

CLEAR TEXT:
WASO Ranger Activities'
Electronic Newsletter

May 7, 1993

DOI HONOR AWARDS

The 57th Departmental honor awards convocation has been postponed until next fall or later. Those honor awards which were approved during the 1992 review will be presented at that convocation, and the 1993 awards may be presented at that time as well. In order to keep on schedule and to prepare for the coming convocation, nominations for honor awards are now being accepted for consideration.

Although the deadline for submissions is August 1st, supervisors and managers are encouraged to submit nominations as soon as possible because of the lengthy approval process. Nominations may be made for the following awards: Distinguished Service, Valor, Conservation Service, Public Service and Equal Opportunity. Criteria and other information on all but the EEO awards are found in 370 DM 451. Criteria for the EEO award may be obtained from Debby Martin in Employee Relations in WASO.

Nominations should be sent to Debby, but we'd like a copy as well so that we can keep abreast of nominations and make preparations to support rangers coming in for the convocation. Judging from the incident reports received this year, there should be a number of nominations for Valor Awards from the field. Please look closely at the criteria to see if you should submit names from your park.

INCIDENT REPORTING

The quality and timeliness of incident reports continues to improve thanks to your conscientious efforts. They have made the Service's incident reporting system the best in the Department, and have proven highly valuable in a number of different ways:

- * Major Incidents - Special reports on major incidents are prepared in standard format immediately upon receipt and are distributed to the Director, the Associate Director for Operations, WASO Public Affairs, and the Department's Office of Enforcement and Security Management. The latter are often redistributed promptly to key offices in the Department, including the Secretary. Those reports are prepared and distributed regularly as long as an incident remains critical, such as during the extended search for the school group from Michigan in the Smokies after the "Blizzard of '93". In certain circumstances, such as during the Hurricane Andrew recovery effort, daily briefings based on incident reports are held in the Department's emergency information center for the Secretariat, and briefing statements are faxed to the appropriate Congressional delegations on the Hill. These have proven effective in minimizing calls from those areas to the incident.
- * Morning Report - All incidents meeting established incident reporting criteria (and some that don't but have inherent Servicewide interest) are summarized in the morning report. The morning report is distributed by hard copy to about 40 offices throughout Interior, including the entire Directorate of the NPS. An ASCII version is sent out to

virtually every park and office in the NPS (and to a number of offices in other agencies, such as the Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife Service) via a special system on cc:Mail which is managed by the cc:Mail post office administrators (those wanting to get hooked up should talk to their regional administrator, not Ranger Activities).

* Special Uses - All incidents are sorted into separate files by type, which makes it possible for us to run special reports on types of incidents for various interested offices. These have proven highly useful in educating people who are not entirely familiar with ranger operations. We were able, for instance, to pull together all incidents in which rangers were involved in investigations last year to show OPM the degree to which rangers conduct such investigation. We've also been able to prepare special reports on poaching and ARPA depredations to support our resource protection initiative. And we provide NASAR with quarterly summaries of searches in the NPS for use in their publications.

Most incident reports are edited for style, grammar, syntax, coherence and length, but every effort is made to keep the substance of the report unaltered. Errors in interpretation occasionally occur, generally because an incident report is either ambiguous or omits important information. When time and circumstances permit, queries asking for supplementary information are sent on cc:Mail, but that often is not possible. Please keep reports simple, straightforward, and free of jargon ("the alleged perpetrator"), and attempt to ensure that the six basics of journalism - who, where, when, why, what and how - are all covered in each submission.

The importance of timely and comprehensive (but brief) incident reports continues to rise. Because of the heightened White House and Departmental interest in quick reporting of major incidents, we have established a "duty officer" in Ranger Activities - a staffer who is available during off-duty hours, including nights, weekends and holidays, and carries a pager with both numeric and voice mail capability. Information on contacting the duty officer through the pager on Level 1 incidents was sent out to all of you several weeks ago, and remains available for those who missed or mislaid it. Although we've been working with the White House to determine just which incidents they want to hear about, they haven't been able to pin their needs down to specifics as of yet. It's therefore the duty officer's responsibility to determine which should go up the line to the DOI duty officer and thence to the White House situation room. If you believe an incident should qualify, whether because of the nature of the incident, extreme media interest or political sensitivities, please let the duty officer know.

REGULATION PROCESS UPDATE

The Department is establishing an "Office of Regulations" which will assist in tracking and streamlining the review process for all regulatory actions. We have represented the NPS in several meetings with the Department regarding the establishment of this office and the new process. Until the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks is confirmed by the Senate, however, all NPS regulation packets must be cleared by the Secretary. They have asked that only critical issues be sent up at this time. Consequently, most NPS regulatory actions are still on hold until AS/FWP confirmation. In addition, we need to brief the new Director, whenever appointed, on most of these actions prior to publishing.

Below is a list of regulations that have been cleared through the solicitor

and are waiting approval by the NPS Director and an AS/FWP briefing:

Penalty provisions (36 CFR 1.3) Changes the maximum fine levels for all petty offenses as established by the Criminal Fine Improvement Act of 1987

Subsistence hunting,
Alaska (36 CFR Part 13) Establishes an alternate process for deletion of a subsistence resident zone.

Solid waste disposal sites
(36 CFR Part 6) Sets procedures for the elimination of solid waste sites in NPS areas.

Non-Federal oil & gas (36 CFR 9B) Governs the management of non-Federal oil and gas rights in NPS areas.

Mining & water rights (36 CFR 9A) Corrects a catch-22 regarding water rights on mining claims.

Fort Jefferson, fishing & other
(36 CFR Part 7) General revision.

We are also working on other regulatory issues which are at various stages of development. These include an advance notice of proposed rulemaking regarding rock climbing (already submitted to OMB); proposed regulations to revise 36 CFR Part 14 regarding rights-of-way; and several park-specific special regulations in Part 7.

We also have a file on the comments received on a general revision to Parts 1-5 which we asked for last year. We received over 100 comments on minor revisions to these sections. Thanks to all of you who worked on these. We have not forgotten about the revision, but the project is temporarily on the back burner until we get through some of the other regulatory issues.

As soon as possible, we will be proceeding with publishing the above actions according to the following priorities:

1. Regulations already approved by the Solicitor that have a Servicewide effect.
2. Proposed regulations for rights-of-way (Part 14).
3. Park specific regulations.

As always, please call Tony Sisto at 202-208-4874 if you have any questions.

FIRE WEATHER

We just received the May, 1993, NOAA weather briefing from NIFC. They report that severe drought exists from the Pacific Northwest to western portions of North Dakota, and that the worst conditions exist from the Cascades to the Continental Divide.

Nearly normal precipitation is forecast the next 30 days for Alaska and most of the lower 48 states; the only exceptions are extreme southern California and southern Arizona, where dry weather will prevail. Warmer than normal temperatures are forecast along the Pacific coast, in the desert Southwest, and through the northern tier of states from Montana to New England. The southern Rockies and Great Basin will have cool weather. Warmer than usual weather is anticipated in the West and southern Atlantic states, including

Florida, during the period from May to July. The central part of the country from Texas to the Great Lakes will be cooler than normal. Eastern Montana and western North Dakota will be dry. Wet weather will cover most of the South and East.

El Nino has not weakened much during the past month. Experimental computer models suggest that ocean temperatures will return to normal by summer, but the level of confidence in these models is low. It appears likely that this episode will continue for at least the next few months.

COUNTER-DRUG TRAINING

The third annual counternarcotics and special operations course was held in Organ Pipe during the last two weeks of April. The course prepares law enforcement personnel to combat drug trafficking and other illegal activities on public lands. Exercises included a combat/officer survival firearms practical and sessions on camouflage techniques, surveillance, reconnaissance and team movement, sensor equipment, tracking, and building entry. The trainees included 23 officers and rangers involved in drug enforcement from areas administered by the NPS, BLM, BIA and Park Police. Training was conducted by Customs, Border Patrol, BIA Police, the Army's Fifth Special Forces Group, the Air Force Reserve, and the Arizona National Guard.

SEASONAL LE CANDIDATES

In the last issue of Clear Text, it was noted that one of the seasonal law enforcement training program (SLETP) schools had graduates available who were still seeking seasonal positions with the NPS. We have since received word that approximately one half of this year's class of eligible applicants at two other schools have yet to be offered jobs. An informal phone survey by the SLETP coordinator at FLETC indicated that the majority of the 21 currently approved seasonal law enforcement training programs have several graduates - about seven or eight each - who still have not received offers. Any parks that have exhausted their registers and will be issuing local vacancy announcements are asked to send a copy of the announcement to each of the SLETP directors. A hard copy list of these schools was sent last week to five different divisions in each of the NPS regional offices; if you can't get one there, contact Tom Cherry, the SLETP coordinator at FLETC, at (912) 267-2795. Many of these graduates possess the majority of the skills you are looking for, including first aid, S-130 and S-190, search and rescue, radar, climbing, white water, ASP baton, PR-24, and CPR.

NOTES FROM THE PARKS

Canaveral

On April 8th, Governor Lawton Chiles signed legislative documents which changed the proprietary jurisdiction in the park to concurrent jurisdiction. Following a considerable planning effort, the public was made aware of this change on April 28th. The primary impact on the park will be in the assimilation of the state law prohibiting public nudity, as nudists have traditionally used a remote section of the park's beach. The park is placing its primary emphasis on public awareness and visitor information. A structured plan for increased enforcement actions has been developed and is being implemented. Actions and reactions from the public are being monitored closely in order to add any needed flexibility to the plan. In the past, the seashore has been the gathering spot for several hundred nudists/naturists on any given day. According to an article in the Orlando Sentinel, the head of

the American Sunbathing Association has urged fellow nudists "not to be obstructionists" and has said that he will work through proper channels. [Bill DeHart, CR, CANA]

Coulee Dam

Anyone interested in dates, applications or general information on state, regional or world police and firefighter games can contact Gil Goodrich at Coulee Dam at 509-725-2715. If you're a swimmer or runner, he asks that you contact him about forming an NPS triathlon team to compete in the World Games this August in Colorado. He's also looking for cyclists to form an NPS team for the U.S. - Canada games this June in Calgary. [Mark Forbes, RAD/PNRO]

VACANCIES AND OPM REGISTER OPENINGS

Independence

The park has been recruiting for its vacant chief ranger position under vacancy announcement MARO-93B-21, which closes on May 10th. This position is currently undergoing a classification review which may result in the position being upgraded from GS-12 to GM-13. While this is clearly noted on the vacancy announcement, the pinks to date (4/26) have not been updated to include this annotation. [Dennis Reidenbach, AO, INDE]

QUESTIONS?

Is there something you'd like to know about that we can answer? Let us know and we'll publish the question and answer in an upcoming edition of Clear Text. Please be sure to specify that the question is for response in this newsletter, as questions also come in via cc:Mail which are for individual staff member response. If you've got a question that needs answering, it's likely that other rangers will also be interested in the reply.

Clear Text is the bi-weekly electronic newsletter of the Ranger Activities Division in WASO. It is distributed via cc:Mail to all ranger training and operations centers (FLETC, HOAL, STMA, NIFC), regional office ranger divisions, park chief rangers, and other interested parties. If you would like to get it but don't currently receive it, please advise Ranger Activities via a short cc:Mail message. Any office may receive it, including districts and subdistricts within a park. PLEASE pass it along to others in your division and park.

Prepared by WASO Division of Ranger Activities

Telephone: Branch of R&VP - 202-208-4874

Branch of F&A (WASO) - 202-208-5572

Telefax: Branch of R&VP - 202-208-6756

Branch of F&A (WASO) - 202-208-5977

cc:Mail: Branch of R&VP - WASO Ranger Activities

Branch of F&A (WASO) - WASO Fire and Aviation