

NATURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND SCIENCE  
WEEKS OF JANUARY 29 AND FEBRUARY 5

HEADS UP/CURRENT AND UPCOMING ITEMS OF SERVICEWIDE INTEREST

AIRWEB - AIRWeb is the Air Resource Division's (ARD) presence on the World Wide Web (WWW). Most people with access to the Internet and a WWW browser software product can access AIRWeb by following the links down from the NPS home page, or by pointing your browser at [www.aqd.nps.gov/ard/](http://www.aqd.nps.gov/ard/). AIRWeb contains links to primers on air quality in the parks and interpretive literature, photos of visibility impairment and vegetation injury, graphs showing ozone trends over time, the IMPROVE newsletter archive, other Internet sites with air quality programs, links to government information servers (e.g. for Federal Register, Congressional Record, EPA), etc. Each AIRWeb park page has a "PARK" button which will take the browser to that park's home page on the NPS server. There are presently 51 park pages on AIRWeb, most of which are not yet developed. The prototype park for development is Shenandoah. The features found on AIRWeb's Shenandoah page are planned to be extended, to the extent possible, to all other parks for which monitoring programs exist. The ARD is very interested in feedback regarding the utility and value of AIRWeb as means for information dissemination and retrieval. Suggestions for enhancements and proposed changes would also be welcomed. Please contact Chip Harvey by phone (303)969-2807 or CC:Mail with questions, comments, or concerns about AIRWeb.

EXOTIC PLANTS/WEEDS INITIATIVE Representatives from NPS NBS FWS and BLM developed a draft National Strategy on weeds during the week of January 29. It has been circulated to the representatives from Federal Interagency Committee on Management of Noxious Exotic Weeds (FICMNEW), with a request that they have agency comments at our Feb 14 meeting. It has been ccMailed to all FAO and SSO asking for their comments. Other interested parties may obtain the draft directly from Gary Johnston.

Efforts are being made to add the National Weed Strategy as an agenda item at the forthcoming meeting of several departments' Deputy Secretaries on February 13. The NPS working group will convene the week of March 18 in Fort Collins to complete the NPS weed plan. Additionally, there is a meeting in Albuquerque, NM the week of March 11-14 of the Western Society of Weed Scientists, during which the Western Weed Coordinating Committee will be meeting. Gary Johnston will represent the NPS there and make a presentation. (Natural Systems Management Office)

EXOTICS/WEEDS SURVEY/DATABASE The Department has asked all agencies to provide NBS with results of a weed survey by March 31. The purpose is to provide the Department with as reliable as possible estimate of impacts of weeds. Terry Cacek is working with the Natural Resource Information Division (particularly Tim Goddard) to complete the survey using RMP and RMAP data bases. They will be inputting species information not previously automated so that the survey can be completed without requesting info from field. Another example of how useful these data bases can be if we can collect comprehensive information in a routine and predictable manner--it can save parks work in the long run, and hopefully get us some help at the same time. (Natural Systems Management Office)

WATERSHED AND REMEDIATION PROGRAM - A Feb 1, 1996 video conference chaired by Silvia Baca made it clear the DOI policy makers are not

supporting a Statewide general NPDES permit for stormwater runoff at abandoned mine sites, but rather, want to pursue a multi-agency effort involving DOI, DOA, EPA and the states that would approach the problem with a "watershed" program. The conference left many unanswered questions as to how specifically this was to be done and what would be the sideboards for a program. (Geologic/Water Resources)

**INDUSTRY FUNDING FOR ABANDONED MINE RESTORATION** - Geologic Resources staff meet recently with the mining company representative pursuing this initiative with industry groups. In summary, Gold Institute and National Mining Congress members remain interested in establishing a program with the NPS, with at least 8 company CEO's already committed to funding shares. The individual mining companies are now debating how those monies should be spent, e.g., AML inventory, site characterization, or actual restoration. Homestake Mining Company has made a commitment to help the NPS develop a plan to mitigate the safety hazards at the abandoned Katherine gold mine site in Lake Mead. A site visit is expected soon, and this site will serve as a pilot to develop the process and address remaining questions such as legal liability, etc. (Geologic Resources)

**OIL AND GAS PIPELINE DATA UPDATE** - Two recent regulatory issues concerning petroleum pipelines in NPS units (proposed revisions to NPS rights-of-ways regulations at 36 CFR Part 14 and Department of Transportation's proposed revisions to regulations governing interstate petroleum pipelines) prompted us to update data on pipelines in parks. We purchased digitized national data and downloaded the information into a GIS. Data are limited to "major" transmission pipelines originating in or traversing units, and does not include individual well flowlines or single field gathering lines.

Results show 227 pipelines in 55 parks in 29 states; 142 of the pipelines carry natural gas; 85 of the pipelines carry petroleum liquids such as crude, liquified petroleum gas, or refined petroleum products. A few surprises emerged during analysis of the data in terms of number of pipelines in select units. These include Santa Monica Mountains NRA (11 pipelines), Indiana Dunes NL (14 pipelines), Mississippi NR & NRA (9 pipelines), and Natchez Trace Pkwy (23 pipelines). This information emphasizes the need for affected units to prepare spill contingency plans for petroleum pipeline leaks and ruptures. (Geologic Resources)

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS/REPORTS OF MEETINGS OF INTEREST

**WORKSHOP: PARTNERSHIPS IN PRESCRIBED FIRE IN COLORADO:** On December 11 and 12 at the Colorado State University in Fort Collins, many federal, state, and local agencies, tribal representatives, and others met to address tough issues about the use of prescribed fire in Colorado. The idea for the workshop came about after the tragic deaths of 14 firefighters last year near Glenwood Springs when Governor Roy Romer and Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt discussed the need for better management of areas susceptible to wildfire. Both Governor Romer and Secretary Babbitt presented opening remarks to the attendees.

The objective of the meeting was to identify opportunities and develop specific actions, including increased coordination and partnerships among all agencies, for the best possible use of prescribed fire in Colorado. Through the use of breakout sessions, top priorities were identified to achieve these objectives in areas of growth and development, joint funding, liability, public education/information and safety, preparedness and coordination, and impact mitigation. The atmosphere at the workshop was extremely cooperative and productive, although many details of implementation remain to be worked out. One caveat presented by the mitigation work group was that prescribed fire should not automatically be assumed to be the tool to use to achieve wildland management objectives and that other tools should be examined. There was some uneasiness expressed by the State's air

quality control agency regarding the magnitude of possible effects on air quality if land managing agencies substantially increase controlled burning throughout Colorado. A possible outcome of the workshop could be an executive order by Governor Romer to effect an increased use of prescribed fire in the State as a wildland management tool. (Air Resources Division)

**WESTAR COUNCIL: WILDFIRE AND PRESCRIBED FIRE WORKSHOP:** WESTAR sponsored a workshop on wildland fire in San Francisco, November 27-29. Due to the widely accepted notion that our Western forests and grasslands are in a state of poor health and decline, federal, state, local, and tribal land managing agencies are proposing to increase the use of prescribed fire in many wildland areas to achieve objectives ranging from hazard fuel reduction for wildfire prevention to restoration of wildlife habitat and the sustainability of ecosystems that are fire dependent.

There is a perceived dilemma between achieving both wildland fire and air quality objectives in the future. By holding this workshop, Western State air quality agencies, under the umbrella of WESTAR, are trying to foster a cooperative assessment of future prescribed fire needs and potential or likely effects on air quality. Both WESTAR and land managers are seeking a compatible solution to increased smoke emissions from all wildland fire (prescribed fire and wildfire) and the protection of public health and welfare from the air pollution impacts of that smoke (e.g., national ambient air quality health standards and visibility). The workshop resulted in the formation of five standing work groups to continue work in several areas of concern, such as monitoring, modeling, policy development, and emission control measures for fire. (Air Resources Division)

**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP -** The Strategic Planning Office convened a work group January 22-25 to further NPS plans for implementing the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) that requires Federal agencies to implement strategic planning and program performance measures. This workshop addressed the NPS framework for Servicewide performance goals and development of specific performance measures. Natural Resources was represented by Larry Bancroft, SEKI, Mary Foley, NEFA, and Dave Shaver, GRD. With significant travail and trepidation, performance measures were formulated by subgroups in four categories: resources, partnerships, visitors, and organization. These draft performance measures will be consolidated and a package distributed for general review in mid-February. Review period will be short, due to statutory timeframes. WASO-NR division chiefs will receive review copies, any other interested reviewers should contact WASO Strategic Planning (via ccMail) ASAP to get the on distribution list. (Geologic Resources)

**SUCCESSFUL LAND RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP -** A project at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore demonstrates a partnership that may prove helpful to other areas. We are encouraging parks with unfulfilled restoration needs to contact local National Guard Engineering Units to determine if they can perform restoration work during their annual training. Linking Guard training with park restoration projects requiring heavy equipment (reshaping, stabilization, selective handling of cover material, etc.) allows for the completion of important, but unfunded, natural resource management goals. In June 1995, a cooperative effort was tested at Sleeping Bear Dunes with outstanding success. Working with the Michigan National Guard and NPS geologists, the park completed restoration work at two of their nine abandoned sand and gravel pits. A recent GRD report on this project shows that the "equivalent" cost for the restoration work completed is \$28,220 while the "actual" cost to the park was only \$7000 due to the excellent work provided by the Michigan National Guard. This project, the first of its kind between the NPS and the National Guard, confirmed the merit of such partnerships for accomplishing important

resource management work. For further information on establishing a similar partnership, contact Dave Steensen, Geologic Resources Division, at (303) 969-2014. (Geologic Resources)

**GEOLOGISTS-IN-THE-PARKS PROGRAM** - In December, the Geologic Resources Division introduced the Geologists-in-the-Parks Program. The program is directed toward earth science school teachers, university professors, and geoscience professionals, to facilitate placement of geoscientists in parks that want to improve geologic interpretive program or have identified geologic resource management needs. According to park preferences, geoscientists will be placed as either: supported volunteers, seasonal employees, or non-competitively hired university professors. So far, over 30 parks interested in hiring geoscientists have responded. The division is now advertising the program to the public through journals, announcements with the Geological Society of America, and on the internet at <http://www.aqd.nps.gov/grd>. While delayed by the shut-down, we hope to operate the program at a pilot scale in 1996, and increase the scope and magnitude of the program next year. (Geologic Resources)

**CENTRALIA POWER PLANT** - An organizational meeting was held in Olympia, Washington among those interested in exploring better controls on the Centralia Power Plant, which will soon be the largest source of sulfur dioxide (approximately 70,000 tons per year) in the west. Attending were representatives of EPA, WA Department of Ecology, SW Air Pollution Control Authority, Puget Sound Air Pollution Control Authority, US Forest Service, PacifiCorp (operators of the plant), and NPS (Mount Rainier: Supt. Briggles, Barbara Samora; PNW SSO: Shirley Clark; ARD: John Christiano, Cathy Rhodes). Options for facilitating the meetings were explored, and the participants' expectations were stated. A tour of the plant and discussion about the plant economics was scheduled for January 30, and the next meeting general discussion is scheduled for February 9. The NPS hopes these discussions will result in better controls and less impacts at Mount Rainier and other park and wilderness areas in Washington, without serious economic disruption.

**MOJAVE MINERALS MANAGEMENT ISSUES** At the Superintendent's request, GRD staff (Jim Woods and Jim Wood) and the PGBSSO minerals program specialist (Chuck Sayon) are at Mojave the week of February 5 to provide technical assistance on several minerals management issues, including evaluation of road material extraction sites for completing MOU with San Bernardino County, monitoring of active mining operations, and assessment of 2 proposed mining plans of operations and 1 oil and gas pipeline plan of operations. GRD staff will also meet with the Superintendent to discuss the NPS mining claims and nonfederal oil and gas management programs, including a review of applicable regulations, operation permitting procedures, GRD's role and staff expertise, and identification of the park's short-term minerals management objectives and assistance needs. (Geologic Resources)

**PARTNERSHIP INTEREST IN WEED INITIATIVE** Tom Campbell, lobbyist for Dow Elanco in DC, is spearheading an effort to develop an environmental coalition to increase public awareness of the weed problem. Their second meeting will next Tues or Fri. In addition, Melroy Jackson, Monsanto, has requested a meeting with the DOI Weed Committee, purpose is to explore ways Monsanto may be able to help.