



January 23, 2003

NLCJournal

“Nothing is more important than the safety of our employees. To make certain the National Park Service is effectively organized and staffed to ensure employee safety, we are taking concerted action to strengthen and revitalize our Officer Safety and Law Enforcement Program. The principal business of the National Leadership Council at this meeting is to confirm a strategy that accomplishes this goal.”

—Fran Mainella, Director, National Park Service
National Leadership Council Meeting
Reno, Nevada

The National Leadership Council (NLC) met in Reno, Nevada, November 20 and 21, 2002, to (1) address key policy, program and operations issues and (2) to meet with the Association of National Park Rangers (ANPR). Director Fran Mainella welcomed the opportunity to engage ANPR leadership in discussions about NPS law enforcement needs and directions, and other matters of interest to both organizations. The Director reiterated NLC concerns about growing resource and visitor protection demands and their impact on protection rangers, and she asserted it is an NLC priority to develop a comprehensive strategy bolstering program management and operations.

The Director introduced Lisa Mendelson as Associate to the Director, replacing Bill Walters who retired earlier in the month. The Director said Mendelson brings to the position a broad range of Park Service experience spanning park operations, natural and cultural resource management, concessions, and volunteers, in addition to experience on Capitol Hill and with the Office of Management and Budget. The Director said Mendelson is an excellent communicator, and she looks forward to working with the NLC team.

Director Mainella announced that Southeast Regional Deputy Director Pat Hooks will serve

The National Leadership Council (NLC) is a forum to unify the National Park Service and to provide consultation and strategic leadership on major policy and program issues.

as Acting Regional Director until January, when Midwest Regional Director Bill Schenk will assume the regional directorship in Atlanta. She said former Regional Director Jerry Belson will take - on a major assignment supporting work - force enhancement and broadening diversity as a meaningful part of NPS operations. She said further that Midwest Deputy Regional Director Dave Given will serve in an acting capacity as Regional Director in Omaha.

Rejuvenating Our Law Enforcement Program

The National Leadership Council discussed the work of the Law Enforcement Task Force, chaired by Deputy Director Don Murphy, and endorsed development of a plan to strengthen and reform the NPS Officer Safety and Law Enforcement Program. It was agreed that the effort will be guided by and based upon existing program law and policy. The plan—to be considered by the NLC at its January 28 and 30, 2003, meeting—will recommend a range of reforms, supporting budget, and a multi-year schedule of actions. The plan will propose:

- Development of a Protection Ranger Leadership Board to provide subject matter expertise to the Directorate and NLC on operational and policy issues.
- Organization of the NPS Law Enforcement and Emergency Services program management functions at the WASO level.
- Clear organizational structure and reporting lines for special agents emphasizing officer

- **National Leadership Council**
- **Fran Mainella**
Director
- **Randy Jones**
Deputy Director
- **Donald W. (Don) Murphy**
Deputy Director
- **Lisa Mendelson**
Associate to the Director
- **Sue Masica**
Associate Director
Park Planning, Facilities,
and Lands
- **Bruce Sheaffer**
Comptroller
- **Teresa Chambers**
Chief
United States Park Police
- **Katherine (Kate) Stevenson**
Associate Director
Cultural Resources
- **Michael (Mike) Soukup**
Associate Director
Natural Resources
Stewardship and Science
- **Richard (Dick) Ring**
Associate Director
Administration, Business
Practices, and Workforce
Development
- **Brian O'Neill**
Acting Associate Director
Partnerships, Interpretation
and Education, Volunteers,
and Outdoor Recreation
- **Ernie Quintana**
Acting Associate Director
Resource and Visitor
Protection
- **Robert L. (Rob) Arnberger**
Regional Director, Alaska
- **Karen P. Wade**
Regional Director
Intermountain
- **William (Bill) Schenk**
Regional Director
Midwest
- **Terry R. Carlstrom**
Regional Director
National Capital
- **Marie Rust**
Regional Director
Northeast
- **Jon Jarvis**
Regional Director
Pacific West
- **Patricia Hooks**
Acting Regional Director
Southeast

- safety, supervision by NPS senior law enforcement officials, and agency mission goals.
- Staffing and management related to Homeland Security.
 - Enhanced training (development/implementation of a Field Training Evaluation Program; a post-basic training field training program to improve officer safety and effectiveness; law enforcement refresher training program consistency, standardization, and quality control; and, Special Operations classes for rangers working in high risk areas).
 - A process by which non-law enforcement commissioned managers are made knowledgeable of, and held accountable for, management of NPS law enforcement programs in accordance with law, policy, Director's Orders, and standards of ethical conduct.
 - Staffing and recruitment (development of a process for increasing the capacity of the NPS protection ranger work force including retention and "no net loss" strategies and options).
 - Internal investigation protocols.
 - Additional equipment: Use of newest technologies, and policies or procedures to assure the timely replacement of vehicles used in law enforcement operations.
 - Establishing a uniform mechanism for reporting, and data management, of case incidents that also has inter-operable capabilities with other Federal law enforcement agencies.
 - Communications and Dispatch Operations: Implement a wireless radio communications network that meets agency mandates (Director's Order 15) for conversion to narrowband digital technology and the needs of field operations. (FY 2003-2006).
 - Funding and accountability: Long-term budget strategies (via law enforcement needs assessments), law enforcement services accounts, and implementation of the Department's "Activity Based Costing" process.

The National Leadership Council recommended and the Director agreed to establish immediately the proposed Protection Ranger Leadership Board to help develop the reform plan. The recommended membership (seven Regional Chief Rangers, the Chief of the Division of Ranger Activities, the Ranger Activities Law Enforcement Program Special Agent and up to

two Associate Regional Directors for Operations) will be expanded to include an on-the-ground field ranger, several superintendents, possibly SES superintendents, and representation from the U.S. Park Police (USPP). A draft charter for the body will be presented for discussion at the Board's first meeting in early December 2002.

The NLC also supported immediate establishment of a training program for law enforcement rangers that will provide field training for new FLETC graduates before placing them on active duty in their assigned park areas. A funding strategy to support the program will be developed by the Acting Associate Director Ernie Quintana, reviewed by Comptroller Bruce Sheaffer and approved by Director Mainella. In this regard, the NLC recommended to the Director the following: staff costs to develop and coordinate the program from FLETC, as well as mentor salary costs, will be covered from the \$20 million anticipated in FY 2003 for additional park (base) operating funds, if appropriated. If these monies are not appropriated, alternatives to consider include use of the Service-wide training account and/or regional assessments. Direct costs for the training—travel and per diem—will be covered by the trainee's assigned park.

Hearing from the Association of National Park Rangers

Director Mainella welcomed to the NLC meeting ANPR president Ken Mabery and board member Rick Jones, thanking them and the Association for strong support of the Service. She said ANPR is an active and valued NPS partner. Mabery said that while ANPR speaks for the traditional park ranger role and values, it feels a distinct affinity for *all* NPS employees, because it the responsibility of all employees to advocate and to accomplish the NPS mission. He said the public image of the uniformed park ranger is a very positive one, that the public identifies "ranger work" as virtually all work performed in parks. For this reason, he said the "Grey and Green" should at all times be visible to park visitors, and NPS functions should be carried out by NPS employees. He said the Park Service should be cautious about directing staff to assignments outside parks unrelated to park

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purposes. He said that ANPR is concerned about the capacity of the NPS to do its work, and he recommended that park budgets and field staffing levels be increased and new emphasis be placed on professional development. He offered that ANPR intends to spark action to better fund and staff the National Park Service, and he expressed the hope that the NPS might develop a formal relationship with ANPR, similar to the one it has with the George Wright Society.

Director Mainella instructed Acting Associate Director Brian O’Neill, working with the Office of Policy and Regulations and the Office of Solicitor, to review the Service’s relationship with ANPR and develop a proposal for a strengthened partnership. The NLC members voiced strong support for this goal, but cautioned that such a relationship would require the NPS be clearly separated from any effort of ANPR to inform the Congress.

Growing the NPS Workforce and Broadening its Diversity

The NLC discussed the requirement to prepare a workforce strategy as part of the Department of Interior’s Strategic Human Capital Management Plan issued in September 2002. The Plan is one of the five Presidential management initiatives, the others being: Competitive Sourcing; Improved Financial Performance; Expanded Electronic Government; and Budget and Performance Integration. The Park Service has been focusing on workforce issues for some time, reflecting concerns about the impact of downsizing efforts in recent years, the need to accomplish measurable goals of “organizational effectiveness” outlined in the NPS Strategic Plan, and the NLC commitment to implement the 2001 National Park System Advisory Board report, *Rethinking the National Parks for the 21st Century*, which called on the Service to review and build its “institutional capacity.” The NLC is unanimous in its view that the future National Park Service will require new talents and abilities to achieve evolving new century organizational purposes. Looking to the future, the NLC believes that the NPS must have expertise to administer parks as educational resources, protect park resources in landscapes that are increasingly altered by human activity, and fashion broad collaborative

relations with academia, the private sector, state, local and other Federal agencies.

Director Mainella called particular attention to the NPS goal of enhancing workforce diversity, saying that with the demographic complexion of America changing, it is essential the NPS include more minorities to be representative of the emerging nation. She said that having a workforce that looks like America helps the Park Service remain relevant and attract a broader representative range of park visitors. Deputy Director Don Murphy said recent internal reports indicate that despite repeated attempts and a number of initiatives, the NPS has been unable to make meaningful progress in changing the public face of the agency. He said the Service must act to identify the reasons for this, and establish and implement an accountable system to ensure results. The Director asked that the NPS workforce strategy identify specific actions to broaden workforce diversity, and include a narrative stressing the importance of this goal to the long-term sustainability of the NPS. She directed Regional and Associate Directors to speak to the issue with groups of employees and Acting Associate Director Brian O’Neill to develop a message to be shared with partners and volunteers. It was agreed that the NLC will devote a major portion of its January 2003 meeting to consider the developing workforce strategy and review an action component to broaden diversity in the organization.

Other Issues – In Brief

Maintenance Backlog Reduction – Deputy Director Murphy, working with the NPS Office of Budget, the Office of Public Affairs and Harpers Ferry Center, is completing work on a public information package that will detail the significant progress the Service has made in reducing the maintenance backlog. It will address the maintenance issue in the context of Service’s larger mission of preserving, managing and interpreting America’s heritage legacy.

National Park Foundation – Acting Associate Director O’Neill reported on a series of meetings the NPS is holding with Foundation leadership, saying the purpose is to develop improved communications and understandings about how

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best to accomplish shared objectives. He said that in recent years the Foundation has become a strategic partner better able to support the NPS, and he noted its goals are to channel resources into key areas of communications, outreach and volunteers, and education, central interests of the National Park Service. He said routine executive-level meetings between the two organizations will be established.

Seamless National Network of Parks and NPS National Partnerships Conference – The NLC considered its three-year goal to encourage building a nationwide network of parks and protected places, hearing from network staff coordinator Chris Brown that discussions are getting underway with a core group of strategic partners regarding possible roles in collaborative work to bring about organizational connections. The vision of an interconnected system of parks and recreation areas, other protected lands and waters, and programs serving visitors animates NPS thinking about the purposes of the national

partnerships conference. Conference coordinator Peggy O'Dell reported on the status of planning for the November 17-21, 2003, conference, now called *Joint Ventures: Partners in Stewardship*, saying it is anticipated that a large number of the Federal land managing agencies will join the NPS as co-conveners of the conference.

Renewing Our Education Mission – Acting Associate Director O'Neill reported that planning has proceeded apace to establish a National Park Service Education Council, as directed by the NLC. He said the Council will serve as an interdisciplinary advisory forum, advocating the renewal of the Service's education mission nationally and in the field, and coordinate with national education partners within the Service to build capacity, create additional opportunities for learning and to expand partnerships. He said the NLC will consider a draft charter for the Council at the upcoming January 2003 meeting in Washington, D.C.