



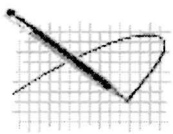
Alex Carter

09/30/2002 11:38 AM
YDT

Subject: Monthly Report(s) from ADNRS for August and September

Among the many interesting entries below, note especially that biostatistical assistance is now available to parks and regions through the BRMD tech assistance process and that the NPS Public Survey Results report for 2000 and the presentations from the recent Vital Signs Monitoring Meeting in Denver are now available on-line.

Alex R. Carter, Team Manager
Biological Resources Team
Alaska Support Office
National Park Service



Abby Miller

09/30/2002 03:24 PM
EDT

Subject: Monthly Report(s)

An August Monthly Managers Report was not produced so our report was never finalized and distributed. This month's report represents both August and September (although a late July event or two snuck in). Please circulate as appropriate.

Associate Director for Natural Resource Stewardship and Science
Monthly Report
August and September 2002

NATURAL RESOURCES CHALLENGE

NPS Receives Award: At the annual meeting of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, held in Big Sky, Montana September 12-16, NPS was given a plaque in recognition for dedication and significant contributions to the conservation of fish and wildlife resources. Involvement and commitment by the Biological Resource Management Division to this organization was made possible through the Natural Resource Challenge funding and has helped NPS relationships with state fish and wildlife agencies.

Park Flight Featured: The Park Flight Migratory Bird Program, funded through the Challenge, was selected as one of two NPS programs to be highlighted at the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, August 26 - September 4, 2002. The World Summit brought together tens of thousands of participants, including heads of State and Government, national delegates and leaders from non-governmental organizations, businesses and other major groups to focus the world's attention and direct action toward meeting difficult challenges, including improving people's lives and conserving natural resources. The Program also was featured in the August 2002 issue of *Winging It*, the newsletter of the American Birding Association (ABA). The article, "Birding El Salvador," resulted from onsite technical assistance provided to the El Salvador Park Flight project by Eric Finkelstein of Amistad NRA. A companion piece, "Park Flight: Hemispheric Linkage for Conservation and Ecotourism," describes the context of the program and technical assistance efforts. Both articles serve the Park Flight Program goals of encouraging birding-ecotourism and engaging and informing birders about conservation efforts. ABA's mission is to provide leadership to field birders by increasing their knowledge, skills, and enjoyment of birding, and by contributing to bird conservation.

Vital Signs Monitoring Meeting: Approximately 130 persons from five agencies attended the second annual "Meeting of the Vital Signs Networks" in Denver from August 12-16. Participants discussed the latest guidance and strategies for designing and implementing natural resource monitoring programs and talked about progress by the 32 vital signs networks. Presentations by the coordinators of the first 12 networks indicated good progress towards designing integrated monitoring programs in which parks share professional staff and funding. Presentations relevant to long-term monitoring of natural resources and partnership opportunities were given by scientists from ARD, GRD, WRD, BRMD, NRID, the CESU program, the fire program, the Soundscapes program, USGS, NatureServe, and The Nature Conservancy. Presentations and handouts can be downloaded from the meeting website at <http://www.nature.nps.gov/im/monitor/denver.htm>

NCR Water Resources Positions Update: Good progress is being made in filling Water Resources positions funded under the Natural Resource Challenge. Hiring officials have had to choose from among numerous well-qualified candidates for all of the positions that have been filled to date. One of two Alaska Region positions has been filled; applications for the second position are being reviewed. In the Pacific West Region park and regional staff are in the process of selecting from among top candidates for one position while a second position is currently being advertised. The Intermountain Region has filled one position as a detail, a second has been advertised and, for a third, an announcement is being prepared. Both positions in the Midwest Region have been filled. The Southeast Region has filled one position and is in the process of making a selection for a second. A shared Northeast Region / National Capital Region position has been filled. Finally, for a Northeast Region position, a selection has been made and an offer is pending.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND NEW SERVICES & MAJOR REPORTS AVAILABLE

Director's awards for natural resource stewardship were awarded at the NPS meeting held in conjunction with joint the Ecological Society of America and Society for Ecological Restoration meeting (discussed below).

The 2001 recipients honored at that meeting were:

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" **Dr. Stanley C. Bond, Archeologist, Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park, Director's Award for Trish Patterson/Student Conservation Association Award for Resource Management in a Small Park**

" **Wayne G. Brewster, Supervisory Natural Resource Administrator, Yellowstone National Park, Director's Award for Natural Resource Management (1st of two recipients)**

" **Robert Allen Johnson, Supervisory Hydrologist, Everglades National Park, Director's Award for Natural Resource Management (2nd of two recipients)**

" **Dr. Kathy A. Tonnessen, Research Coordinator, Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit, Director's Award for Natural Resource Research.**

In addition, one of the awards was presented at the Inventory and Monitoring meeting (also discussed below):

- **Dr. Steven G. Fancy, National Monitoring Coordinator, NPS Natural Resource Information Division, Director's Award for Professional Excellence.**

Two other award recipients were announced but have not yet been presented with their awards:

- **Donald L. Neubacher, Superintendent, Point Reyes National Seashore, Director's Award for Superintendent of the Year for Natural Resource Stewardship**

" **Paul L. Harris, Heavy Equipment Operator, Redwood National Park, Director's Award for Excellence in Natural Resource Stewardship through Maintenance**

The awards include a monetary award and a bronze sculpture of a bison, sculpted by Chris Schiller, son of former NPS scientist, Bob Schiller.

Air Quality Report Available: The Air Resources Division has released "*Air Quality in the National Parks-Second Edition*," a report documenting current air quality conditions and trends at many units of the national park system. This publication also discusses the impact that air pollution has on national parks, the actions the NPS is taking to protect parks and their resources from existing and new air pollution problems, and future air quality challenges the NPS will face. Paper copies of the report (in color) are available and will be distributed to parks and regional offices. Additional copies may be obtained by contacting Dee Morse at (303) 969-2817 (dee_morse@nps.gov). In addition, the 2001 Annual Data Summary Reports of the NPS Gaseous Pollutant Monitoring Program have been issued and paper and electronic versions have been sent to the parks. These reports provide summary graphs and tables characterizing gaseous pollutant and meteorological conditions at each individual park as well as dry deposition of acidic species. These reports provide feedback to the parks and ensure that the information they helped collect is readily available.

"Clear Skies" Legislation Introduced: On July 26 several members of Congress introduced the Administration's "Clear Skies" legislation, which addresses air quality impacts of electrical generation. Through phased caps, the bill

would reduce emissions of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and mercury from older generating units. Most emissions reductions will occur in the East. From 2010 to 2060, it phases in an "emissions auction market" where utilities will have to buy, in a public auction, an allowance for each ton of certain pollutants they emit. New and modified units that meet certain emission standards would be exempted from the normal air quality permitting process. The bill also exempts generation units (new or modified) that are farther than 50 kilometers from a Class I area from the Federal Land Manager notification and comment requirements. Due to competing bills, no Congressional action is expected before next year.

NPS Land Management and Public Involvement: Social Science Research Review, Volume 3, Number 1, entitled "Public Involvement in National Park Land Management Issues", has recently been published. The publication, which was written by Dr. Jo Ellen Force and Deborah J. Forester of the University of Idaho, reviews the literature on public involvement in the context of land management agencies with particular attention to the activities of the National Park Service. For electronic or hard copies, please contact Brian Forist in the Social Science Program Office (Phone: (202) 513-7190; Email: Brian_Forist@partner.nps.gov)

Report on the Effects of Personal Watercraft Use on Air Quality at Glen Canyon NRA: A report summarizing results of a study of the effects of boating on air quality has been submitted to Glen Canyon NRA. The study was conducted at Halls Crossing over the busy Labor Day weekend of 2001. Information from the report has already been incorporated into the Environmental Impact Statement being prepared on Personal Watercraft (PWC) use in the Recreation Area. Significantly higher levels of volatile organic compounds, carbon monoxide, and nitrogen oxides were observed in high activity areas. PWC's were estimated to contribute 25% to pollutant levels in the Halls Crossing area.

NPS signs Interagency Agreement with the US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution: The Institute will provide assessment, mediation, facilitation, consultation, and training in connection with NPS' efforts to promote the effective use of alternative dispute resolution methods to resolve conflicts related to environment, natural resources, or public lands. Note separate task orders may be issued with separate scopes of work. Contact EQD for copies of the agreement.

Biostatistical Support Agreement Signed: The Biological Resource Management Division (BRMD) signed an agreement with the Survey Research Center & Statistical Consulting Service of the University of Wyoming for Biostatistical Support for NPS projects. The agreement, signed on July 15, 2002, was handled through the Rocky Mountains CESU and can be accessed by parks through the Technical Assistance Call to the BRMD.

NPS Public Survey Results: The Social Science Program recently published Regional Technical Reports summarizing the 2000 NPS Comprehensive Survey of the American Public. Dr. Fred Solop of the Social Research Laboratory of Northern Arizona University conducted the telephone survey of 3,515 adults between February and May of 2000. The survey covers a range of topics: visitor and non-visitor demographics; barriers to visiting NPS units; public attitudes toward fees, resource management policies, reservation systems, park planning and other issues; the public "image" of the National Park System; and public perception of problems facing the parks. Electronic copies of the seven regional reports can be obtained from Brian Forist in the Social Science Program Office (Phone: (202) 513-7190; Email: Brian_Forist@partner.nps.gov.)

Release of SAMI Air Quality Report: After ten years of study and analysis, the Southern Appalachian Mountains Initiative (SAMI) released its final report, which includes recommendations for improving air quality in the southeast. The report addresses air pollution effects (i.e., visibility impairment, acid rain, and ozone damage) in eight southeastern states (AL, GA, KY, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV), focusing on parks and wilderness areas (e.g., GRSM and SHEN). SAMI's recommendations include member-state support for national multi-pollutant legislation. SAMI is a voluntary, state-lead association that includes industry, environmentalists, academics, government officials, and land managers. NPS has been an active participant throughout the SAMI process.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES/PROGRESS

Withdrawal of DOI Objection to Proposed Coal-fired Power Plant Near Mammoth Cave NP: The DOI Assistant

Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks has withdrawn his previous finding that the proposed Thoroughbred Generating Station (TGS) would have an adverse impact on visibility at Mammoth Cave NP. The original finding was transmitted to the State of Kentucky in a February 2002 letter. As proposed, TGS is a 1500 MW coal-fired power plant to be located in Muhlenberg County, approximately 74 kilometers west the Park. Based on new information submitted by TGS and additional analyses performed by the Air Resources Division, emissions from the proposed facility are no longer expected to adversely impact visibility at the park.

Reestablishing Air Monitoring at Mesa Verde NP: The wildfire at Mesa Verde National Park destroyed both the National Atmospheric Deposition Program wet deposition sampler and the new mercury deposition sampler. The remaining air quality monitoring equipment survived the fire, but power and phones have been down for a couple of weeks. To restore wet deposition measurements at Mesa Verde, some equipment that was ready for a new installation elsewhere has been loaned to the Park and the Air Resource Division field support contractor has reinstalled the power lines and deposition samplers. Ozone and IMPROVE visibility monitoring have also been restored.

New Jersey Park Flight Event Recognizes American Airlines The New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route and New Jersey Audubon Society sponsored an event to recognize American Airlines, the Park Flight Program's partner and contributor. A new migratory bird exhibit was unveiled and a presentation was made by New Jersey Audubon Society education and science staff about the Park Flight project, "*Preserving Oases Along the Flyway: Critical Stopover Habitat in New Jersey for Migrating Birds.*" The event was attended by NPS staff from the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route and project partners from the National Park Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and University of Arizona, as well as members of the public. It was held in conjunction with a visit by a biologist from Panama who is participating in a three-week international internship for the New Jersey Park Flight Migratory Bird Program project. The focus of this project, which is managed jointly by the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route and New Jersey Audubon Society, is using weather surveillance radar to monitor nocturnal songbird migration and identify key stopover sites in New Jersey that migrating birds use as they travel between their wintering and breeding grounds. This technical exchange was coordinated through the NPS Office of International Affairs International Volunteer in Parks (IVIP) program.

Serving the Visitor 2001 Now Available: The Visitor Services Project (VSP) recently published "Serving the Visitor 2001," the eighth annual "report card" on how well the NPS is serving its customers. For hard copies, please contact Brian Forist in the Social Science Program office. (Phone at (202) 513-7190; Email: Brian_Forist@partner.nps.gov).

Chickasaw Groundwater Applications Protested: The NPS filed protests with the Oklahoma Water Resources Board concerning two applications to appropriate ground water east of Chickasaw National Recreation Area, for a large groundwater exportation project. The NPS is concerned that the withdrawals would capture recharge destined for park springs. A pre-hearing conference was held in Wayne, Oklahoma on September 30, due to high public interest and the number of motions filed by various parties. The primary matters addressed were managing the parties, inclusion of project-related applications not yet noticed to the public, and scheduling the evidentiary hearing, possibly for as early as October. In the meantime, the NPS is working with the USGS to identify work that may be undertaken to better understand sources of spring discharge and provide support for a Board proposed hydrologic study of the aquifer.

Expansion of Directional Drilling Operations at Big Thicket National Preserve: An operator who has drilled one well under the Big Thicket National Preserve from a location outside the boundary, has notified staff from the Intermountain Region, the Park and the Geologic Resources Division of plans to expand drilling operations under the park. The original well was drilled under an exemption from NPS nonfederal oil and gas regulations; the operator has indicated that he will apply for similar exemptions for future wells. NPS oil and gas regulations allow a Regional Director to grant an exemption from the requirement for plan of operations if there is a finding that directional drilling within the park (i.e., underground) does not "pose a significant threat of damage to park resources". Because granting an exemption is a federal action, NPS must comply with the provisions of National Environmental Policy Act.

Snake River Gravel Pit Reclamation: A partnership with the Federal Highway Administration and the State of

Wyoming's Abandoned Mine Lands Program has produced \$1.3 million for the Snake River Gravel Pit reclamation project at John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway. More than 350,000 cubic yards of sand, gravel, and topsoil are being re-graded to create 55 acres of sedge meadows, willow flats, stream channels, oxbow ponds, and uplands. The site is within the Yellowstone Grizzly Bear Recovery Area and will provide habitat for several other "species of special concern," including bald eagles and western boreal toads. The design was developed by NPS Water Resources Division and Colorado State University, based on analysis of site characteristics and nearby undisturbed "reference areas" on the Snake River floodplain. Earthmoving will be completed by October 2002; revegetation will occur in the spring and early summer of 2003.

OBED Oil Spill: NPS, working with the USFWS and the State of Tennessee, has taken the lead in applying for and receiving funding under the OPA "Initiation" of Natural Resource Damage Assessment activities funding. The NPS was notified that the U. S. Coast Guard National Pollution Funds Center has agreed to make up to \$353,777 available for trustee activities associated with the Prior well blowout incident in OBED National Wild and Scenic River, Wartburg, Tennessee, July 21, 2002.

Biological Control Risk Assessment/Analysis Workshop Held: The Biological Resource Management Division represented the NPS at this workshop sponsored by USDA. The objective of the workshop was to produce a whitepaper outlining the key issues that need to be addressed in evaluating and regulating risks and benefits of biological control agents. As a result of this workshop a much larger meeting on bio control agents will be held next year.

NRPC staff gives presentation to Denver Service Center Planners: On September 9, representatives from Water Resources Division, Air Resources Division, Natural Resource Information Division, and Geologic Resources Division presented an overview of the NRPC and described how the program center could assist the Denver Service Center (DSC) during their General Management Planning (GMP) efforts. Because there has been concern in NRPC about the lack of adequate natural resource information in some recently prepared GMPs, DSC planning staff is very interested in discussing how the NRPC could help them improve the quality of their GMPs. The benefit of early and continued NRPC involvement during the GMP planning process was stressed during the presentation. NRPC planning assistance on most GMPs would include: in-house project scoping with DSC planners, review of Project Agreements, identification of technical experts, answering natural resource questions (including policy assistance), reviewing interim planning products, and policy review & comment of draft GMPs.

Research Permit and Reporting System Training: Research Permit and Reporting system (RPRS) training was held September 4 and 5th at the BLM Training Center in Phoenix Arizona. The training was funded with FY 2002 NRPP Project money. Twenty-three park science coordinators and other users of RPRS received training on park research policy, collections policy, and how to use RPRS.

Joint Conference of the Society for Ecological Restoration and the Ecological Society of America: The joint conference of these societies was held in Tucson, AZ the week of August 5. The conference was well attended with nearly 4,000 registrants. In addition, the NPS organized a side meeting to discuss the activities of Servicewide Natural Resources Programs. About 30 people attended the meeting, with various Divisions collaborating and presenting an overview of NRPC restoration activities. In conjunction with the NPS meeting, there was an evening social to present the awards for Natural Resource Manager of the Year (two), Natural Resource Manager in a Small Park, and Researcher of the Year.

NPS Lands Conference: Staff from Natural Resource Program Center divisions attended and made presentations to the NPS Lands 2002 Conference to give presentations on water rights and mineral appraisals. Water rights and mineral assets are property that should be addressed by the NPS in the appraisal and recording process the same as land assets. The conference was an opportunity to build internal partnerships.

NRPC Restoration Technical Advisory Group: Fourteen members of the Restoration Technical Advisory Group (RTAG) met in Denver on August 20. Discussions emphasized the continued development of the group, improving communications and information sharing (both internally and externally), and funding opportunities beyond those

within Natural Resources. Short-term action items include, (1) preparing guidance for parks on using Line-Item Construction and Dam Safety funds, (2) working with other Natural Resource fund managers on developing an approach to analyzing project costs, and (3) establishing a working group to develop an RTAG, all-TAG, and/or NRPC session at the 2003 George Wright Society. In addition, as established during a previous meeting, the Chairmanship will rotate among the participating Divisions. The Chair for the next year will be Pete Biggam, Natural Resource Information Division.

STAFF NEWS

New Staff Member in NRID: Lisa Nelson joined the Inventory and Monitoring Branch of the NRID as the Information Manager on September 23, 2002. Her duties include coordinating data management with the I&M networks; managing I&M information systems and database applications and budgeting for I&M information management projects. She brings eight years of experience in natural resource data management and web application which included work with the contractor Johnson Controls on the NPS' Research Permit and Reporting System and the NPSpecies applications and on several U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service endangered species applications. Also, she developed Internet mapping utilities for FWS habitat monitoring and general mapping applications. Lisa has both a B.S. and M.S. in Zoology, from the University of Wyoming, and an M.S. in Forestry with a GIS and remote sensing emphasis from Colorado State University. Her field research was in tropical rain forest and temperate grassland and forest ecosystems. Prior to entering the data management field, she taught biology at community colleges in San Diego and at the University of Denver.

EQD Budget Analyst: In the Washington office, Loretta Felder-Keniley has joined EQD on a 120-day detail as a budget analyst. She will be assisting the EQD program analyst, Debby Peck, in organizing multi-year accounts that go back to 1994, as well as managing the year-end process for FY 2002. Loretta has skills in IDEAS (Procurement), AFS II, (financial tracking), and FFS (financial management). She comes from the NPS Capital Training Center, also in Washington.

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Abigail Miller
Deputy Associate Director, Natural Resource Stewardship & Science
National Park Service