

Natural Resource Stewardship and Science
July Report

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

ADVISORY GROUP NAMED Mike Soukup has selected a Natural Resource Advisory Group from among those nominated by Regional Directors.

Selections include: Doug Morris, Supt. (SHEN); Barbara West, Supt. (VOYA); Andy Ringgold, Supt. (REDW); Mel Poole, Supt. (CATO); Steve Martin, Supt. (DENA); Frank Deckert, Supt. (CACA); Julie van Stappen, NR Specialist (APIS); Steve Petersburg, NR Specialist (DINO); Bob McIntosh, Assistant RD (NERO); Judy Gottlieb, Assistant RD (AKO); Suzette Kimball, Assistant RD (SERO); Bill Anderson, Resource Advisor (NCR); Hank Snyder, SO (SER); and Kathy Jope, SO (PWR). The Advisory Group was established to provide advice, increased communication, and assistance to the Associate Director and Deputy Associate Director, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science and the National Natural Resource Program Center divisions. The group will meet twice yearly, once in conjunction with field and cluster representatives--the latter meeting this year in Portland the week of August 25.

SCIENCE NEEDS FORUM Mike has also identified an immediate need for a smaller standing group to provide advice on maximizing the use of science in our resource management efforts. It is envisioned that the advisory group will constitute itself into other subgroups or issue forums as necessary in the future, with the ability to add expertise as needed to subgroups to carry out these assistance functions.

Members named to the Science Needs Forum are: Karen Wade, Supt. (GRSM); Sarah Allen, Scientist (PORE); Gary Davis, Sr. Sci. (CHIS); Mary Foley, SO (NERO); John Karish, SO (NERO); Jim Sherald, SO (NCR); Dan Huff, Assistant RD (IMR); and Ron Hiebert, Assistant RD (MWR).

REGIONAL HAZE REGULATIONS On July 18, 1997, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed regional haze regulations to improve visibility, or visual air quality, in Class I areas (including 48 NPS areas) throughout the nation. Haze is caused primarily by fine particles of sulfur dioxide and other pollutants that are emitted through a range of human caused activities (e.g., electric power generation, smelters, manufacturing processes, burning, and auto emissions). In 1985, DOI, NPS certified visibility impairment in GRCA, YOSE, YELL, MORA, SHEN, GRSM and other Class I areas to varying degrees. In the East, natural background visibility is about 90 miles, but the current average range only 14-24 miles; Western natural background visibility is about 140 miles and the current average range is about 33-90 miles. The Clean Air Act contains a national visibility goal of no manmade visibility impairment in Class I areas. The proposed rule defines reasonable progress toward the no impairment goal as a 1 deciview (or about 10%) visibility improvement in Class I areas every 10-15 years. Federal Land Managers (FLMs), like NPS, would have a consultation role in developing monitoring plans, determining natural conditions, and implementing emission reduction requirements. NPS plans to work with a DOI workgroup to develop comments on the proposal. A hearing is scheduled for September 18, in Denver, with comments due October 20. Initial reports suggest that estimated costs and burdens associated with compliance, as well as the role of the FLM, will be debated, particularly with industry stakeholders. For

more information, contact William Malm (970) 491-8292, or Karen Malkin (202) 219-3384.

I&M REPORT *Inventory and Monitoring Program 1996 Annual Report.* The report has been posted on NatureNet since 25 July 1997. It is the first annual report of the program. It outlines the major accomplishments of the program to date and indicates how the information has been used by park managers for making decisions. Part I of the report features descriptions of the principal functions and the structure of the I&M Program and the status of inventory and monitoring in 12 National Park System units. Part II consists of six reproduced fact sheets about inventories of natural resources in the National Park Service. Part III is the largest of the three parts. It is organized by type of resource and describes the reasons for monitoring and the last known status of the resources. The 1997 annual report is expected to provide more comprehensive information about the status of resources in parks with prototype experimental monitoring.

MESA VERDE WATER RIGHTS Efforts to secure court recognition of water rights for Mesa Verde NP (MEVE) and Colorado Portion of Hovenweep NM (HOVE) are nearing successful completion. On July 25, 1997, the Department of Justice submitted to the Colorado Water Court, on behalf of NPS, proposed decrees for both parks. The park, RO, and Solicitor's office fully support the proposed decrees. In addition to protection of spring flows at MEVE and HOVE, NPS also gains instream rights for the Mancos River within MEVE, and recognition of present and future administrative water uses at both parks. WRD worked cooperatively with the State Engineer to define the extent of these rights. The State, in turn, worked with the objectors to resolve their concerns. WRD also assisted DoJ in responding to technical and legal concerns raised by the objectors. All but one of the objectors to the NPS's claims have stipulated to the proposed decrees. The remaining objector cannot be located. The Court is expected to approve the decrees. These will be the fourth and fifth NPS units in Colorado to gain recognition of Federal reserved rights for administrative purposes and instream flows.

NRPC STAFF ON THE SPOT AFTER FORT COLLINS FLOOD - On the night of July 28, some areas of the city of Fort Collins were hit with extreme flash flooding. While NPS facilities and staff were spared from any loss, five citizens are dead and many others have suffered damages totaling in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Staff at the NPS office were quick to help their community. The city requested assistance from local water resources professionals to delineate the extent of the flooding so hydrologists from the Water Resources Division assisted by flagging high water marks along flooded streams. Other staff worked at victim assistance facilities.

ASBESTOS AT VALLEY FORGE NHP (VAFO) Assistance was provided to VAFO in responding to recently discovered asbestos resulting from prior industrial activity within the park. Environmental Quality Division (EQD) contractors were able to assist the park in response activities after EPA withdrew from the immediate response. EQD is working with the park, DOI, EPA and other NPS offices to provide for long-term addressing of this problem.

NATURAL RESOURCE YEAR IN REVIEW ADNRSS has issued its first "Year in Review." This publication supplements Park Science and provides the

only regular avenue to communicate trends, major issues and accomplishments since the Natural Resource Publications Program stopped producing Servicewide reports. It is hoped that this digest will be useful in sharing what is going within the National Park Service with both internal and external audiences.

GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL MONUMENT (GRSA) WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN GRSA and the Water Resources Division recently released the Great Sand Dunes National Monument Water Resources Management Plan. This WRMP assesses the current water resource conditions and management issues affecting the park, including water quantity, water quality, and water supply. The WRMP also provides a recommended course of action for addressing these issues including 10 water-related project statements which will be incorporated into the Monument's Natural Resources Management Plans.

PROGRESS

NEW OZONE AND PARTICULATE STANDARDS On June 26, 1997, President Clinton approved the issuance of revised, somewhat more stringent primary or health based National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone and PM. The President also made clear his support for flexibility in implementation. In years of interagency meetings with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and others, NPS and the Department of the Interior (DOI) supported the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) interpretation of the law and science as requiring more stringent standards both for human health (primary standard) and for welfare (secondary standard, which addresses ecological effects). EPA states the new standards will provide health protection to 125 million Americans; the PM standard alone will prevent 15,000 premature deaths annually. The final NAAQS largely maintain EPA's proposed primary (health) standards, but lack separate secondary (welfare, ecological effects) standards. Still a significant number of NPS Class II and some Class I areas are anticipated to be classified in "nonattainment" of the standards, meaning EPA will require emissions reductions (including emissions offsets for new sources) to benefit these areas. For example, based on review of available NPS and state data, 5 Class I areas (including GRSM and SEKI) may not attain the primary ozone standard. The rules are now undergoing Congressional review. Additional Congressional hearings and correspondence are anticipated. Contact Mark Scruggs, (303) 969-2077, or Karen Malkin (202) 219-3384.

NEPA-RELATED GUIDANCE Public Review Scheduled for Conservation Planning and Environmental Impact Analysis Material - Working with the Office of Policy, a DO on "Conservation Planning and Environmental Impact Analysis (CP/EIA) has been developed and will be announced for public review on August 8, 1997. This will also begin the public review period for the handbook on CP/EIA implementing NPS procedures under the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments close September 22, 1997. A field guide will be developed in the next six months that will further explain the "how to do its" of environmental impact assessment in the NPS.

CONSTRUCTION PRIORITY-SETTING Abby Miller again represented Natural Resources in applying the Choosing by Advantages (CBA) process to

proposed construction projects. The CBA group makes recommendations to an NLC-level group that actually sets the priorities. Abby notes that there were a few projects this year with natural resource objectives, including forest restoration at Redwoods, coastal watershed restoration at Point Reyes, restoration of a former ski area at Rocky Mountain, and dam and construction removal to restore salmon at Olympic. Several other project included elements that would benefit natural resources. While the projects that were primarily natural resource-oriented scored very well in advantages to improving resource condition or preventing threats, they tended not to score or score well in other areas, thus often scoring less well than projects that had several different types of advantages. If more interpretive or safety advantages were built into such these projects, for example, they would fare better.

IPM CLASS 24 people were selected to attend the IPM training being sponsored by the Environmental Quality Division IPM group. Training is scheduled for the week of August 18th at the Albright Center.

The Water Resources Division organized a meeting on July 10, 1997, of natural resource management specialists from Lake Mead NRA, Grand Canyon NP and Glen Canyon NRA to discuss issues related to the Bureau of Reclamation's development of the 1998 Annual Operating Plan for the Colorado River reservoir system. As part of the 1998 AOP process, the Secretary directed the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to recommend criteria for determining the availability of surplus water for delivery to the Lower Basin. Hydrologic modeling was conducted to understand the implications of five alternative criteria on such things as reservoir levels and the frequency of high flows (spills) in Grand Canyon. The three parks and WRD identified resource issues related to the surplus criteria alternatives and will recommend preferred criteria to BOR. Also at the July 10 meeting, the three parks and WRD discussed issues related to implementing a possible beach/habitat-building spike flow from Glen Canyon Dam in the spring of 1998. Language was proposed and included in the 1998 AOP which provides for the possibility of a spike flow. The spike flow subject will be on the agenda of the first meeting of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Federal Advisory Committee in September.

HEADS UP

At the request of Ron Hiebert, the Midwest Assistant Regional, the Natural Resource Information Division reissued a natural resources report he wrote in 1993, entitled "Handbook for Ranking Exotic Plants for Management and Control." He has been getting lots of requests for the booklet, but it is out of print. It is accessible from the NatureNet web page, under publications.

COOK III At the request of the NLC, John Cook is directing a task force to examine implementation of restructuring at the Washington level. Abby Miller is the Natural Resource representative on the task force. Two other task force members, Bill Walters (Seattle SO) and Betsy Chittendon (WASO Administration) will be conducting the initial review of WASO natural resource functions. They may be

contacting parks and SOs for views on WASO Natural Resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES Recognizing the interdisciplinary nature of natural resource issues, the NPS law enforcement program is opening the next environmental crimes investigations course to natural resource specialists and environmental protection specialists. This course will provide an opportunity for law enforcement and natural resource personnel to interact and learn options for addressing illegal environmental pollution impacting the parks. The course will be held in Denver, CO., Sept, 16-18. Applications are due to FLETC by Aug. 11.