

PROPOSED MINUTES

First Meeting

“Made in America” Outdoor Recreation Advisory Committee

July 17, 2018

Washington, DC

The first meeting of the “Made in America” Outdoor Recreation Advisory Committee was called to order by Committee Member Rick May, serving as Acting Committee Chair, at 9:48 a.m., Eastern, in the South Penthouse of the Stewart Lee Udall Department of the Interior Building, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20240.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Ms. Amanda Covington
The Honorable Linda Craghead
Mr. Derrick Crandall
Mr. Bruce Fears
Mr. Bradley Franklin
Mr. J. Antonio Gonzalez
Mr. Jeremy Jacobs
Mr. Rolf Lundberg (Alternate Member)
Mr. Christopher Maloof
Mr. Rick May
Mr. Matthew Miller
Mr. John Morris
Mr. P. Daniel Smith
Mr. Kenneth Walsh
Mr. William Yeargin

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Benjamin Bulis
Mr. Philip Morlock
Mr. Patrick Pacious
Mr. James Rogers

OTHERS PRESENT (at least part of the time)

The Honorable Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Interior
Mr. Scott Cameron, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget,
Exercising the Authority of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget,
U. S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC
Mr. Benjamin Cassidy, Senior Deputy Director for External and Intergovernmental Affairs,
Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC
Ms. Alma Ripps, Designated Federal Officer for the “Made in America” Outdoor Recreation
Advisory Committee, National Park Service, Washington, DC

Ms. Lena McDowall, Deputy Director, Management and Administration, National Park Service, Washington, DC

Ms. April Slayton, Assistant Director, Communications, National Park Service, Washington, DC

Mr. Jeffrey Reinbold, Assistant Director, Partnerships and Civic Engagement, National Park Service, Washington, DC

Mr. Tom Medema, Acting Associate Director, Interpretation, Education and Volunteers, National Park Service, Washington, DC

Mr. Bob Ratcliffe, Chief, Division of Conservation and Outdoor Recreation, National Park Service, Washington, DC

Ms. Kelly Horvath, National Park Service, Washington, DC

Ms. Bonita Butler, Office of the Solicitor, Department of the Interior, Washington, DC

Ms. Roeger Kirk, Office of Policy, National Park Service, Washington, DC

Ms. Shirley Sears, Office of Policy, National Park Service, Washington, DC

Mr. Morgan Neuhoff, Boat U.S., Alexandria VA

Mr. Will Samuelson, Boat U.S., Alexandria, VA

Mr. Steve Sanetti, NSSF/SAAMI, Newtown, CT

Ms. Rychelle Andersen, Latham & Watkins, Washington, DC

Mr. Travis Annaton, Democracy Forward, Washington, DC

Ms. Allison Spawr, Signal Group, Washington, DC

Ms. Lori McCullough, The Great Outdoors Fund, Washington, DC

Ms. Allegra Chilstrom, Neal R. Gross, 1321 Rhode Island Avenue, NW, Washington, DC

Mr. Tyler Ray, American Hiking Society, 8605 Second Avenue, Silver Spring, MD

Mr. Josh Tuohy, Corps Network, 1275 K Street, NW, Suite 1050, Washington, DC

Mr. Andrew Harnett, The Wilderness Society, 1160 M Street, NW, Washington, DC

Mr. Adolfo Ibarra, CNN, 820 First Street, NW, Washington, DC

Ms. Jessica Wahl, Outdoor Industry Association (OIA), 419 – 7th Street, NW, Washington, DC

Ms. Callie Hoyt, MIC, 1235 South Clark Street, Arlington, VA

Ms. Natalie Levine, National Parks Conservation Assn, 777 – 6th St., NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC

Mr. Steve Salisbury, American Motorcyclist Assn, 444 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 837, Washington, DC

Mr. Taimer Ahmad, The Wilderness Society, 1516 M Street, NW, Washington, DC

Mr. Aman George, Democracy Forward/Western States, 1333 H Street, NW, Washington, DC

Mr. David Wetmore, Tourism Policy Council, 601 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Washington, DC

Mr. Bill McGrath, Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP, 1155 F Street, NW, Suite 1200, Washington, DC

Mr. Jack McNeill, Senior Vice President, Delaware North, 250 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY

Ms. Mary Ellen Sprenkel, President & CEO, The Corps Network, 1275 K Street, NW, Washington, DC

Mr. Scott Socha, President, Parks and Resorts, Delaware North, 250 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY

Mr. Tyler Wilson, Director of Government Relations, The Corps Network, 1275 K Street, NW, Suite 1050, Washington, DC

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CONVENING THE MEETING

Rick May, *Senior National Advisor to the Secretary for Recreation, U.S. Department of the Interior*

MR. RICK MAY convened the meeting, welcomed members of the public, the media, and the Committee members, and thanked them for coming. He announced that he would be acting Chairperson of the meeting for the morning until the Committee elected the official Chairperson during the afternoon session. He then introduced the Secretary of the Interior.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

The Honorable Ryan Zinke

SECRETARY RYAN ZINKE welcomed everybody to the meeting and explained how the Department has about 200 advisory committees on different areas that are our partners. He expressed the importance of this Committee since recreation is an \$887 billion industry with the goal for Americans to go out and enjoy their public lands through increased access. Over the last 500 days or so, the Department has increased hunting and fishing on 38 wildlife refuges, increasing opportunities to go out and hunt on over a few million acres; and these efforts will continue. He pointed out that we don't want to be an adversary to industry and there is a lot of opportunity to work together on projects.

The Secretary cited that the U.S. is the largest producer of oil and gas at 10.7 million barrels a day, surpassing Saudi Arabia, and by the third or fourth quarter, we will have surpassed Russia. He

stated that he doesn't favor oil and gas any more than other sources—the important point is that our energy is made in the U.S. under reasonable regulation as opposed to getting it from overseas. There are reasons to fight overseas, but fighting for energy is not one of them when we have it here; we don't want to be held hostage by anybody.

He outlined the next two priorities for the Department: infrastructure and the reorganization of the Department.

He talked about a pending bipartisan bill in Congress to address the \$11.7 billion backlog that has a good chance of passing, and that it would be a watershed moment with our parks. He expressed his concern that our parks are being loved to death.

SECRETARY ZINKE explained how the Department hasn't been reorganized in 150 years. Using a chart showing a trout and salmon in the same stream, he explained how different Departments and bureaus manage the two species differently depending on what part of the river they are swimming through which greatly complicates getting permits to replace a bridge, put a dock in, or repair a riparian bank. You have to deal with multiple biological opinions, independently produced, by bureaus with different missions in different regions. He also mentioned the dead and dying timber found on U.S. Forest Service lands.

He shared a slide showing how Interior regions across bureaus are currently organized, and how complicated the boundaries are. He then explained how using watersheds and ecosystems, they developed revised regions, then brought in Interior senior executive service employees, Governors, conservationists, oil and gas industry executives, and eventually Congressional members to evaluate the proposed new regions. In most cases, Governors wanted States to be within one region only, so the boundaries did change to reflect this. He pointed out that the Bureau of Indian Affairs was not included in the proposed Interior reorganization since the tribes are sovereign nations.

Within the unified regions, he explained, there will be three areas that will be jointly coordinated, very similar to the Defense Reorganization Act. The three areas are recreation, conservation, and permitting.

There will be a Division of Recreation in each of these new regions for better coordination on recreational activities, such as the use of electric bikes on connecting trail systems, with decisions made at the smaller, regional landscape level.

For conservation, wildlife corridors will connect across lands. He cited the recent Secretarial Order focusing on big game wildlife corridors and working with States to identify and put joint conservation plans in place since wildlife doesn't stay on Federal lands, it goes to State lands and to private lands.

The last area is permitting, which is mostly about process. Better coordination is needed among bureaus to shorten the timeframe for making decisions; and in the end, to make better decisions. He stated that for all three areas, the structure is designed to make sure that the State has a liaison officer attached to it and that someone is in charge. Industry should have a point of contact to see what hurdles have to be overcome; the public should have an injection point to make sure its voice is

heard, and all should be done through a local, State, and regional voice. We need to get away from the one-size-fits-all mentality and have a local flavor on these regions; that would help diffuse some of the anger out there. The Secretary spoke about passionate people who want to get involved, but we need a structure where their voice can be heard and not just a process where a public comment gets sent in. They need to actually be there at the table and be more collaborative. We feel strongly that this is a better model.

Out of the 12 unified regions, he stated that the Department would be going forward with five to start. Each region will have a Senior Executive Service person to begin to build and populate the three areas that we can do jointly (recreation, conservation, and permitting).

SECRETARY ZINKE stated that today, 16 percent of Interior employees are of retirement age. In five years, 40 percent of Interior is retirement age, so the reorganization can be done without having to RIF [Reduction in Force] anybody.

He then talked about how under former Interior Secretary Salazar, a lot of our U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) scientists were taken from the field and consolidated here in DC—about 800 of them—where they didn’t do field work anymore. What they do is handle portfolios and give grants to a lot of universities and other folks who do the science. The USGS scientists manage our science, and in some cases, have lost their capability to do science. He said the plan is that when scientists retire in DC, they will be replaced by scientists in the field doing day-to-day work and becoming the subject-matter experts who coordinate with the local universities.

He mentioned that we are looking at increasing our leases and providing some stability in our leasing platforms for some of our vendors, but it will require legislative approval. Public-private partnerships will also be important; the Federal government shouldn’t have to pay for everything. He cited the example of a pier with a warehouse, Fort Mason, in San Francisco, and that private money could be used to convert that pier into a loft. The Department could then carve out 20 or 30 units so that park employees would have affordable housing.

Although national parks have vendors and commercial enterprises inside the parks, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service don’t have that to the same level; so there is great opportunity—especially on public lands around the parks—to use vendors throughout a connected system of trails across different bureaus and Departments, from trailheads to lodges in support of recreation.

SECRETARY ZINKE ended with telling Committee members that he views them as our partners, that they have a good pulse on what the public wants and where the markets are going, and that he can’t fix an issue unless he knows about it. He said it is important to have actionable recommendations that can be done at the Secretarial level; and he is willing to go to Congress, if need be. He asked for 10 things he can do as Secretary, and 10 things that he can do longer term. He then had each Committee member introduce him or herself, who they work for, and which interest they represent.

The Secretary left the meeting.

WELCOMING REMARKS BY THE ACTING COMMITTEE CHAIR

Rick May

MR. MAY explained that he is the Senior National Advisor to the Secretary for all things recreation. Recreation is a bipartisan activity, we are working to get more kids outdoors since they are our future advocates to protect the great outdoors. Most members of the public don't know what the Department of the Interior does. We need to do a better job of advertising what we do, and that we are stewards of 20 percent of the Nation's lands and minerals.

He stated that the Department provides access to public lands in areas where energy, both renewable and conventional, can be produced or developed. The Department supplies and manages water in 17 western States and supplies hydroelectric power. It also upholds Federal trust responsibilities to Indian tribes and Alaskan Natives. It is responsible for migratory wildlife conservation; historic preservation; endangered species conservation; surface mine lands protection and restoration; mapping; geological, hydrological, and biological science for the nation; and also provides financial and technical assistance to the insular areas. He cited that it has a \$12 billion annual budget, 70,000 employees, 280,000 volunteers, and raises billions every year from energy, minerals, grazing, and timber leases. Interior is a very busy organization with immense responsibilities.

OVERVIEW OF THE SECRETARY'S PRIORITIES

Rick May

MR. MAY reviewed Secretary Zinke's top 10 priorities: create a conservation stewardship legacy second only to Teddy Roosevelt; sustainably develop our energy and natural resources; restore trust and be a good neighbor; ensure tribal sovereignty means something; increase revenues to support DOI and national interests; protect our people on the border; strike a regulatory balance; modernize our infrastructure; reorganize DOI for the next 100 years; and achieve our goals and lead the team forward.

He also talked about his priorities in recreation, such as expanding trails (biking, hiking, equestrian, motorcycles, all types of trails). He cited the use of electric bikes by Wounded Warriors to get them into the Great Outdoors and that no one should be barred from that experience because they are disabled, they are infirmed, or they are elderly. It should be open to all.

He discussed the importance of having recreation advisors in all 50 Governors' offices. So far, there are 11 States that have appointed advisors to focus on a recreation agenda. There are also recreation advisors that are appointed in each one of the bureaus.

MR. MAY talked about the importance of concessions in parks. He said that we have not been the best business partners in the past, but this is something that the Secretary wants to change. To that end, he has had meetings with large and small concessioners, and is working on re-writing regulations that are more beneficial to those providing the services and to the government, as well. He also touched upon the importance of broadband in parks and its use for saving lives. Finally, he

mentioned that Interior is getting ready to roll out a new reservation system that is simple and easy, and will allow users to take virtual tours of campgrounds.

OVERVIEW OF SECRETARIAL ORDERS 3365 AND 3366

Rick May

MR. MAY talked about Secretarial Order 3365 that established the office of Senior National Advisor, and Secretarial Order 3366 that makes recreation a priority within the bureaus at Interior. Each bureau is required to submit a plan within 90 days on the types of recreational activities available on public lands. Consumers spend \$887 billion on recreation, which brings in \$65 billion in Federal taxes and almost \$60 billion in State taxes, and produces 71.6 million American jobs.

Recreation contributes to our economy, it contributes to our health, and this Committee has the ability to improve on both of those.

OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR REORGANIZATION

The Honorable Scott Cameron, *Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, Exercising the Authority of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, U.S. Department of the Interior*

MR. SCOTT CAMERON provided additional background and details on plans for the Department reorganization. He spoke about the Secretary's long-range vision of having a unified approach by the Federal government in terms of how we deal with land management. There are currently multiple agencies that have regulatory and management authority for resources in a particular watershed. The Administration's proposal for government-wide reform would make some changes that would simplify this arrangement.

He offered the example where the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation have adjacent dams on the same river. They have made heroic efforts to coordinate with each other in terms of managing those water resources, but it would be less complicated if they had both agencies reporting in the same chain of command.

Similarly, he said under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, both have responsibility for regulating some of the species of fish that you would find in rivers. Having the ESA, and the Marine Mammal Protection Act completely housed within the same Department would enable us to do on a routine basis what we can now really only do on a heroic and ad hoc basis.

He pointed out that currently there are approximately 61 different regional boundaries within the Department, but the Secretary's goal is to move us to 12 unified boundaries where all of our bureaus that have land-management responsibilities will be looking at the same geography. He said they had

conversations with the U.S. Forest Service, the Corps of Engineers, and the Environmental Protection Agency early on in the development of these ideas, but decided to focus on Interior for right now. He said the Secretary has been enormously interactive with virtually every stakeholder community that might have the remotest interest in his vision for unified regions at the Department, and he has made endless calls to Governors and held meetings and calls with members of Congress.

The Secretary's initial instinct was to go with scientifically based watershed boundaries, but Governors and members of Congress are more interested in State boundaries. We wanted to be respectful of their concerns and priorities so we adjusted the boundaries. He pointed out a couple of obvious exceptions, the Klamath Basin in California and Oregon where we will not be splitting it in half since it is already a complicated enough political, ecological, and social situation. Same for the Lower Colorado Basin. There is no perfect or simple way to do this, it's a matter of trade-offs and establishing or making decisions about appropriate balances. We hope to go live in FY18 with the new unified regions.

He mentioned that in terms of including the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) in the reorganization, Interior takes seriously the notion of tribal sovereignty, so you don't make decisions for people, you ask them what they want to do. There are hundreds and hundreds of Indian tribes, so it is highly unlikely that we'll have a unanimous perspective from all the Indian tribes on whether or not they would like BIA and BIE to be involved in this. We are going through a formal tribal consultation process right now as is our obligation.

He explained that the Secretary brought in the regional directors from all the bureaus, and asked them a series of questions about how to best organize inside this piece of geography. Do we have someone that we will call an Interior Regional Director (IRD), who is responsible for managing the things that happen inside this bureau, inside this region? And if so, for what things is the person responsible? We looked at shared responsibilities for NEPA compliance, permitting, invasive species management, and recreation, and the benefit from having close coordination across the bureaus.

Many bureaus stated their interest to give administrative functions over to an IRD in areas such as human resources, acquisition or information technology. There are some truly unique activities that some of our bureaus do that none of the other bureaus do, such as the Bureau of Reclamation running hydroelectric generating facilities, so those functions would remain with the bureau as opposed to be transferred to an IRD. Bureaus were more interested in this person acting in a facilitation/coordination role as opposed to management, more of a facilitator or convener in chief than having line authority over a bureau. Given the geographic variation in the country, the particular portfolio of an IRD in one part of the country might be different from the portfolio in another part of the country; this should happen organically. Trying to be flexible and to adapt our management structure to regional needs and regional priorities without 100 percent command and control from Washington.

MR. CAMERON said they are still figuring out the relationship of a bureau director and assistant secretary to this new position of an IRD. Since some things are the exclusive jurisdiction of a particular agency, you would need a traditional chain of command. For matters that really are inter-bureau, and where there are differences of opinion and potential conflict, then the IRD's role would

be to narrow and clarify the issues and try to work them out at the regional level, as appropriate. Then a small fraction of the things that are now typically kicked up to Washington, will end up getting kicked up to Washington. A relatively larger fraction will be resolved by those 6-8 bureau regional directors and the IRD.

He said that the IRD would have direct access to the Deputy Secretary in Washington, who has easy access to bureau directors and assistant secretaries. This will lead to more decision making at the regional level with fewer issues being raised at the Washington level, and these will be fewer in number, narrower in scope, and more clearly defined. The bureau directors would still be in charge of personnel and training, and basic, nationwide policy matters that were relevant to that particular bureau.

He ended saying that with decisions made closer to the ground it will be easier for Governors and Mayors to interact with DOI.

MR. CAMERON then took questions from the Committee.

MR. DERRICK CRANDALL asked if there been discussions about how these regional overlays may play with the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) and fees, especially in the area of integrated fees for Federal agencies and State level agencies on a regional basis. He also asked about the newly revised recreation.gov listing non-Federal opportunities.

MR. CAMERON explained that at this point the discussion is focused only on Federal agencies and not trying to amend agency's authorizing statutes, but maybe down the road this could be considered. He also mentioned that there will be two pilots for the concept of unified regions: one in Alaska and one in the Upper Colorado Basin area.

MS. LINDA CRAGHEAD asked if the reorganization will occur through natural attrition as opposed to an immediate relocation of personnel, and how long will personnel stay in current offices but perform roles for different areas.

MR. CAMERON explained that the proposal is not going to really have much impact at all in the day-to-day lives of people who are working in a particular national park or a particular national wildlife refuge or a particular BLM district office. Staff who would be most personally affected by this initially would be people who are in the regional or State offices of the bureaus, but even that will be minimal. It costs on average \$100,000 to move a Federal employee from one location to another. Not anticipating mass movements of employees at all, even regional staff, would mostly be Senior Executive Service employees many of whom are eligible for retirement (40 percent). There will be vacancies from natural attrition.

Do not anticipate that the simple creation of these unified regions will have much in the way of budgetary impacts at all. We're not using this as an excuse for moving people around. Looking at a 10-15 year time frame, is there a natural place for there to be the regional office for the Great Lakes Region or Rio Grande, Texas Gulf. Over time, as we do new hires, we'll probably hire people in those natural places. We will also use technology and teleworking options so staff don't have to be physically located in the same place.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Dan Smith, *Deputy Director, Exercising the Authority of the Director of the National Park Service*;
April Slayton, *Assistant Director, Communications, National Park Service*

MR. DAN SMITH stated that providing the best customer service to visitors to national parks has been a core mission of the NPS since its beginning, and that although many of our iconic places that people want to visit haven't changed at all, the visitor experience has changed. He talked about the history of the parks, the early role railroads played with western parks, and now the important role of automobiles, technology, and information.

He mentioned the soft relaunch of Recreation.gov in October of this year with full launch in January 2019, and that it is an adaptable system. He offered the example that his family is planning a trip, and they are using technology to plan it from the kitchen table, from buying tickets to booking reservations. He pointed out the importance of public-private partnerships, and that members of the Committee are still probably two steps ahead of the NPS in terms of reservations or in combining fee programs, but we are still doing a lot in this area and are open to input.

MS. APRIL SLAYTON explained that over the past few decades, the NPS has developed a significant digital audience, primarily through social media and the NPS.gov website. She shared that the NPS has over a million followers on Facebook, and getting close to that on Instagram. If you look at the social media presence of our individual parks and programs, we have nearly a 1,000 social media accounts with many 1,000s more followers for our NPS messaging.

NPS.gov receives about half a billion page views a year with more than a 1,000 web authors and more than 100,000 web pages of content. We have strong analytics around the issues that digital visitors are looking for and the NPS is very responsive to that in terms of identifying new areas where we need additional content. We have a high customer satisfaction rating across government for the digital user experience, but want to build on this success to create an integrated and seamless experience that meets all of our visitors' needs.

She explained how the NPS has developed subject sites where we aggregate content from parks across the country around subject areas where we know our visitors are interested. For example, a visitor who is interested in hiking can go to one of our subject sites and find different locations where they could hike, some of which may be locations they weren't thinking about visiting, but that connect to their interests and desires. We have subject sites in recreation, history, nature, and location-based subject sites, so that visitors really can connect their interests to a variety of national park sites across the country.

MS. SLAYTON explained that the NPS will have a one-stop shopping experience for trip planning for national park visitors. The NPS has met with a lot of cooperating associations, concessioners, and official service providers to better understand how we can integrate services, products, and events into our digital presence. Recreation.gov will also offer the ability to integrate reservation services into our visitor experience. We want to find ways to make this a seamless experience for visitors, so that they have access to all the information they need to plan an amazing national park experience.

She outlined a pilot they are doing right now at Acadia National Park and other parks using digital passes to support and modernize the visitor experience. They also have several studies underway about how they can expand this to all national parks.

The NPS is using real-time data to make sure that visitors know what to expect when they get to the parks. For example, at Blue Ridge Parkway and Yellowstone National Park, they're using traffic data from their dispatch offices and updating maps on NPS.gov in real time, so that visitors know what to expect with traffic conditions. At Acadia National Park and Great Falls, they are using technology to identify parking lot usage and if there is parking availability or not for visitors before they get to the park.

Cape Cod National Seashore is developing space availability data at its parking lots as well using cameras and other technology instead of having staff update the information. They also are working with the Department of Transportation to make sure that things like ferry schedules are available on the NPS website and in other trip planning applications.

At Rocky Mountain National Park they are using dynamic signs, and working with our Federal, State, and local partners to encourage visitors to use park and ride, shuttles, and other entrances to the park when visitation is at its highest.

Recent improvements to NPS.gov include completely revamping what's under the hood, allowing data from parks to go into a system, and making it available to external sources, app developers, and the public to create new and interesting products for visitors. We are also developing a Service-wide app with functionality for all 417 parks. In terms of accessibility, we are working with the American Council for the Blind and the University of Hawaii to audio describe some of the most beautiful parks, so that visitors with visual impairments are able to experience the parks through the audio descriptions.

The NPS is also working on a pilot for digital assistants, including Alexa, so the data not only works for NPS.gov and NPS sites, but that it's transferable and usable on other platforms. As new technologies emerge, the NPS is making sure that the data is still flexible enough to work with the next generations that are coming out. When visitors come to the parks, they want technology as part of their experience in the parks, to share their experience, plan their days, and buy things using their phones.

Currently, the NPS has at least 133 sites where Wi-Fi is available to the public, and is looking to expand that in cooperation with our partners, concessioners, and others who are interested in providing this service to the public. Also using the Department of Commerce FirstNet funds to expand connectivity in our backcountry and remote areas for law enforcement and other purposes.

MS. SLAYTON said the NPS has focused a lot of energy on building the NPS experience, while also finding a way to expand the ecosystem in which we share park information with the public. The NPS wants to ensure that others who have great ideas and great new technologies have the ability to use our data to give information to the public in the way the public wants to receive it; and to work with online trip planning services who want to include the data and information into their trip planning products.

MR. SMITH encouraged Committee members who work with the public to offer advice, give recommendations that move the NPS a little bit further than where it is now, and improve on the work we have done.

MR. JERRY JACOBS asked about data collection for data analytics on park visitors, how they use the site, and what their preferences are.

MS. SLAYTON explained that there are limits in terms of data gathering on members of the public who are visiting national parks, but we do gather information through the Survey of the American Public. In the future, the NPS is interested in moving forward with a digital user experience study where we would look at the values and interests of the public in the products that we do have available.

MR. JOHN MORRIS asked how the NPS currently solicits input from visitors and customers and where they see trends going or areas of improvement. He also asked about the best tools and methods the NPS has for collecting customer or guest feedback.

MS. SLAYTON explained that individual parks have their own web and social media presence; they get feedback on the ground through conversations with visitors, but also through social media.

Each park has a point of contact who manages their social media presence and many parks use that to identify the trends and things that their visitors find interesting which they in turn integrate into their social media plans. The NPS is doing this on a national level, as well. The watch for the analytics and find the content that people find interesting, then respond to that by increasing the amount of information they have around a certain subject.

For example, earlier this year we had a significant increase in interest around our deferred maintenance issues, so we increased web content that we have available to provide the kinds of information that we know from our analytics that people are looking for online.

MR. SMITH added that in his experience as a park superintendent, the NPS stays in the 90 to 98 percentile of satisfaction with visitors. Highest level of dissatisfaction from visitors relate to bathrooms and parking.

MR. BRUCE FEARS stated that operating in the parks is a big issue for Aramark; the importance of connectivity, cell phones, Wi-Fi, getting people quickly through the entrance gates. Millennials who are out hiking or rafting all day want to go back to the campsite and share pictures with their relatives at home. And right now, except for the urban areas, Wi-Fi is pretty spotty or nonexistent in some cases. It would be valuable to address those topics.

MR. SMITH acknowledged that this is a priority for the Department.

MR. CRANDALL mentioned that the Department has expertise in geographic information systems, incredible information on vegetation, soils, historical pictures, and could use that same system to store lots of stories. They could have pictures of Teddy Roosevelt, could customize the storytelling according to visitors interests. You can look at pictures taken from the same point in successive years all the way back to the early 1900s, from the same point at the Grand Canyon for example; and talk

about the visitors who have been there. Trying to join U.S. storytellers with international visitors, as well as people that maybe first generation Americans, offers great opportunities.

He cited an issue with Recreation.gov that the platform doesn't have the ability to connect visitors who are interested in visiting a site, such as a museum, with a company in a local gateway community who offers bike rentals to get to that museum. The public wants to be able to do that all from their smartphone. The committee could help mitigate those limitations, think of the big picture, draw upon the resources of gateway communities. Recreation.gov began with President George Herbert Walker Bush back in the 1980s when he discovered in Montana that he couldn't find any consistent overall collection of Federal campsites, and had to go to each bureau to get info. Subsequently, it took lawsuits and Federal contracts to finally consolidate that information into one site. It would be nice to have websites that went beyond .gov.

MS. SLAYTON agreed and again emphasized the point of the information provided by the NPS being part of an ecosystem with the goal of increasing the amount of information available to visitors, and to look at ways to integrate and to provide links back and forth to product services, concessioners, and others.

MS. AMANDA COVINGTON mentioned the importance of States as part of the ecosystem since visitors don't always know if they are in a national or State park. It should be seamless to a recreational end visitor; outdoor recreation offices are needed in all States.

MS. SLAYTON mentioned that might be a great role for the private sector to help connect NPS data to State park data; could work with local organizations, visitor bureaus, chambers of commerce, etc., to find ways to use our data. We could also expand beyond recreation to other topics like civil rights, sharing information and connecting data among the National Archives, Smithsonian exhibits, and the NPS, to provide a broader and more expanded experience for the public.

MS. CRAGHEAD said we should be looking beyond State offices, especially if there is no outdoor recreation office, connect to all of our partners in those States. State tourism offices are extremely valuable with respect to information that's available in the State, shouldn't have to reinvent the wheel. We should build upon efforts, collaborate and complete each other, not compete.

MR. CHRIS MALOOF emphasized that the NPS should spend more time focusing on what consumer data looks like since that is going to be the primary economic driver in the 3-5 five year time frame, and that is where we should invest.

MS. CRAGHEAD spoke about utilizing technology, such as push notifications. In instances when visitors have to wait, they can check out stores or activities in areas around parks. She spoke about the importance of economic development in local communities, especially in rural communities; about getting dollars into stores near parks, helping mom and pop shops, and the importance of driving the economy of our local communities.

MR. ROLF LUNDBERG brought up the issue of unmanned aerial vehicles/drones, and how the NPS and other Interior bureaus are the most advanced agencies in terms of their use. He asked if the NPS has looked at the potential for UAVs and drones as the confluence of entertainment, recreation,

search and rescue, and exploration, and as part of the future use of technology in a variety of ways on NPS and other lands.

MS. SLAYTON talked about their important use in search and rescue operations, and the fire management program, helping make sure that we understand how a fire is behaving and responding appropriately. She said there is wide media interest in using drones to take the kind of footage that gets people excited about visiting national parks, but we need to manage it to make sense for bureaus like the NPS that have different rules.

MR. CRANDALL said the Committee will spend time on this topic. One application is using drones to help people decide where they want to be at a campsite, what features (lake, trees, trails) are nearby. Use of buoys out in the water and webcams and other kinds of devices, all of that information is packaged up by the commercial sector for people interested in surf conditions at a specific site.

Discussions between NOAA and the Department, sharing historic weather data, temperatures, number of sunny days, likelihood of rain, will be able to look ahead six months to plan a trip. Ski areas do it with predicting the average snow packs. Hard to find the data now.

MS. SLAYTON said there are great opportunities to share data, NPS.gov will be able to integrate that kind of data from other sources, make sure it works in other applications. We have considered creating a YouTube or Hulu channel that's got all of the Park Service content. We are looking at all kinds of opportunities to share our content through interesting new ways.

COMMITTEE STRATEGIC PLANNING—PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Lena McDowall, *Deputy Director, Management and Administration, NPS*

Jeff Reinbold, *Assistant Director, Partnerships & Civic Engagement, NPS*

MR. JEFF REINBOLD presented what the NPS is doing with public-private partnerships in three areas: strategic infrastructure investments, commercial visitor services, and philanthropy and impact investing.

He explained that strategic infrastructure investments, also called deferred maintenance, is one of the Secretary's biggest priorities. He wants to modernize our infrastructure and reduce the over \$11 billion maintenance backlog using a variety of new methods, many of which were learned through State partners and the private sector.

He explained that we need to figure out exactly what authorities we have and to identify places where new legislation might be needed. In addition to the maintenance backlog, there is also a modernization component.

There are two areas the NPS is focusing on in terms of public-private partnership since there are associated revenue sources—housing and utilities. For example, park staff and partners can't afford to live near parks or they can't get a three month lease for the season. The NPS has a total deferred

maintenance associated with our housing inventory of over \$180 million with additional operations and maintenance costs of \$44 million, but we're only bringing about \$22 million in revenue.

With the help of the National Park Foundation, the NPS has contracted with Marstel-Day, an outside firm, to look at these two areas and to interview people in the field, other practitioners, and other agencies; then review our authorities and our practices to help us identify a couple of case studies. We are also looking at DoD since they have been successful in privatizing their housing.

In reviewing the results, we found some places where we probably have authorities that we haven't used, where we can actually enter into some more creative relationships. We also identified authorities that DoD has but the NPS doesn't, and are looking at how the NPS can get those authorities.

Marstel-Day is also looking at the business case in some of those areas. The NPS had done a study maybe 10 years ago that had found a lot of housing needs are in remote areas, but there wasn't really a business incentive for a private company to come in. We are doing a case study now up in Acadia National Park to see if we use Park Service land to develop a dormitory style housing, will a private contractor be interested in building and operating it. If successful, this could expand to partners or non-Federal staff who work in parks.

We also asked Marstel-Day to look at the potential role of philanthropy or impact investing in some of these areas, to develop a business case to support this, to see if there is a way that there could be an impact investing component to it or could philanthropy provide a catalyst to jumpstart some of these things.

MR. REINBOLD spoke about how the relationship between the NPS and the National Park Foundation has evolved significantly over the last 10 years; how the Foundation just announced completion of a \$500 million campaign for the NPS. The Foundation is now bringing in roughly \$100 million a year. There has been a change in the relationship where we are looking at the Foundation in a much more strategic way, to be able to go out and contract this study, get access to the people they have on their board. These connections would have been incredibly difficult for us to do without them. Also leaning on the Foundation to go and do targeted studies for the NPS hopefully reducing the time that it would take to do some of these and greatly increasing the expertise that we have available.

He stated that the housing problem is acute across the country, it affects the morale of the staff, visitor experiences, and our ability to work with partners.

He then turned to utilities, explaining that in the past, the NPS has entered into energy savings performance contracts where a private company will come in, upgrade all of the lighting, and the NPS will pay them back for the cost using the energy savings. We are unsure how successful these have been, and are having Marstel-Day evaluate some of these contracts, looking at terms and conditions, and where are they successful. The NPS must lean on the National Park Foundation and others with expertise in this area. It is easy to say no to these agreements since NPS is unfamiliar with them. We need our contracting people to understand these agreements and evaluate them.

MS. LENA McDOWALL talked about authorities and contracting methods that the NPS uses to contract for commercial visitor services in parks. She pointed out that a lot of what visitors see and experience in parks are provided by commercial partners, either through concession contracts or commercial use authorizations (CUAs) for outfitter and guide services, and in some cases, leases.

Concessions are the largest with the NPS having about 480 contracts that cover lodging, retail, food and beverage, marinas, and outfitter guide services. If it is commercially provided and related to recreation in a park, it's generally provided by a concessioner. These generate about \$1.4 billion in concessioner gross receipts. Those contracts return about \$120 million a year to the Park Service in franchise fees. The average franchise fee is close to 8 percent.

The NPS has about 6,000 CUA permits that are active. These are for some of the smaller businesses that operate in parks or for businesses that have services that begin and end outside of a park, like a motorcoach tour. A lot relate to things like firewood sales, kayak tours, bicycle rentals, some of the smaller opportunities that don't have a large footprint within the park itself. Those are generally done on a cost recovery basis where the Park Service charges the permit holder essentially what it costs to manage that activity; those numbers are a lot lower, about \$2.4 million last year when you look at the cost recovery fees that were associated with various permits.

Leases are also used, but not as much as concession contracts. The NPS has a general leasing authority that allows the Park Service to lease facilities that it is not using for particular park purposes. General rule is that if it is most appropriate under a concession contract, then the NPS is not permitted to do a lease. The NPS has about 150 leases across the service. There are a few areas where there is some overlap between leases and concession contracts. Some of the largest leases in the Park Service are for lodging facilities or for food and beverage mainly in urban areas. The NPS has not used those in some of the larger, more rural parks.

MS. McDOWALL mentioned that the NPS has a new pilot authority for providing commercial visitor services allowing it to experiment with different kinds of contract types. Examples could include management contracts in the lodging and food and beverage space or looking at different ways to do the bid process.

The NPS goal is to improve visitor experiences and make it easier for businesses to work with the Park Service. She said they are looking at changes for policies and perhaps regulations in the concessions world; a lot of these have to do with the bid process which is very rigid. There is not a lot of opportunity for businesses to suggest new kinds of services to offer in parks and then get credit for that in the bid process. Right now the government puts a contract out in a Request for Proposal (RFP) and it's a take it or leave it kind of a situation that doesn't leave a whole lot of room for creativity. It relies a lot on Park Service staff trying to anticipate what visitors are going to want in terms of hospitality over a 10-20 year period of time.

She explained that the NPS employees are definitely not the experts in commercial hospitality, which is the reason why there is such a large concessions program. It would be helpful to take advantage of the industry expertise and ideas coming out of the private sector when looking at concessions during the permitting process.

MS. McDOWALL offered the example of getting CUAs for a motorcoach tour in parks. Right now, if a company wanted to operate in multiple parks, it would have to do it on a park-by-park basis; which is frustrating, if you have to manage and apply for multiple permits. The NPS is looking at things like multi-park CUAs where a company can just get one CUA that allows them to operate in multiple parks. So those are the kinds of efficiencies we're looking at when it comes to the permitting process.

She also touched upon ways to make the fee and collection process more efficient and more convenient for visitors and more cost effective for the Park Service. She explained that the NPS is using mobile passes (the Your Pass Now system) at 12 parks as part of a pilot program that has run over the past 18-24 months, which allows visitors to purchase mobile passes in advance of their visit. Once the new Recreation.gov system is up and running, it can be used more widely Service-wide.

She also mentioned a new study of fee collection technologies that may be implemented in the future, similar to the E-Z Pass. The study will look at opportunities, cost, funding, and connectivity issues, and if it will actually speed things up at the gate. We should know in the next 6-8 months about what is feasible. She asked Committee members to tell the NPS about the kinds of things that will make that visitor experience move more efficiently and the kinds of things that the Park Service can do differently in how it evaluates opportunities to provide services for visitors in ways that we have not necessarily thought about before.

MR. REINBOLD ended the session by discussing philanthropy and partnerships, and some of the work the NPS has been doing on impact investing.

One of the things that the NPS is doing is trying to prioritize recreation assets so that we can deliver on the deferred maintenance goals of the Secretary while also supporting goals around recreation. Focused on trail and water-related kinds of activities, also modernizing and upgrading campgrounds.

He spoke about the importance of bringing in other partners to help us and that a lot of the trail work the NPS does is actually done through cooperative agreements with partners, youth and veterans groups, and with others. The NPS is looking at opportunities to expand that work so that we're not only replacing or renovating the trail, but we're building a constituency of supporters for the park as well.

Over the last five years, the NPS has received about \$400 million in philanthropic support, most of that is infrastructure related. There are areas in which philanthropy provides great support, and there are areas, like our wastewater treatment plants, that no donor is going to help the NPS fund. We have purposefully tried to align the National Park Foundation, local charities, and local philanthropy friends groups at most of the parks with NPS needs.

We are looking at philanthropy and at partnerships in a much more strategic way to identify the Secretary's priorities list, match it to what the Park Service needs, then sit down with those partners and talk about where does the appropriated dollar fit best and where does private money and investment fit into this. These are conversations the NPS was not having even five years ago.

MR. REINBOLD said the NPS has seen a willingness from Congress to provide seed money through the Centennial Challenge, the Helium Fund, where they will make an investment matched by a partner to help the NPS deal with a deferred maintenance problem. Many involve trails, boat docks, all kinds of activities that are really ripe for this kind of support. Use a lot of Department of Transportation money.

He mentioned some interest from the investment community for impact investing opportunities, where we would bundle together some assets that otherwise may not be particularly attractive on their own to attract some private sector investment and help make a business case. This is not an area of expertise within the Park Service, so would love for the Committee to offer advice and support, how investment or philanthropy could be that catalyst, what are the opportunities and limitations.

The NPS is also involved in using some of our philanthropic partners to help us get the word out about recreational opportunities in parks. Traditionally, the NPS had not invested in marketing and advertising, but during the Centennial (2016), the National Park Foundation contracted with Grey Advertising in New York, put together our Find Your Park campaign, reached into places the NPS historically hadn't been, put a new face on the Park Service that was probably much more engaging and inviting to millennials and others than traditionally done.

We want to leverage outside support to help not only get the word out, but put out publications and things that might get people interested in recreation and parks. For example, the NPS and the Park Foundation, in partnership with the International Game and Fish Association, produced the Passport to Fishing, a new junior angler program.

The NPS is looking for those opportunities to not only get people to come out and recreate, but to build that connection and hopefully a constituency to support the NPS well beyond their visit to the park.

MR. MAY invited Committee members to ask questions of presenters, opened up discussion on what they heard.

MR. JACOBS expressed interest in the issue of employee housing, public-private partnership concept, and asked if there was a list of top needs or locations where the NPS has the greatest demand for affordable housing. They could explore opportunities with companies that work in and around the parks.

MR. REINBOLD wasn't sure if list existed, but would look into it.

MS. McDOWALL mentioned that the NPS has done a series of housing needs assessments so there is some data, not sure if broken out as places that are not particularly affordable. We certainly have the list of places where we have obsolete housing, and a prioritized list of places where we do need to invest in housing.

MR. SMITH stated that because the Secretary is interested in this housing issue, the NPS is doing a deeper dive into our housing situation. We have contacted regions within the past two weeks to see what the needs are in all the parks.

MR. MAY shared his experience visiting Rocky Mountain National Park and seeing the housing situation where some of the workers were living in what could only be described as a tool shed. DOI reached out to the RV industry who donated four small homes. The Army Corps was also involved in breaking ground on the 8-person dorms that are out there. By October, we should have people living in suitable quarters to take on the Rocky Mountain winter.

He said this was the first park he visited, and there are many others that are like this. The RV industry is willing to help, but you can't depend upon philanthropic events such as this one to take care of the business in all the parks. At Yellowstone, a former superintendent told him that the trailers he lived in back in the 70s are still being used by employees today.

National Parks are our gems, and we need to look after them, but we are not doing a very good job of taking care of our people who take care of the parks. It's a testament to the motivation of the people in the parks to live under those conditions just so that they can be work there.

MR. JACOBS spoke about a project in Shenandoah National Park with the Youth Corps. By working with the Youth Corps and the National Historic Preservation Trust, Delaware North was able to take dollars that as concessioners they were obligated to spend and stretch them further, getting more work done. He encouraged the NPS to go through the list of obligations of concessioners and their maintenance costs and see whether there isn't an opportunity to stretch those dollars a little further.

He ended with the observation that when the Youth Corps kids finished the project, they brought their family back. And the pride they have in the park is forever, it's lifelong. You have built a constituency, the dividends are multi-leveled, and it's well worth it.

MR. WILLIAM YEARGIN asked for more information about the National Park Foundation's relationship with DOI and if DOI had "development officers." He also asked if contributions to the Foundation were from mostly individuals or did they come from larger corporations.

MR. REINBOLD explained that the National Park Foundation was chartered by Congress. The Secretary sits on the Board and Dan Smith is also a representative. We have a very close affiliation, but they are totally separate from the Department and from the NPS.

He said the Foundation entered into a strategic plan recently, and that this was the first time the NPS tried to align its goals and their goals. During the NPS Centennial, the Foundation grew significantly, developed a first rate board; wonderful folks on there who not only are supportive of the parks, but invest themselves in the Foundation, in what we're doing.

MR. REINBOLD offered the example of the Antelope Flats Project out at Grand Teton National Park, a wonderful piece of property right in the middle of the park that the NPS needed to protect. The State of Wyoming needed to be able to sell it and return the proceeds back to the school system. It cost around \$46 million, and the NPS had only nine months to come up with the money. The NPS Director sat down with the Foundation, and with the local trust there, and worked out a way where the NPS would use several years of land acquisition money and the Foundation would come in with private money, even if that meant getting a loan, so that we could meet the deadline on this. We

were able to raise \$46 million essentially within nine months and buy this piece of property that was right in the middle of major elk habitat, part of the viewshed of the park, and a very strategic priority.

He cited the importance of the NPS identifying these needs, making a compelling case, which opens up donation possibilities. Also defining roles—the Foundation and local groups, many of whom are very powerful. In smaller parks, sometimes bringing out that Youth Corps is every bit as important as a million dollar donation. Because if you have limited resources, having that first rate volunteer group who can come out and help you is really important. In our new policy for philanthropy [Director's Order #21], we stressed not just the cash but also the importance of donations of time and in-kind services, something that was not emphasized as much in the past.

In terms of donations, most of NPS funding comes from individual donations, out of 100 right now roughly 20 percent of it is corporate. After the Centennial, the Foundation developed a very active corporate program, a licensing program, things that hadn't historically been done at this level. It has been very successful, not only by bringing in corporate support, but also aligning it with Park Service needs.

There are a lot of restrictions on working with corporations inside of parks. We tend to do a lot more cause marketing, things that don't require some kind of activities or activation inside the park itself.

MR. YEARGIN asked if the Foundation has typical development tools, such as the ability to name a building after somebody within the park.

MR. REINBOLD explained that naming buildings is actually Park Service policy and that the Foundation has to work within NPS policies, as well, when it comes to donor recognition. There's no advertising in parks. The Foundation can't be offering things that the NPS can't actually execute; but, donor recognition is part of what we're able to do.

MR. CRANDALL spoke about the opportunities to both address the current problem of the deferred maintenance backlog and to put into place a sustainable model that prevents its recurrence. He said that even if the Congress were to wipe out the deferred maintenance backlog, we would continue to run a deficit for the next 10 years, and we'd rebuild that deferred maintenance. It is important to address the backlog and outline a plan for the future.

He mentioned that it is exciting to go after the 10-12 big projects that the Secretary identifies in the \$100 million range or more, such as Ellis Island, but if you look at the 417 units of the National Park System, the vast area that the BLM manages, wildlife refuges, and more, there needs to be a new way to look at some of how that will work.

MR. CRANDALL offered the example of work being done by the National Forest Foundation. At the Wayne National Forest, they are building a new 100-mile mountain biking trail system in Southeastern Ohio in an area that is the poorest section of Ohio and that has opioid problems. The private sector will come in and invest the money, but the repayment will be, instead of a fee, a portion of the tourism tax that's collected by the county to be able to repay this construction of a 100-mile mountain bike trail. This might be a model for some of the BLM sites that don't have an

entrance station, where it's hard to collect fees or for other DOI properties where there are not just one or two or three gateways, but just a diverse kind of an access issue.

MR. LUNDBERG asked about restoration work in parks being performed by veterans, and if there are specific programs that the NPS is currently working with, especially with the Department of Veterans Affairs, that seek to help veterans beyond just health care.

MR. TOM MEDEMA explained about the NPS's veterans' engagement strategy that is built around expanding programs beyond just hiring more veterans into the workforce. It includes health and wellness with the veteran and their family, and engagement with volunteers and stewardship opportunities. The strategy is built around reaching active duty service members, as well as their families, and also veterans, and in providing them with experiences in national parks.

If the NPS provides active duty service members with experiences, they're going to be connected before they get out. And then when they get out, they become veterans with these embedded experiences. The strategy is built around using active duty service members to help volunteer on some deferred maintenance projects as part of their required service time.

The NPS is also trying to reach military schools with our distance learning programs or Every Kid in the Park Program. We also are engaging veterans in service corps, workforce and job skills programs, as well as outdoor recreation programs such as paddling, fly fishing, mountain biking, and motorcycling.

MR. MAY talked about his work with the Wounded Warrior Program since 2012. The issue that a lot of these folks face who are coming out of the hospitals is that they are not ready to go back into the workforce. He talked about a surfing program that is run through the Navy Regional Medical Center and conducted in Del Mar, California that takes amputees and teaches them how to swim and how to surf, creating self-reliance. He stated that there are two things that veterans really need. They need contact with nature, and contact with people who have been through similar situations. If we were to replicate these kinds of programs across the country—in Montana, could do programs that were based on fly fishing, or white water rafting in Idaho—programs that had some contact with nature, but also with their peers, that could go a long way towards helping our veterans out.

MR. REINBOLD mentioned the work NPS does with partners in communities, the importance of connecting the park and the community, and the use of Land and Water Conservation Fund monies to connect trails with the parks. He mentioned that the NPS has a number of technical assistance programs, over 50, within the NPS to support that interface between the parks and the community.

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON

MR. MAY opened the floor up to nominations for a person to serve as the Committee Chairperson.

MS. CRAGHEAD nominated **MS. COVINGTON** to serve based on her broad base of experience in the realm of both the private and public sectors working with all sorts of different partners in the outdoor recreation industry. She is very well-spoken and quite organized.

MR. YEARGIN seconded the motion.

MR. MAY asked for other nominations. There were none. **MS. COVINGTON** was elected by voice vote unanimously.

MR. MAY opened the floor up to nominations for a person to serve as the Committee Vice Chairperson.

MR. CRANDALL nominated Bill Yeargin to serve to provide some geographic balance in the leadership positions. He said he is a marvelous leader within the recreation community, specializing in boating, and running a company that's been in business for 90 years. He is a wonderful champion of everything that the Committee has been talking about here today and would like to offer his name as Vice Chair.

MR. FRANKLIN seconded the motion.

MR. MAY asked for other nominations. There were none. **MR. YEARGIN** was elected by voice vote unanimously.

MR. MAY thanked them for their willingness to serve in these important positions and turned the meeting over to the new Chairwoman to run.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON thanked **MR. MAY** and the Committee for electing her. She stated that she is very passionate about outdoor recreation, both personally and professionally, and looks forward to serving with **MR. YEARGIN** as well as the other members. She thanked the Committee for the opportunity to serve as chair.

DISCUSSION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF SUBCOMMITTEES: ISSUE AREAS AND MEMBERSHIP

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON opened up a discussion about issues or topics that the Committee can potentially form some subcommittees around, suggested members brainstorm topics then we will group them. She mentioned infrastructure, public-private partnerships, and technology as areas discussed during the meeting.

MR. CRANDALL discussed the importance of outreach, making sure that we don't just serve the current market of park visitors and people who go outdoors. He specifically cited outreach to urban Americans, younger Americans, and Americans of diverse backgrounds as a priority for the Committee to focus on.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON pointed out that a lot of members around the table represent different industries or markets that are working on recruitment and retention or reactivation, so there is some broad knowledge there that could help.

MR. YEARGIN suggested that technology as it is used throughout the Department of the Interior, and particularly the National Parks, would be a good subject for a subcommittee.

MS. CRAGHEAD suggested overall communications. Technology is important, but that's just the base for overall communications to the outside world.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON offered that we could combine some of these topics, like having a communications subcommittee, with a focus or emphasis on technology.

MR. CRANDALL mentioned the previous discussion about technology, that communications is part of it, but it is also fee collection, and other kinds of things, where we just improve the business practices of the various components of Interior for ways to maximize the available dollars, whether they are appropriated or collected through fees, or other sources.

MR. YEARGIN suggested the importance of access, providing recommendations related to increasing access where appropriate.

MR. CRANDALL stated the importance of partnerships, and how we define it. He said right now within Interior, partnerships often exclude those that have a commercial base, sort of a business-to-business basis. We need to look at partnerships the way the Secretary defined it, where you are all our partners. We need to begin to see each other in a different light than simply saying, you're a vendor, we're buying our gasoline from you or we're buying our airline tickets from you. We need true partners to serve in a shoulder-to-shoulder, united way, to support people that want to visit and enjoy the great outdoors. Need to redefine the scope for the hospitality industry, transportation industry, and others, as true partners with the NPS and the Department.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON added that she would expand that to not just businesses or concessioners, but other agencies or local governments as well.

MR. MATT MILLER offered that he is passionate about the modernization of camping facilities.

MR. JACOBS suggested infrastructure dynamics, areas and dimensions that we may go into that are not currently being explored. Could delve into the whole issue of how infrastructure and infrastructure improvement could happen in the parks and in other public lands.

MS. CRAGHEAD said based on her experience with park facilities in Kansas, what are some new and exciting things that might bring people into the parks beyond conservation and preservation. It could be music related, a unique type of programming, or a partnership with the State. They could focus on new areas, not necessarily just the current modernization of stuff that's already there, but what are some of the new and exciting things NPS could be doing.

MR. FEARS piggybacked on that and the topic of access to look at new recreational opportunities as well as new products that currently aren't being used or offered.

MR. JACOBS stated that it is important to look at similar committees like this one that were previously established, and what recommendations were crafted before. It would be helpful to know what in the past has been proposed and whether there were good ideas that, for whatever reason,

were not acted on at the time; just to have the advantage of knowing what other work had been done before, would be helpful.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON asked if the NPS could pull some of that historical information, so that we at least have a baseline to work from.

MR. CRANDALL said that our client is the Secretary of the Interior and if we listen to him, he did talk about various priorities, and what sounded like his top one is reorganization. How do we see reorganization in the role of recreation? How do we make it maximize the benefit to our industries, to the public, to the States, as well as to Interior?

MS. CRAGHEAD suggested the Committee look at commercial use modernization. For example, in motorcoach services, right now, you have people who are trying to set up tours two or three years out, but they can only contract with one State or one national park, there is not a current opportunity for multi-use or for multi-year. So, planning for future commercial partnerships is tough.

MS. COVINGTON mentioned that is an issue she hears from a lot of our consumer bases and constituencies.

MR. ANTONIO GONZALEZ offered the idea of outdoor ethics, conservation, Leave No Trace, in terms of what's done at parks.

MS. CRAGHEAD said going to go back to the commercial use modernization, what are the best practices? Examples of motorcoaches coming to parks that don't have bathrooms in them. Issues with traffic lines, people are hopping off, how do we prevent situations like that? Just like the Leave No Trace, how do we prevent situations from occurring that may impact our ecology in a poor way?

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON mentioned that the list is at 15 subcommittees, need to combine some of these together. Don't want more than four subcommittees given the scope and the size of this Committee.

MS. CRAGHEAD added reservation systems, permitting and reservation across different public lands.

MR. CRANDALL suggested infrastructure includes the deferred maintenance backlog since it is about investment of public and private funds, in terms of what's needed and forecasting demand. He said he thinks infrastructure would be a pretty good bucket to talk about. They could also put access under infrastructure too, because a lot of that is transportation. It could include parking areas too.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON added modernization of camping facilities in there too.

MR. CRANDALL also added leveraging funding.

MS. CRAGHEAD asked where concession agreements go in.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON suggested that new and exciting programs and partnerships fit under communications.

MR. YEARGIN pointed out that technology is way bigger than communications, many different parts.

MS. CRAGHEAD suggested reservation systems, parking, Wi-fi, broadband access, and traffic control could all be under technology.

MR. CRANDALL suggested that the Chairwoman and Vice Chairman sit down and tweak the list based on the buckets then we could think about, who would bring expertise, not only from within the Committee, but outsiders that would help us.

MS. CRAGHEAD said that outdoor ethics is kind of business practice to a certain extent.

MR. YEARGIN stated he had some experience with advisory committees before in a very similar committee in the Commerce Department, and suggested a couple of things. One is for the Chairwoman to take these ideas and put them into three subcommittees. He mentioned that the work gets done at the subcommittee level, not the twice a year meetings of the full Committee. It is sort of like being at a buffet, when you first get there and you want a little bit of everything, you want to tackle everything. He said that the Chairwoman could send an email after the meeting asking members to rate their interests in serving on the subcommittees.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON recommended when the subcommittees get formed, they may have to brainstorm ideas under each of those topics, as they get into the work and meet as a subcommittee, they may define their scope a little bit better, knowing what's first to tackle versus out a little bit.

The Chairwoman said that subcommittee membership should be limited to no more than 6 people.

MS. ALMA RIPPS pointed out that we need to do this as a public process having the full committee establish the subcommittees. It is cleaner to have them established during the meeting.

MS. CRAGHEAD stated that the Department has already done a lot of work on the reorganization, and asked if the Committee really needed to focus their time and attention on that topic.

MR. CRANDALL offered that from a standpoint of maximizing the advantage to recreation, this is the time to get involved in that discussion, between now and the end of 2018. If we have any recommendations, based upon our corporate involvement and restructuring and things like that, to direct how these regional entities would truly reach out and involve all of the different bureaus and ensure that there's consistency and coordination of recreation opportunities throughout the Department, now is the time to do that.

Maybe we do that just with some discussion at the full Committee level. My concern is, if we delay this and have a subcommittee working on it, the train may have already taken off from the station. This is a timely issue.

MR. MAY stated that the Secretary wants the Committee to look at this, he wants to do it right the first time around. Now is the time to make changes. The Committee had a cursory kind of look at

the reorganization, but an in-depth look may lead to other ideas that haven’t been brought to the forefront and need to be.

MR. CRANDALL made a procedural inquiry if it is possible for this Committee to take an action by either voice or by email regarding the reorganization over the next 60-90 days. Can the Committee circulate recommendations then take a vote in writing or by phone or anything else to actually adopt recommendations to the Secretary?

MS. RIPPS explained that work done by any of the subcommittees, which are not covered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, cannot be reported directly to the Secretary, **MR. SMITH**, **MR. MAY**, or anyone else. Those discussions and recommendations have to be brought to the full Committee in a public setting to be discussed and voted on. It cannot be done over email or on the side.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON returned to the discussion on potential subcommittees—reorganization of DOI, public access, partnerships, communications, and technology. She said that she tried to combine to get down to four. She said communications, if it’s outreach, it’s basically marketing, and they could combine partnerships and collaboration.

MR. JACOBS pointed out that technology surfaces in infrastructure and communications, so that could be a sub-topic.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON talked about combining access and infrastructure, putting technology as a sub-bullet under communications and put it also as a sub-bullet under public access/infrastructure, so that both subcommittees are touching on that.

MS. RIPPS suggested that the Committee should avoid having two subcommittees working on the same types of issues since that could be confusing. She agreed that technology probably crosses all of these topics. She mentioned the previous discussion on technology and the digital experience being a priority for the NPS, pulling together reservation systems, trip planning, and social media.

MR. JACOBS suggested that this topic might be a standalone subcommittee.

MS. CRAGHEAD recommended moving it up with technology, so it would be technology and digital experience.

MR. CRANDALL mentioned technology is also better use of resources or LEED certified buildings and other kinds of methodologies, so technology does have a role in more than just communications.

MR. YEARGIN stated that could make an argument that technology and communications fall under each of the other three subcommittees, as well; that each of the other three have a technology and a communication element. He suggested limiting it to three: partnerships/collaboration, access/infrastructure, and then, reorganization.

MR. FEARS expressed concern of having technology and the digital experience only be a subcategory since he thinks it is the biggest issue on the list and ties into the communications piece.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON suggested that they could put outreach to urban/youth under technology, reach that generation and future generations. They could also put it under marketing.

So they have technology and digital experience, partnerships and collaboration, which includes marketing and outreach, public access and infrastructure, which obviously will touch on technology, and then, reorganization of the DOI.

They also will look at past proposals and outdoor ethics as overarching action items.

MR. K.C. WALSH spoke about the reorganization occurring soon, and asked how the subcommittee will advise given that time line.

MR. CRANDALL explained that the Secretary wants each member, as an individual or as part of a company or organization, to weigh in on how to structure it to be successful for the long term. Starting with regions in Alaska and the Upper Colorado this year, more regions in 2019, so there is time to advise. Good way for us to reflect upon what the Secretary has asked us to help him with, can look at State parks, and other kinds of things, and how does that fit into the overall outdoor recreation needs for reorganization.

MR. JACOBS added that the Secretary himself said that there's elements of this reorg that are being allowed to happen organically, so there will be an evolution that will happen over time and there will be benchmarks to check against, whether or not it's been successful or not, and what needs to be revised.

MR. WALSH stated that based on Rick May's presentation that morning, they may want to stick trails underneath infrastructure.

MR. JACOBS asked if the subcommittees will also have the opportunity to set the scope of their work.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON responded they would once the members got the subcommittees up and running. They will also decide the schedule and time frame, and what is achievable.

MS. RIPPS added that the subcommittees are the work group, they are pulling in people, figuring things out, will recommend if maybe one of these categories really should go under a different subcommittee. When everyone comes back together for the next meeting, you bring that forward and make a recommendation to the full Committee.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON moved that the Committee establish subcommittees on the following topics: technology and digital experience; partnerships and collaboration; public access and infrastructure; and the reorganization of the Department of the Interior.

MR. JACOBS seconded the motion.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON stated that the motion is agreed to. She then asked members to volunteer to serve on each subcommittee, including nominations for absent members to serve, with

no more than six members per subcommittee. She also asked for members to volunteer to serve as the chairperson. The results were as follows:

■ **SUBCOMMITTEE ON PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION**

Jeremy Jacobs (Chair)
Bradley Franklin
Antonio Gonzalez
Rolf Lundberg
John Morris
James Rogers (*in absentia*)

■ **SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Bradley Franklin (Chair)
Benjamin Bulis (*in absentia*)
Antonio Gonzalez
Matthew Miller
Phil Morlock (*in absentia*)
K. C. Walsh

■ **SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL EXPERIENCE**

Christopher Maloof (Chair)
Linda Craghead
Bruce Fears

■ **SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE REORGANIZATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

Derrick Crandall (Chair)
Linda Craghead
Jeremy Jacobs
K. C. Walsh

MR. CRANDALL asked if any member can submit ideas to any of the subcommittees.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON confirmed that the subcommittees would be happy to have that type of input, from people within this Committee, as well as external to the Committee.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON introduced the next order of business which was the opportunity for public comment. She invited the public to join the Committee at the table, and offer their comments for up to three minutes. She also stated that if there were time, they would open up the floor to any other members of the public who wished to speak, but did not sign up when they checked in.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON recognized Mr. Taimur Ahmad, representing the Wilderness Society.

MR. TAIMUR AHMAD thanked the Committee for the opportunity to comment, and stated that he really appreciated the public process that is going on. He talked about his organization, a national nonprofit that protects wilderness and inspires Americans to care for our wild places. He said his organization strongly believes in the importance of outdoor recreation on our public lands and supports this Committee’s commitment to improving the experience of visitors to do that.

He said while he is glad to see the Committee work towards this goal, he is concerned that the Committee, as it is currently formed, is not sufficiently broad or diverse in terms of the stakeholders who are allowed a seat at the table. He continues to believe that this lack of diversity will negatively impact the Committee’s ability to ensure a great recreational experience for all Americans.

He said as it stands now, the Committee shuts out representatives of human powered and back country recreationists in favor of voices from industries that overwhelmingly rely on motorized users, as well as those who depend on built infrastructure for their experience.

He said that outdoor recreation on America’s public lands and waters takes a wide variety of forms, from boating and fishing on Army Corps waters, to climbing in Yosemite National Park, to backpacking in Shenandoah National Park.

The Wilderness Society believes that all of these user groups, from RV enthusiasts to wilderness backpackers, should have a voice in advising the Secretary on how to best facilitate outstanding recreational experiences on our public lands. As such, he feels that the Committee has an obligation to consider the needs, interests, and knowledge of the recreationists that do not have direct representation on the Committee. The voices of recreation advocacy groups, like the Outdoor Alliance, The Mountaineers, and the Mazamas, and activity-based organizations, like the American Canoe Association and the Access Fund, should be considered as part of this Committee’s deliberations.

He said he thinks the views of friends-of organizations, conservation organizations, and the scientific community should be thoughtfully and seriously considered by the Committee and that in order to facilitate this, the Secretary should make the recommendation process outlined in Secretarial Order 3366 more transparent. The SO directs certain bureaus within the Department of the Interior to submit recommendations for increasing recreational opportunities on the lands they manage.

He said given that the purpose of the SO is to ensure that public lands and waters are accessible for recreational pursuits by all Americans, he believes that the reports submitted by the bureaus should be made available to the public and subject to an open comment period, to fulfill the intent of the Order and ensure that the full spectrum of perspectives within the recreational community are heard.

MR. AHMAD said TWS is glad that both the Secretary and this Committee believe so strongly in the value of recreation on our public lands, as TWS does, and hopes that the Committee will make sure that all needs are evaluated when considering how to solve the critical issues that are impacting outdoor recreation today.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON thanked him Mr. Ahmad for his comments.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON next recognized Ms. Mary Ellen Sprenkel, President and CEO of The Corps Network.

MS. MARY ELLEN SPRENKEL explained that The Corps Network is the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps, or Youth Corps that represent 130 organizations across the country engaging 25,000 young people annually, between the ages of 16 and 25. Of those, about 50 percent are young people of color, 50 percent from urban areas, ranging the socioeconomic scale.

She talked about how The Corps Network is based on the model of the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s, and that they have been partnering with the NPS and all of the bureaus of the DOI for 50-60 years. And if you go back to the CCC, their predecessor, 80 years.

She explained that the Corps does things like build and maintain trails and campgrounds, remove invasive species and hazardous fuels. They help build the infrastructure and maintain it and help with historic preservation like the Shenandoah Project, previously discussed.

She said there is a lot of opportunity for growth and that the Corps and the young people that serve in the Corps can help meet a lot of the things that the Committee has identified as priorities, in terms of infrastructure, modernization of campgrounds and trails, communications, and introducing the next generation to our public lands. One of the most important parts of working with the Corps was not just that the work got done but it gets done in a cost-effective manner. The Corps is about 60 percent of the cost of other kinds of labor, so it is a cost-savings, and they are building the next generation of stewards.

She talked about a group of African American men from Baltimore who came out to Shenandoah National Park, who had pretty much never been out of their community. They were on horseback, they were in the stables, and they brought their friends.

MS. SPRENKEL ended by offering the Corps as a resource to the Committee. She thanked them for the important work that they are doing and said the Corps would love the opportunity to help.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON thanked Ms. Sprenkel her comments.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON next recognized Ms. Kate Van Waes, Executive Director of the American Hiking Society.

MS. KATE VAN WAES offered two recommendations to the Committee. First, that the nonprofit sector can offer a lot to this Committee since they coordinate and recruit volunteers who work on infrastructure in coordination with the private sector and the Federal government.

She said there are ways that they can reach the users of public lands in different ways from how the private sector or the Federal government can, and that they have a lot of expertise in communicating and engaging with all of those different groups, getting them excited about participating in outdoor recreation, getting them excited about protecting public lands, et cetera. She recommended that the Committee consider adding some nonprofits to your subcommittees as non-voting members who could add expertise. The American Hiking Society and others in their network could help identify these people and also offer their own expertise.

The second is that the Society could offer to prepare white papers that summarize information from many sources on specific issues for your subcommittees, provide background evidence on why something might work.

She stated that those are two possible ways the Committee could constructively work with nonprofits and get their expertise to help you out.

She ended with urging the Committee to consider the issue of access for those who have been traditionally underserved in the outdoors. To think about reaching urban populations, the traditionally underserved, low-income families when looking at reaching the next generation. To look at reaching more people of color, more women, et cetera; that the Committee is not just thinking of it as a communications and outreach and marketing thing, but that they are actually, in everything that they do across the board, thinking about addressing, what are the systemic and root causes for those communities being underserved and how do to address them in what the Committee is doing.

MS. VAN WAES said often you will find that the reason that you don't see enough, say, people of color represented in outdoor recreation has nothing to do with interest. It's not as much that marketing needs to happen, there are systemic and root causes for that that need to be addressed when it comes to access. She mentioned the earlier discussion about reaching out to veterans that goes beyond just recruiting them to get them outdoors. It has to do with programs that really are designed for them to be able to enjoy the outdoors and use that as a stepping stone to moving on. She urged that the Committee think of it that way and not just about marketing.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON thanked Ms. Van Waes for her comments.

No other members of the public asked to address the Committee.

CHAIRWOMAN COVINGTON then recognized **RICK MAY**.

WRAP-UP

MR. MAY emphasized the importance of welcoming diverse visitors to our public lands to recreate. He mentioned that some changes can be done administratively, but some require changes by Congress. He cited the example of wanting to set up gun ranges on BLM land, but can't since the law restricts concessions on BLM land. He asked the Partnerships and Collaboration Subcommittee to consider these types of recommendations, including changes to laws not just regulations or policies.

He ended the meeting, thanking everyone for their participation and huge ideas. He thanked everyone for taking time out of their busy schedules to come here and help us out and that it was greatly appreciated.

ADJOURNMENT

MR. MAY adjourned the meeting at 3:16 pm.