

CLEAR TEXT:
WASO Ranger Activities'
Electronic Newsletter

November 30, 1995

CLEAR TEXT is the monthly 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), field area office ranger divisions, park chief rangers, and other interested parties.

Short submissions for the last two sections of the report - "Park Notes" and "Job Market" - are welcome and encouraged.

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.

025 SERIES - Bill Sanders, RAD/WASO

There has been a lot of interest Servicewide in OPM's proposal to move the GS-025 park ranger series from its current home in the GS-000 "miscellaneous" family group to another series family group so that OPM can reduce the number of series families governmentwide. OPM is NOT proposing to eliminate the 025 series.

Last month, Associate Director for Administration Mary Bradford sent the following memorandum to DOI Director of Personnel Woody W. Hopper, Jr. Because of the interest in this issue, the full text of that memo is being provided here:

The proposal for the OPM series consolidation has been distributed throughout the National Park Service for review. The level of interest from our employees, managers and personnelists has been overwhelming.

As an agency, NPS is greatly impacted by this proposal. We have over 6000 employees in series assigned to the GS-000 Miscellaneous Occupations Group which has been proposed for elimination. While it was an obvious choice to abolish this group as part of classification restructuring, we urge OPM to proceed with caution in reassigning the series from this group. The identification of which group is appropriate for each of the series requires careful review and study. By far, NPS is most impacted by the proposal to move the GS-025 Park Ranger Series into the GS-1800 Protective Services Group.

GS-025 Park Ranger Series

The National Park Service has completed a multi-year effort (with OPM involvement and support) to develop and implement a career management policy for the Park Ranger occupation. An underlying principle of this effort has been the recognition of park rangers as resource educators, resource protectors, and multi-skilled specialists. The work of the occupation is natural and cultural resource based. Using these principles, we have developed a cohesive, integrated career plan that recognizes the broad range of skills

and knowledge required of a park ranger. Placement in the GS-1800 Protective Service Group will damage this identity and emphasize only one aspect of the occupation. To place all park rangers in a group that includes correction officers, border patrol agents, etc., is unnecessarily limiting and is an unbalanced perspective of the profession. If placed in this group, we will eventually be required to officially title our rangers "Protective Service Specialists (Administrative)" and use classification guides and qualification standards that will only capture one aspect of the work.

If the GS-1800 Protective Service Group will indeed cover the existing GS-025 series, we will be forced to consider dividing the ranger workforce into different specialties and move positions into different groups. Our ranger positions involved in resource education will have to be moved to the GS-1700 Education Group or subject matter fields such as the Biological Science Group, Social Science Group, etc. Our managers will have to be placed in a general management series, perhaps one in the GS-300 Group. This splitting out of our positions will seriously damage the occupational integrity that we have worked so hard to maintain.

As an agency, we would like to see the GS-025-Park Ranger Series continue as it now exists: a multi-specialty occupation encompassing many skills and knowledge required to manage our nation's resources. If it cannot continue in its current form as a separately defined series, we see a need for studying and discussing the possibility of a land management group that will encompass similar and related professions (GS-460 Forestry, GS-023 Outdoor Recreation Planner, etc.) more closely aligned to that of the ranger.

If the above options are not possible, we propose the placement of the entire GS-025 profession into one of the following:

- 1) GS-1700 Education Group - This will emphasize the educational aspect of the various ranger specialties. Public education about valuable resources is a key function of the occupation.
- 2) GS-100 Social Sciences Group - This group covers occupations (historians and archaeologists) that are related to park programs. It would also recognize some of the resource work (cultural) involved in the ranger profession.
- 3) GS-400 Biological Sciences Group - This would emphasize the natural resource-based work of the ranger although as currently designed, primarily professional occupations exist in this group.

Although the ranger occupation does not fit directly into any of the above groups, we are willing to work within one of them to maintain the integrity of the ranger profession and not align it solely with protection.

We have the following concerns and comments about the placement of other series currently in the Miscellaneous Group:

GS-023 Outdoor Recreation Planner

The GS-023 Outdoor Recreation Planner has been proposed for inclusion in the GS-100 Social Science Group. While there may be some general relationships between outdoor recreation and some of the social sciences, the use of this series in NPS is more related to the natural sciences. In terms of recruitment, our managers rely heavily on candidates with natural resource backgrounds which are within the parameters of the existing qualification standards used for the GS-023. If the series is moved to the GS-100 Social Science Group, we will lose the ability to obtain candidates with natural resource backgrounds. To avoid this problem, we suggest placement of this series in a more general land management grouping if one is formed, or placement in the GS-400 Biological Sciences Group which will have to be expanded to include

administrative occupations as well as professional.

GS-028 Environmental Protection Series

The GS-028 Environmental Protection Series has been proposed for placement in the GS-1800 Protective Service Group. None of our positions in this series perform what is traditionally seen as "protective" work. Most of our GS-028 positions are involved in legal and regulatory aspects of natural resource programs and issues. Others perform duties relating to hazardous waste/materials management or mining concerns. This series should not be moved into the protective group with criminal investigators, police, border patrol agents and similar occupations. We recommend placement in the GS-900 Legal Group or a science group such as the GS-400 Biological Science or the GS-1300 Physical Sciences. With these latter suggestions, expansion of a "professional" group to include administrative positions will have to be explored.

General Comments

We have comments concerning other aspects of the series consolidation proposal. Many of our natural resource specialists have raised questions about the wisdom of abolishing specialized series in the scientific occupations. They feel that the use of only general titles, qualification standards and classification guides will make the process of establishing and recruiting for specialized science positions (entomologists, fishery biologists, botanists, wildlife biologist) more difficult and time consuming.

As efforts are made to restructure the classification groups, we recommend considering the possibility of combining two of the existing groups: the GS-1000 Information and Arts and the GS-1700 Education. Both focus on communication and learning. Many of the series within each are related. For example, there are obvious relationships between writing and education. Exhibits and audio visual productions are geared to learning. Education is a major component of museums. Because of the parallels between the series in both groups, we recommend considering their consolidation.

Another concern is related to the DOI effort to automate classification. How will Proclass be impacted by this proposal? All of the bureaus have devoted extensive human and financial resources to this effort and it appears that much of it could be negated. How will DOI be proceeding with Proclass if this proposal is enacted?

In summary, we are supportive of efforts to simplify and improve the structure of the classification system; however, the current proposal needs additional study. Although it was an obvious choice to move the series from the Miscellaneous Group to other existing groups, this proposal shows that these decisions require careful study and review. These series were maintained in a separate group because they did not fit elsewhere; they cannot be quickly "slotted" into the existing structure. The proposal also raises many technical issues about special pay rates, existing qualification standards and other concerns that are not even addressed in this proposal. These issues require additional review and comment. Finally, we hope that DOI carefully coordinates its automation efforts to any upcoming changes planned for the classification system.

We are very interested in keeping informed of the proposal as it undergoes review and change. We are available to participate in any discussion or work groups that will be examining any of the program changes.

REGULATIONS/JURISDICTION UPDATE - Dennis Burnett, RAD/WASO

36 CFR Part 2: The informal review of the final draft by the Solicitor's Office continues. Action on the final proposal awaits conclusion of this analysis.

NCR T-Shirt Regulation: Nothing has occurred in the appeals process since the last CLEAR TEXT.

Part 7 & 13 - Special Park Regulations: At least 22 special park and other Servicewide regs are in the Department at some stage of the review process.

36 CFR 1.2, 1.4 and 13.2 - Applicability and Scope: The proposed rulemaking should be printed in the Federal Register on December 5th. Section 1.2 defines the primary scope and applicability of 36 CFR Parts 1 through 5 and Parts 7 through 13. Section 1.4 contains definitions for terms used in the text of the regulations. Section 13.2 modifies section 1.2 as it pertains to units of the System in Alaska. The latter revision affects how regs are applied in many areas, not just in parks with navigable waters. The revision will also affect non-Federally owned lands within park boundaries that are managed by the NPS under leases or other agreements.

36 CFR 1.3 - Penalties: The proposed rulemaking package is awaiting an approved DI-1 to go to the Federal Register. This rule will revise the existing penalty provisions for convictions of violating NPS regs found at 36 CFR 1.3(a) to conform with the Criminal Fine Improvements Act of 1987 (PL 100-185, 18 USC 3571). This rule will change the maximum fine levels for all petty offenses - including those of a regulatory nature - to \$5,000 for individuals and \$10,000 for organizations.

36 CFR 1.4 - General Provisions, Definitions - Change in Organizational Title from Regional Director to Field Director: The NPS is amending the definition of "regional director" found at 36 CFR 1.4 and replacing it with field director. The final regulation was printed in the Federal Register on November 3rd and was final on that date.

36 CFR Part 61 - Procedures for State, Tribal and Local Government Historic Preservation Programs: The regulation is still being reviewed by the Solicitor's Office.

43 CFR 10 - NAGPRA: The final rule establishes definitions and procedures for lineal descendants, Indian tribes, Native Hawaiian organizations, museums and Federal agencies to carry out the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990. These regs contain a systematic process for determining the rights of lineal descendants, Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations to certain Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony with which they are affiliated. The final rule is at the Federal Register and should be printed on December 5th. It will become final on January 4th.

36 CFR Part 3 - Boating and Water Use Activities: A proposed regulation is being developed concerning the introduction of non-indigenous aquatic nuisance species in park waters. The NPS hopes to regulate access to NPS by individuals and vessels that have recently operated in waters infested with injurious, non-indigenous aquatic plant and animal species. This reg is the result of the spread of the zebra mussel.

36 CFR Part 11 - Arrowhead and Parkscape Symbols: The NPS is moving forward in a proposed regulation providing protection to the arrowhead, USPP insignia, park ranger badge, and the park ranger/special agent/criminal investigator credential shields. This proposed rule will also delete reference to the Parkscape symbol.

Jurisdiction: The NPS is working on correspondence to make application to the state of Tennessee for the cession of concurrent jurisdiction over those lands and waters owned and administered by the NPS within the state and over which the United States exercises proprietorial jurisdiction. Along with a requested cession of jurisdiction by the state, the NPS is also proposing to cede jurisdiction over those lands and waters owned and administered by the NPS within the state over which the U.S. exercised exclusive jurisdiction.

CIRS/NIBRS UPDATE - Bob Reid, RAD/WASO at SEFA

Beginning in January, Kathy Clark and I will be conducting CIRS training sessions at central locations in all of the field areas. Our goal is to train representatives from the remaining parks not on CIRS. Parks with the CIRS program that are not using it because of a need for additional training should consider sending representatives to the sessions, too. There will probably be two sessions in each field area. The training takes two days and park reps will be trained as system administrators. They will take the CIRS software back to their parks, install it, and train LE rangers and others on its use.

ALL parks in the Service are being included in this effort. Smaller parks with few reports should also get involved. The CIRS system can also be utilized to collect data for other programs, such as fire, resource issues, safety, and special events, and can accordingly be of assistance in park management.

Kathy and I will be coordinating the training sessions through the various SSOs to ensure that all parks are included. A schedule of training dates and locations will be disseminated next month.

The next version of CIRS will be released in mid-January to parks who are already on line.

RADIO FREQUENCY NARROWBANDING - Frank Weed, Radio Frequency Manager, WASO

Since the beginning of the new fiscal year, the Service's narrowband radio steering committee (NSC) has been looking at funding for narrowband radio implementation - the second year for which WASO funding is expected. Now is a good time to look at last year's accomplishments and next year's objectives to see where the Service is heading in the overall program.

The Department has directed the Service to reduce the bandwidth requirements (i.e., to change out the radios) in California, the east coast and the Four Corners area by the end of 1999, then the rest of the country by 2004. The NSC has developed a systematic approach to meet the objective and developed a cost model that assists in planning the funding required for this transition. The cost model has been critically reviewed by the Department, demonstrated to the wireless telecommunications liaisons throughout the Department, supported by them, and adopted by the Department as the standard for use by all of the bureaus. The model produces an estimate of equipment replacement cost for each park area, including some limited enhancement to support modern technological improvements, and the costs of engineering services and installation to make the transition. The overall cost to the Service for narrowbanding is currently estimated at \$110 million, a figure that is expected to come down with competition in the marketplace.

The Service was authorized funding of \$300,000 last year to begin implementation of the transition. That amount was distributed to parks that met the Department's schedule requirements for Phase I, had an approved upgrade plan or an urgent requirement for system support assistance, and fit the available funds. The parks that benefitted most from the WASO funding included Pinnacles, Great Smoky Mountains, Little River Canyon, Delaware Water Gap and Cape Cod. A few other parks in the east were granted limited funding to replace wideband portables with narrowband radios or to add small radio repeaters. All of the funds were authorized and obligated within the last quarter of the fiscal year.

With the uncertainties of the this year's appropriations bill, it is not clear what funds will be available in FY 96. More than \$1 million has been requested; up to \$3.3 million could be obligated on major systems replacements this fiscal year. The NSC plans to meet in January to determine which parks will receive WASO funding for their system components, again keeping the Department's schedule in perspective.

The NSC is striving to secure funding to complete the Phase I transition by the mandated date of January 1, 2000. Given the nuances of contracting for equipment purchases and installation, the uncertainty of the budget, and the inability to make reallocation of frequencies possible where desirable until such transition is accomplished, the committee will be continuing to ask for centralized funding and prioritizing of the effort. It is striving to convert all of the smaller parks in California, the east coast and the Four Corners area at least a year ahead of schedule, with the larger parks distributed as they best fit in over the four years remaining until the year 2000.

PARK NOTES

"Park Notes" is open to all parks who have something to say - whether an announcement of a significant ranger activity, a request for assistance on a project, an offering of surplus equipment - in short, anything of consequence to you that you'd like to get out Servicewide.

Yosemite

Yosemite recently implemented a new Multi-Casualty Incident (MCI) plan adopted from the California Office of Emergency Services (OES) plan used by the counties adjacent to and surrounding the park. On November 4th, a parkwide MCI drill was held to test the plan and to practice operating procedures for an actual incident. Four ambulances, two air ambulance helicopters, two rescue units, three engines and 90 persons were involved in the drill. In addition to park employees, participants included personnel from Yosemite Concessions Services, Mariposa County fire and EMS services, regional air ambulance services, and California OES and EMS regional agencies.

Yellowstone

The rumors you may have heard are true - Jerry Mernin and Terry Danforth are retiring after a combined 60+ years working for the National Park Service in Yellowstone. A dinner and party in their honor is scheduled for Friday, December 15th at the TW Services Rec Hall in Mammoth. If you're interested in attending, or if you want to send a video message, cassette message or anecdote, contact chief ranger Dan Sholly. Donations toward a gift and/or a scrapbook can be sent to Grace Gifford, Chief Ranger's Office, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190. Grace also needs photographs for the scrapbook.

WASO

Nine agents and officers, including five from the NPS, recently received public service awards from the Justice Department for the investigation and subsequent prosecution of the ARPA case which involved trafficking in archeological resources and artifacts taken from Little Big Horn Battlefield NM and Native American lands and for the first NAGPRA case prosecuted nationally for trafficking in Native American remains. Those recognized were Bob Marriott, Clark Guy, Mike Johnson, Mike Greenfield and Ron DeAngelo from the NPS; John Putsche, Lee Lingard, and Larry Shackelford from BLM; and Robert Elliott from the FBI.

El Malpais

The park is seeking metal, horizontal format boundary signs. If you can help, please contact Darwin Vallo at 505-285-4641 x 20.

JOB MARKET

This section of the newsletter is open to all listings of vacancies, details, and other related position announcements. We'll also list inquiries from overseas for placements in U.S. parks.

Carlsbad Cavern

Because of the recent shutdown and the Thanksgiving vacation, the park is concerned that some rangers may not have seen the GS-11 supervisory park ranger (LE) opening announced on AVADS. The vacancy closes today, December 1st. If you're interested, get in touch ASAP with Gary Vequist at the park and/or check CACA 95-04 on AVADS.

Prepared by the Division of Ranger Activities, WASO, with the cooperation and support of Delaware Water Gap NRA.