

Introduction

The NPS Commercial Services Program has initiated three workgroups to address several topics of interest to the Service and concessioners, they are:

- simplified processes for small concessioners
- concessioner recognition and incentives
- innovative commercial visitor services

The Service requested the CMAB convene three workgroups comprised of CMAB members, NPS staff and concessioners. The Service is looking for concessioners to volunteer for these workgroups.

A description, timeline and level of effort for each workgroup is below. Please review the information and if interested in participating in a workgroup send an email containing your name (or the name of the person you are recommending), company, workgroup you are interested in and telephone number to commercial_services@nps.gov. Please submit your selection by May 13th.

Workgroup #1: Simplified Procedures

In the National Park Service Concessions Management Improvement Act of 1998 (“1998 Act”), Congress directed the Service to include “simplified procedures for small, individually-owned, concession contracts” in the competitive process for the award of a concession contract.¹ This project continues efforts to develop and implement policies for simplifying the prospectus process and contract compliance procedures for small individually-owned concession contracts.

Preliminary Work:

- An NPS workgroup has defined the scope of the project and compiled information on concessioners by revenue and operating structure. The NPS workgroup is preparing material to use with the CMAB workgroup.
- CMAB agreed to form a workgroup of concessioners to provide input to NPS

Form a CMAB Workgroup

- Comprised of NPS staff, CMAB members, current concessioners
- Meetings held via web conferencing – one meeting per topic area
- Topics:
 - Simplified procedures for the process of competing for a concession contract
 - Simplified procedures for financial reporting
 - Simplified procedures for asset management
 - Simplified procedures for contract management

CMAB Workgroup tasks (April 2013 – November 2013)

- Share preliminary discussion points – early May
- Facilitate four web conferences, one on each topic area – mid-May through mid-June
- Review draft report (prepared by NPS workgroup) and provide feedback (draft report to CMAB workgroup in August/September)

NPS Workgroup tasks (March 2013 –February 2013)

- Consolidate feedback from the CMAB workgroup on potential actions to simplify processes and provide staff assistance to the CMAB in developing recommendations.
- Develop and conduct concessioner survey (all concessioners holding a “small, individually owned, concession contract”)

¹ Pub.L. 105-391 Section 403(1)

- Analyze information from survey, CMAB workgroup, and NPS
- Prepare draft (September) and final (February) reports recommending changes, including implementation plans

Present recommendations to CMAB (March 2014)

- CMAB provides recommendations for implementation

Present recommendations to NPS management (March – May 2014)

- Obtain approval to implement recommendations

Implement new procedures (June 2014)

Existing Workgroup Members:

CMAB: Richard Linford, Courtland Nelson

Facilitator: Anne Altman, Special Assistant for Business Services, NPS

NPS Lead: Debra Hecox, Branch Chief, Planning and Development, Commercial Services

Paul Pfenninger, Project Manager, Commercial Services, NPS

NPS Proposed Concessioners (or other company representative)

Kirk Ellis, Devil's Mountain Guide Service (WRST)

First Out, Last In Yacht Adventures, Sheri and Craig Loomis (GLBA)

Sheri Griffith, Sheri Griffith Expeditions, Inc., (CANY and DINO)

Cris Coughlin, Glacier Guides, Inc. (GLAC)

Jesse Jefferson, Buffalo River Canoes, Inc. (BUFF)

Stacy Smith, Carr's Grocery Store and Canoe Rental (OZAR)

Edward G. Benz, The Benz Corp. (Nauset Knoll Motor Lodge) CACO

Sandra Robinson, The Shuttle, Inc., dba Crater Lake Trolley (CRLA)

Diane Mills, The House that Jack Built (LACH)

Addison Williams, Price Lake Boat Rentals, Inc. (BLRI)

Elizabeth Burns Cook, Smokemont Stables, Inc. (GRSM)

Workgroup #2: Innovative Visitor Services

Working with a contracted hospitality Consultant, the NPS will identify new commercial visitor services and potential changes to existing services to enhance visitor experiences, attract new visitors, and contribute to support for resource protection. This project will assist the NPS in meeting A Call to Action goals, including responding to changing visitor demographics and attracting new audiences to the parks.

Preliminary work:

- NPS prepared a Scope of Work to obtain services of a Consultant to work with the CMAB workgroup, interview NPS park staff and current concessioners, review existing literature, and interview other park managers (e.g., state parks, Parks Canada).
- NPS issued a Request for Proposals, expects proposals on April 24, and hopes to award a contract on or around May 1.

Form a CMAB Workgroup (April 2013)

- Comprised of NPS staff including the Consultant, CMAB members, and concessioners
- Meetings held via web conferencing

CMAB Workgroup tasks (May – July 2013)*

- Participate in 2-3 Consultant-led web conferences to provide ideas and recommendations on new services and changes to existing services NPS should consider
- Review initial consultant report and provide feedback

NPS tasks (March – August 2013)*

- Obtain feedback from the CMAB workgroup on new and enhanced visitor services and provide staff assistance to the CMAB in preparing recommendations
- Review consultant reports and provide feedback and guidance
- Develop recommendations on implementing the consultant's report

Present recommendations to CMAB (September 2013)*

- CMAB provides recommendations for implementation

Present recommendations to NPS leadership (October 2013)*

* Timeline anticipates not conducting a broader survey of concessioners. If the survey occurs, the timeline will lag by several months to obtain approval of the survey instrument.

Existing Workgroup Members:

CMAB: Ramona Sakiestewa and Michele Michalewicz
 NPS Lead: Debra Hecox, Branch Chief, Planning and Development, Commercial Services
 Melody Krueger, Project Manager/COR, Commercial Services, NPS
 Contracted consultant (contractor not selected yet)

NPS Proposed Concessioners (or other company representative)

Bill Butts, Forever Resorts
 Carolyn Metzler, Gettysburg Tours, Inc.
 Armand Ortega, Ortega Enterprises
 Terry MacRae, Hornblower Cruises and Events
 Mark Grisham, Colorado River Discovery, LLC

Workgroup #3: Concessioner Recognition Program

The current concessioner review program ranks concessioners as unsatisfactory, marginal, or satisfactory. There is no superior performance ranking. Several program-specific National Park Service (NPS) awards are currently available to concessioners (e.g., environmental achievement), and authorized concessioners with satisfactory ratings are provided the opportunity to use a Concessioner Mark. However, there is no broad recognition program for service quality. There are also no financial or contractual incentives.

The NPS and concessioners are interested in exploring ways to implement programs to both recognize and incentivize concessioners. As the first step in this effort, the Commercial Services program wishes to present an NPS concession staff, concessioner and CMAB-vetted proposal for a concessioner recognition program and superior performance evaluation process to NPS leadership by the end of Calendar year 2013 for implementation in 2014.

Preliminary Work:

- As part of the Standards, Evaluation and Rate Administration (SERA) Project, the NPS worked with hospitality consultants to assess current industry practices and identify NPS incentives opportunities.
- An initial discussion on recognition and incentives was conducted at the Fall 2012 Concession Management Advisory Board meeting.
- Following the discussion, the Board recommended that NPS concentrate on a recognition program as a first step in the broader effort on incentives.

Form a CMAB Workgroup (April 2013)

- Comprised of NPS staff, CMAB members, current concessioners
 - No travel will be required as meetings will be held via web conferencing.

CMAB Workgroup tasks (April 2013 – June 2013)

- Share preliminary discussion points: Late April.
- Facilitate three webinars: Mid May, Early June, Late June
- Develop Recognition Program Recommendations: June 30.

- Provide input on defining superior performance criteria and evaluation processes.
- Provide input how recognition and other incentives should be integrated with the SERA superior performance evaluation process.

NPS Workgroup tasks (July - August 2013)

- Consolidate and analyze information from CMAB workgroup, and other sources.
- Prepare report recommending an implementation plan for concessioner recognition program and superior performance evaluation processes
 - Draft for CMAB Comments: Mid July.
 - Final : End of August

Present recommendations to CMAB (September 2013)

- CMAB provides comments/recommendations based on information presented.
- Additional types of incentives for superior performance are discussed. Request further CMAB workgroup involvement to explore additional incentives.

Present recommendations to NPS management (October 2013)

- Obtain approval to implement recommendations for recognition program and superior performance evaluation processes.

Implement new procedures (January 2014)

- Recognition Program.
- Superior performance evaluation process.

Develop Additional Incentive Programs (2014)

- Utilize CMAB workgroup process to investigate other incentives.

Existing Workgroup Members:

Facilitator – Dr. James Eyster, Chairperson, CMAB

NPS Lead- Kurt Rausch, Branch Chief, Contract Management, Commercial Services

NPS Proposed Concessioners (or other company representative)

James McCaleb, Xanterra Parks and Resorts

Bruce Fears, Aramark Parks and Destinations

Bill Butts, Forever Resorts

Kevin Kelly, Delaware North Company

Armand Ortega, Ortega Enterprises

Terry MacRae, Hornblower Cruises and Events

John Rutter, Grand Teton Lodge Company

Brad Hill, Evelyn Hill

Kim Thomas, Golf Course Specialists

Nat Patridge, Exum Mountain Guides

John Wood, Holiday Expeditions

Raymond Peterson, Katmailand Inc.

NPS Consultants and Industry Experts

Geoff Baekey, Capital Hotel Management

Reed Woodworth, PKF

Vince Magnini, Hospitality and Tourism Management, Virginia Polytechnic Institute