

Summary: Allegations of Travel and Ethics Violations by NPS Superintendent and Other Park Employees Unfounded

Report Date: May 3, 2017

The OIG investigated allegations that a national park superintendent, two of the park's administrators, and a Midwest regional officer may have violated ethics and travel regulations by joining an outside professional organization and attending multiple yearly conferences. It was alleged that the membership to the organization and the related travel were not essential to their respective positions and were a waste of taxpayer's money.

We found no evidence that employees violated Department ethics or Federal travel regulations through their membership in the outside trade organization or by attending the annual conferences. There was a consensus among the park employees and some National Park Service (NPS) regional office personnel that membership to the organization enhanced their ability to operate the park's unique assets. Additionally, NPS regional leadership were aware of the travel and supported it.

We also confirmed that the memberships were held in the name of the park and therefore did not violate Federal appropriations law, which generally prohibits the Federal Government from paying employees' membership fees for employees to outside organizations.

This is a summary of a report of investigation that we provided to the NPS Director.

