



# **Investigative Report of Allegations of Hostile Work Environment at Yosemite National Park**

Date Posted to Web: April 10, 2017

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

## SYNOPSIS

We initiated this investigation based on an August 2016 expedited inquiry conducted by the National Park Service (NPS) into allegations that a senior official at Yosemite National Park had created a hostile work environment for employees. We focused on allegations that some of the official's management decisions were motivated by bias or favoritism and that he harassed or belittled employees by acting dismissive, being overly critical, withholding information from them, and making negative comments about them. During our investigation, 12 unrelated allegations of discrimination, hostile work environment, and other misconduct involving Yosemite and NPS Pacific West Region employees were brought to our attention; we investigated these allegations as well.

We found no evidence that the senior official's management decisions were motivated by bias or favoritism. Of the 71 employees we interviewed regarding the allegations against the official, 42 spoke highly of him as a manager. The remaining either had no opinion, vacillated in their opinion, or said that he sometimes communicated poorly; that he could be dismissive, abrupt, or overly critical; and that he would often publicly criticize and undermine employees after he lost confidence in them. Some accepted this behavior and did not think the official was aware of it, while others felt his treatment toward them was personal or motivated by other factors, such as gender bias. Over half of the members of the park's management team said they had witnessed the official undermining another team member's competence and performance; they categorized this as embarrassing but were unsure whether it constituted harassment. The official's management style and behavior may have contributed to what some Yosemite employees perceived as inappropriate behavior.

The official, who retired from NPS after our investigation began, acknowledged that he tended to micromanage certain issues at Yosemite and was critical of employees, but said that he did not consider his behavior to be hostile or harassing. He said that his job was very demanding and that he had not intended to appear dismissive. He also said that no employees had ever brought their concerns to his attention.

In addition, some employees told us they had learned from a subordinate of the senior official about comments the senior official had allegedly made about them. This subordinate denied telling the employees about these comments, however, and the senior official denied making them.

Of the additional allegations we reviewed during this investigation, three resulted in adjudication by NPS or other Government entities, four resulted in a supervisor taking some action to correct the problem, and we forwarded three to the NPS ombudsman for review. In the two remaining cases, the subjects of the allegations no longer worked at the park.

## DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION

In the summer of 2016, the National Park Service (NPS) received allegations that a senior official (now retired) at Yosemite National Park had created a hostile work environment for his employees. Two regional NPS law enforcement employees conducted an expedited inquiry (EI)—a type of administrative inquiry intended to determine whether evidence of a hostile work environment exists and warrants further investigation—in August 2016. Based on the EI’s findings, NPS officials forwarded the case to us for further investigation.

We opened our investigation on September 26, 2016. In it, we focused on allegations that some of the senior official’s management decisions were motivated by bias or favoritism, and that he harassed or belittled Yosemite employees by acting dismissive, being overly critical, withholding information from them, and making negative comments about them. We also investigated 12 unrelated allegations of misconduct involving other employees at Yosemite and in NPS’ Pacific West Region.

### **Allegations That the Senior Official’s Management Decisions Were Motivated by Bias or Favoritism**

We investigated allegations that the senior official intervened in the candidate-selection process for an employee development program, intervened in hiring actions to prevent people he did not like from getting jobs they had applied for, improperly assigned an employee to be a fire official because the employee was male, showed favoritism toward an employee, allowed an unauthorized employee to provide legal advice on a major contract, and discriminated against certain female employees. Our investigation did not reveal conclusive evidence that the senior official’s decision making was motivated by bias or favoritism. We also reviewed relevant policies and found no violations.

#### *Alleged Selection of an Administrative Employee Over a Manager To Attend Yosemite’s Leadership Academy*

According to our interviews, as well as those conducted during the EI, the senior official allegedly showed favoritism by selecting a Yosemite administrative employee to attend Yosemite’s Leadership Academy over another applicant, a Yosemite manager. The Leadership Academy was an employee-development program with the purpose of giving employees greater understanding of and insight into the management of a large national park. Employees applied to the Academy by submitting a written proposal to the Yosemite management team.

The manager said she was detailed to Yosemite in 2013 and became permanent the next year. She said her initial impression of the senior official was that he was not a “fan” of hers, which she attributed to lingering issues he had with her predecessor.

The manager said that while she was on her detail to Yosemite, a subordinate of the senior official suggested she submit an application for the Academy. She did so, but was not selected. She said that she did not have a problem with this until the senior official’s subordinate told her that the senior official had selected the administrative employee over her.

The manager said that she was subsequently selected for Yosemite's management team and that she ultimately attended NPS' Generating Organizational Advancement and Leadership (GOAL) Academy, but she still felt the senior official did not like her. Specifically, she said, he was sometimes amiable toward her, but she would also hear negative comments or "find out things" from other employees about his opinion of her.

We interviewed the senior official's subordinate, who said that the Academy had a limited number of openings and that the senior official told him to include the administrative employee's name on the list of candidates. He said he did so and discussed the list with the management team. He said that the administrative employee and several other candidates were selected, and the manager was the only one who was not. He said that the senior official did not personally target the manager for exclusion, but his support for the administrative employee created an appearance of favoritism.

We interviewed the senior official before he retired, and he said he did not select the administrative employee for the Academy, nor could he recall instructing his subordinate to include her name on the list of candidates. He said that employees interested in attending the Academy nominated themselves by filling out a form for review by the management team. He said that the employees selected for the Academy were those who showed the greatest potential, and that the administrative employee was very skilled.

The senior official also said that he did not decide to exclude the manager from the Academy, and that this would have been the management team's decision. He said the fact that the manager was not yet a fulltime Yosemite employee when she applied to the Academy may have precluded her from being selected. He stated that he was never told about her disappointment at not being selected, and he said that the GOAL Academy she attended was much more prestigious.

#### *Alleged Denial of a Supervisory Position for the Manager*

The manager said that in the fall of 2015, she applied for a supervisory position at Yosemite. She said she was interviewed twice by a panel and felt she did fairly well on the first interview. She acknowledged, however, that she had been surprised to learn that she was one of the finalists selected for the second round of interviews because she did not have experience relevant to the position.

Sometime later, a Yosemite management team member who had been on the interview panel told the manager that the position was not going to be filled. Instead, she said, they were planning to readvertise the position, and she told the manager that she should reapply.

The manager said she suspected that the panel had selected her but that the senior official did not want her to have the position. She said she became suspicious when one of his subordinates intercepted her one day as she was heading toward the senior official's office and told her it was not a good time "to be around the office." Then, sometime in mid-2016, the senior official's subordinate confirmed that she had been selected for the position but the senior official had said

no. She felt that the senior official declined her selection because she did not have relevant experience, which she agreed was a valid reason, but also because she was a woman.

According to the manager, the management team member told her that the senior official did not uphold the selection because the manager did not go to his office to socialize, and that he had said she was not as smart as she thought she was. "I kind of wish [the team member] hadn't told me that," the manager said, explaining that she then began doubting her own abilities. She said that she did not reapply when the position was readvertised.

We interviewed the management team member, who said that the panel selected the manager unanimously but she knew the senior official would not be happy with the selection because she had seen him interrupt and demean the manager when the manager gave presentations. According to this team member, when she informed the senior official of the selection, he said that the manager was an introvert and "not as smart as she thinks she is." The team member said that the only legitimate criticism he had was that the manager did not have supervisory experience, but she noted that none of the candidates did and said that she had explained that to him. She said he suggested she contact some of the manager's references while he considered their decision.

The management team member said that she contacted one of her colleagues, who gave the manager a good reference, and a management official at another park who had worked with the manager in the past; she said this official's reference was "mixed." The management team member explained that the official told her the manager had applied for a position at his park but had not interviewed very well. Ultimately, the management team member said, the senior Yosemite official decided to readvertise the position.

The senior official recalled the management team member telling him that the list of certified candidates for the position was not as good as it could have been but that the panel had selected the manager. He said he told her that the manager did not have any relevant experience and would not be a good fit for the job, and he had her readvertise the position in hopes of hiring the most qualified candidate possible. He said the program they were hiring for oversaw a \$2 billion contract, and he wanted a qualified person to be in a supervisory role.

When asked whether he had ever told the management team member that the manager was not as smart as she thought she was, the senior official said he did not recall. He stated, however, that he did believe that this was the case in terms of dealing with this specific program because it took a long time to gain a proper understanding of all that the program involved. He said that he explained this to the team member and that if she thought he was being negative toward the manager, then that was her perception, but not his intention.

#### *Alleged Intervention in the Hiring and Selection of an Employee*

We interviewed a Yosemite employee who said she was hired at Yosemite as a term employee but applied for her current permanent position in 2014. She was interviewed for the permanent position by a panel, which consisted of several members of the management team (including her supervisor).

The Yosemite employee said that after her interview she followed up with the panel members occasionally and was told that their decision was still pending. In the fall of 2014, her supervisor offered her the position, telling her that the senior official had delayed the hiring decision because he had concerns about hiring her; the supervisor told the employee that the senior official ultimately brought the decision before the management team for a vote. The employee said the team voted in her favor and she got the position, but she never learned why the senior official delayed the hiring decision or what concerns he had.

The employee's supervisor recalled the senior official expressing concern over the employee's selection. She explained that he felt the employee would not be suitable for the position because she fell "too far" on the side of protecting cultural resources, as opposed to putting Yosemite's needs first. She said she had also heard rumors that he was concerned that the employee had been "leaking information" to one of the park's external partners. When asked whether the senior official's concerns were valid, the supervisor said that although she had no proof, she believed he was more concerned about the employee's personality because she was a "strong, vocal" woman.

A management team member said that he thought the employee's hiring process received "more attention and oversight than was warranted" for a nonsupervisory position. He said that during a team meeting, the senior official and one of his subordinates voiced reservations about the employee, saying she was "a little too outspoken" at some community meetings and that she spoke up "too stridently or too forcefully." According to the team member, the senior official also said that when the employee worked on the cultural section of a particular project, she became "too attached, or too much of an advocate," suggesting that she was not presenting an equitable balance between protecting cultural resources and supporting Yosemite's needs. The team member said, however, that he had attended the same meetings but never got the sense that the employee was advocating for or favoring one alternative over another.

This team member said that during the meeting, another member of the management team stated that one of her staff members had difficulties working with the employee. He said that he believed these difficulties were due to the employee's close ties to a local American Indian tribe. He told us that other employees in the division said that she was "too close" to the tribe and that it seemed as though she was supporting the tribal members instead of NPS at some community meetings.

The management team member said that at the end of the discussion, the senior official told him that the decision was ultimately his (that is, the team member's). Therefore, the management team member selected the employee for the position.

The senior official said that the management team member informed him of the panel's initial selection of the employee and that he told the team member to meet with the rest of the team and make sure they agreed with the selection. According to the senior official, he suggested presenting the selection to the team because others had expressed concerns about the employee. When asked what concerns they had, the senior official said that they were concerned in general about the office the employee worked for, and he felt that because she was part of that office already she might have been contributing to the difficulties. He acknowledged that during one

meeting with the employee and a local tribe, she appeared to be advocating for the tribe instead of Yosemite. He said this was a legitimate concern, but it was alleviated over time and was not the reason he suggested her selection be brought before the management team.

The senior official said that he thought confirming the selection with the entire management team was a positive thing. He acknowledged that “very few” selections were taken to the team for an opinion, but in this case he wanted to involve the team in order to make sure the employee was the right choice. He said that the team had no issue with her, she was ultimately selected for the position, and he did not think there had been a delay in making the decision. He said he had not known about the perception his involvement had created. “I wish people would have given me that feedback,” he said.

#### *Alleged Improper Selection of a Management Team Member’s Subordinate for a Key Role*

A Yosemite management team member alleged that the senior official selected one of her male subordinates instead of her to serve as the agency administrator representative (AAR)—the person designated to act on park management’s behalf concerning fire-related issues—during a wildfire that spread to Yosemite in August 2013. She believed that the senior official selected her subordinate for this important role, instead of her, because of gender bias.

According to the management team member, when the wildfire began she was working on another fire in northern California. She said that at that point, the wildfire was not a threat to Yosemite. In her absence, the senior official assigned her subordinate as the wildfire’s deputy incident commander on a Type 2 incident management team composed of personnel from Federal, State, and local agencies.

***Agent’s note:*** *According to NPS Fire and Aviation Management, there are five levels of incident command systems, with Type 5 being the least complex and Type 1 being the most.*

After a couple of days, the management team member said, she contacted one of her colleagues and learned that the wildfire was entering Yosemite. She said she told her colleague that she would be “demobilized” from the northern California fire and return to Yosemite to assist in the firefighting, and he was amenable to that decision.

She said she returned to Yosemite only to learn that the senior official had appointed her subordinate as the AAR. She said that at this point, her subordinate was also functioning as a Type 1 incident command trainee, which she said violated the Wildlife Fire Organization’s prohibition against collateral duties. She said the exact policy was in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations “Red Book,” though she was not sure this prohibition was explicitly stated. She felt that the senior official’s selection of her subordinate showed that he was questioning her competency. She said that she approached the senior official to ask him why she had not been selected as the AAR, but did not receive a clear answer. She said she could not remember his exact response, but recalled being frustrated by his selection of her subordinate. She said she also brought up the Red Book violation to the official, but she could not recall his response.

The management team member said that her subordinate conducted briefings on the wildfire as the AAR, and some coworkers approached her and asked why she was not conducting them. She said she did not have a good answer to their questions, and she considered this part of the “public humiliation” she suffered due to the senior official’s decision.

She said that she was finally designated as the AAR a few weeks later, following a new team transition, but by that point the fire was mostly under control.

The senior official said that the management team member’s subordinate was assigned as the wildfire’s deputy incident commander “on the initial attack,” and he designated her subordinate as the AAR because she was on the assignment in northern California when the wildfire broke out. Upon her return to Yosemite, her subordinate asked the senior official to allow him to remain the AAR until his team completed their 21-day rotation, whereupon she could assume the AAR role. The senior official said that given the complexity of the fire and the fact that the subordinate had already been working as the AAR, he agreed that the subordinate should remain in that role until the teams switched out.

The senior official said that the management team member’s subordinate was never an incident command trainee, as she had said. He said that she had already served 21 days on the fire in northern California, and after her return to Yosemite she was required to take 3 days off before getting involved in another fire. He said that even if she had been able to assume the AAR role upon her return, he would not have removed her subordinate from the role because her subordinate knew more than she did about that particular fire. “It was the smart thing to do,” the senior official said. He added that she did not express any issues with his decision at the time.

An NPS fire official reviewed the records of the subordinate’s assignments and confirmed that the subordinate was assigned as a Type 2 incident commander in August 2013. The fire official said that during the early days of fighting the fire, the subordinate might have completed some tasks that were aligned with the duties of a Type 1 incident command trainee, rather than a Type 2 incident commander, but the fire official said this was “not unheard of.” He later confirmed that the subordinate was not prohibited from completing such tasks while serving as an AAR.

The subordinate corroborated the senior official’s statements. He said he was designated the AAR in August 2013 and that he was never a Type 1 incident commander trainee. He recalled that the management team member returned early from another fire assignment the day after he was made AAR. He recalled that she acted distant when she arrived at Yosemite, but he said he could understand that it was difficult for her to walk into a situation in which a firefighting team had already been through a great deal together.

#### *Alleged Preferential Treatment of an Administrative Employee*

Like the manager interviewed earlier in this report, another Yosemite employee said that the senior official showed favoritism toward the administrative employee. According to the Yosemite employee, the administrative employee reported directly to the senior official, who had purportedly promoted her by approximately two grade levels in 3 years.

The Yosemite employee explained that Yosemite had celebrated three anniversaries in the past 3 years: 2014 was the 150th anniversary of the Yosemite Grant, 2015 was the 125th anniversary of the park, and 2016 was the NPS centennial. He said that these milestones occasioned at least 50 events per year, and the senior official gave the administrative employee a role related to these events that, until then, the Yosemite employee had held. He said that the senior official did not take the role away from him and that he never reported to the administrative employee, which left him feeling uncertain about his position.

The employee also said that when former First Lady Laura Bush visited Yosemite in 2015, he had to work with the Secret Service as well as the President's Special Response and Incident Management teams. The administrative employee was asked to assist him with coordinating the visit, and he felt that she was "in way over her head."

In addition, the employee recalled a presidential visit to the park in June 2016, for which he and the administrative employee were assigned to act as Yosemite's liaisons with the White House. He said that he did the higher-level coordination, but he received no recognition while the administrative employee received a monetary award.

Despite his feelings that the senior official had favored the administrative employee, the Yosemite employee acknowledged that the administrative employee had done well in the positions the official gave her, and he described her as "incredibly competent."

The senior official described the administrative employee as outstanding. He said she began at Yosemite under a direct reassignment and that she had supervised other employees in the office. He explained that she had applied for and received a detail that came with a temporary promotion but that he had nothing to do with her getting the detail. He also said that Yosemite had advertised in 2015 for a position and that the administrative employee was one of only a few applicants. He said that he and another official interviewed her, and they both agreed that she was the best candidate. He said, however, that he did not know of any ranking sheets or paperwork that might exist from these interviews.

The senior official said that the administrative employee had worked closely with the Yosemite employee on the centennial events, and he felt they worked well together. He added that the Yosemite employee had plenty to do without taking on the extra work involved in the centennial by himself.

We also asked the senior official about gifts he had allegedly bought and given to the administrative employee. He acknowledged that he had given Fitbits to her and to another Yosemite employee on their birthdays, saying it was an effort to promote team cohesion and general wellness. He said he paid for them with his own money and was not aware of this violating any ethics guidelines. Both employees confirmed that they received Fitbits from the senior official.

In addition, the senior official said that he held a going-away party for the administrative employee when she left Yosemite for a position with another park. He said that he also purchased a gift for her; he explained that other employees had given him contributions toward

the gift and he had contributed \$700 of his own money. He said that in addition to the gift, she received an NPS arrowhead plaque and other memorabilia, which he said was standard practice, and that other NPS employees gave her gifts as well.

Our review determined that while the senior official did not violate ethics guidelines by giving gifts to his subordinates, doing so could create the appearance of favoritism.

We reviewed the administrative employee's Notification of Personnel Action forms (Standard Form 50) as part of this investigation. We found that she was promoted to two higher-level positions during her time at Yosemite; she was competitively selected for both.

### *Alleged Gender Bias and Discrimination Against Female Employees*

NPS' expedited inquiry cited incidents of alleged gender bias and discrimination against female employees. During our investigation, we spoke with nine Yosemite employees who believed that the senior official had a bias against women. They described an environment in which he targeted certain female management team members who were smart and outspoken by frequently bypassing them to speak with their male subordinates, where he micromanaged or criticized female employees' work products, and where he generally favored male employees over female employees.

Several of the women who were involved in the hiring actions we discussed in this report believed the senior official had a gender bias. The manager felt that he denied her the supervisory position because she was a woman. In addition, a management team member said she felt that the senior official had a long, demonstrated history of "bullying, demeaning, humiliating behavior" directed at her and other "confident" female employees. A supervisor said she believed the senior official intervened in her employee's hiring process because the employee was a "strong, vocal" woman.

Other former and current Yosemite employees also felt that the senior official took actions and made decisions based on a bias against women. One management team member said that gender bias and favoritism by the senior official went "hand in hand." She explained that he was more disposed to like employees if they socialized and had coffee with him, and that male employees were more likely to do this. She said she did not build relationships by "chit-chatting," and that put her at a disadvantage with the senior official. She recalled that he had once given her mostly positive feedback on her performance during a feedback session, but had also called her "aloof." She also described a 2015 incident in which the senior official canceled a work-related trip she and some of her staff members had planned. She said that he told her it was "disrespectful" of her not to check with him before she set up the trip.

Another management employee said she felt "slighted" by the senior official many times because he would walk directly past her to talk to her (male) deputy about issues that were outside the scope of the deputy's position. She said that she once asked the senior official if he was upset with her or if he believed she was incompetent, but he said no. After she heard other female employees talking about his gender bias, she came to believe that this bias was the cause of his behavior toward her.

A former manager at Yosemite also believed that the senior official had a gender bias. She said that a former Yosemite official had recommended her to the senior official as his replacement when he left, but the senior official selected a management team member instead. According to the former manager, the senior official's rationale for this decision was that the management team member was already at the same grade level as the official he was replacing. "I think that kind of made sense," she said, but she felt that she was overlooked because she was a woman.

The management team member we interviewed in connection to the 2013 wildfire stated that, in addition to not making her the AAR for the fire because she was female, the senior official made several other decisions that she felt were affected by her gender. In 2015, she said, she volunteered to be interviewed by a national TV network about Yosemite's fire program, but the interview had to be canceled because the senior official had "dismissed" her request. She added that the senior official also created and fostered an environment that allowed her employees to talk with him directly, which caused problems between her and her staff.

Some former Yosemite employees, however, felt that while the senior official did not always treat female employees well, some male employees did not necessarily fare any better. One former employee said that the senior official did not appreciate being challenged by his subordinates and that those who did so ended up on his "bad side." When asked if this treatment was biased toward a specific gender, however, she said no; she said the senior official was the same way with men as he was with women. Another former employee said that the senior official had a gender bias and that most of the employees he "lashed out at" were female; she added, however, that some male employees also experienced many problems with him. A third former employee said that she saw a gender bias in whom the senior official listened to and respected, but she added that he felt some female employees "walked on water" as well.

The senior official denied having a gender bias and said that he never made any decisions based on gender. He said the management team at Yosemite was a fair balance of male and female managers and that he worked well with women, particularly those who spoke up and expressed themselves. He said he would sometimes speak directly with a supervisor's subordinate if he wanted that employee's expertise, but this was not because he had a gender bias against any particular supervisor. He said he talked to both male and female subordinates of Yosemite supervisors.

According to an official at another park who had worked closely with the senior official, the senior official habitually bypassed supervisors and spoke directly to their subordinates, most often when the subordinates had specific information about a project or action. He said that the senior official did this in order to hear information directly from the source, and he did not see any evidence that gender bias was a contributing factor.

A Yosemite supervisor said that he did not believe that the senior official had a gender bias, but he felt that the senior official could have handled certain situations better. He attributed the perception that the senior official was biased against women in positions of authority to the fact that the senior official would sometimes seek the opinions of male employees whom he considered subject matter experts. As an example, the supervisor said that the senior official

would sometimes first ask a female supervisor for her opinion on a matter but would later ask her male subordinate for his views before rendering a decision. He said this practice often led to the “appearance” of gender bias on the senior official’s part. Others said that he did this to male supervisors as well.

The supervisor said that the senior official respected one of the female managers because she demanded it, whereas other female supervisors’ personalities were more timid and less assertive. The supervisor stated: “If you do not speak up, then you do not get heard.” He also said that the senior official would often hold sidebar conversations or turn his back on people when they were speaking, which people often interpreted as a nonverbal indicator of disrespect. He said that the senior official was not biased against women; he was just a poor communicator and a micromanager.

A former Yosemite supervisor said that he did not believe the senior official had a gender bias because he had seen him treat both male and female employees in what he would consider a hostile fashion. He was hesitant to describe the senior official’s attitude toward certain employees as demeaning, but said it was similar to bullying. He said that he himself as well as other male employees were also subjected to this type of behavior. “I’m certain that he was unaware of it,” he said, adding that the senior official had a “blind spot” when it came to this type of behavior. He believed that if the senior official had been made aware of his behavior sooner, he might have been able to adjust it.

A review of Yosemite census data from 2011 to 2016 revealed that female employees make up approximately 39 percent of the park’s workforce and accounted for 36 percent of the park’s supervisors. A review of the awards given out at Yosemite from 2010 to 2016 showed no apparent discrepancy between the monetary or time-off awards given to male and female employees. Our review of the awards given to them between 2014 and 2016 revealed no clear discrepancy between the genders. During this timeframe, all of the management team members received time-off awards, and three members—two male and one female—received monetary awards.

### **Allegations of Harassment and Hostile Work Environment**

We investigated allegations that the senior official fostered a hostile work environment by belittling or harassing employees, by keeping a list of employees who had been interviewed for the EI, and by impersonating his subordinate on two occasions. Of the 71 employees interviewed, 42 spoke highly of him as a manager, while the rest either had no opinion, vacillated in their opinion, or said that he sometimes communicated poorly; that he could be dismissive, abrupt, or overly critical; and that he would often publicly criticize and undermine employees after he lost confidence in them. Over half of the members of the management team said they had witnessed him undermining another team member’s competence or performance; they categorized this as embarrassing but were unsure whether it constituted harassment. The senior official’s management style and behavior may have contributed to what some Yosemite employees perceived as possible inappropriate conduct.

### *Alleged Harassment and Belittling of Employees*

During this investigation, we spoke with 16 individuals who expressed varying degrees of concern about the senior official's demeanor, management and communication styles, tone of voice, and behavior. Although not everyone was quick to classify this behavior as harassment, some said his behavior sometimes undermined employees. Examples of this behavior included walking out of someone's office abruptly, publicly criticizing employees' work, and being unsupportive or uncongenial.

The park official who had worked with the senior official said that he had observed many interactions between the senior official and Yosemite employees and realized that the quality of the senior official's relationships with them varied widely. He recalled one of the senior official's more challenging behaviors being his habit of talking about people when they were not present. He said that these comments were sometimes positive but were often negative, and they were typically about an individual's performance but sometimes concerned their conduct. He said that the senior official would make these comments in front of people who were not directly involved, including staff at lower grades or even the target individual's subordinates. He said it troubled him to see this behavior from a senior official, but clarified that he did not consider the content of the comments themselves to be inappropriate.

The park official said that when the senior official had concerns about an individual's performance, he would also call out those concerns publicly with that person present. He added that this would sometimes occur in meetings but more often in smaller social settings. He said that he had talked to the senior official once or twice concerning his negative comments about staff. The senior official told him he appreciated the feedback, the park official said, but he did not change his behavior.

According to the park official, some of the senior official's actions could be considered aspects of a hostile work environment, at least to the recipients of these actions. He explained that the senior official had trouble dealing directly with poor employee performance and would often take work from an underperforming employee and assign it to someone he had more confidence in rather than deal directly with the performance issue. The park official said the senior official would rarely explain his rationale for such decisions. He said that from his perspective, the senior official did this because he was attempting to accomplish the task at hand, not because he disliked the employee he was taking work from. He also said that if the senior official lost trust in a staff member he would "turn [them] off" or stop listening to them.

One management team member said that the senior official would occasionally direct comments toward her such as "That's a really stupid idea" or "Are you going to present that dopey idea?" She said that he would also use words such as "bozo," "idiot," "failure," and "incompetent" when referencing her work. She emphasized that these terms were directed at her work, not at her personally.

Similarly, a former Yosemite manager said that during a management team meeting, the senior official responded to a comment she made by saying either "You are stupid" or "Your idea was

stupid.” She could not remember his exact words, but she perceived the comment to mean that he thought she was stupid.

Another former employee described the senior official as an “intense micromanager” who had too much control over the management team. When asked to provide the most egregious example of the senior official’s hostile management style, she told us that when she worked for one of Yosemite’s female management team members, the senior official would frequently bypass her supervisor and contact the employee herself directly to discuss projects. She said the senior official was overly invested in certain projects and would micromanage the details, which demoralized her supervisor. She said the senior official frequently broke the chain of command and contacted subordinates as a way to avoid conflict with supervisors.

A number of Yosemite employees said that while the senior official did not make derogatory comments to their faces, he made them in the presence of one of his subordinates, who later shared these comments with them. According one employee, the subordinate told him that the senior official hated him. In addition, a Yosemite manager said the subordinate told her that the senior official gave her a poor reference when she applied for a position at another national park. A former employee said that the subordinate told another Yosemite employee that the senior official had called him “lazy.” When we questioned the subordinate, however, he denied making these comments.

We interviewed the employee who was allegedly called lazy, and he said the senior official was a “jerk” and described him as brusque and demanding. He said that the senior official sometimes made comments that were embarrassing or unprofessional, although he could not recall any specific examples, and recalled that the senior official had denied him a detail once because he wanted him to finish certain projects at Yosemite.

As another example of the senior official’s management style, both his subordinate and a management team member said that he had deliberately withheld information from them about the 2016 presidential visit to Yosemite. The management team member said that she found out about the upcoming visit from a concessionaire.

The senior official denied harassing employees or creating a hostile work environment. He said that he was very busy, and that if he seemed dismissive, it was not intentional. “At Yosemite, you work at a fast pace,” he said, “and I do think some people want to ponder things for a long time, which we don’t have time for.” He said he never heard any feedback from any employee regarding his demeanor.

Regarding negative comments he allegedly made about Yosemite employees behind their backs, the senior official said that he may have made critical comments when he was concerned about a project moving forward. He said that he mentioned it if a management team member was not meeting deadlines, but that he had never said negative things about anyone. “That just doesn’t happen,” he said. When asked whether he would have made these comments in front of those individuals’ subordinates, he said he could not recall any specific examples. He also said he could not recall the other park official telling him not to criticize them in front of their subordinates.

The senior official said that occasionally bypassing first-line supervisors to talk directly with their subordinates was his management approach. "I would say that's a good technique," he said. When asked whether any of supervisors had expressed concern about him speaking directly to their subordinates, he said no. He acknowledged, however, that one had commented on his practice, and said he rectified the issue by continuing to communicate openly with her.

The senior official said that he may have categorized suggestions from employees as "a stupid idea," but he denied calling anyone stupid or an idiot. He said he never referred to an employee as lazy, and said that he denied this employee's request for a detail because the employee was very busy and many of his projects were behind schedule; he said that the park could not afford to lose the employee to a detail. He also denied telling his subordinate that he hated an employee.

Regarding the allegation that he deliberately withheld information from his subordinate and a management team member about the June 2016 presidential visit to Yosemite, the senior official explained that he received a call from the White House to discuss a potential presidential visit for Father's Day. He said that two other employees were present for the call, and the White House staffers he spoke to asked him not to share information about the visit with employees who were not present. He explained that both his subordinate and the management team member were in training that week, so they were not notified of the visit until the following week.

The senior official recalled that his subordinate was upset he was not told about the visit sooner and that the subordinate said he would have wanted the senior official to notify him about it even though he was in training. He said the management team member was also upset that she was not told sooner and that she found out about the President's visit from one of the concessionaires. The senior official explained that a team from the White House went to a Yosemite hotel to secure lodging for the visit, and the hotel managers told the management team member about it before she heard about it from him.

The senior official admitted that, when it came to some high-profile projects, he considered himself a micromanager. He said that the consequences of some of these large projects failing were too great, and he wanted to be involved to make sure they stayed on track.

When asked to give his own definition of a hostile work environment, the senior official described it as "pervasive and prevalent" yelling and demeaning behavior. He said that no one had ever brought any concerns about a potential hostile work environment to his attention.

When asked if he was aware that he occasionally engaged in behavior that could be interpreted as demeaning or dismissive, such as holding sidebar conversations while people were talking or turning his back on a speaker when he had heard enough, the senior official said that he did not "have that self-awareness." He said he had no recollection of doing those things, but that if they had occurred, it was not conscious or deliberate, and that he had not intended to insult or belittle anyone. "I don't yell, I don't scream, I'm pretty easygoing," he said. "I will ask tough questions, but I think that is what [a senior official] needs to do." He said he did not consider these actions examples of a hostile work environment.

The senior official later sent us an email reiterating that he had not been aware of the Yosemite employees' concerns and that no employee had ever brought concerns to him. He wrote: "Considering Yosemite has close to 900 employees, this seems important to mention." He noted that while in his previous management position at another national park, he received no complaints about a hostile workplace. He also wrote that during his time at Yosemite, he had not received any feedback that employees were concerned about his demeanor or overall tone. He said that had he been made aware of it, he could have worked to change some aspects of his behavior. We confirmed that none of the employees who felt belittled by the senior official ever approached him to discuss his attitude and behavior.

#### *Allegations that the Senior Official Harassed a Management Team Member*

The management team member said that the senior official's criticism of her was subtle and often indirect, relying on "insinuations" and "innuendo." She said he never actually called her any names, but that he made disparaging comments about her work, including such statements as—

- "You're going to make us look like incompetent liars."
- "This thing you did paints us as incompetent."
- "We're going to look like bozos if we do this."
- "That's a really stupid idea."
- "Are you going to present that dopey idea?"
- "I just don't know if they're that sharp."
- "There's probably someone who could do this a little better."
- "I just don't know if they're that competent."
- "So-and-so knows I'm going to shoot her if we do this."

The management team member said that she knew the senior official was not literally threatening to shoot anyone—she said he was not a violent person—but she found such language violent and inappropriate for the workplace. She said he spoke this way primarily to the female members of the management team, but she acknowledged that he had also said such things to the male team members.

For 2 years, the management team member said, she was tasked with developing a new contract for a Yosemite program and publishing it for bids because the old one was expiring. She said that the senior official was dissatisfied with the contract and reviewed it three times before it was actually published because he felt it was "terrible." She said that even after it was published he claimed it was an embarrassment and was displeased with the work she had done to develop and advertise it. She said she left the office crying but decided not to fight with him over the matter.

The management team member told us that the senior official said numerous times during management team meetings that he did not have faith in her or her staff and that they needed to bring in outside help to assist with their work. During one meeting, she said, he kept asking her why she had not considered suggestions about the contract that the outgoing contractor had made. She said that when she told him she did not think they should be taking suggestions from the outgoing contractor, he reiterated that he had no faith in her succeeding and no confidence

that she was making progress with the new contract. She said that his continual criticism of her work made her question her own competence, and she began to think of herself as a fraud.

The management team member said that before the contract was awarded, the senior official began meeting with the new contractor behind her back, and he requested changes to the contract without her involvement. She said she learned of these changes over the course of several meetings, and she felt it had been inappropriate for him to leave her out of negotiations. She acknowledged that some of the senior official's meetings were impromptu and took place when the new contractor's employees approached him in his office, but she said that she was also excluded from formal meetings. She said this issue was ultimately addressed after she filed a complaint; she told us that the senior official said during a conversation that he was under significant stress and had not deliberately excluded her from meetings.

Since she filed her complaint, the management team member said, she had noticed a difference in the senior official's behavior, and three female employees had told her recently that he had complimented them. Overall, she said, he had begun to try to improve, but she did not think his compliments were all genuine. She acknowledged that he might not have been aware of how employees interpreted his management style.

The senior official recalled two or three "tense" management team meetings during the transitioning of the contract. He said that his questions to the management team member in these meetings concerned whether she and her team were prepared to accomplish the transition to the new contractor. He said that in one meeting, he expressed his concern that they were not fully staffed or equipped to make the transition. He said he never raised his voice but was "forceful" in expressing his concern.

He recalled that the management team member submitted proposals five times for franchise fees and that each time they were inaccurate and "not a good piece of work." He said he did not remember saying her work was stupid, but acknowledged telling her that it was not "good enough to make it to the next step." He said he might have commented that her work would make them look "like idiots."

The senior official said he did not consider the questions and comments he made during these meetings to be evidence of a hostile work environment, and said he never considered that the management team member might have perceived them as such. He also said that she never mentioned a hostile work environment during their conversations. He said he had no idea that she was upset with him, and that she never approached him about how she felt he was treating her. He acknowledged that his relationship with her was not as "robust" as it was with other management team members.

We interviewed eight other management team members who attended these meetings. The team members had different impressions of the interactions between this team member and the senior official.

One said that the senior official was very rude to this management team member, that he would unfairly nitpick her presentations and her program, and that he would single her out and make

her look foolish. She categorized his behavior as harassment, but she also said that her team member may have contributed to the dynamic.

Another recalled that during one meeting, the senior official said of the management team member's work product: "I could throw it across the room," and that the senior official had also said he did not think she could complete the project. The team member we spoke to felt this was unfair. "The truth is," he said, "that woman nailed it."

A third member said that the senior official questioned the management team member's competency in a few meetings during the transition to the new contract. He said that the worst thing he heard the senior official say to her was "I don't think you can get this done." He said that he thought the management team member felt attacked by the senior official because she looked close to tears. When asked whether the senior official used abusive language, such as calling her stupid or an idiot, during the conversation, he said he could not remember, but he recalled the team member crying after the meeting because the situation had built up over time. He said that the senior official had been under a great deal of stress and that his directness and negativity during those meetings was out of character.

A fourth team member said the senior official spent too much time during these meetings challenging or questioning what the management team member was doing, pointing out mistakes in her spreadsheets, and asking why certain projects were not completed. He said that the senior official was not mean about it, and he believed that the senior official was trying to get her to improve her performance because the information that she provided to the team needed to be well reasoned and accurate. When asked whether he ever heard the senior official speak in a demeaning or belittling manner, he said no, but acknowledged that "if someone is very sensitive, then maybe they could take some words as being overly critical."

The fifth team member acknowledged that the management team member received a "fair bit" of hard questioning from the senior official, but he stated that she should have run her program in a way that would ensure the senior official would not have had to resort to such questions. He also said that she was not adequately prepared for certain presentations. He stated that he had never seen the senior official lose his temper, raise his voice, or use demeaning remarks toward an employee during a meeting. He also did not recall hearing the senior official use the word "stupid," either directed at an individual or in general commentary. He said that only approximately 5 percent of the meetings he had attended had involved pointed or uncomfortable questioning.

The sixth team member remembered that the senior official and the management team member "buted heads" at some meetings. She said, however, that she could not recall him demeaning or belittling the management team member.

The seventh team member told us that the senior official made many members of the team generally uncomfortable, and said he could see why this management team member might feel intimidated or demeaned by the senior official about her preparation at these meetings. He recalled the senior official telling her condescendingly that her team could not complete certain

projects, but also saying that he would not supply her with additional support. “He seemed to be coming at her [from] both sides,” he said. “[It was like] she can’t win.”

The eighth team member said this management team member’s presentations before the team “lacked fidelity,” and did not include attributes that the senior official was used to seeing in other programs. He said this caused the senior official to ask the management team member some pointed questions. He did not recall the senior official using the word “idiot,” but he did remember him saying: “This is stupid, how this is being done. This is not the way it should be done.” The eighth team member said that the management team member would talk back and raise her voice during these discussions, which increased the stress level in the room and made it clear that she disagreed with the senior official. He believed she was trying to defend her staff.

The team member said that he did not see the senior official behave in any way he himself would consider disrespectful, but the management team member came to his office one day and attempted to confirm whether the senior official was “beating her up because she was a woman.” He said he told her that she was pushing back and that she needed to use “risk communications” with the senior official. He also told her that he did not think it was gender discrimination and that all of the members of the management team got “beat up.”

#### *Allegations That the Senior Official Had a List of Expedited Inquiry Interviewees*

One of the senior official’s subordinates said he received an email about the EI from a regional official in August 2016. Shortly thereafter, the senior official texted and then called him to ask if he had gotten the email. The subordinate told the senior official he had, and he then forwarded it to the senior official. He said the senior official asked him who else got the email, but he did not know because the other recipients were blind copied.

The subordinate said that he asked a Yosemite manager whether she had received the email, but she told him she had not. He said that the senior official came into his office shortly thereafter and was focused on finding out who had filed complaints against him. According to the subordinate, the senior official told him he did not know who had filed them, but he mentioned the names of several female employees, including the manager and a management team member, whom he thought may have. He said that he told the senior official that the manager did not get the email.

The subordinate said that sometime later, the senior official pulled up a Microsoft Word document on his computer and told the subordinate: “I have a list of who they sent the notes to.” The subordinate said he saw the names of two individuals who had told him that they received the email, but he did not see the manager’s name. He said that he told the senior official this, and the senior official replied: “I wonder if [the manager] complained and therefore that is why she didn’t get the invite right to the meeting.” The subordinate said that was the end of the conversation; he returned to his office and they did not discuss the list further. He said he thought that the senior official might have shown him the list to see if he would tell anyone about it. The subordinate said he did go to two management team members and asked them if they knew that the senior official had the list, and they were both “mortified.” The subordinate said they were the only two he spoke to about the list, but after he did so, word spread rapidly.

The senior official denied having a list of EI interviewees. He said that the regional official notified him in July 2016 that two complaints had been made and that an EI would be conducted. Sometime later, he received a phone call from the regional law enforcement employee overseeing the EI, who explained that EI investigators would attempt to interview Yosemite employees. The senior official said that two staff members compiled a list of employees at the law enforcement employee's request and that someone might have sent it to the Regional Office when it was complete. He assumed that an email would have then been sent to the people on the list, but he had no confirmation of this.

The senior official said that he later received phone calls from employees asking him to explain the purpose of the email. He said his subordinate also contacted him about it, and he told the subordinate to forward it to him so he could see it. The subordinate did so, with all of the recipients blind copied, and they discussed whether people were concerned about having received the email. He said he did not know how many employees actually received it.

According to the senior official, the employees were interviewed sometime later, but he was not. During a subsequent conversation, the regional official suggested the investigators interview him, and he told her he was concerned that the email sent to the employees was not balanced. He explained that the email essentially stated that any employees who had "a problem" could speak with the investigators. He said the whole EI process was "very poorly done" and did not provide a complete picture of what was going on at Yosemite.

The senior official said that he never attempted to find out who was interviewed during the EI and had not known that he was its subject until later. He said a number of employees told him—without prompting—that they had been interviewed, but he never asked any employees whether they were interviewed. When asked whether he had showed his subordinate a list of interviewees, the senior official said that he showed the subordinate the list of employees that had been compiled. He said that some of the people on that list might have been interviewed, but he had no way of knowing.

#### *Alleged Use of a Park Volunteer To Provide Legal Advice*

We interviewed an attorney with the Department of the Interior's Solicitor's Office, who said that the senior official had allowed a Yosemite volunteer to provide legal advice on a project. The attorney said that someone (she could not recall who) told her that the volunteer had become involved with the project, and that an employee later forwarded her a non-Government email from the volunteer with a signature block listing the volunteer's title as the senior official's "Special Advisor . . . for Legal Affairs." The attorney explained: "All legal advice has to come out of the Solicitor's Office unless a client agency has been authorized by the Solicitor to hire outside counsel."

The attorney said she called the senior official and explained to him that conversations and correspondence with the park volunteer did not have attorney-client privilege and that, per the Volunteers in the Parks Act of 1969, volunteers were not supposed to be used in a policy-making capacity. She said that her then-supervisor put together a memorandum to advise the senior

official and the then-regional director that using the volunteer as legal counsel violated Department policy.

The attorney said that she also participated in a conference call with her supervisor, the regional director, and the senior official; during this call, she and her supervisor explained their concerns about the volunteer. She said that the regional director asked the senior official for his thoughts, and he responded that the volunteer was not really providing legal advice and that when she had volunteered to work on the project the regional director had said it was okay. According to the attorney, the regional director said during the call that the senior official had mentioned the volunteer in passing. The attorney said that the senior official also told them during the call that he had not authorized the volunteer to use the "Special Advisor" title in her signature block, and that she would no longer use that title or provide legal advice.

The senior official said that the volunteer had approached him and expressed an interest in working on the project, explaining that she had a legal background and that she could provide some insight into the project. The senior official said that she struck him as very smart and organized, and he thought it would be beneficial to have another person reviewing documents related to the project.

The senior official said that the volunteer was one of about 20 people who commented on the documents. He said Yosemite had been sued over this project three times, and he wanted to use her expertise even though "her 'lane' couldn't be the legal side; she could only make comments." When asked if the volunteer ever made legal comments on any of the documents, he said: "Not to my knowledge," but he admitted that he did not read all of her comments before they were submitted.

The senior official recalled the meeting during which the attorneys and regional staff discussed how the volunteer was being used. He said that he was told during this meeting that the volunteer could not provide legal advice, but his understanding was that "as long as we kept [her] in her lane, it was fine." He acknowledged that he had received the memo, and said that when he later spoke with the attorney, they had "corrected all that and made sure it didn't occur again." He said he only became aware that the volunteer was writing legal opinions based on the memo and the meeting.

The senior official said he told the volunteer after the meeting that she could not write legal opinions in the documents. He said he did not use the volunteer as a way to circumvent working with the Solicitor's Office; he said he respected the attorney and thought she was "excellent."

We reviewed comments the volunteer made on the project, as well as a memo she sent to the senior official, and we confirmed that the volunteer had provided legal advice. As cited in the memo from the Solicitor's Office to the senior official, the volunteer's legal advice violated 43 U.S.C. § 1455 and the Departmental Manual (456 DM 1), which states that the Solicitor has "sole discretion" regarding who is authorized to provide legal advice.

### *The Senior Official's Alleged Impersonation of a Subordinate*

According to one of the senior official's subordinates, the senior official once impersonated him on the phone with a CBS or ABC producer from New York. He said he and the senior official were sitting in the senior official's office one evening after 6:00 p.m. when the telephone rang. He said that the caller identification displayed a New York area code and that he knew it was 9:30 p.m. there. He said he told the senior official: "We have no business talking to anybody calling us from New York City at 9:30 at night," and that such calls were the responsibility of the public affairs office. Nevertheless, the subordinate said, the senior official turned on the speakerphone and answered the call: "Yosemite National Park." According to the subordinate, the caller was asking for access to Yosemite for media interviews, but the senior official could not "handle" her question. When she asked why he was not helping her and who he was, the senior official gave the caller his subordinate's name and title instead of his own.

The subordinate said that he believed the senior official regretted answering the phone because the caller was a "pushy" media producer. According to the subordinate, the senior official told the caller he could not help her. The caller then asked: "You're not going to take my information?" He said that the senior official responded: "No, I can't help you. I have to go now, goodbye," then hung up.

When asked whether he said anything to the senior official about the phone conversation, the subordinate said he did not because he had been in an acting role at the time and he wanted to have a permanent position. He added: "Do I need to comment on that to a [senior official] when they impersonate someone? Like, do I really need to tell this man that that was wrong?" He said that this demonstrated poor leadership by the senior official.

The subordinate said that he told two other employees about the phone call, and one employee later informed him that the producer had complained to the Regional Office about the way she had been treated. According to the subordinate, this employee told him he was able to help the producer and the complaint "went away."

The subordinate told us that the senior official later impersonated him a second time. He said that he and the senior official were sitting together when the phone rang. The secretary was out, so the senior official answered the call on speakerphone, saying: "Yosemite National Park." The subordinate said that he signaled to the senior official with his hands to let him take the call instead, but the senior official had already initiated the conversation. According to the subordinate, the caller asked who the senior official was and the senior official again gave the subordinate's name and title instead of his own. The subordinate said he did not interrupt, but when the phone conversation was over he told the senior official: "Don't ever do that again. That's wrong; don't do that again." He said that the senior official did not react to this comment.

The senior official said he did not recall either instance of alleged impersonation. Based on the circumstances described, there appeared to be no violation of § 529 of the California Penal Code ("Performance of certain acts in false character").

## **Additional Allegations Against Employees**

During this investigation, we received complaints of workplace hostility that were unrelated to the allegations against the senior official. We conducted additional interviews into 12 separate allegations.

A law enforcement employee with the Bureau of Reclamation alleged gender discrimination and a hostile work environment while she was at Yosemite for field training. She said she had also filed a complaint and was currently awaiting a hearing.

A Yosemite employee alleged a hostile work environment while working in a warehouse at Yosemite. She said that her then-supervisor belittled the personnel in her division whenever they made mistakes. The employee filed a complaint, but a hostile work environment was not found. She said the supervisor later left Yosemite for another position.

A former Yosemite manager alleged that two male coworkers were “the biggest bullies in the [Yosemite] Valley,” and that they tried incessantly to make a new program she developed fail. She complained about their actions to her supervisor, who told us that he reported the complaint to the male employees’ supervisor; he admitted, however, that he was supervising many employees around this time and had not had enough time to address her concerns as much as he probably should have. The manager and the male employees no longer work at Yosemite.

In addition, a Yosemite employee alleged that her supervisor would sometimes become angry with her, and that he would yell at her and then avoid talking to her for days. She said he also became upset, raised his voice, and used profanity. She said that she reported his behavior to another supervisor in her chain of command but told him she did not want to act on it at that time. A higher-level supervisor later became involved in the issue and set up a meeting for the employee and her supervisor; the employee said she attended the meeting but decided she did not want to continue them. She said she was looking for another job.

Another Yosemite employee alleged that her former supervisor had shouted at her and slammed his office door in her face, once striking her with the door. She said that when she approached a human resource specialist and a regional EEO employee about the issue, they dissuaded her from filing formal complaints. During interviews, the HR employee and the EEO employee both denied ever dissuading someone from filing a complaint. The supervisor ultimately retired.

A former Yosemite employee stated that a coworker once told her he was in love with her. She said the coworker’s attraction to her was a distraction, so she reported the matter to her supervisor and the coworker was reassigned.

A Yosemite employee alleged that another employee had shouted at her and other employees on some occasions. We contacted the second employee’s supervisor and inquired whether he was aware of this behavior. The supervisor said that the employee had “gone off the handle and yelled” at employees on more than one occasion, but he did not believe this behavior was prevalent or ongoing. The supervisor said that a separate incident involving the employee had

been investigated and determined to be a conduct issue. He said he gave the employee a formal letter of counseling.

In addition, a Yosemite employee alleged that her former supervisor created a hostile work environment by setting her up to fail in her job, and that her former supervisor was a “terrible bully” who would “fly off the handle for no reason” and who had shouted profanities at her. The supervisor said she could not recall using this language, but said that she had attempted to terminate the employee before her probationary period ended because she was not “grasping the basic concepts” of her expected performance. The supervisor said that the employee was allowed to stay at the park but was moved into another division. We referred this complaint to the NPS ombudsman for review.

Another of this Yosemite supervisor’s employees alleged that the supervisor would often fail to give him direction on projects and that she had “flown off the handle a few times” at meetings. He said he had also witnessed the supervisor going “toe to toe” with an employee, “yelling and screaming.” He said she would also force her staff to sit in meetings that would last for hours. We referred this complaint to the NPS ombudsman as well.

A former Yosemite employee alleged that her former supervisor created a hostile work environment by yelling often, but said that it was not directed toward her so she could not provide any specific examples. She said the supervisor had left Yosemite several years before.

A Yosemite contract employee alleged that his coworkers used foul language and played vulgar music where he and park visitors could hear it. We also referred this complaint to the NPS ombudsman.

Finally, it was alleged that an NPS regional official was racist because she failed to address discrimination against a former park employee. The regional official explained that NPS had tried unsuccessfully to accommodate a disability the former employee had. She said a relative of the former employee had called her “a number of times” about the matter and she listened to his concerns, but later he began to make “outrageous” comments about NPS employees, calling them racist.

### **SUBJECT**

Former senior official, Yosemite National Park, NPS.

### **DISPOSITION**

The former senior official retired from NPS after our investigation began. We provided this report to the Acting NPS Director for any action deemed necessary.