

Subject: ADNRSS MONTHLY REPORT-OCTOBER

FYI from Abby Miller.....report on the latest happenings from the NR Associate Director's Office.

Forward Header

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NEW DEVELOPMENTS

COUNCIL ON UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH. The Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) briefed the Associate Director on the CUR organization and mission and invited the Directorate to participate in a dialogue to be hosted by the National Science Foundation April 15-17, 1999. The CUR mission is to promote research by undergraduate students in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering at primarily undergraduate institutions. The CUR see research in parks as one outlet for its efforts to promote research by undergraduate students. The CUR April dialogue will focus on federal science policy issues, research funding, and new opportunities for research, including community based research support and participation. NPS sees partnership opportunities involving colleges near parks, Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units, and cooperative research facilities as possible ways to make parks more hospitable for research.

OVERVIEW OF CORAL REEF AREAS UNDER NPS JURISDICTION COMPLETED. In preparation for the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force meeting, the Water Resources Division, with the assistance of the Natural Resources Information Division, completed an assessment and overview document of all coral reef resources under NPS protection. This document provides an overview of the areas, level of protection received, types of resources included and a summary of management issues. Copies of the document are available from Jim Tilmant at the Water Resources Division in Fort Collins (970-225-3547).

INVASIVE PLANTS. The fact book "Invasive Plants Changing the Landscape of America" has been published! Produced by the Federal Interagency Committee for the Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds, this publication is chock full of interesting information about invasive plant impacts to resources in the U.S. It provides individuals and decision makers with information about the extent of invasive plant impacts and is a great resource for anyone doing a briefing, writing an article, or including something about invasive plants in an RMP or other park document. We will send a copy to every park superintendent, park

chief of resource management, and each regional director. If you want an individual copy, please contact Wilma Watkins via cc:mail and include your mailing address in your message.

INCREASED SUPPORT FOR PARK WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT PROJECTS. The FY99 budget recently passed by Congress included a \$12 million increase in the USGS budget for water quality monitoring and assessment work as part of the President's Clean Water Action Program.

Of this increase, \$2.5 million is earmarked for USGS water quality assessment projects in National Parks. As part of the FY99 ADNRSS Unified Project Call, 35 projects were selected for funding under this new program. All projects stem from needs identified in park Resource Management Plans and were developed cooperatively between parks and USGS District Offices. Selected projects fall into three classes: long-term monitoring studies, intensive/synoptic studies, and technical assistance. The Water Resources Division is coordinating servicewide implementation of this new program.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

DRINKING WATER SOURCE ASSESSMENT AND PROTECTION AGREEMENT IS SIGNED.

In accordance with the President's Clean Water Action Plan, a Federal multi-agency source water agreement has been finalized. Agencies of 10 Federal departments, including the National Park Service and other Interior agencies, signed on to cooperate and partner with state, tribal and local governments in their efforts to assess and protect the nation's drinking water sources. The agreement ensures full Federal cooperation with states as they fulfill the 1996 Safe Drinking Water Act mandate to assess the potential threats to each public drinking water system from ground water and surface water sources. The agreement will make valuable data and expertise on drinking water source quality more accessible to drinking water quality managers at the state, tribal and local government level and to the public. Regional Forums will be held in 1999 across the country to facilitate partnership building and to ensure implementation of the Federal assistance that the agreement promises.

DISTURBED LANDS RESTORATION AT SLEEPING BEAR DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE.

In response to a technical assistance request from the park, Geologic Resource Division staff designed the restoration of a 10-acre sand and gravel pit located on one of the park's main roads. The Division also provided to the park "contract ready" design documents, a detailed project description, and site preparation and management recommendations including suggestions for heavy equipment operation, soil handling and revegetation.

NNL PROGRAM. The revised NNL regulations were transmitted to OMB; the draft 1998 Section 8 Report was mailed out for review; a commitment was made to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to update the Section 8 Report (surface mining threats) for Cinder Cones Natural Area NNL, CA; and the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks met with Walapai Tribal leaders on November 3 about Grapevine Mesa Joshua Trees NNL, AZ.

HEADS UP

PROPOSED MINING OPERATION EA ANNOUNCED IN FEDERAL REGISTER. Joshua Tree

National Park published a notice of availability in the Federal Register of the environmental assessment (EA) for a plan of operations

proposed by the First Class Miners Club. The Club is seeking access through the park to the mining claims that it owns outside the park. Park staff worked closely with the Geologic Resources Division as well as members of the First Class Miners Club to fully address this complicated access issue. The park will accept comments on the EA until November 22.

INVESTIGATOR'S ANNUAL REPORT SOFTWARE. The servicewide software for gathering and tracking annual research reports was completely redesigned. The new system allows investigators to enter their reports through the Internet. Park and regional staff responsible for managing the IAR process are required to access the NPS Intranet to verify new reports, look up park reports gathered since 1991, and search the servicewide IAR database. Instructions for accessing the new IAR software application will be distributed by the end of November. They will include an explanation of how parks may gather reports from investigators that do not use the Internet. Park staff should not send the old IAR software to investigators. Please contact Tim Goddard at (970) 225-3543 for more information.

MEETINGS

NPS WATER/AQUATIC RESOURCES PROFESSIONALS MEETING. The Water Resources Division hosted a meeting of NPS water/aquatic resource professionals in Fort Collins, Colorado on October 26-30, 1998. The meeting, attended by over 50 NPS professionals, emphasized the integration of water-related disciplines to address a variety of water resource issues facing park units. Participants included NPS - Water Resources Division, Air Resources Division and Geologic Resources Division; USGS; Colorado State University; USEPA; and representatives from various NPS units. The agenda provided one day of presentations on integrating disciplines to achieve a more complete analysis of natural resources, a one day field trip along the Poudre River, and one day of 6 concurrent breakout sessions on various water-related themes.

COASTAL PARK SUPERINTENDENTS AND RESOURCE MANAGERS MEET, RATE COASTAL PROCESSES HIGH. Superintendents and Resource Managers from the Atlantic and Gulf Coast Parks met at Cape Cod National Seashore to discuss a wide range of issues. While numerous topics were addressed at the Superintendents' conference, including T&E species, coral reefs, beach nudity, off-road use, and coastal erosion, the focus was clearly on park authority to regulate activities. A subsequent meeting of the resource managers about long-term monitoring emphasized ongoing coastal processes as a central theme. While only 3 parks have active erosion monitoring, all mentioned coastal processes as a concern. The Geologic Resources Division proposed a servicewide coastal processes conference in late 1999.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY STEWARDSHIP SYMPOSIUM HELD AT EL MALPAIS NATIONAL MONUMENT. Sixty scientists, researchers, friends of the park, and speleologists attended the symposium, which was a great success and will provide focus for future research and enhance resource interpretation at the Monument. The workshops, stewardship panel and presentations covered a wide range of research and resource management topics. Particularly interesting presentations included those by: Diana Northrup (microbiology); Scott Baldrige (structural geology); and Dr. Henri Grissino-Mayer, recipient of the Monument's first Alton Lindsey Award for resource stewardship (tree ring study).

FIRST FEDERAL CORAL REEF TASK FORCE MEETING HELD AT BISCAYNE N.P. The

first

meeting of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, established by Executive Order 13089 calling for increased protection and management of our nations coral reef resources, was held at Biscayne National Park on October 19-21. The Task Force is co-chaired by Secretary Babbitt and the Secretary of Commerce. Associate Director Soukup, along with Superintendents Dick Frost (Biscayne) and Dick Ring (Everglades) attended the meeting. The Task Force's purpose is to coordinate agency mapping and monitoring programs; develop and implement fundamental scientific research; develop and implement conservation, mitigation and restoration programs; and implement appropriate strategies to promote worldwide coral reef conservation. The Task Force has established sub-committees to work within each of these areas. The National Park Service will be involved in several of the sub-committees.

THE NATURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY GROUP (NRAG) met in Park City, Utah in October. It addressed Small Park NRPP allocations and the status and recommendations for implementation structures for the Director's Natural Resource Initiative, among other issues. Minutes from the meeting will be posted on the Natural Resources bulletin board. If you do not have access to the bulletin board, natural resource personnel in Support Offices will have the minutes and can forward them to you.