

Hello Tooshar,

I hadn't heard anything from you about the National Park concealed carry issue we have been discussing - I assumed the Senator has still been busy. I just now saw him standing on TV regarding the closed Senate hearings that Harry Reid demanded.

I wanted to update you on some information I've gotten. I last month I got a letter from Congressman Murtha regarding his response from Karen Taylor Goodrich. Congressman Murtha basically paraphrased what Mrs. Goodrich wrote, however I could tell her response was the exact form letter that Senators and Congressmen have gotten from her. The only difference in all of these letters is the name of the elected representative printed on them. If you are interested, I can email you images of these letter from Mrs. Goodrich.

The last two copies of these letters came from Sen. George Allen and Sen. Conrad Burns - the Chairman of the Interior Subcommittee.

These letters all simply state the Park Service is concerned about the public safety, flora and fauna. Primarily, the Park Service claims to be concerned about potential proliferation of poaching and shooting trees and hikers (which the criminals are doing a pretty good job of now anyway).

When the Virginia Citizens Defense League and NRA Counsel Chris Comte met with Interior Department Undersecretary for Parks Wildlife and Fish, Paul Hoffman, the group explained their goals. The objective was for the Petition for Rule Making (to amend 36CFR 2.4 to assimilate state laws regarding concealed carry of handguns) to begin a process of discussion and to be listed in the National Register. Neither of which has ever happened.

Park Service officials claim to be evaluating the "history of the regulation and its continued application). Mrs. Goodrich lists Jerry Case as the contact person in case of questions regarding the issue. Mr. Case early on professed to know nothing about this issue. I can provide you a list of the telephone calls I made to speak to someone on this issue. I was never able to get to anyone.

Tooshar, this amendment to 36 CFR 2.4 is very similar to the debates over right-to-carry law implementation in the 38 states that now enable their citizens to defend themselves lawfully. There have been virtually no cases where a concealed carry permit holder has committed a crime with their handgun. People who go through the effort to get a permit are not the ones likely to commit crimes. To the contrary, they actually prevent crimes hundreds of thousands of times each year.

If right-to-carry laws can be implemented with relative ease - from a law enforcement standpoint - there is absolutely no reason why 36CFR 2.4 can't be implemented quickly since state handgun laws already prevail in the National Parks.

The Park Service has never addressed the fact that this is a self defense issue. The Park Service is spread so thin that visitors truly are in danger when they visit a National Park. The GAO reported that there is only one park ranger for every 110,000 visitors and 118,000 acres of land.

I think I've mentioned this to you before but my wife and I were at Skyland on Skyline Drive and hiking on the exact trail on which two women were murdered just days before our visit.

Years ago I was working for a seismic surveying company and stationed in Cumberland Gap, TN. One morning around 3 a.m I was awakened to the sound of sustained gunfire outside my motel room. I jumped to call 911 but the shooter had already planned ahead and cut the wires. I was left to decide how to defend my life since there was no way out of the motel. Miraculously, the shooter fled without making it to my room. The motel, the Wilderness Trail Motel, is now (ironically) part of the Cumberland Gap National Park.

Tooshar, I feel very passionately about not relying on others to protect me. I simply can't tolerate bureaucrats sidestepping this issue and, in effect, diminishing the importance of our cause and endangering my life.

I hope Senator Santorum can contact Gale Norton and strongly request that she look into this matter and resolve it quickly.

If entire states can make a transition from prohibiting concealed carry one day to permitting it the next, there is no reason a park can't simply assimilate those same laws that are in effect only inches across the border.

No one gets anything for free with the amendment of 36CFR 2.4. If you are able to legally possess a concealed handgun on one side of a National Park you should be able to possess it on the other side of this bureaucratic boundary.

If a person is prohibited from possessing a concealed handgun, well, they probably won't abide by the revised park laws anyway. Criminals will continue to victimize more than 4,400 people each year in our supposedly safe National Park system.

Tooshar, I sincerely hope Senator Santorum can help us by putting pressure on the Park Service and Interior Department to amend 36CFR 2.4.

Thank you for your help with this goal. I hope to talk to you soon.

Rick \*\*\*\*\*

Johnstown Rifle and Pistol Club