



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Shenandoah National Park
3655 US Hwy. 211 East
Luray, Virginia 22835-9036

IN REPLY REFER TO:

A6415

Park Directive No. PARK MGMT - 511

Subject: CONSISTENT DECISION-MAKING

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE - At a Management Team retreat the need to develop a consistent decision making process was identified. The following directive describes the decision making process that all park employees will follow.

CRITERIA THAT INFLUENCE THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DECISION-MAKING.

- ❖ A basic premise is that consensus is the ideal – but best when the value of consensus exceeds the price of consensus.
- ❖ A second premise is that consensus does not always require engagement of the whole Management Team, but involves a group of stakeholders assigned to collaborate on a problem.
- ❖ Factors that influence WHAT decision is made
 - Laws, Executive Orders, Court decisions, regulations.
 - Local Bargaining Agreement.
 - Policies – Departmental and NPS.
 - Potential for liability.
 - Knowledge and information – What are the complete and accurate details?
 - History and background – What is the full evolution of an issue?
 - Arena of decision making – Who shares responsibility?
 - Timing – When is the window to make a decision open?
 - Context with other issues, i.e. how much change or controversy is appropriate in a period of time, both internally and externally?
- ❖ Factors that influence HOW a decision is made.
 - Degree to which a decision impacts others.
 - Timing – Does the need for a timely decision outweigh value of reaching consensus?
 - Capacity of those involved to reach agreement without harming their capacity to effectively collaborate in the future.

- Personal investment/feelings about an issue. Don't ask others to spend much energy searching for consensus if Superintendent feels quite certain what a final decision will be.
- Nature/consequences of the decision – What is the significance to Park as a whole?
- Amount of information and knowledge at hand – How much more information will a collaborative process yield?

WHEN & WHERE DECISIONS ARE MADE

- ❖ An issue should be brought to the squad meeting where stakeholders can be identified if:
 - It is a new issue, idea or solution.
 - The solution/idea will require additional funding or staff from the park in current or future years.
 - The solution/idea will result in a change in operations that would impact staff or visitors.
 - If the decision is made during squad the decision will be documented in the squad notes.
- ❖ If a person requires an immediate decision from the Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent or timing doesn't lend itself to a discussion at squad, then it is the responsibility of the person who requires a decision to ensure all stakeholders are present at the meeting or have had a chance to share their point of view. The Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent will ensure this has taken place.
 - If the decision is made outside of squad it will be announced at the next squad meeting and documented in the squad notes. It is the responsibility of the person seeking the decision to ensure it is mentioned at the next squad meeting.

SQUAD MEETINGS

- ❖ Squad meetings should focus on decisions needed for the future. The general agenda will be 1) celebrations 2) Superintendent's items 3) Business carried over from past squad meetings 4) New agenda items 5) Report from each division
- ❖ The Wednesday prior to squad the Assistant Superintendent or Chief of Administration will send out a request for squad agenda items. The Chief of Administration will also send out a request for agenda items for the project management meeting.
- ❖ "Agenda items" are those items that need discussion during squad. You should submit them in bullet format and indicate how much time they will require for discussion.
- ❖ The Superintendent's Secretary will be responsible for taking the notes at squad meetings. (see attached format) Within a couple of days after squad, the Superintendent's Secretary will send the notes to the management team for final review. After review, they will be posted on the park's Intranet web page.

- ❖ If a Management Team member has information to share with the squad but it doesn't require a discussion or a decision then the information can be shared via an addendum to the official squad notes. These should be provided to the Superintendent's Secretary along with your review comments. They should be submitted in bullet format and should be less than one page in length.

Approved:

Douglas K. Morris
Superintendent

Date

FORMAT FOR SQUAD MEETING NOTES

Synopsis of Squad Meeting Dated: (enter date)

Attendees:

Celebrations:

Superintendent's Report:

Business carried Over from Prior Squad Meetings (report on action items):

New Business (include Decision/Action)

Individual Division Reports Follow:

Administration

Concessions

Interpretation

Maintenance

Natural and Cultural Resources

Management Assistant

Ranger Activities