



RANGER ACTIVITIES INFORMATION EXCHANGE



Volume 1, Number 1

October, 1985

This is the first edition of the Ranger Activities Information Exchange, a four-page newsletter which will be produced monthly by the Washington Ranger Activities Office and distributed to the chief rangers in each park, regional office ranger staffs, and other interested parties.

The main purpose of the Exchange will be to serve as a forum wherein rangers from both the field and central offices can share and evaluate information on operational matters in a timely, direct and clear manner. Along with news of major events, program developments and policy changes, it is an objective of the Exchange to discuss both our successes and failures in a positive, constructive manner in order to improve ranger operations throughout the Service.

The Exchange will focus exclusively on such ranger affairs; it is not intended to bypass or usurp traditional agency publications or correspondence procedures. It will be the product of rangers from all parts of the Service, and you are strongly encouraged to contribute. The Exchange will only be as good as you make it.

The Exchange will be going to chief rangers at the park level, but they are encouraged to duplicate it and share it with their staffs. If you have any information for the Exchange, please contact Bill Halainen at 202-343-4189.

Introductory Comments

We are all accustomed to trading information and swapping ideas about our work. The Ranger Activities Information Exchange is a logical extension of our shared desire to know what is happening in the park ranger community, and will serve as a forum where rangers from throughout the Service can exchange information on events, programs, ideas and other current and important developments.

During the past year and a half, many people have worked on over a dozen projects affecting ranger activities, including structural fire, emergency medical services, health and fitness, search and rescue, wildland fire management, employee uniforms and law enforcement. You are now beginning to see some progress in these important areas, but we know that we're only at the beginning and that several critical projects still need extensive attention. You know that Chief Ranger Dan Sholly will soon be leaving the Washington office and will become the chief ranger at Yellowstone. Dan has provided constant energy and leadership in the development of these programs. Many of you have worked on project teams, writing, editing, conducting research and applying your practical experience. Rangers throughout the Service will benefit from your efforts. We will soon be recruiting for a new chief of ranger activities to assure that these important projects continue to receive professional attention.

Thank you for your help during these past years. We'll need even more involvement in the future, and your contribution to this exchange of ideas and ideals will make the next several years a time of progress and pride. The work of the future is work for your future.

Tom Ritter
Chief, Visitor Services

36 CFR Part 4 Revisions Near Completion

The new revisions to 36 CFR Part 4, the Service's vehicle and traffic safety regulations, are nearing completion. They have gone out to the field, regional offices and U.S. magistrates and attorneys for comment, with a targeted return date of late November. This will be the only opportunity for such review prior to publication of a proposed rule in the Federal Register, possibly in January.

There are four major objectives of the revision:

- elimination of all Service regulations that duplicate state codes and retention of those that are unique to the agency;
- removal of all references to former administrative categories (i.e., natural, historic and recreation areas);
- reduction of the number of special regulations pertaining to traffic; and
- delegation of more authority to superintendents to designate traffic restrictions through 36 CFR 1.5.

Several regulations have been revised in significant ways. Section 4.6, which deals with operating under the influence of alcohol and drugs, now contains an implied consent section which prohibits refusal to submit to a test and makes proof of refusal admissible in court. It also establishes .10 as the legal level for intoxication and prohibits the use of any combination of drugs and alcohol (including prescription drugs) "that renders the operator incapable of safe operation."

Section 4.14 on unsafe operations retains and clarifies the elements necessary to charge a driver with that offense, but defers to state law on the more serious charge of reckless driving.

And a new addition to the regs prohibits operation or travel in a motor vehicle without fastened safety belts (with some minor exceptions). The Service's intent in creating this regulation is to seek willing compliance by visitors through education and public contacts, rather than through enforcement contacts not initiated as a result of other violations.

There are some deletions from Part 4. Gone are sections 4.5 and 4.20 on drivers licenses and vehicle registrations, which were adequately covered by state codes. Ditto for 4.12 and 4.21 on mufflers and brakes. Section 4.9 on false reports was deleted because the new section 2.32 on interfering with agency functions supplants it. Several other sections have also been dropped.

If you have any comments on these proposed changes, submit them through channels to the Chief of Ranger Activities in WASO. Any questions should be directed to Andy Ringgold at 202-343-4187.

Tort Claims Summary

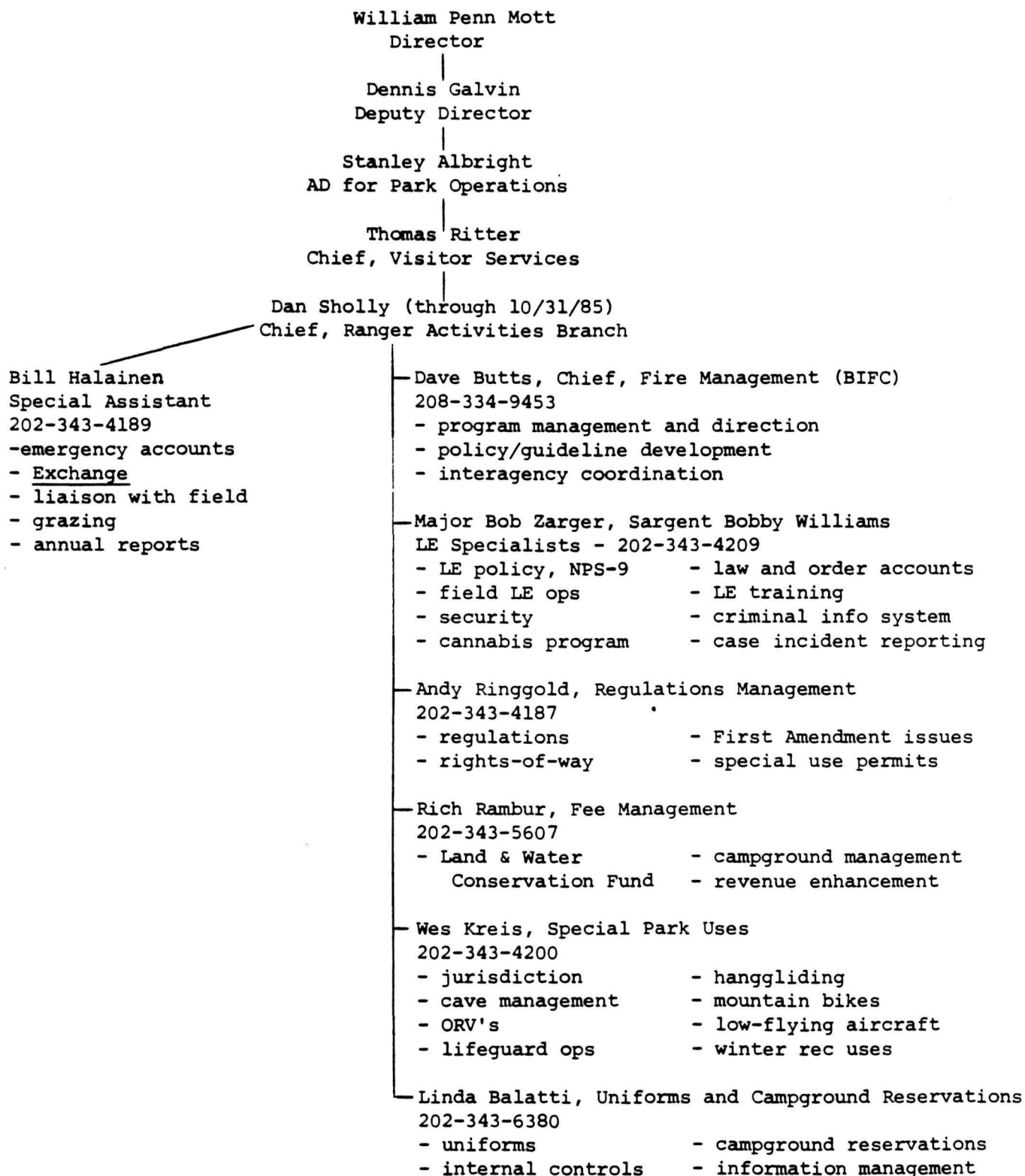
If you are not familiar with it, the American Law Review periodically publishes a summary of recent court decisions concerning the liability of the United States under the Federal Tort Claims Act for deaths or injuries sustained by visitors to national parks and forests.

The current compendium, cited as 66 ALR Fed 305, is 30 pages long and covers decisions on suits arising from animal attacks, drownings, falls and falling objects, vehicular accidents and a variety of other causes.

If you'd like a copy, write to Bill Halainen, Ranger Activities (650), National Park Service, Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127.

Washington Ranger Activities Directory

In order to improve communications with the field and clarify areas of responsibility in the Ranger Activities Office, this issue of the Exchange offers the following diagram of the organization of the office. Future issues will carry similar flow charts for the regional ranger activity offices:



The office's emergency services coordinator position is currently vacant and unauthorized. Several people are instead acting as special coordinators in a number

of areas, including:

- EMS - John Chew, Shenandoah (703-999-2243)
- SCUBA - J.T. Reynolds, Albright (602-638-2691)
- Aviation management and NIIMS - Rick Gale, Santa Monica Mountains (213-888-3440)
- Structural fire - Wes Kreis, WASO (202-343-4200)

Staffers in the Washington office will be happy to talk with you about any special problems that can't be handled through regular channels.

National Criminal Information Network

The National Criminal Information Network, which the Service has been working on for some time now, will come on line early next year.

When operational, the network will provide parks with a handy and readily accessible tool for combating serious crimes within their boundaries, particularly car-clouting and Archaeological Resources Protection Act violations. The system is being created and supported by the Forest Service and Park Service. It will collect and disseminate information on crimes which are relatively unique to land management agencies and can not usually be found in other computerized systems (such as NCIC). Information collected will allow investigations and link analyses to be conducted and thereby help determine patterns of criminal activity that may involve numerous parks. Previously, such information sharing among parks has been haphazard; the new network will make it possible for rangers throughout the system to cooperate in the resolution of common problems.

Project Director Jim Deason reports that the Data General MV 10000 computer is currently being set up at the training center in Marana, Arizona, and that a contract has been let with Pro-Sight Corporation, a data management company, for programming, analysis and assistance in setting up the system. The Park Service has also signed an interagency agreement with the Forest Service in order to pool the two organizations' resources in establishing the network's information base.

In the meanwhile, Deason and his cohorts are working on a program for personal computers (primarily the IBM PC) which will make it possible for field rangers to record information on their units which can later be sent on to the main computer. Eventually, parks with approved NCIC terminals and proper security clearances will also be able to retrieve a wide range of criminal information from the MV 10000. The Washington office and most regional offices will be directly linked to Marana and will be able to call up any information needed. These terminals should be on line within the next few months. Detailed information and instructions for use of the system will be distributed in the near future.

Rangers Killed At Mount Rainier

Late on the evening of September 16th, three Mt. Rainier rangers were killed in a motor vehicle accident while returning from Enumclaw, a town north of the park.

The three - area ranger Wayne Casto and seasonals David Horst and Polly Nash - were returning from a farewell dinner which had been held for departing seasonals. While crossing a small bridge, they were hit by a drunk driver who was traveling in the wrong lane at over 85 m.p.h. The confining bridge made evasive action impossible, and all were killed instantly. The middle-aged driver of the other vehicle reportedly had a record of prior DUI convictions and was driving on a revoked license.

Wayne Casto had been a ranger in the Service since the late 60's, and had been at Rainier since 1973. Dave Horst had worked seasonally in Alaska and was in his fourth season at Rainier. Polly Nash was working her first season in the park and was a patrol ranger.