

MONDAY, AUGUST 14, 1995

TELECONFERENCE

MEETING REPORT

UPDATE/FYI

On Monday, August 7, Federal Land Managers, owners of the Centralia power plant, and State, Local, and Federal regulators met in Tacoma to discuss ways to minimize the plant's air emissions and associated effects on Mt. Rainier NP and other Class I areas in the Pacific Northwest. The local agency, the decision maker in current proceedings, acknowledged that our concerns were valid, but was reluctant to adopt many of our specific recommendations at this time. Nevertheless, all parties agreed to continue discussions in an effort to negotiate further emission reductions. In addition, the State will facilitate a regional study to examine all sources which may contribute to visibility degradation in western Washington. Several Air Resources Division, park, SSO, and FDO personnel participated in the meeting, as well as Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary, Molly Ross. This Tuesday (August 15) Mt. Rainier Supt. Bill Briggie will testify at a public hearing regarding the Centralia Project and reiterate our concerns. Changes have been made that were suggested by NPS and the company, which may forestall a major decision. (Air Resources Division)

New World Mine Economics - Staff have received calls from various public interest groups and news organization, including the New York Times, investigating the potential "buyout" of the proposed mine near Yellowstone. We expect to see continued press attention. Meanwhile, we are participating in the EIS economics workgroup meeting next week in Missoula, Montana discuss economics of alternatives in the EIS and the buyout option economics. The New York Times had an editorial in the 8/14 paper, discussing the potential disaster should the mining plan proceed.
(Geologic Resources)

Exploration Results in Another Dry Hole in Padre Island - The most recently approved drilling operation in the park was completed August 8th, and all drilling information points to another dry hole. This is the second dry hole drilled in Padre Island this year. The recent lack of success makes new drilling proposals unlikely. The results are also supportive of our litigation position with the mineral owner that the lack of leasing activity results from poor prospects, not NPS regulation constraints.
(Geologic Resources)

Additional Mining Activity at Mojave - The Castle Mountain Mine located adjacent to Mojave are proposing to significantly expand the mining operation (e.g., expansion of pits, leach pads, extend mine life 10 yrs, etc.). We will assist the park with scoping comments for the upcoming EIS. Also, another operator has submitted a proposed exploration plan for expedited review in hopes

of gaining a small miner exemption from the BLM concerning annual claim fees. We will prepare technical review/comment on the proposed plan to assist the park in responding to the claimants. The claimants are apparently on first name basis with Senator Feinstein. (Geologic Resources)

The USGS is proceeding with its geology in the Parks program, in spite of RIFs in other parts of the USGS. (Geological Resources)

The settlement agreement on the Brucellosis/Bison issue continues to progress with the state (Wyoming), and APHIS. The Church Universal and Triumphant has concerns. (Natural Systems)

1995 RESOURCES MANAGEMENT "PROFESSIONALIZATION" STATUS

This year parks, Field Area Offices and Resources Stewardship and Science, and the Personnel Division, WASO, have been cooperating on a centralized approach to recruit for Resources Management "Professionalization" positions for FY95. As of this week, 2 Wildlife Biologist (DENA & KALA), 3 Fishery Biologist (KATM, LACL & OLYM), 4 Resource Management Specialist (KLGO, SAGU, GRKO, & PIPE), 2 GIS specialist (PORE & BLRI), 1 Ecologist (KEFJ), and 1 Senior Scientist (GRCA), positions have been filled. We have not yet heard from WUPA on their selection. Several positions have had to be re-advertised on a DOI-wide basis through AVADS and OPOP, all with closing dates of August 16th. These positions include 2 Wildlife Biologists (NWAK & FIIS), 1 Resources Management Specialist (GWMP), and 1 Chemist (CACO).

Frank Panek, previously with Wildlife and Vegetation Division and now with the Water Resources Division, and Paula Ehrenfeld, Karen Nusbaum, Adele Singer, and Joe Collins of WASO Personnel, as well as numerous staff in parks and Field Area Offices, are complimented on their teamwork, persistence and dedication that has ensured a successful FY95 Resources Management "Professionalization" initiative. (Partnerships)

IPM REENGINEERING

The IPM Reengineering Team has consolidated the options it identified for amendment of the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) pesticide use approval process. The results include a "draft" of an approval process that significantly streamlines the approval process, provides for pesticide use approvals on a multiyear basis, and maintains a knowledgeable cadre to help ensure stewardship remains a paramount goal. The draft is now in circulation to all Field Area Directorates, with their comments due back to Dr. Terry Cacek, Fort Collins Resources Program Center (970/225-3542) by August 24, 1995. If returning comments permit, it is hoped that revision into final recommendations to the Director can take place early in September 1995.

In the interim, IPM and Resource Information Management Division

personnel have been putting the final touches to IPM software as a prelude to field testing this winter. They are now working on "documentation" for the software; and have added approximately 80 pesticides to the NPS IPM database. Expansion of the database will help speed the approval process and facilitate "end of year" pesticide use reporting. (Partnerships)

Odds and Ends from the meeting

The Natural Resources Bulletin Board on cc:mail is now "UP". The gatekeeper/interim moderator for the bb is Rick Inglis, Water Resources Division, Fort Collins, Co. (970) 225-3517. Reachable by telephone, or cc:mail, for more information. (Water Resources)

On August 15, 1995, an MOU was signed by Bill Yellowtail, Regional Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Water Resources Division, National Park Service, to improve cooperation and coordination between the two agencies for the purpose of protecting, enhancing, and restoring water and related natural resources. More specifically, the MOU establishes a framework for the exchange or detail of staff between EPA and NPS to accomplish activities in project specific workplans. (Water Resources)