

National Park System Advisory Board
DRAFT Meeting (Videoconference) Minutes
June 30, 2020

The **National Park System Advisory Board** (Board) convened for a videoconference meeting at 11:00 a.m., on Tuesday, June 30, 2020. In accordance with the provisions of Public Law 92-463 (5 U.S.C. app.) the meeting was open to the public throughout its duration. Board Chairwoman Mary Pope Hutson, National Park Service (NPS) Deputy Director David Vela, and Board Staff Director Joshua Winchell conducted the virtual meeting from the Rachel Carson Room in the Interior Building, 1849 C St NW, Washington, D.C.

Board Members Participating:

Andrew “Tuck” Beckstoffer, Joseph Emert, Hon. William Hewes, Mary Pope Hutson (Chairwoman), Dr. Zelma Lansford, Dr. Les Moore, John Nau III (Vice Chairman), Philip Pearce

Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Board:

Joshua Winchell (NPS), Staff Director, National Park System Advisory Board.

Other Participants:

David Vela, Deputy Director for Operations, Exercising the Authority of the Director, NPS; Reginald Chapple, Acting Assistant Director, Partnerships and Civic Engagement, NPS; Joy Beasley, Acting Associate Director, Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science, NPS; Alma Ripps, Chief, Office of Policy, NPS; Shirley Sears, Office of Policy, NPS; Diana Allen, Chief, Healthy Park Healthy People Program, NPS; Danielle Buttke, Veterinary Epidemiologist, NPS; Ed Clark, Senior Program Analyst, NPS; Sonya Coakley, Deputy Director, Office of Public Health, NPS; Tamara Delaplaine, Landscape Architect/Project Manager, NPS; Deb DiQuinzio, Manager, Northeast National Natural Landmarks Program, NPS; Deborah Douglas, Organizational Development Specialist, NPS; Heather Eggleston, Manager, National Natural Landmarks Program, NPS; Sherry Frear, Chief, National Historic Landmarks Program, NPS; Jason Gibson, Chief, Business Management Group, NPS; Laurie Jenkins, Coordinator, Pacific Northwest National Natural Landmarks Program, NPS; Greg Kimmit, Concessions Management Specialist, NPS; Dr. (Capt.) Sara Newman, Director, Office of Public Health, NPS; Kurt Rausch, Chief, Commercial Services Program, NPS; Jessica Sharpe, Public Health Consultant, Pacific West Regional Office, NPS; Lora Uhlman, Project Manager, NPS; Margaret Bailey, Senior Vice President, CHM Government Services; Derrick Crandall, Counselor, National Park Hospitality Association; Claire Griffith, Senior Vice President, Sweet Briar College; Rob Hotakainen, Reporter, E&E News; Eric Mart, President, California Land Management; Warren Meyer, President, Recreation Resource Management; Partick Michaud, CHM Government Services; William Shafroth, President, National Park Foundation; Mary Ellen Sprenkel, CEO, The Corps Network.

Convening the Meeting

Meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Hutson at 11:00 a.m., EDT.

Introductions and Roll Call

- Hutson welcomed and thanked Board members for their efforts during the past months, acknowledged this was a long-awaited meeting, rescheduled from the March meeting which was cancelled as a result of the global pandemic. Hutson thanked Board committees and committee chairs for working diligently over the past four months to make sure that the Board would have a robust set of recommendations for the Board to consider at this meeting. Hutson thanked Deputy Director Vela and NPS staff for their efforts navigating the challenges of the pandemic and the racial injustices that have struck this nation.
- Winchell took roll call, confirmed members present (see “Board Members Participating” list, above) and confirmed quorum.

Remarks from the Deputy Director Vela

- Vela noted that in his nearly 40 years of public service, the last five months have been the most challenging of his entire life: the nation’s ongoing battle with the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the ongoing demonstrations and discussions around commemorative statues, civil justice, the Black Lives Matter movement.
- Vela discussed how the NPS is bringing virtual experiences and opening discussions during the COVID-19 pandemic. While not the same as being there, virtual experiences can provide some of that experiences about these very special places that are part of American’s birthright.
- Vela thanked the Board's committees for tackling and developing recommendations on improving accessibility for visitors at our parks and improving efforts to develop a second century workforce. Vela thanked the Board for its commitment to help the National Park Service provide a 21st second century visitor experience while also creating a more resilient, diverse, inclusive, and respectful workforce that is well trained to meet the needs of our second century of service.
- Vela introduced NPS Next, a program to build a strong workforce for the NPS second century modeled on the Grand Teton Next program that Vela implemented as superintendent. NPS Next is designed to align parks and programs with departmental and service-wide priorities and will help employees engage in a vision and direction for the second century of the NPS. The effort will address a wide range of topics, including a thriving workforce, providing a 21st century visitor experience, stewardship in a changing environment, modernizing NPS business practices, and enhancing partnerships.
- Vela requested the Board’s assistance in developing recommendations to ensure NPS Next is the best, most effective employee engagement and workforce enhancement planning process it can be. Specifically, Vela requested that the Board review NPS employee participation and response to the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) and develop recommendations on how to best increase NPS employee response and how best to fully integrate FEVS data on an ongoing and systematic basis.

- Vela described FEVS as a tool that uses more than 70 questions to measure employee perceptions about the factors that influence employees wanting to stay, join, and help their agency meet its mission. The NPS also surveys all less than permanent employees – part-time and seasonal for example – through a contractor and includes those results in reports to parks and units.
- Vela commented that for the past five years, the NPS has scored in the bottom half of Federal agencies of comparable size as the best place to work in the Federal government, according to the Partnership for Public Service. Therefore, the NPS must pay closer attention to what its employees are communicating in the survey and must work to improve the morale and engagement of NPS employees.
- Vela requested that the Board help the NPS better understand FEVS scores and what the results mean. Vela acknowledged that the Board's Workforce Planning Committee has already started examining the scores as it relates to the NPS Supervisor Support Initiative. He now requests that the Board help the NPS better understand the survey data and provide recommendations to best integrate that data on an ongoing systemic basis into NPS workforce development programs, such as NPS Next.
- Vela then introduced Captain Sara Newman, Director of the Office of Public Health. Vela stated that the NPS Public Health Service is one of the Service's greatest assets in the battle against COVID-19 pandemic. Vela stated that the Public Health Office has long been embedded within other Federal agencies to serve in health and safety leadership roles, and the NPS is the luckiest of Federal agencies in getting Captain Newman and her team to serve with them.

Presentation from Captain Sara Newman, Director of the NPS Office of Public Health, U.S. Public Health Service

- Captain Newman thanked Vela and extended her sympathy to COVID-19 victims. Newman provided background and history on the Office of Public Health and the U.S. Public Health Service. As Captain in the United States Public Health Service (USPHS), Newman is assigned to the NPS by the Department of Health and Human Services at the request of the NPS to provide public health guidance, expertise, and leadership. Newman serves in the NPS with more than 60 other Commissioned Corps officers.
- Newman described the USPHS as one of several Federal agencies, uniformed services, including the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard. and whose history dates back to 1798 when President John Adams established a Federal public health response force to combat infectious diseases that were threatening our nation due to sea merchants. Currently, USPHS officers are in an operational dress uniform because they have been activated during the national health crisis, are in response mode, and are deployable immediately.
- There are more than 6,000 officers led by the United States Surgeon General under the Assistant Secretary of Health with a mission to protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of the nation. They serve in more than 800 locations around the world for more than 24 Federal agencies across the government as physicians, nurses, dentists, veterinarians, scientists, engineers, environmental health specialists, and other professionals.

- The USPHS has been serving in partnership with the NPS for 100 years. They are located in parks, regions and offices nationwide to provide technical expertise, tools, guidance, and education; conduct research; and assist park managers in making operational and programmatic decisions. Public health officers conduct routine inspections and periodic assessments of water systems, wastewater, recreational water, thousands of systems across the Service. They inspect food and lodgings to prevent disease transmission and to help park managers meet their regulatory requirements for these facilities. Officers also serve in positions related to occupational safety and health, injury prevention, and clinical services. The office also promotes parks as a resource for health through the NPS Healthy Parks, Healthy People program. The USPHS implements epidemiologic strategies to prevent disease and provide 24/7 response to promptly address outbreaks and implement prevention strategies.
- What USPHS has done to support the NPS during the COVID-19 pandemic is no different from what they are trained to do on a regular basis. What is different about this is the scale. USPHS has never dealt with an outbreak of this size that has affected every single park and every single individual who works in that park or visits that park. At this scale, the pandemic is not manageable alone and requires partnerships. When the NPS needed to form an incident response effort – a formal incident response – the USPHS helped design and implement a response strategy working with their partners in law enforcement and others, and NPS leadership, to formulate the strategy.
- USPHS developed and evaluated tools and guidance to inform science-based decisions about modifications to park operations. The public health team designed a risk assessment tool for park managers to use to evaluate the effectiveness of mitigation strategies to reduce risk, allowing them to either continue operations or to help them make decisions regarding the need to close certain activities or services. USPHS conducts risk assessment and follow-up for employees who test positive with COVID-19 and provides guidance to reduce the spread of infection in NPS employees and in the public.
- USPHS has participated in national, regional, and park town halls to educate employees nationwide about the public health impacts of COVID-19 and the strategies to mitigate, giving information on the science and the evolution of the science. To date, USPHS has participated in over 240 town halls, reaching more than 14,000 employees and sponsoring town halls in over 134 parks. USPHS continues to conduct these town halls.

Presentation on the NPS Second Century Campground Strategy, Tamara Delaplane, Project Manager, NPS

- Delaplane provide background on campgrounds, camping, and the NPS role is providing those opportunities to the public.
- Camping is one of the most significant recreational opportunities that national park visitors seek. In some park locations, camping opportunities are limited due to the size of the campground and the number of people that want to visit. The NPS has more than 1,400 campgrounds and in 2018, had 7.9 million stays in campgrounds. NPS campgrounds are also a source of deferred maintenance.
- NPS campgrounds have a range of facilities: 36 campgrounds with electrical hookups, more than 400 campgrounds with water stations, roughly 131 campgrounds with year-

round hot showers, and roughly 33 campgrounds with Wi-Fi. Some are operated by the NPS, some by concessioners, and a very small number by partners.

- Because of the growing interest in expanding public recreation access, the NPS needs to make sure it is focusing on what is the criteria for updating a campground. Therefore, the NPS is generating tools to support a sound financial investment and ensure that a repeatable decision framework is used, a framework called the Second Century Campground Strategy.
- The Second Century Campground Strategy has three main branches: the first branch is campground inventory and data management improvement; the second is market analysis contracts that are underway; and the third is the development of a campground design guide. The intention is not to change every campground or make all campgrounds the same. The NPS will not be forcing change on parks and will not be turning over all campgrounds to concessions. The three branches of the strategy create a suite of management decision tools to develop a business case for investment – when is it appropriate to invest in campgrounds, and at what level – to make efficient and consistent financial decisions.
- NPS data inventory and management goals are about making the data comprehensive and will allow the NPS to incorporate data-driven decision-making for investment. The NPS also wants to increase the availability of digital reservations and expand the details that are available in the reservation system so if you're a visitor and you want to reserve the campsite that's by the lake, you know which campsite to try to reserve.
- Another effort is market analysis, ensuring the NPS understands fiscal and operational realities, to make sure the NPS tracks total life-cycle costs, including operations and maintenance not just making decisions based on construction and development costs. This will help the NPS ensure it is including safety and accessibility requirements while following all policies and regulations. Some industry analysis reports have already been completed and were posted on the Board's website in January 2020.
- Financial models will be developed for pilot parks to consider investment strategies and potential revenue that would result from additional investments. These models will allow park managers to consider whether to develop concessions contracts, have a third-party operator manage campgrounds or manage the campgrounds by themselves. For the industry analysis goals, the NPS wanted to increase understanding of current and future visitor expectations and what visitors really want.
- The overall strategy includes development of a campground design guide. The NPS is looking to standardize and simplify the process for park management and decision makers to become more efficient and consistent. A significant part of the design guide will be to improve accessibility and universal design. Universal design is the concept of designing buildings and environments to make them accessible to all people, regardless of age, disability, or other factors.
- The NPS asked the Board to provide recommendations for improving accessibility and universal design in campgrounds to make sure that we are including these to the fullest way possible in the design guide. The variety of facilities and amenities is broad, and efforts are being made to make the data more available and more useful to both managers and the public. The market analysis contracts will provide tools for parks to make consistent, repeatable, and defensible financial decisions. The design guide will be a resource for every level of the project, from small repairs done in-house by park

maintenance staff to larger modernization investments that expand RV usage in the specific campgrounds.

Presentation on Partnerships and Marketing, Reginald Chapple, Acting Assistant Director, Partnerships and Civic Engagement, NPS

- Chapple gave a presentation on the role of the NPS's non-governmental organization and corporate partners in marketing and increasing awareness of parks and the NPS mission. Chapple highlighted that the NPS does not do marketing and it is rare to find a Federal agency that does. For the most part, marketing is handled by an outside agency or a partnership and the National Park Foundation (NPF) – the congressionally chartered nonprofit partner of the NPS – is a primary NPS partner in marketing and fund-raising.
- Three years ago, the NPS and NPF completed a joint strategic plan and implemented a cause marketing effort called the Find Your Park campaign driven by social media to reach new audiences through social media and technology.
- With the COVID-19 pandemic, the NPF and NPS partners have been agile in adjusting the campaign to the current needs, so when people were not able to get out to a park, the partnerships brought the park to them through technology.
- The NPF has also helped other members of nonprofit community partners during the pandemic by creating a pro bono legal advice program when the payroll protection programs rolled out. For example, many NPS friends' groups and cooperating associations – did not know how to apply when those programs became available after the pandemic legislation passed. And the NPF provided pro bono support for many NPS partner communities through that process.
- NPF also helped with a major economic report developed by the Boston Consulting Group. Specifically, the report represented a set of data collection reports on the impact of visitation on the NPS. Phase two of this report will be completed soon and will focus on transportation tourism, digital infrastructure, and facilities. The information provided will be essential in addressing deferred maintenance and implementing the Great American Outdoors Act, as well as examining opportunities for programs such as clean fuel, driverless technology, timed entry, smartphone pay apps, Wi-Fi in visitor centers, modernized digital trail maps and apps, and visitor centers.
- NPS partners have demonstrated their agility in bringing technology and social media to bear, and the use of technology and social media can help make the NPS more relevant. Technology can help the NPS deliver a virtual, digital visitor experience when people cannot physically visit parks, and enhances the overall educational experience. The ability for partners such as NPF to help the NPS better deliver natural, historical, and cultural experiences to the public can provide exceptional value.

Welcome Remarks from Rob Wallace, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

- Wallace stopped by briefly to welcome Chairwoman Hutson and Board Members. He thanked them for their work on the Board and their support of the NPS. Wallace also thanked NPS staff and leadership for their work.

Presentation from Will Shafroth, President and CEO, National Park Foundation (NPF)

- The coronavirus has affected and interrupted NPS partners ability to contribute to the NPS mission.
- NPF has adapted reasonably well in its direct marketing and online fundraising. NPF has taken a moment to look at the landscape and ask how does the NPS need us now in ways that are different than they needed us before the pandemic? NPF decided to lean heavily and immediately into the concept of a “virtual park” and virtual park visit, finding ways to take the parks to the people.
- NPF has also worked on #RecreateResponsibly and been actively involved with the coalition of some 300 organizations and companies that are getting these messages out: know before you go, plan ahead, practice social distancing, play it safe, stay close to home, and leave no trace. There is an opportunity to help create a new culture around visitation in the national parks and other public lands that NPF thinks is both a timely and important message.
- NPF also takes responsibility in looking out for and supporting the roughly 250 existing national park friends’ groups and helping to establish new ones. These groups wake up every day and only think about a park. There are also 70 park conservancies, such as the Grand Teton National Park Foundation and the Friends of Acadia, and many more.
- These groups are experiencing some of the same challenges as NPF. Golden Gate National Recreation Area had to furlough many people that perform important educational interpretation functions in the park because of the closing down of Alcatraz and other visitor places in the park. NPF has really leaned into this moment to support that community including webinars and fireside chats.
- NPF has not slowed down the work to help build the capacity of these organizations. We support national park friends’ groups because if NPF can invest \$50,000 in an organization that could result in it raising another \$500,000 in the next three years, that is good leveraging and a good investment.
- The Great American Outdoors Act is a big moment for all in the partner community and the NPS. How can the partner community work with the NPS to ensure that the funds for deferred maintenance get as much done as possible in the most efficient way? How can the new roles and responsibilities for the partner community be used to work on this issue on behalf of the NPS to help ensure success?

Committee Reports

- Visitor Experience Committee, Philip Pearce, Chair
 - The Visitor Experience Committee worked specifically on recommendations to update and improve Director's Order (DO) #42, Accessibility for Park Visitors, which are being submitted for the Board to consider. Pearce commented that the recommendations will lend themselves as well to the campground guide being developed by the NPS and the attempts to formalize the process of applying accessibility guidelines and principles within the NPS. The required standards and guidelines are a starting point.
 - The support for universal design is important in that it attempts to make sure that whether you have a disability or not, you are going to have access to the facilities at a campground or at an NPS facility, consistent with Section 504 of the

Rehabilitation Act and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act which set out compliance requirements to make facilities and the features accessible.

- Regarding accessibility training, two levels are being suggested. The first level is basic training for all NPS staff, volunteers, partners, and concessioners. The next or higher level of accessibility training helps ensure that people understand what accessibility guidelines and principles look like when they are applied. Having more significantly trained staff members within the NPS equips them to perform a function that ensures the facilities and the interpretive features are going to be accessible.
 - The second part of the recommendations involves planned document reviews to ensure that the people who have the most expertise in evaluating accessibility will have an opportunity to look at plan documents before construction begins or before interpretive features are installed. This could save dollars in the long run for the NPS, but also save embarrassment for having branded facilities that do not meet accessibility requirements.
 - The third recommendation is for a post-construction review. During construction or during installation, either inadvertently or even sometimes intentionally, errors are made, and deficiencies come to light that were not in the plan process.
 - Lastly, recommendations were discussed about reviews of educational and interpretive delivery features. These are reviews conducted on the information and the communication technology to ensure that they are compliant with the standards and that they are the most effective means of delivery available. This review will also help determine if there are other types of interpretive and educational materials that may be used – that utilize either existing or even emerging technologies that are available. Using more up-to-date digital technology for information delivery ensures that making changes to that interpretive information can be done relatively easily and inexpensively as opposed to the more traditional physical displays. It can also deliver information regardless of the visitor’s native language, better accommodating international visitors to national parks.
- Workforce Planning Committee, Les Moore and Zelma Lansford, Co-Chairs
(Les Moore remarks on the health-related recommendation letter submitted to the Board.)
 - Moore read through the Committee’s recommendation letter focused on NPS health and wellness. The top-line recommendation is a request for the NPS to revise its mission statement to include the word “health” and implement subsequent measures to recognize the benefits of the National Park System as a health resource for all people with clear and substantial benefits to the underserved and minority populations who disproportionately suffer from chronic diseases.
 - The proposed NPS Mission Statement would read: *The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, health, and inspiration of this and future generations.*

- Moore commented that the NPS finds itself with a repair deficit, understaffing, employee stress, and overwork. All compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and social unrest. The addition of *health* to the NPS Mission Statement would honor the NPS history and heritage and signal a commitment to recovery and renewal to remedy this growing set of organizational and societal ills during a time where the need is great to realize the benefits of the National Park System as a health resource to the nation in this time of great need for healing.
- The NPS has a longstanding mission and dedication to protecting and promoting public health. The original purpose of the national parks – with the acquisition by Congress of what would eventually become Hot Springs National Park – was for the health of the nation. As a steward of these healing places, NPS employees have a mission that is the stewardship of the natural and cultural resources of the United States. Each of the NPS resources is also a place of health and healing for the people of the U.S. And there is no other agency better suited to address the healing of the nation than the NPS at this time.
- Natural resources offer great potential for resiliency of employees and for the nation. In addition to the positive impacts, outdoor settings can promote both physical and mental wellbeing. Visiting a site can be a great source of healing for a family, a group, or the nation. The committee recommended a 10-step approach for implementing health and wellness as integral to the NPS mission for employees, for the park system as a whole, and for the nation. NPS-wide communication at all levels of this mission revision and the importance of being the caretakers, the stewards, and ambassadors of the health and resiliency of the nation.
- Moore concluded by highlighting the need for increased resource allocation for the NPS, Public Health Service, and Healthy Parks, Healthy People program to implement the recommendations in collaboration with partners. These networks are already developed. The recommendations are merely focused on implementing them, and that process can begin by changing – by adding a single word to – the NPS mission.

(Zelma Lansford remarks on the supervisor-development related recommendation letter submitted to the Board.)

- Lansford introduced the committee’s recommendation related to NPS Supervisor Support Initiative with the first part being that the supervisors receive training before they're assigned to serve as a supervisor. Lansford noted that in health organizations in the private sector, successful supervisors are developed before they move into the job. In addition, NPS Harpers Ferry Center staff – with expertise in education which shows in every NPS brochure and in the exhibits at every park visitor center – should be tasked to apply that expertise to the material on supervision, placing it online to make the materials far more effective and available. Also, we believe strongly that changes to a few slides such as the one on reasonable accommodations of employees with disabilities must be edited.
- Lansford also outlined a series of specific changes to slides used in the NPS supervisor workshop presentation to further clarify topics such as leadership accountability and supervisor skills. Suggestions were also made to focus more

on giving examples and providing demonstrations on leadership rather than listing facts and rules, which are more effectively provided in a stand-alone, online reference source.

- Lansford concluded by expressing appreciation for Director's Vela remarks and recognition of his request for the Board's recommendations to help the NPS understand the FEVS and using that information to improve the NPS culture in helping the workforce effort.
- National Historic Landmarks Committee, Joe Emert, Chair
 - Emert provided introductory remarks on the initial work of the Committee, including selection of subject matter experts. These experts are from the fields of pre-contact archeology, historical archeology, architectural history, history in public history, history in historic preservation, landscape architecture, museums, and State historic preservation efforts.
 - A preliminary, administrative meeting of the Committee was held for members to get to know each other, as well as provide a general overview of the national historic landmark (NHL) process, with an additional administrative meeting planned for July with a deeper dive into the NHL process, and a brief overview of the approximately 15 nominations for consideration at the Board's next meeting.
 - In early September, a two-day virtual Committee meeting is scheduled to review the specific NHL nominations. The sites will be discussed in depth and the Committee will take public comment. A vote will then be taken to either recommend the sites be forwarded to the Board for action, or held pending further work. All the sites that are recommended for NHL designation will be presented to the full Board for deliberation and recommendation to the Secretary.
 - The Secretary requested a meeting of the Committee last week to expedite the NHL nomination for the Hermitage Hotel in Nashville so it could be presented at this meeting. The reason for the Secretary's request was that the State of Tennessee was the 36th State to approve the 19th Amendment and that the celebration of that moment – the ratification of the 19th Amendment – is just around the corner.
 - The Hermitage Hotel's opening in 1910 coincided with the growing influence of the suffrage movement in Tennessee, and by the summer of 1920, local, State, and national figures in suffrage, politics, industry, and media became keenly aware that Tennessee alone held the fate of the 19th Amendment. During the summer of 1920, the Hermitage Hotel was the headquarters of both the pro- and anti-suffrage forces as they lobbied the State legislature. Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, stayed in the suite at the Hermitage Hotel for nearly six weeks, guiding the strategy and tactics to win the final vote in the State legislature.
 - The Committee recommended that the Hermitage Hotel meets NHL criteria and that the Board recommend to the Secretary the designation of the property as an NHL.
- National Natural Landmarks Committee, Mayor Billy Hewes, Chair

- The National Natural Landmarks (NNL) Committee has had a number of calls with NNL Program Manager Heather Eggleston and Joshua Winchell providing the program and Federal Advisory Committee Act guidance and background for our subject matter experts serving on the Committee. Hewes thanked them for their participation, as well as committee members who have participated in this process.
- No NNL proposals will be considered at this meeting. The committee anticipates four nominations will be presented at the Board's September meeting.

Public Comment

- Ms. Mary Ellen Sprenkel, CEO The Corps Network (also submitted written comment)
 - The Corps Network which is the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps based on the model and philosophy of the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s. Today's Corps engages young people between the ages of 16 and 25 and veterans up to age 35 in education, workforce development, and conservation-related services.
 - Current membership is more than 130 member Corps. They operate in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories and collectively engage about 25,000 young Americans every year. About half of these Corps and Corps members work in partnership with the Federal public land management agencies, including the NPS. In fact, last year, more than 10,000 Corps members worked on NPS lands.
 - Over the last three years, Corps has completed more than 75 million dollars in project work for the NPS. Many of those were deferred maintenance projects – building trails, campgrounds, historic preservation, restoring habitat and waterways – and much more. Sprenkel noted that a handout that she distributed provides quite a bit more detail on Corps and the kinds of project work that they do.
 - Benefits of working with Corps for the NPS is a cost savings. A cost analysis done by the NPS and Booz Allen a few years ago demonstrated that partnering with a Corps can save between 50 and about 85 percent of a project cost.
 - Another benefit is exposure and workforce development of the next and more diverse generation of land managers and stewards. Approximately 45 percent of our current Corps members identify as young people of color, so we are a diverse group. The Corps also have a noncompetitive hiring authority under Federal statute which provides qualified Corps members the ability to move directly into Federal land management careers.
 - The Corps have been and currently are an important partner of the NPS, but there's potential to do a lot more. Convergence of a number of factors have kind of set the table for significant growth, including the multi-billions in deferred maintenance, the anticipated passage of the Great American Outdoors Act, currently high unemployment rate caused by COVID-19, and thousands of young people wanting to serve.
 - Sprenkel concluded by stating that the current conditions are ripe for a modern day CCC, and The Corps Network would love to engage with the Board and the NPS to make that happen.

- Mr. Eric Mart, President, California Land Management
 - Mart provided details about California Land Management which is a campground concession company operating on nine different national forests in the West. Mart provided background on his approach to operating campgrounds, related to a change driven by budget cuts to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) recreation programs. The program is based on a privity relationship where concessionaires would pay a percentage of their gross to the Forest Service in exchange for the right to operate government facilities, charging the public reasonable prices for their use, and subsisting off the difference. The program was considered a temporary stopgap measure by the USFS. As a result, the permits were short, three years in length and largely seasonal. The concessionaire's primary duties were to clean the sites, maintain the restrooms, and collect the fees from the public. The USFS would step back in and take over the facilities in the off-season. Permits were typically for a single site or a small group of campgrounds.
 - The USFS planned to step back in at the end of the permits to take over and operate again. But the budgets never came back. As a result, they turned inward and built the program and it was expanded and changed. Longer-term permits were issued, first for five years, then five years with an option for a second five. Key offset provisions were implemented, allowing concessionaires to assist with the deferred maintenance.
 - Year-round responsibility and the operation of day use facilities was also added to the permits. Larger areas were then consolidated in single permits, sometimes including entire national forests. Today, the program offers a wide range of services, ranging from basic facility maintenance and food service, to retail stores, interpretive programs, and a variety of other services. The majority of all developed sites on the national forests are currently being operated by private companies. Permit terms are now offered for 10 years with the option to renew for five additional years. The Forest Service is looking at even longer terms in the hope of attracting private capital investment from their concessionaires. Mart concluded that the approach may merit NPS consideration.

- Mr. Warren Meyer, President, Recreation Resource Management (also submitted written comment)
 - Meyer provided background on his company, growing up in the Forest Service concession program and operating more than 100 campgrounds, and bringing private capital in addition to operational expertise to public campgrounds.
 - Meyer commented that many USFS campgrounds sound like truck stops because everybody is running their generator all day. Investing in electrification of those campgrounds is a paying investment for private companies, which makes it a more natural experience because the campground is quiet again.
 - Another item he shared was that several agencies have come to them trying to get new demographics into their parks. California State Parks was the first one to approach them more than ten years ago. They were trying to get urbanites, kids and under-represented groups into the parks when they weren't coming to camp.

- Meyer concluded by saying these approaches could be of real benefit for the NPS as part of the campgrounds in the next century program. They would like to be a partner with the NPS, helping to solve some of the problems of bringing capital to deferred maintenance and new amenities within the National Park System.

Decisions and Actions

- Approval of Minutes – The Board unanimously approved minutes from its August 27, 2019 meeting.
- Hermitage Hotel National Historic Landmark Nomination – The Board unanimously approved the recommendation from its NHL Committee to recommend to the Secretary the designation of the Hermitage Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee as a NHL. Chairwoman Hutson reaffirmed that the Board found that this property met NHL criteria and voted to recommend to the Secretary, via the NPS Director, the designation of the property as a NHL.
- Recommendations for Updating and Improving Director’s Order #42, Accessibility for Park Visitors – The Board unanimously approved the recommendations submitted by its Visitor Experience Committee and discussed during the meeting.
- Recommendations for Increasing Health, Wellness, and Resiliency by Reclaiming the NPS Heritage – The Board unanimously approved the recommendations submitted by its Workforce Planning Committee and discussed during the meeting.
- Recommendations on Curriculum Changes for Supervisory Skills Essentials – The Board unanimously approved the recommendations submitted by its Workforce Planning Committee and discussed during the meeting.
- Term Renewal for Chair and Vice Chair – Chairwoman Hutson stated that she and Vice Chair Nau are nearing the end of their one-year terms as chairs but are willing to serve an additional one-year term if other members are supportive. Hutson called for additional nominations for chair and vice-chair. No additional nominations were offered, and the Board unanimously approved additional one-year terms for Hutson and Nau to serve as Chairwoman and Vice Chair, respectively.

ADJOURNMENT

- Chairwoman Hutson thanked Board members and meeting attendees and adjourned the meeting at 4:05pm EDT on June 30, 2020.

LIST OF ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE BOARD DURING THE MEETING

- ❖ Certification of minutes from the Board’s August 2019 meeting.
- ❖ One-year term renewal of Mary Pope Hutson as Chairwoman.
- ❖ One-year term renewal of John Nau as Vice Chairman.
- ❖ Approved recommendation to the Secretary for designation of the Hermitage Hotel as a NHL.
- ❖ Approved recommendations from the Visitor Experience Committee on accessibility.
- ❖ Approved recommendations from the Workforce planning Committee on the Supervisor Support Initiative and increasing health outcomes for the NPS.