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News Releases

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CHENEY AIDE FINALLY LEAVING INTERIOR DEPARTMENT — Hoffman Tenure Marked by Failed Park Policy Rewrite and Reversals of Scientists

Washington, DC — Paul Hoffman, a former Dick Cheney aide with a ham-handed approach, is resigning today from his post as Deputy Assistant Interior Secretary, according to a farewell e-mail posted by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER). His departure closes a stormy chapter in the Bush administration's attempt to leave its imprint on the National Park Service and other resource agencies.

Prior to his Interior appointment, Hoffman had led the Cody (Wyoming) Chamber of Commerce and served as an aide to then-U.S. Representative Dick Cheney. During the first Bush term, Hoffman was the principal political operative on national park issues. In that position, he created such a firestorm of criticism that he was moved to an administrative slot. Hoffman's parting message was typically acerbic:

"I can attest to the fact that Interior gets in your blood, but I can also say that it does not necessarily turn it green."

Hoffman sparked a furor by trying to rewrite all Park Service management policies to subordinate the parks' conservation mission to "enjoyment" by the public, a stance that promoted human intrusions from snowmobiles to hunting. In his draft, Hoffman, a "Young Earth" creationist, struck all references to evolution (such as, "species are evolving" and "naturally evolving ecosystems") in some cases leaving entire paragraphs intact except to excise an evolution reference. Then-incoming Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne publicly rejected Hoffman's draft and soon thereafter transferred him.

"National parks were the one environmental issue on which George W. Bush campaigned but, under Hoffman, parks became 'The Bad News Bears' for Bush," stated PEER Executive Director Jeff Ruch.

Besides the park management policies debacle, Hoffman authorized the firing of U.S. Park Police Teresa Chambers for disclosing staff shortages in a Washington Post interview, a case that is still in court. His antipathy for the media was palpable as reflected by this post on his supposedly anonymous blog:

"I now live in the Washington, DC, Metro Area and I am a Senior Executive with the Federal government. I have had extensive experience with the media over the years, but nothing compares to the

vilification and lies I have been subjected by the likes of the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, the New Republic, Vanity Fair, and even National Geographic.”

Despite a total absence of scientific training, Hoffman regularly overruled agency scientists on issues ranging from the effect of power-plants on park visibility to whether cutthroat trout should be protected under the Endangered Species Act. In his last position where he was in charge of “Human Capital, Performance, and Partnerships” Hoffman presided over Interior’s vast physical plant which was found to be scandalously unsafe for workers in an Inspector General audit.

“Paul Hoffman’s departure from public service will be little mourned,” Ruch concluded.

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[Read the Hoffman resignation message](#)

[Visit Hoffman’s anonymous blog](#)

[Look at one example of Hoffman at work](#)

[See the unsafe conditions at Interior under Hoffman](#)

[View Hoffman’s deposition in the Teresa Chambers case](#)