

Subject: NAT RES AUGUST RPT

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NATURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND SCIENCE AUGUST REPORT

NOTICE OF UPCOMING EVENTS/FUNDING RESULTS:

NR-MAP - All clusters have named an NR-MAP coordinator (list attached to bottom of report). Training for these coordinators (in conjunction with Cultural CR-MAP coordinators) is scheduled for the week of October 7. We are intending to mail instructions and printouts showing current information in the data base directly to parks by September 27. It will go to all parks currently in the database, and all parks identified by the coordinators as wanting to be added to the database. Parks will have until mid-November to complete the updates. The instructions will indicate a limited number of fields with time-sensitive data that need to be updated--the balance can be updated if parks have new or better data, but do not need to be.

NRPP - A panel met in August to evaluate NRPP proposals. Based on panel recommendations, Mike Soukup has approved 15 resource management proposals and 10 research proposals, the latter to be forwarded to the Biological Resources Division of USGS (former NBS). Funding for the NPS-funded NRPP projects is uncertain, as there is a funding increase for NRPP in the FY 1997 budget. The House bill zeroed it out and the Senate committee bill left a portion in (\$2.25 million). Without an increase, only the first 5 of the approved projects will be funded in FY 1997 and it will be 1999 until all can be started. The memo announcing the NRPP approvals will be posted separately on the Natural Resources bulletin board.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES:

PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES NEW WORLD MINE BUYOUT - During his August 12, 1996, visit to Yellowstone, President Clinton announced that the Federal government had entered into an agreement with Crown Butte Mining, Inc. (CBMI), to acquire the company's holdings in the New World mining district. In late 1990, CBMI proposed construction of a large scale underground gold/silver/copper mine in the New World mining district just 2 1/2 miles northeast of Yellowstone National Park. The mine proposal included a 77 acre tailings impoundment to hold toxic tailings in perpetuity. Spurred on by concerns of irreparable damage specifically to park lands as well as the ecosystem, Yellowstone, the Geologic Resources Division and the Water Resources Division worked closely with a host of other agency and conservation group personnel to bring the inordinate risks of the proposed mine into the light of day.

Under the intense scrutiny of cooperating agencies and involved public, CBMI fought through the permitting and EIS process for almost six years. When citing the intense battle that had taken place over the proposed mine, the President stated that "[y]ou waged this fight for all the people of the United States, and, indeed the people of the world who love and believe in the preservation of our natural resources" To emphasize this point, in his speech the President went on to say ". . . everyone can agree that Yellowstone is more precious than gold."

In brief, the acquisition agreement entered into by the United States with CBMI will provide the company with unspecified federal lands located elsewhere worth about \$65 million. In return, lands now owned

or controlled by CBMI in the New World mining district will revert to Federal ownership with CBMI performing about \$22.5 million in clean up efforts on the site to remove the scars and contamination brought on by over 100 years of historic mining in the area. Further involvement in the acquisition and clean up process by Geologic Resources Division, Water Resources Division, and the park is necessary. NPS New World team members will work with the Gallatin National Forest and the EPA to ensure that clean up efforts associated with New World land acquisition proceed with heavy consideration of neighboring Yellowstone National Park.

COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNITS - Mike Soukup, working with Gary Machlis, has developed a proposal for redesigning the former NPS CPSU network, assigning an NPS applied scientist to each, and encouraging other agencies to also assign personnel to each. The CESUs would be cluster-based, with the NPS-portion driven by cluster agendas, and would assist parks (and other land managers involved) in brokering research and technical assistance. The proposal was presented to the DOI Science Board on September 6. The next step is to develop the proposal more fully and fine-tune it, in conjunction with other agencies, to develop a consensus document--it will be circulated within NPS during this process. Mike is hoping to be able to win future funding for the network, but in the meantime to begin implementation with positions that field offices or clusters may be able to dedicate.

COLORADO VISIBILITY - PUBLIC HEARING ON LONG-TERM STRATEGY - The Colorado Air Quality Control Commission held a public hearing on August 15, 1996, for the purpose of incorporating elements of a Consent Decree regarding control of emissions from the Hayden Power Plant near Steamboat Springs, CO. The Consent Decree, filed in District Court on May 22, 1996, contains requirements that control measures be put in place at the power plant within the next 2.5 to 3.5 years for both sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and particulate matter emissions (a 14,000 ton per year reduction in SO₂ emissions is expected from current levels). The State intends that such measures should constitute "reasonable progress" under Clean Air Act requirements for Class I area visibility protection, specifically as it relates to visibility improvement at the Class I Mt. Zirkel Wilderness Area managed by the U.S. Forest Service. The Forest Service certified in 1993 that the Hayden plant was contributing to visibility impairment at the wilderness area.

The proposed addition of the Consent Decree to the Colorado visibility implementation plan passed unanimously and with no objections from any party to the hearing or the general public. Some reservations were voiced by EPA officials at the hearing concerning "force majeure" language contained within the decree that could effectively cause delays in implementing controls at the facility beyond the time period envisioned. EPA stated that they will closely watch this part of the long-term strategy to ensure that "reasonable progress" is achieved. Other aspects of the State's visibility plan review will be subject of another public hearing later this fall. This next phase of long-term strategy review and revision will cover the remaining eleven Class I areas of Colorado, including Rocky Mountain and Mesa Verde NPs and Great Sand Dunes and Black Canyon of the Gunnison NMs. (Air Resources Division)

CENTRALIA POWER PLANT NEGOTIATIONS - ARD and MORA staffs continue to meet with PacifiCorp and other stakeholders to obtain more control of sulfur dioxide emissions at the Centralia Power Plant. During July 30 and August 1 meetings, the group discussed how emissions limits should be framed (in terms of annual, hourly, daily averages, etc.). The preferred option is viable largely due to a proposed tax break package which PacifiCorp will bring to the Washington State Legislature this Fall. The group began struggling with what the course of action will be if the legislation is not approved. Options include less control of sulfur dioxide, meeting the proposed higher emission limit with a less preferred option (closing the mine and/or a portion of the plant), and

seeking other funding sources. Subgroups continue to develop details regarding economics, monitoring, emission limit language, environmental benefits, and communication/education for internal and outside groups. At the meeting on August 21 and 22 discussions continued and near final emission limitation language was hammered out. Representative Norm Dicks met with the group and expressed his support for the process. Work continues to complete the background material for the proposed preferred solution which will be revealed at a public meeting in Tacoma on September 16. The next meetings will be held September 16-18 in conjunction with the public meeting. There is a possibility that President Clinton may express his support for the process and the preferred solution in a speech in Tacoma on September 18 or 19. (Air Resources Division)

MAN AND THE BIOSPHERE NATIONAL COMMITTEE - The National Committee meet July 23-24 and voted on how to divide \$400,000 of agency FY 96 contributions among five Directorates. The results were Biosphere Reserves \$50,000, Marine and Coastal \$160,000+, High Latitude \$45,000, Tropical \$111,000, and Human Dominated \$45,000. The Biosphere Directorate proposal for \$200,000 was deemed too diffuse, but the \$50,000 planning grant provided to assist with its redrafting and resubmission for FY 97. Two policy papers were considered: 1) Creation of MAB Affiliates (i.e., MAB endorsed reserve systems though without official biosphere reserve status, and 2) Guidelines for the Selection of U.S. Biosphere Reserves. Both documents will be redrafted and resubmitted for potential final approval, before they can be transmitted to Paris for the final OK. There will be a Glacier Bay/Admiralty Island Biosphere Reserve planning workshop in Gustavus, Alaska, September 10-11.

LEGISLATION PROPOSED AFFECTING BIOSPHERE RESERVES - The American Land Sovereignty Protection Act (H.R. 3752) was introduced in Congress on June 27, 1996. It portrays biosphere reserves and world heritage sites as controlled by the United Nations. The bill sponsors perceive land external to a biosphere reserve "core" has federal land use restrictions and hence such international designations represent a threat to private enterprise. The Department is assimilating bureau comments on this bill. NPS comments have been forwarded.

NATIONAL NATURAL LANDMARKS GUIDANCE - Some official NNL Program management control guidance was sent to the field. The draft 1996 Section 8 report has been sent to the field for review. We have had two Congressional offices independently inquiring about the status of the NNL Program regulations, which they want released.

OZONE LEVELS - The final data for June has ozone in excess of the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) (120 ppb) at Sequoia NP once (1 hour) and at Joshua Tree NP 5 times (12 hours). Ozone concentrations were observed above 100 ppb at 5 different parks for a total of 126 hours. California parks continue to have some of the worst ozone air quality. Both Mammoth Cave NP and Great Smoky Mountains, where we are doing enhanced monitoring, had 5 episodes of ozone greater than 100 ppb. (Air Resources Division)

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