

*Top News*

# Shake-up at the National Park Service

## Political appointee who censured Chambers gets new duties - Examiner exclusive

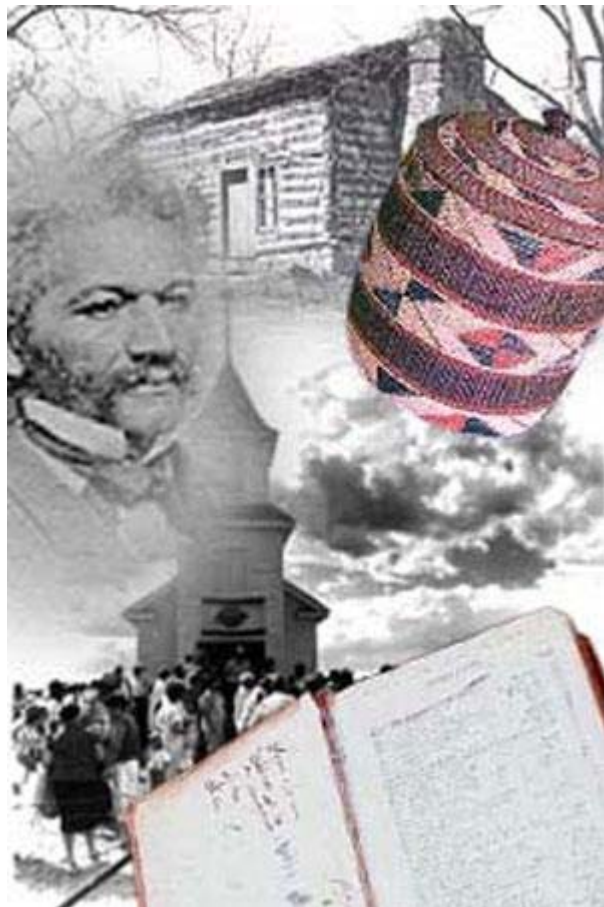
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A significant reorganization is being made in the management of the National Park Service and promises to result in a change in who oversees most key day-to-day functions of the U.S. Park Police. The Washington Examiner has obtained a copy of a letter sent by Interior Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett to Congressman Norman Dicks, the ranking minority member on the subcommittee that oversees appropriations for the Department of the Interior and other agencies.

That letter lays out a proposal to divide oversight of several functions within the National Park Service.

In the letter, Scarlett refers to creating efficiencies through consolidation and improving communications between NPS headquarters and field units.

The plan puts a great deal of power into the hands of Stephen P. Martin, the deputy director who was brought in to replace A. Durand "Randy" Jones just four months ago. Martin, a career Park Service manager, came from Denver, where Interior Secretary Gale Norton served as attorney general before moving to Washington to take the Cabinet position. Martin is a 30-year veteran of the NPS and began his career as a park ranger at Grand Canyon National Park.



A National Park Service illustration that combines many symbols of its mission. Its "interpretive" rangers work with the public, explaining historic sites, while patrol rangers protect the nation's parks and enforce regulations. All, including the Park Police in Washington, work under a hierarchy that is changing July 8 to consolidate most day-to-day operations and revenue streams under one career manager instead of a co-managership with a political appointee.

*National Park Service graphic*

Chief Park Service spokesman David Barna told The Examiner on Sunday that the letter to Rep. Dicks was the last stage of a process developed at the staff level for the past five to six months and that the changes take effect July 8. They are what he described as a "consolidation of business practices" under one manager, restoring the arrangement in effect prior to the Bush administration. "The co-sharing of operations ... just hasn't worked well," he said. The changes, he added, "have absolutely nothing to do with the Chambers case," referring to the firing of former Parks Police Chief Teresa Chambers.

### **Murphy's complaint**

It was Deputy Director of External Affairs Donald Murphy, a political appointee whose responsibilities would be mostly assumed by Martin, who first filed the complaint against Chambers that led to her firing.

Martin's title would be changed from deputy director, Internal Affairs, to deputy director, Operations. Under the new organizational chart Martin assumes oversight of the regional NPS directors; Park Planning, Facilities and Land; Visitor and Resource Protection; Natural Resources; Human Capital; and the United States Park Police. These divisions oversee more than 90 percent of the agency staff and include, according to the Park Service's Barna, all the revenue streams the service generates.

That would appear to leave very little oversight for Murphy, whose title would change to deputy director of Support Services.

"Don Murphy used to describe himself as 'the Chief Operations Officer for the Park Service' but now he is reduced to making sure that birds don't fly into the windows at headquarters," said Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility Executive Director Jeff Ruch, whose organization's mission is "Protecting Employees who Protect our Environment." PEER is also spearheading the legal challenge to restore Teresa Chambers to her post as chief of the Park Police.

Ruch may be referring to a May 2004 University of California-San Diego alumni magazine article where Murphy is described as "bureaucrat who manages 23,000 federal employees and a \$2.4 billion-a-year budget." The article continues by saying, "While [NPS Director Fran] Mainella makes the key policy decisions, Murphy is charged with carrying them out as the 87-year-old agency's top day-in-and-day-out administrator."

In her letter to Rep. Dicks, Scarlett states that "we seek to improve efficiency by balancing responsibilities among top managers and consolidating similar functions under common leadership." However, the vast majority of responsibility for many of the Park Service's key divisions is now under the control of one individual.

The letter also mentions Public Law 104-333 and cites the requirement that, of the two deputy directors assigned to the director of the NPS, one is to oversee operations and the other is to be responsible for "other programs assigned to the National Park Service." To help handle the extra work load Martin will have two assistant directors; one for Human Capital and the other for the department of Business Services. Even so, Scarlett's letter to Rep. Dicks says, "There are no added costs associated with this realignment" and that it "affirms our commitment to raising the importance of our human capital to equal that of our financial capital."



Fired Chief of the Park Police  
Theresa Chambers is still waiting for a final decision from a federal civil service court on her appeal. Two of the six administrative charges against Chambers have been thrown out and her attorneys continue to challenge the others on legal and First Amendment grounds.

## **Other letters**

Similar letters were sent to other members of the appropriations subcommittee and indicated that this is something the Department of Interior wants to move forward quickly. It closes, "We intend to proceed with this reprogramming unless we hear from you within 30 days of your receipt of this letter." The letter was distributed on June 8 and would therefore go into effect shortly after the July 4 holiday. Ruch adds, "Morale within the Park Service is at an all-time low; this latest reorganization is merely rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic."

As deputy director of the National Park Service overseeing the U.S. Park Police, Murphy was Chief Chambers' boss. On Dec. 2, 2003, Chambers filed a formal complaint against him with Director Mainella. She closed the letter by stating, "Thank you for your support and willingness to address Don Murphy's recurring attempts to slander my professional reputation and for your efforts in reversing the increasingly hostile work environment he created and continues to escalate and which I will no longer tolerate." Shortly thereafter, Murphy filed administrative charges against Chambers for admitting staffing shortages in an interview with The Washington Post.

## **'Demotion is no surprise'**

The proposed realignment within the National Park Service will leave Murphy with very little oversight responsibility, including that for the U.S. Park Police. "Chief Chambers' case is just one of a series of matters that Murphy mishandled, so this functional demotion is no surprise," Ruch said.

Chambers is still waiting for a final decision from the MSPB, which is a federal civil service court. She was fired on July 9 of last year following more than seven months of administrative leave. Two of the six administrative charges against Chambers have been thrown out and her attorneys continue to challenge the others on legal and First Amendment grounds.