

Subject: June Monthly Report

Interesting updates on congressional action on the 2001 budget relative to the Natural Resource Challenge (air monitoring, water quality/resource monitoring, endangered species, CESU's, etc.).... and more on the ongoing hiring of personnel in the WASO NR offices.

FYI. Andy Riggold, the recipient of this year's Superintendent of the Year Award for Natural Resource Stewardship also sits on the Natural Resource Advisory Group (NRAG). He is is one of several superintendents in that group. Evne being from a busy large parklike Redwood, Andy regularly attends all NRAG meetings and speaks strongly in support of science and natural resource management in the NPS. He is definitely deserving of this recognition and award.

Alex

Forward Header

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Natural Resource Stewardship and Science  
June Monthly Report

NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

National Cave and Karst Research Institute (NCKRI) Gets Interim Director The USGS's Zelda Bailey is the interim director of the NCKRI. The Congress directed NPS to establish NCKRI in cooperation with other federal and non-federal partners in the Carlsbad NM area to facilitate research and education on cave and karst resources. The Intermountain Region and the Geologic Resources Division are working together to establish the NCKRI and worked together in Bailey's selection. Bailey has more than 20 years experience as project chief and manager with USGS-WRD from the Caribbean to Wyoming. She has considerable experience in developing partnerships with other agencies and entities in challenging organizational situations. Zelda will initiate the next phases of NCKRI development in July.

Ozone Advisories Great Smoky Mountains NP has already had 13 ozone advisories this year. In April and in May, the park exceeded the 8-hour ozone concentration of 85 ppb. Ozone also was high in June in Mammoth Cave NP, and the park officially started a policy to issue advisories. Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks will also begin issuing ozone health advisories this summer. Current ozone advisories that the Air Resources Division receives and the monthly count of excesses are posted on the web at <http://ww2.nature.nps.gov/ard/gas/exceed.htm>. John Ray 303-969-2820

Tallgrass Prairie Gas Operations On 26 May, representatives of the Kansas Corporation Commission and Chisholm Oil met with Tallgrass Prairie and Geologic Resources Division staff at the preserve. For the first time since the preserve was created, state inspectors were on site, which signals the commission's intention to enforce state rules for Chisholm's 24 gas wells in the preserve. The operations are relatively benign, but abandoned pipelines and unmaintained roads contribute to erosion. The wells only produce a combined 140 MCF/day. Non-producing wells may be candidates for plugging.

Director's Awards Presentations by award recipients were a highlight of the Annual Natural Resource meeting in Missoula. Previously announced award winners received their awards at a reception. Winners were: Andy Ringgold, Redwood

National Park, (Superintendent of the Year for Natural Resource Stewardship); Howie Ginsberg, Research Ecologist, U. S. Geological Survey, Rhode Island (Natural Resource Research); Steve Petersburg, Dinosaur National Park (Natural Resource Management); Dan Foster, Nez Perce National Historic Park (Trish Patterson/ Student Conservation Association Award for Resource Management in a Small Park); and Merry Petrossian, USS Arizona Memorial (Excellence in Natural Resource Stewardship through Maintenance).

FY 2001 Budget The House action on the appropriations bill included \$9.4 million of the \$18.5 million Natural Resource Challenge request-a substantial amount considering that the House has a low target to achieve and these were virtually the only operational increases other than fixed cost increases that were successful in the House. Funded were: Monitoring, inventory of air emissions, making natural resource data more usable (partial), park base increases for threatened and endangered species recovery and exotic species control (partial), and CESUs. Also of interest and funded was project monies for EIS preparation. Increases for vegetation mapping, water resource projects, water quality monitoring, planning-related resource assessments (syntheses), and learning centers were not funded in the House mark. Senate subcommittee markup resulted in \$10.75 million in increases for vegetation mapping, monitoring (partial), water quality monitoring, park base increases, water resource projects, and learning centers. The items not funded by the Senate were all of those funded by the House, except for monitoring and park base increases. We are hopeful that all of the increase requests will receive some funding when the differences are addressed in the conference committee.

Facility Management in the 21st Century The facility management community is defining its future path. As part of their effort, the work group assigned to the task wanted to hear about experiences in developing the Natural Resource Challenge and asked Abby Miller to address their June meeting. Several parallels and some differences emerged. Park Service culture and public expectation focus on building facilities in parks, creating problems for facility managers and resources. Little attention is paid-by superintendents, the planning process, or the Service as a whole-on defining and implementing appropriate, state-of-the-art maintenance procedures after construction-or on seriously considering alternatives to in-park facilities. Facility managers are often removed from headquarters or are so involved in paperwork that they rarely see the facilities they manage. Communications problems plague facility and resource people. Abby suggested an element of future success would be targeting and defining issues that all parts of the service can agree need attention and drawing on the wider community to help address them. There may be opportunities for natural resource personnel to assist this effort in the future.

#### HEADS UP

National GIS Coordination and Procurement Change Leslie Armstrong and the national GIS program coordination have been reassigned to the WASO Information Telecommunications Center. Michelle Gudorf from Intermountain GIS is detailed to the natural-resource GIS coordinator position for the summer. The natural-resource GIS position will be advertised soon. Leslie's phone number and address remain the same. Michelle can be reached at 303-987-6709. Also-be aware that new GIS procurement procedures are available on the cc:mail GIS Bulletin board. The old USGS GIS contracts expired.

Protecting Island Ecosystems: Management of Non-Native Rodents NPS and USFWS are sponsoring a workshop in the management of non-native rodents in island ecosystems. The workshop will be held during 18-20 July in the Fort Mason Center, Building A, Fort Mason, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, San Francisco, CA. Please contact Carol DiSalvo, 202-219-8936, for additional information.

#### OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS/PROGRESS

Funding Panels-Review of Proposals in Response to Natural Resources Unified Call Regional representatives participated in three independent panels that reviewed FY 2001 Unified Call proposals:

- \* NRPP-Natural Resources panel met on 19-21 June.
- \* NRPP-Threatened & Endangered Species panel met on 20-22 June.
- \* BRMD panel met on 5-8 June.
- \* WRD's panels meet the week of June 12 and June 19.

Results from these panels will be made available in July.

The Baseline Valuation Project estimates economic values for selected visitor activities in parks. The values are used in damage assessment under the Park System Resource Protection Act and other applications such as regulatory cost-benefit analysis. Beach use at PAIS, historic/cultural appreciation at FOSU, and scenic vista appreciation and other activities in ARCH, CANY, and NABR have been evaluated. The principal investigators determined the appropriate sampling and modeling. Survey instrument pretesting begins this summer at FOSU.

Survey instrument development for PAIS will be completed by the end of summer; pretesting begins in fall. Primary data will be collected in FOSU and PAIS in 2001. Sample frame and survey instrument development for the Southern Utah units will begin this year. The project is to be completed in early 2002. Proposed Heavy Duty Diesel Standards At a 29 June public meeting, the Air Resources Division presented testimony in support of EPA's proposed new standards to reduce nitrogen oxides and particulate matter emissions from heavy-duty diesel engines and vehicles sold after 2007. These standards also require a reduction in the amount of sulfur allowed in diesel fuel beginning in 2006. The division supports these regulations because they will reduce adverse effects from ozone and particulate matter emissions on park resources. In addition, lowering diesel sulfur content will have a more immediate effect on sulfate formation, a constituent of urban and regional haze. Bruce Polkowsky--303-987-6944.

Paleontological Scoping at Arches During May 2-5, a team of staff from Arches NP, Capitol Reef NP, Dinosaur NM, Fossil Butte NM, Zion NP, and the Utah Geological Survey, along with members of the Utah Friends of Paleontology, helped Arches NP with a paleontological scoping session and field inventories. The Geologic Resources Division assembled the team in response to a request for technical. More than 10 new fossil localities-including a sauropod skeleton, dinosaur tracks, and possible pterosaur feeding traces-had been discovered and documented in Arches NP. A paleontology intern sponsored by the Geological Society of America will continue the paleontological resource inventory in Arches NP during June and July.

#### PROFESSIONAL MEETING ATTENDANCE/PAPERS/TRAINING

Annual Natural Resources Meeting The servicewide meeting of Natural Resource personnel was held on 13-14 June in Missoula, Montana, and hosted by the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) at the University of Montana. Kathy Tonneson is stationed there as the NPS representative on campus (and only agency representative to date). Kathy and others presented valuable information about CESU benefits and the logistics involved. There were also presentations about the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute and Carhart Center on the same campus. Information on Natural Resource Challenge activities dominated the meeting. Other major topics were contemplated changes to resource planning processes and impairment and environmental quality issues-the latter two as they relate to revised management policies, implementing the Omnibus National Park Service Management Act (aka Thomas bill), and improving NEPA implementation. The Natural Resource Challenge Council, consisting of superintendents and regional directors, met on 22-23 June in Washington, D.C. to discuss a variety of topics relating to the implementation and accountability of the Natural Resource Challenge. Discussions included current and FY2001 funding, FY2002 planning, refinements of a communication plan, the Discovery 2000 Conference, science in the parks, and potential partnership opportunities. The meeting was well attended and several ideas and action items were generated to help build Servicewide, congressional and public support for the long-term goals of the Natural Resource Challenge. The next meeting of the Challenge Council is scheduled for November. Contact: Abby Miller, 202-208-4650.

Natural Resource Data Management Training The I&M Program sponsored a workshop in Denver to develop a data management training course that focuses on good data management practices in the context of existing natural resource and NPS information systems and databases. The workshop was organized as a "train the trainers" venue and emphasized data and information access as well as basic and applied database, GIS, metadata, and document management training. The workshop included hands-on exercises with Synthesis, a variety of GIS data, NPSpecies, Dataset Catalog, metadata, NRBIB, and NR Intranet and will be offered to NPS data managers and resource staff two times during FY 2001 at times and locations yet to be determined.

NPS Presents Papers at Two Conferences The Geological Survey and the American Association of State Geologists hosted the annual Digital Mapping Techniques Conference in Lexington, KY. Tim Connors of the Geologic Resources Division and Steve Fryer of the Inventory and Monitoring Program presented a paper titled "The National Park Service Digital Geologic Map Model: Transformation from Paper to Digital, Featuring Legends, Cross Sections, Map Notes and Keyword Searchability." The paper addresses how geology is being incorporated into Geographic Information Systems to efficiently display geologic data. The paper was well received by conference attendees interested in adapting aspects of the NPS digital geologic map model. NPS presented case histories and participated in panel presentations in a recent workshop on damage assessment and restoration sponsored by the American Petroleum Institute and NOAA. Personnel from the Environmental Quality Division's ERPA unit discussed recent use of cooperative assessments in reaching restoration goals under the National Park System

Resources Protection Act and other damage assessment provisions.

#### STAFF CHANGES

**New Air Quality Monitoring Specialist** The Air Resources Division welcomed David Maxwell to its staff this week. David assumed the air quality Monitoring Specialist's duties of the division. He will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the division's particle, optical, and gaseous monitoring networks, coordinate field and contractor operations, and participate in data analysis and quality assurance. David is a Colorado resident but comes from Saudi Aramco (Saudi Arabia) where he had similar responsibilities. He also completed tours with EPA and the Office of Surface Mining.

**New Geomorphologists** Geomorphologists Harold Pranger and Deanna Greco joined the Geologic Resources Division to assist parks with land restoration and surficial process and natural-resource issues and to support servicewide restoration programs. Pranger was previously with the Office of Surface Mining and Greco with the Bureau of Land Management. The addition of their expertise greatly enhances the capabilities of the division and the Natural Resource Program Center in providing services to parks in disturbed-lands and surficial geologic issues. Other ongoing recruitment include a paleontologist and a coastal geomorphologist.

**Endangered Species Specialist** The Biological Resources Management Division advertised for a GS-11/12 Endangered Species Specialist with a background in a zoological science. The announcement is for status and non-status individuals. The announcement can be found at USAJOBS and closes on 7 July.