

DRAFT Briefing Statement FY 2017

Bureau: National Park Service
Issue: Twitter retweets during inauguration
Program/Park: WASO

Key Points

- The National Park Service is actively investigating the situation to identify the individual who retweeted two tweets related to the inauguration from the NPS national Twitter account that were inappropriate for the NPS Twitter account.
- **Official NPS statement:** The two tweets posted on the National Park Service's social media account today were inappropriate and inconsistent with the agency's overall approach to engaging the public through social media. Moving forward, the agency will provide better guidance to all employees who post to official NPS social media accounts about best practices and appropriate content for posts and retweets. We apologize for these tweets and pledge to maintain the highest standards for our social media content moving forward.

Background

- Around 4:40 pm ET on January 20, NPS Office of Communications (OCOMM) staff was contacted by multiple trusted sources sharing concern about two retweets from the national NPS Twitter account, @natlparkservice.
- External media sources reported on the retweets, and NPS engaged with DOI's Office of Communications (OCO).
- NPS OCOMM immediately engaged our social media team, confirming that no one with access to @natlparkservice in Washington posted the retweets.
- Multiple individuals have access to the @natlparkservice account credentials (Twitter only provides one set of creds per account). OCOMM began to check with others outside of Washington with access to the credentials in an attempt to identify the source of the retweets.
- Around 5:10 pm ET, DOI OCO sent a directive to all bureaus to immediately stop tweeting until further notice. NPS forwarded this information to all regional communications offices nationwide to disperse this message to parks with Twitter accounts (193 parks have registered Twitter accounts)
 - On Saturday, January 22, NPS received updated guidance from DOI OCO indicating that national, park and program social media posting could resume.
 - NPS then posted a tweet on its national account indicating that it would resume posting. "We regret the mistaken RTs from our account yesterday and look forward to continuing to share the beauty and history of our parks with you"
 - DOI subsequently asked to see the content of posts for the NPS national Twitter account before it is posted for the following 48 hours, and NPS is following through on that request.

- NPS OCOMM also changed the password for the national Twitter and Facebook accounts and restricted access to a single point of contact in Washington, DC. It will not be shared with any other staff until the current situation is resolved.
- NPS OCOMM also sent guidance on Saturday, January 21 to all NPS park and program social media contacts recommending that they immediately change their passwords and review the list of staff who have access to their accounts.
- Using Twitter's account dashboard, which includes a list of IPs and OS used for recent account access, we traced the IP address used for the two questionable posts to an ISP in the San Bruno, CA, area and checked all possible NPS social media points of contacts in that area. None indicated that they had been active on NPS Twitter accounts on January 20.
- Initially, NPS OCOMM suspected that this incident was an accidental cross-posting from a personal Twitter account (this has happened on multiple occasions in the past with other NPS social media accounts). However, after additional review NPS OCOMM was concerned that the account may have been compromised. Consequently, NPS OCOMM contacted NPS IT security staff and requested that they investigate this as a potential security incident.

Current Status

- **Investigation in process:** NPS OCOMM will work closely with IT security specialists to support an investigation of these posts.
- **Possibly related park Twitter intrusion:** The social media manager at Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, Seattle Unit received an automated email from Twitter Thursday night, asking if she had changed the email address associated with the account. It indicated that the password had been changed using an IP address from "Santa Cruz or Clara, CA". The IP that posted our retweets was from the San Bruno area, which is about an hour away from those locations. NPS OCOMM is concerned that this proximity and the related nature of these two incidents may not be a coincidence. NPS IT security has been provided this related information.
- **Updated social media guidance for parks and programs:** NPS OCOMM will immediately begin a review of social media guidance for parks and programs to ensure that appropriate information about appropriate tweet and retweet content is up to date and relevant.
- **Improving communications channels for social media contacts:** NPS OCOMM will immediately begin the process of developing a national list of social media primary POC's for all parks and programs with active social media presences to ensure that we can quickly communicate important information with the account managers in cases of security or content related issues.

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