

The Journal of the Association of National Park Rangers

RANGER

Stewards for parks, visitors & each other

The efforts behind building a better workforce

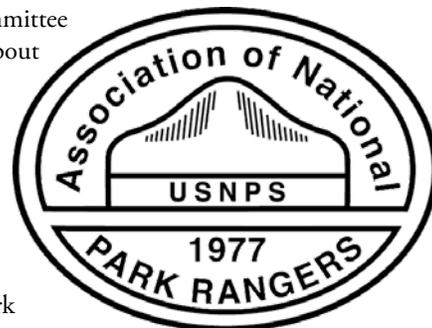


Vol. 37, No. 3 | Summer 2021

- 3**
President's message
- 4**
The people of the parks
- 6**
Evolving uniforms for a changing workforce
- 8**
The pitfalls of USA Hire
- 10**
Confessions of a lighthouse keeper
- 11**
So you want to become a VIP?
- 14**
Ranger Rendezvous heads to Jacksonville
- 18**
In Print: Ranger life
- 19**
Seasonals' contributions build a better NPS
- 20**
Cultural Resources: How organizational culture could be repelling diversity
- 22**
Protection: A thank-you letter to all the HR professionals
- 23**
Welcome to the ANPR family & Kudos

On the cover: Ranger Millie Jimenez of Grand Teton National Park is one of the thousands of employees who make up the National Park Service. This issue of *Ranger* magazine explores the human relations programs that help keep the NPS operating properly. Photo: NPS / Ann Mattson

When the editorial committee met last fall to talk about content for *Ranger* magazine, a lively discussion ensued about the need for an issue dedicated to human resources. I, being new to ANPR, was not convinced. HR? When I think of human resources, I think of paperwork and official minutiae like claiming the proper deductions on tax forms or monitoring retirement accounts and changing healthcare deductibles. Not exactly sexy stuff.



But delving deeper into “HR,” it turns out the folks who do this type of work also do so much more. And the issues they monitor are vitally important to the National Park Service employees who depend on them for fair and equitable treatment.

In this issue of *Ranger*, we look at a few of the more pressing issues of the day. The USA Hire assessment tool is at the front of the line. Critics say it hamstring candidates from being considered for jobs of which they are eligible, and their list of grievances is long. So debated is this topic that our author, though very much qualified to address the issue, prefers to remain anonymous.

Another current challenge with which HR professionals struggle is hiring and retaining a diverse workforce that better represents us as a country. Alan Spears, our cultural resources columnist, challenges those within the NPS to rethink how the park service is going about improving and expanding a more diverse workplace. I encourage you to read this very well-written and thoughtful piece.

The rules and regulations behind uniform attire gets plenty of attention too, and is constantly being monitored to better represent the needs of park employees. Jan Lemons, who served on the uniform committee, shares her thoughts on the new products being introduced – the result of listening to park employees' wishes for change.

And finally, on a lighter note, we offer the latest on this year's Ranger Rendezvous 44, which is once again set to meet in person, this year in Florida. We look forward to meeting members new and old, forging new relationships – and perhaps even picking up a good story or two.

— Melissa DeVaughn
Ranger magazine editor

RANGER

THE JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL PARK RANGERS
Vol. 37, No. 3 Summer 2021

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.

ANPR business address P.O. Box 151432, Alexandria, VA 22315-9998, anpr.org. Members receive *Ranger* as part of their membership dues. See the website or *Ranger* for membership/subscription details.

FINAL DEADLINES

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



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

President Paul Anderson, RETI
Past President Jan Lemons, WOTR
Secretary Lauren Kopplin, DINO
Treasurer Bill Wade, RETI

Board Members

Education & Training Tom Banks, OLYM
Fundraising Activities Jeanette Meleen, CARL
Internal Communications Elsa Hansen, SEUG
Membership Services Reghan Tank, XNPS
Professional Issues Tim Moore, NAMA
Seasonal Perspectives Lauren DeGennaro, MWRO
Strategic Planning Jonathan Shafer, NCRO
Government Affairs Rebecca Harriett, RETI

Staff

Membership Services Chris Reinhardt

Ranger Magazine

Editor/Publisher Melissa DeVaughn

Professional Ranger section

Cultural resources Alan Spears, NPCA
Interpretation Brian Forist, IU
Protection Kevin Moses, SHEN
In Print Rick Smith, RETI

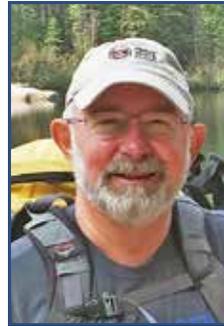
Copyright © 2021. All rights reserved. Articles and images in this publication are the sole property of ANPR and *Ranger* magazine, except where otherwise indicated. Republication in whole or part is not allowed without written permission.

ANPR advocates for issues affecting rangers

President's message

— Paul R. Anderson

Summer is upon us, and it is busier, and we hope safer than ever. Our national park areas and our exceptional NPS staff have been an anchor for Americans throughout the



pandemic of the past 18 months. Never before has the importance and value of our national park areas been so visibly and emotionally demonstrated! While NPS staffing levels continue to suffer from years of declining funds, visitation has increased. You have steadfastly stepped up to the plate and responded to the challenges with innovation, professionalism and dedication. I am proud to have served the National Park Service as a ranger for more than 40 years, and I am even more proud of your current efforts and performance to protect our parks and make our visitors' experience safe, educational and enjoyable.

As I write this message, ANPR is deeply engaged in several issues of importance to our membership and NPS employees in general. Last quarter we sent a letter to Acting Director Shawn Bengé and Assistant Secretary Shannon Estenez about USA Hire and its failure to meet DOI guidelines for a secondary hiring assessment for NPS positions, especially temporary and seasonal positions. USA Hire does not measure specific job-related skills or qualifications as DOI guidance requires. We offered to work with the NPS and the DOI to identify other kinds of secondary assessments that might be useful, and that are directly job-related. As of this writing, it appears that NPS will discontinue using USA Hire for temporary and seasonal positions. We are pleased with this decision, and hope that any future secondary assessment is fair, non-discriminatory, transparent, and specific to the job being filled. We will continue to support the effort to repair and improve the NPS hiring process for the benefit of all NPS employees, and the

National Park Service. We hope that NPS will also identify and implement alternative assessments for permanent positions that improve their ability to assess job-related skills and competencies, including both eligibility factors and job suitability factors. Those assessments currently exist, and could be adapted to the federal government and the NPS requirements.

In addition, we are currently working with Dr. William Moreto at the University of Central Florida and one of his PhD candidates on a survey of ANPR members (and perhaps other NPS employees) pertaining to the evolution of law enforcement attitudes, leadership, training and other aspects among NPS protection rangers. They plan to work with us to design the survey and distribute it. Once the draft survey is provided to us, we will get input from others. We hope that the survey results will help identify best practices for recruiting, hiring, training and leadership to promote professional law enforcement and high morale among the NPS protection rangers in achieving the National Park Service mission. Dr. Moreto and his graduate student have committed to making a presentation on their project at Ranger Rendezvous 44 in Jacksonville this October.

With COVID-19 vaccinations well underway, we are looking forward to an in-person Rendezvous in Jacksonville. I hope to see you all there, to once again celebrate each other and the National Park System, explore issues of concern, and learn more about how we can improve our performance in achieving the NPS mission. This issue of *Ranger* addresses some of these ideas and accomplishments. I hope that as you read this the NPS finally has a permanent Director, and that Interior Secretary Haaland's leadership continues to help us conserve the National Park areas unimpaired for the enjoyment and benefit of this and future generations.

Thank you all for what you do every day!

— Paul R. Anderson
ANPR President

People make the parks

Roosevelt championed fair hiring practices for federal employees

By *Melissa DeVaughn*

One of the less glamorous – yet absolutely vital – aspects of the National Park Service’s inner workings is its human resources department. This cadre of professionals is responsible for helping to manage the careers of its employees, from the moment they are vetted and hired, to their retirement many years later. HR is the place to seek help with medical issues, financial decisions, retirement benefits and more. This behind-the-scenes work is critical to the well being of NPS’s employees and ultimately their retention and ascension within the ranks.

Teddy Roosevelt, whose name is synonymous with conservation of public lands, is also behind the human resources support network that exists today. Today’s U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is the NPS’ HR department, evolving as a result of the Civil Service Act of 1883, which created the Civil Service Commission. Roosevelt, as the commission’s leader before he went on to become president, was guided by one principle: that employee selection and retention should be based on the merits of one’s ability to do the job and uphold the values of the fledgling National Park System.

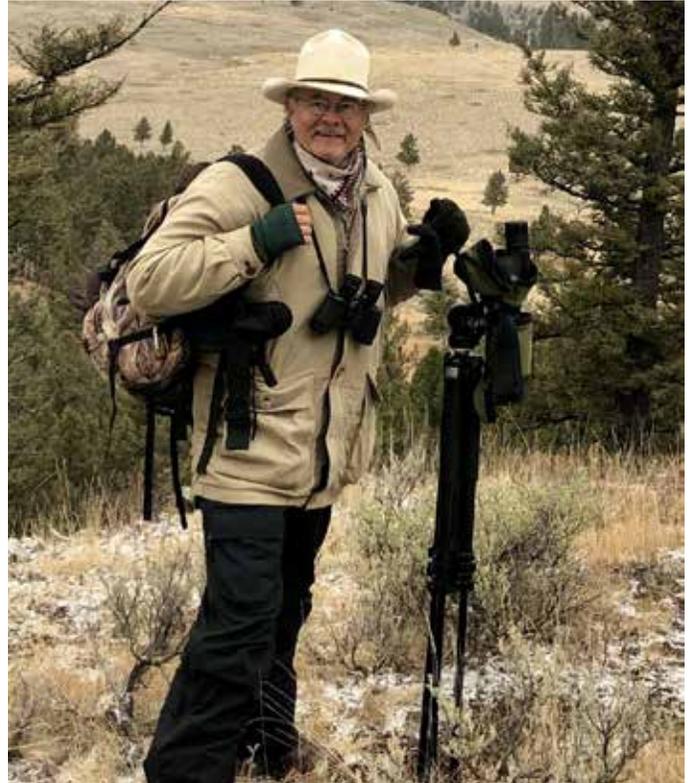
“I don’t think the average federal employee knows how much Theodore Roosevelt is a relevant factor in the job they possess, the classification they possess,” said Stacy Allen, chief ranger at Shiloh National Military Park in Shiloh, Tenn. Allen, an avid historian and reader of Roosevelt biographies, also has a service-wide reputation as a Roosevelt lookalike. With brimmed hat and bushy mustache, Allen jokes he doesn’t look like Teddy Roosevelt: “Teddy Roosevelt looks like me.”

“Park service people get hung up on the conservation end of Roosevelt,” Allen added. “They don’t appreciate that Teddy had a great deal to do with the creation of the merit system job they hold – and any modern civil service job bears a direct link and foundation from his influence.”

Indeed, this early work is evident today as the OPM continues to utilize the classification and merit system. But times have also changed. The National Park system is vastly larger than it was in the early 1900s – Roosevelt alone is responsible for the creation of five national parks during his 1901-1909 tenure as U.S. president, and for doubling the number of national park sites through the passage of the Antiquities Act of June 8, 1906. Parkland has continued to grow since then.

The United States has a more diverse work force now too, creating ever-evolving challenges for fairness when attracting new employees, hiring them and retaining them long term.

“Citizenship reflected upon society at the time, and we can say it then favored to white males,” Allen said. “That same equal merit status for civil service employment he established then runs true for minorities and women today.



Stacy Allen, chief ranger at Shiloh National Military Park in Shiloh, Tenn., makes his yearly visit to Yellowstone National Park in 2020. Allen, an avid Teddy Roosevelt aficionado, also happens to look just like the former president who is also credited with creating fair hiring practices for federal employees. Photo: Stacy Allen

“Over time, the need to balance our workforce to reflect favorably for society has shown there’s work to be done,” Allen acknowledged. “There’s always work to be done. One, we have to help people in under-represented populations recognize that federal employment is a good career, and opportunities exist for them. They stand to be the next generation of employees performing these civil service jobs, and recruitment and retention is key.”

As the NPS enters a new era under a promising administration, now is the time to meet again those ideals Roosevelt fought for so long ago. And it starts, Allen said, with the park service’s No. 1 asset: its people.

“Roosevelt had a passion for fairness and justice,” Allen continued. “Yes, he was flawed, but we are all flawed. He was uniquely flawed and that’s why we are still talking about him today. He understood government service was to the people and for the people and he wanted it to be fair and balanced and the job to be respected.”

Melissa DeVaughn is editor of Ranger magazine.



This stereotypical image of Theodore Roosevelt shows him astride a horse as a volunteer U.S. Cavalry officer. However, Roosevelt also was the defining force behind the creation of a federal hiring system based on merit and fairness. The work he did in the late 1880s and early 1900s is the basis for today's NPS human resources hiring practices. Photo: NPS

The Green & Grey

A year in the life of a uniform committee member working with VF Solutions and rangers

By Jan Lemons

AFTER 25 YEARS OF WORKING FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE in uniformed positions, I finally was placed on the national uniform committee as part of my position in the regional office. I wanted to be a voice for uniforms for women in law enforcement, and in general. I wore men's pants because the women's pants never fit right, had foot issues and needed special footwear, and always wondered what was up with the rainbow of colors of uniform parts? These are some of the same questions I have heard repeatedly from other employees.

But what I found when I joined the committee was not what I expected. Instead of an army of staff in the uniform office, I found one lone ranger. Ramie Lynch is the sole employee (and the heart and soul) of the uniform program. He has been responsible for the program for several years and his quick responses to questions and issues is one of the fastest I have witnessed in all my years with the National Park Service. Supporting him on the committee were selected staff members from regional offices. The group is dedicated to ensuring the voices from the field are heard.

We had a uniform committee meeting in Tennessee and were able to visit the VF Distribution Center. When we arrived there, we found several VF employees committed to serving NPS needs and asking for feedback. The VF staff is constantly trying to improve upon things and make us happy, which is no small task with so many uniform wearers. I got to try on the new women's fit pants and they fit perfect in my regular size. We got to see how the name plates got made, patches sewn on, and rows and rows and rows of boxes ready to be picked and shipped out to our parks. We viewed new items, too, including the new zip-up sweater, which is receiving lots of positive feedback. We also asked for, and received at lightning speed, search-and-rescue technical shirts to be added to the program. Also, keep an eye out for new shorts based on the new trousers already available.

As far as color for the uniform pieces is concerned, VF has worked tirelessly in the past few years to ensure the colors "ranger green" and "ranger grey" all match. If I had a dollar for every person who told me the 5.11 pants selected are the wrong color and 5.11 makes a color that more closely matches ranger green, I could finance my next trip to Disneyland! While these color discrepancies may be true, there is a reason: The color selected is manufactured



Gwen Pettiford of VF Solutions, left, shows a selection of gear, including new socks, to rangers at Stones River National Battlefield in Tennessee. Photo: Jan Lemons

in a compliant country whereas the other color that more closely matches is NOT manufactured in a compliant country. The new first tactical pants match even closer and I think the women's fit is better. And what about the socks? Everyone loves the socks, but not the restrictions that you can only order two pairs. With that said, I have good news. The limit has been raised to five pair. Again, if I had a dollar for everyone who talked about giving socks to friends and family members, I could go to Disneyland yet again. And by the way: Please don't give uniform parts to friends and family members. Uniforms are meant to be used by park staff only. For shoes,

it is recognized that everyone has a variety of needs with their feet and with the locations in which they work. While there are some choices for footwear on the uniform site, it's an option to buy any type of footwear that works for your feet as long as the shoes are brown and polishable.

Thank you to all of those who field-tested the first tactical pants and rain wear. This program relies on your assistance and all comments are taken into consideration. As you can imagine, trying to make a uniform that fits and looks good on 20,000 people is no small task. If you have any questions or concerns speak with your park uniform coordinators or contact Customer Service at VF solutions. And I am always happy to answer questions if you can't get things resolved. Check the uniform page on the park website for latest updates. Wear the highly recognizable uniform with pride and know the staff in the NPS and VF Solutions are working hard to enhance the uniform program.

Jan Lemons is at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts and past ANPR president. She served on the Uniform Committee.



Tyler Bunn of VF Solutions shows the new uniforms to Uniform Committee member Rene Buel. Photo: Jan Lemons



INTERIOR FEDERAL CREDIT UNION
Your Natural Resource for Financial Services
interiorfcu.org

Join Interior Federal Credit Union, *Your Natural Resource for Financial Services*

- Loans for Every Purpose
- Savings and Investment Options
- Some of the Best Rates in the Country
- 5,600 Shared Branches
- 55,000 TOTALLY Free ATMs Nationwide

Federally Insured by NCUA
Equal Housing Lender



Establishing a career in the National Park Service can be daunting enough without the cumbersome USA Hire program adding to the equation.
Photo: Kurt Moses / NPS

A hiring headache

USA Hire: The wrong tool to help NPS employees advance their careers

— An ANPR report —

EXECUTIVE ORDER (EO) 13932 ON MODERNIZING AND Reforming the Assessment and Hiring of Federal Job Candidates was signed on June 26, 2020 and went into effect December 24, 2020. The stated intent of this EO is to make the hiring process more efficient, but since its inception, human resources professionals, hiring managers and job applicants alike are realizing that it is making matters significantly worse.

The roll out of these new requirements has been cumbersome. Prior to December 24, 2020, bureaus had received some guidance on implementing these changes, but HR professionals were not aware of how to properly move forward to meet many of these requirements. At one point there was question as to whether this would be moved forward, and HR was advised to “wait.” Furthermore, with these new requirements becoming mandatory during the holidays, much of the process was halted for several weeks. Clear guidance, updated templates for announcements, and training was not provided until

January/February 2021. Many announcements had already opened before clear guidance on building some of these assessments were in place. Some pieces had been provided but not the whole process and implementation information. It has been less than ideal to say the least. All the while HR is trying to “sell” this to supervisors who now must abide, with a smile, which is anything but genuine.

The EO promotes the participation of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), current employees who have knowledge of the position being hired and the skills required to perform successfully to identify highly skilled talent using multiple assessments. In addition to HR review, SMEs will also review applicants to determine who is “Best Qualified.” This means that agencies can no longer rely solely on an applicant’s answers to the self-assessed questionnaire. While these traditional assessment questionnaires can still be used, they must be used in conjunction with another assessment tool that measures job-related competencies, prior to referral of applicants to the hiring manager.

Additional concerns over USA Hire include:

- USA Hire can only be completed on a computer and not everyone owns or has access to a computer.
- If an applicant fails the exam they have no chance to take it again for a full year. This is simply unfair.
- SME panel members are not always available to participant on a panel in a timely manner and managers are having to scramble to find volunteers to help them with this requirement.
- It now takes longer to hire an applicant than it once did.
- Many qualified candidates are eliminated due to the limitations of the USA Hire system.

The Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) USA Hire Assessment tool may be used in conjunction with management-developed assessment questionnaires to meet the secondary hurdle requirements. USA Hire is a repository of OPM/Industrial and Organizational psychologists designed assessments, which measure general competencies and skills critical to the job, providing a "whole person" assessment. Applicants will be invited to take the assessment after initial application if they have rated themselves eligible and meet minimum qualifications. Applicants who do not take the assessment or fail to meet the minimum qualifications will not be eligible for further consideration. Additionally, if an applicant fails a USA Hire Assessment for a particular grade and series, they are not able to re-take the assessment for the entire calendar year, and their scores will be recorded and used for any applications that use USA Hire for the particular series and grade.

USA Hire is also not available for every recruitment, series, grade, etc. It is not available for supervisory positions (because DOI decided not to purchase the supervisory assessment), interdisciplinary positions, and a variety of series that the National Park Service (NPS) hires regularly (park guides, facilities services assistant, etc.). For these positions, HR and managers must opt for another secondary assessment, which may include: SME resume review panels, SME interview panels, SME review of written narratives/writing samples, and job knowledge tests.

Secondary assessment options must be completed prior to applicants being referred to the hiring managers. This requires upfront planning and consultation with HR prior to the job announcement being posted. Managers must identify which option best fits their recruitment, as well as SME panel members who will be available shortly after the job announcement closes. Generally, each assessment will count for 50 percent of the applicant's total score (if using two assessments). Only competitive applicants who meet a predetermined cut point score will be reviewed for further consideration. This means, only applicants applying for promotion, and certain other competitive applicants such as Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act applicants, and Veterans Employment Opportunity Act eligibles must meet these cut points. Noncompetitive applicants (those who have held the grade of the positions they are applying to, certain veterans, returned Peace Corps volunteers, individuals with disabili-

ties, to name a few) do not need to meet the cut scores, and are referred even if they are not necessarily among the best qualified.

These new requirements are proving to be daunting for applicants who now must take one- to three-hour assessments, or be reviewed by a SME panel (who frankly, do not have an understanding of Human Resources Qualifications Determination Processes, which is a certificate program that HR staffing specialists complete that make them experts in the field). The requirements also are cumbersome for managers, SME panel members and HR specialist – all of whom are struggling to gather information, and muddle their way through these new requirements.

Thus far, the applicant pools are still quite large, many are still taking the exam (begrudgingly) and getting through to the next process. Managers are still getting large lists of applicants, partially due to the larger applicants pools, and in general due to COVID. A better way to cut down on applicant pools is to put an applicant count cut-off on an announcement – not place undue burden on the applicants themselves. All in all, the executive order is requiring more work on all parties' ends than it is saving managers time. While some of these additional hurdle options are useful for some recruitments, the flat-out across-the-board requirement for these is, for lack of better words, ridiculous.

I personally, have not spoken with anyone who is in favor of these new requirements. Managers have always had the discretion to use the multiple hurdle approach, which we do use often in the National Capital Area. Requiring it, by law, especially when we are lining the pockets of a private-sector contracted company, seems not only corrupt, but a waste of taxpayer dollars – taxpayers who must now take extensive exams to be considered for even the lowest level of federal positions.

An NPS Human Resources Specialist provided the content of this article on the condition of anonymity.

The screenshot displays the USA Hire assessment interface. At the top, it shows 'Occupational Judgment Example', a timer for '4 Min. 6 Sec. Remaining', and a progress bar. The main instruction reads: 'Watch the following video. Choose the most AND least effective course of action from the options below.' Below this is 'Step 1. Scenario' which describes a situation where Barbara and Derek are coworkers and Barbara has a new assignment. A 'Missing Plug-in' button is visible. 'Step 2. Courses of Action' lists four options with radio buttons for 'Most Effective' and 'Least Effective' selection. The USA Hire logo and tagline 'Transforming Government One Hire At A Time' are at the bottom, along with a 'Record answer' button.

A sample question from the USA Hire assessment tool. Critics of USA Hire say it causes more work, and is more complicated for all parties involved. Source: OPM

Confessions of a VIP lighthouse keeper

Story and photos by Jonathan Schechter

“One of the gladdest moments in life, is the departure upon a distant journey into unknown lands. Shaking off with one mighty effort the fetters of habit, the burden of routine, the cloak of many cares and the slavery of home, man feels once more happy.”

— Sir Richard Burton 1856

MY FIRST FORAY onto the shoreline of South Manitou Island as a volunteer lighthouse keeper for Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (SLBE) became one of my “gladdest moments in life.” It remains so today, and now after four tours of duty at that historic 1871 lighthouse overlooking the often-stormy Manitou Passage of Lake Michigan I reflect back on how it all came to be as I count the months until my fifth tour — and I make three confessions.

Although I had never worked for the National Park Service, I often embraced nature’s way in the splendor of the mainland of Sleeping Bear Dunes; a dramatic landscape of forests and sand dunes where the rhythm of crashing waves shapes the spectacular shoreline. And then six years ago, just a few weeks after I discovered my semi-retirement naturalist position in Oakland County was about to be “downsized,” I stumbled upon a volunteer position announcement from Matthew Mohrman, the volunteer coordinator for SLBE. They were in need of a lighthouse keeper for a six-week tour of duty on 5,280-acre South Manitou Island. Their post was a tempting portal to enter a “distant journey into unknown lands.”

With my interest stirred, I researched South Manitou and its rich nautical history with chilling tales of tragedies, shipwrecks, hardships and endless human determination. When the Erie Canal was completed in 1826, the island took on new importance. Crescent Bay, the island’s deep natural harbor,



Jonathan Schechter is a VIP for Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Michigan and writes nature blogs for Oakland County Michigan Government. Photo: Courtesy Jonathan Schechter

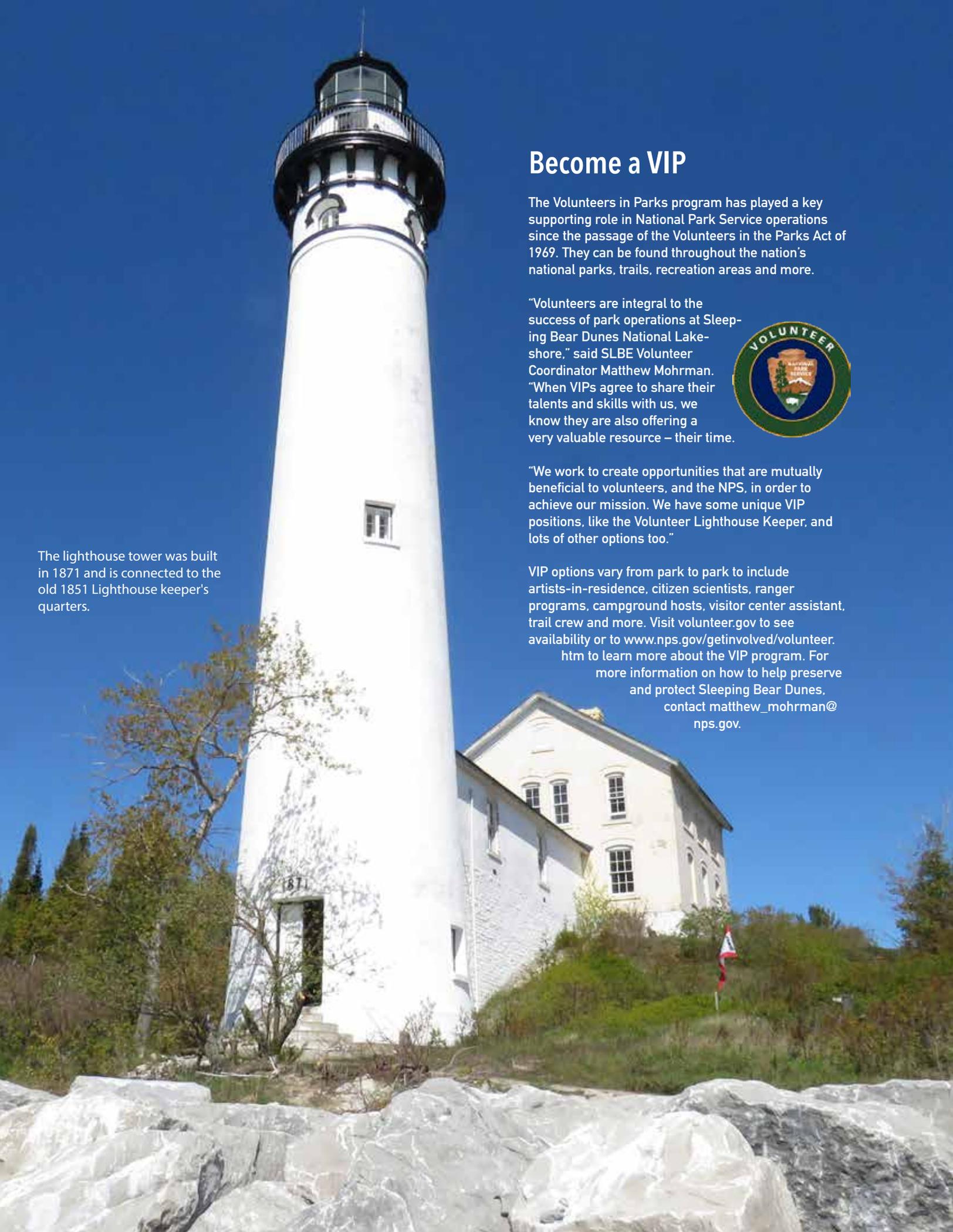
offered refuge from storms for sailing ships and steamers that navigated the Manitou Passage. South Manitou’s strategic location between Chicago and the Straits of Mackinac also made it an ideal location for steamers to take on firewood to fuel their boilers as they navigated Lake Michigan.

I was enticed further by the existence of a grove of giant cedars and sand dunes towering 400 feet above the shoreline, and learning the first of three lighthouses was built in 1839 to aid the expanding shipping industry. That was followed by establishment of a U.S. Life-Saving Service (USLSS)

rescue station at Crescent Bay that was converted into a ranger station after the park service acquired the island in the 1970s. When I discovered the USLSS was the predecessor to the U.S. Coast Guard and had the memorable motto of “You have to go out, but you don’t have to come back,” I knew what I had to do. Go out to South Manitou!

There was only one problem and that’s where my first confession is in order: I knew absolutely nothing about lighthouses. I was also completely unaware of the existence of Volunteers-In-Parks (VIP), which is a National Park Service-wide program that allows individuals to play an active role in helping to protect and share our national treasures and support NPS operations.

I took a leap of faith and reached out to Mohrman with the goal of stirring his interest in me as a viable candidate, not just someone looking for adventure. I mailed a letter of inter-



The lighthouse tower was built in 1871 and is connected to the old 1851 Lighthouse keeper's quarters.

Become a VIP

The Volunteers in Parks program has played a key supporting role in National Park Service operations since the passage of the Volunteers in the Parks Act of 1969. They can be found throughout the nation's national parks, trails, recreation areas and more.

"Volunteers are integral to the success of park operations at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore," said SLBE Volunteer Coordinator Matthew Mohrman. "When VIPs agree to share their talents and skills with us, we know they are also offering a very valuable resource – their time."



"We work to create opportunities that are mutually beneficial to volunteers, and the NPS, in order to achieve our mission. We have some unique VIP positions, like the Volunteer Lighthouse Keeper, and lots of other options too."

VIP options vary from park to park to include artists-in-residence, citizen scientists, ranger programs, campground hosts, visitor center assistant, trail crew and more. Visit volunteer.gov to see availability or to www.nps.gov/getinvolved/volunteer.htm to learn more about the VIP program. For more information on how to help preserve and protect Sleeping Bear Dunes, contact matthew_mohrman@nps.gov.



The Great Lakes Piping Plover Conservation Team is a partnership of agencies, universities and volunteers, including VIP participants. In this image, a team member and NPS volunteer are weighing and documenting statistics of a banded piping plover near the South Manitou dock.

est with an updated resume emphasizing my experience as a naturalist and ER paramedic background along with my active membership in the Wilderness Medical Society. My goal was simple; sell myself as a candidate with multiple useful skills for island life in addition to being a lighthouse keeper. I discovered there were no specific qualifications for this VIP position beyond representing the NPS in a professional and engaging manner, and being physically up to the task, which would include perhaps a dozen trips up and down the lighthouse tower each day with visitors in tow, and being flexible and willing to help where needed.

Three months later I broke my “burden of routine” with the act of stepping from a National Park Service landing craft onto the old Crescent Bay dock of South Manitou Island. Within minutes of arrival, I was smitten by the place.

After hand-shaking with staff and other volunteers, some of whom monitored endangered piping plovers that nest on the island, I headed to “my” lighthouse to climb the 117 steps of the spiral iron staircase to the catwalk for the first time. My official role was to share the history of the lighthouse, the Manitou Passage and the island to visitors and campers, and that is best done from the base of the lighthouse and for those willing and able, from the catwalk. I did both—and more.

Confession No. 2: “Other duties.” I was involved in diverse island operations including assisting with ferry arrivals,

Eastern Coyotes are the island’s apex predator. Their tracks are common along the shoreline and sightings often occur near the lighthouse.

helping campers search for the Big Dipper, to the occasional need for trail inspections and participation in minor search-and-rescue operations. At times I would go into the field with NPS staff from the mainland on their various wildlife monitoring and flora research studies, which gave me a better understanding of the island’s natural and unnatural history. My most unexpected experience involved Mammoth Distilling. South Manitou Island was the sole-source for Rosen Rye, the Prohibition- era’s most-celebrated whiskey grain



“My official role was to share the history of the lighthouse, the Manitou Passage and the island to visitors and campers, and that is best done from the base of the lighthouse and for those willing and able, from the catwalk. I did both — and more.”

—Jonathan Schechter, VIP



American white pelicans occasionally take a “rest stop” on the island's shoreline and when one ‘yawns’ in front of the lighthouse, it's a truly amazing site.

and now, 100 years after it was first planted, Rosen Rye is being reintroduced by Mammoth Distilling to South Manitou's historic Hutzler Farm.

It's Confession No. 3 however that fuels my island-dreaming passion and will most certainly lure me back. The lighthouse is an ideal wildlife-watching post. Eastern coyotes crossed over from the mainland during a hard freeze of the Manitou Passage. One coyote I came to recognize I now call Brother Coyote. We occasionally arrive at the lighthouse at the same time when all is quiet. I climb the steps to watch sunrise or sunset, and Brother Coyote patrols the breakwall for fresh herring gull eggs. I look forward to seeing him on my next tour of duty and believe he will be back on the breakwall since we have both become creatures of habit with a fondness of the lighthouse habitat.

I am always excited to see American white pelicans at the lighthouse breakwall and watch bald eagles and cormorants soar past the catwalk. Huge American toads thrive on the island and are prey for eastern hognose snakes. When hognose snakes flatten their heads and hiss in what appears to be a threatening manner island guests sometimes get worried. “No, they are not puff adders,” has become one of my most-repeated phrases, for I quickly discovered that I was the go-to guy for questions on nature's way, even when up on the catwalk. That definitely adds to the pleasure of my ever-changing VIP role.

Jonathan Schechter is a VIP for Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and writes nature blogs for Oakland County Michigan Government.



The historic U.S. Life-Saving Service Station overlooking the dock on Crescent Bay was constructed in 1901 and now serves as the NPS Ranger Station. It is the largest structure on the island.

Rangering in the new reality

Story by ANPR Planning Committee

THE IMPROVING PUBLIC HEALTH SITUATION ACROSS THE United States means ANPR is excited to invite you to Ranger Rendezvous 44 in Jacksonville, Florida! After last year's enjoyable but socially distant, virtual meeting, we are glad to be planning to meet face-to-face Oct. 12-17, 2021. Set the time aside so that you can reconnect and recharge with fellow ANPR members. The general schedule of activities includes:

- Oct. 12-13: Training sessions.
- Oct. 13: Board of Directors meet (members invited to sit in).
- Oct. 14, 16 and 17: Keynote presentations, panels, concurrent breakout sessions. President's Reception evening of Oct. 14 and awards event with entertainment evening of Oct. 16.
- Oct. 15: Field trips or other recreational activities on your own.
- Oct. 15: Evening reception with exhibitors.
- Oct. 15 through noon Oct. 17: Exhibits.

Following is a summary of ANPR's early planning to bring to you exciting conference sessions, training, field trips and other activities.

PRESENTATIONS

One constant with the change of administrations is change! Some changes are familiar; a return to how things were. Some changes will take us in new directions. There is a lot to keep up with. Speakers from inside and outside the NPS will address issues meaningful to us, such as:

- Hiring and recruitment.

- Ensuring justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion among staff and for visitors.
- Responsibilities and law enforcement's role in park and visitor protection.
- Park housing.
- Natural and cultural resource management.
- Interpretation and education.
- NPS uniform program and more.

We will invite the Secretary of the Interior, the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and the NPS Director to share their priorities and challenges. Key leaders from the Washington Office will be invited to provide updates on their respective responsibilities. Local superintendents and the regional director will be asked to "welcome" Rendezvous participants and provide information about the area. And we are working on having a "mystery guest."

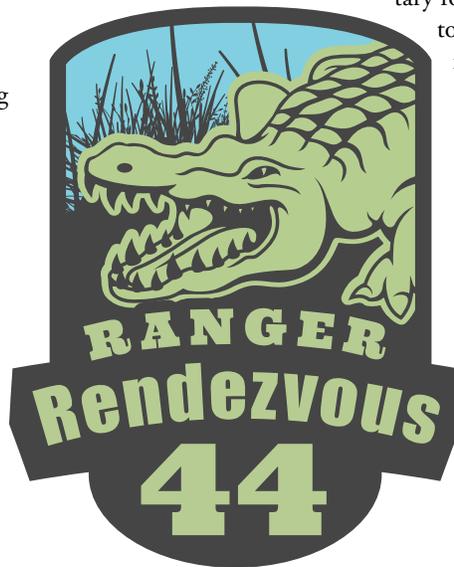
TRAINING

We are working on scheduling training sessions on topics such as Operational Leadership, the incident command system, retirement planning, cultural resource preservation and others.

FIELD TRIPS

Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve (TIMU):

Visit one of the last unspoiled coastal wetlands on the Atlantic Coast. Discover 6,000 years of human history and experience the beauty of salt marshes, coastal dunes, and hardwood hammocks. Our tour will stop at Fort Caroline National Memorial where you'll discover stories of exploration and survival and the short-lived





The Kingsley Plantation as seen from the river, located in Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve. Photo: NPS

French presence in 16th Century Florida.

Next we will go by boat to Kingsley Plantation where participants will discover the stories of the enslaved people of this 18th and 19th Century plantation via an award-winning audio tour.

Following this, take in a drive through the Talbot Islands, with stops at American Beach and Driftwood Beach if time allows.

Castillo de San Marcos National Monument (CASA):

Visit the oldest masonry and only extant 17th Century fort in North America. Castillo de San Marcos symbolizes a clash between cultures; still resonant with the struggles of an earlier time, these original walls provide tangible evidence of America's grim but remarkable history. After a ranger-led tour of the fort, have a leisurely lunch and shopping in St. Augustine's Historic District. Following lunch, tour Fort Mose Historic State Park, a premier site on the Florida Black Heritage Trail, and discover the history of the 1738 fort built and established as a free black settlement, the first to be legally sanctioned in what would become territory of the United States.

OTHER TRADITIONAL AND SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Our Awards evening will be held Oct. 16, with a special guest to be announced.

Top among the awards is the celebration of the Harry Yount

Award, one of the hallmarks of recognition for park rangers. It is the kind of recognition that rewards both those who receive it and celebrates our profession as a whole. More than two dozen park rangers have been honored with the national award since it was first introduced in 1994, and ANPR will recognize all of the past national and regional honorees at a special gala ceremony in lieu of our usual banquet. Look forward to seeing past NPS greats and learning about their sacrifices on behalf of park visitors and to protect parks.

The National Parks Conservation Association also will present the Stephen Tyng Mather Award.

Following the awards presentation will be a reception and entertainment.

The traditional raffle and auction of special items provided by members and vendors will again be included. You can also look forward to long-standing Rendezvous traditions like trivia night, NPS movies, and, of course, the traditional hospitality room, which will be available for making new acquaintances, renewing old ones and solving the world's problems.

BEYOND THE CONFERENCE

Visiting Jacksonville: Lots to do in and around Jacksonville

The Jacksonville Museum of Science and History is just blocks from the conference hotel with a planetarium, science displays,



A birds-eye view of the backwaters and creeks of Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve. Photo: NPS

and local history.

Take a St. Johns River tour. The river flows through the heart of Jacksonville, and visitors can take a river taxi to ferry them up and down the river. The water taxi features information about the river's history and ecology.

The Downtown St. Johns Riverwalk is a popular place to go for a walk or a run. It is located directly behind the conference hotel. Connect to paths leading to shops, bars, breweries, and other businesses on and near the south bank of the St. Johns River.

BREWERIES, BARS, RESTAURANTS, AND NIGHTLIFE

In addition to the bar in our hospitality suite (whose cost is included in your registration) and the bar and restaurant at our conference hotel, attendees are only a few blocks' walking distance from dozens of local businesses that feature Atlantic caught seafood, live music, and locally brewed beer.

COVID CONCERNS

The Rendezvous Planning Committee will make changes to event plans if directed to do so by public health authorities or if there is reason to believe that hosting the conference poses an unreasonable risk to attendees' health.

The committee remains optimistic that the increasing availability of vaccines and the overall decline in COVID cases will mean par-



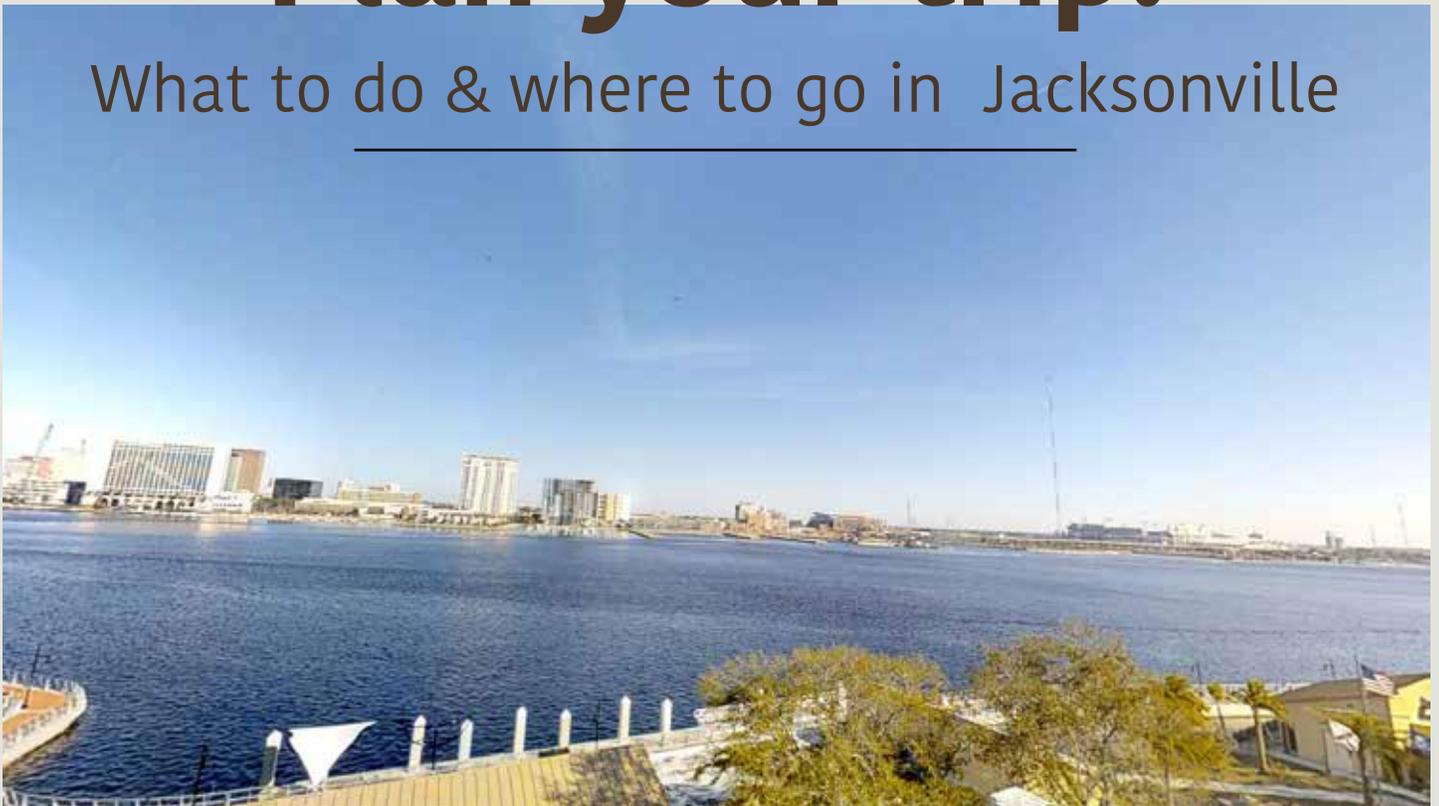
Take in the serene marshes at Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve. Photo: NPS

ticipants will be ready to get together in person with your friends and colleagues. If you have questions or want to get engaged with event planning, or have a presentation you'd like considered, contact jshafer@anpr.org to learn more.

There is something for everyone at Ranger Rendezvous 44, and we're looking forward to seeing you there!

Plan your trip:

What to do & where to go in Jacksonville



WHEN: Oct. 11-17, 2021

WHERE: Jacksonville, Fla.

COST: Full conference, is \$99 for members, \$85 for student members with ID, or \$135 for nonmembers for early registration before Sept. 5. Regular period registration rates are \$135, \$115, and \$165, respectively. One-day, two-day and evening-only rates start at \$35. Visit anpr.org for those details.



CLOSEST AIRPORT: Jacksonville International Airport is the closest to the Rendezvous event. It is a 25-minute drive south from the airport to the conference facility.

CONFERENCE FACILITY: The Southbank Hotel at Jacksonville Riverwalk draws inspiration from the St. Johns River, ports, and area bridges – providing an authentic Northeast Florida experience. The centrally located hotel is nestled on the Southbank of downtown Jacksonville near the trendy San Marco and Riverside historic districts. At this uniquely independent hotel, you'll enjoy the best of both worlds: big city amenities and boutique style. There is on-site dining and lounges, a pool and courtyard, and 40,000 square feet of event space. The conference rate is \$118 (plus tax) for single/double room, which includes up to two free full breakfasts each day.

REGISTRATION: Open beginning June 1. Visit www.anpr.org to register and for other event details.



The view from the Southbank Hotel, at top, takes in the water and surrounding San Marco and Riverside historic districts. Above, the rooms at the Riverside offer plenty of space to spread out.

Pilot Rock
RJ Thomas Mfg. Co.

Many thanks for sponsoring
our Ranger Rendezvous events

IN PRINT

Never a dull moment in the life of a park ranger

By Rick Smith

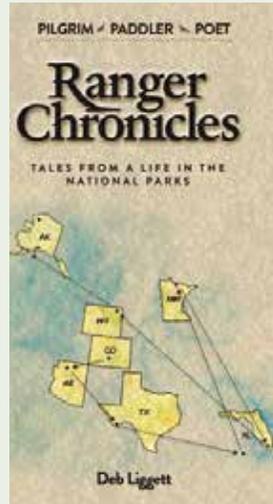
LEGENDARY YELLOWSTONE RANGER, JERRY MERNIN, ONCE OBSERVED, all ranger stories begin with “And there I was” and end with “and that’s no shit.” If you apply that formula to retired ranger Deb Liggett’s book “Ranger Chronicles: Tales From a Life in the National Parks,” the “there I was” part of her story is the typical life of a nomadic national park ranger: Grand Canyon, Big Bend, Great Sand Dunes, Dry Tortugas, Voyageurs, Everglades National Parks, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Aniakchak National Monument, Devils Tower National Monument, and Alagnak National River.

“And there she was” in Big Bend. She was leading a nature hike, pointing out the unique plants of the Chihuahuan desert. Suddenly, she realizes that she doesn’t quite know where she is. Headlines flash through her mind: *Ranger leads hikers to their deaths*. Finally, she crests a hill and sees the parking lot ... “and that’s no shit.”

“And there she was” as a district interpreter in Everglades when Hurricane Andrew hit Florida, the third most powerful storm to ever hit the United States. As a part of the designated operations team, Deb and four others began to seek help. An incident management team was dispatched to the park. The park sent uniformed rangers to the addresses of park employees to determine if everyone was safe. It took 10 days before they accounted for all the employees at Everglades, Big Cypress, and Biscayne parks. Over the next several months, 900 employees from parks around the nation were sent to Everglades to help the three NPS areas recover. The NPS really is a team, “and that’s no shit.”

“And there she was” in Wyoming, as superintendent of Devils Tower, embroiled in a First Amendment case that went all the way to the Supreme Court. Devils Tower has been a point of contention for some time. First, there’s the issue of the name of the Monument. American Indians were angered by the disrespectful nature of the name. Deb, however, realized that changing the name was beyond the scope of the Monument staff. What they could do, however, was to work on a voluntary climbing ban on the Tower during the month of June, a time of special significance to the Northern Plains Indians.

Deb and her staff, through what must have been an agonizing series of meetings with climbers and interested Indians finally released a draft plan that called for the voluntary closing of the Tower



“The Ranger Chronicles,” by Deb Liggett, Jackrabbit Press, ISBN 978-0-9761494-2-2 (paperback) 172 pages

“And there she was” in Big Bend. She was leading a nature hike, pointing out the unique plants of the Chihuahuan desert. Suddenly, she realizes that she doesn’t quite know where she is. Headlines flash through her mind: *Ranger leads hikers to their deaths*.

– Rick Smith, *In Print* book reviewer

during the month of June. Following public comment, the plan was adopted.

Shortly thereafter, the Bear Lodge Multiple Use Association filed suit by claiming that by endorsing a voluntary closure, the NPS had established a government religion. James Watt’s old Mountain States Legal Foundation supported the suit. They lost in District Court, lost in the Appeals Court, and when appealed to the Supreme Court, the Justices refused to hear the case. “And that’s no shit.”

“And there she was” in Alaska, the superintendent of Lake Clark, hosting former President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalyn, in the park. The Carters had been invited to Alaska to commemorate the President’s signing of ANILCA, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act.

After the ceremonial acts, the President and First Lady were interested in some fly fishing. Off they went. After catching a few, the fly rods were put away so that they could float downstream to another spot. Mrs. Carter’s fly rod ended up in Deb’s boat. Deb noticed that there was a label on Mrs. Carter’s rod: No. 2 made for First Lady Rosalyn Carter. As they floated downstream, their boat hit a tree and both Deb and Mrs. Carter’s rods went overboard. They quickly pulled to shore and raced back upstream. One rod could easily be seen. They retrieved it and looked for the label. Nothing. It was Deb’s. Finally, after ducking his head a number of times in the 40-degree water, the guide was able to retrieve Mrs. Carter’s fly rod. The day was saved “and that’s no shit.”

This is a book that I enjoyed very much. I’ve known Deb and Jay for a long time. I’ve always admired how they managed their careers and how they didn’t let their careers get in the way of serious hiking, biking, running and river running. “Ranger Chronicles” documents it all. I know you’ll find it interesting as well, “and that’s no shit.”

Rick Smith worked in six parks, two regional offices and WASO, and ended his career as the Acting Superintendent of Yellowstone.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Seasonals: The heart and soul of NPS

WE ARE RIGHT IN THE MIDST OF STARTING OUR BUSY SUMMER season, which means an influx of seasonal park rangers. This is my favorite time of the year. After a slow winter, seasonals are returning, and with them are bringing fresh energy and invigoration to the parks. When I started applying for seasonal jobs in 1993, the application was a dozen pages of scannable bubbles, and you could only apply to two parks. You had to call all the parks to figure out which parks were hiring seasonals and how many they would hire, and it forced you to also consider applying to more remote parks that might receive fewer applicants. Competition was fierce and only the best would be selected. If you worked many, many seasons you might get picked up permanently in a remote park or doing a job in administration or dispatch to get status. Or, if you were like me, had to leave the National Park Service and get a job at a different agency like the IRS, Immigration, or the US Mint. Also, after college, my parents did not want me working seasonal jobs with no benefits.

Fast forward to 2015 when the Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act (LMWFA) came into play and changed the hiring landscape dramatically. This allowed seasonals to apply for certain permanent positions after 24 months of satisfactory performance. Many seasonals continue their journey using the LMWFA to become the nation's next generation of permanent park rangers. The NPS benefited because we could hire staff that already had experience. Seasonals benefited since they no longer had to worry about where their next paycheck was coming from, where they were going to live, whether could they get a pet, and most important whether they were eligible to contribute to retirement and Thrift Savings Plan.

The seasonal hiring bubble application went away and you could apply for any number of parks. This created a challenge for rating officials and hiring managers alike as the same people were getting rated multiple times for jobs and hiring officials were stealing rangers from each other. To combat this, hiring officials started grouping vacant positions together, facilitating faster ratings. The stealing of rangers still exists and will most likely continue with no end in sight.

The National Staffing Office was created to hire certain categories of seasonal employees, including law enforcement, fee collection, and interpretation, but that list is expanding every year. Hiring is done by groups, with the largest parks getting advertised first, followed by medium, and then small parks. A "train schedule" was established, which allowed seasonals to know in advance when jobs for each park would be posted and allowed hiring officials to know when they can expect to receive a certificate of eligible candidates.

And then came 2021. As we emerged from COVID-19, seasonals and permanents alike faced a new hiring hurdle... the Assessment. This part of the application must be completed within 48 hours of application or 48 hours of the position closing, which may be earlier than posted if the applicant cap is reached. This



Fee Supervisor Amelia Bruno and her seasonals make working the entrance station fun at Crater Lake. Photo: Jan Lemons

poses quite the challenge for rangers living and working in remote areas of the country with limited access to high speed Internet. The assessment is a three-part examination consisting of reading comprehension, logic and reasoning, and personality assessment. You aren't advised if you pass, and you can only take the test once a year per series. Hiring officials are getting Certs with only a few qualified applicants making hiring even more challenging. There is movement among the Association of National Park Rangers to get the assessment removed from the seasonal hiring process.

The seasonal hiring process has undergone many changes over the past 30 years. These changes including the LMWFA and "train schedule" have been welcome improvements. One fact still remains: The seasonal rangers always have been, and always will be the backbone of the National Park Service bringing their enthusiasm and energy, despite the challenges of the hiring process. Thank you all for your service!

Jan Lemons is at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts and past ANPR president. She served on the Uniform Committee.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Is organizational culture killing the park service's diversity efforts?

IN THE LATE 1990s A NATIONAL PARK SERVICE REPORT ON workforce diversity showed that 79 percent of the agency's employees were white. Programs, policies, and partnerships were implemented to assist NPS in recruiting and retaining a work force that more closely resembled the increasingly diverse constituency the NPS served. By 2010, those numbers had changed; roughly 82 percent of the agency's work force was white.

Why the backslide? While the inability to recruit, hire, train, and retain a diverse work force could be seen as an HR fail, I think one other culprit might be responsible: NPS organizational culture.

Criticizing organizational culture can trigger a strongly defensive reaction. Suggesting that what makes a place or a people unique may be the same things that make them less accessible and relevant to outsiders can be a paradigm-shattering event. It is nonetheless a conversation that any institution truly interested in tackling justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion will need to have.

I experienced this more than 20 years ago as an organizer for NPCA's Community Partners Program. My boss Iantha Gantt-Wright tasked me with better connecting NPS staff to communities of color – people who despite their interest in parks and the outdoors had not yet developed a relationship with their NPS neighbors. I began facilitating monthly meetings and led our partners through endless icebreaking exercises to start building trust.

For the staff at NPCA our national park advocacy is based upon a deep passion and affinity that we have for national parks. Our cubicles are festooned with chachkas from national parks; we keep lists of the NPS units we've visited; some of us even have favorite interpretive rangers. So, based upon



A family takes part in the 2017 Night Sky Festival at Byrd Visitor Center in Shenandoah National Park. Visitors young and old gathered to experience the wonder of a partial solar eclipse. Photo: Margaret Barse / NPS

that park-centric view, asking our community partners to share about their most memorable experience in a national park seemed a perfectly good way to start those meetings.

Yet, silence was often the only response to my inquiry. Not the silence of people reluctant to share but rather a silence that indicated my choice of questions as a facilitator did not resonate with these audiences. Our organizational culture, which then adhered more closely to the national parks as "America's Best idea" tag line, assumed that everyone would have a story to tell about watching wolves in Yellowstone's Lamar Valley. But it kept me from understanding how,

if you hadn't yet had an experience like that and were asked to share, the fear that mentioning the family picnic or birthday party held in the local green space down the block from your home might be seen as bush league kept too many people quiet.

We needed these people – their passion and expertise – to help protect our national parks, and there I was losing them before our partnerships had ever gotten started. All thanks to assumptions about the centrality of national parks in people's lives. Changing the question to ask about family and hobbies drew much better (deeper and humorous) responses. But being open to

questioning the adverse impacts of NPCA's organizational culture was a critical first step toward developing better more respectful partnerships.

When I think of the NPS organizational culture I focus on these three things.

1) Employees are encouraged to believe that getting paid in sunsets and scenery, not money, is a thing.

2) That a 90-day-detail at a large natural landscape park is qualitatively better than a career spent at an urban historic or cultural site and

3) That to move up, you have to move around.

In several informal and unscientific conversations with young professionals of color I've found that what they look for in possible employers are decent wages, some meaning or relevance in the work (which for many of my historian friends means working on or with historic and cultural resources), and job stability – working a gig without being transferred every two years. They may be hearing about or sensing the

“Our organizational culture assumed that everyone would have a story to tell about watching wolves in Yellowstone. ... But it kept me from understanding how, if you hadn't had an experience like that, the fear of mentioning the family picnic or birthday party held at the local green space down the block from your home might seem as bush league kept too many people quiet.”

– Alan Spears, National Parks Conservation Association

way things are within NPS and taking a hard pass.

In 2012, data compiled by NPCA's Center for Park Management showed that while 36 percent of the U.S. population was comprised of people of color just 18.6 percent of NPS employees represented those populations. Pending the release of more up-to-date data it appears the agency still has a

workforce-diversity problem. If the things that make NPS unique are also keeping the agency from making gains toward becoming a more diverse organization, it may well be time to examine and adjust the agency's organizational culture.

— Alan Spears
National Parks
Conservation Association



Enjoy the Outdoors™
...with Pilot Rock Trash Receptacles



- Commercial Quality Receptacles Designed for Outdoor Use.
- Choose the Size, Shape, Material & Color.
- Lids & Liners Available for All Models.
- Collect Trash, Recyclables, Pet Waste & Smoking Ash.
- Certified Bear-Resistant Models.
- We offer a Receptacle for Every Landscape, Location & Budget.

KEEP IT CLEAN

**Pilot
Rock®**

RJ Thomas Mfg. Co., Inc. • Cherokee, Iowa • 800-762-5002 • customerservice@rjthomas.com • pilotrock.com
Benches • Picnic Tables • Trash Receptacles • Bear Resistant • Bike Racks • Custom Signs • Site Amenities • Charcoal Grills • Campfire Rings

PROTECTION

Hoo-rah for HR

Behind-the-scenes work is vital to NPS success

THIS IS A SALUTE TO A GROUP OF OUR most talented, yet often unsung, behind-the-scenes rockstars: The tireless folks who staff the National Park Service’s human resources (HR) offices, and the administrative assistants who find themselves doing HR-related work more and more as “other duties as assigned” keep getting added to their list of responsibilities.

The other day, as we were driving by a crew of homebuilders working on the roof of a house, my 4-year-old son said, “Daddy, I saw a human up on that roof.” He didn’t say “person,” “guy,” “woman,” “lady,” or “man,” he said “human.”

A simple thing, I know, but it cracked me up (kids say the darndest things), plus it caused me to really think about how any work gets done in this world: Homes are built, papers are written, trucks are driven, rescues are accomplished, helicopters are flown, campgrounds are maintained, fees are collected, grass gets mowed, and parks are protected by humans. And those humans—those professional public servants—can’t even start their work until HR gets their work done. This makes HR utterly vital to the rest of us and to our Mission. We need HR.

Think about it: Is anything more important than our people—our human resources? Of course not.

As a supervisor, I particularly cherish the worth of our HR staff and administrative assistants and the inter-divisional cooperation they cheerfully provide. Throughout any given year, and especially over a vital period of several months when we’re getting new seasonal staff onboarded, HR professionals provide indispensable assistance—and leadership—to those of us who, though we’re not HR specialists ourselves, are expected to accomplish dozens of personnel-related tasks correctly, on time, and while ensuring that we’re using “the new and exciting, most current version of the form.”

At best, people like me—those whose



The human resources *behind* Human Resources. Photo: Kevin Moses

primary job is District Ranger, but find themselves shouldering another “collateral duty,” this one being “de-facto administrative assistant”—muddle our way through most of these tasks, which of course, change procedurally from year to year and require new steps, new forms, and communication with offices that have new names. There’s no way I could keep up with it all were it not for an awesome cadre of HR specialists and administrative assistants to keep me on track.

Some of these administrative assistants aren’t even officially responsible for the rangers we hire every year, yet they attend to them and their needs as if they were their own, because, as it goes with *The Mandalorian*, so it goes with the National Park Service: “This is the way”—the “way” being: Everybody does the work of two and sometimes three jobs, but only gets paid for one. Despite the way of things, these administrative assistants stoically forge ahead, checking the boxes, submitting the required forms, sending the emails, making the phone calls, coordinating, coordinating, coordinating, all in the spirit of ensuring our human workforce arrives to work on time, with all their ducks in a row, ready to onboard and hit the ground running, and then they keep us all on track every day once they’re on the org chart. It’s a never-ending process, really.

They walk selecting officials through the recruitment and job posting processes, advise when certs are available, offer guidance on the different hiring authorities, complete housing requests and regional hiring requests, process awards, track 1,039 hours for seasonals, do emergency COVID hires, provide guidance as to what time counts toward the LMWFA and what time does not,

calculate Major SAR cost analyses, ensure hours are coded properly in QuickTime, crank out travel authorizations and vouchers in Concur, order drug screens and medical exams, send out official job offer letters, issue keys and badges, tell us when our body armor’s expiring, conduct new employee orientations and exit clearances, help us with budget tracking and credit card tasks, communicate constantly with the NSO, IT, and the CRO, visit USA Staffing almost daily, and in their free time they check the statuses of IQCS, BIs, PDs, SF-50s, I-9s, PIVs, EODs, COBs, and the EIEIO.

And that is just the tip of the iceberg. HR and admin assistants do all the above and so much more. In short, these incredibly dedicated people take a process that has a lot of seams and makes it seem seamless. In my opinion, throughout the NPS, some of the finest human resources are indeed Human Resources themselves.

In closing, I’ll address our HR and administrative assistant professionals directly: You all are awesome! I speak on behalf of my fellow field personnel when I say that we appreciate you, we have the highest respect for the work you accomplish every day, and we thank you for your astonishing work ethic, your indefatigable spirit, and the never-ending support and guidance you provide to us in the field. There is simply no way we could get our jobs done without you doing yours.

Oh, and thanks, too, for the ever-present chocolate that always seems to grace the corners of your desks.

Hoo-Rah, HR!

— Kevin Moses
*Central District Ranger,
 Shenandoah National Park*



Welcome to the ANPR family

Here are the newest members of the Association of National Park Rangers

(Updated 2/9/2021)

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Robert Foster | <i>Anthem, AZ</i> |
| Mary Lisa Carenza | <i>Shawano, WI</i> |
| Joanna Dorris | <i>Long Beach, MS</i> |
| Alex Anderson | <i>Sammamish, WA</i> |
| Micheal Smith | <i>Davis, CA</i> |
| Nick Molnar | <i>East Brunswick, NJ</i> |
| William Nash | <i>Clever, MO</i> |
| Nicholas Money | <i>Homestead, FL</i> |
| Kelsey Pepper | <i>Rougemont, NC</i> |
| Joseph Ehlers | <i>Phoenix, AZ</i> |
| Thomas Sanford | <i>Pueblo West, CO</i> |
| Amy Busch | <i>Enterprise, OR</i> |
| Blake Burrus | <i>Saint Louis, MO</i> |
| Will Rice | <i>Missoula, MT</i> |
| Ashley Biggs | <i>Ann Arbor, MI</i> |
| James McKinney | <i>Mosca, CO</i> |
| Gracien Sivanza | |
| Rebecca Whipkey | |



Kudos List

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

(Updated 5/1/21)

- Rick Mossman
- Wendy Lauritzen
- Tom Banks
- Melissa DeVaughn
- Jonathan Shafer
- Rebecca Harriett

Donor Recognition list

(Updated 5/1/2021)

Denali Peak \$1,000+

- Bruce & Georjean McKeeman
- Rebecca Harriett

- Donald Steiner
- Helen Scully
- Richard Smith

Cliff Palace \$250-\$499

- Paul R Anderson
- Bill Wade
- Kevin Roache
- Phillip A Young
- John Case

Appalachian Trail \$50-\$99

- Forrest and Mary Heaton
- Nicholas Money

Little Rock Central High School

\$25-\$49

- Thomas R Parker
- Jan Kirwan

Devil's Tower \$100-\$249

- Lauren Kopplin
- Rob Wallace
- Ron Sprinkle
- Sue Consolo-Murphy
- Walter D Dabney
- Arthur North
- Donald Freedheim

Liberty Bell - Up to \$25

- Jonathan Shafer
- William Phelps
- Sara B Sprinkle
- Jen Seron
- Chris Reinhardt

ANPR's Super Raffle is now open

The popular ANPR Super Raffle fundraiser is offering some great prizes this year, including a weeklong cabin getaway in Yellowstone, \$1,800 toward a "roll-your-own vacation," and a variety of original artworks.

To have a chance to win, all you need to do is donate for tickets. Each ticket makes you eligible to win any of the prizes. Get tickets for yourself, for your family or friends; or pass along the entry link to anyone who might want to support ANPR. The raffle closes at noon EDT Oct. 16, 2021, with the drawing scheduled later that day, during Ranger Rendezvous. You needn't be present to win.

Visit <https://raffecreator.com/pages/38397/association-of-national-park-rangers-super-raffle> for entry, prize descriptions and more.



Custom Printed Junior Ranger Badge Stickers for Kids

Our custom printed badge stickers will bring a smile to a child's face. Our junior park ranger badge stickers are ideal for community events, school classroom visits or when children visit your battlefield, national park, heritage corridor, historic site, lakeshore, national monument, recreation area, scenic riverway, scenic trail or seashore. Badge stickers are printed on either shiny gold or silver foil. Customized for your location at no extra charge. Fast and reliable delivery.



Visit Our Website: www.policestickers.com
 a website owned by Creative Services of New England
 1199 Main Street - P.O. Box 417 - Leicester, MA 01524-0417
Telephone: 508-892-1555





**ASSOCIATION OF
NATIONAL PARK RANGERS**

P.O. Box 151432 | Alexandria, VA 22315-9998

**FIND YOUR
ANPR**

Directory of ANPR Board Members, Task Group Leaders & Staff

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Paul Anderson, Retired
panderson@anpr.org

Past-President

Jan Lemons, Wolf Trap
jlemons@anpr.org

Secretary

Lauren Kopplin, Dinosaur
lkopplin@anpr.org

Treasurer

Bill Wade, Retired
bwade@anpr.org

Education and Training

Tom Banks, Olympic
tbanks@anpr.org

Fundraising Activities

Jeanette Meleen, Carl Sandburg Home
National Historic Site
jmeleen@anpr.org

Internal Communications

Elsa Hansen, Southeast Utah Group
chansen@anpr.org

Membership Services

Reghan Tank
rtank@anpr.org

Professional Issues

Tim Moore, National Mall
tmoore@anpr.org

Seasonal Perspectives

Lauren DeGennaro, Midwest Regional Office
ldegennaro@anpr.org

Government Affairs

Rebecca Harriett, Retired
rharriett@anpr.org

Strategic Planning

Jonathan Shafer, National Capital Region
jshafer@anpr.org

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Business Manager

Chris Reinhardt
P.O. Box 151432
Alexandria, VA 22315-9998
creinhardt@anpr.org

Ranger Editor/Publisher

Melissa DeVaughn
mdevaughn@anpr.org

**Give
the gift of
membership**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT ANPR.ORG**