

## **Natural Resource Stewardship and Science Monthly Report for July 2003**

### **DRAFT**

#### **Natural Resource Challenge**

Compendium of Watershed Condition Assessment Methods - A cooperative effort recently was initiated by the Water Resources Division through the Chesapeake Watershed CESU and George Mason University (GMU) to develop a literature review and evaluation of planning-level watershed condition assessment methods, and to work with NPS to develop guidance in the selection of methods for use in NPS watersheds. GMU has organized an interdisciplinary team and will develop methods compendiums for wetland, stream, riparian, and upland watershed resources, as well as methods for developing integrated assessments of ecological health at the watershed and landscape scales. The compendium will be available online and will be presented to NPS in a series of workshops in 2005.

#### **Significant Activities**

Natural Resource Laureate Program is underway - This program is modeled after the Geo-Scientist-in-the-Parks program with NRPC efforts focusing on providing parks with much needed scientific expertise. Candidates selected will be volunteers who have been successful in their chosen field and possess a high level of technical/subject matter expertise and competence in one natural resource area. All disciplines within the NRPC will be included.

Representatives from EASI (the Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement) visited Denver to finalize the first pilot projects and learn more about the National Park Service, the Natural Resource Program Center and the goals for the Laureate Program. The visit ended with the final selection of six projects to be accomplished by Laureates in the upcoming 12 months. The parks selected are Timicuan Ecological and Historic Preserve, Richmond NBP, Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Biscayne NP, San Juan Island NHP and Santa Monica Mountains NRA.

More information about the Laureate Program will be available in section G of the 2004 Technical Assistance Call or by contacting Diana Maxwell at (303) 969-2078 or [diana\\_maxwell@nps.gov](mailto:diana_maxwell@nps.gov).

Geologic Resources Division Reorganization - The Geologic Resources Division recently reorganized in order to improve its effectiveness in helping parks and carrying out Servicewide responsibilities. The changes result in modified work assignments and program responsibilities for some staff and all the branch managers. The new structure is as follows:

- Education and Outreach Branch - Bob Higgins, Chief
- Geoscience and Restoration Branch - Jim C. Woods, Chief
- Planning, Evaluation and Permits Branch - Carol McCoy, Chief

GRD's primary functions remain the same: developing the NPS geologic resources management program; providing specialized assistance to parks in geology and minerals management; and coordinating development of national level policies, regulations and guidance. For more information go to: <http://inside.nps.gov/programs/divisionnews.cfm?div=32&Page=news>.

Cooperative agreements finalized - Cooperative agreements for three new CESUs were finalized in July — Californian, Piedmont-South Atlantic Coast, and Upper & Middle Mississippi Valley CESUs. The NPS is a federal partner in each of these new CESUs. For more information, contact Jean McKendry, 202/219-8894.

## **Head's Up**

Results of the Servicewide Comprehensive Call (SCC) Posted - The results of the FY 04-06 SCC have been posted on Intranet. To access the results go to:

<http://www1.nrintra.nps.gov/sccresults/sccresults2/>

Comments on the projects from each of the panels will be sent to the regions.

## **Other**

Geologic Resources Evaluation Reports - Representatives from parks, the Northeast Region, Denver Service Center, and other Washington offices met on July 16-17, at the DOI University training center in Lakewood, CO, to discuss the contents and future of Geologic Resource Evaluation (GRE) reports. With the joining of the Geologic Resources Inventory (GRI – GPRA Goal Ib1) program with the Geoindicators (GPRA Ib4) program, the report product has evolved into a new GRE report format. The report will address the geology of the park, geologic features and processes in the park, the geologic map and accompanying stratigraphic column, a bibliography, and geologic issues including inventory, monitoring and research.

Water Resources Division 2002 Annual Report - The Water Resources Division has released its 2002 Annual Report, which outlines the division's accomplishments in water resource stewardship and science. The Annual Report features articles that provide insight into the issues faced by park staff and highlights the technical assistance provided throughout the national park system. The report will be available on-line at <http://www.nature.nps.gov/wrd/pubs.htm>. A limited number of printed copies of the Water Resources Division Annual Report 2002 are available. To obtain a copy, contact the Water Resources Division by e-mail ([patricia\\_hennessy@nps.gov](mailto:patricia_hennessy@nps.gov)) or write to Patty Hennessy, National Park Service, WRD, Suite 250, 1201 Oakridge Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Mexican and Panamanian Biologists Assist Park Flight at Golden Gate/Point Reyes - Jorge Cruz Sanchez from Mexico and Karla Aparicio from Panama are participating in an international internship from August through October for the Park Flight Migratory Bird Program project at Point Reyes and Golden Gate, in cooperation with project partner Point Reyes Bird Observatory. Based at the Palomarin Field Station, Jorge will assist with standardized mist-netting, banding, and interpreting these operations to the public, and Karla will assist with the migratory bird education and outreach program to local Hispanic and other communities, including banding demonstrations. This technical exchange was coordinated through the NPS Office of International Affairs International Volunteer in Parks program.

Progress Made on Implementing the Black Canyon Water Rights Agreement - On July 31, 2003, the National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation, and State of Colorado executed an

Enforcement Agreement allowing the United States to take actions to enforce the instream flow water right being pursued by the Colorado Water Conservation Board for the Gunnison river through Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. This enforcement agreement is an important element of the April 2, 2003 water rights agreement because it establishes the authority of the Secretary to protect water-dependent resources in the park.

New Air Tour Management Plans Begun - The Natural Sounds Program Office, Federal Aviation Administration, and the DOT Volpe Transportation Center initiated four air tour management plans in the month of July. Internal scoping meetings were conducted at Yellowstone NP and Glen Canyon NRA. Park orientations for the ATMP planning teams were held at Yellowstone NP, Navajo NM, Canyon de Chelly NM, and Petrified Forest NP. Tribal consultation, acoustical data acquisition, gathering of planning information, scoping, and alternative formulation are the next steps in the planning process.

### **Staff News**

Christine Whitacre will serve as cultural specialist with NPS at the Rocky Mountains CESU. Her start date is 24 August 2003. Christine has been with the NPS Intermountain Support Office, cultural resource division since 1989. She is a historian, and has worked with many of the Rocky Mountain Cluster parks, including Grant Kohrs Ranch NHS, Grand Teton NP, Yellowstone NP and Sand Creek Massacre NHS.

Departmental Award to Rick Dawson Rick Dawson was presented with the DOI NRDAR Sustained Performance Award. He was commended for being a mainstay of the program for almost 10 years, as well as a member of the work group for NRDAR. The award was presented at the DOI's Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) Program annual retreat at the USFWS National Conservation Training Center July 14-18<sup>th</sup>, attended by several Environmental Quality Division members.

Joe Carriero was selected by the Restoration Program of the Environmental Quality Division's Environmental Response, Damage Assessment and Restoration Branch to fill the position of Restoration Project Manager/Environmental Engineer. Joe will be located at Academy Place in Lakewood, CO. Joe joined us on July 13th, from his previous positions in the Bureau of Reclamation and the FWS Air Resources Group.

Nate Benson has been hired by the Fire Management Program Center to act as a liaison to the Natural Resource Program Center. Nate will be stationed with the Biological Resource Management Division. As a Fire Ecologist, his other responsibilities will include working with the Natural Resource Information Division to integrate fire effects data and coordinate the National Burn Society Mapping Project with USGS. Nate has worked in various fire programs for the NPS since 1987. He has monitored fire effects at Glacier, worked as a leader of fire use modules at Yellowstone and the Great Smoky Mountains, and was prescribed fire specialist at Everglades. Nate has a bachelor of arts in Ibero-American studies and a master of science in land resources from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

### **Meetings/Presentations**

Upcoming Geological Society of America Annual Meeting Technical Session on Glaciers in National Parks Approved - The Geological Society of America (GSA) annual meeting will be held in Seattle during the week of November 2, 2003. Geologic Resources Division staff organized and will moderate a technical session entitled, "Glaciers, Glacial Geology, and Glacial Ecosystems in the National Parks." Nine technical papers will be given during this session including papers from NPS park staff, a former Geoscientist-in-the-Park, USGS staff, academia, U.S Army Corps of Engineers staff, and GRD staff.

Discussion about coordination of Park Service Resources Protection - Act On July 22, the NR Damage Assessment and Restoration staff of Environmental Quality Division held a day long meeting with the Cultural Resources staff to begin discussions about coordination of Park Service Resources Protection Act (PRSPA section 19jj) claims between natural and cultural resources. Participants included staff from the Archaeology, Cultural Landscapes, Historic Structures, Museum Collections, and Archeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA) enforcement programs.

Meeting with EarthScope Expected to Lead to Increased NPS Involvement – On July 23rd and 24th, NPS staff from the Intermountain Region, FLAG, GRD and NRID met in Denver with 10 Earth Scope university contacts, and one USGS representative. The meeting was to help develop an interpretive plan for Earth Scope, as well as to determine how this program will interact with the NPS. EarthScope is now in its first year and is noted as being the most comprehensive Earth science experiment ever conducted. The scope of this project will cover almost every county in the United States and is already involving parks and citizens from across the U.S. Earth Scope will help scientists and citizens gain a better understanding of the dynamics of the North American continent. "Earth Scope is to Earth science what the Hubble telescope is to our understanding of the universe." This major National Science Foundation project will run for 15 years and has grant monies approaching half a billion dollars. Given the funding, the research and interpretation opportunities, the possibility of funding a number of Geoscientists-in-Parks positions, and the opportunity to work with many universities through the CESU networks, this appears to be a golden opportunity. GRD will obtain a list of the over 100 universities involved to date; will determine which parks will be asked to place temporary monitoring equipment; will summarize the program in a "heads-up" memo to parks; will work with researchers, parks, and CESUs to help place temporary monitoring equipment and GIPs; and will facilitate obtaining the resulting free satellite imaging, seismic, and other data. Additionally, NRID will assist with providing outlets for promoting and disseminating information about EarthScope internally as well as to the general public electronically and in conjunction with various workshops conducted.

Annual Caribbean Food Crop Society Meeting - The Caribbean Region NPS Exotic Plant Management Team (EPMT) liaison Dr. Daniel Clark represented the NPS at the annual meeting and conference of the Caribbean Food Crop Society (CFCS) in Grenada. Attendance and presentation at the conference provided the CFCS governing body and attendees with a NPS perspective with regards to research and management of Caribbean region invasive species. This perspective is particularly important at this time because many nations in the region are discovering that invasive species may be adversely impacting their economy and natural areas.

The liaison addressed the conference body regarding his research being conducted in the Virgin Islands National Park that is aimed at examining the ecological effects of exotic invasive plants in Caribbean natural areas. As a member of the NPS EPMT, the liaison also formally introduced the EPMT partnership aspect of managing invasive exotic plants in the region. A number of cooperative projects were proposed by the international participants at the conference and these will be considered this year for possible implementation.