



October 24, 2004 (Report on the September 15-16 Meeting of the National Leadership Council)

# NLCJournal

The National Leadership Council (NLC) convened in Washington, D.C. on September 15-16 to act on a broad range of management issues. As in previous meetings, the budget was the main focus of attention, with deliberations centering on FY 2004 funding and developments in Congress relative to approving the FY 2005 budget. Director Fran Mainella expressed enthusiasm that the NLC was meeting for the first day of its two-day meeting at Great Falls Park, Virginia, to learn more about that park and National Capital Region (NCR) accomplishments.

Continuing concern was expressed about the impact of budget constraints, and appreciation for commitments across the Service to maintain the parks and manage programs in the current fiscal environment. In response to direction at the April meeting, Comptroller Bruce Sheaffer announced a change in budget policy to allow use of a limited amount of maintenance project funds to mitigate impacts of project execution on park operations. Up to 5 percent of selected project funds can be used to pay overtime or hire temporary employees to perform the normal duties of employees directed to support project work. Sheaffer said the policy was effective immediately, though the regions might delay implementation until the start of the next fiscal year to develop procedures for monitoring and allocating funds. The NLC reviewed the FY 2005 budget request, the status of budget deliberations on Capitol Hill and prospects for favorable congressional action.

Regional Director Terry Carlstrom introduced Julia Hewitt, NCR Environmental Protection Specialist, and Bob Hartman, Chief of Maintenance, C&O Canal National Historical Park, who shared information about two successful regional programs. Hewitt, reporting that the NPS manages 80 percent of the District

of Columbia's Anacostia and Potomac River shorelines, described the region's Clean Marina Program, which has significantly increased awareness in the boating community that environmental compliance protects resources and reduces pollution and the costs of business. Hartman spoke about the C&O Canal's experience improving safety following the 1996 death of an employee. He said that with the active involvement of the superintendent, a Risk Management Action Plan was prepared that emphasized the central importance of behavior-based safety. He said that, by FY 2000, the park's Lost Time Rate (LTR) had dropped from 10.5 to 3.45, and in FY 2001, the park achieved an LTR of zero. With employees now conducting observations for safety behaviors as a part of their job, the park is developing a culture of employee safety.

## Directions in Park Planning

Associate Director Sue Masica and Park Planning and Special Studies Manager Warren Brown reported that many General Management Plans (GMPs) are thought to be generating unrealistic expectations among the parks and constituent groups about funding for facility development, land acquisition, and staffing. They reported that 135 parks (35%) have reasonably current plans, 204 (53%) have plans that are out of date, and 38 parks have no plan. It was noted that, while the appropriation for GMPs has remained relatively constant over the past 10 years (6.6M in 1994, 7.2M in 2004), funding has not kept up with inflation, resulting in a substantial drop in planning capability. Active GMP work is underway in approximately 100 parks; however, if current trends continue, in 10 years about 50 additional parks will need new GMPs. With concerns that GMPs may have become too complex and detailed, the NLC expressed interest in: (1) developing plans more

## 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
- Dwight Pettiford**  
Chief  
United States Park Police
- Michael (Mike) Soukup**  
Associate Director  
Natural Resources  
Stewardship and Science
- Jim Poole**  
Acting Associate Director  
Administration, Business  
Practices, and Workforce  
Development
- Chris Jarvi**  
Associate Director  
Partnerships, Interpretation  
and Education, Volunteers,  
and Outdoor Recreation
- Karen Taylor-Goodrich**  
Associate Director  
Visitor and Resource  
Protection
- Dr. Janet Snyder Matthews**  
Associate Director  
Cultural Resources
- Steve Martin**  
Regional Director  
Intermountain
- Ernie Quintana**  
Regional Director  
Midwest
- Terry R. Carlstrom**  
Regional Director  
National Capital
- Marie Rust**  
Regional Director  
Northeast
- Jon Jarvis**  
Regional Director  
Pacific West
- Pat Hooks**  
Regional Director  
Southeast
- Marcia Blaszak**  
Regional Director  
Alaska

quickly and cheaply, while still meeting park needs and fully engaging the public in the process; and (2) exploring other ways to meet park planning needs short of developing full-blown GMPs. The NLC agreed that it would broaden its discussion of the issue at the next meeting.

### **Remarks from Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton**

Secretary Norton said she came to the NLC meeting to thank NPS employees for their support and “wonderful commitment.” She spoke of her experience as Attorney General for the State of Colorado, working with the State’s delegation and Department and NPS leadership at that time, to expand Colorado’s Great Sand Dunes National Monument. She said it was a tremendous personal honor, as Secretary of the Interior, to sign the letter of determination earlier that week officially creating Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve. She identified NLC members with whom she had worked, and encouraged NPS leaders to maintain the highest standards of performance in pursuing the parks’ mission.

### **A Report from Lynn Scarlet, Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budget Analysis**

Assistant Secretary Scarlet identified Department priorities to: (1) develop common information systems among the bureaus; (2) bring on-line new communications and security system technologies; (3) pursue management excellence through the Competitive Review process; (4) promote partnerships as a critical tool to accomplish business; and (5) integrate performance management systems into all bureaus.

### **Organizing and Funding the Lands Program**

The NLC examined proposals to address serious funding issues in the administrative and acquisition sections of Park Service’s Lands function. A variety of options to address the problem were considered, taking into account their ease of their implementation and impacts on program management. The Director asked

regional directors to study further several approaches and to report back.

### **An Update on Competitive Review**

Acting Associate Director Jim Poole reported that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requested that each Department develop a long-term plan for competitive reviews (the “Green Plan”) for FY 2005 through FY 2008. Poole presented a draft Green Plan prepared by the NPS Competitive Review Program Office. The Director instructed the office to revise the draft to reflect: (1) management reviews already undertaken by the Northeast and Intermountain regions, stressing that such reviews are done whenever a post becomes vacant; and (2) the Preliminary Planning Efforts (PPEs) for WASO and New York City Parks. NLC members were informed that the Service’s final FY04 FAIR Act Inventory was approved by the Department and forwarded to OMB. After the inventory is approved by OMB the formal 30 day appeal period will begin. This process will allow each individual the opportunity to review and appeal decisions that have been made on the basis of the FAIR Act Inventory. After the completion of this process, the Competitive Review Program Office will publish the final FY04 NPS Crosswalk.

### **Fleet Management**

Regional Director Jon Jarvis led a discussion on fleet management, identifying the following issues:

- While parks/regions may only need vehicles on a seasonal basis, GSA insists on annual leases;
- Regions have no incentive to further reduce fleets, given that there is no way to recoup savings;
- Given that regions such as AKR and MWR use older surplus vehicles rather than renting through GSA, safety is increasingly a problem; and
- GSA’s rules and preferences do not fit Service needs.

The NLC agreed that: (1) the Service should try to use its bargaining power vis-à-vis GSA (the

NPS leases some 4,601 vehicles) to restructure the relationship to the Service's advantage; or, (2) turn to the private sector. Associate Director Karen Taylor-Goodrich and Acting U.S. Park Police Chief Dwight Pettiford cautioned that law enforcement needs had to be met. The Director will take up the matter with Assistant Secretary Lynn Scarlet.

### **Select Law Enforcement and Security-Related Issues Review**

Addressing select law enforcement/security issues, Taylor-Goodrich recommended utilizing results from the park-generated Law Enforcement Needs Assessment process as an important information resource in establishing priorities for the park protection component of any operational increased targeted for visitor services. She reported that Visitor and Resource Protection staff will proactively address national and departmental law enforcement and security related funding priorities in coordination with regions and the regional OFS priority setting processes. Chuck Higgins, Director, NPS Unit, Public Health Service, provided an overview of the current NPS Public Health program (30 PHS staff assigned to assist parks), and presented a proposal to establish an "NPS Disease Surveillance Program" to anticipate, respond to, and control disease outbreaks in parks in coordination with local and state agencies and the CDC. The Director asked for further consideration of the proposal pending additional information on program costs.

### **Building Our Capacity for Partnerships**

Associate Director Chris Jarvi reviewed, and the NLC approved, an NPS Vision for Partnerships and a Partnership Strategic Plan ([www.nps.gov/partnerships/shr\\_vision\\_partn.htm](http://www.nps.gov/partnerships/shr_vision_partn.htm)). Jarvi reported on the Building Better Partnerships project, which provides a systematic approach for developing and evaluating partnership construction projects, providing tools and techniques for managing the process, and maintaining a system of accountability within the organization. He said a team has evaluated 23 specific park partnership construction projects and prepared a report to share results with the Department, OMB, and staff of the House and

Senate appropriations committees. Work is being completed on two other project inventories, public-public over \$5 million and private-public from \$1 million to \$5 million); a computer-based tracking/monitoring system is being developed and tested; a set of training modules is being prepared to be launched in the spring; and a schedule is being developed for public review and comment on the updated Director's Order #21 on Donations and Fundraising. He asked the NLC to review and comment on a proposed process for moving existing and new projects through the system, as well as to advise on how best to implement the proposed language respecting the budget process.

### **Enhancing NPS Diversity**

Reporting on the National Recruitment Plan were Bill Gwaltney, Assistant Regional Director for Workforce Enhancement, IMR; Marie Eilander, Equal Employment Manager, IMR; and Kym Elder, NCR Special Emphasis Recruiter. The purpose of the Plan is to recruit and retain qualified individuals who reflect the diversity of the Nation, so the NPS will have an effective and relevant workforce. It was offered that permanent diverse hiring has not improved in the Service. While parks report on a lack of diverse applicants for seasonal jobs, recruiters and NPS computer databases have hundreds of students who have not been hired. It was agreed that overcoming barriers to recruitment and hiring will require funding, executing, and expanding a variety of short term efforts; working to make agency culture more welcoming; and holding selecting officials accountable. National Recruitment Plan strategies include the following:

- Organize and use recruitment resources;
- Recruit aggressively at the recommended national-level;
- Work with colleges and universities on recruitment efforts;
- Engage community groups and ethnic media;
- Work with the Cooperative Ecosystem Study Units to identify suitable recruitment activities;
- Utilize electronic recruitment services;
- Work with partners to conduct recruitment activities;
- Use a standardized exit interview format to

- enhance recruitment and retention; and
- Evaluate recruitment activities for effectiveness.

Achieving the goals of the Plan will require active participation from the NPS staff already part of the Recruitment Futures Workgroup and/or others from each region and center. The estimated participation from each region and center to accomplish the work necessary to implement the plan would be 0.30 FTE per region/center. The amount of funding for FY 2005 for the implementation of the National Recruitment is \$300,000.

### Geographic Information System

The NLC discussed a proposal to transfer funding for Geographic Information Systems from the Associate Director for Natural Resources Stewardship and Science to the Office of the Chief Information Officer. It was decided to forward the proposal to the Information Technology Investment Council (ITIC) for review and analysis for impacts to the field. With that review in hand, the NLC will recommend an action to the Director.

### RTCA Strategic Plan

After an introduction from Chris Jarvi, leaders for the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) presented the draft new Strategic Plan for RTCA. The plan has 3 goals: establishing networks (for conservation and recreation); holding NPS and its partners more accountable, and; expanding outreach and marketing. Particular emphasis is given to working more closely with units of the national park system, to provide consultative assistance as well as to help parks connect with communities and partners in their vicinities. RTCA will continue as a critical outreach arm from the NPS to national and local conservation organizations. The new RTCA mission statement tiers off the NPS mission, stating: *RTCA implements the natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation mission of the National Park Service in communities across America.* Members of the NLC weighed in with supportive comments on the new plan, as well as with thoughts on how RTCA work could support the Service's civic

engagement work and park planning activities. It was suggested that this strategic plan might constitute a "management review" under the competitive sourcing process.

### National Park System Advisory Board

WASO Policy Chief Loran Fraser described current activities of the National Park System Advisory Board, and identified the committees that are pursuing the Board's legislative mandates and special projects and studies requested by the Director. The committees include the:

- (1) National Historic Landmarks Committee, which recommends the designation of national historic landmarks;
- (2) Science Committee, which recommends designation of national natural landmarks (and recently completed a report assessing the Natural Resource Challenge and looking to the future of NPS science at [www.nature.nps.gov/scienceresearch/index.htm](http://www.nature.nps.gov/scienceresearch/index.htm));
- (3) Education Committee, which is developing the thought that national park purposes might include a civic education mission;
- (4) Partnership Committee, that is developing a report recommending the NPS role in National Heritage Areas;
- (5) Director's Council, comprised of the former NPS Directors and several retired senior managers, which addresses matters affecting administration of the Service and management of the parks, as requested by the Board;
- (6) Philanthropy Committee, which is now getting organized to examine philanthropy's role in supporting the NPS mission; and
- (7) Health and Wellness Committee, also now just getting underway, which is looking at how the Park Service might promote public awareness that outdoor recreational activity promotes health.

The NLC asked Director Mainella to consider scheduling an upcoming Director's Council meeting to coincide with the next NLC meeting, and to arrange the two bodies to meet jointly. The Director agreed to explore the possibility.

### Upcoming NLC Meeting:

November 9-10, 2004, in Washington, D.C.