



Investigative Report of Alleged Sexual Misconduct and Reprisal at Yellowstone National Park

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This is a version of the report prepared for public release.

SYNOPSIS

We initiated this investigation in September 2016 after the National Park Service (NPS) reported allegations brought forward by a Yellowstone National Park employee. This employee alleged that a pervasive culture of gender bias, sexual harassment, and financial misconduct existed in a work unit within Yellowstone's Maintenance Division. He alleged that this behavior was tolerated, and even fostered, by a "men's club" environment—one of insensitivity and arrogance toward other Yellowstone employees—that was pervasive in the division from 2011 to 2015.

During our investigation, we interviewed over 100 current and former Yellowstone employees and reviewed more than 500 documents, including NPS-wide employee surveys from 2014 and 2015 and a 2016 exit survey of over 200 seasonal Yellowstone employees. An additional allegation of hiring discrimination by a supervisor in the Maintenance Division was raised during the interviews, so we included this allegation in our investigation.

We found credible evidence that male supervisors and staff in the Maintenance Division unit created a work environment that included unwelcome and inappropriate comments and actions toward women. This negative work environment was allowed to continue because of the actions, or inaction, of supervisors. Specifically, the Maintenance Division supervisor should have known about and addressed some of the alleged misconduct.

Our investigation of the employee's allegations of financial misconduct confirmed that the Maintenance Division supervisor had allowed his employees to use his Government credit card to make purchases, in violation of the U.S. Department of the Interior's Integrated Charge Card Policy. We also found that between 2011 and 2015, some Yellowstone employees made split purchases (breaking a large purchase into small, separate purchases in order to circumvent the procurement process). The employee's allegation that Yellowstone promoted another employee after she made over \$10,000 in personal charges to her Government credit card was unfounded.

We also did not find evidence of hiring discrimination by the Maintenance Division supervisor. Although we confirmed that he had told a subordinate in early 2016 that he would not be hiring women to fill open positions in the work unit, we found that he later offered positions to two women.

DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION

We opened this investigation on September 23, 2016, after the National Park Service (NPS) reported allegations to us that had been described in a magazine article. A Yellowstone National Park employee alleged in the article that exploitation, predatory sexual behavior, reprisals, abuse, and financial misconduct had occurred in an unnamed division of Yellowstone from 2011 to 2015; he also alleged that a pervasive “men’s club” environment in the division—one of insensitivity and arrogance toward other Yellowstone employees—had encouraged these issues.

After the article was published, the employee discussed his allegations with Yellowstone Superintendent Dan Wenk, who initiated an investigation into them with a contract investigator. Wenk stopped his contracting efforts, however, when we communicated our intent to initiate an investigation. Our investigation included interviewing over 100 current and former Yellowstone employees and reviewing more than 500 documents, including NPS-wide employee surveys from 2014 and 2015 and a 2016 exit survey of over 200 seasonal Yellowstone employees. During our interviews, an additional allegation of hiring discrimination was raised against a supervisor in the Maintenance Division; we included this allegation in our investigation.

The Employee’s History at Yellowstone and Decision To Report Allegations

In 2010, the employee began working at Yellowstone, on a temporary seasonal basis, in the park’s Maintenance Division. He was selected in 2012 for a permanent position, later taking a detail in another Maintenance Division unit. After completing his detail, he returned to his permanent position.

The employee told us that he read a magazine article about allegations of misconduct by NPS employees at Grand Canyon National Park. He said that as he read the article, which included an interview of then-NPS Director Jonathan Jarvis, he thought that some of the issues involving how male employees at Grand Canyon talked about and treated female employees were similar to what he himself had seen at Yellowstone. He said he also found Jarvis’ comments in the article “arrogant.” He said he then contacted a magazine and reported his allegations of misconduct at Yellowstone. He told us that he did not report the allegations to Yellowstone officials because he did not believe they would be addressed.

The employee confirmed to us that the division he referred to in the article was a unit where he had worked. This unit, one of 25 units and subunits in the Maintenance Division, is staffed by seasonal and permanent employees who primarily do seasonal maintenance work at Yellowstone. The number of temporary seasonal employees fluctuates with the workload during the park’s summer and winter seasons.

***Agent’s Note:** Temporary seasonal employees serve under appointments limited to 1 year or less. The term “seasonal” refers to the employees’ work schedules, not the appointment type used to hire them. These employees are subject to termination at any time without use of adverse actions or reduction-in-force procedures.*

As of the date of this report, the unit had no permanent supervisor; that position had been filled by acting supervisors since the last supervisor retired. A Maintenance Division supervisor was the first-line supervisor of the unit until the mid-2000s, when he was promoted to his current position and became the second-line supervisor for this unit and for another unit in the division. This supervisor reported to a Maintenance Division official, who had been in that role since 2012.

The Employee's Allegations in the Article Found To Be Inaccurate or Exaggerated

Allegation 1: A Supervisor in the Maintenance Division Unit Sexually Exploited a Subordinate

According to the article, the employee alleged that female employees in the Maintenance Division unit were “exploited” by their male coworkers, and the article stated that a female employee had been “more or less kept by . . . one of her supervisors for a sexual relationship.” According to the article, this woman did minimal work, drank daily, and was “essentially . . . kept inebriated and available for favors from her superior.”

When we interviewed the employee, he admitted that “exploitation” might not have “been the best word” he could have used to describe the mistreatment of women assigned to the Maintenance Division unit. He clarified that what he had witnessed was primarily an environment of verbal abuse in which male employees would “talk down” to women and use inappropriate language toward them.

He said, however, that he did believe that a former seasonal employee had been sexually exploited by her supervisor during her time in the unit. He explained that he believed her supervisor (a subordinate of the Maintenance Division supervisor) had kept her employed, despite her well-known drinking problem, so that he could continue a relationship with her. The employee claimed that her supervisor had spoken openly about their relationship.

The employee said that he had seen the former seasonal employee drink wine “many times” while at work, and he told us he had once relieved her of her duties because she was “so drunk she couldn’t even stand up.” Furthermore, he said, her supervisor asked him on one occasion to buy him a bottle of wine for her, but he refused because he assumed that she would drink it while on duty.

The employee told us he had heard that the seasonal employee lost her job at Yellowstone after an alcohol-related incident at work. He said that one day she and her supervisor were arguing in his vehicle, and her supervisor got angry at her, told her to get out, and drove off without her. The employee said that the seasonal employee, who was drunk at the time, got into another vehicle and drove off, but Yellowstone law enforcement later stopped her. As a result of this incident, he said, she was fired.

Our review of the seasonal employee’s personnel records showed that she worked at Yellowstone for over 20 seasons. She left the park, but returned when the Maintenance Division supervisor hired her.

We interviewed the former seasonal employee, who was no longer associated with NPS, about the Yellowstone employee's allegation. She denied the allegation and said that she was never kept "drunk on the job" in order to have sex. She acknowledged that she and her supervisor had been in a relationship while she worked for him, but explained that the relationship was consensual. She declined to give specific information about the relationship but told us that she cared "deeply" for her supervisor, that he had been "very kind and good" to her, and that she would never say anything against him. She also confirmed that she did have a drinking problem and had lost her job at Yellowstone due to an alcohol-related incident at work, but she stated that her supervisor had been concerned about her problem and had tried to help her with it, not exploit it. Her supervisor, who had retired, declined to be interviewed.

When we interviewed the Maintenance Division supervisor, he said that he had hired the former seasonal employee and approved yearly requests from her supervisor to rehire her thereafter. He said he knew her as an acquaintance before he hired her, and he acknowledged that he did not seek any references from her previous supervisors before hiring her.

The Maintenance Division supervisor acknowledged that the former seasonal employee had a problem with alcohol and that he had terminated her employment after Yellowstone law enforcement informed him that they had stopped her while she was intoxicated and driving a vehicle at work. He said he understood that she had consumed alcohol at her supervisor's house before driving the vehicle. He said that the season after her termination, he was having trouble finding laborers to hire and her supervisor suggested rehiring her if a replacement could not be found. He said he told him: "No, that won't happen again."

We asked the Maintenance Division supervisor when he first became aware that the former seasonal employee had a drinking problem. He said at first that it was about 4 months after he initially hired her, but he then clarified that he had just heard she liked to "party." There was a difference, he said, between drinking and having a drinking problem. When we specifically asked him whether anybody had told him that she drank on the job, he said no. He insisted that he had not known she had a drinking problem until he fired her after the incident with the vehicle.

Statements by two of the Maintenance Division supervisor's other subordinates, however, contradicted his assertion that he knew nothing about the former seasonal employee's drinking problem or her drinking on the job. One told us that her drinking problem was common knowledge among her coworkers. He said that she would drink while on the job and that he had called her supervisor on several occasions to come get her because she was drunk and he was concerned for her safety. This subordinate said he spoke to both the seasonal employee's supervisor and the Maintenance Division supervisor "more than once" about her drinking problem. Another subordinate told us that he told the Maintenance Division supervisor at least twice that the seasonal employee had been drinking on the job. He explained that she had smelled of alcohol and that he had seen her walking unevenly at work.

Other employees who had worked with the former seasonal employee said that her coworkers had known about her drinking problem for years. One told us that he had worked with her in another Yellowstone unit and that she "drank heavy" during that time. A second employee said

that she drank on the job during the time he worked with her and that more than once he had smelled alcohol on her breath “first thing in the morning.” He said he understood that the unit they had worked in together stopped rehiring her because of her drinking problem, and he was “mystified” when he heard she had later been hired to work in the Maintenance Division unit because her drinking problem was common knowledge and he knew she had not quit drinking.

In addition, a former employee who had worked with the former seasonal employee recalled an occasion when the former seasonal employee came to work so drunk that she could not do her job. This former employee said that her supervisor, who knew about the seasonal employee’s drinking problem, asked her if she would take the seasonal employee home to “sleep it off,” which she said she did. She recalled another incident in which the former seasonal employee drove a work vehicle while intoxicated.

When asked about his knowledge of the former seasonal employee’s relationship with her supervisor, the Maintenance Division supervisor stated that he heard rumors about it about 3 years after he hired her. He said he confronted her supervisor about the rumors, but her supervisor denied the relationship. The Maintenance Division supervisor acknowledged that he did not inquire further into the matter, nor did he inform his own then-supervisor about it. That supervisor, who has also retired, denied knowing anything about the relationship.

Allegation 2: Supervisors Improperly Hired an Employee for the Maintenance Division Unit

According to the article, the Yellowstone employee alleged that a woman had been hired specifically so she could be exploited for sex. When we interviewed him, he clarified that he believed the Maintenance Division supervisor and another supervisor, his subordinate, had hired another seasonal employee in order to have sex with her. He said he believed the Maintenance Division supervisor terminated her employment in part because she had rejected his sexual advances.

The employee, who was on a detail to another Yellowstone unit when this former seasonal employee was hired, explained that sometime after she was interviewed for her position, the Maintenance Division supervisor’s subordinate told him: “You’ve got to see this [employee] we just hired,” implying that this supervisor found her attractive. According to the employee, he then told the employee that he intended to try to have sex with her. The employee also alleged that he later heard secondhand that the Maintenance Division supervisor had also wanted to have sex with her.

Although the employee told us that he had assumed these two supervisors had interviewed the former seasonal employee in person, we determined that the Maintenance Division supervisor interviewed her by telephone and selected her for the position without having met her in person. The former seasonal employee explained in an interview that she met both supervisors for the first time when she reported to Yellowstone to start work.

The former employee’s personnel records showed that she worked at Yellowstone for two seasons. Her employment was terminated after she became intoxicated at work and could not perform her duties.

The former employee, who was no longer associated with NPS, told us that neither supervisor made any sexual advances toward her while she worked for them. She described the Maintenance Division supervisor as a “wonderful boss” and said his relationship with her was friendly and supportive. None of our other interviews substantiated the allegation against the Maintenance Division supervisor.

The former employee did acknowledge, however, that after the other supervisor retired, he made sexual advances toward her by phone and text. (The supervisor declined to be interviewed.)

The Maintenance Division supervisor denied the allegations about why he hired the former employee. He told us that he selected her for the position after a telephone interview, and he denied making any sexual advances toward her. He confirmed that he fired her after she became intoxicated at work and could not do her job.

Allegation 3: The Maintenance Division Supervisor Groped an Employee

The article stated that, when asked if he had seen sexual harassment firsthand at Yellowstone, the Yellowstone employee alleged that he had seen “blatant physical groping.”

During our interview, the employee clarified this allegation. He explained that he had once seen the Maintenance Division supervisor grab a female employee’s buttocks with both hands. He explained that at the time of this incident, he was part of a small group of employees waiting for the supervisor to join them for an office equipment demonstration. He said that the supervisor came out of his office and then walked up to the employee, put his hands “all over her backside,” and grabbed her “right on her ass cheeks.” He said the employee “just kind of laughed” about the incident but seemed uncomfortable.

Another Maintenance Division employee told us that he had also witnessed the incident, which he believed had happened a few years before. He said, however, that the Maintenance Division supervisor did not grab the employee’s buttocks. Instead, he said, the supervisor rubbed her lower back for several minutes. He said that he and a coworker were standing in the back during the demonstration when the incident occurred, and that the female employee “just stood there” and did not tell the supervisor to stop. He said the incident made him uncomfortable and he left the demonstration soon afterward.

We interviewed the coworker, who confirmed that he had witnessed the incident. He told us that the supervisor did not put his hand on the female employee’s buttocks, but did rub her lower back. He said he and his coworker were the only ones standing behind the woman when the supervisor placed his hand on her back and “rubbed it kind of low” for about 10 seconds. He said the incident made him uncomfortable and he moved away from where he was standing.

We also interviewed the female employee about the incident. She told us that she could not recall the Maintenance Division supervisor touching her during the demonstration, but said that if he had, it would have been to put his hands on her waist and move her out of the way. She acknowledged that he had touched her shoulders and arms occasionally during the years they

worked together, and that he would stand behind her and put his hands on her shoulders while she was sitting in her office chair. She said, however, that he had never touched her inappropriately or made her uncomfortable.

While the Maintenance Division supervisor acknowledged that he and the female employee had been at the demonstration together, he denied grabbing her buttocks or rubbing her lower back. He did admit that he could have touched her lower back because they were friendly with each other and had a good working relationship. He also admitted that he occasionally touched her shoulders, her arms, and the middle of her back, and he said that she would reciprocate by tapping him on the shoulder when he walked by her.

When asked whether it was right or wrong for him, as a supervisor, to touch a female employee, the Maintenance Division supervisor stated: “Times have changed,” but admitted: “Nowadays, yes, it’s wrong.”

Allegation 4: Employees Verbally Abused a Female Coworker

The article stated that the Yellowstone employee described “a practice of abuse” of female employees in the Maintenance Division unit. Although the article did not specify that he was referring to verbal abuse, during our interview he gave an example of alleged verbal abuse that he had witnessed. He explained that a woman who had worked there had been subjected to abusive behavior in the form of derogatory comments and name calling by two male coworkers, and that he had witnessed the female employee crying several times because of the abusive behavior and language directed toward her. He claimed that the two male employees had called her a bitch and said that she was not capable of doing her job. He said that the two were well behaved as individuals, but when they were together they acted like “two 3-year-olds.”

We interviewed the woman, who was no longer associated with NPS. She told us that when she was with the unit, she was assigned to operate the worst equipment, which she felt was unfair treatment. She explained that the two male employees, both of whom were younger and less experienced than she was, were given better equipment while she was given equipment that always broke down. She said that the male employees would tease her and blame her when she reported broken equipment, and she would go home crying out of frustration.

She also described an experience she had at Yellowstone that predated the period the Yellowstone employee discussed in his initial allegations (2011 to 2015). She told us that a coworker, who left NPS in the early 2000s, had verbally abused her by calling her a derogatory name after they had a disagreement and telling her that if she had not been a woman, he would have punched her. She stated that the other men in the unit turned against her after the incident because they thought she was going to file a complaint against her coworker, but she did not because she needed her job. Instead, she said, she requested help from her supervisor to resolve the conflict, and he, along with the Maintenance Division supervisor, eventually resolved the matter.

When we interviewed one of the male employees about the allegation that he had verbally abused the woman, he told us that he had “more or less” gotten along with her but felt she was

“pushy.” He said that when he first started working with her, he accepted her negative behavior toward him, but over time he became more comfortable in his job and learned to ignore her. He admitted that he had called her a bitch and said he had done so because he was frustrated with her; he told us he considered her “marginal” in her job. When asked if the other male employee had ever called her a bitch, he said he did not know.

The second male employee told us that he had gotten along “just fine” with her and had never argued with her. He denied the allegation that he had called her a bitch or spoken negatively to her. He told us that she and his male coworker had not always agreed about how to operate equipment and that his coworker felt she had not maintained equipment properly. He said, however, that his coworker’s complaints about equipment operation and maintenance were not solely directed at her, but at male employees as well. When asked if his coworker had ever called her a bitch, he said not to his knowledge.

Allegation 5: A “Men’s Club” Environment Existed in the Maintenance Division Unit

In the article, the Yellowstone employee referred to a “men’s club” environment. When we asked him to clarify, he told us that working with the unit’s male employees, who had worked together and known each other for a long time, was difficult because they would “just take over the place.”

The employee acknowledged that the unit, which handled many repair and maintenance tasks at Yellowstone, played a vital role in the park’s operations. He believed, however, that the mentality of having prestige at the park—along with being under the direction of the Maintenance Division supervisor, who the employee said promoted this mentality—created an environment ripe for abusive behavior like the issues he had alleged. He also stated that the Maintenance Division supervisor knew about the misconduct in the unit, but did not stop it.

Current and previous Maintenance Division officials partially agreed with the employee’s allegation regarding the mindset of the unit’s employees. The Maintenance Division supervisor described the culture at Yellowstone as a “good old boy system.” He told us that when he came to Yellowstone in the 1990s, this culture was rampant, and he acknowledged that although it had improved over time, it still existed. He explained that the absence of available housing at Yellowstone hindered the park’s ability to attract qualified applicants for open positions, so local applicants had to be selected. He acknowledged that when he first became a supervisor, he felt pressured to hire local individuals considered to be part of the “good old boys’ club,” but that pressure had lessened over time. He believed that hiring people from outside the area would help change the park’s culture. Another Maintenance Division official also believed that there was a good old boy system in this unit and in another Maintenance Division unit, and told us of past incidents of misconduct had occurred. In addition, the former deputy superintendent said that he believed there was “some merit” to the statement that such a system existed and that there was some tolerance of “boys being boys.”

We found that between 2010 and 2016, six women who had previously worked in this unit had been subjected to derogatory comments or actions that made them feel uncomfortable:

- As discussed in Allegation 4 of this report, a former employee told us that she was subjected to verbal abuse and unequal treatment while assigned to the unit.
- The former seasonal employee we interviewed in connection with Allegation 2 told us that men in the unit would make sexual and racist comments in her presence while she was working, and their remarks made her feel “uncomfortable and degraded.” She said that a relative of her supervisor was part of the unit and his drinking and comments were among the worst. We interviewed this employee, who acknowledged that he might have used a racial slur in the former employee’s presence. The former employee also said that someone once stole six pairs of her underwear from her dresser drawer.
- Another Yellowstone employee told us that when she worked in the unit she was subjected to verbal abuse and “dirty” language from two male coworkers. We interviewed the coworkers, both of whom denied the allegation.
- A former temporary seasonal employee told us that when she worked in the unit, her supervisor offended her by referring to her and the other Native American employees in the unit as Indians.
- Another former temporary seasonal employee told us that a male coworker had harassed her and made inappropriate comments that caused her to feel nervous around him. She said that she reported this behavior to the Maintenance Division supervisor and told him she did not want to work with the male employee anymore, and the supervisor agreed. The supervisor confirmed her account and told us that he did not rehire the male employee for the following season.
- The former seasonal employee interviewed in connection with Allegation 1 told us that she had been mistreated during her time at Yellowstone. While she did not want to discuss her experiences in detail, she told us that she believed women at Yellowstone were treated differently because they were women. She said that Yellowstone was a “man’s world” and that park officials needed to “wake up” to the fact that men there were “very dominating.”

We also confirmed the Yellowstone employee’s allegation that the Maintenance Division supervisor had been aware of some misconduct in the unit but failed to correct it:

- Regarding the statement by the former seasonal employee that some employees drank heavily and used derogatory language, the Maintenance Division supervisor said that he had a stated policy that no open drinking was permitted in common areas of work locations. He admitted, however, that he knew the employees drank openly in spite of this policy. He also admitted that he knew the drinking occurred in the former employee’s presence but that he took no action except to warn her when she got drunk. A subordinate of the Maintenance Division supervisor, who had briefly supervised these employees, said that some drank in the former employee’s presence and that at times they got a “little loud” and “maybe a little obnoxious.” He told us that, in hindsight, he should never have allowed alcohol “anywhere near that whole area.”

- This subordinate also alleged that an employee had been allowed to work directly for a relative. He told us that “on paper” the employee worked for the Maintenance Division supervisor, but in reality he worked for his relative. This employee acknowledged that he had worked under his relative’s direct supervision. The Maintenance Division supervisor also admitted that the employee had worked under his relative’s supervision at times and acknowledged that he had known at the time that this violated NPS’ anti-nepotism policy.

As part of our investigation, we identified all current permanent and seasonal female employees who were assigned to the Maintenance Division in 2016. We interviewed 30 of these employees, as well as 26 male employees. Most stated that they had not personally experienced or witnessed sexual harassment, discrimination, or intimidation, but seven employees reported concerns about the male-dominated environment or perceived hiring discrimination (discussed on p. 13 of this report) in the Maintenance Division.

In an attempt to assess whether sexual harassment or gender discrimination was a problem outside the Maintenance Division, we reviewed all 14 Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaints (8 formal and 6 informal) filed by Yellowstone employees from 2011 to 2016. There were no EEO complaints involving sexual harassment, and the only gender-based complaint was filed in 2012 by a male employee alleging discrimination based on sexual orientation.

We also reviewed Yellowstone’s 2016 exit survey of 217 seasonal employees. Two of the 38 survey questions pertained to safety concerns, discrimination, sexual harassment, hostile work environment, and bullying in the workplace:

1. “I felt empowered to report occurrences of safety concerns, discrimination, sexual harassment, a hostile work environment and/or bullying.”
 - Of the 217 respondents, 14 percent gave a negative answer (either “disagree” or “strongly disagree”) to this question.
 - The Maintenance Division had the highest percentage of negative answers, with 30 percent.
2. “I understood my responsibilities on reporting safety concerns, sexual harassment, a hostile work environment and/or bullying in the workplace.”
 - Of the 217 respondents, 4 percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed.
 - The division with the highest percentage of negative answers was Resource and Visitor Protection, with 7.59 percent, followed by Maintenance, with 6.67 percent.

Allegation 6: Financial Misconduct Occurred Under the Maintenance Division Supervisor's Direction

The article mentioned reports of an environment of financial misconduct at Yellowstone. When we interviewed the Yellowstone employee, he alleged that during his detail in another unit under the supervision of the Maintenance Division supervisor, the Maintenance Division supervisor directed him and a coworker to use the supervisor's assigned Government credit card to make purchases when the two reached their monthly credit limit on their assigned Government credit cards. The employee explained that the supervisor interrupted a meeting he and his coworker were attending and told them that he did not "give a goddamn if [they were] out of money." He then directed the two to use his Government credit card to make purchases when the two no longer had credit remaining on their cards. He said he objected to this directive, but the supervisor told him that there would be no discussion about it.

Another supervisor in this unit confirmed the Yellowstone employee's account of this directive. He explained that he had been out of the office the day the Maintenance Division supervisor interrupted the meeting, but the employee had called him the same day and informed him about what had happened. He told us that when he returned to work, he confronted the Maintenance Division supervisor and told him: "We can't do this," because the two employees would "lose their purchasing authority" if they did. He said that about 7 or 8 years before, he had often seen the Maintenance Division supervisor give his Government credit card to two employees in the unit and direct them to use it to make purchases.

We interviewed these employees, who both acknowledged that the Maintenance Division supervisor had directed them to use his Government credit card to make purchases once they reached their monthly credit limit on their cards. One said that the supervisor gave him this direction approximately 2 to 4 years before; the other said the supervisor had directed him to do this approximately 5 years before.

We reviewed the U.S. Department of the Interior's Integrated Charge Card Policy Manual, which governs the use of credit cards issued by the Department. The manual expressly states that cardholders must not allow anyone else to use their cards, convenience checks, account numbers, personal identification numbers, or other sensitive information related to their cards.

The Maintenance Division supervisor admitted that he had in the past directed four employees to use his assigned Government credit card to make purchases when they had reached their monthly credit limits. He acknowledged that allowing someone else to use his assigned card violated departmental policy. He said that now, when his staff reached their credit limits on their assigned cards, he would make purchases for them using his card.

The Yellowstone employee also alleged that other employees had tried to get him to use his Government credit card to make split purchases (breaking a large purchase into small, separate purchases) in order to circumvent the lengthy procurement process. He said that he refused to do this.

The Maintenance Division supervisor acknowledged that split purchasing had been a common practice 7 or 8 years before, but said it no longer occurred because the Maintenance Division had begun using blanket purchase agreements to purchase larger items. A Maintenance Division official also acknowledged that the division had frequently used split purchasing, in part because dealing with the contracting office was “extremely difficult.” An employee told us that the Maintenance Division supervisor had directed him in the past to make split purchases, but he could not recall specifics. He said that the practice had stopped approximately 8 years before. Another employee also told us that the Maintenance Division supervisor had directed him in the past to make split purchases but that he had refused.

To confirm the extent of split purchasing in the units under the supervision of the Maintenance Division supervisor, we reviewed the results of Yellowstone’s Government credit card audits from 2011 to 2016. Out of 1,962 total accounts audited during these years, no split purchases were identified in one of the units. In another, nine transactions were identified in 2013, four in 2014, two in 2015, and none in 2011, 2012, or 2016.

Finally, the Yellowstone employee alleged that another employee had made approximately \$10,000 in personal charges to her Government credit card. He said that she “got caught” but was later promoted.

We interviewed this employee, who now worked for another bureau in the Department, about the allegation. She denied charging \$10,000 to her Government card, but admitted that for a period in the 1990s she had used the card occasionally for personal cash advances and once to pay for work-related training for another NPS employee. She said, however, that she had paid all of the money back, and she clarified that she was not promoted afterward; rather, she was demoted and reassigned to a lower-level position at Yellowstone.

We confirmed that the employee was demoted. In the late 2000s she made a lateral transfer to her current bureau, where several years later she was promoted to her current pay grade.

Yellowstone and Regional Officials Were Unaware of These Alleged Issues

We interviewed Yellowstone and NPS regional officials, including Superintendent Dan Wenk, Wenk’s former deputy, and two officials from NPS’ Intermountain Region about the issues the employee alleged in the article. All denied any knowledge of the issues until just before the article was published; however, Wenk believed that “there might be a grain of truth” to the allegations. He acknowledged there had been issues with employee misconduct in the Maintenance Division, specifically the units referenced in this report. In addition, the deputy said there had been two sexual harassment incidents at Yellowstone in 2016, but both had been resolved with the suspension or reprimand of the male employees involved. Neither incident involved the Maintenance Division or the employees mentioned in this report.

No Indication of Hiring Discrimination by the Maintenance Division Supervisor

During our investigation, a subordinate of the Maintenance Division supervisor alleged hiring discrimination against women in one of the Maintenance Division units. He said that in early

2016, the Maintenance Division supervisor told him: “We’re not hiring any women this year.” He said the Maintenance Division supervisor made the comment after learning that a woman was planning to apply for an open position in the unit.

The Maintenance Division supervisor acknowledged making the comment to his subordinate and told us he had not wanted to hire any women into that unit because the unit had not had a permanent supervisor since the former supervisor retired. Knowing that the unit did not have “too good a record at this point in time,” he said, he did not want the “distraction” of a woman there without direct supervision. He told us, however, that he later changed his mind; he said he offered seasonal positions to two women, but they both declined. We confirmed this statement. As of the date of this report, the unit had no female employees.

We reviewed all job announcements, lists of certified applicants, and selectees associated with the Maintenance Division since 2013, and found the following:

- There were 61 job announcements associated with the Maintenance Division. (Many of these announcements had multiple hires.)
- Out of the 1,238 certified applicants for these announcements, 170 (13.7 percent) were women.
- Of the 170 certified female applicants, 94 were offered positions.
- Of the 216 total applicants who accepted positions, 31 (14.4 percent) were women. (The remaining 63 female applicants declined for various reasons.)

SUBJECTS

1. Maintenance Division supervisor, Yellowstone National Park, NPS.
2. Maintenance Division supervisor’s former subordinate (retired), Yellowstone National Park, NPS.

DISPOSITION

We provided this report to the Acting NPS Director for any action he deemed appropriate.