

Pay Scales and Regional Staffing

In the midst of the debate about how much money has been spent in different ways and at different levels of the Park Service, it's interesting to go to http://php.app.com/fed_employees/search.php and just compare some numbers.

For instance, if you look at the salaries of all the employees of the Intermountain Regional Office and the Denver Service Center, it shows in fiscal year 2008 there were 543 employeesand 24% earned more than \$100,000 and 64% earned more than \$75,000.

If you combine the numbers for Mesa Verde National Park and Yosemite National Park---one of our typical medium-sized parks and one of our larger parks---you end up with 993 employees....and of these only 1.5 % earned more than \$100,000 and 6% earned more than \$75,000. (Based on the web site's statistics: at Mesa Verde NP one person earned over \$100,000 and 9 others earned between \$75,000 and \$100,000; and at Yosemite NP there were 819 employees with 14 earning over \$100,000 and 36 earning between \$75,000 and \$100,000.)

These numbers include all employees---full time permanent and summer seasonals. If we try to eliminate the seasonal employees, then Mesa Verde NP had approximately 60 year-round employees and Yosemite NP had approximately 400. That results in a combined full time staff in the two parks of 460 people with 3% earning over \$100,000 and 13% earning over \$75,000.

Statistics like these obviously raise questions: How many people really are necessary to support our parks and to support the mission of the Park Service? And how much should they be paid?

Perhaps as Director Jarvis and others begin to look carefully at budgets, at the possibility of future budget restraints and challenges, and at where to devote time, money, and energy in the next decade, they should begin to ask: do we need so many people at the middle management levels of the Park Service? Do we need so many disproportionately well paid people? And what regional services really are necessary, and how much should be spent for those services in comparison to the programs, preservation activities and visitor services that are necessary in our parks?

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