



The Coalition Of  
National Park Service Retirees

# THE COALITION OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RETIREES

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## 2014 ANNUAL REPORT: CHAIR'S REPORT



**MAUREEN FINNERTY**  
CHAIR, CNPSR

This was a busy year for the Coalition. We passed the 1,000-member threshold, and our membership at year's end was 1,047. As you can see from the following articles, we were engaged in many issues, and much was accomplished.

The Coalition also launched an aggressive fundraising campaign, and

we are delighted that our member donations topped \$30,000, a 50 percent increase over 2013! We are extremely grateful to all of you who contributed. We will continue our fundraising efforts in the coming year. A small administrative budget and staff would greatly enhance our efforts and increase our effectiveness.

At our December Executive Council Meeting, the board agreed to investigate a name change for the organization. The Coalition of National Park Service Retirees (CNPSR) has served us well for a decade, but the name does not adequately describe who we are or what we do.

Our bylaws define membership as being open *"to anyone who held a salaried position with the National Park Service at any time and who subscribes to and supports the purposes and objectives of the organization."*

This definition says nothing about being "retired" from the NPS. Our name, on the other hand, clearly sends the message that you need to be "retired" from the NPS to be a member. This limits our ability to recruit and shrinks the potential recruitment pool. Furthermore, the name "Retirees" has had a negative impact on some potential funders and limits the perception of our organization's advocacy role. As a result of our Executive Council discussion, a small work group was formed to explore a name change. Options are being discussed and will be rolled out this spring.

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*This coming year we will also initiate more regular communications with all members. We will do this on a monthly basis, highlighting the important work being done on issues, communication, membership, networking, and education.*

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As is customary each December, we say goodbye to some board members and welcome new ones. Special thanks to Joan Anzelmo, Don Field, and Cherry Payne who contributed significantly during their time on the board. And, we welcome new members David Barna, Brenda Barrett, and Maria Burks. We look forward to an exciting and productive 2015.



## ISSUES COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2014

Committee Activities: On behalf of CNPSR, the committee analyzed a variety of issues; communicated and coordinated with concerned CNPSR members, other advocacy groups, and/or NPS personnel about those issues; and on selected issues, prepared and submitted written comments or reviewed collaborative action (comments, court briefs, etc.) proposed by other groups to determine if CNPSR should participate in that action. The committee acted on the following issues in 2014:

- Commented on both public scoping and on preliminary alternatives for the Moose-Wilson Corridor Comprehensive Management Plan at Grand Teton National Park
- Commented on Glen Canyon NRA Off-Road Vehicle Management Plan/DEIS
- Cosigned letter with 50 other groups opposing H.R. 1459, a bill that would weaken the president's authority to designate national monuments under the Antiquities Act



- Cosigned letter opposing H.R. 2954, the Public Access and Lands Improvement Act that combined multiple individual bills affecting various units of the National Park System. The bill included provisions that would set aside the Cape Hatteras National Seashore 2012 ORV management plan, prohibit

enforcement of the special regulation related to the plan, invalidate a 2008 U.S. District Court consent decree, and reinstate ORV management under the Seashore's previously discredited 2007 interim plan. The bill would also open all rivers and lakes in Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks to paddling and invalidate existing special regulations limiting paddling to select rivers and lakes in the two parks

- Commented on proposed legislation to change the designation of Colorado NM to a national park
- Commented on Everglades NP DEIS proposing Acquisition of East Everglades Power Company land to add to Everglades NP
- Commented on U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Waters of the U.S. Proposed Rule
- Commented to secretary regarding proposed BLM oil and gas leasing near units of the National Park System
- Cosigned amicus brief opposing Drake's Bay Oyster Company's (DBOC) most recent (and final) request for the U.S. District Court to enjoin the Secretary of the Interior's previously upheld decision to allow DBOC's authorization to operate a commercial oyster facility on Drake's Estero in Point Reyes NS to expire on its own terms
- Commented on OPM Proposed Rule on Health Care Benefits for Temporary and Seasonal Employees
- Cosigned letter from National Parks Second Century Action Coalition advocating to Appropriations Committee leadership for an increased budget allocation for the NPS as it prepares to serve park visitors for the next 100 years
- Commented on Big Bend NP Environmental Assessment for Multi-Use Trail at Panther Junction
- Commented on the NPS Proposed Rule for Sport Hunting and Trapping on National Preserves in Alaska and on the related Environmental Assessment on Wildlife Harvest on National Preserves in Alaska
- Commented on Little Bighorn Battlefield NM General Management Plan Amendment scoping newsletter



## CNPSR COMMUNICATIONS 2014 HIGHLIGHTS

The year 2014 proved to be very active in communicating to our members, diverse news media, and the public regarding issues of importance to our organization.

We began 2014 with national statements and national news releases regarding the NPS 2015 FY Budget and our appeal that there should not be across-the-board cuts in the coming years as required by sequestrations. This followed our very successful leading of the national dialogue about the economic impacts to communities and states when parks were forced to close in October 2013 when Congress did not pass a budget and shutdown the federal government. The 2014 budget statements followed our vocal advocacy for national park funding.

In March, we were the leading voice asking Congress not to gut the Antiquities Act through measures underway in the House.

Throughout the year, CNPSR issued various eblasts to our members to apprise you of issues that we are engaged with or to communicate other important messages.

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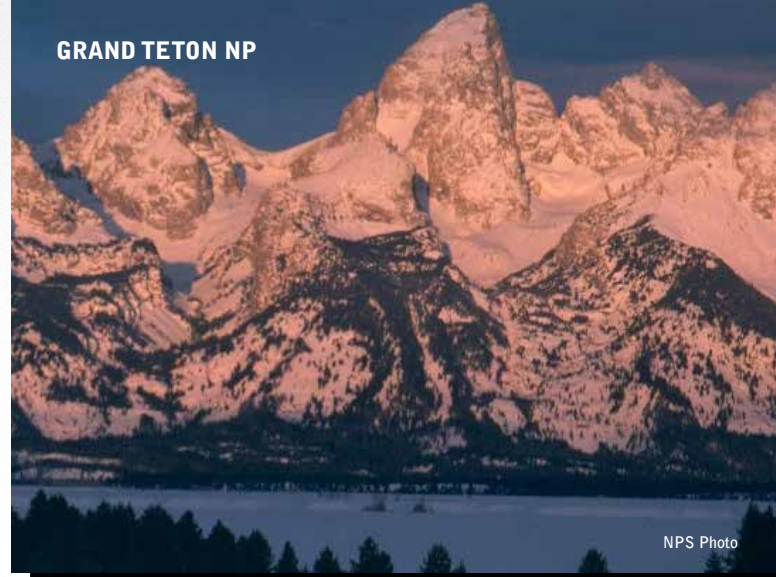
**We are working hard to keep you informed about our activities! While hard to quantify precisely, our collective outreach efforts through the news media stories, website, and digital platform outreach, and eblasts to members reached many thousands of people and raised the public profile of CNPSR.**

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Our contract webmaster and digital communications expert, Steve Pittleman, continues to refine and improve many elements of our website and has posted lots of information there. He also selectively posted to Facebook and Twitter on key topics.

In addition to the news releases issued, Joan fielded dozens of individual news media calls and email questions on a variety of topics. Not all were issues CNPSR was taking positions on. However, the national news media continue to look to the CNPSR as a valuable source of information.

GRAND TETON NP



## CONGRESSIONAL STRATEGY

The purpose of the Congressional Outreach and Advocacy Committee has been to use constituent CNPSR members to connect with their Congressional delegations. Objectives are to introduce the Coalition to Congressional members and to let delegation staffs know that the organization can provide insights on issues or proposed legislation independent of any political interests. That is, the Coalition can look at an issue from the perspective of what is best for the national parks and the system.

With the help of Coalition member Jim Pepper, key members of various Congressional committees were identified. Then, using the Coalition membership database of addresses, member-constituents of the targeted House or Senate members were identified. Twenty-two Coalition members were approached, and seven responded positively.

Meetings were held with three House member staffs and three Senate member staffs in their home states. Staff members indicated that they were unaware of the Coalition, but appreciated knowing that the organization existed and the potential for insight from the organization on park-related issues within their districts.

While the Coalition does not have the ability to reach out to House and Senate members in large numbers, using member-constituents sends a powerful message to those who are able to influence the NPS and the parks so profoundly.

Coalition members who wish to participate in this effort can contact Jim Hammett at [jhammet@ortelco.net](mailto:jhammet@ortelco.net), who is the committee chair for 2015.



# MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2014

## Highlights

As of December 31, 2014, CNPSR had 1,047 members, an increase of 135 members in the past 12 months (i.e., since December 1, 2013). In June, Gary Cummings rotated off the committee after serving as its chair for the past several years. Gary's efforts were instrumental in helping CNPSR achieve and surpass its longstanding goal of 1,000 members.

In March, CNPSR Webmaster Steve Pittleman took over managing the CNPSR membership database, which has resulted in much improved efficiency and tracking of our membership information.

In May, CNPSR rolled out its new "Affiliate" category, which includes anyone who wants to support the Coalition but does not qualify as a "member."

We continue to recruit new members as we recognize the opportunity to grow our organization. To that end, we have taken the following steps:

- Between January 1 and December 1, 2014, the Membership Committee contacted 431 retirees and pending retirees inviting them to join CNPSR, including contacting all employees whose pending retirements were announced in the NPS *The Morning Report*. There are many retirements that do not get announced in *The Morning Report*, and as a result, this effort misses an unknown number of new retirees.
- In April or May, the NPS retirement office began issuing CNPSR information (a "rack card" provided by CNPSR) with the retirement information provided to all pending NPS retirees.
- In May, former DSC managers John Reynolds and Cal Cooper sent a letter to a mailing list of over 100 retired Denver-area NPS employees encouraging them to join CNPSR. Over 20 of the people contacted joined CNPSR.
- These efforts combined resulted in an average of about 10 new members per month.
- Personal contacts continue to be the most effective means of recruiting new members.

Now that we have exceeded 1,000 members, it is time to establish a new membership goal. Some EC members have suggested 2,000 members as the next goal!

## PARK INSTITUTE OF AMERICA

### *Bringing the best ideas to our best places*

During 2014, the Coalition continued to work on the Park Institute of America (yes, the name has been changed again, hopefully for the last time). A blueprint for the Institute has been completed and a three-year financial plan prepared. Efforts are underway to find a home for the Institute and to recruit individuals for the Board of Directors. A university location is desired, and feelers are out to several schools to assess their interest in hosting the Institute. It is hoped to recruit a diverse board comprised of leaders from the fields of conservation, academia, business, communications, social media, and philanthropy. Once a location is secured and several board members recruited, fundraising will commence. For further information, contact Maureen\_Finnerty@npsretirees.org

## ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORT – OUTREACH INITIATIVES

### Hispanic Access Foundation

CNPSR has solidified its partnership with the Hispanic Access Foundation (HAF) through the signing of a "Partnership Work Plan." The Work Plan outlines partner commitments towards our common goal of increasing awareness within the Hispanic community about the NPS and the role national parks play in sustaining healthy environments. Presently, HAF community outreach efforts have been concentrated in the Southwest. Notifications have been made to the deputy directors for the Pacific West and Intermountain regions about our partnership and of the potential to conduct outreach program outings within their regions. NPS response to this initiative has been positive. Currently, use of Coalition members to serve as park guides at HAF outings has not been necessary due to strong participation by NPS active-duty employees.



## NPS Emeritus Program

CNPSR has proposed a strategy to expand on the NPS “Emeritus Volunteer Program” to include opportunities for retirees to serve as “Emeritus Mentor/Coach” and “Emeritus Special Competence Hires.” The expertise and institutional knowledge attained by retirees over the course of a career provide parks and central offices an opportunity to secure skilled help on a temporary and as-needed basis. An outline describing how each of these emeritus initiatives could function has been drafted by the Coalition and submitted to the NPS, Associate Director for Workforce, Relevancy and Inclusion.



The NPS formally launched the Emeritus Volunteer Initiative as a stand-alone program in 2014. Currently, the use of retirees as Emeritus Special Competence rehires is intermittent and not well known. The Emeritus Mentor/Coach Initiative, while not a new idea, is not formally recognized by the NPS. We hope to work with the NPS to strengthen, highlight, and simultaneously launch all three of the emeritus initiatives to the field and regional staff. The Coalition feels that when these three emeritus initiatives are embraced and jointly promoted they will provide valuable assistance to parks. The decision to act and fully embrace the emeritus initiatives currently rests with the leadership of the NPS.

- **Emeritus Volunteer** – Retirees can stay active and connected with the NPS by volunteering to serve park needs in interpretation, education, natural resources, cultural resources, and community-based outreach projects.
- **Emeritus Mentor/Coach** – Retirees can share their institutional knowledge, skills, and experience with active duty NPS employees.

- **Emeritus Special Competence Hires** – Retirees serve as rehired annuitants in positions they qualify for based on the expertise they acquired while working for the NPS. Positions would be temporary and based on urgent need.

## FUNDRAISING

The Coalition reviewed its fundraising practices and contacted numerous foundations to determine their interest in funding Coalition activities. Thanks to the generosity of the Turner Foundation, Katie Eckman (former CEO) reached out to numerous foundations and individuals who have donated to conservation efforts in the past to determine interest in funding our Coalition. We learned that most of these organizations are not currently funding protected lands, but are instead making efforts to protect unprotected and threatened lands. However, depending on how things shake out politically during 2015, this could change. We will keep abreast of this as the year progresses.

We received a \$10,000 gift from an individual who has funded many conservation initiatives and is a strong supporter of our national parks.

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Donations by Coalition members were approximately \$31,500—an increase of nearly \$10,000 when compared to the previous year. This is a record high level of donations from our members!

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A fundraising committee was established during the annual meeting that will be developing a new fundraising strategy for the new year.

## BUDGET

The Coalition’s budget remained steady with expenditures and income balancing each other. That said, we were unable to hire an executive director this year, and we did not have administrative support as we have enjoyed in the past. This limits the Coalition’s ability to accomplish many of its goals and become a stronger advocate for the parks.



## HARTZOG AWARD

This year we have two winners of the George Hartzog Award. Both are very deserving, and we congratulate and thank them for their service!

**Brian Winter** has been a lead for the Elwha River restoration in Olympic National Park since 1985. First working for the Elwha Tribe, then for the NPS, he has been the primary point person for all aspects of the removal of Elwha and Glines Canyon dams and associated restoration activities. He has worked tirelessly with all stakeholders, contractors, engineers, and biologists to continually move the project forward to completion. With a single blast of dynamite, the last concrete of Glines Canyon Dam was reduced to rubble in August 2014, and the largest dam removal project in the United States was completed. While many individuals had important roles in the success of this project, there is no individual more important to its success than Brian.

**William "Bill" Halainen** - Retired but still a part-time contractor for the NPS, Bill has been fully engaged in promoting and assisting the NPS well before his retirement. Before he retired, in addition to other duties, he was the editor of *The Morning Report*, doing so since the late 1980s and continuing into today. Through the years, he has acted as an editor for a number of NPS-related books and articles and, for 30 years, has been routinely called upon to provide information and

assistance to a great many offices and people within the NPS organization and family. These requests for assistance are made principally because they know that Bill has a broad knowledge of NPS history and organization. Additionally, Bill was on the ground floor of the International Ranger Federation, helping in a number of important, albeit sometimes subtle, ways in its organization and founding. Most of this assistance has been on his own time and was through his ability to reach out to many individuals with whom he had become a friend and acquaintance through his editing and writing for *The Morning Report*.

ELWHA RIVER RESTORATION  
OLYMPIC NP



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