

To: Regional Chiefs of Natural Resource Management  
Regional Chief Scientists  
WASO Natural Resources Divisions

From: Acting Associate Director, Natural Resources

Subject: Natural Resources Update Report

August 2, 1993

Dave Haskell has taken off for Russia for two weeks and will return to Shenandoah upon his return. We will consider bringing others in to handle resource management issues on an as needed basis. With so many people on leave and in the field in August, and with several actions that await the release of the transition teams report at the end of August, we may wait until we have a clearer notion of the steps we will be taking next in implementing our 5-year strategic plan.

I am off tonight for a meeting of the National Park System Advisory Board subcommittee that is formulating recommendations on the future of NPS research and resource management programs in light of the establishment of NBS. This is the committee chaired by Boyd Evison that was convened at the Director's request.

Dan Huff is in Washington as of today acting for two weeks in my Deputy slot. He can be reached at (202) 208-5193.

Gary Williams has been particularly busy trying to keep the inventory and monitoring program on track. He and others are reviewing proposals for the vegetation management contract. The group worked all last week and will make site visits all next week with a short list of potential contractors. In addition, he is working to complete the scheduling of inventory priorities that we are hoping to get out by the end of the month. He is also making final arrangements for the monitoring training course to be held the week of August 23. Finally, he will be working with an NBS implementation task force this week to try to ensure a smooth transition and future operation of a portion of the inventory and monitoring program. So bare with Gary if he is a little hard to get in touch with and has difficulty with some of his deadlines.

The 5-year strategic plan goal leaders and team leaders met through the wonders of televideo conferencing last week to review the status of various efforts. Dave Haskell has developed a human resources paper that pulls together much of the progress to date on roles and functions, organizations, and professionalization. While he is in Russia, Kathy Jope will work on completing a draft for final review. Jenn Coffey is completing a quarterly report to update everyone on the status of the current products stemming from the 5-year strategic plan effort.

The last of the two RMAP meetings was held the week of July 19 in Boston. The process was well received by the eastern and

midwestern parks represented at the meeting. The Western region team that developed the process will meet during the week of August 16 to refine the process based on information and recommendations provided by the parks in the other nine regions. They are working with us to "hand off" the process to Natural Resources/WASO this fall.

Today (August 2), Director Kennedy and Gene Hester will hold a 3:00 p.m. televideo conference with the 10 Regional Directors and their staffs to discuss progress being made to formulate the National Biological Survey. Dr. Hester hopes to be able to answer questions about NPS concerns regarding interacting with NBS in FY 1994 and beyond. Dr. Hester has been working hard to ensure that the NBS decides on organization and procedures that ensure responsiveness to the parent bureaus.

MONDAY, JULY 31

TELECONFERENCE

Meeting Issues

**Birch Bayh Writes to Director on New World Mine; GRD Prepares Draft Response** - Ex Senator Birch Bayh, recently hired by Crown Butte et. al. to lobby for the New World project, wrote to Kennedy expounding on the virtues of the mine and explaining that any information being spread by the NPS and other groups that does not conform with the company line is incorrect. GRD prepared a draft response for YELL. The letter should have reached Badgley last Friday. (Geologic Resources)

**DOJ Increases Interest in New World Mine** - GRD staff participated in last weeks' cooperating agencies meeting and New World mine tour at Yellowstone, and took advantage of the opportunity to brief DOJ attendees on NPS issues. DOJ sent five attorneys (probably some kind of record) to the New World meeting and tour to get them up to speed for the unavoidable future litigation on the proposed mine. Due to the diligence and competence of staff and managers from GRD, NPS Water Quality, Yellowstone, EPA, and the Solicitor's Office, DOJ now has a keen awareness of NPS concerns associated with the proposed mine. (Geologic Resources)

**FY96 Budget Update** - The Senate full appropriations committee marked up the appropriations bill Friday. They reduced the operating budget slightly by disallowing some fixed costs and increase land acquisition and construction. There is also language--we believe MAB activities are targeted. The NBS would get a reprieve of sorts if the Senate prevails. It would keep NBS as a separate agency, although moving it to Water and Science renaming again. It would reduce the budget only \$21 million, compared to \$53 million in the House bill. (Abby Miller)

Lissa Fox is trying to put together a Natural Resources Model for Interpretation, which outlines the "basics" of NR for Interpreters at the Park level. She's asked for input from the Divisions as to substance/subjects. Input on substance, and existing Natural Resources sources of info, such as Air Resources Manual, Highlights report etc, should be fed to Lissa by the end of the week. (Debby Peck)

1. Attendees at the Public Advisory Committee meeting of the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission participated in a demonstration exercise designed to determine what level of haze was perceptible, and at what level the haze became objectionable. The participants were shown a series of slides with varying levels of haze in the canyon. While the results for what level of haze was perceptible were quite consistent, the participants split into a "trimodal" distribution for what was objectionable. A few participants found almost any level of haze objectionable, the majority of people found haze levels which reduced the visual range to 150 km objectionable, and a few didn't find the impairment objectionable

until the visual range was about 40 km, which would mean the far side of the canyon was just barely visible from some observation points! At 40 km visual range, the color and texture of features on the far rim would be severely degraded. For reference, if the air over the canyon were unimpaired by pollution, the visual range would approach the theoretical limit of 391 km. Visual ranges approaching the theoretical limit have been observed at the canyon, and visual ranges in excess of 260 km occur about 10 % of the time in some seasons.

A meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 7, in Tacoma among the Federal land managers, owners of the Centralia power plant, and State, local, and Federal regulators. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss information relevant to the control of the Centralia plant to minimize emissions and effects on Mt. Rainier and other class I parks and wilderness areas in Washington. Several Air Resource Division, park, SSO, and FDO personnel will attend the meeting along with Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary, Molly Ross. (Christiano, AR)

A settlement meeting on brucellosis was held last week in Helena, Mt. No draft of the settlement has yet been received from the state. (Soukup)

The NBS budget for FY96 has been decreased to \$146M. Also there is concern within NPS that the Service is not receiving NBS competitive grants. (Soukup)

The Department, B. J. Thornberry, is recruiting at the 14/15 level, a person to oversee a Department-wide exotic weeds person. It is anticipated that each Bureau will contribute funds, approximately 25k. (Cacek)

Owen Williams is back in the mornings, in Water Rights, after surgery. (Kimball)

Kliwinski had a Tues. meeting with Ann Badgely concerning the New World Mine.

Shafer is working on the NNL workplan for FY1996.

TVA has produced a report for Energy Needs through 2020. Karen has address for TVA, if anyone would like a copy. (Malkin)

There will be a Supt's Meeting on Man in the Biosphere Program, October 30-31, concerning NPS Biosphere Reserve issues. (Soukup)

We continue to have problems in WASO with prompt payment of contract invoices; Peck is proposing to contract policy that a revision be made to the policy to allow COTRs to send invoices to AOD for prompt payment, with simultaneous copies to Contracting. In the meantime, invoices go to Dee Brown, Contracting (Peck).

(With apologies for the delay - Abby's on Travel..DEP)