

From: (b)(6) (FHWA)
Sent: Sat, 25 May 2024 01:07:16 +0000
To: (b)(6) (FHWA)
Subject: RE: Media Inquires

Sad thing about the article is that (b)(6) Had nothing to do with it yet (b)(6) getting crucified in the comments.

(b)(6)
Project Engineer
FHWA (WFLHD)
2901 E. Bogard Rd
Ste. 103
Wasilla, AK 99654

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)@dot.gov>
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 5:04 PM
To: (b)(6)@dot.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Inquires

Well, put away the torches and pitchforks..... its also posted to the public website. So anyone googling could have found it.

(b)(6)

FHWA - Western Federal Lands Highway Division
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)@dot.gov>
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 5:05 PM
To: (b)(6)@dot.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Inquires

I misspoke, I also send it to

I misspoke, I also send it to BGC and Garrett at proHNS.

(b)(6)

Project Engineer

FHWA (WFLHD)
2901 E. Bogard Rd
Ste. 103
Wasilla, AK 99654
(360) 833-3338

From: (b)(6)@dot.gov>
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 3:20 PM
To: (b)(6)@dot.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Inquires

Not even the contractor?

Just for fun, can you send me the list?

(b)(6)

FHWA - Western Federal Lands Highway Division
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)@dot.gov>
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 2:44 PM
To: (b)(6)@dot.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Inquires

No one but NPS employees and FHWA staff along with (b)(6)

(b)(6)
Project Engineer
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Wasilla, AK 99654

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)@dot.gov>
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 1:08 PM
To: (b)(6)@dot.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Inquires

Who are we sending that out to? Maybe we need to revisit the list.

(b)(6)

FHWA - Western Federal Lands Highway Division
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)@dot.gov>
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 1:40 PM
To: (b)(6)@dot.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Inquires

Both of the photos are from the May 10th newsletter.

(b)(6)
Project Engineer
FHWA (WFLHD)
2901 E. Bogard Rd
Ste. 103
Wasilla, AK 99654

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)@dot.gov>
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 12:23 PM
To: (b)(6)@dot.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Inquires

Yes. I shared with (b)(6) and (b)(6)

(b)(6) called me and we chatted. Hopefully Granite's statement is something we can direct people to and FHWA won't have to make one. Granite is working on a statement.

The comment section is horrible on that article.

(b)(6)
FHWA - Western Federal Lands Highway Division
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)@dot.gov>
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 1:19 PM
To: (b)(6)@dot.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Inquires

Did you see the article in the Alaskanwatchman?
<https://alaskawatchman.com/2024/05/23/denali-national-park-bridge-crew-ordered-to-stop-flying-american-flags/>

(b)(6)
Project Engineer
FHWA (WFLHD)
2901 E. Bogard Rd
Ste. 103

Wasilla, AK 99654

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)@dot.gov>

Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 11:46 AM

To: WFL_ConstructionBranch (FHWA) <WFL_ConstructionBranch@dot.gov>

Subject: Media Inquires

Good Afternoon,

This is a stern reminder that no employee of WFL is allowed to speak to the media. If approached by the media, you are to direct all inquires to FHWA Public Affairs.

Office of Public Affairs can be reached at 202-366-0660 or by email to FHWA.PressOffice@dot.gov.

Have a great weekend,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

FHWA - Western Federal Lands Highway Division
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6) (FHWA)
Sent: Thu, 16 May 2024 19:56:53 +0000
To: (b)(6); (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Granite trucks

Thanks for the observations (b)(6). I figured the flag would get some comments and have mentioned it to Granite. I will explain a little more clearly this afternoon.

The traffic volume has been a burr under my saddle. As you said, there wasn't anything definitive put into the SCRs so I'm lacking some ammunition to force car pooling except the threat of how it will effect their CPARS evaluation. (probably better than having something in the SCRs though). I will have the discussion with (b)(6) this afternoon about that as well.

I will let you know how it goes.

(b)(6)
Project Engineer
FHWA (WFLHD)
2901 E. Bogard Rd
Ste. 103
Wasilla, AK 99654

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)@nps.gov>
Sent: Thursday, May 16, 2024 11:28 AM
To: (b)(6)@nps.gov>; Harvey, Jesse (FHWA) <jesse.harvey@dot.gov>
Subject: Granite trucks

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

David,

I received a visitor complaint about a pick-up truck (assumed to be Granite) driving on the park road yesterday, west of Tek, with a "very large and obnoxious American flag attached to the vehicle and flapping in the wind". I acknowledge that there's nothing inherently offensive about an American flag, but perhaps it's not befitting of the NPS preference to make traffic as discreet as possible for wildlife and visitor experience. Tour and Transit buses will be driving out to East Fork starting on Monday - is there an appropriate way to request that Granite take it down?

Also, in general, there seems to be a lot of contractor traffic going back and forth on the road during the day, mostly pickup trucks with a single occupant. What happened to the intention to carpool to the work site? I don't think anything specific was ever included in the SCRs but is there some way to encourage an effort to minimize the traffic on the road, particularly May

20th-Sept 12th, when the Vehicle Management Plan thresholds will be measured? Of course, I don't want to cause any schedule delays or incur any financial consequences, and I am not speaking on behalf of park managers. I'm just trying to help us follow through on the commitments we made to the public during the planning and compliance process.

Thanks for considering,

(b)(6)

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature area. The text "(b)(6)" is written in red at the top left corner of the box.

From: (b)(6) (FHWA)
Sent: Mon, 27 May 2024 23:47:34 +0000
To: (b)(6) (FHWA)
Cc: (b)(6) (FHWA)
Subject: Denali Flag Issue
Attachments: Denali Flag Issue Timeline..pdf, (b)(6) Flag email.pdf, Media Inquiry email string.pdf

(b)(6)

Attached is my account of the flag issue. Let me know if you have any questions or comments. I have also attached all the emails I received as indicated in the accounting. I will continue to bite "my tongue" as long as possible. 😊

(b)(6)

Project Engineer
FHWA (WFLHD)
2901 E. Bogard Rd
Ste. 103
Wasilla, AK 99654

(b)(6)

Denali National Park Flag Issue

I received an email (attached), from (b)(6) on May 16 at 11:28 a.m. After reading the email, I went up to the site and spoke with my primary contact with Granite, (b)(6) and recapped the contents of the email. I only relayed to him that I had received an email from "the park" and never during our conversation brought up the name or mentioned (b)(6).

I told (b)(6) that I am a veteran and fly the flag at my house every day, but that if I were a tourist and had paid money to come to the park and was trying to photograph or view wildlife and a truck with a flag flapping in the wind drove by and scared the wildlife away, I'd be upset also. He agreed and said he would tell the employee to take it down. He went and spoke to the employee; came back to me and said he told him to take it down and he was good with that. A few minutes later the Granite employee came to me and said he took the flag down and we had a brief conversation in which he asked what about flying it up here on site and I responded that I didn't have a problem with that and made the comment that this was about the only project I'd ever been on with a crane that there wasn't an American flag flying on the boom. He said he was ok with it and walked off. I thought the issue was over with.

(b)(6) and I also addressed the issue of the large number of trucks traveling the park road and I reminded him that we were paying for vans that they said they would bus the crews to and from Tek pit to the jobsite, and to and from 5-mile pit where their personal vehicles are parked. He kinda made some excuse about using them and I told him that I've only seen the vans a couple of times and then they only had 1 or 2 people in them. I told him that they should start using them as they said they were, or we would be asking for a credit back.

At this point I thought the issue was over with.

On May 22nd, I received the email chain from (b)(6) that (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6) and (b)(6) were cc'd on from the editor at the Alaskan Watchman, asking for answers to 5 questions regarding the issue for an article he was going to publish. This email stated that he had a 2p.m. deadline that day and I suppose that since he didn't get a response, he went ahead and published the article with what he had, which were not true facts.

On May 23rd during a brief conversation with (b)(6), he said that it was a Granite policy that nothing was allowed to be placed on Granite trucks without their permission; (decals, stickers, flags, etc.).

After the article was published, I don't recall who first mentioned it to me, I believe it was (b)(6) when we were up at Bear Cave with the rest of the SRO group, but I went on the Alaska Watchman website and saw the follow up articles, was told it had made national news on Fox and then there were a couple of follow up articles about it. On May 25th there was a Teams call with NPS, Granite and FHWA WFL to discuss the issue.

Sunday, May 26 (b)(6) called me and clued me in on the planned protest convoys that were headed to the park that afternoon. I told her I had already told my crew to avoid going to the front of the park unless it was an emergency.

Sunday evening at 7:56 p.m. I received a call on my work phone from the editor of the Alaska Watchman wanting to ask me some questions to verify his facts. After the fourth time telling him that I could not talk to him, but will refer him to the FHWA public affairs office in

Washington, I told him that FHWA policy didn't permit me to talk to the media in any circumstance at any time. He hung up.

This is as best as I can recall all the details to date.

Other than the brief conversation I had with the employee stated above AFTER the granite QCM (b)(6) (b)(6) spoke to him, no one else to my knowledge from FHWA has spoken to him about the flag issue.

There is a flag flying on the Hamilton crane (east abutment) now and one on one of the Granite excavators (west abutment), neither of which leave the project site.

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)@nps.gov>
Sent: Thursday, May 16, 2024 11:28 AM
To: (b)(6) (b)(6) (FHWA)
Subject: Granite trucks

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

(b)(6)

I received a visitor complaint about a pick-up truck (assumed to be Granite) driving on the park road yesterday, west of Tek, with a "very large and obnoxious American flag attached to the vehicle and flapping in the wind". I acknowledge that there's nothing inherently offensive about an American flag, but perhaps it's not befitting of the NPS preference to make traffic as discreet as possible for wildlife and visitor experience. Tour and Transit buses will be driving out to East Fork starting on Monday - is there an appropriate way to request that Granite take it down?

Also, in general, there seems to be a lot of contractor traffic going back and forth on the road during the day, mostly pickup trucks with a single occupant. What happened to the intention to carpool to the work site? I don't think anything specific was ever included in the SCRs but is there some way to encourage an effort to minimize the traffic on the road, particularly May 20th-Sept 12th, when the Vehicle Management Plan thresholds will be measured? Of course, I don't want to cause any schedule delays or incur any financial consequences, and I am not speaking on behalf of park managers. I'm just trying to help us follow through on the commitments we made to the public during the planning and compliance process.

Thanks for considering,

(b)(6)

Harvey, Jesse (FHWA)

From: (b)(6)@nps.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 5:34 PM
To: (b)(6) (FHWA); (b)(6) (FHWA); (b)(6) (FHWA); (b)(6) (FHWA)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: FW: URGENT Fw: [EXTERNAL] From NPS.gov: Resending Media Questions from Alaska Watchman

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

FHWA Team,

Please be aware of the media inquiry we've received (below).

Looks like we may want to circle up to collectively discuss and jointly formulate a response. Probably be more to follow on this, but just wanted to make you aware.

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)@nps.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 5:28 PM
To: (b)(6)@nps.gov>
Subject: Fw: URGENT Fw: [EXTERNAL] From NPS.gov: Resending Media Questions from Alaska Watchman

(b)(6)

For your awareness. We should notify FHWA.

Thanks, (b)(6)

From: (b)(6)@nps.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 1:07 PM
To: (b)(6)@nps.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@nps.gov>
Subject: URGENT Fw: [EXTERNAL] From NPS.gov: Resending Media Questions from Alaska Watchman

(b)(6) we've had a request for comment on the flag issue from the editor of the Alaska Watchman. He says he has a 2pm deadline today, which is not reasonable. If you would, please start working on the answers, as you would like this to read in a local newspaper and we will probably need to vet this up the chain. Copying (b)(6) on this as well.

From: NPS News Media <NewsMedia@nps.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 12:37 PM
To: (b)(6)@nps.gov>; (b)(6)@nps.gov>
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] From NPS.gov: Resending Media Questions from Alaska Watchman

Seems sensitive- I have not included DENA.

(b)(6)

National Park Service
Office of Public Affairs

From: (b)(6)@nps.gov on behalf of Ask NPS, NPS <AskNPS@nps.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 4:35 PM
To: NPS News Media <NewsMedia@nps.gov>
Cc: editor@alaskawatchman.com <editor@alaskawatchman.com>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] From NPS.gov: Resending Media Questions from Alaska Watchman

Hello,

This message is being forwarded to our news media department for a response.

Thank you.

Office of Communications
National Park Service

From: no-reply@nps.gov <no-reply@nps.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 2:06 PM
To: Ask NPS, NPS <AskNPS@nps.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] From NPS.gov: Resending Media Questions from Alaska Watchman

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Email submitted from: editor@alaskawatchman.com at /orgs/1207/contactus.htm

Use editor@alaskawatchman.com to reply to this message

Category: Information

I am working on an article about the construction crew out at Polychrome Pass. I was notified that Park Superintendent Brooke Merrell told the man in charge of Federal Highways oversight that the construction crew could no longer fly the American flag from their vehicles or equipment. I would like to get an explanation or rationale from the park about why that request was made. Below are five specific questions I'm hoping to get answered. My deadline is today (May 22) at 2 p.m. Please feel free to answer these questions via email or phone (907-982-4108). Thank you. Joel Davidson, editor Alaska Watchman QUESTIONS: 1. Did Denali National Park Superintendent (b)(6) ask for the American flags to be removed from the construction vehicles and equipment that are being used in the Polychrome bridge construction

- project?
2. When was that request made?
3. Does the park allow American flags to be flown in other areas of the park?
4. Does the park have a policy against visitors flying the American flag on their vehicles when driving through the park?
5. Why does the park not want flags flown on the construction vehicles at the Polychrome construction site?