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ADDITION - Water Resources Quarterly Report, July - September 1998

SERVICEWIDE

WRD staff reviewed and commented on a Federal Register notice proposing changes to the Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit program. WRD comments expressed strong concern that the proposal would greatly expand the number and types of water resources that would fall under the nationwide permit program, which has little or no review by other agencies or the public. WRD sent out notices to parks via the Natural Resource Bulletin Board, Regional/SO Water Resource Coordinators, and the August ADNRSS report encouraging park participation in the Corps' District permit conditioning process. Each of the Corps' 38 Districts is conducting public hearings to develop regional conditions. If these new nationwide permits should become final, development of regional conditions may be the best way to protect park resources from the impacts of activities in adjacent or upstream wetlands, rivers, and other regulated waters. (Krueger, Wagner)

WRD staff participated in the General Management Plan priority setting meetings which utilized the "Choosing By Advantages" methodology for selecting GMP funding priorities for FY99-01. (Flora)

WRD staff is preparing a concurrent session proposal on Water Resource Management Plans for consideration at the George Wright Society Conference in March 1999. Speakers have been selected from various NPS units. (Vana-Miller, Weeks)

WRD compiled background information on National Parks with coral reef resources, including amount of habitat managed, current management status of these areas, level of reef protection and current management issues. This information has been used in responding to Executive Order 13089 calling for increased protection of our nation's coral reef resources and to provide briefing information to the Secretary for use with the National Coral Reef Task Force. An Overview of Areas, Protection and Management Issues paper was completed and a briefing statement provided to the Secretary's office. These documents are available through WRD in Fort Collins. (Tilmant)

WRD organized and presented a session called "Increasing the Protection of our Marine Parks" at a Coastal Superintendent's Conference held at Cape Cod National Seashore in September. Superintendents of 15 coastal marine parks heard talks on the current initiatives for marine protection; the need and benefits of establishing no-take areas; the legal aspects and concerns for instituting additional regulations; opportunities for cooperation with the national Marine Sanctuary's program; and provisions of the National Park Service Resource Protection Act that can be used to recover costs when resources are damaged. This was a productive session in which the Superintendents decided they would seek ways to more often and informally explore common issues and operations better addressed collectively than by individual parks. (Tilmant)

WRD assisted the Air Resources Division in locating a person to assist in the collection of fish and aquatic biota samples for the national cooperative EPA baseline contaminants study being conducted at several national parks. These samples will be used to evaluate baseline, low pollution concentration levels of common airborne contaminants within our nation's waters and to help test and develop monitoring protocols. A training session for the national collection teams was attended at Rocky Mountain National Park. (Tilmant)

WRD staff attended the Biological Resources Division (USGS) national fisheries research program meeting in Madison, Wisconsin. Participation in this meeting provided an opportunity for NPS input in the identification of national fisheries research priorities for the BRD. (Tilmant)

INTERMOUNTAIN REGION

WRD personnel and David Mott (BUFF) traveled to Bandelier National Monument (BAND) to scope out water resource issues for the Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP). Seventeen water resource-related issues were discussed including post-fire effects, reservoir management, water rights, and water quality monitoring, and several problematic areas of the park were visited. David Mott will be the lead author on the WRMP. Mr. Mott's participation on the WRMP is made possible through the WRD's 'Hydrological Affiliates Program. The WRMP is scheduled for completion in FY99. (Mott, Vana-Miller).

MIDWEST REGION

WRD personnel traveled to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (SLBE) as part of a technical assistance request by the park. Several problematic areas were discussed including wetland assessment needs, dredging impacts, fish hatchery effluent impacts, and a proposed fish egg-take station. All of these have been prioritized as issues for the Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP). Discussion centered on the development of actions or project statements to address these issues as well as a reprioritization of the issues for the WRMP. In addition, Biological Resource Division (USGS) personnel were present to update WRD on the progress of several park projects. The WRMP is scheduled for completion in FY99 (Vana-Miller, Wagner)

WRD staff has completed the final draft Voyageurs National Park (VOYA) Water Resources Scoping Report and incorporated comments provided by the technical editor review. The report is currently under review by VOYA staff. (Weeks, Hughes, Long)

Buffalo National River (BUFF) began work on a 3-year project to prepare a Water Resources Management Plan. David Mott, is the project manager. The project is financially supported by WRD, BUFF and Arkansas Department of Pollution Control and Ecology. A meeting was held in August to begin discussion with stakeholders and regulatory agencies on the WRMP process. A second meeting is scheduled in November to begin discussion of water-related issues. (Weeks)

NORTHEAST REGION

WRD staff reviewed and commented on the draft GMP/EIS for Gettysburg National Military Park (GETT). (Krueger)

WRD signed off on a wetland Statement of Findings for the "Forest Hills Municipal Authority Wastewater Project; South Fork of the Little Conemaugh River," which involves routing a new regional sewer line through Johnstown Flood National Memorial (JOFL). This document was used to assure that the project would have a minimal impact on park wetlands. With this sign-off, WRD certified the technical adequacy of the wetland analyses and certified consistency with Servicewide procedures for implementing Executive Order 11990 - "Protection of Wetlands." (Kimball, Wagner)

WRD staff traveled to Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DEWA) to attend a Delaware River Basin Commission meeting on establishing water quality standards and monitoring criteria and to review fishery issues with the park. DEWA is facing a number of fishery management issues and has very good cooperative working relationships with the states of New Jersey and Pennsylvania. However, the park wants to establish decision-making protocols, determine appropriate stocking procedures, and establish long-term fishery management goals that are compatible with and supported by the states. Meetings

with the states to address these issues will be initiated prior to the next summer's fishing season. A Park Fisheries Management Plan will be developed in the future. (Tilmant)

PACIFIC WEST REGION

WRD staff traveled to Death Valley National Park (DEVA) to review alternatives and begin the process of assessing the environmental impacts of modifying the water delivery systems in the Furnace Creek area of the park. (Krueger, Wagner)

As part of the ongoing Water Resources Scoping Report (WRSR), WRD personnel traveled to Mojave National Preserve (MOJA) to ground truth several issues, collect more information, and to interview local ranchers. The WRSR is scheduled for completion in the fall of 1998. (Kunkle, Hagemann)

WRD staff reviewed and commented on the draft report "Management and Restoration Alternatives for the Redwood Creek Estuary and Draft Environmental Assessment" for Redwood National Park (REDW). (Krueger)

WRD staff assisted the Denver Service Center and Yosemite National Park (YOSE) by reviewing the fourth and final wetland delineation for the campground redevelopment project in the Merced River area. (Krueger)

SOUTHEAST REGION

WRD staff participated in SERO's Project Statement Improvement Workshop in Atlanta. (Weeks)

WRD signed off on a wetland Statement of Findings for the section 3X, southern terminus road segment at Natchez Trace Parkway (NATR). WRD staff also assisted the Denver Service Center in locating wetland restoration sites to serve as mitigation for wetlands impacted by the southern terminus road project. With this sign-off, WRD certified the technical adequacy of the wetland analyses and consistency with Servicewide procedures for implementing Executive Order 11990 - "Protection of Wetlands." (Kimball, Krueger)

WRD staff assisted the Tennessee Valley Authority and Obed Wild and Scenic River (OBED) in the completion of a Water Resources Management Plan, which addressed a number of programmatic and issue specific water resources issues facing park management. Project statements were developed which will be included within the unit's Natural and Cultural Resources Management Plan. Copies of the WRMP are available from Don Forester, Superintendent, Obed Wild & Scenic River. (Flora, McGlothlin, Sharrow)

FY99 funding was approved from WRD's Unified Call to prepare a Water Resources Management Plan for Canaveral National Seashore (CANA). WRD staff is currently assisting CANA with the initial planning effort to begin this 2-year project. (Weeks)

WRD staff prepared an abstract for BICY Superintendent, Water Resources Management Plan, Big Cypress National Preserve: A Contribution Toward Effective NPS Management, for consideration at 1999 George Wright Society Conference. (Weeks)

WRD signed off on a combined wetland and floodplain Statement of Findings for the "Taylor Slough Bridge Replacement and Old Ingraham Highway Removal" in Everglades National Park (EVER). With this sign-off, WRD certified the technical adequacy of the wetland and floodplain analyses prepared by park staff and certified consistency with Servicewide procedures for implementing Executive Orders 11990 - "Protection of Wetlands" and 11988 - "Floodplain Management." The project will allow a more natural flow regime in Taylor Slough by upgrading bridges and culverts and removing 2.5 acres of abandoned road fill. (Kimball, Wagner, Smillie)

WRD reviewed and commented on the "Environmental Assessment: Hole-in-the-Donut Soil Disposal" for Everglades National Park. (Wagner)

PUBLICATIONS

Weeks, D.P. and C.J. Bates, 1998. The Big Cypress Hydrology Program: A proactive approach to establishing multiagency partnerships. Park Science. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service. 18(1): 24-15, 27.

Blackstun, David, Lloyd Woosley, Mark Flora, and Roger Durall. 1998. Water Resources Issues in the Rio Grande - Rio Conchos to Amistad Reservoir Subarea. U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. - Mexico Border Field Coordinating Committee Fact Sheet Number 3. Washington, D.C. 8 pp.