

## **Email from David Vela to NPS employees**

Dear Colleagues,

Over the past 30 years, I have had the distinct privilege of wearing the “green and grey” of the National Park Service while serving and protecting our nation’s most special places and all of the stories that they contain with you. One of the highest honors that I had was working with you and our beloved agency. Over this past year, we have endured some of the most challenging times in our agency's history from addressing a global pandemic to social and racial unrest throughout our country.

Over the course of our 104-years history, we have never turned our backs on the challenges and opportunities facing the National Park Service. And, we will not change our mission, who we are and what we fundamentally believe in as we embrace our operational realities in a second century of service. However, I will not be continuing this journey with you.

With the support of my wife of 40 years and my family, I have decided that it is time to hang up my flat hat for the last time in the coming month.

One of my favorite quotes is from President Theodore Roosevelt when he stated, “People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care”. It is my hope and prayer, that you will always know that my passion was always your safety and care.

In my confirmation hearing to serve as Director during the last Congress, I mentioned that you are "the pride of the National Park Service". I will never be able to adequately put into words how proud I am of you - whether a volunteer, seasonal or permanent employee. Whatever success I can claim in my over 30 years in the NPS is because of you - my colleagues. Thanks for the opportunity to serve on the front lines with you, and know that you continue to make me proud!

David Vela

Deputy Director

Exercising the Authority of the Director

National Park Service