

David Vela

Deputy Director

Exercising the Authority of the Director of the National Park Service

Ex-Officio Director

WASHINGTON, DC

A 28-year career veteran of the National Park Service, David Vela serves as deputy director, exercising the authority of the director of the National Park Service. In this role he leads the more than 20,000 National Park Service employees who protect, preserve, and share America's 419 national parks with the American people and who manage the NPS programs that help communities across the nation preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities.

Prior to assuming his current role, Vela served as superintendent of Grand Teton National Park and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway where he managed more than 310,000 acres of park lands, including the spectacular Teton Range that serve as home to iconic wildlife from bison to grizzly bears as well as 51 miles of the wild and scenic Snake River. In addition, he managed a budget of approximately 13 million dollars, millions of dollars in construction projects, and a permanent and seasonal workforce exceeding 400 employees.

Vela previously served as National Park Service Associate Director for Workforce, Relevancy and Inclusion in the Washington headquarters. He administered a \$32 million dollar operational budget with 153 employees, and served as a key advisor to the National Park Service Director and Deputy Director on the full spectrum of strategic human capital management issues, initiatives, and policies. His national program areas included: Human Resources, Learning and Development, Equal Opportunity, Youth, and the Office of Relevancy, Diversity & Inclusion.

Before his time in Washington, Vela served for over four years as director of the National Park Service Southeast Region, where he oversaw 66 national park sites in nine states, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Vela administered multi-million dollar projects to include an operational budget in excess of \$230 million dollars. In addition, he provided product and leadership support for the Department of Interior/National Park Service National Latino Heritage Initiative, served as co-chair for the National Park Service Civil War 150th Commemoration National Steering Committee, and served on the National Park Service Development Advisory Board and National Leadership Council Executive Committee.

Vela began his National Park Service career in 1981 as a cooperative education student at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park in Texas, and later became a permanent park ranger. From 1987 to 1998, Vela worked in a variety of federal posts outside the National Park Service. He was a special agent in the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Inspector General's Office, conducting white-collar criminal investigations in New York and New Jersey. He was also a special assistant for Hispanic affairs to the late U.S. Representative George Thomas "Mickey" Leland of Texas. He was a federal investigator for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. In 1996, the Texas Attorney General appointed Vela





director of the Texas Child Support Program, where he supervised more than 70 field offices and 2,400 employees.

Upon his return to the National Park Service, Vela held park superintendent positions at Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site (Texas), Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park (Texas), and the George Washington Memorial Parkway (Washington, DC and VA/MD area).

Vela is a graduate of Texas A&M University, with a Bachelor of Science degree in recreation and parks. He graduated from the U.S. Department of the Interior Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program in May 2006. Vela is the recipient of numerous awards both within and outside of the National Park Service for leadership and performance excellence. He and his wife Melissa have two children, Christina and Anthony, and six grandchildren.