

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240**

**December 28, 2016**

Memorandum

To: Regional Directors  
Associate / Assistant Directors  
Superintendents

From: Assistant Director, Partnerships & Civic Engagement

Subject: Signing and Release of Director's Order #21: Donations and Philanthropic Partnerships

The Director of the National Park Service (NPS) has signed Director's Order #21: Donations and Philanthropic Partnerships. It will be released to the public today, bringing the process to a close. Thank you to everyone who participated in this revision, especially those of you who contributed very detailed and thought-out comments. I would also like to acknowledge the work of the WASO Office of Partnerships and Philanthropic Stewardship and the regional partnership coordinators.

The newly revised policy broadly provides guidance to:

- Help the NPS connect with broader philanthropic communities;
- Offer updated agreement templates and tools to engage new and more diverse philanthropic partners;
- Update donor recognition options in accordance with the new Donor Recognition Act;
- Assist NPS employees to evaluate and accept donations;
- Create certification and training for successful philanthropic practices and results; and
- Provide brand management strategies and guidelines.

The new Director's Order #21 is available on the NPS Office of Policy website <https://www.nps.gov/applications/npspolicy/DOrders.cfm> Scroll down the list to the Guidance Document Title: Director's Order #21: Donations and Philanthropic Partnerships. Additional guidance on ethics, donor recognition, and frequently asked questions can be found on the Partnerships website <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/partnerships/index.htm> in the "Partnership Toolkit" section.

## **Background**

The revision of DO-21 was brought about in part by several of our non-profit partners expressing concern with various provisions of the existing Director's Order. The Director asked the National Park System Advisory Board to review the order. Board Member Paul Bardacke, former Attorney General of New Mexico, was asked to chair a new committee on partnerships and philanthropy (the Committee). The Committee was composed of a wide cross section of

corporate and non-profit leaders, and included existing partners and entities NPS that had not previously engaged. These individuals represent corporate America, universities, museums, park philanthropy, foundations, youth, concessionaires, and outdoor recreation.

The Committee met for 5 months from April 2014 to August 2014. Key members included representatives from the Friends Alliance and the Public Lands Alliance. They received briefings on key policy issues by subject matter experts and used this information along with their personal knowledge and experience to develop recommendations to be presented in a final report entitled, "Toward a New Era of Philanthropy and Partnerships." These recommendations were used as the guiding principles to update DO-#21 and some were tested during the NPS 2016 Centennial and Find Your Park campaign.

## **Next Steps**

Our briefings and discussions over recent months have focused on changes to the existing Director's Order. In January, we will begin a several month rollout that will have a distinctly different tone as we focus on how to use the document and what it means specifically to you as an employee or partner. We will begin with a basic explanation of Director's Order 21 and a discussion about common ethics questions.

Over the following months we will release sections of the Reference Manual as they are completed. The Reference Manual contains further details and examples for how to implement the Director's Order. We intend to complete and make available all sections of the Reference Manual by mid-2017.

One other key step is working with the solicitor's office to update agreement templates that establish and guide the philanthropic relationship between a partner and the NPS. We will complete these agreement templates and make them available during the first quarter of 2017.

From the earliest days of America's national parks, individual citizens, private sector companies, and organizations have played vital roles in the development, support, and promotion of the national parks. Philanthropic and partnership practices and opportunities have continued to evolve over the last decade, becoming more sophisticated and competitive. The new Director's Order ensures we are aligned with the best business practices in the philanthropic community and positioned to succeed into our second century.

I encourage you to review the revised DO #21 and watch for upcoming announcements of webinars and trainings. If you have any questions regarding the revised DO-#21, please contact Reggie Chapple, Division Chief, Office of Partnerships and Philanthropic Stewardship, at (202) 354-2112.

cc:

Deputy Director, Operations (NPS)

Division Chief, Office of Policy (NPS)

Division Chief, Office of Partnerships and Philanthropic Stewardship (NPS)