

Briefing Statement

Bureau: National Park Service
Issue: Climate Friendly Parks: Managing in the Face of Change
Office: National Park Service, Air Resources Division
Date: November 2, 2004

Background: Effects of climate change are being noted in many regions. Glaciers are melting, weather patterns are becoming more unpredictable, sea levels are rising, and animals and plants are moving into regions they never existed before because of changing habitats. The National Parks, because of their location and unique, protected resources, are places where the effects of these changes are particularly noticeable. With the establishment of the National Park System in 1916, responsibility was given to the NPS to preserve and protect resources for the enjoyment of future generations. Maintaining these resources requires practicing good stewardship within parks and on regional and global scales. The NPS should be a leader in demonstrating sustainable stewardship practices within parks and educating the public about them in all park areas.

The NPS is not alone in this idea. Several Executive Orders direct federal agencies to operate more efficiently and waste less. Examples include: EO 13101, Greening the Government Through Waste Prevention, Recycling, and Federal Acquisition; EO 13123, Greening Government Through Efficient Energy Management; EO 13148, Greening the Government Through Leadership in Environmental Management; and EO 13149, Greening the Government Through Federal Fleet and Transportation Efficiency. Not only will these directives make government operations "greener," implementing them will allow us to use less fuel, produce less waste that needs cleaning up, and get us closer to being an energy-independent nation.

Proposal:

In 2002, President Bush has established a goal of reducing the nation's greenhouse gas intensity of the U S economy by 18 percent by the year 2012. For the NPS to participate in achieving this voluntary goal, and to show the lay public how to reduce greenhouse gas (ghg) emissions, every park needs a baseline inventory of their own ghg emissions. A baseline assessment could help NPS to determine what ghg emissions and global warming mean for the NPS as a whole. The assessment could then be used for setting management goals, prioritizing activities, and demonstrating how to reduce emissions on a park-by-park basis, as well as servicewide.

Using the baseline assessment, the Climate Friendly Parks program will add the climate change/energy efficiency aspect to the Green Parks Partnership Program, which already collaborates with EPA's OPPTS in Green Purchasing. The Climate Friendly Parks Program will provide a means to bring to the public eye a voluntary, intergovernmental effort to respond to climate change; the parks

