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September 11, 2001 Oral History Project, 2001-2004



Paul M. Pfenninger
January 23, 2002

Interview conducted by Janet McDonnell
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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

SEPTEMBER 11th ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH PAUL M. PFENNINGER

Shenandoah National Park

Conducted by Janet A. McDonnell, Ph.D.

January 23, 2002

START OF TAPE

Janet McDonnell: It's January 23rd and I'm here with Paul Pfenninger at the headquarters of Shenandoah National Park. And maybe just to start if you would just tell me a little about what your position is here at the park.

Paul Pfenninger: I'm the Interpretive Programs Manager, so my position primarily controls the interpretive program aspects of the park: guided walks, talks, campfire programs.

Janet McDonnell: That's interesting. We might be able to talk about how you might interpret this particular event as we go along. You also had another role as a member of the Type 2 Incident team, and it would be very helpful to me if you would just explain a little bit about what the team is and how it's made up. And then we'll talk about September 11th specifically, but just some background, please.

Paul Pfenninger: Basically, what it is my function on the team is the Public Information officer. It is a team that has been assembled by the National Park Service, the Northeast Region, and now the Eastern Coast. They combined a couple of regions and made these all risk management teams.

Janet McDonnell: When did that occur?

Paul Pfenninger: That occurred, I believe, about a year and a half ago. So, we have been moving in that direction so that you wouldn't just have a Northeast team and a Southeast team, Midwest and so forth. It combines others - I think three or four teams on the East Coast, three or four teams on the West Coast, and a couple of teams in the middle of the country. The premise is all based on the Incident Command System, in that when a significant incident happens or a significant incident is about to happen - for instance, a presidential visit or something of that nature that would affect a park's function - the management team would come in and be able to over that incident and allow the park to get back to normalcy and get back to regular operations and still serve the visitor while management team handles the specific incident.

Janet McDonnell: How many Type 2 teams were involved with the September 11th response?

Paul Pfenninger: In this region here, there probably was - again and I don't know positively how many—there probably were at least two Type 2 teams that were in operation plus a Type 1 team. Type 1 teams handle the more national, definitely presidential visits and those things are handled by a Type 1 team. Sometimes you get sucked into an incident and you might be a Type 2 but you're the best thing they've got. It depends on the level of

connections that you need, for instance Type 1 people probably have direct access to the Directors office and so forth, where we deal primarily with the regional offices and so forth. An incident team has an incident commander who is given charge of the incident and is able to make decisions with the superintendent's blessing, usually supported by a financial section chief, operations section chief, planning section chief, I forget one, a safety officer—I think that's it. So, with the team assembled we work as a team, we practice as a team, we have to go through training, through FLETC—Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. They put us through a two-week training down there—actually, I take it back. It was a one-week training course, 40-hour training course.

Janet McDonnell: Are positions one deep? Two deep?

Paul Pfenninger: Usually about three deep and then you rotate in and out and you're on-call—shouldn't say on-call. You're in the slot and if an incident occurs while you're—

Janet McDonnell: Would a Type 2 team in the East be made up of people who live within that—

Paul Pfenninger: Yes. Normally people that are stationed within that region or on the East Coast. I don't know how you would define that. I guess East Coast regions would be the best.

Janet McDonnell: Can you identify people in those particular slots for your team? Starting with the commander maybe?

Paul Pfenninger: Sure. Rick Brown is the incident commander, Carl Merchant is the planning section chief, Chester Mikus is one of the section chiefs—he might be support—and then there was a new member, we actually had two new members on this particular incident. I'm trying to remember his name but can't but he's the Operations section chief and he sat next to me the entire two weeks and I can't remember his name. And then we had Ben Morgan from the Everglades. He was our safety officer and he just happened to be in New York City during the incident and so he contacted us knowing that we needed a safety officer that was on site and he was actually down in the Manhattan area. Will Reynolds is the operations section chief—I knew it would come to me. Our financial section chief was handled by somebody in the regional office and I don't remember his name.

Janet McDonnell: When were you first contacted and how were you contacted?

Paul Pfenninger: On September 11th or do you mean in general on September 11th? We had had a situation here where we lost power in the morning and none of

our computers worked. And we were basically told to go home if we had computer access at home, to go home and work on the computers at home. And I had projects I needed to do. And on my way home I turned on the radio and heard what was going on and my first instinct was to call back to the communications center and tell them if they need anybody, if they need any help, I'm available, whatever we need to do. They called me back about 12 o'clock and told me that they were activating our team and that we were going to Philadelphia and we were on our way about 4:30, 5 o'clock that night, Chester Mikus and I. Chester works here at this park also, so him and I drove to Philadelphia that day.

Janet McDonnell: So, the word comes not from the incident team commander but from the communications center.

Paul Pfenninger: Usually what they do is they have a resource order that they put in and somebody up higher, probably the regional director, said "We need an incident team in here to manage it." The superintendent, the regional director, the Director, is ultimately who gives us our task. "This is what I want you to accomplish here, this is our memorandum of agreement that this is what you're here for, to manage this incident here" - we're usually presented with objectives of what we hope to accomplish.

Janet McDonnell: Do you need something in writing—I think for the Type I team it was a "delegation of authority"—you need one for Type 2?

Paul Pfenninger: Basically, what that does is take the authority and hands it off to the management team and tell them "You're now in charge".

Janet McDonnell: But that would most likely be signed by a regional director—

Paul Pfenninger: Or the superintendent. And in the case of 9/11 I think it was not even the regional director, it was Dale Ditmanson who was the - I don't know if he was the acting regional director at the time, I know he's an associate regional director but Marie Rust, who's the regional director, was in Florida and could not get back.

Janet McDonnell: So, what guidance were you given initially? Were they able to tell you some things here before you left?

Paul Pfenninger: Not much. They just told us when to report to duty and lined out our travel and basically said "You're due to be up in the regional office at 8 o'clock in the morning and they'll assemble the team, Rick Brown will be there." Chester and I got there pretty late on that night of the 11th, we probably didn't get into our hotel until 11:30 or so. And then we reported to duty first thing at 8 o'clock in the morning.

Janet McDonnell: And what were some of the missions you ended up pursuing? Tasks might be a better word.

Paul Pfenninger: I'd have to look at my notes but primarily what we were tasked with doing when we got there was to gather some information about special events that were scheduled to be in different national parks. Also, to pull together what resources we had in some parks to help find out what sites had been affected. Seeing that they were in our region, those Manhattan sites—again, they didn't have telephone, or any kind of communication system set up most of the phone services were haywire in the New York area—so we had to establish connections.

Janet McDonnell: And how did you do that?

Paul Pfenninger: Primarily, we relied on cell phones and as people got their cell phones in and got the message out, we also worked with cc mail and inter-office mail. Our job was to contact each national park in the region and find out had anything occurred in their park, what was their security like, did they need additional security, what were the risks—sort of do a risk assessment, especially places like the Liberty Bell versus Shenandoah, which would be a higher risk target. At the time it was unsure what situation we were in, how many terrorist attacks there would going to be, and so our job was to pull that information together and to feed it to the Type 1 team who was going to feed it direction to the Director.

Janet McDonnell: And how did that link occur?

Paul Pfenninger: That link occurred through just cell phones and through regular cc mail messages.

Janet McDonnell: But did it occur, for example from incident team commander to commander or did you communicate with your counterpart on the Type 1 team?

Paul Pfenninger: Little bit of both, and again that was one of our objectives, that we were to make sure that this information got to the Type 1 teams and so they could put it all together in a bigger picture of what was happening in the nation. And I believe it was primarily between the two incident commanders who would discuss things, but occasionally the information officer from the Type 1 team calling me and saying “Look, I need this information, can you feed that back to me?” We would do a daily report called a Situation Report and that included “Here's the number of resources we know that are available, here are the - ”

Janet McDonnell: When you say resources do you mean equipment, what have you?

- Paul Pfenninger: Resources would mean equipment, people, any kind of special equipment or any kind of special training. For instance, if there was anybody who was trained in dog searches, we'd be able to access that and make sure somebody knew that order was right there and the whole idea was that there was one voice. So, if somebody needed something, then they would tell us, we'd find it for them and send it to them.
- Janet McDonnell: So how did that relate to the function that the coordination center was playing here? Because they were doing that—were you just doing that on a smaller scale?
- Paul Pfenninger: It's interesting. The unit here was primarily a national unit—they had been converted to a national unit—and so we were doing it on a smaller scale for our region, so we became the voice for the Northeast Region and Southeast Region at the same time. We were primarily focused on the Northeast Region and our job was to gather that information and send it to this communication center which had direct link to the Type 1 team. So, in a sense we were doing the same job they were doing only they were gathering information from the whole country.
- Janet McDonnell: Did you have the authority at that regional level to actually transfer the resources or just to collect the information and assess needs?
- Paul Pfenninger: I think we had the authority to transfer help within our region. In fact, I know because our safety officer went to the Manhattan site, ordered up some things, we helped some of the Manhattan sites get back up online. For instance, Federal Hall, which was probably the closest site to the Twin Towers, it needed cleaning, it needed security, it needed a bunch of different things that had to be ordered up and we ordered those resources.
- Janet McDonnell: You mentioned Southeast Region, but your area must have included National Capital Region too—
- Paul Pfenninger: No. National Capital Region had their own team to function, I believe. And each one of these regions was reporting directly to the Type 1 team. Although we certainly swapped resources in and out. I know that, for instance, that when they had a problem with security—their law enforcement, the U.S. Park Police, needed help—and you have to remember we're all drawing from different national parks and there really are no regional boundaries when it comes to resources. When you need a person, you put it out on the order form, and they look at their list of people that are qualified to do that and they just start making phone calls. The biggest problem we ran into was everybody was drawing from the parks closest to the sites because there's no air travel, no train—the regional director was stuck in Florida so she couldn't even get up here. So, there were some real transportation problems that were being cured by

drawing from local sources. And we got down to the bottom of the barrel pretty quick and so then we were trying to get resources in from other places, but they come online soon after that and now they were starting to order resources up. It was hard to get resources in.

Janet McDonnell: Did you encounter some reluctance on the part of parks to release resources?

Paul Pfenninger: Some. In some areas yes, in some areas no. I think it had a lot to do with risk factors. For example, Independence was pretty helpful but they were a pretty big risk factor and they were actually ordering resources, so it didn't make sense to give us rangers to send someplace else when they actually needed people to guard the Liberty Bell. Other parks that weren't very close to anything perceived as very high risk seemed to want to give up folks a lot faster. Will Reynolds and Chester Mikus might have a better idea of that just because of their positioning—Chester, again, is the logistics chief and his job is to order up—

Janet McDonnell: And you were more involved with getting the information out. Did that include with the media as well? Did you interact with the media?

Paul Pfenninger: There was pretty strict gag order that came down fairly fast that said all press releases had to go through the Director's office. So, we—again, anything that we really did focused on when the park was going to open or close, if parks were closed, any kind of special events that were coming up, and any special media request. The National Football League wanted to do a thing out on Ellis Island to start back up the football season that had come to an abrupt stop and so we had to negotiate with the superintendent, the acting superintendent at Ellis Island, and the president of the National Football League to kind of get down on the same page and in the meantime kept the Director informed because the Director had some call in what was going on also.

Janet McDonnell: Did you see some unique uses of park resources and park properties?

Paul Pfenninger: It's interesting that our national parks serve as these icons, so the symbolism there—I mean, the Statue of Liberty is a very powerful symbol and the fact that that took place across from the Statue of Liberty, a lot of media picked up right away that that would be an excellent shot. But then to think beyond that, think about the past use during World War II and stuff. It seems like there are always places—you've got this huge chunk of land with lots of boundary to it that's fairly well isolated in a sense. So, things like at one point they used Ellis Island for a morgue because it was easy to secure. You see in a couple of places there are naval bases and airfields close to a national park where they share common boundaries. You've got some interesting things happening there with National Guard

stationed on one side of the fence and Park Rangers on the other. I'd say as far as anything bizarre—common sense kind of stuff, it just made sense to be using it. Certainly, using some of the patrol boats from Fire Island to help shuttle supplies, shuttle personnel. I know a lot of the fire boats there were used to—I don't know if they were fire boats, actually—a lot of boats from Fire Island came in and helped rescue people during the event. It's one of the first things they thought of “Oh we need to get some people off that island.”

Janet McDonnell: I suppose park sites became havens for people fleeing the debris and stuff too.

Paul Pfenninger: There's some great stories about Federal Hall, actually. When the Twin Towers started to collapse, a whole mess of people went into Federal Hall, which is literally right at the back side of one of the buildings. And they took refuge there. Interesting to talk to some of those folks and hear some of the horror stories coming out of there.

Janet McDonnell: There are some people up in New York doing that. I imagine they're hearing some pretty powerful stories. When you were assessing resources and needs and earlier in the interview you talked about different categories of resources - what was the greatest need?

Paul Pfenninger: Protection. To have some law enforcement - and I'm not quite sure again, it all depended on how high a target it was assessed that park would be. For instance, Boston Harbor has a Naval harbor right there so Boston National Historical Park actually is in charge of Boston Naval Yards. I don't even know if it's open today, because the U.S. Constitution is there. That was assessed as a pretty high target and so they were really careful about that particular area and they needed a lot of resources.

Janet McDonnell: Did the team have any role in determining or at least recommending which—well, maybe not which parks should be closed—but maybe for how long? I mean if you were looking at security and risk and all of that, it seems like you might have had some good insights to contribute to those discussions.

Paul Pfenninger: No, not really, and primarily because of the President's order and the Director's order that came down and said “You should not be closed” and immediately they closed everything and then this attitude “No, we're not going to let this disrupt our normal operations. We want to get them open as fast as we can. We don't want events cancelled.” And so the order came back and said “If you are thinking about closing, let us know” and then that had to go down of command and then came back up saying “That's a pretty good idea, go ahead and close it.”

- Janet McDonnell: And there were a few exceptions to that. Like Statue of Liberty—
- Paul Pfenninger: There were a few places that we did not have any control over like Boston Naval Yard because that's controlled by the U.S. Department of the Navy and they decided "That needs to be closed, we're closing it."
- Janet McDonnell: How well do you think that process of gathering the information and disseminating it—not only giving it to the Type 1 team but as well to the center here—how well did that process work?
- Paul Pfenninger: We got off the ground very fast because we were up there. Type 2 Team was up there, we all arrived at primarily the same time, the only exception was Ben Morgan who we discovered was in Manhattan and he kind of fell into place. He was a key resource for us there in Manhattan. But primarily we all started at the same time, got our briefing, and were off and running. The ordinance center here, I felt, did a really good job. I felt like I could get information from them and to them back and forth and we did really good sharing. The Type 1 team had some real difficulties getting established because they couldn't get their people here because it's a national team that comes from all different regions. For example, Chris Sister [phonetic] is the information officer and she had to come from the West Coast. There was no way she was getting here from the West Coast in 24 hours. I think it took her, eventually, about a week to get here. She had to wait until they came back up with air travel.
- Janet McDonnell: Did the Type 2 Team fill that gap for a brief period? I thought I read somewhere that you filled in until the Type 1 stood up.
- Paul Pfenninger: Yeah, pretty much so. Because all the action was happening in the Northeast, we really were catching the brunt of it. We were staying in contact with their incident commander and the operations section chief who were staying here because they were both local. Skip Brooks is their Incident Commander for the Type I team and he's at Colonial.
- Janet McDonnell: And Dennis McGinnis was another one.
- Paul Pfenninger: Right. So those two had already hooked up and we could get information to them. They just didn't have anybody. And then there was a real question where that team was to be located. They initially wanted them in Washington and Washington wanted them to come back here, there was talk of setting up the Director's office at Shenandoah. I know they had gone to Washington and been told to come back here so they were really in flux.
- Janet McDonnell: But you went to Philadelphia, but then did you quickly then go up to New York City or did you stay in Philadelphia?

Paul Pfenninger: We stayed in Philadelphia. We made the determination that Philadelphia was a good spot to operate from because we had all the tools that we needed—computers, we had access to telephones, we had access to the Regional Office, we had all the support we needed there. Going to Manhattan would be really difficult especially with all the other organizations going there—the Red Cross, the different agencies that were functioning there all needed the same things we needed so the decision was made to stay in Philadelphia. Some members of our team did go down to the Manhattan sites and assess some of the situations there just to get some feel for what was going on out there. Because up until then everything we were getting was off of CNN and the different news channels plus what we gathered by talking to our individuals on the phone. There's an information officer in Manhattan and I can't remember his name, but he was very instrumental in getting us a lot of information and phone contacts. He had cell phone numbers because he is the Public Affairs officer for the Manhattan sites.

Janet McDonnell: Did you folks brief Marie Rust on a regular schedule?

Paul Pfenninger: We briefed Dale Ditmanson every morning and every afternoon and sometimes we would talk on conference calls with Marie so she could ask us direct question but mostly we kept Dale informed constantly and he played a role in giving us the thumbs up on media releases. Sometimes I'd take them directly in say “Does that look like that's gonna fly?” and he'd say, “Send it up to the Director's office and let's see what happens.”

END OF SIDE A

START OF SIDE B

Janet McDonnell: I understand there was a lot of training involved and working your way up within this incident command system and so I was wondering if you could compare the response to this event with past events you've worked on. I realize that might be hard because this was such a unique event, but it seems like so much of what you do is what you've trained for and sort of regimented—

Paul Pfenninger: It was certainly different in that there was a direct threat to our national parks, something that could be controlled versus a natural event that you know you don't have any control over, for instance the floods that it hit Yosemite in '97. That one, a major flood came through Yosemite Valley, shut the park down literally for about a month, so we were called in on that as the Type 2 Team. You still have destruction, you still have a huge resource you're trying to bring back up online as far as the national park goes, but in this sense, we were lucky that we didn't lose any of our

national icons. What we were dealing with was the emotional and intellectual connections that people were making with the Twin Towers. So, in that sense, we were just trying to be sure that our resources were safe and that we could do that through security. We could do that by offering counseling, and so forth, to the employees from that park to make sure they were safe because they were a huge resource. And we wanted to make sure that they were safe and that they had comfort.

Janet McDonnell: Did you coordinate with other agencies in order to accomplish these things?

Paul Pfenninger: Well, the National Park Service has a Critical Incident Stress Management team and so we called in a couple of teams to the Manhattan Sites primarily to deal with people's emotional needs at that point.

Janet McDonnell: What about security issues? Did you coordinate with the FBI or the U.S. Park Police?

Paul Pfenninger: U.S. Park Police, FBI, direct feeds would come in. Part of what Will Reynolds was working as operations section chief and being a law enforcement ranger is, he was working with the security situation. He was working through the U.S. Park Police and the FBI. The FBI would feed the Park Police that would pass on information, for instance, about suspects that we should be on the lookout for, what are some of the protocols, what are some of the types of things we should be on guard against. Decisions were made about barriers in front of the Liberty Bell. The superintendent made that call, but it was our team giving them information, "here's what they think is going on, here's some precautions to take."

Janet McDonnell: So, in the time you were up there you saw actual physical changes as the result of these assessments?

Paul Pfenninger: Yeah, where people could go, where people couldn't go—compared to past events, this one was definitely unique and very stressful in the fact a lot of things were happening very fast, you work a lot of long hours. I also worked a double homicide that was here and so I guess I was prepared for about anything, because after that double homicide that was my first incident as an incident commander—I mean, as an incident information officer—and it literally just taught me that there are a lot of people out there that want to do bad things to other people. I guess I've been pretty naive up until then.

Janet McDonnell: It added an emotional element that you hadn't experienced before, it sounds like.

Paul Pfenninger: Maybe because this one we were in Philadelphia and the Manhattan Sites were so far away, in a matter of speaking, that it was just a little different.

Janet McDonnell: Given those past experiences and this one, I'd be interested in hearing you assess the incident command system. Does it work? What are its strengths? What are its weaknesses?

Paul Pfenninger: I think it definitely does work. I think, once the team hits the ground and gets going and has some clear assignments, the positive things are that they can take the stress away from the employees that are working at the park. The downside is that they can cause stress. Just to give you an example, the double homicides that occurred here, one particular incident that I remember is that the team needed an office for FBI agents, so they commandeered an office with the superintendents blessing. But that employee had a complete office taken over, had her phone erased. Now she's got an FBI office—she can't go in her office anymore. So, she was displaced for almost 8 weeks out of her office so it can cause some stress too. The overall effort is to relieve the stress on the park personnel and resources and to have that team come in and manage that incident that things get back to some normalcy in the front counter where the visitors are impacted.

Paul Pfenninger: Some other pluses to it—it's very organized. There's a uniformed set of rules everybody plays by. "Here's what you do next." It's easy to order up resources, it's easy to get those resources here, it's easy to bring some continuity to the situation. For instance, when the FBI were here, they were amazed we were able to get a trailer in here in 24 hours. They just said, "How did you do that?" "We ordered up." That's the system, it's set up that way. You order it, you've got the authority to spend the money and bring it in. That's one of the downsides to it is that a lot of money gets spent. Sometimes it gets spent and it doesn't need to be spent. Our team is known for going in and trying to do things at a reasonable cost and not getting too wild. And again, I'll give you some examples. If you look at what happened in Yosemite, one particular incident there, somebody wanted photographs, as a Senator was coming out and it was going to be on the news and they wanted photographs, very large photographs, in the background showing the destruction and damage. They ordered up those photographs and they were, I think, \$8000 for a set of photographs. We saw that and went "Whoa." We would never have spent that kind of money, not on photographs for a backdrop. We'd have taken them to the site and let that be the backdrop. A lot of time people see it as a way to spend money, that they can get things that they need for the incident but everything that we buy/purchase stays in the park. So, a lot of time things like digital cameras and copying machines—people will order up copying machines and it comes across Chester's desk and he goes "Wait a minute. Someone wants to order a copying machine. Can't we just rent one without

buying one?" "Oh yeah, I guess we could." We typically like to go rentals—our particular team does—but there are teams out there that will spend money like crazy.

Janet McDonnell: How is it funded?

Paul Pfenninger: There are special accounts set up for specific incidents.

Janet McDonnell: Accounts set up by headquarters or by—

Paul Pfenninger: The Director's office, I imagine. Funds that are just set aside, special funding.

Janet McDonnell: But if it's a regional event, the account would be established by the regional director?

Paul Pfenninger: Right. There maybe be an account established by the park. For instance, we had the CCC reunion here—the national Civilian Conservation [Corps] reunion—here. In fact, Chester and I had to come off of the incident at 9/11, come home because we were on the incident team managing that CCC reunion. We had an account here that dealt with that.

Janet McDonnell: Do you feel that the team itself was adequately resourced? Did you have the tools you needed to do your job?

Paul Pfenninger: Yeah, well, we did. We made do with what we had because we hadn't been used in a year and a half. We had had some minor things but we really hadn't been used and part of the idea in establishing these teams was making sure they had the equipment ready to go, things like cell phone, laptop. Again, we're a pretty low budget team so everybody brings their own laptop. I don't have a laptop, so I borrowed one from our office. I don't have a cell phone—

Janet McDonnell: So there aren't a lot of costs involved.

Paul Pfenninger: Right. But other teams have all that already—they have their jump kits with their laptops and their pagers and their cell phones and their radios all right there. And so, when they get there that's all there. We, when we got to the Philadelphia office and there was a lot of communication centers there—I can't remember if it was Sprint, some major telephone company up there donated the phone to us. It might have been Nextel, but they actually donated cell phones and said we could have as many as we wanted and they had the radio function on it, they gave us calling—free. They gave us all that for free so that worked out really well and again, that's a typical thing that our team looks for, we really look to find things

like that, so it doesn't cost us that much money. And normally we're pretty successful at finding.

Janet McDonnell: What was the toughest part about this response? Is it the emotional element that you were talking about before?

Paul Pfenninger: Yeah, there are some really tough parts that have some added benefits too. The emotional part is very tough, but it probably would have been tougher to have been at home and not able to do something and that was my initial response. In fact, I wrote a note to my staff here because I didn't even have time to tell them where I went, that I know they all wanted to do something, and that's exactly what I felt, like "Gosh I want to do something, I can't just sit here." So, I think being up there and doing something was really good emotionally.

Janet McDonnell: Is there something that stands out as being the most gratifying part? Was there a particular incident or encounter or is it just the sort of general feeling of feeling gratified?

Paul Pfenninger: I think it's the general feeling of feeling gratified, but it's the teamwork aspect. Knowing that you're working together to accomplish something that makes you achieve your goals. When the incident gets turned back over to the particular party—in this case, the regional office—when we handed it back over to the regional chief ranger's office, Marie Rust, and Dale Ditmanson, it was now a manageable situation. They had all their resources in hand, they knew what was out there, we had established links and connections to the parks that there was a way to report in. It just felt good. You felt like "Wow, I saved these folks some agony, I was able to step in, now I can go back to my normal job and find relief in that because I don't have all that craziness going on in my park."

Paul Pfenninger: I think any time we help out a park in the Manhattan area, we felt good. That was definitely a big plus. They become your friend. You talk to them every day on the phone, you check on them and say, "How are things going?" and they know that somebody cares about them. And it's the simple things, and you might not even be able to do anything for them but, gosh, "We've ordered that and it's coming." It's just the calling and making a regular contact with them and letting them know you know they're out there. And that's what the Director and the Regional Director both wanted - to keep relaying the message that we knew they were there and that we were there for them, if they needed something, call us. For instance, the whole National Football League trying to have a concert out on Ellis Island. The Director 100% and the Regional Director said "Hey, it's the superintendent's call, if he thinks his people can handle that, great. If he can't then we'll negotiate with the National Football League, we'll work it out." And I felt like a turkey talking to the guy at the National Football

League and calling the superintendent at the same time and doing this, but it saved him the problem of why they couldn't use the place. He was very eloquent, and he basically said "At one point we want to maintain the dignity of the Statue of Liberty. It's a symbol. And not that we don't think the National Football League is a dignified profession or anything, it's just not really what the Statue of Liberty is singly about, it's about a bigger picture," and I think it was pretty gratifying knowing I could save him some headache-

Janet McDonnell: It's taking a level of pressure off.

Paul Pfenninger: He doesn't have to deal with the media at all, he just gives them my number and says, "Talk to this guy."

Janet McDonnell: Is there anything more about the team that I should know about that I haven't asked? It's an information gathering function and shifting resources thing. I would like to shift and talk a little about the park here and maybe get your perspective on some things. How did the 9/11 attacks affect day to day life in the park here and does it still have an effect on day to day operations in the park?

Paul Pfenninger: I was told by my staff, who work in the field with the visitors, that they found a lot of people were coming to the park right after the incident. They were coming here to get away from the TV, the news reports, the information that was out there - they needed a break from that and that the park provided that break. There was no "Guess what happened today'," "They're looking for Osama Bin Laden today," or "This is what they found"—there was none of that here in the park. So, they found a little bit of comfort in coming here. My staff, again just in the conversations that we were having, felt like their job was to provide that connection for folks here. That's their job anyway but they felt a pressing need that people had emotional, intellectual connections to this place, the significance of this place, and as interpreters, that's what they've been trained to do. They felt more of a need to go out there and go out of their way and make sure that those connections happened.

Janet McDonnell: So, it's not that the meaning of the park changed but the importance of conveying that meaning or the way that they conveyed that meaning to the public changed a little bit after? I'm not sure how to word that—

Paul Pfenninger: Maybe not to put it that way because I don't think that it did change. I don't think that the significance of meaning changed, I don't think that the way they went about it changed. I think the frequency of how they went about it—instead of taking a 15-minute break here, they went out and they roved. Instead of doing just a 30 minute talk, they brought people out into the resource and helped them make connections out in the resource, got

their mind on something so it wasn't just a "sit down and listen to me talk about how important Shenandoah is." It was "let's go out and discover something new and perhaps you'll make your own connection to this place."

Janet McDonnell: Do you think that continues a bit?

Paul Pfenninger: Yes.

Janet McDonnell: Well, tell me a bit about this Civilian Conservation Corps event and were you involved at all in the decision to go ahead and hold that?

Paul Pfenninger: Let's back up. Before September 11th, we established a Type 2 which was basically a park team that got together and decided that somebody needs to be in charge of logistics, somebody needs to be in charge or information. We were coordinating with the U.S. Forest Service; I can't name them all - couple agencies involved - there was the Civilian Conservation Corps reunion group that we were coordinating with. We had made those decisions way back, probably April or May of the previous year, about when the reunion was going to happen, what was going to take place there. We knew some Congressmen and Senators were going to come, we knew the Director was going to come, we knew it was going to be a pretty big event.

Janet McDonnell: Now this is a reunion of people that had worked in the park as part of the CCC program?

Paul Pfenninger: It was more than that. This was supposedly going to be their last national reunion. And these people who worked in the Civilian Conservation Corps all over the country. Each year they have a national reunion and this year they had it in Shenandoah. Camp 1 say was Camp Roosevelt, across the way here in U.S. Forest Service land, camps 2 through 13 were here in Shenandoah so this was a pretty big area for the CCC. Roosevelt himself came to Shenandoah to visit the CCC, ate lunch with them up at the camp at Big Meadows, dedication here was done with the CCC boys out in the front so it's a big part of our significance here. So, the decision was made to have the last one be here. Anyway, that precipitated into it was coming, we needed to prepare of it because it was coming and that was in April and May and that was happening all along. It was scheduled to happen the last of September, September 29th. So, September 11th really put some question of whether or not we should go forward with it.

Paul Pfenninger: Again, we were going to have some pretty high-ranking people here and that pushed us risk wise and the numbers of people we would be expecting really put a higher risk factor. But the decision came down from the Director's office and the Regional Director's office was that we were going

to go on, busy as normal as possible. We weren't going to let things change because of the risk, we weren't going to be afraid someone was going to do something, we were going to take extra precautions to guard against the risk. And so, this situation here, we went forward. Chester and I reported back to Shenandoah to take on the role that we had previously been slotted into to get this reunion going, to make sure it happened. The event went off without a hitch and it was a great day. We had the Secretary of the Interior here, we had the Director here, we had the Regional Director here, we had the Director of the Army Corps of Engineers Lt. General Flowers - boy, he was great. It was a big event. We probably had something in the neighborhood of 400-500 people. It was really important for the CCC boards. They recognized the significance of what they were going versus what happened on September 11th and there certainly was mention of that during the ceremony. "The passing of the shovel" is what they called it. Basically, what they were doing was they were passing on their legacy on to the youth of the United States. There are a couple of youth organizations involved, like the YCC -the Youth Conservation Corps, AmeriCorps and again those are two big youth organizations that are moving forward with conservation.

Janet McDonnell: So, it sounds like other than perhaps maybe a greater interest on the part of the public not only visiting but finding meaning in what they see here, that beyond that the day-to-day operations haven't changed very little or no at all.

Paul Pfenninger: In my world—and I know there's a whole bunch of secret squirrel stuff going on out there.

Janet McDonnell: From the ranger law enforcement perspective it would be different—

Paul Pfenninger: But we take adequate precautions and I don't think anybody in the visitor's center would walk past a package that was sitting next to a door not being guarded or next to a bench with nobody sitting around, I think they would take notice of that. Or if somebody was acting suspicious, doing certain behavior, writing down notes about where staff was, I think somebody would recognize like that and be on guard for that. But as far as day-to-day operations, we don't close any different or open any different.

Janet McDonnell: And the way you train your staff won't necessarily be any different?

Paul Pfenninger: I mentioned to my staff that we have to always to be on guard for prejudice. And to be on guard against their own prejudice might be coming out. Especially - we get visitors from all over the world and just because somebody speaks a different language doesn't mean they're a terrorist and because somebody looks like they're from the Middle East doesn't mean they're a terrorist. Greet them the same way you would

everybody else. Don't prejudge them. If they do something that gives you suspicion, then take action but not if someone comes in and using the telephone or coming in and wanting information when the next guided hike is going to be.

Janet McDonnell: So, do you think this was a transforming event in any way, just from your perspective, with the people you talked to and worked with up in the Northeast Region or from your role here in the park?

Paul Pfenninger: I think when it first happened yes, but the further away we moved from the situation, the less things seemed to be in chaos anymore. It seems like things have gotten back to normal. You don't flip the channel anymore to find out what's happening on CNN, all though you could do that very easily. It's like "Well, they'll catch him one of these days." I think our park staff is there too. I've got a guy on my staff who loves to travel. He travels all over the world and he can't wait to go on furlough and travel. He's off to Singapore and China and it hasn't slowed him down at all.

Janet McDonnell: It's human nature to seek normalcy.

Paul Pfenninger: I don't think in the park is operated that that was an event changing situation, a major force that's going to change the way we operate our National Parks. Then again, I'm talking from only the interpretive side, the Visitors Center side. Law enforcement may be a totally different picture and I'm not clued into what changes they've undergone and what pressures they're going to see. For instance, I know they've got a call-up now, the Director has said "We're going to give so many people to the new Agency that's been formed," with so many park rangers up to them, so many park ranger positions. I know they're doing details back and forth to Washington.

Janet McDonnell: Is there sort of an after-action process for the incident teams? Do you go through a hot wash?

Paul Pfenninger: Yeah, we do a deep review. First, we sit down with the superintendent and in this case, it was the Director and parties that handled it. We sat down and said "Okay, this is what we accomplished, are you ready to take this back?" and once that happens, we pretty much go back to our own parks. It depends on how stressful the situation was. In the double homicide that was here there was a definite debriefing where we had to sit down and talk about our feelings, some of the situation that occurred, and we did an internal review of our operation. The 9/11 situation, we had several incidents that all of us had to get back to—Chester and I had to get back to the CCC reunion, Rick Brown had to get back to the—

END OF TAPE