

NATURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND SCIENCE
JUNE REPORT

GEOLOGIC PARTNERSHIPS Geologic Resources Division staff met in Washington 6/17-20 with representatives of the WASO Interpretive Division, National Science Foundation, American Geological Institute, U.S. Geological Survey, American Geophysical Union, National Earth Science Teachers Association, American Geophysical Union, National Geographic Society, National Park Foundation, and Cincinnati Museum of Natural History, seeking potential partners for NPS geological resources management, inventory & monitoring, and interpretive programs. A number of promising opportunities emerged from the meetings. GRD will pursue these opportunities in consultation with park and SSO staffs, and will inform parks of progress through targeted announcements, and, if appropriate, special project calls. For more information, please contact Robert Higgins or Lindsay McClelland via CC:Mail.

GRAND CANYON VISIBILITY TRANSPORT COMMISSION "FINAL" MEETING AND RECOMMENDATIONS: On June 10, the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission held its "final" meeting at Grand Canyon National Park. The Commission forwarded to the EPA its recommendations to preserve and improve visibility in 16 Class I areas on the Colorado Plateau. In brief, the Commission recommends:

- targets for reducing sulfur dioxide emissions, with a regulatory program if targets are exceeded,
- a cap on mobile source emissions set in about 2005 (when those emissions "bottom out"),
- better integration of visibility concerns into prescribed fire management and removal of "administrative barriers" to non-fire alternatives,
- energy efficiency and conservation, renewable energy sources, and sustainability.
- additional research, especially on the impact of pollution sources near the Class I areas, road dust, and Mexican emissions.

Secretary Babbitt and all non-voting Commissioners (BLM, Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission, EPA, NPS, USFS, USFWS) supported the recommendations. All voting commissioners except Nevada voted for the recommendations (Acoma Pueblo, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hopi Tribe, Hualapai Tribe, Navajo Nation, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Wyoming). Nevada cited concerns over road dust, Mexican emissions, and potential limits to economic growth for its "no" vote. The Commissioners agreed that the regional, consensus-based approach used by the Commission was preferable to top-down, command and control regulations, but realize the Commission's work process must be streamlined in the future. They directed their Operations Committee to develop, by September, a plan for continued regional cooperation directed the Committee to monitor implementation of the recommendations. EPA now has 18 months to review the recommendations and decide how to respond. The states and tribes will then have one year to carry out any EPA requirements. Copies of "Recommendations for Improving Western Vistas" are available from the GCVTC, c/o WGA, 600 17th St., Suite 1705 S, Denver, CO 80202. The Commission's technical report will be available later this summer.

At the request of Secretary Babbitt, an interagency group will begin looking at funding needs and ways to implement the recommendations pertaining directly to federal lands (e.g., fire and "in and near Class I areas"). A workshop may be held to educate agency personnel.

EXOTIC SPECIES--INTERAGENCY "WEED TOUR" Recently the National Park Service played a major role in organizing and conducting a tour, in the Washington DC area, that focused on the impacts of exotic plants on natural systems and other managed areas. The tour, called: The Silent Green Invasion: Congress Visits the Front Lines, was designed to increase legislators' and others' awareness of the problem. The tour was sponsored by the Invasive Weed Awareness Coalition, an informal organization whose members include representatives from NGO's, NPS, NBS, FWS, BLM, Forest Service, and the pesticide industry. More than 50 people attended the tour, representing more than 20 Congressional offices, 7 Federal agencies, and numerous state, industry and non-profit organizations concerned about this issue. Several news media representatives attended, providing local coverage which was aired on at least three stations.

EXOTICS--NPS WEED STRATEGY: Thanks to all those who commented on the draft NPS strategies. Comments have been incorporated and the final version has been sent to the artist for design and layout. We anticipate printed copies by early August.

EXOTICS INTERNATIONAL: Gary Johnston is attending an international conference sponsored by Norwegian ministries of Environment and the UN on Alien Species. Gary is participating as a member of the U. S. Delegation. Other members of the delegation include Gary Edwards, USFWS, Lloyd Loope, NBS and John Matuzak, US Dept. of State.

GREAT LAKES AIR QUALITY PARTNERSHIP Erik Hauge, NPS Air Resources Division planner, chaired three meetings in the U.S. and participated in a fourth meeting in Canada in May regarding the establishment of a Great Lakes RAQP. This RAQP was the result of discussions between U.S. and Canadian officials at various scientific conferences and the June 1995 International Air Issues Workshop (Waterton Lakes N.P., Alberta), as well as resulting from several other such interagency air quality partnerships in other parts of the U.S. and Canada. The meetings were held in Cornwall, Ontario; Seneca Falls, New York; Midland, Michigan; and Bayfield, Wisconsin, and were attended by representatives of Federal environmental and land managing agencies (Parks Canada, Environment Canada, Health Canada, NPS, Forest Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service) and Indian tribes. The agency and tribal representatives participated in roundtable discussions regarding their air quality issues and concerns, participation in cooperative efforts, monitoring and research programs, and needs. The discussions then focused on the various aspects of establishing a Great Lakes RAQP, including the role of protected areas in air quality management, linkages with existing partnerships, relationships with regulatory agencies, participation of state and provincial agencies and protected areas, inclusion of non-governmental entities, geographic scope of the partnership, communication, and funding.

The participants in all four meetings unanimously agreed to establish an international RAQP for the Great Lakes (ecosystem- wide), and to invite participation from appropriate Federal, state, and provincial land managing agencies and Indian tribes. Each agency will select one or two representatives to serve on a steering or organizing committee, which will meet to develop a draft interagency agreement outlining the mission, objectives, procedures, membership, responsibilities, and other elements of the partnership. The steering committee members will then return to their respective agencies and tribes and circulate the draft agreement for review and revision. The final document will be endorsed at a later general membership meeting.

U.S.- MEXICAN STUDY OF BIG BEND AIR QUALITY Miguel Flores, Bill Malm, and Superintendent Jose Cisneros (BIBE) travelled to Monterrey, Mexico, for the initial meeting of the joint U.S.- Mexico regional field study investigating air pollution impacts on Big Bend National

Park. The objective of the regional study is to identify the source regions and/or source types responsible for poor visibility at the park. Plans call for a small scoping study to be performed this summer and two intensive studies to be performed during winter 1998 and summer 1998. U.S. and Mexico personnel agreed to deploy a total of 17 sites, 9 of which will be located in Mexico. Agreement was also reached on a schedule for the scoping study, which we hope to initiate on August 1. Daily particle sampling will be performed at each location. Personnel from the University of California at Davis will be responsible for site installation and operator training for this study. Prior to returning to the office, Flores visited Amistad National Recreation Area to identify potential sites for the study. He also met with officials from Texas Parks and Wildlife to solicit their help in the study by allowing the use of state parks as sampling locations. Four state parks will be used as sampling locations for the study. Flores will return to Monterrey on June 21, accompanied by personnel from UC-Davis, to demonstrate the use of the IMPROVE fine particle sampler and provide initial training to Mexican personnel.

PARK SCIENCE NOW AVAILABLE ON WORLD WIDE WEB. Two more issues of Park Science have been posted on the WWW.

CANON FUNDING The National Park Foundation is presenting a proposal to the Canon USA Corporation for projects to be included in the Expedition Into the Parks program for 1997. Call for proposals will be sent to parks via cc:Mail and posted on the NR bulletin board. Up to nine successful proposals may receive 50k each for I&M or conservations projects with a strong interpretive component.

GIS METADATA STANDARDS The NPS GIS standards have been revised and now recommend adherence to the national data and metadata standards, add PCs as a GIS hardware platform, and recommends that Arc/Info software products be the only software supported by NPS GIS field technical support centers.

NBS INFORMATION NEEDS MEETINGS The NBS conducted a cycle of meetings in its information needs process in June. Three regional meetings were held--a mid-continent meeting in anticipation of a move from two regions to three under the USGS structure. Finally, a national meeting was held in Washington. The meetings involved NBS and all of its client or partner bureaus. In Washington, Abby Miller represented NPS. The NPS "national needs" from FY 1996 were reconfirmed, as there did not appear to be substantial progress in addressing the issues, and fire ecology was added to the list. The FY 1996 list was prepared using a panel and a new list may be established next year using a panel approach. Areas of concern emphasized by NPS, as well as others, included: the need for synthesis where many ongoing projects are indicated as being responsive to bureaus' general topics of concern; the need for an assigned lead or contact for broad issues of concern to several bureaus; the need for NBS to clearly indicate where it cannot be responsive or fully responsive; the need for a clearer process for determining how NBS selects which of the bureaus' priorities it will respond to--the current system gives the appearance that response is at the discretion of center directors without regard to bureau priorities; that small-scale local interest projects should not have to compete against "global" issues (not as much of an issue for NPS due to NRPP); and the need to clearly identify the difference between "national" and "regional" needs and how they fit into NBS's processes.

WATER RIGHTS SOLICITOR The Director has formally requested establishment of a field office of the Solicitors's Office to work directly with the Water Rights Program of the Water Resources Division.

CENTRALIA COLLABORATIVE DECISION MEETING: NPS, Forest Service, EPA,

State (WA) and local regulatory agencies, and the owners and operators of the Centralia Power plant, are involved in meetings to try to come up with a means to get the power plant to control its emissions while maintaining financial viability. The most recent meetings occurred the week of June 17. Various control options, confidential business information, and alternative ways to finance controls were discussed. A public meeting was held in Chehalis, WA, near the location of the plant, to inform the citizens about the process and to gather public input. As might be expected, the main concern of those attending was the economic impacts to the community of closing the plant and/or the coal mine. The plant and mine generate payrolls of over \$35 million and are major employers in the towns of Centralia and Chehalis. Some concern was also expressed about the effect of controls on electric rates. A public meeting is scheduled for Tacoma on July 10 at which a different viewpoint is expected. The Tacoma meeting will likely involve more environmental groups concerned about park and wilderness impacts and public health effects. The CDM process is scheduled to con