Passing the Torch: A Conversation Between Generations about Resource Stewardship

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Jeff Connor
Natural Resources Specialist, Rocky Mountain National Park

What’s a Service memory or experience of yours while with the National Park Service?

Jeff: What’s a Service memory or experience of yours while with the National Park Service?

I was in charge of responding to a situation involving a child who had wandered off a mountain due to a raging wildfire rushing up a trail. I remember being in a helicopter over a forested area, looking down into the jaws of hell. The situation was dire, and I had to make a decision on how to proceed.

What do you think is the most important lesson you’ve learned while working with the National Park Service?

I think the ability to make quick decisions and act on them is crucial. It’s important to be calm and composed in stressful situations, and to have a plan in place for dealing with unexpected events.

Jody Ballenger
Natural Resources Specialist, Glacier National Park

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Jody: What’s a Service memory or experience of yours while with the National Park Service?

I was assisting a group of rangers on a wildfire expedition, and we had to hike through Cataract Canyon, where there were lots of those. It was a grueling experience, but I learned a lot about dealing with unexpected events.

What do you think is the most important lesson you’ve learned while working with the National Park Service?

I think the ability to adapt to changing situations is crucial. It’s important to be flexible and able to adjust to new circumstances at a moment’s notice.

Fred Bunch
Chief of Resources Management, Grand Sandunes National Park

What’s a Service memory or experience of yours while with the National Park Service?

Fred: What’s a Service memory or experience of yours while with the National Park Service?

I was working on a project to restore a beach deep in the heart of Glacier National Park. It was a challenging experience, but I learned a lot about dealing with unexpected events.

What do you think is the most important lesson you’ve learned while working with the National Park Service?

I think the ability to work collaboratively with others is crucial. It’s important to be able to communicate effectively and to work together to achieve common goals.

Group Interview Session at McGraw Ranch

July 2010, Bert Frost (top right) and Fred Bunch (bottom-right) were seated in a circle at McGraw Ranch. The audience was encouraged to ask questions. Rocky Mountain Chief of Resource Stewardshp Bob Babkowski (top left) provoked about the group before the interviews. Interview photos by Peter Biddle.

Tom Olliff
NPS Landscape Coordinator, Great Northern Landscape

Conservation Cooperative

What’s a Service memory or experience of yours while with NPS?

Tom: What’s a Service memory or experience of yours while with NPS?

I was helping to restore a beach deep in the heart of Glacier National Park. It was a challenging experience, but I learned a lot about dealing with unexpected events.

What do you think is the most important lesson you’ve learned while working with the National Park Service?

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What is your vision for the National Park Service in the future?

Tom: What is your vision for the National Park Service in the future?

I believe the National Park Service should continue to be a go-to person, be competent – because I think every employee should be capable of doing any task. As a result, I am where I am today. I believe that the National Park Service should continue to be a go-to person, be competent – because I think every employee should be capable of doing any task. As a result, I am where I am today.

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