



# Earth, Wind & Water

*News from the NRPC*

June 8, 2007

## NRPC Contributes to Success of 2007 George Wright Society Biennial Conference

Park and protected area managers and researchers gathered in St. Paul, Minnesota, April 16–20, to advance the discussion of managing and preserving natural and cultural resources for the enjoyment and benefit of this and future generations. The setting was the 2007 George Wright Society Biennial Conference, and the theme was “rethinking protected areas in a changing world.” The conference challenged participants to consider how parks and protected areas would evolve in a more urban, technology-driven society in which parks are becoming islands impacted by influences that primarily originate outside their boundaries. Ocean stewardship, climate change, invasive species, and the challenge of keeping parks relevant to diverse constituencies were among the many important discussion topics.

The Natural Resource Program Center (NRPC) played an integral role in the success of the 2007 conference. Since its inception in 1996, the program center has served as a resource for scientific and technical expertise, policy guidance, and management assistance related to natural resource preservation in the national parks. The George Wright Society conference is a key forum for NRPC personnel to share their knowledge, experience, and recommendations for best practices with a broad audience of park managers and other natural resource professionals, and many staff participated in the rich discussion of



In 1930 George Meledez Wright became the first chief of the wildlife division of the U.S. National Park Service.

wide-ranging topics. For example, 33 of the 146 conference sessions were organized and chaired by NRPC employees. Additionally, the center was represented on 48 panels and in 13 posters.

Program center staff also coordinated a day-long workshop focused on developing and delivering resource messages to the media. The NRPC Outreach Technical Advisory Group (OTAG) arranged for plenary speaker Bebe Crouse, a former reporter and editor with National Public Radio, to share her insights into effective news reporting, particularly environmental news. Crouse's presentation was followed by three sessions organized by

OTAG members examining the interaction of media (including broadcast, radio, print, and Web) and park staffs in developing and reporting park natural resource stories, such as management of feral pigs at Channel Islands National Park and the effects of nitrogen deposition in Rocky Mountain National Park. The day ended with an exercise analyzing how the media would cover a hypothetical and potentially catastrophic event at a major western national park.

As researchers and managers learn more about how park systems are being affected by internal and external pressures it is imperative that they share their knowledge among professionals in the field. The George Wright Society biennial conference is widely recognized as an outstanding opportunity for park managers, researchers, and other resource managers to discuss their research, share experience, and develop management strategies related to park protection. Participants from across North America came to sample from 146 different topical conference sessions, take part in field trips to local parks and sanctuaries, and attend social events supporting scholarship programs and banquets recognizing resource managers for their outstanding accomplishments. Many took advantage of the conference also to meet with colleagues to advance various programs and park and protected area management strategies.

More than 900 people attended the 2007 George Wright

*Cont'd on page 3*



# Life in the Fast Lane

## NRPC in Brief

### Director's Column

There is an old story about three men working in a quarry who were asked what they were doing. The first man said that he was breaking big rocks into little ones. The second man said he was making a living. The third man said that he was building a cathedral. This seems like an appropriate story for the unveiling of Earth, Wind, and Water. This is the first issue of what is anticipated as a quarterly newsletter that is targeted at sharing information and helping build a sense of community and shared mission for NRPC staff.

A few months ago we conducted a survey of NRPC (and NRSS) employees. Results indicated that enhancing communications was at the top of the list of things to address. The Outreach Technical Advisory Group (OTAG) has been charged with developing a communications plan for the NRPC. This newsletter represents the first tangible product of this effort. We hope to present the community of work carried out by the NRPC and the people that dedicate their efforts to preserving natural resources within National Parks. I invite you to submit suggestions, comments, and articles about how the NRPC is contributing to the larger goal of caring for parks and the commendable work of you and your colleagues. Introduce us to new faces or say goodbye to those that are moving on. Celebrate our interests outside the NRPC so that we can get to know each other, beyond emails and reports. At the end of the day we do more than a job, we are caring for the cathedrals that are our national parks.

George Dickison, Center Director



Early Morning Fog over the Upper Mississippi River. Effigy Mounds National Monument. Photo by Ken Block.

*The NRPC Divisions and Offices are busy with many different projects and activities. Here is a sampling of some of the work they are doing.*

**Air Resource Division •** Proposed “Glades Power Park Project” to be Sited North of Everglades NP: The Glades Power Park Project is a 2000 megawatt coal- fired power plant that would be located approximately 113 km north of Everglades NP. NPS anticipates potential sulfur/mercury deposition in the park and potential visibility impacts. NPS Air Resources Division staff have been working with the park in coordinating project comments. Florida Power and Light (FPL), the project proponent, have already indicated that they are open to NPS suggestions on mitigation strategies. NPS Air Resources Division and Everglades NP staff met with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and FPL to discuss remaining permit application concerns. FPL arranged a May 9 meeting with the DOI Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks to brief him on the project.

**Water Resources Division •** Wild and Scenic Rivers Program Established: On May 17, the National Leadership Council approved the creation of a Service- wide Wild and Scenic River (WSR) Program and Steering Committee. A memo is being prepared at the NLC's request that will ask regions, Associate Directors, and some WSR parks to identify Steering Committee members. Joan Harn (RTCA- PVE) and Bill Hansen (WRD- NRSS) will serve as interim co- chairs of the WSR Program and Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is charged with developing an action plan and identifying the permanent location and funding for the Wild and Scenic River Program.

**Office of Education & Outreach •** OEO has been working with OTAG to obtain the services of former NPR editor and radio journalist BeBe Crouse to serve as a

keynote speaker and panelist at the recent George Wright gathering (see related article, pg. 1). BeBe has agreed to be of assistance to NRPC in the future, so be on the look out for future opportunities to connect with her. • Lindsay Utley recently finished her joint interpretive project with the Sounds Program and OEO. One result of the project was a short [audio postcard \(click to listen\)](#) about Ptarmigans in Alaska parks. Read more about the project in the May 25th edition of [Naturally Speaking](#).

**Biological Resources Management Division •** Elaine Leslie will be working with Bruce Nash and the Rocky Mountain Middle School Math and Science Partnership Director, Center for Applied Science and Math for Innovation and Competitiveness (out of CU Denver), on presenting the Views projects to students throughout the country. These projects use real park data sets to further science in the classrooms. • Park Flight program has just selected (and she has accepted) Canadian biologist Victoria Moran from Ontario for the Park Flight international internship (IVIP) shared between Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Point Pelee National Park in Ontario. This position, which will focus on shared migratory species (birds and butterflies) starts June 11th at Cuyahoga, with six weeks at each park location. This will be the second year the NPS has had a Canadian intern shared between these parks.

**Geologic Resource Division •** The NPS has learned that the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) will soon issue a “flash report” concerning human health and safety issues associated with abandoned mines in Death Valley NP. Two recent field audits conducted by OIG investigators in Death Valley NP revealed the absence of physical barriers and the presence of vandalized ineffective barriers at several dangerous abandoned mines in the park. OIG will likely recommend administrative closures and (Cont'd on p. 3)



# Life Outside the NRPC

*How well do you know about your coworkers? For most of us, work is only a part of who we are. In this column we seek to highlight the hidden talents and interesting hobbies of the members of the NRPC community. We will seek to answer such burning questions as "what NRPCer is a poet?" or "which employee has swung on a vine in the Amazon rainforest?" If you think you know the answers to these questions or have a question you would like to pose, let us know.*



## Who ran a 3:45 marathon?



Dan McGlothlin is not only an NPS Kowski Tournament golfing legend, and head of the NPS Water Rights Branch Monitoring and Enforcement Program, but is also a marathon runner supreme, having completed the Old Town Colorado Marathon this past May 6<sup>th</sup> in under 3hrs. 45 min. Way to go, Dan!

**How many other NRPC'ers have completed at least one marathon? Five? Ten? Who's run the most? Let us know.**

## Next Issue's Mystery Person



Who participated in the "Triple Bypass", a 122 ride that climbs over 10,000 vertical feet over three mountain passes?

If you know someone that has a talent, skill, significant goal, amazing adventure, or is involved in extra-curricular activities that should be recognized, please send submissions to

## Where in Parks?



What unit protects a stretch of North America's longest river? Answer in next issue.

## NRPC's List Classifieds

*Classifieds* will announce upcoming events (e.g. conferences, and trainings), requests for expertise, freebies and for sales. Please send anything you would like to include in this section to Sara\_Melena@nps.gov.

## GWS 2007

(Cont'd from p. 1) Society conference and, through its leadership and widespread participation, the Natural Resource Program Center was integral to its success. Through their dedicated research and sharing of expertise, the NRPC staff helped invigorate the discussion of parks and protected areas stewardship in the 21st century.

## NRPC in Brief

(Cont'd from p. 2) posting of warning signs at hazardous abandoned mines until park staff can install effective permanent barriers or closures. Park management is aware of the impending report. OIG began the "Audit of Public Safety Issues on Abandoned Mine Lands" in January 2007, and plans to issue a final report to the NPS and BLM in early 2008.

Environmental Quality Division •  
PEPC Analysis of Centennial Initiative  
Comments: Using PEPC to facilitate this

process, the NPS Environmental Quality Division helped the NPS Centennial Initiative team analyze over 2,000 responses received during Centennial public comment period. Over 6,000 other comments were compiled from on-line submissions and notes from public listening sessions. PEPC was also used to compile over 1,100 public suggestions for specific Centennial projects.

Office of Inventory, Monitoring and Evaluation (OIME) • Inventory Completion and Vital Sign Monitoring  
The Inventory and Monitoring Program component of OIME provides park managers with information about what they manage (through inventories) and the condition of the resources they manage (through monitoring) so that good decisions can be made about actions that affect those natural resources. As of FY 2007, an estimated 2,145 park data sets (77% of those outstanding) will have (Cont'd on p. 4)



# People in the News

Wendy Schumacher, NatureBib coordinator, finished her Ph.D. in Education with a specialization in Construction Management from Colorado State University (CSU). Her dissertation was entitled "1982 Structural Fire at the Home of Franklin Roosevelt: An Oral History." She has moved on from the NRPC to take a position with the EPA.

Christopher Mayer, Interpretive Specialist with the Office of Education & Outreach, finished his Ph.D. in Interpretation from CSU's Department of Natural Resource Recreation & Tourism.

Mike Whatley, Chief of the Office of Education & Outreach, recently returned from an assignment to Jordan through the DOI's International Technical Assistance Program where he led interpretive training courses for archeologists and museum specialists, and worked with diplomats to improve interpretive efforts at key heritage sites.

## Ch- ch- ch- ch- Changes

*We would like to take the opportunity to recognize the people who are joining the NRPC or moving on. Some of us have been here for entire careers while others may be on short-term internships. Whatever the length of time or position, this section will help us get to know the new person we see walking down the hall or calling us on the phone, and allow us to say goodbye to those who are moving on. If you know someone who is coming or going, please let us know.*

Dave Shaver, Chief of the Geologic Resources Division, is retiring after 28-year career with the NPS.

Lindsay Utley served for six months as an Interpretive Specialist for the Natural Sounds Program. In that time Lindsay was able to review and develop some helpful products and approaches for interpreting soundscapes in national park. Lindsay's future endeavors will take her to Maine and Peru.

Rebecca Landewe, Missouri Water Quality Standards Coordinator for EPA Region 7, is serving a 60-day detail with the Water Resources Division, working on water quality related issues in park units.

### NRPC Work Day at ROMO

The NRPC Work Day at ROMO is scheduled for Wednesday, July 18 this year. Our efforts there over the past three years are greatly appreciated... The park is preparing a list of possible projects and is mainly interested in how many people to expect. They need to know that at least a week ahead of time. As in the past, I will be pleased to coordinate the Program Center's participation with park staff. So check out your calendars and let me know if you are interested in helping out.

I will update you with information as it becomes available. Thanks, I look forward to hearing from you.  
Bruce Heise  
bruce\_heise@nps.gov

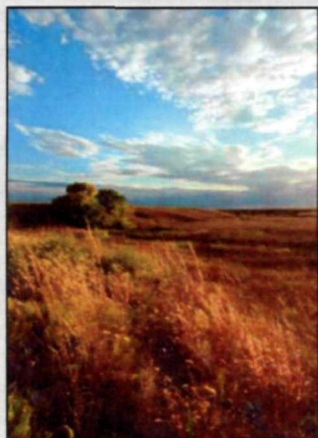
Earth, Wind & Water is the quarterly newsletter of the Natural Resource Program Center.

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Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve.

## NRPC in Brief

(Cont'd from p. 3) been developed and all 32 networks, encompassing 272 parks, will have received funding to monitor vital signs. *IRMA Project* The OIME is participating in the IRMA project in accordance with the policy on NRPC Natural Resource Applications issued on October 26, 2006. This project will transition three major I&M applications (NPSpecies, NatureBib, and NR Datastore) to Service Oriented Architecture. • *PRIDE Project* The OIME, in partnership with the Office of Natural Resource Information Systems, is also conducting the PRIDE project in an attempt to plan natural resource information systems with a long-range, comprehensive perspective for delivering optimal, high-quality natural resource information products to park managers and other decision makers. The study will focus on five major business functions: (1) natural resource inventory, (2) monitoring, (3) research, (4) applied management treatments, and

(5) information transfer and develop a modernization blueprint that describes a transition process for going from current to desired conditions.

**Office of Natural Resource Information Systems** • Bill Commins participated in discussions with National Geographic and briefed Margi Brooks on results. It appears likely that the NPS NNL sites may be included in web based Encyclopedia of Natural Places project led by National Geographic. • The NPS Privacy Act Coordinator reviewed information about the NNL database and determined a Privacy Impact Assessment report will be required. Bill Commins has experience writing a PIA and will be providing assistance to Margi. • With assistance from the OCIO, the Fort Collins location recently had IT bandwidth serving the facility significantly increased (10x). This will be especially beneficial to more heavily used public facing web solutions like PEPC, RPRS, and Natural & Science.