

**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, NATURAL RESOURCE
STEWARDSHIP AND SCIENCE
MONTHLY REPORT FOR May 2001**

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

Panels Review Project Proposals – Review panels have made recommendations for various NRPP and Water Resource categories of projects. Project approvals are expected in early June. Results will be posted on the web, with an electronic message about the location of the results transmitted by mid-June.

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) Response Planning The Biological Resource Management Division and the National Incident Management Team collaborated to prepare Interim Foot-and-Mouth Disease Prevention and Response Plans for the Park Service. The two plans, the first developed by federal land agencies since the outbreak of the disease this year in Britain, was presented to the DOI Committee developing a response for the Department. Members of other DOI agencies observed during the preparation of the plans. Scientists with USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the USGS Wildlife Health Center, as well as NPS science and operations staff reviewed draft documents and revisions were submitted to the Director on May 9. The Interim plans call for the establishment of FMD coordinators at NPS units and at the regional level. The goal is for parks to be ready if the disease should be found in North America, and to insure that the mission of the Park Service is not compromised by control measures undertaken. Both plans are available on the NPS Intranet site.

Midwest Region Natural Resource Meeting Held - The Midwest Region held a natural resource meeting April, 3-5, 2000. An entire day was devoted to a session on vital signs monitoring and network presentations. At this session Bob Higgins, GRD, presented an overview on the geologic resources inventory and monitoring activities of the Division and provided an introduction to utilizing the geosindicator checklist as a tool for selecting geological indicators of rapid environmental change. This tool can be used in vital signs monitoring network scoping meetings to evaluate geological processes that may need to be monitored as a vital sign.

Natural Resource Advisory Group The Natural Resource Advisory Group met at Shenandoah National Park the week of May 7. Several modifications to project funding administration were recommended. The strategy for implementing the air quality monitoring component of the Natural Resource Challenge was reviewed. They reviewed the new research permitting process and made recommendations for some minor modifications. They also reviewed a park web page template on resources and other aspects of Natural Resource Challenge implementation. The NRAG was asked to pre-review a Director's Order related to CERLA, NERDA, and section 19jj of the Resource Protection Act. The group also discussed impairment. A mechanism has been set in place to provide more detailed guidance on the topic, including a steering committee and a wider committee of superintendents, natural and cultural resource

specialists, environmental compliance personnel, policy officials, and other program representatives. Minutes of the meeting will be attached to the June monthly report.

Discovery 2000 Natural Resource Track Plenary Tapes Tapes of Dr. Peter Raven's presentation, excerpts from Dr. E.O. Wilson's presentation, and the question and answer session with both scientists have been sent to associate regional directors for natural resources, with a request that they be made available for loan to parks. Copies have also been sent to Albright Training Center, the National Conservation Training Center and the Conservation Studies Institute at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHS.

Three Agencies Join in Training Course - A Bureau of Land Management Cave Management Training Course was held in Carlsbad, New Mexico, with participation by the Park Service and the Forest Service. The staff from Geologic Resources Division and the Denver Service Center instructed several of the course modules. The course was designed last year at the BLM National Training Center with NPS assistance. This was the first cave management training course for the BLM. Two employees from Carlsbad Caverns National Park attended the course.

Binational Meeting on Amistad Cooperative Fisheries Management Plan Held in Mexico

-
A draft Binational Cooperative Fisheries Management Plan (BCFMP) was recently completed during a meeting of the NPS, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and representatives from Mexico in Saltillo, Mexico. The BCFMP calls for binational cooperation in the monitoring, stocking, harvesting, and management of fisheries in the Amistad Reservoir and sets jointly agreeable long-term goals for the management of recreational and commercial fisheries. The plan identifies target species and establishes protocols for continued cooperation. Lack of coordination in fishery management between Texas and Mexico has led to a variety of species introductions and uncertainty regarding the numbers of fish being stocked and harvested. This plan will be the first binational effort to establish a coordinated fisheries management program on the Rio Grande.

Heartland Aquatic/Riparian Workshop Held in Hot Springs, AR - The Midwest Region Heartland Aquatic/ Riparian Workshop was held in Hot Springs, AR, April 24-26. The goals of the workshop were to develop specific monitoring standards, objectives, and questions, and to identify and list specific indicators. These indicators are then ranked by applying scientific criteria. Indicators were biological, physical, and chemical. Representatives from OZAR, BUFF, ARPO, CUVA, HOSP, EFMO, and PIPE presented the critical issues in their respective parks. Others in attendance included representatives from the Midwest Region, NRPC (including GRD and WRD), USGS, and researchers from several universities and colleges.

HEADS UP

General Meeting A Servicewide meeting of natural resource representatives will be held

in conjunction with the Natural Areas Association meeting at Cape Canaveral Florida the week of October 1. Watch for details.

Technical Assistance Call A call for technical assistance requests for the Natural Resource Program Center has been forwarded to regions.

PROGRESS

Meeting of Federal Land Managers and EPA on Regional Haze Planning - Representatives of the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency met in Denver to discuss the multi-state planning activities now underway to address regional haze in federal Class I areas. The meeting covered ways to enhance communications among the federal agencies, the environmental goals shared by the agencies, and key technical issues which need to be addressed in a consistent manner nationally. As a result of this meeting, EPA will host periodic discussions on topics such as monitoring, air quality modeling, and emissions inventory development.

Geologic Process Scoping Kicks Off With Fire Island Meeting - The first geologic process scoping meeting (GPRA Ib4) in 2001 was held at Fire Island National Seashore April 24-25. Bob Higgins and Carol McCoy represented Geologic Resources Division. The group participants identified thirteen geologic processes and four geoindicators. The four geoindicators are: (1) Dune formation and reactivation; (2) Relative sea level change; (3) Shoreline position; and, (4) Wetlands extent, structure, and hydrology. A report will be submitted to the NPS Strategic Planning Office which will include recommendations for long-term geologic monitoring and research needs.

California Air Quality Report Available - In early May, the ARD received copies of the final report entitled *Assessment of Air Quality and Air Pollutant Impacts in Class I National Parks of California*. The report summarizes emissions, transport, ambient monitoring, and air quality-related ecological and visibility effects information for California, with chapters dedicated to each of the NPS Class I areas in the state. In addition, the report provides recommendations for future air quality research and monitoring. The report will be posted on the NPS website at <http://www2.nature.nps.gov/ard/pubedhp.html>. Copies of the report can be obtained from Tonnie Maniero at (303) 969-2806.

Big Thicket Operator Completes Plugging Phase of Lease Abandonment and Reclamation Project - Merit Energy plugged the last well of a four-well plugging project. Removal of surface equipment is also nearing completion. Merit plugged all wells by NPS and State of Texas standards. In addition, a representative for the Railroad Commission of Texas witnessed the setting or testing of each plug. The staff of Big Thicket monitored and documented the plugging as it progressed. Merit Energy will next submit a plan for NPS approval to sample for contaminants. Results from the sampling will be used to refine the reclamation plan.