



The University of Florida's SunMUN III

————— *Specialized Committee* —————

**Nature's Diplomats:
The U.S. National Park Service**



Noelle Morey



Conference Policies

Equity Statement

The SunMUN III team is dedicated to creating and maintaining a safe, inclusive, and equitable environment for all delegates, staff members, and advisors. Through collaboration, open-mindedness, and diplomacy, the SunMUN III Secretariat is committed to providing each and every participant with an equitable and positive experience.

To uphold this commitment, all SunMUN III secretariat members, directors, chairs, and staffers have completed training, including University of Florida Model United Nations equity standards training and Meridians Title IX training.

For any questions, comments, or concerns regarding equity, please contact our Chief of Staff, Alonzo Rojas, at sunmun.fl@gmail.com.

General Conduct Policies

The SunMUN III team is dedicated to enforcing proper conduct throughout the conference weekend. This includes but is not limited to:

1. Abiding by ALL hotel policies, including maintaining proper volume levels, respecting non-SunMUN III hotel guests, possession/use of illegal substances, underage drinking, etc.
2. Being present at ALL committee sessions. If a delegate must miss a committee session, they must contact their head delegate and their committee director immediately.
3. Delegates are expected to maintain respectful and equitable conduct towards all committee attendees and staff.

Sexual Misconduct Policy

The SunMUN III team is dedicated to providing a safe environment for all delegates, staff members, and advisors free from discrimination on any grounds and from harassment during the conference including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated. Sexual harassment can involve one or more incidents and actions constituting harassment may be physical, verbal and non-verbal.

Examples of sexual harassment include but are not limited to:

- Making derogatory or demeaning comments about someone's sexual orientation or gender identity
- Name-calling or using slurs with a gender/sexual connotation
- Making sexual comments about appearance, clothing, or body parts
- Rating a person's looks or sexuality
- Repeatedly asking a person for dates or asking for sex
- Staring in a sexually suggestive manner
- Unwelcome touching, including pinching, patting, rubbing, or purposefully brushing up against a person
- Making inappropriate sexual gestures



- Sharing sexual or lewd anecdotes or jokes
- Sending sexually suggestive communications in any format
- Sharing or displaying sexually inappropriate images or videos in any format
- Attempted or actual sexual assault including rape

SunMUN III will enforce a zero tolerance policy for any form of sexual harassment, and will treat all incidents seriously and promptly investigate all allegations of sexual harassment. Any and all acts of sexual harassment will not be tolerated and may result in delegate excusal from the conference, with no payment refund in addition to mandatory reporting of all occurrences. An anonymous sexual harassment reporting form will be provided at the conference.

Photo Policy

SunMUN III staffers will be present at committee rooms, socials, and other SunMUN III events in order to take photos and videos of the conference weekend. These photos will be used in SunMUN III's closing ceremony, SunMUN III's social media, and possibly promotional material for SunMUN III and future iterations. If you are uncomfortable being photographed and/or recorded, SunMUN III would like to give you the opportunity to opt-out. To do so, please follow this link in order for our photography team to be aware of your situation: tinyurl.com/sunmunoptout

Dress Code Policy

All delegates attending SunMUN III are expected to attend committee sessions in Western Business Attire (WBA). WBA is expected due to its role in creating a professional work environment conducive to debate and diplomacy. Examples of WBA are collared, button-down shirts, blouses, blazers, slacks or formal pants, pencil skirts, closed-toe professional shoes, and a tie or bowtie.



Land Acknowledgment

SunMUN III and the University of Florida Model United Nations team acknowledges that the land we occupy for this conference is the homeland of the Seminole and Miccosukee people. We recognize that the Seminole and Miccosukee peoples, as well as many other tribes, were forced out of their rightful land. The consequences of this brutal removal on the Indigenous communities are still being felt to this day. SunMUN III and the UF Model United Nations team honor the history, perseverance, and strength of the Indigenous people on a national and international scale. As students in the state of Florida, we continue to educate ourselves and reflect on the state's history of colonization and advocate for awareness about Indigenous cultures and issues. During SunMUN III, we ask for everyone to reflect on the effects of colonization while in committee and participating in conference activities this weekend.

For more information on the Seminole people, please refer to the [Seminole Tribe of Florida website](http://semtribe.com).
semtribe.com

For more information on the Miccosukee people, please refer to the [Miccosukee Tribe website](http://miccosukee.com/miccosukee-tribe-history).
miccosukee.com/miccosukee-tribe-history



Committee Policies

Materials & Technology Policy

Directives and related documents, including press releases and communiqués, in all Crisis style committees will be written on loose leaf paper. Delegates will be able to use paper from their delegate padfolios, which will be distributed before the first committee session. Crisis notes and joint personal directives will be written and sent on paper using a two-pad system. Delegates will be able to write joint personal directives on paper and submit them to the crisis staff when crisis notes are collected. The use of cell phones is strictly prohibited during committee sessions, unless in the event of an emergency. Delegates may not use laptops or other similar technology for any reason during committee sessions, without the express permission of the Chair and/or Crisis Manager.

Plagiarism and Pre-Writing

SunMUN III has a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism and pre-writing. Plagiarism is considered the passing of other people's work as your own. This includes crediting other delegate's clauses, directives, or ideas as your own. Plagiarism also includes the reuse of clauses submitted at other conferences, or the reuse of clauses on actual UN resolutions. Pre-writing, as defined by the SunMUN III team, includes writing directives, crisis notes, clauses, and other Model UN materials that increase a delegate's standing in awards OUTSIDE of the allotted committee time. SunMUN III has a zero-tolerance policy for both of these activities and encourages delegates to present original ideas that are created within the confines of the conference weekend.

SunMUN III encourages delegates to cooperate with the secretariat if they are accused of plagiarism or prewriting. Our USGs and/or Chief of Staff will conduct a thorough investigation into any claims and make a judgment on the provided evidence.



Letter from the Director

Dearest delegates,

My name is Noelle Morey and I could not be more excited to work with you in Nature's Diplomats: The U.S. National Park Service at this year's SunMUN! I am a third year Environmental Science major with a concentration in Policy, Law, and Regulation and a minor in Communications. Since my start with UF Model UN, SunMUN has held a special place in my heart; as we both enter our Junior season, it feels so fulfilling to be bringing you, the best delegates, a third year of exciting debate.

For the last 7 years of my Model UN career, I have been a General Assembly delegate through and through - but now it is time to shake things up a bit! With the assistance of SunMUN III's amazing leadership team, I am thrilled to be presenting this year's specialized General Assembly committee to all of you. The United States National Park Service was established in the early 20th century, officially relieving the Department of the Interior of their long-standing management of the nation's beloved parks. Since its creation, the NPS has become a staple of American culture, overseeing the function, protection, and evolution of the 429 recognized national parks. Delegates within Nature's Diplomats: The U.S. National Park Service are tasked with the challenge of doing just that - overseeing their respective parks while maintaining collaboration & diplomacy in the face of any challenge that may arise. Specific committee mechanics will be outlined in this background guide, but one thing is for sure: delegates can expect engaging twists and turns that mimic nature's unpredictability.

As always, I strive to present you all with the best committee experience possible, a goal that requires a mutual platform of kindness, equity, and respect. When you travel to SunMUN, it is our hope that you enjoy your weekend both in and out of committee. To achieve this, I kindly request that you use integrity in your pre-committee preparation process, in-committee conduct, and out-of-committee interactions with your fellow delegates. Please note that there is NO POSITION PAPER required for this committee. For your sake, please do not expect to write outside of committee; I want you all to unwind while soaking up the Floridian sun outside of our committee room!

Whether you are returning to our conference for another year of debate or traveling to Florida for the very first time, I look forward to bringing you a memorable committee experience that you can carry with you for years to come. I wish you all the best in your preparation and cannot wait to see what you will bring to the table. Please feel free to contact me at sunmun.fl@gmail.com with any questions, comments, or concerns you may have prior to our conference weekend (*be sure to put our committee name as the subject line if you contact our Secretariat*). And remember: adventure is out there, rangers!

Warmest regards,

Noelle D. Morey
Director
Nature's Diplomats: The U.S. National Park Service



Rules of Procedure

Specialized General Assembly Mechanics

Delegates in this committee will adhere to *traditional General Assembly parliamentary procedure* while incorporating realistic crisis updates to enhance the applicability of delegates' resolutions. Delegates will be expected to successfully address the crisis updates within their overall *resolutions and collective moderated debate*, a component of this committee that will challenge delegates' ability to collaborate and maintain diplomatic communication all in a timely manner.

These intermittent crisis updates are the only procedural element within this committee that delegates can expect to deviate from traditional GA rules of procedure. All other rules of procedure are standard, including expectations for resolutions, author's panel, and moderated/unmoderated debate.

Given that delegates will be representing parks within the National Parks Service, members of this committee are permitted to select a name (within relevance of their position title/name) by which they would like to be referred to. For example, a delegate can go by their park's official or colloquial title, or "Ranger XYZ."

Let's forge on, Rangers!



Committee Introduction

The Service Itself: NPS Past & Present

A result of President Woodrow Wilson's signing in the summer of 1916, the National Park Service's origin stems from "The Organic Act." This monumental piece of U.S. legislation not only established a new branch within the Department of the Interior, but also provided legal protection to the culturally integral "areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations[.]"¹ Since its creation, the NPS has become a staple of American culture, overseeing the function, protection, and evolution of the 429 recognized national parks, forests, and monuments. Staffed by over 20,000 employees across the United States and host to over 325 million visitors each year, the National Park Service has a vast array of obligations to its workers, civilians, and ecosystems. The precarious balance of these responsibilities is further complicated by the addition of factors external to human control, namely natural disasters.

The National Park Service, given its broad range of oversight, is allocated a hefty budget from the federal government, with \$3.09 billion being distributed for operational costs across the following categories:

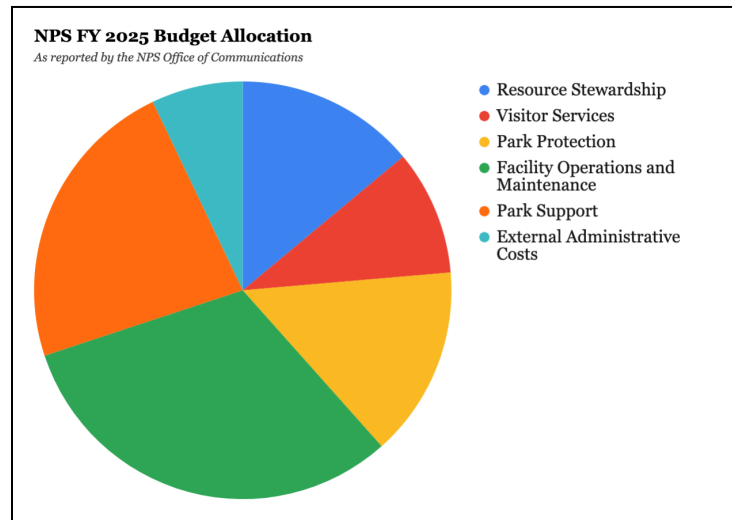


Fig. 1. Pie chart illustrating the composition of NPS 2025 budget.²

Between the large sum of investment into and impact of the National Park Service, it is clear that the service has a looming sense of duty to its many constituents. To effectively explore the various issues faced by the NPS, this background guide will be divided into the three most prevalent areas of concern

¹ <https://www.nps.gov/articles/quick-nps-history.htm>

²

[https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/president-proposes-\\$3-57-billion-national-park-service-budget-in-fy-2025.htm#:~:text=Operation%20of%20the%20National%20Park%20System%20%E2%80%93%20This%20is%20the%20primary,%24456.6%20million%20for%20park%20protection](https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/president-proposes-$3-57-billion-national-park-service-budget-in-fy-2025.htm#:~:text=Operation%20of%20the%20National%20Park%20System%20%E2%80%93%20This%20is%20the%20primary,%24456.6%20million%20for%20park%20protection)



reported internally within the service, as well as those observed by outsiders from both professional and recreational lenses:

1. *Provision, Protection, and Promotion of Cultural Resources for Americans*
2. *Retention of Rangers, Staff, and Other Personnel*
3. *Navigating Difficulties in or Disruptions to the Visitor Experience*

Before delving into the topics listed above, a review of the function of NPS Rangers is necessary to assist in the development of a proper research lens.

Ranger Roles and Responsibilities

NPS Rangers are versatile employees, serving as ambassadors to the Department of the Interior (DOI) with an aptitude for interpersonal communication, educational development and programming, and various areas of expertise related to natural resources. As connectors between visitors and the hundreds of millions of acres overseen by the service, rangers are certainly known for their personable nature and ability to curate fruitful cultural and recreational experiences for guests of all ages.

To represent NPS Rangers within this committee is to embody the criteria listed for the position and uphold the aforementioned tenets; delegates should strive to play the part of DOI and nature ambassadors, presenting the unique expertise and perspectives they have developed as a result of serving in their respective NPS locations. Due to its classification as a U.S. Government position, the rules, regulations, and requirements surrounding the ranger role are overseen by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the chief human resources facility of the federal government. The OPM highlights a few key points that delegates should consider in their representation of NPS Rangers:

Policy & Planning

Rangers in higher-level positions often have educational or experiential backgrounds in natural resource management byway of policy-making/analysis, specifically in the areas of conservation, sustainability, or park operations. Day-to-day operations rely on the rangers' dedication to formulating and upholding the expectations delineated by NPS policies and plans. Dictating protocols and guidelines for various aspects of park management, these policies range from climate response frameworks, visitor experience guides, and the function of transportation systems. Rangers of all ranks play a vital role in implementing these plans within parks, ensuring visitors' safety and enjoyment in all conditions. This aspect of the role requires not only creativity in structural planning, but also logistical prowess in the ability to execute wide-scale policies.

Law Enforcement & Investigative Work

Some rangers have specialized backgrounds or skill sets in roles related to law enforcement or investigation, which aids them in fulfilling the hands-on protective role within the position.



Specially-hired law enforcement rangers are tasked with overseeing the protection of parks, visitors, and cultural

Tour Guidance

NPS rangers often come from backgrounds involving the facilitation of tours, reinforcing their personable nature and the need for an aptitude in communication.

The tenets outlined by both the National Park Service and the Office of Personnel Management are indicative of the rangers' front-facing role in the parks, with visitors and fellow park personnel serving as their audience at any given time. With the intricacies of the ranger role in mind, delegates will have a better frame of mind in navigating the main aspects of the challenges currently facing the NPS.



Challenge One: Provision, Protection, and Promotion of Cultural Resources for Americans

Chapter Five of the NPS Management Policies is dedicated to Cultural Resource Management, a section of their directives system that delineates their managerial approaches as well their mission statement, an affirmation that they “will protect, preserve, and foster appreciation of the cultural resources in custody...”³

Given its mandated role, as established by The Organic Act, to protect history and culture within the United States, the National Park Service reserves the duty to care for and promote appreciation of thousands of cultural relics such as structures, artifacts, and other sites. In recent years, the addition of national cultural/historic sites to the NPS jurisdiction has contributed to the eleven-percent growth of the park system over the last 23 years. Despite this seemingly positive growth within the system, the service's bandwidth in distributing protective and managerial historic oversight is thinning, with the ever-growing instability of financial support for historians. In just the last decade, the network of historians within the NPS has displayed a substantial decline, with only 138 full-time historian positions being listed amongst the over 20,000 employees within the system.⁴

The lack of adequate funding to maintain cultural and historic management has caught the attention of many concerned individuals, namely the activists involved with the National Parks Conservation Association. The NPCA, a network of over 1.6 million members & supporters, incorporates policy analysis, volunteerism, and lobbying into their park advocacy efforts.⁵ The NPCA, given its wide-reaching platform, has been a champion for protecting the cultural conservation role of the NPS, and the widespread positive response to their campaign reflects a necessary diversion of attention towards this cultural crisis. The matter at hand is the result of several culminating factors that put vital U.S. cultural & historical sites at risk of degradation or complete destruction, and thus, a blend of fiscal, social, and environmental frames of mind must be applied in order for sustainable solutions to be formulated.

After decades of being overlooked, the NPS function cultural preservation and promotion lacks the financial wherewithal to support the necessary full-time and part-time operational staff. In addition to the personnel shortage, the lack of funding in this category of operation has also led to the service's inability to maintain ample relations with the growing number of indigenous tribes involved with the service. A crucial component of protecting and promoting culture/history within the U.S. is dismantling the erroneous policies that remain codified in federal legislature and land management approaches.⁶ Moreover, the adherence to tradition as opposed to ingenuity prevents an upward momentum of employees to management positions, leading to stagnant policy.⁷ Despite the service's publication of

³ <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/policy/mp-5-cultural.htm>

⁴ <https://www.npca.org/articles/3773-the-quiet-crisis-facing-national-parks>

⁵ <https://www.npca.org/about/our-story>

⁶ <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/05/return-the-national-parks-to-the-tribes/618395/>

⁷ https://muleapi.blm.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2022-06/NW%20RAC%20Public%20Record_Mr.%20Spotts_2.pdf



policy memoranda and conduction of conventions with the goal of outlining guides for responsibilities to the indigenous peoples of America, the NPS has much room for growth in the equitable incorporation of tribes within their function/operation.



Fig. 2. Grand opening of Xunaa Shuká Hít at Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve.⁸

The ever-growing threat of climate change, and the equally prevalent shortfalls in research within the DOI, leaves yet another gap in the service's ability to effectively protect artifacts and sites from irreparable damage caused by natural disasters. Without proper preparation and information on the part of the NPS, these naturally-occurring events, exacerbated by climate change, will have devastating effects.

⁸ <https://www.nps.gov/articles/2016npstribaltourismhighlights.htm>



Challenge Two: Retention of Rangers, Staff, and Other Personnel

The Park Service employee base faced a 29% decrease in just ten years, with over 5,900 employees leaving the network between 2010 and 2020. At the root of all issues in the NPS is the ongoing staffing crisis, which has permeated into various aspects of NPS function at all levels. From the top positions to part-time employees, the shortage of hands on deck within the system has left several employees fulfilling the roles of two to three people while getting paid for the work of one. This personnel problem stems from the following causes: harmful practices in the NPS workplace environment, increased responsibility per employee, and, as previously outlined, funding.⁹

Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, or PEER, is an 'anonymous activism' platform for public servants to address shortcomings, misconduct, or otherwise harmful practices within their departments while maintaining an emphasis on pinpointing the "message, rather than the messenger."¹⁰ PEER's vast collection of insight includes the NPS Voices Summary Report from 2019, which is examined in the following case commentary.



Fig. 3. Park Ranger badge with DOI seal on park trail.¹¹

⁹ <https://peer.org/blog-being-bold-on-park-staffing/>

¹⁰ <https://peer.org/>

¹¹

https://cdn.outsideonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/23/park-ranger-police_s.jpg?crop=1:1&width=600&enable=upscale&quality=100



National Park Service Voices Summary Report: A Cultural Case Study

The *Voices Summary Report* is composed of the results of a survey that gathered employee statements and sentiments regarding the quality and functionality of their workplace environment within the park service. Within this summary is an array of alarming statements made by park employees, with reports ranging from corrupt hiring processes to overworking of employees to lack of accountability among leaders to harmful harassment policies & incidents. It is evident that the NPS-commissioned Voices Project was a necessary undertaking, with employees at all levels within the system reporting wrongdoings in almost all aspects of the working environment. An anonymous NPS employee utilized the report as a space to share that they “want consistency between words [and] action,” while another stated that “If [the employees] speak up [they] get assigned to a less desirable task.”¹² The criticism of the NPS workplace is not only internal, but is reflected by the service’s low ranking amongst federal employment opportunities; of the 436 subcomponent federal agencies listed in the “Best Places to Work” ranking, the National Park Service sits at spot 353.

Morale amongst NPS employees is seemingly at an all-time-low, with supervisors lacking support, lower-level employees lacking a voice, and the highest-ranking positions having a decreased bandwidth for functionality as a result of the systemic and environmental changes within their role. Staffing shortages not only impact the visitor experience, but also impede the service’s function of protecting and conserving the environment. With 189 billion acres of land to oversee, the diminishing pool of Park Service employees is increasingly burdened, especially with the incoming funding presented to the service with the intent of creating new parks for under-resourced areas within the U.S. While there are initiatives in development, both financial and infrastructural, to assist the Park Service through this crisis, the NPS needs internal shifts to make actionable and sustainable change for current & future generations.

¹² <https://peer.org/nps-voices-summary-report-06-06-2019-pdf/>



Challenge Three: Navigating Difficulties in or Disruptions to the Visitor Experience

The aforementioned challenges present a roadblock to ensuring a smooth, enjoyable, and educational visitor experiences at parks and sites within the system. While the NPS receives funding from the federal government, philanthropic and voluntary donations also contribute to the system's revenue; amassing over \$94 million in 2014, it is clear that cash contributions have the potential to make a notable impact in system operations and function.¹³ In order to keep these donations flowing into the system, as well as ensure the public's enjoyment of parks as suggested in the service's purpose statement, NPS personnel must find ways to overcome the various difficulties in and disruptions to the visitor experience.

As it relates to the visitor experience, the previously explained staffing & cultural crises create several gaps in the guest impression of the parks and sites within the NPS. With a shortage of personnel, the visitor experience is impacted in the following ways: safety/security, educational value, and accessibility.

Safety & Security

NPS employees with specialized training in law enforcement oversee teams of rangers tasked with maintaining a safe and secure park environment. Safety provisions are overseen by various departments, with contributions from the Public Risk Management Program and the long-standing partnership between the NPS and the U.S. Public Health Service. Within these subdivisions of the service, employees work to "reduce unintentional injuries in national parks" by sustaining partnerships with health & safety organizations and providing educational and planning resources to visitors prior to their park experience.¹⁴ While these resources are accessible to visitors, the lack of personnel to enforce these policies creates gaps in park safety.

¹³ <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-16-166>

¹⁴

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1336/index.htm#:~:text=The%20Public%20Risk%20Management%20Program,staff%2C%20partners%2C%20and%20visitors.>



Questions to Consider

1. How can the park ranger role be leveraged to improve systematic function of the NPS?
2. What are common daily challenges faced by rangers across all parks? How can training improve to ensure better preparedness for such issues?
3. In what ways should the NPS be restructured, if at all?
4. How can community collaboration & stakeholder involvement contribute to the improvement of the NPS?
5. Should the NPS take a top-down approach across all parks within the system? Do all parks require equal resource allocation?



List of Positions

1. Acadia National Park - Ranger Blake Rox - ME
2. Big Bend National Park - Ranger Dakota Brooks - TX
3. Big Cypress National Preserve - Ranger Jamie Reed - FL
4. Biscayne National Park - Ranger Casey Cedar - FL
5. Blue Ridge - National Parkway - Ranger Drew Parker - NC
6. Carlsbad Caverns National Park - Ranger Skyler Mines - NM
7. El Yunque National Forest - Ranger Cris Rain - PR
8. Everglades National Park - Ranger Max Marsh - FL
9. Glacier Bay National Park - Ranger Bailey Glade - AK
10. Great Smoky Mountains National Park - Ranger Jordan Hill - TN
11. Grand Canyon National Park - Ranger Sam Rivers - AZ
12. Mesa Verde National Park - Ranger Jesse Field - CO
13. Olympic National Park - Ranger Rowan Lakewood - WA
14. Redwood National Park - Ranger Alex Woods - CA
15. Sequoia National Park - Ranger Riley Grove - CA
16. Shenandoah National Park - Ranger Cameron Blue - VA
17. (Hawai'i) Volcanoes National Park - Ranger Quinn Ash - HI
18. Yellowstone National Park - Ranger Taylor Stone - MT
19. Yosemite National Park - Ranger Avery Pine - MT
20. Zion National Park - Ranger Ryan Thorn - UT



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