



Voices of Experience – Focus on the Future

Coalition of National Park Service Retirees

Mission:

In pursuit of its vision for the National Park Service, the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees studies, educates, speaks, and acts for preservation and protection of America's National Park System and the mission of the National Park Service.

Vision:

The CNPSR participates in the national dialog regarding the management of America's National Park System.

The Coalition is considered to be a principal stakeholder in the planning and decision-making processes, a status that reflects the more than 11,000 years of experience in National Park Service management and operations that its members possess.

The Coalition works with other interested parties to assure that management decisions made by current NPS leaders are consistent with the legislative guidelines enacted by previous Congresses.

Coalition Accomplishments 2008 Involvement in National Park Issues

- BLM actions affecting Utah/Colorado parks – worked behind the scenes with other organizations to reduce impacts of BLM auctions
- Cape Hatteras NS (NC) – served on formally established negotiated rulemaking committee as one of three national conservation organizations
- Grand Canyon NP mining impacts – provided comment and testified at field hearing
- Great Basin NP water issues – provided comments and wrote several letters advocating protecting the park resources
- Guns in Parks Regulation – met with DOI Assistant Secretary, provided formal comments; conducted survey and prepared impacts report; prepared for litigation. Responded to approximately 100 media enquiries and emails from interested citizens
- Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (MO) – monitored attempts by Danforth Foundation to take and develop NPS lands for urban renewal; commented in media
- Point Reyes NS (CA) – monitored oyster farm lease in wilderness; letter sent to Senator Feinstein emphasizing need to uphold park and wilderness laws and policies
- Yellowstone and Grand Teton NPs (MT, WY, ID) winter use – monitored implementation of policy and legal decisions; worked closely with “winter use coalition” to provide comments and public information
- Yellowstone NP (MT, WY, ID) World Heritage designation – sent letter to IUCN opposing DOI’s “delisting” action
- Valley Forge NHP (PA) – Worked closely with NPCA on appeals to zoning to allow American Revolutionary Center to develop park inholding; testified at zoning board hearing
- Testimony – testified at before House National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee hearing on fees on public lands
- Centennial Act legislation – provided input to legislative language; worked with broader “coalition” to have appropriate legislation enacted (legislation failed in 110th Congress)
- Lyndon B. Johnson NHS (TX) – disputed plans to amend GMP to modify transportation system to park and other issues
- Little Big Horn NHS (MT) – disputed plans to expand visitor center in violation of GMP; plan was withdrawn
- Old Santa Fe Trail Office Building (NPS-owned historic structure - NM) – protested actions planned to reconfigure office space in building and modify the historic collection
- Harpers Ferry Center (WV) Collections Management – letter to NPS Director protesting deterioration of management of historic artifact collection
- NPS Cultural Resources Management Program – voiced significant concern through several avenues about deterioration of the overall program
- Collaborative Service Corps Initiative – briefed NPS National Leadership Council; negotiated protocol for implementation that was implemented in October
- Serve as member of NPS/NPCA Learning and Development project – attended initial “summit” meeting of involved organizations
- Election Transition Team – provided input to team on priorities for NPS and National Park System
- Congressional Relations – provided briefings (in person and electronically) to elected officials and staffs on various issues; met in person regularly with Chairman of House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
- Monitored and contributed input to National Parks Second Century Commission
- Provided review and comment to impacts to NPS areas of the West-wide Energy Corridors plan
- Monitored, reviewed and provided comment on activities related to the RS2477 rights-of-way issue, primarily in Utah and Colorado.



CNPSR Executive Council

Bill Wade, Chair
Phil Brueck, Treasurer
Robert Arnberger
Don H. Castleberry
Maureen Finnerty
Jake Hoogland
Rebecca Mills
Doug Morris
JT Reynolds
Pat Tiller

CNPSR Accepted Authority on National Parks

Press releases, comments, and reports that CNPSR has issued have been quoted by national media, including:

- The New York Times, Washington Post, LA Times and The Philadelphia Inquirer
- Electronic media such as Greenwire
- National Public Radio program *All Things Considered*
- TV news on MSNBC and Fox

As a result, the first three-quarters of the year saw the Coalition mentioned over 100 times. This translates into Coalition effectiveness.

By far the greatest coverage in this period has been on the gun rule issue. Coverage included quotes from Doug Morris and Bill Wade in press releases, as well as Wade interview excerpts on the NPR program *All Things Considered*.



Double Arch, Arches National Park
Photo by Bruce McKeeman

In May, 2003, three former high-ranking National Park Service employees spoke at a press conference in Washington DC against actions being taken by political leaders that were having detrimental effects on the National Park Service and the National Park System. At the same time, a letter was sent to President Bush and Interior Secretary Norton, signed by 20 NPS retirees, voicing similar concerns.

Since that time, more than 690 additional former NPS employees, many of whom were senior managers of the agency, have joined the Coalition to monitor and respond to the decisions and actions of the political leadership of the Department of the Interior and the NPS.

As park managers, rangers and employees in other disciplines, we devoted our professional lives to maintaining and protecting our national parks for the benefit of all Americans - both living and those yet to be born.

Coalition Membership Increases
to 690

Never before in the 90 year history of the National Park Service have so many retired employees come together to voice concern about threats to the Service and system to which they devoted their professional careers.

We know that many more of our former National Park Service colleagues, who have served under several different Administrations, both Republican and Democratic, agree with our concerns.

We have served this country well, and our credibility and integrity in speaking out on these issues should not go ignored. We count among our members:

- 5 former Directors or Deputy Directors of the National Park Service
- 23 former Regional Directors or Deputy Regional Directors
- 28 former Associate or Assistant Directors at the national or regional office level
- 74 former Division Chiefs at the national or regional office level
- 150 former Park Superintendents or Asst. Superintendents
- Numerous Division Chiefs, Supervisors and other employees who served at the park level



CNPSR Gun Impact Report

SURVEY: 77 PERCENT OF NPS, FISH & WILDLIFE EXPERTS SAY PROPOSED GUN RULE WILL HURT MANAGEMENT OF NATIONAL PARKS, WILDLIFE REFUGES

TUSCON, AZ.///October 14, 2008/// More than three out of four (77 percent) of 1,400 present and former employees of the National Park Service (NPS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) predict that the controversial Department of Interior (DOI) proposed rule reversing the long-standing prohibition of carrying loaded, concealed weapons in National Parks and Wildlife Refuges will have an adverse affect on the ability of NPS and USFWS employees to accomplish their mission.

This finding and others are contained in "Natural and Cultural Resource Impacts and Management Consequences of the Proposed Regulation to Authorize the Possession of Concealed Firearms in Units of the National Park & National Wildlife Refuge Systems," a major new report the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees (CNPSR), which now has more than 690 members. While DOI has neglected to provide an analysis of the potential impacts of its proposed rule, CNPSR surveyed in excess of 1,400 present and former employees of the National Park Service and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to assess the impacts that these experts foresee should the regulation go into effect. Other key results of the survey include:

- 75 percent feel that there will be an increase in opportunistic or impulse wildlife killings in parks and refuges
- 83 percent of survey respondents anticipated that the proposal will increase the overall level of complexity for management of their park or refuge.

In issuing the report, CNPSR emphasized that DOI violated the procedural requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in failing to adequately examine the foreseeable impacts of the relaxed gun regulation. Additionally, CNPSR asserts that DOI should have consulted the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service pursuant to ESA, as 89 threatened or endangered species inhabit the parks that would be affected by the regulation.

The new CNPSR report highlights the enforcement complexities and threats to public safety that should have been addressed in an analysis of reasonable alternatives to the rule under NEPA.

CNPSR Development: 2008

- Media Relations – CNPSR mentioned or quoted in over 200 media stories throughout the country on over two dozen topics; CNPSR initiated media release on "Quiet in National Parks" picked up by over 50 media outlets. On average CNPSR received 3-4 media calls each week
- Completed 11 Professional Opinion Papers on a variety of topics to be used in various ways
- Website upgraded and expanded
- Contracted with Administrator to handle financial management and membership data
- Contracted with Intern in DC to assist CNPSR with briefings, research, issue tracking and relationships with other organizations
- Completed fundraising plan and EC members attended training in fundraising
- Initiated member newsletter
- Hartzog Institute – formally established at Clemson U.; CNPSR has one seat on Board of Directors
- Member and non-member donations received = \$18,310.36 (FY2008 figures)
- Received following grants:
 - Rockefeller Philanthropic Advisors - \$75,000 for organizational development
 - 444S Foundation - \$15,000 for Cape Hatteras rulemaking process and other OHV issues
 - Turner Foundation - \$10,000 for supporting the Hartzog Institute
- Membership increased to 690 from approximately 625
- The EC met 5 times during the year, 2 meetings were face-to-face, lasting 2-3 days each
- CafePress Store – Initiated on-line source of CNPSR-related items; revenue to date approx. \$180
- Presented 1872 Award to Kristen Brengel of The Wilderness Society; the George Hartzog Award to Dr. Richard West Sellars; and an honorary CNPSR membership to Jon Catton
- Volunteer time expended to manage and operate CNPSR:
 - Executive Council = 6500 hours; Other CNPSR members = 600 hours
 - Other (primarily legal assistance by Perkins Coie LLP) = 200 hours
 - Total value of volunteer time contributed = \$333.350



THE COALITION STRATEGIC PLAN: A VISION FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE IN ITS SECOND CENTURY

As the National Park Service nears the beginning of its second century, the national parks and all they represent have evolved from units of a respected national system into the combined expression of our most valuable and inalienable national heritage. They are the unchanging measure of a rapidly changing world, repositories of information against which human progress or its opposite can be gauged, touchstones of who we are as a people and even as members of the human species, the best hope for preserving the cultural record that defines American civilization and the global biological diversity upon which life itself depends.

At a crucial time—when the United States may decide whether to retain the benefits of victories painfully won over decades or to risk losing them to narrow, short-term, and private interests—the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees declares its vision of a National Park Service that by August 25, 2016:

- Preserves and enables visitors to enjoy the truly special places of our common heritage—the inalienable heritage—of our nation, without confusion about its mission.
- Is deeply involved with the American people in what it means to be American and with the people of the world about what it means to be human.
- Is viewed by the public and government officials not as a “land management agency” but as the steward of the primary ideas and ideals held in trust as the nation’s heritage.
- Educates visitors through deeply personal experiences of profoundly important places.
- Leads, encourages, and assists all others in our country who pursue similar goals; and on behalf of the United States assists all others in the world who pursue similar goals.
- Is free of burdens that impede accomplishment of its mission, and has leadership that is free of inappropriate constraints and conflicting goals.
- Is well-funded, well-staffed, sophisticated, professional, value-driven, motivated, innovative, daring, and excellent, within a context of long-term continuity.
- Provides education, training, and career opportunities that maximize fulfillment of the professional potential of each employee.
- Is managed as a coherent system rather than as independent areas and programs.
- Is driven by a current and constantly-renewed vision, nationally and in each individual park.

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