

Subject: APRIL MONTHLY REPORT

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, NATURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND SCIENCE
APRIL 1998 REPORT

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

DIRECTOR'S NATURAL RESOURCE INITIATIVE At the NLC meeting in Washington on April 21, the Director's Natural Resource Initiative was discussed. The NLC had before them the Challenge document, an Implementation Plan, and a general, multi-year budget strategy. The latter was produced by Bruce Sheaffer and focused on I&M, project funding, and staffing expertise. There was general agreement to the entire package and Director indicated his readiness to proceed, once he had had a chance to brief the Secretary and other Departmental officials about the initiative. The Director subsequently requested a few edits to the documents and on May 8, the Director forwarded the package to the Secretary. We are working on ways to make a formal announcement and general distribution of appropriate material and will keep you posted as we progress.

RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AWARDS - The 1997 recipients of the Natural Resource Stewardship and Research Awards and the Appleman-Judd Award have been announced. Mark Woods, Superintendent, Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, received the Superintendent of the Year for Natural Resource Stewardship award. Gregory McGuire, Facility Manager and Chief of Area Services at Ft. McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine received the Excellence in Natural Resource Stewardship through Maintenance award. Robert P. Cook, Resource Manager at National Park of American Samoa, received the Trish Patterson-SCA Award for a small park natural resource manager. Kent Turner, Chief of Resource Management at Lake Mead National Recreation Area, received the Director's Award for Natural Resource Management. Katherine Kendall, Research Ecologist, Biological Resources Division, USGS, Glacier National Park, received the Director's Award for Natural Resource Research. For further information on these recipients and the awards, please see the posting to the Natural Resource Bulletin Board by Debby Peck on April 29.

TENTATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PILOT CESUs - The Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) Implementation Working Group met last month and reviewed the proposals for the establishment of pilot CESUs. The highest ranking proposals were tentatively recommended by the Working Group and universities were notified in early March. The recommendations were: University of Tennessee (Southern Appalachian Mountains Biogeographic Area); University of Rhode Island (North Atlantic Coast Biogeographic Area); Northern Arizona University (Colorado Plateau Biogeographic Area); and University of Montana (Rocky Mountains Biogeographic Area). NPS field personnel participated in site visits conducted in early April to learn more about the facilities and services described in the proposals. In addition, other agency field representatives, along with members of the Working Group, discussed their agencies' participation in the proposed CESUs. The CESU working group will review the final reports from the universities and discuss the site visits on May 15. Then formal recommendations will be made to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, Department of the Interior, for final selections of pilot CESUs. Each CESU will be a working collaboration among federal agencies and universities. The CESU network will

provide research, technical assistance and education to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies and their potential partners.

GLACIER BAY COMMERCIAL FISHERIES ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT RELEASED - After

months of meetings, public workshops, and interagency discussions, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve released an Environmental Assessment (EA) addressing the effects of a proposed federal regulation on commercial fishing within park waters. NPS regulations and the Wilderness Act have prohibited commercial fishing in the park and park wilderness waters since 1966 and 1980 respectively, but commercial fishing has continued in both wilderness and non-wilderness areas. Several attempts have been made to resolve the commercial fishing issue through litigation, administrative rulemaking and legislation since 1990. A proposed rule was finally published in April of 1997. The EA evaluates the impacts of the proposed rule and four alternatives for managing commercial fishing within the marine waters of the park. The proposed rule will eliminate commercial fishing within wilderness waters of the park immediately and phase out commercial fishing activities in Glacier Bay proper over the next 15 years. Commercial fishing would generally be authorized to continue in non-wilderness waters outside Glacier Bay proper under a cooperative fisheries management plan developed by the NPS and State of Alaska. The Water Resources Division assisted Glacier Bay and the Alaska Support Office staff in developing this EA. Open houses and public hearings will be held in seven communities during May to receive comment on the EA and proposed action. The comment period closes on June 1, 1998.

PARK ABANDONED MINE PROJECTS SELECTED FOR FY98 - Based on project priorities

submitted by the regions, and Geologic Resources Division recommendations, Mike Soukup selected 21 Abandoned Mineral Lands (AML) sites for clean-up this fiscal year, using \$234,000 of the Servicewide AML funds now available for park projects. The selection process for FY98 relied on each Region's project rankings and relative AML workload. In FY99 and beyond, the AML funding process will be included in the Natural Resources Unified Call. The Park Service AML program supports the Servicewide Strategic Plan Long-Term Goal IalA (Restoration of Disturbed Lands) and the Service's mission of preserving resources unimpaired.

DECISION ON LEAD PROSPECTING DEFERS DECISION ON MINING NEAR OZARK NR -

In April, the NPS was informed that the Secretary of the Interior has decided to concur in the BLM/USFS issuance of five prospecting permits to the Doe Run Company to explore for lead, 16 miles west of Ozark National Scenic Riverways. The Department proposes to allow mineral exploration, while deferring a decision on future mineral leasing and/or mine development. The Department and the company will enter a contractual agreement where, in exchange for the permits, the company will agree to waive any legal or equitable rights to a future lease that arise from the prospecting permits. The issuance of any future lease will be contingent on: a full environmental study of the impacts of mine development, in particular addressing the resources of Ozark Riverways; a determination that a valuable mineral discovery has been made, considering the costs and feasibility of mitigating environmental impacts; and a determination by the Secretary that issuance of a lease is not in derogation of the values and purposes for which Ozark Riverways was established.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

INFLOW HABITAT STUDY INITIATED AT GLEN CANYON - The Biological Resources

Division (BRD) of the USGS has funded a three year study of the inflow areas of Lake Powell to determine the effect of lake level regulation on habitat availability, fish abundance, diversity, and predator-prey relationships within these habitats. The study also hopes to provide a better understanding of the importance of these habitats to the larval and juvenile stages of the endangered Colorado Squawfish and Razorback Sucker. Glen Canyon staff were assisted by the Water Resources Division and the Intermountain Region in the development of this project, and WRD has worked with BRD in finalizing the study plans. This study was funded through the NRPP/BRD funding source

BIG BEND AREA HUMATE MINE Big Bend National Park is attempting to make its concerns known in the permitting process for a proposed mine adjacent to the park. Landowners, land management companies, and mining companies plan to surface mine humate, ultimately marketed as a soil amendment, two miles from the parks western boundary. Big Bend is currently discussing issues with the Army Corps of Engineers and the state Air Quality Board and identifying possible adverse impacts; Geologic Resources Division is assisting. Park efforts to voice concerns about the project are hindered because Texas does not regulate humate mining or even conduct environmental studies.

NEW REPORTS/PUBLICATONS

NATURAL RESOURCE YEAR IN REVIEW PUBLICATION RELEASED - The Natural Resource Year

in Review--1997 was printed in April and is being mailed to more than 4,000 recipients in the National Park Service, other federal agencies, and nongovernmental organizations. Now in its second year, the review provides summaries and analyses of the most significant natural resource issues and trends in the National Park System during calendar year 1997. Reviews of applied science and resource management are provided with the objective of increasing interest in, understanding of, and support for the natural resource stewardship role of the National Park Service. The report is the new feature story on NatureNet of the World Wide Web and is accessible at http://www.aqd.nps.gov/pubs/yr_rvw97/

CONTAMINANTS ENCYCLOPEDIA AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET - The National Park Service

Environmental Contaminants Encyclopedia has been completed and is now available on the Internet. This document summarizes environmental information on 118 toxic elements, compounds, and products. The subjects covered include common petroleum products and compounds, metals, cyanide, and VOC solvents such as trichloroethylene. The URL is: <http://www.aqd.nps.gov/toxic>. Comments or questions may be sent by electronic mail to senior author Roy Irwin of the National Park Service Water Resources Division in Fort Collins, Colorado (roy_irwin@nps.gov). Thanks to the many NPS employees who contributed information, assistance, and/or encouragement on this project.

INSIDE EARTH, THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CAVE AND KARST

PROGRAMS - This first issue, posted on the Geologic Resources Web Site, has 15 articles from ten National Parks as well as the complete text of the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act and summaries of the cave program. The Newsletter will be published quarterly (editor - Dale Pate, Carlsbad Caverns). The response to the first issue has been good, with Web postings about it

on the National Speleological Society, Karst Waters Institute, and the Cave Canada servers. The newsletter has also been made available as hard copies and has been sent out to requesters in the electronic format. The newsletter can be found at <http://www.aqd.nps.gov/grd/geology/inside/index.htm>.

ANNUAL NPS RECREATIONAL FISHERIES REPORT RELEASED - The National Recreational

Fisheries Conservation Plan under Executive Order 12962 requires all participating agencies to report their accomplishments towards maintaining and improving recreational fishing opportunities each year. This year's report stresses that the National Park Service manages its fishery resources to promote the healthy, natural existence of native wild populations of fish. Recreational fisheries are managed with emphasis on the quality of the experience and the opportunity to catch native fish in their natural environment. With these goals in mind, the National Park Service spent over \$6.25 million in managing and enhancing its recreational fishery resources during 1997. An additional \$4.6 million was spent on water resources management, water rights and water operations projects that ultimately help insure the maintenance of healthy fishery resources. Fishing opportunities were available in 169 park service areas that supported over 7.5 million user days of recreational fishing. Fishery education and angler ethics programs were given in over 73 of the park units providing recreational fishing opportunities. A copy of this annual report is available through the Water Resources Division, Fort Collins (cc:mail - Jim Tilmant).

UPCOMING EVENTS

JEAN LAFITTE TO HOST 3D-SEISMIC WORKSHOP - A full-scale 3D-seismic operation is currently underway at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. This is the first 3D-seismic operation to occur on NPS lands, and provides an excellent opportunity for staff from other park units to gain some firsthand observations. Jean Lafitte will host a two-day "workshop" during the last week of May when operations will include surveying, shothole drilling, and recording. The workshop will include extensive field time via boat and seaplane, meetings with key players including the compliance monitors, and discussions to compare ideas and concerns. Geologic Resources Division staff will be on hand to join in discussions. Since at least three parks are now in the permitting process for 3D-seismic, a primary topic of discussion will be the NPS handling of 3D-seismic under 36 CFR 9B. The 50 square mile shoot includes 5760 acres in the park's Barataria Preserve Unit, a wetland complex that includes rare floating marshes, floating scrub/shrub thickets, and prehistoric archeological sites. The park worked very closely with the operator to assure that the plan of operations includes every realistic action to reduce the impacts to the park's resources. Some of the more innovative ideas include use of 1) third-party compliance monitors, 2) GIS/GPS technologies to locate and avoid sensitive resources, 3) high resolution aerial photography (pre and post), 4) lightweight marsh buggies for drilling, 5) helicopters to reduce airboat passages, and 6) interpretive wayside, press releases, and a newsletter article. If you wish to attend the workshop, contact JELA Natural Resource Specialist Sandee Dingman via cc:mail.

GIS MEETING - The Intermountain Regional GIS meeting will be held in the Denver Sheridan West Hotel in Lakewood on 1-5 June. The contact is Kerri Mich.

PROGRESS

INDIAN RIVER INSTREAM FLOW AT SITKA NHP - The State of Alaska convened all of the Indian River water users, including Sitka NHP, to discuss the potential for conflict between water diversions and instream flow values. The Water Resources Division assisted the park in presenting evidence of potential impact to fishery resources from diversions for fish hatchery, hydropower, and municipal uses. The State is encouraging the parties to develop a mutually acceptable solution before they consider implementing a regulatory solution.

HEADS UP

GEOLOGIC RESOURCES DIVISION COMMENCES DRAFT PROPOSED REVISIONS TO MANAGEMENT POLICIES - The Director has asked that draft proposed revisions to the NPS

Management Policies be submitted to the WASO Office of Policy no later than June 30, 1998. In keeping with this timeframe, the Geologic Resources Division is focused on revising the geology resource sections, which includes paleontological resources at Chapter 4; the minerals sections at Chapter 8; and the section on in-park use of borrow pits and spoil areas at Chapter 9. The Division has already obtained and will continue to seek input from field reviewers before submitting any suggested revisions to the Office of Policy. If you would like to be included on the list of reviewers for the minerals revisions, please contact Eddie Kassman at (303) 969-2146. For the geology revisions, call Julia Brunner at (303) 969-2012. Once proposed revisions to the NPS Management Policies are compiled, the Office of Policy intends to put the document out for a 60-day NPS review.

GIS NEWSLETTER - The new NPS GIS Newsletter is now posted at <http://www.nps.gov/gis>.