

# **SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT, 2008**

## **LITTLE BIGHORN BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL MONUMENT**



“Sunrise over Battle Ridge/Indian Memorial & Last Stand Hill”, 2007 - John A. Doerner, NPS-LIBI

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Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument started 2008 with our primary focus on: **1)** Enhancement of visitor services and visitor experience; **2)** Consultation with the various tribes for the permanent interpretive panels on the interior walls of the Indian Memorial; **3)** Upgrading the battlefield's infrastructure; **4)** Planning for additional visitor service space. **5)** Sitting Bull Reburial to Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. (**Please note that the following numerical sequence (1-5) used below refers to our main accomplishments listed above which were our major priorities at LIBI in 2008, and is not a numerical order listing.**)

### **1) 132nd Anniversary Observance –**

June 25 & 26, 2008 marked the 132nd Anniversary observance of the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Our role again this year was largely supportive as host to the public and our various support groups and organizations that attend and participate each year in their own unique way to reflect on the Battle of the Little Bighorn and the participants in the battle including the Lakota, Northern/Southern Cheyenne, Arapaho, Crow, Arikara, and Seventh Cavalry. honor the participation including Friends of the Little Bighorn, Custer Battlefield Historical & Museum Association (CBHMA), and Lakota, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Arikara Scout organizations.

The theme of this important observance each year is “Peace Through Unity” which has been successful in bringing visitors of all cultures together during the unique programs that are presented free to the public each year. Visitors have an opportunity to reflect back on this historic event in American history and understand the importance of the battlefield today and for future generations.

This observance was special in that retiring Superintendent of Little Bighorn Battlefield and Big Horn Canyon National Recreation Area, Darrell J. Cook was honored by the Northern Cheyenne in a special ceremony in recognition of his outstanding work to build strong and positive relationships between the NPS-LIBI and Indian Country. Darrell retired after a long and distinguished career with the NPS. The following excerpted program lists the various events and participants:

**PEACE THROUGH UNITY -  
PROGRAM  
TUESDAY JUNE 24, 2008  
ARIKAREE (ARIKARA) SCOUTS PROGRAM**

1:00 PM.....Amphitheater (Located behind Visitor Center)

Welcome.....James Charles, Acting Superintendent Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

Master Of Ceremonies.....Duane Fox, Old Scouts Society, White Shield, ND

Guest Speakers.....Markus Wells, Chairman, Three Affiliated Tribes  
.....Frank White Calf (And Other Guest Speakers to be Announced)

Ree Scout Legionaires/Drum Group..... (Descendants of Custer's Ree Scouts)

History of the Ree Scouts & Their Horses: Bloody Knife's Buckskin  
Sgt. Bobtail Bull's Horse  
Little Brave's Pinto

**WEDNESDAY JUNE 25, 2008**

5:00 AM.....Entrance Gate Open (Entrance Fee Waived)

7:00AM.....Prayer For World Peace Ceremony led by Charles Little Old Man, Donlin Many Bad Horses, Northern Cheyenne Pipe Ceremony. Location: Indian Memorial

10:00 to 12:00 .....Attack At Dawn followed by Lakota Speakers Location: Indian memorial/Battle Ridge

12:00 to 2:00 PM.....Big Horn Riders on Horseback Location: north slope over park boundary, proceeding to Indian Memorial with ceremonies & Speakers to be announced.

2:00 PM.....Northern Cheyenne Horseback Riders arrive and approach monument from Montana HWY 212, and unveil new Cheyenne Marker in Amphitheater.

2:30PM.....Roman Nose Marker Dedication (Amphitheater)

Welcome.....James Charles, Acting Superintendent, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

Key-Note Speaker.....Conrad Fisher, Cultural Historian, Northern Cheyenne Tribe

Roman Nose Marker Unveiling.....Northern Cheyenne Representatives

**1) Visitation -** Chief Ranger Michael Stops reports that visitation was 284,677 in 2008, a decline of 2.94% compared to 293,295 in 2007. Record high gasoline prices, another summer of extreme temperatures, drought, and severe wildfires burning throughout Montana, as well as an unstable national economy are likely contributing factors for the decrease.

**2) Indian Memorial –** We are still working to finalize work on the permanent interpretive panels for the interior walls of the Indian Memorial. Several consultation meetings with the Northern Cheyenne were conducted at LIBI and we also worked with the Arikara to finalize their text and graphics for their interpretive panel. James Charles, Management Assistant for LIBI and Big Horn Canyon NRA (BICA) is to be commended for his assistance to Darrell Cook in 2008 and for coordinating and attending several off-site tribal consultation meetings with Fort Peck Sioux Tribe (April 2008) and Northern Cheyenne tribe (May 2008) as well as by correspondence and telephone. James also did all of the electronic computer graphic layouts and provided large color copies for all the tribes and LIBI which was invaluable to us. John Doerner, Chief Historian continued to provide important historical review and share his valuable expertise for all the respective panels. In previous years we consulted closely with all of the respective tribes including the Lakota, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Crow and Arikara to strategize and came up with the text and graphics for all of the interior wall panels to provide temporary interpretation for the public. RoGene White Man Budget Analyst (BICA) assistance in coordinating consultation with all the respective tribes, especially the Northern Cheyenne, was a great help to Superintendent Darrell J. Cook. Future work in FY2009 will focus on finalizing consultation with the tribes and permanent panels; how to proceed with actual contracting, and what needs to be done to the existing granite panels exterior finish before they can be inscribed. This will involve on-site polishing of each granite panel face by the contractor followed by adding all necessary final inscription/graphics.

**1&2) Administration –** In FY2008 our ONPS Budget was \$1,149,9800 with 20 FTE's, as compared to \$1,082,600 and 20 FTE's in FY2007. Cathy Not Afraid, Administrative Officer, continued to keep up with the high volume of requests including purchase orders, from other divisions, as well as the hectic pace of LIBI's daily operations. Prudence Pretty On Top, LIBI IT Tech was busy between LIBI and BICA, keeping our computer and telephone systems in good order. Sandy Harris began her second year at LIBI as Administrative Clerk. Alvina Morning entered on duty in June 2008 and served as Office Assistant.

**1) Community Relations –** LIBI continues to have a strong relationship with the local community and our battlefield related organizations including: Crow Tribe, Crow Agency; Northern Cheyenne Tribe; Lakota Sioux Tribes; Hardin; Billings; Custer Country; and government agencies. The outreach and educational programs foster strong ties with the community. Superintendent Darrell Cook worked with the Crow Tribe, and Custer Battlefield Preservation Committee on boundary adjustment and land transfer that would be mutually beneficial to Little Bighorn Battlefield, Big Horn Canyon National Recreation Area, and the Crow Tribe. The goal is additional lands that would be gained will ultimately be turned over to the Crow Tribe, and managed by NPS policy to ensure protection of the fragile view shed that surrounds Little Bighorn Battlefield. LIBI also made our Training and Conference Room located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Administration Building available to the local community, including the Crow Tribe, BIA, and other groups throughout the year.

**1)NPS-LIBI Employee Safety –** LIBI is to be commended for having no lost-time injuries in 2008. We stressed a proactive safety program that empowers our employees to be safe and work safe, at all times.

**5) Sitting Bull Reburial -** In the fall of 2006 Ernest W. LaPointe, great grandson of Sitting Bull (Lineal Descendant) made a request to NPS-LIBI to transfer Sitting Bull's remains to Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument for perpetual protection, in response to an original agreement with the family to properly maintain the Mobridge grave site that was not kept. Family concern for lack of security and maintenance of site within the Standing Rock Reservation that has been used by local residents for illegal drinking and partying at grave site since 1953. The grave is littered with trash, alcoholic beverage containers and shows signs of vandalism. Also of concern is commercial development plans by new owners who have failed to contact Sitting Bull's family. Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument (LIBI) has been working closely with the Sitting Bull descendants on the Indian Memorial, warrior markers, and museum exhibits over the past five years. LIBI supported the request because it would honor the legacy of Sitting Bull as a champion of the Lakota, provide perpetual care and protection of his grave site for future generations, and help balance the story of the Battle of the Little Bighorn while recognizing the American Indian role in American history. LIBI held several on-site meetings with Mr. LaPointe throughout 2007-2008 including one with his sisters and their immediate family members. John Doerner, Chief Historian and Sharon Small, Interim Curator conducted extensive research

on Sitting Bull's murder and burial in December 1890 in anticipation of the transfer of Sitting Bull's remains to Little Bighorn Battlefield. NPS-LIBI also began formal consultation with both IMR-Denver and WASO for support and authorization to proceed with appropriate NEPA/Sec. 106 Compliance, including an Environmental Assessment and appropriate public scoping meetings. **Update:** In FY2008 however, NPS-LIBI was notified by the Sitting Bull family that they have decided not to inter Sitting Bull at LIBI, but have decided to inter him at an undisclosed private location that will be known only to the family.

#### **1) Cooperating Associations & Concessions – Western National Parks Association (WNPA):**

Western National Parks Association (WNPA) continued to be an important partner and vital part of our interpretive operations, providing LIBI with Interpretive Supplement Account (ISA) contribution of \$37,515. Our total sales generated from the Battlefield Bookstore was \$591, 434 as compared to \$577,169 in 2007, this despite a decrease in visitation. They have once again provided funds for reprinting of all of our park trail guides (Custer National Cemetery, Deep Ravine Trail, & Entrenchment Trail), in addition to our summer newspaper/Interpretive Program Schedule distributed to the public. WNPA also helped us to sponsor numerous NPS events including: Indian Memorial tribal consultation meetings for the permanent interpretive panels. WNPA also had staff from their Tucson headquarters helping to update and rearrange the bookstore to enhance traffic flow and increase sales. WNPA also purchased an authentic M1866 Winchester Carbine which was replicated to match Sitting Bull's original at the Smithsonian. Loreen Walks Crooked Arm our WNPA Field Manager is to be commended again for her dedication, professionalism and management of the battlefield bookstore and WNPA staff. Brendon Nomme, WNPA Sales Assistant and all the WNPA employees are also to be commended for their hard work and dedication working the first-line in our busy battlefield bookstore in 2008 and for the continued success of the bookstore which is a critical visitor service and essential part of our overall visitor services.

**1) Appsaloone Tours:** 2008 marked the 12th anniversary of our partnership with Little Bighorn College (Crow Tribal College) which has operated Appsaloone Tours again under a concessions permit. The popular one-hour guided bus/van tours are an important interpretive service for park visitors. 578 bus/van tours were given from Memorial Day to Labor Day in 2008, grossing \$56,150, an

increase of over \$6,000 compared to 2007, despite lower overall park visitation, and record high temperatures throughout the intermountain west. The two new tour busses purchased in 2007 really enhanced visitor service and reliability with the latest ADA compliant and air conditioned shuttle transportation available. Several large capacity vans served as back-up vehicles and for providing special VIP tours when needed to help off-set costs during lower visitation periods. The success of the concessions in 2008 is attributed to the dedication of Jackie Yellowtail as Manager, and the Crow students who share their cultural perspectives on the Battle of the Little Bighorn and their unique tribal history in the Crow Tribal Homeland with our visiting public.

**1) Interpretive Division** - Ken Woody, Chief of Interpretation, reports yet another successful season and exceeded the 78% park goal of Visitor Understanding & Appreciation, scoring 82%, this despite a decrease in visitation, with quality staff training and top-notch interpretive programs. We reduced the program lineup to just the main "Battle Talk" presented every 45 minutes throughout the summer starting at 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM daily on the visitor center patio. The following is a breakdown of visitor services provided in 2008: 608 **Ranger Talks/Interpretive programs** given to 46,145 visitors (down from 1,001/49,437 in 2007); 4 community off-site programs given to 102 students; 933 Jr. Rangers were signed up (Up from 865 in 2007); 2,205 orientation film showings of "**Their Shots Quit Coming**" were given to 32,327 visitors; 28 on-site school tours were given to 1,059 students; 1,975 roving contacts/patrols interacted with over 1,501 visitors. 212 requests for LIBI information were processed. The Visitor Center Meter/Counter recorded 158,200 contacts in 2008 compared to 154,473 in 2007. Bus Tours: 9,276 visitors attended 578 1 hour Apsaalooke Bus Tours/Little Big Horn College (compared to 7,913 visitors/562 in 2007). This, despite a long and extremely hot summer and daily temperatures averaging from 80-100+ degrees which taxed both staff and their passengers as well as the vehicle air-conditioners. Marvin Dawes Sr., Crow Tribal member is our lead interpretive ranger. Jerry Jasmer continued in the term position assisting Ken and Marvin with operations, including leading Military Staff Rides at LIBI. A full compliment of seasonal interpretive Rangers in 2008 included: Michael Donahue of Temple, Texas (his 18<sup>th</sup> year); Frances Takes Enemy of Ft Smith, Montana (Returning under Teacher-Ranger-Teacher Program), Steve Littleton of Ohio (5<sup>th</sup> year), Rose Williamson Crow Agency (3<sup>rd</sup> Year Returning), and new seasonal Luny Hill.

**1) Friends of The Little Bighorn Battlefield** – Bob Reece, President of Friends announced that 2008 marked the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Friends of Little Bighorn. Accomplishments in 2008 are included in their Annual Report, excerpted below:

**Friends of the Little Bighorn Battlefield**  
**Annual Report to the Superintendent**  
**2008**

Our cash contributions for 2008 were originally promised for the installment of the audio/visual equipment with the completion of the visitor center expansion. Since that project was canceled, Friends will contribute funds based on future needs. Acting Superintendent James Charles and Chief of Interpretation Ken Woody have requested funds to replace the widescreen television used to show the interpretive film. Friends has agreed to donate the television but as of this writing, we await confirmation from NPS staff as to the amount needed to donate. Our general funds continue to surpass the \$30K level and still growing.

Here is a list of some of our other accomplishments:

- The Friends provided 700 volunteer hours for the organization. This includes volunteer hours worked on the trails (see note below). 21 members gave 199 volunteer hours assisting the NPS by providing interpretation along the Keogh and Deep Ravine Trails and Reno-Benteen Battlefield June 27-28, 2008; managing this year's fundraiser; and the Friends Feast.
- Friends, in cooperation with the University of Oklahoma Press, published its first limited edition book for sale to raise funds. The leather bound, signed and numbered copy (limited to 100) is Jerome Greene's Stricken Field: The Little Bighorn Since 1876. This incredible and detailed administrative history of the battlefield has proven to be a great success in generating revenue for Friends. Friends donated one copy to LIBI's library, one copy to the author, and one to Paul Hedren who wrote the introduction. To date, the limited edition has netted \$2,295.00. Once all 100 copies have sold, Friends will net approximately \$5,700.00 for the general fund.
- We held a successful fundraiser for Friends on June 27, 2008 at the Stone House on the battlefield. Our guest speaker was historian, Jerome Greene. Mr. Greene's program was titled, "Little Bighorn Battlefield: Closing the Circle on Indian Testimony" based from his recent administrative history, Stricken Field. The evening was perfect: blue skies and the battlefield as a backdrop emphasized the importance in understanding the history of the battle site. Thanks to Mr. Greene's presentation, our fundraiser was the most successful to date. Preregistration of ticket sales amounted to \$716.00. Add to that the sale of fundraiser tickets on June 27 plus the sale of nine more limited edition books that evening, equaled nearly \$1,700.00 -- our fundraiser garnered about \$2,400.00. These earnings have been deposited into our general fund. We also held our general membership meeting on June 28 followed by our annual barbecue.
- Friends continues to provide updated information of the soldier and warrior participant list that the Chief Historian can use for record. We also maintain that list on the Friends website resulting in less correspondence work for the monuments Chief Historian – we hope!
- Friends had the highest increase in memberships in one year. Our membership grew from 225 (in 2007) to 262 (so far in 2008). And, we continue to see a strong rate in membership renewals.
- Our operational costs remain low. Although, the total cost of our newsletters issued (three each year) did increase from about \$400 in 2007 to about \$500 today, this is due to the increase in membership – that's a good cost and we continue to keep our costs for this publication to a bare minimum. Board member Lola Mauer does a great job as editor of the newsletter. Board

members contribute their own funds for some expenses like the web hosting of the Friends' website and maintaining its domain name. Also, board members contribute much of their own money in preparation and managing volunteers and fundraisers: Mike Semenock and Kay Hunsaker were instrumental in keeping costs down over the June weekend.

- Friends continues to sale products in the visitor center bookstore. This year we increased profit margins. Our best selling item continues to be the baseball cap adorned with the beautiful LIBI logo created and drawn by Chief Historian John Doerner.
- The website continues to grow in content. Visitation remained level. So far for the period from Jan 2007 through early October 2007 we have had 154,259 visitors with 4,613,427 hits. However, our number of pages visited has increased in 2008 over 2007. This is a true barometer of how well a website performs. From January through early Oct 2007 we had 433,135 pages viewed, but the number of pages viewed for the same period in 2008 has increased to 443,556.

Warmest Regards,  
Bob Reece  
President, Friends of the Little Bighorn Battlefield

**1) Memorial Day Observance** - Our annual Memorial Day Observance was held on May 26, 2008 at 11:00 AM in the amphitheater adjacent to Custer National Cemetery. Marvin Dawes, Lead Park Ranger Interpreter served as Master of Ceremony. Key note address was made by Marvin Dawes. Attendees included: Hardin American Legion Post #8 & VFW James Louk Post #7481 who served as Color Guards/Rifle Teams. Key note speaker was Captain Richard S. Newell, U.S. Army Recruiting Office, Sheridan, WY. Reverend Jerry Jasmer conducted the invocation and closing prayer. Ken Boggio of Hardin played taps.

**1, 3, & 4) Visitor Center Expansion** - On August 18, 2008 the NPS issued the following Official Press Release regarding the cancellation of the Visitor Center expansion Project:

## **Intermountain Region News Release**

### National Park Service abandons Visitor Center Expansion at Little Bighorn Battlefield

The National Park Service announced today that it will not move forward with the proposed expansion of the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument visitor center, but will instead study how to improve services to visitors without expanding the visitor center.

"Sometimes you just have to admit that you didn't do your homework as well as you might have," said Mike Snyder, Regional Director, Intermountain Region. "We've concluded that is really the case here. The proposal to expand the visitor center was one way to solve the problem of crowding during interpretive talks and the lack of a great room or theater to view the park's film. But, after regional office staff reviewed the issues, we've concluded there are other

ways that we can achieve those goals without encroaching further onto the battlefield," Snyder said.

The visitor center project was driven by a need to address long-standing problems that negatively impacted the visitor experience at the battlefield. During high visitation periods, visitors cannot comfortably listen to interpretive talks given on the building's patio because the patio is not large enough to accommodate the crowds. The park's film, which tells the story of the battle, was screened in a basement room that is not accessible to people with mobility impairments and which lacks adequate exits.

"These are long-standing problems that we expected to be resolved with the construction of an off-site visitor center," said Snyder. "The 1986 General Management Plan called for that to occur, but so far, the obstacles to achieving that have been insurmountable. In the meantime, park employees have struggled mightily to provide a quality visitor experience with inferior facilities," Snyder continued. "To his credit, former superintendent Darryl Cook said 'enough is enough' and sought to improve the situation with the proposal to expand the visitor center. Resolving these conditions remains a top priority, but we think it can be accomplished without the significant expansion studied in the Environmental Assessment."

The proposed expansion was the subject of a June 2006 Environmental Assessment and subsequent Finding of No Significant Impact signed by Snyder. A recent lawsuit by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility challenged the legal adequacy of those documents. As a result of today's decision to abandon the expansion project, the National Park Service will withdraw the Finding of No Significant Impact it issued for the visitor center project in April 2008.

In the coming weeks, Intermountain Region specialists in interpretation and safety will work with battlefield staff in developing other approaches to providing the film and interpretive talks to park visitors. If the need exists, the National Park Service may consider interior changes to the building that do not alter the exterior walls, but will do so only after engaging in public participation and environmental compliance.

**3&4) Battlefield Tour Road (Rehabilitate Route 10)** – In FY2008 the 100% drawings/engineering specifications as well as completion of all required NEPA/Sec. 106 Compliance for the Battlefield Tour Road Project were in place. The project is also in the PEPC System. Actual construction work is still scheduled to begin in FY2011, barring any unforeseen budget delays.

**1) Battlefield Entrance Fee/Hours** – Entrance fee of \$10.00 per vehicle or \$5.00 for bus passengers/pedestrians/motorcycles was in effect year-round in 2008. NPS Interagency (IA) Annual Pass, IA Access, or IA Senior Pass holders received free access, including visitors to Custer National Cemetery. Summer hours began May 26, 2008. Memorial Day to Labor Day the visitor center was open 8:00 AM to 7:30 PM; Battlefield Tour Road was open 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM; and Custer

National Cemetery & Last Stand Hill was open from 8:00 AM to 9:00 PM through July 31st; & then 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM through Labor Day. The Custer Battlefield trails (Deep Ravine Trail/Keogh-Crazy Horse Trail & Indian Memorial-7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Memorial Trail) & the Entrenchment Trail at Reno-Benteen Battlefield were open from 8:00 AM until 7:30 PM daily throughout the summer and are ADA/Universal Accessibility Compliant and are extremely popular with the public.

**1) Roman Nose Warrior Marker Project** – John A. Doerner, LIBI Chief Historian has been busy conducting historical research on Roman Nose, Northern Cheyenne warrior killed in action 25 June 1876 while fighting against Major Marcus Reno's command in the Valley Fight during the Battle of the Little Bighorn. The new red granite marker for Roman Nose was unveiled to the public on June 25, 2008 during the 132<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Observance of the battle. The inscription is as follows:

**ONONEVOO ' XE ' NE ' HE  
ROMAN NOSE  
A CHEYENNE WARRIOR  
FELL HERE ON  
JUNE 25, 1876  
WHILE DEFENDING  
THE CHEYENNE  
WAY OF LIFE**

## **1) Ranger Activities:**

**Law Enforcement/EMS/FEE Operation** - Chief Ranger Michael Stops reports the following:

**Law Enforcement/Case Incidents** - We had 56 case incidents relating to various visitor services, which is up from 16 in 2007. The Chief Ranger and one seasonal LE Ranger was on board, Skeeter He Does It, returning again in 2009.

**Special Use Permits** - 10 Special Use Permits including one for commercial filming at LIBI were issued, an increase from nine special use permits issued in 2007.

**Emergency Medical Services (EMS)** – We had zero incidents involving medical emergencies as compared to two incidents in 2007.

**132nd Anniversary observance** - Went off without any major incidents, despite the heavy crowds during Little Bighorn Days and all the various events hosted by the NPS here. LIBI had two commissioned LE Ranger. LE Ranger Skeeter He

Does It, Ft. Smith, MT, hired under the SCEP Program. Skeeter is a welcome addition to the staff and has been assisting Michael Stops with LE and Fee responsibilities throughout 2008.

**Fee Collection** – Fee revenue in 2008 was down from 2007 which was commensurate with reduced visitation levels. We maintained a seasonal staff of four-five Visitor Use Assistants, in the Student Temporary Employee Program (STEP). We had Paul Matt, Jr. Cassie Nomee, Angel Hugs and Joseph Vallie, our Lead VUA in 2008.

### **1&3) Natural Resources –**

**Invasive Plant Management:** Melana Stichman, Biological Technician is funded through our fee demonstration projects “Restore Historic Viewshed For Visitor Enhancement and Photography” and “Restore Native Vegetation”. Melana single handedly treated 25 acres of noxious weeds throughout the monument and submitted additional natural resource related projects into PMIS for LIBI. Target invasive plants included: field bindweed, St. Johnswort, houndstongue, Russian thistle, whitetop, yellow sweetclover, curly dock, Russian olive, prickly lettuce, and several thistles and knapweeds. The Exotic Plant Management Team (EPMT) from Glacier National Park returned to help LIBI staff treat field bindweed along park roadways. The EPMT began treating Russian olive along the Little Bighorn River at the Custer unit boundary, although access was limited due to flooding in June.

Preliminary efforts began on developing an Invasive Plant Management Plan that will involve ten parks located in the northern Rocky Mountains, including Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. This plan will be used to direct the management of invasive plants/noxious weeds and will include the use of a suite of tools that allow the park to effectively manage area natural and cultural resources with minimal effects from non-native invasive plants.

**Restoration:** Monitoring revegetation and noxious weeds throughout the park continued in 2008 under a fee demonstration project “Restore Historic Viewshed for Visitor Enhancement and Photography” which is a significant battlefield plan to restore the historic and natural landscape back to the approximate 1876 appearance. Three acres of previously disturbed land used by the War Department and NPS as a maintenance equipment repair/storage, and staging area were restored. Other 2008 work included noxious weed removal, and planting native seed that were collected from the park the previous year. The Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred the Quonset Hut building is non-significant in 2006. The building is slated for removal in the future and will be donated to the Big Horn County Historical Museum in Hardin, MT.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Plant Materials Center in Bismarck, North Dakota continues to cultivate and harvest native grass seed for the battlefield. Native plant species include green needlegrass, bluebunch wheatgrass, sideoats grama, and blue grama. Seeds were originally collected in the park in 2005 as part of a re-vegetation plan for the Battlefield Tour Road Rehabilitation Project.

**1) Severe Summer Drought** – 2008 marked the ninth continuous year of drought in Montana and much of the intermountain west. This situation has created extreme water shortages and fire danger conditions, and has lowered the Little Bighorn River and area aquifers to record levels. As a fire prevention measure commensurate with Big Horn County, we enacted a no smoking ban outside of vehicles which went into effect in late July until conditions improved in late fall. Temperatures reached record high levels in July and August with 100+ temperatures recorded. The prolonged drought has also impacted our abilities to provide adequate irrigation of Custer National Cemetery, and the lawns throughout the battlefield. Lonnie Hergenrider, Facility manager and our Maintenance division coped with the water shortage and scheduled irrigation during the evening and early morning hours to maximize water retention and minimize evaporation. The heat has also challenged our NPS staff, including those who work outside and we have continued to provide special cooled units that dispense bottled water for employee safety at key work areas and buildings. Visitors are also cautioned about the extreme temperatures during the ranger talks and bus tours. Despite the extreme temperatures, we only had minor heat related incidents with the public.

## **1) Division of History & Cultural Resources:**

**Museum Curator** - Sharon Small, interim Museum Curator was busy working on various research and photo requests, as well as year-end projects, including cataloging of museum objects. We exceeded our original PMDS Target of 103 museum protection standards met consultation with 109 actual standards met in 2008. Sharon also worked with Ernie LaPointe, great-grandson of Sitting Bull to research, prepare, and install the new Sitting Bull Exhibit. Sharon also purchased and installed a new museum exhibit case for the new Sitting Bull exhibit. completed an Annual Inventory Report of our Museum Collection, processed over 30 research requests, 37 photograph requests, and assisted over 11 on-site

researchers who accessed the museum collections. She is working with the annual upgrade to the Automated National Catalog System Plus (ANCS+).

**Chief Historian –** Chief Historian John A. Doerner processed over 420 research requests on the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 2008 (email: 312; telephone: 100+; mail: 14) up from over 291 in 2007. 12 on-site researchers utilized the White Swan Library Collection. Doerner continued to accession new library publications as well as upgrade the historic map and oversize case aerial photographs and blueprints with protective archival covers. He also continued extensive research and field work which has been on-going since 1999 when he first championed the placement of red granite markers at Cheyenne and Lakota casualty sites to honor and preserve their casualty sites on the battlefield, complimenting the existing historic 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry markers first erected by the War Department in 1890 to denote soldier casualty sites. This on-going research resulted in the placement of a new red granite marker for Roman Nose, Northern Cheyenne warrior killed in action 25 June 1876 in the valley Fight against Major Reno's Battalion. He also conducted additional research and consultation on other warrior casualties and updated the Warrior Marker Index and Map records. Doerner also conducted extensive research on the burial of Sitting Bull in 1890 (see Sitting Bull Reburial project) and customized a reproduction M1866 Winchester .44/40 Carbine, complete with exact replica's of Sitting Bull's personal "S.B." initials and "Four Winds" medicine symbol carved into the stock; brass tack decorations, and matching stock marks and dings using photographs of Sitting Bull's original at the Smithsonian Institute. The replica Sitting Bull Winchester was added to the new Sitting Bull museum exhibit. He also assisted the interim curator Sharon Small with research of the new popular Sitting Bull exhibit, and was instrumental in obtaining several original Sitting Bull items from Thomas Heski formerly from the famous David F. Barry Collection for Ernie LaPointe and Sitting Bull family that are now on loan to NPS-LIBI.

**1 & 3) Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) Project –** In 2007 we started work on the first CLI in a joint partnership with NPS and Utah State University.

Work in 2008 involved actual preparation and writing of the draft CLI by Professor Michael Timmons, Principle Investigator and Emily Wheeler, Graduate Assistant after a comprehensive on-site investigation here back on July 23-27, 2007 followed by review of the draft CLI by John Doerner, Chief Historian, other battlefield staff and Jill Cowley, PhD, NPS Historical Landscape Architect, Santa Fe. Copies of the draft CLI were then distributed in September to the Cultural Committee heads

of the 12 historically affiliated tribes of LIBI for initial comments. After additional review and editing the CLI is scheduled for completion in 2009.

The final CLI will document each physical development, size, condition, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, as well as a host of other valuable information useful in NPS Cultural and Natural Resource Management and preservation at LIBI. The CLI will also be an important document of Little Bighorn Battlefield's overall resource inventory and will be useful in enhancing the existing National Register documentation of LIBI and provides a description and analysis of the physical landscape characteristics and historical overview of the battlefield and how they shaped the landscape that exists here today.

**1/3) Maintenance Operations** – Our maintenance staff (Les Frickle, Jimmie Brothers, Wayne Not Afraid, Vel Grinsteiner, Richard Struck, and Kenny Woody, Jr.) under Facility Manager Lonnie Hergenrider have been busy with perpetual care of Custer National Cemetery which is an important feature on our powerful cultural landscape. Keeping the park irrigated and supplied with water through another summer of severe drought and extreme temperatures was challenging. Replacement of diseased and damaged Colorado Blue Spruce and Cedar Trees (first planted by the War Department in the early 1930's) in recent years has been a major achievement. Several major equipment upgrades were made, and on-going projects included cleaning and straightening of headstones in the cemetery; upgrading our irrigation sprinkler systems and making maximum use of overnight and early morning-late evening irrigation to maximize water retention during our eighth year of drought. Lonnie Hergenrider served on two details and one temporary promotion as General Operations and Maintenance Supervisor in the North District, Big Horn Canyon NRA. Maintenance Crews continued to work cooperatively at LIBI and BICA and shared equipment and resources effectively. The Chief Historian John Doerner worked with Lonnie Hergenrider and the Veterans Administration on future upgrades of all of our outdated and worn-damaged concrete cemetery section stakes. Another significant achievement was replacement of damaged sidewalks in several sections of the cemetery as well as along the Entrenchment Trail at Reno-Benteen Battlefield, and upgrades to park employee housing/quarters. An unexpected problem with our electrical line to the visitor center occurred on September 22, 2008 indicating need for future replacement and upgrade of equipment in 2009. Daily ground maintenance, trash removal, building and restroom cleaning, especially at the visitor center and public restrooms, as well as snow removal of the infrastructure road and sidewalks continued to be a top priority. All maintenance Division Fee Demonstration

Projects were halted during 2008 to help fund the proposed Visitor Center Expansion Project (Which was cancelled by NPS).

**1/3) Custer National Cemetery:** 2008 Interments: 16 (seven cremain burials), with 802 people in attendance. We are nearing maximum capacity of our 5,000 burial plots, and in 2008 looked at potential areas within our existing cemetery boundary that we may be able to expand additional burial plots in the future, if found to be feasible.