

Summary: Investigation of a Senior Park Official for Violating Contracting Procedures

Report Date: June 17, 2015

OIG investigated allegations that a senior official at the C&O Canal National Historical Park in Hagerstown, MD, violated contracting procedures and created a conflict of interest when he pursued the installation of geothermal energy units at the vacant Ferry Hill mansion using a local contractor with whom he had a prior business relationship.

We found that the senior park official violated agency contacting procedures when he, without consulting with the supporting Major Acquisition Buying Office (MABO), arranged for a local contractor to conduct a site visit at the park and prepare a scope of work for the installation of geothermal energy units at the historic Ferry Hill building. The superintendent then submitted those work specifications from the contractor verbatim to MABO to use in the solicitation and awarding of the contract.

We also found that the senior park official, along with two other senior park staff previously used this same contractor to install geothermal energy units at their personal residences.

The MABO decided to award the contract only to a small business certified through the Small Business Administration's (8)a Business Development Program. The contractor who conducted the site visit and prepared the scope of work was not certified under the program, and the park ultimately canceled the requisition. When asked, the senior park official denied cancelling the procurement because the local contractor was ineligible.

We found no evidence that the official committed a criminal offense, so we did not refer our findings to a U.S. Attorney's Office.

This is a summary of an investigative report that was provided to the NPS Director for any action deemed appropriate. On July 12, 2016, NPS informed us that the official was verbally counselled for his actions.

