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09/04/01 03:55 PM YDT

Subject: Addition to August Monthly

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Natural Resource Program Rotations End In March, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science initiated some detail assignments to help implement FY 2001 increases, broaden individuals' experience, and contribute to further

integration of programs across the Natural Resource Program Center. Those 6-month details come to an end in mid-September. Rich Gregory, Natural Resource Information Division (NRID) chief returns to his NRID position from his detail to the Environment Quality Division (EQD). Dave Shaver, Geologic Resources Division (GRD) chief, returns to his division from a stint as acting chief of the Natural Resource Information Division. Carol McCoy and Jim Woods rotated 3-month assignments as GRD chief during Dave's absence and now get to go back to their full-time branch chief jobs. Debby Peck was detailed to the EQD as well; her detail resulted in a permanent job there. Gary Mason was detailed to Debby's Program Coordinator position; he will continue playing that role until the position is filled.



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09/04/01 12:57 PM YDT

Subject: Monthly report from Soukup/Miller's office

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NATURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND SCIENCE AUGUST 2001 MONTHLY REPORT

NATURAL RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Interest in Exotic Plant Management Teams (EPMTs) Growing : August 7 and 8, the Biological Resource Management Division (BRMD) made a presentation on the EPMTs at the FWS Regional IMP Coordinator's Meeting held in Decatur, Georgia. The FWS was so impressed with the teams, that they have expressed interest in a joint weed management effort .

Draft of Operations Manual for EPMTs Completed: Tony Pernas of the Florida EPMT has just completed a two week detail in Fort Collins to draft the EPMT Operations Manual. The draft manual was distributed to the existing three other teams for review and should be finalized early in October of this year. This manual will be used in the creation and implementation of the six new EPMTs in FY 2002.

Park Vital Signs Monitoring: Approximately 90 people from the NPS and USGS met in Phoenix to discuss the Servicewide approach to vital signs monitoring. Participants reviewed the current guidance for designing park monitoring programs and discussed ideas for improving the organization and development of integrated natural resource monitoring efforts within the NPS. Participants included all regional Inventory & Monitoring (I&M) coordinators and network coordinators, managers and staff from the Natural Resource Program Center, park natural resource chiefs from Alaska to the Virgin Islands and California to Maine, and several superintendents. A website at <http://www.nature.nps.gov/im/monitor/phoenix.htm> provides access to the presentations and handouts from the meeting, along with the latest guidance for park vital signs monitoring.

I&M Meets with Museum Management Program Council: Representatives from the Servicewide I&M Program attended the Museum Management Program Council meeting held July 31 - August 2, 2001 at Mammoth Cave National Park. They provided an overview on how baseline inventories and ecological monitoring are being implemented throughout the agency. Larry West, Regional I&M Coordinator for the Southeast Region and Ellen Gray, Regional I&M Coordinator for the National Capital Region also attended the meeting and summarized I&M activities in those regions. Another major topic of discussion was integration of the NPSpecies database being developed by the I&M Program and the ANCS+ database maintained by the museum program. In addition to sharing information about the respective programs, the meeting also provided an opportunity for the participants to discuss potential issues and identify areas of mutual need and cooperation.

SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS

Colorado National Monument (COLM) Map and Poster wins Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) Award: The geologic map and poster for COLM, which attracted so much attention at the USGS Open House in Reston, has won this year's prestigious (ESRI) Award for the best GIS product. It is also in the running for additional graphic awards from other organizations. GRI funds were used to make this happen. The USGS will have a forthcoming article on the ESRI in an upcoming issue of People, Land, and Water.

Water Rights Agreement for Six NPS Units in Arizona: The Department of Justice, representing the NPS in the Little Colorado River (LCR) Adjudication, has approved the signing of five stipulations to resolve water rights issues for six parks (Grand Canyon NP, Hubbell Trading Post NHS, Petrified Forest NP, Sunset Crater NM, Walnut Canyon NM, and Wupatki NM) in the LCR Basin. The stipulations will be signed by NPS, the City of Flagstaff, and a number of other water right stakeholders involved in the adjudication. The stipulations recognize the water rights of each party, including NPS Federal reserved water rights for administrative and in-situ purposes, and establish mitigation measures to protect LCR parks from future water development.

HEADS UP

Park Flight Grantee Workshop Scheduled: As part of the technical exchange component of the Park Flight Migratory Bird Program, a workshop has been scheduled for all Park Flight grantees from both U.S. National Parks and Mesoamerican parks and protected areas. This workshop, which will focus on interpretation, will be held in November at the Albright Training Center in Grand Canyon. A second Park Flight grantee workshop, which will focus on monitoring, will be held next year in Mesoamerica. Project managers will be provided with further details as they become available.

NPS will have eight articles in the USFWS' May/June Endangered Species Bulletin: The Bulletin should be out in September and will contain an overview of NPS efforts on Endangered Species and seven regional or local examples of NPS projects.

PROGRESS ON ONGOING ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Agencies Comment on Draft Paleontology Bill – The NPS, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Army, Smithsonian Institution, DOI Solicitor's Office and the Office of Legislative Counsel developed comments on the proposed "Paleontological Resources Protection Act." The agencies submitted the comments to Congressman James McGovern (D-MA), the sponsor of the bill. The bill would prohibit commercial collecting of fossils from federal lands, establish penalties for fossil theft and vandalism, protect locations of vertebrate and other rare fossils on federal lands from FOIA requests, require agencies to improve their planning and monitoring, and allow continued "casual collecting" of common invertebrate and plant fossils on some multiple-use lands.

Digital Geologic Maps Available for Several Parks: Geological Resources Inventory staff has been producing digital geologic maps and making them available for download from the

Inventory and Monitoring FTP site (<ftp://gis01.nature.nps.gov>). Digital geologic maps are available for Natural Bridges NM, Bents Old Fort NHS, Dinosaur NM, Great Sand Dunes NP, Hovenweep NM, Mesa Verde NP, Rocky Mountain NP, and Black Canyon of the Gunnison NP. Data should soon be available for Curecanti NRA, Colorado NM, Florissant Fossil Beds NM, and Arches NP. Other parks in progress and soon to be completed are: BRCA, CARE, SAGU, CANY, CEBR, GOSP and ZION.

Air Tour Management Plans: Representatives of AD-NRSS and the Soundscape Office met with representatives of the FAA at the Volpe National Transportation Center in Cambridge, MA on August 22. The purpose of the meeting was to assess progress in preparing for the initiation of the Air Tour Management Plans required by PL 106-181 for commercial air tour operators overflying most national parks in the contiguous US and Hawaii. Under the terms of the legislation, the FAA will be the lead agency and the NPS a cooperating agency. Both agencies must sign the necessary NEPA documents.

The FAA anticipates that the regulations required to initiate the process will be in place by the start of 2002. Work is progressing reasonably well on the development of the interagency agreements and the internal instructional documents. A web site is being developed with components for an FAA-only, an FAA-NPS extranet, and a public internet. The one area of significant disagreement is with respect to the amount and nature of data that needs to be collected in the parks on the effects of air tours on NPS resources. The NPS is maintaining that the parks need real data on the current and potential effects of air tours and the FAA is maintaining that the data needs can be satisfied using limited historical data and hypothetical dose-response visitor characterizations.

Mesoamerican Park Flight Projects Selected: In cooperation with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, U.S. Agency for International Development Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Program, Park Flight administered by the BRMD, working with Mesoamerica Partners in Flight, has identified and funded priority projects at important bird conservation sites in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama, and Mexico. Projects include developing environmental education, interpretive trails, bird watching guide trainings, monitoring workshops, avitourism opportunities, and involving rural communities in educational and monitoring activities.

Congressional Field Tour of Water Resource Issues at Black Canyon of the Gunnison NP: The State of Colorado organized a field tour to review and discuss issues associated with an NPS water rights claim that has been filed for Black Canyon of the Gunnison NP. Participants included staff from offices of various members of the Colorado congressional delegation, office staff and elected representatives from state and county levels of government, water districts, environmental groups, the Western Area Power Authority, the Bureau of Reclamation, and NPS staff from both the park and the Water Resources Division. The tour helped educate participants on water resource issues at the park and on the purposes of the NPS water rights claim filed for the park.

NPS Assists Mustang Island State Park: The NPS (Padre Island National Seashore) is the lead

federal agency on the trustee council that will develop a sediment management restoration plan for Mustang Island State Park (TX) following the Berge-Banker Skubay oil spill. GRD staff coastal geologist Rebecca Beavers visited Mustang Island in May with Ken McMullen from Padre Island NS, and representatives from Texas Parks and Wildlife, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to assess sediment management strategies for the state park. The revised report, filed in July, provided recommendations for actions to be addressed by a consulting firm.

Federal Agencies Discuss Environmental Oil and Gas Issues: The Department of Energy (DOE) hosted a meeting with federal agencies that deal with oil and gas exploration and production activities (NPS, FWS, FS, USGS, MMS and EPA). Held in Las Vegas, NV, in July, the purpose of the meeting was to discuss common issues and needs related to planning, regulatory oversight, NEPA, joint agency projects, coordination among agencies and information transfer related to conducting oil and gas activities in an environmentally responsible manner. The group set up an "oil and gas development networking system" among the agencies with DOE as lead. A report of the meeting is forthcoming.

Dry Tortugas Channel Closure Discussed: The channel between Bush and Garden Keys in Dry Tortugas National Park has shoaled over and closed. The resulting accreted "land bridge" has been stable and accumulating sediment since December 2000. GRD coastal geologist Rebecca Beavers provided technical assistance to Dry Tortugas National Park to assess the fate of the channel. Beavers met with Sonny Bass and Shelly Miller of the Everglades Research Center and Bob Howard of DRTO. Howard, Bass and Beavers recommended to EVER/DRTO Assistant Superintendent Larry Belli that the channel should remain closed and to implement a water quality monitoring program.

Agreements with the National Speleological Society and the Cave Research Foundation Extended: The NPS has had agreements with these two groups on national and individual park levels for over 30 years. Contributions of these two groups to NPS cave management have been invaluable over the decades. Through the efforts of the Cave Research Foundation, Mammoth Cave is now known to be the longest cave in the world with over 350 miles of surveyed passages. The discovery of a new type of speleothem in Wrangle-St Elias NP&P was made through the exploration and scientific efforts of the National Speleological Society.

EPA Best Available Retrofit Technology (BART) Hearings. Air Resources Division (ARD) staff participated at two public hearings, in Washington DC and Chicago, conducted by the EPA to obtain comments on proposed guidance for implementing the BART requirements of the Regional Haze Rule. BART applies to large air pollution sources constructed between 1962 and 1977 that contribute to visibility impairment at Class I areas. ARD also drafted written comments for the Department to provide to EPA. Both the oral and written comments supported the EPA BART guidance, because we anticipate visibility improvements from utilities and the other large emission sources that must apply BART. The vast majority of the other comments at the hearings were in favor of the BART guidance.

Healy Clean Coal Project (HCCP). The HCCP is a coal-fired utility boiler constructed by Golden Valley Electric with significant funding from the Department of Energy's Clean Coal

Technology Program. When Golden Valley received a construction permit for the HCCP in 1993, the Department of the Interior (as recommended by NPS) appealed the permit because of possible visibility impacts at Denali NP. Because the clean coal technology was not a commercial success, Golden Valley is now proposing to retrofit it with a conventional burner design. ARD participated in a stakeholder meeting to discuss the Company's retrofit plans. ARD and the park want to ensure that the Company's retrofit plans include the best available control technology to minimize impacts at the park.

Study at Glen Canyon NRA. A field study has been initiated to measure the air pollutants from Personal Watercraft (PWC) and other boating at Glen Canyon NRA. Very little is currently known on the effects of PWC on air quality under the conditions that they normally operate. ARD staff will participate in the study along with a contractor hired by Glen Canyon NRA to measure gaseous and particulate pollutants at Halls Crossing and some additional upwind sites.

Lake Mead NRA Water Rights: For the second month in a row, the Nevada State Engineer held an administrative hearing regarding an application to develop groundwater in Coyote Spring Valley near Lake Mead NRA. For the August hearing, NPS staff from Lake Mead NRA and the Water Resources Division (WRD), among other federal bureaus, provided testimony regarding potential injury to springs and water dependent resources on federally managed lands in the area. The applicant, Coyote Springs Investment, is requesting water that would be in addition to the amount requested by the Las Vegas Valley Water District in last month's hearing. The State Engineer is expected to issue rulings on both water right applications by December, 2001.

Congaree River Flood Map Released: A Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood map released on August 20 confirmed that about 70% of a developer's property is located in a floodway around the Congaree River. The floodway is where the highest and strongest waters are expected to flow during a 100-year flood. Development is severely restricted in floodways. The development company had proposed changes to the Congaree River flood map to allow for a \$1 billion development project on 4,600 acres south of Columbia, SC. NPS participated in the FEMA re-mapping effort because the Congaree Swamp National Monument is located downstream of the area covered by the flood map and the proposed development project. NPS concerns focused on potential hydrologic alterations to the Congaree River and water quality impacts to the monument if significant changes to the flood map had been accepted and the project was allowed to proceed as proposed.

Nicaraguan Assists Park Flight at Sequoia/Kings Canyon: Salvadora Morales, a biologist working at Mombacho Volcano Natural Area in Nicaragua, has completed a two month internship at Sequoia/Kings Canyon National Parks as part of the Park Flight Migratory Bird Program administered by BRMD. This technical exchange was coordinated through the NPS Office of International Affairs International Volunteer in Parks program. Working with an ornithologist from the Institute of Bird Populations, Ms. Morales assisted NPS staff in banding birds at two MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) stations. She also assisted with public interpretive programs on migratory birds, and gave presentations and Spanish lessons to park employees.

Nicaragua Receives Technical Assistance from Park Flight: As part of the technical exchange component of the Park Flight Migratory Bird Program, staff at the Chocoyero El Brujo Wildlife Refuge in Nicaragua have received assistance from Joni Gallegos, a landscape architect with the NPS WASO Park Facility Management office. The purpose of Joni's site visit was to design a boardwalk and viewing platform at an important site for resident and migratory birds, as well as to sight the specifications for a future visitor center/kiosk.

STAFF NEWS

I&M Bibliography Coordinator Hired : Wendy Schumacher has recently been hired as a Technical Information Specialist with the Servicewide I&M Program. In her new position, Wendy will have primary responsibility for overseeing the operational maintenance and updating of the NPBIB bibliographic database and assuring its accessibility for use by parks and central offices throughout the Service. She holds a Master's degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois. Most recently, Wendy served as an Information Resource Management volunteer with the Peace Corps in Morocco where she taught basic cataloguing skills and supervised cataloguing projects. She has also served as Freedom of Information Officer and Division Records Officer with the Environmental Protection Agency's Resource Management Division in Chicago, Illinois. Wendy will report for duty with the I&M Program on October 1st.

Effort to Build Geothermal Monitoring and Research Program Gets a Boost: At least one proposed bill in Washington would, if enacted, significantly encourage geothermal development on federal lands, with potential adverse impacts on park thermal features. It is timely that we have the help of Debbie Barr from the Department of Energy Yucca Mountain Project for a 60-day detail. Debbie is in the government-wide Executive Potential Program. Debbie will help GRD and WRD develop a program to address geothermal issues, including inventory, monitoring, and research, as required under the Geothermal Steam Act.

Engineering Technician/Assistant Project Manager Selected: Janet Reyelts has accepted the position of Engineering Technician/Assistant Project Manager in the EQD Restoration Program Office in Lakewood. Janet is currently working for the Fish & Wildlife Service and has many years of experience in COTR responsibilities, design, construction, and environmental projects. Janet's official reporting date will be September 9, 2001, therefore she will be attending the EQD meeting at NCTC the week of Sept 17.