

**National Park System Advisory Board
Meeting (Videoconference) Minutes
September 16 & 17, 2020**

The **National Park System Advisory Board** (Board) convened for a videoconference meeting at 1:30 p.m., on Wednesday, September 16, concluding at 3:45 p.m., on Thursday, September 17, 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 and Board Staff Director Joshua Winchell conducted the virtual meeting from the Rachel Carson Room in the Department of the Interior Building, 1849 C St NW, Washington, D.C.

Board Members Participating:

Joseph Emert, Hon. William Hewes, Mary Pope Hutson (Chairwoman), Dr. Zelma Lansford, Dr. Les Moore, Philip Pearce

Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Board:

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

Other Participants:

Margaret Everson (Counselor to the Secretary, Exercising the Delegated Authority of the Director, NPS); Shawn Bengé, Deputy Director of Operations, NPS; Reginald Chapple, Acting Assistant Director, Partnerships and Civic Engagement, NPS; Joy Beasley, 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 Parks Healthy People Program, NPS; Skylar Bauer, Archaeologist, NPS; Serena Bellew, Deputy Associate Director, Preservation Assistance Programs, Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science, NPS; Danielle Buttke, Veterinary Epidemiologist, NPS; Jeremy Buzzell, Chief, Accessibility and Housing Support Programs, NPS; Carolyn Davis, Regional Coordinator, National Natural Landmarks Program, NPS; Tamara Delaplaine, Landscape Architect/Project Manager, NPS; Deb DiQuinzio, Manager, Northeast National Natural Landmarks Program, NPS; Tara Dondzila, Regional Public Health Consultant, NPS; Deborah Douglas, Organizational Development Specialist, NPS; Heather Eggleston, Manager, National Natural Landmarks Program, NPS; Gabrielle Fisher, Acting Manager, Wellness and Resilience Branch, Office of Risk Management, NPS; Mark Foust, Superintendent, Buffalo National River, NPS; Sherry Frear, Chief, National Historic Landmarks Program, NPS; Jason Gibson, Chief, Business Management Group, NPS; Patty Henry, Historian, National Historic Landmarks Program, NPS; Laurie Jenkins, Coordinator, Pacific Northwest National Natural Landmarks Program, NPS; Chuck Laudner, Assistant Director for Legislative and Congressional Affairs, NPS; Dr. (Capt.) Sara Newman, Director, Office of Public Health, NPS; Gwen Ruppert, Office of Public Health, NPS; Megan Springate, National Coordinator, 19th Amendment Centennial Commemoration, NPS; Jennifer Wyse, Chief of Staff, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science, NPS; Christopher Baxter; Erica Byrd; Matthew Davis; Katia Engelhardt; John Garder; Claire Griffith; Todd Lookingbill; Mike Powell; Marguerite Pridgen; Natalie Somerville; Reed Sparling; Michael Strutt.

Note: Meeting agenda, slide presentations, and documents shared at the meeting are posted to the Board's website: <https://www.nps.gov/resources/advisoryboard150.htm>

CONVENING the Meeting – September 16th

Meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Hutson at 1:30 p.m., EDT on September 16, 2020.

Introductions and Roll Call

- Winchell opened up the call, took roll and confirmed members present (see “Board Members Participating” list, above) and confirmed quorum. Winchell handed the meeting over to Chairwoman Hutson.
- Hutson welcomed and thanked Board members for their ongoing efforts since the last meeting. Hutson also welcomed Margaret Everson and Shawn Bengé to the meeting, thanked all the NPS staff involved in supporting the Board and the meeting.
- Hutson reviewed the agenda and introduced Margaret Everson.

Remarks from Margaret Everson, Counselor to the Secretary, Exercising the Delegated Authority of the Director, NPS

- Everson thanked Hutson for the introduction and provided additional background on her experience with the NPS, starting in the early 2000s when she worked for the Department of the Interior. Everson acknowledged the work of the two NPS Deputy Directors, Shawn Bengé and Lena McDowall.
- Everson briefed the Board on the Department's COVID-19 pandemic planning, discussed the coordinating role of OMB, ongoing communications with the Department, and among its Bureaus. Everson discussed how the Department was working to ensure staff and public safety while at the same time helping to keep as much public lands open and accessible as possible/feasible. Everson emphasized the role of national parks, public lands and the outdoors as a resource for improving health and well-being for people.
- Everson provided a synopsis of the Great American Outdoors Act and a briefing on a Secretary of the Interior order to implement the Act which established a task force to develop a strategy to maximize the impact of the Act, and how to best tackle the maintenance backlog for Department managed assets.
- Chairwoman Hutson commented on the potential value of partners and partnerships in helping tackle the maintenance backlog and leverage the resources the Act has provided.

Remarks from Shawn Bengé, Deputy Director of Operations, NPS

- Bengé updated the Board on key leadership changes at the NPS, including the new Associate Director of Business Services Justin Unger; the new Associate Director of Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science Joy Beasley; and Jenny Anzelmo-Sarles, the new Chief Spokesperson for the NPS.
- Bengé provided background on NPS fire suppression (fighting active, unwanted fire) and use of planned, controlled burns (active forest management) to reduce the chances of uncontrolled, catastrophic wildfires, as well as achieve desired habitat conditions for

ecosystem restoration. Benge described the role of the NPS within the context of the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), the coordinating entity for fighting wildfires. Benge shared that the only active fires in national parks are in Yosemite, Sequoia and Kings Canyon, Yellowstone, and Point Reyes, and have burned 11,000 acres in those parks. Additional parks are being impacted by smoke from nearby fires. Benge stated that as a result of the wildfire situation, resources available to NIFC have been severely depleted.

- Board member Hewes gave recognition to all the NPS staff involved in fighting wildfires, and also mentioned storm impacts to national parks in the Gulf states.
- Board member Lansford requested clarification from Benge regarding active forest management and wildfire suppression activities in wilderness areas. Benge responded that the NPS does use decision-making criteria (a “decision tree”) to make those choices, where life, health, and safety take the priority. Benge offered to provide the decision tree.
- Chairwoman Hutson asked if Benge could provide the Board a funding status for NIFC, Benge agreed he would.
- Chairwoman Hutson thanked Benge and offered that the Board send a letter of appreciation expressing acknowledgement and thanks to all NPS staff who have continued to work during the pandemic and wildfires.

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

- Newman gave a slide presentation on COVID-19 updates for NPS staff and National Park System units, noting that 2021 will represent the 100th anniversary of the partnership between the U.S. Public Health Service and the NPS.
- The NPS has reported approximately 150 positive cases for staff since March, with 96 percent recovered and the remaining are new cases, a very low number of infections (0.6 percent of total workforce). Newman commented that with 96 percent of parks open, this represents a very low infection rate.
- Newman outlined the actions of the Office of Public Health including: monitoring and interpreting evolving science and adjusting decision-making, mitigation strategies, training, and health guidance based on the evidence and science; conducting virtual town halls – 274 town halls to date reaching 18,000 people – to inform staff and the public about safety guidelines.
- The Office of Public Health has also been working with NPS communication experts to develop physical signs for parks to use to encourage safe and healthy visitor behavior during the pandemic in addition to social media messages.
- Newman also provided a status of the Office of Public Health’s history and ongoing mission and activities independent from the pandemic, emphasizing the role of the office to ensure a healthy park system and the role of the park system to help people stay healthy.

Presentation on the 19th Amendment Centennial Commemoration, Megan Springate, Coordinator, 19th Amendment Centennial Commemoration, NPS

- Springate gave a slide presentation (posted on the Board’s website, see note above) outlining the history of the 19th Amendment, focusing on key moments and individuals leading up to the ratification of the amendment.
- Springate started her presentation by discussing the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention in 1848, where participants introduced what they called the Declaration of Sentiments. The declaration was an extensive litany of all of the things that women did not have rights to do as women, including owning property, having control over their own children, serving in religious roles in their churches, and the right to vote. Springate discussed that the genesis of the women’s rights movement started even earlier, including with traditions of certain Native American tribes including the Haudenosaunee or the Iroquois. Springate discussed the impact of the Civil War, Reconstruction, and Supreme Court cases that led up to the push in the early 1900s to secure Women’s suffrage through a constitutional amendment. Springate described the scene at the Hermitage Hotel in Nashville, as both pro and anti-suffrage advocates lobbied Tennessee state legislators for their cause. On August 26, 1920, Tennessee was the final state to ratify the 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote.
- As a result of the pandemic, the NPS had to scale back many of its in-person events acknowledging the centennial, but did develop a wide range of virtual events and materials to celebrate and educate Americans about Women’s suffrage.

NPS Updates/Presentation on National Garden of American Heroes, Chuck Laudner, Assistant Director for Legislative and Congressional Affairs, NPS

- Laudner provided an update on the Executive Order on the National Garden of American Heroes, including the work of the task force established to implement the order. The task force was given 60 days from the signing of the executive order to produce a report on potential locations for the garden as well as a list of additional historical figures to include in the garden not listed explicitly in the executive order. The task force received and developed a list of 623 unique “heroes” to be included in the garden, and 127 suggested locations.
- The task force assessed all possible locations using a number of factors including access, viewshed, and availability of utilities. Using these factors, the task force winnowed down the location list to 14 options and is in the process of prioritizing that list down further to 3 or 4 final options.
- The task force also suggested that the “traveling exhibits” mentioned in the executive order be implemented by rotating statuary among locations identified by each state government, rather than a single traveling exhibit of statuary visiting a single state at a time.
- Laudner provided an update on the status of damaged statuary around the country, stating that 96 statues or monuments have been damaged and are in need of repair or replacement and discussed Endowment for the Arts and the Humanities grant money that has been made available to address repairs and replacements.
- Laudner stated that the task force is scheduled to meet again at the end of September to discuss next steps to move the National Garden of American Heroes forward.

Workforce Planning Committee, Les Moore and Zelma Lansford, Co-Chairs

- Co-Chair Les Moore provided remarks on the NPS mental and emotional health programs update letter submitted to the Board (letter submitted to the Board and public via the Board website prior to the meeting).
- The letter did not provide recommendations for consideration but provided an update on the work of the committee to examine the existing mental and emotional support programs available to NPS staff. Moore emphasized that he planned on having specific recommendations ready for Board consideration at its December 2020 meeting. Moore talked about the committee examining suicide awareness and prevention and wellness resiliency and morale improvement. Moore discussed the NPS Wellness and Resiliency Branch and the possibility of expanding it, as well as bring it closer to the NPS Director's office. Moore mentioned the branch's interaction with the Public Health Service and the desirability of supporting that interaction on an ongoing basis.
- Co-Chair Zelma Lansford provided remarks on the committee recommendation letter on NPS training programs related to Great American Outdoors Act implementation and improving NPS use of Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey data (letter submitted to the Board and public via the Board website prior to the meeting).
- Lansford described the need for NPS maintenance and preservation staff to be fully and properly trained in order to effectively put to use deferred maintenance funding made available by the Great American Outdoors Act. Lansford noted the postponement of relevant classes as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic and stressed the importance of rescheduling those classes as soon as safely as possible as well as keeping the cost of classes as low as possible to encourage participation.
- Lansford shifted discussion to the committee's second set of recommendations, focused on improving NPS use of the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). Lansford provided background on the federal government-wide FEVS and the relatively low NPS scores for a range of employee satisfaction measures published online. Lansford noted that supervisors and leadership who have followed the Department of the Interior FEVS guidance (DOI Personnel Bulletin #16-14 referred to in the committee's letter) are able to adapt and improve attitudes, performance, and survey results for their staff.
- Lansford surmised that when NPS leaders pay attention to low FEVS scores, they are able to recognize existing or emerging problems and take evidence-based steps to address them.

Visitor Experience Committee Report, Philip Pearce, Chair

- Pearce gave a brief update on the work of the committee. He reviewed the committee's report from the Board's June meeting on accessibility, which related to the NPS processes to ensure accessibility at the national parks' facilities.
- The committee's next assignment from the Board was to examine the campground planning guide and develop recommendations to improve the guide's accessibility components. Pearce noted that the Board's previous recommendations regarding accessibility were also relevant to the campground planning guide. Pearce stated that NPS staff are already looking at the accessibility recommendations and looking into integrating them into the campground planning guide, in advance of receiving additional

specific recommendations from the Board. He mentioned that the draft design guide has not been provided to the committee for review, but he anticipated receiving it within the next couple weeks.

- Pearce concluded that by the December meeting the committee will have additional specific recommendations for the NPS campground planning guide, and the committee will then be ready to tackle its next assignment from the Board.

ADJOURNMENT – September 16th

- Chairwoman Hutson thanked Board members and meeting attendees and adjourned the meeting for the day at 5:00 p.m. EDT. Chairwoman Hutson announced that the meeting would reconvene the next day September 17, at 11:00 a.m., EDT.

RECONVENING – September 17th

- Meeting was called back into order by Chairwoman Hutson at 11:00 a.m. EDT
- Winchell took roll and confirmed a quorum of Board members were on the call (see “Board Members Participating” list, above).

National Natural Landmarks Committee Report, Mayor Billy Hewes, Chair

- Chair Hewes thanked Heather Eggleston (NNL Program Manager for NPS) and the members of committee for their work. Hewes described the series of committee meetings that were held to discuss both the process of NNL designation and the candidates themselves. Hewes passed the presentation over to Eggleston.
- Eggleston provided a slide presentation (posted on the Board’s website, see note above) describing the three NNL proposals reviewed and recommended for Board consideration by the NNL committee: Bear Rocks/Allegheny Front Preserve in West Virginia; Glenwood Caverns in Colorado; and Lanphere and Ma-le’l Dunes in California. For each site, Eggleston reviewed detailed information about its characteristics found in the documents posted to the Board’s website in advance of the meeting. Eggleston also brought to the Board’s attention public comment received in support of Lanphere and Ma-le’l Dunes, and one letter raising concerns about its designation.
- Eggleston noted that 599 National Natural Landmarks have already been designated, so one of the sites before the Board could be viewed as the 600th NNL designated.
- Chairwoman Hutson asked Eggleston a question about the impact of NNL designation on access to the sites. Eggleston responded that designation did not change the accessibility of a site designation.
- Winchell asked for clarification from Hewes and Eggleston as to when the public comment letters were received by the Committee, Eggleston replied the letters were all received after the Committee met and approved recommending all three sites for designation. Winchell also clarified that he provided those letters to the Board in advance of the Board meeting.

National Historic Landmarks Committee Report, Joe Emert, Chair

- Chair Emert briefed the Board on the National Historic Landmarks (NHL) Committee, stating that the Committee reviewed 11 nominations for NHL designation and will make

recommendations to the Board. Emert introduced Joy Beasley to present to the Board information on each of the recommended sites.

- Beasley gave a slide presentation (posted on the Board's website, see note above) summarizing the following 11 candidates the committee recommended to the Board for designation: (1) Grant Cottage, Wilton, New York; (2) Patsy Cline House, Winchester, Virginia; (3) Andalusia Farm (Flannery O'Connor Home), Milledgeville, Georgia; (4) Scout's Rest Ranch Headquarters, North Platte, Nebraska; (5) First Presbyterian Church, Stamford, Connecticut; (6) Pan American Union Headquarters, Washington, DC; (7) Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Shop, Alexandria, Virginia; (8) Western Railroad Stone Arch Bridges and Chester Factory Village Depot, Becket, Middlefield, and Chester, Massachusetts; (9) Lower Pecos Canyonlands Archeological District, Val Verde County, Texas; (10) Minong Copper Mining District, Isle Royale National Park, Keweenaw County, Michigan; (11) West Point Foundry Archeological Site, Cold Spring, New York.
- Beasley also presented summaries on the following sites where the committee recommends updated documentation for the following NHLs, with any additions and corrections as noted by the Committee: (12) Hill-Stead, Farmington, Connecticut; (13) Kalaupapa Leprosy Settlement, Kalawao, Hawaii.
- Lastly, Beasley stated that the committee recommended the deferral of a property to allow for continued consultation with interested parties and for a revised nomination to be brought back to the NHL Committee at a future meeting: (14) Rock Island Site II, Rock Island State Park, Door County, Wisconsin.
- Emert concluded the presentation by stating that the committee suggests that the Board request that Grant Cottage be officially designated as the 2,600th NHL.

Public Comment

- Marguerite Pridgen – Pridgen stated she has been a member of the Fort Dupont Park Community Gardens for roughly six years and over that time has noticed a number of issues with management of the park, particularly that area which is the Community Garden. Most notably, no clear or consistent permitting process. She also stated that inadequate trash systems or places to actually keep trash or compost, and communication has been an ongoing issue with NPS staff. Pridgen noted that in her written comments provided to the Board (she wondered) if there's some way to get some sort of more consistent effective management of that area, and primarily looking to see if there's any way that the Board can recommend some sort of partnership with a local organization, such as a community-based organization that focuses on agriculture to see if they can assist or at least manage the whole process on behalf of the NPS.
- Matt Davis – Davis, Director of Historic Museums, Georgia College, spoke in support of Andalusia's nomination for the National Historic Landmark status. Davis emphasized details of the location noted in the NHL committee presentation and noted that Georgia College utilizes the site as an educational resource to not only teach the public about the life of Flannery O'Connor, her work, but also the family that supported her, and what life was like in the mid-20th century South on a dairy farm and in a rural community. Davis stated that they are in the process of restoring this site following all of the Secretary of the Interior standards and have conducted an extensive amount of restoration work, including restoring the original pieces, colorations, and rooms back to their original designation. Davis

concluded by stating that he hoped that the Board will give due consideration for the nomination for status as a NHL. Winchell confirmed that Davis' written comments had also been submitted to the NHL Committee in advance of its meeting to discuss the site.

- John Garder – Garder, with the National Parks Conservation Association, expressed wanting to work with the NPS and DOI to ensure that over the course of the Great American Outdoors Act funding that it's a success. Garder asked about the process used by DOI to review the maintenance list that comes up from the NPS. He asked where things were with the process for expanding the LWCF list. Garder requested to see the solicitor review, asking when it would be made public and would there be a formal, robust process of engaging stakeholders. Garder concluded by asking if there is anything the Board can do to advise the Acting Director and the Secretary to invite public interest groups, and the public more broadly, to better understand the process and have an opportunity to review the list before the funds are spent, and engage the many stakeholders who helped push for this bill and want to see the implementation be a success.
- Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District – Winchell noted a written public comment received the day before the Board meeting bringing to the Board's attention the water district's claim of a right-of-way easement on the southern portion of the Lanphere and Ma-l'el Dunes property, and requesting that this portion not be designated as a National Natural Landmark.

Decisions and Actions

- Approval of Minutes – The Board unanimously approved minutes from its June 30, 2020 meeting.
- National Natural Landmark Nominations – The Board unanimously approved that Bear Rocks/Allegheny Front Preserve in West Virginia, and Glenwood Caverns in Colorado be recommended for designation by the Secretary as National Natural Landmarks, and that Lanphere and Ma-l'el Dunes be sent back to the NNL Committee for further review, based on the concerns raised by public comment submitted by the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District. The Board also requested that Bear Rocks/Allegheny Front Preserve be considered the 600th NNL designated.
- National Historic Landmark Nominations – The Board unanimously approved the recommendations from its NHL Committee to recommend to the Secretary the designation of 11 new National Historic Landmarks, updated documentation for two existing landmarks, and deferral of one proposed property to the committee for further work (see NHL Committee update for full list, above). The Board also requested that the Grant Cottage be considered the 2,600th NHL designated.
- Recommendations for rescheduling GAOA-related courses and improving use of FEVS through full implementation of DOI Personnel Bulletin #16-14 – The Board unanimously approved the recommendations, with minor revisions (wordsmithing, no content changes) suggested by Chairwoman Hutson.
- Letter on emotional and mental health programs for NPS staff – The Board unanimously approved the letter without changes.
- Letter in support of NPS staff working during the pandemic and wildfires – The Board discussed, and unanimously approved Chairwoman Hutson drafting a letter of acknowledgement and appreciation to NPS staff working through the Coronavirus pandemic and wildfires.

ADJOURNMENT

- Chairwoman Hutson thanked Board members and meeting attendees and adjourned the meeting at 3:50 p.m., EDT, on September 17, 2020.