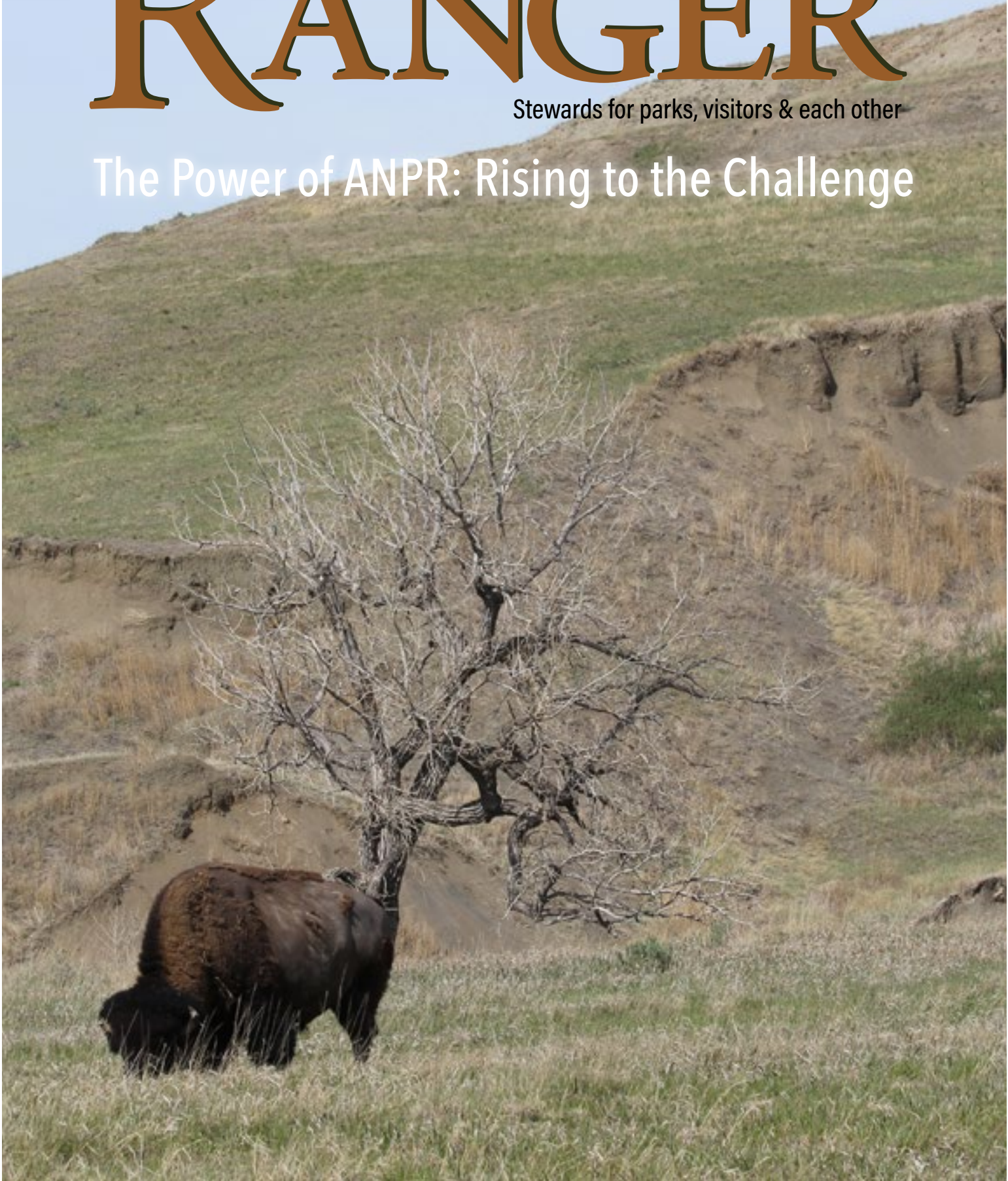


The Journal of the Association of National Park Rangers

RANGER

Stewards for parks, visitors & each other

The Power of ANPR: Rising to the Challenge



Vol. 40, No. 2 | Spring 2024

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Spring
2024

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ON THE COVER: More than 1,200 bison live in the Sage Creek Wilderness of Badlands National Park. This year's Ranger Rendezvous 47 will include an exploration of these spaces. Photo: NPS

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN, AS ANPR LAUNCHES ITS SPRING fundraising drive to rally its members around causes important to National Park Service professionals, supporting agencies, and allies. It's a humbling endeavor, asking for money from those already paying annual dues, registering for Ranger Rendezvous, and supporting the association throughout the year. But this collective effort allows us to continue ANPR's mission, which is:

We communicate for, about, and with National Park Service employees of all disciplines to promote and enhance our professions, spirit, and mission; to support management and the perpetuation of the National Park Service, its Congressionally authorized programs, and the national park system; and to provide a forum for professional enrichment.

But at the heart of this effort lies this: How can we, as ANPR members, actually make a difference? Sadly, we have dozens of new members join our association every quarter, and of those, only a small percentage renew. We are happy to see you arrive, and sad to see you go. As the governing body of ANPR, it is our responsibility to actually engage you in this organization, to make you *want* to come back. We do not just want our members to click a membership box and make an online payment. We want to know how we can not only attract you, but also *keep* you.

This month, we not only are asking you for your continued financial support, but more important, we want to see **YOU** – the member – actively engaged in the work that we do. We've all been to the staff meeting where everyone is willing to throw out criticism and offer suggestions on how to better a specific problem or challenge. But who actually steps up and does the work? We want doers, not sayers.

ANPR is at a critical juncture in its existence. To exist, we need more people willing to "do the work." In researching information for the article on the Museum of the National Park Ranger (ANPR's primary fundraising objective this spring; see our article about it on pages 12-13), I discovered that in 1991 we had more than 1,500 members! Today, we are at just over a third of that. We may be able to do more with less money, but we emphatically *cannot* do more with fewer members. We need your expertise, your passion, and your "spirit of the National Park Service" to better our efforts at reaching ANPR's vision, which is:

Through advocacy, education, and communication, we promote a professional, healthy, and productive National Park Service and encourage professional stewardship for America's national parks.

I invite you this spring not just to send a donation, but to think seriously about ANPR's Mission, Vision, and Values, and how *you* can play a personal role in helping us achieve our goals. As scattered entities throughout the country, we may be able to raise some money. But as unified, goal-oriented, "spirit of NPS" believers, we can conquer the world. Read on in pages 4-7 about how to be more actively engaged as an ANPR member (it starts with attending Ranger Rendezvous!) and how to support the causes we believe are important in today's environment.

— Melissa DeVaughn, *Ranger* magazine editor

RANGER

THE JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL PARK RANGERS
Vol. 40, No. 2 Spring 2024

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 is 12675 N. Sunrise Shadow Drive, Marana, AZ 85658, 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. 30
Summer issue April 30
Fall issue July 30
Winter issue Nov. 15



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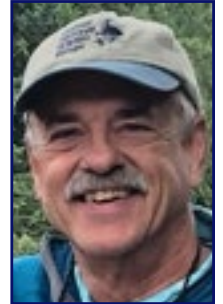
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Solving the NPS housing dilemma

President's message

— Rick Mossman



HOPEFULLY EVERYONE IS READY FOR SUMMER, WHETHER you're a seasonal working at a new area, a permanent planning for an onslaught of visitors, or a retiree planning on doing some traveling.

One of the things we consistently hear about among ANPR membership is the housing crisis in the NPS. We heard from two speakers at the Ranger Rendezvous in Jacksonville, Fla., in October about new housing and new housing ideas the NPS is trying in order to provide more housing for employees.

At the same time recently, we have been hearing that the NPS is increasing rents dramatically this summer. I have heard stories of rents increasing by double and even higher. This seems to go against the common sense of trying to provide housing for seasonals (and permanents) but then increase the rent dramatically. I have heard rumors of numerous seasonal and permanent employees turning down job offers because they can't afford the rent. We would like to get actual numbers and facts. So, if you have housing stories like this, please send them to us.

Also, a reminder to start planning for the World Ranger Congress. It will be held Oct. 7-11, 2024, in Hyères, France, the original riviera. The registration information from the IRF will be out shortly. Also, mark your calendar for Nov. 2-9, 2024, for our annual Ranger Rendezvous in Rapid City, S.D. Trainings will be held Nov. 2-5, and our all-day board meeting is Nov. 5. The bulk of presentations, entertainment and activities is set for Nov. 6-9. This should be a spectacular Rendezvous with some great field trips and engaging speakers. More than 30 National Park units are within a day's drive of Rapid City.

I hope everyone has a great, fun, and safe summer.

— Rick Mossman, *ANPR president*

ANPR Values

We are dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of a vital national park system and an effective National Park Service. The excellence that we promote is rooted in the values that we as an organization embody. These values are:

- **Loyalty.** We do not waver in our loyalty to our mission and to the long-term mission of the National Park Service. In fact, we believe that they are interrelated and interdependent. Any and all members of ANPR who embrace this loyalty — regardless of their job classifications or areas of work — are deemed to be “rangers at heart.”
- **Excellence in Professional Stewardship.** We believe that the American public and the national park system deserve the highest, most enlightened level of care and service and that these should be primarily provided by highly skilled, dedicated employee stewards.
- **Honest Communication.** We believe that honest and forthright communication of issues, needs, and information about our national parks is essential. This requires a perspective that transcends simple political agendas and overly politicized and unscientific policies.
- **Collegial Care.** As members of a professional family with shared dedication and values, we seek to support and care for each other every day, and especially in times of great risk.

I'm an ANPR member: Now what?

Get the most out of your membership by staying in touch, and involved



Members of ANPR socialize at the 2023 Ranger Rendezvous in Jacksonville, Fla. Attending Rendezvous is a great way to get the most out of your membership. PHOTO: Jonathan Shafer

EVERY SPRING, ANPR LAUNCHES ITS ANNUAL FUND RAISER to help us continue to do the work of representing the interests of National Park Service professionals. Read all about it on pages 10-13. That work may mean rallying support for better park housing or working to improve the always-daunting hiring process. We provide career mentoring, monitor legislative actions relevant to the NPS, and raise money to help new and mid-career professionals further their development. And the list goes on.

But what do you, as a member of ANPR, get out of your membership other than the promise that we will do these things? Over the last five years, ANPR has made some changes. After weathering the COVID-19 slump and finally being able to reconvene in person at the 2022 Ranger Rendezvous in Tucson, Ariz., ANPR has revamped its website, enhanced its newsletter, and upped its social media presence. Our goal is to provide you with a platform that can help you engage with other NPS professionals, retirees, and supporters. But first, it's important to get the most out of your membership:

CREATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP ACCOUNT!

Did you even know there *was* such a thing as a member account? Well, now you do! It is a password-protected side to our ANPR website that is unique to you and tied to the email you used when you signed up as a member. On the membership side of the account, you can:

- View the **online version** of *Ranger* magazine (available to *all* members) before the print edition hits mailboxes.
- Sign up for **Pro Deals** that offer deep discounts on such brands as LaSportiva, Mountain Hardwear, Black Diamond, OR, Mammut, Brooks, and more than 100 others. To do so, click on the application, fill in your information and provide the ANPR application code that is requested. Current NPS staff are reminded not to use a pay stub as proof of employment. Simply use your ANPR membership welcome letter to provide proof of membership.
- **Expert Voice** is another discount site available to ANPR members that not only offers deep discounts on similar brands, but also, if you are interested in pursuing, can provide product samples for gear testing, offer brand ambassa-

dorship, and more. The site also offers access to other ANPR members and outdoor lovers who really use these products and give honest feedback on which gear works and which doesn't. Think of it as an insider's look to the newest and best in outdoor products.

- Manage your membership information. No longer do you need to send multiple emails to get help with your account! If your address has changed, or you are using a different email, simply visit your membership profile and update this information on your own.
- Keep track of your ANPR expenses: Your membership page will list all transactions you have made with ANPR, including donations, registrations, membership purchases, and more. Come tax time, you can get a copy of all these transactions for your records.

JOIN OUR MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY!

Our most pressing goal has been to create a directory exclusive to our membership so we can communicate and network with each other. Think of it as a private Yellow Pages (for those of us old enough to remember what those are). ANPR's goal is to provide a membership directory so we can all find each other – but you **MUST OPT YOURSELF IN!** We will not publicize your name, email address, or contact information – even behind the protection of the membership-only side of the website. It is up to you! If you would like to be available and reachable by your peers, please go into your membership account and update your profile information. Click the box that says, "I would like to be listed in our members-only online directory" and choose your point of contact (phone or email). The form also lets you provide details about your current/past NPS service, so other members seeking insight can better narrow their search. This directory can be a useful tool to our current members, who may want to seek advice on a certain career path, or have questions about a potential park unit that you may work in, or have worked in. As a membership, we can help each other thrive by offering advice and support to each other. Please opt in now so our directory can be complete! We currently have less than 10 percent of our membership opted in, and we need more.

GIVE A GIFT MEMBERSHIP

We hear time and again that “people don’t know who ANPR is.” Well, it’s up to we, as members, to change that! One of the easiest ways to do so is by purchasing a \$20 gift membership for those new to the field or unfamiliar with our association. Go to <https://www.anpr.org/join> and scroll down to the gift membership tab. Click there and then click the black rectangle that says “Gift Membership Application.” If you are logged onto your membership account, the form will automatically generate your contact information as the “gift giver.” All you need is your recipient’s, name, email, and general park information (or ally/supporter status).

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

When you join ANPR as a new member, you are automatically added to our newsletter mailing list, which will deliver two newsletters per month to your in-box. These newsletters are key communication among members in between the quarterly magazine cycle, so be on the lookout. Information on trainings, the annual Ranger Rendezvous, our cruise presenter program, and more can be found in these bimonthly newsletters. If your email has changed or you want it delivered to a different email, simply go to <https://www.anpr.org/media/newsletter> and scroll to the bottom of the page where you can add your email. You can also unsubscribe at any time but must visit the site again to resubscribe.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

ANPR is on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter (X). Just type in our name and we should show up. Not only is this a good way to stay up to date on what ANPR is up to, but you can also share our posts with your circle of friends. Nothing beats word of mouth at the grassroots level. Every single time you share our information, you are allowing opportunity for growth. We thank you for those efforts!

ATTEND OUR RANGER RENDEZVOUS

Social media is great, but no matter how technologically we can advance as an organization, nothing replaces one-on-one conversation and camaraderie among peers. That’s why ANPR’s annual Ranger Rendezvous persists, going into its 47th year. This year’s Ranger Rendezvous will be hosted in Rapid City, S.D. in early November. Read more about it on pages 6-7.

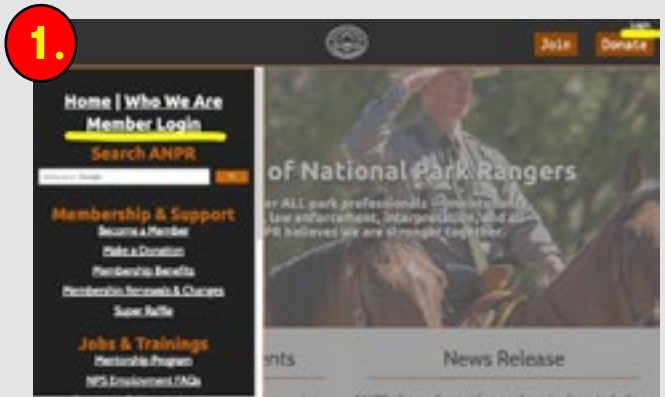
FINALLY, GET INVOLVED!

ANPR’s Board of Directors volunteer their time, expertise, and talents to better this organization, but we can only do so much with the hours we have in each day. Time and time again, we are advised on great ways to become a more effective organization, but without the man- and woman-power to tackle these tasks, we have a long to-do list in front of us. If volunteering for the board is too large of a commitment, consider a committee, or volunteer for one task. No suggestion is too small, and we welcome the input and willingness of our members to get the task done. Not only does this help us achieve our goals, but it gives you, the member, a chance to develop new skills, meet new people, and learn more about the way we operate. ♦

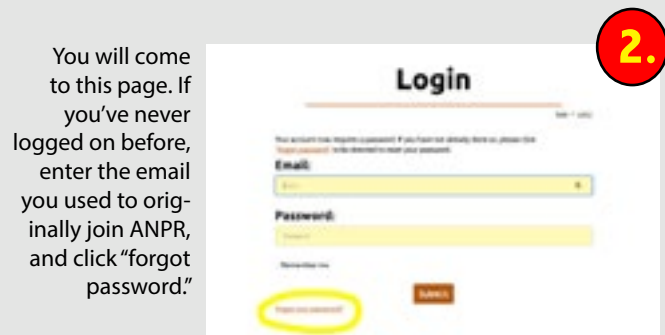
Still have questions on your membership? Contact ANPR Business Manager Melissa DeV Vaughn at mdevaughn@anpr.org.

To the membership page we go...

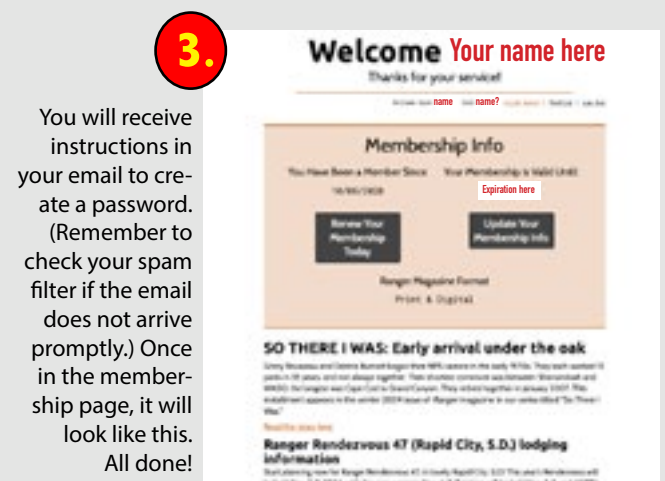
Three easy steps to setting up your membership account



Type in www.anpr.org on your computer to reach our home page. Click the three black bars at the upper left of your screen to see this. Access the membership site by clicking either of the yellow underlined login options. Note that the mobile version may look slightly different.



You will come to this page. If you’ve never logged on before, enter the email you used to originally join ANPR, and click “forgot password.”



You will receive instructions in your email to create a password. (Remember to check your spam filter if the email does not arrive promptly.) Once in the membership page, it will look like this. All done!

RR 47

We will see you in Rapid City!



A view at Badlands National Park in South Dakota. PHOTO: NPS

RANGER RENDEZVOUS 47 IS SHAPING UP TO BE FILLED with educational trainings, compelling speakers and programs, and plenty of free time to explore this corner of the country. The weeklong Rendezvous, hosted in beautiful Rapid City, S.D., kicks off Saturday, Nov. 2, 2024, with trainings; includes our daylong ANPR Board of Directors meeting Nov. 5; and launches the core program Nov. 6-9. This year, ANPR has shifted the program content to a Saturday-to-Saturday timeline to help accommodate travel and ensure participation through the end of the last day.

The theme of this year's Rendezvous is "Rising to the Challenge." And what *is* the challenge, you may ask? Organizers of this year's event agree that the National Park Service, its partners, and allies are facing many challenges in today's world. These challenges range from the damaging effects of climate change to staffing challenges, from budget cuts to high visitation numbers, from community morale to housing shortages, and more. And while these challenges may be daunting, the ANPR Ranger Rendezvous planning committee agrees that rangers are indeed rising to the challenge.

Many of this year's programs will highlight just how they are doing so, and the Rendezvous is the perfect time to examine how we as ANPR members can show support along the way.

If you've never been to the Rapid City, here are a few facts to consider, offered by Ranger Rendezvous planning committee member (and Rapid City resident) Mike Pflaum:

Rapid City, the thriving second largest city in the state, is situated at the eastern base of the scenic and historic Black Hills mountain range, with Badlands National Park just to the east.

RR 47 is a bit later in the fall than some years, although there have been several Rendezvous in the past that fell in early November. The fall weather in the Black Hills area is milder than some would expect, with average high temperatures in early November in the high 40s/low 50s.

There are six national park system units, four state parks, and a premier state trail in the immediate area. In addition, there are approximately 17 national park system units within a half day's drive of Rapid City and more than 30 units within a day's drive for those who may want to plan their own tours before or after the Rendezvous.

Registration is open now! Visit www.anpr.org/rendezvous/47 or scan this QR code



THINGS TO NOTE

- **Election Day** is happening during Rendezvous, on Tuesday, Nov. 5 – as has happened during at least one past Rendezvous event – and plans are underway to have a watch party for those who want to see election results roll in live. Stay tuned for more, as your planning committee continues to nail down details. Meanwhile, make plans to vote ahead of time so your vote counts!
- No Ranger Rendezvous is complete without some **play time**. And this year's Ranger Rendezvous promises plenty of it. There are up to three field trips in the works, as well as a golf tournament and – to bring back a past tradition – a (not-so Wild West) pistol shoot!
- After hearing from past RR attendees, the format of this year's event, as noted earlier, is **Saturday-to-Saturday** to allow participants travel time back to their homes following the event. In past years, participants have had to leave the Sunday sessions early to make their flights or get on the road, so ANPR is hoping to help alleviate that challenge.

LODGING

The Rendezvous headquarters hotel is the Holiday Inn Rapid City Downtown, which is within easy walking distance of the heart of the city, including restaurants, Main Street Square, museums, public art, and more. Rapid City Regional Airport is currently served by five major airlines, and the hotel offers a shuttle for those who call ahead of time. The \$99 (plus tax) rate is available to registered participants,

who will receive reservation instructions upon completing their registration. Instructions for making reservations are also available on our members-side portion of the website.



A guestroom at the Holiday Inn Downtown Rapid City. PHOTO: IHG Hotels

ANPR Super Raffle offers top-tier prizes for lucky ticket holders

THIS YEAR, **RANGER RENDEZVOUS** plans to bring back the Super Raffle fun. In addition to the daily silent auction and drawings, the Super Raffle showcases top-end prizes for those willing to buy tickets ahead of time. Be on the lookout for our on-line link to find the list of prizes, which will continue to be populated. Once at the website, you can donate money for tickets – for yourself or for someone else. We will have more on this year’s Super Raffle in our summer issue of *Ranger*, online and in our bimonthly newsletter. So keep your eyes peeled – and consider donating items to the effort to make this a great success.



In the past, ANPR has provided a \$2,000 “roll-your-own” trip; an eight-day, seven-night raft trip through the Grand Canyon; a one-week stay in a cabin just outside Yellowstone National Park; a cruise in San Diego Bay, historic National Park Service memorabilia, including books and collectors’ items; and custom artwork such as stained glass, paintings, photographs, quilts, carvings and more — all offered by various talented artists among our membership and beyond. As a bonus, there have been prizes for the person who donates for the most tickets, and a prize for the persons who donated for each of the two grand prizes. Stay tuned for more information as we work on collecting Super Raffle prizes.

We need donations for the super raffle! Your tax-deductible donation will be greatly appreciated. For more information, email mdevaughn@anpr.org.

Help ANPR member complete his *Ranger* publication collection

ANPR Life Member Butch Farabee has *almost* completed the impossible: compiling a complete set of all of the Association of National Park Rangers’ newsletters and magazines since the organization began in 1977. In the ’70s, *Ranger* was published newsletter-style, often more than 48 pages of communication each quarter. Today’s *Ranger* is a magazine, with full color but not as many pages. Farabee is collecting them all. Dig into your own archives to see if you can find them, and consider donating these to his collection.

“I am missing only four *Ranger* newsletters/ magazines to have a complete set,” he said. “I would like to present a totally complete set to some ‘official archive,’ yet to be determined but I have a couple of ideas.”

Colorado State University has some of ANPR’s content archived, and may be a good place for the collection, but Farabee said he is exploring a few other options, as well.

The issues Farabee is searching are as follows:

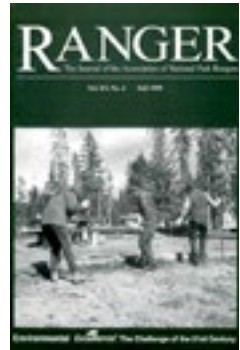
- *Ranger* newsletter July 1981 (Vol. 3, No. 2)
- *Ranger* magazine Fall 1999 (Vol. 15, No. 4)
- *Ranger* magazine Winter 2003 (Vol. 19, No. 1)
- *Ranger* magazine Summer 2007 (Vol. 23, No. 3)

“If you have one or more gathering dust in the garage, I would like them,” he said. “FYI: There are 16 newsletters and 157 magazines to date.”

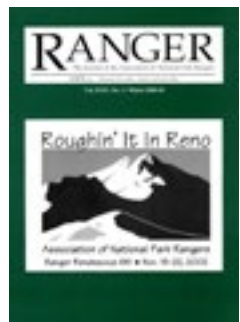
Please send magazines to Butch Farabee, 572 E. River Walk Drive, Tucson, AZ 85737



July, 1981



Fall, 1999



Winter, 2003



Summer, 2007

Welcome to the ANPR family

Here are the newest members of the Association of National Park Rangers (updated 3/14/2024)



Raul Arnaiz
Kate Ballantine
Samuel Biddle
Shaye Davison
Jose Gutierrez

Franklin, NC
South Hadley, MA
Springdale, UT
Torrington, WY
Hayward, CA

Michael Ippolito
Jennifer Knezek
Tim Mastic
Briana Moore
Nicholas Stolle
Richard Taylor
Mark Tezel
Anna Willis
Thomas White
Christina Burton
Rich Erving

Weatogue, CT
Mount Vernon, WA
Riverview, FL
Dallas, TX
Evergreen, CO
Carlsbad, NM
San Antonio, TX
Dimwiddie, VA
Mebane, NC

The view from 'the box'

How a supervisor got a lifelong lesson in perspective

By Lu Setnicka

SO THERE I WAS ... A BRAND NEW SUPERVISOR, ABOUT TO give my very first mid-season seasonal employee evaluation. It was 1978, my first year supervising the Campground Fee Collection operation in Yosemite Valley. Back then, all campsites were issued on a first-come, first-served basis. Every morning was a chaotic scramble: Cars and RVs in a seemingly endless line at each campground entrance, tempers short, visitors wandering around inside the campground, scouting for potential campsites from someone who was planning to leave that day. Many of those unsuccessful campers had to head off to less popular campgrounds outside the Valley, vowing to come back the next morning and try again.

The Fee Collection rangers were a diligent bunch, doing their best to keep visitors happy, collect the fees, and assign campsites as equitably as possible. They were doing a great job, and I was looking forward to sitting down with each of them during their evaluation to review how the season had gone so far.

The fee collection "office" where these conversations took place was a windowless "cave," a small area off the radio room where law enforcement rangers gathered equipment before their shifts. We crowded into the fee collection office each morning, exchanging greetings, checking the schedule, and gathering the money needed to make change for our fee-collection activities.

That day, when everyone was gone, I heard a knock at the door and was excited to welcome in Debbie Bird; I was looking forward to our performance review conversation together. I had the mid-season evaluation form completed; each criteria box was checked with my assessment of how Debbie had been doing up to that point in the summer.

I invited Debbie in, and we sat facing each other on gray, metal, GSA folding chairs. The ambiance almost felt like a prison interrogation room, but at least we had privacy. I thanked Debbie for her time and began to share my feedback with her.

About four sentences into my remarks, Debbie held up her hand and said, "Lu, I have to stop you here." I looked up, surprised. Debbie continued, "I have no idea how you can make these comments since you have never spent any time in the box with me all season." The "box" is what we affectionately called the kiosk at the entrance to each campground, where the fee collectors spent their shifts greeting park visitors and assigning campsites. It truly was a box, about the size of a large outhouse, brown in color. It was outfitted with a cash register, clipboards, a tall chair, sliding glass windows, and one entrance. Debbie continued: "Not once have you joined me in the box, watched how I work, had a sense of what I'm faced with each day."

I was taken aback. True, I had never sat in the box with the fee collectors, but I was out at the campgrounds each morning, clip-



Lu Setnicka was young, ambitious, and thought she was doing the right thing. But experiencing the work of folks in the field is what changed the trajectory of how she managed in years to come.

Photo: Lu Setnicka

board in hand, talking to campers sitting in their vehicles, coordinating site management by radio with the Fee Collection ranger in the box. In my mind, I was right there, working alongside that fee collector. Was that not enough to get a sense of how a fee collector handled their role, certainly enough to complete a mid-season evaluation? Apparently not.

I thought about it and realized Debbie was correct; I hadn't actually sat inside the sometimes-scorching hot box, watching a fee collector maintain their composure while being screamed at by out-of-luck park visitors, calmly assigning sites, accurately collecting and accounting for camping fees, and respectfully responding to all questions.

I met Debbie's eyes and said, "You're right." I took the mid-season evaluation form and ripped it in half. I then turned to the stack of completed evaluations for the other fee collectors and did the same thing. Debbie watched as the scraps of paper floated in the air, landing in the gray, GSA wastebasket at our feet.

It was time to make a change because, for whatever reason, Deb-



Years later, Debbie Bird and Lu Setnicka are still friends after Bird helped Setnicka better understand the work of rangers in the field. Since then, that interaction has guided the way Setnicka manages. **Photo: Lu Setnicka**

bie's comment strongly resonated with me. Over the next few weeks, I worked two to three full shifts with each of the fee collectors I supervised. Often, we were in the box; other times we were scrambling through the rocks at walk-in campgrounds such as Camp 4 and Yellow Pines, chasing elusive campers and climbers who were determined to outmaneuver those of us in the gray and green to avoid paying the camping fees. My mid-season evaluations were late, but it was worth it – the feedback was authentic and accurate. Our evaluation conversations were meaningful, and we laughed about some of the crazy characters we had met in our time working together.

So there I was, 25-plus years later, post-NPS career, as global director of human resources at Patagonia, never having forgotten that 1978 mid-season evaluation experience and the wisdom Debbie pro-

vided me when she spoke up. Each day, I had the opportunity to coach Patagonia's managers to "spend time in the box" with their staff and colleagues, learning about their jobs, getting firsthand experience about the role's challenges, and never having to be in a position to deliver a performance review that wasn't based on authentic feedback. Even now, as an executive and leadership coach, the practice of putting yourself in another's shoes (being "in the box") is often welcome advice to those looking for the courage it takes to tackle difficult communication issues.

Debbie went on to have a long and illustrious career with the NPS, including chief ranger at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and superintendent at Devils Tower National Monument and Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area. At an NPS reunion in Yosemite several years ago, after a long and vigorous hug, I stepped back and said to Debbie, "Thank you for the lesson you gave me in 1978; it has guided me ever since." Debbie looked at me quizzically and said, "Lu, I don't have any idea what you're talking about." I went on to share the story, and she told me she had no memory of that experience. So there I was, learning yet again, about the impact we have on others, insignificant to one, and monumental to another.

Lu Setnicka, a former permanent NPS employee for 15 years, followed her NPS career as a senior executive at outdoor clothing retailer Patagonia, ending her 25-year tenure there in 2012 as global director of Human Resources. She then founded her own HR consulting firm where she is currently an executive and leadership coach for various outdoor businesses and nonprofit organizations. She can be reached at ojaimirk@gmail.com.

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Spring

into action



A scarlet tanager perches amid newly leafed trees in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Spring is a time of renewal in national park units across the country, and the time of year when ANPR sets its fundraising goals for the year. NPS photo: Warren Bielenberg

ANPR has big goals for this year's fundraising campaign

By Wendy Lauritzen, ANPR Board Member for Fundraising

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED HOW MUCH YOUR SUPPORT MEANS to ANPR and in turn, what ANPR provides in response to that support? With our annual spring fundraising drive April 1 through May 31, now is a good time to take a closer look at ANPR's 2023 contributions. In calendar year 2023, 17 percent of ANPR's members provided a total of 102 donations; coming from 74 entities, of which 28 parties donated more than once for a total of \$23,382. Lifetime and gift memberships are included in those figures, along with new funds established to support rehabilitation of the Museum of the National Park Ranger (read all about it on pages 12-13), and our Natural Disaster Relief Fund, for ANPR members displaced by natural disaster. Donations ranged from \$1 to \$5,000, with six entities donating \$1,000 or more.

The bulk of these donations came during ANPR's spring fundraising drive, and a large portion of these donations were made to ANPR's unrestricted account, which the board is so very grateful for as it provides the greatest flexibility in how the money is spent.

This year's focus on fundraising is on the Ranger Museum Fund, as we work with Yellowstone and other supporting contributors to

This year's focus on fundraising is on the Ranger Museum Fund,

raise the funds to revitalize this important structure.

This also is a World Ranger Congress year, which means support of the Rick Smith Honorary International Ranger Fund will be appreciated. This fund will support rangers to attend the World Ranger Congress in Hyères, France, Oct. 7-11, 2024. Closer to home, the Supernaugh scholarship brings attendees to the Ranger Rendezvous, Nov. 5-9, 2024, in Rapid City, S.D. ANPR would very much like to support Supernaugh scholarship-eligible members to attend their first WRC, yet still have sufficient funds for Supernaugh scholarships for the Ranger Rendezvous as well. The Rick Smith Fund is targeted to provide support for primarily rangers from South America and Puerto Rico.

ANPR has donated on other levels as well. In the Jan. 29, 2023, ANPR e-newsletter, there was a request for boots and equipment for park rangers in Peru and Argentina. Donations could be made through the Ranger Foundation or ANPR. Funds were secured in short order for our international partner organizations — for those of you who donated directly to the Ranger Foundation for that purpose, thank you.

A closer look at our funds

Here is a more detailed list of each of ANPR's designated funds — we appreciate your generosity and support in 2024.

UNRESTRICTED DONATIONS

General Fund: This fund helps with ANPR's daily operating costs, which include production of *Ranger* magazine, accounting of designated funds, and organization of the annual Ranger Rendezvous.

RESTRICTED DONATIONS

NPS Ranger Museum Fund: The focus of this year's fundraising efforts, this fund will help rehabilitate the Museum of the National Park Ranger in Yellowstone National Park. Money raised will help clean exhibits in the museum and add new multimedia to its extensive library.

Supernaugh Fund: This fund provides support for our Supernaugh Scholars, awarded each year to aspiring rangers who will attend their first Ranger Rendezvous. The fund is named in honor of Bill Supernaugh, a longtime ANPR supporter.

Harry Yount Fund: This fund supports the Harry Yount Lifetime Achievement Award, which is administered by ANPR and the pinnacle of achievement in NPS service. Funds collected are used in the production of the bronze bust awarded to recipients, and also cover travel costs associated to attend the awards ceremony.

Rick Gale Fund: This fund provides money to carry out ANPR's oral history interviews in cooperation with the NPS Division of History.

BOD Member Support Fund: This fund helps support travel costs for board members to attend the annual BOD meeting at the annual Ranger Rendezvous in support of ANPR's goals.

International Ranger Fund: Now called the Rick Smith Honorary International Fund, it provides money to fund scholarships (from the U.S. and Latin America) to the World Ranger Congresses. This year is a World Ranger Congress year, so donations are appreciated.

Natural Disaster Relief Fund: Any ANPR member in good standing is eligible to apply for and receive aid to help in the recovery following a natural disaster that has directly impacted their life. This fund is an ANPR member benefit, and the amount of aid will be based on the needs of the individual.

Indian Paintbrush, *Castilleja hispida*, buds in spring-time at Glacier National Park. NPS photo: Jacob W. Frank



Other ways to show your support

All donations (unrestricted or restricted) will receive recognition, according to the following national park system feature levels (elevations):

Liberty Bell (sea level): donations up to \$25.

Little Rock High School (335 feet): donations between \$25 and \$49

Appalachian Trail (-3,000 feet avg.): donations between \$50 and \$99

Devil's Tower (5,120 feet): donations between \$100 and \$249

Cliff Palace (6,811 feet): donations between \$250 and \$499

Half Dome (8,694 feet): donations between \$509 and \$749

Mauna Loa (13,678 feet): donations between \$750 and \$999

Denali Peak (20,322 feet): donations of \$1,000 or more

Old Faithful: scheduled donations each month of at least \$25, with no maximum amount, for a minimum of one year.



Ōhi'a Lehua is the most prominent native tree in Kahuku, in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, and blooms in the spring.

NPS photo: J.Weii

LIFE MEMBERSHIP OR CENTURY UPGRADE

Dues (\$750) from a life membership go into ANPR's investment account, less \$50 (or \$50 from each of three \$250 installments) that will be deducted to support the membership.

Life members can elect to periodically "upgrade" to the next "Century level" for \$125 for the first upgrade and \$250 for each one thereafter. Keep in mind that all the money from Century upgrades must go into our investment account, after which only the dividends are available for ANPR operations and projects. Therefore, if you choose an upgrade, we request that you donate an extra \$50 to support the administrative costs of providing life member benefits, such as *Ranger* magazine.

EXHIBIT AT RANGER RENDEZVOUS

If you have a business that provides a product or service, you can exhibit your products or services at a Ranger Rendezvous. Rates are set for each Rendezvous, depending on exhibition expenses. (bwade@anpr.org)

ADVERTISE

If you have a business that provides a product or service, you can advertise in ANPR's quarterly journal — *Ranger* magazine, and/or on our website. Rates available on request. (mdevaughn@anpr.org)

DONATE ITEMS FOR RAFFLE OR AUCTION

At each Ranger Rendezvous, ANPR conducts an on-site raffle and auction. "Prizes" consist of donated items from individuals or commercial entities. Recognition for these donations is provided.

LEGACY CONTRIBUTIONS

Naming ANPR as a beneficiary in a will or insurance policy is a way to leave your legacy after you are gone. We are available to discuss options.

ANPR is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) corporation and all donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

RANGER MUSEUM REHABILITATION

MORE THAN 30 YEARS AGO, MEMBERS OF ANPR BANDED together to raise more than \$22,000 to help create a museum that celebrates the art and science of rangers. That contribution – combined with an additional \$557,500 from the NPS and other donors – resulted in the Museum of the National Park Ranger at Yellowstone National Park’s Norris Ranger Station. This historic building contains a collection of equipment, recordings, uniforms, and other interpretive displays that demonstrate the evolution of rangers since its inception in the early 1900s.

But harsh weather, insects, rodents, and time have diminished this Yellowstone treasure, so ANPR is stepping up once again to give the facility a much-needed face lift. Adjusted for inflation, the money raised by ANPR in 1991 equals roughly \$50,000 today, so the association is working diligently to reach at least as much as it did in 1991. The plaque commemorating ANPR’s contribution to the museum’s beginnings will remain, and the work of rangers will continue to be celebrated for years to come.

“The Museum of the National Park Ranger is a grand achievement by ANPR,” said ANPR President Rick Mossman, who was involved in the original fund-raising efforts as the then-ANPR Alaska regional representative. “All rangers should be proud of this museum and proud that ANPR was able to get it funded, built and opened in 1991.”

First, envision the space, as described by Linda Young, chief, Division of Resource Education and Youth Programs at Yellowstone.

“The conventional indoor exhibits tell the story of the building’s history as a soldier station during the U.S. Army period of park administration, and the evolution of the profession of park ranger from soldier to park ranger,” she said. “Each of these stories is told in small spaces on either side of the structure. The center of the station is left as a gathering space in front of the fireplace. Lastly, there is a small room around the back side of the gathering space in which videos are shown.”

All the exhibits are still relevant she said, and there is no desire to replace them. But she said – and there’s no delicate way to word it –



One of the interpretive displays at the Museum of the National Park Ranger, above, depicts a backcountry cabin. Below, left, students from the Stephen T. Mather School in New York City work a crosscut saw during rehab work on the museum in the summer of 2023. NPS photos: Jacob W. Frank

rodent activity can create more damage than expected.

“The physical exhibits are inspected each spring (before the facility is opened to the public) and fall (after it closes for the season),” she said. “There could be damage to exhibit panels ... for example, rodent infestations can result in chewed edges or accumulations of rodent feces/urine, which can cause varying degrees of damage.”

Thoroughly cleaning the existing exhibits will go a long way to improving the overall presentation of the museum, Young said.

“The exhibits tell an important story and should not be removed or replaced,” she said. “However, the story of the ranger profession has continued to evolve, and we intend to add that important timeline and content by producing new short videos that are topically focused and can be viewed individually or as a group in a series to provide that updated content.”

That’s where ANPR members can contribute beyond simply cash donations, she said. The assets of our very own members – video of rangers at work, especially from the early 1990s to present day – could be valuable additions to the multimedia presentations offered at the museum.

AN ANPR TRADITION OF SUPPORT

The fundraising success among ANPR members in 1991 was truly a grassroots effort. At its December 1990 meeting of Alaska members, then-ANPR Alaska region representative Jeff Karkaker roused \$203 among its members (about \$465 in today’s economy).

Members at the meeting were asked to continue to assist with the funding for the ranger museum to help keep it “ours,” she wrote in the spring 1991 issue of *Ranger* magazine (Vol. 7, No. 2):

The response was very gratifying. The following gave a dollar for every year in the Service: Linda Toms \$25, Micki Hellickson \$19, Jean Swearingen \$30, Rose Chilcoat \$11, Hoofie \$23, Roger Siglin \$26, Bob Gerhard \$10, Bruce Collins \$25. In addition, Ray Bane donated extra snack money from the superintendents’ conference. Some of these people are older than dirt! Anyway, we collected \$203 for the museum.



Volunteer Scott Eckberg speaks with visitors at the Museum of the National Park Ranger in summer 2023.

NPS photo: Jacob W. Frank



In the summer 1991 issue of *Ranger* (Vol. 7, No. 3), ANPR President Rick Gale accepted \$3,500 to develop an exhibit at the museum that depicted the contribution of women in the National Park Service and system. Those funds came from a raffle and silent auction held at a NPS women's conference in New Orleans.

In accepting the donation on behalf of ANPR, Rick Gale pledged the association to spearheading the fundraising necessary to see the exhibit through design, construction, and installation. Maureen Finnerty will be the contact with Harper's Ferry Center on exhibit development.

ANPR was a robust association in the early 1990s, and its 1,500 members celebrated their contribution to the museum – and to its operations. Every year, our members are among those to voluntarily staff the museum during the summer season when, Young said, an estimated 25,000 to 28,000 visitors pass through.

“For years after the museum was established in 1991, 30-plus volunteers were selected to serve at the museum during summer, each only working eight to 10 days after two days of training and operational support before another volunteer arrived and had to be trained ... and so on all summer,” she said.

Back then, Yellowstone's average annual visitation hovered around 2.9 million. Today, however, visitation has exploded to more than 4.8 million, making the previous volunteer model an inefficient and ineffective way to manage the MNPR. Since 2019, volunteers now serve for monthlong duties and must be able to provide their own RV for housing. Still, the experience remains a lasting memory to those who chose to serve.

“Having volunteered there myself, I can attest to the heartwarming feeling at watching kids come through the door wearing their Jr. Ranger vests, their Jr. Ranger badges, and their faux ranger flat hat,” Mossman said. “Then, to watch their eyes widen and glow as they see the pictures of rangers doing ranger things and seeing the sabers and badges worn by the cavalry and rangers, and of them thinking that maybe, just maybe, someday they will be wearing that uniform or badge, too.”

The total cost of upgrading the museum will be shared among NPS funding, and other donors, both corporate and private, to rehabilitate both the inside and outside of this special structure. Meanwhile, ANPR members can help in one of three ways.

- To donate to the Ranger Museum Fund, visit <https://www.anpr.org/donate> and scroll to the NPR Ranger Museum Fund option. Click payment, and your tax-deductible receipt will be on its way.
- To contribute video clips of rangers at work from the late 1990s to present day, contact Linda Young at linda_young@nps.org.
- NPS retirees interested in being considered for one or two, monthlong volunteer work sessions at the MNPR can email the park's VIP office at YELL_Volunteer_Office@nps.gov.

“The Ranger Museum is our memorial to past, current and future rangers; our friends, and fellow co-workers,” Mossman said. “It honors those who sacrificed not only their lives, but to the many who have sacrificed in many other ways for the betterment of the national parks and their visitors. It's our memorial; let's keep it alive.”



FROM THE ARCHIVES

This article is from Vol. 7, No. 2, Spring 1991 *Ranger*, on the original fundraising efforts.

Association Actions

Ranger Museum Funded!

The National Park Foundation has found a corporate donor, Continental oil Company (CONOCO), which has agreed to contribute \$250,000 for exhibit production for the ranger museum at Norris Soldier Station in Yellowstone. Harpers Ferry has completed the design for the exhibits, and will employ the money to put them into production.

The donation will augment the \$300,000 that the Service has earmarked out of this year's repair and rehab money to stabilize and refurbish the station. These two amounts will be further supplemented by \$22,000 from ANPR, about \$6,000 from the donation fund managed by Yellowstone, and \$1,500 from other employees and associations. That sum will be utilized to landscape the grounds around the museum.

A formal opening and dedication ceremony will take place at the park on August 25, 1991, the 75th anniversary of the passing of the organic act creating the National Park Service. There will be a commemorative plaque inside the museum which will identify the major contributors — CONOCO, ANPR, NPCA (which contributed \$5,000 at last year's Rendezvous), the employees of the NPS, and the Yellowstone fund.

Maureen Finnerty, who's been bird-dogging fund-raising for the museum for the Association, had this to say: “ANPR was instrumental in initially developing the idea for a ranger museum, and we can justly take credit for keeping the idea alive for so many years. Without the active efforts of the many members of the Association, the idea would probably have died. You can feel good about this one — it's another major accomplishment by ANPR.”

Joining the NPS workforce

The hiring process is an endurance sport.
Start training now



A large group of Joshua Tree National Park rangers stands amongst a wide Joshua tree-covered landscape. Parks employ a wide range of positions to fulfill many different needs. Photo: NPS/ Anna Cirimele

By Liz Roberts

THE BUREAUCRACY OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT APPEARS to be at its finest when it comes to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the regulations and policies surrounding National Park Service (NPS) vacancies. For someone with limited experience with federal application requirements, the process is intimidating and bewildering. Even for old hands who have successfully applied for many jobs within the system, it can seem confusing and designed to invite error.

There are a couple avenues the NPS uses for filling jobs. Unlike the private sector, we rarely accept unsolicited resumes. The exception is for individuals who qualify under special hiring authorities, such as disabled or campaign veterans, persons with disabilities, or students. Here, though, we will focus on the processes surrounding advertised vacancies at www.usajobs.gov. For additional information on special hiring authorities, visit the OPM website at www.opm.gov.

The National Park Service uses *only* www.usajobs.gov. National Park Service jobs on any other job site are not the actual vacancy announcement, may contain errors, and applications through them will not go to an NPS personnel office.

First, set up a profile in [usajobs](http://usajobs.gov) before applying. Once in the system, you can go straight to NPS jobs by typing National Park Service under “keywords.” Then you can filter the list using a job title, location, etc. to see current job openings.

Once you have selected a job to apply for, use this tool for the best results.

IS THIS THE JOB FOR ME?

An applicant must be both eligible and qualified for the desired job. To be eligible, you must meet one of the categories described under “This job is open to...” and any mandatory training or experience will be listed under “Requirements.” Not all jobs are open to the general public. If it is, there also might be requirements for a particular degree, certificate, or specific prior experience. If you don’t meet the eligibility requirements there is no use in applying; you will just be wasting your time.

Before you fill out an application, do some homework and find out if this is the right job for you. Qualifications listed under the “Requirements” tab help you determine whether the job is a good fit. Be realistic about what you want and like to do. If the job says “road patrol,” don’t expect to be out in the backcountry. If the job has lots of visitor contact, it means every kind of visitor, even those who are cranky, belligerent, or aren’t playing with a full deck. An office job really is an office job: You won’t see much of the park or interact with the public. If it says “backcountry,” don’t count on being able to check your email every day, or even every week. If the job is titled “trail crew,” it means you will be doing heavy labor building trails, not hiking trails every day. Research the park and what issues you would be likely to deal with there – a law enforcement job in Yosemite is going to be very different from one in the Alaska bush, and “backcountry” might mean days from a trailhead in one park and barely off the road system in another. Talk to prospective coworkers within the division – “interview up” to find out what the boss and working conditions are like. If there are many red flags, be realistic about what you want or can tolerate, or apply for something else.

THE APPLICATION PACKAGE

A vacancy announcement will indicate precisely what needs to be in your application. Read it carefully. Every application will require a resume and completed Assessment Questionnaire (posted with the announcement), along with any other certifications or documents applicable to the position.

To get on the Certificate of Eligibles, or “cert,” the applicant must demonstrate in their application that they have the necessary skills and qualifications to do the job, even though the factors they are being evaluated against are a tightly held secret. They must look good on paper, sound good in interviews, and be available during the required timeframes. Let’s look at each individual hurdle in more detail to know what you should and shouldn’t do when applying for a park service job. These tips have come from hiring officials, personnelists, and the lessons learned of experienced applicants themselves. The names and places have been omitted to protect the guilty.

Resumes: Submit your own resume or complete the one-page OF-612 Application for Federal Employment. Contrary to job fairs and public sector job searches, your resume can be as long as necessary to contain the pertinent information about you and your work history. The personnel office will review your resume to determine if you are qualified for the grade and duties of the position. Every resume should have the following basic information:

- Name, address, and as much contact information as possible. If you are going to be out of touch anytime during the hiring process, provide the name and phone number of someone who can get a message to you.
- Citizenship status: U.S. citizenship is required for NPS jobs. Birth date and Social Security Number should not be included when you apply, but will be required before you can actually be hired.
- A thorough work history, especially listing those jobs that required similar skills to the one for which you are applying. Look for key words within the vacancy announcement and use questions in the assessment questionnaire (see below) to elaborate on your experience specific to the desired skill. For each experience block, list the name and address of the company/organization you worked for; the name and phone number of a supervisor or other person who can speak to your performance; dates of employment (down to the day, if known); number of hours worked per week; primary duties for each job; and education — names of high schools and colleges, along with diplomas or degrees and dates received. Don’t forget any other specialized classes or certificate programs you may have taken outside of an established institution that are applicable to the job. Some jobs may require such coursework or certificates, and if so, probably require transcripts. Listing the number of credit or semester hours by subject matter may also be helpful.

Assessment Questionnaire: Your application must include a completed Assessment Questionnaire that is linked to the job announcement. This is a series of questions directly related to the job for which you are applying. Each question will allow for one response:

- A: I don’t have a clue how to do this.
- B: I have been taught how to do this but never actually done it.
- C: I have done this with close supervision.
- D: I have done this without supervision.
- E: I have done this a lot and taught others how to do it.

Make notes as you work through the questionnaire. If you chose answer C, D, or E, go back and edit your resume to describe this experience. Provide examples that show your competence. Tell whether you assisted, directed, organized, or worked independently on given projects and tasks. This is essential if you choose a lot of Es. If it seems like you have inflated your qualifications, the personnelist will compare your questionnaire to your resume, and can reject your application if you don’t provide examples. (If you’re fresh out of school and have little to no job experience, there is no way you can rate yourself as a D or E. Just sayin’.)

Never lie, but don’t be modest when it comes to describing your skills and experience. Be succinct but know that the personnelist evaluating your application can’t assume anything – if you don’t have it down on paper, it didn’t happen. Highlight work experience where you feel you excel.

Watch your keystrokes: One mistake can mean instant ineligibility for the position, since everything except your resume is read by a computer with no margin for subjectivity. Review answers carefully and print or save the form as documentation of responses for later reference. Check for spelling and punctuation errors. Then cross your fingers and hit “send.”

Once you’re finished matching your resume to the assessment questionnaire, resubmit it and delete the original copy if you already attached one.

If you ever get a rejection letter for a job you feel well qualified for, call the personnel office listed in the vacancy immediately and find out why. If you act quickly, you may be able to reverse an inaccurate reading and be included on the cert after all.

Putting the package together: The vacancy announcement will list all documents that are required as part of the application, and have links for uploading them. Include copies of all documents, including government forms, school transcripts, licenses, or training certifications that apply to you. Stating that you’ve held (or are currently in) a job which requires the same qualifications isn’t good enough. The personnelist will need proof of your qualifications.

If desired, write a cover letter that tells the hiring official a little more about you and why you are interested in this particular job. A list of references and letters of recommendation may be added as well, but are not required, and not every hiring official will review them. If requested, include a copy of your most recent performance evaluation. Never alter this document or omit passages or pages that are less than complimentary. Such action can be grounds for disqualification or even dismissal after you are hired. If you take exception to something a prior supervisor has said about you, add a note explaining your side of the story.

Never include a photograph as part of your application. It can’t be forwarded to the selecting official, and if printed directly on your resume, may cause the entire page to be removed. Do not add examples of your work, or other extraneous stuff that just adds bulk

To get on the Certificate of Eligibles, or “cert,” the applicant must demonstrate in their application that they have the necessary skills and qualifications to do the job, even though the factors they are being evaluated against are a tightly held secret.

to the application packet. Hiring officials may have to deal with hundreds of applications. Don't make them wade through page after page of fluff to find the important points about you.

Submission deadlines are never flexible, so don't procrastinate. You never know when the Internet will go down, the system will freeze up, or the required documents are not where you thought they were. There may be a blizzard, family emergency, hungry dog, or ingrown toenail that keeps you from getting your application finished. None of those excuses will sway the personnel folks. They legally can't accept it if late unless they extend the deadline for everyone.

TALKING TO THE HIRING OFFICIAL

Sometime during the application process, call and introduce yourself to the hiring official. You can do this when trying to determine whether a job is the right fit for you, (before you even apply), or after the cert has been issued and the hiring official has seen your name. Either way, respect that the supervisor has a hundred things on his or her plate, and make an appointment to discuss the job later if it is not a good time. Never be a pest and make repeated phone calls. Avoid calling in December when many employees are using leave.

Learn something about the park before calling. Get a map and have it in front of you when discussing the job. Ask the hiring official what they are looking for and demonstrate a genuine interest in the challenges and duties of the position. If they already have your application, see if they need clarification on anything you've put down.

There may be no formal interviews for this position, so use this opportunity to make a good impression. Do not talk about frustrations with job application processes or tell them you have enough rejection letters to paper your bedroom. Don't bring up negatives about prior jobs, supervisors, co-workers, or living conditions. Unless you have a recognized disability and/or valid accessibility issues, do not request specific amenities or place sidebars on job acceptance. (You haven't even been offered one yet!) Remain positive and energetic, and establish some rapport with them so that when they call you for an interview (YES!) you're more comfortable and relaxed.

SO WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE OTHER SIDE?

You've sent off your application, you've talked to the hiring official, and you hear nothing. Despite rumors to the contrary, things do not "slow down" at any time for year-round employees. Personnel offices and supervisors are busy with *lots* of other things besides filling vacancies. Be patient. Eventually they must find time to begin the selection process. If it's a seasonal job, managers and supervisors will be scrambling to contact applicants and hire the best-qualified people — every other supervisor is doing exactly the same thing and may even be trying to hire the same people.

The first thing selecting officials usually do is call applicants to determine availability. It may have been several months since applications were submitted, (I once applied for a job where this took six months!) and applicants may have decided to hike the Himalayas all summer or have accepted other jobs elsewhere. If you are called concerning availability, this is not a job offer. It is just one step as the hiring official begins to check references and narrow down a pool of applicants. Don't pack your bags just yet.

On the other hand, that first phone call may be the interview or job offer itself. If such a call does come, and you're not there, return the call (or email) promptly. Most likely you are not the only person who has been called. The selecting official will be focused on getting

all positions filled ASAP. This is probably your last opportunity to impress upon them what an asset you will be to the park. Be prompt, positive, credible, enthusiastic, and eager to go to work.

DEAR JOHN LETTERS

There will be times when you think you've done everything right and are well qualified for a position but still get a notice that you didn't make the cert. Call the personnel office and see if they will tell you why. Although you probably can't be considered for this job anymore, maybe you'll learn something that will keep you from making the same mistake again. (And again, and again.) But also, don't be surprised if they won't tell you anything. Unfortunately, there are a lot of crabby (and busy!) personnelists out there.

No matter your disappointment, let that go. But be persistent in your NPS job search, and don't get discouraged. Even experienced, career employees put out lots of applications and get rejection letters. One person estimated that it takes an average of 12 applications to different parks for every permanent job offered.

OTHER TIPS AND ADVICE

Now that you have an outstanding application, there are other things you can do to reach your NPS career aspirations. Take advantage of opportunities that provide you with knowledge, job skills, or experience, and can help you land that perfect job.

- Get a degree in a related field.
- Get certified in CPR, EMS, law enforcement, sign language, master gardener, basket weaving, or other skills on your own.
- Have good written and verbal communication skills and be computer literate (even backcountry employees have to write reports!).
- Be physically active and recreate in national parks to gain familiarity with the NPS.
- Work as an NPS volunteer or become involved in local organizations that are relevant to your career goals. (And don't forget to include this experience in your application!)
- Be willing to start "at the bottom" in a location or position that is not your first choice to gain experience and get your foot in the door.
- Hedge your bets by applying to park units that are not as popular and less likely to be bombarded with thousands of applicants. Smaller parks may give you the opportunity to broaden your experience by working with other park functions and are more fun to work in anyway!
- Attend the ANPR Ranger Rendezvous or join other employee organizations that allow you to establish a network within the NPS organization and have one-on-one conversations with supervisors and superintendents across the service. Stay in touch and allow these contacts to help you with your career goals.
- Be persistent, be positive, and take advantage of any opportunity that puts you in the right place at the right time to land the perfect NPS job.

Liz Roberts worked in various administrative functions throughout her 32-year NPS career, retiring in 2017. She especially enjoyed participating in career fairs and doing community workshops to help people apply for federal jobs. For two years, she worked as a staffing specialist for four parks, where she was solely responsible for rating applicants as eligible and qualified, and making the determination to include them on a "Certificate of Eligibles," based strictly on the contents of their application.

INTERPRETATION

QR codes? AI? The world of interp is evolving

REMEMBER DOING A DAYLONG CAREER

day for a middle school near Biscayne National Park. Actually, it was the fourth time I'd been invited back. I didn't bring a PowerPoint like the lawyers and doctors did. I brought cool stuff! Skulls, skins, and corals. I was old school!

Packing up at the end of the day, one young man came up to me and asked "are you on MySpace?" I wasn't. Why should I be on a social network? That was newfangled stuff. I was old school.

Years later, when a special event I'd organized wasn't drawing many people, a volunteer pulled out her phone and said "let me put it on Facebook!" I'd heard of Facebook, but didn't really understand what it was. I didn't need to. I was old school.

But darned if several people didn't show up within an hour of her posting about the event. Hmm. Maybe there was something to this Facebook thing. I joined, and soon I was hooked, connecting with people near and far. Could this be a way of reaching new audiences for the park? I soon learned that most of my friends on staff were on Facebook, but convincing my supervisor and the superintendent that this was a worthy effort was pretty tough.

Nationally, discussions amongst parks about the so called "new media" had interpreters raving about the potential, but most managers afraid to try something so newfangled, so irrelevant...and so potentially dangerous! What if someone commented something inappropriate? Big parks like Yellowstone and Glacier went in headfirst... even when the Washington Office said parks were not supposed to have Facebook accounts. Other parks followed suit. The cat was out of the bag ... and nobody was going to get it back in.

Fast-forward 15 years. Biscayne National Park has 31,000 Facebook followers, and nearly 100,000 on a subsequent "new media" platform, Instagram. Nearly all NPS units and programs have heavy social media presence, and the National Park Service Facebook and Instagram Pages have a combined 7.5 million followers. And remember, the number of people who see NPS posts without following is *exponentially* higher.



AI image of Grand Canyon National Park by Katie at "Big and Little Parks." Find her @BigandLittleParks or BigandLittleParks.com.

Have there been problems with social media? Sure. One notable example came out of Badlands National Park after the inauguration of Donald Trump in 2017 when a former employee who still had access to park accounts Tweeted about climate change. But in a nod to the old adage that there's no such thing as bad publicity, the fans of the national parks were buoyed. My favorite message from that time read:

First they came for the scientists...

And the National Park Service said, "LOL, no" and went rogue and we were all like, "I was not expecting the park rangers to lead the resistance; none of the dystopian novels I read prepared me for this ... but cool!"

Whether one agrees or not with the "going rogue" part of that, I was happy that park rangers were seen as credible in a context that just a few years earlier had been viewed (by me and many others) as irrelevant.

Today, the National Park Service employs staff at parks, regional offices and nationally whose sole job is social media. The posts use humor, relevance, diversity and more as tools to reach an expanded audience... including those who might never get the opportunity to visit a park IRL (which is the newfangled way of saying "in real life").

Posts are routinely lauded by sites who write about social media, and it's not unusual to see readers, jokingly or not, calling for page managers to receive pay raises. Posts about "never pushing a slower friend down" in bear country (even if the friendship seems to have run its course) and advice against "licking toads" carry far beyond social media, with references in newspapers and even "The Late Show" with Stephen Colbert.

Social media is an example of something the NPS was slow to adopt, but is now a critical outreach tool. Are there other newfangled things that need to be embraced? Anecdotally, I see the use of QR codes in parks increasing, especially after the pandemic when they came into their own for touch-free menus at restaurants and bars. How will the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) impact the parks? I've already seen Instagram accounts with posts written by AI, accompanied by images of park rangers and the parks themselves that aren't real. Is there a place for something so newfangled?

It's all so scary. Or maybe I'm just old school.

Gary Bremen retired in 2022, and he immediately created TheTravelingRanger.com ... which he routinely fails to update because he is old school.

ADMINISTRATION

Kill them with kindness: Customer service is a must-have admin skill

ONE OF THE KEYS TO BETTERING ONESELF IN THEIR professional career is training: obtaining and maintaining skills that either help you to do your job or prepare you for a future position or change in career paths. While it's oh, so very important to work on those technical skills throughout your career, it's just as important (some might say even more so) to develop and practice excellent soft skills such as customer service and communications throughout your career.

All of us experience the highs and lows of customer service each and every day. Unfortunately, it seems for me the experiences I remember most are the poor ones. The cashier at the grocery store who didn't acknowledge my presence as she rang up my groceries. The postal worker who barks at each customer, every day, for years.

Maybe I don't have vivid memories of excellent customer service experiences because it's what we should expect! I know that in the moment where someone patiently answers my rambling question, I'm so happy that they took the time to see me and my question as worthy of their time, and that we could make a connection if even for only a few minutes.

Kim White is the administrative officer for the National Trails Office, which administers 10 national historic trails and one historic highway. All told, that covers more than 28,000 miles across 24 states! She's fairly new to the NPS, having worked previously for four other federal agencies and prior to that at two law firms. You can best believe she's had plenty of opportunity to hone and use her customer service skills. In fact, while working for the Department of Homeland Security, she was formally recognized with an Outstanding Service Award for her tenure there.

I met Kim at the Intermountain Region Admin Officer training in October. She quickly impressed me by jumping right in with great questions and by seemingly meeting everyone and sharing her bubbly self with us. This is the kind of personality we need handling human resources concerns, answering the same questions over and over at visitor center front desks, and patiently explaining to visitors why you can't take that petrified wood home with you, and why you shouldn't provoke that bison.

And sure enough, when I interviewed Kim for this article, she told me that the best part of her job is providing great customer service in



Smiles for miles: Administrative Officer Kim White in the National Trails Office, is successful at her job because she treats customers and co-workers with care and respect. Courtesy: Marin Karraker

support of the NPS mission. Kim loves that she is able to serve others – from employees to the public – and she always does it with a smile!

It can be challenging to answer that restroom question for the umpteenth time, and it can be hard to know what to say when that struggling employee comes to you desperate for advice. Maybe they've caught you on a day you're really struggling with a workload or your own troubles. But in that moment, that person is the most important person in the room, and they're looking directly to you for assistance. Step away from that computer, give them your full attention, listen, and help. And with a smile as appropriate.

I believe that we get what we give, both in our professional and personal lives. I challenge you to strive to make each and every connection the best one of the day. You have no idea what your answer and smile can mean to the other person, and I'm guessing you'll walk away from the experience feeling a little lighter in spirit.

— Marin Karraker, *Administrative Officer, SEAZ Group*

This is the kind of personality we need handling human resources concerns, answering the same questions over and over at visitor center front desks, and patiently explaining to visitors why you can't take that petrified wood home with you, and why you shouldn't provoke that bison.

Scholarships available for World Ranger Congress 2024

ANPR WILL BE AWARDING A FEW scholarships to help defer costs for ANPR members who wish to be delegates to the 10th World Ranger Congress. The Congress will be held in Hyères, France, on the Mediterranean coast, Oct. 7-11, 2024. The Congress is sponsored by the International Ranger Federation and France's ranger association, Gardes Nature de France.



The purpose of the scholarships is to provide opportunities for ANPR members/NPS employees who would not otherwise be able to afford to attend this signature worldwide event. Benefits to ANPR are to be represented by active field personnel who will share what they learn at the Congress with ANPR and with fellow NPS employees.

To learn more about the application process, contact ANPR's International Liaison Meg Weesner. Deadline estimated to be April 15. mweesner@anpr.org, 520-576-2083

ANPR monitors proposed federal legislation that may affect you financially

PROPOSED LEGISLATION THAT AFFECTS THE FINANCES OF BOTH CURRENT FERS federal employees and FERS retirees has been introduced in both the House and the Senate. The bill numbers are H.R. 866 / S. 3194 and are both titled "The Equal COLA Act." If this sounds familiar, it has been introduced, but never passed, in past Congresses. The Act is designed to provide FERS retirees with the same annual Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) as that provided to CSRS employees. Currently, FERS and CSRS employees receive the same COLA as calculated based on the third-quarter average CPI each year up to 2 percent. If the CPI based COLA is between 2 percent and 3 percent, CSRS retirees receive the actual amount and FERS retirees receive only 2 percent. If the calculated COLA is more than 3 percent, FERS retirees receive 1 percent less than the calculated amount.

For example, the COLA for 2024 for CSRS folks is 3.2 percent and that for FERS people is 2.2 percent. Obviously, this potential 1 percent difference is then compounded annually. Another example is that if the FERS retiree basic annuity amount is \$40,000, then over a 20- year retirement period, a FERS retiree will potentially receive up to \$8,800 less in 2024 dollars than a CSRS employee, plus any interest one might make on that amount. This amount of difference will be lower if the CPI calculation is less than 3 percent. You can do the math from there depending on what your current or future annuity amount might be.

A disclaimer: Do your own math, and don't take your financial advice from me! The current status of this legislation is that it was referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability in February 2023 and to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs in November 2023. The National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) supports this bill. ANPR encourages you to consider contacting your Congressperson and Senators if this bill is important to you.

— Michael Pflaum, ANPR Board Member for Government Issues

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(Updated 3/14/2024)

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- Stanton Salkin

Old Faithful (monthly donations/ \$25+)

- Wendy Lauritzen
- Meg Weesner

PROTECTION

Why protection ranger vacancies are B-A-D

This is Part 1 in a series of articles Kevin Moses will provide over the coming year on the problems with leaving vacancies unfilled.

D ID YOU KNOW THAT PROTECTION RANGER VACANCIES ARE BAD? It's official: The results are in, and after decades of boots-on-the-ground field testing of what once was a mere hypothesis, we can now say for certain that protection ranger vacancies are absolutely, unequivocally, indisputably, without exception, BAD!

Here are just a few of the rationales supporting this conclusive finding (in other words, when ranger positions are allowed to lapse — even for a little while — at least some of the following vital work doesn't get done):

EMERGENCY RESPONSE/CALLS FOR SERVICE

At a typical national park in Somewhere, USA, protection rangers are required to be emergency-response ready to cover the entire park: Many miles of paved park highways, many additional miles of fire roads and secondary paved roads, campgrounds, lodges and cabins, concessions and park housing areas, picnic grounds, monuments and memorials, service stations, visitor centers, gift shops, waysides, marinas, beaches, airstrips, government-owned facilities, other day-use areas, hundreds of miles of rugged trails, hundreds of miles of difficult-to-reach boundary line, and thousands of acres of remote backcountry, including in many cases designated wilderness.

- The emergencies to which rangers must respond include:
- Law enforcement incidents
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) calls
- Search and Rescue (SAR) missions
- Motor Vehicle Collisions (MVCs)
- Fires (wildland, structural, and vehicle)
- Hazardous Materials (HazMat) Incidents
- Wildlife incidents (bear jams; wildlife hazing; removing deceased deer from road after they've been struck by vehicles; having to dispatch mortally wounded wildlife; removal of venomous snakes, bats, and other dangerous wildlife from heavily populated park areas; responding to animal bite cases, compassionate handling of injured wildlife that have a chance in rehab, food storage issues; assisting resource management staff with Chronic Wasting disease sampling; etc.)
- Mental Health incidents (suicidal subjects, people suffering from any number of psychiatric disorders, Emergency Custody Orders, etc.)
- Be On the Look-Outs (BOLO), Attempts To Locate (ATL)
- Death investigations (natural, accident, suicide, homicide)
- Weather-related incidents (disasters, winter conditions, flooding, trees across road, ice storms, lava flows, hurricane response and clean-up, etc.)
- Winter Road Closures (significant enough in many parks to warrant its own bullet point)
- Mutual aid responses/agency assists to county and state agencies (LE, EMS, SAR, Game and Fish, etc.)



Protection rangers have an infinite list of tasks, including responding to traffic accidents such as the one above, at Buffalo National River, and conducting search-and-rescue missions, such as the photo on the facing page, taken at New River Gorge National Park and Preserve.

Photos: Kevin Moses

- After-hours callouts for any of the above
- “Re-habbing,” replacing, restocking vehicles, equipment, and supplies immediately after they're used on an incident in order to have them mission-ready for the next incident.

PROACTIVE PATROLS

In addition to being response ready for emergencies, which is a reactive posture, we must also conduct proactive patrols, in both front-country and backcountry corridors, during which we look for violations of law and take action to prevent crime and apprehend those who commit crimes, look for safety concerns, visitors in harm's way, etc.

We take a similar proactive approach to preventive SAR (PSAR), speaking with visitors about backcountry preparedness and safety.

MANDATORY COLLATERAL DUTIES, TRAINING REQUIREMENTS, AND OTHER MANDATORY FUNCTIONS

- Law Enforcement
- Firearms Program Coordinator/Firearms Instructors
- Taser Program Coordinator/Taser Instructor
- Control Tactics Program Coordinator/Control Tactics Instructors
- Use of Force Instructors
- Evidence Custodians
- All rangers are required to submit reports into IMARS

- All rangers are required to protect, secure, collect, handle, process, document, store, track, and submit for analysis all evidence related to LE cases, including management of electronic DashCam and Body Worn Camera (BWC) footage
- Coordinate with FBI and state crime labs any time evidence needs to be legally analyzed in a laboratory setting, including proper submission through approved shipment channels and submitting results of analysis to AUSA and the court
- Appear and testify in Federal court (and occasionally in state or local court)
- Victim/Witness advocacy instructors
- Seasonal commissioned ranger hiring and supervision
- Ranger Orientation and Evaluation (ROE) program completion for first-year LEOs, including the completion of a thorough Task Book by ROE coaches and supervisor
- Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP): FTRs and FTL
- Courier duties, including courier coordinator
- Physical Fitness coordinator/Physical Efficiency Battery (PEB) administrators
- Complete mandatory Annual Law Enforcement Refresher Training (40-hour ALERT)
- Complete mandatory Firearms Qualifications (FAQ) twice annually with at least three weapons
- Mandatory firearms maintenance — Armorers conduct thorough disassembly of firearms, deep-cleaning, and reassembly, plus individual rangers clean and maintain firearms after every qualification or training exercise, as well as periodic cleaning and maintenance (firearms absolutely must always be service-ready).
- Complete PEBs annually
- Complete medical exam every three years
- Complete background investigation every five years
- Submit to random drug screening upon command
- Complete mandatory Use of Force & Taser Reports after all UoF and Taser-related incidents.
- Assemble annual Commission Requirements folder (LE training, PEBs, FAQs, BI, medical exam, body armor expiration date, firearms checkouts, etc.); upload into IMARS

ADDITIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE AND EMS DUTIES

Besides responding to emergencies, rangers must also act as SAR/EMS coordinators or incident commanders, serve as instructors as needed, maintain SAR equipment, and compile the annual SAR and EMS report.

They must complete /refresh Tactical EMS (TEMS) program, be involved in hiring and supervision, complete biannual EMT, AEMT (ParkMedic), or paramedic refresher plus multiple additional Continuing Education Units (CEUs), complete biannual CPR training, and stay abreast of Emergency Vehicle Operator Course (EVOC) and instruction.

WILDLAND FIRE, AVIATION, ICS, SAFETY, SECURITY

- Operational Leadership instructors
- Physical Security Program coordinator
- All rangers must maintain minimum Red Card qualifications of FFT2, SEC1, and EMT (complete WFSTAR, Pack

Test, and mock shelter deployment)

- Complete many trainings, including: initial Basic Aviation Safety Training (A-100), triannual refresher, additional Aviation Safety courses such as Mishap Reviews, Crash Survival, Aerial Transportation of Hazardous Materials, etc.; Initial Helicopter Hoist/Short Haul/Longline Rescue training, plus annual refreshers (for those parks with these programs); and elective trainings in any discipline (LE, Fire, SAR, ICS, EMS, etc.) to meet mandatory number of elective hours

OTHER MANDATORY MISCELLANEOUS AND ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS

Numerous annual mandatory on-line training courses (DOI Talent, Credit Card, FISSA, No-Fear, Role-Based Privacy, Active Shooter response, etc.)

Fleet Coordinator (coordinates vehicle outfitting, exchanges, shuttling, etc.)

Purchasing: Many rangers have purchase cards and must manage a budget and attend to the many administrative requirements of using a government credit card

Generate training records for every training session we conduct (including those for personnel from other divisions)

Serve as acting chief ranger, acting deputy chief ranger, or acting district rangers anytime any of the above are out-of-park

Make notifications up the chain of command per local mandatory Incident Notification Guidelines (serious incidents, employee-involved accidents, fires, hazmat spills, etc.).

— Kevin Moses

Supervisory Ranger, Shenandoah National Park



CULTURAL RESOURCES

A quiet crisis facing NPS cultural resources

HISTORY IS GENERALLY A MODEST THING. ONLY IN THE RAREST OF INSTANCES (Pearl Harbor, September 11, 2001) does it kick in your front door, loudly announce itself, and demand your attention. More often, history is like your next-door neighbor, close in proximity and frequently unobserved.

Historians help us to understand the past. Good ones plumb the depths of our shared experiences to find the common, though sometimes previously unobserved or unconnected touchstones of our shared experiences. They create narratives that immerse, provoke, and inspire. Great historians and great interpreters of history are true believers and heretics, detectives and poets, objectivists with a partisan approach to accuracy, inclusion, and truth.

The National Park Service has been in the “history business” since the agency was established in 1916. Few agencies have done the work better.

But a good track record does not ensure a bright future.

With the country at odds over who we are and what we stand for. With ongoing efforts to rewrite or ignore the parts of our past that make some feel uncomfortable. And with the opportunity to capitalize on keystone events such as the 250th anniversary of American independence (July 4, 2026) to reconnect the public to a remarkable, complicated national narrative, we need more than ever to get the practice of history right.

Because the National Park Service will continue to play a pivotal role in the interpretation, management, and preservation of the nation’s patrimony, we need to ask if that agency is prepared to do so. The answer, it seems, is maybe.

Bad budgets and inadequate staffing levels are adversely impacting the core functions of the National Park Service’s cultural resource management operations. The “do more with less” philosophy that has governed the actions of NPS managers and planners has over the last two decades emptied the ranks of NPS museum specialists, curators, historians, and cultural resource managers. Interpretive rangers still lead tours of battlefields and historic sites that are of the highest caliber. But research conducted and sampled by the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has revealed the following.

- Roughly 450 cultural resource positions remain unfilled.
- Between 2011 and 2023 the number of NPS historians decreased from 182 to 138, a 25 percent decrease.
- More than 50 percent of NPS cultural resource management jobs are performed as collateral duties, meaning those personnel may not devote more than 20 percent of their time per month to their cultural resource work.
- More than 80 percent of all national parks lack the baseline data assessing the condition of the cultural resources in their inventory.

How we got here may be less worthy now of consideration than determining how we help the park service recover from these deficits.

What NPS needs is sufficient funding and staffing to develop and implement a successful, integrated approach to storytelling and preservation. Interpretive rangers must be given accurate, inclusive, and just narratives to share with the public. Those rangers need to be backed up by museum specialists, historians, curators, and archi-



An image from Yorktown Final Victory that combines interpretation with an appeal for public donations. NPS cultural resources needs financial support now more than ever.

Photo: Alan Spears

vists. These behind-the-scenes technicians and detectives will ensure that the narratives our parks are espousing are empirical, and that the resources are being well cared for and consistently culled for new information that could change or expand existing narratives.

Non-federal partners have a place in this too. Tribes, academic institutions, and nonprofit partners should be called upon to assist the park service in sharpening its approach to cultural resource management, historic preservation, and culturally competent storytelling. And let’s please end the de facto embargo on NPS employees attending and participating in conferences out of the fear that federal money may be used to facilitate learning and scholarship.

This year, NPCA will launch a Cultural Resource Challenge campaign. We will ask congress for an additional \$250 million in federal funding over several fiscal years to support the National Park Service’s cultural resource management operations. To resolve this quiet crisis requires deliberate, immediate action. We believe this campaign will ultimately provide the budget and staffing resources the National Park Service needs to move the answer to the question “Is NPS ready to keep leading on cultural resource management?” from a cautious maybe to a resounding yes!

— Alan Spears

National Parks Conservation Association

IN PRINT

Heller's love of wilderness shines in tension-filled 'Last Ranger'

I COUNTED THE DAYS UNTIL THE RELEASE OF PETER HELLER'S "The Last Ranger." I've devoured everything this Colorado author has written, beginning with the "The Dog Stars," published in 2012. When publication of "The Last Ranger" was advanced in a news release in early 2023, my interest was particularly piqued, working as I do, for an association whose goal is to represent and support the interests of National Park Service professionals.

On release day, I happened to be in Colorado, and I scoured the bookstores in Grand Junction, sure that his book would be featured. I was not disappointed. There, displayed prominently on a shelf at Out West Books, was "The Last Ranger" – and bonus, it was a signed, first edition!

The "last ranger" is named Ren Hopper, an angsty law enforcement ranger in Yellowstone National Park, who feels the park is getting devoured by clueless tourists, entitled vacationers, and a general attitude that the wild lands of this 2.2-million-acre national park are there for the taking. He spends his days breaking up campground fights, writing tickets, and investigating vandalism. He longs to be alone in the wilderness, to be part of the landscape rather than play babysitter to city folks who don't know how to respect the land. He is an angsty guy addicted to fly fishing, as all of Heller's main characters tend to be, and he doesn't seem to know how to resolve that inner turmoil.

The conflict in "The Last Ranger" begins when, while out enjoying the backcountry on his day off, Hopper spots in the distance a man with a rifle and a dog, chasing over a ridge a small black bear Hopper knows as "Edgar." He manages to intervene, and Edgar escapes, but when Hopper confronts the man – who he suspects is a local resident named Les Ingraham known for flouting the law – the interaction is less than pleasant. Now Hopper is angry, and he launches a quiet poaching investigation, which festers like a wound in the community.

This book covers a lot of real-life rangers issues that makes one wonder if Heller ever worked for the National Park Service: federal land vs. local community tensions, overworked and burned-out

employees, doing more with less, and interoffice politics. There's even some romance involved, when he becomes more than friendly with Hilly, a feisty scientist studying Yellowstone's wolves. I suspect Heller didn't get every detail correct – surely that idyllic cabin he is provided with for housing is not real – but the power of his words more than make up for any factual errors.

Heller is one of the most talented writers of literary fiction I follow. His stories are complicated, and his characters are flawed, multidimensional individuals who are believable at every turn. He rarely resolves the conflicts in his stories – in "The Guide," published in 2021, you never fully find out what sinister things are happening at the elite fishing lodge where his main character (another angsty guy named Jack) is working, but it's almost not relevant. "The Last Ranger" is no exception, but I won't spoil the ending. Pick up this book, and immerse yourself in Heller's rich descriptions of the stunning landscapes outside the reach of most Yellowstone visitors.

— Melissa DeV Vaughn, *Ranger* editor



The Last Ranger, Peter Heller, Alfred A. Knopf, 2023, 287 pages.

Kudos List



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

- Rick Mossman
- Ed Rizzotto
- Liz Roberts
- Meg Weesner

(updated 3/14/2024)



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