University. A recommended list of possible schools from the Organization of American Historians is found in Appendix H. Anyone with additional recommendations should contact the Chief of Training in WASO.

VIII. Miscellaneous Issues/Recommendations

A series of issues/recommendations arose during the task force meeting which did not really fit any of the previous topics. They are included here in no particular order of importance.

A. Participant Action Plan Approach (PAPA)

The task force likes the use of the PAPA, especially in the operations course. It might be better utilized if it were completed in conjunction with the trainee's supervisor, and followed through with both the supervision and trainee. The supervisor and his/her trainee would contract with the

Training Center to identify the course sessions that can benefit the park unit. They can also identify ways to disseminate course information to park employees and management. Such procedures would ensure more training success and implementation.

B. New Training Concepts

The task force feels that new training concepts, especially those which are "hot" in our society, should be injected wherever possible into interpretive training. High technology issues in audio-visual areas such as IMAX, computers, laser discs are some examples. The "One-Minute Manager", "In Search of Excellence", and other management areas should also be examined.

C. National Register/Historic Leasing Training

Ed Bearss asked the task force to emphasize in interpretive training how to properly fill out national register nomination forms. The task force feels that mention of where to get such training is more appropriate to present at interpretive training courses. It appears that such a course will be given by the NPS in FY85 - eligible interpreters should be encouraged to attend. Also, similar courses can be found through AASLH and Smithsonian.

D. Potpourri

- interpretive training should focus on the transition between one's college training and the "real world" of front-line interpretation.

- interpretive training needs to focus at times on the "mundane" and how to assure that the "mundane" does not become low in quality.

- interpreters need to find ways to attend professional meetings, and have interaction with non-NPS groups.

- refreshers in interpretive skills and program management should be made available to management.

Michael D. Watson

APPENDICES

(A) Outline and Objectives for Ranger Skills (April 10-May 28, 1984)

(B) Overall Objectives and Curriculum Outlines for Interpretive Skills I and II.

(C) Outline and Objectives for Interpretative Operations for First-Line Supervisors (March 19-30, 1984)

(D) Outline and Objectives for Interpretation Program Management (January 25-27, 1984)

(E) Proposed Outline for Administration for Interpreters

(F) Regional Skills Teams Apprentice Guidelines.

(G) Outline of Essential Knowledge in CRM for Interpretation.

(H) Organization of American Historian's List of Colleges