



A Letter from the Chair

The Coalition of National Park Service Retirees (CNPSR) has been in existence for nearly 10 years. Much of our focus during this time frame has been on advocating and speaking out for parks. We have worked on numerous issues, and had some notable successes (NPS Management Policies, snowmobiles in Yellowstone, biking in Colorado National Monument). Yet, as we looked at the organization's governance and sustainability over the next 10 to 15 years, it became apparent to us that we needed to examine who we were and where we had been, so that we could best determine where we should go.

To address these issues, the Executive Council at our 2010 annual meeting formed a work group. Over the course of several months, and after preparing and reviewing many draft documents, we decided to seek some outside help. The Kennedy School of Government at Harvard was engaged and as part of a 6 month process, conducted a member survey. Oral interviews were also conducted with over 30 non-members from various disciplines – both friends and foes.

An overwhelming majority of those surveyed or interviewed believed that the Coalition should continue to be the “voices of experience” defending and protecting the National Park System. But, there also appeared to be strong interest in promoting parks and educating the nation about their importance to our history, health, well being and quality of life. There was also a sense that we needed to establish a more consistent and ongoing relationship with the National Park Service, and to explore areas of common interest where we could work together.

As a result of all this, the Executive Council agreed to pursue 3 major goals for the upcoming year and the foreseeable future. The first is to continue to work on issues that impact the National Park System, but to focus on those that have national impact or are precedent setting. The second goal is to support the Director's “Call to Action” and to explore areas where the Coalition's expertise might be especially helpful. And, the third goal is to pursue the idea of the establishment of a Centennial Institute, which could explore the history and mission of the System and Service, address issues that will be challenging to park professionals now and in the future, and emphasize the importance of parks and protected areas to the overall quality of life. Working groups have been established for each of these goals. The Council would like to draw more of you, our membership, into the work that will be done under each of these. Please do not hesitate to contact the Chairs or any member of the Executive Council with your ideas, questions, and contributions.

The Executive Council will continue our communications efforts. We will converse with our members and external constituencies through posting on the CNPSR website, direct e-mail notifications, and other methods as appropriate. When the CNPSR Executive Council makes a decision to publicly take positions on issues, the CNPSR will also communicate directly with the news media in various ways.

The hard work that the Executive Council undertook during the last year to examine the sustainability and future of the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees spotlighted an essential truth: **our sustainability and effectiveness depends on our membership – our current members' support and involvement, and our ability – through the efforts of all our members – to attract new members especially among the recent (but also, the not-so-recent) retirees.**

The new Executive Council seeks to support our colleagues in the National Park Service wherever possible. We reaffirm the CNPSR mission to study, educate, speak and act for preservation and protection of America's National Park System and the mission-related programs of the National Park Service

Maureen Finnerty
Chair, Executive Council



EC MEMBERS
Maureen Finnerty, Chair
Molly Ross, Vice Chair
Joan Anzelmo (not pictured)
Anne Castellina
Gary Cummins
Don Field
Doug Morris
Cherry Payne
JT Reynolds
Rick Smith
Bill Wade

Call to Action

One of the three major focus areas that the Coalition will engage in beginning in 2012 is the “Call to Action”, a visionary report released by the National Park Service on August 25, 2011. The plan, with four themes (Connecting People to Parks, Advancing the Education Mission, Preserving America’s Special Places, and Enhancing Professional Organizational Excellence) is a 36-point action plan for National Park Service employees and partners. The plan seeks to advance the Service towards a shared vision for 2016 and the NPS’ second century. (For more information, go to www.nps.gov/calltoaction).

Objectives include an NPS that will more fully engage an increasingly diverse American people, and ensure that the System is representative of significant achievements by all cultures and ethnicities of this nation. It calls for the use of the most modern and relevant policies and technologies so that parks will serve as cornerstones to protect broader natural and cultural landscapes. Development of a more adaptable, innovative, collaborative and safe workforce is another goal.



The Call to Action depends upon not only agency actions, but those of partners as well. It is also designed to be “revenue-neutral” so that an already-stretched agency budget will not be further compromised. Representatives of CNPSR attended a partnership “Summit” in January to find ways in which the Coalition might support implementation efforts through advocacy, the activities of individual members, and public relations. Please see the article on “America’s Summit on the National Parks” in this Newsletter and check the CNPSR website regularly to see opportunities for you to support this forward-thinking plan. We look forward to delivering unprecedented grass-roots support from NPS alumni.

Co-Chairs: Anne Castellina, Cherry Payne, and J.T. Reynolds

2012 Annual Operations Plan Highlights

The Executive Council of the Coalition of National Park Retirees proposes to accomplish the following during the 2012 calendar year. These actions are consistent with the Goals and Objectives of CNPSR articulated in the current Strategic Plan for the organization. Taken all together they form the Annual Operations Plan. Many of the key priorities listed below are further explained elsewhere in the annual Newsletter and on the CNPSR website.

- We will focus on the following key priorities established at the December, 2011 Executive Council Meeting: establishment of a Centennial Institute; support for the NPS “Call to Action; identification and appropriate action on issues of national significance; maintenance and improvement of public information and external communications; focus on membership/recruitment/internal communications
- We will review the role and function of the Advisory Committee
- We will continue to work with the Association of National Park Rangers and the National Park Service, as appropriate, to establish a Centennial Oral History project documenting the stories that NPS employees and retirees have to tell
- We will continue working with NPS, parks, and regions regarding areas in which the Coalition can assist employees in the accomplishment of the NPS mission
- We will continue developing a congressional strategy
- We will consider the question of whether CNPSR should establish a lobbying arm
- We will pursue appropriate leads for fundraising for CNPSR
- We will continue our role, as appropriate, in the NPCA Leadership Consortium, and will explore opportunities to cooperate and coordinate with other organizations on issues of common interest
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2011 Coalition Accomplishments

It is the custom of the Coalition to publish its accomplishments every year so that members can know what was done on their behalf. This year, we decided to summarize our accomplishments under the strategic goals of CNPSR. A more detailed list is on the CNPSR website. The greatest amount of work last year falls under our first goal. This is consistent with the survey completed for the Harvard Kennedy School of Government: 90% of respondents said that advocacy was the most important goal of the Coalition. Thanks to all of you who participated in the survey.



1. *Protect and defend the units of the National Park System and the mission of the National Park Service.* The Coalition responded to 14 issues under this goal in 2011 including the PORE Oyster issue, YELL winter use, the COLM bicycle race, GRCA uranium/mining, BICY ORV, and the EVER proposed land exchange. Responses ranged from testimony at hearings to letters and comments on various EA's and EIS's.
2. *Instill public understanding and appreciation of the origins, purpose, and ideals of the National Park System and the National Park Service.* Coalition members maintained and managed the list serve that publishes daily news articles dealing with the NPS and related conservation issues. Interviews were begun for Stanford University training videos and a list of interviews prepared for the Centennial Oral History Project. A letter on temporary appointments was sent to OPM asking for guidance on interpretation governing the reappointment of term employees.
3. *Initiate or engage in activities that will contribute to, or educate others about, the significant role of the National Park System in a healthy planet and a vigorous American society.* A Congressional strategy was drafted in 2011. EC and CNPSR members continued to share their knowledge, skills, and abilities with conservation officials in other countries. The 2011 Hartzog and 1872 CNPSR awards were selected from nominations submitted by the membership. (See article elsewhere in this Newsletter)
4. *Develop alliances and engage in collaboration in support of the National Park System and National Park Service.* CNPSR members continued to actively engage with NPS in training events such as the IMR Goal Academy, Leadership Consortium, and the Fundamentals II and V courses. Youth activities continued and expanded at five different NPS areas. CNPSR members continued to collaborate with partners by lending support for Valles Caldera, Old Santa Fe Trail Building, Blackstone Valley River NHP proposal, and for the "Restore Hetch-Hetchy" initiative.
5. *Sustain CNPSR as an organization capable of achieving its vision, mission and strategic goals.* In 2011 the EC worked with the Kennedy School of Government to better organize and direct the organization into the future. A plan was developed for moving forward by focusing on nationally significant issues, the Park Service's Call to Action, and the conceptualization of the Centennial Institute.

Centennial Institute

In conjunction with the Hartzog family, CNPSR hoped to realize its vision for a Centennial Institute through the Hartzog Institute at Clemson University. When those plans failed to materialize this past year, and the Hartzog family removed their name from the Institute, the Coalition decided to regroup and develop this concept independently. A Committee has been formed to outline the vision, mission and operational strategy of such an Institute. The development of a Centennial Institute would be very consistent with the strategic goals of the Coalition. Over the coming months, a scope of work will be prepared, more thoroughly detailing how such an Institute might be structured and how it will function.

Co-Chairs: Maureen Finnerty and Don Field

2011 CNPSR Awards

The George Hartzog Award is given to the individual or individuals who demonstrate outstanding support for the mission of the National Park Service. Recipients can be active NPS employees, NPS retirees, or members of the general public.

Vince Santucci, Senior NPS Geologist, Geologic Resources Division, Washington, DC, is the 2011 recipient of the Hartzog Award. Since 1991 Vince has worked diligently and tirelessly to ensure that fossil resources throughout the national park system are protected for the American people while being made available for research by qualified scientists. His efforts have allowed the National Park Service to help visitors form a greater understanding of the processes that have shaped the Earth we know today and how those processes continue to alter and affect our planet.

The 1872 Award is given to the individual or individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the Coalition. The nominations for this award come from members of the Executive Council.

Mike Finley, NPS retired, is the 2011 recipient of the 1872 Award. Since 2003 Mike has provided CNPSR consistent guidance, counsel and advice on strategy and specific issues of concern. He has also been a key person in establishing avenues of contact to grant and funding sources that have enabled CNPSR to carry out its mission.

Margaret Anderson Memorial Service

On January 1, 2012, Park Ranger Margaret Anderson was shot and killed by a lone and heavily armed gunman as she attempted to block his access to a snow play area near Paradise in Mount Rainier National Park. On January 10 a memorial service was held for her at Pacific Lutheran University in Seattle. Executive Council member Gary Cummins, accompanied by his wife Diana, represented CNPSR at the service.

The Margaret Anderson service was attended by thousands of people including Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, Washington Governor Christine Gregoire, U.S. Senator Patty Murray, NPS Director Jon Jarvis, Deputy Director Peggy O'Dell, and hundreds of representatives of law enforcement and emergency services organizations from across the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia including a detachment of Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The service was somber, emotional, and inspiring. Margaret's father, Secretary Salazar, and Director spoke of her strong faith, commitment, and dedication and hailed her as a hero who, in Jarvis' words, was a hero, "not because she died, but because of why she died. To keep visitors safe."

The 34 year-old Anderson leaves behind her husband Eric, also a ranger at Mount Rainier National Park, and two daughters ages 3 and 1. The National Park Foundation has established a memorial fund in honor of Margaret Anderson. Information on the fund is available at www.nationalparks.org/MargaretAnderson.



CNPSR Membership

Last year, we encouraged our members to contact at least 3 persons whom they knew had retired and ask them to join CNPSR. CNPSR can benefit from increased numbers and particularly from the experience and expertise brought to the organization. The new membership numbers show that we made progress through these efforts; in 2011, membership rose 9.4% to 811. Making personal contacts to encourage retired NPS folks to join us is the most effective recruiting tool we have.

To reach our 1,000 membership goal the EC is again calling all CNPSR members to reach out to former colleagues and ask them to join. When you contact a prospective member tell him or her how much their membership means to us and assure them they will not be subjected to unwanted solicitations. We continue to resist charging dues. However, we rely heavily on member's generosity through donations. We also are exploring the concept of a planned giving program to take advantage of the fundraising that comes from this kind of program.

Direct potential members to our website, www.npsretirees.org. Have them find the "Contact/join us" button which will direct them to the registration. It's as easy as that! By making a few calls in the next few months you can help CNPSR grow in numbers and influence as we get closer to the NPS Centennial in 2016.

Co-Chairs: Gary Cummins, JT Reynolds

America's Summit on National Parks, January 24-26, 2012

Coming together to build momentum and support for the National Park Service and System in anticipation of the 2016 Centennial, the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), the National Park Foundation (NPF), and the National Park Hospitality Association (NPHA) hosted a gathering of about 400 to start filling in an agenda inspired by Director Jarvis's Call to Action. Coalition officials Molly Ross, J.T. Reynolds, and Jerry Reynolds attended the event, and the Coalition is planning to stay involved in the critical follow-up.

The Summit sponsors believe that collaboration among park supporters is necessary to take the fullest advantage of the opportunities provided by the 2016 Centennial. Just as Stephen Mather and Horace Albright realized that public support was needed for the establishment and funding of the new National Park Service and System in 1916, private and public support of various kinds is again needed to sustain, protect, and restore the National Park System and NPS Programs into this next century.

Despite the relatively few months of planning for the event, the Summit seemed successful in attracting interested, influential, and diverse participants and presenters from the political, academic, non-profit, outdoor recreation, tourism, and other park-supporting communities. The remaining question is how good will the follow-up be? Participants are already reviewing a "Statement of Joint Principles," drafted to communicate pervasive and nonpartisan support for parks and NPS programs and to establish common ground for park supporters. An action plan is expected. CNPSR members might want to bookmark www.2016parksummit.org to learn more about the important themes discussed at the Summit and to keep abreast of developments.

Issues Work Group

The Issues Work Group identifies the issues on which CNPSR might want to become involved. Relying on the eyes and ears of all CNPSR members, this work group monitors significant developments with the potential to affect the resources and values of the National Park System or the Service's mission-related programs. Whether positive or negative, a development in Congress, the agency, the private sector, or elsewhere may warrant CNPSR engagement. But because CNPSR wants to focus its energies on the most important issues, it has developed guiding principles. Thus, CNPSR will prioritize issues determined to be inconsistent with NPS mission, law or policy. And CNPSR will focus further on issues that have broad implications or set precedents for parks. CNPSR will also prefer issues that raise public awareness of parks or the threats to them. CNPSR will not usually become involved in personnel issues, and will remain non-partisan in its actions. Finally, CNPSR aims to be supportive of its NPS colleagues to the fullest extent possible.

Examples of issues in which CNPSR has been involved in past years include the rewriting of the 2006 Management Policies, the revision of the firearms rules for the National Park System, and the (ongoing) planning for winter use in Yellowstone National Park. CNPSR is currently tracking the progress of HR 1505, a bill that would suspend nearly all the nation's environmental laws within 100 miles of the Canadian and Mexican borders in the name of homeland security, and HR 2834, a bill that would open some National Park Service areas to hunting and recreational shooting. These examples are just a few of the issues that grab our attention and elicit our comment. We are always open to learn about additional issues that might call for comment—pro or con—from CNPSR.

Co-Chairs: Rick Smith and Molly Ross



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).

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

Name _____

Address _____

Donation amount (check enclosed) _____

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Email address if we don't have it _____

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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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