

[Assessment of the Department of the Interior's Law Enforcement Activities]
[From the U.S. Government Printing Office, www.gpo.gov]

Report No. 2002-I-0014

Title: Assessment of the Department of the Interior's Law Enforcement
Activities

Date: January 14, 2002

Most law enforcement offices are under the direction of managers who have limited or no law enforcement experience or training. This decentralized Bureau management has had near total autonomy, with the power to determine law enforcement priorities, funding and investigative direction. This management approach, combined with the Department's hands-off philosophy, has resulted in chronic frustration on the part of the Departmental law enforcement officers and a disquieting state of disorder in the structure and operations of law enforcement throughout the Department.

...the NPS Ranger and FWS Refuge Program budgets and approximately 50 percent of the budget for BLM's law enforcement program are derived from or commingled with non-law enforcement budgets.

An example of this lack of budgetary identity can be found with the NPS Rangers. NPS Rangers are funded primarily through the "Operation of the National Park Service" appropriation. Within this appropriation, the budget sub-activities of "Visitor Services" and "Resource Stewardship" contain the bulk of funding for law enforcement Rangers. The total FY 2000 law enforcement funding for NPS Rangers, according to the NPS budget justification was about \$129.6 million from "Resource Stewardship" and "Visitor Services." When asked, the Acting Chief of the NPS Ranger Activities Division could not provide a breakdown of FY 2000 funding totals by park.

In an internal report, the NPS concluded it was in need of 1,295 new positions.

Some staffing and deployment decisions were completely arbitrary, based solely on the manager's personal prioritization. As an example, one Park Superintendent chose not to hire additional law enforcement Rangers, even when provided additional funding for the acknowledged need, because he felt the additional Rangers would "unbalance" his work force. A fellow Superintendent stated, "We must be careful not to show too much support for law enforcement over other programs."