ATTENTION:

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March 15, 1991

AG601 (FOJE)

Memorandum:

To: Deputy Regional Director, Southeast Region

Through: Superintendent, Everglades National Park

From: Superintendent, Fort Jefferson National Monument

Subject: Superintendent's Annual Narrative Report for 1990

SUMMARY:

During early 1990, five new employees arrived to fill positions at FOJE that had been vacant for two to six months. The long lapse in key supervisory, management and administrative positions, exacerbated by continued communication difficulties with administrative headquarters at Everglades National Park, resulted in significant deficiencies in operational efficiency, supervision, management direction and adherence to NPS policies and procedures. However, through a combined staff effort, together with the strong operational support provided by the Superintendent's Office at Everglades National Park, especially from the Assistant Superintendent who was delegated supervisory responsibilities over the Monument's Superintendent, Fort Jefferson National Monument had accomplished substantial improvements in all areas of operation by the close of 1990.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION:

The efficiency of administrative operations at the Monument has been enhanced greatly by expanding the duties and responsibilities of the employee filling the administrative support position. Assisted by the close support and cooperation of the Everglades AO, Fort Jefferson has assumed increased responsibility in the areas of procurement, bills of collection, budget development, budget tracking, travel and OAS billing. For the first time, Fort Jefferson has an Imprest Fund, and soon Third Party Draft. This long overdue improvement has greatly facilitated local purchase of essential supplies and materials.
A vehicle for the Monument, obtained as surplus from the Air Force means that the staff will no longer have to donate the use of their private vehicle in order to conduct government business on the mainland. Administration operations are now functioning smoothly at Fort Jefferson with a minimum of additional unnecessary burden on the folks at Everglades, who provide the administration support that we continue to need and rely on.

Difficulties with the Monument's radio/telephone communication system to the mainland continue to be a fundamental hindrance to further improvements in operational and administration efficiency. The Monument was without any radio/telephone communication for more than four months in 1990. The request for cyclic funding to rehab the existing system was not approved for FY'91. Improvements in communication capabilities continue to be an area of priority concern for the Monument.

We were emphatically reminded of the importance of our supply vessel, Activa, to the Monument's operations by the captain's emergency surgery in March (from which he has now fully recovered) and a serious engine fire which took place in December, fortunately without any injuries. In both instances, the Monument had to rely on commercial seaplane service for several weeks to transport employees and essential supplies. Valuable transportation assistance was also provided by US Coast Guard and NADC vessels.

PLANNING/DEVELOPMENT:

An evaluation of the progress made during two years of renewed stabilization work at Fort Jefferson indicated that the efforts were significantly insufficient to keep pace with the rate of deterioration. Justification was provided to double the cultural cyclic funding for at least six years beginning in FY'91 to allow for a longer field season by the Regional Preservation Crew. The recommendation was also made to establish a monitoring system to evaluate the significance of developing cracks and provide management with the information necessary to make decisions about the scope, expense and potential success of the future stabilization efforts that would be required to preserve the Fort.

Considerable progress was made during 1990, in negotiating the terms of agreement with the US Coast Guard for transfer to the National Park Service of ownership and management of Loggerhead Key, where the Coast Guard has operated a Light Station since 1922. General agreement has been reached on upgrading the condition of facilities and equipment before the transfer, as well as on provisions for continued logistical support by the Coast Guard after the transfer. Although an original target date of May 1991, was discussed, a more realistic time frame would be FY'92. The question of obtaining the additional funding required
for the anticipated 2-3 FTE's that will be stationed on Loggerhead, as well as for operational support has not yet been adequately addressed. A Development Concept Plan must be established to provide management guidance especially in the area of providing visitor services.

Development of an Historic Landscape Report for Garden Key has begun with the assistance of a Masters degree candidate in Historic Landscape Architecture.

Although the impetus for the Fort Jefferson National Monument Redesignation Study which was stipulated in Title II of the "Everglades National Park Protection and Expansion Act of 1980" has waned with creation of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, considerable justification still exists to promote continued efforts in this direction. Creation of a headquarters office in Key West to provide necessary mainland logistical support and to permit closer coordination with citizen support groups and other collaborating outside agencies, is being actively pursued on an informal basis by the current Monument Superintendent. A careful examination of the costs and potential benefits of establishing a headquarters office in Key West, could be appropriately undertaken during a Redesignation Study.

A Proposed Rule containing significant changes to the 36 CFR Special Regulations for Fort Jefferson National Monument has been submitted to the Department of the Interior for approval and publication. The existing boundary description has been revised to coincide with the new boundary legislated in Pub. L. 96-287 (1980). Language has been clarified regarding the prohibition of commercial fishing and allowed recreational fishing techniques. Shipwrecks now receive specific protection. Language relating to protection of coral reef formations has been strengthened.

During the next two years, a comprehensive management plan for the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary will be developed. It is absolutely critical that Fort Jefferson NM take an active role in this process. Although the Monument will maintain its jurisdictional integrity within the surrounding Sanctuary, the management plan to be developed will address the entire Florida Keys reef tract system. The important role to be played by the Monument, which has had protected status since 1902, must be integrated successfully into the comprehensive plan.

RESEARCH:

Progress has continued with the Coral Reef Assessment Program whose goal is to establish long term research and monitoring sites. Fort Jefferson National Monument is one of four NPS units with coral reef ecosystems chosen for study. Florida Department of Natural Resources is conducting this cooperative project at Fort Jefferson.
A three month project to develop detailed documentation of four shipwreck sites within the Monument was conducted by NPS's Submerged Cultural Resources Unit, with volunteer assistance from the Maritime Archaeological and Historical Society and graduate students from Brown University. CERU has been contracted to produce an assessment of the Monument's submerged cultural resources which would establish a research design and methodology for the comprehensive survey and study of all existing submerged cultural resources within the Monument. The survey would be undertaken as soon as funding can be obtained.

If funding is available as expected, a NOAA C-MAN Weather Station will be established at Pulaski Light during 1991. Besides providing important weather data for long term climatic monitoring, information on wind and sea conditions will be available to mariners and the Monument staff.

The long-term research study on the Sooty Tern colony on Bush Key has continued, although without official support from Everglades National Park. The need to publish the accumulated results of years of study continues to be an overdue priority. A long term cooperative study on Peregrine Falcon migration continued this year on Loggerhead Key.

Lobster, conch and fish monitoring studies will be undertaken during 1991 in association with outside agencies and organizations.

With no in-park research personnel, Fort Jefferson must rely on Everglades National Park and other agencies to develop the important research studies for which the Dry Tortugas offers so much promise. Efforts to establish cooperative research projects are continuing.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:

During 1990, the Regional Office of Historic Architecture's preservation crew completed approximately 17 weeks of on-site stabilization work at Fort Jefferson. After demolition and repair of four lower tier gun embrasures, attention was focused on repointing interior arches whose loose bricks created a significant safety hazard for visitors and employees walking below. A funding increase approved for FY'91 will allow a doubling of the on-site time devoted to stabilization and preservation work in order to help catch up with the accelerated deterioration of the Fort. The feasibility of this goal will be evaluated during the next few years.

Follow-up monitoring has taken place at the site of the Mayro Vetricani grounding which occurred in October, 1989, near Pulaski Light. Although the federal government eventually dropped its civil suit against the owners to allow the State of Florida to
more fully press its claim, the National Park Service retained an advisory role on decisions regarding expenditure of the anticipated settlement funds. In October 1990, agreement was reached on an out of court settlement for $3.3 million. The money was deposited in a State Trust Fund established to fund Florida DNR projects related to coral reef and natural resource restoration and protection. The Superintendent of Fort Jefferson NM has been a member of the DNR working group established to make recommendations on expenditure of the funds. A significant portion of the funds are expected to be devoted to expanded coral reef research and protection efforts at Fort Jefferson National Monument.

A new campground management plan has been implemented, which requires all large camping groups of 10 or more to apply for a Special Use Permit in advance of arrival. The policy became necessary to manage the increased number of large camping groups of 50-60 people who visit in the Spring to observe the bird migration through the area. More than one large group at a time can overwhelm our limited campground and comfort station facilities.

Fort Jefferson National Monument's critical review of the U.S. Navy's Environmental Assessment to conduct weapons system blast tests in the vicinity of the Monument lead to aroused public opposition and eventual relocation of the tests. It was felt that the Navy had not adequately addressed the issue of the threat to marine mammals and endangered sea turtles using the area.

PUBLIC USE STATISTICS:

During 1990, a total of 27,360 visits were reported for Fort Jefferson National Monument. Of these, 71% were recreational visits and 29% were non-recreational visits, primarily by commercial fisherman and military personnel. Of the recreational visitors, 51% arrived by boat; 47% by commercial seaplane services; and 2% by NPS supply boat.

Overnight stays within the Monument for 1990, were reported as 40,773; with 60% being recreational visitors; 32% by commercial fishermen; 5% by military personnel and 3% by non-resident, Park Service personnel. Of the overnight recreational visitors, 67% stayed on their boats and 12% stayed in the NPS campground on Garden Key. May continues to be our busiest month due primarily to large organized groups coming to observe the spring bird migration through the area. Nearly half of the camping visits for the entire year take place in May. In general, we experience a higher number of recreational visitors using the seaplane services during the winter and spring months; more recreational visitors arrive by boat during the summer months and the highest numbers of commercial fisherman during the winter months.
INTERPRETATION:

Despite having only one staff position in our Interpretive Division, an active program of interpretive activities was offered during 1989. In addition to tours of the Fort, snorkeling tours of the coral reefs, night time guided walks around the moat wall and evening star gazing programs as well as a special program on Dr. Samuel Mudd were provided to educate visitors and increase their appreciation of the resources and history of Fort Jefferson. Education outreach efforts were combined with those of Everglades NP to provide environmental education programs to grade schools throughout the Florida Keys.

Planning and arrangements have been completed for SERO's Public Affairs Office to produce an education video to replace the slide program in the Visitor Center. Filming dates were postponed until early 1991, because transportation was not available in December, due to the Activa's engine fire.

Planning continues for renovation of the Visitor Center's sales area and exhibits. One site visit has been made by our consultants from SERO and Harper's Ferry. Some funding will be provided by the FNMA. The project is being designed so that it can be implemented in several phases to accommodate available funding. Work should begin in the Spring of 1991.

The draft of Fort Jefferson National Monument's first ever Statement For Interpretation has been completed. Review and approval is expected soon.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS:

Despite the fact that we are separated from our nearest community by 65 miles of ocean and a five hour boat ride, the current Superintendent has devoted considerable attention and effort to developing increased awareness, appreciation and support for Fort Jefferson NM among the people of Key West and the Lower Keys. The primary focus has been to work with conservation organizations on matters of mutual concern and to promote a program of volunteer participation at FOJE by local residents. A weekend beach clean up project which brought 25 volunteers to Fort Jefferson on the Activa has lead to the development of a small cadre of ardent supporters in Key West. As a result, a couple has now donated the use of a private fully equipped apartment for Monument staff on shore leave or official business. Numerous other networking benefits have occurred. Closer ties have been developed with personnel from Fort Zachary Taylor State Historic Site in Key West, to share historical information and lend logistical assistance.
The issue of creating a headquarters for Fort Jefferson NM with one of the historic buildings in Key West has been presented to city officials and several civic groups. Although interest and support has been expressed, no one has yet come forward to champion the cause. Opportunities continue to be pursued, however, as time and the radio/telephone allows.

COOPERATING ASSOCIATIONS:

The Florida National Parks and Monument Association continues to provide valuable support for the interpretation program at the Fort. In addition to supplying books and other educational materials for the Visitor Center, the association has purchased snorkeling gear for loan to visitors and a spotting scope for use during birding programs. The association has set aside funds to assist in the renovation of the Visitor Center sales area and exhibits.

CONCESSIONS:

During 1990, Commercial Use Licenses were issued to three companies who operate seaplane services to Fort Jefferson, as well as to approximately 20 companies who conduct fishing, diving or sightseeing charter boat trips to the Monument. Licensing is administered through the Everglades Concession Specialist. Compliance with the licensing requirement has been a problem, especially with some companies who only make a few trips to the Monument each year. Some resent having to purchase the considerable insurance premiums that are required as a condition of obtaining a Commercial Use License. Figures are not readily available on the total member of visitors arriving by commercial transportation.

LAW ENFORCEMENT:

The first priority of 1990 for the law enforcement program was to develop the vessel capabilities to safely conduct a marine law enforcement and resource protection program. As a result of a batch of contaminated fuel, every vessel with an outboard motor was inoperable. All motors had to be rebuilt. The 26' diesel patrol vessel which was suppose to be capable of handling rougher seas was of such poor design and construction that it was completely worthless and, in fact, had to be pulled from service because it was a safety hazard for the operator. This left an 18' vessel as the primary patrol boat. Although adequate for conducting harbor patrols in protected waters and law enforcement operations on calm days, poachers essentially had free rein during periods of rough sea conditions, which occur most of the time in the Dry Tortugas. By the close of 1990, the ill-fated 26' Reef Ranger has been surveyed as unserviceable and a 17' boat has been replaced with a 25' patrol vessel. The results have been dramatic. Now that patrols can be conducted in all sea
conditions, three commercial fishing violations involving over 100 illegal traps and nearly 200 protected lobster were issued within two weeks. When equipment replacement money becomes available for the prematurely surveyed 26’ Reef Ranger, to purchase another new patrol boat, the Monument should then be properly equipped to perform its law enforcement functions.

Considerable efforts during 1990 were devoted to achieving compliance with the applicable Operations Evaluation Standards. In most cases, program plans and guidelines were either non-existent or greatly outdated. Thusfar, work has been completed on a Law Enforcement Needs Assessment, Hurricane Safety Plan, Documented Safety Program, Evidence Management Plan, Emergency Operation Plan, Firearms and Ammunition Inventory, Structural Fire Plan, Boating Operations Plan, EMS Needs Assessment, Emergency Diving Operations Plan and a Comprehensive Manual of Law Enforcement SOP’s.

During 1990, 135 incidents were reported. Of the 18 violations notices issued, most were for commercial fishing in a prohibited area, illegal spearfishing, and illegal taking of lobster.

Notable incidents during 1990 have included an attempted murder, assaults, drunk and disorderly cases, visitor fatality of natural causes, body recovery of a drowned commercial fisherman, SAR of a downed seaplane, boarding of a vessel with a suspect wanted in a bombing case, diving accident, a barracuda attack on a visitor, boardings of vessels on U.S. Customs’ “Hit List”, and a dramatic SAR in very rough seas of the crew off a sinking fishing boat. This rescue resulted in the nomination of the two participating Rangers for the Department of the Interior’s Valor Award. Ten helicopter medical evacuations were conducted from Fort Jefferson in 1990.

Considerable attention and energy has been devoted to establishing closer cooperation with the US Coast Guard, US Customs and the Florida Marine Patrol. Coordinated joint law enforcement operations are now routinely conducted. We are relied upon to provide reliable intelligence information regarding the movement of vessels through our area who are suspected to be involved in drug smuggling operations.

In order to help meet the need for Rangers experienced in marine law enforcement, a 120 day detail position has been established on a trial basis. The hope is to attract well-qualified and experienced personnel who are able to step right into marine law enforcement operations with minimal additional training.
MAINTENANCE:

The Maintenance Division has made significant progress in the battle against the corrosive salt environment through the implementation of an accelerated preventative maintenance program for all equipment and machinery. The MMS system has greatly facilitated the development of FM standards and scheduling of maintenance servicing.

A worn out 60KW generator was replaced by a new 100KW generator making it unnecessary to run two generators in tandem during times of peak usage. Our two stand-by generators are badly in need of a major overhaul. Replacement with another new 100KW generator may end up being more cost effective. Cyclic maintenance funds were not approved in FY'91 for this project. It will remain a high priority for FY'92 funds.

A dry summer season and an overextended desalination plant which broke down repeatedly, put the Fort in a near critical fresh water shortage in September. Several supplemental water deliveries were arranged with a research vessel from the Florida Institute of Oceanography which was operating in the area. Replacement of the desalination plant with one of sufficient capacity remains a high priority for FY'92.

Tropical storm, Marco, brought 60 mph winds and 11 inches of rain in early October, just in time to relieve our water storage. Staff quarters and the Visitor Center suffered some water damage and the moat wall lost several courses of bricks.

Safety improvements in the transportation of gasoline to the Fort and on-site storage became a critical issue during 1990. One by one, the portable fuel tanks used to transport fuel on the Activa, which were not EPA approved, began to fail. The underground gasoline storage tank was rapidly deteriorating due to the elements. The entire system has now been replaced with EPA approved, double-walled tanks for the safe transportation and storage of gasoline.

Volunteer projects during the year resulted in repainting the Lighthouse and the cannons on the third tier. Once again, volunteers from the 482nd Air Force Reserve Unit donated their construction skills and labor to renovate one of our staff quarters.

Boating operations have improved substantially now that all boat maintenance has been delegated to the Maintenance Division. An employee was provided additional marine engine maintenance training, resulting in reclassification and upgrading of the position.
Bids received on the Garden Key dock rehab project contract were over budget and therefore resulted in having to downscale considerably the work to be done. All wooden piles are to be replaced, patching is to be done on the concrete dock, and concrete piles installed for a small fueling dock. Funds did not permit replacing the splintered and deteriorated decking and stringers on the dock and walkways. This becomes a carry over priority item for next fiscal year. This FY's portion of the dock project is expected to be completed in the Spring of 1991.

Plans are underway to create a temporary maintenance helper position in 1991, to be shared with the Regional Preservation Crew. The employee would work exclusively on the stabilization project during the 30-35 weeks of their field season and for the FOJE Maintenance Division the remainder of the time.

Michael Eng
April 28, 1993

Memorandum

To: Deputy Regional Director, Southeast Region
   Attention: Regional Historian

From: Superintendent, Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Parks

Subject: Superintendent's Annual Narrative Report for Dry Tortugas National Park for 1992

SUMMARY:

From March 1992 until November 1992, Fort Jefferson National Monument/Dry Tortugas National Park was operated by acting site managers due to the transfer of our site manager to the South Florida Research Center at Everglades National Park. Hurricane Andrew, on August 24, will long be remembered due to the effect on south Florida and due to the loss of Natavidad Rohena, a member of our staff and community. Many changes were made during 1992, the highlight of the year being the dedication of Dry Tortugas National Park on November 12, 1992; and the announcement of L. Wayne Landrum as our new Site Supervisor.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION:

Jerre Brumbelow, Tom Murphy, Neil DeJong, Chris Bernthal, John Gibson, and Carolyn Wiley were all Acting Site Managers during 1992. Monica Eng resigned in March and Sarah Buckendorf was hired as Office Automation Clerk in June.

Our vehicle was lost during Hurricane Andrew, a replacement is scheduled for August 1993. Difficulties with the radio/telephone communication system continue to be a hindrance to further improvements in operational and administration efficiency. A cellular phone was secured for Dry Tortugas; however, this system is weather dependent also and only operational in favorable weather conditions. Improvements in communication capabilities continue to be an area of priority concern for the park.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (Natural and Cultural)/RESEARCH:

Monitoring continued on the Mavro Vetranic grounding site which occurred in October 1989 near Pulaski Light.

Florida Department of Natural Resources is conducting a cooperative project at Dry Tortugas to establish long-term research and monitoring sites for the Coral Reef Assessment program. The sites were set up in 1992. A NOAA C-Man Weather Station was installed at Iowa Rock. Important weather data for long-term
climatic monitoring and information on wind and sea conditions will now be available to mariners.

A long-term cooperative study on peregrine falcon migration continued this year on Loggerhead Key. Dr. Bill Robertson continued his long-term research study on the Sooty Tern colony on Bush Key.

Florida Department of Natural Resources continued lobster, conch, and fish monitoring studies. Research was initiated on breeding habits of nurse shark and this project is to continue in 1993.

FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT/MAINTENANCE:

Volunteers from the 482nd Air Force Reserve Unit donated their labor to renovate the crew quarters. Two employees from the Regional Historic Preservation Crew from Cape Hatteras National Seashore were here for two weeks working on repointing brick. Our boat mechanic transferred in April leaving the position vacant until October when Pat Given was hired. Our Maintenance Worker Foreman spent six weeks in the Facility Manager training in June and transferred in October. We expect to hire that position in March 1993. Robert Buckendorf was temporarily promoted to a WS-6 position to fill the acting supervisor position. Our temporary maintenance person resigned at the same time as the foreman transferred. Natavidad Rohena was killed in Hurricane Andrew. The training, transfer, and loss of personnel put us in a position of maintaining our support systems and serving the visitors and being able to do very little else.

PLANNING:

The stabilization work at Dry Tortugas did not receive funding for 1992. Negotiations for terms of agreement with the U.S. Coast Guard for transfer to the National Park Service of ownership and management of Loggerhead Key, where the Coast Guard has operated a light station since 1922, have continued throughout 1992. Additional funding for operational support has not been allocated. Historic Landscape Report for Garden Key was submitted in June.

An administrative/housing site was established in Key West in September. A two-bedroom apartment was leased for a year to provide necessary mainland logistical support and to permit closer coordination with citizen support groups.

Public Use

During 1992, a total of 34,258 visits were recorded at Dry Tortugas National Park. Of these, 63% were recreational visits and 37% were non-recreational visits, primarily by commercial fishermen and military personnel. Of the recreational visits, 54% arrived by boat, 45% by commercial seaplane, and 1% by NPS supply boat.

Overnight stays within the park for 1992 were reported as 53,432. Of these, 61% were recreational visits and 39% were commercial visits. Of the recreation overnight stays, 86% were boats, 11% campers, and 3% visiting NPS personnel. Of the non-recreational overnight stays, 75% were commercial fishermen, 20% were military, and 5% were visiting NPS on assignment. The months of April, May, and
June continue to be the park’s busiest months, due in large part to the bird migration which attracts many large groups from throughout the U.S. This is most evident with the overnight camping. Of the 3676 people who camped here in 1992, 60% did so between April 1 and July 1. May alone saw 25% of the total number of campers. Boats continue to be the primary mode of travel to the park, except during the winter months of November, December, and January. This coincides with season of rough seas and high winds. During this time, seaplanes are the main visitation method. Commercial fishermen visits are highest during the winter months. Lobster season runs from September to March. The commercial visitation reflects this season.

INTERPRETATION:

Because the Interpretive Division has but one staff position, most of the interpretive services utilize non-personal media. These include a self-guiding trail through the fort, site bulletins, and a newly-installed computer generated visitor interactive touchscreen program. During the busier periods of the year, personal services still occur. Ten interpretive walks and talks are regularly scheduled during the peak months. These include guided snorkel tours, fort walks, and program focusing on natural history such as the birds of the Dry Tortugas, geology, and lobsters.

This year the Florida National Parks and Monuments Association has granted funding for Phase II of the visitor center renovation, which will focus on the natural history of the park. Preliminary fact-finding is being done to ascertain the exact themes to be presented in this new phase of the existing center.

1992 saw the rewriting of the Interpretive Prospectus and Statement for Interpretation. The park’s historic collections were an important focal area as well. The Scope of Collections document was completely rewritten and approved, and cooperative efforts made with the Everglades Regional Collection Center.

LAW ENFORCEMENT:

A second twenty-five foot Boston Whaler patrol vessel was purchased for Dry Tortugas to allow the capability to safely conduct a marine law enforcement and resource protection program. The Hurricane Plan, Documented Health and Safety Plan, Evidence Management Plan, Emergency Medical Plan, and numerous Standard Operating Policies have been reviewed and updated in 1992.

Eighty-eight case incidents were written in 1992. Eighteen violation notices were issued with sixteen of those for resource violations. Fourteen of the incidents were water area rescues, one disorderly conduct, one aggravated assault involving a firearm, one SAR involving a seaplane, and numerous felony warrant situations were encountered during boardings with the USCG. There were fifteen major emergency medical incidents requiring helicopter evacuation, one fatality of a visitor, and two incidents where our rescue made the difference between life and death.

Excellent relations continue to exist with the US Customs, Florida Marine Patrol, and the United States Coast Guard, all of whom have conducted joint patrols with the DRTpO rangers in 1992. We provide weekly intelligence information regarding
the movement of vessels through our area which are suspected to be involved in drug smuggling operations. For the first time in the history of the fort, the Sheriff of Monroe County, Richard Roth, visited the fort in November.

One seasonal law enforcement ranger worked a full one hundred eighty days at DRTO in 1992. We utilized two detail rangers. USCG law enforcement personnel have supplemented our staff by spending three-day to ten-day assignments at the fort. We provide housing, a vessel, and operator to allow us to conduct regular joint patrols.

In August we conducted the second annual marine law enforcement training. Instructors and students attended from the following organizations: U.S. Customs, Florida Marine Patrol, National Marine Sanctuaries, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Park Police, and NPS.

LAND ACQUISITION:

No new lands were acquiring in 1992; however, the legislation establishing Dry Tortugas National Park included wording to establish an administrative site in Key West and to transfer Loggerhead Key from the U.S. Coast Guard to the National Park.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS/COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES:

Five beach clean-up weekends with fifteen to twenty volunteers were conducted. Dry Tortugas National Park has been designated as a Marine Debris Monitoring Site. Our volunteer hours totaled 2,100 hours for 1992. Our staff Interpreter worked with the Florida Keys Environmental Education Outreach program in April. A total of five schools were contacted, with Scott Eckert presenting a total of fifteen programs of forty-five minutes in length.

CONCESSIONS/COOPERATING ASSOCIATIONS:

The Florida National Parks and Monument Association continues to provide support for Dry Tortugas National Park by supplying books and educational materials for the visitor center, snorkeling gear for loan to the visitors, and setting aside funds for the renovation of the visitor center. A donation fund was set up for Dry Tortugas programs. A Student Conservation Aid was assigned for twelve weeks work on the turtle research program.

In July, Chalks seaplane service reestablished operations at Dry Tortugas National Park. The total number of seaplane concessions for 1992 is four. Twenty-eight special use permits were issued for commercial use operations.

Richard G. King
DRY TORTUGAS NATIONAL PARK

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT - 1993

SUMMARY:

Dry Tortugas National Park continues to be a challenge with the communication systems, logistics, staffing problems, and increasing visitation. March 13, 1993; the storm of the century hit Dry Tortugas National Park bringing winds recorded at the Fort Jefferson weather station at 95 knots. Tornado type winds caused severe damage to boats, leaving nine recreational vessels aground on Bush Key and one large fishing vessel grounded on the swim beach. Damage to park facilities and resources included damage to walls of the fort, moat walls, downed and damaged trees in the parade ground, and downed trees at Loggerhead Key. The radio and weather tower blew down, the lighthouse suffered window damage, and the satellite dish was destroyed.

There were two major collapses of fort walls this year--one outside the superintendent's quarters and the second one near the beach. Both sections fell into the moat and involved the exterior wall of the fort. And there is more to come with the condition of the walls along the moat.

On a positive note the year ended with many improvements in the operation and facilities of the park. Offices were redesigned and made more functional, maintenance areas were restructured to separate work elements, and general housecleaning in the fort improved the appearance and ability to accomplish work. The dock was at least half finished leaving a job for the coming year. This first full year as a national park has been exciting and very busy for the staff.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION:

Communications improvements are an area of priority concern for Dry Tortugas National Park. The cellular phone has been down since July and intermittent problems plague the radio and regular/irregular phone system. A satellite phone system is planned for FY '94.
The office automation clerk position was redescribed and approval was given to fill it. This position will really aid the staff’s ability to communicate with the outside world and provide the ability to track budget and stay on top of programs.

The site supervisor met with several neighboring agencies and individuals in the area including the Commander of the Group Key West Coast Guard office, Commander of the Key West Naval Station, Florida State Park Service at Fort Zachary Taylor, local law enforcement agencies monthly meetings, the Monroe Sheriff’s office, and NOAA at Looe Key and Bahia Honda, and Billy Causey from the main office in Marathon.

Cooperation with other agencies and groups included mooring buoy installation with the Marine Sanctuary, Reef Relief and the State of Florida.

The park hosted and assisted researchers in various projects: the Submerged Cultural Resource Unit (Southwest Region), survey of park shipwrecks, Shark Research, the state of Florida Department of Natural Resources in fish surveys, coral growth and recruitment, and U.S. Geological Survey in mapping projects.

The control of Casuarina (exotic tree) on Loggerhead was instituted by the Everglades exotic plant control team. The last large Casuarina on Carden Key was removed.

A dive training course was conducted and the number of park divers increased from one to six. The annual Marine Law Enforcement training course was also completed at the park.

The site supervisor attended two pre-construction conferences. One on the new dock at Loggerhead and one on the replacement of Pulaski Light. Both are scheduled for completion in April 1994.

There was sufficient year-end money to pay for another year’s lease of an apartment and office in Key West. This was much needed for living/working space for employees, especially since the Everglades’ space—the only mainland site previously available—was destroyed by the Hurricane.

**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (Natural and Cultural) AND RESEARCH:**

The Submerged Cultural Resources Unit worked at DRTO from May to August. They were joined by the Navy diving team and Brown University’s Submerged Cultural Resources team.

One Student Conservation Assistant worked from May to July documenting sea turtle nesting activity at DRTO. Florida DNR/DEP monitoring of the Pulaski Light grounding site of the Mavro Vetranic continued for the fourth year.
Florida DNR/Department of Environmental Protection continued the cooperative project of long-term research and monitoring of the coral reef assessment program. Other Florida DEP research studies included conch, lobster, and fish populations.

Albion College of Albion, Michigan, conducted a research program about nurse shark breeding habits. University of South Florida conducted water and sediment research.

Marine debris monitoring continued on East, Garden, and Loggerhead Keys. Florida Audubon Group supplied volunteers to assist in this program.

South Florida Research Center employees initiated treatment of Casuarina in the eutics removal program at Loggerhead Key.

Peregrine falcon migration studies were conducted by Dr. William Mattox. Dr. William Robertson’s studies of the nesting tern colony on Bush Key were conducted in 1993.

The mooring buoy installation at Loggerhead, Long, and Garden Keys and the Windjammer Site was accomplished with assistance from Reef Relief and NOAA.

FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT/MAINTENANCE:

Volunteers from the 482nd Air Force Reserve unit rebuilt half the dock. They will return in spring 1994 to complete the project. The terreplein project was put on hold for the year. John Javor was selected as Maintenance Mechanic Supervisor and reported for duty in June. Pat Givens attended the First Line Manager Training in August at Harpers Ferry. Robert Buckendorf transferred to Everglades National Park and Marvin Johnson came to work as a detail person for DRTO. The TV satellite system was completed and is operational.

Both units of the superintendent’s quarters have been made operational. The headquarters office has been remodeled with the Site Manager, Chief Ranger, and Maintenance Foreman working from it. The maintenance division has started to standardize all of its equipment because of its remote location. Maintenance division has taken over all the maintenance at Loggerhead with no additional personnel or funding. A Parker twenty-five foot vessel was acquired as a maintenance support vessel.

PLANNING:

Negotiations for transfer of Loggerhead Key from USCG continued throughout 1993. The administrative site established in Key West in September 1992 was upgraded to a three-bedroom site with one room dedicated primarily to office equipment and work area.
PUBLIC USE:

During 1993, a total of 35,209 visits were recorded at Dry Tortugas National Park. Of these, 68% were recreational visits and 32% were non-recreational visits, primarily commercial fishermen and military personnel. Of the recreational visits, 54% arrived by boat, 44% by commercial seaplane, and 2% by NPS supply boat.

Overnight stays within the park for 1993 were reported as 50,156. Of these, 59% were recreational visits and 41% were commercial visits. Of the recreational overnight stays, 83% were boats, 15% campers, and 2% were visiting NPS personnel. Of the non-recreational overnight stays, 65% were commercial fishermen, 20% were military, and 15% were visiting NPS personnel on assignment.

The months of April, May, and June continue to be the park's busiest months, due in large part to the bird migration which attracts many large groups from throughout the United States. This is most evident with the overnight camping; however, a change occurred this year with the introduction of smaller tour boats offering overnight facilities on-board. The impacts of these self-contained, small scale tour boats are unknown at this time. Boats continue to be the primary mode of travel to the Dry Tortugas, except during the winter months of November, December, and January. This coincides with the season of rough seas and high winds. During this time, seaplanes are the main means of transportation. Commercial fishermen visits are the highest during the winter months. Lobster season runs September to March.

INTERPRETATION:

Interpretation staff consists of one individual; therefore, the staff members were involved at times in selling publications and answering visitor questions. Non-personal services are the standard means for conveying public information. This includes site bulletins, brochures, bulletin board, and self-guiding trail. In addition, special introductory personal interpretive programming was presented to seaplane visitors upon their arrival. During peak visitation times, personal services interpretation is a primary focus. Eleven interpretive walks and talks are regularly scheduled during the peak season. These include guided snorkel tours, fort walks, and programs focusing on natural and cultural history of the Dry Tortugas and resource management issues.

The computer has assisted the division greatly this year. In particular, the automation of information requests, data entry, retrieval, and analysis and desk top publishing. Special training was completed on planning and producing site bulletins. This will aid in the production of at least three new site bulletins in FY94.

The Florida National Parks and Monuments Association has granted funding for the hiring of a sales person to staff the Association bookstore. This will allow the interpretive staff to pursue more
personal services interpretation. In addition, the Association is purchasing several pairs of binoculars for the public to use. The division plans more personal interpretive birding activities this year, using the glasses. Alternative uses of the $9000.00 are being considered since the Visitor Center continues to leak, and the overall inside environment of the display area cannot be controlled. One consideration is the purchase of dioramas of the fort to enable the visitor to see how the fort would have looked with armament in place.

VOLUNTEER IN THE PARKS (VIP)

The first year of DRTO's wholly-managed program separate from EVER was completed and deemed successful. Independent funding was granted from SERO and the budget maintained, reports produced, and the program managed in accordance with NPS-7. A new concept of VIP programs was initiated at DRTO: the vessel-based program. This has proven to be a worthwhile addition to the overall program, considering the visitor makeup at DRTO. The new addition has given visitors an opportunity to share skills and learn more about DRTO and NPS. A total of 69 volunteers contributed 2215.25 hours in the areas of Administration, Interpretation, Maintenance, and Resource Management. Of the volunteers, 5 were Student Conservation Assistants.

LAW ENFORCEMENT:

Ninety-one case incidents were written in 1993; there were ten agency assistance incidents, six disorderly conduct incidents, twenty-two water rescues, twenty-four refuge assistance, one fatality, and two Medivac with 10 major medical incidents. Nine violation notices were written, seven of them for resources violations. In 1993 court cases were moved from Homestead to Key West, Florida, to US Magistrate Hugh Morgan's court. US Customs, Florida Marine Patrol, and the United States Coast Guard have conducted joint operations at Dry Tortugas National Park in 1993. Monroe County Sheriff's officers conducted training for park staff, and the Site Supervisor and Chief Ranger have attended the monthly law enforcement meeting in Key West on numerous occasions.

Barry Eastman and Nancy McCleskey been assigned as seasonal law enforcement rangers this year due, in part, to the resignation in July of Al Brown, the permanent Law Enforcement ranger. Roy Appugliese accepted the permanent GS-7 LE position in December. Carolyn Wiley has worked a detail in Tamiami Subdistrict at Everglades since October.

The annual Marine Law Enforcement training was conducted in July. Instructors and students were from Florida Marine Patrol, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, US Coast Guard, US Park Police, US Customs, and NPS. In November the chief ranger met with the Florida DEP Director of Law Enforcement to facilitate involvement of DEP in this training in 1994.
National Park Service dive certification and training was conducted in May. It included divers from Virgin Islands National Park, the Submerged Cultural Resources Unit, and SEAC.

LAND ACQUISITION:

No new lands were acquired in 1993; however, the legislation establishing Dry Tortugas National Park included authority to establish an administrative site in Key West and to transfer Loggerhead Key from the USCG to the National Park. In July 1993 the United States Coast Guard began to schedule USCG Auxiliary on a routine basis rather than regular Coast Guard personnel. Transfer of property and equipment is continuing and a Memorandum of Agreement is in draft form as of September 1993.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS/COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES:

Fort Zachary Taylor State Historic Park employees received orientation to Fort Jefferson, their sister facility, in December.

A Special Activity Permit for a wedding was issued to a local commercial fisherman who has been fishing here for twenty years. The wedding party consisted of more than two hundred people, a lavish buffet served on the grounds, and live musical entertainment.

CONCESSIONS/COOPERATING ASSOCIATIONS:

Relations between the Florida National Parks and Monuments Association and the park are excellent. The annual board meeting was held at Dry Tortugas National Park in May. The park had four seaplane concessions for 1993, and twenty-one special use permits including birding tours, dive operations, and charter fishing operations.

Four SCA's worked from April to July completing maintenance projects, and assisting with installing signs for closure of nesting areas for terns, buoy installation, and exotics removal from Garden Key.

L. Wayne Landrum  
Site Supervisor

Richard E. Ring  
Superintendent