

Summary: Allegation Unfounded That Former NPS Senior Official Violated Post-Employment Ethics Law

Report Date: November 22, 2017

The OIG investigated an allegation that a former National Park Service (NPS) senior official violated Federal ethics laws by seeking post-retirement employment at a university, while acting in his official capacity as an NPS senior official during discussions with a professor from that university. The senior official and the professor allegedly discussed the possibility of the university forming a national parks institute, which the senior official hoped to head after he retired. In addition, before he retired, the senior official allegedly improperly arranged the transfer of an NPS employee to the campus of the university.

Our investigation did not find evidence that the senior official violated any ethics laws or regulations. University staff, NPS employees, and the senior official told us that he did not discuss post-retirement employment with the university while he was a NPS senior official, did not communicate with the NPS on behalf of the university after retiring, and was not involved in the NPS employee's transfer to the university.

Although our investigation did not find that the senior official was involved in the employee's transfer to the university, we did find that the NPS did not have an adequate business case to justify the move, which cost approximately \$29,000 and resulted in a cost-of-living increase in the employee's pay. Most of the NPS managers we interviewed believed the NPS' stated goals for the transfer were inadequate or could have been accomplished by transferring the employee to a location other than the university.

This is a summary of an investigative report that we issued to the Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks for any action deemed appropriate.

