



## United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
W46 (2465)

JAN 31 2007

Mr. Philip Van Cleave, President  
Virginia Citizens Defense League  
P.O. Box 513  
Newington, VA 22122

Dear Mr. Van Cleave,

Thank you for your interest in our regulation that manages the possession of weapons when in a unit of the National Park Service (NPS). I understand you feel it's important for personal protection. However, the NPS finds the current regulation, 36 CFR 2.4, to be very effective for these primary reasons:

- **Parks are safe places.** While some crime does occur on NPS managed lands, statistics show that such crime levels are far lower than in other similarly-situated communities, especially when considering that the National Park System has approximately 280 million visits each year.
- **"Right to carry" laws do not reduce crime.** In fact, armed citizens attempting to assist rangers create volatile situations, often putting the private citizen or ranger's life in jeopardy.
- **Firearms already may be transported in a vehicle through any park area.** They need to be made inoperable or stored in such a manner as to prevent their ready use. The firearms regulation is designed to ensure public safety and provide maximum protection of wildlife resources by limiting the opportunity for unauthorized use of weapons, while still providing reasonable regulatory relief for persons living within, traveling through, or conducting activities on lands adjacent to park areas.
- **"Right to carry" laws do not protect visitors from wildlife.** Most weapons carried for protection from wildlife are not adequate for that purpose. Untrained individuals attempting to protect themselves from dangerous animals often exacerbate the situation.

Based on these reasons, the NPS does not support any change in the current regulation (36 CFR 2.4) which prohibits possessing, carrying, or using a weapon in virtually all units of the NPS. Therefore we deny your petition for rulemaking. If you have further questions in regard to this issue, please contact Jerry Case, Chief Regulations and Special Park Uses, at 202-208-4206.

Sincerely,

Karen Taylor-Goodrich  
Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection