



Subject:

**Associate Director, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science Monthly Report
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Natural Resource Challenge

Learning Center Web Site The Natural Resource Information Division, Information Services Branch launched its Intranet site for the NPS Research and Learning Centers in January. This site acts as a clearinghouse for the research and learning center activities and the information is continually updated. A public Research and Learning Center Internet site is currently under construction and will provide the public with general information about learning centers, how researchers can become involved, and opportunities, benefits, and resources for educators. NPS staff Servicewide can access the site at: <http://www1.nrintra.nps.gov/learningcenters>.

Major Accomplishments

Resolution of Coronado National Memorial Water Rights Pending The NPS, in cooperation with the Office of the Solicitor and the Department of Justice, have reached an agreement-in-concept (Stipulation) with state parties and Indian tribes in resolving water rights issues associated with Coronado National Memorial in the San Pedro River Adjudication in Arizona. State parties and Indian tribes included are: Salt River Project, San Carlos Apache Tribe, Tonto Apache Tribe, and Vavapai Apache Tribe, Phelps Dodge Corporation, BHP Copper Co., Gila River Indian Community, City of Phoenix, and ASARCO Incorporated. The United States hopes to finalize the Stipulation and submit it to the Special Master by mid-February.

Seagrass Restored at Biscayne National Park In December 2002, the first seagrass restoration project for the NPS using funds received from a 19jj damage assessment settlement occurred at Biscayne National Park. Staff from the park, the Environmental Quality Division Restoration Program Team, and contractors from Foster Wheeler Environmental Corp., /Marine Resources, Inc., worked together to plan and implement the restoration activities. The restoration occurred at the Pure Pleasure site and included the placement of fill material into trenches resulting from the vessel *Pure Pleasure* grounding. Restoration of three other sites in the park are still in the planning phase and implementation is expected to be underway by summer 2003.

Joshua Tree National Park Competitive Research Grant Joshua Tree National Park announces a call for proposals for a \$12,000 competitive research grant to support field research in the physical, biological,

ecological, and cultural sciences. Research proposals should focus on answering questions about significant natural and/or cultural resources of the park and the Mojave and Colorado Deserts. Proposals are due Feb. 21, 2003 and will be rated and ranked by a park-based review committee. Fieldwork must commence in 2003. The grant is open to qualified researchers and field investigators including government agency scientists, university faculty, advanced degree candidates, private sector research professionals and other individuals. Employees of the park and directors of the Joshua Tree National Park Association are not eligible. For conditions, guidelines, and questions refer to the attached Science-Grant PDF.

Heads Up

National Park Foundation Offers Park Flight Continuation Grants: The National Park Foundation has announced the availability of continuation grants for 2003, on a competitive basis, to current U.S. Park Flight Migratory Bird Program grantees. The funding comes from American Airlines, a Park Flight partner. Eligible projects and units are those selected in the first round of Park Flight grants funded through the National Park Foundation in 2001: Sequoia and Kings Canyon, North Cascades, Bandelier, Pecos, Aztec Ruins, Capulin Volcano, Fort Union, New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail, Cuyahoga Valley, Great Smoky Mountains, Golden Gate, and Point Reyes. Current U.S. grantees will have until February 14th to submit their proposal, and parks will be notified of awards by March 31, 2003. Through a separate Request for Proposals, developed in cooperation with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, current Mesoamerican Park Flight grantees at important bird conservation sites in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama, and Mexico will also be able to compete for 2003 continuation grants.

Canon National Parks Science Scholars Program for the Americas The Canon National Parks Science Scholars Program announced its 2003 competitions. The program is a collaboration among Canon U.S.A., Inc., the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the US National Park Service. Thanks to a generous commitment by Canon U.S.A., Inc., the program will be awarding eight \$78,000 scholarships to Ph.D. students throughout the Americas to conduct research critical to conserving the national parks of the region. Research projects in the biological, physical, social, and cultural sciences are eligible, as well as projects in a new category: technology innovation in support of conservation science. Applications must be received by May 15, 2003. The application guide and cover sheet are available at < <http://www.nature.nps.gov/canonscholarships/>>.

New Water Publication Available The American Geological Institute, as part of its Environmental Awareness Series, recently published "Water and the Environment." The Water Resources Division (WRD), in partnership with the other federal agencies, helped support development of the book. The 64-page publication, authored by Steven J. Vandas, Thomas C. Winter and William A. Battaglin, is intended for both students and interested public, and serves as an attractive and informative public outreach resource. The book includes sections on hydrology, environmental concerns, and approaches to protecting and managing water resources. The WRD is working with the Natural Resources Program Center, Information Resources Management Division to develop a distribution plan, including distribution through visitor center bookstores.

NRMAP Profiles Being Updated Parks in the Inventory & Monitoring program participated in the 2003 update of the Natural Resource Management Assessment Program (NRMAP) profiles. These profiles are being entered into an expert-based software program that calculates the Full Time Equivalent Employees (FTEs) needed to manage park resources. The update is expected to be completed and entered into the new NR-MAP database in mid-February. The resulting draft workload factor values are anticipated in early March. NRMAP is an assessment tool, which provides an objective workload analysis of natural resource program tasks to assist with planning, formulating, and allocation of funds. <http://www1.nrintra.nps.gov/nrmap/>

American Birding Association Directory The Biological Resource Management Division and Park Flight Migratory Bird Program are supporting the American Birding Association's (ABA) Opportunities for Birders

2003 Directory. Each year the ABA gathers and publishes information on bird-related projects in need of volunteers. The directory is published as a service to ABA's 22,000 members, typically very skilled birders, and as a service to the agencies and organizations in need of skilled volunteers. NPS has advertised for volunteers in this directory for years. The NPS logo will be featured on the 2003 Directory, and a directory will be sent to resource management staff at each NPS unit.

Ongoing Activities

Roundup Power Plant On January 10, the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks withdrew his adverse impact finding that that emissions from the proposed Roundup Power Plant in Montana would adversely impact visibility at Yellowstone NP. The Assistant Secretary had earlier (December 2002) made a finding of adverse impact, based on analyses conducted by the Air Resources Division (ARD). Noting this action went against the recommendation of the ARD, the Assistant Secretary determined that on those days when Roundup had significant visibility impacts at Yellowstone, weather events (i.e., fog, precipitation) were the most significant source of the impairment, not Roundup's emissions. ARD staff and Director Mainella have arranged a meeting with the Assistant Secretary to discuss the implications of this decision in future permit reviews.

New Mexico Park Flight Ceremony with American Airlines: On January 9, 2003, Superintendents Steve Bone and Nancy Kaufman joined park staff, park visitors, local school children, and project partners to thank the National Park Foundation and American Airlines for supporting a very successful New Mexico Park Flight project in 2002. The New Mexico project, "Assess Neotropical Birds and Provide Educational Field Trips to Five Parks," includes Aztec Ruins, Bandelier, Capulin Volcano, and Fort Union National Monuments, along with Pecos National Historical Park. A live Peregrine Falcon and Swainson's Hawk were on hand for everyone to enjoy close up. Both species breed in New Mexico and migrate through Mexico and Central America to their wintering grounds in South America. During the project, approximately 660 rural school children visited their local national park areas during educational field trips conducted by Hawks Aloft. In addition, field work conducted by the New Mexico Breeding Bird Atlas Project documented breeding for approximately 50% of all the summer birds observed in these five parks.

Proposed Cement Plant Permit in South Dakota Air Resources Division (ARD) has filed comments regarding the expansion of the Dacotah Cement plant with the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources on behalf of national parks in southwestern South Dakota. Issues addressed by ARD include requests that Dacotah investigate improved emission controls and conduct additional analyses of impacts from the proposed emissions on park visibility.

Resource Damage Resources At Big Bend Monitoring and restoration of 13,000 square-feet of fragile desert vegetation at Big Bend came to a successful end. The damage resulted from a reckless driver attempting to evade law enforcement in June 2000. Under provisions of the Resource Protection Act (section 19jj), the park pursued a settlement for damages and response. The driver's insurance company provided a check to the park for \$2,504. Fourteen species of plants were restored to the site in 2000.

Upcoming Meetings

NPA and EPA Cooperation EPA's Assistant Administrator for Air, Jeff Holmstead, has invited the Air Resources Division to meet with him on February 6, 2003. The purpose is to share information and explore ways NPS and EPA can work together as the EPA moves forward with programs that affect air quality in national parks and wilderness areas.

Significant Meetings Held

World Heritage Managers' Meet On January 14 and 15th, Superintendents and staff from 17 US National Park units and nine Canadian National Parks designated as World Heritage Sites met in Los Angeles as part of the US-Canada World Heritage Managers' Meeting. The meeting kicked-off a two-year process

known as periodic reporting outlined in the World Heritage Convention, the international agreement signed by both the US and Canada which governs each country's participation in World Heritage program. They were joined by counterparts from state and provincial parks and privately owned World Heritage sites. The meeting was hosted by the NPS Office of International Affairs and co-sponsored by Parks Canada. Under the terms of the Convention, the United States and Canada will prepare "periodic" reports intended to provide a summary of each nation's participation in the World Heritage Convention and a "snapshot" of current conditions at its World Heritage properties. Natural Resource Information Division is slated to provide technical assistance in posting reports on the Internet and editorial review.

NPS Convenes Western Energy Summit Over 60 western park managers and resource specialists gathered in Phoenix, Arizona, January 21-23, to discuss energy development planned near parks, potential impacts, and appropriate responses. The summit was organized to provide information for constructively and effectively weighing in on decisions affecting energy development on federal lands adjacent to parks, and for advancing sound energy use strategies within park boundaries. Rebecca Watson, Assistant Secretary for Lands and Minerals Management, encouraged the NPS to engage in "intelligent dialogue in response to controversy." Resources and strategies for reducing energy use within parks were also presented, with help from the National Renewable Energy Lab. All the information delivered at the summit is accessible through the intranet:

<http://www2.nrintra.nps.gov/energysummit/index.htm>. The web-based toolbox will be augmented over the coming months to include additional information requested by park managers at the summit.

CESU Holds Wilderness Workshop Multiple partners (University of Montana, University of Idaho, NPS, USGS-Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center, BLM, USFS, USFS-Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute and Carhart Training Center) of the Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (RM-CESU) convened a workshop at Glacier National Park, January 22-24, 2003. The workshop, titled "Wilderness Stewardship in the Rockies: Let's Talk!" was designed to bring wilderness area managers together to network and share information about such topics as: wilderness day use management, restoration and weed management, cultural diversity, and perceptions of wilderness. In addition to the RM-CESU partners, there was significant participation by Canadian park managers.

Microbes Workshop Held The Biological Resource Management Division hosted an interdisciplinary group of scientists to discuss management of microbes in the context of the NPS mission. The group addressed the scientific possibility, and feasibility, of determining native vs. exotic status of microbes and processes that involve microbes in NPS units. A Science Assessment report summarizing the workshop will be prepared and available to NPS by May 2003.

Zoonotic and Environmentally-Transmitted Diseases Workshop Held On January 7 and 8, 2003, the Biological Resource Management Division (BRMD), Public Health Division (PHD) and the Risk Management Division (RMD) held a workshop to address zoonotic and environmentally-transmitted diseases. Managing the risks to resources, employees, visitors, and the environment from disease agents and reservoirs and developing control strategies is a shared responsibility of the natural resource, risk management and public health programs. The goal of the workshop was to develop a system of standard operating procedures for determining lead responsibilities and responses to categories of zoonotic environmentally-transmitted diseases. The workshop participants were also briefed on the Johns Hopkins/Department of Defense early warning system project for bioterrorism focusing on domestic animals and wildlife as well as the NPS Air Division's ozone alert system.

NPS Hosts Air Force Western Pacific Region Airspace/Range Council Meeting In 1988, the Air National Guard (ANG) initiated regional meetings to establish lines of communication between agencies with an interest in the management and use of military training airspace and ranges. Since 1995, the regular Air Force (AF) has co-sponsored the meetings with the ANG. Because an estimated 40% (150+) of park units are within 10 miles of a military training route or operations area, the NPS has long since become a regular participant, and is on the agenda at each meeting, giving us a chance to educate as well as to be

educated. The Western Pacific meeting is typically the first of six that the Air Force holds across the country during each calendar year and it was hosted this year by the National Park Service at the Presidio of San Francisco on January 23-24. This meeting had special significance due to the Presidio's rich military history and because the Air Force and the NPS have just jointly published the AF/NPS Western Pacific Regional Sourcebook. NPS, Pacific West Regional Director Jon Jarvis welcomed the group; other NPS participants included staff from the Natural Sounds Program (NSP), Pacific West Region, Lake Roosevelt NRA, Death Valley NP, Sequoia-Kings Canyon NP, Yosemite NP, and Golden Gate NRA. NPS meeting organizers have since received messages from the Air Force, proclaiming the meeting successful and praising the NPS' hosting efforts.

Nature Sounds Society Natural Sounds Program (NSP) staff participated in a Nature Sounds Society (NSS) meeting in Ft. Mason, San Francisco on January 25th. The purpose of the NSS is to educate the public to the value of being able to hear natural sounds and to protect natural ambient soundscapes from noise intrusions. The NSS is a grassroots organization that has established a variety of contacts in the pursuit of their educational goals. NSP staff briefed the organization on their efforts in addressing natural sounds issues associated with various types of park overflights and other park related noise issues. It was agreed that the National Park Service and the Nature Sounds Society have some common interests that would be mutually beneficial to each organization and that the NSP would continue to be involved with the NSS. The next meeting is scheduled for the end of April, and the NSP will provide a briefing on the Air Tour Management Plan process and associated acoustical data acquisition approach.

Airspace Issues at Seashore Parks NPS staff from Cape Lookout, Cape Hatteras, the Southeast Region, and the Natural Sounds Program (NSP) met in New Bern, North Carolina on January 16th with Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point representatives to discuss a Marine Corp proposal to establish a special use airspace. The airspace would provide the military with the capability to conduct high-speed sea/land training operations at altitudes above 3,000 feet. The principal purpose of the meeting was to review each of the comments that the NPS, led by the NSP, had submitted in response to the Marine Corps' draft environmental assessment. The meeting was very productive and set the groundwork for both the collection and analysis of additional soundscape data and consideration of supplemental noise metrics for noise sensitive areas.

Staff News

Michele Lee has accepted the position of Administrative Support Assistant in the Air Resources Division (ARD) in Denver. Michele will be responsible for administrative support (acquisitions, budget tracking, purchasing, etc.) to both the Air Resources Division and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Air Quality Branch. The Fish and Wildlife Service is jointly funding this position. Michele came to ARD from the Denver Service Center.

Dr. Bret Schichtel has recently joined the Air Resources Division as a Physical Scientist. Bret will be duty stationed in Ft. Collins and will work on visibility and regional haze issues. For the past few years he has worked with the Cooperative Institute for Research in the Atmosphere (CIRA) at Colorado State University where he did research on visibility and regional haze in NPS areas. He has done considerable work with the IMPROVE visibility monitoring network and the BRAVO special study of the causes of visibility impairment at Big Bend National Park. In addition he was intimately involved in the development of both the IMPROVE (<http://vista.cira.colostate.edu/IMPROVE>) and WRAP (<http://vista.cira.colostate.edu/VIEWS>) web sites. Bret holds both masters and doctorate degrees in mechanical engineering from Washington University.

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