



Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service

16 June 2014

The Hon. Jon Jarvis, Director
National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Jarvis:

I am writing to you on behalf of the commissioned officers of the United States Public Health Service. These 6800 officers serve under the Surgeon General of the United States. They wear military uniforms, hold military rank, receive military pay and benefits—including full exchange and commissary access as well as treatment under TRICARE—and carry CAC cards. They deploy in the event of national emergencies, as they did with Katrina and Sandy. They have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan and are currently deployed to the US border in response to the influx of unaccompanied minors. They provide the health care for the US Coast Guard, and a commissioned corps Admiral serves as the Coast Guard's Surgeon General. What they do not have is access to national parks under the "Annual Pass for US Military and Their Dependents" program.

As I am sure you can see from the above paragraph, there is no logical reason why these officers should not be afforded the same national park access given to members of the military. They are one of the seven uniformed services of the United States. I could not tell from the NPS website whether this military access card is generated as a result of National Park Service regulation or as a result of statute. If it is a result of statute, we will strive to get that changed; if it is derived from an NPS regulation, then I respectfully ask that it be changed to provide full and free national park access to members of the USPHS commissioned corps on the same basis as is afforded to members of the US military services.

Thank you for your consideration. You may feel free to have your staff contact me at 301 731-9080 or jcurrie@coausphs.org for additional discussion.

Sincerely,

Col. James T. Currie, USA (ret.)
Executive Director