

RANGER

The Journal of the Association of National Park Rangers

Stewards for parks, visitors & each other

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Learning & Development IN THE PARKS



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COVER:
 Ranger Murray Shoemaker is “rescued” during ice rescue training at Blue Mesa Reservoir in Curecanti National Recreation Area, Colorado.
 Photo by Connie Rudd

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In this issue:

This issue includes the last article in a series about National Park Service search and rescue history by *Ranger* columnist Kevin Moses. Moses based his series on several books about “SAR,” highlighting some of the most compelling incidents and rangers in NPS history. We extend our thanks to Moses and the authors he has cited in his articles for this series.

Rangers who specialize in search and rescue have extensive training and education — a good segue to the theme of this issue: Learning and development. NPS best practices continue to evolve with the times, and at the core of this evolution is learning and development.

In “Democratizing the process of setting NPS standards of excellence,” “The Learning and Performance Ecosystem” and “The Common Learning Portal,” readers learn about how the NPS is updating learning and development philosophies, tools and resources for the 21st century. Needless to say, learning and development is the foundational layer of an NPS career and an essential topic for our readers.

The three columns in The Professional Ranger section underscore the importance of the NPS mission and integrity amid change and uncertainty. Although every page in *Ranger* is about rangers, for rangers, this section of the magazine is always a must-read.

We are currently seeking columnists to write about protection and resource management for The Professional Ranger. As the 2016 readership survey found, 40 percent of *Ranger* readers work in interpretation and 40 percent work in law enforcement. While we’ve included more articles about interpretation in this and recent issues, we are still in need of voices from NPS law enforcement and also from resource and wildlife management to write for *Ranger*.

Please contact rangermag.editor@gmail.com if you have an interest in submitting articles to share with your fellow ANPR members.

Ann Dee Allen,
Ranger editor

RANGER

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Vol. 33, No. 2



Spring 2017

Ranger (ISSN 1074-0678) is a quarterly publication of the Association of National Park Rangers, an organization created to communicate for, about and with National Park Service employees of all disciplines; to promote and enhance the professions, spirit and mission of National Park Service employees; to support management and the perpetuation of the National Park Service and the National Park System; and to provide a forum for professional enrichment.

In meeting these purposes, the Association provides education and other training to develop and/or improve the knowledge and skills of park professionals and those interested in the stewardship of national parks; provides a forum for discussion of common concerns of all employees; and provides information to the public.

The membership of ANPR is comprised of individuals who are entrusted with and committed to the care, study, explanation and/or protection of those natural, cultural and recreational resources included in the National Park System, and persons who support these efforts.

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FINAL DEADLINES

Spring issue	Jan. 31
Summer issue	April 30
Fall issue	July 31
Winter issue	Nov. 15



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Become a
mentor

Greetings rangers and rangers at heart

Well, we are starting to get into the busy season with seasonal hiring in full swing. Parks are packed with spring break visitors and many of us are planning to bring new seasonals on board.

This issue of *Ranger* is about learning and development. I encourage all of you to complete your individual development plans and put some thought into where you want to be in three, five or 10 years.

Even if you don't work in the National Park Service, think about where you're heading. Think about what steps you need to take to get there, what training you need, what networking needs to be done. You might not get everything completed but at least you have a plan. Plans can change or be scrapped but having a plan is a good thing.

You have already made one step forward in your career by joining the Association of National Park Rangers. It is a great place to network, meet other rangers and supervisors and gain some insight and wisdom from others' experiences.

Find a mentor, be a mentor

I highly recommend joining the ANPR mentoring program. Everyone can gain a wealth of knowledge from mentors and learn things they would never learn in a classroom. Formally or informally, you can mentor new park staff no matter your position.

Retirees make excellent mentors! Their institutional knowledge can and should be passed down to the next generation of park stewards.

I have been fortunate in my career to have some wonderful mentors at all

levels, from the time I was a young seasonal just starting out, to being a chief ranger learning from more experienced chiefs and superintendents. Mentoring is a wonderful thing.

Don't forget to take advantage of the ever-growing online NPS trainings. Many sessions are free and you can learn a lot.

Branch out from your specialty and learn about other divisions or work groups. You never know what new experience, training or networking will help lead you to your next great position.

In these ever-changing times, I encourage you all to help each other out. Network, train each other, seek out new opportunities. ANPR is here to assist you in the journey.

Please contact me if I can be of any assistance to you!

Ranger on!!

Jan Lemons
President, ANPR



An instructors skills workshop for operational leadership at the Stephen T. Mather Training Center in West Virginia. Photo by Demica Vigil

a century of

SAR V



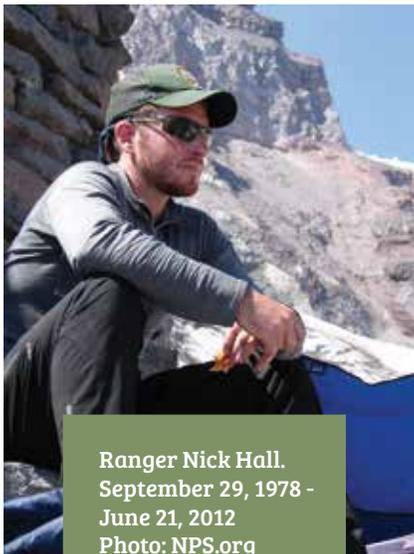
search & rescue



The 2000s By Kevin Moses, Shenandoah

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This article is the fifth in a series of articles to appear in *Ranger* magazine about the legacy of U.S. National Park Service search and rescue personnel and events. The articles highlight some of the more significant events and milestones of NPS search and rescue (SAR) over the course of the last century.



Ranger Nick Hall.
September 29, 1978 -
June 21, 2012
Photo: NPS.org

At the beginning of the 21st century, search and rescue in the National Park Service was marked by the incomplete resolution of a five-year-old mystery: The July 2001 discovery of human bones, remnants of an NPS uniform and backcountry gear belonging to ranger Randy Morgenson. The items were strewn about in a steep mountain creek near Window Peak Lake, and though finding them offered some closure, many questions about the demise of this veteran backcountry traveler remained.

Morgenson left an indelible mark on Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. His name is etched in marble on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C., alongside the names of thousands of other officers who died in the line of duty.

Just a few months later in 2001, the American concept of the incident command system was put to the ultimate challenge on 9/11. In the aftermath of that day's unprecedented, horrific terrorist attacks, the coordination of law enforcement, emergency medical, firefighting, public health, military and of course, search and rescue resources, was tested. NPS personnel were among them.

Rick Brown's incident management team went to work planning a response framework to protect parks in the Northeast Region. "There was an immediate operational component to the incident to assist the parks and park personnel in New York near 'Ground Zero,'" he writes in *Ranger Up!* "The park personnel at those sites had been involved in the initial response to the attack or were traumatized by the attack in a number of ways; they needed outside help."

Five months after the 9/11 attacks, the world's largest sporting event was successfully, and peacefully, held on U.S. soil: the 2002 Olympic Winter Games. Once again, the collective SAR talent of the NPS was tapped, and 100 lucky rangers who could ski, operate snowmobiles, and possessed winter SAR and survival savvy were selected to serve at the Salt Lake City games. One of them was Greg Moss.

In his autobiography, *National Park Ranger, a.k.a., "Bleeding Green & Grey,"* Moss, whose 32 years of rangership kept him moving from Alaska to the Virgin Islands, called the Games the highlight of his career. He sums it up this way: "So here I was employed as a National Park Ranger, working as a Deputy U.S. Marshall, for the United States Secret Service, and getting to ski every day for free."

From red rocks to great lakes

A new drama gripped the world in April 2003. In a highly remote BLM area just outside Canyonlands National Park is the even more remote Bluejohn Canyon. In this spot Aron Ralston's arm was pinned by an 800-pound chockstone, causing him to endure over five days of hunger, thirst, pain and anguish before he cut off his arm and conducted one of the most stunning self-rescues to date.

By now, many folks have read about Ralston's saga in *Between A Rock and A Hard Place*, but NPS rangers first learned about it in the NPS *Morning Report*. As Steve Swanke wrote, "Ralston realized that his survival required drastic action, so he amputated his arm below the elbow utilizing his pocketknife. He then applied a tourniquet and administered first aid, rigged anchors and fixed a rope to rappel to the floor of Bluejohn Canyon. Ralston was found by a Utah Public Safety helicopter...

and transported to Allen Memorial Hospital in Moab.” In 2010, Hollywood made a movie out of Ralston’s ordeal titled *127 Hours*.

The same month Canyonlands rangers were searching for Ralston, another ranger received his first NPS job offer from a remote park in Lake Superior. So began a decade of adventure for Clif Edwards, who penned his recollections of SAR missions in *Paths Crossed: Protecting National Parks*. In this entertaining read, Edwards reminisces about land and marine rescues at Isle Royale and Everglades national parks and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore from 2003 to 2013.

The ultimate sacrifice



Edwards’ book has a special place in the hearts of many rangers, including myself, because it honors rangers Kris Eggle, murdered in the line of duty at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument in August 2002, and Margaret Anderson, murdered in the line of duty at Mount Rainier National Park in January 2012. I knew both of these fine rangers. Without question, NPS SAR is a band of brothers and sisters.

During the time between Eggle’s and Anderson’s deaths, the NPS lost Rocky Mountain national park ranger Jeffrey A. Christensen, who left for a foot patrol in Colorado’s Mummy Range on July 29, 2005. That evening and the next morning he failed to answer radio status checks. A massive weeklong search ended when they located his body — another blow to the NPS and SAR.

In 2003, the NPS Ranger Honor Guard was founded to honor those officers who pay the ultimate sacrifice while in service to their country. Their motto: “When One of Us Falls, We All Stand.” The Honor Guard was in Washington, D.C., when the names of rangers Eggle, Anderson and Christensen were inscribed on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial alongside Morgenson’s. Nearby are the words: “*It is not how these officers died that made them heroes, it is how they lived.*”

On a lighter note, the Midwest Region of the NPS welcomed its first formal SAR team at Buffalo National River. The team was inspired by and founded in the spirit of legendary teams at Yosemite and Joshua Tree. The team, comprised of paid NPS



Top: Aron Ralston was injured in Bluejohn Canyon in southeastern Utah. Map: U.S. Bureau of Land Management

Left: Mount Rainier National Park ranger Margaret Anderson was fatally shot in the line of duty on January 1, 2012. Photo: NPS.gov

staff and volunteers who included a mechanic, tree farmer, pastor, roofer, garage door technician, volunteer firefighters, paramedics and tattoo artist, specializes in high-angle, cave and swiftwater rescue.

In 2016, the Buffalo River team was honored with the Department of Interior’s Exemplary Service Award for saving a climber in November 2014. The climber was stranded on a ledge with a broken back on the 209-foot headwall of Hemmed-In-Hollow Falls in the Ponca Wilderness.

A few years later, the Midwest Region got another formal SAR team: The Hellbenders in Missouri’s Ozark Scenic Riverways. Other positive changes were on the way in the 2000s, too, including Position Task Books for SAR jobs, a National SAR Leadership Steering Committee, thorough updates to RM-59, the Service’s Reference Manual governing SAR, and the development of a new SAR school in Arizona and California called the National Search and Rescue Academy, or NSARA.

Seven years after Christensen’s death, and only six heartbreaking months after Anderson’s murder, the NPS lost yet another employee to SAR. Astonishingly, the

tragedy occurred in the same park where Anderson was killed: Mount Rainier. In June 2012, Nick Hall was conducting a rescue operation of four injured climbers. He was unhooking a litter from beneath a hovering helicopter when he slipped and fell more than 2,400 feet down the Emmons-Winthrop Glacier.

Hall’s untimely death meant another engagement for a Critical Incident Stress Management Team and another callout for the NPS Ranger Honor Guard. The following year, the NPS Basic Technical Rescue Training—East course dedicated their week of training to Hall’s memory.

A shot in the sand



After the losses of 2012, we needed positive news. Though heroic rescues occurred in many places, an amazing shot in the arm came in July 2013 from an unexpected place: Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. A boy had become trapped under 11 feet of sand and, as the hours ticked by, many rescuers thought they were working a recovery.

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Six-year-old Nathan Woessner was climbing the park's large dune mass on Mount Baldy when he fell into a foot-wide hole. His father made voice contact with his terrified son but the sand collapsed. For almost four agonizing hours, rescuers toiled to find Nathan. *The Chicago Tribune's* Colleen Mastony interviewed firefighter Brad Kreighbaum, who said, "There wasn't a hole in the sand, there wasn't even a dimple. There was nothing."

The digging paid off just before 8 p.m. when Kreighbaum felt his probe hit something. He thrust his hands into the sand and felt the boy's hair and face. He looked at the excavator operator in disbelief and said, "Brother, you got him!"

This past century of SAR has definitely seen its share of changes, especially given the technological advances in aircraft, communications, specialized equipment and training. In light of these changes,

many elements of our SAR responses are sure to be different over the next 100 years. We may no longer be satisfied with snubbing a belay line "around a convenient white pine." And we probably won't need to fire shots in the air to communicate with fellow rescuers.

At the same time, some things never change: People continue to, and probably always will, in the words of Horace Albright, "leave their discretion at home." And, the things that matter most in National Park Service search and rescue I hope will carry on.

A hundred years ago, our second director made famous the words, "If a trail is to be blazed, it is 'send a ranger.' If an animal is floundering in the snow, a ranger is sent to pull him out; if a bear is in the hotel, if a fire threatens a forest, if someone is to be saved, it is 'send a ranger.'"

It is this spirit that I pray will flourish. In this next century and beyond, when a

soul in distress calls for help from deep inside our parks, we shall most definitely "go about the business of hauling him out."

... that others may live. 

Kevin Moses is Central District ranger at Shenandoah National Park in Luray, Virginia, and Basic Technical Rescue Training—East incident commander. He is a regular columnist for Ranger.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:



I wish to express my sincerest appreciation to all the authors cited herein, and especially to Charles "Butch" Farabee, whose SAR collection, *Death, Daring, and Disaster*, was indispensable to the completion of this series. I also wish to advise that the events and milestones mentioned herein do not cover everything worth mentioning in NPS SAR's last 100 years, they only scratch the surface.



THIS YEAR MARKS THE 40TH RANGER RENDEZVOUS: AN IMPORTANT DATE IN BOTH ANPR'S TIMELINE AND THAT OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.

We hope you will join us Oct. 19-22 at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colorado. Only three miles from Rocky Mountain National Park, the location promises spectacular scenery, abundant opportunities for outdoor exploration and lots more. It's the perfect setting for a conference about national parks and the people who protect them.

Join us for Ranger Rendezvous and XL: Resilience, Purpose and the Next Chapter

At this year's Rendezvous we will look into matters of land management, interpretation, conservation and the life of rangers. ANPR celebrates the rangers who have been dedicated and essential parts of the National Park Service. This year's theme for Rendezvous is XL: Resilience, Purpose and the Next Chapter. Our call for presentations is now on ANPR.org!

Rendezvous speakers, sessions and programs are designed for attendees across all NPS divisions. The conference will feature national and regional speakers and professional development and training opportunities on a wide variety of topics.

Additionally, plan on valuable networking, social time, guided tours, a service activity and field trips. There will also be an annual photography contest and raffle, as well as a silent auction featuring one-of-a-kind items.

Set aside new, unused items to send or bring to Estes Park for our silent auction

and raffle. Even if you are not able to attend this year, we'd love to receive donations for this event.

Please also help us identify and contact potential donors, sponsors and exhibitors for the conference.

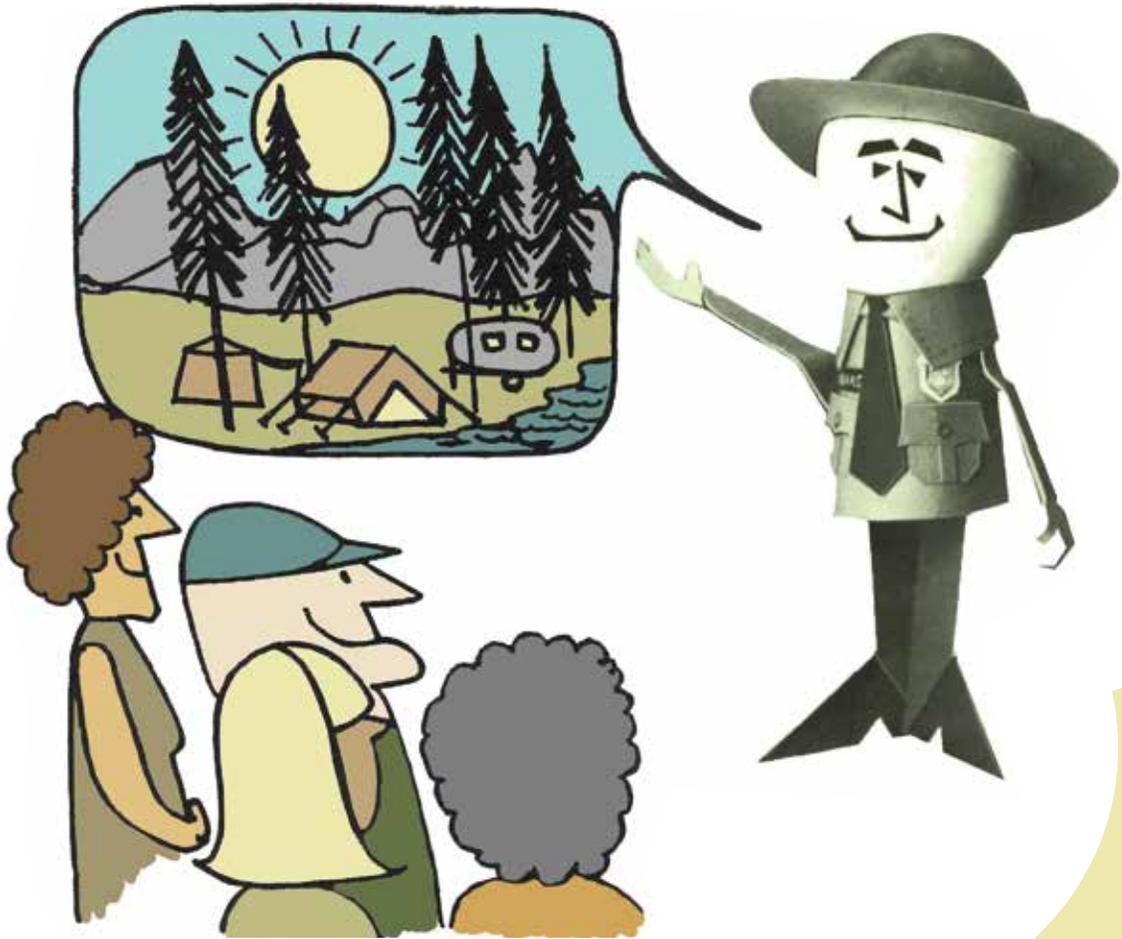
We are also still looking for volunteers to help with specific assignments for Ranger Rendezvous. Please contact Cadence Cook at anprinternalcommunications@gmail.com if you have time to donate to this excellent meeting.

We will keep you informed about speakers, sessions, trainings and details on the conference as plans are confirmed for Ranger Rendezvous "XL". Please submit your presentation now and register online beginning June 1.

See you there! 

— Cadence Cook
anprinternalcommunications@gmail.com

— Elizabeth Jackson
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Democratizing the process of setting

NPS standards of excellence

By John M. Rudy, Stephen T. Mather Training Center

In 1975, on the eve of the American Bicentennial, *Interpreting Our Heritage* author Freeman Tilden offered his advice to National Park Service interpreters who were beginning to think about how the nation might celebrate the 200-year anniversary of independence.

At 93, Tilden spoke as sage to his profession. “You can’t preach to people in the parks; they don’t like it,” he admonished in a filmed interview. “The most you can do is get them to thinking for themselves.”

Tilden’s goal for interpretation was to instill critical thinking skills in NPS professionals and park visitors. He wanted interpreters to ask hard questions, including: Were our ancestors right?

But that transition – from a craft increasingly focused on knowledge transfer to one based on inspiration – would not be simple.

“I’m saying things that I know perfectly well are extremely difficult to do,” Tilden admitted, “but I merely say that’s more important than parades.”

Tilden wanted parks to be places of action, places for developing social consciousness. And the NPS was Tilden’s great hope for the work of creating an engaged citizenry.

How we interact is in flux

Investigating the philosophy of communication can be a challenge. The very idea of how we as a species interact is in a state of almost constant flux. The world has changed greatly in just the last two decades. Human interaction has become quicker, more vibrant, and, most importantly, far more democratic thanks to a plummeting barrier to entry.

Our standards of interpretive success and our best practices for communication, on the other hand, have become static over those same two decades. Our style of communication in the NPS has been largely didactic and presentational. We have focused on telling people why places and objects are important. A site’s significance has been a sort-of received wisdom from on high instead of a wonder discovered and rediscovered by the visitor.

The shift in culture requires a shift in the fundamental function of the interpreter from “sage on the stage to guide on the side.” It requires a shift from a performative

act to a collaborative one. And it also requires a shift in the direction that information flows: from unidirectional (interpreter to audience) to omnidirectional (with visitors and interpreters alike learning from each other’s collective experiences).

IDP embraces change

The Interpretive Development Program (IDP) has been trying to make the shift to evolving standards of interpretive excellence. But in doing so, it has required a vastly different process and mindset. Just as technology and culture change at a moment’s notice, the standards need to be nimble enough to shift and change with American culture. All this has required a new style of thinking.



As we encourage interpreters to allow for new and emergent ideas of relevance to come from visitors, the training community has had to encourage ourselves to allow new and emergent ideas for our craft from interpreters. We are endeavoring to democratize the process of establishing our standards of excellence.

In practice, this has meant starting to create a Wikipedia-style process of talking about our craft. The goal is that every interpreter in the field can have a voice in the best practices of interpretation. We have not quite arrived there yet, but the experimentation so far has been fascinating and heartening.

Starting from our original “Foundations of Interpretation” descriptions, the IDP team took a first stab at incorporating some

of the rising best practices in interpretation. Adding in new elements of success, from documents such as the “NPS 21st Century Interpretive Skills Vision Paper,” outside entities including the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience and MuseumHack, and leading philosophical voices including the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Nina Simon, this document served as a starting point for change.

But where in the past we might have trusted our own instincts and simply taught our own newly defined standards, or asked a group from the field to validate these new thoughts, we instead opened the document to radical editing by a broad group of NPS field interpreters. What came from that process was a document more vibrant and exciting than anyone in the IDP could have possibly imagined. This new “Foundations of 21st Century Interpretation” incorporates new voices and perspectives.

Portal welcomes new voices

But the next step is the evolution. Tools like the NPS Common Learning Portal and other collaborative technology open up an opportunity to let more than a select few individuals edit this draft of excellence. They hold the promise that the entire field of interpretation, inside the National Park Service and out, will have a say in how we describe our work in a truly democratic process. Like any democracy, there will be fits and starts, but the goal is that the very definition of interpretation can be a living, breathing document – changing with culture and society.

As we encourage our interpreters to incorporate the voices of the visitor in park experiences, we need to hold tight to the same guiding principle. The field itself is the perfect source for describing their own efforts toward excellence. And the democratizing effect of technology can help make that possible.



John M. Rudy is an interpreter and trainer with the Interpretive Development Program in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. When he’s not helping push the field of interpretation in interesting new directions, he can be found studying black history and the Civil War era.



In the waning hours of a sunny afternoon,

a visitor hiking on Little Moose Island in Acadia National Park spotted a strange object near the high tide line along the rocky shore. It was cylindrical, a metallic canister with a reflective green stripe at the top. A notice printed on the side said, "If found, call police or military."

THE VISITOR CALLED A RANGER.

The Learning and Performance Ecosystem:

A conscious approach to ongoing learning

By Dylan Mroszczyk-McDonald, Acadia National Park

What was the object? Where did it come from? Were there more? Should people be concerned? How should we go about finding the answers to these pressing questions?

Continual learning is a critical element of every successful ranger's career. Whether you seek to rise through the ranks or achieve mastery at your current level, a commitment to continual learning is critical for performance and safety in the challenging environment in which we work.

In the past, the terms "learning" and "training" were used synonymously. They

generally referred to traditional classroom-style sessions in which a subject matter expert stood at the front of the room imparting knowledge. Now, however, it is increasingly necessary to reevaluate preconceived notions about training and become more conscious of the many learning methods and opportunities available to us.

This evolution is taking place throughout the National Park Service. For example, the NPS learning and development group recently announced the launch of the Common Learning Portal. The portal is part of an ecosystem approach to employee learning and development.

The ecosystem model puts employees at the center of learning surrounded by numerous tools to help them develop knowledge, accomplish a task or achieve a goal.

A key element of the ecosystem model is that enhanced performance can result from learning that takes place outside of traditional training. Learning can also occur from doing research, consulting with others and sharing information. This type of learning has always been going on, even if it has not been fully appreciated or understood as training.

The Law Enforcement, Security and Emergency Services (LESES) Resources app that allows users to access checklists and other job aids is an example of performance support. The Field Training Evaluation Program (FTEP) and mentoring provide social networking and collaborative learning opportunities.

At Acadia, the integration of this model with operational risk management principles taught in operational leadership training has helped keep rangers safe as they carry out their mission of serving the public and protecting our parks.

The visitor who stumbled upon the canister on Little Moose Island was able to take several pictures of it on her smartphone and send them to rangers

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Caretakers needed for a family-owned woodland property in Vermont



This Green Mountain 1,600 acre woodland property is near Rutland and Killington, and includes a rustic farmhouse, garage, woodshed, lawn going down to the 13-acre beaver pond, log cabin, and a 1.25-mile dirt driveway. Members of the family come and go, mostly on weekends.

Caretakers (single or couple) provide a presence on the property as well upkeep of the lawn and flowerbed, sides of the driveway, trails, and wood gathering. There is plenty of room for a garden if wanted. The garage is well supplied with tools including a weed whacker and wood splitter.

The house includes a wood burning stove, running hot and cold water (artesian well), electricity and back-up generator,

washer and dryer, phone and internet and large front porch overlooking the pond. Caretakers have their own apartment with small bedroom and living room, and bath. The kitchen is shared with family members.

The property is open from the end of May until early to mid October. The opening and closing dates are somewhat flexible – family members, some of whom live nearby, love to fill in.



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RENDEZVOUS EXHIBITORS

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Pilot Rock



NEXUS SILVER TAPROOM

continued from page 9

immediately. The Acadia rangers used the photos to perform database searches of the U.S. Patent Office and Military Specifications & Data Sheets (a knowledge management skill), call the U.S. Coast Guard (an access-to-experts skill) and correspond with other rangers (social networking and collaboration skills) about what the object might be.

The rangers identified the item as a marine location marker buoy. The devices are designed to burn magnesium and release red phosphorus smoke. They are capable of burning under water. Rangers learned that the buoys are utilized in maritime search and rescue operations by Coast Guard aircraft.

Of even greater significance was what rangers learned about the components and life cycle of the device. This type of marker buoy contains a scuttling charge, a small explosive designed to detonate when the device runs out of fuel, sinking it and disposing of it to prevent a floating hazard to navigation.

The rangers realized that the scuttling charge may have failed, meaning the buoy could contain live explosives and pose a threat to anyone nearby. At the recommendation of Coast Guard experts, rangers teamed with the State Police Explosive Ordnance Disposal bomb squad to recover and dispose of the device properly.

Before this incident, none of the rangers on duty had any familiarity with marine marker buoys or their dangers. Without the ecosystem of learning, they may not have realized the potential for danger. Traditional training would not have addressed the just-in-time learning needed to resolve the situation safely.

The ecosystem model does not replace classroom learning. It does recognize that together the 1) conscious use of the on-demand tools of the ecosystem model, 2) risk management principles and 3) dedication to the NPS mission, give employees the tools they need to succeed. 

Dylan Mroszczyk-McDonald grew up exploring the forests that are now in Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park. He began his NPS career as a seasonal interpreter at Boston National Historical Park and completed Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC) field training at Yosemite National Park. He currently works as the Schoodic District ranger at Acadia National Park in Maine, has a law degree in environmental law & policy, and serves as a visiting instructor at FLETC.

The CLP is still in its pilot phase. To access it make sure you're on an NPS network (VPN) and have your PIV card on hand.

The Common Learning Portal: The NEW frontier

The Common Learning Portal (CLP) combines three styles of learning for a holistic learning experience for National Park Service employees, volunteers and partners. The CLP was developed by the NPS Office of Learning and Development and is a key part of the new NPS Learning and Performance Ecosystem.

The CLP is organized around three types of learning at <https://mylearningnps.gov>: formal, informal and social, as reflected in the site's navigational elements.

It democratizes the learning experience, enabling employees to chart their own development course, regardless of travel ceilings and work location.

The Training Events section of the portal is a catalog of all formal training opportunities. Listings provide key information on dates, locations (if applicable), learning objectives and registration information.

The Knowledge Park is a digital library of informational resources. These active,

curated resources supplement and enhance formal training. A focus on community-fed learning allows resources to be submitted by the field or subject matter experts, supplementing the traditional top-down flow of information with grassroots knowledge-sharing available to a wider audience.

The Commons is a network of professionals that leverages social learning by connecting employees, volunteers and partners as new sources of expertise. Social learning provides a space for learners to discuss, troubleshoot and contextualize information to utilize in their work. Groups allow for project collaboration, peer feedback, information gathering and sharing best practices. 

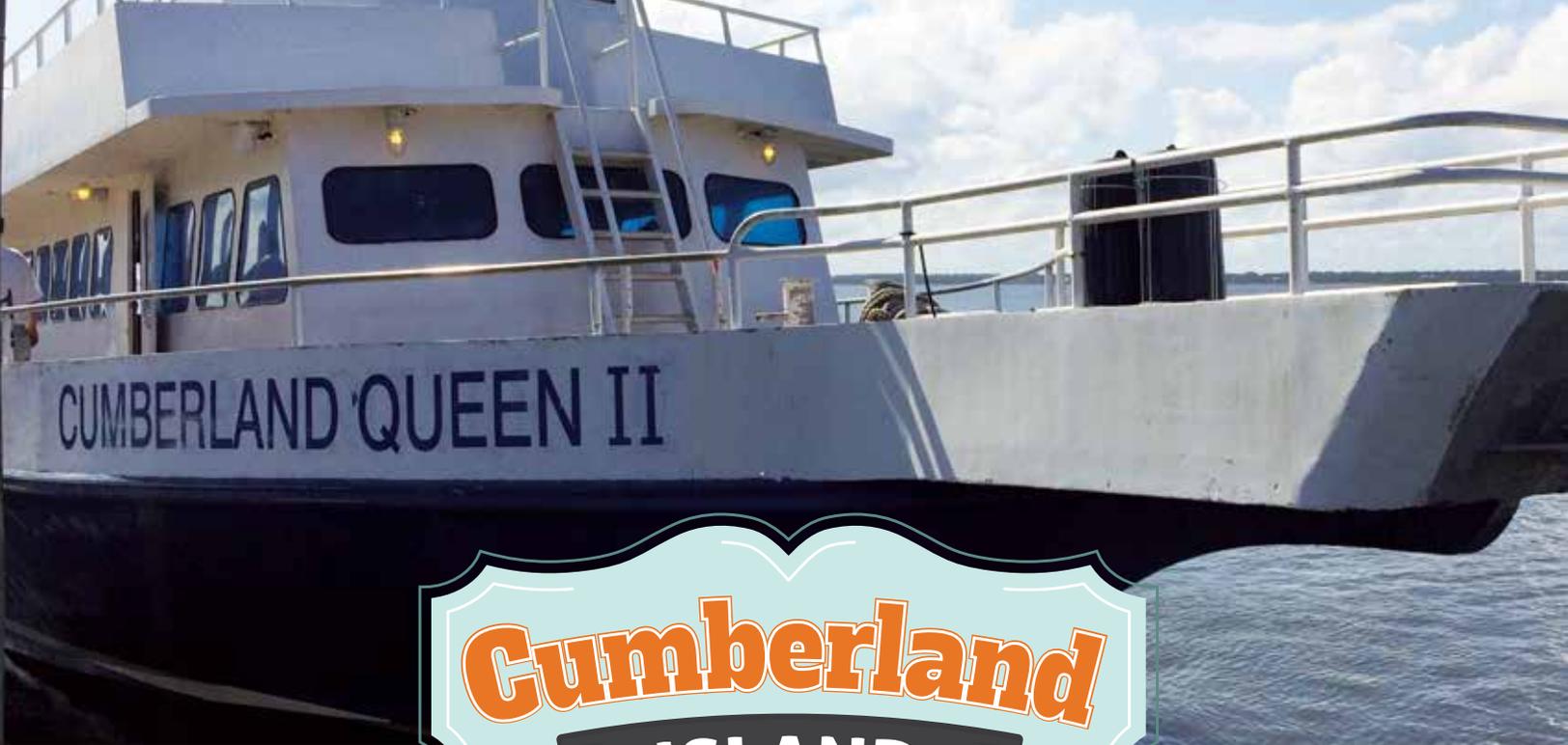
Molly Russell is the CLP Communities of Learning manager for the Distance Learning Group. She provides assistance and guidance to Commons administrators, moderators and users.

Tori Peterson is the CLP writer-editor for the NPS Distance Learning Group. She assists and supports training managers and users of the CLP.

WHAT IS IT?	FORMAL LEARNING	INFORMAL LEARNING	SOCIAL LEARNING
Where can I find it?	Training Events	Knowledge Park	Commons
What does it contain?	Face-to-face trainings; webinars; training programs	Videos; policies; laws; manuals; worksheets	Discussion groups; peer feedback; access to experts

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE

- "Learning and Performance Ecosystems: Strategy, Technology, Impact, and Challenges" at eLearning Guild <https://www.elearningguild.com/showFile.cfm?id=5367>
- "Overcoming the Challenges of Social Learning in the Workplace" from *Learning Solutions Magazine*, August 11, 2008 <http://www.learningsolutionsmag.com/articles/85/overcoming-the-challenges-of-social-learning-in-the-workplace?ga=1.73257619.1458906858.1469650961>.



Cumberland ISLAND

*where wilderness
meets culture*

By Will G. Mundhenke, Capulin Volcano

“Where Nature and History Meet” is the formidable tagline Cumberland Island National Seashore employs to greet visitors. Designated as a national seashore in 1972, Cumberland Island retains a remarkable seashore ecosystem of beach dunes, forests and marshes, and it provides quality opportunities for recreation along coastal Georgia.

In founding the national seashore, the National Park Service cited the relationship between human activities and island ecosystems, recognizing the fundamental role that people have played in shaping the landscape. Cumberland’s enabling legislation also identified hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, swimming and horseback riding as just a few of the island’s recreational amenities.

By law, the development of bridges between Georgia’s largest sea island and the mainland is restricted. To reach the large barrier island, you must first drive to the town of St. Marys. There, you can explore the park’s museums, visitor center and interpretive waysides as the ocean breeze brushes your face and you await a ferry to the island.

On the 45-minute voyage to Cumberland Island you can see deep blue waters, lush green forests — and a pulp mill puffing out exhaust. The mill seems like an eyesore along the stunning coastline, but it is a reminder that even near a national park unit one cannot escape human influence. The mill also demonstrates that people and pristine nature can coexist.

Cumberland Island was inhabited for thousands of years beginning with

indigenous groups and later the Timucuan people. After the Spanish arrived in the 1550s, they created missions and a garrison on the island. The Spanish eventually lost Cumberland to the English.

Following the Revolutionary War, the sparsely inhabited island became part of the United States. Human influence resumed in the later part of the 18th century with the introduction of American plantations made prosperous by imported slaves.

By the 20th century, the Carnegie family owned most of the island. They sold it to the federal government to enable the establishment of the national seashore, although some privately owned inholdings remain.

During colonization, Cumberland was deforested. This may be the most lasting imprint that humans made on the island.



Interpretive park guide
Will G. Mundhenke

On September 8, 1982, more than 9,800 acres of Cumberland Island were admitted into the National Wilderness Preservation System as Congressionally designated wilderness area. Within this wilderness, specified as “untrammled” by the Wilderness Act of 1964, are numerous cultural resources, ruins, trails, archaeological sites and additional evidence of human habitation. The First African Baptist Church and Carnegie Plum Orchard Mansion can be toured there, and the ruins of the abandoned, fire-ravaged Carnegie Dungeness Mansion also can be seen.

The wilderness designation requires humans to be visitors. The concept of wilderness evokes sublime nature. However, humans have trammled Cumberland Island from the northern to the southern coast for centuries. How can a national seashore with such a rich history be considered untrammled or undeveloped enough to be wilderness?

The answer lies in interpretation.

“Where Nature and History Meet” holds a powerful lesson for all national park sites that contain wilderness. The NPS doesn’t separate human influence from wilderness on Cumberland, but rather interprets wilderness according to what historian James Feldman calls “rewilding.”

Rewilding relies on an understanding of how a human landscape, allowed to regrow, can have wilderness value equal to an area left undeveloped. Thus, a second-growth oak forest on Cumberland Island is wilderness.

The presence of history and culture do not detract from wilderness, but rather add to it. Rewilding recognizes the influences of African Americans and indigenous peoples

on the island and highlights the significance of their settlements and artifacts.

Cumberland Island National Seashore serves as a model for national park units by using interpretation to relate how each historical group has valued this treasured natural resource. Within our parks, cultural resources should exist in harmony with

wilderness. Uniting culture and nature through interpretation creates a storied wilderness of human use — a *historical* wilderness. 

Will G. Mundhenke is an interpretive park guide at Capulin Volcano National Monument in northeast New Mexico.

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ANPR
Oral History Project

Meg Weesner on one of her last days
at Saguaro National Park in Arizona.
Photo courtesy of Meg Weesner

“The decisions that I made and the path that I followed led me into the job that I’d admired so much.”

Meg Weesner: An interview with Hannah Nyala West

Edited by Lu Ann Jones

In the 1980s Meg Weesner was among a pioneer generation of women to move into natural resource management positions in the National Park Service. When Hannah Nyala West interviewed her in 2012 for the Association of National Park Rangers Oral History Project, Weesner reflected upon the value of mentors and the importance of collaboration with communities to preserve and protect public lands and natural resources.

After graduating from Northwestern University in 1975, Weesner started her NPS career as a lifeguard at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, in Arizona and Utah. There she met someone who opened up new job possibilities for her.

WEESNER: The person working in the next room was the first natural resource manager at Glen Canyon. His name was Bill Supernauth. When I had a free moment, I used to love to go next door and talk to Bill, because that natural resource field just attracted me. I liked talking to him, I liked what he did, and I must’ve had this kernel in the back of my mind that I wanted to be a natural resource manager.

Weesner next worked as an interpreter and briefly as a law enforcement ranger. Meanwhile, her interest in natural resources inspired her to seek out opportunities that were usually reserved for men and to bolster her credentials with graduate training in wildland recreation management.

In fall 1984, Weesner entered the second class of Natural Resource Management Trainees, a selective two-year NPS training program. When she completed the program she was placed at New River Gorge National River in West Virginia as a natural resource specialist.

WEESNER: I wanted that job as a natural resource manager at a park. Of course, there weren’t very many women at the time doing it, but somewhere along the way, the decisions that I made and the path that I followed led me into the job that I’d admired so much. I had no idea that’s where I was going, as I took each step along the way, but I actually got to where I wanted to go, even though I hadn’t conceived of the idea totally.



**YOU CAN HEAR THIS
ARTICLE AS A PODCAST ON
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<https://soundcloud.com/npsoralhistory/meg-weesner-on-community-and-natural-resources>

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In the mid-1980s, just over a decade into her career, Weesner was asked about her career path.

WEESNER: One of the questions they asked me was, “How does what you thought 10 years ago match what you’re actually doing?”... I thought back and I go, “You know what? I am doing exactly the job that I had wanted to do then.”

Weesner’s next position was as the chief of science and resource management at Saguaro National Park in Tucson, Arizona. She stayed there for almost 20 years, until she retired in 2011.

WEESNER: Pretty soon my brother and his wife had two kids and we were all there in Tucson together, and I never ended up leaving. So I just stayed, because there were family connections, the job was good, the superintendents have always been really good there, and I just stayed. I chose to quit moving around and develop some roots there.

Staying in Tucson gave Weesner the opportunity to get involved in collaborative projects between local governments and the park. At Saguaro, Weesner worked under a superintendent for whom she had a lot of respect.

WEESNER: His name was Bill Paleck, and he was really an innovator. At Saguaro, you had a town that was just growing like gangbusters, and you’ve got Saguaro National Park — there’s a unit on the east side and a unit on the west side — and the [Coronado] National Forest is on the north side, and so the town is just filling in the basin in between and it was coming ever and ever closer to the park.

Paleck creatively dealt with this issue, using a strategy Weesner admired and applied to her own work.

WEESNER: He had the philosophy, “Let’s manage that interface. We need to move to the next step and look at managing where the juncture comes together.” You have this transition from dense housing development to sort of rural-suburban ranch houses on like three-acre properties and no commercial development at all near any of these protected areas, parks or national forests. So you’ve got this transition through a sort of semi-rural landscape until you get to the parklands and the wilderness area.

Because of its proximity to a city, Saguaro National Park had to reconcile its resource protection goals with development. Over the years, Park Service employees, local activists and developers learned to work together to find solutions that both protected the land and allowed for growth in the metropolitan area.

WEESNER: This was started by a developer who had control of about a thousand acres right on the south boundary of the park. And he submitted a proposal that would build four resorts and 25,000 homes on that property. Of course, environmentalists in Tucson were outraged. So they started looking at it, doing surveys of the property and everything. To try and make a long story short, they identified some key habitat areas. So the developer agreed to pull back the scale, size and scope of what they were going to be developing, identified what the key natural habitats were that were important to protect, and scaled it back. And the bill passed Congress in 1991 with support on the conservation side and the developer’s side — everybody involved supported this, no controversy whatsoever.

Expanding the park had to be done by working in conjunction with developers, not in opposition.

WEESNER: So that’s the legacy I’ve been working at — just maintaining all those linkages with the other professionals in the Tucson area and with university professors, and keeping all those channels of communication open. As somebody once said, “As goes Saguaro, so go all parks in the future.” Because these communities are going to be more and more living right next door, and Saguaro has been a leader in figuring out good ways to do that.

Meg Weesner retired from the National Park Service in 2011 and lives in Arizona. She has been a member of ANPR since 1986. Hannah Nyala West is a writer and historian who lives in California. Lu Ann Jones is a staff historian in the Park History Program in Washington, D.C.

NPSHISTORY.COM seeks resources to share online

Harry Butowsky is seeking documents for npshistory.com. Butowsky retired from the National Park Service in 2012 with 36 years of service. At the time of his retirement, he managed the NPS History e-library. Following retirement, he created nps-history.com and now has more than 20,000 documents on the site. Many of the documents are unique and cannot be found anywhere else in electronic format.

Butowsky’s goal with nps-history.com is to offer a window into the historical richness of NPS archival and library resources and to illustrate the wide variety of national parks. The site is private; Butowsky receives no funding or direction from the NPS for it.

“I am always looking for new material to scan and place on nps-history.com,” he said. “I accept all types of documents, from park brochures to planning, natural and cultural resources management reports.”

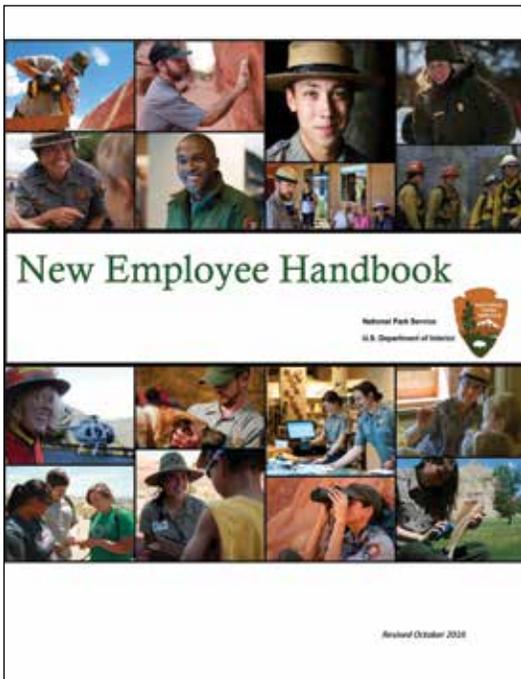


Butowsky asks rangers to contact him at harryb3570@gmail.com about contributing material for nps-history.com so that NPS resources can be viewed by a wider audience.



ADMINISTRATION

Uncertainty prevails for first half of fiscal 2017



It certainly has been a rocky first half of this fiscal year. As this article was written we were still operating on a continuing resolution for our operational budget, the hiring freeze had hampered filling both permanent and some temporary positions, and the 1039 temporary seasonal appointment authority had been redefined for service years and rehire status.

Needless to say, the administrative world is a bit chaotic. Not knowing the answers to daily inquiries for hiring scenarios and budget outlook has been a bit stressful and unsettling for many National Park Service administrative staff.

On December 9, 2016, the Continuing Resolution (CR) was extended through April 28, 2017. The CR provides funding for operations through April 28, 2017 at 57.37 percent of our FY16 appropriation. The across-the-board reduction applied to the first CR was reduced from 0.496 percent to 0.1901 percent. This reduction is factored into the 57.37 percent threshold. There is a possibility of an additional reduction and we are cautioned to be conservative in spending until full-year funding is determined.

The hiring freeze was enacted on January 23, 2017 through a presidential memorandum and has brought hiring to standstill while the NPS awaited guidance on the parameters of the hiring freeze. Within 90 days of the publication of the memorandum, the director of office of management and budget (OMB) in consultation with the director of the office of personnel management (OPM) were to recommend a long-term plan to reduce the size of the federal government's workforce through attrition. The hiring freeze will expire upon implementation of the OMB plan.

At the time of this article, only temporary appointments could be recruited, but actual job offers were on hold while NPS guidance was still to arrive. The NPS typically hires about 10,000 seasonal and other temporary

employees throughout the year, with more than 8,000 of those on board during the peak summer visitation period. Once temporary appointments are approved this will bring a small sigh of relief, as most parks rely on their seasonal staffing to serve the needs of visitors.

As of late February, the winter-season parks were struggling to finish hiring for their remaining busy season, while the summer parks were gearing up to recruit summer staff. Relief from the hiring freeze for temporary positions would be welcome news. Hopefully by the time this article is published we will have moved forward with lateral transfers, term appointments and permanent positions.

The third upset this fiscal year was the redefining of the 1039 appointment. Many seasonals routinely work two seasons in a year at different parks; now their rehire status is limited to one park and they must compete for their other park. No more seasonal lifestyle of hopping from park to park using rehire status. Seasonals now have to carefully choose the park where they want to be rehired and apply to a competitive job announcement at the second park.

I am hoping the second half of this fiscal year gives us some stability in the finance and hiring realms. It is tough to be in administration and not have answers for NPS decision-makers and employees.

— Michelle Torok
Saguaro and Tumacácori, Arizona

PERSPECTIVE: CULTURAL RESOURCES

When the going gets tough I go to Harpers Ferry

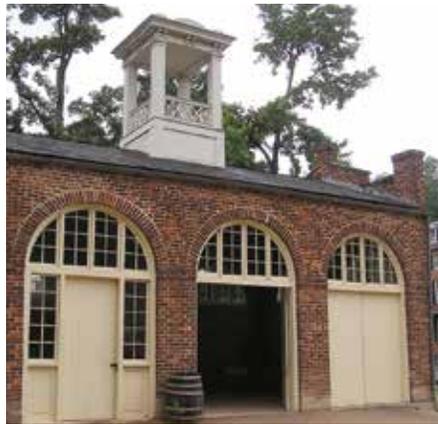
Members and friends of the Association of National Park Rangers know that Rebecca Harriet recently retired from the National Park Service. She closed out her career as the superintendent at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, a place high up on my list of favorite national park units.

I was thinking about Harriet and Harpers Ferry recently for several reasons. No matter your political stripes this past election was a mighty rough one that brought us a series of new lows. Chief among them for me was the ascendancy of soundbites and bumper-sticker slogans over thoughtful analysis and studied debate. Facing, as we are, a Gordian knot of political, economic and social issues both foreign and domestic, the Nation appears to have abandoned regard for anything complex. And as a historian that leaves me feeling more than little bit out in the cold.

Harpers Ferry has always been about complexity and the interweaving of historic themes. The Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers converge there. So did old and new notions about weapons manufacturing that pitted for a time the handcrafted work of artisans against modern mechanized production systems. The artisans lost, by the way.

This one place was the site of abolitionist John Brown's famous raid to free enslaved African Americans, Confederate General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson's greatest victory in September 1862, and the true birthplace of the Niagara Movement, the precursor to the NAACP that helped advance the modern Civil Rights agenda in the United States. Try fitting all that on a bumper sticker.

NPS interpretive programs at Harpers Ferry embrace that complexity. Take for



example the story of John Brown's pikes.

When Brown and his raiders came to Harpers Ferry in October 1859 his arsenal included a large number of 6-foot long pikes. Each ended abruptly with a sharpened point for thrusting. More economical than guns, these were the weapons with which Brown intended to arm his newly freed guerilla army.

I had always regarded those pikes as symbols of black resistance, rebellion and freedom, but an NPS interpretive program added another dimension to their meaning for me.

For white families trapped in their homes and aware only that armed men had invaded the town, captured the arsenal and were attempting to incite a slave insurrection, the fear they felt must have been overwhelming. The absolute moral evil that was slavery encountered the natural instinct to protect hearth, home and family from an enemy at all costs.

This sentiment had taken Brown to Bleeding, Kansas in 1856, where in the name of African American freedom he slaughtered unarmed men he believed to be pro-slavery. Thus did the white men of

I had always regarded those pikes as symbols of black resistance, rebellion and freedom, but an NPS interpretive program added another dimension to their meaning for me.

Harpers Ferry take to the streets to beat back an insurrection.

After Brown's raid had been quashed, authorities sent pikes to the capitols of every southern state, where they were placed on prominent display. The message to southern whites was unmistakable: A slave insurrection fostered by abolitionists and northern agitators could be coming soon to a town near you. As a result, militias throughout the south sprang into action, a phenomenon that paved the way for rapid mobilization of Confederate forces in April 1861.

The interpretation of Brown's pikes at Harpers Ferry reminds me that complex issues can be genuinely viewed in different and often diametrically opposed ways. And that pausing for a moment to consider the viewpoints of "the other" generally gains us more than we lose.

The NPS is entering the post-Centennial period with a more diverse array of park units in the system than at any previous time. Moreover, agency personnel and outside partners are examining ways to ensure that the history preserved in our parks is inclusive, accurate and linked across the widest possible array of interpretive themes.

None of the events that took place at Harpers Ferry happened in isolation. The history our national parks protect and disseminate to the public should reflect that interconnectedness. We should all be grateful that in a world filled with soundbites the NPS is embracing the beautiful complexity of our shared past.

— Alan Spears,
*National Parks Conservation
Association, Washington, D.C.*

THE PROFESSIONAL RANGER

INTERPRETATION

Finding common ground in science, scholarship and protection

The Oxford Dictionaries declared “post-truth” to be the word of the year for 2016. The term is defined as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.”

In some ways, the post-truth stance should not be at all foreign to interpreters who are accustomed to engaging with and welcoming multiple perspectives held by park visitors, and honoring their diverse personal beliefs. Similarly, interpreters understand that visitors connect with protected places, stories, icons and objects in emotional as well as intellectual ways.

It is out of this understanding that I am willing to challenge our dogmatic notion of inherent meanings in park resources. On the contrary, meanings are assigned by individuals, as well as by cultures and agencies. With all of this in mind, I think interpreters are very well positioned to positively and calmly respond to the potential post-truthiness that may emerge in our upcoming interactions with visitors and others.

Park visitors, however, are only one of the elements at play in any interpretive encounter. In *On Interpretation: Sociology for Interpreters of Natural and Cultural History*, Machlis and Field wrote:

[Interpretation is] largely a service for visitors to parks... and other such leisure places. Its practical objectives are straightforward: to assist the visitor, to accomplish management goals, and to promote public understanding and appreciation.



America's Best Classroom Week interpretation at Pea Ridge National Military Park in Arkansas. NPS photo

If we understand this to be so, then we know that beyond the service for visitors we are also tasked with accomplishing management goals of our agency. Here, we must veer from the post-truth arena to one with clearer, substantiated understandings.

On December 20, 2016, the National Park Service (NPS) *Director's Order #100: Resource Stewardship for the 21st Century* became the guidance for agency policy.

SIGNIFICANT IN THE ORDER IS THE FOLLOWING:

The overarching goal of resource stewardship is to manage NPS resources in a context of continuous change that we do not fully understand, in order to:

- Preserve and restore ecological, historical, and cultural integrity
- Contribute as an ecological and cultural core of national and international networks of protected lands, waters and resources
- Provide visitors and program participants with opportunities for transformative experiences that educate and inspire.

It is also essential to understand and fully embrace that Director's Order #100 states, “To fulfill the stewardship goal, the

NPS will use a decision-making framework that is explicitly based upon three criteria: 1) best available sound science and scholarship, 2) accurate fidelity to the law and 3) long-term public interest.”

As interpreters, we understand that one of our roles is to honor diverse perspectives and help connect park resources to visitor interests. We are also able to choreograph fair and respectful conversations in which varying perspectives can be shared. However, we have an obligation to mediate those conversations with the best available sound science and scholarship as well.

Therein lie essential pieces of truth as currently understood. Sound science and scholarship demands that we question what we don't understand and that we make decisions based on what we do know at the time.

We need not defer our position to post-truth when there is truth guiding us. We must be true to our visitors, understand that as humans we can change our minds, and that, perhaps, parks and other protected areas are common ground where we can collectively come to understand and indeed protect the ecological, historical and cultural integrity of the nation's most special places.

— Brian Forist,
Indiana University, Bloomington



FOR A VIDEO ABOUT “POST-TRUTH,” VISIT

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2016>.

THANK YOU



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(updated 2/11/2017)

All in the Family

ANPR Life Member Cindy Ott-Jones retired on January 2 after 37 years of service with the National Park Service.

She had been superintendent of Big Bend National Park and Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River since 2012. Ott-Jones's first seasonal and permanent positions were at the Old Courthouse in St. Louis, Missouri, a unit of Jefferson National Expansion Memorial. Other permanent assignments included Harry S. Truman National Historic Site and Lava Beds, White Sands and El Malpais national monument. At Lava Beds, she met husband Rick Jones. Following additional training, Ott-Jones became chief ranger at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. She also served as superintendent at Bents Old Fort National Historic Site, deputy superintendent at Grand Teton National Park and Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument. She can be reached at yodaluke57@yahoo.com.

ANPR Life Member Nancy Nelson retired on January 3 after 39 years of service with the National Park Service.

She had been superintendent of Minute Man National Historical Park since 1993.



Jim Northup



Cindy Ott-Jones

Nelson was hired by the NPS as an environmental protection specialist at the North Atlantic Regional Office in Boston. She served in a variety of regional office positions and worked throughout the region as a park planner, landscape architect and special assistant to three regional directors. She played an active part in planning for the Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island restoration and rehabilitation projects and for two new national parks Frederick Law Olmstead National Historic Site and Lowell National Historical Park. She also authored the Fire Island Wilderness Study and served on the steering committee for the Vail Agenda.

ANPR Life Member Jim Northup retired on January 2 after 36 years of service with the National Park Service.

He had been superintendent of Shenandoah National Park and Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park. During his career, Northup worked as an interpretive and protection ranger, natural resources specialist, wildland fire and aviation specialist, chief ranger and superintendent. His assignments included work at Big

Bend, Great Smoky Mountains, Grand Teton, Guadalupe and Shenandoah national parks; Cape Hatteras and Fire Island national seashores; the Buffalo River National Scenic River and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. He held a law enforcement commission for 24 years and was also a park medic, NPS SCUBA diver and active in technical rescue. In addition, Northup served as an operations section chief, all-risk management incident commander and division chief. He can be reached at jgnorthup@yahoo.com.

ANPR Life Member Ronald Sutton passed away at home in Tucson, Arizona on November 9, 2016.

Sutton had a long and varied career with the NPS, working as a ranger in Alaska and Arizona then becoming a computer specialist with the Southern Arizona Group. He enjoyed working with the parks to install and understand computer networks. In retirement, he split his time between Tucson and Eagle, Alaska, where he continued to work with parks on their information technology needs.

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These people have either given someone a gift membership to ANPR or recruited a new member. Thanks for your help and support!

- Chris Reinhardt
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Welcome to the ANPR family!

Here are the newest members of the Association of National Park Rangers (updated 2/11/17)

- Linda Bloomer, *Powell, TN*
- Amber Debardeleben, *Savannah, GA*
- Curt Dimmick, *Eatonville, WA*
- Darwin Fields, *Urbana, IL*
- Charlotte Fries, *Fernandina Beach, FL*
- Amanda Guenther, *Bishop, CA*
- Jamie Hays, *Lake Elsinore, CA*
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Recommendations suggested by bear biologists and wildlife specialists of the IGBC	Counter Assault		Guard Alaska	Pepper Power	Frontiersman				
Minimum Net Weight	7.9 oz 225 gr	8.1 oz 230 gram	9 oz 255 gr	7.9 oz 225 gr	9.2 oz 260 gr	7.9 oz 225 gr	9.2 oz 260 gr	7.9 oz 225 gr	9.2 oz 260 gr
% Capsaicin & Related Capsaicinoids	1% - 2%	2% Produced with OC rated at 3.6 Million SHU's	1.3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Shotgun-cloud Spray Pattern	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Minimum Spray Distance	25 ft	30 ft	32 ft	15-20 ft <small>Does NOT meet IGBC Recommendations</small>	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	35 ft
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The Wonder of It All: 100 Stories from the National Park Service

Yosemite Conservancy, 2016. Preface by Jon Jarvis.

Foreword by Dayton Duncan.

By Tony Sisto

When I was 13 years old, I remember getting out of my uncle's Pontiac at Mather Point in Grand Canyon and walking to the rim for the first time. My reaction was visceral. I gasped. I had never imagined such a scene existed on this planet. It was surreal.

Over the next several years, I returned to Grand Canyon National Park with my parents on camping trips. I could never get enough. After high school I spent three summers there working for a park concessionaire.

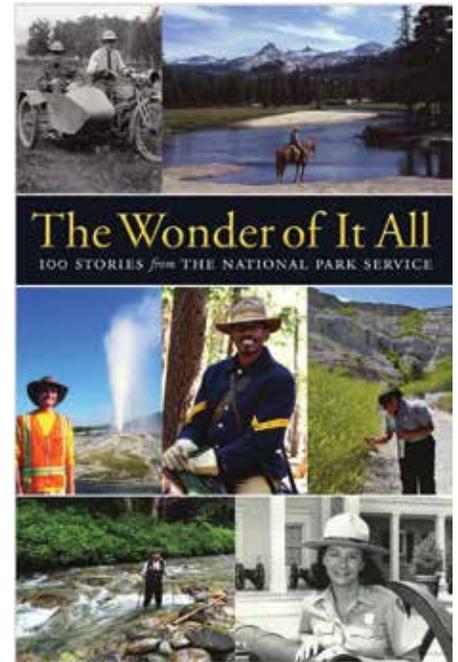
Well before the end of those summers, I knew I wanted to be a ranger. In 1978 I attended the Horace M. Albright Training Center at Grand Canyon as a member of the last intake class of the era.

As filmmaker and author Dayton Duncan writes in his foreword to *The Wonder of It All*: "The real power behind the national park idea is always personal. It is something you feel. It is an experience you never forget." This certainly applies to me. In reading the 100 stories in this book, collected in celebration of the National

Park Service Centennial, it also applies to the NPS employees and volunteers who contributed these stories of their personal engagement and emotional connection with parks across the country.

Nearly all of us who have worked with the NPS come away with a plethora of stories and events that have engaged us during our time with the parks. Through busy days we may briefly wonder about the circumstances that placed us in an inspiring moment or posed a particular challenge. But it is only in longer reflection that we truly see the scope of the job we have taken on and committed a large portion of our lives to.

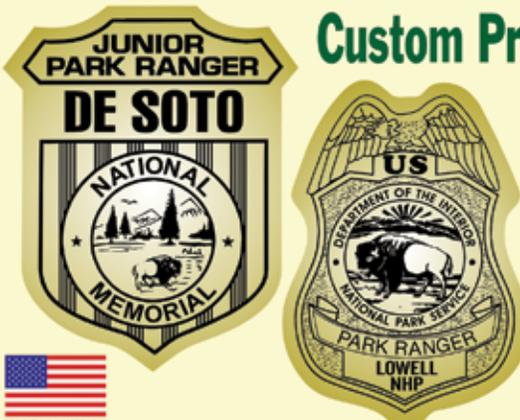
Opening with Rose Rumball-Petre's evocative "A Campfire Program" – "The sun is setting. Campfire smoke drifts through the campground. ... Near the front a ranger is stooping to light the community campfire. ... The night air is chilly ... and the program begins" – and ending with the poem from Iraq war veteran Wayne Rogers in "The Park Service Saved My Life" –



"It is Friday, I step away from the role of defending my country / It is now Monday, I step into the role of preserving my country / The Park Service saved my life" – this anthology of 100 stories speaks of NPS employees, retirees and volunteers as they define their lives and experiences in the National Park Service.

Beginning with the campfire, these stories of ours – for they are really all of ours – have changed, or perhaps even saved, our own lives. This book helps remind us how.

Tony Sisto spent his career with the NPS and was a member of the story review and selection team for this book.



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