Director's Order #11C: Web Publishing

Approved:

Duration: Until revised or rescinded.

This DO replaces and supersedes DO #70, issued on January 8, 2001.

Table of Contents

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Director's Order (DO) is to define responsibilities and establish the standards for information published by the National Park Service (NPS) on the World Wide Web (Web) including the Internet (nps.gov), Intranet (InsideNPS), and Extranet.

2. BACKGROUND

The Internet offers extraordinary opportunities to share information and invite the public to learn more about the NPS mission, park resources, and our national system of parks and partnership programs. Through the Web, we can communicate essential information about the national park experience and our cultural and natural resources offering users a very potent frame of reference for whom we are as a people and as a country. This information is available globally to anyone who has access to the Internet and who wants to learn about these American places and the people, objects, events and values they represent.

The nature of the Web allows us to create a seamless presentation that fully integrates content created Service-wide making the user experience richer, deeper, and more satisfying. The web should never be considered a publication as a publication is a 1 way communication while the web is 2 way. The web is a communications vehicle that (when properly utilized) actively answers the requests of its visitors. The launch of a Content Management System (CMS) in 2005 was a critical step in achieving this goal. The CMS represents the evolution of Web technology and thinking since the launch of *Park Profiles* in 2000 and gives parks and programs the tools necessary to develop and post material that meets the needs of our users and the requirements of the NPS, Department of the Interior, and federal policies governing the Web as well as accepted national and international protocols. This will ensure the most efficient use of technology, funding, and human resources. It will also continue the

implementation of the public outreach and communications programs established in DO #52.

3. SCOPE

This DO defines responsibilities and establishes principles, standards, and a common vocabulary for the NPS's use of Web technologies to publish information externally (nps.gov), internally (InsideNPS), and to our friends' groups, partners, and other government agencies (Extranet). This document applies to all Web pages, all searchable databases that have a public Web interface and all Web applications (refer to definitions in section 5.1

It applies to all NPS employees, contractors, volunteers, and partner organizations producing material for the NPS Web.

4. LEGAL AUTHORITIES

4.1   General authority to issue this order is found in the NPS Organic Act (16 USC 1 through 4) and delegations of authority in part 245 of the Department of the Interior Manual (DM). This Order is intended only to improve the internal management of the NPS and is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

4.2   The following laws and other guidance direct the NPS in its Web activities:

The Electronic Freedom of Information Act (EFOIA) Amendments of 1996 (P.L. 104-231, or "E-FOIA," 5 USC 552) established very specific requirements for federal agencies to make certain information available in electronic format, including publishing to the Internet. The legislative history makes clear the Congressional intent that federal agencies be pro-active in delivering to the public electronically formatted information that is clearly of general public interest.

The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-511, 16 USC 5901-6011), as amended by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-1344, USC 3501-3520), directs agencies to promote the use of information technology to improve the productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness of agency programs, including improved dissemination of public information.

OMB Circular A-130 (revised, February 8, 1996) implements the Paperwork Reduction Act by establishing uniform government-wide information resources management policies. It directs agencies to use electronic media and formats, including public networks, to make government information more easily accessible and useful to the public.

Section 104 of the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-391) directs the NPS to make available to the public its strategic plans, annual performance plans, and annual budgets.

Executive Order 13011 on Federal Information Technology (July 16, 1996), gives agencies the authority and responsibility to make measurable improvements in mission performance and service delivery to the public through the strategic application of information technology.

Executive Order 12862, "Setting Customer Service Standards," September 11, 1993 (31 USC 501, 58 F.E. 48257), establishes customer service standards to guide agency operations.

Executive Memorandum, "Expanding Access to Internet-based Educational Resources for Children, Teachers, and Parents," (April 18, 1997) gives agencies the responsibility to better educate children by developing high-quality educational resources on the Internet.

The Child Protection Act of 1984 and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 establish the guidelines for the protection and privacy of children on the Web.

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires federal agencies that develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology to make it accessible to people with disabilities unless it would pose an undue burden to do so. Federal employees and members of the public with disabilities must have access to, and use of, information and services comparable to the access and use available to those without disabilities.

4.3   The following NPS guidance also relates to the Web:

Director's Order #5: Written Communication (Paper and Electronic). Describes responsibilities and requirements for written communication and correspondence within the NPS and with organizations outside of the NPS, including electronic mail, the Internet, and the Intranet. It also addresses personal use of these technologies in the workplace and the privacy of employees when using them.

Director's Order #20: Agreements. The NPS is authorized by law to enter into agreements with other agencies, organizations, and individuals. These agreements establish formal relationships that allow the NPS to more efficiently and economically accomplish its mission.

Director's Order #21: Donations and Fundraising. Establishes guidance for NPS employees who accept donations directly and/or work with organizations that seek to raise money to benefit the national parks or the programs of the NPS.

Director's Order #52 A–D: Communicating the National Park Service Mission. Establishes strategies and standards for increasing public awareness and understanding of the NPS mission and sets consistent Service-wide graphic design standards.

5. DEFINITIONS

Content Management System (CMS) – the database technology used to manage content for nps.gov.

Cookie – A message given to a Web browser by a Web server. The browser stores the message in a text file. The message is then sent back to the server each time the browser requests a page from the server.

Enterprise Web Management (division) –provides Service wide Web support through system administration, technical governance, development, training, design, guidance, and technical support. This Division is managed by the Enterprise Web Manager

Extranet –a means to make certain Intranet resources (InsideNPS) available to partners, business affiliates, and stakeholders.

FTP – File Transfer Protocol, a means of uploading files to a remote website.

InsideNPS – The official NPS Service-wide Intranet website.

Internet – a Web page, digital image, application, video and sound file, and/or database that is publicly available on the Web.

Intranet – a Web page, digital image, video and sound file, application, and/or database restricted to employees and authorized users.

NISC – National Information Systems Center – A division under OCIO that is responsible for governing, maintaining, building, and deploying all new applications, websites, and databases.

NITC – National Information Technology Center – A division under OCIO responsible for network, hardware, and machine maintenance.

nps.gov – The official NPS public website.

NPS Web Management Steering Committee (WMSC) – is responsible for recommending the overall guidance, direction and coordination for the web and the development and maintenance of web guidelines and related directives and standards in coordination with the NPS Enterprise Web Management Division. The WMSC is responsible for providing recommendations for the direction and coordination on web related technologies, architecture, infrastructure, hardware, software, servers, and applications. This committee is chaired by the Enterprise Web Manager.

OCIO – Office of the Chief Information Officer – responsible for providing Service-wide strategic direction, advice, and guidance to NPS management on all aspects of information management and technology. This directorate is managed by the Chief Information Officer (CIO)

Persistent Cookie – Also called a *permanent cookie*, or a *stored cookie*, a cookie that is stored on a user's hard drive until it expires (persistent cookies are set with expiration dates) or until the user deletes the cookie. Persistent cookies are used to collect identifying information about the user, such as Web surfing behavior or user

preferences for a specific Web site. This type of cookie is not allowed on federal websites without a waiver from OMB and the OCIO.

Post – The act of publishing content.

Search Engine – A program that searches documents for specified keywords and returns a list of the documents where the keywords were found.

Server – A computer or device on a network that manages network resources. For example, a file server is a computer and storage device dedicated to storing files. Any user on the network can store files on the server. A print server is a computer that manages one or more printers, and a network server is a computer that manages network traffic. A database server is a computer system that processes database queries.

Session Cookie – Also called a *transient cookie*, a cookie that is erased when the user closes the Web browser. The session cookie is stored in temporary memory and is not retained after the browser is closed. Session cookies do not collect information from the user's computer. They typically will store information in the form of a session identification that does not personally identify the user.

Web Application – Any web enabled software (whether built internally or commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) products) that perform business improvement processes and enables the streamlining of information flow or capture.

Web Content Author (author) – the individual(s) primarily responsible for researching, writing, and editing Web content. (creator, writer, editor, etc.). This position will be listed as the point of contact for inquiries.

Web Page – Individual document that is available on the web.

Web Project – any activity or task that creates content (pages, images, multimedia, and applications) that does not reside within the nps.gov content management system or the InsideNPS content management system. Residence in the content management system is dependant upon the use of the standard templates and designs available within the CMS and upon the page being created, managed, and served by the CMS.

Web Resource Producer (producer) – the individual(s) responsible for the technical aspects of web, including, mark up language coding (HTML, DHTML, XML, etc), posting, modifying, and/or creating document files.

Website – A logically and navigationally connected set of one or more pages, documents, services and/or applications(s). It is intended for a specific audience(s), accessible through the Internet, Intranet or Extranet via a Web browser, with a primary point of entry (home page), has a defined purpose and is managed as a distinct collection.

Web standards and guidelines – a set of documents produced by the Enterprise Web Management Division that governs all aspects of the web that are not covered by this

DO. These documents shall be located on InsideNPS (http://inside.nps.gov/waso/web).

Upload – To transmit data from a computer to a bulletin board service, mainframe, or network. For example, if you use a personal computer to log on to a network and you want to send files across the network, you must upload the files from your PC to the network.

URL – Abbreviation of *Uniform **R**esource **L**ocator,* the global address of documents and other resources on the Web. The first part of the address indicates what protocol (type of connection) to use and the second part specifies the IP address or the domain name where the resource is located. For Example: http://nps.gov/yell – http:// is the protocol; nps.gov is the address of the site; yell is the park's directory/site

6. OPERATIONAL POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES

6.2   nps.gov
- Is a primary communications tool of the National Park Service presenting our mission, principles, and policies to a worldwide audience 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Any official web-enabled public information produced by NPS with operational or internal funding must have a presence on nps.gov.
- Will provide the public with accurate, comprehensive, current, and useful information.
- Will meet or exceed Web usability standards and the unique needs and requirements of Internet audiences.
- Is managed by the Enterprise Web Management Division and all Web pages must adhere to this Director's Order and all guidance set by the Enterprise Web Manager in coordination with the Web Management Steering Committee.
- Will maintain a consistent look and feel in compliance with Director's Order # 52C.
- To serve the public and ensure operational effectiveness, the National Information Technology Center (NITC) will ensure that the nps.gov is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with 99.9% uptime. The NITC will also assume responsibility for maintaining sub-second server response time for all public-facing servers.
- The NPS Web relies upon a shared or "distributed" model of work, responsibility, and accountability to succeed.
- New nps.gov projects must be approved in advance by the OCIO. The OCIO has 30 days to review a project. Projects not reviewed within 30 days are considered approved.
- All content on nps.gov may be subject to OCIO review, approval and/or auditing for compliance with the web standards and guidelines.
- The web standards and guidelines will set standards for design, usability, information architecture, security, application development, multimedia, flash, and features. They will also govern other aspects of the web not covered in this DO.
- Links are provided to enhance the user experience and ease of use, but it must be clear when users are leaving nps.gov. Intercept scripts must be

6

utilized and default scripts will be provided by the Enterprise Web Management Division.
- o All pages containing links to non-federal managed sites must trigger a disclaimer intercept.
- Webcams are permitted only for non-commercial resource protection and visitor uses. (Any use of streaming technologies must be approved at least 60 days in advance by the OCIO ensure infrastructure capabilities for such projects.)
- All NPS websites, web pages, or applications will have domain names that tier off of nps.gov. All NPS content will primarily be hosted on ".gov" domains.
- URLS –The Web address (URL) for a park is http://www.nps.gov/"xxxx" where "xxxx" equals the park's "Alpha Code. All Parks will also be available under the park's official name. (http://nps.gov/GrandCanyon). URLS for non-park websites on nps.gov must be coordinated with the Enterprise Web Manager and appropriate Program/Regional Coordinator.

6.2 InsideNPS
- Will meet or exceed Web usability standards and the unique needs and requirements of Internet audiences.
- Is managed by the Enterprise Web Management Division and all Web pages must adhere to this Director's Order and all guidance set by the Enterprise Web Manager in coordination with the Web Management Steering Committee.
- Will maintain a consistent look and feel in compliance with Director's Order # 52C.

6.3 New web projects must be approved in advance by the OCIO. The OCIO has 30 days to review a project. Projects not reviewed within 30 days are considered approved.
- Projects will be reviewed for compliance with policy, potential redundancy, and for service-wide applicability.
- Projects will be reviewed for compliance to web standards and guidelines as published by the Enterprise Web Management Division in coordination with the Web Management Steering Committee. The standards and guidelines shall be published and maintained on InsideNPS.

6.4 All NPS websites will comply with applicable federal, departmental, and agency policies and regulations.
- Information considered confidential or protected under the law should not be posted on nps.gov, but may be posted on InsideNPS if stringent security methods are in place.

6.5 All material published on nps.gov must follow standards and procedures for Formats, content, writing, organizational structure and metadata established in the web standards and guidelines.

6.6 All NPS websites will comply with accessibility regulations including but not

limited to:

- Provide a text-only version of any graphics-rich page. Every effort should be made to develop one Web page that serves both those with and without disabilities.

- Provide "alternative text" for all images (not including those used as spacers), buttons, links, hotspots on image maps, and graphical buttons. Alternative text should describe the image in detail and not convey any other meaning than the description of the image and its purpose.

- Provide alternative formats such as text versions that convey the essence of audio and visual presentations.

- Avoid blinking, flashing, or other design elements that cause the screen to flicker.

- Comply with web standards and guidelines as defined by the Enterprise Web Management Division.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES AND DELEGATIONS

7.1 Chief Information Officer
- Final Approval for all web projects
- Delegation of authority to Enterprise Web Manager for governance of web.
- Legal Responsibility for Information on public sites.

7.2 Enterprise Web Manager
- Oversees and approves information design standards, maintenance, and governance of the NPS Web infrastructure (which NISC administers), including licenses, facilities, and security.
- Reviews and approves activities by other NPS organizations that affect the NPS Web.
- Ensures consistent management of the web by governing content usability, taxonomy definitions, website design, website infrastructure, and web applications.
- Enforces this DO – in consultation with the CIO – by terminating user access to the Web and/or removing material when non-compliance is not remedied.
- Develops and maintains the web standards, guidelines, design, and training.
- Chairs the NPS Web Steering Committee to regularly solicit input from the field and WASO.
- Division Chief of NPS Enterprise Web Management Division
- Project Approval. Any project not approved by this The Enterprise Web Manager will be subject to shut down until such approval is granted. Any budget requests, Web activities, or projects will require approval before proceeding to the ITIC, PMIS regional approval, or OFS approval.

7.3 NPS Web Management Steering Committee

- Represent the needs of the NPS and its partner organizations, and set development priorities and goals for the web.
- Has review over all Web activities.

7.4   Regional and Associate Directors
- Responsible for information quality and legal compliance of all web content that is posted by subordinates.
- Delegation of Authority and designation of a Regional/Program Web Coordinators. A minimum of 1 Web Coordinator is required for every region and program.
- Delegation and Designation of 1 voting member to the NPS Web Steering Committee.
- Submission of web projects for approval to the Enterprise Web Manager before Regional/Program Approval of funding.

7.5   Park Superintendents
- Delegation of authority to Park Web Coordinators.
- Assignment and designation of Park Web Coordinator Duties. A minimum of 1 Park Web Coordinator is required for every park.

7.6   Park, Regional and Program Web Coordinators
- Responsible for information quality and legal compliance of all web content that is posted by subordinates and local content authors.
- Responsible for compliance with this and other policies and guidelines at the park/program level.
- Coordinating training for their regions/programs in collaboration with the Enterprise Web Management Division.
- Maintain an up-to-date list of park web coordinators.

7.7   Content Authors
- Responsible for posting content on the park, program or region.
- Responsible for information quality and accessibility of content that they publish on the web.

8.   ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS SPECIFIC TO WEB

8.1   EFOIA Requirements

Nps.gov is the NPS electronic reading room as required by the Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendments of 1996 (EFOIA, 5 USC 552(2)). The following documents, or their equivalents, fall within the specific requirements of EFOIA, and must be posted on nps.gov and be accessible through the appropriate park.

- Final versions of certain park planning documents, including General Management Plans, Operations Plans, and other plans that document park policy and management decisions.

- National Environmental Policy Act decision-making documents, including Environmental Impact Statements, Environmental Assessments, and Findings

of No Significant Impact.

- Service-wide Management Policies, Strategic Plans, Director's Orders, and handbooks and other forms of guidance that accompany Director's Orders.

- "Park Compendiums" or other similar legally required documents that list superintendent-authorized decisions that affect the public, such as opening and closing times, and open and closed park areas.

- All superintendent directives and guidance to park staff that affect the public.

- Documents that were released in response to a FOIA request and that are known to be of high and continuing public interest. This category might include documents such as contracts; agreements with partners or other agencies; or any documents that involved controversy or a public commenting process. The web standards and guidelines contain specific guidance for complying with EFOIA.

8.2   National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 Requirements

Nps.gov will be used to comply with Section 104 of the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-391), which deals with park budgets and accountability found in park strategic and performance plans. The following documents or their equivalents have been determined to fall within these requirements and must, therefore, be posted on NPS.gov and be accessible through the appropriate park.

Each park's 5-year strategic plan and annual performance plan prepared pursuant to the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA).

Each park's annual budget, including, at a minimum, funding allocations for resource preservation (including resource management); visitor services (including maintenance, interpretation, law enforcement, and search and rescue); administration; and the allocations into each of the above categories of all funds retained from fees collected for that year, including (but not limited to), special use permits, concession franchise fees, and recreation use and entrance fees. These budgets should be posted following receipt of the appropriation for the park unit from the Operations of the National Park System account, but no later than January 1 of each year.

8.3   Standard Disclaimer Statement(s)

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget Memorandum on Privacy Policy (6/2/99), all publicly accessible NPS websites must provide a link to the approved disclaimer statement. The privacy policy, as outlined in the disclaimer, ensures that individuals have been given notice and choice about how any personal information is handled when they use NPS.gov. The disclaimer also addresses issues of endorsement, copyright, and links to non-NPS sites. Each park homepage will have a link to the NPS disclaimer statement.

The web standards and guidelines contain specific guidance on the use and placement of disclaimers. (Published by the Enterprise Web Management Division)

8.5   Logos

Logos for plug-ins are allowed; as long as the plug-in is free and is an industry standard. Approved logos of plug-ins shall be maintained in the web standards and guidelines, which are approved, published and governed by the Enterprise Web Management Division. Authority for the governance of placement and use of logos shall reside with the Enterprise Web Management Division.

8.6   Electronic mail - Website Interactivity

Each park or program with a website on NPS.gov must provide an email link, but not a personal, visible, email address to which public inquiries may be directed. This address should be provided to the Enterprise Web Management Division for placement in a central feedback system. All inquiries must receive a timely and appropriate response. (See DO #5: Written Communication, Section 10.5).

No actual email addresses will be made publicly available. All email will be routed through a central feedback application.

Personal email addresses currently residing on a publicly available page must be removed and replaced with a link to the central feedback application.

---End of Director's Order #11C---