

**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL REYNOLDS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM, ON THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RESPONSE TO INCIDENTS OF EMPLOYEE MISCONDUCT.**

**September 22, 2016**

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Chairman Chaffetz, Ranking Member Cummings, and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to update the committee on steps that the National Park Service (NPS) has taken to address the specific sexual harassment cases at the Grand Canyon National Park and Canaveral National Seashore, as well as the broader issue of harassment in the workplace.

The sexual harassment cases at the Grand Canyon and Canaveral were more than a wake-up call for the National Park Service. They presented us with clear and undeniable evidence that, as we begin our second century of service, we must extend the same commitment to the employees of the National Park Service as we make to the protection of our nation's most extraordinary places.

On behalf of the senior leadership of the National Park Service and the majority of our 20,000-plus employees who are outstanding public servants, I share your abhorrence with the behavior that the Inspector General outlined in its reports on the River District of Grand Canyon National Park and Canaveral National Seashore.

In response to those situations, the leadership team at the National Park Service has committed to making substantial and long-term culture changes at the agency to prevent sexual harassment and to ensure that every employee has a safe and respectful work environment.

This kind of change is neither easy nor fast. We will need to develop trust and support among our employees, visitors, and Congress to make the changes that are undeniably necessary. Every employee in the NPS workforce plays a role in making the NPS a safe place to work. This hearing today is one step in that journey.

Prior to becoming Deputy Director in July, I worked in various parks and regional offices throughout my 30-year career with the National Park Service. As Regional Director for the Midwest Region, and more recently as Associate Director for Workforce and Inclusion, I strove to instill accountability and to address issues of unethical conduct or poor performance. As the new Deputy Director, I am personally committed to bringing a culture of transparency, respect and accountability back to the National Park Service and to making it a safe place for employees to work. We want to become a model agency.

I will start by outlining the specific actions we have taken at the Grand Canyon National Park and Canaveral National Seashore since Director Jarvis testified here in June. Then I will outline the NPS-wide roadmap to address sexual harassment and create a safer and more respectful work environment for all our employees and our larger workforce.

Since the June 14 hearing, the NPS has taken the following actions related to the incidents at the Grand Canyon:

- The NPS appointed a new superintendent, Christine Lehnertz.
- For now, we have closed the River District within Grand Canyon. While NPS still has a presence on the river, park and regional officials are developing a plan to better structure and organize the individuals responsible for protection and use of this resource.
- The NPS has taken actions to hold employees accountable for their misconduct and can discuss the details of those actions with the Committee in a closed setting.
- The NPS developed and is implementing 18 action items in response to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) report.

Since the June 14 hearing the NPS has taken the following actions in response to the incident at Cape Canaveral:

- The NPS has appointed an acting Chief Ranger at the park. The Chief Ranger accused of sexual harassment is no longer working at the seashore.
- Appropriate actions are being determined by the regional office relating to holding the employees accountable for misconduct and action will be taken soon. The NPS can share the details of the Agency's action with the Committee in a closed setting.
- The Southeast Regional Equal Employment Opportunity Chief presented Sexual Harassment training at the seashore with separate sessions provided to supervisors and employees.

NPS policy directs all employees to report harassment when he or she sees it, and every employee is protected by law as an investigation unfolds. As we become aware of allegations of sexual harassment and hostile work environments, we must act quickly and consistently to protect employees and use each investigation to further inform efforts to prevent harassment.

The following are efforts, taken in partnership with Department of Interior (DOI), to fulfill Director Jarvis' directive to eradicate sexual harassment and to change the culture in the NPS:

- Since July 20, NPS managers and employees have participated in mandatory online training and new NPS-specific guides have been developed by the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and distributed service-wide. Along with the online training, these guides provide more detailed information to assist employees and supervisors in understanding, preventing and reporting harassment.
- We have created an e-mail box for employees to share their concerns regarding harassment in the workplace and the service-wide response to preventing further harassment. The mailbox is regularly monitored and all inquiries are referred to appropriate services, including the EEO Office, the Office of Labor / Human Relations and/or the Employment Assistance Program. All inquiries are addressed within 72 hours.
- The NPS is implementing a safe, confidential hotline for employees to report harassment and to understand their reporting options. The hotline will be monitored by an ombudsperson's office, housed within DOI. The ombudsperson's staff will serve as an independent, neutral, and confidential resource for employees to raise concerns, explore solutions and seek resolution and conciliation. They will be able to direct employees to appropriate officials and service providers. Meanwhile, we are holding focus groups with volunteers from the NPS workforce to provide qualitative feedback on employees'

needs and expectations for a confidential reporting service. Their feedback will enable the NPS to tailor ombudsperson services to the specific characteristics and needs of the NPS workforce.

- We are conducting a service-wide workplace harassment survey. The survey will identify the context, character, and causes of harassment and factors that have allowed it to occur within the NPS. The anonymous survey will be administered by a third party in late fall, and we expect to have the results by early spring. The survey will address harassment based on race or ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion and disability status. We will repeat the survey in the summer of 2017 to capture input from seasonal employees who may not have been in employment status during the winter season survey.
- To address incidents of harassment or a hostile work environment as they come to light, the NPS is deploying teams to investigate potentially volatile situations and provide recommendations for quick and appropriate resolution, whether through a full internal investigation, engaging outside investigators or referral to the OIG. We used this technique recently at Yosemite National Park to deal with complaints of a hostile work environment, which has led to an OIG investigation.
- The EEO Office was realigned to report directly to the Director of the NPS. We are committed to ensuring the EEO office has the ability to support our compliance with the laws, regulations, policies, and guidance that prohibit discrimination in the Federal workplace. Furthermore, we are working to better integrate the role and function of EEO into the rest of the Park Service and the role of a diversity and inclusion program.
- In partnership with the Department, training of EEO, Employment Relations, and Human Resources staff has just been completed for all our professionals in this area. Also in coordination with the Department, the NPS Office of Learning and Development is developing in-person, NPS-specific training for managers and employees to be delivered in 2017. And, the NPS will participate in the roll-out of a new DOI online training on the No Fear Act in the fall.
- The NPS has a series of policies that provide guidance to employees on such topics as sexual and other forms of harassment, equal employment opportunities, discrimination, and diversity. These policies are based on laws, regulations and departmental policies. We are currently working on updating our bureau policy that provides the process for filing discrimination or EEO complaints for job applicants, employees, and former employees who are protected by civil rights laws. In addition, the Director will be revising policy to set a mandatory 14-day deadline for completing an anti-harassment inquiry. Since the Committee's June hearing, our EEO Office has developed and published specific guidance for all managers and employees on their rights, responsibilities and process in understanding, preventing and reporting harassment in the workplace.

The efforts undertaken in response to recent reports are insufficient unless we commit to a long-term plan to fundamentally change the culture of the National Park Service. As noted in the June 2016 Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace by EEOC, culture change begins with leadership commitment and accountability and is sustained through ongoing training, education, and employee engagement. In the last two years, we have stood up a series of employee resource groups--voluntary, employee-led affinity groups that connect like-minded

individuals and foster peer support, mentoring and information-sharing. A newly formed women's employee resource group has been instrumental in providing guidance and recommendations to ensure that our efforts meet the needs of our 9,000+ female employees.

The National Park Service leadership, in its centennial year, has re-focused on what we want the service to look like in its second century. We are committed to a process that is transparent and informed by the best practices of other government agencies and private industries that have faced similar crises. After the survey is completed, we will share the results publicly and with Congress. As we refine our response roadmap, we will share the steps we are taking – and the results of those efforts – as well. Transparency and accountability are the greatest tools we have to ensure that we continue to make the improvements that our employees want and deserve.

Thank you again for inviting me to testify before you today. I am happy to answer any questions that the committee may have at this time.

## **MICHAEL T. REYNOLDS**

### **Deputy Director, Operations**

National Park Service

Washington, DC

2016

Since August 1 of 2016, Michael T. Reynolds (Mike) has been serving as the Deputy Director of Operations for the National Park Service. In this capacity, he is responsible for the day to day operations of the 7 regions and the 413 parks nation-wide for the National Park Service ( NPS) as well as program areas in Washington DC. These programs serve communities and NPS stakeholders in many facets including natural, cultural, and recreation resources, facilities, planning and lands, visitor and resource protection, fire, safety, and interpretation and education programs and partnerships and community based programs like rivers and trails or National Historic Landmarks. He has 30 years of service in the Department of the Interior.

In April, 2014, Reynolds was assigned to the National Park Service Headquarters in Washington DC as the Associate Director for Workforce, Relevancy, and Inclusion overseeing the NPS' human capital, training, relevancy, youth, and recruitment programs nationwide. His leadership focus was on changing systems and processes for Workforce and Inclusion to have an employee-focused program relevant and ready to support the NPS and its people for its Centennial in 2016 and beyond.

Reynolds was appointed National Park Service (NPS) Midwest Regional Director in 2011. During his time as Regional Director of the Midwest Region, Reynolds focused on leadership efforts to move the National Park Service toward a new century of service as the anniversary of the National Parks and National Park System arrives in 2016 and to position programs and people in the Midwest to be ready for the many challenges it faces.

Prior to his appointment as the Midwest Regional Director, Reynolds served as Deputy Regional Director of the Northeast Region in Philadelphia for 4 years. Earlier in his career when he was Superintendent of Fire Island National Seashore, Reynolds created innovative ways to work with the local community and park partners. He also effectively reorganized park operations to create a more efficient organization grounded in sound business planning. His NPS career also includes stints as a resource manager, planner, and a division chief at Yosemite National Park, Mojave National Preserve, Cape Cod National Seashore, Curecanti National Recreation Area, and the NPS Denver Service Center which is the National Park Service's planning, design, project management and engineering office serving parks nationwide.

The third generation of his family to work for the NPS, Reynolds grew up in Yosemite National Park. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and an MBA from Regis University in Denver. He was a Senior Executive Fellow at Harvard University in the spring of 2011.