

Summary: Investigation of Allegations of Reprisal Against an NPS Program Assistant

Report Date: April 11, 2016

We investigated allegations that Hawaii Volcanoes National Park (HAVO) managers reprimed against a program assistant for submitting various complaints and grievances to the Office of Special Counsel and to National Park Service (NPS) officials.

The program assistant made numerous allegations of reprisal including that HAVO managers—

- denied him a promotion;
- threatened him with a detail to another park;
- directed him to turn in his Government laptop while he was on leave;
- told him to sign a management expectation form that others did not have to sign;
- threatened to revoke his telework agreement;
- restricted him from reviewing job vacancy announcements;
- told others at the park not to speak to him;
- passed him over for a supervisory position; and
- placed him in absent-without-leave status.

In addition to his allegations of reprisal, the program assistant alleged that trails at HAVO were not being properly maintained and that HAVO's Maintenance Division was misappropriating HAVO funds.

We did not substantiate the program assistant's allegations of reprisal or fund misappropriation. From interviews with HAVO staff, however, we learned that the park's backcountry trails have not been fully maintained. An NPS official informed us that this problem is not unique to HAVO, and many national parks are experiencing funding shortfalls in their maintenance departments.

We provided our report on our investigation to the Director of NPS for any action he deemed appropriate.

This is a summary of an investigative report that was issued internally to the U.S. Department of the Interior. This summary was posted to the web on May 11, 2016.

