

Subject: December 2002 Monthly Report from WASO ADNRSS (Soukup and Miller)

FYI, Attached is the latest Natural Resources monthly report from Abby Miller and Mike Soukup.

-For coastal parks note especially the "Accomplishments/Significant Activities" section re: Standards for Coastal Mapping Protocols.

-For I and M networks and parks, note the summary report from the IMAC (Inventory and Monitoring Advisory Committee) meeting in November in Denver.

-For Denali and other Arctic parks, especially note the entries for activities and meetings in the Air Quality arena including the Western Airborne Contaminants Assessment Project, Regional Haze Planning Organizations, Ozone Non-attainment areas and deadlines and air quality concerns from western energy development and power generation.

-For wildlife biologists, note especially the entries on chronic wasting disease, international migratory bird day (May 10, 2003) and wildlife critical habitat identification in Canada.

The next scheduled NRAG meeting is set for the week of February 11, 2003. Dave Mills, Ralph Tingey and I are the AK regional representatives for that group. If you have questions re: Natural



Abby Miller

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Associate Director, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science
Monthly Report for December 2002

New Developments

Proposed Power Plant Near Shenandoah National Park: Competitive Power Ventures (CPV) is a proposed natural gas-fired power plant that would be located just 7 km from Shenandoah National Park. On November 25, 2002, NPS Air Resources Division (ARD) personnel talked with the Virginia Department

of Environmental Quality and the permit applicants via conference call. The permit applicants have volunteered not to use oil as a backup fuel, as well as some other improvements to their permit application. ARD has asked to see their modeling data so that we can evaluate these new conditions. We are still waiting for their data.

Critical Habitat in Canada: The Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) sponsored a workshop on December 9-11, 2002 on how to identify and quantify habitat needs for endangered species. CWS brought together a number of U.S. and Canadian researchers to discuss how new approaches to population viability analysis, habitat identification, and spatial modeling could help identify habitat requirements. A reference guide will be produced this spring. Loyal Mehrhoff, Biological Resource Management Division, was one of the U.S. participants.

HEADS UP

International Migratory Bird Day 2003: Through the Park Flight Migratory Bird Program, the National Park Service is supporting Partners in Flight International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) again this year. IMBD is an international outreach event celebrating and supporting migratory bird conservation. It will take place on May 10, 2003 (the second Saturday of each May), but can be celebrated throughout the year. The IMBD 2003 theme is "Catalysts for Conservation," exploring how birds have been the inspiration for some of the most significant conservation actions in the Americas. The IMBD 2003 artwork by Gerald Sneed, which can be viewed at <http://birds.fws.gov/imbd>, features ten species which symbolize movements that increased protection of birds across state or country borders. The NPS logo will be on the 2003 IMBD materials, and a catalog of these materials will be sent to all parks in January to encourage and facilitate participation in IMBD activities. IMBD activities can include bird counts, banding demonstrations, bird walks, interpretive lectures, interactive games, displays, and festivals. For information on obtaining IMBD 2003 materials contact www.birdday.org or call 1-866-334-3330. For general IMBD information, e-mail IMBD@fws.gov or call 703-358-2318. NPS IMBD events can be registered on-line at <http://birds.fws.gov/imbd>.

Natural Resource Advisory Group Meeting The Natural Resource Advisory Group will be meeting in St. Paul, MN on the week of February 11.

Accomplishments/Significant Activities

Standards for Coastal Mapping Protocols: The *Coastal Mapping Protocols Report* was developed from a coastal mapping protocols workshop held at Canaveral National Seashore in July 2002. This report focuses on geologic mapping in Atlantic and Gulf Coast parks, and it will be used for future coastal mapping projects. Previous to this meeting, no standard protocols existed for geologic mapping in dynamic coastal areas. Hard copies were sent to workshop participants and NPS partners. It was also posted on the NPS Coastal Geology Web site earlier this month. The report can be accessed on the NPS Intranet at: <http://www2.nature.nps.gov/grd/geology/shoreline/index.htm>.

IMAC Holds First Meeting: The newly formed Inventory and Monitoring Advisory Council (IMAC) held its charter meeting in Denver in mid-November. It represents a restructured advisory group for the Inventory and Monitoring Program. The IMAC membership includes each of the seven Regional I&M Coordinators, one member from each region nominated by the Regional Director, and one member from USGS-BRD. IMAC members attending were: Mike Britten and Angie Evenden, IMR; Phyllis Adams and Phyllis Green, MWR; Elizabeth Johnson and Carl Zimmerman, NER; Sara Wesser and Maggie MacCluskie, AK; Larry West and Joel Tutien, SER; Penny Latham and Ray Sauvajot, PWR; Marcus Koenen and Christina Wright, NCR; and Fritz Knopf, USGS-BRD. The council, chaired by the Chief of the Natural Resource Information Division, is charged with providing the I&M program with guidance, oversight, and strategic direction. In addition to the council members, Abby Miller, Deputy Associate Regional Director for NRSS, and several I&M and NRPC staff attended the meeting to offer their expertise. The council adopted a

charter and heard detailed reports on the progress of I&M networks by region, as background for future deliberations. Guidelines and deadlines for the various progress and administrative reports required of the regions were also adopted. The next meeting is scheduled for May 2003 in Port Angeles, WA.

Ozone Nonattainment Deadline Set: In a proposed settlement with environmental groups, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has agreed to issue by April 15, 2004 designations for attainment and nonattainment areas under the new 8-hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard. States and tribes would be required to update or submit their recommendations for designations to EPA by April 15, 2003. The NPS will attempt to work with the States in their designation proposals. It is very possible that some NPS lands will be designated as nonattainment areas which may have significant impacts on park planning operations.

Progress / Updates

Regional Haze Planning Organizations (RPOs): The Air Resources Division convened a conference call for FWS, ARD, regional and park staff to discuss upcoming RPO meetings and visibility issues of Servicewide concern. There is an increasing effort to coordinate NPS participation and policy positions in the five RPOs as individual RPOs are at different levels of progress. We plan on monthly calls for the four "eastern" RPOs (VISTAS, MANE-VU, Midwest, CenRAP) where data analysis and policy issues will be very interconnected and important to each RPO.

Chronic Wasting Disease Workshop Held: The Biological Resource Management Division (BRMD) assisted the USGS Biological Resource Division in organizing a Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Surveillance Workshop held in Madison, WI on December 10-12, 2002. The workshop was hosted by the National Wildlife Health Center and brought together a small group of experts on CWD and statistical sampling. The product of the workshop, a white paper providing guidance to state, federal, and tribal wildlife agencies for performing the most robust CWD sampling possible, should be finalized in late March 2003.

Roundup Power Project (RPP): The Roundup Power Project is a proposed 780 megawatt, coal-fired, electric generating station located approximately 180 km northeast of Yellowstone National Park and 122 km south of UL Bend Wilderness Area. Air Resources Division (ARD) and Yellowstone National Park staff attended a state-sponsored public hearing on this project and presented testimony raising our concerns about visibility impacts at both Yellowstone and UL Bend. The Assistant Secretary is considering ARD's recommendation that he make a formal adverse impact finding with respect to visibility impacts at these areas.

Coal Bed Methane Development Actions: BLM has agreed that before they issue their "Record Of Decision" for the Wyoming oil and gas DEIS in March 2003, they will work with NPS to identify "Adaptive Management" strategies to minimize air quality impacts at NPS units in the region. The Air Resources Division did not have an opportunity to comment on the final Wyoming EIS, but had raised concerns in April 2002 raised concerns that coal bed methane development actions proposed in the Powder River Basin region of Wyoming and Montana could adversely impact visibility other resources at NPS units in the region. BLM is the lead agency on the EISs for these projects.

Yellowstone National Park Winter Air Quality Monitoring: Monitoring sites have been installed at the West Yellowstone entrance, the Yellowstone south entrance, and the Old Faithful parking lot. Three months of carbon monoxide (CO), 2.5 micron diameter particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), meteorology, digital images, and particle scattering for visibility data will be collected. This snowmobile monitoring is being done in cooperation with the State of Montana. The Air Resources Division has provided technical assistance, instruments, and data collection abilities for this park funded project.

Western Airborne Contaminants Assessment Project (WACAP) Peer-Review: The Air Resources

Division sponsored a formal peer review of the WACAP draft project research plan December 11-12 in Seattle. The WACAP project will assess risk to seven western parks (Denali, Noatak, Olympic, Mount Rainier, Rocky Mountain, Glacier, and Sequoia) from persistent organic pollutants and other airborne toxic compounds. NPS staff from the seven parks were in attendance. Project investigators from the Environmental Protection Agency, Oregon State University, University of Washington, the USDA Forest Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey presented their portions of the research plan before a peer-review panel of five invited scientists. Peer-reviewers gave constructive suggestions regarding research direction and implementation for the snow, water, sediment, fish, vegetation, subsistence foods, and laboratory analysis project components.

Staff News

Barbara K. Chappell joined the immediate office of the Associate Director, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science filling the Program Analyst position in the Program Coordination Office previously occupied by Debby Peck. (Debby still works in the Environmental Quality Division.) Barbara will lead the financial, property management and human resources administrative support provided to the natural resources programs at the Washington Office. She comes to the NPS from the DOI National Business Center with previous administrative experience with the U.S. Navy and in the private sector. Plans will be made shortly to organize a meeting among her counterparts in the divisions to assist in coordinate matters with the various programs, as appropriate. Barbara can be reached at 202-513-7167 and by e-mail at barbara_k_chappell@nps.gov. (Please note that this is Barbara K. Chappell not the Barbara Chappell on Lotus Notes at Capital Reef NP.)

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