



NPS Women Cartes de Visite Collection



Fran Mainella, 2009. (NPS History Collection Photo).

Fran P. Mainella
Washington Office
Director, 2001-2006

- Born in 1947 in Willimantic, CT.
- Earned a B.A. in Education and Physical Education from the University of Connecticut in 1969.
- Earned a M.A. in Counseling from Central Connecticut State College in 1974 and was awarded an honorary doctorate in public service in 2002.
- Became director of recreation in Lark Park, FL in 1978.
- In 1983, became executive director of the Florida Park and Recreation Association.
- Appointed by President George W. Bush to be NPS director on June 4, 2001. After her Senate confirmation, she became the 16th director (and first woman director) on July 18, 2001.
- Was NPS director during the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and implemented increased security at parks in its aftermath.
- As director, prioritized addressing the maintenance backlog and developing partnerships.
- Controversies during her tenure included illegal tree cutting at the C&O Canal to benefit the wealthy owner of a Washington football team.
- Resigned from the NPS effective October 16, 2006.
- After leaving the NPS, became a visiting scholar at Clemson University.
- Began her own consulting company c. 2015.
- Has won numerous awards and honors, including the Pugsley Medal (twice).
- Serves on numerous trusts and coalitions related to parks and recreation.

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