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FEBRUARY 2003 ADNRS MONTHLY REPORT

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Mammoth Tracks Discovered Near White Sands National Monument - During a geoscientists scoping meeting and fieldtrip at White Sands National Monument in January 2003, Lisa Norby, Geologic Resources Division, made an exciting discovery of 10,000 to 12,000 year old mammoth tracks. The tracks were located outside of the park in the White Sands Missile Range in an area where camel and mammoth tracks had previously been discovered. The tracks were created when a mammoth wandered through the area and made depressions in wet, muddy sediment. The sediment in the tracks became compacted and over time, the surrounding sediment has eroded away, leaving raised impressions of the tracks. NPS Paleontology Coordinator, Greg McDonald, confirmed the discovery.

IPM Assistance to the White House: Steve Jacobs, BRMD contract entomologist at Pennsylvania State University, was invited by the National Capital Region to consult on issues at the White House. They are redesigning a food service area and they asked for help in developing a pest-free design. While at the White House, Steve advised on several insect and rodent issues. Steve is available to others as well; contact regional IPM specialists or Servicewide IPM coordinator Carol DiSalvo.

National Energy Plan FOIA Request: Air Resources Division received a memo concerning a FOIA from the Natural Resources Defense Council, asking for "records relating to the implementation for the National Energy Plan by the Department of the Interior." ARD is working on the request for "final agency reports and agency memoranda" regarding the Powder River Basin EIS in Wyoming and Montana.

Monitoring Technical Advisory Group Formed - The NRPC has recently formed a Monitoring Technical Advisory Group (MTAG) to assist with providing natural resources monitoring guidance to the networks. The Geologic Resource Division (GRD) representatives will immediately develop a list of geologic attributes to be used by networks and parks when selecting what will be measured in NPS units. This information will be compiled in a master Access database that NRID will distribute to the new networks as they come on-line. In the near future, the MTAG will also write sections of a monitoring manual.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

Mineral Information Provided for Ranger Training in Future Geologic Resource Theft Cases- A new training module for Federal Law Enforcement Training Center will include information provided by Geologic Resources Division on appraised mineral fair market value for vandalism and theft cases involving geologic resources. The information also includes laboratory techniques for "fingerprinting" trace elements in mineral crystals to prove the geographical origin of the stolen property. This is another outreach project that demonstrates the specialized professional resources within the Natural Resource Program Center that can be drawn upon to achieve desired goals in resource preservation across division lines.

Gauley River Concerned Over Adjacent Coal Waste Spill -New River Gorge staff notified the Geologic Resources Division of a small scale coal waste spill directly upstream of Gauley River NRA. An adjacent surface coal mine and prep plant, located four miles from Gauley River NRA, was slurring coal waste into nearby abandoned underground mine workings for disposal. Unknown to the mine operator, the abandoned workings were located only ten feet below a stream that flows into the Gauley River NRA. The slurry broke through to the surface under the stream and coal waste began flowing down the stream. The operator shut down the slurry operation as soon as they discovered the problem and began cleanup efforts. The park has not noticed any detrimental effects to the Gauley River. West Virginia will perform a review of the permitted operation and may amend the permit. The NPS plans to work cooperatively with the state and mine operator in an effort to reduce the likelihood of future spills.

Rocky Mountains CESU Recruits for Summer Interns at Salish Kootenai College: In February 2003,

Rocky Mountains CESU partners from University of Montana, NPS-Intermountain Region, Glacier National Park and Crown of the Continent Learning Center visited faculty and students at Salish Kootenai College (Pablo, MT), the minority partner of the Rocky Mountains CESU. The NPS is offering two paid internships and other summer job opportunities at Glacier NP in summer 2003 for students in the four-year Environmental Science department at Salish Kootenai College. During these on-site meetings, faculty in Salish Kootenai College Environmental Science helped to plan for a remote sensing/GIS workshop cosponsored by the Learning Center and the Rocky Mountains CESU, scheduled for later in FY03.

PROGRESS

EPA Still in Control of Blowout Well Near Obed Wild And Scenic River - Six months after the EPA federalized response actions for Pryor Oil Company's July 2002 blowout well at Obed Wild and Scenic River, the location remains under EPA control because of issues related oil releases into park waters and the mechanical integrity of the well's surface casing. Pryor Oil has filed a lawsuit against EPA challenging their federalization of the response. Recently, Pryor Oil presented technical evidence supporting their position that it is unnecessary to conduct a mechanical integrity test (MIT) and that the well does not pose an ongoing threat in its current condition. The company recommended that it be allowed to continue producing the well indefinitely without an MIT, but perform the test prior to resuming drilling operations. EPA advised Pryor Oil that it would evaluate and respond to Pryor Oil's recommendation. The Geologic Resources Division will also evaluate the information and prepare recommendations for the park's consideration. The Environmental Quality Division continues its natural environmental resource damage assessment assistance related to the blowout.

Contaminants Technical Advisory Group Holds Annual Workshop – Technical specialists representing four Natural Resource Program Center Divisions (WRD, EQD, BRMD and GRD) participated in a 2-day Contaminants Technical Advisory Group (CTAG) workshop held in Ft. Collins, Colorado. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss technical aspects of emerging Servicewide contaminant issues including ongoing response, resource damage assessment, and restoration actions. The meeting also focused on anticipated contaminants-related projects and issues in parks and developing strategies to meet park and Servicewide resource protection goals in the contaminant arena. Issues addressed during the workshop included emergency spill response capabilities in the NPS, development of a framework to establish Servicewide contaminant cleanup standards, potential threats to parks from nearby EPA-listed sites, coordination between the NPS hazmat program and the Natural Resource Program Center, status of remediation actions at EPA-listed sites in parks, and technical aspects of 17 ongoing and anticipated park-specific projects.

PROFESSIONAL MEETING ATTENDANCE/PAPERS

Coastal GeoTools'03 Provides Coastal Information - Staff from the Geologic Resources Division and the Natural Resources Information Division attended the Coastal GeoTools '03 Conference hosted by the NOAA Coastal Services Center in Charleston, SC this month. Coastal GeoTools '03 has become one of the most important conferences for the coastal resource management community. Programs using geospatial technologies for coastal zone mapping, monitoring, planning, or management leave the conference participants more aware of available data sources and data gathering projects, available tools and innovative uses of technology, potential partners, and more confidence in their ability to make technology-related decisions. For example, NPS participants found a coastal LIDAR dataset for Golden Gate National Park by attending a presentation by one of the NOAA remote-sensing specialists. Geologic Resource Division staff are working to provide this information to Golden Gate.

Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS): NPS Visiting Senior Scientist, Gary Machlis, organized and led a symposium at the 2003 Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Denver, CO. The symposium was entitled "Science, Ecosystem Management and the American West" and included presentations by Jerry Franklin

(University of Washington), Penelope Morgan (University of Idaho), Stephen Pyne (Arizona State University), Patricia Limerick (University of Colorado), and Ray Sauvajot (National Park Service). Additional information about the meeting and this symposium is available at <http://www.aaas.org/meetings/MPE.shtml>

Silence of the Lands Conference: The Natural Sounds Program Office cosponsored on February 20 and 21 "The Silence of the Lands" Conference with the University of Colorado, Center of the American West and the Natural Resources Law Center. The purpose of the conference was to enhance public awareness of the values of park sound environments and noise intrusions issues. Individuals representing disparate views on the noise and motorized access issues attended and participated in a couple of panel discussions. Keynote speakers were former Montana Representative Pat Williams, NPS Historian Richard Sellers, Wild Sanctuaries President Bernie Krause, and University of Colorado Speech Professor Kathy Arnhardt. Topics presented were the politics of addressing noise issues in national parks, history of motorized use in the NPS, natural sounds ecology (biphony), and physiology of hearing. The conference was attended by NPS Deputy Director Randy Jones and Intermountain Regional Director Karen Wade in addition to a number of other NPS employees.

STAFF NEWS

New Hire for the Biological Resource Management Division: Lori Betts has joined the BRMD in February as a Program Analyst. Lori started working for the NPS in 1989 and has worked for several parks and the Intermountain Region. Most recently she was the Budget Analyst for the Southeast Utah Group (Canyonlands and Arches NP and Natural Bridges and Hovenweep National Monuments). Lori's primary responsibilities will be the administration and oversight of the Natural Resource Preservation Program (NRPP), including Small Park, Disturbed Land Restoration, Threatened and Endangered Species, and Natural Resource Management projects.

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