

CLEAR TEXT:
WASO Ranger Activities'
Electronic Newsletter

September 9, 1994

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. Short submissions for the last three sections of the report - Field Notes; Park Exchange; and Vacancies, Register Openings and Details - are welcome and encouraged.

Next issue: October 7, 1994
Submission deadline: October 5, 1994

RANGER CAREERS

With the conceptualization of the ranger of the future and the implementation of benchmark position descriptions establishing a career ladder for the ranger occupation through GS-9 (the first phase of Ranger Careers), the basic re-structuring of the personnel system for the journeyman level of the ranger workforce was completed. We are now moving to the second phase of the Ranger Careers initiative while simultaneously addressing the various intricacies spawned by the implementation of the first phase.

The second phase will be just as intense and at least as essential as the first. In volume two, we are developing and institutionalizing the components of a modern career management system for the ranger occupation. This will continue to be a major project for Ranger Activities, Personnel, Interpretation, and Equal Employment, and is a project requiring the sustained support and cooperation of other divisions, outside organizations, and individuals as well.

It seems, then, a good time to share with you what this means and where we are headed with Ranger Careers over the next several months. Our major work activities - outlined below - are (1) the design of the Park Ranger Career Management system, (2) complete implementation of that system, (3) integration of the ranger careers system into the developing NPS-wide careers management process, and (4) development of a permanent organizational renewal mechanism for the occupation within the Park Service.

Design of the Ranger Careers Management System

The product of this design activity will be a comprehensive document - a career management program document - that will describe all elements of the personnel system for park rangers. The core of the career management plan will include the following:

1. The Ranger Careers policy statement (Special Directive 94-3) issued by the Director on June 14, 1995.
2. A section spelling out specific responsibilities for managing the ranger career system within the occupation as carried out by the Ranger Careers Manager, which will clarify career roles spanning the occupation from

senior rangers to line rangers.

3. A description of the ranger positions covered by career policies and procedures.

4. An important chapter governing "career entry" policies and procedures [qualifications standards, competitive examining plans, and recruiting strategies].

5. A chapter outlining career patterns and planning indicators.

6. A very important chapter laying out a comprehensive training and development scheme for all rangers from entry level through senior positions.

7. A chapter capturing applicable portions of the new DOI-wide performance management system that are "real" and work.

8. A chapter on policies and procedures governing advancement and mobility within the Service.

9. A chapter on methods and requirements for a periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of the career program itself.

Clearly, development of this career management charter, just now beginning, involves a substantial level of effort. The Ranger Careers Management Program will be the first of several being developed for NPS occupational groups (others include resource management, administration, concessions, and maintenance) under the leadership of the Director's Careers Council and the National Leadership Council.

Implementation of the Ranger Careers Management System

The completion of the design is only the beginning. Once design is completed, the drafts have been circulated for comment, and the program document finalized, the implementation process can begin. We plan to start putting the career system in place shortly after the beginning of calendar year 1995. Implementation will initially involve activating the competitive recruiting and examining system providing "front-door" entry into the Service for those outside the career service. Other systems to be brought on-line in early 1995 include the in-service placement provisions, career development and advancement systems, and the performance management system. Implementation will be accompanied by orientation and training programs for all rangers, seeking to convey a complete understanding about how this modernized personnel management system for rangers will operate. We plan to have all aspects of the career management system in place in July, 1995, and to be well along in the final phase of ranger careers by then.

The Next Projects

The Ranger Futures Work Group and the Ranger Activities Division will be working on two other initiatives over the next year. The first is a series of steps to be taken to assure, once in place, full integration of the ranger career program into the Park Service management process, and that issues in personnel management and management of ranger careers are automatically taken into consideration when other management decisions — on resources, budgets, policies, priorities, facilities, support systems, training, work programs, and work assignments — are being made.

The final work activity and the final item in the Ranger Futures original work plan is directed at developing a permanent organizational self-renewal process in the National Park Service. We have all learned from the Vail Symposium's examination of NPS management practices, that one such "Vail" event a century is not enough. But bureaucracies, while not notably self-reforming, will change if mechanisms are put in place to provide the impetus for improvement. The establishment of a self-renewal process providing for a continuous review of NPS policies and programs — aimed at making things

better – can assure that we have an effective and up-to-date outlook in the Service and specifically in the continuing management of the park ranger occupation, at all times. This will be the ultimate culmination of "Ranger Futures".

The Continuing Mission

Throughout the entire Ranger Careers project, we have remained steadfast in the pursuit of excellence, focused on achieving the goal of re-establishing a professional Park Ranger occupation in which the traditional IMAGE of "park ranger" as the epitome of resource protection and education becomes REALITY. The mission continues.

REGULATIONS UPDATE

1. Comments from all interested parties on the revisions to 36 CFR Part 2 were due to Bruce McKeeman (Voyageurs) by September 1, 1994. If you have comments and have not passed them onto Bruce, please do so ASAP. The Part 2 work group is planning to get together in October to discuss the comments.

2. The Secretary's Office has put a hold on the "Servicewide" climbing regulation, apparently until after the November elections. The final draft package is ready to go to the Assistant Secretary.

3. The Solicitor's Office continues to debate the penalty section found at 36 CFR 1.3. The National Park Service has been attempting to establish one penalty section found at 36 CFR 1.3 in accordance with the "Criminal Fine Improvement Act of 1987" (P.L. 100-185). This one penalty section would be applicable to ALL areas administered by the National Park Service and would eliminate the differing penalties currently found at 36 CFR 1.3(a),(b),(c) and (d).

LAW ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

1. The VRAP working group will meet at Yosemite between November 6th and 11th to review and consolidate all park submissions. A final report will be forwarded to the Directorate shortly thereafter.

2. A meeting of all regional law enforcement specialists is scheduled for FLETC in mid-November. Issues tentatively on the agenda include suitability investigations and training needs and proposals – the latter to include a discussion of a proposed NPS criminal investigator training course.

3. **IMPORTANT:** All final emergency law and order accounting must be received in WASO by the close of business on September 16th. The only exception(s) are for those incidents still ongoing on that date. For such incidents, ALL final accounting **MUST** be received by close of business, October 6th. There will be **NO EXCEPTIONS** to these requirements absent **WRITTEN** approval of **WRITTEN REQUESTS** for waiver submitted to Major Dale Dickerhoof, WASO Law Enforcement Specialist. Please address any question(s) to your respective regional law enforcement specialists. Submissions not meeting these requirements will not be considered, regardless of any prior approvals.

FEE UPDATE

1. Beginning October 1st, the collection of commercial tour fees will change. Instead of collecting a flat rate fee as was done in 1994, Congress has concluded that a commercial tour entrance fee should be charged, and

individual entrance fees collected from tour participants. In order to facilitate this process, an affidavit form has been developed which can be sent to tour companies to fill out prior to their buses' arrival at a particular park. Rather than have entrance rangers enter buses to count heads, parks should rely on spot audits to ensure "truthful" responses on these affidavits. This change in collection policy will probably cause longer lines and lead to confusion over the various passport authorities and over who qualifies as family members. Parks should utilize cost of collection funding to help facilitate the expeditious collection of commercial tour fees.

2. Chief Ranger Jim Brady has approved the 15% cost of collection funding for recreational fee collection programs at FY94 levels for planning purposes and to ensure that fee collection programs continue uninterrupted. The 15% cost of collection funding will be finalized in November after review of fee revenues for FY94 and summation of field audits for FY94.

3. Recreation fee legislation is on hold at present. There's been speculation - but nothing definitive - on possible amendments to the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. A major bone of contention concerns Congressional authorization for the direct return of fee collection monies to the NPS.

PARK EXCHANGE

Assateague Island

The park belongs to a firearms range with ten other law enforcement agencies. They are looking at the possibility of installing some turning targets, and would like to know if any of you are using any electronic turning targets or know of a manufacturer of dependable systems. Contact Brion Fitzgerald on cc:Mail at ASIS Ranger Activities or 410-641-1443.

Olympic

The park is interested in hearing from other parks that have begun, are in the process of, or have successfully converted non-status seasonal employees to term appointments, permanent subject to furlough, or full time permanent jobs. We are interested in specific hiring authorities and the processes used for those conversions. Please send a cc:Mail note to Curt Sauer at Olympic containing a contact person and phone number or call him at 206-452-4501.

FIELD NOTES

National Capital Region

Runners in and around NCR: Women in Federal Law Enforcement (WIFLE) will be sponsoring a five kilometer run in East Potomac Park at 8:30 a.m. on October 15th. Proceeds will go to WIFLE's scholarship fund. For further information, contact Colleen Spicka, NCRO, 202-619-7020, or officer Betty Griffin, USPP, 202-690-5000.

Golden Gate

On July 20th, the park's aquatic safety staff at Stinson beach hosted the 1994 United States Lifesaving Association Pacific Northwest Regional Lifeguard Championships. This year's event was attended by 11 teams from four western states who competed in 12 events, such as the two-mile beach run,

rescue race, distance swim, rescue board relays, run-swim-run, etc. The Golden Gate team, consisting of rangers Pat Norton and Matt Ehmann and lifeguards Xavier Agnew, Steve Chmielewski and Mark Norman, placed fourth in the team competition, and took several first, second and third place finishes in the individual events.

VACANCIES, REGISTER OPENINGS AND DETAILS

Pacific Northwest

EPA has announced a GS-1301/028-12/13 Scientist/Environmental Protection Specialist position in which the incumbent will serve as a fisheries expert for Region 10 in Seattle. The job is being announced governmentwide. This is a particularly important job involving the various ecosystem efforts underway in the Pacific Northwest, including the President's Forest Plan and the Columbia River Basin EIS effort. The job involves the development and implementation of a Pacific Northwest strategy for the restoration and protection of salmonids, working with several federal, state, and tribal authorities. The job also would involve the development of a regional ecosystem management strategy incorporating salmon and other related initiatives. Knowledge of aquatic ecology, with an emphasis on salmon ecology, is a major component of the KSAs. If interested, request EPA job announcement No. 94-62(DA). The Seattle office phone is 206-553-2953. The announcement closes on September 19th.

If you would like to get CLEAR TEXT 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

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