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United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

In reply refer to:

May 4, 2005

C3823(2410)

Memorandum

To: Regional Directors
Regional Concession Chiefs

From: Acting Associate Director, Administration, Business Practices and Workforce
Development /s/ **Alfred J. Poole, III**

Subject: Commercial Services Planning Policy Requirement

The purpose of this memorandum is to remind all superintendents with commercial services in their parks of the National Park Service (NPS) policy requirement to conduct commercial services planning to support their commercial services programs. This would include concession contracts, Commercial Use Authorizations/Incidental Business Permits, Cooperating Associations, Friends Groups, and Special Use Permits where compensation is being received for visitor goods and services.

A recent General Accounting Office (GAO) Report entitled, "National Park Service: Agency Needs to Better Manage the Increasing Role of Nonprofit Partners (GAO-03-585)," made a recommendation that all parks with commercial services have a Commercial Services Plan (CSP). The NPS response to the report was that it is already the policy of the NPS to require commercial visitor services planning. This requirement and further guidance is found in Chapter 10.2.2 of the NPS Management Policies. Our response also commits the NPS to have CSPs in all applicable parks, recognizing that this is a long-term goal and dependent on resource constraints and coordination with other NPS planning.

The concern expressed in the GAO report related to commercial services planning was the need for a comprehensive analysis of all commercial operations in a park and the relationships between them, specifically concessions, Cooperating Associations, and Friends Groups. This is a primary objective of a CSP. The plan also establishes necessary and appropriate criteria; ensures resource and visitor experience goals are achieved; ensures compliance with other plans; and determines economic feasibility of all commercial proposals. These factors are also required by NPS management policy.

Guidance and assistance to meet this policy requirement is available through regional and WASO Concession Program offices. Park superintendents without commercial services planning in place should contact those offices, especially if they have concession contracts nearing expiration. Jo Pendry, Concession Program Manager, and Terry Goodrich, Planning Program Lead, are the contacts in the WASO Concession Program office.

cc: Superintendents with Commercial Services