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Subject: October Monthly Report

NATURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND SCIENCE
OCTOBER MONTHLY REPORT

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HEADS UP

KATHY DAVIS RECOGNIZED Southern Arizona Group Resource Manager
Kathy Davis received the Director's Natural Resource Stewardship Award for a Natural Resource Manager at the September Society for Ecological Restoration meeting in San Francisco. Kathy was recognized for her long efforts to bring Resource Careers to fruition. That effort built on the Natural Resources Professional Development Plan-nearly completed in 1994-added a Cultural Resource component, and expanded to produce a full range of classified position descriptions and career-ladders for numerous resource management disciplines. It is rare for a central office employee to receive the Director's a resource management award; awardees are nominated by regions and park personnel usually compete best for the award. Her receipt of the award is tribute to her determination over the last 5 years, and her expert leadership of the team of people she worked with to produce such widely influential results. The position descriptions and guidance are expected to be transmitted in the near future. Other award winners were included in last month's report.

USE OF RABIES VACINE A meeting between Acadia National Park and the State of Maine was held in October to discuss the possible use of an Oral Rabies Vaccine to prevent an out break of raccoon rabies from reaching Mount Desert Island, the park and communities on the island. This approach is being considered by the state as a means of reducing human risk and maintaining a rabies free racoon population on the island. The approach is still experimental and is being tried in areas along the Ohio/Pennsylvavania border, on the mainland adjacent to Cape Cod and is also proposed in an area of Fairfax County, Virginia. It has been tried in Cape May, NJ, an area of Anne Arundel County, MD, other areas. The issue at Acadia has not been resolved; there are significant NPS policy issues involved. Gary Johnston of the Natural Systems Management Office attended the meeting in Maine and is assisting the park in handling the issue. If any unit of the NPS is approached to participate in use of this vaccine or other vaccines please contact Mike Coffey or Gary Johnston.

CLOSURE TO THE NAVAJO ISSUE: On October 14, 1999, the third and final sulfur dioxide (SO2) pollution "scrubber" began operating at the Navajo Generating Station in Page, Arizona. In 1986, the NPS identified the power plant as a likely contributor to visibility impairment at Grand Canyon NP, particularly during the wintertime. Subsequent intensive studies confirmed the link between SO2 from

the plant and haze in the park. In 1991, the plant owners agreed to install scrubbers to reduce SO₂ by 90%. A ceremony was held at the plant to celebrate the completion of the \$420 million project. Grand Canyon Superintendent, Rob Arnberger, and Air Resources Division Chief, Chris Shaver, spoke at the dedication ceremony.

ONE MORE COMING SOON -- On October 6, the owners of the Mojave Generating Station and environmental organizations announced an agreement to install a full suite of pollution controls on the power plant, located in Laughlin, Nevada. In 1997, the NPS identified Mojave as another likely contributor to visibility impairment at Grand Canyon NP. Shortly thereafter, the Sierra Club and National Parks and Conservation Association sued the plant owners over alleged violations of various emission limits at the plant. A consent decree has been filed in the case outlining an agreement to install SO₂, particulate matter, and nitrogen oxide pollution controls at the plant by 2006.

FOSSIL BUTTE WEBSITE WINS AWARD- Fossil Butte National Monument has been awarded the National Association of Interpretation (NAI) Award for Interpretive Media for the Fossil Butte extended website. The site was developed by GIP David Hays, currently a GIS specialist at Dinosaur National Park. Funding from the Geologic Resources Division's intern program enabled Fossil Butte to put together a winning project.

PRESS BRIEFING ON NATURAL RESOURCE CHALLENGE Deputy Director Deny Galvin, Associate Director Mike Soukup, Park Superintendents Doug Morris and Don Neubacher, and advisor Stan Albright met with about 15 press representatives on October 25 to provide them with information about the Natural Resource Challenge.

AIR FORCE AGREES TO CLEANUP MILITARY CANAL. After long resisting the desires of Biscayne National Park and other local groups, the Air Force has agreed to begin an expedited feasibility study to study options for cleaning up highly contaminated sediments in a Canal connecting Homestead Air Force Base and Biscayne Bay. Biscayne National Park and WRD staff have been actively involved in providing the technical information necessary to convince Air Force that the cleanup was necessary.

NATURAL RESOURCE ADVISORY GROUP MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS Meeting in Sante Fe, NM, the Natural Resource Advisory Group (NRAG) made recommendations to the Associate Director about the future direction of the GIS program, administration of Resource Management Plans in the coming year, and on other issues. Full minutes and recommendations from the meeting, held the week of October 25, will be appended to the November monthly report.

PEOPLE NEWS

Skip Ladd started duty in Denver as the Assistant Regional Director for Natural Resources and Science, replacing Dan Huff. Skip was with the FWS for 27 years. He worked on wildlife and bird issues in North Dakota, Washington DC, Alaska, California, and Denver. Most recently he was the FWS Assistant Regional Director for MT, WY, ND and SD operations. His new duties are being defined but he will work on major Natural Resource issues such as brucellosis in the Greater Yellowstone Area and other issues in the Intermountain Region. He will provide support to Parks and Regional Directorate on all types of natural resource issues.

PROGRESS

FLAG Report and Planned Workshop. The Federal Land Managers' Air Quality Related Values Work Group (FLAG) was formed to develop a more consistent approach for the Federal Land Managers (FLMs), i.e., National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, to evaluate air pollution effects on their resources. A Federal Register notice will announce the availability of the draft FLAG Phase I Report. The draft will

summarize technical and policy guidance for evaluating air quality related values and for completing and evaluating new source review permit applications. A public workshop is planned for December 15, 1999, in Denver. (John Bunyak 303-969-2818)

EPA INVOLVED IN SHENANDOAH AND GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS AIR QUALITY: EPA and Congressional Caucus Alerted to Air Pollution Issues at Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains: Growing concerns about air pollution problems at Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains NPs have stimulated increased efforts to inform regulators and legislators about the issues and potential solutions. Shenandoah Superintendent Doug Morris and other park staff met with regional and national EPA officials on October 18 to request more aggressive action to address park pollution problems. The following day, Acting Superintendent for Great Smoky Mountains NP Phil Francis and park staff briefed a regionally-focused Congressional caucus, chaired by Senator Fred Thompson (TN) on similar issues at Great Smoky Mountains NP. The message delivered was that pollution reductions beyond those required by current laws and regulations will be needed to restore resources at these parks.

DATA AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT: The Natural Resource Program Center drafted a plan for the integration of natural resource databases and information systems. Integrated systems allow faster and easier access to information that enables parks to incorporate information into decision making. Integration also reduces duplication of effort and simplifies user navigation through large volumes of information. In addition to integrating data, the Air Quality Information Management System (AQUIMS) is being enhanced to become a broader natural resource information system called Synthesis. Synthesis will serve as a single point of entry to data and information systems. From this single gateway, a user may view and integrate many types of information including text-based documents, photographic libraries, databases, spreadsheets, presentation graphics, GIS, bibliographies, internet-based information, and expert systems. A desktop and a web-based version of Synthesis are presently under development. Contact Bruce Nash for information.

BIG CYPRESS OIL AND GAS MANAGEMENT PLANNING EFFORT BEGINS- Big Cypress National Preserve is in the early stages of updating its Minerals Management Plan (now called an Oil and Gas Management Plan). The plan is being updated to include the expansion area lands and to revise specific plan provisions. The oil and gas management plan will take a programmatic approach that will direct oil and gas operators to protect park resources, values, and public health and safety by achieving NPS performance goals. The planning team will prepare a scoping newsletter and hold public scoping meetings in the near future. Contact Lisa Norby at 303-969-2318.

TWO ABANDONED MINES CLOSED AT THEODORE ROOSEVELT -- Two hazardous mine openings located in Theodore Roosevelt National Park near the town of Medora have been successfully plugged with polyurethane foam. The park maintenance team completed both hazardous opening closures in less than six hours with some technical assistance from the Geological Resources Division. Total material cost was about \$2,000.

IA WITH USGS: The Water Resources Division has recently negotiated a new five-year Interagency Agreement with the U.S. Geological Survey that is available to other NPS units to use. This agreement is a very broad-based agreement that covers both water and geologic investigations and research as well as mapping, surveying, remote sensing and information systems development. Any NPS areas that have a need for the type of work described above and want to use the U.S. Geological Survey to accomplish the work are welcome to use this agreement. For more information call Debi Cox, Program Analyst for the Water Resources Division at 970-225-3510 (or Email to Debi_Cox@NPS.gov).

WATER RESOURCES SCOPING REPORT FOR KATMAI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE. A Water Resources Scoping Report was completed for Katmai National Park and Preserve (KATM). This report includes an overview of KATM's natural environments and water-related issues, and identifies potential partnerships for future water-related projects. Recommendations in this report have led to a two-year funded project (FY00-FY01) to prepare a more comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan for KATM, which will include project statements that address issues presented in the scoping report. Copies of KATM's scoping report may be requested from Don Weeks (NPS-WRD) via cc:Mail or at (303) 987-6640.

MEETINGS/TRAINING

GIS ANNUAL MEETING. The GIS Coordinators held their annual meeting last week in Acadia National Park. Generally they were supportive of the proposed transfer of the WASO GIS position to ITC but recommended that Natural Resources still maintain a GIS coordinator position like other WASO program and the DSC offices. The organizational shift would not affect the WASO GIS budget allocations to regions. The Southeast Region will be hiring a GIS Coordinator this fiscal year. A planning committee was formed for a national GIS conference to be held in the next couple of years. Internet GIS technologies and applications were also discussed and a new NPS GIS web feature will be highlighted for National Geography Week in November.

MERCURY WORKSHOP: Everglades National Park and Water Resources Division staff actively participated in the State of Florida Workshop on Effects of Mercury on Wading Birds on October 6 and 7, 1999. Among the conclusions of the experts present was that it is unlikely that Florida can develop a scientifically defensible new mercury water quality criterion based on population-level effects on migratory wading birds, so the focus should be on individual-level effects and perhaps other wildlife. For more information, contact Roy Irwin, 970-225-3520.

OIL AND GAS TRAINING COURSE -. Staff from parks with oil and gas issues and regional offices with oil and gas program oversight responsibilities attended a Nonfederal Oil and Gas Production Operations and Compliance training course at Cuyahoga Valley NRA in September. The Geologic Resources Division conducted the three-day course. Instructors provided an overview of the 36 CFR 9B and other applicable regulations, production operations engineering and monitoring, pollution prevention, contamination assessment, and spill response.

MEETING ON PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES - Eleven park paleontologists and four superintendents attended an October 19th hosted by the Geologic Resources Division in Denver. The group agreed to: 1) prepare technical guidance to implement the new Servicewide paleo-GPRA goal, 2) identify opportunities for funding park geologic resource management needs through the Natural Resource Challenge, 3) initiate efforts to develop a Servicewide paleo database and seek NRPP funding to undertake a multi-park fossil inventory, and 4) continue efforts to influence the interagency report to Congress. A follow-up meeting will be held in 2000 (Bob Higgins, 303-969-2018).