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Richard T. Gale  
December 12, 2001

Interview conducted by Janet McDonnell  
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Harpers Ferry Center  
PO Box 50  
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425  
HFC\_Archivist@nps.gov

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
SEPTEMBER 11<sup>th</sup> ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with  
RICHARD T. GALE  
Chief, Fire Aviation Response Emergency Team

Conducted by  
Janet A. McDonnell, Ph.D.

December 12, 2001  
Main Interior Building, Washington, D.C.

## START OF TAPE

- Janet McDonnell: It's December 12. I'm Janet McDonnell and I'm here with Rick Gale to talk about the Park Service response to the September 11th terrorist attacks. And maybe we can start, Rick, if you would just identify yourself and explain just a little bit about your position, your role, with the Park Service.
- Richard Gale: Okay. Rick Gale and I'm the Chief of Fire Aviation Emergency Response for the National Park Service. I'm a Washington Office employee, but I'm on duty station in Boise, Idaho, at the National Interagency Fire Center.
- Janet McDonnell: Okay. How did you first learn about the attacks on September 11th?
- Richard Gale: Actually, I had a meeting with somebody from Human Resources, Dave Davies, I think his name is, in Dick Ring's office.
- Janet McDonnell: So, you were here in Washington?
- Richard Gale: I was here in Washington, yes. And Dick [Ring] got a call from someone, I think his wife, but I'm not sure of that, and so we flipped on the TV and there we were. We saw the second—the live pictures of the second aircraft hitting.
- Janet McDonnell: Would you take me through those first hours? I mean what were your first actions?
- Richard Gale: Well, really not any. We sort of finished the meeting and then not knowing what else was happening, I came back up here to Ranger Activities. And then as the reports began to come in it, it appeared that the Park Service might have some involvement here, potentially, and certainly, maybe some potential involvement on sites in New York City. I decided, you know, I'll go down to the front hall and see what's going on, what we're doing. So, I walked into—
- Janet McDonnell: The front office being the director's suite, okay.
- Richard Gale: The director's corridor. So, I walked into the deputy director's office, who was on vacation. John Reynolds, the regional director from Pacific West was in, I guess acting for him. And the director was there, Fran Mainella, a couple of her special assistants, Sue Masica, Kate Stevenson. Sue is the associate for admin. Kate is the associate for cultural resources and partnership. I don't remember who else was in there. And they were just talking about what needed to be done.

- Richard Gale: About that time, I think, there were some instructions about ready to come out of the Secretary's office. I don't remember if they were out or not. But Reynolds introduced me. I had met Fran, briefly, the week before. And Reynolds introduced me basically saying, and you need to check his exact words with him, but basically, he told Fran, "Here's this guy that does this stuff for a living. You need to pay attention to him." And so, Fran did. And we, I sort of just, she said, "Come on, we've got to go upstairs to the political office on the 6th floor." And I don't remember all of the sequence of what we did there now, but again, it was time to get organized. The Secretary wanted all of her leadership of the department, as well as the bureau leadership, to go out to what is called Site B, which is the USGS [U.S. Geological Survey] office in Reston [Virginia].
- Richard Gale: And so, Fran and I actually got in a car with one of the departmental guys. I can't remember his name, David something, but I think he's the guy that runs the department's congressional affairs. In the basement in the garage under the Main Interior, we started out on 18th Street here, and of course, it was total gridlock. It took about 20 minutes just to clear out to get to the street from the garage.
- Janet McDonnell: Can I interrupt just for clarification? Was going to Reston—was the idea that that would be sort of a safer place?
- Richard Gale: Yes and get everybody organized. That was the Secretary's direction. At that point, I told Fran because communications were down, all of the cell links were just overloaded, I said, "Fran, you're going to be incommunicado from everybody all of the time if you do this for several hours. My recommendation is we go back in here, go back to the 6th floor and do what we need to do." But I said, "I think you're going to spend all of your time sitting and you won't have any knowledge of what's going on nor will you be able to do much."
- Richard Gale: She agreed so we just got out of the car, walked back up there, went to the, I guess we went right to the 6th floor at that time, and the deputy secretary, Steve Griles, was here. And shortly after that, the department opened up an office, I don't even remember on what floor, but it was part of the National Business Center, a big conference room, and that's basically where we worked out of the rest of the day.
- Janet McDonnell: Did that become the DOI communications center?
- Richard Gale: Yes, I think so. Well, for the first couple of days it was, yes, it was a little bit of everything. And then we brought in Gary Van Horn, who's the U.S. Park Police Major, he's the National Law Enforcement Specialist stationed here. He came, was here. I don't remember where he'd been earlier that day. But any rate, at some point in time, then the decision was made by the

Secretary to go to what now is called Site C, which is in Shepherdstown, part of the Continuity of Operations backup plan. Which means that the director goes there, and which means then that typically—the director, the Secretary would do that, we would send our leadership under the deputy to Harpers Ferry Center, the museum facility not the park and where they have a space, set up there.

Richard Gale: I went back to the hotel. And so when Gary Van Horn took Fran, and I don't remember what time it was, late in the afternoon, early evening, took her to Shepherdstown, I went back to the hotel and under her direction, I contacted all of the associates, plus Reynolds, who was as I say the acting, and made arrangements for them to go out there to Harpers Ferry the next morning. I barely got that accomplished, and the call came in—I don't remember where it came from, but anyway, that the director was coming back. So, we canceled it. Then we turned around and canceled all of this.

Janet McDonnell: So, tell me a little bit about that Continuity of Operations plan? So, there was a pre-existing plan? Did that work well?

Richard Gale: Well, it worked reasonably well. I mean it's a little out of date. And we found, and of course, with lessons learned we learned is it better to keep people in this building or just to send them out into the street? There were rumors abounding whether the Metro was running, Metro was shut down. So, it was pretty chaotic, as you might guess. So, yes, but there is a plan, our bureau has a plan for this building, actually there's one for North Capital, and for AOC [Accounting Operations Center]. Each regional office has one, each service center, where they're going to go in case of this.

Richard Gale: And our plan basically calls for recognizing that the director will go where the Secretary goes or wants her to go. We arrange with the Harpers Ferry Center and they have, I guess, I've not seen it, a conference room where they've installed extra phone line, jacks, and that sort of thing, so she can actually manage the NPS operations from out there.

Janet McDonnell: So just, again, just so that I understand this. Is the Park Service's plan, is that a piece of the DOI continuity [of operations plan] instead of separate?

Richard Gale: Yes, it is. They're all integrated. They're supposed to be integrated. There clearly needs to be some more work done.

Janet McDonnell: Okay. Just to backtrack for a second, when you first went and met with the director you said that the parties there—the senior staff—were discussing some of the things that would have to be done. Can you just give me, I mean, obviously, don't talk about anything particularly sensitive, but a sense of the kinds of things they were discussing?

- Richard Gale: Well, the main thing, we were trying to get information. But, you know, they were, "Well, we've got to find out if this road is open. Can you get there?" And I said, "Time out, folks. Let's stop, take a deep breath, and get ourselves organized and deal with it. Let's figure out the critical things that need to be done." I said, "We don't have any information so we're going to have to go with our best stuff. But let's not have associate directors running around trying to figure out what routes are open. We can get somebody else to figure some of that stuff out." So, I tried to just get them organized a little bit, which we did.
- Richard Gale: And basically, shortly thereafter I said—Fran said, "We need to go upstairs." And I don't remember whether she already knew that or whether she got a call. I can't recall that. And so, I went with her, and then we did the—so I sort of lost contact with the associates and stuff for the rest of the day. I'm not quite remembering that. But basically, I was just with Fran the rest of the day.
- Janet McDonnell: Would you go on and talk about how your role unfolded? You assumed something of an advisory role.
- Richard Gale: Yes, basically what I was doing there was to give her advice about how we should think about getting organized, what we could do, and some of that stuff. So, one of the things we did right away was call our national Incident Management Team together and pre-plan, and not knowing what we might need from them, but to have them on site at Shenandoah. We didn't want to have them here because we didn't know what you could do here. So, we tagged them up in Shenandoah just to be ready. So that call went out the first day. And we'd have to look at the Shenandoah logs and all to get the exact times and all.
- Janet McDonnell: Maybe just to stop at that spot for a minute. It would be very helpful to me if you could just explain a little bit more about the process for activating the—well, first of all, maybe just to get on the record a brief description of the Incident Command System.
- Richard Gale: Well, the Incident Command System is a very flexible system designed to manage any sort of incident. It's generic in nature, and the NPS uses it and adopted it in 1985 for all emergency operations. It's flexible enough to expand and contract quickly both ways. It's basically—what it does is—the way the Incident Command team works is they get—the incident commander gets a delegation of authority or something. Now we just had a verbal delegation at that point in time. I wanted those guys pre-positioned.
- Janet McDonnell: This is from the director?

- Richard Gale: In this case it would have been from the director, correct. But I wanted that team pre-positioned in case we needed them. At least I had them all in one place. I had them in short, a short time from here rather than bringing them from all over the country to get here. So, it made sense, until we scoped out what their need might be is to do that. So that's what we did.
- Janet McDonnell: And they convened at Shenandoah National Park?
- Richard Gale: Yes.
- Janet McDonnell: Is that part of this operations plan that they would convene there?
- Richard Gale: No, not necessarily.
- Janet McDonnell: How was that decision made?
- Richard Gale: Well, based on, because the decision was based on, we didn't know what we had. We knew we might have a need, so let's put them someplace close, but not right here in the middle of things where we might have to move them sometime again. So just put them down where they're close. We talked—I don't remember. It seems to me we might have talked about putting them at Manassas even or something. Shenandoah has got a dispatch center and all of that. I mean to me it made more sense just to put them there.
- Janet McDonnell: Were there any challenges in activating the team? I've heard that, the fact that planes were grounded, getting some of these people in was somewhat difficult initially. Do you have any thoughts on it?
- Richard Gale: Well, I don't remember that. I mean I'd have to go back—and probably you'd need to—I don't remember that but once we talked about that and got them going, I really was not in that loop much anymore. But I don't know. Brenda Ritchie, who is the head of communications center at Shenandoah, can probably tell you that.
- Janet McDonnell: And this delegation of authority?
- Richard Gale: Well, we didn't have one at that point. We were just getting it ready, but that's how, ultimately, they would work.
- Janet McDonnell: But there was ultimately one, correct?
- Richard Gale: Yes.
- Janet McDonnell: And if you would just explain to me a little bit about what that included?

- Richard Gale: Well, what the delegation would include, in this case, we wrote it for Fran to sign, but it gives them her authority to do things. So, they were speaking on behalf, if you will, for the director. And it also gives them authority to expend funds. But it also, is equal to the authority is the constraints. It will also tell them what they cannot do without checking back with her or her designated person. And what she did was designate me as her representative to the Incident Management Team.
- Janet McDonnell: And does it lay out tasks or missions?
- Richard Gale: No, it's very broad. It's very broad. That's the benefit of ICS, let the people who know how to do that do that.
- Janet McDonnell: Okay. Maybe just a little bit more about, moving into the area of communications for a minute.
- Richard Gale: Back to the team and coming by air. Come to think about it, I think we were able to get, because the teams were nationwide, I think we were able to fill out the team locally pretty much with people who could drive. For example, one of the incident commanders is from Indiana Dunes, J.D. Swed, the other being from Colonial. And I think if I remember this correctly, J.D. was in Philadelphia visiting his—I better not put that. I'm not sure. Anyway, I don't remember some of that.
- Janet McDonnell: Okay.
- Richard Gale: So that was basically the first day, I mean it was mostly just trying to gather stuff up, and my role basically was just to be a sounding board for Fran or when things came up out of the politicos to say, "Okay," or "Fran, I don't think we have to do this." Early on, one of the thoughts by the Secretary's office was to shut all of the national parks down. And I told Fran, I said, "That's easier said than done, because that means, if you're truly shutting them down, you're going to have to sweep the back country—remember, we're still in the fall—of places like Yellowstone, Yosemite, and then you've got to enforce it." Sometimes that takes more resources. Shutting the park down wasn't so much because of the threat. It was freeing up the resources. So, the Director talked to the Secretary and said, "Let's do this differently. Let's reduce service or something. Let's not have a total closure," which the Secretary readily agreed to.
- Janet McDonnell: So, explain a little bit more about what actually happened then, how that played out.
- Richard Gale: It was mostly a discussion in the Secretary's conference room. I mean there were just ideas being generated. We need to do this. And Fran



carried our message very easily to the Secretary, who as soon as she got that picture, I mean there wasn't a question. She just hadn't thought it through clearly.

Janet McDonnell: Right, but some parks were closed temporarily.

Richard Gale: Yes.

Janet McDonnell: Primarily the ones in the Northeast.

Richard Gale: Northeast, I think. No, more than that. We shut down, and I can't tell you the actual sequence. We can find that out. But we shut down the U.S.S. Arizona Memorial, Fort Point under the Golden Gate Bridge, the Arch. I don't know if Mount Rushmore was shut down, but it might have been. The monuments, the memorials here.

Janet McDonnell: Things that were considered icon parks.

Richard Gale: Yes. Of course, the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island.

Janet McDonnell: Did some of these discussions then involve risk assessment? Maybe only in the broadest sense?

Richard Gale: In the broadest sense at that point. I mean I don't think we were really into that for a few days.

Janet McDonnell: But only the assumption that the icon parks might be at more risk than the other?

Richard Gale: Yes.

Janet McDonnell: Okay. Well, just before we leave the incident command team, I understand that the team actually met with you on a daily basis?

Richard Gale: Yes.

Janet McDonnell: What kind of information did they provide you with?

Richard Gale: Well, we finally brought them up here. I don't know if that was the second day or the third day.

Janet McDonnell: Into the south building of Interior?

Richard Gale: Actually, they worked in here for two days, this little office right here. This little office right here for the record is the office of the Chief of Ranger Activities of the Main Interior. They worked right in here. And

then they used some other offices, maintenance, and wherever they could find the space. There is an organized place over in the top floor of South Interior where they went. I guess they were in here maybe two or three days, I don't remember.

Richard Gale: But what we had them do was, what we started them doing, and we could get the delegation [of authority] and look, but basically was intelligence gathering. What's really going on? Resource availability—what do we have? They started to identify things like heavy equipment operators. Where were they? How could we get them there? And heavy equipment that might be used for respiration and rehabilitation. I don't remember whether it was because of a request from the Northeast or what, but the same thing with boats and boat operators, because again we had NPS rangers and Park Police officers patrol the New York Harbor, at the request of the Coast Guard.

Janet McDonnell: And you were shifting some ranger resources, too.

Richard Gale: We were. Exactly, yes. And at some point, in time in there is when, again, we have to go back to the written record. We started getting requests to support the Bureau of Reclamation dams. That was fairly early on.

[Tape Interruption]

Janet McDonnell: So, the support to the Bureau of Reclamation, ranger support. Would you want to give me a little background on that?

Richard Gale: Well, I don't remember now off hand how that came in, but we were—because again, it sort of makes sense, initially. I mean Hoover Dam has got Lake Mead. Grand Coulee Dam has Lake Roosevelt so the NPS has a presence there anyway in those lakes. So here is some law enforcement assistance that could be done. Again, this was a short term, immediate kind of a response. But you can see, one of the things I asked that team to do is begin to do a bunch of strategic planning. Play the “what if” game. Now “What if we're asked to do this, what kind of an impact?” And that's what they started on.

Janet McDonnell: Okay.

Richard Gale: And so, you organize the team based on the kind of response. This team, and probably some of their frustrations, they didn't do any "real work." They never shoveled any dirt or moved any material, but they were vital at what they were doing for planning. And then they also then served early on and for some time as a focal point for all of the updates of park status, who's on, what's closed, what's open, where we are, focused to them. And so, we had a briefing with Fran every morning at 7:30, so that she could

take the latest data upstairs to her political meeting at 8:15. So the Incident Commander would come over and brief us every morning at 7:30.

Janet McDonnell: You mentioned a couple of things that I want to follow up on. The team was organized, this Incident Command Team is shaped differently for different types of events. Is that what you're trying to say?

Richard Gale: Well, the basic functions are command, operations, planning, logistics, and finance. So that was the functions for them and then information. But we beefed up, for example, the information section to start, to help pull stuff together and do that. We brought into operations in gathering the data, we brought in people, for example, that were familiar with the Maximo process, the facilities maintenance [database system], that knew how that system works, because they had some of that information. For example, on this team the operation section chief is Dennis McGinnis, who's a facility manager at Shenandoah. Well, since he already knew about that, he knew the kind of people he wanted to get in to do that sort of work. So that's how it's organized.

Richard Gale: So, the big functions for this thing were in operations, and planning, and information. Logistics, once they had a place to stay and a place to work, didn't have much to do because we weren't supporting any ongoing activities.

Janet McDonnell: Sure. How effective do you think the Incident Command System was in this event?

Richard Gale: I think it was very effective for us. Where it fell down is that we offered to share the people, that team, with the department and they opted not to use it.

Janet McDonnell: Is that anything you want to elaborate on?

Richard Gale: Well, I mean, to me that was not a very smart decision because these, I mean it didn't say that we had to run everything. They could still do that. They can be the overall leader. But we were just trying to give them the support.

Janet McDonnell: And what was the impact, if any, of the department not—

Richard Gale: Well, it made our job a lot harder because there's no integration going on. And so, it was just like, you'd go over there, and you'd say, "Why are you guys doing it this way?"

Janet McDonnell: And I would be interested to hear your thoughts about coordination.

- Richard Gale: Have you seen the lessons learned that we did for the department?
- Janet McDonnell: Yes.
- Richard Gale: Okay, well some of that is covered. Well, I think the coordination was not very well, or it was in spite of, not because of I mean, there was a huge amount of effort expended to do those things and a lot of it was duplicative. It wasn't very effective.
- Janet McDonnell: As I understand it, there were actually several command centers that maybe contributed to—
- Richard Gale: Well, it could have been. I mean we had ours doing our stuff. I mean it was pretty clear what their responsibility was. It wasn't to muck around with the department. The department had one for overall. They were also then coordinating some of the responses to the dams. And then they decided we needed to protect this building. At the time all of this was going on, don't forget, we had just moved the weekend before the resources management, I guess natural. I don't know if cultural went up there, too, and administration folks, up to the G Street [office]. And that facility is not—I mean it's a public garage. Anybody can drive in right underneath the thing. It's right next to the World Bank building. And so, there was utter chaos.
- Richard Gale: And so, one of the early things we tried to do, and basically Major Van Horn and Dick Powell, the chief of Risk Management, led the charge on this, was to try to figure out some security for that facility. And basically what we persuaded, and when I say we, it wasn't just me, the director, and others to do, was to be very liberal with those folks in terms of administrative leave for at least until that Monday, so we could get some things back in shape. Well, before that ever happened, of course, the White House and the Executive Office Building came over and said, "We want this. Bye."
- Janet McDonnell: I did understand that the Incident Command Team had a big role in facilitating that move?
- Richard Gale: They did. They went out, and again, that's sort of what they can do well. Instead of all of these people trying to do that, the administrative people who work for Sue Masica who are part of being the victims if you will in this case, they went out, found under a federal supply schedule, a furniture supplier. Now you pay through the nose for this stuff. I mean they had it done. By Monday when they came back, they had furniture there. Now I mean try to go through the normal process, it takes forever. But because on that team you have people who understand the logistics. You've got a

contracting officer, well, she doesn't have unlimited, but she's got something like five-million-dollar authority. Bang.

END OF SIDE A

START OF SIDE B

Richard Gale: Well, can I tell you then, day two, we came back here. The Secretary called the Deputy Secretary. I think this is the way it went. I'm not positive. But I was up in their offices on the 6th floor when there was an unreported plane across the Canadian border, as I remember it, so the decision was made to put everybody down in the cafeteria. And again, that's where sort of where the Continuity of Operations. There's no alarm system to talk about, other than fire. And basically, the two people that sort of brought order to chaos, even though they didn't know anything, were the director, Fran Mainella, and the Deputy Secretary, Steve Griles. I give them both high marks for trying to coordinate that, trying to keep people informed, when they didn't really know anything. But they did very well.

Janet McDonnell: Actually, that brings us back to communications again. I'd like your sense of how well communications worked within the Park Service those first few days. Obviously, you mentioned earlier that phone lines and cell lines in the Washington area were jammed. Were you getting information from?

Richard Gale: There has always been an established process for reporting incidents. That's been in place a long time and that's the 24-hour dispatch center in the Shenandoah. So, we just augmented that. They brought in and hired some more dispatchers to be able to handle that, people, coordinators to be able to handle that flow. But that I mean, again, it was—

Janet McDonnell: Was the morning report a useful tool in getting word out throughout the service?

Richard Gale: No, I don't think so. My sense is that it was okay, but it was always behind. It's not designed to be a communications vehicle. What we had done, I don't know who set this up, but they had noon Eastern Time conference calls early on. I don't remember what day this was, with every region. And usually, all of the associates, public affairs, congressional affairs, etc., from headquarters were in there and we'd just go around and get updates, what are the issues? Well, for example—and again you need to, I don't have the precise thing—but Alaska, with a total ban on flying, we're dependent on air in Alaska. So, you had people in the bush that you needed to support. I mean it was, that got fixed. But those were the kinds of issues, the different issues that you'd never think about that were coming out of some of these things.

- Janet McDonnell: So were your days sort of just, I mean I'm sure that no two days were the same. Was it sort of this trouble shooting, problem solving role?
- Richard Gale: Exactly. What I tried to do is be the heat shield for Fran, to get her the stuff she needed to do when she needed to make decisions or take upstairs, and as best I could, keep some of the other stuff, I say trivia but it's not necessarily, more tactical kind of stuff, so she still had other things she needed to do. And, of course, she was, I mean, again, the Secretary of the Department had certain things they wanted from their leadership of the bureaus. So, she had a full-time job.
- Janet McDonnell: Did that communication system that you just described and the information flow process, were you comfortable that you had all of the information that you needed for her? Was she comfortable with that?
- Richard Gale: Well we had some glitches in there because there was sometimes, and we finally got it fixed, I think, that there were alternate communication around and therefore the intelligence that was coming in necessarily didn't jive. And so, the numbers weren't necessarily correct. This was open, this was closed. And that caused, it even caused her some grief, because she wasn't getting the right precise stuff to take upstairs.
- Janet McDonnell: And to respond to calls from the media, too, I would imagine.
- Richard Gale: Yes, again, I don't know again how much of that we had here. I guess you need to check with Dave Barna or somebody about that. My sense is there weren't that many media calls about the impact on parks, but there might have been.
- Janet McDonnell: Okay. I've heard anecdotal accounts of people coming to parks in those first few days to feel a sense of safety, reassurance, connection with traditional values.
- Richard Gale: That seemed to be the case. I don't know if it was the very first few days, but shortly thereafter that was definitely the case. And again, you know, although the other thing that was being decided is what special events would go on and what would be canceled? There was some ceremony at the Jefferson Memorial that was scheduled for a day or two after September 11, and that was postponed just because of security. On the other hand, I think it was National Public Lands Day which was like ten days afterwards or something and there was a ceremony in the Shenandoah for the CCC to celebrate that. Well, that went on. The Secretary was there. The Assistant Secretary was there. And at that place is when the leadership of Shenandoah, Connie Rudd and Doug Morris, were talking about people that were coming in. So, yes, I don't know, I

don't have a sense that it was right the first few days, but definitely there's anecdotal information that people viewed these as places of refuge.

Janet McDonnell: As special places.

Richard Gale: Yes.

Janet McDonnell: You've been with the Park Service for quite a few years and I'd be interested if you have a sense of whether the way people viewed national parks changed at all as a result of the attacks?

Richard Gale: Well, I don't know. Again, not knowing, I mean just going on what the anecdotal evidence is and I think the answer is yes. I mean I think they, I don't know if there's any difference in the way they view them, but it's maybe a more heightened awareness of them. I don't know if they think the attitudes are different. Maybe it's just raised up that this is more important. Down here, now it's up higher.

Janet McDonnell: Right. That certainly occurred during World War II.

Richard Gale: And I don't know how the parks, I think many parks around the system were that way. Not just the ones closest, for example, to here. I mean I think other parks, and I can't tell you which ones, but people saying, "I've had enough of watching TV I've got to go and do something different."

Janet McDonnell: Go and see something green, right?

Richard Gale: Yes.

Janet McDonnell: Oh, okay. I'd like to talk about the issue of funding for a minute. I don't know how deeply you were involved in that, probably not real deeply. You mentioned some funding authority that came with the delegation of authority letter for the Incident Command Team. And I guess looking at it more broadly, does the Park Service have existing authority for emergency spending? Is there a pot of money that the Park Service can—and if not, what kind of, how did you folks deal with that and what kind of problems did that create?

Richard Gale: Well, the answer to the first one is no. There isn't a pot of money, and this is something that at least maybe before this, but at least since Hurricane Andrew in '92, not only the NPS but the department has said we need to have some of that authority. Now, in wildland fire, we have a preparedness account and we got the authority to immediately establish an account, no money in it, to record charges. We don't have that same authority in other than wildland fire. But you know, you still have to do what you have to do, and that doesn't mean your silly about it, and record

all of those charges. But yes, that was a big issue about, "Well, are we going to get paid?" Well who knows? "Yes, they're going to get paid, but are we going to be reimbursed?" Can't answer that question, but the point is, typically on those kinds of emergencies, if you don't get a supplemental appropriation, it comes out of land acquisition or you delay a construction project, or whatever.

Richard Gale: But the mechanism to seamlessly go, like we have in wildland fire, for other emergencies is not there. And that's again one of the highlights in the lessons learned that needs to really be fixed.

Janet McDonnell: Okay.

Richard Gale: And whether that fix takes legislation or not, I'm not sure.

Janet McDonnell: Which sort of brings me to the area of resources in general. Do you believe that the Park Service was adequately resourced to respond to an event like this, resources in the sense of enough Park Rangers, enough law enforcement officers? And you just talked about funding. And enough resources in terms of incident team members and that kind of thing?

Richard Gale: Well, let me put it to you this way. We had plenty of resources to take care of the immediate threat, okay? Which is sort of shut the door, here we come. And that immediate threat, and once you get into restoration/rehab, you still may have a threat but it's not as immediate. So yes, we were okay for that. No, we're not okay for the long term which we're being impacted to this day about protecting dams, protecting this building, trying to protect parks. We've been committed for at least a year or probably more to 100 plus rangers to support the Winter Olympics. So, we're running—and the Park Police, in some cases, we've got some ability to hire seasonals, and rotate people and all, but they don't. They're potentially in, as far as running people into the ground, worse than we are. But no, we're not there yet.

Richard Gale: So to do that, what we did was in early October over the Columbus Day weekend, we brought a group of about five people together right here, spent the weekend in this room, and we developed a strategic assessment with alternatives for how to deal with this in the longer term. And that was given to and briefed to Deputy Director Galvin on the Monday or Tuesday after the holiday and he took copies in to the NLC [National Leadership Council] meeting that month.

Janet McDonnell: Is that something that you can talk a little bit more about?

Richard Gale: Yes, and I can give you a copy of it.



Janet McDonnell: Okay, great.

Richard Gale: Now basically what we did was say, we can't do this reactive thing of send us this ranger, send us these guys, do this, do this. We've got to get on top of it. So, one of the ways you do that is by setting up what in the fire world we call the Multi-Agency Coordinating Group. In our case we used the regional chief rangers and called it the MR.CG, the Multi-Regional Coordinating Group, by using those processing to set priorities and allocate critical resources. Okay. What's the first priority? Hoover Dam. Okay, so then they get all of the protection first before the fifth priority.

Richard Gale: And so that process took a while, but we brought in some people that are used to doing that, including a good colleague of mine who retired on September 30, to help organize and get that process working. And that works until today. And they developed a plan from that, which then by that time in November we developed a series, just like in wildland fire, a series of five preparedness levels all of the way from businesses is normal, to national emergency, shut the door and send everybody. The same kind of a thought process that's used in wildland fire. We also used the wildland fire coordinating dispatch system to move resources, which is well in place and can do that very effectively. That system can move like 15,000 people in 24 hours. We can move resources way faster than the military can.

Janet McDonnell: That hadn't occurred to me, but it sounds like all of those years of experience with wildland fire management really gave us some lessons, some insights.

Richard Gale: It does. And it gave us some ideas. And then, so following that and that's in place, but you know, several of us feel that that's still an interim step. If we're going to be doing this for two or three years, and it appears that that's certainly a strong likelihood, that we needed some other way to go. And so, I suggested that to the associate regional directors for admin and operations. We had a meeting here the week before Thanksgiving. They concurred and so we had another small group, including some of the ones that were on that original strategic assessment, met the week after Thanksgiving, and we have given a briefing paper about where we think we ought to go and actually that, I think, was handed out yesterday. Maybe at 1:00 the NLC is going to ask me about that. We'll see.

Janet McDonnell: Okay.

Richard Gale: But we've got to get strategic about this thing.

Janet McDonnell: Right. I had just a couple of questions left hanging about the support to the Bureau of Reclamation. And it sounds like you were involved in the initial

request and the early discussions on what to do about that requirement, that need. Was there a discussion about what authority the Park Service would do that under?

Richard Gale: Absolutely.

Janet McDonnell: Can you tell me a little bit about that?

Richard Gale: Well, there was no authority for us to do that.

Janet McDonnell: Okay.

Richard Gale: For example, take Lake Mead National Recreation Area, which includes both Lake Mead and Lake Mojave, which is behind Davis Dam, the dam that is downstream from Hoover. That's all, Hoover Dam and Davis Dam are within the legislative boundaries of Lake Mead. And it's an area established by an act of Congress, unlike Lake Roosevelt, which is a tripartite agreement. So, Lake Mead, Lake Powell and others are established by an act of Congress. But in that legislation, even though it's within the legislative boundaries, it excised the dam and the facilities from this. So, we had no jurisdiction. And the bureau has no law enforcement authority, Bureau of Rec. So, the answer was then you need to do that under the authority as a deputy United States Marshal. Same thing here. Rangers in this building have no authority here unless they're acting under the deputization. So that took a lot of effort.

Janet McDonnell: So, they actually deputized these rangers? Is that what you're saying?

Richard Gale: Yes, Special Deputy United States Marshals. And we've done that for, actually, there's many parks. Some rangers are that. They serve their own arrests warrants and that sort of thing. And that took a lot of work. And actually, the department helped us with that.

Janet McDonnell: Are we still providing support?

Richard Gale: Yes.

Janet McDonnell: And we talked a few minutes ago about resources. I assume that, obviously, that has stretched the ranger resources somewhat. And I also read that pulling ranger resources to go up to, to support Catocin/Camp David, and correct me if this is wrong, that that has forced some other parks to close? That their ranger resources were stretched so much that—

Richard Gale: I don't think it forced them to close, but one of the keys in this strategic plan is to develop a drawdown plan beyond which you can't go. Now right now it's focused on protection resources, but that's part of the thing we

talked about in Seattle was we need that for systems, tomorrow, I mean, you know, it could be that, what's the next terrorist threat? Well, maybe instead of anthrax we'll use hoof and mouth disease so you could lose of all your biologists. So, you need to do this in a broad context and be ready for it instead of just this reactive mode.

Janet McDonnell: Was the underlying commitment then from the director on down, or the underlying guidance, I'm not exactly sure of the right word, but the fact that we wanted to keep the parks open? I mean as a bottom line we want to do that as much as we possibly can. Is that?

Richard Gale: Well, we were under instruction and still are not to close any parks now.

Janet McDonnell: Okay. Under instructions from Interior?

Richard Gale: The Secretary and the Director. Now, we're not under instruction, and to provide the basic services. So, if you're going to keep a park open, that says you've got to have some protective services. That says you've got to have some emergency response services. That says you've got to run the wastewater treatment plants, clean the rest rooms, patch the roads, whatever. Now you may not give all of the interpretive programs or you may reduce hours of entry stations or visitors' centers, or something, but you still keep the basic park open. And meeting that objective, plus our direction from the Secretary's office to provide support to the Bureau of Reclamation dams, plus this building, we've got people now that are on their third two-week or three-week assignment there. So not only are you pulling resources out of there, but even the people that stay home are working extended hours and you start impacting peoples' decision-making ability and some of that sort of stuff, let alone their personal lives.

Janet McDonnell: They just get worn out.

Richard Gale: Exactly. When they get worn out, people make silly decisions if they're not careful.

Janet McDonnell: Is the fact that the few parks that were closed were closed really for a very brief period and they were for the most part parks in the Northeast region, is that a record that we're proud of with this event, that the Park Service is proud of, that we were able to continue operations?

Richard Gale: I never thought about it in that context to be honest with you. Yes. I don't know. For example, I don't think the Statue of Liberty is open yet, is it?

Janet McDonnell: No, I don't think so. But that's the exception.

- Richard Gale: Yes, it is. And there's still issues about, I guess like at Independence, whether you close the street next to the Liberty Bell or not. And that's a negotiation between the city and us. Well, yes, I guess it would be a mark that we should be proud of I mean I don't know that there's any indication that I've heard of that we didn't respond to something because we were doing other things. I haven't heard that.
- Janet McDonnell: What were some of the early discussions concerning the monuments here in Washington? I would imagine that protection of the monuments was a huge concern in those first couple of days.
- Richard Gale: Well, they were shut down. And again, that's really the United States Park Police responsibility. I don't know how they did that, whether they barricaded them. I mean I don't know how you shut down, for example, the Jefferson Memorial other than you have people on patrol there. Then when they were reopened, there were certain processes they did before that. Again, you need to talk to those folks to tell you that. Like for example, none of them were reopened until they were searched with a bomb dog and some of those sorts of things.
- Richard Gale: But again, you've got to be careful. Does it take more resources to enforce the closure or to manage the open? And that's a decision-making process that you need to look at.
- Janet McDonnell: Okay. Actually, you were involved with the Exxon Valdez response and the Hurricane Andrew response. And I would really enjoy hearing you talk about how this particular response compared to the others. Obviously, the event is dramatically different, the event itself, but just to reflect a little bit.
- Richard Gale: Well, basically in those things, including the Yosemite flood, we had a doing role. In other words, putting the park back together in the Yosemite's case, helping the people in the Hurricane Andrew. The Exxon Valdez, all I did was run, I chaired the review of that. But, again, the same thing there about impact on park resources and how we're going to clean them up and that sort of thing.
- Richard Gale: Here was more of a planning, except for a few, very few sites, like in New York City, and you know, that we didn't have any "doing role." Now we're had people on Incident Management Teams that have gone up there and helped support that, and that sort of thing. My youngest daughter, for example, spent 34 days in New York City on that Incident Management Team that was supporting the urban search and rescue teams that were doing the recovery effort. But our Incident Management Teams, you know, they were just doing the planning, the intelligence, that sort of stuff without having a real operational kind of a role. And that's one big

difference. And that's probably the frustrating difference. I mean it's a lot easier to get a hold of something and fix it than it is to do intelligence.

Janet McDonnell: Well, one of the people I interviewed pointed out to me that the response to this event sort of was a good indicator of the flexibility of the Incident Command System because it could be shaped.

Richard Gale: Oh, yes, absolutely. That's exactly right. See, we used the Incident Command System, when we drafted the Continuity of Operations Plan, I brought the Incident Management Team in to do it. And it was done in 10 days, boom, start to finish, because the beauty of that, they can focus full time on it. They don't have to stop, "Let's go to this meeting," and that kind of an approach. It's a clear focused, bring in the particular type of resources you need. We used the Incident Management Team to do the implementation plan when we had the Park Service reorganization in 1994. So yes, the flexibility is there, absolutely.

Janet McDonnell: And as I understand it, for the most part, or maybe entirely, there are people who work their way up through the Type 2 Team, regional teams, they're seasoned people who have worked with each other for years.

Richard Gale: Yes, they are. And that's why you have a team instead of an aggregation because you hit the ground running, you don't have to learn a management style, this person, or the idiosyncrasies of that person. You already know those things. It's built into the process.

Janet McDonnell: You know who your contacts are.

Richard Gale: Right.

Janet McDonnell: Okay.

END OF SIDE B

START OF TAPE TWO

Janet McDonnell: Just to start winding down here. I'm looking to draw in your years of experience with the Park Service. Do you see this as a transforming event for the Park Service in any way, the attacks and the response to the attacks?

Richard Gale: Well, I think it could be. If we use this to think like I like to say, "around the corner," instead of like, we traditionally do. If we use the lessons, we learned here to do some thinking like that, yes. Now whether it's a transforming event for the Service, I don't know. And it may be. It may force us to look at the way we look at how we allocate resources. And all

of my sense is that it's one more thing we've been tasked to do, and we'll look at that in the traditional way of let's just throw a few good men and women at it, which may be the wrong approach. Maybe we'll find that out at 1:00 today.

Janet McDonnell: And when you talk about looking around the corner, and you've touched on this briefly, but what kinds of things, what categories are you looking at?

Richard Gale: Well, okay. For example, we've been at this now, what, three months. And even though we've got this Multi-Regional Coordinating Group, we're still being in a reactive mode. And that's what we tried to talk to them in Seattle about. The draw down plan ultimately, so you tell the directors, tell them, "I can do this. I can do that. I can do the other. I can't do all three. You're choice, Madam Secretary. Which ones, or what level do you want me to do?" Or, "I've got to have more resources to do that." But we need to give her, we have not yet, given her the ammunition that she needs to articulate that stuff. So, she hasn't gotten totally wonderful staff work from us in that regard. And we're still looking at it on a piecemeal basis which, I mean I don't think it's a piecemeal thing. I think we're, I don't have any crystal ball here, but it strikes me that we're not all of a sudden tomorrow say, "Okay. Olly olly oxen free."

Janet McDonnell: Business as usual. Right.

Richard Gale: And therefore it behooves us to spend some quality strategic time looking at the long-term implications and also, what are our opportunities? For example, now these are just off the wall, okay? But why couldn't we think about talking to the Bureau of Reclamation or the sky marshals and say, "We've a win/win deal for you. We've got a lot of seasonals that would love to be permanents. Why don't you hire them for two years, train them, use them, and at the end of that time they'll have their status, they'll get some benefits and then we'll start moving, this will be our intake program into the National Park Service?" We haven't thought about that stuff. Now is that doable? I don't know, but it sure as heck isn't if we don't think about it. Let's look at what we have here and look at what kind of opportunities that provides us, instead of just looking at the detriments that we're looking at. We're focused totally on the detriments.

Janet McDonnell: Right. Right. And if you've got this draw down plan, I mean you're also looking at a way to ramp up, too, in case of another event.

Richard Gale: Well, the draw down plan needs to talk about the potential, I mean it may not be a terrorist threat, but if we lose a critical resource, cultural or natural, or impact it, then we haven't met our statutory obligations. And so, the drawdown plans need to take those things into account. I mean you

can't, in my judgment, provide protection for natural or cultural resources strictly on a reactive basis. You have to do it on a proactive basis. You know, what is the value of a patrol ranger at Manassas? Well, I think some of the value is the fact that they're out and about, probably precludes metal detector type folks trying to get artifacts. As opposed to catching them in the act, and we still need to do both. But we need to have that proactive approach and we need to not forget that part of it and just have resources in the draw down plan that is a totally, if something happens, we'll respond. Because I don't think, in my judgment anyway, that means we're meeting our statutory obligations to this nation's resources, natural or cultural.

Janet McDonnell: And it also sounded like one of the things that you and the other planners are keenly aware of now is, or have always been aware but this highlighted, was the need for flexibility in the plan that you're talking about.

Richard Gale: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Janet McDonnell: Do you have any other thoughts on the lessons that we've learned from this? You've been pretty articulate about some of these lessons.

Richard Gale: Well, I think, if I gave ourselves the way we reacted and the use of our Incident Management Team and some of that, I would only give us about a C+. I think we really did not do, and we need to spend some time effectively using that team, maybe articulate what that team needed, or maybe the team or something. There needs to be some analysis of that. The communications were at best C+. We shouldn't have had, after the first couple of days, any glitches about the intelligence that was coming in here, regardless of the source. And yet we continued to have it.

Janet McDonnell: What kind of glitches?

Richard Gale: Well, different people getting different information. And then Fran would hear one thing, and then she'd hear another, and she rightly said, "Well, what's right?" Perfect question she should be asking and a legitimate question. She shouldn't have had to ask that. And there were some internal stuff about that. We need to look at the process we use to move information through the Shenandoah and the way we dealt with it here. And I think we need somehow, and this is a lot harder, but we need somehow to integrate what we're doing far better with the department. I mean this almost loggerhead approach is not healthy or useful or productive. And that's not saying that we have all of the answers. But we need, there needs to be better integration and coordination.

Janet McDonnell: How did some of that, conflict is too strong a word—

- Richard Gale: Maybe not in some cases.
- Janet McDonnell: How did that exhibit itself? Can you give me some examples?
- Richard Gale: Well, it was just like, "We don't want any of your resources," and yet turned around and used them. Ordering resources without going through us, so we didn't know what was occurring. Establishing their own Watch system that was not coordinated with ours. And again, it's not all their fault. Maybe we didn't do a good job of coordinating with them. So there needs to be some, and it's focused now on protection. But you know, the next time it might be again, you could think of, if you have something like hoof and mouth, that affects a lot of bureaus in this department. And it affects potentially the bureau like the Bureau of Land Management and Grazing. I mean there's a whole bunch of scenarios you could build without much thinking that are cross bureau boundary kinds of things on a global type scale this is, as opposed to the local scale, which typically we deal with.
- Janet McDonnell: Well, we've been focused on coordination between the Park Service and the Department. What about coordination with the other Interior agencies? For example, did our director, did she sit down at the table with representatives from Fish and Wildlife? How did that happen? How did that work?
- Richard Gale: I only went to those meetings with her early on, but yes, all of those other people were there. We were still in there. How they're doing now and doing that stuff? I don't know. Again, the focus is on law enforcement protection kinds of things. And law enforcement administrators for all of those four bureaus are working together. Now how, for example, Fran is interfacing with nine and a half people at BLM, I don't really know. There is some interface at Fran's level, and even at my level with the Commissioner of Reclamation. At my level, mostly because he's an old personal friend of mine, but there is some of that. But I do not know the answer to that question.
- Janet McDonnell: Okay. Well, just getting down to the end here. I'd be interested in hearing you, and you've partially responded to this as we've gone along for the last hour, but what aspects of the operation were the greatest challenges? It sounds like maybe you're telling me that that coordination was the biggest challenge.
- Richard Gale: That was one. And it's still going on. Now I think the greatest challenge is to think strategically, to look ahead, to play the what if game, to develop a proactive approach to how we're going to deal with this for two years and what are the other threats and that sort of thing.



- Janet McDonnell: And the flip side of that is what worked particularly well? What do you think the Park Service was most successful at? And maybe what did you personally find most gratifying?
- Richard Gale: Well, I think the Park Service was most successful at is what we always do, what we usually do. When the crises hits, we know how to deal with it. If you look at the response from the Park Police, whether it was the Pentagon, or New York City, or the monuments. When you look at the response of the rangers. When you look at, "Let's go. It's doesn't matter. Let's get every resource." Every division that was asked or function that was asked to provide resources and assistance did so without blinking an eye. So as usual, we pulled together at the time.
- Richard Gale: I think the most satisfying thing from my point of view is I think we basically had good leadership at the top. I mean I think Deny Galvin has done a lot of this sort of stuff, whatever it is. And his advice and counsel is always, in my judgment, 100 percent on target. I think the director did a good job in representing the Service, representing us, and the System at the departmental level, certainly early on. I think when I'll be the most satisfied is if in fact we use this, and whether or not we use what we did in Seattle, if we actually get a proactive long range strategic approach to continue in this, then that will make me happy.
- Janet McDonnell: Is there anything that I haven't asked about that you want to get into the record here?
- Richard Gale: No, I can't think of anything, off hand.
- Janet McDonnell: Just one thought just came into mind. You were talking about getting this information, or the Incident Team getting information from the various parks. Did you get the sense that sometimes for, some of these park units have very, very, small staffs?
- Richard Gale: That's right.
- Janet McDonnell: Very short on resources. Was there ever a case where you could sort of sense that this requirement for information, a justifiable requirement, could become burdensome for some parks?
- Richard Gale: No, because they set up processes so that early on your reporting twice a day, and then it became once a day. And then it was we'll assume no changes unless you tell us. So, we tried to—I don't know of any of that. Now, I think early on, for example, I can't tell you the things without going back and looking them up. We got, and I was involved in all of them, three, four requests from three people within the same hour in the

department for the same information. Now this is early on, but we still haven't smoothed out some of that stuff I'm sure that we were equally as guilty about that to the parks early on. But people like Dale Ditmanson, the associate regional director in Philadelphia, Bob Rice, and others can tell you better. But my sense is, and that's one of the things we have to look at, and when I said I gave us a C+, that sort of stuff we have to look at. What did we learn here that we can smooth out and make it better?

Janet McDonnell: Are there—were any historically new missions for the Park Service in this?

Richard Gale: Well, yes, I mean I don't think we've ever provided really security type services like we're doing to the dams and to this building. I mean that is not our overriding mission.

Janet McDonnell: I thought maybe that would be. Well, I appreciate you taking the time.

Richard Gale: Glad to do it.

END OF TAPE