

Farewell from Bonnie Bryson...

When I retired at the end of the business day on 12 July 2023, I found myself in a status I had not experienced since October 25, 1977. I am no longer officially attached to the USACE NRM program.

After 31 years as a federal employee, plus 14 years as a part-time contractor employee, I still feel that my overall favorite jobs were as Park Ranger and Park Manager early in my career. That is partially because those jobs represented my young college-student dreams coming true, and partially because that field experience was the foundation for every other position I ever filled. The icing on the cake has been the positions and experiences that followed, with opportunities to work at all levels of the NRM organization (except Division Office). I worked with, and for, great people at every stop along the way.



I am especially proud of two initiatives, because they can serve Park Rangers long after I leave: helping launch the NRM Gateway knowledge management website and continuing to build content for the past 23 years; and helping launch the Park Ranger CoP Advisory Board in 2008 (and serving as the Board's ERDC Advisor from 2008-2023).

I see a bright future for NRM because of the dedicated people who comprise it, and because you have communication tools that we couldn't even dream of in NRM's early days. I recognize the double-edged sword of things like email that can swamp you; but having lived with and without such features--trust me—your professional life is better with. Take full advantage of the NRM Gateway, M-S TEAMS (especially the NRM Community Teams channel), approved social media resources, etc. You have unprecedented capabilities to connect with your peers and to carry our message to the public.

Some advice I offer, especially to the younger cohort of Park Rangers:

- Don't be shy about taking special assignments and details. You will meet people and learn something new.
- If you ever get the opportunity for a detail at Headquarters, go. It will broaden your horizons in several important ways.
- One last "voice of experience" tip: If you need a credential to accomplish your career goals, enroll and get it done by the time you are 40. You can further your education at any age of course, but it's harder after 40. It just is.

I wish you all well and invite any of you travelling through northeastern KY on a Saturday to stop by Bryson General Store. You'll find me behind the counter managing my late grandparents' and parents' historic business. The coffee pot will be on, so please stop by and we can chat about local history and NRM, present, past, and future.

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