



**Coalition of National
Park Service
Retirees
Mission:**

We will speak and act for the preservation and protection of America's national park areas and for the enjoyment of them in such manner that does not impair their resources nor their intended values and purposes.

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.

AWARDS and HONORS

The Executive Council (EC) of CNPSR is pleased to announce the recipients of the following awards and honors conferred during the December, 2010 Executive Council meeting in Tucson.

The George B. Hartzog, Jr. Award for significant contributions to the mission of the NPS was awarded to Yosemite Ranger Shelton Johnson. Ranger Johnson was cited for his pivotal role in the Ken Burn's documentary "The National Parks: America's Best Idea" and for his life mission of making our national park areas accessible to all Americans. He was also lauded for his singular interpretive programs, which are among Yosemite's most popular and well attended.

The 1872 Award is given to a Coalition of National Park Service Retirees (CNPSR) member who has made significant contributions to the organization. Ms. Maria Abonnel was selected this year for her tireless work in revamping and upgrading the Coalition's website. Ms. Abonnel researched available website hosts and software options for formatting and maintaining the website. She managed the transfer of the website to a new host, learned the hosting software, and has continued to refine and update the site as new information becomes available.

Mr. Don Bauer was made an Honorary *Member* of the Coalition in recognition of his long service in providing assistance to CNPSR on a wide variety of complex legal issues. These included assisting the Coalition in securing tax exempt status, providing advice on the weapons in the park rule, and helping sort through the issues surrounding the draft rule on collecting plant and mineral materials inside parks.

The EC congratulates all of these exceptional people who continue to make a positive difference in our parks and in achieving the strategic goals of the Coalition.



EC Members

- Rob Arnberger
- Anne Castellina
- Gary Cummins
- Maureen Finnerty
- Doug Morris
- JT Reynolds
- Molly Ross
- Rick Smith
- Pat Tiller

**Advisory
Committee**

- Phil Brueck
- Don Castleberry
- Abby Miller
- Jerry Rogers

DEAR COALITION MEMBERS:

2010 was a year of transition for the Coalition. After being its chair for nearly 7 years, Bill Wade decided to step down from that position and resign from his seat on the Executive Council (EC) to take a well-earned break from the leadership role he so capably performed during that time. The Executive Council elected me to take his place. No one will ever know completely the size of the debt of gratitude we owe Bill for his service to the Coalition, but it is enormous. And, he still continues to perform many of the financial and tax tasks that the Coalition is obligated to do. Thanks for all you have done and continue to do, Bill.

The EC just finished our required face-to-face meeting in Tucson the first week of December. We welcomed the two members of the EC whom you re-elected, JT Reynolds and Doug Morris. You also elected Molly Ross and Gary Cummins to fill vacant positions. They also attended the meeting. Don Castleberry attended his final meeting of the EC as a council member as he was term-limited from being a candidate again. Don has admirably served the EC during his time as a member. Thank you, Don, for all you have done.

During our meeting, we developed a list of the Coalition's 2010 accomplishments. You will find them elsewhere in this newsletter. One of the most rewarding things about compiling the list was to see that a number of our activities did not originate in the EC but came to our attention from individual members of the Coalition. We hope this trend continues as the members of the EC cannot possibly know what is happening in each of the 394 units of the National Park System.

The changed political landscape is likely to bring new challenges to the Coalition. Many who will fill leadership positions in the House are not nearly as supportive of protection and preservation policies as were their predecessors. We will need to be even more vigilant in assuring that politics don't trump the sound management of the areas of the System or compromise the programs of the National Park Service. We know we can count on you for continued support.

DONATIONS NEEDED

Each year, it seems that the Executive Council ends up wrestling with dues and membership issues at its required annual meeting. This is primarily due to the irregular and unplanned manner in which we receive funding to carry out the activities of CNPSR. It takes more than just volunteer effort to make the successes of CNPSR possible. It takes funding from foundations and other granting organizations coupled with a successful donor program from the members of CNPSR.

The member donor program is sometimes not as effective as we would like and certainly does not provide the dependable and programmed approach to funding on which the organization must rely. Only about a third of all members donate and many of those who do donate don't do it on a regular schedule. The donations tend to vary widely.

The recent member survey indicated the willingness of many members to entertain a reasonable membership dues program. However, the survey could not delve into associated issues of a membership program and the possibility that the costs of developing and maintaining a dues structure intended to create increased and dependable funding might instead have negative consequences and lead to less funding.

With these factors in mind, the EC decided not to introduce a dues structure; but instead chose to work at increasing donations from the membership. We will also seek to increase members' participation in the program and at greater amounts. As one member observed, "the organization started as a voluntary organization comprised of individuals who gave of their talents and their own funds to make it work. What they got from membership was an advocacy program working on behalf of the parks...not a membership program working on behalf of members."

CNPSR is not an organization established to support its members. There are few "member benefits" from the organization itself. CNPSR is an organization with members who join to support the mission of the organization – the National Park Service – that we all worked for and believe in. That is why the EC believes that a healthy donor program is essential to the success of CNPSR in carrying out its efforts.

Most organizations "put the rush" on members to donate toward the end of the tax year. We want to encourage you to begin 2011 with a donation to CNPSR and to follow that up with periodic donations throughout the year. There are two ways to donate: by check, made out to CNPSR and sent to: CNPSR, 5625 N Wilmot Road, Tucson, AZ 85750; or by going to the CNPSR website at www.npsretirees.org and clicking on the PayPal donation link.

Rick Smith, EC Chair

2010 Coalition Accomplishments

CNPSR members are an extraordinary bunch! We may officially designate ourselves as "retired", but a significant number of our cadre of almost 800 remain passionately and fully engaged in National Park Service issues. We are the eyes and ears for each other, reporting happenings in parks across the country. We are the volunteers who assist overworked, understaffed parks and work tirelessly on Friends Group boards, committees, special events, etc.

We champion legislation that will enhance the NPS or speak caution regarding legislation that will harm the NPS. 2010 was another banner year for Executive Council and individual member efforts on behalf of the parks. Here are a few of the issues that many of you were involved with or weighed in on:

- Briefings with key NPS leaders including Director Jarvis, Science Advisor Gary Machlis, Regional Directors, and Congressional Representatives
- Congressional testimony on the future of the National Park System
- Engagement with park issues at BIBI, ZION, PORE, LYJO, FOBO, GRCA, WRST, JNEM, CHIS, CAHA, BADL, Blackstone River Valley SRS
- Continued participation in YELL winter use coalition
- Support for Valles Caldera, Tule Springs, and Old Santa Fe building legislative proposals
- Continued participation in Leadership Consortium with NPCA, Universities and NPS
- Support for the Public Land Corp, Hetch Hetchy dam removal, and Secretary's moratorium on off-shore oil drilling
- Continued participation in the Hartzog Institute and appointment of a 2nd member (Dr. Don Field) to the Board
- Monitoring of gun legislation implementation
- Initiated focus on NPS training and workforce education
- Completed requirements of 2009-2010 grant from the 444S Foundation
- Engaged in international park efforts and the ITAP program
- Letter to Governor of NY regarding State Park closures
- Participation in Clemson's Open Grid network
- Implemented CNPSR member survey
- Updated CNPRS website

CNPSR 2011 Annual Operations Plan

During its December 2011 meetings in Tucson, the Executive Council formulated an ambitious Annual Operations Plan (AOP). The full text of the plan is posted on the CNPSR web site -www.npsretirees.org. Highlights include:

- As a follow up to a very candid and useful meeting with Intermountain Regional Director John Wessels during the December EC meetings, the EC will continue discussions on how CNPSR can assist the Intermountain Region in the accomplishment of the NPS mission.
- On an important policy issue, the EC will consult with Don Baur regarding the proposed regulation that would permit Native Americans to collect plants and mineral material inside national parks.
- The EC Chair will write letters to the new Chairs of the House of Representatives Resources Committee and the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands upon their appointments.
- Related to the above item, the EC will develop a strategy on how to deal with the new Congress.
- The EC will explore with the Association of National Park Rangers, Clemson University, and the National Park Service, the role CNPSR can play in the Centennial Oral History Project to document accounts of NPS employees and retirees during the course of the development of the National Park system.
- The EC will initiate contacts with the NPS 2nd Century Commission and work toward the development of an updated CNPSR strategic plan that will identify those areas where CNPSR can be most effective in advancing the Commission's recommendations.
- EC members will work on developing youth programs with Julia Washburn in WASO.

Several AOP items will deal with internal CNPSR matters:

- The EC will examine issues regarding CNPSR governance and sustainability.
- The EC will review and edit the Coalition's strategic plan and publish an Annual Operations Plan that sets annual goals.
- The EC will publish and mail out a newsletter that includes CNPSR news, a list of 2010 accomplishments, and a request for donations.

THE CNPSR AND THE OLD SANTA FE TRAIL BUILDING

The Old Santa Fe Trail Building, located between two sets of wagon ruts of the historic Santa Fe Trail, was built in 1939 to serve as headquarters of what came to be the National Park Service Southwest Region. Designed by National Park Service architect Cecil Doty, it was constructed by the Works Projects Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps of adobes made on site from earth removed to create the building's footings and basements. Featuring a large green patio and five small patios, a beautiful entrance foyer, a *sala* or great room, a conference room/gallery, individually unique offices, WPA tin-work, paintings, lithographs, pottery, and furniture made there for use there, the building's national significance and extraordinary degree of historical integrity led to its designation as a National Historic Landmark in 1987 and to its management as though it were a unit of the National Park System. It was even guided by a General Management Plan and assigned a National Park Service alpha code "OSFT." Anchored by this building, the adjacent acreage has become "Museum Hill," home to two important private museums and two major units plus offices of the Museum of New Mexico. Even though the building ceased to be a regional headquarters in 1995, it seemed to be safe as long as senior levels of the National Park Service appreciated its importance.

In 2007, however, a National Park Service Manager saw an opportunity to redirect money from New Mexico to a more favored location by relinquishing a leased office building and shoehorning the full complement of Santa Fe employees into the historic building. Initial concepts of space planners keen on efficiency but ignorant of historic building management, threatened destructive interventions into historic walls and features—contrary to provisions of the General Management Plan. To make room, some historic objects and furnishings that probably had never been out of the building were sent to storage in another state.

CNPSR members and others in Santa Fe, such as veterans of the CCC and members of the National New Deal Preservation Association, who know and love the building called public attention to the threat and proposed that the building either be legislated as a CCC / WPA National Historic Site or proclaimed a national monument.

Space planners, suddenly aware that more was at stake than mere square footage, modified their plans so as to avoid harm to the building. Current

National Park Service managers, including the new Intermountain Regional Director, have returned to treating the building with proper respect. The issue has not gone away, however, and CNPSR, NNDPA, CCC Veterans, the New Mexico Heritage Preservation Alliance, and others continue to press for adding the building to the National Park System. Some are going beyond that: the Santa Fe City Council has adopted a resolution advocating re-establishment of the Southwest Region and Regional Office, and the New Mexico Legislature is currently considering a memorial to that effect.



The historic Old Santa Fe Trail building, which once housed the Southwest Regional Office, has retained its historic integrity through the efforts of CNPSR and other organizations.

Special thanks to newsletter contributors:

Anne Castellina, Gary Cummins, Jerry Rogers, Molly Ross, Rick Smith, Bill Wade
Cheryl Houghtelin, Administrator

Executive Council Authorizes Formation of Advisory Committee

There are a lot of parks and there are a lot of real and potential issues on which CNPSR may become involved at various levels. Some of these issues will be familiar to many of you and many will be complex. In light of this the CNPSR Executive Council thought it wise to retain the wisdom and experience of a small group that will be able to provide the EC with information and counsel on specific issues that can help CNPSR leadership choose rational and principled courses of action. This was formalized during the December Executive Council meetings in Tucson with the creation of the CNPSR Executive Council Advisory Committee.

Rick Smith took up the task of contacting potential members of the new committee and as of December 23 he had the roster completed. The charter members of the CNPSR Advisory Committee are:

- Phil Brueck
- Don Castleberry
- Abby Miller
- Jerry Rogers

The Advisory Committee will be of enormous assistance to the CNPSR leadership in what may prove to be interesting and trying times for the National Park Service.

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 www.npsretirees.org and click on bill_wade@npsretirees.org or send a note to Bill (see address on back of newsletter).

Over One Thousand by May!

"Size can make a difference." Sorry to begin with what has become a pretty tired cliché, but it is apropos to this piece. The Coalition membership currently stands at about 775. Not bad, but when Rick, or Bill, or Maureen, Molly, or anyone representing the Coalition meets with a member of Congress, a Congressional staffer, a public interest organization representative, or anyone who is prepared to weigh in on matters of concern to the National Park Service, it helps if they can state that they represent "over a thousand retired employees of the National Park Service." That is the primary reason for kicking off a drive to increase membership with this newsletter release.

Over the next three months please take it upon yourself to contact at least three retired NPS careerists – regardless of the job they retired in – and urge them to become members of the Coalition. Ideally you should try to make the contact as personal as possible. A face-to-face conversation would be ideal but because of our far-flung membership a telephone call might be the best choice. An email can work but it's easy for the recipient to put off a decision to join. Nothing works better than a direct connection.

Be prepared for some push back. As you know, retirees can be pretty protective of their free time, not to mention their finances. Right up front you should point out that the level of their involvement is up to them. They can spend as many or as few hours of their time on Coalition activities. They will not be badgered about devoting their time and energies because just like the Armed Forces, CNPSR has found that a volunteer force is more time and cost-effective than a larger group of draftees.

The same goes with finances. They may be asked, but not badgered, about donations (which are tax-deductible), but they will not pay annual dues because at this time as in past years, there are none.

Finally, remind them of the many years they put in on behalf of America's national parks and how the current political and economic climate threatens to undermine the good work they did over their careers. By lending their weight to the Coalition of National Park Service Employees, they are taking an important step to preserve the nation's legacy as well as their own. While you're on a roll, give them the address of our great website: www.npsretirees.org where they can easily find more information, including how to sign up. Direct appeals for membership do work. In just a few days, Bill Wade made several such contacts and as of February 12 had added 25 new members!

Over 1,000 by May! A final note: for those you can't get to commit, contact Executive Council member Gary Cummins at casacummins@yahoo.com with the reasons (not their names) they gave for not joining. This feedback can help us be more effective at reaching out to our colleagues in the future.

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 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.)



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Return Service Requested