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Subject: Fwd:Natural Resources July Report

Associate Director for Natural Resource Stewardship and  
Science

Monthly Report  
July, 2001

NATURAL RESOURCE CHALLENGE

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS/SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

NPS Air Toxics Workshop: A technical workshop was held in Seattle to identify issues associated with deposition and effects of air toxics (persistent organics and metals, including mercury) in national parks of the western United States, with emphasis on high elevation areas and Alaska. The discussion laid the foundation for developing an air toxics monitoring strategy for the national parks in this region. Representatives, from various federal and state agencies, presented information on toxics monitoring in fresh water, fish and wildlife, snow, and sediment. The workshop is considered "step one" in the process of addressing airborne toxics in the NPS.

Water Rights Agreement for Lake Mead NRA: Three DOI bureaus have entered into a stipulated agreement with the Las Vegas Valley Water District (LVVWD) and the Southern Nevada Water Authority regarding a LVVWD water right application in Coyote Springs Valley, Nevada. The agreement will help protect springs and other water-dependent resources at Lake Mead National Recreation Area. NPS was joined by the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land

Management in agreeing not to present testimony against LVVWD's application at a Nevada State Engineer's hearing this July. In return, the district and water authority agreed to a set of monitoring and mitigation provisions that will apply to any water right permit that may be granted for this application. The stipulated agreement provides for monitoring effects of water withdrawals by the applicant, cooperative management of monitoring data by all parties, and avoidance or mitigation of adverse impacts to federal water rights and resources.

Development of Deposition Analysis Threshold (DAT): The NPS and Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) have finalized a Deposition Analysis Threshold (DAT) for nitrogen deposition within their Class I air quality areas. The DAT was developed in response to requests by permitting authorities and permit applicants to develop consistent, predictable, and quantitative threshold numbers to compare the amount of deposition created from new air pollutant emissions against the amount that would be of concern to Federal Land Managers. The DAT development was part of the NPS and FWS commitments in the Federal Land Manager's Air Quality Related Values Working Group (FLAG) to continue to develop and provide quantitative numbers to use in modeling future impacts of deposition in parks and refuges.

Superfund Site Update: The Appalachian National Scenic Trail is working with the Biological Resource Management Division to develop an Interagency Agreement with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The agreement will allow NPS participation in the development and implementation of a remedial action plan for NPS lands resulting from damage caused by the Palmerton Smelter Superfund Site. It will also enable NPS to have greater interaction and input with EPA in their negotiations with the Potentially Responsible Party who carries liability to conduct site remediation. Specifically, the division will provide expertise in ecological restoration.

Flood Assessment at New River Gorge NR: A team of NPS resource experts was dispatched to New River Gorge National River in response to heavy rains that triggered extensive flooding and rock and mudslides at the park unit. The

Resource Assessment Team conducted field work to identify and assess resources at risk due to the severe storm. Integrated risk assessment was accomplished by combined team expertise in geohazards, alien plant control, plant biology, aquatic ecology, water quality, geomorphology, computer mapping (Geographic Information Systems), historic architecture, and archeology. A report of the team's findings is expected soon. Team members included NPS staff from New River Gorge NR, the Columbia Cascades Support Office, Redwood NP, Lowell NHP, Petersburg NB, the Geologic Resources Division, and the Biological Resource Management Division.

Natural Resource Strategic Plan Goal Revision Initiated A workshop sponsored by the Natural Resource Goal Group was held in Denver the week of July 23. Members of the goal group, Servicewide goal contacts, and invited park and regional staff help to draft a new framework for natural resource goals that would be more comprehensive than current goals. Workshop participants aimed for a framework to be fully implemented in the 2006 strategic plan, with goals in the FY 2004 plan moving in the direction of the new, more comprehensive approach. The workshop participants will refine their proposals and prepare detailed analyses of their feasibility for implementation in FY 2004, then seek review by the Natural Resource Advisory Group, regional goal contacts, and other primary stakeholders prior to a goal group meeting in early October. If adopted by the Goal Group, the proposals will be available for Servicewide review in November. The workshop participants hope that the framework proposed can be implemented in the 2006 strategic plan and at least portions of it in the FY 2004 plan.

#### NEW DEVELOPMENTS

National Fire Plan Directives to be Implemented: The Biological Resource Management Division will represent the Fire Management Program Center and NPS to implement directives from the National Fire Plan to develop native plant materials for use in post-burn rehab stabilization and alien plant control. This will enhance the ability of NPS to integrate exotic species control work after severe fires and will indirectly lead to greater capacity for exotic plant

control and other ecological restoration projects. The division will also serve as a member of the DOI Fuels Team to implement and coordinate National Fire Plan directives regarding Wildland-Urban Interface and Hazard Fuel Reduction activities.

Executive Order on Migratory Birds to be Implemented: The NPS Biological Resource Management Division along with representatives of 32 other Federal agencies met with the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on July 28th to discuss implementation of Executive Order 13186: Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds. The DOI Solicitor's Office and FWS anticipate implementation of the Executive Order, which was developed in response to a court decision that required federal agencies to meet legal requirements of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. FWS hopes to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with every federal agency that could be responsible for take of migratory birds. The Associate Director will be providing information on how interested individuals can take part in the development and review of the NPS-FWS MOU on migratory birds.

Rapid Response Teamwork Helps Santa Monica Mts. NRA - The Geoscientist in the Parks Program (via GeoCorps America) placed a geology graduate student in Santa Monica Mountains NRA to assist mapping geohazards. Unforeseen health problems with the park natural resources contact, however, left a gap in communications. A team effort provided technical contacts electronically and helped to get the mapping project back on track. Many people did a great job of fitting this into their schedule and insuring that the summer project meets the needs of the park. The GIP Program fills technical positions for short periods of time resulting in long-term benefits to the parks.

#### HEADS UP

Fire Management Program Review: Some Natural Resource staff may be contacted soon by Craig Axtell, Chief of the Biological Resource Management Division. Craig is representing Natural Resources in a Review of National Wildland Fire, Structural Fire, Aviation, and Emergency Response Programs. Two particularly important objectives of the team as it relates to Natural Resources

are 1) to  
?Make recommendations for the integration of other NPS disciplines  
and functions  
into the wildland fire, structural fire and emergency response  
programs of the  
Service? and 2) to ?Identify interdisciplinary opportunities to  
improve  
incorporation of wildland fire, structural fire, aviation and  
emergency response  
with other NPS programs?. If you do not hear from Craig within the  
next few  
weeks, and wish to provide some thoughts or comments for the review  
team, please  
feel free to call him, or send comments to him via email.

Natural Resource Year in Review: The Natural Resource Year in  
Review--2000 was  
shipped in July to park superintendents, division chiefs, resource  
managers, and  
a broad array of partners both in and outside government. The report  
summarizes  
and analyzes significant natural resource preservation issues and  
trends in the  
national park system for the 2000 calendar year. Nearly 40 features  
and 27 brief  
articles are shared, addressing both national and park-specific  
issues. A  
central theme of the report was the continuing benefit of the Natural  
Resource  
Challenge, which is strengthening our capability to preserve park  
natural  
resources. Examples of other issues that are profiled include:

- \* Scrutiny of environmental impacts from snowmobiles in national  
parks.
- \* Recommendations of biologists E. O. Wilson, Peter Raven, and  
other scholars  
for future management of the national parks.
- \* Restoration of the endangered bonytail fish in Dinosaur National  
Monument  
(CO, UT).
- \* Mysterious tadpole die-off in Whiskeytown National Recreation  
Area (CA)
- \* Establishment of exotic plant management teams to address  
high-priority,  
invasive plant problems throughout the national park system

The Year in Review is posted on-line at  
<http://www.nature.nps.gov/pubs/yir/yir2000>. Additional printed copies  
are  
available from the editor (jeff\_selleck@nps.gov). A call for article  
proposals  
for the 2001 edition is imminent (by e-mail) and your contributions  
and ideas  
are encouraged.

Annual Natural Resource Meeting: A memorandum to Regional Directors  
announcing  
the annual NPS Natural Resource meeting and requesting field  
participation is  
expected to be distributed the week of July 30. The meeting is

scheduled for  
October 2-3, in conjunction with the Natural Areas Association in  
Cape  
Canaveral, Florida. Director's awards related to natural resources  
will be  
presented at a reception the evening of October 2. Hotel  
reservations must be  
made by September 2 and agenda recommendations by August 23.  
Information on  
regional selections for participation is also being requested by  
August 23.

#### PROFESSIONAL MEETING ATTENDANCE/PAPERS

Wildlife Disease Association (WDA) and Society for Tropical  
Veterinary Medicine  
Joint Meeting: Although the WDA focuses primarily on wildlife health  
issues in  
North America, an international meeting is held every 10 years, this  
joint  
meeting was held in Pilanesburg National Park, South Africa. Wildlife  
veterinarian Margaret Wild of the Biological Resource Management  
Division,  
presented a contributed paper on the use of tonsillar biopsies for  
diagnosis of  
chronic wasting disease. Chronic wasting disease is an important  
emerging  
disease issue in the intermountain west. The test provides a means  
to study  
epidemiology of the disease in locations such as parks where lethal  
collection  
of deer is not an alternative.

#### STAFF NEWS

Southeast Region Hires Coastal Geologist - Dr. Linda York will join  
the  
Southeast Region Natural Resource Management Staff as their Coastal  
Geologist in  
August 2001. Linda received her M.S. and Ph.D. in Geology from the  
University of  
Delaware and has held research appointments at the University of  
Wales and  
University of Delaware. She is very knowledgeable about coastal  
processes and  
the geologic framework of the U.S. Atlantic and Gulf coasts. She  
coordinated the  
beach surveying program for Coastal Carolina University for 3 years.  
Linda has  
an extensive network of colleagues in the field of coastal geology  
that will be  
a valuable resource for the National Park Service.