

**TRANSCRIPT of Live Broadcast "NPS Roundtable with Deputy Directors"**  
**December 7, 2005 1:00-2:00pm ET**

Listen only line was not active for about the first 15 minutes, so that portion of the text is not included.

**RESPONSE:** ... question and then maybe Steve has some thing to add as well. We've been working very closely with both the Fish & Wildlife Service, the Department of Agriculture and we're providing services through some of our ranger staff who are monitoring wildlife. In fact, wild fowl as they come migrating into the United States. Stations have been set up so we can assist with seeing if the bird flu is actually spreading into the United States that way. Our public health officers have plans to work with our parks, particularly those parks that have high populations of people traveling and visiting from foreign countries to the United States. So there are specific steps that we're taking working with both Fish & Wildlife and the Department of Agriculture, but mainly right now we're in the monitoring stages and there have been no cases of avian flu so far in the United States and we have not found any wildlife that is migratory birds in particular that are exhibiting the avian flu virus as well. So it's something we're going to keep monitoring.  
>> Okay. Great.

>> Other push-to-talk microphone questions?  
>> This is the George Washington Memorial Parkway.  
>> Go ahead George Washington Memorial Parkway.

**QUESTION:** My name is Brandon. I'm a cultural resource specialist for the parkway and I faxed mine in so you can ignore that. I would like your opinions on the balance of resource preservation with modern safety standards. Here at the parkway we're currently undertaking a redesign of the entire northern section of the parkway, all of which is listed on the national register. We've been given a number of safety mandates by another Federal agency that has the potential to impact certain character-tea fining elements of the park. For one reason, the height of the existing stone walls is going to have an impact on the views of the Potomac gorge. And we're tasked with preserving these. And our management policies quote, temporary alterations and additions must not radically change, obscure or destroy its significance spatial organization, materials and features, end quote. The directives we have been receiving seem to be in conflict and I would like to get your opinions. Thank you.

**RESPONSE:** I'd be happy to answer that and we can talk in more detail because some of these are really complicated questions, but I think the key is, and I've not been involved in your specific situation, but in my job as regional director and in working in parks like Yellowstone that protection of the historic integrity and the landscape was paramount, and yet we had to, like in going to the sun highway, we have to make things safer without changing the core values of that resource or park unit. I think that the key is working with Federal highways, working with our staff to come one design that meet a reasonable safety standard but also protect the resource. I think there are many examples where that has been done and I think that we need to continue to work together to have the dialogue to make sure that we make that happen and I think in parks like Yellowstone, I know in going to the sun and others we have successfully done that. Denali NP is another example. So I think keep working at it and we would certainly be happy to work with you and Pat Hooks and others to facilitate that.

>> Thanks a lot.  
>> Yep.

>> Another question in by fax.

**QUESTION:** The question is: asking for a clear explanation of the reasons for and means by which candidates for GS-13 and higher positions will be screened for loyalty as portrayed widely in the media recently.

>> Okay.

**RESPONSE:** I'd be -- I'll take this one, too. We are going to trade back and forth, but, yeah, we had a memo that went out recently that talked about the procedures that had largely been in effect, many of them for years and years, all the way back to George Hertzog to have acknowledgment by the directorate in key selections within the NPS. That memo went out, and it lacked a little clarity. As things sometimes do. But we have since clarified that. Basically it's that regional directors are the Keogh officials in recruiting, in selecting and making recommendations on the superintendencies. That said in order to manage the whole team and whole workforce the directorate needs to be aware of that so as we have needs across the service we can be sure that those are incorporated. All GS-15s, which in this policy has been in place for a long time, that at least 15 or 20 years, go down to the Assistant Secretary's office for approval there. We're going to make sure that this doesn't slow down the hiring process and we use it to get the best pool of candidates possible.

>> Good. Thank you.

>> Again, let's go west of the Mississippi. This is your opportunity. Take this chance to ask the questions. West of the Mississippi, do we have any questions? How about east of the Mississippi? I heard someone say Mississippi. You need to step back 12 inches from your mic. You're getting a little too close to it. Who was that that just -

>> Can you hear me now?

>> Yes, very good. Go ahead and ask your questions.

**QUESTION:** This is Charles Karpowicz in the Washington office and could you give a brief status report on the two major environmental restoration projects that Park Service is involved with, the Everglades restoration and the Elwa River. Thank you.

**RESPONSE:** Again, the details of those were not -- we're not intimately involved with. We've received some briefings on it. I think that's the kind of information that we would like to perhaps share with you afterwards. Recently on the Everglades project I know that there's been lots of discussion and work with the state ensuring that funding is going where it needs to, and I think it's going well for as tremendous a project as it is, but we can provide you additional information on that and get you some briefing statements from the region that would provide greater clarity on that.

**RESPONSE:** I'd also like to perhaps take this opportunity to add, I'll be down in the Everglades specifically next week on the 13th and 14th meeting with Dan Kimble. As many of you knows, the Everglades is a world heritage site. I would also like to take this opportunity to say that the National Park Service was elected to the world heritage committee for the first time in 15 years, and so we're going to be an active participant there. One of the things we're working

on the world heritage committee is removing - or improving the conditions at the Everglades to the extent that we can remove it from the endangered list on the world heritage -- as a world heritage site. A lot of work has been done down there, and after my visit next week, I'll have additional information and we're going to be happy to provide that with you -- for you, and in fact we're going to be putting together a report on the Everglades that will go to the world heritage committee and we'll make that available on inside NPS and you'll be able to get an up to date status shortly after the first of the year.

>> Another question by -- in by fax.

**QUESTION:** A note in the draft management policies currently out for public review says that for the purposes of the management policies the words conserved, preserve and protect will have the same meaning and will be used interchangeably, and there's a two-part question. If the words mean the same thing, why make a change to the words? That's the first part. And the second part, why change our management policy so radically by emphasizing wise use where preservation and protection has been the goal?

**RESPONSE:** Well, I'll start on that and then Don can chime in. First, the words preserve, conserve and protect are ones that all have been given to us by Congress in different laws that all set in motion a high standard of protection of park resources, and there's some cases where the policies are tying themselves back to a specific law and it makes sense to use as close as possible what Congress said. But there was also, I think, some debate that one had a lower standard and one had a higher standard and what we wanted to do was just sort of put that debate aside and say the Park Service has a primary and key responsibility for the protection of park resources and passing them on to future generations unimpaired. So we just wanted to kind of push that debate down and get onto how we do it and how we carry it out and how we prepare ourselves, how we communicate that, and how we be effective in that mission, and so I think that this is a draft that's out there, and there may be some cases where those words are not used in a way that is acceptable, and when we get that input we're going to look at changing that to make sure we duty best job we can in clarifying the document. Okay. Thank you very much.

Where was I? East of the Mississippi, let's do a question east of the Mississippi. Anybody?

>> Hello, this is Linda --

>> This is Russell --

>> This is --

>> Okay. Time out. I heard Denali, which is not east of the Mississippi but nonetheless, was there a question from Denali? Did I hear wrong?

>> No, there was no question here.

>> Okay. I'm sorry. I missed. Everybody try again. Go ahead east of the Mississippi, give me a question.

>> Okay, Canaveral NS, go ahead.

>> Thanks.

**QUESTION:** This is the superintendent at Canaveral, Carol Clark, and I am just kind of weaving through the draft and I've noticed under the law enforcement chapter, chapter 8, that a lot of the language has been eliminated regarding use of force and some other language. Is that because it's covered under other documents?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. What we tried to do in this draft was stop some of the repetition between specific guidelines that were in effect, things that were

found in departmental policy and also specific items like the one you're talking about when our staff and the people who worked on it both field people and folks from Karen's shop looked at it. This is not something that should be in an over-arching policy. The use of force and some of those things should be talked about in guidelines and other manuals on the best practices.

>> Okay.

Another fax question in. Thanks for sending them.

**QUESTION:** The draft policies indicate that some park attributes are associated characteristics. What does this mean and why were these resources put in this category?

**RESPONSE:** I guess the best answer there is that they're all subject to the same impairment standards, and I want to take this opportunity to make the point that everything in the management policies particularly as it relates to preservation and protection of our natural and cultural resources are subject to that impairment standard, which we maintain throughout the management policies. I think as you read the document specifically and you have a chance to go through it over the next several weeks you'll see that that's clearly the case and that we've tried to provide additional very clear guidance to help superintendents make informed decisions with respect to protection of our natural and cultural resources and give better definitions there.

>> Good. Thank you.

>> West of the Mississippi, question on the push-to-talk microphones?

>> Grand Canyon national park.

>> Go ahead, Grand Canyon.

**QUESTION:** Natural quiet has always been a very important issue here, and especially in regard to air tours over the canyon, and the new policy seems to indicate that this is no longer going to be that important. What do you think?

**RESPONSE:** Well, having spent a lot of time myself in Grand Canyon, and it's one of the things that I think is extremely important, and in fact, again within the draft, and I think there are many things that we tried to do in there to construct a better way of actually not just managing for impairment but managing for unacceptable impacts, trying to work with rehabilitation of our park units to pass them on in actually better condition to future generations, that one of the areas in review that I've noticed and actually some of our folks who have -- these initial comments that are coming in, it looks like that's one of the sections that probably could stand to be re-clarified, and again, I think there will be many of these because we're striving to do the best we can. Certainly it's extremely important. One of the things that was the complexities as you looked at it with a single set of policies that cover everything from Langston Golf Course to Gates of the Arctic, sometimes it's hard to get the language just right but it is something in one of the attributes of parks that I think is more and more desirable and we'll certainly work on some of those sections like that to make sure that's communicated clearly.

>> Thanks for sending the fax. We have another question in by fax.

**QUESTION:** According to the preface here, all seven regions state that the no net loss policy is being adhered to. In reality the policy is implemented on a

more or less basis at the park level in some regions while being strictly adhered to in others. Some park superintendents have taken it upon themselves to hire positions outside of the no net loss parameters because effective park operations require that those positions be filled. Considering that there is some -- there is some policy infraction happening regardless, would the director consider amending the no net loss policy to allow superintendents a certain measure of latitude to fill other critical park positions?

**RESPONSE:** Sure, I'll be happy to answer that question. I think it's always been the case with respect to the no net loss policy that the superintendents have had the flexibility -- I think if you look at the policy carefully there is an opportunity for superintendents to appeal to the regions and for regional directors to make the decision when critical positions have to be filled. The superintendent can justify that and get a waiver to the no net loss policy. So it's something that already exists. So I think what we may do is send out a letter of clarification to that effect. Which, in fact, we have done on two separate occasions since the no net loss policy has been in place. So I think the flexibility is there if we need to clarify that. I think we would be happy to do so.

>> Good. Thank you.

>> I think we're on east of the Mississippi. I did hear Frederiksberg the last go around. Did you have a question?

>> Thanks, Jim.

**QUESTION:** This is Russ Smith. I just had a briefing on the smart card access system, and it seems that it's going to be a real impact on our operations with seasonals and volunteers having to get background checks before they can come onboard, the expense, the inconvenience. It's going to be a major impact, and I wonder if the service had any input on how this is going to be implemented or whether this is just being dictated down through the department?

**RESPONSE:** I'll be happy to answer that question. Hi, Russ, how are you? Happy holidays! The important thing here is that the department is listening to the National Park Service and we are weighing in on this particular issue. One of the things that's changed recently is that I think many people were concerned about the fact that volunteers would have to have smart cards as well and this would be a tremendous expense, and that has been modified to where now the volunteers who have -- work 600 hours or more will be the ones that will have to have smart cards. I know that will still be a problem for some parks that have a large number of volunteers, but that's one thing the Department of Interior has listened on. The other thing is that we are meeting on a regular basis now and giving input to the Department of Interior on some of the hardships that might ensue as a result of this smart card program, and modifications are being made as information goes to the Department of Interior about how we have to manage here, and some significant changes have been made, and we'll be sure to get you some regular updates. We're doing everything we can to proceed provide relief for the parks. In fact, our associate director's meeting on last Thursday was devoted to nothing but this discussion on smart cards to make sure that this is not an undue burden on the field, particularly the background checks, and I can share with you on the background checks that background checks are not to be done on people, for example, law enforcement officers or others who have already had a very high level of background checks done already. That's something that we're going to be getting out some

guidance on to you here as soon as we can so that you understand who is supposed to have background checks and who isn't.

>> Okay.

**QUESTION:** A question that's probably on many of our minds... what can we expect from the budget in the next couple of years?

**RESPONSE:** Well, I can -- I'll start with that. Certainly the budget issues within the Park Service, within the country and in many cases with everything that's been going on, the -- the even broader view of the world, it's a tough set of circumstances. Discretionary funds are going to be leaned on and drawn on to help with hurricane victims, certainly the continuing conflicts overseas, and I think that it's going to be hard. Within that I think the Park Service has continued to be successful in being able to get additional funds, especially here recently for operations, for fixed costs, but we still have concerns that there may be even a recession for this year as our legislators and others try to balance the budget and reconcile the funds. I think that we have to continue to work together to become professional and transparent in how we manage our money and prove to Congress that the money that goes to the national parks is some of the most efficiently spent, some of the best-spent money for the best -- one of the best causes in the country, and I think if we do that, and as we continue to do it, and I know the director and Don and I are committed to that, we're going to do everything we can to bring as much to your operations as we possibly can.

>> Thank you.

>> Let's see. East -- I think we were west - west of the Mississippi.

>> How about Carlsbad caverns.

>> Carlsbad Caverns, there you go, let's hear it.

>> Steve, you're talking about budget here.

**QUESTION:** Core operations here in the intermountain region is a big thing for us, and we're spending an awful lot of time wrestling with that. We hear that it's going to be a national program. Could you give us a few words on that? Is it going to be rolled out as a national effort?

**RESPONSE:** Yes, it is going to be rolled out. I guess it has been rolled out as a national effort. The core operations program is a program that started in the field, and it started also in the regional office as a way of beginning to reconcile the need to manage our budget better and especially in some of the operations where we were having a tough time with inflationary costs begin to understand how that impacted us and what we could do about it by setting key priorities. It's also not a snake oil or a magic wand. It's something that parks have to go through and struggle with and hopefully make the right choices, and it's also something that the northeast region with their budget costs projection model and parks that have worked on business plans and others, all of that is evolving into this program. I think the key there is that we have to be able to show where the money's going, how we have created efficiencies and effectiveness for the money that we've spent, that we're spending it on the right things, you know, in the right way, and then either if we have times of shortage, we know we'll be needing the most essential of our stewardship responsibilities, but it's also the way, I think, of justifying and

showing what we need and hopefully for increases in areas to be able to manage our parks better, and we know that tight times that people are going through, and I think it's a good tool to do that, but it's in development, and we need to continue to evolve it, make it useful to you, make it useful to the folks in the field as well as in the region in Washington. So I think it's worthwhile and we have -- actually, I think the intermountain region was just back at Shenandoah doing one -- we're undertaking one at some of our central offices here in D.C. So it's not just an intermountain thing, but it needs to continue to work for you as well.

>> Question from Denver?

**QUESTION:** New language in the draft policy states that the degree of protection that can practicably be achieved will vary reflecting factors such as existing conditions and surrounding land use. Can you elaborate on what this means as a practical matter?

**RESPONSE:** I'll comment on that and perhaps Steve has some comments, too, but I'll do my best. In fact, Jennifer, could you read the question again? There's a certain section of it there I want to make sure I understood.

>> Sure.

New language in the draft policy states that the degree of protection that can practically be achieved will vary reflecting factors such as existing conditions and surrounding land use. Can you elaborate on what this means as a practical matter?

**RESPONSE:** Yeah. I understand. I think in a practical sense it recognizes that our parks are -- vary and maybe an extreme example to make the point is George Washington Memorial Parkway and Denali are different in how they might be managed with result to their scenery or even their soundscape. One is a memorial parkway. It's beautiful. People here in Washington enjoy it. But you have to recognize the practical differences between the two and the management policies try to give guidance to superintendents with respect to those differences. Another example that's often brought up in terms of practical applications has to do with the kinds of activities that are allowed in different segments or in different park units. You have Independence in Philadelphia and the Washington Mall, for example, and there have been proposals to allow the use of a -- segues in parks, those little scooters that people right around on. Certainly Independence in a very practical way you could not allow for that kind of use on the narrow streets of Independence, where Independence is located in Philadelphia, but on the Mall it may be something that once the proper reviews are done that you could allow at a place like the Mall because it's different, the roadways are wider, and the uses is different. So it's those kinds of practical differences that the management policies are trying to recognize and give some guidance to superintendents and managers on.

>> Thank you.

>> Another push-to-talk microphone question east of the Mississippi?

>> This is Great Smokey Mountains, Kathy Cook.

>> Let's go with --

**QUESTION:** This is Tom Baker, and myself and colleagues I have spoken with across the country, we're concerned about the subliminal and not so subliminal messages that are being projected in these policies. One of them that really comes to mind is that there seems to be a prevailing theme of putting use -- ahead of protection. I would like some comment on that.

**RESPONSE:** I think that one thing that we want to make completely clear, and that is that certainly the Park Service has a mission that's made up of different components, and we have providing for the use and enjoyment of the parks, and we have the protection of the parks for future generations. The thing we want to make clear is that there was no intent, there is no intent to water that mission down, that if - you know, that while it's recognizing appropriate uses is something that's really important, and you go back to the language of those who wrote the act, who talked about it 15, 20, 30 years afterwards, and they always mix those up, as far as, you know, which one went first and how it was put together but there was one thing that was clear, and that is if there was a question as to an activity or to a use, that the protection of the resources had to be the key factor, it had to be predominant. Because inherently in order for future generations to enjoy these parks we have to protect them and I think that that's something that has to be clear if we need to straighten that out in certain places, I think that's fine, but I think it's a mission that we're up to, but be there no mistake, what our goal is here and how important the protection of those resources is.

>> Thanks.

**QUESTION:** A good follow-up question to that from Golden Gate - you have referred several times to the protection afforded resources by the impairment standard. Can you talk about how the impairment standard in the draft management policies differs from the impairment standard in the 2001 management policies?

**RESPONSE:** Well, I think that the impairment standard is the impairment standard, and so when we talk about passing resources on unimpaired, that is something that is the baseline. It is how we've managed. It's how we've always managed the parks. I think the key is that it's important that we don't have that as our only standard. Really, we need to be managing well before impacts get there. We need to gather the scientific and technical information to make sure that we're well below that, and I also think that the more we learn about our parks and the situation that we're -- they're in and if you look at the vast array of things that now make up the park system, in many cases our concern is not only not allowing impairment, not even having unacceptable impacts, but it's also restoration of so many of our areas, and I think that's one of the areas that we in the policy something that was focused on, that I think it needs to be fleshed out a little bit more, but really our job is to pass the parks on in better condition to future generations, appeared I think - - and I think that's something that with what we know now, different than what Mather and Albright understood we can do that. Don, would you like to add anything?

**RESPONSE:** No, I think what may be key and bear reiterating is managing well below impairment. That is, managing in such a way that you really don't ever get close time pairing the resources. So I think one of the fundamental differences in the management policies that are out for public comment right now is that there is a real honest attempt to make sure that we provide guidance to superintendents, to make decisions in such a way that they don't even get close to impairment. Encouraging them to use the best data, the best

scientific information, together the kind of input that's necessary for making a very sound decision. We have the technology now to do so, and we're trying to write into the management policies the kind of guidance that would allow superintendents to pursue that. But it should be emphasized one more time that where that information may not be necessary -- or may not be readily available, and there is a chance that the resources would be impaired, we are still talking about that impairment has to be predominant and superintendents are still -- still have the latitude to make decisions to protect the resource if they fear those resources are going to be compromised, and that's really important that that's understood about these management policies. That's something that's been consistent throughout and will remain.

>> Good. Thank you.

>> Canyonlands national park.

>> West regional office.

>> Canyonlands, go ahead.

**QUESTION:** This is Peter Fitzmaurice, Chief Ranger at Canyonlands. I am concerned the draft has eliminated the base jumping or parachuting from fixed objects. The current document clearly states it's not an appropriate activity within national park areas and is prohibited and regardless of the proposed draft has eliminated this paragraph completely, regardless of intent of the National Park Service, the base jumping groups based on their web site activity clearly see this as an open door for them and that the parks are now saying this is appropriate and they can come on in.

**RESPONSE:** I'll try that, because that was one of the things that did come up. I think there were two things. It was not the intent to make it seem like this was something that was now suddenly allowable. I think the intent was that it was sort of pulling out a single activity and referring to it when there are regulations and there are other things in places that, I think, potentially prohibit that as well as the fact, and this is back to the whole premise, I think, of the document, is to look at not just single out something like base jumping and then all of a sudden you're going to have a section on hang gliding and awful these different things, but to say, "is this use appropriate here? Is it a safe place to do it? Is it allowed by regulations? Will it cause unacceptable impacts? Does it conflict with other uses?" And I think that was the intent, that one of the things that were asked a lot in the jobs that we have now or that we see a lot as regional directors and administrators is that, how do you construct a decision that will -- that will stick? Part of that is, and we've defined what professional judgment is, which, you know, seems like something we all understand, but part of the purpose of the document is clarifying that for others. So to make sure we have good public process, that we have -- base things on laws and regulations, that you have good scientific and technical information and then you make the sound decisions based on that, but part of those specific sections that dealt with items that were not intended and if it's on their web site, we have to clarify that. The intent was to get it back to talking about and justifying things and then being able to communicate to people why certain uses are not appropriate in national parks, and again, these are the kind of things that we need to hear about and certainly need to resolve as we move from the existing policies, which we're still operating under, to a better document some time from now.

>> Thank you.

>> Great Smokey Mountains, you had a question. Go ahead.

**QUESTION:** Yes, this is Kathy. You've explained it a little bit as we've gone on during the discussion, but can you explain more of what legislation was introduced as it applies to appropriate use?

**RESPONSE:** Yes, in the other -- in the '01 document, the one that we're operating under now, there were actually a couple of different definitions, one in the glossary and one in the main part of the document on impairment. And also we found that we needed to really clarify to people as much as possible that we weren't just managing for impairment. We were managing for impacts that we felt were unacceptable for a variety of reasons, because of conflicts with other uses, because of cumulative impacts, because of uncertainty of information, and really felt that the organic act really talked about a couple of things, and I think that something in order to sustain and make sustainable long-term decisions that are good for parks we have to be able to talk about, not everything is appropriate here, that certain things are, and those things we embrace, we're enthusiastic about, that's part of our mission, that's part of what we're all about. But it's not -- you know, it's back to the old thing of not everything goes, and to clarify to people when that a superintendent is telling them "no" for something that it's because we thought about it and we've analyzed it, and it -- either because of unacceptable impacts or because it's not an appropriate use, that's why we're doing it, and it begins to allow us to have better dialogue and what we're saying is because also we've explained things better, we have better scientific or technical information, that then some of those decisions will be better supported and superintendents and park staff will be able to articulate why they're doing things. So it was really a way of beginning to say, "How do we communicate our mission better and how do we make better longer term sustainable decisions?" This definition and wrestling with this is a little bit new, and its language that then was put through the document, and I think that's where we really need your input and really, you know, you need to understand what the intent of this team, and there were many superintendents, there were park staff, there was leadership that worked on this, but also recognizing that this is only a draft, and we have many months ahead of us to resolve some of these concerns before we replace the old one, document.

>> Good. Thank you.

>> West of the Mississippi, I think there was a question from the Pacific west regional office. Is that correct?

>> Yes.

**QUESTION:** This is Dave. Don, I wanted to thank you very much for coming out last week to help us celebrate one of the 40,000 projects that have been funded by the land and water conservation fund. You're a very eloquent spokesman and champion of that kind of opportunity for advancing public outdoor recreation and conservation and in ways that very strong partnerships are formed. I'm just wondering if you have any further word on possible recessions for the land and water conservation fund program, what the -- any more thoughts on the future of that program and sort of related to the future of funding, whether there are any plans for helping other people in the National Park Service understand what this program is all about and how it is so relevant to our core mission.

>> Sure.

**RESPONSE:** Of course, the program is extremely important. There is a \$27 million proposed recession in the land and water conservation fund, that is, taking away the money that's already been appropriated for the land and water conservation fund. But there is a strong move under foot, particularly in the Senate, to restore that money to prevent the recession from taking place. The land and water conservation fund, of course, of both the Federal and stateside of the fund, that fund since 1964, '65 has funded all of the major outdoor recreation projects in this country as well as all the major Federal acquisition and many of the National Park Service lands were purchased with land and water conservation fund monies as well. We're also in the process right now of putting in place a reprogramming to continue to administer the program. I think as you know the program has waxed and waned over the years. It was nearly zeroed out in the Reagan administration. It was some funding -- there was some funding available in the Clinton Administration. It's gone up and down here in the Bush Administration. I think there's a strong constituency out there for the fund still, and I think there are those that are working right now to rally to make sure that there are -- their members of Congress know how important the land and water conservation fund is and that it continue to be funded from our outer continental shelf oil royalties. So I'm guardedly optimistic about the fund because there are some real champions of it in Congress, and I don't think they're going to let the fund be completely zeroed out.

>> Thank you.

I think we're getting close to the last question. East of the Mississippi, do we have one more question?

>> Cape cod.

>> Northeast regional office.

>> Cape cod, go ahead.

>> Hi, Jim.

**QUESTION:** It's George Price up at Cape Cod NS. We can't underestimate the significance of the management policies as they're being looked at. Up here at Cape Cod we have a Federal advisory commission and even the town of Provincetown board of selectmen had a meeting on these policies. It seems like you're going to receive a tremendous amount of policies as the deadline approaches. My question is, how is that going to be managed and reviewed for the next step?

**RESPONSE:** We have we begun thinking in depth about that, and I want to say something about that, I think that the debate over the management policies and the interest and the passion is good. Because we can't become complacent, and we have to recognize that there are many differing points of view out there, and we need to be able to communicate what we're all about and we need to have policies do that that well and that help guide and substantiate these key decisions. So it's good. The policies -- again, I want to reiterate, right now we're operating under '01. They, too, are very good policies, and it's our goal to take the time that's necessary to move forward with what we have now. We'll have our policy staff and others will pull together the comments. We're planning on forming a group that will include a broad mix of Park Service people to take those comments and work on the document. We have then talked about having the advisory board with perhaps a -- you know, kind of what would be seen as an unbiased group take a look at that, maybe with some of our former director or others participating in that as well. Then move forward with a product that is good and that's worthy to replace what we have now. I think

that recognizes - if you look at the document, there are things on better business practices and how do we make sustainable decisions and how do we undertake strategies to engage not only local communities but the national communities to make long-term sustainable decisions. So we're not in a big hurry to get this done, and we really wanted to do it right. There's been lots of misinformation out there. There is a very, very, very preliminary draft that came out that caused a lot of stir and we want to let some of those - the waters quiet. We want to make smart choices here and do the right thing for the right reasons. I would stress that there has been some misinformation and it's our goal to try to get that aside, recognize that the start of this process was a little ragged, but from -- as we move forward now, let's do the right thing and get it in the hands of the people in the Park Service who can make this come out right, but think about some of the ideas and challenges we have as we move forward in an ever changing society.

>> One last question from the northeast region.

**QUESTION:** Given the increased emphasis on recreational use, how do you plan to engage and educate the public, including the travel industry, which drives a lot of traffic to national parks, to assist us with our resource protection needs and goals?

**RESPONSE:** That's a very good question, and, I mean, I think it really comes down to what is appropriate use and having a clear understanding of that. I think it also has to do with working very well with our partners. We've hired a new tourism director to work with the tourism industry and part of that person's job is going to be to educate the tourism industry and other use groups about what appropriate use in various parks happen to be. It also, I think, is helpful that we now have a land managers roundtable which the director sits on and actually grew out of our conference in Los Angeles about three or four years ago, and that roundtable, one of the reasons for its existence is to not only work together with land managers but also to work together with other use groups and the recreational industry as a whole to anticipate new recreational trends, to educate those industries about what appropriate use is as well so that we can get ahead of the curve on those sorts of things. So education, working closely with our partners and having clear definitions for ourselves about what appropriate use happens to be in our 388 parks I think will help us mitigate some of the problems that might ensue from these recreational changes that we anticipate in the future.

>> Thank you very much.

Well, I think we're coming to the end of our time here. We need to wrap this up. I appreciate your input and your questions. We kind of had a slow start there and I was wondering, but you really stepped forward and asked some great questions and I appreciate that. From what I understand, the listen only phone bridge was a little late in coming in. I apologize for that. It didn't get hooked up quite the way it should have at the front end, but hopefully you were able to listen to that for the rest of the time. There will be an evaluation for this session. We'd love to hear how you thought this went. I'm feeling it went better than the last time. So I'm hoping you're feeling the same way, but we still would love to hear your comments. How you would get an evaluation is making sure that your TEL point of contact at your park puts your name on the roster, finalizes the roster and then my learning manager will, in fact, send you an e-mail. I know that both of the deputy directors have a short closing statement, and so we will turn it back over to them so they can do that statement and then we'll be gone. So thank you very much.

**CLOSING:** Thanks, very much for the opportunity to have this conversation this afternoon. I just wanted to maybe close on a couple of positive notes. One of the things that we didn't get a chance to mention is that there is -- you know that the centennial of celebration for the National Park Service will be coming up in 2016. There is a planning committee that has been appointed by the secretary and the director that will be meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, actually tomorrow and Friday, and you'll be hearing more about that. This is just a preliminary planning committee, but it's a very exciting thing that's going on. The other thing that's happening is we're on the cusp of having one of the most important cultural sites in the United States declared a national historic monument for the National Park Service, and that's the African burial ground in New York, which you'll be hearing a lot more about as well. Then I know that a lot of you have questions about GPRA and that didn't come up today, but I'm happy to report that as part of our legacy goals, the director's legacy goals, we've been able to reduce the number of GPRA goals by 25. Right now meeting in Washington over the next three days is the GPRA streamlining and planning committee that's responsible for further reducing the number of GPRA goals and streamlining the GPRA process to make sure that it's a much better management tool than it has been. So we certainly heard you on those two fronts. Again, thank you very much for joining us this afternoon, and I know Steve has some closing comments as well.

**CLOSING:** Well, I'll certainly echo that thanks, but also I guess really wanted to make the point of how important these communications really are, and with the pace of things, with all of the means of communication, sometimes we don't do as good a job as we should, but it's very, very important to us to have these kind of communications, and I think it's also a very important time for the National Park Service with things that are going on, be they related to policies, be they related to budget, related to building our workforce where we all really need to work together, and I think a couple of things, one is that I know that our national leadership council and the superintendents and the people that we all work with and the employees, and in particular for the national leadership council, it's a great group of folks, and they have every day your best interests at heart, and I think also that the greatest asset for the National Park Service and the reason that we've been so successful for so long is our employees, and as much as we can communicate and all work together, I think that our outcome in the future will be good, but I think we're up for challenging times, and so as much as we can work together, the better off we'll be. The other thing that I'd like to say, that one of the highlights of these jobs, of being -- coming out of the field and being in the regional director's slot is to have a chance to see all of the great things that are happening. Sometimes if you only read the press accounts and other things, you wouldn't realize the incredible things that are going on from our parks and recreation areas and historic sites that we have, and there are many, many good things, and we need to also focus on those and make those continue to happen. So I would just like to say for Don and Fran and the national leadership council, you know, have good holidays, be safe, remember those key employees that we've all worked with that have passed over this last year, and let's get out there and get the job done, and I think we're going to have a great year ahead of us. And thank you. And if these are useful, let us know and we'll do more of them. Thanks.