

ADNRSS Monthly Report–March 2011

Heads Up

Training on Analyzing and Transforming Conflict to Create Sustainable Solutions for People and Wildlife: Registration is now open for a four-day intensive training by NPS partner the Human-Wildlife Conflict Collaboration. The course draws upon best practices from conflict resolution to assist participants in addressing complex conservation conflicts and cultivating sustainable conservation solutions. It will be held November 1–4, 2011, at Hawai'i Volcanoes NP immediately preceding The Wildlife Society annual conference and is endorsed by The Wildlife Society Human Dimensions Working Group. For more information, visit <http://www.humanwildlifeconflict.org/Training.htm>. (Contact: Kirsten Leong, 970-267-2191)

Accomplishments

Geologic, Energy, and Minerals Management Survey: The Geologic Resources Division (GRD) recently surveyed park staff online to identify geologic, energy, and mineral resource management needs in the

NPS. One hundred and forty-five responses representing 143 NPS units show significant needs: 82% of respondents indicated that their park contains geologic resources of interest to visitors, and 61% indicated their park contains potential geologic hazards, yet only 24% indicated their park has geologic staff. Summary results were presented at the 2011 George Wright Society Conference, and a full report of the information will be completed within six months. (Contact: Rebecca Port, 303-969-2154)

New Wayside Protects Visitor Health: A collaborative outreach effort at Greenbelt Park helps educate park visitors of risks associated with tick-borne disease and measures they can take to protect themselves. This effort was initiated by a congressional inquiry about risks from ticks and Lyme disease. The NPS Office of Public Health, Risk Management, and Integrated Pest Management Programs for NCR and Biological Resource Management Division [BRMD]), Interpretation programs; Department of Defense; and State of Maryland Department of Health assisted the park in educating employees on risks associated with ticks via on-site training, conference calls, and development of the wayside exhibit. (Contact: Carol DiSalvo, 202-513-7183)

Congaree NP Supports Outstanding Young Scientists: On March 18, the Old-Growth Bottomland Forest Research and Education Center presented six “Young Ecologist Awards,” made possible by the Robert Charles Mitchell memorial fund, at the 55th Annual Region II Science and Engineering Fair. The event was hosted by the University of South Carolina and featured both junior (5th–8th grades) and senior (9th–12th grades) divisions. This year 700 students submitted science fair projects. Several of these projects will go on to represent South Carolina and the United States in the upcoming Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Los Angeles (May 8–13). (Contact: David Shelley, 803-647-3966)

Progress

Progress on Oil and Gas Siting MOU: The EPA, NPS, BLM, FWS, and FS have finalized the memorandum of understanding for air quality analyses related to oil and gas siting. Agency managers held a call on March 31 to review the MOU commitments and framework for MOU implementation. The target date for signature by the department secretaries is now April 29. (Contact: John Bunyak, 303-969-2818)

Briefing to NPS Scorecard Advisory Group: The Inventory and Monitoring Division (IMD) chief provided a briefing for the comptroller’s Scorecard Advisory Group on March 2, 2011. He gave an overview of the proposed vision and framework for State of the Park Reporting and how it relates to Resource Stewardship Strategies and the comptroller’s scorecard. The National Leadership Council reached a consensus last year to “bring State of the Park reporting function back to NPS, learn from the Parks Canada model to step up and synthesize our monitoring efforts, and determine how to best meld those efforts with management plans.” State of the Park reports will provide a snapshot summary of the condition of natural resources, cultural resources, visitor services, and facilities/infrastructure. (Contact: Steve Fancy, 970-225-3571)

Vegetation Database Update: BRMD staff worked cooperatively with Colorado State University to develop an improved version of the PLOTS database, released March 31, 2011. The NPS Vegetation Inventory Program uses the PLOTS database for storing inventory field vegetation plot and accuracy assessment data. The NPS PLOTS 3.2 database, along with a detailed user’s manual, is available for download at <http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/inventory/veg/plots.cfm>. (Contact: Tammy Cook, 970-267-7201)

Public Meetings on Dog Management Plan/DEIS at Golden Gate NRA: In early March Environmental Quality Division (EQD) staff participated in four public meetings on the Golden Gate dog management plan/draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). Over 1,400 people attended; the park has received several thousand comments. A first amendment demonstration was held outside one meeting where 200 people protested the park's preferred alternative, which reduces off-leash dog use from current levels. The public comment period has been extended six weeks, through May 30, for a total of 135 days. (Contact: Michael B. Edwards, 303-969-2694)

Collaborative South Florida Mapping Strategy: The South Florida and Caribbean I&M Network and Everglades and Big Cypress NPs have agreed on a cost sharing and collaborative vegetation mapping strategy with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The unique grid mapping effort includes helicopter sampling to verify types and mapping units. Mapping will meet and vary slightly from the standards, and the park is pleased with the ability of the coordination and design to deliver accurate products in South Florida's challenging sampling environments. These data will support the vegetative response to critical water flows contested in the South Florida public lands. Products will meet national standards by matching local types to the National Vegetation Classification Standard. (Contact: Karl Brown, 970-225-3591)

State of Utah Explains Details of Arches NP Water Rights Agreement: On March 1, 2011, the State of Utah, with the NPS, discussed the provisions of the draft water rights agreement for Arches NP at the monthly Grand County Council Meeting in Moab, Utah. The agreement recognizes NPS federal reserved water rights for in-situ uses of surface and groundwater, establishes diversion and volume limits for future NPS consumptive use, subordinates to existing uses, and limits future state uses near the park. The state and NPS plan to have the final water rights agreement ready for the governor's signature in FY 2011. (Contact: Jim Harte, 970-225-3538)

Big Bend–Rio Grande Collaboration for Transboundary Landscape Conservation: The Commission on Environmental Cooperation recently funded a two-year effort to help conserve the unique biological diversity of the Big Bend–Rio Bravo region of Mexico and the U.S. along 250 river miles of the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo and the surrounding Chihuahuan Desert grasslands. The intent is to expand and facilitate bi-national partnership and collaboration to develop a science-based conservation strategy for environmental flows and river rehabilitation; expand strategic planning and implementation of exotic and invasive plant species management; and facilitate the development of sustainable economic and social tools for integrating the local communities of Boquillas and Coahuila, Mexico and others along the border region. (Contact: Mark Wondzell, 970-225-3512)

Student Fellowships for Work in Glacier NP: The Rocky Mountain CESU and Crown of the Continent Research Learning Center (RLC) awarded fellowships to three students working on natural resources projects. The new Jerry O'Neal fellows include Brett Addis, graduate student at University of Montana, for "Conservation of Amphibian Diversity in Glacier National Park: Risks of Hybridization and Disease to an Isolated Species"; Matt Wilson, graduate student at University of Montana, for "Are alpine freshwater macroinvertebrates shifting upstream in response to climate change"; and Kelsie Delaney, undergraduate student at University of Wyoming, for "Do Tourists Bug Bacteria? The effects of human presence and pollution on bacterial diversity and distribution in the streams of Glacier National Park." (Contact: Tara Carolin, 406-888-7919)

Reports and Publications

Statistical Abstract 2010: The National Park Service Public Use Statistics Office released the Statistical Abstract 2010, which details actual National Park System visitation in 2010 and forecasts for 2011 and 2012. Visitation statistics are broken down by unit, region, state, and other categories. System-wide recreational visits in 2010 totaled 281 million, down by 1.5 percent from the previous year due to factors such as severe weather and no presidential inauguration. Located in the Social Science Division under the Natural Resource Stewardship and Science Directorate, the Public Use Statistics Office collects, audits, analyzes visitation data provided monthly by individual NPS units. Users can download customized visitation reports and statistical abstracts dating back to 1904 from the website at <http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/stats.cfm>. (Contact: Butch Street, 303-343-2704)

Protecting Eastern Forest Integrity: The Northeast, National Capital, Southeast, and Midwest regions released *Rapid Response to Insect, Disease & Abiotic Impacts: Procedures to Protect Forest Integrity in Units of the National Park System within Eastern Forests*. The electronic document provides quick assistance to identify and manage insect, pathogen, and abiotic threats with a focus on invasive exotic species. Some of the features include: (1) dichotomous key to determine likely pest problems; (2) pest descriptions and associated internet links; (3) summarized process of integrated pest management; (4) checklist for implementing pest/pathogen response plans; (5) summary (and whole texts) of law and policy for pest management; and (6) technical assistance contacts for each region. Target audiences are practitioners and decision-makers. The document is available at http://www.nps.gov/nero/ipm./Forest-Insect-n-Disease-Rapid-Response-Plan_final-2010-08-05.pdf. (Contact: Wayne Millington, 814-863-8352)

Guilford Courthouse NMP Geologic Resources Inventory Report: The report identified geologic issues, described geologic features and processes, and provided a brief geologic history of the park. The report was written for resource managers and individuals with a science background, not necessarily one in geology, and complements the park's digital geologic map. GRD's Geologic Resources Inventory Team has now completed reports for 88 parks. The team's products include scoping meeting summaries, digital geologic map data, and geologic reports. Products are available at the GRI website at http://www.nature.nps.gov/geology/inventory/gre_publications.cfm (Contact: Jason Kenworthy, 303-987-6923)

Soundscape Research Published in *Leisure Sciences*: Lelaina Marin, outdoor recreation planner with the Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division (NSNSD), and co-authors Peter Newman (Colorado State University), Jerry Vaske (Colorado State University), Robert Manning (University of Vermont), and David Stack (Statue of Liberty NM) have published a paper in *Leisure Sciences* (volume 3, issue 2, pages 147–161). The paper, "Motivation and Acceptability Norms of Human Caused Sound in Muir Woods National Monument," shows that visitor motivations for a quiet setting can affect acceptability of different sound conditions and offers recommendations for setting management standards to meet soundscape objectives. (Contact: Lelaina Marin, 970-225-3552)

Northern Great Plains I&M Network Paleontological Resource Summary Report: The GRD, in cooperation with the Inventory and Monitoring (I&M) Program, finalized the paleontological resource inventory and monitoring summary report for the Northern Great Plains Network. The report used literature reviews and interviews to provide park managers with baseline paleontological resource data for fossil resource stewardship. Paleontological resource summary reports have now been prepared for 31 I&M networks. Thus far, the reports have documented fossil occurrences in more than 230 park units and continue to build baseline paleontological knowledge throughout the NPS. Due to the sensitivity regarding fossil resource locations, the report is available for NPS staff only through NRInfo (<https://nrinfo.nps.gov/Reference.mvc/Profile?Code=2169091>). (Contact: Jason Kenworthy,

303-987-6923)

Cattail Population Genetics Publication: The Great Lakes Research and Education Center has facilitated research on the population genetics of invasive cattails in Great Lakes-area parks. Recent results, which suggest how clonal stands of cattails spread through a wetland, were published in the journal *Wetlands* (<http://springerlink.com/content/0277-5212/?k=Travis+2011>). (Contact: Joy Marburger, 219-395-1544)

PNW-CESU Revives its Quarterly Newsletter: After a four-year hiatus, the Pacific Northwest CESU has revived its on-line newsletter (<http://www.cfr.washington.edu/research.cesu/news.htm>). Current items include the recent admission of two new federal (USACE and NOAA) and one academic partner (Central Washington University) to the CESU and the upcoming 2nd Annual Pacific Northwest Climate Science Conference in June. (Contact: Chris Lauver, 206-685-7404)

Presentations, Conferences, and Workshops

George Wright Society Conference: NRSS staff from all divisions participated in the biennial George Wright Society (GWS) Conference on Parks, Protected Areas & Cultural Sites in New Orleans, Louisiana, on March 14–18, 2011. Staff presented papers, coordinated sessions, and participated in panels on many different natural resource and social science topics. The conference was very successful with over 1,100 attendees. More information about the conference is available at <http://www.georgewright.org/gws2011>; the conference proceedings will be published on the GWS website as a free, downloadable e-book in PDF format.

NPS Represented on ASBPA Federal Panel: GRD's coastal engineer participated in a federal agencies panel at the 2011 American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) Coastal Summit Meeting in Washington, D.C., on March 1, 2011. Other federal agencies that participated were USACE, NOAA, BOEMRE, and FEMA. The panel answered questions about pressing coastal hazards faced by the varied agencies, partnerships to address these concerns, and tools being implemented to help make communities more resilient. NPS staff clarified NPS policies related to beach nourishment and situations when it can be considered as an option for resource restoration or protection. More information about the summit is available at http://www.asbpa.org/conferences/sum_11_sessions.htm. (Contact: Jodi Eshleman, 215-597-1782)

NSF Climate Education Partnership Workshop: The second pilot workshop for the NSF-funded climate change education partnership was held on March 31 at Palmetto Bay, Florida. This workshop included NPS staff from Everglades NP, Biscayne NP, Big Cypress NP, and the South Florida/Caribbean I&M Network as well as partners from FWS, NOAA, and educational institutions from K-12 to university level. One goal was to join NPS partners and stakeholders in a dialogue about how to communicate climate change in a place-based setting. The workshop was followed by site visits to some of the parks, and a summary report will be made available shortly. The next workshop in this series is scheduled for May 25, 2011, at the South Interior Building in Washington, D.C. (Contact: Angie Richman, 970-267-2136)

Climate Smart: NPS staff members participated, via teleconference to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in an experts working group meeting on "Climate Smart" adaptation on March 22–23. The goal of the working group was to provide guidance on implementing natural resource management projects that are robust to climate and other environmental changes, following the model that produced the highly successful climate change vulnerability assessment guide. The working group was initiated by the

National Wildlife Federation and consists of about 20 invited federal, state, and NGO staff. The plan is to hold a summit in June and have a fully reviewed draft report ready by the end of 2011. (Contact: John Gross, 970-267-2111)

National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy Workshop: The FY 2010 DOI, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act Conference report urged the Council on Environmental Quality and DOI to develop a national climate adaptation strategy for fish, wildlife, plants, and related ecological processes, which will include input from federal, state, tribal and non-governmental partners. BRMD, CCRP, and Air Resources Division (ARD) staff represented the NPS at the workshop in Alexandria, Virginia, serving on technical teams of experts on forest, grassland, shrublands, deserts, tundra, inland waters, coastal and marine habitats. The national strategy is due for completion in 2012. (Contact: Tanya Shenk, 970-267-2193)

RM-CESU Represented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archaeology: The Rocky Mountains CESU cultural specialist, Pei-Lin Yu, presented two papers—"Scale, organization and sustainability in traditional salmon fishing: insights from the ancient technology of the Upper Columbia River" and "A Snapshot of Climate Change-Related Activity in the NPS's Archeology Program"—at the annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology in Sacramento. She was joined by RM-CESU cooperators from Utah State University, University of Montana, and University of Colorado Boulder. She also served as a panelist on "Archeology in the Media" and coordinated the award ceremony for the 2011 winner of the John L. Cotter Award for Excellence in NPS Archaeology, Dr. Douglas Wilson of Fort Vancouver NHS. (Contact: Pei-Lin Yu, 406-243-2660)

Training Offered

Climate Change Webinar: As part of the "Climate Change in National Parks" webinar series, Wendy Abshire of the Cooperative Program for Operational Meteorology, Education and Training (COMET) program introduced attendees to free web-based multimedia educational materials available through their service, a part of the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research, at <http://www.comet.ucar.edu/>. (Contact: Angie Richman, 970-267-2136)

Standards and Procedures for Basic Inventories : Several Ft. Collins IMD staff members met in Denver on March 1 with staff from the three active inventories: vegetation, soils and geology. The purpose was to provide the inventory coordinators with a briefing and some training on standards and procedures for formatting and uploading products to NRInfo, getting reports into the three report series, getting data into the inventory tracking database, and GIS and metadata standards and procedures they should use. (Contact: Margaret Beer, 970-267-2168)

Vegetation Inventory Training at Jean Lafitte: BRMD vegetation inventory staff trained park and Gulf Coast I&M staff at Jean Lafitte NHP&P, collecting field validation data to assess the overall accuracy of the existing non-digital vegetation map of the Barataria Unit created by the USGS National Wetlands Research Center. If the USGS map proves to meet vegetation inventory accuracy criteria, it will be converted to a digital GIS database, which would accelerate completion of the inventory at the park.. (Contact: Karl Brown, 970-225-3591)

Climate Friendly Parks Workshops: NRSS staff hosted Climate Friendly Parks workshops at Indiana Dunes, Sleeping Bear Dunes, and the Flagstaff area parks. These workshops offer the parks an opportunity to assess their carbon footprints and create climate action plans. (Contact: Julie Thomas McNamee, 202-513-7182)

Staff News

New Air Resources Division Chief: As of March 27, 2011, Carol McCoy is the new ARD chief. Carol is a 30-year veteran of the National Park Service. For the past eight years, she was chief of the GRD Planning, Evaluation and Permits Branch, where she provided leadership and program direction to a multi-disciplinary staff that aids park managers in resolving geologic resource and minerals management issues. Carol has also been leading a cross-cutting effort and team of experts across the Service in maximizing the NPS ability to protect parks and influence outcomes in support of the nation's clean energy goals. (Contact: Carol McCoy, 303-969-2096)

New NPS Staff Working with CESUs: Several new staff members will be working the CESU network. Dr. Tim Watkins, science and education coordinator with the CCRP, is the new national coordinator for the NPS CESUs and RLCs. Cheri Yost (formerly of Rocky Mountain NP) is the new program coordinator for the national CESU network. Jordan Smith, a research fellow, continues to assist in the national CESU office. Meeting notes and other materials from the CESU coordinators' meeting on March 18 are available at <http://www.cfc.umt.edu/cesu/NEWCESU/Postings/default.htm>. (Contact: Kathy Tonnessen, 406-243-4449)

New Renewable Energy and Climate Change Specialist: Sarah Quinn has joined the NPS Renewable Energy Team. She is duty-stationed in Denver as a member of the GRD. Previously, Sarah worked for the California State Office of the BLM where she was a renewable energy program and environmental coordinator. In addition to her renewable energy background, Sarah is an attorney, member of the Colorado Bar, and Presidential Management Fellow. (Contact: Sarah Quinn, 303-969-2094)

New Environmental Protection Specialist: Dan Niosi began work as an EQD environmental protection specialist in the Academy Place office. Dan's previously worked at the Denver Service Center where he was a project manager for planning in a wide range of parks, from Gates of the Arctic and Denali in Alaska to Morristown NHP in New Jersey. Before coming to the NPS, Dan spent 10 years in the consulting industry where, as a project manager, he supported NPS planning and compliance efforts, including ungulate, oil and gas, and off-road vehicle management plans/EISs. (Contact: Pat Walsh, 303-987-6620)

New Administrative Assistant Joins NSNSD: The Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division welcomes Administrative Assistant Judy Foy. Judy comes to them from the Bureau of Reclamation human resources. She has worked as an environmental specialist with the Disaster Assistant Employee Program of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. (Contact: Karen Trevino, 970-225-3563)