

national park service



superintendents' guide
to
media
relations

u.s. department of the interior





UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

July 12, 1968

A66-INF

Memorandum

To: All National Park Service Superintendents

From: Director

Subject: Guide to Media Relations

This public information guide has been prepared primarily to assist superintendents and their staffs in the preparation of news releases and to guide them in working with representatives of the news media, writers and photographers.

These guidelines cannot possibly cover every detail of the information program. They are intended to provide an easy-to-read summary of what public information is, and guidance in general terms on what to do when you, as superintendents or staff members, have information of interest to the public, or problems involving matters of general public interest.

There will be times that you feel you need questions answered on activities not covered in the guidebook. A telephone call or memorandum to your Regional Director or the Regional public affairs assistant may provide the answer you need.

Names and telephone numbers of the Information office staff in each of the Regional Offices are included for your convenience.

If you have any question regarding the material in this handbook, please let us know through your Regional Director. The chances are that the same question may be on someone else's mind and it should be clarified.

Enclosure

INFORMATION OFFICE PERSONNEL
Washington Office
Area Code 202

Acting Chief, Division of Information, Edwin N. Winge
343-6843 or 343-6844
Home telephone: area code 301 588-3915

Branch of Press Relations:

Chief, Francis X. Kelly
343-4214 or 343-4895
Home telephone: area code 301 721-2377

Branch of Features and Public Inquiries:

Chief, John R. Vosburgh
343-2811
Home telephone: area code 301 656-2856

Still Photo Branch:

Chief, Cecil Stoughton
343-5055 or 343-4240
Home telephone: area code 703 354-0919

REGIONAL PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS

Northeast Region: 143 S. Third Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19106
James R. Whitehouse, Actg. - area code 215 597-7018

Southeast Region: Federal Bldg., Box 10008, 400 N. Eighth Street,
Richmond, Va. 23240
Joseph Cullen - area code 703 649-2601

Midwest Region: 1709 Jackson Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102
William Dean - area code 402 221-3482

Southwest Region: Old Santa Fe Trail, P.O. Box 728, Santa Fe,
New Mexico 87501
(vacant) - area code 505 982-3375

Western Region: 450 Golden Gate Ave., P.O. Box 36063, San Francisco,
Calif. 94102
Gustav W. Muehlenhaupt - area code 415 556-7691

National Capital Region: 1100 Ohio Dr., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20242
Mrs. Carol J. Smith - area code 202 381-7396
Sandra Alley " "

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

A good public information program has a lot to do with your "public relations"--with what people think about your park and about the National Park Service.

If your park is well managed and your programs are interesting and worthwhile, the public should be told. Indeed, since the public pays the bill you have a duty to let the people know about your program. As Fortune magazine puts it: good public relations is simply good performance, publicly appreciated.

Simple as this may be in concept, it is not easy to attain. As with any active part of your program, you must work at it in a positive way. While your job, and the mission of the National Park Service in conservation, preservation, and in more complex aspects of our national life, may be clear to you, they are not equally well understood by the public. Your responsibility as a superintendent includes the basic task of informing the public on what you are doing, and why. This does not mean issuing press releases on every detail of your activity. Far from it. It does mean contact with the public on the major parts of your program, important developments within the park, and things of significance that happen there. Public appreciation, or public opinion, is sometimes fickle, and always fragile. And, obviously, opinion is influenced by many things which communicate ideas but have no relationship whatever to media or to the written word.

For example, the impact of a fine interpretive exhibit or AV program can be lost if the visitor encounters a dirty restroom on his way out.

We are concerned here, however, with that part of public relations which involves media, and media problems: with the press, with radio and TV, with photography, movies, advertising, and all the tools of mass communications. Use of these tools or techniques is so important that a special effort should be made to understand them, how they work, and what their particular needs may be.

Primarily, you will be dealing with news, that is, with matters of general interest, and with people who handle it--reporters, photographers, cameramen, editors, or commentators.

You must understand that it is their job to get the story. They will be after answers to all the major questions--which are often referred to as the "who, what, where, when and why's" of a story. If the story is an important one--as, for example, the grizzly bear attacks at Glacier in 1967, or the elk management program at Yellowstone, a great many questions must be asked in order for the reporter to get a full understanding of what happened or what is going on.

Your job is to cooperate in helping the news people get the facts, clearly and in their true perspective. How to do this is the major subject of this handbook.

Let it be understood at the outset that we are a public agency employed in public business.

The public has every right to know what we are doing. Obviously, this applies equally to all communications media, and to individuals who write or ask questions about National Park Service activities as well.

This right is fully expressed in the Department of the Interior information policy (DEPARTMENTAL MANUAL Part 470), and it applies at every level and to every headquarters.

For your convenience the Department's policy information is reprinted here. Even if you have read it before, reread it now. It is an excellent guide, and answers many questions.

Department of the Interior
DEPARTMENTAL MANUAL

Information

Part 470 Public Expression

Chapter 1 General Policy and Procedures

470.1.1

.1 Department Information Policy

A. As a vital and integral part of its over-all mission, the Department of the Interior has a continuing responsibility to keep the public informed of its many programs and activities. The Department welcomes public examination of these programs and activities, not only as an inherent public right under our system of government, but also because public understanding and discussion are essential to the effective planning, conduct, and accomplishment of Department activities.

B. The Department's information policy recognizes that the public understanding and support necessary to the efficient accomplishment of its assigned responsibilities demand both good performance of its activities and an alert program of responding to public interest in what the Department is doing and why. This information program should make available to the public facts and opinions in a straight-forward and restrained manner about the plans and work of the Department. The Department's policy requires that those inquiring about the Department's **activities** receive a prompt and frank response setting forth clearly, completely, and accurately the information the Department has available.

C. It is the policy of the Department to accord the public free access to information about its activities. This information will be made fully available to any interested person except in those cases where, because of national security or related considerations, disclosure is clearly not in the public interest. It is the policy of the Department that equal and courteous treatment be accorded to all representatives of new-gathering agencies in the dissemination of Department information.

D. It is the policy of the Department to reduce the number and volume of publications distributed free to the public and to encourage the sale of Departmental publications in order to increase the return of user fees to the Federal Government. It is the policy to increase dissemination of information by stressing reliance on suitable nongovernment media and making greater use of all such available technical and other publications programs (See 470 DM 1.5, 476 DM 1, 476 DM 2, 476 DM 3).

.2 Procedures. To implement the foregoing policies, the following procedures will apply throughout the Department:

A. All Washington headquarters press releases and all Department publications, scripts for motion pictures, slide presentations, and radio and television programs, except those of a strictly scientific and engineering character and those granted specific exemption by the Director of Information by virtue of being an established and continuing series, will be cleared by the Office of Information (See 471 DM 1.1).

9/21/66 (Rel. No. 877)
Replaces 10/17/57 & 8/29/61

Department of the Interior
DEPARTMENTAL MANUAL

Information

Part 470 Public Expression

Chapter 1 General Policy and Procedures

470.1.2B

B. All speeches to be made by members of the Office of the Secretary, and by headquarters officials of bureaus and offices, will be given prior review by the Office of Information. Speeches by bureaus and office officials also will be reviewed by the office of the appropriate Assistant Secretary prior to submittal to the Office of Information. Speeches must be in the hands of the Office of Information, complete with all prior clearances, at least 48 hours before departure for the speaking engagement.

C. Prior approval is required to be given by the Office of Information of all personnel actions involving professional employees engaged in information activities. The Office may, from time to time, review performance ratings of such personnel. Travel authorizations involving trips of more than five days will be reviewed by the Director of Information.

D. The Office of Information may obtain assistance directly from bureau information officers on any information project and when occasion requires may detail bureau information personnel to the Office of Information for work on special projects. In the same manner, Office of Information personnel may be detailed to a particular bureau or to the staff of the Secretariat for specific projects.

E. The Office of Information has full responsibility for preparing and distributing the annual report (Conservation Yearbook) of the Secretary and for the review of all publications except those of a strictly scientific or engineering character (See 314 DM 5.3 regarding special handling of scientific periodicals).

F. The Director of Information may issue instructions directly to bureau information officers to carry out the assigned responsibilities of the Office of Information.

.3 Role of Bureaus and Offices. Effective conduct of the Department's information program requires full cooperation between the Office of Information and bureau and office officials including information personnel and field personnel. Bureaus and offices will carry on adequate information programs consisting of factual information about activities and accomplishments within their respective spheres of competence and the announcement and explanation of final action or adopted policy. Bureau and office officials should avoid speculation on unsettled questions or future policy and when in doubt should refer questions by news agencies on controversial subjects--particularly those involving more than one bureau or office--to the Office of Information. As a part of its responsibility for determining the information policy and procedures of the Department, the Office of Information will, when necessary, direct bureau information officers and staff personnel as to the need for developing news, feature stories, or articles and make final determinations as to the manner in which information problems are to be

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Chapter 1 General Policy and Procedures

470.1.3(Cont.)

handled. Bureau information personnel must be kept constantly informed by staff and operating officials on all significant or newsworthy actions by their bureaus, and, in turn, the bureau information personnel are responsible for keeping the Office of Information currently informed on these actions.

.4 Field Information. Field officials are responsible for disseminating accurate and adequate information about their work. However, they should confine statements made in their official capacity to factual material related to their area of responsibility and avoid conflict with policy decisions made and announced in Washington. Normally, the Office of Information, Office of the Secretary, will not require that it give prior review to field-written releases, but it should be notified in advance regarding those releases which cut across bureau or Department lines, are national in scope, or which are likely to result in subsequent involvement of Washington headquarters officials. In such instances, advance copies of the press release are to be air-mailed or wired to the Director of Information well in advance of the intended release time.

.5 Public Information Released in Technical Journals. Bureaus and offices may publish scientific and technical material produced as a result of their activities in recognized professional and other journals and related media in lieu of Government publication. The bureau or office through its own information unit will provide the Office of Information, Office of the Secretary, with a copy of the material prior to publication in each case where the material to be published has broad public interest, involves important new scientific or other technical information, has direct bearing on policy questions, or relates to programs of other bureaus of the Department or other Departments.

WHAT IS NEWS?

As a park manager, your concern is to make sure the public knows what your program is, what facilities are available for public use and when, what's going on in your park, who your people are, and so on. All of these matters will be of interest to the press, and to other media, as news or as feature material, or subjects for talks and programs.

News always has a time element. If information is fresh and unpublished, editors will use it promptly. If it is old, it probably won't be used at all.

Parks represent many values, and many special interests to people. Any one of the diverse values found in a park may be news, or useful information and you should be alert to these opportunities.

To help give you ideas for legitimate stories that would interest an editor we have prepared a check list. Review it frequently. In the press of your daily work, it is easy to overlook a newsworthy item of information.

NEWS CHECKLIST

Personnel.

1. New people on the staff
2. Promotions or transfers
3. Retirements
4. Awards

Facilities.

1. New visitor center; structures of any kind; plans for remodeling; moving or razing; parking areas.
2. Master plans.
3. Campgrounds, picnic areas, trails.
4. Interpretive matters.
5. Transportation plans or installations.
6. Groundbreaking ceremonies; dedications.
7. Seasonal openings and closings.

Community relations.

1. Use of park areas or resources for a broad community purpose-- e.g., as a school Environmental Study Area.
2. Participation in local activities or programs.
3. Services to the community: fund drives, speakers, services of personnel, emergency aid, loan of equipment.

Special items.

1. Proposed changes in park regulations.
2. Unusual uses of park--scientific studies, archeological recoveries, public hearings, etc.

3. Wildlife or nature news or features.
4. Recreational opportunities.
5. Children or youth affairs.

Social.

1. Functions.
2. Employee activities: marriages, awards, graduations, etc.

Advance news on speeches.

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Some stories require a followup. For example, if you announce that crews are removing snow from park roads with a proposed opening date, you must follow up with another news release when your opening date is definitely known.

Remember, any time you change plans or schedules for some facility used by the public, you should let the people know in advance.

Normally, most of your news stories will be of local interest. Some items, however, are of broad and general concern, and should be released at the Regional or Washington level.

In most cases you should be able to tell immediately whether a story is of more than local interest. If it is the kind of news you would see in the state capital newspapers, it is probably of more than local interest. If you have any doubt, call the Region about it. Any news release can wait until you get it right.

Some stories won't wait, however--a disaster, for instance. These special cases will be discussed in a separate section.

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HOW TO WRITE A NEWS RELEASE
(when you have news worth talking about)

Since the written news release is basic, you should make a special effort to abide by the time-proved fundamentals.

This is not the place for experimentation or fancy writing. Its purpose is not to entertain, but to inform, and to do that, it must present facts (not opinion) clearly, simply and completely.

A news release is easy to write when you have adequately prepared yourself to write it. This means having all the facts--all the answers to the basic questions of who, what, where, when, and why, and all details such as proper spellings, correct figures, accurate titles, middle initials, and so on. Write these down, and keep your notes on your sources. You will be surprised how often you will be called on to check back, elaborate or clarify some obscure point. Your notes will be invaluable.

You should understand at the outset that it is part of a newsman's job to probe for facts. He's suspicious, occasionally cynical perhaps; usually bright and certainly not easily fooled. He will look at a hand-out critically, and change it to suit his publication's need or to satisfy his own professional standards.

You should not expect your release to be used as you deliver it, or to be used in entirety. This is not important.

It is important, however, to prepare a news release in such a way that it can be used as submitted, or nearly so. If you save a busy newsman's time, it is appreciated.

If your story strikes a specially responsive chord, the editor may decide to give it more space or a different treatment. Perhaps he will assign a man to call on you for more facts or background. In any case, your role is to supply the information. You and your staff should be prepared to do this willingly and well. It pays handsome dividends.

Examine a news story in a daily paper. Take a wire story (AP or UPI) as your example, and notice how simply it is put together; notice the economy of writing; the short sentences, short paragraphs, simple words and simple constructions. These are basic requirements which you should emulate.

Try to tell the most important element of your story in the lead, or first paragraph. Think of it this way: if the paper had only one inch of space for your story, what would you say?

After the lead, you can elaborate the details in descending order of importance.

There used to be a rule in editorial rooms that a news story had to be a complete story at the end of every paragraph. That is a good way to think about the story as you write.

Keep your presentation simple: use typewriter, double space, and indent paragraphs. Use white paper 8½ x 11-inch, one side only. Use mimeograph, multilith, thermofax, xerox. Do not send carbons.

At the top of your page, list your park, your address, the name and phone number of the news source. Make it easy for the editor to call if he wants to talk about the story.

And never mark your story a "press" release unless that is only what it is. Radio or TV people are not "press," but they do deal with news. Call your offering a "news release."

Keep your release short. Don't ramble on with inconsequential matter or irrelevancies.

Keep your story to facts, never opinion or speculation. Never editorialize, without attribution. For example, in a news release, do not say: "bear feeding is dangerous both to the animals and the visitors. Violators of this park regulation will be vigorously prosecuted." Say, instead: "Superintendent Jones warned that bear feeding is dangerous both to the animals and the visitors. Violators of this park regulation, he said, will be vigorously prosecuted."

Keep your language simple and active. Avoid bureaucratic words, clichés, repetition, slang.

The active form of a verb is preferred over the passive. For example: "Superintendent Brown greeted the Mayor's delegation at the Park entrance," not "The Mayor's delegation was greeted at the Park entrance by Superintendent Brown."

News should be attributed to a responsible, personal source. The National Park Service letterhead on the News Release is not an adequate source, nor is the vague, unidentifiable "Park Service officials." Statements, announcements and decisions are made by people, who should be identified.

Remember your time element. A release prepared for a morning paper or a Sunday paper should not say "...it was announced today." Nobody gets up that early. The editor would probably catch it, but you should save him the trouble.

You may also want to say something about when you want your news story printed. If time of release is not important, simply mark it "for immediate release."

When you've finished your draft, read it for understanding. Is it clear? Or is it confusing? Think of yourself as a reader who knows nothing about the subject. Is it still clear and complete?

Be sure your copy is clean, without scratches, inserts or illegible erasures.

The foregoing general rules hold for most stories. There are special considerations for stories involving juveniles, arrests, or court cases, discussed in the Law Enforcement section.

Following are two sample news releases illustrating the correct style and format.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
National Park Service
Fort Fracas National Historic Site
Pebble, Colorado 60312

Smith - 366-1234

July 10, 1968

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FORT FRACAS VISITOR CENTER TO BE DEDICATED

Superintendent H. Guilfoyle Smith announced today that the new visitor center at Fort Fracas National Historic Site will be dedicated August 9, with Congressman John Q. Adams, of Colorado, as principal speaker.

Governor John Love, Mayor Ralph M. Rampart of Pebble, and other federal, state and local officials have been invited to the 2 p.m. ceremonies, Smith said. Special parking provisions have been made for the general public, he added.

Workmen are putting finishing touches on the \$135,000 building which has been under construction since last January. The visitor center, constructed of native limestone, is located just off State Route 96, at the north entry to the historic site. It will be a contact point for arriving visitors, and its interpretive displays will tell the story of the fort and its relationship to the history of the region, Smith said.

The building also will house administrative offices and other functions.

Fort Fracas is located 20 miles south of Pebble, Colorado. The fort was built by the Army in 1872 to provide protection for mining activities in the region. Authorized as a National Historic Site by the Congress in 1942, it was restored and is now administered by the National Park Service.

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
National Park Service
Yosemite National Park, California 95389

Hadley - 372-4456

June 7, 1968

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW CHIEF RANGER SELECTED FOR YOSEMITE

Claude W. McClain, former chief ranger at Grand Teton National Park, has been selected for the position of chief park ranger at Yosemite National Park.

According to Superintendent Lawrence C. Hadley, McClain has served as chief ranger at Grand Teton since 1966, having transferred to that area from Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Other assignments include Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, Petrified Forest National Park, Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park and Yellowstone National Park.

At Yosemite, McClain will head up the Division of Resources Management and Visitor Protection with the prime responsibility for the protection of the park visitor, the park's forest and wildlife.

McClain is a native of Manzanola, Colorado, and attended the University of Colorado and Colorado State University. He is married and has two children, a daughter, age 10, and a son, age 8.

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OFFICE OF INFORMATION
STYLE SHEET

Note: What follows is a condensed version of the Style Sheet approved by the Office of Information, Department of the Interior. This style is used by all Bureaus and Agencies of the Department on news releases. It can be helpful to you in preparing your local releases.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations of organizations, etc., can save time and money. First, however, be sure you have indoctrinated your reader. Do not use BIA until you first have used Bureau of Indian Affairs. Do not use periods with such acronyms.

Abbreviate St., Ave., Blvd., Ter., Dr., Rd., but not Point, Port, Circle, Plaza, Place, Oval, Lane.

Abbreviate states which follow cities, towns, villages, Indian agencies, national parks, etc.

Here are the abbreviations we use:

Ala.	Ill.	Miss.	N.M.	Tenn.
Ariz.	Ind.	Mo.	N.Y.	Tex.
Ark.	Kan.	Mont.	Okla.	Vt.
Calif.	Ky.	Neb.	Ore.	Va.
Colo.	La.	Nev.	Pa.	Wash.
Conn.	Md.	N.C.	R.I.	Wis.
Del.	Mass.	N.D.	S.C.	W. Va.
Fla.	Mich.	N.H.	S.D.	Wyo.
Ga.	Minn.	N.J.		

Do not abbreviate Alaska, Hawaii, Canal Zone, Virgin Islands, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Utah.

Abbreviate months only in tabular material (optional) or when used with a complete date. Thus, it's Oct. 12, 1966, and "in October 1966, the nation was ..."

Abbreviate days of the week only in tabular material.

FIGURES, DIMENSIONS, ETC.

Except when dealing with finances and ages, the general rule is to spell out numbers below 10 and to use figures for 10 and above:

A five-pound fish, a 10-pound fish; a 3-year-old girl; a \$4 million contract; a \$5 fee; six acres of land.

Do not mix standards in the same story, such as pounds and kilograms, meters and yards, decimals and fractions in treating the same items. When the metric system is used, translate into the U.S. measure.

Do not begin a sentence with a numeral.

TITLES

Avoid over-long prefatory titles. Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, Solicitor Edward Weinberg, and a few others are all right. It should be Commissioner Floyd E. Dominy of the Bureau of Reclamation, not Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Floyd E. Dominy. Preferred is Dr. Walter R. Hibbard, Bureau of Mines director (note lc on "director"), or Director Walter R. Hibbard of the Bureau of Mines (note uc on "director in this usage.")

Official titles should follow a lower-case style: John Jones, regional director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife; Stanley Smith, personnel officer of the bureau; Frank Alto, chief of the division of geology, branch of bituminous coal analysis. Try to shorten titles whenever possible, for they often wear little to the reading public.

We do not often use names of the Members of Congress in news stories. However, when we do it's Congressman John Jones of Alaska and Senator John Smith of Oregon. Parties are not designated.

Never abbreviate a person's first name by using a contraction unless he specifically prefers it. Thus Chas. F. Luce is incorrect, but Congressman Joe R. Pool is correct. Check your directories.

Use of "Mr." should be avoided in stories, for too often we find one man being called "Mr." and some other person in the same story not so recognized. Use "Dr." if a person holds such a degree: Dr. Stanley A. Cain, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. Thereafter: "Dr. Cain said," or "Assistant Secretary Cain said..."

UNDERLINES AND QUOTES

Quotes are preferred to underlines. Use quotation marks for motion picture titles, names of vessels, and for titles of publications.

Use underlines for scientific names, foreign phrases, speech titles, and in those rare cases where a speaker insists on underlining to make certain his point is understood.

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HOW TO GET YOUR STORY IN THE PAPERS AND ON THE AIR

If only one newspaper served your park, the mechanics of getting a story to the paper would be simple. You would mail it, or take it, to the appropriate editor, or to the reporter who normally "covered" the park, and that would be that.

But life usually isn't so easy. Chances are you will have to deal with a dozen or more newspapers, dailies and weeklies, and with a few radio and TV stations, too.

Media File

Your job will be simplified if you work up basic information on the news media, and keep it up to date in card files or a looseleaf notebook.

List all the newspapers. Note the number of their subscribers, when they publish (days of week, morning or evening), and their copy deadlines. Note the desk or editor (e.g.- city desk, state editor, conservation editor, sports editor, outdoor editor, etc.) who should receive your releases. Note the names and phone numbers of reporters or editors you may wish to contact in person.

Special information should also be noted: for example, if the paper is printed letterpress or offset, rotary or flatbed. Do they want pictures and features? Does the editor have personal or particular interest in your park? Is he a history buff? A flyfisherman? A bird watcher? Amateur ecologist?

The idea is to make your file reference work for you and your staff. To do that, it must contain useful information.

Be sure to include the wire services--Associated Press and United Press--International--in your media file. Unless your Park is in or near a large city, chances are the wire services will not have separate staffs and offices. They are, however, represented by a "stringer" who usually is a reporter or editor of the local daily newspaper. You should have the name and phone number of the AP and UPI "stringer" in your area and include them on your mailings.

Many large metropolitan newspapers also employ local writers or editors as "stringers" and it is helpful to know who they are.

Compile information on radio and TV stations. They will differ, of course, from the other media, but you will need names, dates and times of regular news broadcasts, phone numbers, special information and so forth, just as with the newspapers.

Further details are discussed in the section on radio and TV, which follows.

Radio and Television

Radio and television stations, like newspapers, are in the business of collecting and disseminating the news. They should receive the same news release you send to the newspapers, and at the same time. Be sure it is sent or delivered to the News Editor.

But there are two unusual traits about radio and television that set them apart from the printed media.

First, they are immediate. Minutes after you talk to the television or radio news editor, your news statement can be on the air. This gives you a swift means of communication in an emergency.

Second, they are intimate. Television comes right into the living room. So does radio, but it also follows you in your car, on the beach, or even on the street. So it is important to remember--if you are doing the talking--that your audience may be large in numbers but it consists of individuals or small groups in informal social situations.

So don't use your public speaking or "auditorium" tone of voice. Speak in conversational tones. This applies whether you are being interviewed in person; recording a statement over a "beeper" phone for later re-broadcast, or taking part in a panel show before a live audience.

Radio: Some people have a tendency to downgrade radio, despite the fact that there are some 262 million radio sets in the country.

Radio is immediate and flexible, and the trend is toward placing greater emphasis on spot news coverage.

For this reason, radio can be extremely valuable to you in keeping the public informed on conditions in your park--traffic jams, overcrowded facilities, changing road conditions, or in an emergency such as a forest fire or a bad storm when you have to get the alert out quickly to the entire area.

Television: When possible, try to send pictures along with your news story to television stations. The cutlines can be the same as for newspapers.

The most important thing about pictures to be used on television is that they be clean and sharp. You can use glossy pictures as they can be sprayed by the station to reduce the glare. Some stations can even use good polaroid shots. Most stations make 35-mm slides from your pictures and keep them on file for future use.

It's a must that each television station serving your area have a good, portrait-type picture of the Superintendent--in uniform, of course--that can be used for video backup on recorded statements or other news affecting the park.

When you participate in a television interview-type program, always bring some visual aids with you, if at all possible. Photos, 35-mm. slides, even good clear artwork, as well as exhibits, can be used to add eye-appeal to your presentation.

Don't worry about clothing colors, or makeup, although men who have heavy beards should shave as close as possible to air time to reduce shadow.

If you are going to demonstrate something, or use a slide or exhibit, be sure you rehearse it in advance. Nothing is more embarrassing than to go before the live camera with a gadget that doesn't work-- or an exhibit you can't find. Also, having run through it successfully beforehand will give you added confidence.

Being at ease, and familiar with what you are going to say are important factors. When on an interview or panel show, it's a good idea occasionally, to look directly into the camera. Remember, the people you are really talking to are behind those red lights, and they expect you to look them in the eye once in awhile.

Public Service Time: There is another important difference between newspapers and the electronic media. While newspapers are privately owned, the air waves are owned by the people. Radio and television stations, which operate under a permit from the Federal government, are required to devote a certain amount of their air time to public service.

Most stations are eager to discharge this responsibility and are constantly on the lookout for interesting and informative subject matter.

This can give you excellent opportunities to present many phases of the National Park Service story. The format for public service programs is usually either an interview or a panel show, from 15 to 30 minutes in length. But some stations also use five-minute slots. Chances are, your show won't be in prime time, but even so, it will reach many, many more people than could be seated in the largest auditorium in your area.

There are many ways to utilize public service time. It can give you the chance to explain the National Park Service side of a local controversy; to "sell" a new policy change, or to advance the long-range concepts of conservation and environmental education.

But remember, you are competing with many other worthy organizations and programs for a limited amount of air time. So don't wait to be asked if you have an interesting and important story to tell. You must take the initiative.

It's a big help, of course, when you make such a request, if you already are acquainted with the Program Manager of the station, or the host of the interview show. There's no substitute for personal contact.

WHO GETS IT ?

If you mail your news, address the envelope to the right staff person.

On small daily papers, and weekly papers, all the address you need is:

The Editor
name of paper
street address
Town, State and Zip Code

In larger cities, big daily papers have departmentalized editorial staffs. General news probably should be addressed to the News Editor, or City Editor. Sports news should go to the Sports Editor. As mentioned earlier, your data sheet should list the various editors who would have specific interest in news information developing in your park. If you are doubtful, "News Editor" or "Editor" will do the job.

Never send news copy to an editor by name, unless he's the only man there. A personal address might simply delay getting your news into print.

"News Editor" is the proper addressee for TV and radio stations.

] Don't Delay [

News ages fast. Don't let your news releases lie around, but mail them promptly.

Remember deadlines. Your release should get to the papers in plenty of time for the editor to read it, to call you if there are any questions, and to get it ready to publish. Remember, he has a lot of other material to handle.

Most of the stories you will deal with will be for use upon receipt, or for immediate release.

Obviously, when you issue a news release, it is available to everyone at the same time. Broadcast media can use it almost immediately, since they have no complex problem of converting it into type, printing, etc.

On an important spot news story, a morning paper generally can cover news that happens up to about midnight prior to issue. Afternoon papers can cover news that happens up to about noon on their day of issue.

Deadlines and number of editions vary somewhat, paper to paper. Get the specific times and note them in your basic list or notebook.

When you plan the release of your story, remember the weekly papers. Many weeklies are issued with a Thursday dateline. Printing times vary, and so, as a result, do copy deadlines.

Plan to get your release to the editor in time for him to use it. Remember, weekly papers generally have a long "lead time"--early copy deadlines. Usually they can handle late news on page 1 only--which means important news.

Telephone?

There will be occasions when you won't have time to write, mimeograph and mail a news release. Use the phone. But have the information, the facts--or as many of them as you can get--at hand before you place your calls.

Don't call at deadline time, unless your news is of such great importance that it cannot wait.

Tell the editor the facts of your story--briefly and simply. If he is interested, he may take your information himself, or ask you to talk to someone else, or he may assign a reporter or photographer to cover your story in person.

If your story is a developing one, offer to keep him posted. Be cooperative.

The same telephone guidance holds for radio and TV stations.

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LAW ENFORCEMENT, CRIME AND DISASTERS

This is an area of great sensitivity and importance. The manner in which you handle news relating to crime and disasters can do much to strengthen your relations with news media. At the same time, a single incident, badly handled, can create distrust and suspicion that destroys years of patient effort in building an effective relationship with newsmen.

Of necessity, great discretion must be vested in the Superintendent and there are few specific guidelines that apply Servicewide to all types of situations. There is one overriding principle you should keep in mind, however, and that is this:

When crime or tragedy occurs in an area of the National Park System, the public has a right to know about it, and they get their information through the various media--newspapers, radio and television, who, in turn, get their information from you.

There are several valid reasons for publicizing law enforcement activities within the parks. It can serve as a deterrent to further violations. It can alert the public to potential danger, enlisting their support and enabling them to take protective measures, if necessary. It can reassure the residents of the area that the National Park Service is effectively carrying out its visitor protection and law enforcement program.

What follows are some general guidelines on procedure in certain areas. Many are being followed now. Not all are applicable to every situation. If a situation arises in which you are in doubt, consult your Regional Public Affairs Officer. You should have both his office and home phone numbers.

ACCURACY: It is always important to have your facts straight in any news release, but doubly so in cases involving crime or tragedy. Names, addresses, and ages should be checked and cross-checked for accuracy. If a crime is involved, be specific as to the charge. Do not editorialize or moralize.

JUVENILES: The name of a juvenile should not be mentioned in a news release--either at the time of arrest or after disposition of the case. The only exception would be if a juvenile commits a major crime, is a fugitive, and the information would be useful in his apprehension.

The legal definition of a juvenile varies from state to state and each Superintendent will know the age limit for his area.

PRE-TRIAL PUBLICITY: When the suspect in a major crime (felony) committed in a Park area is arrested, formally charged and taken into custody, this information enters the public domain and becomes a part of the public's right to know. This does not mean that the Superintendent should rush to the media with an announcement, although there will be times when this is both proper and necessary. But it does mean that the information must be made available upon request, to a bona fide news representative. There may be times when this information must be withheld temporarily--for example, when additional arrests are imminent and premature disclosure would jeopardize closing out the case. In the vast majority of such incidents, however, National Park Service personnel will be working with other law enforcement officials and should be guided by their procedures.

There may be other instances when pre-trial publicity is both necessary and desirable. Announcement of an arrest, or arrests, may call public attention to a bad local situation and deter commission of the same type of crime by others during the period in which defendants are awaiting trial.

But if names are used, in pre-trial stories you must take great care to make it clear that the persons involved have been accused, but not convicted. For example, say:

"John Jones is awaiting trial on charges of alligator poaching,"
NOT "John Jones is awaiting trial for alligator poaching."

Extreme caution must be exercised in release of pre-trial information about sex crimes. For example, the names of rape victims or complaining witnesses in cases of homosexuality or perversion must not be released. Because of the stigma attached to such an accusation and the lasting harm to a reputation that would result should the charge prove unfounded, great care must be taken in identifying the suspect and in releasing details of the alleged offenses.

Media policy on sex crimes varies widely. It is important for all National Park Service personnel, however, to remember at all times that until the trial has been concluded, the guilt or innocence of the accused has not been legally determined.

DISPOSITION OF COURT CASES: Superintendents, in their discretion, may find it useful in the overall interests of law enforcement to issue general news releases at the close of a court session. These may be just summaries of the types of charges or offenses; number of convictions, fines, and other penalties imposed. The names of adults involved and the details of the offenses need not be included, unless, in the judgment of the Superintendent, it would serve as a deterrent to future violations, or it is a logical followup to a case that was widely publicized earlier. However, once a case is formally disposed of, it becomes a matter of public record, and must be supplied, upon request, to a bona fide news representative.

In no instance, should the details of such a case be voluntarily publicized solely as a means of inflicting additional punishment upon the defendant.

FATALITIES: In all cases of fatalities occurring in an area of the National Park System, it is the policy of the Service that next of kin be notified before the identity of the victims is given to news media. Superintendents occasionally may find themselves under great pressure from reporters to violate this policy, but such pressure must be resisted. The only exception would be when, after a suitable interval, the Superintendent determines it necessary to enlist the help of the media in locating relatives whose whereabouts are unknown.

DISASTERS: On those rare occasions when a major catastrophe or disaster strikes an area of the National Park System, Superintendents will find themselves overwhelmed by the demands of the news media for timely, accurate information. For many reporters, this is their first and only contact with the National Park Service.

Much confusion and irritation on both sides can be avoided with a little advance planning.

A key step should be the designation, in advance, of a Press Officer to correlate information, brief the media, and release all statements for publication. All personnel likely to come in contact with the press should know who the Press Officer is and the general procedures to be followed.

Generally, the Press Officer should not be the Superintendent because he will be too heavily involved, personally, in coping with the situation in the field.

The first requirement of a Press Officer is that he be available to the press, preferably by phone at Park headquarters; the second, that he be responsive.

When an emergency occurs and the calls start coming in from the press, never say "No comment." This is a red flag to any newsman. It's much better to say: "I don't know, but I will check it out and call you back." You aren't expected to know everything about a rapidly changing emergency situation.

It is important that you keep a record of your press queries, and return the calls as soon as you have the facts in hand. Don't wait for the reporter to call you back. Remember that the reporter also is working under great pressure and usually in a competitive situation.

But before you do return the calls, organize your facts and get your ducks in a row as best you can. A simple, written statement is helpful because it insures that you tell the same story, and the complete story, to all the reporters.

On occasion, it may be necessary to bring in the Regional Public Affairs Officer for assistance. It is to the advantage of both the Park and the reporters that there be a single, authoritative and knowledgeable news source.

The foregoing does not mean, however, that a gag be placed on all National Park Service personnel and that they be prohibited from talking to reporters on the scene regarding background material, etc. The rule of common sense, backed up by advance knowledge of procedures, will be most effective.

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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The Department of the Interior policy on information states very clearly that the public is to be accorded free access to information about departmental activities.

This is qualified somewhat, of course, in Public Law 98-487 (the Public Information Act of July 4, 1967) and in 43 C.F.R. 2, which all park administrators should understand. By and large, the exceptions are not likely to have much impact on individual parks, or even on regional offices, insofar as inquiries from news media are concerned. The traditional policy of full disclosure, which is the basis of public trust, continues to be our guiding principle. The terms "secret," "confidential" and the like should never be used to describe any National Park Service program or proposal at any stage of its development.

There will be occasions when newspapers or other will want information we are not in a position to give them. Such situations will require tact and diplomacy in explaining why the questions cannot be answered. For example, reporters may want to know about a new master plan. Certainly it is no secret that a master plan is being prepared, nor are we hiding the resources that are involved. But until a master plan has been reviewed and signed by the Director it is not officially approved, and details are subject to change. Thus, our policy is not to publish details until after the plan as a whole has been approved, the exception being, of course, when public hearings are scheduled on a proposed master plan, clearly labeled as such.

This is a valid reason for delaying release of information, and if explained, it should be accepted without much further argument.

In all cases where information cannot be revealed, the reasons must be sound and carefully considered. Information is never denied to the press unless its disclosure would constitute an unwarranted invasion of an individual's privacy, concerns personnel or medical files, would prejudice law enforcement or a pending land acquisition matter, or would be premature.

Internal correspondence, memoranda, and the like usually are not released, but there may be occasions when this release would be approved if it served the public interest. For example, in 1966 the Department released to the press the substance of a memorandum from the Director to the Secretary which presented details of sonic boom damage at Canyon de Chelly. This served in lieu of a press release during a press conference by the Secretary.

If you have been a superintendent for a year or two, chances are that you have fielded many of the sensitive questions. When you get a tough one, you know better than to brush off the reporter with a "no comment" answer, or some other rude or graceless non-answer to a legitimate question. There are always valid answers, or else there are good explanations of why something cannot be released. If you have any doubts, check with a higher headquarters.

If you don't know an answer, or don't have all the facts, you should not be afraid to say so. No one can be expected to know everything. But always get the facts, then call back the inquiring newsman with straight answers, or straight reasons why you can't answer.

As a general rule, avoid speculation about pending legislation, new budgets, national policies and similar matters quite obviously beyond local control or influence. While it is a mistaken idea, some people feel any Federal employee, particularly an officer such as a park superintendent, should have an insight into everything happening in Washington. Be glad you haven't.

