



U.S. Park Police: Inanity or Insanity?

October 2008. The Chief of the U.S. Park Police job is vacant [again](#), but the reasons why remain shrouded.

In response to our press release drawing attention to the vacancy announcement, the National Park Service issued a clarification that Dwight Pettiford had not resigned – he has merely been assigned to a new position: “Senior Security Manager for Icon Parks”. Huh? That clarifies virtually nothing. All we know is that he has left his current job but still do not know –

- Was his ouster voluntary? Who proposed it? Was he facing a threat of removal?
- What are the duties of this new job? To whom does he report? Does he have staff assigned to him (if so, from where) or will Pettiford be some kind of lone ranger patrolling the National Mall at night looking for security lapses?
- Given that Pettiford was relieved of his duties (but not his title) back in March following a critical Inspector General report faulting icon security, why is he now given a job managing icon security?
- Presumably, Pettiford is not taking a pay cut. Why should the USPP continue to absorb his salary plus that of a new chief at a time when Park Police force levels are at a [20-year low](#) and well short of current needs?
- What has Pettiford been doing for the past 7+ months? He was supposed to be writing a reply to the Inspector General report but instead of reporting for duty, Pettiford went home on personal leave. Was any reply ever written?

Adding to the mystery is that no one from the National Park Service or Interior Department made a public announcement that the USPP Chief position is officially empty. PEER found out because someone sent us the job advertisement that had been posted October 6, running until Nov. 5 – the day after the election.

Nor do we know who is making these decisions or why. All we know is that now a second USPP Chief has been removed for talking to the *Washington Post*. The same brilliant minds behind these moves want to pick yet a third chief.

Here's a suggestion. Bring back Chief Teresa Chambers tomorrow and fire the person(s) in Interior who are responsible for this long-running fiasco.