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Subject: July monthly report

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

NATURAL RESOURCE INITIATIVE - The final consolidated action plan for the initiative, titled "Natural Resource Challenge: The National Park Service's Action Plan for Preserving Natural Resources" was signed by the NLC on July 26. The document has received professional editing and lay out assistance and will be printed the first week in August. There will be an internal and external version-the internal version with more budget information.

A companion public information brochure that focuses on why we need to pay attention to natural resource management is also being prepared. A "plain vanilla" version may be available in mid-August when the Plan is formally released, and a glossier Harper's Ferry Center unigrid version available some time later. Plans are underway to revise the constituent action plans to provide more detail than was available in the consolidated plan. There are also plans for more public awareness activities.

NATIONAL PANELS SET PRIORITIES FOR FY2000 - Several ranking panels met in Colorado and completed their work. They set priorities for project funding for Disturbed Lands Restoration; Abandoned Mineral Lands; Water Quality Mitigation and Restoration; Hydrology, Watershed Management, and Planning; Wetlands Restoration and Planning; Wetlands Inventory; Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery, and NRPP Natural Resource Management. The panels included a mix of regional representatives. An NPS/ USGS also ranked project proposals in the areas of Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment for funding and implementation by the USGS as part of the administration's proposed Clean Water Action Plan. The Associate Director, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science will be sending the results of all of these panels to Regions in early August.

INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL The council established by Executive Order 13112 on invasive species held its inaugural meeting. Secretary Babbitt of the Department of the Interior, Secretary Glickman of the Department of Agriculture, and Secretary Daley of the Department of Commerce each delivered remarks. An advisory committee of about 25 stakeholders will be established. The Federal Register announcement seeking nominations for the advisory committee will be available sometime in August. Both the advisory

committee and the council will be supported by the Department of the Interior. About 5-6 permanent staff are planned to support the work of the council.

NEW EXHIBIT AT MOUNT RAINIER NP CELEBRATES PARTNERSHIP TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY - On July 16, 1999, a press conference was held at the Paradise Visitor Center in Mount Rainier NP to dedicate a new exhibit that explains how air pollution is affecting resources at the park and provides visitors with information about current air quality conditions (ozone concentrations and visibility). Officials from the American Lung Association, Washington Department of Ecology, Puget Sound Clean Air Agency and PacificCorp joined NPS Air Resources Division Chief Chris Shaver in celebrating the public-private partnership that produced the informative exhibit and the collaborative efforts being made to reduce air pollution. The exhibit is dedicated to John Christiano who managed the NPS air program from 1985-1996.

STUDY LAUNCHED TO INVESTIGATE CAUSES OF HAZES AT BIG BEND NP - On July 5, 1999, the ARD initiated the Big Bend Regional Aerosol and Visibility Observational, or BRAVO, study to determine the causes of visibility impairment at Big Bend NP. The study will continue until October 31 and will use the release of unique chemical tracers from 4 locations in Texas to help understand air pollutant transport into the park. The study is being sponsored by EPA and the ARD with assistance from the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

PROGRESS/UPDATES

FIRE MANAGEMENT - On July 22 a delegation from the National Interagency Fire Center met in Denver with Natural Resource Stewardship and Science personnel. The group reviewed the progress to date stemming from a coordination meeting last June in Boise and a follow up meeting with the Natural Resource Program Center. Issues and activities for future action included: Natural Resource participation in future RM-18 revisions and NIFC participation in RM-77 revision; integration of fire management planning and resource planning; emergency rehabilitation and longer-term follow up; and continued coordination on regional haze issues, fire research, and vegetation mapping. On the fire management planning/resource management planning issue, a decision was made to cooperate in the near-term on efforts to improve fire management plans and their use of NEPA, as well as to explore how these plans might be better integrated with RMPs in the future. Sarah Robertson is new to NIFC in an NPS/FS position and will be working on planning issues.

CANADA PANEL ON ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY The Parks Canada Panel on Ecological Integrity has completed most of its field visits and has started developing its report, with a draft scheduled to be presented to a cadre of peer reviewers at the panel's October meeting. The Panel is using information from NPS regarding CESUs, the Director's natural resource awards, NPS Management Policies, and other NPS activities to help inform its deliberations. We anticipate that the panel's thinking regarding ecological integrity will be of use to NPS with respect to better application of the non-derogation clause from the Redwood Act Amendment and several provisions of the Thomas Bill and to improving the revisions that currently are being developed to the NPS Management Policies.

DIRECTOR RAISES CONCERNS ABOUT AIR QUALITY AT SHENANDOAH NP -

Emissions from several new power plants proposed in Virginia could exacerbate the current adverse impact conditions at Shenandoah NP. Therefore, Director Stanton sent a letter to EPA questioning whether Virginia's State Implementation Plan (SIP) is adequate to prevent significant deterioration of air quality in NPS units. The Director asked EPA to initiate collaborative efforts with Virginia and NPS to assess the effectiveness of Virginia's SIP and revise the plan accordingly. The Director's letter was in follow-up to Superintendent Morris' letter raising similar concerns directly to Virginia.

PROFESSIONAL MEETING ATTENDANCE/PAPERS

13 CAVE RESOURCE SPECIALISTS FROM 7 NATIONAL PARKS ATTEND NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY CONVENTION - The NPS participated in the July '99 NSS convention where NPS cave specialists brought attendees up to date on the status of the National Cave and Karst Research Institute. In addition, national cave coordinators from the NPS, BLM, USFS and USFWS attended an open forum session with the membership at large discussing cave resource protection issues. Specific questions for the NPS from the Society members focused on the Institute, the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act and concerns regarding the science programs at individual Service areas.

HEADS UP

FY 01 DOI SCIENCE SUPPORT USGS is sponsoring a Department-wide meeting August 3-4 to develop its coordinated, DOI-support budget proposal for the FY 2001 budget. NPS will send one or more representatives to each of the five discussion teams. In addition to production of an integrated budget proposal, NPS hopes these team meetings will also identify ways in which DOI bureaus can increase their research and other science partnerships in the field.

REPORT TO CONGRESS ON FOSSIL POLICY UNDER DEVELOPMENT - Geologic Resources Division and Ranger Activities staff are representing NPS interests on an interagency work group, led by the Science Advisor to the Secretary, to prepare this report mandated by the FY99 Appropriations Act. The report, due in February 2000, will assess "the need for a unified Federal policy on the collection, storage, and preservation of fossils." Staff attended a public hearing and follow-up interagency "working group" meeting in June to develop an outline for the report. A background paper prepared for the public meeting is at <http://www.doi.gov/fossil/>. The report should address potential legislation and recommendations to improve preservation and study fossils on public lands. The interdepartmental group meets again on July 28 begin report preparation, presenting an opportunity to inform Congress about concerns in federal paleontology. Interested NPS staff should contact Lindsay McClelland via cc:mail or by phone at 202-208-4958.

PUBLICATIONS

THE 1998 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INVENTORY AND MONITORING PROGRAM is posted on NatureNet at <http://www1.nps.gov/pubs/I&M1998/title.htm>. As the two previous reports, it covers news about the program (staffing, budget, etc.) and the status of natural resources in five National Park System units and two unit clusters that conduct prototype ecological monitoring. NRID expects to distribute hard copies during the last week of August or in early September. For

more information, contact the I&M Program Manager, Gary Williams, or the editor, Elizabeth Rockwell by cc:Mail.

SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH REVIEW PUBLISHED - The second edition of the Social Science Research Review was published entitled, "Race, Ethnicity and Use of the National Park System." Dr. Myron Floyd at Texas A & M University authored the paper. Over 2000 copies of the review were distributed to all parks, NPS offices, and to other NPS partners. The paper is a review of current literature that examines the issue of how racial and ethnic minorities' experience the National Park System. (Copies available from Gary Machlis, Social Science Program)

PRIMENet REPORT AVAILABLE - The first annual report for the Park Research and Intensive Monitoring of Ecosystems Network (PRIMENet) is now available. EPA and the ARD jointly fund PRIMENet. The purpose of the network is to link environmental stressors with ecosystem responses. The network consists of fourteen Class I parks that monitor ultraviolet radiation, visibility-reducing particles, atmospheric deposition, gaseous pollutants, and climate. The report describes monitoring activities and data, and summarizes the research projects that are funded by PRIMENet. The report is available on the web at <http://www.nature.nps.gov/ard/prime>. Please contact Kristi Heuer (303) 987-6941 with any questions.

OTHER INFORMATION

REMEMBER TO UPDATE YOUR LINKS - In response to sound and welcome requests by various parties, NRID changed the URLs of several fact sheets in its electronic Fact Sheet Series (<http://www.nature.nps.gov/facts>). Instead of changing the URLs when fact sheets are updated, NRID now retains the original URL to preserve the links from other entities to the fact sheets e.g., [fgis.htm](#), not [fgis2](#), [fgis3](#), etc.). If you link to specific fact sheets, please make adjustments. During 2 Apr-15 Jul, the fact sheets were visited 6,568 times; the average duration per visit was 9:20 minutes, illustrating the importance of maintaining links! Please contact the editor Elizabeth Rockwell (970-225-3541) to resolve problems.

STAFF NEWS

GARY MASON JOINS NATURAL RESOURCES - Gary mason, formerly of Natchez Trace Parkway, has recently joined the Natural Resources Program Coordinator's Office in Washington, D.C. Gary will be in charge of RMPs for Natural Resources. He will also act as liaison with Bob Karotko on natural resource training issues and work with Abby on PMIS and OFS budget issues. Gary's accomplishments at Natchez Trace indicate that he will certainly be an asset to the Natural Resources Program Coordinator's Office.

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The recently transmitted monthly report was incorrect with respect to Gary Mason's organizational affiliation in WASO. The paragraph should read:

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