

NPS Law Enforcement Task Force Meeting July 17 and July 18, 2002

Action Items at end of notes
Summary for each day at beginning of notes for that day

Dick Ring
Bill Supernough
Dennis Burnett
John Reynolds
Rob Amberger

Frank Dean
Kevin Fitzgerald
Lora Peppers
Pamela Blythe
Teresa Chambers

George McDonald
Jeff Cupps
Mike Fogarty
Brian Sweatland

July 17, 2002

Summary:

- Yosemite is an evolutionary park and hopes to lead into the future
- New Associate Director of Resources and Visitor Protection will be the Chief Ranger for the NPS and incorporates law enforcement with other responsibilities.
- Concern on where special agents will be stationed and to whom they do report
- NPS should not lose "local" control of special agents
- Desire for consistency between all law enforcement programs within Interior
- Concern for the ability to respond to emergencies
- V-RAP – examines and calculates ranger staffing
- V-RAP needs refinement and the deficiencies need to be corrected
- Ranger staffing levels currently taxed by security details, fire assignments, and other issues.
- Contractor doing an assessment of software for incident reporting
- NPS needs staffing standards
- Put OPS requests in the System
- NPS needs a plan on what it needs, what are the capabilities, and how we plan to get there.

Morning Session:

Dick Ring called the meeting to order at 0922.

- He expressed Don Murphy's apologies for being detained in Washington, D.C.
- Introductions were made.
- Steve made a short welcoming address to the group: Safety message on exiting in case of emergency. Yosemite is committed to Safety. It is good to come back to the field and link with operations. Variations of themes here apply to all parks. We have the luxury of specialization and this is not common. The usual is the multispecialist generalist. Weave together science, humanities and educational components. We will never have enough rangers to do enforcement. Voluntary compliance. –

Yosemite is not Yosemite Valley – Yosemite Valley like an incorporated county and the park is really more. 3.2 million visitors last year. 45 permanent commissioned rangers, 70 fire people, Wilderness employees, and administrative people. There is a lot of Law Enforcement attention and fire attention and it has been hard to get applicants.

Yosemite stresses education – Law Enforcement is a finely honed skill, but we have appreciation of education and building the powerhouse of education. There is excitement that the U of C is opening a new campus in Merced and two research institutes that will weave into Yosemite as living labs.



Jeri will talk about Wildlink for disadvantaged youngsters. NASA funds are a source. Diversity outreach component.

Economies – Protection's budget is 7 million, 3.4 dedicated to LE, rest for Fire. We look for ways to use our workforce more economically. We lean heavily on volunteerism: Desk Officer Program, (saves us \$70,000 a year); Horse Patrol (again retired LE); Retired Fire engineers doing Fire Condition Assessment.

Introduced four Assistant Chief Rangers: Don Coelho, Law Enforcement Support: Tom Nichols, Fire: Jeri Hall, Resource Protection: Cam Sholly, Operations.

- Dave Mihalic, Superintendent of Yosemite, also welcomed the group to the park. Recognized John Reynolds for his ability to let "us do what we need to do". There is a saying about the "Yosemite Way". We are changing that to "Yosemite Leads the Way". Yosemite will not show the right way or the best way but the group will see everything that is encountered by parks is here in this park. All the different aspects of rangers are in Yosemite, and the park tries to meet the expectations of the public. The American Public that come to this park want to see a ranger with the flat hat. Yosemite tries to ensure this. Anyone wearing a uniform is a ranger to the public, and the public thinks that they have authority.

The Concessionaire has 2000 employees and we work closely with them. One would have to go to many different parks to find the total of everything here.

- John Reynolds thanked Dave for setting the stage. John agreed that the seven miles of Yosemite Valley is not all of Yosemite. Stop and enjoy Yosemite. Yosemite has been known as the evolutionary park. Things start here and spread. The constituency here believes that this is their place. This applies to all parks but it is particularly vivid here. It is every individual's park. We manage parks in trust for the public.

The Great Remembrance is a book. If parks are important to you, then buy this and read it. Flow of depth of caring infuses everything.

Dick Ring talked about his time here in Yosemite with the Flood of January 1997. He said the feeling of caring is here.

Dick Ring and Kevin Fitzgerald tried to cover what Don Murphy was to cover this morning. The new Associate and realignment in WASO have caused quite a bit of discussion. This position will work arm in arm with the Park Police and have a strong commitment not to lose generalist ranger concept. This position will be the Chief Ranger for NPS – cover Law Enforcement, emergency services, and continue to cover management functions such as Wilderness management. The position should keep a sense of what the ranger profession is about and work with other Law Enforcement units.

Kevin looked at the position description a few weeks ago to ensure everything was incorporated and that it reflected the multi-skilled generalist. It was heavily Law Enforcement and Kevin incorporated Wilderness and other responsibilities. The position should be a manager and not a technical expert. It now reflects the title and embraces the concept. Don Murphy wants a Law Enforcement background in the applicant but the person does not have to be commissioned at this time. It will be SES.

Bill Supernagh asked if it would be dual titled? It is officially titled: Associate of Resources and Visitor Protection. Dick said the realignment in WASO adds this Associate position and does realign functions: Associate of Cultural Resources and Education (looking at separating education); Associate of Partnerships; Associate for Natural Resources and Science; Associate for Professional Services (construction, lands, facility management); Associate for Administration (workforce, business, revenue, concessions).

It was asked where GPRA was assigned, and it is still in the Deputy's Office. Two Deputies will work together.

Rob Amberger would like to share information learned about this new Associate of Resources and Visitor Protection. What is the word on the street?

Dennis Burnett said the questions he has received are about line authority and will there ever be money dedicated to Law Enforcement or will it be siphoned off.

Rob is hearing support but that the education function is very important and needs similar importance and linkages.

Bill Supernauth echoes the feeling about education and it does not make sense to have education under cultural resources so there is concern about what will happen to Education and Interpretation. As far as the new associate, the field rangers just don't care. They don't see any more money or people.

Two areas where pink flags have been raised: Where will Wilderness Management and Fire Management be. Will this realignment trickle down to regions and parks? We have been putting Fire and Wilderness closer to Natural Resources. Will it be closer to Protection? How does this tie into Natural Resources then. Nobody has taken a position.

Rob Amberger said he had received some emails asking about special agents and where they will be stationed. Employees are very concerned that Special Agents will be stove piped into a different and separate system. There is concern that Superintendents or Chief Rangers will not supervise Special Agents.

We need a way to investigate our own organization. Now the complaint goes to park in question and parks have the people involved in the issues looking into the issues. Need a better way to look at this.

Steve Shackleton agreed with the comments and said those are the comments that he is getting from Yosemite. The superintendent should retain the capacity to supervise the interface between rangers and Special Agents. Tougher cases have continuity and good evidence with this.

In the wake of September 11 and our capacity to rally in a hurry, we could forge a response mechanism stating we have these Special Agents and we could trigger a fast response (like SET and IM Teams). There is a strong feeling that we should not lose local control.

The idea that investigators could be called from other parks/areas for assistance is available.

John Reynolds said we prefer to keep Special Agents in the parks. Part of that depends on Chief Ranger in the Region. That is where it stops.

Concerns Kevin heard were about the issues in IG's report. Field interviews, whether true or not, raised concerns. Don Murphy agreed that everyone is exposed to influence. There has to be conversations between Special Agents, rangers, etc. to see how this will be. The Deputy Director will not tolerate scenarios. If an employee is performing Law Enforcement specialist duties - if there is a true investigatory need - let them go to where needed and fill in behind. If these functions are taken away from the park, there will be problems.

John Reynolds asked where the roots to all of this started. John wondered if any comments were really heard by the IG's folks. Parks are not run like the Secret Service. The people that were heard were the same folks that wrote DO-9 and it reads like City law enforcement.

Don Murphy has been able to talk to IG. The Department agrees that the Regional Chief Ranger is as far down in the organization as this issue will go. Field folks need to understand that even though this is ridiculous, it is real. We may have to go through a stage we don't want to go through to get to where we want to be.

The product from this meeting should be a communication statement: Statement from NLC should be reiterated.

Dick Ring said all of this discussion needs to be recapped with Don Murphy quickly tomorrow (July 18). The group needs to present the concerns and the answers. There is a desire for better consistency between all different Law Enforcement programs within Interior about the concern for the ability to respond to tackle local, state, and national issues and emergencies. Don Murphy has focused on these.

With regards to Park Police – some NPS employees have never met a member of the force and other NPS employees were Park Police formerly. There is ambivalence to support. Nobody is displeased. Nobody is upset if DO-9 is expanded to include Park Police for total law enforcement.

Teresa Chambers said it is an advantage to work with the rangers and that the Park Police have strong affection for LE rangers. They see themselves as part of the bigger NPS and the Park Police know that.

Jeff Capps said Park Police do not want to do without Law Enforcement rangers. He said he would be clueless in a natural park and there is room for both parties – each has different expertise. They should work together.

V-RAP Discussion with Frank Dean.

V-RAP has been focused on lately by Frank Dean and Senior Level Mgmt Trainees (USDA Leadership Academy Project) and Frank presented the results.

Visitor Management Resource Assessment Program.

It was developed in 1995 to systematically examine and calculate ranger staffing and provide justification for staffing budgets. It is based on R-Map. R-Map included one-time tasks and Protection was not convinced that the same efficiencies would apply since protection is not a one-time project. Also Protection does not hire contract employees. V-RAP could ensure accurate and consistently applied methodology could be used throughout NPS to determine Ranger staffing.

Thomas Report used V-RAP. IACP was asked to review the Law Enforcement program and endorsed V-RAP and recommended validation.

V-RAP begins with completion of a park profile by Chief Ranger. The Regional Chief Ranger reviews this. Data fields include size, visitation, miles or road, SAR, EMS.

Ranger duties are broken into 28 functional areas. Then park profiles are entered into the program, analyzed, and staffing tables are produced.

The group talked to Fire Pro folks, state parks, University and NPS research consultants for validation. They interviewed some Chief Rangers at selected parks. It was discovered that there were some different interpretations of terms so there was some inconsistency.

V-RAP was meant to be generic and uniqueness can be highlighted (urban interface, dive programs, etc.). V-RAP still misses some activity that impact park staff but it will help to establish some standards. Time away from job was studied. Some rangers on SET or Fire Teams may be away over 50% of the time. This needs to be factored in.

Some Chief Rangers were not comfortable with V-RAP. It provides baseline Ranger support costs but costs have gone up since 1996. Radios, defensive equipment, cost of out of park response (such as local county sheriff) are some examples.

Fire Pro has never been validated by an outside source. Annually it is reviewed and adjusted. None of State parks consulted used a staffing model. Scientists revealed that no statistical analysis of the current V-RAP model is possible. It is based on professional judgement of Chief Rangers and there is no consultant with the expertise to evaluate the program. It does not lend itself to quantitative analysis.

Statement Of Work - Phase I - Ranger focus group provides input. Phase I also to consider performance base staffing component. Phase II - develop web based V-RAP.

Team concluded needs must be refined. Found deficiencies. Need to develop definitions, update software, coordinate with AFS, provide training, integrate turnover and position vacancy factor into model, establish pilot program to test by authorizing additional FTEs in some units.

Conclusion: Ranger staffing levels are currently taxed by security details, fire, other issues.

Bill Supernaugh asked if they looked at new hires that may not have a commission or limited commission? No. Were relationships between V-RAP and CIRS examined? CIRS is more broken than V-RAP and is not used in many places. Bill suggested a crosswalk between the two programs. Dick Ring said a contractor is doing an assessment of services' needs for incident reporting and assessing software out on the market now. The contractor will be reporting their results to the National Leadership Council (NLC). All of this is going through the Information Technology Investment Council where every new investment in technological systems is examined for compatibility. Some decisions will be made over the next few months.

Bill Supernaugh asked what the bandaid fix is while the contractor is examining this now. Kevin Fitzgerald said a number of parks are doing their own thing.

Dick asked Teresa Chambers how they did Needs Assessments. She asked why Park Police were not included and have been on their own. Is there a mechanism in place? Frank Dean said they dusted off an existing program and just worked with a sampling of parks for this study.

Rob Arnberger reminded everyone that work was done on required occupancy and some professional standards (FBI) were found. But there is not a lot out there for the park situation. The Park Service will have to develop their own. If the Park Service can develop some standards, it will be a model for many organizations. IACP even did not have something acceptable. The Task Force cannot rely on finding anything.

Teresa said there are many unique incidents - it is different for accompanying the President of the United States than someone else, rural conditions add to consideration, who is on annual leave, etc. Park Police will sit down in each area and go back to basic functions and what does it take to do it. Then how many do they have and then go back to Director and ask for strength. They will be ideas for standards from many organizations.

It will be hard to answer Congress when they ask how did we get to a figure. Each park is a different community with different stresses and needs, and it will be hard to come up with standards. Generalized questions can be done. The number of visitors does not make the determination. There is nothing nationwide that will work. A rationale must be developed to defend each case.

Dave Mihalic asked if we could take a standard and tweak it instead of developing one. Population base models need to take into consideration that each night the population changes in parks. Concerns are hard to identify because they change daily.

Rob Arnberger said it is important how the standards are developed and how the program is marketed to Congress. This needs to be done within a two to three year horizon with the budget, and it needs to be done sooner rather than later. It is being developed now with herky-jerky actions, and we are going to be asked how we arrived at this figure.

Mike Fogerty commented on definitions. Functions, places, etc. need to be defined correctly. Define operations, types of employees and we might be able to come up with numbers that are defensible. Density, amount of traffic, scenic road or highway, things like this need to get points

Dick Ring said he is asked, "what is your business plan"? People are looking for models to help to figure out needs and convey and convince needs. We are heading towards enterprise architecture for communications.

Complexity analysis matrix for prescribed burns can show need. There is a way one comes to a conclusion. It gives people a comfort level even if they do not understand the entire matrix.

This is no small thing that can be done in a short time frame. It needs a continued and steady commitment to build upon. We need a system and approach for understanding so NPS and Park Police can pursue this goal. It will take a significant effort.

Rob said there is a glaring discrepancy. Deficiencies in Law Enforcement manpower arrived at have not been translated into OFS. How many parks do not have OFS requests in to cover needs? "Inside" people have a mishmash accumulation of information. There is nothing anyone can look at right now to show there is a problem. One cannot find consistency throughout the Service in requests.

Kevin said part of the problem with the process of OFS is that it is a guessing game. What is the flavor of the month? There is not a true sense of needs. Regions do not give clear guidance. This is part of the difficulty. Validation of numbers is not vetted.

Steve Shackleton said when the Thomas Report went up to the committees, it was accompanied with the idea that the methodology of VRAP was not perfect. It encouraged them to have staff look at it and if there were a better idea, the group wanted to hear it. A dialogue was encouraged. The committees are the ultimate consumers and if they had ownership, it would have believability. But there was no response.

We need to get on the stick, overhaul it, polish it, and admit that it is not perfect but it is under development and is the best that we have.

John Reynolds talked about OFS requests. The most successful approach is to have a park NOT to guess the system. Write down what it honestly takes to do the request and DO the requests. Don't ask limits. Get them in the system. Do them. Be honest and use a business like approach. Portray it in the way you want it to operate. Do not anticipate what you think will happen.

Rob said there are two levels of problems:

1. Only part of the time do people "game" the system. Instructions come out. With the request to be followed.
2. Reality- we are going to have to find a way to get on the board in an interim fashion as we do a model and gather information. We have to find a way. We are going to have to come up with the deficit of our needs. We have to get there. There is very little connection between OFS needs and the deficit.

Dick said a plan is needed - We should admit we are not where we want to be but here is the plan. We need to make the best use of the tools available. Here is what we are going to set in motion to be better by next year, two years from now, three years from now. With the capabilities we have, this is how long it will take us to get there. If you are not satisfied, then we need more resources. We need to bring short term and long term into focus.

Suggested a subgroup could work on this.

Meeting was adjourned for lunch and the afternoon field trip.

July 18, 2002

Summary:

- DOI has been reaching down into the NPS and directing actions in Law Enforcement. NPS needs to stay in control. SES Associate Director position could maintain control
- NPS will go forward in searching for the new Associate Director
- NPS Law Enforcement is wrapped up in the DOI Law Enforcement Plan
- NPS needs to be sure the generalist ranger is our concept.
- NPS must plan ahead and work out Congressional concerns
- Need to track money and tell the story to Congress and others
- A separate budget limits flexibility
- There is fear we have become too focused on Law Enforcement
- Need a working strategy for communications to The Hill
- We are losing people
- Need to figure out how to continue work on V-RAP
- NPS wants FLIRT back. Backlog is unacceptable and it is not moving forward
- If NPS gets out from under FLIRT, there has to be something to take its place
- ICS – a management system. Critically important and Regions need to fund the teams
- DOI and other departments need education on ICS

Don Murphy called the meeting to order at 0905.

Don thanked Steve Shackleton for hosting this meeting and stressed the importance of this meeting. The briefings by the Protection staff were very beneficial to the USPP. The Deputy Director enjoyed the practices for Yosemite that were presented with stories which turned problems into solutions. There is a lot of positiveness going on and the Task Force needs to transition itself to how to better manage Law Enforcement in the NPS and spread the positiveness.

Don Murphy shared new information to bring the group up to date:

*A major recommendation came out of a meeting in Washington, D.C.: There were concerns from Congress about the Department Of Interior (DOI) controlling Law Enforcement and that the NPS was being influenced by DOI. NPS was being very careful to control their own destiny. Having the Associate Director at the SES level will ensure the person can hold their own. DOI feels it is easy to reach down into the Service and direct actions so this SES Associate is necessary.

We could have stepped up to the Fourth of July. There were some heated discussions on the structure – others fancy an advisory group headed up by Interior. Don Murphy said this was unacceptable and that NPS would stay in control and DOI's participation would be advisory. DOI could be in the loop and understand what was going on in order to report to the Secretary.

There could be problems in the future. Much of what Debbie Weatherly hears is from people out in the field and it is not all accurate. Don Murphy has tried to let her know that we are not doing the negative things she is hearing. She included language in bill that said NPS could not expend funds on the Associate Director. Basically the language said we could not have a Law Enforcement program in NPS.

She said she was getting member objections and would set up a meeting for Don Murphy to talk to them. It did not happen, and Don's impression is that there were no member objections.

Don has provided information to her that this Associate position is not strictly law enforcement but includes Fire, SAR, Wilderness and other functions. He has an appointment on August 15 with her.

Don met with Bruce Sheaffer who has influence with her.

The second part of this issue: The Senate has said nothing about this and this is positive. Don wants to talk to the Senate side to be sure they are aware of our needs.

The third part of this concern: The question is, should we proceed in hiring the Associate position? The group advised Don Murphy to talk to Debbie Weatherly and then proceed and advertise the position. There is no binding language at this time to stop us.

Discussion: Should we do something on a temporary basis or should we move ahead?

Mike Fogerty pointed out that we would not have a selectee until after October, and we should go ahead with the process which will raise it to the surface. Dennis Burnett agreed.

Bill Supernaugh asked if the candidates should be from SES or not. The answer was that they do not have to come from SES, and it will be advertised broadly.

USPP asked if DOI could provide the money instead of the NPS, and it was explained that this could not be done. Kevin Fitzgerald said we will defer to whatever comes out of conference, but we need to be not far behind.

Rob Arnberger said that two years ago there was a similar situation with an Associate Director for Partnerships.

There was a NLC endorsement on this position and perhaps we should give a copy of this endorsement to Debbie along with the compelling need because of the complexity of the program. And this will let her know we are moving ahead.

The question was asked, is it worthwhile to make individual appointments with subcommittee members themselves? The reality is that we should be able to make contacts even though Debbie Weatherly may be upset.

Don Murphy agreed with Rob, and Don thought he had an agreement with Debbie to do this and felt he was stiffed at the last minute. Maybe the timing is better than we think and we could make appointments outside of Washington in the districts.

Dave Mihalic asked if we could identify some people to use a back channel communication. Maybe the misinformation could be neutralized. Don said the right folks to do this would have to be identified.

All of this got wrapped up in the DOI Law Enforcement plan, and if we were just talking about NPS, it would be different.

Rob Arnberger said Debbie Weatherly may feel that she is protecting the NPS, and she has a good heart for the Park Service – she may feel that Don is the mouthpiece for the administration. When she did this on the Associate for Partnership, it was clearly in defense of the Park Service.

Dick Ring said this is an important distinction to make. He suspected that what Rob said is on target and he is concerned on stove-piped control of Law Enforcement.

The word Law Enforcement is a hot button and carries some negative connotations. The multi-specialized Ranger is acceptable.

Bill Supernaugh asked if there is a role that our partners can play without us violating guidelines about discussing information outside the committee. Dave Mihalic pointed out that this could backfire when Ms. Weatherly checks her "sources".

Rob said you "don't unleash the dogs of hell". We need to approach it methodically and not highlight something that does not need to be highlighted.

Don Murphy said we don't need to make this an "in your face", and we need a dual strategy: We are going ahead with the pending plan and working out her concerns. Don will have Bruce Sheaffer communicate this also. And the backchannel folks should send a consistent message. The August 15 meeting will help. There are key members on the committee that need information, and the Deputy Director will work with our congressional affairs folks to get appointments with them in their home districts.

Dick Ring thought that we should make the point of what happened at the NLC meeting which was a significant event. It kept faith with our original objective of keeping the Ranger.

Don said the Senate needs information so they can be supportive of our position.

Don moved on to other key issues:

V-RAP is important and the Deputy Director is attempting to get credible data for staffing levels for the Ranger Protection Program. USPP is in the same position of getting credible information and presenting it as an entire package. Don said he did not want to slow USPP down or the other way around, and we are on a dual track but we need to support each other.

We are working on a campaign to communicate to Congress our needs. When the NPS works on a separate budget for the Protection Ranger, sometimes the recommendation ends up getting shoved aside for other priorities. Don does not think the task force has addressed that yet. USPP is tied to the National Capitol Region budget. The Deputy Director said there has to be a way to be sure that Law Enforcement needs are met and our budget is not displaced by other needs and demands. We have decisions to make on what we are campaigning for.

Rob Amberger said the information yesterday was positive but troubling – he thinks it will be a while before definitions are redone and we get a return on credible information. He is starting to try to develop an interim strategy to develop a level of confidence. In response to the Thomas Bill we went forward with some information and figures of what we determined to be the minimum gains. We could use that as a point of departure. As V-RAP gets more on line, we can refine figures and get us into play.

The concern of Congress is that they get a dollar and are able to track it through to see where it went. It gets into NPS and gets lost. We have a major issue with our budget system. One of the successes of the program is FirePro. There is a way to track it to completion. We may want to develop a model such as that.

Natural Resource challenge is the same process and can be tracked. Another example we could use.

Mike Fogerty said that the money for 6 (c) is trackable. We know that we cannot pay for what we need. Any budget officer can do anything. Some things now are taken off the top such as medicals and maybe we could do something like that.

Dick Ring thinks we have the capability to do what we want to do without having a legislative budget for Law Enforcement. The Green Book identifies what we are going to spend and it is tracked through PWEs. The budget office is capable of reporting what was spent – so we have the capability but are not necessarily doing it. The separate budget is a sword that cuts both ways: It is hard to shift funds and emergencies don't lend themselves to months of discussion. There have been discussions about shifting funds and management in the service has had to jump hurdles. We can do some of this now ourselves.

Bill Supernauth said OFS increases are generally for positions in two or three different divisions. We know that 100% of the increase does not go for what we asked for – it is a game of catch up. This makes for creative bookkeeping. Fire is another concern. Bill is balancing the budget by charging Base 8 to Fire

when rangers go out since there is nobody to backfill. So then that money may be used to buy a Maintenance pick-up or something for another division.

Dave Mihalic said this flexibility exists all the way up to the Regional Director. If we don't have the money to do the job, we never go to ONPS and just say we will get it next time. If budgets are separated out, it changes the rules of the game.

Dick Ring said the Fourth of July was an example. If there were a separate Law Enforcement budget, funding that response would have had to have been absorbed within the Service in Law Enforcement. Drawing down on the facility backlog projects funded it. If we go to that system, flexibility is lost and it sets up other divisions to say "me too". We will have stove-piped ourselves into a rigid structure.

Rob Amberger said there is a program for the Natural Resource Challenge and that money has been tightly controlled. The products are starting to roll in. It was designed to prove to Congress that the money went where it was supposed to go.

The Deputy Director said the challenge to the NPS is members of Congress with good memories. They remember and look where the money they gave us last time went. Dick Ring said they do not trust us. We have the ability to track money, we just don't do it.

Mike Fogerty pointed out that the budget has not gone up but costs have gone up. We have a few pieces of factual information to show where money has gone. Rob said the Thomas Bill had a certain level of endorsement. We have to use some existing facts and build on that.

Dick Ring said we have some funds that we track carefully and are part of ONPS. Bruce Sheaffer could go back and ask what was requested for Law Enforcement and could also ask how much did the Service actually spend on an expenditures and obligation basis. We can produce a report.

Don said the Department is moving quickly to follow dollars and outcomes on Law Enforcement side. Bruce Sheaffer has been working with strategic planning folks to put together a system.

We need the flexibility but we need to track the dollars. The direction to Rob and his subcommittee is to use the Thomas Report and other data as a basis for the communication of our needs and the fact that we can track these dollars.

Don Murphy asked when information would be forthcoming from V-RAP? Rob Amberger said there needs to be another push to clear up definitions, clear up instructions, define models, and to go out to field to obtain new data.

Dave Mihalic said there was no indication that further work would be done. We have a flawed product, and we need to choose to go there.

Dick Ring said there are issues, and corrections are needed. V-RAP is not a funded program and no personnel are assigned to it. There is a cost associated with it and a workload. That could be done, but it needs to be set in motion. Going full steam ahead would mean it will be next spring before we had a result.

Kevin Fitzgerald said Frank Dean's group came up with a scope of work and would take 360 days. V-RAP "light" could be accomplished – which would be defining costs and definitions and keeping it as a DOS program – but we do not have a time frame.

Donnis Burnett said we need the validation, but we are the experts. That can be pulled out of the Statement of Work (SOW).

If the 1200 positions needed are legitimate, we could build on it. It needs to be an Oracle based program and move forward.

Bill said no matter what we do to V-RAP, we would not diminish it. It is a conservative estimate, and we could make that statement.

Steve Shackelton said Mike Fogerty was right – we can track figures with existing technology. When Thomas Report was sent up, V-RAP went with it. There was an invitation to look at VRAP and give us advice. Right now we have 1300 commissioned positions, and this number is going down. There were 1500 commissioned positions when the report first went to Committee.

There is a fear that we have become too focused on Law Enforcement. V-RAP acknowledges Fire and ties in SAR, EMS, and Wilderness. It has a strong weight towards Law Enforcement, but it ties in other responsibilities.

If we run V-RAP, track the add-ons (like Resource Challenge), this is an accountable system and Congress can come in and audit this in a year or two.

Dick Ring agreed with Steve Shackelton and said there are things we can do now, in a year, and in two years. We need a working strategy. For credibility, the first time we walk up on the Hill, we better have figures for the past years and actually what was executed. There are 60 PWEs and we could generate a report that said we know what we asked for and what we did with it.

The Deputy Director asked if that need translated into what does that mean to the field ranger? Will it be meaningful?

Steve said the authorizers need to be accountable and also the people catching the ball. Can we freeze and institutionalize our existing action? Present our new program – tracking through PWEs –

There was discussion regarding a companion Law Enforcement report at the end of the year – a layperson's report on what NPS did with the money. This report would be from the Protection Division to Superintendent to Regional Director.

Don Murphy asked if this report would be only for a limited amount of time. Kevin Fitzgerald said we do several reports but we have never combined them into one report.

People say they never heard what we do – we never tell the story. Dave Mihalic said there is a perception that things are going on and we do not tell folks because we do not want them to know. We just have never told our story. We need to tell the story with the figures.

Rob Amberger said he does not want to get wrapped up with problems in V-RAP. This has to be a phased report and make a multi-year approach. NPS needs to make an investment in the future. In order to get on board with anything, one must look three years ahead and many in this group will be retired by then. Where are we going to land so we can begin.

Don Murphy said Dick Ring has had conversations with Bruce Sheaffer based on what how many employees we can get through FLETC.

Kevin Fitzgerald said it is the beginning of a five-year program. We will just be keeping up with what we are losing. Dennis Burnett talked to all the classes and students are telling him that the NPS is not doing anything to keep them. Our existing force is jumping ship since we cannot match other agencies in salary.

Sky Marshals do not have 57-year-old retirement policy.

Rob Amberger thinks this will stabilize but the trick is not to lose more. We need a replacement program. We may have to reduce standards.

Deputy Director Murphy said just before he left Washington, D.C., a meeting for July 17 was announced on Homeland Security. It could have been an opportunity to make a case for additional resources. Don Murphy has not heard from Bruce Sheaffer yet on this meeting.

Dick Ring and Mike Fogerty said this information was submitted earlier this year, and they may just now be looking at this. Some positions have been put in the 2004 budget.

Bill Supernaugh asked about the intake program. The park has to have a funded position in order to get an intake employee. Are these positions base funded? Is this supplemental money available?

Mike Fogerty said the program pays the first year, and then the park picks it up. Kevin Fitzgerald said it takes 23 million dollars for 192 people.

Bill said we need an increase in ONPS to fund a position to do this.

Dick Ring mentioned that in order to provide a pool of trained folks to fill vacancies, it would take 192 new employees a year that would be in training status through the year and their salary would be paid. That would maintain the number of commissioned rangers we have now. There would be no down time to go to FLETC or background checks done.

Conclusion: Deputy Director Murphy said the temporary fix is to work hard to maintain the status quo and we need an immediate strategy to keep people. We will never catch up unless we can be on par with other federal agencies. DOI can and should help us with this. Don Murphy said he needs to make this case to DOI and it needs to be an immediate strategy. The Deputy Director will work with the budget folks to start an initiative to get additional funding for increase in salaries for our Law Enforcement rangers.

In the meantime, the question was asked how V-RAP was funded earlier. Dennis Burnett said who ever had time to work on it helped out. The fieldwork was tasked out to the Chief Rangers and there was a small task force. It was a self-help program. Don Murphy said we need to figure out how to continue V-RAP work so we can augment our staffing and develop what our future staffing needs are. Frank Dean did not have a cost estimate on his Statement of Work. Kevin said they had \$125,000 to implement some work.

Next issue:

* Dennis Burnett had updated Don Murphy on FLIRT and the Deputy Director is going to call a meeting to insist that the Department give the responsibility back to NPS. The current organizational structure is insuring themselves work for the next 15 years. There is a flippant attitude and the FLIRT staff is negative.

Dick Ring said we have 512 pending cases (cleared 10 in June) dating from 1989 and any new position must clear their review before the position can be advertised and filled. And FLIRT must approve positions that they have already approved. The Deputy Director will draft a letter in distinct terms and get this resolved quickly. There are 182 position descriptions pending and 13 have been cleared with 8 more received.

Kevin Fitzgerald said that if your best recruiting tool is your staff, this is not happening. Employees are discouraged.

Don Murphy said to put the word out there that he is pushing for this. Dennis Burnett said in the past that the Department has supported FLIRT. Our objective should be to get legislative help with the backlog. Dennis has the language ready to go. The issue is that they are re-examining the benchmark Position Descriptions. Mike Fogerty said that FLIRT thumbed their noses at the Senate. After the IG report, nothing was implanted and the same person is still in charge so NPS is afraid that change will be hard to make. The Deputy Director said he could work with Dennis on this from the road. He will work with Lynn Scarlet. Don will personally meet with her.

Mike Fogerty said we could pull the finding from FLIRT and then could bring it back into existence. We can get out of the agreement with FLIRT but the person in charge is under the Secretary and not FLIRT. It can be redelegated to departmental level. Dick Ring said we will take it back on but it will still have to go to someone in the Department. OPM wants consistency. Dick said there should be someone in charge that wants to get to yes. Our analysis would have to be approved by DOI and that is the chokepoint.

Dennis said we sent teams to FLIRT to help and FLIRT said they still had to go over the work done by our teams.

Rob said that if we get out from under FLIRT, there has to be something in place to take over.

Dick Ring said if one word in a position description was changed, the position description needed to be re-examined. Mike Fogerty said to use an addendum. As long as not we were changing the percentage of work, there was no problem.

Don Murphy had one last question: The legislative fix. What does that mean? Dick explained that it would be in the wording. Don said the legislative fix will not be easy and Mike said it is a big-ticket item. Congress is scared.

The Task Force then moved on to another subject: Dave Lanimore, the Mather District Ranger, made a presentation on the Incident Command System:

Using the Incident Command System (ICS) one can take 2000 individuals that do not know each other and within matter of hours accomplish work. It is a management system. Everyone uses the same terminology and same definition of tasks.

Incidents are defined by type:

Type V – small, maybe one ranger and two
Type IV – maybe a MVA. Finished in one shift
Type III – extended incident using a "short team"
Type II – more complex, political complications
Type I – National incident.

An Incident Commander, who has Command Staff and a General Staff, manages incidents. The Command Staff consists of a liaison officer with home unit, safety officer, and information officer. The General Staff is operations section chief, logistics section chief, planning section chief, finance section chief. In big incidents, sections will be expanded. For example, the finance section chief may have a personnel time recorder, equipment time recorder, time unit leader, cost unit leader, etc. ICS is for any kind of incident and is used on a diversity of incidents. Some incidents are mandated by law to use ICS such as hazmat incidents.

If there are 5 Type I incidents to be managed, there can be an Area Command. This is a small team that does not manage incident but coordinates and prioritizes resources for incidents involved.

NPS ICS history – we have been using it for a long time going back to 1991. It is used it for Presidential visits, celebrations, events, SAR, Fire, etc.

Currently there is an Incident Management Steering Committee. Rick Gale saw NPS was losing the ability to manage incidents. Nearly everyone came up through the fire ranks. A lot of employees have retired. There are teams, but teams are having hard time filling slots because of lack of experience and lack of employees. The Committee set up a training and qualification system so there is a feeder method, based on fire. The All Risk Teams could feed into fire.

Many times ICS is not used. Managers feel they are giving up control, they do not know what ICS is, (park can do normal activity while incident is managed), and the issue of funding is always a concern.

All Risk Teams do not have funding. Many unit levels are not filled trying to keep the costs down. All Risk Teams do it with 6 to 8 people where Fire may have 42 and cost \$50,000 a day.

Other agencies are looking at what NPS is doing with ICS. The states came to look at our training. We are working with the states to work it into one system, and we are working with Fire.

In 2002 we had \$291,000, and the money was swallowed up for security.

There are 4 Regional teams and one national team. No guidance for funding. The national team has no funding source. The regional teams work for the region so this can cause problems. This means a lack of coordination.

Dick Ring emphasized that this is a critically important program and Law Enforcement programs have to do with command and control. In order to respond to incidents as we have been asked, we are backsliding because folks are burned out and retiring. We are not funding the care and feeding of the program. How do we fund it? We don't have the authority that fire has. We need reprogramming approval ahead of time. We need to commit to this system especially for the Law Enforcement incidents and the security situations we have currently.

It would be interesting to know how the USPP handle incidents. If they are not using ICS or if there is not a patch, then we have an issue that can cause concerns.

Rob Aramberger said there is another issue: DOI is uneducated about ICS. DOI is putting together emergency action plans that have no resemblance to ICS. Some people just see ICS as a Fire thing - NPS adapted it to All Risk but other agencies have not. They do not use common terminology, step up plans, and they hesitate to change. This causes a duplication of efforts - two sets of operational procedures.

Dave Mihalic sees an opportunity for ICS with the new interest in security with other agencies.

Dick Ring said the administration did not realize that there was a tool available to them with September 11, they did not trust it, and they made things up as they went. Miscues, stresses, and strains were created.

Don Murphy asked why the system did not go into effect. Dick said we tried to sell it to the Department but the DOI was going direct to parks, went around the system, and caused dysfunction.

The system started to gear up and was not called upon. John said within one hour after it hit the Trade Center, Rick Gale started ICS and went with the Director. Then it was not used. Rob said there was a brand new bunch of people in the Department and hardly anyone around that day. They did not have a level of confidence with us to do our jobs. Dick feels this dysfunction is continuing. In developing emergency plans, we were part of a steering group for the Department. We cannot use what is in place to do normal operations to run an incident. Something is needed that steps outside the normal organization. With the Fourth of July, we saw "it is nice but we want our hands on it directly" attitude. Dave Lattimore said the local executive wants parts of our team to make their own team. The critical thing is to recognize the point that one needs a system.

Don said we need to communicate our capabilities to the Department.

We currently have two operations going on right now with Homeland Security. The Deputy Director said this was not cleared with him. We are staffing the Department Watch Office and our own Office. NPS knows there is duplication, but there is a control issue here.

Rob Aramberger said there is a lack of understanding of control. John said we had a way to respond. Other agencies are not put together to do this so they could not find a way to respond at the department level. They then set up a control system even though other bureaus did not have the ability.

Dennis Burnett and Kevin Fitzgerald will pull together a meeting with the Department. Dave Mihalic said the ICS is a concept of shared resources. This could be taken to Deb Weatherly and emphasized that we have this system that the Coast Guard had adopted, the States are using, and why cannot the Department look to this. This could be a marketing point for the Associate Director.

Rob feels there is another message: The health and function of our ICS system. When we advocate the greatness of this, we have to raise the health of this system. We can't talk about our response time when we cannot respond.

John Reynolds said to tell each Region to fund the teams. Dick Ring said the ICS system has never been funded but NPS robs Peter to pay Paul. So the last four or five years Rick Gale robbed Fire to help all-risk system.

Dave Mihalic mentioned that the National Wildfire Coordinating Group is made up of many "agencies" and they run it for fire. There is no similar coordinating group for all risk and there is real potential for us to take leadership for this. Dick said we want to do it but it is like dealing with FLIRT – we have tried to go after that. A few people keeping lots of plates spinning. Ranger Activities is a ghost of what it used to be. NWCWG is thinking about looking into coordinating All Risk. They said they have not been tasked with that so it has not happened.

During Homeland Security, NPS has been using Fire to get resources and dispatch them.

Don Murphy made a note to brief DOI on our system and the capabilities. Rob said we have a reservoir of experience. Teresa said this might be the time to do this with a new Deputy Secretary coming in.

Kevin Fitzgerald said they are doing a debriefing in Omaha the end of the month and then do a briefing to the Department. They will weave in an ICS for Dummies course in the debriefing.

The Deputy Director said this is extremely important and we need to do something immediately. Don made a note for a briefing August 19. Dave Lattimore said there is a presentation ready to go.

John said it would not hurt to brief the NLC.

The meeting adjourned for the morning to be followed in the afternoon by field trips.

Action Items

- Deputy Director Murphy has an appointment on August 15 with Debbie Weatherly to discuss the Associate Director position and law enforcement in the NPS
- Deputy Director Murphy to communicate with Bruce Sheaffer on above
- Deputy Director Murphy will work with NPS Congressional Affairs Office to get appointment in home districts
- Deputy Director Murphy will work with budget people to start an initiative for additional funding for increase in salaries for law enforcement rangers.
- Deputy Director Murphy will work with Dennis Burnett on the FLIRT issue
- Deputy Director to brief DOI on NPS ICS and its capabilities