



Appropriations Amendments Involve Controversies at Point Reyes & Theodore Roosevelt

Senator Dorgan of North Dakota has been threatening the NPS for some time about the process used to reduce the elk herd in Theodore Roosevelt NP. Spurred on by state game management officials, who favor public hunting for management of game species (especially ungulates) in national parks, Dorgan has made his threat a reality by introducing an amendment to the Senate appropriations bill. The amendment would preclude the NPS from using any appropriated funds for elk reduction in the park by any means that does not include the public to assist in hunting and removing the carcasses of the elk. Dorgan relates this to the "successful" Grand Tetons model for elk management. The NPS position is to allow the ongoing EIS process to proceed, and is ready to release the alternatives and soon thereafter, seek public comment. CNPSR and other organizations are working to try to get this amendment stripped from the House version of the bill, or in conference, believing that it is a bad precedent and will open the door to similar pressures for public hunting in other national parks.



Also potentially affected by the appropriations bill is Point Reyes National Seashore. As part of the Congressional designation of Wilderness in 1976, the act establishing the wilderness directed future removal of the commercial Oyster Farm in Drakes Bay. The act's clear intent was that the existing oyster farm should be abandoned when the permit expired in 2012. The new owner of the oyster farm purchased this business with full understanding that it is to be phased out in 2012. Nonetheless, the owner has convinced Senator Feinstein to propose an amendment to the appropriation bill to extend the lease. Among the arguments that have been used by those seeking to extend the



con't on p. 3

Report Faults Cultural Resource Programs

In October 2008, the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) issued its report, *Saving our History: A Review of National Park Cultural Resources Programs: A Report by a Panel of the National Academy of Public Administration for the National Park Service*. The report found declining budgets and staffing levels, deteriorating historic and prehistoric park properties and museum collections, lack of Washington leadership and an agency inattentive to its mission.

A key finding was that park-related cultural resource (CR) programs (this report did not include "external" programs) are underfunded and understaffed and have borne a disproportion-

con't on p. 2

Cultural Resource Programs con't from p. 1

ate share of NPS budget and staffing reductions over the last two decades. Between 1995 and 2008, inflation-adjusted funding for these programs declined 2% per year or 26% in total. During the same time, the Natural Resource Challenge brought an additional \$77.5 million to the natural resource counterpart programs. In both cases, these involve all park-oriented programs, not just park bases. In 2008, less than 4% of NPS staff were assigned to park CR programs and natural resource staffing was nearly 80% greater than cultural resource staffing, although they were once nearly equal. At the same time, the last 30 units added to System have been established to preserve, commemorate, and interpret some important aspect of the American story.



The report attributed the problems to several factors, including lack of strong or effective advocacy by leaders and a poor relationship between Washington and field cultural resource leaders. Administrative issues were also cited, including time investment in data systems, lack of related performance standards, earlier deadlines for project fund obligation combined with later project funding receipt, and travel restrictions

that disproportionately affect CR, where travel to parks by experts concentrated in clusters is required. NAPA found the facility management data system, FMSS, especially unsatisfactory for park archaeological sites, historic buildings, and cultural landscapes projects because it uses "replacement value" for irreplaceable historic and prehistoric properties.

A litany of program specifics in the report underscored the general findings. While ethnography was not addressed, NAPA addressed other programs and found:

- Only 2% of NPS-managed acreage has been surveyed for archaeological resources, less than two-thirds of the surveyed resources were fully recorded, and less than half are in good condition.
- Of an estimated 2,300 cultural landscapes, only 401 have been identified and documented, and of those only half are reported to be in good condition.
- Only a third of park historic structures are in fair condition, 13% are in poor condition, and the FMSS-calculated backlog for historic structures is nearly \$2 billion.
- 70% of park historians are eligible to retire, while many of the 1,000 historic resource studies need updating and more than half of parks lack administrative histories.
- NPS collections are second in size to the Smithsonian, but only about 350,000 of the more than 123 million items are on display and fewer than half are cataloged; most parks with museum collections do not have a dedicated museum curator.

The NAPA report offered 16 recommendations that addressed specific problems highlighted, as well as the need for strategic, programmatic efforts, such as a cultural resource challenge and the attention of the Director to CR leadership. A request to the Associate Director for Cultural Resources for information about steps taken to address the recommendations went unanswered, but we understand that

Appropriations...Controversies con't from p. 1

the current farming operation is that Park Service findings about its impact are flawed; a recent National Academy of Sciences report concluded that there is "lack of strong evidence that there is major ecological impact" from mariculture. However, the Park Service has sent extensive comments to the Academy about its report—which CNPSR has requested through the FOIA process, since our initial request was turned down. The CNPSR and others believe that the scientific arguments over the level of impact are a smokescreen to cloud the real issue. The CNPSR has corresponded with Representative Woolsey, requesting that she seek to have any such action undertaken in an open manner, with full hearings, rather than through a rider and has discussed the issue with the staff of key House leaders. In addition to CNPSR and a local coalition, national environmental groups are also involved in trying to maintain the integrity of the wilderness area and of the decision-making process and priority for this public good over private gain.

Issue Updates—Guns in Parks & YELL Winter Use

Following passage of the legislation that included the Coburn Amendment allowing functional **firearms** in national parks and wildlife refuges, CNPSR has been working with various groups to determine the impacts of the amendment. It appears that there are a significant number of issues arising from this legislation and how it reconciles with existing law and regulations. This has left a "mess," as one person described it, that the Department of the Interior is going to have to work out, before the parks have real guidance in how to implement the legislation and how the public will be educated about what it can and can't do. The guns law does not go into effect until February 2010, but it will take all of that time to work out the details, most likely requiring comprehensive rulemaking by DOI.

There have been two recent meetings among the parties to the litigation about **Yellowstone winter use** to explore settlement talks. There is a general feeling among those on the "conservation" side is that further settlement talks will not be very useful and that DOI needs to be urged to move forward with rulemaking.
BREAKING NEWS 7/23 NPS issued intent to halve snowmobiles use through

Help CNPSR – Run for the EC or Volunteer

Four Executive Council terms expire the end of this year – Wade, Finnerty, Brueck and Mills. All are eligible to re-run but Becky Mills and Phil Brueck have declared that they will not re-run for the EC. Becky will chair the nominations committee, assisted by Doug Morris and JT Reynolds. See related email or the website or contact one of the above regarding nominations.

Volunteers are needed to assist the EC with carrying out its business on behalf of the membership—contact Bill Wade if you can help:

- CNPSR Public Information Officer
- Chair of CNPSR Fundraising Committee
- Assistance on the Membership Committee
- Writer for Featured Story section of CNPSR website

MEMBERS —To continue to receive email Member Updates and this newsletter, please remember to notify the Coalition when you move or change email addresses. Just go to the website npsretirees.org and click on bill_wade@npsretirees.org or send a note to Bill (see address on back of newsletter).

Highlights of Second Quarter 2009 Activities (not addressed elsewhere)

- Bill Wade testified in March before the House parks subcommittee on “Restoring the Federal Public Lands Workforce” and in April, John Reynolds testified for CNPSR before the same subcommittee on “The Public Land Service Corps Act of 2009.” A movement like the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) could emerge if Congress passes the [Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2009 \(HR 1612\)](#), an update of a [similar act](#) passed in 1993. HR 1612 would create thousands of full-time, paid positions in national parks and other public lands to work on natural and cultural resources conservation projects. The potentially massive project would be administered by the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.
- Wade attended the fourth and fifth (last) meetings of the National Parks Second Century Commission, at Gettysburg and Great Smoky Mountains. At the last meeting, the committees presented their final draft recommendations for discussion and consensus by the entire Commission. The final report is planned to be ready for distribution in mid-September, with release near the airing of the Ken Burns national parks documentary, starting September 27.
- CNPSR is working with NPCA and the Baker Center for Public Policy in their efforts to educate public and elected officials about the Second Century Commission report and recommendations. A meeting of these groups hosted by NPCA and the Baker Center is likely in early November. Pro bono public relations assistance will be provided to NPCA and the Commission as a result of a relationship that Maureen Finnerty had with a principal of a legal and public relations firm.
- Bill Wade and Maureen Finnerty attended a two-day NPS session at Grand Canyon in May 29 and 30, also attended by as representatives from several universities (including Clemson’s Hartzog Institute and the University of Indiana’s Eppley Institute). A condensed version of NPS Fundamentals Courses was provided to show the foundation that all NPS employees receive, followed by discussions about components needed to supplement current programs for leadership development. Two committees worked on curriculum development and delivery processes.
- Maureen Finnerty, Jake Hoogland, and Bill Wade met with DOI officials Will Shafroth and, for a short-time, with Tom Strickland on June 8, discussing:
 - Yellowstone NP winter use
 - Valley Forge NP– subsequently a resolution emerged to relocate the facility proposed, which CNPSR objected to, from the park to Philadelphia.
 - Presidio – regarding board composition in making new appointments to the Trust Board of Directors; John Reynolds is a candidate.
 - Everglades restoration
 - NPS leadership and the need for maximum flexibility and support to the new Director (when confirmed) to build his own team and make organizational adjustments to move the NPS forward.
 - CNPSR’s desire to support DOI and NPS

Will Las Vegas Water Plan Great Basin NP?

For nearly 20 years, Las Vegas has sought the right to pump groundwater from selected Nevada counties for use by its increasing population and tourists. In 2007, Nevada's State Water Engineer decided to permit the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) initially to pump up to 40,000 acre-feet per year (afy) from Spring Valley (adjacent to Great Basin NP on the west). The decision included conditions, including monitoring the effects for a 10-year period before potentially permitting up to an additional 20,000 acre-feet/year (or reducing the permitted amount). He also required a 5-year period to collect baseline information. Interior bureaus, including the National Park Service, had withdrawn their protests against SNWA's applications for water rights in Spring Valley in exchange for a "Stipulated Agreement", which included required monitoring, mitigation if adverse effects occur, and other conditions. CNPSR objected to the Stipulated Agreement. Later, the CNPSR urged Senators Reid and Ensign to request a briefing by the NPS Water Resources Division regarding potential impacts on Great Basin and the need for research, and at Senator Reid's request, NPS water rights branch staff briefed his office in early 2008. (See letter to Reid dated October 2, 2006 and December 9, 2007 letter to Reid and Ensign, in "browse content--letters" section of CNPSR website.)

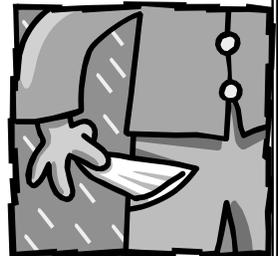
Now SNWA is requesting 50,000 afy from Snake Valley, which encompasses most of Great Basin NP and extends east if its boundary into Utah. Not only is a large amount of water involved, but the applications are very close to the park—as close as ¼ mile for one diversion and within 3 miles of Lehman Caves. The DOI bureaus filed timely protests in 1990, which are still in place, as have a number of Utah state agencies. Hearings before the Nevada State Water Engineer were scheduled for this coming fall, but have been delayed for two years at the request of SNWA. The U.S. Geological Survey, in Scientific Investigations Report 2006-5099, found that in several areas of the park, surface-water resources potentially are susceptible to ground-water withdrawals in Snake Valley. A new Nevada law, AB416, requires research on water resources in arid Nevada before water is piped from one location to another.

The Bureau of Land Management is developing the Environmental Impact Statement for the groundwater pumping project. CNPSR provided comments. The EIS draft is expected to be released to the public for comment in summer or fall of 2009.

Please keep the donations coming...

We are running below the average of the past two years for donations to CNPSR from its members. Given the reduced probability of funding availability from grant sources during the immediate future, we will need to rely even more on contributions from members to carry out the work of the Coalition.

The Executive Council has taken some steps to reduce our expenditures, but if we are to be effective, especially during the time when some real opportunities for success in a number of the issues we have been working on, we need a continuing flow of dollars. To date, still fewer than 20% of the members have donated this year. Please do your part. Checks can be made out to CNPSR and sent to: 5625 N Wilmot Road, Tucson, AZ 85750; or you can use PayPal at the link on the website.



I'd like to make a donation the old-fashioned way (alternative is at www.npsretirees.org)

Name _____

Address _____

Donation amount (check enclosed) _____

Please email an acknowledgement

Please send acknowledgement by mail

Email address if we don't have it _____

CNPSR is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Please use this space to let us know if and how you'd like to be involved in the collaborative initiative with NPS, provide feedback on this newsletter, or pass on any other thoughts you'd like to share with the Executive Council. (You can also contact us at www.npsretirees.org)

Coalition of NPS Retirees
5625 North Wilmot
Tucson, AZ 85750