

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Susie Manezes, Bureau of Land Management, Vale District, 100 Oregon Street, Vale, OR 97918.

Juan Palma,

District Manager.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**National Park Service****Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve**

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice sets the schedule for a meeting of the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve Advisory Committee. Notice of this meeting is required under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Public Law 92-463).

DATE, TIME, AND ADDRESS: Wednesday, October 4, 2000; 9 a.m. until business and public comment are complete; Chase County Community Building, Swope Park, Walnut and County Road, Cottonwood Falls, Kansas.

This business meeting is open to the public. Space and facilities to accommodate members of the public are limited and people will be accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis. An agenda will be available from the Superintendent 1 week prior to the meeting. Attendees are encouraged to participate in these meetings. If you would like to address the committee, please contact the Superintendent by September 29, 2000, at the address or telephone number listed below requesting that your name be added to the agenda. Depending on the number of requests, the Superintendent has the right to limit the amount of time each participant is allowed to address this committee.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Steve Miller, Superintendent, Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, P.O. Box 585, Cottonwood Falls, Kansas 66845; or telephone him at 316-273-6034.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve was established by Public Law 104-333, dated November 12, 1996.

Dated: September 6, 2000.

David N. Given,

Deputy Regional Director, Midwest Region.

[FR Doc. 00-23731 Filed 9-14-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**National Park Service****Notice of New Policy Interpreting the National Park Service (NPS) Organic Act**

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of new policy.

SUMMARY: The Director of the NPS has approved "Director's Order #55: Interpreting the National Park Service Organic Act." This Director's Order adopts section 1.4 of NPS "Management Policies" in advance of adopting the entire 10-chapter volume. We have done this so that all NPS employees will have access to our official interpretation of the 1916 NPS Organic Act (16 U.S.C. 1) and the 1978 amendment to the National Park System General Authorities Act of 1970 (16 U.S.C. 1a-1). These statutes, taken together, are the primary source of guidance for managing the national parks. All NPS personnel must conduct their work activities and make decisions affecting the national park system in conformance with the interpretation in this Director's Order.

ADDRESSES: Director's Order #55 is available on the Internet at <http://www.nps.gov/refdesk/DOrders/index.htm#new>. Requests for paper copies should be sent to: NPS Office of Policy, Room 2414, Main Interior Building, Washington, DC 20240. Copies may also be obtained by calling (202) 208-7456.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Chick Fagan at (202) 208-7456.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A draft of proposed revisions to NPS "Management Policies" was issued for a 60-day public review and comment period, beginning January 19, 2000 [65 FR 2984]. We subsequently considered all the comments received, and will adopt the year 2000 edition of Management Policies in the near future. However, due to the importance of instituting as soon as possible a Service-wide interpretation of the most salient provisions of the Organic Act and General Authorities Act, we have issued Director's Order #55 as a means of adopting section 1.4 of "Management Policies." This Service-wide interpretation will help all NPS employees understand their legal duties in managing the national park system, and will help ensure the law is properly and consistently applied throughout the national park system.

Comments on Draft Section 1.4

Sixteen organizations and individuals commented on section 1.4 of the draft "Management Policies." Their comments and our responses are summarized below. Most of the comments listed are summaries or consolidations of comments that shared similarities.

Comment #1: The NPS Organic Act gives equal weight to the NPS's obligation to conserve park resources unimpaired, and to the NPS's obligation to provide opportunities for public enjoyment. This is not properly reflected in the NPS's proposed policy.

Our response: Congress, recognizing that the enjoyment by future generations of the national parks can be assured only if the superb quality of park resources and values is left unimpaired, has provided that when there is an unavoidable conflict between conserving resources and values and providing for enjoyment of them, conservation is to be predominant. This is how courts have consistently interpreted the Organic Act, in decisions that variously describe it as making "resource protection the primary goal" or "resource protection the overarching concern," or as establishing a "primary mission of resource conservation," a "conservation mandate," "an overriding preservation mandate," "an overarching goal of resource protection," or "but a single purpose, namely, conservation."

Comment #2: It is virtually impossible to provide opportunities for enjoyment without causing at least some degree of impairment. The NPS should acknowledge this fact and not use the Organic Act as a pretext for curtailing the level of public use and enjoyment allowed in national parks.

Our response: The Organic Act and the General Authorities Act prohibit impairment of park resources and values, not all impacts to park resources and values. We have revised section 1.4 to make that distinction clearer.

Comment #3: The definitions of "enjoyment," "resources and values," and "impairment" are critically important to how the NPS will implement the policy. As written, they are too unclear; or will allow too much (or too little) discretion by decision-makers.

Our response: We have revised the definitions to make it easier to understand how these words apply within the context of the overall policy. We have also revised text at other key points to help make the overall policy clearer and, in the process, reduced the need for more explicit definitions.