



OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

CLOSEOUT OF THE EVALUATION OF THE NPS LAW ENFORCEMENT FIELD TRAINING AND EVALUATION PROGRAM



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Memorandum

To: P. Daniel Smith
Deputy Director, Exercising the Authority of the Director
National Park Service

From: Mary L. Kendall 
Deputy Inspector General

Subject: Closeout Memorandum – Evaluation of the NPS Law Enforcement Field
Training and Evaluation Program
Report No. 2019-WR-002

We completed the survey phase of our evaluation of the National Park Service (NPS) Law Enforcement Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP). The objective of our evaluation was to determine if there was a disproportionate number of women and minority trainees that fail FTEP.

Our survey work revealed that the NPS did not have a disproportionate number of women and minority trainees fail FTEP. We did, however, identify two concerns outside the scope of this evaluation that we want to bring to the attention of NPS management officials.

Survey Scope and Methodology

The NPS provided data on FTEP participants for the past 5 years including the participant's name, gender, and duty station; whether he or she passed or failed; the name of the field training officer who issued the participant's final rating; and the reason the participant failed (if applicable).

Figure 1 below summarizes the NPS FTEP participant data for the past 5 years.

FTEP Trainees	NPS
Total women trainees	49 (15%)
Total men trainees	274
Total trainees	323
Women who failed*	2 [†] (4%)
Men who failed*	9 (3%)

* These participants are included in the total number of NPS FTEP participants.

† Both failed for not meeting required performance standards.

Figure 1. NPS FTEP participant data for 2014 – 2018.

Observations Regarding NPS FTEP

During survey, we identified two concerns that we want to bring to the attention of NPS management officials: (1) the FTEP field training location, and (2) the required experience for an FTEP graduate to become a field training officer (FTO).

We learned that it is the NPS’ practice for FTEP trainees to train at their home park when possible, as opposed to training at other parks. Some of the former FTOs we spoke with believed that when field training is completed at a trainee’s home park, evaluations are less objective and the quality of the training suffers, making it a disadvantage to trainees. We heard one NPS official refer to it as a “bro deal.” Other officials commented that evaluating an officer at his or her home park was problematic as the FTO may be friends with the trainee or be the officer who hired him or her.

We also learned that FTEP graduates are only required to have 1 year of law enforcement experience before they can become an FTO. We were told that a prior NPS policy required 3 years of experience, but the current NPS handbook only requires 1 year. In practice, some FTEP graduates have become FTOs in as little as 6 months after graduation. One former FTO we spoke to questioned whether officers with limited experience are qualified to be FTOs. In contrast, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) FTOs are required to have 5 years of law enforcement experience, with at least 2 years in the Federal Government and 1 year as a BLM law enforcement officer.

Conclusion

We have provided this information to you for any action deemed appropriate. We ask that the NPS advise us within 30 days on what, if any, action it intends to take to address our

concerns. We appreciate the cooperation and assistance provided by the NPS staff during our review.

We conducted our evaluation in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation as put forth by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. We believe that the work performed provides a reasonable basis for our conclusion. If you have any questions, please contact me at 202-208-5745.

