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Subject: August Monthly Report for ADNRSS

NATURAL RESOURCES STEWARDSHIP AND SCIENCE
AUGUST MONTHLY REPORT

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND NEW ACTIVITIES

NATURAL RESOURCE INITIATIVE ANNOUNCED: THE CHALLENGE OF THE NEXT CENTURY On a rainy August 12, Director Stanton publicly announced what many have been working so long to plan and implement. The announcement was held in conjunction with Mt. Rainier's 100th anniversary celebration (thanks and kudos to new superintendent Jon Jarvis for sharing the occasion). The final consolidated action plan, including a public version and an internal version with additional budget information, were available in time for the announcement. Both are available on the web, the internal version on the intranet. There was strong regional press coverage of the event, as well as national coverage in Greenwire and the Washington Post. Additional stories in national outlets are in the works. Several actions contained in the plan are underway. A briefing with OMB on the FY 2001 budget will be held at the end of September, while Congress is considering a \$20 million increase related to the effort. The steering committee continues to meet to discuss needed additional efforts and communications.

PUBLIC REVIEW OF NPS RESEARCH AND COLLECTING PERMIT PROCESS: The NPS published a notice in the Federal Register (64 FR 46211-46212, August 24, 1999) soliciting public comment on the proposed NPS natural and social science research and collecting permit process. The proposed process identifies what is required of applicants seeking a permit and explains annual reporting requirements. The draft permit, conditions and other elements are available on the NPS website at <http://www.nature.nps.gov/ResearchPermit>. (John Dennis, NSMO 202-208-5193.)

NO ESCAPE FROM AIR POLLUTION: A report comparing pollution levels in national parks with urban air quality was published by the Clean Air Network and Clean Air Task Force. The report summarizes data from the NPS air quality monitoring network and state and local air monitors. It highlights that the number of unhealthy air quality days in some parks exceeds the number of unhealthy days in nearby cities (e.g., Cape Cod has had higher pollution levels and more bad

air days than Boston). The report concludes that, literally, there is no escape from health-threatening ozone smog and the only way to reduce smog in parks and other vacation spots is to reduce air pollution nationwide. The report is available at www.clearair.net.

A table listing the ozone exceedances at NPS units this summer is available at www2.nature.nps.gov/ard/exceed.htm. Eight parks experienced unhealthy ozone levels in July. Several eastern parks have been issuing ozone advisories to visitors and staff. These notices are also posted on the internet. (John Ray, ARD, 303-969-2820).

MEASUREMENT OF TOXIC AIR POLLUTANTS IN PARKS: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has asked the NPS to participate in the National Dioxin Air Monitoring Network. The dioxin levels would be measured in five parks as part of a 29-site national network to identify the distribution and transport of this very toxic substance. EPA will provide the equipment, field support, and site funding for the study. (John Ray, ARD, 303-969-2820)

GEOLOGIC RESOURCES DIVISION PUBLISHES 1998 ANNUAL REPORT: This Annual Report is a first for the division, which was created in 1995. In addition to minerals management, the division is now charged with responsibility for the earth sciences encompassing cave and karst systems, fossils, coastal processes, glaciers, landslides, soils and other processes that form or act on geologic features. The Annual Report summarizes the division's assistance to parks in minerals permitting and the distribution of project funding for abandoned minerals lands projects. The division's geology functions continued to develop in 1998, with significant advances in the cave program, the paleontology program, geology education, and geologic assistance to parks through field interns and external agency scientists. The report is being mailed to each park with significant natural resources and is available on the internet at <http://www.nature.nps.gov/grd/geology/grd1998>.

QUALITY ASSURANCE GUIDANCE DEVELOPED: A guidance document explaining Quality Assurance/Quality Control procedures and Detailed Study Plan guidelines has been completed by the Water Resources Division. Even volunteer projects are now expected to document basic QA/QC protocols. The guidance is generic enough that it should be helpful to those doing general research or monitoring in parks. The guidance document was posted on the Natural Resources Bulletin Board on August 16, 1999. Roy Irwin, WRD, 970-225-3520.

HEADS UP/UPCOMING MEETINGS

THE NATURAL RESOURCES GENERAL MEETING will be held at the Presidio in conjunction with the Society for Ecological Restoration on September 22-24. All regions will have representation. Director's Awards for natural resource-related accomplishments will be presented at an SER banquet.

CALL FOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR CANON NATIONAL PARKS SCIENCE SCHOLARS On 25 August, AD Soukup distributed a call for research questions to prepare for the 2000 Canon National Parks Science Scholars Program. The call was sent via ccMail to the NLC and all superintendents and was posted to several NPS bulletin boards. The Canon National Parks Science Scholars Program is underwritten by Canon U.S.A., Inc., and is a collaboration among Canon U.S.A., Inc., NPS, NPF, and AAAS. Since 1997, 15 scholarships have been awarded, and one awardee has already completed his dissertation. Eight additional scholarships will be awarded in 2000. AD Soukup is

requesting suggestions from the field for important, timely research questions in the four broad discipline areas covered by the program: biological sciences, physical sciences, social sciences, and cultural sciences. The questions must meet the following criteria:

- * the focus should be on basic research questions important to the management of units of the National Park System,
- * the scope should be appropriate for a doctoral dissertation (time, effort and funds), and
- * questions should relate broadly to units of the National Park System.

Suggestions for research questions are to be submitted AD Soukup by 10 September 1999. Participation from the field is important to ensure that the Canon National Parks Science Scholars contribute to the critical research needs of the National Park System. For a more details, please visit the Natural Resources Bulletin Board on ccMail. An announcement about the 1999 Canon Scholars will be distributed to the National Leadership Council and all park superintendents soon.

PROGRESS

NEW WORLD CLEAN UP CONCERNS NPS: The U.S. Forest Service recently released draft assessment documents for the isolation of mining wastes in a central repository in the New World Mining District near Yellowstone National Park. The repository would serve as the final disposal site for approximately 60,000 cubic yards of waste formerly owned by the Crown Butte Mining Company and an additional 370,000 cubic yards of waste that would be moved to the repository from the McLaren Tailings located near Cooke City, Montana. Three candidate sites are being considered, including one site located within the headwaters of Soda Butte Creek, a tributary to the Lamar River in the park. The NPS requested that the Gallatin National Forest and New World clean-up contractor delay disposal of an initial 5000 cubic yards of acid-forming mining waste at the proposed Soda Butte site until all necessary geologic and hydrologic testing can be completed.

The Forest Service has agreed to postpone disposal of any waste material until next summer when all testing is completed. The repository site evaluation is available at <http://maximtechnologies.com/newworld/public.htm>. (Gary Rosenlieb, WRD, 970-225-3518 and Kerry Moss, GRD, 303-969-2634).

MANAGEMENT OF THE COLORADO RIVER: The Bureau of Reclamation is developing "surplus criteria" for the management of the Colorado River and the initiation of a NEPA process. Surplus criteria are the reservoir storage and hydrologic conditions under which water deliveries to lower basin states would be permitted to exceed their entitlements under the Colorado River Compact. The Water Resources Division provided comments in favor of fairly conservative (restrictive) surplus criteria because fuller reservoirs provide more flexibility in managing releases (especially flood releases) from Glen Canyon Dam. Overly liberal criteria could result in significantly increased drawdowns of Lakes Powell and Mead during dryer hydrologic periods in the Colorado River basin. This in turn would reduce the frequency of high flows (management floods) in Grand Canyon National Park and would affect aquatic, riparian, and recreational resources in Glen Canyon and Lake Mead National Recreation Areas.

INTENSIVE STUDY MEASURES VOLATILE ORGANIC COMPOUNDS AT SHENANDOAH: With the help of park staff, University of Miami researchers completed a field study to measure volatile organic compounds (VOCs) at three ridgetop locations in Shenandoah National Park.

This EPA-funded study measures the VOCs that contribute to ozone formation and compounds that are listed as hazardous air pollutants. Enhanced monitoring at the Big Meadows location had previously identified elevated concentrations of toluene and isopentane that are likely to be from industrial sources. The wind sector sampling and multiple locations will help identify possible sources of the VOCs. (John Ray, ARD, 303-969-2820).

ASSESSMENT OF HYDROCARBON CONTAMINATION AT BIG SOUTH FORK: The NPS is exploring a partnership with the USGS Energy Program to determine the extent of soil and water contamination caused by oil and gas development in the park. Big South Fork is updating its inventory of nearly 300 wells and would like to prioritize the sites based on the greatest threat to public health and safety and park resources. NPS and USGS will make a scoping trip to Big South Fork this fall to further facilitate the partnering decision. (Lisa Norby, GRD, 303-969-2318).

VOLCO VALIDITY REPORT: The validity report performed on the Volco mining claims in Mojave National Park recommends that action be taken against all the claims on the charges of lack of discovery of a valuable mineral deposit. The report has been approved by the Bureau of Land Management Mineral Examiner. Copies are being mailed to all interested parties, including the claimants, the park and Pacific West Region. (Sid Covington, GRD, 303-969-2154).

USGS FY 2001 RESEARCH SUPPORT: NPS personnel from Natural Resources Stewardship and Science, National Capital Region and Southeast Region joined staff from the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Reclamation, Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey in two days of discussion about coordinating and focusing USGS FY 2001 budget proposal to meet information needs of the bureaus. The results of the meeting will support part of the USGS FY 2001 budget proposal to the Department of the Interior. (John Dennis, NSMO, 202-208-5193).

FY 2000 ADNRS SERVICEWIDE PROJECTS Results of all of the panels to evaluate proposed projects submitted by the regions for FY00 funding have now been forwarded to the regions.

NEW FACES

T&E COORDINATOR SELECTED Loyal Mehrhoff, of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Portland Regional Office, has been selected to replace Peggy Olwell (who left last year) as NPS's Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species Coordinator. Loyal has worked on T&E issues for many years, many of them in Hawaii. His experience includes serving as the FWS representative on the Hawaii Plant Recovery Coordinating Committee, teaching courses on the Endangered Species Act at the National Conservation Training Center and biology at the college level, serving as Hawaii's representative to the Center for Plant Conservation, and working on the Northwest Forest Plan, including working on both the Research and Monitoring Committee and the Survey and Manage Species Oversight Team. He sports a Ph.D. from the University of British Columbia and a B.A. and M.A., respectively, from the University of Montana and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He will be reporting for work to Ft. Collins in October.