

USACE Park Ranger Community of Practice
Advisory Board Charter
9 July 2008

A. Background. Park Rangers are the professional uniformed team members (including but not limited to 0099, 0025, 0028, 0400 job series) who perform, manage, or supervise work in the stewardship of Federal lands, waters, and park resources at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE or Corps) operated and maintained water resources projects. Functions include but are not limited to park management; natural, historical, and cultural resource management; watershed management; endangered and/or special status species management; flood risk management; real property and shoreline management; environmental compliance practices; asset management, visitor assistance; safety; infrastructure surveillance and protection; and the development of interpretive and recreational programs for the benefit of the public. Park Rangers are leaders in both emergency response and community outreach. Park Rangers are the Corps face to the nation and may be the only contact the public has with the agency. It was determined to establish a Park Ranger Community of Practice (CoP) based on discussions at Natural Resources Management (NRM) national conferences and meetings of the Recreation Leadership Advisory Team (RLAT) and the Stewardship Advisory Team (SAT).

B. Goal. To develop and administer the Park Ranger CoP and to provide for a unified and on-going support platform for the USACE Park Ranger.

C. Purpose. To advance the technical and leadership skills of USACE Park Rangers and empower them to accomplish professional Park Ranger duties in an agency-of-choice work environment; to develop and implement a plan for Park Ranger program sustainability which ensures that the Park Ranger is appropriately positioned for the future; to develop and implement plans and tools to communicate with and educate others about the current roles of the Park Ranger; and to develop and implement a plan of action to address any barriers to internal or external recognition and support of expanding Park Ranger roles across all business lines.

D. Guiding Principles. The following principles will help guide this Community of Practice and its Advisory Board into the future:

- The Park Ranger CoP Advisory Board will function as a guiding coalition to maintain focus on CoP principles. They will champion current and future initiatives to enhance CoP effectiveness in the face of impacts to the workforce and project use that may occur as agency leadership focus evolves and as political, social and economic trends develop.
- Park Rangers are absolutely essential and the key to the success of the execution of the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) and Civil Works mission of the Corps of Engineers.
- The role of the Park Ranger will continue to expand in support of additional Civil Works missions such as flood risk management, homeland security, stewardship, environmental compliance, regulatory, asset management and real estate actions.
- The Corps must augment current learning and future development opportunities by providing the tools, training, and resources necessary to enhance park ranger safety,

success and career satisfaction.

- As with much of the Federal and Corps workforce, demographic trends indicate that there will be increased needs for succession planning and retention strategies to ensure that an adequate, capable, and professional Park Ranger staff is sustained in the upcoming years. These needs mandate a Park Ranger CoP to sustain this staff while also preparing future managers and program leaders.

E. Advisory Board Membership. Membership of the Advisory Board and meeting descriptions follow:

- The Advisory Board will typically consist of fifteen members plus a Headquarters (HQ) proponent and an Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) representative to provide technical assistance.
- Eight members will represent the current Committee Chairs and/or Program Managers from the following NRM program areas: Visitor Assistance, Career Development, Interpretive/Outreach, Uniforms, Public/Water Safety, Signs, Partnerships and Volunteers.
- Each MSC will have a representative. At least one of the MSC representatives will have 5 years or less of Corps experience at the time of their appointment. The majority of these at-large members will be field NRM team members authorized to wear the uniform and whose primary duties involve Park Ranger programs.
- Membership terms initially will be staggered to maintain continuity yet allow new members to periodically transition onto the board and provide fresh perspectives. Initial appointments are from three to four years. Subsequent appointees will serve four-year terms.
- Meetings will be primarily virtual in nature; however, periodic face-to-face meetings may be held as necessary. Face-to-face meetings will be held in conjunction with other scheduled meetings as much as possible to reduce costs.
- From time to time the Advisory Board may call upon subject matter expert resources to assist with specific CoP issues.
- The Advisory Board Chair will provide overall direction and leadership to the Board, conduct meetings and represent the Board in reporting to the HQ Natural Resources Management (NRM) and Operations CoPs.

F. Functions. The Park Ranger CoP Advisory Board will perform the following functions:

- Develop and maintain a working Project Management Plan (PMP).
- Develop an annual plan of action for new CoP initiatives and submit it to the HQ Natural Resources Management Chief for approval.
- Effectively and efficiently deal with issues that arise as a result of ongoing CoP initiatives.
- Support the NRM Career Development Steering Committee in recruiting, training and development, maintenance of career ladders, and retention actions for team members accomplishing professional Park Ranger duties (including but not limited to those accomplished by job series 0099, 0025, 0028, and 0400).

- Work with ERDC to develop and maintain an NRM Gateway web page as well as other learning tool and information-sharing tools and initiatives.
- Appoint ad hoc committees or task forces as needed to accomplish specific tasks. Task forces may consist of Advisory Board members and/or members of the NRM community.
- Fulfill other responsibilities mutually agreed to by the Advisory Board and Headquarters.
- Facilitate communication and education of others about the roles of the USACE Park Ranger through internal and external outreach.