

DM-M: It definitely varies, I think. The communities in which parks are based are certainly a driving factor in many situations. There has historically been friction, not universally, but certainly in certain areas. Parks in the West or the Grand Canyon even is a good example of that. In terms of some of the tribal nations and how you reconcile the fact that parks are now on ancestral land. There's also questions of, "okay, if you want to become more diverse and inclusive, how can we encourage local communities, who may not have the most favorable view of the Park Service, to come and work for us." Every situation is very different, really. And I think that's where the autonomy that individual park units have; can it help. There's not sort of one, "thou must do this" strategy or directive coming from the top.

I think people in these areas need the flexibility to adapt to the realities on the ground, and in their situations. I'm speaking very generally, only because I don't have firsthand knowledge. I've talked to people who do. I have lots of anecdotal stories and perspectives, but I guess I just don't have any firsthand experience that I could speak to directly with a concrete example, if that makes sense. I worked in Boston for a while and the park in Boston is largely made up of a former Navy yard at Charlestown. That was already federal land, so not really many frictions there. However, in South Boston, there's an area in Dorchester Heights that is a tiny postage stamp of land. A little park and a monument commemorating the British evacuation of Boston in the Revolutionary War that is an area that a lot of the locals bring their dogs to. It's the only green spot, so they just let their dogs run off-leash. One of the regulations in national parks is you can't have a dog off-leash. There were always challenges there in terms of park and local community relations in terms of, "okay, how do you educate people?" 'Cause you don't want it to necessarily be about enforcement, just giving people tickets.