

**Fwd: NPS story follow up**

1 message

**Lyndsey Gilpin**  
To: Paige Blankenbuehler <paigeb@hcn.org>

Sun, Nov 14, 2021 at 2:29 PM

I've added a chunk of this in the story, but I'd love if you read to see if I need to add other things from it.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Anzelmo-Sarles, Jenny** <Jenny\_Anzelmo-Sarles@nps.gov>  
Date: Sun, Nov 14, 2021 at 3:16 PM  
Subject: RE: NPS story follow up  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: Roulett, Stephanie A <Stephanie\_Roulett@nps.gov>

Hi Lindsey, sharing a statement and additional background.

**STATEMENT FROM NPS CHIEF SPOKESPERSON JENNY ANZELMO-SARLES**

"The National Park Service executive leadership is passionately committed to eradicating harassment in the workplace, and in creating a workplace that is welcoming, safe, inviting, and productive. This is an ongoing effort and remains a top priority. We are proud of the progress we've made, particularly in implementing systems that are designed for greater accountability, but there is still more work to be done.

NPS received the final accepted National Park Service Voices Report in late 2019, had begun initial internal rollout to leadership teams including the Safety Leadership Council, and was preparing to distribute it to the full workforce when the COVID-19 pandemic emerged. We recognize our delay in sharing the report could have the unintentional consequence of impacting our efforts to build confidence and trust with employees.

One of the most important things we can do is be transparent about what is occurring within the workforce and help break down barriers that dissuade or prevent people from coming forward when they are subject to or witness inappropriate behavior. We continue to encourage people to talk openly and honestly about workplace concerns and NPS leadership remains committed to being open and transparent with employees about these issues."

**BACKGROUND/ATTRIBUTABLE TO NPS**

The NPS continues its concerted effort to eliminate harassment of all kinds from the workplace and change the culture that allowed pervasive harassment to persist for so long. This is an ongoing effort and remains a top priority of leadership.

We are proud of the progress we've made, particularly in implementing systems that are designed for greater accountability, but there is still more work to be done. We are also glad to see some key trends of improvement in our most recent Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results (see attached)-specially that 96% of employees know where to report harassing conduct, that 87% of supervisors believe they have the tools to address these issues, and that we saw a 10% increase in just one year (68.4% in 2020 compared with 58.4% in 2019) of employees reporting they have confidence that the NPS will take immediate action to stop inappropriate behavior and hold offenders accountable. There are a number of encouraging trends here while others remain concerning or improvement is slower than we would like.

To help the NPS understand the scope of these issues, we launched the Workforce Environment Survey (WES) in 2017. Like the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, the Workforce Environment Survey gave us statistical data to understand these issues but didn't give us an opportunity to hear from employees in their own words. As a companion follow up to the Workplace Environment Survey, the NPS hired an outside consultant to lead an "NPS Voices Tour," which began in 2018. At the same time, the NPS also took a number of actions and put systems in place to enact change.

One of the most important efforts was streamlining the reporting and accountability process. The policy you've previously reported on, Directors Order 16-E, and associated Harassing Conduct Tracking System make it easier for employees to report harassment directly to a centralized system, creates an immediate record of their report, and triggers an investigation.

Our leadership team values the feedback shared in each of these reports and it has helped inform our decisions and actions over the past few years. Below are just some of the actions these reports have influenced:

**Anti-Harassment**

- Launched the Harassing Conduct Tracking System in 2018. Of the 179 cases investigated in Fiscal Year 2021, 23 were closed with findings of harassment. Corrective actions included terminations, suspensions, training and counseling.
- We have reprioritized funding to provide resources for a 30% increase in the number of Employee and Labor Relations Specialists.
- We've established a national anti-harassment response coordinator position and stood up an anti-harassment group within the Employee and Labor Relations Division to address harassment complaints and provide training to improve working conditions.

**Workplace Culture and Diversity**

- Stood up the Diversity Recruitment Advisory Council (DRAC) in Summer 2021 to explore ways to advance diversity recruitment for the NPS. Co-chaired by two senior executives, the DRAC is comprised of a cross-section of employees representing human resources, superintendents, program managers, associate regional directors, field staff, and EEO representatives and is staffed by the Office of Relevancy, Diversity and Inclusion. The council will present its recommendations to leadership for addressing persistent systemic challenges to diversity recruitment before the end of the year.
- NPS engaged consultants in Oct 2021 to help create our first-ever national Workforce Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy. The consultants are currently engaged in review of past NPS efforts, including the NPS Voices Tour Report, and will work with NPS leadership to begin employee and stakeholder outreach in the coming months.
- Also, in October 2021, NPS senior leadership and regional directors began working with a leading outside consultant to create, what will become, an action plan for Activating a Positive Culture and Improving Work Environment. This team is early in the process and we anticipate sharing more details with the NPS workforce in the near future.

**Training**

- Incorporated anti-harassment training into new employee orientation, the NPS Fundamentals employee training program, and New Superintendents Academy.
- Conducted a number of bystander intervention trainings. We have also completed train-the-trainer courses for 95 employees. This should significantly expand our capacity to offer this popular training.
- Collaborated with the Ombuds program to create the "Getting to the Core of Conflict and Communications" Courses in FY20 and FY21. That content has been rolled into a refresh of the new supervisors training and was rolled out in summer 2021.

**Employee Wellness**

- Initiated the NPSMindful program as part of our focus on employee mental health, wellness, and resilience. Leadership has been meeting with supervisors to provide tools and resources for discussing employee mental health and is strongly encouraging employees to use work time to take advantage of these ongoing mental wellness educational series, check-ins, and webinars.

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From: Anzelmo-Sarles, Jenny  
Sent: Saturday, November 13, 2021 12:42 PM  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: Roulett, Stephanie A <Stephanie\_Roulett@nps.gov>  
Subject: NPS story follow up

Hi Lindsey, thanks for connecting with Stephanie yesterday. Wanted to circle back on what your drop dead deadline is for our response?

We are working diligently to address your questions and to demonstrate where claims in your emails and questions that are not consistent with fact. Im also concerned that, based on some of your questions, you are making assumptions based on a limited set of information and data.

I'm in transit today and about to get on a flight from the west coast back east but want to be sure we have the opportunity to respond throughly.

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