



OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Alleged Smuggling of Contraband by a National Park Service Employee

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

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We investigated an allegation that a National Park Service (NPS) employee assisted inmates from a prison work detail to smuggle contraband into a Federal penitentiary. We interviewed inmates and NPS employees and found insufficient evidence to prove or disprove that the employee assisted inmates who smuggled contraband into the penitentiary. We did find, however, that inmates on the work detail had access to knives and other tools and were left unsupervised, a violation of the interagency agreement between the Federal Bureau of Prisons and the national park.

We also investigated whether the employee followed NPS and departmental procedures for the use of prison work details, and if the NPS had established policies and procedures for the supervision of inmates working at the national park. We presented those findings and recommendations on the lack of departmental policies and procedures in a separate management advisory (Management Advisory No. OI-GA-18-0898-I, *The National Park Service Needs Policies or Procedures Covering Prison Work Details in National Parks*).

We provided this report to the Deputy Director, Exercising the Authority of Director for the NPS, for any action deemed appropriate. The employee has since left the NPS, and as a result of our management advisory, all prison work details at national parks have stopped pending further consideration.

II. RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION

We initiated this investigation after receiving allegations that a National Park Service (NPS) employee helped prisoners smuggle contraband into a Federal penitentiary in 2018. The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) searched the NPS van when it arrived at the penitentiary with inmates from a work detail and located contraband inside it, including more than \$400 in cash, knives, tools, cigarettes, and other tobacco products.¹ Under an agreement between the BOP and the national park, prisoners provided various services at the park. The park superintendent told us the park had been using prison work details for about 10 years.

The interagency agreement between the park and the penitentiary prohibits contraband, which includes money, items from vending machines or other food or drink, perfume, jewelry, hair extensions, clothing, watches, cosmetics, radios, firearms, explosives, weapons, ammunition, metal-cutting tools, recording equipment, cellular telephones, narcotics, marijuana, cameras, alcoholic beverages, prescription drugs, and other items including tobacco.

We found insufficient evidence to prove or disprove that the NPS employee provided the contraband to the inmates or helped smuggle it into the penitentiary. We interviewed the inmates who had worked at the park on the day BOP officers discovered the contraband, and they denied that the NPS employee gave it to them. When interviewed, the employee not only denied providing contraband to inmates or receiving anything of value from them, but also denied any

¹ Title 28 C.F.R. § 500.1(h) defines contraband as material prohibited by law, regulation, or policy that can reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or adversely affect the safety, security, or good order of the facility or protection of the public.

knowledge that the contraband was in the van despite it being visible to the BOP personnel who searched the van.

We did find, however, that the national park violated its agreement with the BOP. The agreement, which was signed by the superintendent, required that inmates remain under the supervision of an NPS employee. It also prohibited the NPS from knowingly giving inmates access to weapons and metal-cutting tools. Park employees told us, however, that inmates were left unsupervised for approximately 2 hours while working at the park, and that the inmates, whose criminal histories included firearms- and drug-related convictions, had access to knives.

III. SUBJECT

Former NPS employee.

IV. DISPOSITION

The Office of the U.S. Attorney declined to prosecute the former employee.

The superintendent transferred the employee to another position at the park before the employee left the NPS. In addition, as a result of the management advisory we issued, all prison work details at national parks have stopped pending further consideration.

We provided this report to the Deputy Director, Exercising the Authority of Director for the NPS, for any action deemed appropriate.

