



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers



NFFE News Release

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Workers at Yellowstone National Park Organize a Union Under NFFE

Washington, D.C. – Today, the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE-IAM) is proud to announce workers at Yellowstone National Park have elected America’s first federal employee union to represent America’s first established National Park. Interpretive Park Rangers, educators, researchers, fee collectors, first responders, firefighters, and other staff working for the Department of Interior’s National Park Service are now unionized after voting in favor by over 80%.

The election was held during the peak of summer when the park has its highest staff levels and both permanent and seasonal employees had the opportunity to vote. NFFE will be reestablishing one of its original and historical units, Federal Local 465, which hosted the NFFE National Convention in the Old Faithful Inn dining hall in 1935.

Yellowstone employees established an organizing committee three years ago and canvassed for over 100 signatures despite logistical hurdles in locating and contacting coworkers spread out over a wide geographical range, as well as environmental challenges such as floods, heavy snow, and subzero temperatures.

“Working to protect and preserve Yellowstone for ‘the enjoyment of the people’ is a much more difficult and precarious career than people realize,” the Yellowstone organizing committee said in a statement. “Due to low pay, unmanageable workloads, high rent, a stifling hierarchy, and many other issues, the workforce here is struggling. The resulting high turnover negatively affects the park and the public’s experience of it.”

“Our goal in unionizing is to improve communications between field staff and park management and improve working and living conditions for all employees, especially temporary seasonal employees,” the statement continued. “We also want to find tangible ways to build a more inclusive, diverse workplace with more transparency and opportunity for advancement. Yellowstone National Park is one of our nation’s crown jewel parks and a place that all Americans can be proud of. National Park workers should be valued as highly as the places we love and work to protect, and we believe that union representation will help ensure that we are treated with the dignity and respect we deserve.”

Yellowstone joins its fellow Federal Land Management Agency employees on the Bridger-Teton National Forest, the Bighorn National Forest, the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, the Helena-Salmon-Challis National Forest, and many others the region who represented by NFFE. In addition, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Local Lodge 88 represents workers in Yellowstone employed by Xanterra Parks & Resorts, as well as many workers throughout the state of Montana.

“I am honored to welcome the Interpretive Park Rangers, scientists, biologists, photographers, geographers, and so many other federal employees in essential roles at Yellowstone to NFFE,” said NFFE National President Randy Erwin. “By unionizing, previously unrepresented Yellowstone employees have obtained a critical voice in their workplace and now have the power to make significant changes to benefit themselves and their colleagues. It comes as no surprise that these workers and millions across the country are realizing the value of a union, as the Biden Administration has respected the aspirations of workers to unionize. I look forward to working with the Yellowstone employees and helping them achieve improvements in their workplace.”

Established in 1917, the National Federation of Federal Employees is America's first union representing civil service federal employees. NFFE represents approximately 110,000 federal employees in 35 departments and agencies government-wide. NFFE is affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO. For more information, go to www.nffe.org.