

NRM UNIFORM COMMITTEE NOTES
October 21-25, 2002, Albuquerque, New Mexico

1. As we have for the past three years, the NRM Uniform Committee met with our counterparts from the National Park Service and the US Fish & Wildlife Service. This years meeting was held in Albuquerque, New Mexico.
2. Attending were Dean Bonifacio LRD, Grafton Anding MVD, Sara Jernigan SAD, Susan Robinson SWD, Barbara Cooper SPD, Ralph Gendron NAD, Mark Andreasen NWD(CR), and Jim Runkles Chair. Michele Fromdahl was unable to attend due to maternity leave. Steve Austin COTR was able to join us for one day. Annette Abshire, Contracting Officer from the National Park Service was also unable to attend.
3. Several issues were addressed by the combined committees. Some of those issues include the following:
 - a. Maternity wear. This continues to be a problem for all concerned. The uniform wearer is not getting the uniform items in time to meet her needs. The Contractor can not afford to keep stock on hand to meet the needs. The USF&WS have decided to look into dropping the maternity uniform all together. The NPS and COE decided to form a subcommittee to come up with some workable solution.
 - b. The Campaign hat "sweat band" is being replaced. Current band is leather. This will be replaced with a nylon type band that will provide a softer feel and be more absorbent.
 - c. Given that the Corps and the Park Service share several items, it was agreed to combine our wear tests and try to work together to reduce overall costs of the program.
4. In the Corps individual committee meeting, the committee went over the results of the surveys taken in the field. All comments were considered and responses developed. A matrix covering all these items is attached. Some of the agreed to items are as follows:
 - a. Shirts. Numerous comments were made concerning the shirts in the uniform program. In 2001, the committee recommended a wear test of a new material renowned for it's wick-ability and UV protection. The contractor experienced difficulty in getting the material in the correct color. Long lead times resulted in the wear test being postponed until early 2003. The committee has directed the contractor to continue the effort to perform this wear test. The goal is to acquire a shirt that will be breathable enough for warm weather, provide the UV protection necessary for many parts of the country, resist fading, and hold it's shape for more formal situations.
 - b. Trousers. Like the shirts, the committee is continuing to search for better materials that don't fade, are not too heavy, yet are breathable, and provide a professional appearance. The difficulty in providing trousers to meet all the needs of the field was apparent in the comments. While some liked the fuller cut of the newer trousers, others complained of the

bagginess. The committee is working with the NPS on a wear test of a newer style of trousers. The results will be brought to the next meeting.

- c. Other items. Refer to the attached matrix for more specifics.
5. Recommendations. The committee discussed several issues at length and made the following recommendations to HQUSACE:
 - a.
 - b. Addition to Program. The committee was approached to add a hat for sun protection. The National Park Service has a soft sun hat in their program. The committee is recommending that this hat be added to the program to provide additional sun protection. This hat would be a Class C item only.
6. Other Issues. The committee also addressed the following:
 - a. Backorder Items. Much concern was expressed about the number of backorders and their length, especially with the relatively new bib overalls. The contractor assured the committee that the backorders were being addressed. They apologized for the long wait period on the bibs. The contractor had placed orders for the bibs utilizing past history on the insulated coveralls. The number of orders were 10 times the number expected.
 - b. Sizing issues. There were numerous comments concerning the various sizes of the uniform items. Many of these issues can be explained by addressing the changes made in the system. The committee has recommended changes over the past few years that have resulted in “phasing-in” replacement items. These replacements have been made due to new materials, new “patterns”, and/or new subcontractors. It has been deemed most economical to phase in the replacements rather than “buy-out” the stock on hand. As the older stock is depleted, the newer stock is shipped. This occasionally results in different fits in a single order.
 - c. Lost Passwords. When an employee loses or misplaces his/her password, acquiring this information has been difficult. An agreement has been reached where the master list of passwords is being sent to the Chairman of the NRM Uniform Committee on a monthly basis. Should an employee need this information, they can either email or call Jim Runkles.
 - d. Outerwear. Decisions will have to be made in the near future concerning outerwear. Several of the vendors supplying these items are moving out of country. The raincoat vendor has already moved, but we have enough stock on hand to last a year or two.
 - e. Website. Numerous complaints about being able to access the ordering website. The contractor explained that they were performing upgrades to the system, and that the system should be functioning properly in a couple of weeks. [NOTE: Following the October meeting, the website had even more problems. These were a result of performing both hardware and software upgrades at the same time. The website was not totally repaired until the first quarter of CY 2003.]
7. General Information:
 - a. The contractor, VF Solutions, has moved the distribution center from Nashville TN to Martinsville, VA. This began in September 2002.

- b. There is a **30-day limit on returns** for wrong size, fit, etc. If the item should prove defective, this can be waived. **It is highly recommended that each employee utilize a “sharpie” or other permanent marker on the uniform item tag to indicate the date received.** This will aid in determining the length of wear of the item.
 - c. Many items are Made-to-Measure. These MTMs take up to 5 months to make, but are the only option for several items. [Note: In January, 2003, the manufacturer of the fabric necessary to make the Duty Jacket moved to Mexico. This created an even longer wait period for these MTM items.
8. The NRM Uniform Committee would like to thank all who responded to the surveys. Each year these surveys provide the committee with useful feedback. The committee would like to remind all employees of the NRM Gateway site <http://CorpsLakes.usace.army.mil> . Direct feedback can be supplied to the committee via this very useful site.
9. If you have any questions concerning any of the above mentioned issues, feel free to contact Jim Runkles at 541-374-4556, or via email at jim.e.runkles@usace.army.mil .