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NPS Operation Leadership Program Interviews, 2018

Sara Newman
November 8, 2018

Interview conducted by Lu Ann Jones
Transcribed by Teresa Bergen
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The narrator has reviewed this transcript.

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Narrator – Sara Newman
Interviewers – Lu Ann Jones

[START OF INTERVIEW]

Lu Ann Jones: So, let me do just a little test first. First of all I'll just open by saying this is Lu Ann Jones. It's November the eighth. I'm with the Park History Program. And we are in the Main Interior Building in Washington. And I'm doing an interview today with—

Sara Newman: My name is Sara Newman.

Lu Ann Jones: And you are?

Sara Newman: I'm currently the Director of the Office of Public Health for the National Park Service.

Lu Ann Jones: Great. So let's just see how we're doing here.

Sara Newman: Okay, yeah, let's see how—

[End Track 1. Begin Track 2.]

Lu Ann Jones: Why don't we start again? So, this is Lu Ann Jones. It's November 8, 2018. We're here at the Main Interior Building in Washington. I'm with the Park History Program. And today I'm doing an interview with—

Sara Newman: My name is Sara Newman, and I'm the Director for the Office of Public Health here at the National Park Service.

Lu Ann Jones: And do I have your permission to record this interview?

Sara Newman: You do.

Lu Ann Jones: Thank you. We're doing this in anticipation of the Operational Leadership summit next week. So, I was wondering if you could, I've read a brief biography, but to kind of talk about where your work with public health and with the Park Service, how that intersected with Operational Leadership originally.

Sara Newman: I've been here at the Park Service now for 13 years. So my intersection with Operational Leadership started when I had a different job, which was as the Program Manager for the Public Risk Management Program in the Office of Risk Management. So my relationship, I guess I'd say with

Operational Leadership was quite different than it is now. But it certainly was a rich relationship in which I was able to identify how that program, its concepts, its principles could apply to the objectives and goals I had for my program. And time and again, that's changed or evolved with my new role in the National Park Service.

Lu Ann Jones: Well so what were the goals? What were the goals and the mission of the program that you were directing at that time?

Sara Newman: Sure. So the goals of that program were to do what we could to provide our park managers the tools, the resources, the information, and the guidance to reduce the possibility of injury in our visiting public. Operational Leadership, which was really intended as an employee program, I saw as a true opportunity for me to apply to the public – and there were opportunities in which I actually could do that. So, you know, that's where it was very obvious for me to be able to do that.

Lu Ann Jones: One of the questions that Mark wanted us to talk about, one of the things that he and I talked about – so you had these kind of programmatic ways that you knew, but had there been particular accidents or incidents or kind of a series of incidents that just made you realize we need to do something differently? An epiphany that just said, enough is enough, we have to do something different, and OL seemed to be at least part of the answer to that?

Sara Newman: I think that's absolutely certain in our employees where we have the day-to-day ability to work with them and educate them and give them, and empower them. It's a little different with our visitors because they come and they go. So to give them the tools of Operational Leadership is not as easy, although we do do it. So in other words, we took concepts like the Green-Amber-Red, and the ideas of when you engage in this activity, before you enjoy the horseback riding trip or the walk down the path or any effort that you're going to do, any recreational activity – we actually had interns who took some of those OL concepts, translate them for visitors, so they could do their own sort of a risk assessment of that activity. I don't know about epiphany. You know, certainly I probably did; you know, here's a really neat concept that definitely is going to be effective in our employees that we can train them over time and empower them and have them assess and then even be able to empower them to tell their manager, "Sir, I cannot do this. This is not safe for me to do."

Sara Newman: But could we do that to our visiting public? Could we transfer those ideas, those concepts, those principles, to our public? We thought we could. And so I had an internship program in which our interns and several who were able to apply this idea – they developed the concepts and they integrated them into messaging for our visitors, so they could apply those

preplanning, and when you're in the moment about to engage in activity, to reduce the possibility of serious injury or harm.

Lu Ann Jones: I happened to read the *Ranger* issue that Mark [Herberger, Operational Leadership program manager] I guess guest-edited that focused on Operational Leadership and just this morning read the article that you talked about. So that was a series of bicycle accidents in one of the Hawaii parks. And it was very interesting to talk about, as you say, applying these principles to employees versus visitors. So how did you specifically one, apply these principles to visitors, and maybe you could recount either that case study or other instances when you applied that, and then the messaging for the public.

Sara Newman: So that case, the Haleakala that you're referring to, was in relationship to numerous very serious injuries that were occurring in that park over some time related to folks who'd take a bus ride up. And at "0 dark thirty" in the morning, at literally four a.m. when it's pitch dark would go down a very steep mountain wearing a helmet. And all the conditions that would make it very easy to get in an accident. In other words, the road could be black ice. It's dark out. If you fall, you're falling on lava. Not hot lava, but lava rock. And if you know anything about lava rock, it's like glass. So, the injuries that were happening related to this activity were severe. And there were, you know, hundreds of injuries and even there were deaths.

Lu Ann Jones: And this was a concession operator that was renting these bikes, is that correct?

Sara Newman: Correct. Several. Permittees who were, exactly, who were renting out bikes and leading these programs. So this was an interesting case, because what we did in this case is we did a serious accident investigation. A team of us went out and really assessed it. But what we did is we used OL as a framework for that. So what do I mean by that? I mean, we looked at the various aspects of OL, of Operational Leadership, which is – what is the management of that program? What sort of information do people have before they go? What do operators communicate? So, what was the communication aspect of that activity or event? So, we actually looked at aspects of Operational Leadership and evaluated the risk of that activity to determine, should this continue to be an activity that is run by these permittees? You know, to give the management of the park, the leadership, some recommendations in relation to decision making. So this was very different, because we used OL as a guide, as a framework, for assessing risk. It was a very effective way to do it. It was sort of the unique approach to OL. So, our actions informed management about decisions that would relate and affect the public.

Sara Newman: So that was different than some of the other ways I've used OL, which would be in another case, Lassen Volcano, for example, where we had an intern who was evaluating an activity where the visitors would do this walk. And there was some high risk to this walk. It was very hot. They had to insure they brought enough water. There were hilly hikes that people may not expect. So, what we did is I had an intern who went out there and assessed the activity, determined where there was high risk and where there were some issues, and even looked at data to see what kind of injuries were happening, what were the risk issues. She then developed an education tool that allowed that visitor to do what we call Green-Amber-Red assessment, so that they themselves would do their own risk assessment to say, am I fit for this? These sort of questions. Do I have sufficient water? Do I have shoes? Because blisters, I mean, you wouldn't think about, blisters were a major issue. People walked and they'd come back and they didn't have the right shoes. Do I have, you know, the necessary sort of equipment if I do get a blister to put a Band-aid on? They seem basic. But if you're in a group of people walking and someone gets a blister and they can't walk, now you've got to somehow get that person out. Once one person's injured, it impacts the whole team.

Sara Newman: So, they actually created this risk assessment tool so the visitor could checklist, you know, do you have little kids? Do you have enough food? Do you have water? Did you plan your trip? Do people know you're going to go, and have you told them what time you're coming back? You know, how long do you plan to go and when will you turn around if you're not feeling well? Do you feel well today? (LuAnn Jones laughs) So these sorts of questions that would empower them to make decisions. And also talk to each other. To say, "Maybe we should do the hike that's 1.2 miles, not the one that's 6.8."

Sara Newman: See how different those two approaches to a visitor safety issue is? One was as a tool for us, those of us who were doing the serious accident investigation team, to use OL as a framework for decision making. The other one was actually for the public to use as doing their own risk assessment. I hope that makes sense, that difference.

Lu Ann Jones: I thought it was really interesting, you know, just the different psychologies and assessments of risk when you're on vacation versus when you're at work. And how people who might be cautious at work, on vacation might just do things that they probably consciously know they shouldn't be doing. But somehow they are unleashed (laughs) to try something like riding down that hill when they aren't, as you said, the responders who said, "These are people who should never have been on the bike in the first place."

Sara Newman: Yeah, that's a great point. And you know we do think, especially when we're working, and this is true in public health in terms of injury prevention or disease prevention, that you're absolutely right. When you're on vacation, you may make different decisions and have different decision points – one, because you're on vacation, you spent a lot of money, you want to maximize the opportunity. There may be peer pressure, which is, "Oh, come on, we came all the way out." Even though you don't feel well that day, you sort of hide it. Or you say, oh, I've just got to do it anyway. Or just feeling like you want to take that risk because you're on vacation. So interestingly, I don't think there's a lot of science on how does your behavior change or mentality or thinking, how does your risk aversion change because you're on holiday, you're on leisure? So you know, it is different in a park, a tourism environment, than I think it would be, as you say, on your day-to-day job.

Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm. Some of the background I read on Operational Leadership and also just when I was in Operational Leadership training was talking about the Park Service culture, and how sometimes that supervisors in particular might be so bent on getting the job done that they ignore red flags. And unless that subordinate feels like they have it within their power and rights to say, "I shouldn't be digging the trench here," or, "I shouldn't be digging in this soft soil" or something, you might be setting yourself up for a big risk. So how would you assess, what was it about Park Service culture that made it a riskier culture or whatever, that needed to change? What needed to change to make it more safety conscious in a systematic way?

Sara Newman: That's such a good question. I think what was so effective, and has been so effective about OL, really comes down to empowerment. By that I mean that no matter who you are, what level employee you are in the National Park Service, this program educated you, opened your eyes, to the fact that you're valuable. You're not any less valuable than someone who's paid ten times as much or is a much higher level. Your life is as valuable as anyone else's. And you should feel empowered to say, "No, I'm not comfortable." That's hard. Who doesn't want to ensure they do the job, please their boss, feel like they won't get punished, feel like there won't be retribution, you know? But that's a hard thing. I think what OL did was to reinforce that message. And when you're reinforcing, not just from the bottom up, but then it's reinforced from the top down. So in other words, yes it's a bottom-up idea where employees themselves created the idea of this program. But their highest leadership said yes, we agree. We want you to speak out. And it happened.

Sara Newman: In other words, one example was when I was at, I think it was an SLC [Senior Leadership Council] meeting. And one of the superintendents got up and he said, "You know, we're talking about leadership and we're talking about safety. And I just got an email from our intern who sent a

note out parkwide to everyone insisting that they be careful about such and such." That the intern felt empowered to communicate about a risk issue at the park. I can't remember the details of it. But we all sort of stood back and said wow, we are making progress. The fact that that superintendent provided that opportunity, encouraged that sort of communication from an intern, someone who was probably 19, 20 years old, demonstrates how powerful this program can be. For me that's sort of the essence of what has made it so effective.

Lu Ann Jones: Have you seen instances where people resisted? Or where you had to, I don't know, do a little coaxing because they were wed to this hierarchy? Yeah, I guess where have been the points, there are always points of resistance in any kind of opportunity to change. So have you been able to identify where those points of resistance might be?

Sara Newman: Oh, yeah. They're everywhere. So, I'd say some examples are the folks who've done it all the time that way. "I've been here for 30 years and now you come along and tell me that because I'm not wearing eye protection when I'm doing weed whacking that I'm going to blow my eye out? Give me a break. Give me a break." So, yeah. The resistance is so much heavier than the ability to change people. This is with anything in public health or prevention is convincing people that yeah, you've been texting and driving for ten years and never crashed into anyone. But the severity of that decision, if it results in a crash, is so high, is so wrong, is so bad that, does it take that for us to convince you that it wasn't worth it? When you text that one time and you crash into the mom and her baby, and they're now gone? I mean, nobody should have that kind of lesson. But yes. Running into that resistance in the Park Service is a day-to-day task.

Sara Newman: With my staff, I've got public health people who work for me. They wear a U.S. Public Health Service uniform. So, they not only are public health, but they symbolize it every day and they're a model to the community. Well, I've learned about one of my officers, or several, that drove so many hours that they went into an embankment because they were so exhausted. Well, yeah. They have a high-demand job. It requires they do a lot of travel. There's a driving restriction in our parks in terms of, but either A, they choose to ignore it. They think that their boss wouldn't mind if they drove – they're meeting their mission. They want to go back and see their family. For a number of reasons they justify why it's okay for them to engage in that unhealthy and risky behavior. But if they have the embankment issue – thank God nobody died – it's over. And so yes, somebody who even wears a Public Health uniform who should know the risks, who is educated in public health, is a challenge. If it's a challenge there, it's going to be a challenge everywhere. So, it's not something you just do and stop; it's something we have to continue to make part of our culture until it's ingrained. You know, this is a problem in our nation.

Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm. Well who did you intersect with initially to come in contact with Operational Leadership and then to get involved and start seeing how it would apply to visitor protection? Do you kind of remember how that got started?

Sara Newman: I guess I'd say because I was in the Office of Risk Management and worked directly with Mark Herberger, who leads the program and has just been the genius behind really implementing it and bringing it to a level where it is – having trained over twenty-five thousand people throughout, you know, he really is the essence of knowledge in regard to that. So, I think the connection with him, with Michael May, who's the chief of that program. And with staff. But you know, I had the advantage of being in that program and learning about it. I took OL as a trainer, so I became a trainer. And that obviously crystallized my understanding of it and allowed me then to apply it to my own work, which resulted in what we did in Haleakala and what we have done with our interns, and the work that we do on a day to day basis. But I would say, you know, I'm not sure if I know that first memory. But definitely my exposure to Mark Herberger and the work he's been doing throughout has been essential in my real understanding of this program.

Lu Ann Jones: What, particularly when you were in the risk management program, so what was your job day in and day out as a Public Health officer, as opposed to an NPS civilian, for example?

Sara Newman: That's a good question, because we in the Public Health Service have had a relationship with the National Park Service for a hundred years. You'd never imagine, but it was way in 1921 when Steven Mather, who was the first director of the National Park Service, reached out to the Surgeon General at that time and said, "Hey, we want a Public Health Service officer to come and inspect water." So, the Public Health Service fills a role, a unique role in the National Park Service to do public health. And of course, prevention of injury is a public health issue. So, they hired an epidemiologist and went to the Public Health Service to fill that need. You know, most of the jobs here are not public health. You're a biologist or you're a natural resource expert, or you're a cultural resource, you're a historian or you're a ranger or law enforcement. But this unique role that we fill is public health. And that's prevention, risk management, disease outbreak investigation. So at that time, I happened to be hired to fill a position for injury prevention using epidemiologic methods to really design and create a program that is science-based, and really created the foundation of a program that included policy, guidance, scientific backing. We prioritized highest areas of risk and began to target in those areas, working with parks and managers to design a program that could most

effectively address the highest areas of concern as it relates to visitor injury.

Sara Newman: So, what makes us unique as officers who are assigned here, and currently we have 57 from the United States Public Health Service, is that we are very flexible. We can meet the demands of this agency if tomorrow I have to go off and go five days or two weeks solid to deploy for the National Park Service, I can be deployed. There's no extra cost for me to do that. There's no compensation, there's no overtime sort of compensation. And that's a value to the Park Service, to have that kind of flexibility. You know, it's a high-risk agency. We do a lot of work that's high risk. There are fires, there are natural disasters that impact our parks specifically. So to have a team of officers that can be at the needs, at the beck and call of this agency, is an advantage. And a slight difference from perhaps the civilian that may not have that same kind of flexibility, and we're expected to do it, whereas with the civilian, it would be maybe a little more challenging. So we really are, we value the hundred-year relationship we've had with the National Park Service to bring the expertise of public health to the Park Service.

Lu Ann Jones: So if I understand epidemiology, you're talking about spreading disease, right? So how did that model affect looking at injury?

Sara Newman: Epidemiology is a method, and epidemiology can be used for any kind of outcome, whether it's injury or disease. Because anything that is not random can be studied. Now if it's random, we can't study it. But like disease, injury is not random. What does that mean? That means there's a pattern of behavior that's existing among those who are dealing with that outcome that can be studied and potentially prevented. In other words, when we see that these people keep falling down this waterfall, we can keep going to the bottom and pulling them out, or we can go up to the top and find out oh, there's a slip on the bridge that we better fix and then these people won't keep dying down the waterfall. No different from a disease in which people keep getting sick from the flu. Well, maybe we could vaccinate them to prevent that. So, you use and apply the same methodology in injuries – because they aren't random – that you do in diseases.

Sara Newman: Many people don't think about that, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which is the world premier scientific agency, has a whole center on injury. They established that maybe fifty-some years ago, realizing that injury is a public health crisis. Currently one of the injury issues is violence in our nation. Opioid epidemics, you know. So injury, as you well know, cell phone use and driving. That's an injury. So how do we stop those patterns of behavior that result in a bad outcome?

Lu Ann Jones: So, when you came here, what were the injuries that were at the top of the list, and how have they changed over time? Because I would imagine that there could be some constants. But we also subject ourselves to injury within a larger culture. So what were you addressing immediately? And I'll just ask you that first.

Sara Newman: Sure, so we did look at data, and they weren't always as great as we'd like them to be. Because as a scientist, when I came, I said, "Where are the data?"

Sara Newman: They said, "Well, there's no database."

Sara Newman: Huh?! So I used what I could at that time. And there were several ways I could use, I won't go into detail. But just to answer the question, what we found was the leading cause of death in the National Park Service – and I'm saying death, because we had death data – drowning.

Lu Ann Jones: Wow.

Sara Newman: Followed by motor vehicle crashes and then falls. I haven't been doing the injury as much in the past several years; I don't believe it's changed much, and it certainly didn't change over time when I was doing it. Drowning is still a leading cause of fatality. Now, why are people drowning in our parks, you're thinking? Well, mainly it's because the opportunity for drowning. In other words, people can drown when they're walking across a bridge; they slip off and they drown. Or they're swimming across a river, and they shouldn't have been on that river, and they drown. Or they're boating. So, we have a lot of waterways. There's a lot of water activities. And there are opportunities for drowning even when you're just hiking. So, it is a leading cause of fatality.

Sara Newman: Injuries are different, and those are harder for us to decipher. But certainly, you know, if you drown, you drown. So, it's not usually an injury. Drowning is a death. But submersion can be an issue. But with injuries, those are more likely to be the same things that employees would suffer. Falls, scrapes, those sorts of things. Sprains, falls, scrapes, those sorts of things that aren't even major. But over time, those fatality causes, I don't believe have changed very much.

Lu Ann Jones: Interesting.

Sara Newman: But what it did is got us to then target on, okay, we know drowning is a leading cause of death. Let's initiate a drowning prevention program. We know that in terms of car crashes, which is not probably surprising when you think about in national parks there's a lot of driving. As we mentioned before, people are on vacation, so alcohol can be a factor. In fact, what we

did in a study is found out that there are a higher proportion of, in those crash-related accidents, those car-related, the rate of drinking was higher than in the sort of general population. And that may be related to the fact that you're on vacation, you may be drinking.

Sara Newman: You know, also, there is wildlife. In other parts of the country there may be better barriers for animals or even lighting, because they're not in parks; parks, because we're protecting a resource, may not have lighting, may not have barriers. So, animal interaction was another cause of crash in vehicles. But you know, just like in the general population, driving is a major source of injury in our nation. So, it's no different than in parks.

Sara Newman: In terms of falls, okay of course that's going to be high because of the opportunity to fall and to trip, just like our employees. So, we targeted our prevention to those different areas: a transportation program, a drowning program and then a preventive search and rescue program so folks who are hiking can think about some of those prevention factors.

Lu Ann Jones: We talked about how the culture of the Park Service, get the job done, mission-driven, that was kind of the perhaps leading to some risk among employees. But do you think that that culture also affected how visitors, the visitor culture? You know, if employees are kind of taking risks, are they less likely to help visitors assess risk? I mean, are those two things intertwined, I guess, is what I'm trying to say.

Sara Newman: Well, I think they are, you know, in a number of ways. One way is, I think if our employees don't see the value of prevention and personal protective equipment and thinking before doing, then how are they going to relate that to the visitor? You know, it's do as I say, not as I do. That doesn't work so well. But when they can model it, and when they practice it, not only are they keeping themselves safe, but certainly they're sending a message. I mean, our employees need to be the messengers. They need to be the ones that model it, that message it, and who truly believe in it.

Sara Newman: In fact, one of our associate directors several years ago, when he said, I was the acting chief of the Office of Risk Management at that time. He came to me and said, "Sara, we need a strategy for safety for the National Park Service. I want you to help lead that. Because," and what he said was, at that time I was also co-managing the Public Risk Management Program. But he said, "I need you to shift your focus on employees. We'll get back to the visitors. But until our employees get a real grasp and a sense of where they're going, what the strategy is for safety, how do we put our energy in the public? We need our employees to be practicing it, believing it, and then spewing it, in order for it to be effective." So, I think you're absolutely right. There's an interrelationship in many ways, and that's how it's going to be most effective.

Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm. (phone ringing) That's okay. Oh, I was interested, oh, yeah, you had the NPS staff model. I got that from your article. But the risk management internships. Could you just talk a little bit more, because that did seem like a real innovation and opportunity to work with SCA [Student Conservation Association]. So maybe you could talk about that a little bit?

Sara Newman: Sure. It was such an exciting program and time for us. The program idea started with one intern who I sent to Virgin Islands park. They came to me and said, "We need someone to help us out." They said, "Sara, will you come for three months and help us really get a grasp on our injury program here and how we prevent drownings, and rip current, and all these issues we're dealing with?" Mainly, it was drownings with their visitors.

Sara Newman: Oh, my gosh. Would I have liked to go three months to the Virgin Islands National Park, right? And I said, "No, I can't do it. But I'm going to get you someone who can do it." And that's where the idea came up, right? The idea was, why can't I get a smart, young, flexible – someone who can strip away from whatever they're doing to do this at a low cost? So, I came up with the idea of getting a doctoral student who had the skillset to do that sort of evaluation assessment of what the issues were in that park to come up with some recommendations that would help them address their needs. It was such a success having this SCA student.

Sara Newman: The park paid for it. They were so excited about it. They were like, wow. They helped me interview candidates, and they selected the candidate. So, they felt very empowered because they were part of the selection. They paid for it, so they were invested in it.

Sara Newman: Then I managed it by ensuring I gave oversight to this intern. So although I wasn't there, unfortunately, I at least spoke at least weekly to this intern. Gave her guidance, gave her advice. You know, read her material, made sure that she was doing what she needed to be doing, made sure she had the support she needed. It was a huge success.

Sara Newman: In fact, this intern did such a great job that the work she did became policy, and it launched a new program. Now this incredible woman is a CDC [Centers for Disease Control] employee and has a doctorate. So, did great things.

Sara Newman: But since then, we've had about 60 people, both undergraduate and graduate students, go to parks throughout the nation to do these sorts of injury prevention programs. And it varied; it depended, really, on what the park needed. You know, "We'd like you to evaluate this bike trail and

come up with messaging." Or, "We have no idea why there are so many injuries. We want you to tell us what's causing it." So either they knew what was causing it or they didn't know, or they wanted to educate employees to give them tools to educate visitors. So we would do an evaluation of what their needs were. They'd come to us. We'd evaluate. And when I say "we," I mean my staff, would evaluate what they needed. We'd create a position description that we thought would meet their needs. They'd approve it, we'd work together, and then we'd say okay, we're ready to pitch this out and find a student who can help you with a very clear and discrete task, with an on-site supervisor, with us providing training, weekly guidance. They'd give us weekly reports that we reviewed. They had a product at the end that was very specific, whether it was building a website, creating a video, giving them cards and tools and evaluating something and giving a report at the end. So they knew exactly what they were going to do.

Sara Newman: The greatest thing is, let's say in one year we had maybe 20 interns at a time. We'd get together for a week before they launched off and trained all the interns. We trained them about the Park Service, our expectations. They wrote their position descriptions there, their task, what they're going to do and how they're going to implement it. They planned out their whole summer. We really managed it very carefully, made sure we gave them all the training they'd need. Our goal was for them to succeed and to have a great experience. So young people, again, this great experience in parks applying what they learned in undergraduate or graduate school. Some did their dissertations, some did their master's, some got published, some presented at national conference. And every one of them, I think, grew and really learned a lot about themselves and their interests. So it was a huge, huge success.

Lu Ann Jones: Wow. That's great. Well I was wondering, I won't keep you much longer, but in terms of when you were teaching, you have taught Operational Leadership. One, do you think you teach it any differently from your vantage point than perhaps other people do. And what have you learned, do you feel like, from those teaching experiences?

Sara Newman: So, I took the training to actually teach and never had the opportunity to do it. The reason I never did is because of timing. So after I took the training, I became the chief of the Office of Risk Management and never had the opportunity to actually teach. But having said that, and the fact that I never went out and trained others to implement it, I certainly took aspects of OL and trained interns – we did a whole exercise in Operational Leadership with our students, giving them scenarios and case studies, and said, "What would you do if…" So, example, you run into a visitor who has captured a squirrel. It was half alive. But it was so cute. The visitor was handling it. What do you do? So, we'd walk them through how would

they handle a visitor that just touched wildlife that could have a whole number of diseases; didn't realize it. Now you are there. So what did they think about in terms of their own risk? How would they handle this visitor? Who would they contact? How would they, what would they advise the visitor? So, they walk through scenarios.

Sara Newman: Now before we do the scenarios, we teach them Operational Leadership, personal protective equipment, making good decisions, supervisory guidelines that would inform how they handle high-risk situations. And then they go ahead and did these great scenarios, which gave them that hands-on. Then they'd rotate and do another, rotate and do another. So they had six or seven different scenarios and groups that gave them that hands-on sort of oh my gosh, I'm faced with a situation. How would I manage it? How would I handle it?

Sara Newman: So, I took all the concepts of OL and shared it with those interns to empower them to use OL in their daily lives. And even, you know, instruct it to visitors. Use it in the work they were doing. Use it in their communication. So, but I want to make sure, I wasn't one of the official trainers.

Lu Ann Jones: Okay. So thinking about the conversation next, what, Tuesday morning, are there questions other than those that I've kind of suggested to participants that you think would be particularly good to ask people? I mean, I have a sense, even though you now and Mark are the only two who I've met face to face, that this will be not a reticent crowd, so I think it will take on a life of its own. But are there questions that you think I might think about asking people that would be particularly rich about their OL experiences?

Sara Newman: Well, let me first say I thought your questions were great.

Lu Ann Jones: Thank you.

Sara Newman: Because in addition to asking ones, you obviously did your homework, and that always makes a richer conversation because you knew the right questions to ask. I guess one of the questions, I'm not sure it enriches anything you've done because they were so good, is how has OL affected your own personal life? Or where have you seen it come up where you just didn't expect it?

Lu Ann Jones: Yeah. That's a great one. So? (laughs)

Sara Newman: Well, for me, it was just like this *wow*. So, when I was introduced to OL, my oldest daughter was seven. So, this past summer, when she was 18, she worked at Yosemite National Park as an EMT. And she called me one

night and said, "Mom," you know, she's 18, first time actually being an EMT in one of the most high-risk parks in the nation. She said, "Mommy," she still calls me Mommy, by the way, she said, "Mommy, there was a major incident today." Actually, I knew about it, because when they're major, we get notification. She said, "Two or three hikers were hiking and were hit by a boulder the size of a microwave, and I responded."

Sara Newman: And I said, "Oh my gosh," you know, "what happened?"

Sara Newman: And she said, "Well, they flew the helicopter up. They got the guys, they brought them—"

Sara Newman: I said, "Wait a minute, wait a minute. Did you go in the helicopter?"

Sara Newman: And she said, "Oh, no, Mommy. They did a GER," right, she called it GER. "They did a GER and it was determined that I couldn't be on that airplane."

Sara Newman: And I just got the chills. I said, "The Green-Amber-Red? You mean the GAR?"

Sara Newman: "Yeah, yeah, the GAR. Green-Amber-Red. So, they evaluated. So Mom, I want to tell you what they do." So she was teaching me. "So what they do, Mommy, is they do an evaluation before they go out on anything and they make sure it's safe for us. So they did this thing called Green-Amber—" And she's explaining it to me and I'm thinking, *wow*. My kid has no idea I taught this, was part of this. It's been a major part of my work. And here she is telling me how she went through a GAR and was not allowed to go in the helicopter.

Sara Newman: She said, "That's okay, because I was safe. But they brought the guys down and I was the first to be able to sort of—"

Sara Newman: Anyway, I swear, I got chills. And it really made me feel like *wow*, not only is this personal, but OL is doing its thing. It's reaching this volunteer. You know, she was a volunteer. She's not paid. She was a volunteer in the park for three weeks. And GAR hit her, right? She was exposed to that. So that was, for me, the pinnacle.

Lu Ann Jones: Wow. (laughs) What a piece of serendipity there.

Sara Newman: Right? Yeah. It really was.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, did you tell her after she had done that? Not to deflate her, but to say you've just kind of epitomized part of my work or something.

Sara Newman: So, I don't know if I really had the opportunity. Because you know, she was in a hurry and telling me all these things. I mean, I think I was so just stunned. I was, "Oh, yeah, Honey, I know what that is." She was so excited about it. But it was just so much fun to hear her explain it to me and teach me about it as though I didn't know it that I sort of enjoyed that and kind of let it go. I'm not sure if later on I said, "By the way," you know. I don't think I did. It's still sort of out there. But it was just sort of this really cool, I think I've told everybody else. I'm not sure I even told Mark Herberger. But it's definitely a story I will share next week.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, that's great. To see that it really – it makes sense to her. She hadn't heard it from you. But that was something that made sense to her.

Sara Newman: Right. And you know, I think that I used approaches like that with my kids, you know. "You're not getting in the car ever if you've been drinking. Anytime if you're with a friend and they've been drinking, just come get me." You know, all the things you do as a parent, but we don't necessarily use that language, like, "Okay, let's do a little Green-Amber-Red before you go out tonight." So, she knows managing risk. But it was just the coolest thing.

Lu Ann Jones: Wow, that's great. Well, that seems like a nice story to end on. And I really appreciate your suggestion that that is a nice question to ask next week, and to ask in individual interviews, too. So thank you so much.

Sara Newman: Thank you, Lu Ann. It was fun.

LuAnn Jones: I appreciate it.

[End Track 2.]

[END OF INTERVIEW]