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NPS FOIA OFFICER
12795 W. Alameda Parkway
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, CO 80225
Fax: 303-969-2557
FOIA.gov

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United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DENVER SERVICE CENTER
12795 W. Alameda Parkway
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

IN REPLY REFER TO:
DOI-NPS-2023-004792

June 7, 2023

Via Email

This letter is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated May 27, 2023, in which you requested:

A copy of the Integrated Communications Plan (the most recent such plan) for the NPS Division of Law Enforcement, Security and Emergency Services (LESIS). This plan was developed with the aid of MDB, Inc. in 2015-2016.

Upon review, your request has been granted in full. Attached is 1 PDF consisting of 34 pages, which is being released to you in its entirety.

We have conducted a foreseeable harm analysis under the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016 and, after consulting with a subject matter expert, 1) we do not reasonably foresee that disclosure of this information would harm an interest that the FOIA's exemptions were designed to protect and 2) disclosure would not be prohibited by law. Therefore, we are releasing this information in full. Please be aware that our decision to release this information does not mean that we have waived our ability to invoke applicable FOIA exemptions for similar or related information in the future.

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Please do not hesitate to contact me, as the person responsible for processing your request, with any further questions or concerns. I can be reached at waso_foia_requests@nps.gov. Additionally, the Department's FOIA Public Liaison can be reached by emailing doifoiapublicliaison@sol.doi.gov.

Sincerely,

SARAH
GAMBLE

Digitally signed by
SARAH GAMBLE
Date: 2023.06.07
07:31:27 -04'00'

Sarah Gamble
Records and Information Management Specialist
Information Resources, National Park Service
waso_foia_requests@nps.gov
(202) 230-2980

Communications Plan

**A comprehensive strategy for expanding
and improving Division communications**

Prepared for:

**Division of Law Enforcement,
Security, and Emergency Services
National Park Service**

Prepared by:

MDB, Inc.

March 13, 2015

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Introduction

Rangers desire more communications from the National Park Service's Division of Law Enforcement, Security, and Emergency Services (LESES). They are not only open to the idea, but they also can easily envision how LESES information would be valuable to them and something they would eagerly consume. That was a key finding of the research MDB, Inc. conducted for LESES.

The receptivity and recognition among Rangers of the value of potential communications provides a good opening for LESES. Yet undertaking a new communications program still presents significant challenges. Virtually no one in the field knows what LESES is or has a clear understanding of what it does. The organizational structure within which LESES works – the chain of command and the separation of operational and policy responsibilities – makes communications more difficult. The tasks performed by Rangers working under the LESES umbrella of responsibilities cover an array of duties. And there are no simple, catch-all communications channels that will reach all of LESES's audiences consistently.

The communications plan outlined in this report recognizes these challenges and provides strategies for overcoming them. It reflects the need to educate Rangers about what LESES is, basically introducing the Division to them for the first time, and it counts on repetition to build awareness, recognition, and credibility over time. It provides a significant focus on “branding” the Division to make it more easily recognizable and understood. And it calls for the use of multiple communications platforms to convey information and serve Ranger information needs.

It's worth noting from the outset what the communications plan does not do. It does not suggest significant changes in the organizational structure of the NPS. It respects the existing roles of key players, such as Park Chiefs, Superintendents, and the Regions.

The plan also does not envision diminishing the work of the branches that operate under the LESES umbrella. The work of the branches, including communications on specific issues related to their responsibilities, will continue. But the plan does envision the branches playing a role in helping the Division communicate better. And, likewise, under this plan improved LESES communications will enhance its role in supporting the work of the branches.

Through the implementation of this communications plan, LESES will raise its profile significantly among its primary audiences. That, in turn, will ensure that Rangers have the information to do their jobs and understand how to find even more resources. It enhances their sense of part of a national team in which they are proud to be a part. It will elevate awareness of the critical contributions of Rangers who perform law enforcement and emergency services duties and enhance the professionalism of their work. And, perhaps most importantly, it will ensure that new policies and directives are communicated in a clear and timely manner to those who need to know and understand them.

This communications plan was informed by research findings presented to LESES in a December 1, 2014 report prepared by MDB. The discussions we had with the LESES team – including individual conversations and meetings with the entire team – were critical to our ability to develop this blueprint. That research, conducted under Task 1 of the Scope of Work, our subsequent collaboration with the LESES team, and our communications expertise provide the foundation on which this plan is built.

In this plan, we have attempted to strike the right balance between what is ideal with what is realistic. While we understand that LESES may not be able to implement all aspects of the communications plan immediately, we have outlined a plan that we believe is achievable. We also note which tactics are most critical in the near term, and we offer some ideas that could be implemented should resources permit.

The plan provided in this document follows the structure outlined in the Scope of Work under Task 2.

1. Goals and Objectives

In developing the communications plan, it's first important to define what we are attempting to achieve. What are the overarching goals and objectives? All other elements of the plan should contribute to achieving these targets. Some communications tactics may be designed to contribute only or primarily to achieving one goal, while others will address multiple goals.

In identifying these overall targets, we have identified big-picture "strategic goals," which are the overriding purposes of the plan. These are supported by "tactical objectives," which are actions to achieve the major strategic goals.

Below we outline these major goals and objectives and provide an explanation of the rationale and purpose of each.

Strategic Goals

➤ **Raise awareness of LESES – its name and role – primarily internally.**

As our research showed, virtually no Rangers know what LESES means, and they didn't know the name of the Division either. When prompted, they would offer a guess that it might be the policymaking entity in Washington, DC. This lack of familiarity applies to others as well, including Park Chiefs and Superintendents.

Consequently, a critical first goal is to ensure that your audiences recognize the Division. But, in addition, you must explain what its role is. That awareness includes its policy-related responsibilities and operational duties, but it also includes being the home of experts who can help Rangers and other NPS leaders, as well as the central office for all law enforcement and emergency services responsibilities and personnel.

➤ **Position LESES as the go-to source of expert information for Rangers performing duties under the LESES umbrella of responsibilities.**

Rangers regularly search for information that will help them do their jobs or simply to fulfill their interest in what is happening to their colleagues at other parks. Now, they rely too much on informal networks, word-of-mouth, and rumors to fulfill these information needs.

A central aim of the communications plan should be to get Rangers to view LESES as the respected source of information about topics related to their jobs. Their first instinct should be to check with LESES as the go-to source of credible, accurate information.

➤ **Position LESES as a voice and advocate for Rangers.**

As our research report stated, “LESES should play the leading role in improving the understanding – within the NPS and among the public – of what law enforcement Rangers do and their value to the NPS and the nation.” This, of course, applies to Rangers who primarily perform emergency services duties as well. And an important external audience is other law enforcement agencies with whom Rangers often work.

Rangers not only want someone to help explain the functions they perform to other authorities within the NPS, such as Superintendents and the top national leadership, but they would clearly appreciate indications that a national entity is speaking up for them, serving as their advocate and cheerleader.

➤ **Ensure that all Rangers working in areas under LESES’s jurisdiction – including seasonal Rangers, the “militia,” and those who primarily perform collateral, non-law enforcement duties – understand the Division and feel a part of it.**

While all of the participants in the focus groups we conducted during the research phase called themselves “Law Enforcement Rangers,” even as they perform “collateral duties,” it is important that those other Rangers who primarily perform emergency services duties understand that they too fall under the LESES umbrella. Communications must convey that they are a critical part of the Division as well.

Likewise, when the “militia” is organized and later called into service, those individuals must similarly understand the role of LESES and how they’re a part of the team. This is not to say that all members of the militia need to be treated with the same amount of information as those working, say, in law enforcement on a daily basis. But LESES must be relevant to all of those parties.

Tactical Objectives

➤ **Increase the number of communications tools used.**

Currently, LESES communicates through the chain of command, issuing policy directives and memos through the Regions. (We recognize that some branches under LESES communicate in varying ways to those under their jurisdiction.) Using this method of information distribution, communications may not always reach important audiences, such as front-line Rangers, they often do not get to them in a timely manner, and the fate of documents are subject to the whims of various parties along the distribution chain. Similarly, current practices do not contribute to creating awareness of LESES. They do not build the brand identity.

A significant objective – essential to achieving the goals outlined above – is as simple as increasing the number of types of communications tools employed. There is no one tool that will ensure communications reach any given audience and certainly not every audience. People regularly rely on multiple communications platforms. The plan calls for using numerous new tools that to convey information and provide a steady stream of communications from LESES.

➤ **Communicate directly with internal stakeholders, especially front-line Rangers.**

As Chief Charles Cuvelier points out, today most Rangers only have a direct relationship with LESES at the beginning and end of their careers – when they're commissioned and when then separate from the service. That must change. Rangers and other key audiences should hear directly from LESES on a regular basis – throughout their careers, throughout the year.

Only through direct exposure will LESES be able to create a clear identity with those in the parks. Direct communications will build awareness of what LESES is, but it will also help ensure that Rangers understand that LESES is an expert source of information and guidance, as well as the national office for their profession.

➤ **Ensure that direct communications are delivered in a timely manner.**

As noted above, today no one can say with any certainty when or how a Ranger may hear about, for example, a new policy directive. A Region may decide to hold onto a document for days, weeks, or indefinitely. If a Park Chief receives notification from a Region, he or she may decide to pass along an e-mail at some point or simply orally convey a summary of the information during a meeting with the Rangers under his or her command.

To address this serious uncertainty, LESES must strive to ensure that important communications not only reach their intended audiences in a somewhat uniform manner, but also do so in a timely way. During the focus group research, Rangers regularly expressed concern about getting information more rapidly.

➤ **Educate and gain acceptance from internal stakeholders on the communications process and recognition of its importance.**

As new methods of communications are undertaken, it's important that people within the NPS understand what LESES is trying to do and – equally or, in some cases, even more importantly – what it is not trying to do. Rangers and Park Chiefs should be aware that they will now receive direct communications. These parties will also be informed about new resources, such as the new and improved intranet.

Other players, such as Superintendents and Regional Chief Rangers must understand what types of information will continue to flow through them and why and how some information will be sent directly to Rangers. It will be critical to convey to Superintendents, Regional Chief Rangers, and Park Chiefs that LESES is not trying to cut them out of the communications chain nor do an end-run around them. And LESES, through this new approach to communications, is not attempting to undermine their authority or diminish the roles they play.

➤ **Increase sense of uniformity throughout the system (a better balance between national and park-specific needs).**

As one Ranger put it in a focus group, "I always say there's nothing 'national' about the National Park Service." Rangers regularly noted that there is a great diversity of practices from park to park and from region to region. While they all noted the need for

flexibility in order to meet park-specific needs, they felt that too much leeway was granted to Regions and parks in the area of law enforcement.

This lack of uniformity also diminishes a feeling that they are part of a national force. And it contributes to a lack of awareness of, and connection to, LESES. Consequently, a key objective is to strike a better balance between a national system and regional and park variations.

Later, in Section 6: Strategies and Tactics, we tie the goals and objectives together with the communications elements. There we explain how individual tactics contribute to achieving specific goals and reach specific audiences.

During the implementation phases, as communications products and content are developed, we should remain focused on whether and how those tools contribute to the goals and objectives outlined above. Does a particular tool and activity help achieve a goal? And, if so, is it doing so effectively?

2. Key Audiences

For any communications initiative, it's critical to be clear about who we are trying to reach. Who are the primary audiences for the communications activities?

For this communications plan, we have identified several audiences. They are listed here roughly in order of importance – or, rather, to the degree to which we want to reach with them.

➤ **Law Enforcement and Emergency Services Rangers**

This audience includes the 2,000-plus front-line Rangers who perform law enforcement and emergency services duties in the parks, as well as investigators and trainees. For part of the year, it will also include seasonal Rangers. This is the broadest and largest group and the one most difficult to reach and penetrate on an ongoing basis.

Yet they are also the audience that LESES most needs to reach. They are, after all, those who LESES is intended to serve and those who will most benefit from improved communications – information and expertise – from the central office.

➤ **Park Chief Rangers**

Park Chief Rangers, of course, play the most critical role in managing and overseeing operation of functions under the LESES umbrella within the parks. They are, for example, responsible for ensuring that policies issued by LESES are implemented and followed in the parks. They are also the most important and direct communicators with the rank-and-file Rangers on a regular basis.

Consequently, it is critical that communications from LESES is deemed meaningful to them and helps them fulfill their management functions. While they would always receive all the communications distributed or made available to the rank-and-file Rangers, LESES should periodically provide tailored information that is specifically intended for

them. The Park Chiefs also need to clearly understand how a new and improved communications system is intended to work and how it benefits them.

➤ **Regional Chief Rangers**

These officials now play perhaps the most critical role in the communications chain between LESES and the field, deciding what information to pass on, who to distribute it to, and when to do so. They exert tremendous influence in determining the fate of messages from Washington. Documents from LESES can languish in the Regions and the fate of the same communication can vary significantly from Region to Region.

The challenge for LESES is to secure greater control over the flow of information it originates and deems important. This plan will provide great uniformity in how communications are delivered and who receives it. At the same time, however, the Regional Chief Rangers have oversight responsibilities within their Regions and regularly communicate with Rangers in the parks under their jurisdiction.

This plan recognizes the role Regional Chief Rangers play. It would not remove them from the chain. Rather, it provides greater clarity into what they should do with information from LESES. It ensures that they are not a barrier to LESES reaching the field, and it will make their jobs easier.

➤ **Park Superintendents**

Because of the role Superintendents play operationally, overseeing the Park Chiefs and the Rangers in their parks, they must understand how LESES is communicating with the people they supervise. We don't want any Superintendent to think we're doing an end run nor that they are out of the loop. Rather, LESES is communicating directly with law enforcement and emergency services Rangers to help improve performance in the parks on areas in which LESES has special expertise.

LESES also has a role to play in helping educate Superintendents about the value of law enforcement and emergency services within their parks. Rangers have expressed an interest in LESES helping to explain the profession to those who are not, for example, law enforcement specialists.

We believe that Superintendents will welcome this improved communications system. But they need to be aware of what LESES is doing and how they benefit from it.

➤ **Deputy/Associate Regional Directors**

This audience is primarily considered a target because of their supervisory role over the Regional Chief Rangers. (We also want to ensure that everyone in the chain of command is aware of, and as comfortable as possible with, new communications procedures.) By informing them about the new communications methods we are employing, we will reduce resistance to change that may emanate from the Regional Chief Rangers. We will also underscore that we respect the role the Regions play in the NPS and emphasize that we are not attempting to diminish that role.

➤ **Militia Response Workforce**

In addition to the law enforcement and emergency services Rangers listed as our first audience above, another nearly 1,800 NPS personnel serve as qualified members of the “militia,” ready to participate in emergency-response situations, special events requiring an augmented NPS presence, and manage incidents. During these deployments, they come under the LESES umbrella.

Many members of the militia who are not part of the daily law enforcement and emergency services force are most likely interested in many issues related to these specialties. They can be made to feel as part of the team. But their primary concerns are new requirements for training (related to emergency medicine, for example) and the lessons learned following an incident. What do they need to do to stay qualified? And what is the after-action analysis from an emergency incident?

➤ **NPS Leadership**

During our focus group research, many Rangers expressed concern that the upper management of the NPS may not be sufficiently aware of the significant contributions law enforcement and emergency services personnel make and what they do on a daily basis. Signs of LESES educating the NPS leadership – and serving as an advocate for the field within headquarters – would be greatly appreciated by rank-and-file Rangers. They see it as a significant role LESES could play on their behalf.

➤ **Potential Rangers**

The brand, image, and words presented by LESES should also resonate with individuals who may be interested in pursuing a career in law enforcement and related fields within the NPS. Therefore, LESES communications must also reach places such as job sites and descriptions of NPS responsibilities that are viewed by potential recruits.

All of these key audiences (with the exception of potential rangers) are internal stakeholders. It is these internal audiences on which LESES must first focus and serve. But LESES should also take some steps to reach certain external audiences – such as other law enforcement and emergency services professionals, Congress, and the public – to explain and promote the Rangers under its jurisdiction. In many cases, outreach to these external audiences would primarily be designed to show internal audiences that LESES is serving as their champion, representing them well.

3. Main Messages and Themes

Just as LESES oversees a wide spectrum of policies and programs, what it has to say will cover a range of topics. Likewise, new issues and concerns constantly arise related to law enforcement and emergency services. Consequently, LESES will have new things to say about these developments and trends. Rangers, as noted in the research report, are anxious to hear what LESES has to say on a multitude of topics, and they value the expertise that they understand is housed within LESES.

The branches under the LESES will continue to have primary responsibility for issues related to their functions, including communicating about those issues. But the branches must contribute to the overall LESES communications strategy, enhancing the understanding key audiences have about LESES's role as the umbrella organization that unites the number of distinct programs under it.

To help guide the communications program outlined in this document, we have developed a few core messages. These common themes provide the big-picture view of how we want LESES to be seen and understood. While there will be many specific messages used throughout LESES's communications, all of those should complement these overriding themes, bolstering them, and certainly never undermining the concepts embodied in them.

Here are the core messages and themes:

- **LESES serves the millions of visitors to the nation's national parks. It does so by serving and supporting the 2,000-plus law enforcement and emergency services Rangers who make park visits safer, respond to medical needs and emergencies, and protect visitors in other ways. LESES develops policies and provides expertise, guidance, and training to the Rangers in the field.**

LESES is the national office for NPS public safety responsibilities – protecting people and parks. It oversees its law enforcement and emergency services functions, as well as the collateral duties performed by the Rangers in the nation's parks and national monuments. LESES develops the national policies in these areas, provides expertise and guidance to the parks and Rangers, and trains new Rangers to fulfill these roles professionally.

- People make 275 million visits to the nation's more than 400 national parks and monuments every year, and those visits are safer due to dedication of the Rangers working under the LESES umbrella.
- The Division oversees 27 programs – ranging from security, investigations, and search and rescue operations to medical standards, emergency response, and victim assistance to training and commissioning Rangers.
- It is organized into six branches: Operations & Policy, Emergency Services, Security & Intelligence, Investigative Services, Office of Professional Responsibility, and the Law Enforcement Training Center.

Most of NPS Rangers working under LESES's umbrella of programs perform multiple duties. Consequently, most areas LESES supports – from multiple branches and programs – touches the work of individual Rangers regularly.

- **Law enforcement and emergency services Rangers play a key role in the NPS – “protecting and preserving.”**

The NPS could not operate without the Rangers working under LESES. On a daily basis these Rangers fulfill the critical role of protecting and preserving – both people and the natural resources within the parks. They protect people from people, people from resources, and resources from people.

Whether it's enforcing laws and regulations or providing emergency medical assistance to visitor and those who work in the parks or ensuring that people don't harm the natural wonders the parks are preserving, these Rangers ensure that people can visit the parks safely and that the parks will remain for future generations to enjoy.

- **While each park has unique needs, law enforcement Rangers are part of a national team and LESES plays the leading role in fostering this national unity.**

The parks within the NPS vary dramatically – in size, the natural resources they contain, their location (from very remote to urban centers), the number and type of visitors, and the hazards they contain. Likewise, how law enforcement and emergency services are best delivered varies from park to park.

But enforcing laws and providing emergency services requires skilled professionals. And there are laws, regulations, and policies that apply to every park. LESES plays the central role in supporting a national force working in dispersed locations and conditions. From the initial training through the promulgation and issuing of national policies and on to providing expert guidance and support, LESES unites this force of Rangers into a team of professionals serving individual parks, the entire system, and the nation.

- **Rangers have multiple skills, wear multiple hats. “The best deal in civilian service.”**

The Rangers LESES supports are well trained in multiple areas. While the primary focus of most of these Rangers is in law enforcement, they all perform additional duties, such as providing emergency medical services, search and rescue, and managing critical incidents. They perform a full range of tasks on a regular basis, providing a force within the parks that is ready and able to fulfill public safety needs on a moment's notice.

In a world that has become increasingly specialized, these Ranger are truly Jacks (or Jills) of all trades (and master of them too), providing a flexible and ready workforce to meet the most critical needs of the parks and their visitors. With such a wide array of skills, they are truly the “best deal in civilian service.”

- ***Integrity, adaptability, and teamwork* characterize law enforcement and emergency services Rangers.**

Integrity is the foundation for everything they do, the core value by which they serve people and parks. Situations can change rapidly in the parks, and Rangers regularly adapt as they move from performing one type of service to another. And Rangers value the teamwork that goes into providing safety and responding to emergencies and often dangerous situations.

4. Branding

When thinking about “branding” LESES, it is first important to recognize that we are not attempting to build brand recognition in the same way as you would for a product, such as Coke or Pepsi. First, we are not trying to reach a broad consumer audience. Even visitors to parks, for example, don’t need to know or remember what the national office of law enforcement and related services is called or even what it does. In addition, we do not want to brand the division as something separate and distinct from the parent organization, the NPS.

Our brand-related goal is to develop a recognizable name and image for the division for the audiences outlined earlier in this plan. With the brand – and the complementary use of taglines and messages – we can create a greater sense of unity and awareness of what LESES is and what it does, as well as highlight its value to Rangers and the NPS as a whole.

It’s important to keep in mind that a “brand” is more than just a catchy name or creative logo. It’s the combination of words, images, messages, and other focal points that together create a memorable, easy-to-understand identity for an entity, program, or product. No single element can be expected to convey the brand alone. Various elements must work together to support a coherent theme or idea.

As our research clearly showed, almost no Rangers knew the name of the central office. They did not have a sense of what it does or of the breadth of programs under the same umbrella. And the acronym (LESES) was not recognized by anyone, and, when told what it stands for, it was difficult for them to remember.

In part, this lack of recognition is due to the fact that front-line Rangers, and even Superintendents and Park Chiefs, have rarely, if ever, heard directly from LESES. They don’t see the name or acronym. When they hear from the branches, they usually don’t know that they are part of a division. (There was some awareness that policymakers and the Training Center fall under Visitor and Resource Protection.)

A New Name

Over time, we could build recognition for even a difficult name and acronym. And pursuing a branding strategy for the current name is certainly a possibility.

But we would strongly recommend shortening the name and acronym to make it easier to use and remember. Shortening the name, and focusing on one or two concepts, would also contribute to a sense of what unifies the division. By pushing too much into a name, it calls attention to the individual parts, instead of the unified whole.

Points to Consider

When considering a new name for LESES, there are a few key points to keep in mind:

- The name should be as short as possible, while remaining inclusive and allowing audiences to envision the scope of activities that take place within the entity. The shorter the name, the easier it will be to use when accompanying other names, such as the names of the branches.
- Rangers consistently refer to themselves as “law enforcement rangers.”

- “Law enforcement” is the key. Rangers call other aspects of their jobs “collateral duties.”
- But some Rangers only work in emergency services. They play a distinct role and cannot feel excluded.
- Rangers like being called “Rangers,” although the term also applies to others within the NPS who do not perform law enforcement and emergency services duties.
- The word “police” should not be used.
- Rangers tend not to use the words “safety” or “public safety.”
- It could be called a “Division” or “Operations” or “Office” (or “National Office”), and those words could be part of the acronym, but they don’t need to be. (It cannot be called a “directorate.”).
- The name shouldn’t conflict with or seem redundant with the overall Visitor and Resource Protection Directorate or the other units beneath it, which also “protect.”
- A division name could be accompanied by a tagline, which can help explain the breadth of functions that fall under the division umbrella.
- Ideally, the name would be meaningful to civilian counterparts – local sheriff and police departments, and EMS providers – with whom Rangers deal on a regular basis. A name that resonates with these outside entities isn’t essential, but it could be helpful.
- An acronym isn’t necessary, but it can be useful and will probably be used regardless. Whether an acronym is intended or not, the name shouldn’t be allowed to be turned into an odd acronym. (For example, something like “Law Operations, Security, and Emergency Services” or “LOSES” would be very bad. “Division of Ranger Operations and Policies” or “DROP” is another example.)
- The most commonly used words in the 13 names for the division over the last 60 years are “Protection” (used in six of the 13 names), “Ranger” (used five times), and “Law Enforcement” (used three times since 1971).

Examples of Names

In addition to the points outlined above, as we consider a new name for LESES, it is worth noting the names used by similar entities to describe their law enforcement-related offices. Here are a few examples:

- U.S. Forest Service (USDA): **Law Enforcement and Investigations (LE&I)**
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (DOI): **Office of Law Enforcement**
- Bureau of Indian Affairs (DOI): **Office of Justice Services (OJS)**
- Bureau of Land Management (DOI): **Law Enforcement**
(They do not appear to call it a division or office, just “BLM Law Enforcement.” The uniformed personnel are “Law Enforcement Rangers” or “Special Agents.”)
- DOI: **Public Safety, Resource Protection and Emergency Services (PRE)**
(A Deputy Assistant Secretary heads this office, which has oversight of the law enforcement, security, emergency management, intelligence, and wildland fire and aviation functions.)

- **DOI: Office of Law Enforcement and Security**
(This is another office under the Secretary of the Interior. It was created after 9/11, and is led by a Director.)

Note that all of these names focus on the “law enforcement” function. Some of these entities may not have responsibility for emergency services, although some obviously do.

New Name Options

Here are three top options for a new name for LESES. (Note that variations of these names could also work well.) We have briefly stated the chief pros and cons for each name.

Option 1: Law Enforcement & Emergency Services (LE&ES, LEES, or LE)

Pro: It is inclusive of the primary functions within the division. “Law enforcement” clearly includes additional functions, such as investigations, security, and training. The inclusion of “Emergency Services” ensures that those who are not commissioned Rangers, but who perform emergency services duties clearly understand that they’re part of this division.

Con: It isn’t much different or shorter than the current name. The vast majority of Rangers consider themselves “law enforcement Rangers” and would not feel the addition of “emergency services” is necessary. They know those responsibilities are part of the division without it being stated in the name.

Option 2: Law Enforcement Rangers Division (LER or LERD)

Pro: It’s shorter and remains focused on the primary duties of the majority of Rangers. This is what Rangers call themselves. And the word “Rangers” is something unique to the NPS and a label Rangers like.

Con: It may not appeal to the Rangers who primarily, or solely, provide emergency services. And it may not be immediately clear to the militia that this is the division to whom they report during emergencies.

Option 3: People and Park Protection (PPP or 3P or P³)

Pro: This name focuses on what law enforcement and emergency services Rangers actually do – protect people and parks – and why they do it. It emphasizes the mission and service. Rangers are fond of the “3P” saying that they “protect people from people, people from resources, and resources from people.” As noted earlier, the most commonly used word in the 13 names used for the division over the last six decades was “Protection,” which is now also used in the name of the Directorate.

Con: It’s close to “Visitor and Resource Protection,” which could cause confusion and internal opposition. FAM may also feel that this implies it is under this division, since they also “protect” people and parks.

Taglines:

A shorter name could also regularly be accompanied by the use of a tagline. That would allow the use of a simpler name, which is easier to remember and refer to, while offering a greater explanation of what the division includes. A tagline can also help paint a picture of what the division, and its people, ultimately do.

Taglines could be used under the name on most documents – letterhead, newsletters, e-mail messages, etc. Multiple taglines could be used on different documents as well, allowing, for example, a longer explanatory tagline as a “footer” on a newsletter or as part of the masthead.

Possible taglines include:

- “Protect and Preserve”
- “Security, Investigations, and Emergency Services.”
- “Protecting People and Parks”
- “Protecting people from people, people from resources, and resources from people.”
- “Protecting America’s Best Idea”

Visual Identity

A brand is also enhanced by the visual identity that it presents. Usually, the central component of the visual identity is a distinct and creative logo, which, as the brand identity is built, becomes recognizable in its own right. The visual identity captures the viewer’s attention and it should convey a feeling for the entity it represents.

In addition to a traditional logo, graphic marks can help establish an identity as well. (Think of the Nike swoosh.) And the creative use of typography can be used to make a name or acronym stand out and be remembered. (Think of the PBS logo.)

In LESES’s case, we will be somewhat constrained by the NPS Graphic Design Standards (Director’s Order #52B) that govern use the Arrowhead Symbol and how materials developed within the NPS look. A first step in developing the look for LESES products will be to discuss options with the Harper Ferry Center, which is responsible for overseeing graphic design standards within the NPS, and the Communications Office of WASO.

Because the Arrowhead is already widely used and recognized, and recognizing NPS restrictions, we don’t want to develop a separate or competing logo. Rather, we would develop a complementary look or, in essence, a sub-brand that coordinates with the overall NPS brand. The Arrowhead could be incorporated into a visual identity with a new division name. And we might consider slight variations of the Arrowhead.

As part of the branding process, we would identify how the authorized NPS colors – green, gray, and brown – are used to provide a consistent look. And we’d develop distinctive mastheads for use in, for example, the newsletter, e-mail updates, videos, and InsideNPS.

We could, however, consider unique typography or graphic marks to accompany the name, which would help it stand out and become recognizable as a distinct entity within the NPS.

Use of the Brand

As part of the development of a new brand, standards or principles should be developed that would govern how the brand is used on a consistent basis. For example, these guidelines would outline how it is displayed on materials (newsletters, etc.), as well as rules for the use of the division name by branches (on business cards, stationary, branch newsletters, etc.).

(Section 6. Strategies and Tactics has a further discussion of cross-cutting communications principles.)

5. Communications Channels and Tactics

So, how do we actually deliver information? Through what channels do we communicate, introduce and reinforce a new name and brand, convey the messages, and build recognition for LESES with the target audiences?

This section of the plan outlines the specific communications channels LESES should use to reach its audiences. We first provide some brief comments and recommendations on the few existing channels, followed by recommendations for developing and using new conduits for communications.

Existing Channels

LESES currently uses few channels to communicate with its audiences. Through one existing method, information only reaches most key audiences indirectly after passing through others' hands, and it is often filtered by them as they decide what to do with it. Another method, the intranet, requires Rangers to take the initiative, with nothing prompting them to do so. And when they visit the LESES section of InsideNPS, it is hard for them to find the information they're looking for.

Policy Directives

The types of information LESES currently sends include new or updated policies, revised sections of the Law Enforcement Reference Manual, summaries of official reviews of incidents (such as deadly force incidents), and similar critical documents. These travel up the chain of command in Washington and then to the Regions.

Regional Chief Rangers take time to consider in what form they should forward information and to which parties. Who needs to see it? Does it require an additional cover note from them? Does it require action?

To help the Regional Chief Rangers, and to help achieve greater uniformity of action by all the Regions, LESES should include clear directions on these types of documents. These directions should include indicators related to:

- **Distribution:** Who needs to see it? We understand that most memos now have "Attention: Superintendents, Park Chief Rangers . . .", etc. to direct the further distribution of the memos. But we know Regional Chief Rangers are making their own judgment calls on how to distribute the documents.

- **Urgency:** How timely is the information? An indication of how quickly the documents should be passed on could help facilitate faster distribution.
- **What:** What type of document is this? Is it a new policy, an update, or simply useful information? Does it require a response or action? Sometimes this type of document is indicated in the “Subject” line, but it should be clear.
- **Digest:** At times (but not always), it may be helpful to craft a short sample cover note for the Regional Chief Rangers to use when they forward the document. We understand that they now sometimes sit on documents as they consider what, if anything, they need to add to the document as the e-mail it onward.

These memos are often (or always?) from the Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection. By not issuing the memos from the LESES Chief, it further diminishes awareness of LESES. While this may be necessary for internal reasons, effort should be made to highlight early and prominently in the memos that these are documents from the LESES Division.

We understand that these policy documents and reports must go through the chain of command, and they may need to officially come from the Associate Director. These requirements or practices underscore why additional communications (outlined below) are necessary.

InsideNPS

As our research report stated, “All parties would benefit from a central clearinghouse of information. But the content and format of the current intranet keeps everyone from using it.”

The chief complaint Rangers had about InsideNPS was that it was too hard to navigate and that they often stumbled across outdated information, requiring them to continue searching for up-to-date documents. As is true for any site on the Internet, if a visitor becomes frustrated, finding a site hard to use, they quickly leave and never come back.

For LESES, that central repository of information must be housed in the intranet. Rangers need – and want – a place where they can easily go to find policies and other information. Other tools can deliver information and call their attention to new developments and directives, but Rangers also need to be able to go to a central source to find documents on an ongoing basis.

For Rangers to use InsideNPS as a go-to resource, it must be revamped and then reintroduced to them. Fortunately, the NPS is currently developing a new platform for InsideNPS, which provides an opportunity to redesign the LESES sections of the site and start anew.

At this writing, however, details about the new InsideNPS 2.0 are unclear. Consequently, it is uncertain how it will be structured and how easily accessible it will be (that is, whether it will have a responsive web design). But we should assume that it will be a much improved platform on which we can organize and provide reliable information. Once we have a clear understanding of the design and capabilities of the new site, we can develop a structure that works best for Rangers. This will include determining how information is organized and procedures for keeping it up to date.

A user-friendly format will allow Rangers to easily see where information for which they are searching is located, as well as see new updates. The LESES section of the current intranet, for example, has too many categories listed on the left-hand navigation sidebar and they seem to be in a somewhat random order.

As an example, major information categories that would be useful for content presentation and navigation are:

- **Overview** – about LESES, including its branches, and the role of its Rangers
- **Policies and Directives** – clearly labeled and organized, with the Manual available for viewing and downloading, as well as “reforms”
- **News** – new information, copies of newsletters and updates, videos, photos, and perhaps a periodic blog
- **Incidents** – an overview of procedures and short access to information on past incidents
- **Exemplary Rangers** – awards and highlights of outstanding and interesting accomplishments of rank-and-file Rangers
- **Training** – requirements and opportunities
- **Jobs** – opportunities for current Rangers
- **Contact** – how to reach LESES leaders

Once more details about the platform are available, we could work with you to consider the best organization for the site. While no one knows when the new InsideNPS will be ready, we could assume it may be ready to go online next fall. We could then prepare content to be ready to populate the site and introduce it to Rangers at that point.

We will likely know more about the new platform within a few months. At the same time, the first couple of months of the plan’s implementation will be very busy with such initial steps as determining the name, look, and brand, introducing the communications program, and starting to communicate via newsletters. Consequently, we recommend waiting until the third month to determine whether we should develop an alternative to the InsideNPS 2.0 site to serve in the interim or as a substitute. At that point, we can decide whether to develop our own platform (such as a protected WordPress site or secure Google+ platform), which could be redirected or transferred to the new official intranet site.

New Channels

Rangers are a hard group to reach. They don’t sit behind desks waiting for the next e-mail to pop up. They are not fans or regular users of social media. They don’t turn to any one single source to meet their information needs. They sometimes don’t have access to the Internet or phone service when working or traveling in remote areas.

But they are hungry to know more about the NPS and their profession. They regularly search for and consume information on the Internet and through informal networks of colleagues. And, as noted earlier, they are anxious to hear more from LESES.

Two key points are important to remember: First, e-mail is the best way to reach Rangers. They all receive a significant amount of e-mail and say this is the primary way they get information.

Second, a substantial number of Rangers read the Morning Report on InsideNPS. It's often the home page on computers they use in park offices. This suggests that, with an improved platform, proper content, and encouragement, they could easily go further into InsideNPS – and view other online sources – to learn more from LESES.

But to reach a majority of Rangers, LESES will need to use multiple channels. And repetition is critical. The issuance of a new policy, for example, should be announced in a variety of ways and through multiple methods to ensure that front-line Rangers know about the development and understand where to go to find out more. Repetition is also essential to build awareness of the LESES brand and ensure Rangers understand the breadth of work it does.

Quarterly Newsletter

A key component of the communications plan is the development of a regularly issued newsletter. The newsletter provides an opportunity to showcase various aspects of LESES, touch on various topics, reinforce the connection with its branches, and drive readers to additional sources for more information.

It should be published quarterly. (Monthly is probably too often and anything less frequent than quarterly would diminish its value to Rangers.) Ensuring that it's issued on time is important, so Rangers come to expect its publication and are anxious to read it.

Because it will be published only periodically, it will be a summary of various issues, as opposed to a timely delivery device for “hot” news. But serving as an overview is an important attribute, reiterating key information that may have been announced earlier and previewing new developments to come.

The newsletter should be delivered in the body of an e-mail. In this way, the recipients will see the masthead and initial content immediately upon opening the e-mail. They can then scroll down to read the content and find links to additional information. This format also provides significant flexibility in how long each newsletter is. But, in general terms, it should be the equivalent of about two 8.5” X 11” pages in length.

A masthead would showcase the LESES name and that the newsletter is specifically targeted to Rangers. There should be between four to six articles in each issue with at least one visual (photo or chart) on each page.

Newsletter articles should be short and to the point. Links at the end of articles can send the reader to additional information, such as more in-depth explanations of new policies or updated sections of the Manual. Collectively, the articles should convey the ideas behind our key messages. As an example, a typical newsletter could include:

- An article on a new policy or important development that every Ranger should know.
- News from one or two branches that helps explain something of importance to most Rangers and underscores how the branches are tied together within LESES.
- A story on an outstanding Ranger (or group of Rangers) who have done exemplary work, such as dealing with an incident or difficult situation.
- Visits by the LESES Chief to parks and LETC.

- LESES's take on a new law enforcement-related development, such as the use of body cams.
- Short updates on training or job opportunities.
- Reminders of other resources, such as the new InsideNPS, documents/Manual, the expertise of the branch Deputy Chiefs, and upcoming opportunities to share information (via webinars, etc.).
- A sidebar with a "fun fact" on Rangers or the NPS.

The newsletter would be e-mailed to all Rangers, as well as the other key audiences listed earlier. Rangers could save it, print it out, and share it with others as well. Copies of each newsletter would be available in PDF form on the LESES section of InsideNPS for later retrieval and downloading by Rangers. Park Chief Rangers would be encouraged to print out color copies to distribute and have available in their offices.

(See Section 7. Stakeholder Management for comments on mailing lists and distribution. See Section 8. Timeline for suggestions on the timing of publishing the newsletter.)

Periodic Updates/Notices

Because the LESES newsletters will be published only quarterly and we want to stick to a fairly strict publication schedule, they will not be the best vehicles for publishing timely new information. Consequently, LESES should deliver additional short updates to all Rangers between the publication dates of each newsletter. Each update or notice should focus on just one important issue, such as the release of a new or updated policy, commentary on a new development, or showcasing a Ranger who has received an award or other recognition.

These should also be delivered to all of the key audiences via e-mail. But the entire content should be contained within the body of the e-mail (not as an attachment). A good way of providing this content is through a service, such as Constant Contact, that allows the easy distribution of mass e-mails in a format that will remain visually consistent and appealing on any computer or device. Using this type of service also makes it easy to judge how successful an e-mail is by monitoring open and click-through rates.

An example of an update would be an announcement of a new policy. The memo with the precise wording of the new policy would still be delivered through the chain of command. It would also be posted on the LESES section of InsideNPS. But an e-mail notice would also be sent to every Ranger. The notice would feature a masthead specifically for these updates, which would become recognizable over time. It would contain headlines to catch the recipients' attention, contain two-four short paragraphs (written in a punchy, journalistic style) to tell the story, have a photo or other visual, and contain links to click through to get more details and information.

Ideally, an update would be sent about once a month. But the exact timing should be tied to the specific content. Combined with the newsletter, we would ensure that Rangers are hearing from their division at least monthly, that they are receiving critical information in a timely manner, and they are regularly provided access to places where they can get additional information.

Updates for Park Chiefs

Because Park Chief Rangers play such a critical role – as supervisors of Rangers and enforcers of LESES-promulgated policies – some special efforts should be made to communicate directly with them as a special group. They will, of course, receive all of the quarterly newsletters and updates outlined above.

But, at least in the initial stages of the implementation of the communications plan, we should consider sending Park Chiefs periodic updates intended just for them. These would essentially be a short newsletter or alert that speaks directly to them and reflects their unique status and position within the NPS and under LESES. The timing of the issuance of these communications would be between the quarterly newsletters, and the content could be dictated by new developments we want to announce or explaining upcoming plans.

At times, we should also send special video messages that are primarily developed with Park Chiefs in mind. Certain products, such as the identity brochure, would be handy tools for them to use in explaining what law enforcement and emergency services Rangers do. And we may ask them to make copies of some products available in print form.

We should also ensure that Park Chiefs are aware and supportive of – and serve as advocates for – the communications program as a whole. We are confident that they will be very supportive of these new communications. But, initially at least, we should consider sending them an advance notice that messages such as the newsletters will be sent soon to the Rangers working under their supervision. This heads-up could be as simple as an e-mail sent to them two or so days in advance of the newsletter with a preview of the main content.

NPS.gov

While the public web site for the NPS is not a new communications channel, it's new for LESES. The Division now has no presence on the site. And the absence may speak volumes to LESES's key audiences, especially those in leadership positions. Other divisions under the Visitor and Resource Protection Directorate – including Fire and Aviation Management (FAM) and the Office of Public Health (OPH) – have good summaries of what they do and what falls under their jurisdictions. LESES should too.

On NPS.gov, LESES should develop the following content, with visuals, to be posted on a special section of the site:

- Summary overview of what LESES is and what it does.
- Summary of the branches and major programs.
- List of the LESES leadership team.
- A few points on key regulations.
- Highlights of what Rangers do, perhaps showcasing an award-winning Ranger or two.

Having this presence on the public site will also provide access to basic information for other federal agencies as well as counterparts, such as police and sheriff departments who regularly work with Rangers in the field.

Identity Brochure

A simple handout that explains what LESES is, what it does, and what falls under it should also be developed. This should be short and to the point, yet provide a clear understanding of the breadth of services and programs that fall under the LESES umbrella, as well as the contributions made by front-line Rangers. Some of the content developed for the NPS.gov web site can be adapted for this purpose.

The brochure could take a variety of forms, from a traditional three-fold brochure to a larger one-fold pamphlet or even simply an 8.5-by-11" sheet, with content on front and back printed on a heavier card stock. The final printed product should be distributed to top leaders, including Superintendents and Park Chief Rangers, and made available in electronic form (PDF) for all Rangers and NPS personnel.

Mobile App

The new and improved intranet will be a critical home for critical information. As LESES becomes a go-to source of information, this is a prime place where Rangers will go. But many Rangers do not have access to a computer on a daily basis, especially when they're in the field. At the same time, most – most likely a vast majority – have personal smart phones. (An estimated four-in-five Americans under the age of 50 have smart phones, and the rate is most likely higher among Rangers.)

Consequently, LESES should develop a mobile app that Rangers can use at work and at home to access information. Like the intranet site, the app would be a central clearinghouse for all critical content Rangers need to access. But it would offer the content in formats that are specifically designed to be compatible with mobile devices.

The contents offered through an app could include:

- The Law Enforcement Reference Manual (broken down by chapters)
- Summaries of key policies
- Summaries of emergency response procedures
- News (with a "push notice" letting them know when something new is posted)
- The quarterly newsletter (including past issues)
- Videos

Having the Manual easily accessible, for example, would be very beneficial to Rangers. You can easily imagine them checking it periodically and even perusing it during leisure times. The availability of the newsletter through an app would also make it more likely that they'd go back to read it and even read back issues.

Some Rangers expressed reluctance to use their own personal smart phones for work. (For those who said this in focus groups, it was clear that they were primarily expressing frustration over not having government-issued phones.) But we are confident that a LESES app, if available, would be widely used. Importantly, it would also make them more likely to later visit the new InsideNPS site and to seek out additional information from LESES.

Videos

Video messages can be an especially effective means for building the LESES brand, raising awareness, conveying the key messages, sharing highlights of new developments or policies, and driving Rangers to additional sources for more in-depth information. They can also vividly show how LESES is acting on behalf of Rangers, as experts and advocates.

In 2015, almost everyone watches some videos online and on mobile devices. And there are numerous ways to make it easy for people to watch videos on a number of different platforms – from InsideNPS to a YouTube channel.

We recognize that some of the concerns about videos expressed by Rangers and the LESES leadership team relate to the difficulty some Ranges have had in downloading training videos. But we are recommending something different – much shorter videos (usually just one-to-two minutes long) that could be streamed rather than downloaded.

Short, compelling, and timely videos should be produced on a periodic basis. The types of videos LESES should produce include:

- Short (1.5 minute) video announcing a new policy or the release of a new section of the Manual. This would primarily be designed to grab their attention, emphasize the importance of the new development and its key points, and encourage them to pay attention to more detailed explanations provided elsewhere.
- Introducing new resources. This would give a quick overview of resources – such as the new InsideNPS 2.0, an LESES closed Facebook page, the Manual, and centennial plans – and help drive Rangers to them.
- An annual address by the LESES Chief. This will put a face on the Division and create a sense of unity and purpose. A version of this idea was suggested and enthusiastically embraced by the Park Chief Rangers.
- A welcome to seasonal Rangers. Again, the LESES Chief could convey a short message specifically to the seasonal employees.
- Interesting data. A video that focused specifically on data, using graphics and voice-over narration, could ensure that Rangers understood the latest statistics and appreciated the value of collecting data.

Links to these short videos could be sent to Rangers directly. Most often, however, they would be promoted through the e-mailed updates and newsletters described earlier. In addition, they would provide interesting content for the new InsideNPS site and could be easily watch on other platforms as well.

Informal Discussion Groups

As noted in our research report, Rangers tend to have informal networks of friends and former colleagues with whom they regular share or seek information. While they value these relationships, they know they sometimes lead to spreading rumors, and they would prefer that LESES serve as the authoritative sources.

In the focus groups, the Rangers regularly expressed appreciation for being asked their views, and they enjoyed the give and take of conversation with colleagues from other parks. This

prompted several Rangers to say that they'd like to have similar discussions more often. They'd appreciate being asked for their views and insights and from hearing the ideas and experiences of their counterparts in other parks.

To implement this idea, LESES should organize periodic informal discussion groups in which rank-and-file Rangers are invited to discuss topics of interest and share their views. These events would foster information-sharing and create a sense that they are part of a respected national team. They would help solidify the understanding that LESES is in the lead and is connected to the field.

These discussions could usually be conducted as simple conference calls. Webinars are possible as well, although Rangers often have difficulty connecting to webinars online and they are not enthusiastic about this type of interaction. Each discussion could be led by one or two LESES leaders serving as moderators as well as the "experts" who could answer questions. But the primary purpose would be to hear from the Rangers, not to make formal presentations.

Some sessions could be convened simply to invite input or positioned as LESES wanting to hear ideas and views from the field. Others could be promoted as question-and-answer sessions to, for example, clarify new policies or discuss incidents or other hot topics of interest to Rangers.

For LESES, the benefit of these discussions would be to promote LESES as the convener, the experts, and a central office that is well connected to the field. Inviting Rangers to participate is just as important as their participation. In other words, even if only a dozen or so Rangers take part in a discussion, the value of holding it goes well beyond – to the 2,000 others invited and those who hear about the discussion informally afterward through the Ranger grapevine.

Discussions could also be organized by type of park (big or small), region, tenure (a first-year Ranger discussion), and certain special groups, such as the Park Chief Rangers.

Content of Communications

There is much for LESES to communicate – and much that Rangers would like to hear from LESES. Certain information is really critical for them to know – such as new policies and directives – but Rangers also feel that LESES could fulfill a broad range of information needs. As the research report noted, Rangers currently seek out information from outside sources on a regular basis. But they know much of this information may be inaccurate. They fear they participate in spreading rumors as opposed to hearing the facts about, say, an incident that happened in a different park.

Consequently, the content of communications delivered through the vehicles outlined above can cover a very broad and diverse range of subjects. These should include:

- Policies – new, updates, and reminders
- Introducing new tools/resources
- Lessons learned – from incidents and Ranger actions
- LESES analysis of incident reports
- Legal updates

- Updates on trends in law enforcement/emergency services (body cams, etc.)
- Law enforcement-related on news from the parks
- Showcasing and recognizing Rangers doing outstanding work
- Showing the connection between Washington and the park
- “Work skills” training/update
- Annual reports and statistic
- Dashboards and other data

Over the course of a year, all of these types of information should be conveyed in one form or another. Announcing new policies, for example, would be timed to the issuance of those new directives. But as we map out the content of each tool – newsletters, updates, discussion groups, etc. – we should strive to ensure that each type of information is covered through some communications vehicle at some point.

6. Strategies and Tactics

So, how does this all fit together? The previous section outlined specific communications channels and how they should be used to reach the audiences and achieve the overall plan goals. This section of the plan provides a further discussion to explain how it all works together to provide an integrated strategy that will meet the goals and objectives.

Cross-cutting Communications Principles

First, it is helpful to state some overarching communications principles embodied in this plan. These principles apply to most, if not all, of the various elements of the plan.

- The LESES name and acronym, whether the existing ones or new ones, must be prominently displayed on all communications. They should have a consistent look and feel, which will be developed in during the development of an LESES brand.
- The LESES name should appear in all branch-specific communications as well. The branches should ensure that whenever they communicate, it’s clear they are part of the overall Division.
- Direct communication from LESES to all Rangers should be issued regularly. A consistent drumbeat of information – and, most importantly, promotion of the LESES brand – should be delivered. Repetition is vital, especially during the early stage as we’re building awareness and creating the identity of LESES.
- The communications vehicles and tactics discussed in this plan should be brief and easy to consume. The recipients should be able to understand at a glance why each communications product is important to them.
- Communications must be timely. Rangers should feel that they are getting information they need when they need it – when it is new. Likewise, it should clearly be up to date.

- Communications should drive Rangers to other resources, such as InsideNPS, where they can find out more. Short e-alerts and videos can be primary drivers to these resources. As such, they help to position LESES as the go-to source for information.
- New tools, such as the newsletter and InsideNPS 2.0, must be introduced and reinforced. These new tools should be explained and, again, repetition is key. They can't be introduced and then dropped.
- Communications should highlight Washington expertise and the connection between LESES and the parks.

Following these guidelines going forward will not only help ensure that we stay focused and on track, but contribute significantly to the success of the program.

Alignment of Tactics

How does it all align? These two matrixes show how the tactics help us achieve our goals and objectives and reach different audiences.

Alignment of Goals & Objectives with Tactics									
Goals & Objectives	Tactics								
	Policy Directives	InsideNPS	News-letter	Periodic Updates	NPS.gov	Identity Brochure	Videos	Discussion Groups	Mobile App
Raise Awareness	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Position as go-to source	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Voice for Rangers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
All Rangers Included		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Increase no. of tools		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Communicate directly		X	X	X			X	X	X
Timely Delivery		X	X	X					X
Educate Internally		X	X						
Increase Uniformity	X	X	X	X					X

Alignment of Audiences and Tactics									
Audiences	Tactics								
	Policy Directives	InsideNPS	News-letter	Periodic Updates	NPS.gov	Identity Brochure	Videos	Discussion Groups	Mobile App
Front-line Rangers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Park Chief Rangers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reg. Chief Rangers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Park Super-intendents	X	X			X	X	X		
Dep./Assoc. Regional Dir.		X			X	X	X		
Militia Workforce		X	X		X	X	X		X
NPS Leadership		X	X		X	X	X		
Potential Rangers		X			X	X			

Introducing Audiences to the New Communications Plan

For the most part, the new LESES brand and communications plan will be introduced by simply using it. New products will be developed and delivered. Through some products, such as the newsletter and updates, a new development will be announced and explained. For example, when the new InsideNPS or a mobile app are ready to go, the quarterly newsletter would highlight their availability and how they are new and improved. With repetition, awareness will grow.

But for a few audiences – Park Chiefs, Superintendents, and Regional Chief Rangers – we want to ensure that they understand what is planned and what it means for them and the people they supervise. In informing these audiences, we will stress how LESES is taking steps to improve the information flow and access to resources to help Rangers do their jobs. The new initiative will also help them – in the parks and Regions – do their jobs too by ensuring, for example, that people know about new policies and know where to turn for information they need.

Introducing the new brand and approach should include the following steps:

- **Park Chiefs:** A memo explaining the new brand and, in brief, the intention to provide some communications directly to all Rangers should be distributed to all Park Chiefs. They should be invited to participate in a webinar that will explain the rationale for the change and provide an opportunity for them to ask questions. (Most likely, the Park Chiefs will have additional new ideas that could contribute to additional communications practices and content.)
- **Superintendents:** Park Superintendents should simply be made aware of highlights of new procedures LESES will use to communicate with people working under their supervision in the parks. Sending this communication to the Superintendents also provides an opportunity to educate them about the role of LESES. Special information should be prepared for them that extols the value of law enforcement and emergency services Rangers. We do not believe that Superintendents need a webinar or conference call to discuss the changes. But, to keep everyone in the loop, we should inform Regional Directors at the same time, sharing similar information with them.
- **Regional Chief Rangers:** A memo should also be sent to the Regional Chief Rangers, informing them of the changes. This communication will also stress how it does NOT change or diminish their oversight role. They are not being cut out of the chain of command. Rather, we are helping to make their jobs easier too. A webinar/conference call should be conducted with them to explain the changes briefly and respond to any of their concerns. To pave the way for securing acceptance from this group, and to ensure everyone is in the loop, we should similarly send a memo to the Deputy/Associate Regional Directors in advance of the communication with their subordinates.

The opening for the discussion with each of these groups can be the announcement of any name change. That can be the starting point for explaining how additional steps will be taken to improve communications.

In this educational phase, LESES is simply informing these audiences in a positive way, highlighting the benefits for them and addressing any concerns they may have. It is NOT asking for their approval for these changes.

7. Stakeholder Management

Creating and maintaining up-to-date, accurate lists can be a daunting challenge for most organizations. The one constant of lists is that they're ever-changing. And unless an organization knows a person's current e-mail address, they cannot be contacted.

Fortunately, we understand that the NPS Office of Human Resources has good e-mail lists of all NPS employees. From our past discussions, we also understand that they can provide us with up-to-date lists broken down by categories, such as law enforcement and emergency services Rangers, Park Chief Rangers, and Superintendents. These should be the best lists for us to rely upon for most of our outreach efforts.

During the early stages of the implementation of this plan, we should contact the Office of Human Resources to discuss our needs for lists and establish procedures for securing lists from them on a regular basis. We would discuss with them the format we'd like (for a listserv or in an Excel format for use with services, such as Constant Contact), as well as how much advance notice they need to provide the lists.

Because there are personnel changes happening constantly, we should request the latest, most up-to-date lists from Human Resources before each communication that requires use of these lists. In this way, we can continue to rely on Human Resources to keep these lists accurate, which they will be doing for other (personnel-related) purposes.

8. Timeline

In this section, we outline a timeline for implementing this communications plan. This should be used for exemplary purposes, as a model, not a precise timeline. The precise timeline will depend upon such factors as when implementation begins and other issues relating to the calendar. For example, the timing of some activities (a newsletter, update, and the development of the new intranet site) should coincide with certain dates in the calendar, such as when seasonal Rangers are on board for the summer, when a new policy needs to be announced, and when InsideNPS 2.0 is available.

Nevertheless, this timeline provides a good sense of the order in which activities should take place, the preparation work needed, and the frequency in which certain activities should be undertaken. While it is uncertain exactly when implementation will begin, when reviewing this schedule, one could think of “month one” as being in April 2015.

Timetable for Implementation	
Month One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine name of LESES (new or retention of the existing name). • Begin developing brand using name, including guidelines for usage, as well as design prototypes to use on newsletters, updates, etc. • Develop calendar of anticipated policy directives. • Discuss list needs with Office of Human Resources. • Outline possible content for first quarterly newsletter.
Month Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare content on LESES for NPS.gov web site. • Write content for first newsletter. • Begin drafting LESES identity brochure/fact sheet. • Inform key stakeholders (Regions, Park Chiefs, and Superintendents) of new plans. • Develop script for first video (likely welcome as seasonal Rangers come on board).
Month Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute first quarterly newsletter. • Finalize identity brochure. • Produce and distribute first video. • Determine subject of first update (to be distributed in Month Four). • Assess likely timing of InsideNPS 2.0 and determine whether alternative is needed.
Month Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute first update. • Begin determining infrastructure and content for new intranet site. • Distribute identity brochure.
Month Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop content for new intranet site. • Distribute second update. • Prepare content of second quarterly newsletter.
Month Six	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute second quarterly newsletter. • Produce second video. • Determine first informal discussion group (identify subject and target participants). • Develop content for new intranet site (continued).

Month Seven
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute second video. • Launch and promote new intranet site. • Conduct first informal discussion group. • Conduct informal assessment to get initial reaction to use of new tools.
Month Eight
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare third quarterly newsletter. • Distribute update. • Consider adjustments to communication program. • Promote intranet site.
Month Nine
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute third quarterly newsletter. • Unveil new section to intranet site. • Conduct second informal discussion group.
Month Ten
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute update. • Promote intranet site. • Produce video.
Month Eleven
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute video. • Distribute update. • Prepare fourth quarterly newsletter.
Month Twelve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute fourth quarterly newsletter. • Begin evaluation of communications plan to date.

9. Evaluation

Undertaking a comprehensive communications strategy is new for LESES. It has never communicated directly to all Rangers. The plan calls for employing new channels and tactics that haven't been tried before and Rangers aren't used to using or receiving. Rangers are, by the nature of their work, hard to reach. And operational issues, such as the lack of a straight line in the chain of command from LESES to the parks, present challenges.

Before evaluating how well the communications plan is working, it must be given time to work. Dramatic changes in perception will not happen immediately; they require time and repetition to take hold. But some changes, such as recognition of a new name for the division, can happen fairly quickly. Certain barriers will be reduced over time. For example, reluctance to use the intranet, based on years of frustration with the current system, will take time to overcome. And there will be a certain amount of an I'll-believe-it-when-I-see-it attitude from the Rangers.

But evaluating how well the program is working is essential. It should be assessed at certain intervals. At these checkpoints, LESES can evaluate whether the program is on track, how to address unforeseen obstacles, and make modifications to the plan.

Determining how well the new communications program is working can take many forms, including considering and assessing qualitative and quantitative measures. And it should include a combination of informal and formal assessments, ranging from informal feedback from

Rangers to counting both the delivery of communications and changes in Ranger activities, such as visits to the intranet.

Focus on Achieving Goals

Ultimately, however, as we evaluate the program, we should remain focused on how well we are achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the first section of this report. Are we making progress toward achieving these goals? For example:

- Have we raised awareness of LESES among the key audiences? Do they recognize the name and have a better understanding of what the Division does?
- Is LESES seen as a go-to resource by more Rangers? Are they turning to LESES, via the intranet and other means, for information?
- Has LESES acted as a voice for Rangers? Has that been conveyed in communications?
- Does an improved understanding of LESES apply across the spectrum of Rangers working under the LESES umbrella?

Making progress on these major, big-picture goals is the key. Determining how well we have done on achieving these ends will require analysis of a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures – a mixed-methods approach.

Assessing Implementation

A fairly simple – yet critical – first step in the evaluation process will be to monitor how well LESES is adhering to the communications plan. After all, if we don't communicate – regularly and in a timely manner – no changes in awareness, perceptions, and behavior will happen. Tracking the implementation of the plan should include an assessment of:

- How many communications were delivered and to whom?
- Were they delivered on time and did they include timely information?
- How well were the guidelines on use of the LESES name (or new name) followed?
- Were key messages conveyed within the communications?
- What impediments were there to keeping to the plan?

The implementation of the plan should be done on an ongoing basis. But after certain intervals – every six months or so – a more thorough assessment of the questions outlined above should be undertaken. At these points, a determination of whether adjustments to the plan – tactics and communications vehicles used – should be made.

Quantitative Measures

Counting certain activities will help assess how well the plan was implemented. (How many newsletters and updates were sent? How many Rangers were they sent to?)

But other quantitative measures should be tracked over time, starting with baselines. These quantitative measures include:

- What is the open rate of special e-mail updates? (Using a system, such as Constant Contacts, makes it easy to track open rates and click-through rates.)
- How has the number of visitors to the intranet site changed over time? (Total visits and unique visitors should be tracked.) Were these changes related to communications activities, such as a newsletter driving traffic to the site?
- How many people viewed an LESES video?
- How many people participated in an LESES-hosted discussion group.

Quantitative data could also be obtained through an online survey of Rangers. Because we're starting from a point of little awareness, and because we've already done focus groups, we'd recommend foregoing a baseline survey and waiting to conduct an initial survey until the communications plan has had about one year to operate. Data from an online survey can provide hard numbers on awareness, use of tools, and perceptions of the value (look and content) of the communications. It can also include open-ended questions for obtaining attitudes and opinions.

Qualitative Measures

Data can only tell you so much. That's especially true as we venture into a new communications program that seeks to share information, raise awareness, and shape perceptions. Consequently, using a qualitative approach will be useful in ascertaining how well the communications program is working.

The focus groups and interviews conducted at the end of 2014 showed that we can gain significant information by talking directly to representative groups of Rangers, Park Chiefs, and Superintendents, as well as the LESES team. The focus groups also made it clear that Rangers and Chiefs, in particular, are very insightful, very open, and very willing to share their views. (In fact, they regularly expressed their appreciation for being asked what they think.)

Once the program has been underway, LESES could again conduct a small number of focus groups to assess how much of the information LESES is sending is reaching the field and how well it is raising awareness and changing perceptions. Since we just conducted a series of focus groups, we'd recommend waiting about a year to again conduct formal (or semi-formal) focus groups.

In the interim, however, we should consider these types of qualitative measures:

- Collecting informal feedback heard from the field.
- Reaching out to several individuals in the parks to ask for their feedback and reactions.
- Conducting an informal discussion with a select group (or groups) of Park Chiefs and, perhaps, Rangers. This could be done after several months via conference calls.
- Assess what differences in behaviors LESES Deputy Chiefs perceive. (For example, do they sense a greater awareness of LESES in conversations they have with the field? Do they have a sense that more people are getting information and/or using the intranet as a resource for finding answers to questions?)
- And later in the process, we could include open-ended questions with a formal online survey.

These qualitative assessments will, especially initially, be most valuable, providing insights from the field. Later, combining them with quantitative measures will give us the tools to properly evaluate the effectiveness of the overall communications program.

The Evaluation vs. Action Tradeoff

When determining the extent of an evaluation program, it's always important to keep in mind that there are tradeoffs. One can go very deep in evaluating attitudes and communications programs. The possibilities, and associated costs, are endless but have real budget ramifications.

Consequently, the ultimate judgment on how many resources should be devoted to evaluation should take into consideration that using dollars for this purpose may diminish the resources available for actual communications. Especially during the early stages of a communication program, communicating is the key.

That said, some level of evaluation and assessment is vital to knowing how well we're achieving our goals. We've outlined some evaluation techniques that are not necessarily costly. A mixed-methods approach will yield information that is easily synthesized and reported to help LESES determine what has worked well, what could be fine-tuned, and what should be re-worked to respond to unexpected or altered circumstances as the plan is undertaken over time. A targeted, but relatively simple, evaluation approach can capture both the nuance and big-picture information necessary to give LESES confidence that its communication plan is producing value for Rangers and the entire organization.