

the national park service

management system

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMP R E F A C E

In 1917, Steve Mather and Horace Albright organized the National Park Service pursuant to the act of August 25, 1916, and instituted the "systems" approach to management. Secretary Lane's letter to Mather dated May 13, 1918, established the Service's first long-range objectives. Role and Functional Statements were established between Mather and his first Superintendents by means of personal letters in which responsibilities and relationships were agreed on. Policies were lifted from legislative language and congressional committee deliberations. Due to the then small number of park areas, the management system was quite informal. And, it served very well for its time and formed a sound basis for modern management concepts and procedures to follow in later years.

As the number of parks increased, it became apparent to Mather, Albright, Cammerer and other early Directors that the developing park system needed additional management concepts. A specific and clearly evident need was to manage parks in a sufficiently

similar fashion so that national policies and procedures would be evident. Hillory Tolson, in the early 1930's, compiled those early policies to be applied on a national basis. Operating handbooks were developed in the 1940's and 1950's which served to articulate specific procedures through which the work of the Service would be carried out. In the 1950's comprehensive legislative histories were developed to better familiarize field managers with congressional mandates and interests. These, too, were effective and extremely helpful for their day. To a considerable extent, however, they contributed to a highly centralized management system.

In the early 1960's Congress, the Bureau of the Budget, and the Secretary began to take a more critical business-like look at the affairs of the National Park Service, as well as other bureaus. Industry and business had meanwhile developed new "systems-oriented" approaches to management. Government bodies, as mentioned above, saw practical application in some of these approaches.

Congress was no longer content to examine only short-range programs. Congressional committees became more intently

interested in future year funding commitments and at the same time in the day-to-day management of the National Park System. The Secretary and the Bureau of the Budget became interested in more effective and economical management and insisted on future year budget projections for the rapidly growing National Park System. Underlying all of this was a growing awareness of and interest in National Park management by the tax paying public.

All of the above dictated the need to reexamine the effectiveness of management by the National Park Service of the rapidly growing system. Many management concepts of the past could be retained. Others needed to be modified and some new concepts introduced. Importantly, those procedures (mostly in handbooks and Administrative Manuals) which served to stifle innovation and constrain the effectiveness of decentralization and delegated authorities and responsibilities would have to be abandoned. At the same time, concepts which would encourage management innovation, flexibility, and local decisionmaking would have to be developed. To a large extent, this has now been accomplished.

In lieu of handbooks and Administrative Manuals, a "systems-oriented" type of management--Management by Objective--has been instituted that provides a sound basis for the local manager to develop today's action programs in the light of the present needs of the still growing National Park System.

THE NEW MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The new system of Management by Objective was summarized in my memorandum of August 19, 1971, to the Assistant Secretary (reprinted in the "Newsletter" of September 6, 1971).

Since the components of the new management system were issued over a period of several years, it is extremely important that we understand they constitute, nevertheless, a single management system.

Management by Objective is a system by which managers and their staff determine the objectives of their organizational units within the context of the overall mission and long-range objectives of the National Park Service. Through application of the various management tools and resources available to it, each organizational unit can achieve its objectives and programs. The essential "tools of management" we have developed together are:

1. A Statement of Management Philosophy
2. Administrative Policies
3. Long-Range Objectives and Annual Goals
4. Activity Standards
5. Role and Functional Statements
6. Personal Performance Standards

(See Exhibit "A" for Definitions - Management Tools)

These "tools" are not ends in themselves. Each is a related component of one integrated system for managing. Used together, they comprise a total management system which enables each separate decision or action to be more purposeful because it supports and is supported by other decisions or actions made within the context of the total system. They establish the parameters for our management and in so doing face us all in the same direction.

HOW TO USE IT

We begin to apply the Management System by developing written Long-Range Objectives. The objectives reflect applicable laws and regulations, Departmental and Servicewide objectives, Administrative Policies, and other factors which prescribe the parameters within which management at various levels of the organization function. The objectives also determine in large measure the activities the areas or offices must engage in to fulfill the mission of the Service. The planning process of determining objectives, establishing goals tied to objectives, and developing broad plans for their achievement is a perennial one.

After selecting the activities to be carried out, the local team knows from the Activity Standards what constitutes satisfactory accomplishment of the activity. Therefore, these standards are of assistance in determining the resources required to conduct the activity satisfactorily. They provide a basis for justifying budget requests and identifying operating deficiencies. In addition, Activity Standards afford all members of the team a ready means by which to communicate the results expected of a given activity, thereby facilitating work assignment and program accomplishment with a minimum of direction. At the same time, Activity Standards provide a measure for evaluating end results.

Through Role and Functional Statements, managers of organizational units know their role and how they fit into the overall organization. This is a useful tool to be prepared and used by managers to clarify responsibilities and avoid duplication of effort, or omission, which may otherwise result.

Personal Performance Standards describe the results that will obtain when each employee has performed his functions satisfactorily. These standards are essential for constructive

dialogue between the employee and his supervisor with respect to the job to be done and in evaluating the job actually done. An equal, if not perhaps greater, benefit of such Personal Performance Standards is that they enable the individual to know in advance of any communication with the supervisor when the job has been done satisfactorily.

To be truly effective, these tools must be applied by the team members in their day-to-day operational decisions and actions.

Exhibit "B" illustrates a practical application of Management by Objective and the sound management planning that is required.

The system is one which fosters individual creativity since objectives while setting a course of predetermined direction, leave considerable freedom for exercising individual judgment and initiative in achieving them. Use of the system, truly, will make delegations of authority and decentralization really effective.

Moreover, Management by Objective involves participation by all members of the team.

DEFINITIONS - MANAGEMENT TOOLS

MISSION: The broad National Park Service charter which reflects legislative enactments and Executive directives--

- a. To manage and develop the National Park System for public use and benefit by such means and in such manner as to leave its resources and values unimpaired for future generations.
- b. To cooperate with Federal, State, and local governments and the private sector in programs to preserve the natural and cultural inheritance of our Nation.

This mission is summarized in our statement of Management Philosophy which we call a Pledge of Public Service.

Administrative Policies implement and supplement the Service mission and statement of Management Philosophy. They do not stipulate "How to do the job" - they set broad parameters within which day-to-day management decisions may be made.

Long-Range Objectives are definitive statements of desired end results which point the direction of program implementation.

In the National Park Service, objectives are generally long range - involving a time span of more than 1 year.

Long-Range Objectives for the National Park Service are developed and kept relevant by the Office of the Director. Regional Long-Range Objectives are supportive of the National Park Service objectives and also identify those objectives which have application to the individual Region involved. Long-Range Objectives for each field area are stated as Management Objectives in the statement for Management and Planning.

Activity Standards are measurable statements, by the Director, of the results or conditions that will exist when activities of the Service have been carried out satisfactorily. They are expressed in a single level of acceptability and apply Servicewide to all offices and areas engaged in the activity.

Activity Standards cover the principal activities but are not contemplated for the supportive actions (clerical, stenographic, etc.) needed to carry out the principal activities.

Goals are incremental steps in furthering an organization toward the Service mission and the objectives of the area or office, and are generally short range, involving a time span of 1 year or less.

They are measurable, specific statements of expected end results of actions, other than day-to-day operations, which require "stretch" and are achievable within the resources and authorities available to the organization.

Role and Functional Statements are descriptions of the principal functions and responsibilities of an organizational unit together with the relationship of that unit to other units within its sphere of influence whether Servicewide, Region, Park, Service Center, or external organizations and groups.

Personal Performance Standards are statements developed by the supervisor and subordinate which describe the results and conditions that will exist when the employee has performed his functions satisfactorily. Personal Performance Standards are essential for constructive dialogue between the employee and his supervisor with respect to the job to be done and evaluating the job actually done.

APPLICATION
OF
MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVE

(Park Area)

Inherent in the effective application of Management by Objective is the need for planning - deciding what to do, how to do it, and at what speed and cost to do it - this necessitates both creative and judgmental thinking. Management by Objective is "planned" management - establishing the direction of the organizational thrust and then planning how the people and resources of the organization are to be used in moving in that direction. The last page of this exhibit shows diagrammatically this process.

For purposes of this discussion, in applying the Management System in the context of a typical park area, we will assume the area's Long-Range Objectives, which have been framed within and support the NPS Long-Range Objectives, are stated in the area's Master Plan as the Management Objectives portion of the Statement for Management and Planning. Other management parameters are also expressed in the legislative history of the area, the Administrative Policies and other pertinent documents that provide authorities or prescribe restraints -

these controlling documents provide direction and must be fully analyzed.

Management by Objective also requires an undergirding of background information and data on which to formulate judgments and provide assistance in determining the activities to be carried out. This background information and data must be determined by the park and is derived from an analysis of all factors that influence the planning process and have a direct relationship to the activities to be carried out - we must know what we have, where we are, and where we want to arrive. Some of the questions requiring answers are: What are the resources that generate visitor interest and therefore represent interpretive potential? What natural and historical resources must be managed? What physical facilities and equipment must be maintained? How much visitation has there been in the past - what's projected in the future? What are the business trends of the concessioners? What new Servicewide "thrusts" must be considered? The answers to these, and a host of other questions, produce a bank of background information that assists management in the determination of the activities that will be carried out in the area. The Servicewide Activity Standards also provide valuable input into the activity selection process.

Having selected the activities to be carried out, the next step is to determine Resource Requirements Data; the total resources (manpower, money, equipment, supplies, etc.) to carry out the selected activities at standard.

This determination is without constraints (financial or personnel), however, all planning is predicated on carrying out the activities "at standard" and here the Servicewide Activity Standards again come into play since they express in measurable terms the results or conditions that will exist when the various component elements of the activities are being performed satisfactorily.

Using again, to the extent necessary, the background information to support the programing of these activities, management must determine workloads involved in carrying out these activities at standard:

WHAT work is required to carry out the activity.

WHERE the work will be carried out.

WHEN will work be carried out.

HOW MUCH staffing will proposed workload require.

HOW MUCH support (equipment, supplies, etc.) will proposed workload require.

It is important to remember that not all elements of all activities are covered by Activity Standards and that the workload must include all actions whether or not they are covered by Activity Standards.

Having determined the What, Where, When, and How much, to operate all activities at standard, management is in a position to "cost out" the proposed program. This total compilation represents the area's Resource Requirements Data.

Resource Requirements Data provides the information on which to rationally make a number of management decisions required for an effective operation. For the Park Manager, it furnishes the basic data needed to prepare the area's Long-Range Programs. The importance of Resource Requirements Data Servicewide can be effectively illustrated by quoting a paragraph from the statement (Operating Deficiency) enclosed with the December 16, 1971, memorandum from the Director to the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks:

"The National Park Service has been underfunded in its management, operation and maintenance programs for well over a decade. Within this period of time, visitation has been increasing rapidly, and numerous areas have been added to the System. The increase

in visitation has made the funding deficiency for management, operations and maintenance more obvious. Criteria which spell out the conditions that will exist when operations are at standard for park management, law enforcement, park interpretation, resources maintenance and management, and facilities maintenance have been promulgated for the parks. The resources necessary to close the gap between the conditions presently existing in the park and the conditions which will exist when the park is operating at standard is the park deficiency."

Obviously a "park deficiency" cannot be determined until area management, through the application of standards, has first determined what is a standard operation and secondly has generated Resource Requirements Data which places a funding and staffing tag on the operation. Thus, the Servicewide deficiencies which are reported to Congress are directly related to, and supported by, the Activity Standards and resultant Resource Requirements Data developed for each area of the Service.

But the primary value of Resource Requirements Data to the local manager is in connection with determining an area's Annual Operating Program, particularly when the park's allotment provides funding that is less than the amount needed to operate all activities at standard. If the Resource Requirements Data is recorded in detail and is readily available,

it enables management to compare the cost of conducting the activity and the anticipated benefits, to other proposed activities, and to make fact-based decisions as to:

Which of the proposed activities will be carried out at standard?

Which of the proposed activities will be carried out below standard?

Which of the proposed activities will be eliminated?

The resultant decisions provide the basis for developing annual work schedules and/or establishing realistic goals, concentrating resources on those programs determined to have highest priority; thus, the Annual Financial Plan- Operating Program reflects the maximum return on funds invested.

For Management by Objective to be effective, its planning programs must be converted into specific, functional work assignments. It must be decided who does what, who has what authority, and who reports to whom. Role and Functional Statements identify organizational unit responsibilities and are essentially the "harness" that helps people to pull together in performing activities. In a similar manner, Personal Performance Standards identify individual responsibilities and expected accomplishments.

Up to this point, we have discussed Management by Objective solely in the context of a park area. However, the concept is applicable to all offices - in WASO, in the Regions, and in the Service Centers. Each office or unit should establish goals that reflect the Long-Range Objectives of the Service as well as the special needs of local management. As was true in park areas, the planned workload must be converted to Resource Requirements Data with the same "what, where, when, and how much" questions to be answered. There also arises the need to establish priorities and to make conscious decisions as to what work will be deferred when appropriations are insufficient to meet total needs. Management must diligently follow up with subordinates to make certain that target dates are met and that the end product is of acceptable quality. Role and Functional Statements are needed to clarify responsibilities, to avoid duplications, and to prevent oversights - Personal Performance Standards are necessary to guide the efforts of those who do the work.

Obviously, management planning embodies a considerable amount of "paper work" which few people like. For most, it is hard work

and we should keep it to the essential minimum. Yet paper work is a vital part of management. The requirement to plan and to document such plans, to determine requirements and express such requirements on paper so others can understand them, and to communicate one's ideas to others on paper are essential responsibilities of management.

