

## NRM Uniform Committee Meeting Notes

1. The NRM Uniform Committee met in Las Vegas, Nevada December 1 – 4, 2008. All members were in attendance. Also attending were the corresponding committees from the National Park Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the US Park Police. The NPS Contracting Officer, Mr. Lenny Spakow and representatives from the contractor, VF Imagewear, were also in attendance.

2. As in previous years, prior to meeting each of the committee members had distributed questionnaires to the uniformed employees within their Divisions requesting feedback on the uniforms. These comments were all compiled into the attached excel spreadsheet. Each comment was reviewed and responded to on the spreadsheet. Items of note are as follows:

- a. Duty Shirts. There were numerous comments concerning wrinkles in the new shirts. We spoke to the contractor about this. The contractor is aware of the issue and is investigating it. The shirts are supposed to be permanent press. Wrinkles should come out on the first washing. For now they recommend removing the shirt from the dryer while still damp and using a light iron to get the wrinkles out.
- b. Lightweight Shirt. There were several requests to have a long sleeve lightweight shirt that could be utilized for sun protection. We are happy to inform everyone that **long sleeve lightweight shirts are now available on the uniform website**.
- c. Turtleneck. The committee recommended **a mock turtleneck in addition to the full turtleneck**. This should be available this Fiscal Year.
- d. Polo Shirt. Since the inception of the polo shirt, we have received negative comments about its sizing, cost, and appearance. The committee agreed to redesign this shirt and work with the contractor to develop a replacement.
- e. Duty Trousers. The issue was the large number of back orders on this basic item. We discovered that the delays were the result of an unexpected hiring burst by the National Park Service. The NPS is gearing up for their 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and were given permission to hire additional Rangers. They hired 3,000 new rangers, all of course needed uniforms. Since we share items with NPS, some of our orders were also delayed.
- f. Brush Pants. Although liked by many for their durability there were countless complaints about the brush pants fading beyond serviceability after just one or two washings. In an attempt to remedy this, the committee is working with the contractor to find a suitable replacement fabric that holds the color while maintaining the durability.
- g. Belt. We received many comments about the dye coming off the belt. We brought this to the contractor's attention and asked them to work with their subcontractors to correct this.
- h. Fleece Jacket. As mentioned last year, the color of the Fleece Jacket has migrated more toward brown lately than the desired Earth Green. Although the contractor has made the necessary changes, much of the stock on hand is still the incorrect color. This will gradually correct itself. In addition, the

contractor demonstrated a **new fleece jacket** that the NPS has adopted. This fleece has much the same appearance as our fleece lined vest, i.e. the **windproof material is on the outside with the fleece on the inside**. The committee liked the appearance and style of the fleece and **recommended that we adopt it into our program**.

- i. Windbreaker. For the past three or four years the contractor has been looking for a replacement for the windbreaker we currently have. This year they presented a **new windbreaker** that meets all our needs. The committee recommended that we adopt it. We hope to see it in the system soon.
3. The committee then focused on those items that needed further discussion. These items included the Polo Shirt, a proposed Tee shirt, the Nameplate, back-orders, and the ER/EP.
- a. Polo Shirt. This shirt received more comments than any other item. While some liked it, most comments concerned ways to change it. In addition, the committee learned that the black on white (gray) signature was incorrect. It should have been the negative of this signature. The committee decided that since the signature was wrong, this would be the time to redesign the shirt from the ground up and address all these issues.
    - 1) Material. The material was considered too heavy for the intended use of the shirt, i.e. work, bike, beach, and boat.
    - 2) Style. The boxy, loose-fitting, unisex shirt was often a tent on smaller employees.
    - 3) Embroidery. Some felt the embroidered name was too large.
    - 4) Silk-screened signature on front and castle on back. There were suggestions to replace the signature with the shoulder patch. The most common suggestion was to remove the castle on the back, while some wanted to replace the castle with PARK RANGER.
    - 5) Pocket. Several wanted to add a pocket to the shirt, either in front or on the sleeve.
    - 6) Price. Lower the cost to the employee.After much discussion, the committee decided to task the contractor with providing a new polo shirt that met the following criteria:
    - 1) A new lighter material would be needed.
    - 2) The style would have to be less square and boxy and would have to be gender specific.
    - 3) The embroidered name and title would remain the same.
    - 4) The silk screened signature on the left front would remain the same however the castle on the back would be removed and not replaced.
    - 5) No pocket or shoulder patch would be attached.
  - b. Tee Shirt. Many suggested the polo shirt be replaced with a Tee shirt that could be worn under the duty shirt as well as by itself. While there is some merit to the concept the committee did not feel the Tee shirt presented the professional image of the Park Ranger. The committee agreed to authorize black or gray undershirts that may be worn under a duty shirt. These two colors are in addition to the current white color. Undershirts worn under the

duty shirt remain optional; are not to be worn without the duty shirt; and will not be supplied by the Contractor. .

- c. Nameplate. The concerns here dealt with the titles and the Corps logo on the nameplate. The website restricted the number of characters which could be utilized for the title. This led to a discussion of what should and should not be permitted on the nameplate. In addition it was pointed out that the Corps logo is actually the shoulder patch, and not the correct signature logo. With that in mind the committee decided to task the contractor with developing **two nameplates**. One would have just the employees name but no title and no logo. The second would have a new logo similar to the castle on the fleece hat, the employee's name, with an optional title to be selected from a predetermined drop down list.
  - d. Back-orders. We had numerous complaints/comments about the long delays in getting some of the basic items such as pants and shirts. This was a major concern of the committee. We discovered that the reason was beyond that of the contractor. The National Park Service, which owns the largest percentage of the contract, was granted permission by Congress to hire additional employees as they gear up for their 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The NPS informed the uniform contractor of this but could not tell them how many additional employees would be hired. In the end they hired an additional 3000 employees which is more employees than the Corps has in (in total) the NRM uniform program. The NPS and the Corps share many of the basic items like shirts and trousers, therefore both were affected by the shortage of uniforms as these new employees were added. The contractor did everything they could to speed up production, but still could not avoid lengthy backorders.
  - e. ER/EP. At the last meeting the committee had taken great strides toward writing a Uniform Manual modeled after the NPS Manual and Army Uniform Regulations. Over the past months we discovered that a manual was not the appropriate format therefore we had to reformat the material into the ER and EP format. This is nearly complete. We hope to have the ER and EP with Appendix ready for review by the MSCs by early March of this year.
4. Other items of interest include Rain Hat Covers, Socks, Campaign Hat, Rain Pants, Temporary Employee Backorders, Sweater sizes, Sun Hat, Unisex sizes.
- a. Rain Hat Covers. For a short period of time, the Rain Hat Covers were not available on the ordering website. The committee asked the contractor to go to a new rain hat cover that provided extra large sizes for the campaign hat. The Rain Hat Covers should now be available.
  - b. Socks. The committee adopted one pair of black socks (two sizes) to be added to the system and requested the contractor look for a second lighter weight style.
  - c. Campaign Hat. A note to all employees...the campaign hat now comes with a cushioned band inside which may result in the need for one size larger hat than in the past.
  - d. Rain Pants. The Rain Pants have been modified to include a new waterproof zipper. The zipper is black thus slightly changing the appearance of the item.

- e. Temporary Employee Backorders. We discussed the issue of temporary employees losing their backordered items at the end of the FY. The NPS, COE and contractor have agreed to develop a policy whereby those temporary employees who carry over the FY do not lose their backordered uniforms.
- f. Sweater sizes. It should be noted by all employees that the sweater sizes run one size small. We asked the contractor to note this on the website.
- g. Sun Hat. We had requested the contractor to investigate a new sun hat; one that was green like the ball cap. The contractor showed the committee one that the NPS Maintenance employees are using. Subject to approval from Headquarters, the committee recommended approval of this hat.
- h. Unisex sizing. The committee received numerous comments about the unisex sizing being too large for our smaller employees. We asked the contractor to investigate the addition of XS sizes for all unisex items.
- i. Ball Cap. The new ball cap with the smaller embroidered castle will be available soon.

5. As in past years, all comments from the field were compiled into a spreadsheet for review by the committee. Each comment was read and responses made to each. That spreadsheet is attached and will be posted along with this report on the NRM Gateway under Uniforms.

6. The committees met on the last day of the week to discuss mutual items and plan for the next meeting. The USF&WS will host the next meeting scheduled for late January, 2010 to be held in Memphis, Tennessee.

7. If there are questions or comments concerning this report, please contact the undersigned.

JAMES E. RUNKLES  
Park Manager, Bonneville Lock and Dam  
NRM Uniform Committee Chair