

# National Park Service Search and Rescue Policy

Excerpts from Management Policy 2006, and Director's Order 41

## NPS Management Policies 2006

### **8.2.5.3 Search and Rescue**

To provide for the protection and safety of park visitors, the Service will make reasonable efforts to search for lost persons and rescue sick, injured, or stranded persons. This responsibility may be fulfilled by NPS staff or by qualified search-and-rescue organizations or agencies that are capable of responding to life-threatening emergencies pursuant to the terms of a formal agreement. Deceased persons will be evacuated unless the level of risk to the rescue party is found to be unacceptably high. Search managers and superintendents will jointly determine when to terminate a search. The Service will not charge visitors for search-and-rescue operations. Search-and-rescue operations will be conducted using the Incident Command System.

## Director's Order 41: Wilderness Stewardship

### **6.3.5 Minimum Requirements**

Administrative use of motorized equipment or mechanical transport will be authorized only

- if determined by the superintendent to be the minimum requirement needed by management to achieve the purposes of the area, including the preservation of wilderness character and values, in accordance with the Wilderness Act; or
- in emergency situations (for example, search and rescue, homeland security, law enforcement) involving the health or safety of persons actually within the area.

Such management activities will also be conducted in accordance with all applicable regulations, policies, and guidelines and, where practicable, will be scheduled to avoid creating adverse resource impacts or conflicts with visitor use.

While actions taken to address search and rescue, homeland security and law enforcement issues are subject to the minimum requirement concept, preplanning or programmatic planning should be undertaken whenever possible to facilitate a fast and effective response and reduce paperwork.