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June 6, 2001

Memorandum

To: Regional Directors

From: Associate Director, Park Operations and Education /s/ **Richard G. Ring**

Subject: Review of National Wildland Fire, Structural Fire, Aviation, and Emergency Response Programs

In 1998, former Associate Director Finnerty commissioned a review of the national fire, aviation and emergency response programs. Many of the recommendations from that review have been implemented and provide the basis for the continued success of the Fire Management Program Center and attendant programs.

Current and pending retirements and staff reassignments, both at the Fire Management Program Center and in the Ranger Activities Division in WASO, continue to influence how and where we accomplish work. In addition, the National Fire Plan and the 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Policy; the increasing emphasis by the Service, the Department and the Congress on structural fire; the increasing use of aviation resources for a wide variety of missions; and the need to ensure that other emergency response activities at the national level are closely aligned with wildland fire, merit considerations and review, particularly for roles and functions and organizational structures for these national programs.

Therefore, I am commissioning such a review and have selected a team to conduct the analysis and provide me with alternatives and recommendations. The review team members are:

Bill Wade, Superintendent, Shenandoah NP (retired)	Chairperson
Bill Schenk, Regional Director, Midwest Region	ex-officio
Orville Daniels, Forest Supervisor, Lolo NF (retired)	advisor
Craig Axtell, Chief, Biological Resources Management Division	
Brad Cella, Regional Fire Management Officer, Alaska Region	
Deb Liggett, Superintendent, Katmai and Lake Clark NPs and Preserves	
Cicely Muldoon, Superintendent, San Juan Island NHP	
Roger Trimble, Bureau of Land Management (retired)	

The team will be provided oversight by the Chief of Fire and Aviation, Regional Director Schenk and myself.

OBJECTIVES OF THE REVIEW:

- identify and solicit opinions from NPS and interagency constituents and cooperators
- identify strengths and shortfalls in existing programs and develop alternative solutions
- identify future impacts on programs and staffing and develop alternative solutions
formulate role and function statements for WASO and the Fire Management Program Center, in concert with regional and support offices
- investigate the feasibility of inter-bureau positions to meet joint needs in wildland and structural fire, aviation and all-risk emergency response
- determine alternative organizational approaches and the associated strengths and weaknesses of each to meet program objectives
- identify interdisciplinary opportunities to improve incorporation of wildland fire, structural fire, aviation and emergency response with other NPS programs
- make recommendations for providing both immediate and long-term fire and aviation technical and managerial expertise in WASO
- make recommendations on developing, training and maintaining expertise to address to successional needs of the wildland and structural fire, aviation and emergency response programs
- make recommendations for the integration of other NPS disciplines and functions into the wildland fire, structural fire and emergency response programs of the Service
- identify program responsibility and appropriate workloads at different levels of the organization

Over the next several months, members of the review team will be in contact with many NPS managers (both line and program) as well as those in other agencies with whom we cooperate and collaborate. The purposes of these interviews will be to develop information about how effectively the national wildland fire, structural fire, aviation and emergency response programs are serving their intended roles and constituents, and what changes might be appropriate. The review is not intended to develop justifications for increases in staff or funding, but rather to make the most effective use of the resources available to the Service.

I have asked the review team to have preliminary findings available for review and discussion by early October 2001.

If you or any of your staff and parks wish to provide input to the review team, please contact either Sue Vap, National Fire Management Officer (208/387-5225) or any member of the team.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

REVIEW
OF
NATIONAL FIRE,
AVIATION AND
INCIDENT RESPONSE

ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT



NOVEMBER 2001

CONCURRENCE BY REVIEW TEAM MEMBERS

<u>Team Leader:</u>	<u>/SGD/</u> Bill Wade	<u>November 16, 2001</u> Date
<u>Team Member:</u>	<u>/SGD/</u> Craig Axtell	<u>November 16, 2001</u> Date
<u>Team Member:</u>	<u>/SGD/</u> Brad Cella	<u>November 16, 2001</u> Date
<u>Team Member:</u>	<u>/SGD/</u> Deb Liggett	<u>November 16, 2001</u> Date
<u>Team Member:</u>	<u>/SGD/</u> Cicely Muldoon	<u>November 16, 2001</u> Date
<u>Team Member:</u>	<u>/SGD/</u> Roger Trimble	<u>November 16, 2001</u> Date
<u>Team Member:</u>	<u>/SGD/</u> Dave Uberuaga	<u>November 16, 2001</u> Date

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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This review was "commissioned" on June 6, 2001 by distribution of an electronic memorandum to the Regional Directors of the National Park Service. The text of that memorandum follows:

In 1998, former Associate Director Finnerty commissioned a review of the national fire, aviation and emergency response programs. Many of the recommendations from that review have been implemented and provide the basis for the continued success of the Fire Management Program Center and attendant programs.

Current and pending retirements and staff reassignments, both at the Fire Management Program Center and in the Ranger Activities Division in WASO, continue to influence how and where we accomplish work. In addition, the National Fire Plan and the 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Policy; the increasing emphasis by the Service, the Department and the Congress on structural fire; the increasing use of aviation resources for a wide variety of missions; and the need to ensure that other emergency response activities at the national level are closely aligned with wildland fire, merit considerations and review, particularly for roles and functions and organizational structures for these national programs.

Therefore, I am commissioning such a review and have selected a team to conduct the analysis and provide me with alternatives and recommendations. The review team members are¹:

- *Bill Wade, Superintendent, Shenandoah NP (retired), Chairperson*
- *Bill Schenke, Regional Director, Midwest Region, ex-officio*
- *Orville Daniels, Forest Supervisor, Lolo NF (retired), advisor*
- *Craig Axtell, Chief, Biological Resources Management Division*
- *Brad Cella, Regional Fire Management Officer, Alaska Region*
- *Deb Liggett, Superintendent, Katmai and Lake Clark NPs and Preserves*
- *Cicely Muldoon, Superintendent, San Juan Island NHP*
- *Roger Trimble, Bureau of Land Management (retired)*

The team will be provided oversight by the Chief of Fire and Aviation, Regional Director Schenke and myself.

¹ Subsequent to this memorandum being distributed, it was determined that Orville Daniels would not be able to serve on the Review Team. On September 24, 2001, Dave Uberuaga, Deputy Superintendent of Mount Rainier National Park was added to the team to carry out a specific review of the administrative functions at the Fire Management Program Center.

OBJECTIVES OF THE REVIEW:

- *identify and solicit opinions from NPS and interagency constituents and cooperators*
- *identify strengths and shortfalls in existing programs and develop alternative solutions*
- *identify future impacts on programs and staffing and develop alternative solutions*
- *formulate role and function statements for WASO and the Fire Management Program Center, in concert with regional and support offices*
- *investigate the feasibility of inter-bureau positions to meet joint needs in wildland and structural fire, aviation and all-risk emergency response*
- *determine alternative organizational approaches and the associated strengths and weaknesses of each to meet program objectives*
- *identify interdisciplinary opportunities to improve incorporation of wildland fire, structural fire, aviation and emergency response with other NPS programs*
- *make recommendations for providing both immediate and long-term fire and aviation technical and managerial expertise in WASO*
- *make recommendations on developing, training and maintaining expertise to address to successional needs of the wildland and structural fire, aviation and emergency response programs*
- *make recommendations for the integration of other NPS disciplines and functions into the wildland fire, structural fire and emergency response programs of the Service*
- *identify program responsibility and appropriate workloads at different levels of the organization*

Over the next several months, members of the review team will be in contact with many NPS managers (both line and program) as well as those in other agencies with whom we cooperate and collaborate. The purposes of these interviews will be to develop information about how effectively the national wildland fire, structural fire, aviation and emergency response programs are serving their intended roles and constituents, and what changes might be appropriate. The review is not intended to develop justifications for increases in staff or funding, but rather to make the most effective use of the resources available to the Service.

The team commenced its work at its first meeting July 11 – 13, during which relevant documents were gathered and assignments to team members made. The team reconvened for a “progress check”

August 15 – 17. The final team meeting was held September 25 – 28, during which findings and recommendations were discussed, and assignments made for preparation of the final report.

Individual team members conducted interviews both by telephone and face-to-face. Additionally, other persons both within and outside the NPS were given the opportunity to talk with team members, but declined the offer or chose not to respond. In addition to whatever distribution occurred in the field of the June 6 memorandum commissioning the review, a brief description of the undertaking was published in the widely read NPS “morning report” soon thereafter. This announcement invited anyone who wished to do so to contact one of the team members if she/he had relevant issues or concerns to discuss.

Review Team members interviewed 131 individuals. Appendix C lists those interviewed and those who serious attempts were made to contact or who “declined” to be interviewed.

We consulted numerous documents, reports and other references. Appendix B lists those found to be significant to the review.

Our special thanks to Amanda Kaplan, who helped develop interview questions, and to Jan Passek who provided invaluable assistance with some of the interviews.

BACKGROUND

The vast majority of recommendations from the Review of National Fire, Aviation and Emergency Response conducted January 20 – May 18, 1998 were implemented over the following year, or so. Several significant accomplishments from that review that influence our findings and recommendations in this Review are:

- The staff at the NPS Fire Management Program Center in Boise, ID has nearly doubled since the 1998 Review. Several key positions were added that have had significant influence on the program and assistance to the field.
- A Fire Management Leadership Board was established, chartered and is fully functional.
- A strategic plan for the Fire Management Program Center was developed.²
- Several “steering committees” were established to guide various program functions in the national “fire and aviation” arena.
- An effective mentoring program for wildland fire personnel has been developed and implemented.

Since 1998, a number of other events and influences have occurred that also bear heavily on some of the findings and recommendations herein. Among them are:

- The completion and distribution of NPS Director’s Order #18: Wildland Fire Management, November 17, 1998.
- The wildland fire events of 2000, including the Cerro Grande Fire, that resulted in significant increases in targeted wildland fire funding. These events also had a profound effect on the way we will manage wildland fire as an agency.
- The NPS 2001 Appropriations Implementation Strategy, National Fire Plan, November 10, 2000³.
- The joint distribution by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture of the 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (an update and revision of the 1995 Wildland Fire Policy) in January 2001.

² Although, as will be discussed later, after its development and initial use, it has been all but abandoned since early in 2000.

³ The National Park Service developed this strategy to begin implementing the wildland fire authorities and programs in the 2001 Interior Appropriations Act (H.R.4578) and the President’s Fire Initiative (known as the National Fire Plan).

- Several other wildland fire reviews, most notably those by the General Accounting Office and the National Academy for Public Administration (NAPA).
- A significant increase in interest, emphasis and scrutiny directed at wildland fire by the United States Congress, the Department of the Interior, the media, and the public.
- Congressional Testimony by the General Accounting Office: "THE NATIONAL FIRE PLAN – Federal Agencies Are Not Organized to Effectively and Efficiently Implement the Plan." (GAO-01-1022T, 14pp.)

It seems clear that over the next 2-5 years several themes or trends will prevail in the National Park Service:

- There will be a continuing interest in the way the Service conducts itself in the wildland fire arena, and continuing or increasing scrutiny applied to its policies and actions by the Congress, the Department of the Interior, the media, and the public.
- There will be an increasing understanding, both by the public and by those in the NPS, of the relationship between "wildland fire management" and resources (both natural and cultural) management, and a narrowing of the gap that exists between the two.
- The events of September 11, 2001 and thereafter are likely to influence funding, staffing and response capability.
- Advances in technology are likely to continue to influence the fire and aviation program.

In our judgment, these factors justify a major transformation in the organizational structure at the national level. Our principal finding, and the associated recommendations, are fundamental in nature, and are the foundation on which many of the subsequent findings and recommendations are predicated.

The findings, discussion and resulting recommendations are related to the National Park Service as a whole, and are intended to provide generalizations and conclusions regarding the fire management program and its interrelationships with other organizational entities. Rather than an absolute – one can find exceptions at particular regions or at particular parks that are contrary to a finding or discussion presented.

The mandate for this review precluded us from making specific recommendations directed at others outside of Operations, but that does not mean that others do not have responsibilities to help in resolution of the issues. Much of the responsibility for success (and reasons for problems) is not solely that of the fire management organization. Those in the fire program should not infer or conclude that the review was targeting them by only recommending things that they can change, and not others (e.g., Natural Resources becoming engaged in fire planning, or the Natural Resource Advisory Group having one of their meetings in Boise together with FMLB, for example).

PRINCIPAL FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THE NPS' WILDLAND FIRE PROGRAM AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL IS EVOLVING INTO A BROAD BASED ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT PROGRAM THAT IS INTERDISCIPLINARY IN NATURE, AND CAN NO LONGER BE VIEWED SOLELY A "RANGER" FUNCTION. THIS EVOLUTION WILL, AND SHOULD, CONTINUE UNTIL THERE IS A COMPLETE INTEGRATION OF APPROPRIATE ASPECTS OF WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT INTO THE RELEVANT RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS.

DISCUSSION⁴:

At the core of the discussion surrounding this finding is the emotional influence of tradition. Consider the situation that existed several decades ago when certain populations of animals (example: the wolf) in some parks were considered to be "bad" – something to prevent and suppress.

Along the way, the NPS recognized that even animals once thought "bad" were essential components of the ecosystem and needed to be effectively managed, and in some cases, even reintroduced. "Animal control," once a ranger function, evolved with the recognition that highly specialized professionals and science were needed to effectively manage populations of animals and plants in the ecosystems. Many of these management issues evolve around the origins of the populations – natural, (re)introduced or accidental.

Until relatively recently in the history of the NPS, fire was seen as "bad" – something to prevent and suppress. Preventing and suppressing fire was what rangers did – and did well – so "fire" was seen as a "ranger" function. Only in the last 2 – 3 decades has there been an increasing realization that fire is not inherently bad and that it is an essential component of some ecosystems and some cultural landscapes. Similar considerations as to origin – natural, introduced or accidental – pervade fire management issues.

⁴ Throughout this section of the report, our use of the term "fire" will mean wildland fire. Issues related to structural fire will be covered in a later section of the report.

Unlike the recognition and acceptance that "animal (wildlife) professionals and specialists," for example, were essential to effective ecosystem management, the roles of fire professionals and specialists in effective natural resources and cultural landscape management has not progressed to the same level of recognition and acceptance. Fire continues to be viewed by many, including some in the "resource management" community, as a ranger function and responsibility. Some can make the intellectual leap, but can't quite manage to get over the hurdle of tradition.

Without getting into the seemingly never-ending debate about what properly belongs as a ranger role and what doesn't, we believe an objective way to consider the issue at hand is to look at fire not solely from an occupational perspective, but rather at the observable facts related to fire, as a phenomenon. With this in mind, we can view fire:

- In terms of the context in which it occurs (the resources), and why it is necessary for this process to occur.
- In terms of what it takes to **appropriately** manage it, including prevention, suppression, and use.

While these elements are by no means mutually exclusive, they provide a more healthy way for the organization to look at the role of fire and its responsibilities in meeting agency mission goals as opposed to the more traditional, "packaged" approach. Successful program management of each requires a widely divergent set of knowledge, skills and abilities for each, and the sets are not necessarily complementary. This is not unlike the relationship (or lack thereof) between the development, management and delivery of effective interpretive program elements in a visitor center; and the design, construction and maintenance of the facility and equipment constituting the visitor center. Communication, coordination and collaboration are important, but it probably doesn't make sense to have the entire operation managed as a "package."

Consistent with a growing recognition of the values and benefits of fire in resources and landscape management, an increasing number of professionals in the NPS believe that wildland fire should, in fact, organizationally become a part of Natural Resources. At the same time, there is a recognition that Natural Resources is probably not ready, at this time, to fully assume that responsibility because the alliances at the national level between wildland fire and Natural Resources are not yet well established.

Principal Recommendation One:

The Associate Director, Park Operations and Education should establish the Division of National Wildland Fire, reporting directly to him. This structure should be reviewed in 2-3 years to see if the wildland fire program should be incorporated into Natural Resources at the national level.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

Based on our deliberations, interviews and discussions with a wide range of NPS employees and interested parties outside the organization, we believe that this change will provide greater value and benefit to the NPS than does the current organizational structure. Not surprisingly, this

recommendation is supported by nearly everyone we have consulted with in the NPS fire organization. Additionally, a number of other experienced NPS Superintendents, Chief Park Rangers and resource professionals support it. Several members of the Ranger Advisory Council (RAC) support it, or at least do not seriously oppose it.

To imply that this recommendation is unanimously supported throughout the NPS would be incorrect. The support for it is probably slightly in the majority, but not much more than that. In fairness, there are a substantial number in the NPS that feel that no change should be made at the national level and that the wildland fire program should remain under the Ranger Activities Division. Concerns raised over removing wildland fire from the Ranger Activities Division include a perceived erosion of the ranger profession's responsibilities; an impression that further stove-piping of the fire function will be detrimental to interdisciplinary coordination and support; and the potential vulnerability of a "stand-alone" NPS wildland fire structure to conversion to a national fire organization not based in NPS resource protection goals. However, a number of those who expressed concern can offer little more than "fire has traditionally been a ranger function and should remain so" to support this position.

NOTE: This recommendation in no way implies or suggests that we believe that the wildland fire program should be a separate organizational function at the lower levels (regions and parks) of the NPS. While we are mindful that there is a tendency at those lower levels to rush to "mirror" the organizational structure of WASO, we believe that thoughtful park and regional managers will make the determination as to how wildland fire ought to be structured in their units based on what contributes the greatest value and benefit to that unit. This has already been demonstrated, for instance, in Saguaro NP and Everglades NP, where deliberative analyses were undertaken and consideration was given (and rejected) to making wildland fire a separate park division. Conversely, at Big Cypress National Preserve, establishing wildland fire as a separate park division was judged to make the best sense.

Our interviews and our deliberations have surfaced the following additional considerations that we believe support Principal Recommendation One:

- During this time of increased interest and scrutiny in wildland fire issues by the public, the media, the Congress, the Department of the Interior and State and local Governments, the NPS will be better able to meet these challenges. Increasingly, wildland fire objectives are deriving from – and being driven by – external sources. The proposed change would increase probabilities that these objectives could be better integrated with NPS management objectives because of focused leadership at a higher level. The wildland fire program would be more visible than if subordinated to a lower position in the NPS.
- The proposed change would make the organizational alignment of the wildland fire program in the NPS more consistent with the alignments that exist in the other bureaus of the Department of the Interior and of the U. S. Forest Service. As such, increasingly essential interagency coordination and communications and the "stature" of the program would be enhanced.

- The wildland fire program is funded from an appropriation separate from the Operation of the National Park Service (ONPS). The proposed change would make funding issues “cleaner” and improve accountability⁵.
- This recommendation is consistent with the similar recommendation made by the 1998 Review of National Fire, Aviation and Emergency Response. Additionally, it is consistent with the 1999 Review of the Ranger Activities Division. Support and rationale for this change has increased since then.
- The proposed change is consistent with the “de facto” way that the wildland fire program has been managed in the NPS since approximately 1995. Although not formally organized as a separate division, the Deputy Chief Ranger, under whom the fire program exists, has essentially reported directly to the Associate Director, Park Operations and Education. Therefore, in terms of reporting and communications channels, the change would be relatively “transparent.”
- The proposed change would provide more focus and leadership to carry out the program management responsibilities for wildland fire intended by Director’s Order #18 – Wildland Fire Management.
- The proposed change enhances the opportunities for the NPS to carry out the expectations of the 2001 Wildland Fire Policy, the National Fire Plan and *appropriate and relevant* recommendations, suggestions or expectations emanating from the GAO, NAPA and other review organizations.
- In the existing structure of the Ranger Activities Division, the wildland fire program has grown significantly, relative to the other elements in the Division. Separating this program from RAD would allow greater focus to be directed toward those other “ranger” programs.

Principal Recommendation Two:

*The Associate Director, Park Operations and Education should establish the position of **Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire** (vice: Rick Gale). This position should report to the Associate Director, Park Operations and Education. It should be duty-stationed in WASO. Further, we recommend that this position be established and filled as soon as possible to reduce or eliminate the “vacancy” in the position.*

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

While there is universal concurrence that the NPS wildland fire program needs prominent representation in WASO, there is less agreement as to whether this representation should be in the form of the “Chief” or by a “Deputy.” We recognize that having the “bureau fire director” duty-stationed at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise is more consistent with the organizational

⁵ Later in this report, we have specific recommendations relative to the funding of the structural fire and aviation programs.

model of the majority of the other DOI Bureaus and offers some advantages. We believe the scales are tipped in favor of duty-stationing the Chief in WASO by the following:

- Given the level of scrutiny and involvement in the wildland fire program by the Congress, the Department of the Interior and other “external” entities, the NPS’ highest ranking fire professional ought to be at the “right hand” of the Director and Associate Director for immediate advice, counsel and information. This will be especially true if any of the proposals being considered for the establishment of a “Fire Czar” or an interagency “Wildland Fire Leadership Board” made up of the agency Directors is implemented.
- The NPS National FMO (Sue Vap), who is duty-stationed at the Fire Management Program Center at NIFC has been serving as the NPS representative at NIFC, and as the NPS representative on the national Multi-Agency Coordination Group (MAC) for the past several years. As such, she has established protocols that seem to be working effectively.
- Generally, the Chief’s position should have reporting to it all of the “strategic” program management functions in the division. The more operational or “tactical” functions would report to the National FMO. We recommend against having an additional organizational layer occupied by a “deputy chief,” although we recognize that later on, there may be a need for such a position⁶.
- The Chief should be a key member, and perhaps the nominal leader of the Fire Management Leadership Board, as this Board continues to fill its role in developing the national strategy for wildland fire.

Principal Recommendation Three:

The Associate Director, Park Operations and Education should collaborate with the Associate Directors of Natural Resources and Cultural Resources and obtain agreement to establish a “Board of Directors of National Wildland Fire” consisting of the Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire, Chief, Division of Ranger Activities and appropriate high-ranking designees from both Natural Resources and Cultural Resources. These four individuals, under the guidance of the Associates, should develop a “charter” and protocols to assure that there is coordinated national leadership, effective interchange, and strong interdisciplinary collaboration in developing and recommending national policy relating to wildland fire management.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

Because two members of this proposed “board” would be new to their positions, and two would not have been significantly involved in these activities in the past, this group is unlikely to be heavily influenced by past practices or by traditional alliances. The protocols and expectations they establish

⁶ We will provide more in-depth discussion of the structure and organization of the FMPC later in the report.

can be relatively free of operating mechanisms that traditionally constrain effective behaviors across organizational boundaries.

We believe there is a tremendous opportunity to establish a non-traditional approach to advance the effective use of science, technology and staffing in managing and responding appropriately to wildland fire in the natural ecosystems and on cultural landscapes.

Principal Recommendation Four:

The Associate Director, Park Operations and Education should retain the functions of National Aviation Resources Management and National Incident Response Management in the Division of Ranger Activities. The function of Structural Fire Management should be transferred to the Division of Risk Management.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

This recommendation is described here only so that a complete context is presented of proposed organizational changes to those functions heretofore included in the "fire and aviation" program administered under the Deputy Chief Ranger at the Fire Management Program Center in Boise, ID. A full explanation of each element of this recommendation will be provided later in the report under the categories related to each.

NOTE: RECOMMENDATIONS THAT FOLLOW IN EACH OF THE CATAGORIES ARE BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE AFOREMENTIONED PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS ARE ACCEPTED AND IMPLEMENTED. TO THE EXTENT THEY ARE NOT, RECOMMENDATIONS THAT FOLLOW WILL NEED TO BE ADJUSTED.

OTHER FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. FIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM CENTER (FMPC) OPERATIONS

BACKGROUND:

The FMPC has grown from 24 approved positions in June of 1998 to 44 approved positions in June 2001 – an 83% increase. These numbers include interagency, partially funded and part-time positions. The expansion of the organization, along with the increase in workload and complexity brought on by the aftermath of the Cerro Grande Fire, the 2000 fire season, the National Fire Plan and the political pressures and program requirements generated by them, have resulted not only in some exceptional outcomes from the FMPC, but also in some loss of effectiveness and efficiency.

ACCOLADES:

Almost without exception, the FMPC staff is seen, both in the NPS and among its interagency partners, as a group of highly professional, competent individuals. Generally, those interviewed complimented FMPC staff for their support to the field and their attitudes of helpfulness. The only significant exceptions to this perception resulted from situations where workload interfered with ability of staff to deliver.

The FMPC staff with some assistance from workgroups has accomplished a number of significant projects in the past 2-3 years. These include but are not limited to:

- (1) Completion of RM-18,
- (2) Revision of RM-18 Chapter 10, Prescribed Fire Management which was critical for re-implementing the NPS prescribed fire program,
- (3) RM-18, Chapter 4 Wildland Fire Planning,
- (4) Completion of mandated plans such the Action and Fiscal Plans associated with the National Fire Plan,
- (5) DOI 10-year Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Hazard Fuels Management,
- (6) Initiation of Rural Fire Assistance and Wildland Urban Interface programs,

- (7) Response to a number of GAO investigations, the NAPA study, the Cerro Grande investigations/inquiries,
- (8) Completion of Working Capital Fund Analysis addressing allocation of Wildland Engines and
- (9) Continued progress on the development of ROSS dispatch system and IQCS qualification system.

Additionally, it should be pointed out that there is a significant attempt on the part of most staff members at the FMPC to avoid, where possible, passing along unnecessary work or demands to the region or park. This doesn't always work, but the intent is clearly present in the minds of FMPC staff.

FINDING 1.1: NOTWITHSTANDING MANY VALUABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS, THE FMPC CURRENTLY IS OPERATING LESS EFFECTIVELY THAN IT SHOULD BE.

DISCUSSION:

In our judgment, this reduced effectiveness is attributable primarily to three circumstances:

- Failure to follow, at least in part, the January 2000 Strategic Plan.
- The growth of the FMPC and the resulting broadening of the organization and span of control.
- The influences of the Cerro Grande Fire, the 2000 fire season and the National Fire Plan.

The FMPC developed and approved the "Strategic Plan 2000 – 2004" in January 2000. Since early in 2000, that plan has been virtually ignored.

Beginning with the events immediately following the Cerro Grande Fire and being exacerbated by the remainder of the 2000 fire season, the FMPC has reverted to operating in a "crisis mode" characterized by reaction rather than pro-action. A number of persons at the FMPC lamented that the Cerro Grande Fire was a "watershed event" in terms of its effect on FMPC operations, in that there was not an effective debriefing of its impact, and that it shifted the dynamics within the FMPC.

Almost without exception, the staff at the FMPC acknowledges that the Strategic Plan was a good one, and that had parts of it been followed the Center might have operated more effectively. There is consensus that "we have a good plan, but nobody pays any attention to it."

The most significant result of failing to follow at least some of the Plan's components has been a substantial deterioration in coordination and cohesion among the program managers at the FMPC. Nearly every employee at the FMPC has acknowledged this. Current internal operations are

characterized by independency and “ad hoc” efforts, rather than by coordination and interdependency. Staff meetings⁷ are characterized largely by information sharing and “peacocking,” rather than by team effectiveness and in-depth discussion of issues and concerns and in problem solving, decision-making and prioritizing. Further, many in the field who need effective support from the FMPC have observed this lack of effectiveness.

A specific example of this lack of coordination that has been identified is that there have been occasions when requests from program managers at the FMPC have been submitted to the FMLB without first having discussed them among the other program managers in terms of understanding and overall FMPC priorities.

Contributing to the existing situation, the current organization chart for the FMPC shows a Deputy National FMO, eight program managers and several staff positions reporting to the National FMO (Sue Vap) position. Given the responsibilities beyond day-to-day leadership of the FMPC currently expected of the National FMO, this structure is cumbersome to the point of perhaps being unmanageable.

Recommendation 1.1.1:

The Chief, Division of National Fire Management should organize and structure the Division and the FMPC to that shown in Appendix A.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

This proposed organization is intended to accomplish three key results:

- Align the “strategic” functions (communications, policy, planning and budget) to report directly to the Chief of the Division.
- Reduce the span of control and more closely align related functions at the FMPC, and identify appropriate linkages with other NPS organizational entities.
- Eliminate small (2-3 person) program units that make backup during absences difficult (see Finding 1.2).

At the FMPC, beyond the proposed Branch Chief level, we believe position assignment should be undertaken as an effort of the existing key staff (program managers) in a consensus exercise and perhaps in conjunction with revision of the strategic plan. General roles and functions of major units are shown in Appendix A, but these are not intended to be either inflexible or limiting. This should be viewed as an opportunity to establish organizational structure and roles and functions that make the best sense, given the current influences and other recommendations in this review.

⁷ Staff meetings generally consist of the entire FMPC staff meeting approximately once a month. There appear to be few, if any, meetings of key FMPC decision makers (program managers) devoted to critical issues, decisions and priorities.

We are not suggesting by this organization structure that positions incorporating the “strategic” functions assigned directly to the Chief of the Division should necessarily be duty-stationed in WASO, just because we recommend that the Chief’s position should be duty-stationed there. We leave that determination to the Chief.

We recognize that the proposed restructuring at the FMPC cannot be fully implemented, in terms of appropriate grade levels and reporting linkages, without some attrition of current incumbents. Therefore, implementation may have to occur in stages or increments.

Recommendation 1.1.2:

*The National FMO should regard as **urgent** the need to schedule a process to update the Strategic Plan: 2000 – 2004, and seek commitment among the FMPC staff to adhere to it in the future.*

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

We suggest this be done as a team building exercise with two objectives:

- Update the strategic plan.
- Overcome some of the ineffectiveness at the FMPC identified above.

We further suggest that other organizational entities outside of fire, such as the Natural Resources Program Center and one of the Archeological Centers, should have the opportunity to participate in the revision, or at least to review and comment on a draft of the strategic plan.

FINDING 1.2: KEY FMPC STAFF MEMBERS ARE OFTEN UNAVAILABLE TO ASSIST REGIONS AND FIELDS DUE TO TRAVEL COMMITMENTS OR WILDLAND FIRE ASSIGNMENTS.

DISCUSSION:

Numerous park FMOs, as well as Regional fire staff and FMPC identified this issue. It is recognized that there is an obligation and value to the individual, NPS and the interagency wildland fire community that FMPC staff members participate on Incident Management Teams and as single resources, especially at Preparedness Levels 4 and 5. Many FMPC staff members are highly qualified, and recognized for their expertise gained through years and experience.

The problem arises often during high preparedness levels or during critical time period for different programs that program managers and FMPC staff are not available to respond to important field questions or request for assistance. This is particular perplexing when it has been stressed to the field

that certain programs are of critical importance or a critical deadline imposed either by the NPS or Department is imminent and the program manager or the only person at FMPC that can answer the question is not available due to fire assignment or travel, This results in substantial workload on individuals remaining at the FMPC, potentially reduced quality of or the wrong information provided by the regions and the field, impacted budgetary allocation process, extremely short deadlines, and arrival of needed information with virtually no time of review. This situation has contributed significantly to the frustration of those involved at the park, region and FMPC.

FMPC program managers and staff need to work with individuals in parks and regional office to develop individuals that can backfill or represent them if they are not available. This is a critical component of meeting the immediate needs of the parks and region but also assists with addressing the leadership succession issue.

The mobilization and opportunities for team assignments is dynamic and fluid and some flexibility needs to be employed but the situation needs to be more closely managed than it has been to date, due to the increasing demands throughout the wildland fire management program.

Recommendation 1.2.1:

The National FMO should identify which FMPC program managers/ staff members can accept incident management team assignments for a predetermined number of years. Since a person who is assigned to an incident management team may be mobilized at any time or preparedness level, the number of FMPC personnel assigned to established teams should be small.

Recommendation 1.2.2:

The National FMO should develop a schedule that identifies when FMPC program managers/ staff not assigned to teams can be nominated for team assignments.

Recommendation 1.2.3:

The National FMO should identify other FMPC staff members that will be available as single resources at higher preparedness levels.

Recommendation 1.2.4:

The National FMO should identify critical program dependent time periods, when specific FMPC staff will not be available for dispatch (e.g. one month, or time period required to ensure that budget data is available for budget allocation meeting).

Recommendation 1.2.5:

When FMPC individuals are mobilized, The National FMO should determine which, if any, additional FMPC staff members, particularly within the branch of mobilized individual, can be mobilized and which need to remain at FMPC to meet program needs and will not be available for dispatch. There are times when some FMPC personnel cannot be available for dispatch.

Recommendation 1.2.6:

FMPC program managers and staff should identify and provide contact numbers of individual(s) who will provide assistance for their program areas during their absence. This will be posted on the pending wildland fire intranet site.

Recommendation 1.2.7:

The National FMO should evaluate existing deadlines; especially those associated with budget formulation, to determine if conflicts with most active wildland fire seasons can be minimized or eliminated.

FINDING 1.3: THE ADMINISTRATIVE WORKLOAD EXCEEDS THE STAFFING AVAILABLE TO PERFORM ALL DUTIES CURRENTLY ASSIGNED. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES ARE UNCLEAR.

DISCUSSION:

The program center's administrative staff is very conscientious and hard working and other center staff appreciates their efforts. While the staffing level at the FMPC has grown by over 80% since 1998, for administration, staffing has remained between 3-4 FTE for the past 12 years,

The administrative staff performs a wide range of support functions for the program center and over time has also provided support to other work units. Some administrative functions overlap or are duplicated in two or more positions. While in some cases the overlap is needed, many staff members are not sure who is the lead person for certain functions at certain times. Administrative staff also performs some work that should be done by program managers and other work units. Some administrative staff members also continue to provide fire business management support to park units in addition to their support for the Center. In some instances, off-site staff not supervised by the Administrative Officer carries out administrative functions in support of the center. The Administrative Officer is working on clarifying roles and responsibilities.

Recommendation 1.3.1:

To the extent the restructuring of the FMPC is undertaken (see Recommendation 1.1.1), the National FMO should give consideration to combining some or all of the functions currently being performed under the Program Management Specialist (Berg) with those being performed under the Administrative Officer.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

Realigning and re-describing some of these positions should increase the position efficiency and effectiveness related to administrative services.

Recommendation 1.3.2:

The National FMO should assure that the roles and responsibilities of the Administrative staff are clearly defined, both overall and for each position and define the lead for each administrative function. This would include the staff's role in supporting the Fire Business Management program in the parks. Determine whether the Administrative staff do/do not have lead roles in maintaining expertise in Fire Business Management.

Recommendation 1.3.3:

The National FMO should assure that the Fire Business Management Program Manager and the Regional FMOs and FPAs are the focal point to the parks for FBM issues. The FMPC Administrative staff could have a backup role but not a lead role.

Recommendation 1.3.4:

The National FMO should assure that other positions not working directly for the Administrative Officer that have a role/function for administrative support are identified and their roles clarified. Identify specific tasks where they would be the lead, backup or a resource.

Recommendation 1.3.5:

The National FMO should hire a Term Administrative Assistant GS-7, NTE 4 years working directly for the Administrative Officer. The WUI workload/ramp-up is very significant and should fund the needed position.

Recommendation 1.3.6:

The National FMO should create a mini-career path in Administration to improve skills and help maintain a cadre of support staff that can become more knowledgeable and productive.

Recommendation 1.3.7:

The National FMO should request that the Seattle Servicing Personnel Office conduct a mini review after the Administrative Officer has redefined roles and made pen & ink changes in either position descriptions or duties. The Seattle SPO can then quickly review the changes to assure that proper organizational alignment and grade and pay are commensurate with the duties assigned.

FINDING 1.4: PROGRAM MANAGERS HAVE TAKEN ON MORE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS BUT THEY STILL MUST DO MORE TO IMPROVE ACCOUNTABILITY.

DISCUSSION:

Program Managers/Supervisors have specific responsibilities they have been assigned through government streamlining efforts over the last few years. With the use of purchase cards comes the burden of purchase card logs and verification of charges, and with automated systems comes the electronic time and attendance certification of subordinate staff and financial management of program funds. In some cases, FMPC program managers have relied on administrative staff to perform a portion of these duties and in some cases rely on support staff to perform all of these functions. There is a need for administrative support for these functions but the program manager must be responsible. If not properly managed the results are poor accountability and increased workload for Administrative staff.

Recommendation 1.4.1:

The National FMO should assure that program managers and supervisors are properly trained and held accountable for their basic fiscal and personnel management responsibilities including time and attendance certification, purchase card record keeping and financial management of multi-million dollar project accounts.

FINDING 1.5: CURRENTLY MOST OF THE EXPENSES AT THE CENTER ARE BEING CHARGED TO ONE ACCOUNT. THIS IS NOT A GOOD BUSINESS PRACTICE FOR TRACKING AND ACCOUNTABILITY PURPOSES.

DISCUSSION:

Almost \$8.7 million dollars is in the 9560-245 account. Almost 100% of the FMPC's program activities are funded under this single account, although each manager has an allocation of this account. Most of the center's managers have created their own cuff records using spreadsheets or other record keeping that varies among program managers and duplicates what should be tracked in the official system.

One large multi-million dollar account is difficult to manage and properly track. Looking at the list of over 25 primary activities, it would increase accountability and make financial tracking more accountable if the center created several subsidiary accounts and assigned program responsibilities. Currently the Administrative Officer and other staff are doing the program managers work of budgeting and tracking. One significant obstacle in allocating the account is currently the AFS2 program is not networked which is essential in order to have program managers carry out their responsibilities. The Administrative Officer is planning to breakout the 245 account in FY2002.

Recommendation 1.5.1:

For efficiency and accountability the National FMO should assure that the 245 funds are broken out into subsidiary accounts or program work elements and programmed in AFS2 with an authorized amount for each program manager.

FINDING 1.6: THE CURRENT CONTRACTING WORKLOAD IN ADMINISTRATION COULD SUPPORT A FULL TIME CONTRACTING OFFICER. HOWEVER, ENTERING INTO SOME AGREEMENTS WITH LARGER PARKS FOR CONTRACTING NEEDS MAY BE MORE EFFECTIVE.

DISCUSSION:

The current contracting workload is primarily the purchasing of fire engines for selected parks, some interagency agreements, mechanical fuel reduction contracts, and most recently WUI needs. Although the work may support a CO, an alternative would be to target and cultivate a couple of large parks to assist with specific tasks, for example YOSE procures the fire engines, OLYM covers fuel reduction

contracts etc. Prior arrangements will enable the parks to anticipate and plan for meeting the contracting need.

Recommendation 1.6.1:

The National FMO should assure that one or two large parks are identified to assist with specific contracting needs. Establish pre-season agreements so the parks can anticipate and plan for this contracting workload. Explore incentives that would encourage a park to take on this workload. Only if this arrangement proves to be ineffective, should consideration for hiring a contracting officer be initiated.

FINDING 1.7: IT IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR AT THE FIELD LEVEL HOW RESPONSIBILITIES AND SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTISE IS ALLOCATED AT THE FMPC.

Recommendation 1.7.1:

Immediately following implementation of any restructuring at the FMPC and the Division of National Wildland Fire Management, the Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management and the National FMO should assure that role and function statements are revised and widely distributed to the field.

Recommendation 1.7.2:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should assure that periodic brief updates on ongoing wildland fire management programs are posted on the proposed wildland fire intranet, or are otherwise widely distributed. The updates need to identify who at the FMPC is responsible for each program and which individuals can be contacted for assistance if the lead person is not available. Program status, impending critical deadlines, and any anticipated program changes should be included.

FINDING 1.8: THERE STILL IS A PERCEPTION AT THE FIELD LEVEL (AS WAS THE CASE IN 1998) THAT FMPC PROGRAM MANAGERS AND SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS OFTEN PURSUE PERSONAL PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS, EVEN IN THE FACE OF BEING OVERLOADED AND MAY NOT BE FOCUSING ON THE HIGHEST PRIORITY ACTIVITIES IMPORTANT TO THE FIELD.

DISCUSSION:

Some FMPC staff members appear to have too many interagency commitments, resulting in an inability to accomplish NPS program priorities for which they are responsible, or for which they are the identified subject matter experts.

Recommendation 1.8.1:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should assure that the recommended revision of the Strategic Plan includes clear identification of priorities and that key staff are held accountable for delivering on these priorities rather than being diverted by other, lower priority interests and opportunities.

FINDING 1.9: THE NPS RESPONSE TO NATIONAL FIRE PLAN HAS NOT BEEN CLEARLY CONVEYED TO THE FIELD.

Recommendation 1.9.1:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should assure that a document clearly and concisely describing what the NPS has done to respond to the National Fire Plan is prepared and distributed widely throughout the NPS.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

This document should specifically include how FY2000 funding was allocated, the number of positions – account, title and grade affected; rationale for allocation, percentage distributed for firefighters, equipment, fire ecologists, GIS specialists, other positions; and the strategy for future allocations. Although numerous briefings have been presented for Superintendents, and various portions of this information have been released as tables, a consolidated, accurate document has not been available for NPS wildland fire management personnel.

FINDING 1.10: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE “LESSONS LEARNED” PROGRAM HAS LAGGED BEHIND WHAT WAS ORIGINALLY ENVISIONED

BACKGROUND:

The position of Project Manager – Lessons Learned was established in the FMPC (duty-stationed at the National Advanced Resources Training Center in Marana, AZ) in 1999. The position was filled only briefly and has been vacant for nearly a year. A selection has been recently made to fill the position again. The concept behind the Lessons Learned Project is a valid and extremely important one. Significant value and benefit to the wildland fire program can be derived when this project becomes fully operational.

Recommendation 1.10.1:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should assure that appropriate support is provided to guarantee that this project becomes fully implemented and measures up to the original intent for it.

2. THE FIRE MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP BOARD (FMLB)

BACKGROUND:

The Fire Management Leadership Board was established in 1999 as a result of the 1998 National Fire, Aviation and Emergency Response review and the March 1999 Regional Fire Management Officers meeting. Its Charter (approved in January 2000) describes its Purpose as:

To provide strategic leadership for National Park Service (NPS) fire management program policy, program direction, initiatives, funding priorities, and organizational needs.

Its membership (according to the Charter) consists of the following representatives:

- Regional Fire Management Officers (seven); one of whom will Chair the Board
- National Fire Management Officer
- FIREPRO Program Analyst
- Fire Operations and Safety Program Manager
- Training/Qualifications/Business Management Program Manager
- Fire Science/Ecology Program Manager
- Information Resource Management Program Manager
- Communications/Education Specialist
- One Associate Regional Director, Operations
- Executive Secretary/Logistics Coordination Secretary

The Charter outlines a number of relevant and important functions to be performed by the Board.

FINDING 2.1: THE FMLB IS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE AND MODEL OF COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION-MAKING IN THE NPS, BUT NEEDS SOME "TWEAKING."

DISCUSSION:

Several observations, as well as commentary during a number of interviews, regarding the FMLB's Charter and the way it operates deserve some attention:

- The Board is too large to effectively do business.
- Currently there is some concern about an "imbalance" in the representation of the RFMOs versus the FMPC.
- The Board sometimes gets too involved in "tactical" activities that could better be delegated to work groups or staff. It should focus (as specified in its Charter) on strategic activities.
- It is not clearly stated (although it is implied) in the Charter, to whom the Board is responsible.
- The FMLB has generally met only in Boise or in neutral locations.

Recommendation 2.1.1:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should consider the following modifications in the Charter and the operation of the FMLB:

- *The PURPOSE should be revised to say: "To provide strategic leadership advice to the Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management for National Park Service wildland fire management program policy, program direction, initiatives and issues, funding priorities, and organizational needs; and to accomplish functions delegated or assigned."*
- *The membership should be streamlined to include the seven Regional FMOs, the National FMO, the Chief of the Office of Wildland Fire Strategic Planning, Budget and Policy and the three proposed Branch Chiefs in the Division. This reduces the official Board membership to a more workable number – 12. The ARD, Operations and the Executive Secretary should be ex officio. Ex officio representatives should be added from Natural Resources and Cultural Resources.*

- *The FMLB should consider meeting in a region or park at least once a year to provide opportunity meet with management and fire management personnel. Further, it should consider meeting jointly during appropriate meetings of natural or cultural resources representatives.*

FINDING2.2: FRUSTRATION AND LACK OF UNDERSTANDING STILL EXISTS ABOUT HOW FUNDING PRIORITIES ARE ESTABLISHED AND HOW DECISIONS ABOUT FUNDING ALLOCATIONS ARE MADE.

DISCUSSION:

Although this situation has improved greatly from past years, it still has a ways to go. Clearly, the FMLB is on the right path to make the needed improvements. But distrust, misunderstanding and a perception of inflexibility still exist at the field level, and some still feel that favoritism influences funding allocations.

Parks feel disconnected from setting fire management priorities, and managers need a better understanding of fire funding mechanisms. Superintendents are generally inadequately informed about the mechanics of fire funding, and how fire management priorities are set. Specifically, during fire season, superintendents/parks are not well informed about the larger picture of deployment needs. Communications strategies need to be employed to remedy this deficiency.

Regional FMOs, with the FMPC, need to put a mechanism in place to involve park managers more closely in setting priorities, and need to ensure that a clear explanation of fire funding mechanisms is available to all park managers involved in fire. Better-informed managers will build support for fire activities, and will foster managers' willingness to send staff on training assignments on fires. On a park level, this will enable parks to plan work in the absence of fire staff.

In January 2002, the FMLB expects to finalize the ground rules for future FMLB budget allocation meetings. These will also provide the parks with a set of ground rules for budget submission. This should greatly improve the efficiency of FMLB budget meeting and greatly reduce the frustration of everyone involved in formulating the park, regional, and national budget submissions.

Recommendation 2.2.1:

The Fire Management Leadership Board should assure that ground rules for budget submissions and allocations are clear, that they involve park managers in priority setting, and that, once complete, they are widely distributed. In finalizing the ground rules, relevant recommendations appearing elsewhere in this report should be considered.

Recommendation 2.2.2:

The Fire Management Leadership Board should assure that a clear, concise summary of the distribution of the FY2000 funding increase and the strategies for accomplishing the National Fire Plan objectives.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

Despite recognition by many on the value and importance of the FY2000 funding increase to individual park, regional and national programs, there still exists significant uncertainty, unawareness and misconceptions about the distribution of the funds.

3. WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

BACKGROUND:

General comment – this chapter has good material, but needs editorial help – very difficult to read, many sentences are a paragraph long and are disjointed. Have attempted some editorial changes (see below) but this one needs a lot of attention to make it read well.

The last nineteen months have been extremely tumultuous for the NPS Wildland Fire Management Program at all organizational levels. The May 2000 the Cerro Grande fire resulted in an initial short-term moratorium on prescribed fire in the western United States for all federal wildland fire management agencies, which remained in place for the NPS until May 2001. This fire and associated events deeply touched many individual's lives and careers. The 2000 fire season was one of the most severe in our country's history resulting in over 92,000 fires, over 7 million acres burned and mobilization of over 26,000 firefighters.

Cerro Grande and the 2000 fire season were catalysts for the creation of the National Fire Plan and the substantial increase in FY2001 budget allocations. The FY01 budget was targeted at improving the response capabilities of federal wildland fire management agencies and dramatically improving protection of communities by hazard fuel reduction and the Wildland Urban Interface Initiative through collaboration between the federal agencies, the states, and tribes. . The implementation of the National Fire Plan in 2001 placed tremendous pressure on the NPS wildland fire management and park staffs. Hiring the mandated additional wildland fire management staffs in a severely competitive environment for a limited number of qualified individuals has demanded substantial effort by the regional and parks staff. The use of the Franchise Board greatly assisted with the hiring effort.

The increased funding associated with the National Fire Plan appropriation has significantly improved the ability of the NPS to manage wildland fire. NPS wildland fire program is focusing on protecting human life, using scientific information to accomplish resource management objectives, reducing the wildland fire threat to communities and protecting natural and cultural resources and values with a professional workforce. Over 350 positions within the wildland fire management program have been affected either as new positions, conversion to permanent or permanent less than full time, or by extension of employment period. These positions and additional resources will positively affect the wildland fire management program for years to come.

Regional and park wildland fire management staffs have been fully committed to implementing the National Fire Plan. Efforts have centered on hiring mandated staff, initiating the Rural Fire Assistance Program, and initiating the Wildland Urban Interface program, which includes planning projects, contracting services and accomplishing projects. Field staff revised their prescribed fire management plans and restarted the NPS prescribed fire program with on the ground accomplishments. Significant effort and funding was expended to update Fire Management Plans. In addition to the efforts of the wildland fire management staffs, the regional and park staffs also provided significant administrative support. Although the disconnect between the Wildland Fire Management Program and Natural Resource Management Program continues and is addressed in another section of the report, numerous examples were provided demonstrating improved interdisciplinary activities.

The aforementioned efforts and accomplishments by the FMPC, regional and park wildland fire management staffs occurred in addition to responding to and managing wildland fires in NPS units and mobilizing for the 2000 national wildland fire emergency and the 2001 fire season.

Numerous individuals interviewed commented on how hard the FMPC, regional and park wildland fire management staffs have been working for the past eighteen months due to the unrelenting workload. It was observed that only now people are able to take some well-deserved leave of significant duration.

In one interview a superintendent with an active and complex wildland fire program pointed out that today the NPS is realizing the positive results from our willingness to strongly advocate and provide leadership in the development and implementation of wildland fire use (previously known as prescribed natural fire). The case in point was the positive effect on Glacier National Park this past fire season where the wildland fire use strategy of the past 15 years to reduce the threat and promote the protection of resources clearly was a success. . The wildland fire use program has been controversial and has challenged park, regional and national NPS managers and wildland fire management staffs at all levels, but successes are now becoming apparent.

However, these positive changes and new resources have created issues or highlighted existing ones that need to be examined and resolved to further improve the NPS wildland fire management program.

FINDING 3.1: THE FIREPRO ANALYSIS IS OVER 20 YEARS OLD AND DESPITE NUMEROUS MODIFICATIONS AND ADDITIONS IT HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO ADDRESS THE TOTAL STAFFING AND FUNDING NEEDS OF THE RAPIDLY CHANGING AND INCREASINGLY COMPLEX WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM.

DISCUSSION:

The FIREPRO analysis has been extremely successful as the basis for funding and staffing of the park and regional wildland fire management programs. The analysis determines staffing and funding needs in a manner that can be systematically explained and defended. Although the analysis does identify funding for separate program components, such as initial attack, engine crews, program management, and fuels management, it does NOT fully integrate all these components achieve the most cost effective total program. The analysis is directly related to the fire environment, fire business and accomplishments at the park level. It also addresses staffing and funding needs for clusters of parks for increased efficiency of shared resources and for regional offices. However, many fault the design as considering fire history too heavily, rather than a more proactive view of need.

Numerous modifications have been made to update the analysis and address additional components of the fire program such as the recently modified Working Capital Fund analysis (determines

allocation of wildland fire engines). Modifications and additions to the analysis have been hindered by the inability of subject matter experts and work groups to assist, due to existing workload. Therefore, these revisions have not occurred in a timely manner. The complexity of the wildland fire management programs, such as increased demand for interagency cooperation, sharing of resources, and the need for joint sharing positions to meet resource management and compliance requirements has outstripped the current design of the analysis.

One of the contributing factors to the perception that the wildland fire management program is alienated from park and regional programs is the separate funding source, budget submission schedule, budget analysis and project tracking system. With technological advancements, mechanisms should be explored to integrate the wildland fire management budget and tracking systems with the PMIS, and align, if possible, budget submission deadlines with the rest of the NPS schedule. The wildland fire deferred maintenance construction already has been integrated into the PMIS, and integrating other FIREPRO project submissions, such as the hazard fuels and prescribed fire projects should be investigated. This could significantly improve the understanding of park management and staff about requested and ongoing wildland fire management projects and reduce the perception that the wildland fire management program operates independent of park objectives and needs. (This issue is also addressed in the Intra-organizational Cooperation and Collaboration section of this report.)

An interagency task force created by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture is currently developing the framework for an interagency wildland fire management budget analysis system to replace the existing various systems currently in use. The NPS needs to insure that the recommendations that follow are considered during the development of the new system. Because implementation of the new interagency fire program analysis is projected to be five to six years away, modifications to the existing FIREPRO analysis will probably be needed in the interim to address specific issues. However, the number and complexity of these modifications (and corresponding costs to complete) should decrease as the implementation date for the new system approaches. It would be inefficient to spend time and money to make major changes to an existing system that was nearing the end of its useful life. Until the new system is in place the creation of positions not justified by the analysis should be minimized, and existing positions that are longer justified should be not be rehired and funding withdrawn when unencumbered. These modifications should consider the recommendations, as appropriate.

Recommendation 3.1.1:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should ensure that the NPS is consistently and fully represented during the design and development of the interagency wildland fire analysis system⁸.

⁸ See "Developing a Single, Interagency, Landscape-scale Budget Planning Framework and Analysis Tool" – A Report to the National Fire Plan Coordinators: USDA Forest Service and U.S. Department of the Interior. This report is currently in preparation and should be crucial in the implementation of this recommendation.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

If the NPS is not adequately represented, the new system may not provide the funding and staffing for a wildland fire management program that can accomplish the NPS and National Fire Plan resource management objectives. The FMLB may be required to act to ensure individual(s) are available to meet this need which could include a term position(s), extended reassignment, temporary promotion or other alternatives.

Recommendation 3.1.2:

The FIREPRO Steering Committee should provide increased flexibility to parks and regions to meet specific program needs.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

The Committee should explore emphasis on FTE, maximum grade and funding, versus a specifically identified position. For example, the analysis may identify the need for additional staffing/grade/funding to address prescribed fire. The park may want to fill the position as an Assistant FMO to provide developmental opportunities but emphasize that the primary responsibility of the position is accomplishing prescribed fire objectives.

Recommendation 3.1.3:

The Fire Management Leadership Board should assure that the analysis addresses the full spectrum of wildland fire management program including other activities and requirements associated with the wildland fire management program such as planning, compliance, GIS, smoke management, natural and cultural resource management, and administrative support. This includes the need to provide a mechanism identifying the potential shared positions and appropriate funding levels.

Recommendation 3.1.4:

The Fire Management Leadership Board should assure that the: (1) analysis optimizes the wildland fire staffing, funding, and resource needs by recognizing synergism between the program elements such as preparedness, wildland fire use and hazard fuel reduction, instead of analyzing these connected elements separately; and, (2) provides appropriate and equitable employment status and grades for the various program elements. The analysis also needs to recognize that as the staff organization, size and complexity change the support needs and impacts on park operations also change and need to be accommodated in the budget process.

Recommendation 3.1.5:

The Fire Management Leadership Board should assure that the analysis recognizes appropriate interagency obligations and activities, including planning, as well as incorporating impacts of significant Congressionally mandated increase of hazard fuels or Wildland Urban Interface funding when determining staffing and funding needs. This is of particular concern in parks where the FMO or wildland fire staff are collateral duty employees.

Recommendation 3.1.6:

The Fire Management Leadership Board should reassess the determination of FMO position grades to ensure that they reflect the significant changes that are occurring to their programs as a result of the NFP and their increased responsibilities.

Recommendation 3.1.7:

The FIREPRO Steering Committee should evaluate the extent to which project-based funding remains appropriate for prescribed fire, mechanical reduction, and Wildland Urban Interface.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

Preparedness staffing and funding is analytically derived, whereas the aforementioned programs are based on projects. Over time, this has resulted in a number of programs funding a disproportionate number of overhead positions (especially term positions) through projects, since the positions were not generated by the analysis. This has been identified by program managers and the FMLB as an undesirable situation and could lead to significant funding and staffing problems as term appointments end and efforts are made to convert positions to permanent status. The FIREPRO Steering Committee and appropriate Program Managers need to conduct the evaluation and prepare recommendations for the FMLB.

Recommendation 3.1.8:

If project based funding continues or until the new analysis system is implemented, the FIREPRO Steering Committee should explore the following options to incorporate wildland fire management projects into PMIS: (1) determine how PMIS can be used to enter and retrieve unfunded wildland fire management projects and track projects; or (2) ensure that wildland fire project data submitted into the Shared Applications Computer System can be linked to PMIS. A critical consideration is that double entry of data is not acceptable.

RATIONAL AND DISCUSSION

Currently, the wildland fire deferred maintenance construction is the only fire program that is integrated into the PMIS.

FINDING 3.2: THE ALLOCATION OF ENGINES AND STAFFING FUNDED BY THE WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM NEEDS TO BE BROUGHT IN LINE WITH THE RECENTLY REVISED WORKING CAPITAL ANALYSIS AND APPROVED STAFFING LEVELS.

DISCUSSION:

In the past, an effort was made to provide wildland engines to the greatest number of parks possible. The cost of the Working Capital Fund steadily increases due to high cost of engines and their amortization costs. Cost of staffing engines has dramatically increased based upon staffing guidelines implemented to satisfy NFP coverage requirements, safety concerns, and need. The revised Working Capital analysis identifies 11 parks that do not qualify for continued Working Capital funding. In addition, the number of engines supported by the Working Capital Fund will be reduced in some parks with multiple engines. The intent of the revised analysis was to ensure that engines in the Working Capital Fund were allocated to parks with sufficient wildland and or prescribed fire activity. Currently 91% of the preparedness funds are committed to personnel and non-discretionary costs. The Working Capital Funds and engine staffing significantly contribute to this high percentage. Bringing the engine allocations into line with the analysis will reduce this percentage and make more funds available for annual redistribution. The wildland fire management program should not continue to fund engines that do not qualify for the Working Capital Fund.

Recommendation 3.2.1:

The Fire Management Leadership Board should assure that Regional FMOs, and FMPC staff responsible for the Working Capital Fund review the results of the Working Capital analysis and determine which engines should be withdrawn from the Working Capital Fund.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

The engines can remain at the park as long as the park maintains the appropriate qualified park personnel to operate and maintain the engines. Parks that do not qualify for engines in the Working Capital Fund can request replacement of new engines through the capitalized equipment fund.

Recommendation 3.2.2:

Following the review identified in Recommendation 3.2.1, the Fire Management Leadership Board should draft a memorandum for the Associate Director for Park Operations and Education to distribute informing the Regional Directors and Park Superintendents about the removal of engines from the Working Capital Fund.

**FINDING 3.3: THERE IS NO CLEARLY ARTICULATED
COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING FIRE
LEADERSHIP POSITIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE
AGENCY, EVEN THOUGH A CLEAR SUCCESSION STRATEGY
IS VITAL TO THE NPS' ABILITY TO MANAGE WILDLAND FIRE
INTO THE FUTURE.**

DISCUSSION:

The Fire Management Leadership Board, NPS management, and NPS Wildland Fire Management personnel have recognized the issue of wildland fire leadership succession. This issue affects not only the NPS but also the entire interagency wildland fire community. The NPS wildland fire workforce, and that of the other federal agencies, significantly changed as a result of the recent substantial increase in staffing. The increase in staffing will positively affect the demographics of the aging wildland fire workforce and leadership. It will take a number of years to develop the employees new to the wildland fire management.

The Technical Fire Management Program and the pilot Fire Management Mentoring Program are examples of current employee development programs used by the NPS. The FMO Intake Program is currently on hold pending the development of a comprehensive succession and employee development strategy. The FMLB provides funding for the existing employee development programs but has not adequately addressed this issue. The January 2002 FMLB meeting is the first meeting at which strategic issues outside of implementing the NFP and associated budget concerns can be addressed.

The issue of competition between the federal wildland fire agencies for limited personnel with wildland fire experience or interest in wildland fire employment opportunities repeatedly came up in interviews, regional FMO workshops and the FMLB meetings. The NPS needs to clearly identify the opportunities and emphasis of our wildland fire program. The selling point for the NPS wildland fire program is the opportunity to participate in a wide range of wildland fire management activities and develop professional skills to protect human life and property while accomplishing resource management objectives. Most NPS units do not have the number of wildland fires requiring suppression typical of their neighboring land management agencies. Although suppression skills are critical and will be acquired and maintained by NPS wildland fire personnel, the NPS will not be as attractive as an employer if an individual's expectations focus on suppression activities and assignments. It is critical for recruiting and retaining employees to provide them with the full range of wildland fire management training and experiences in clearly defined career ladders. Recruiting efforts also need to describe and emphasize the full spectrum of wildland fire management activities and opportunities in the NPS wildland fire management program clearly, including the science-based, resource driven objectives of the NPS wildland fire management program. The NPS has talented, committed, and competent individuals throughout the wildland fire management program. This, in conjunction with the substantial influx of new personnel, the competition to hire and retain employees, the increased demand on training dollars and potential flat or reduced budgets demands the formulation of a strategy for developing future leadership. The NPS needs to provide

opportunities and rewards for individuals who want to develop the fire management skills required for the NPS.

Recommendation 3.3.1:

The Fire Management Leadership Board should assign the Workforce Development Committee to compile the demographics for the permanent and seasonal NPS wildland fire management employees by grade and position to accurately assess our existing workforce.

Recommendation 3.3.2:

The FMLB and the Workforce Development Committee should evaluate existing employee development program(s) and opportunities to analyze their effectiveness and to determine if they are meeting NPS needs. Examples are the Mentoring Program, Technical Fire Management and Prescribed Fire Academy.

Recommendation 3.3.3:

As one of its highest priorities, the Fire Management Leadership Board should, in conjunction with the Employee Development Working Group, refocus efforts to devise a comprehensive strategy for developing future fire management leadership. The results of the demographic study will provide the foundation for developing the developmental strategy. Diversity and recruitment, establishing a clearly defined career ladder for FMO positions at the park and regional levels, and identification of programs and opportunities for acquiring skills, experience and qualifications should be addressed as critical components of the strategy.

Recommendation 3.3.4:

The Fire Management Leadership Board should assure that all recruitment efforts, public information on the NPS wildland fire program, and employee development activities/programs stress the full spectrum of the NPS wildland fire program (preparedness, suppression, wildland fire use, prescribed fire (these are defined as the same thing earlier in the chapter, delete one), mechanical fuel reduction, and Wildland Urban Interface) and the resource management foundation of our wildland fire management program.

Recommendation 3.3.5:

The Fire Management Leadership Board should work with the appropriate FMPC and regional wildland fire management staffs to develop a Fire Management Leadership Academy.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this academy would be to provide existing, new and potential future FMOs with the tools necessary to manage a park wildland fire program including Fire Management Plan development, natural and cultural compliance requirements, prescribed fire plan preparation, budget analysis and allocation process, employee development, integration of wildland fire program into park programs, and current wildland fire policies and NPS guidance. Components of the former Fire Management Program course and Pacific West Region and the Intermountain Region Fire Management Officer meetings may be useful in developing the Academy. Training courses and

assignments already exist for acquiring operational skills and qualifications. The use of temporary detail assignments should be encouraged and supported as a very effective and efficient method to acquire specific skills, experiences and qualifications that often can be accomplished with existing program funds.

**FINDING 3.4: THERE IS A PERCEIVED LACK OF
COMMITMENT FROM MANAGERS IN SUPPORTING A FULL
RANGE OF FIRE TRAINING AND DETAILS FOR INTERESTED
STAFF FROM ALL DISCIPLINES, WHICH IS A SIGNIFICANT
BARRIER TO BUILDING FIRE PROFESSIONALS IN ALL
FIELDS.**

DISCUSSION:

FMOs can request training dollars for any staff member. A percentage of training dollars are allocated to the park and additional funds can be requested later in the year if additional training dollars are needed. (this following sentence doesn't make sense) NPS managers need to recognize the response of the NPS and the interagency partners to their fires and incidents. Failing to encourage park staff to participate in wildland fire management training assignments contributes to alienation of the wildland fire management program, discourages interdisciplinary activities related to fire, and prevents park staff from developing needed expertise. (rest of sentence is awkward, rec deleting it) that would enable them to better understand fire and recognize opportunities to work more closely with fire to meet park fire and resource management objectives.

Recommendation 3.4.1:

The National "Board of Directors" for NPS National Wildland Fire (recommended in Principal Recommendation Three) should develop a comprehensive strategy to improve interdisciplinary participation in the wildland fire program.

Recommendation 3.4.2:

Park Superintendents should assign responsibility to Park FMOs to ensure that park staffs are surveyed, that non-fire staff members are aware that potential training opportunities exist, and that training dollars are requested for non-fire personnel. Attendance at training courses by non-fire personnel should be dependent on the commitment of the individual's supervisor to allow the individual to take wildland fire assignments.

Recommendation 3.4.3:

Park Superintendents should take advantage of available wildland fire training and assignment opportunities for their non-fire staff.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

Wildland fire training and assignments help the NPS meet its commitment to interagency wildland fire response, provide the individuals with mobilization, operations and incident management experience and build fire management skills. These experiences are valuable beyond fire in developing well-rounded employees who understand wildland fire management..

Recommendation 3.4.4:

FMOs should ensure that park managers are aware of the option of backfilling for individuals on fire assignment or payment of their base-eight costs while on fire assignment.

Recommendation 3.4.5:

The Chair of the Fire Management Leadership Board should assign the Fire Operations Committee to investigate developing a wildland fire simulation scenario (of various complexities) to use in parks to provide the park staff an opportunity to work together with an Incident Management Team.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

This could improve the park staff understanding of: (1) the expectations of Incident Management Teams (IMT), (2) their roles in responding to an IMT, (3) time frames for information needed and products produced by the IMT, (4) the Incident Command System, (5) team building, and (6) the complexities of wildland fire management response.

FINDING 3.5: A WHITE PAPER – “*THE APPROPRIATE USE OF MECHANICAL TREATMENT ON NPS LANDS*” - WAS INITIALLY IDENTIFIED AS NEEDED BUT FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS WAS NEVER STARTED.

DISCUSSION:

This paper is needed to communicate clearly how the NPS can use mechanical treatments and alleviate substantial concern, fear, misconception and misunderstanding by NPS resource managers, park managers and potentially the general public. Wildland fire managers, Fire Ecologists and Natural Resource personnel need to develop this white paper. It should also demonstrate how participation in hazard fuel and Wildland Urban Interface projects enable the NPS to meet fire and resource management objectives throughout the park.

Recommendation 3.5.1:

The Chief, Division of National Fire Management should commission a team made up of appropriate specialists to complete this paper. The paper should be distributed as soon as possible.

4. STRUCTURAL FIRE

BACKGROUND:

The National Park Service continues to struggle with its structural fire responsibilities and the need for a major organizational and cultural change in how we manage (or don't manage) structural fire. The agency is responsible for 25,000 structures including modern visitor facilities, historic buildings, park employee housing, concession lodging facilities and curatorial facilities in which we "protect" museum collections. In many cases a structure we protect is the sole reason for the park's establishment.

The General Accounting Office (GAO) reviewed the Service's structural fire program and released a report in May of 2000⁹. The National Park Service and Department of the Interior agreed with the findings of the report although GAO stopped short of the dire predictions heard within the agency.

The GAO Report repeatedly discusses the failure of the National Park Service to effectively implement improvements. The report states, "the Agency has launched initiatives to address problems, **but practical results depend upon effective implementation** (emphasis added)." The GAO report recommended to the Secretary of the Interior that **at a minimum** the following should be undertaken:

- Establishing minimum structural fire safety requirements throughout the park system,
- Providing for a fire safety risk assessment at each unit of the park system to systematically identify fire safety needs and deficiencies in a timely manner,
- Developing and implementing a plan for correcting the identified needs in a timely manner,
- Establishing a process for ensuring that all new construction and major rehabilitation projects are reviewed for compliance with generally accepted fire codes and qualified personnel to do so, and
- Providing the employee training needed to accomplish the four preceding tasks.

⁹ Park Service: Agency Is Not Meeting Its Structural Fire Safety Responsibilities.

**FINDING 4.1: MANY POSITIONS IN MANY DIFFERENT
PROGRAM AREAS AT THE PARK, REGION AND WASHINGTON
LEVELS HAVE STRUCTURAL FIRE RESPONSIBILITIES BUT
THERE IS NO SINGLE ACCOUNTABLE AUTHORITY OR
STRUCTURAL FIRE FOCAL POINT.**

DISCUSSION:

At the Washington level there are elements of program responsibility in Ranger Activities, Facilities Management, Denver Service Center, Concessions, Housing, Cultural Resources and Risk Management. The current structural fire positions are located within, and funded by the wildland fire arena. The result is a lack of focus and programmatic emphasis.

The NPS goal¹⁰ is to implement a comprehensive structural fire management program including fire prevention (building design, building construction and fire inspection), fire protection (installation and maintenance of fire protection systems), fire suppression (equipment, preparedness and fire operations only when other economically and operationally feasible options do not exist), and education and training.

Recommendation 4.1.1:

The Associate Director, Park Operations and Education should programatically assign the Structural Fire Program in the WASO Division of Risk Management. The three national level positions with structural fire responsibilities currently assigned to the Fire Management Program Center in Boise should be reassigned to this office¹¹.

RATIONAL AND DISCUSSION

The intent of placing the positions and the responsibility in this location is to assign responsibility and accountability that crosses all programmatic areas at the highest level of the Service. This office should have the lead (and the authority) to work with other program areas both within and outside the Operations Directorate to determine and specify each programmatic area or responsibility and to complete an implementation strategy (see Recommendation 4.2.1).

¹⁰ Page 91, FY2002 Budget Request for Visitor Services – NPS “Green Book.”

¹¹ We are not implying by this recommendation that the positions should be duty-stationed in the WASO Office. We leave the issue of duty-stationing to the Chief of the Office to work out for the greatest effectiveness, efficiency and economy.

This recommendation is directed solely toward programmatic organization at the Washington level. Regions and parks should manage the program and positions as appropriate to meet the their own requirements.

FINDING 4.2: THE MAY 2000 GAO REPORT IS AN OPPORTUNITY AND A WAKEUP CALL TO THE SERVICE. THE SERVICE HAS RECEIVED A BASE INCREASE DEDICATED TO STRUCTURAL FIRE IN FY2002 BUT IT STILL LACKS AN EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY.

DISCUSSION:

There is no single, focused implementation strategy or plan within the Service. A symptom that plagues the Service in many program areas is our past success in the “response” mode and this mindset or cultural attitude is prevalent in our thinking about structural fire. Too many managers believe just buying more engines and training structural fire crews can correct this issue. Outside experts and our own internal experts tell us that the Service must make the shift to “prevention” – inspections, sprinklers, defensive clearing, retrofitting, etc. if it is to be successful in managing structural fire. In the course of interviewing for this report we were told – “the NPS has never lost a chimney” – a sad commentary on our response success and “you can unwet it but you can’t unburn it” – that should be the new adage for convincing Service leaders to switch to sprinkler systems. The oft-repeated fear throughout the Service is that unless the leadership takes significant action, we will have the structural fire equivalent of one or another of several recent disastrous wildland fires. Many think it’s not a question of “if” this will happen, but rather one of “when.”

Recommendation 4.2.1:

The Program Manager, Division of Risk Management should assign specific responsibility for the completion of a national Structural Fire Implementation Strategy to the appropriate entity, based on the acceptance and implementation of other relevant findings and recommendations in this report.

Recommendation 4.2.2:

The Program Manager, Division of Risk Management should recommend that the Director approve the Structural Fire Implementation Strategy because it crosses the lines of authority of at least three Associate Directors.

FINDING 4.3: THE STRUCTURAL FIRE STEERING COMMITTEE HAS DONE EXCELLENT WORK BOTH BEFORE AND SINCE THE GAO REPORT.

Recommendation 4.3.1:

Because it is composed of multi-disciplinary experts across the Service the Program Manager, Division of Risk Management should actively involve the Structural Fire Steering Committee in the development of a Service implementation strategy.

FINDING 4.4: SIGNIFICANT CONCERN EXISTS THAT THE FY2002 (AND BEYOND) BUDGETS WILL BE SPLIT AMONG PROGRAM AREAS AND LOSE ITS EFFECTIVENESS.

Recommendation 4.4.1:

The Associate Director, Park Operations and Education should assign responsibility and accountability for the new funding available for structural fire in FY2002 (\$1,067,00) and beyond, including the funding for the 7 regional positions and the funding in the capital improvement account to the Program Manager, Division of Risk Management.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

The integrity and focus of this funding must be maintained through a single conduit to achieve the GAO recommendations. The funding should not be dispersed to the Regions and the Division of Risk Management should be given maximum flexibility to manage this funding to implement a meaningful structural fire program.

FINDING 4.5: THE WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IS CURRENTLY FUNDING THE EXISTING THREE NATIONAL STRUCTURAL FIRE POSITIONS.

DISCUSSION:

In our judgment, this is an inappropriate use of the Wildland Fire Management Program Appropriation money.

Recommendation 4.5.1:

The Associate Director, Park Operations and Education should assure that the existing three national structural fire program positions should be immediately charged to the FY2002 Structural Fire base funding.

FINDING 4.6: THE FY2002 STRUCTURAL FIRE BUDGET INCLUDES THE FUNDING TO PURCHASE TEN NEW STRUCTURAL FIRE ENGINES PER YEAR FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS TO REPLACE EXISTING ENGINES AND TO PURCHASE NEEDED ENGINES OUT OF THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND. THE PURCHASE OF ENGINES AS THE HIGHEST PRIORITY IS CONTRARY TO THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE NPS STRUCTURAL FIRE STEERING COMMITTEE.

DISCUSSION:

This is a classic example of the Service not understanding the need to move to prevention and simply providing for a response mode to structural fire. While we may need to provide new or improved engines in some locations, the highest priority for the Capital Improvement funding may be, in fact, to retrofit structures and provide sprinkler systems as appropriate. Buying engines may look impressive ("throwing metal at the problem") but it is not the way to conquer the problem in most situations. Most superintendents would rather have sprinkler systems than fire engines.

Recommendation 4.6.1:

The Associate Director, Park Operations and Education should assure that the standardized inspection and assessment (see below) is complete before determining what the Capitalized Improvement funding should be used to accomplish. If necessary, adjust the FY2003 and out year budgets to clarify the issue and allow the Service to determine as a result of an assessment and prioritization process what the highest needs are to implement the GAO recommendations.

FINDING 4.7: THE SERVICE NOW HAS A NEARLY COMPLETE STANDARDIZED INSPECTION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS TO ASSIST PARKS IN MAKING DECISIONS REGARDING PREVENTION AND SUPPRESSION ACTIVITIES BUT HAS FAILED TO PROVIDE THE MONEY TO COMPLETE THE TOOL OR TO CONDUCT THE ASSESSMENTS IN THE PARK UNITS.

DISCUSSION:

The assessment tool and the follow up assessment of all park units is one of the highest recommendations in the GAO report. Until this product is complete and the assessment of all parks complete, Service managers have no reliable way to prioritize Service needs.

Recommendation 4.7.1:

The Associate Director, Park Operations and Education should assure completion of the contract on the assessment tool immediately. There should be available funds in the lapse money from the regional positions. After the completion of the assessment tool the highest priority of the Service should be to assess ALL park units so that the Service can prioritize decisions.

FINDING 4.8: THE SERVICE HAS NO REQUIREMENT THAT A FIRE PROTECTION ENGINEER REVIEW NEW CONSTRUCTION OR RENOVATION ALTHOUGH SOME REGIONS HAVE A PROCESS IN PLACE.

DISCUSSION:

The primary recommendation of the GAO Report was to establish minimum structural fire safety requirements throughout the park system. Although the new Director's Order #58 designates the Regional Director as the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) the simple fact of the matter is that most new and almost all remodel and renovation within the Service are not being reviewed by a Fire Protection Engineer (FPE). The NAPA report was silent on this issue. Construction is being reviewed by mechanical and civil engineers and others but not a certified Fire Protection Engineer.

Recommendation 4.8.1:

The Program Manager, Division of Risk Management should assure that minimum standards are developed or adopted for all NPS facilities and buildings.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

Sprinkler protection and early warning detection (smoke detection should be the minimum requirement for all buildings. The AHJ is the “relief valve” for determining what facilities don’t need these features (e.g., small restrooms).

Recommendation 4.8.2:

The Program Manager, Division of Risk Management should assure that the AHJ and/or the FPE determines the applicable codes and standards.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

All new construction and major renovations shall have a designated code basis. RM50B, Section 12 (“Fire Safety”) requires that the International Building Code and the Life Safety Code (NFPA 101) be used. In addition, other NFPA and industry codes and standards, specific to the occupancy, need to be identified.

Recommendation 4.8.3:

The Program Manager, Division of Risk Management should assure that an oversight function is designated in the process to insure that the AHJ or FPE is involved in all phases of the design from the inception of the project to insure that standards (see above) are implemented.

**FINDING 4.9: THE SERVICE HAS TOO FEW EMPLOYEES WITH
EXPERTISE IN STRUCTURAL FIRE PREVENTION,
EDUCATION AND SUPPRESSION TO ACHIEVE THE
RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE GAO REPORT.**

DISCUSSION:

There is wide disparity between the expertise of other agencies with large numbers of structures and the NPS. The NPS has 25,000 buildings and one Fire Protection Engineer. GSA has 8,000 buildings and 22 Fire Protection Engineers. More importantly, the NPS doesn’t just manage structures, it manages structures with national and international significance.

Recommendation 4.9.1:

The Associate Director, Park Operations and Education should assure that an adequate number of structural fire experts (structural fire specialists, training officers, fire protection engineers, or similar) are hired or retained by agreement in both the prevention and response arenas to protect NPS structures and meet NPS mandates. The Structural Fire Steering Committee could be used to assist in developing a response to this need.

FINDING 4.10: UNDERSTANDING BY TOP SERVICE LEADERS ABOUT THE URGENCY OF THE STRUCTURAL FIRE ISSUE IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO SUCCESS.

DISCUSSION:

Training is a significant way to institute organizational change. In all of the findings and recommendations above there are training, re-training, cultural change issues. Training should start with the NPS leadership and superintendents who are frequently seen by the field as the barrier to change.

Recommendation 4.10.1:

The Program Manager, Division of Risk Management should assure that structural fire training modules appropriate to various NPS audiences are developed and funded. The expertise of the NPS Structural Fire Training Officer and the Structural Fire Steering Committee should be used to develop the training program based on their knowledge of agency culture. A recommendation should be made that the NLC require superintendents and other key leaders to attend appropriate modules within specified time frames.

5. AVIATION RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

BACKGROUND:

Use of aviation resources continues to grow among the federal land managing agencies as new and more sophisticated aircraft become available and as missions require. The NPS continues to rank second among all DOI bureaus for total hours flown in support of NPS programs, with aviation use still exceeded only by the Bureau of Land Management. Aviation costs also continue to increase at a rate exceeding normal economic increases.

The NPS use of aviation resources is recognized as unique among the DOI bureaus, with significant portions of aviation use occurring in the non-fire, special category operations. Examples of these types of flight include low level operations, short-haul and sling operations, search and rescue, animal capture and net gunning, and high altitude operations. These types of flight are inherently more demanding and carry more risk than normal point-to-point operations. They require increased training, qualifications, risk assessment, and program management. Consequently, pure numbers of hours flown do not reflect the level or complexity of the NPS aviation program.

Prior to 1991, no dedicated position was committed to national aviation management in the NPS. With emphasis and funding provided by the wildland fire program, the position of Aviation Program/Safety Manager was established in the Division of Ranger Activities and had the full range of aviation management duties. Pursuant to the 1998 "Review of National Fire, Aviation and Emergency Response" in the NPS, the position of Aviation Operations and Safety Manager was established at NIFC to deal with safety, risk assessment, operational issues, daily coordination with the Office of Aircraft Services, and coordination with the other land management agencies located at NIFC. Both creation of the position and performance of the individual have been lauded by those interviewed. Also, aviation managers or coordinators exist for each region, and several parks, as either collateral or full time positions. The recent addition of a full time manager in the Pacific West Region is also seen as a very positive move.

There are a number of aviation management related issues emerging or in various stages of development that require strong aviation manager input or support. Examples of such issues include overflight regulations, sound-scape management, other noise pollution issues, quiet technology development, and aircraft acquisition planning. Many of these issues are not aviation management program issues, but much broader NPS management opportunities. However, they still require strong coordination with and input from the aviation management staff.

While the total impact of the tragic September 11, 2001, events on aviation and the aviation industry will not be known for some time, aviation workload within the federal land managing agencies and bureaus continues to increase in such programs and resource management, law enforcement, and wildland fire (especially due to the National Fire Plan of 2000). The NPS must be appropriately staffed and positioned to meet this workload and associated challenges.

The high level of special use aviation operations, "emergency" nature of much of the aviation use, and other unique mission requirements introduce additional risk and require strong management to ensure

safety of operations. Managing such a complex program requires that the NPS have a strong management plan, professional and adequate staffing, appropriate funding, and effective coordination and collaboration in the interagency arena.

**FINDING 5.1: THE NATIONAL LEVEL AVIATION
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IS BOTH FUNDED BY AND
ORGANIZATIONALLY LOCATED IN THE WILDLAND FIRE
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM.**

DISCUSSION:

As discussed in background above, the national level aviation management program was established by staffing the position of Aviation Program/Safety Manager in 1991. This position, and the subsequent position of Aviation Safety and Operations Manager at NIFC are organizationally located within the Fire Management Program Center as direct staff to the Deputy Chief Ranger, F&AM. Due to the emphasis by the wildland fire management program to establish a national level aviation management program, these positions, and some at the regional level, are fully funded by wildland fire management funds, despite the fact that fire only accounts for 20 to 30% of total aviation use in the NPS.

The effect of this situation is two-fold. First, the organizational placement within the Fire Management Program Center tends to give the primary users of aviation resources less ownership of the program, and consequently, less day-to-day input and management oversight of the program. Second, with funding of the national level aviation management program coming exclusively from the Wildland Fire Management Program Appropriation, it is difficult for aviation managers to get financial attention from other activities in the NPS. This specifically impacts achieving certain program goals and objectives such as adequate training for managing search and rescue or other non-fire, special category aviation operations.

Recommendation 5.1.1:

The Associate Director, Park Operations and Education should organizationally place the national aviation management program as direct staff to the Chief, Division of Ranger Activities. This would recognize the major portion of aviation operations that directly support Ranger Activities. Physical location of the two national positions should not change and the Aviation Operations and Safety Manager should continue to receive administrative and office support from the Fire Management Program Center in Boise. This would continue to allow daily collaboration with the Office of Aircraft Services and the other land management agencies/bureaus located at NIFC.

Recommendation 5.1.2:

Once organizational realignment occurs, the Chief, Division of Ranger Activities should work with other aviation users to ensure funding of the national and regional aviation management positions and programs reflects the mix, and general amount, of activities using aviation resources. As with other NPS programs, wildland fire management should fund the appropriate level for the national aviation management program commensurate with its use.

FINDING 5.2: NO LONG RANGE PLAN EXISTS TO GUIDE THE AVIATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IN CRITICAL DECISION MAKING, FIELD GUIDANCE, PRIORITY SETTING, OR FUNDING REQUESTS.

DISCUSSION:

Despite significant discussion and direction to undertake and complete a strategic plan for the NPS aviation management program, little has occurred. A strategic plan is considered essential as the blueprint for the future. The strategic plan for NPS aviation management needs to address a number of issues such as numbers of aircraft, location of aircraft, aircraft replacement schedules and methods, issues with the Office of Aircraft Services including training and operations, pilot numbers and succession needs, field and national level aviation management staffing needs, and other key emerging issues. The plan needs to have a personnel component, as well as a budget component.

With increasing use of aviation resources in many unique mission requirements, the complexity of many of the aviation management issues, and the high cost of aviation resources, it appears essential that the strategic plan for NPS aviation management be made a top priority and, when completed, be used to guide the program through the next decade.

Recommendation 5.2.1:

The Chief, Division of Ranger Activities should direct the Aviation Management Program Leader to convene a panel of subject matter experts to develop a strategic plan for the NPS aviation management program. The strategic plan should be completed within a six-month time frame and should, at minimum, include all the items listed under discussion, above. As an alternative, an outside panel (or combination of NPS staff and contracted personnel) could be chartered to accomplish the strategic plan. In either case, individuals participating in the effort need opportunity to maintain total focus on the project, in lieu of other day-to-day job demands.

FINDING 5.3: BASE FUNDING FOR THE OFFICE OF AIRCRAFT SERVICES IS CURRENTLY ALLOCATED TO THE REGIONS AND CERTAIN PARKS, THEN COLLECTED BACK BASED ON PRIOR YEAR(S) USE OF AVIATION RESOURCES.

DISCUSSION:

The NPS is the only DOI land management bureau that allocates the Office of Aircraft Services base funding to the regions and parks, then collects it back based on “hours flown” by activity. The process has led to significant confusion in some field offices, appears to add significant accounting workload, and exacerbates some ill feeling toward the Office of Aircraft Services.

Other bureaus use a direct formula at the national office level to determine percentage of use by activity (law enforcement, fire, etc.) and apply that formula at the national budget office level before allocation of funds to the field. As an example, the Bureau of Land Management aviation manager uses a five-year basis and calculates percentage of total use by activity. He then provides these numbers to the national budget office who applies the percentages to the total Office of Aircraft Services base for them, consolidates the funds from the initial appropriation, and transfers the funding. The entire process is “transparent” to the field offices and does not leave the perception of being “penalized” for one exceptionally high year of aviation use.

Recommendation 5.3.1:

The Associate Director, Park Operations and Education should facilitate dialogue between the Aviation Management Program Leader and the Budget Officer to establish a simplified method of allocating and funding the NPS share of base funding to the Office of Aircraft Services.

FINDING 5.4: THE NPS HAS EXPLORED AND IMPLEMENTED MANY INTERAGENCY OPPORTUNITIES TO COLLABORATE ON POSITIONS, SCARCE SKILLS, TRAINING AND EVEN OPERATIONS IN THE AVIATION MANAGEMENT AREA BUT OTHER OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD BE EXPLORED.

DISCUSSION:

The cost, relatively scarce skills, risk environment, and realities of today all demand that each agency with similar programs look at any and every opportunity to share and help each other on an ongoing basis. Much progress has been made in the sharing of aircraft, scarce skill personnel, training, and even operations in some cases, and these efforts should be praised. It is also recognized that some aviation operations are unique to the NPS and little opportunity may exist for collaboration in those missions. However, no focused attention has been given at the service-wide level to ensure optimizing interagency collaboration in aviation management activities.

Recommendation 5.4.1:

The National Aviation Program Leader should lead a review of the various opportunities that currently exist for sharing specific talents, expertise, skills and support systems and consider alternatives and make recommendations for implementation, as appropriate. The outcomes and recommendations implemented from this review should be incorporated into the Aviation Resources Management Strategic Plan.

6. NATIONAL INCIDENT RESPONSE MANAGEMENT

BACKGROUND:

The National Park Service is recognized as having the premiere program for “all-risk” incident response capability, in the form of varying numbers of Type I and Type II Incident Management Teams. NPS Teams have been used in natural disasters, special events, search and rescue, fire, law enforcement emergencies, and special program support to WASO and the Department of the Interior. By all measures, these teams have performed admirably and have “sold” the concept of all-risk incident management to a number of leaders and practitioners in the NPS and beyond.

Since their inception, these teams have been organized, trained and maintained largely through the interest and energy (and periodic funding allocations when needed) of Deputy Chief Ranger Rick Gale. Additionally, some regions have been supportive of the program and have provided some funding.

FINDING 6.1: SUPPORT AND FUNDING FOR TRAINING AND OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY FOR THE NPS INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAMS IS STILL BEING “BOOTLEGGED” FROM OTHER PROGRAMS.

DISCUSSION:

Because of the varying support and use of the “national” Type I Team and the regionally based Type II Teams, their capabilities fluctuate. Protocols for their use vary among regions and there is no national coordination to assure maximum value and benefit of these incident response resources.

Recommendation 6.1.1:

The Associate Director, Park Operations and Education should “nationalize” the program management of the Type I and Type II Incident Management Teams. Program management should be vested with a position in the Division of Ranger Activities devoted as exclusively as possible to emergency operations program management.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

Because the uses of the Type II and Type I Teams in the NPS is almost exclusively non-fire related, this program would be more appropriately managed by the Ranger Activities Division than by the National Wildland Fire Division.

By “nationalizing” the program management, we don’t mean that the Type II Teams should cease to be regionally based. However, there should be increased coordination at the national level to assure consistent training and use of teams.

Recommendation 6.1.2:

The Associate Director, Park Operations and Education should assure that sufficient “earmarked” funding is allocated to/ by the Ranger Activities Division to adequately train and support the designated Type II and Type I teams.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

In addition to required training and “exercising,” funding should be sufficient to provide the teams with necessary team equipment and supplies. The Incident Management Program Steering Committee has developed and submitted a budget for these purposes.

Recommendation 6.1.3:

The Associate Director, Park Operations and Education should implement the long-term recommendations arising from the “Transition Plan and Recommendations – Operation Secure Parks” that was approved by the Deputy Director on October 2, 2001.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of these recommendations will significantly strengthen the national Incident Response Management Program.

FINDING 6.2: THE *INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM STEERING COMMITTEE* HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHING EXCELLENT WORK IN DEVELOPING PROTOCOLS AND QUALIFICATION STANDARDS.

DISCUSSION:

The Committee has developed a charter, a realistic five-year plan and has accomplished several key items, in particular completion of the Type III All-Risk Task Books and an Incident Complexity Guide.

Recommendation 6.2.1:

The Associate Director, Park Operations and Education should assure that the Committee continues to operate in an advisory capacity to the Ranger Activities Division and that the Committee is appropriately recognized for the work it has already accomplished.

7. INTRA-ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

FINDING 7.1: THERE CONTINUES TO BE A SIGNIFICANT “DISCONNECT” BETWEEN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT, PARTICULARLY NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND THE WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM. ALL DISCIPLINES, BOTH IN AND OUT OF WILDLAND FIRE, NEED TO FORM INTRA-AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT THE NPS WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM, AND TO IMPLEMENT THE NATIONAL FIRE PLAN.

DISCUSSION:

There is an institutional predisposition towards fire management and resources management not working together. Much emphasis and encouragement to fire managers is placed upon interagency collaboration and partnerships, and not on intra-agency collaboration and partnerships. Natural Resources and Fire Management did initiate closer working relationships after the 1996 Federal Fire Policy was implemented and the 1998 Review, however, this initial action has not taken the integration to the level that it needs to, and it has not solidified the necessary inter-disciplinary working relationships. Progradation has been made for example with vegetation and fuels mapping with the inventory and monitoring program, dual-function geographical information system positions, and fire planning/NEPA positions.

However, far out weighing this has been the widening of the fracture between fire management and other resources management programs. Reasons suggested for this have been the National Fire Planning effort and its associated time constraints, the emphasis and time constraints on Wildland Urban Interface projects in the fire community, as well as the efforts and emphasis placed on the Natural Resource Challenge in the natural resource community

It must be noted that the root causes of this disconnect is not the lack of desire on the part of fire management or resource management personnel. On the contrary, these staffs have the desire to work together, but working together and collaboration take time, and there is little time available given the workload demands placed on fire management staff and on resources management staff.

There has not been a focus or emphasis by the fire management program for the development of intra-agency partnerships as there is with interagency partnerships. As one interviewee suggested “It is easier for fire people to talk to other fire people in other agencies rather than other disciplines in their own agency”. This was recently substantiated by the General Accounting Office in “The National Fire

Plan -- Federal Agencies Are Not Organized to Effectively and Efficiently Implement the Plan”(GAO-01-1022T) who concluded “...although implementing the National Fire Plan in an efficient, effective, and timely manner will require an interdisciplinary approach, federal fire managers and managers in other disciplines within the agencies --- those responsible for wildlife and fisheries and vegetation and watershed management --- have been reluctant to forge the necessary new working relationships.”

Recommendation 7.1.1:

The Associate Director, Park Operations and Education should work with appropriate leaders in Natural Resources to achieve greater integration of the NPS portion of the Joint Fire Science Program of the FMPC with staff specialists of the Natural Resource Program Center (NRPC). NRPC staff with expertise in air resources, water resources, and biological resources, to name a few, can assist the FMPC with proposal review, proposal evaluation, and technical information transfer.

Recommendation 7.1.2:

As mandated by Director's Order #18, the National FMO and staff should work with the staff of the NRPC to develop 1) a fire research program, 2) procedures to ensure that park resource management plans adequately take into account the positive values of wildland fire, and 3) a primer to assist all NPS personnel in accomplishing fire ecosystem management objectives.

Recommendation 7.1.3:

The Fire Management Leadership Board should assure that the approximately (15) new Fire Ecologist Positions play a key role in the integration of fire management and other resources management functions. They should be the communication link, having an understanding of fire operations and objectives while at the same time, having a scientific appreciation and understanding for ecosystem management objectives and fire effects on natural and cultural resources.

Recommendation 7.1.4:

Where appropriate, the Fire Management Leadership Board should strongly consider the co-location of any additional Fire Ecologist positions with an Inventory and Monitoring Network to strengthen scientific information transfer and to leverage the use of specialist positions (e.g. Data Manager).

Recommendation 7.1.5:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should, where possible, consider the co-location of FMPC positions at the Natural Resource Program Center. Possibilities include the proposed Branch Chief for Fire Science and Planning and/or appropriate additional members of the Branch staff (to collaborate with Inventory and Monitoring Program; develop revisions to, and integrate the fire effects program with Inventory and Monitoring; and collaborate with the Terrestrial Ecosystem Restoration Program, Air Quality specialists and to coordinate burned area rehabilitation).

Recommendation 7.1.6:

The National FMO should encourage staff of the FMPC to conduct training for Resource Management Staff to increase awareness and technical competency of fire as a resource management component. Further encouragement of FMPC should be made for FMPC staff to participate in National and Regional Resource Management Meetings (e.g. George Wright Society, North by Northwest Resource Management, etc.) to further increase awareness of fire and the scientific basis for fire management activities as a resource management function. Wildland fire management staffs should encourage natural resource management personnel who are at parks where fire shapes the environment to attend courses such as Fire in Ecosystem Management or other fire ecology/science courses if they do not understand the role and effects of wildland fire.

Recommendation 7.1.7:

The National FMO and staff should work with staff of the NRPC and appropriate Cultural Resource Specialists and develop a new course with the fundamental purpose of integrating fire management with other resource management disciplines. This is not RX-92 or a modification to RX-92, rather it should be a new course with a specific goal – the integration of the disciplines.

FINDING 7.2: INCOMPATIBLE FUNDING CALLS AND PROCESSES AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS HAMPER INTERDISCIPLINARY COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION, AND LEVERAGING OF PROJECT DOLLARS.

DISCUSSION:

The separate appropriation funding fire management activities may facilitate communication between DOI agencies, but impedes the fire management program from being integrated with other NPS programs. Although the Project Management Information System (PMIS) is the software mandated for use by everyone in the Service, with the exception of new facility construction, the Fire Management Program utilizes the Shared Administrative Computer System (SACS). Whereas natural resources staff and others use PMIS extensively to develop project proposals and justifications, set priorities, and document accomplishments, this is not done for fire management such as prescribed burns, hazard fuels projects, and research. The fire management finance and project approval system

is set up similarly to promote common interagency activities, but comes at the expense of intra-agency activities.

Advances in computer capability apparently will permit the “cross-walk” of these systems using so-called “data mining” technologies. The computer systems and financial processes in place do not facilitate the integration of projects, for example a prescribed burn to eliminate a non-native plant species.

Recommendation 7.2.1:

The Fire Management Leadership Board should work to establish a Funding Source in the Servicewide Comprehensive Call for Prescribed Fire, and Hazard Fuel that is linked to the “252” fire account.

Recommendation 7.2.2:

Consistent with the Servicewide Comprehensive Call, the Fire Management Leadership Board should work to see that a funding source for fire research is established and competitively evaluated. To the extent possible, funding source process components, such as competitive evaluation criteria, requirement for accomplishment and completion reports, etc. should be adopted. Funding currently provided through the SACS system and allocation from the FMLB should be applied to this purpose. The funding source should continue to be administered by the FMPC, and technical support and participation should be encouraged of the NRPC.

Recommendation 7.2.3:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should assure that upon revision/replacement of the SACS, the software used or developed should export fire management project information and allow it to be imported into PMIS. Fire Management Computer Staff should work with PMIS management and development personnel to ensure that PMIS can facilitate the integration of this project data.

**FINDING 7.3: WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT IS NOT A
PRIORITY ACTIVITY OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STAFFS.**

DISCUSSION:

Resource personnel, both cultural and natural, are not engaged in the fire management planning process to the extent necessary to meet agency goals. Fire management staffs are frustrated at the lack of engagement of resource personnel in the setting of resource objectives – the driving force of a fire

management program.¹² Indeed, the perception exists that resource personnel are putting up “road-blocks” to the accomplishment of fire management targets. While at the same time, resource staffs perceive that fire management officers want “black” and have a “burned acres” attitude, and not an ecological attitude.

When natural resource staff were asked why they were not more engaged in fire management activities, the answer was loud and clear – the workloads are too great, “the plates are too full”, and there are other compelling issues to address. In other words, there is another organizational entity that is funded, staffed and charged with the responsibility, and there is no need for resource staffs to become engaged – “the fire staffs are taking care of it”. Fire staff, on the other hand, has serious, time-constrained mandates to implement the National Fire Plan. Their view is to invite resource staff to participate, but at the same time are prepared to move the fire program ahead with or without resource management staff.

That this finding exists confounds the review team – given that fire management activities are some of the most invasive and manipulative resource management activities we do in the National Park Service, whether we put them out, light them, or manage them as wildland fires for resource benefit. It has been said, that fire management is a “resource service”, and better integration of fire management and the other resource disciplines is needed to develop goals and objectives.

Recommendation 7.3.1:

The Associate Director, Park Operations and Education should initiate discussions with the Associate Director for Natural Resource Stewardship and Science, and the Associate Director, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, along with key staff and strongly encourage the elevation of fire management programs as critical to meeting the mission of the National Park Service. And that engagement of natural and cultural disciplines is critical to the implementation of the National Fire Plan and fundamental resource management goals.

¹² The reluctance of resource staff to become fully engaged in the setting of resource objectives for fire management may come largely from the fact that much remains unknown about those resources, their status, distribution, and their variance from “natural” conditions, if any. This is particularly frustrating for fire managers who believe that enough is known about resources to set these objectives. In the end, both disciplines are correct – in many cases there is in fact not enough known to “comfortably” set resource objectives. The Natural Resource Challenge Inventory and Monitoring Program initiative has been initiated, in part, to fill these information voids. Yet, with the alternative for fire managers being suppression in the absence of objectives, the suppression activity and outcomes may indeed have more resource impacts than if the best scientific expertise set the objectives, even in the absence of complete scientific information.

Recommendation 7.3.2:

The Fire Management Leadership Board should encourage and facilitate the co-location of meetings to provide opportunities for interdisciplinary discussions, and awareness of other's programs, objectives, constraints, and opportunities. For example, the FMLB should have one of their quarterly meetings concurrent in time and location with the Natural Resource Advisory Group, or with the Cultural Resource Advisory Group. One day of each of the typically 2½ - 3 day meetings would overlap with all participants of both groups addressing common issues and concerns.

8. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION

BACKGROUND:

The era of close interagency collaboration and cooperation in the fire, aviation, and emergency response programs of the National Park Service (NPS) began nearly 30 years ago. Following formation of the Boise Interagency Fire Center in 1972, and national office director staffing by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management in 1973, the NPS was the next wildland fire management bureau to join the Center, assigning John Bowdler in 1974.

Since 1974, the NPS organization at the Center, now named the National Interagency Fire Center, has grown to its current level in response to the need for increased professionalism and the interagency demands of the programs. The NPS Fire Management Program Center has assumed a leadership role in many areas related to wildland fire management and emergency response. Most recently, the NPS response to the 2000 National Fire Plan and the 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy are outstanding examples of stepping up and providing significant leadership.

Due to the impacts of the National Fire Plan and the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, and potential impacts of other reports such as the one being finalized by the National Academy of Public Administration, the efforts of the staff at the Program Center can be expected to be even more focused on interagency objectives.

Generally, the NPS Fire Management Program Center is characterized as having a highly motivated and capable staff that is fully participating in, and in some cases leading, the many interagency efforts underway today. The words professional, dedicated, collaborative and valuable are frequently used in describing the staff and work produced by the staff.

**FINDING 8.1: THE ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND
FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF RANGER AND THE
NATIONAL FMO POSITIONS ARE NOT CLEARLY
UNDERSTOOD BY INTERAGENCY PARTNERS, ARE OFTEN
CONFUSING, AND APPEAR TO OVERLAP AT CERTAIN TIMES.**

DISCUSSION:

The Deputy Chief Ranger and National FMO have attempted to clearly separate duties and responsibilities between their positions. However, interagency partners perceive significant overlap between duties which leads to confusion at times about who an issue should be directed to or who the official representative is on a given issue, and has apparently led to conflicting direction or feedback to

interagency partners in some cases. Regardless, most partners are very positive in describing overall effectiveness of the NPS national fire program, program direction, and overall program management.

Recommendation 8.1.1:

Upon implementation of any organizational changes resulting from this review, the Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should assure that a clear summary of roles, functions and responsibilities are conveyed to interagency partners. Ongoing effort must be made to ensure these roles, functions and responsibilities remain clear, are closely followed, and continue to be understood by all.

FINDING 8.2: CONCERN EXISTS THAT SOME STAFF MEMBERS AT THE FIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM CENTER MAY OVER-TASKED AND LACK SUFFICIENT BACKUP CAPABILITY TO CONSISTENTLY MEET INTERAGENCY NEEDS.

DISCUSSION:

As stated earlier, the staff at the Fire Management Program Center is regularly characterized as highly professional, motivated, and capable. However, certain key individuals on the staff are perceived to have “too much on their plate” to be able to meet all their commitments. Additionally, necessary travel away from the Center for fire assignments, meetings, field assistance, and other related activities often leaves gaps in interagency participation. This is perceived to happen due to lack of backup or support depth within the staff.

The problem described is not seen as a major one, but has led to significant frustration on certain projects. Certain interagency tasks and projects have been delayed or languished due to unavailability of certain staff members. Additional concern was expressed about succession planning should any of these key staff members retire or move to another position, as little backup planning has occurred.

Recommendation 8.2.1:

The strategic plan for the Fire Management Program Center, described elsewhere in this report, should address these workload, backup capability, succession planning, and other issues related to this finding. No other action is recommended.

FINDING 8.3: SINCE THE 1998 REVIEW, THE NPS HAS WORKED WITHIN THE INTERAGENCY COMMUNITY AT THE NATIONAL INTERAGENCY FIRE CENTER, AND BEYOND, TO SHARE SKILLS AND SERVICES, BUT OTHER OPPORTUNITIES EXIST AND SHOULD BE EXPLORED.

DISCUSSION:

One of the many strengths of the National Interagency Fire Center continues to be the capability to share scarce skills, expertise, and common support systems. A number of areas where the NPS was taking advantage of opportunities were outlined in the 1998 report, and more have been realized since that time. Examples include the Fire Planner position located at the Program Center and the Lessons Learned Project Manager located at the National Advanced Resources Technology Center at Marana, Arizona. However, other functional areas of expertise were identified where the Program Center and interagency groups might benefit through sharing of expertise or support capability. Examples where expertise or skill sharing could be of benefit include Fuels Management Specialists, Community Assistance Specialist, Rural Fire Assistance Specialist, and External Affairs Specialist.

Additionally, as was determined by the April 1999 report on the "Review of Fire, Aviation and Emergency Response in the Pacific Northwest" numerous opportunities exist throughout the NPS for sharing of fire positions with other wildland fire agencies (federal and state). As the concept of landscape-based fire planning and analysis moves forward, fire program leaders should look at opportunities to manage more effectively, efficiently and economically by sharing positions. For example, several have mentioned the possible establishment of "State FMO" positions in NPS Regions that are so large and complex that the current fire management capability is inadequate.

Recommendation 8.3.1:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should encourage the National FMO to continue to review the various opportunities that exist for sharing specific talents, expertise, skills, and support systems and consider alternatives and recommendations for implementation at NIFC; and, as appropriate, encourage other leaders in the NPS to investigate opportunities for position sharing.

9. STRATEGIC FIRE COMMUNICATIONS: FROM INFORMATION TO PROVOCATION

BACKGROUND:

Fire is perhaps the single public land management issue that most captures the eye of the public, the sustained interest of the media, and the focused attention of the Administration and Congress. This level of interest in fire policy and practice offers an unparalleled opportunity to shape public understanding of and build political support for NPS resource issues and management goals. Indeed, the success for the NPS fire program depends directly on the confidence and support of the public, the Administration, and the Congress. An effective communications strategy is unquestionably among the most powerful tools that can be used to build this credibility. Without effective communications, the NPS fire program will not succeed.

Fire communications pose significant challenges on all levels. Internally, the "language" of fire is poorly understood across the Service, and there is not a consistent understanding of NPS fire management policy and objectives within the agency. Moreover, many in the agency not directly affiliated with fire have a poor understanding of the role and function of the fire program and the role of fire in resources management. This lack of understanding internally is exacerbated externally, where generally a public raised with Smokey's message does not fully understand the ecological role of fire. Relating the goals and objectives of a complex program like fire among the array of disciplines within the agency is a challenge, and translating these same goals and objectives to the public arena is an even bigger task.

Compounding the difficulties that exist are the different disciplines in the NPS that have roles in internal and public information. Park Managers, FMOs, Public Affairs, Interpretation, and Fire Information disciplines all become involved in communicating information about fire, from time to time. Clarifying roles and integrating messages have not been effectively managed.

Regardless, the ability to communicate effectively across divisional lines, agency lines, with all levels of government, the media, and with the public in ways that not only provide information but when appropriate, provoke action, is essential to achieve the agency's mandate to ensure public safety and protect park resources. This challenge has not yet been met.

FINDING 9.1: THE NPS DOES NOT ADDRESS FIRE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGICALLY. THERE IS NO STRATEGIC PLAN IN PLACE TO ADDRESS BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FIRE COMMUNICATIONS EFFECTIVELY

DISCUSSION:

Lack of a well-defined, multi-faceted internal and external communications strategy is a significant impediment to getting agency messages across, and fosters crisis management rather than effective program management. The absence of a strategic communications plan which clearly identifies messages relating NPS goals and objectives is a substantial barrier to a directed, comprehensive, effective communications program, and a barrier to broad internal and external understanding of the fire program.

Fire communications has made progress with the creation of a communications professional position at the FMPC, as recommended in the 1998 review. However, the fire management program is in a much different place than it was in 1998, and has an extremely high profile with the media, the public, the Administration, the Congress and within the NPS. The importance of establishing an integrated and comprehensive communications system is clear.

Recommendation 9.1.1:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should assure that a strategic plan for fire communications is developed.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

A strategic plan should be developed on the national level, be crafted with input from an interdisciplinary team, and be coordinated with other wildland fire agencies. An effective strategic plan for communications will translate agency and National Fire Plan goals and objectives into messages that are consistently understood and used in every NPS unit. A well-crafted, comprehensive communications strategy will key in on the internal and external barriers to understanding the role of fire in the ecosystem, and address both internal and external communications needs. If carried out effectively, a well-executed fire communications strategy will result in both strengthening the credibility of and building advocacy for the NPS fire program with the public, the media, and the Congress. A professional, strategic communications strategy is an integral component of a credible fire program.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS:

DISCUSSION:

Internal communications problems are routinely identified in program reviews and were identified in the 1998 national review. The increased NFP workload and rapidly changing programs and conditions have confounded communications within the wildland fire management program.

For the fire program to be successful, it is fundamentally important that there is a well-grounded and widespread understanding of the program within the agency. This does not yet exist. A consistent comment from all disciplines was that the “language of fire” is not well understood, which is one of the barriers to broad participation in the fire program. The basic problem seen is that our definitions are poor, bureaucratic, and too complicated for non-fire trained people to understand, so communications between fire professionals and professional communications staff is difficult, making getting an effective message out to the public extremely difficult.

Even within the NPS fire community itself communication is not well managed. At the FMPC, efforts have been made to improve internal communications with the FMLB Update, a synopsis released within one week after an FMLB meeting. Voluminous information is also distributed by email from the FMPC to wildland fire management staffs. However, park FMOs, regional FMOs and superintendents have identified numerous issues directly associated with internal communications. These include uncertainty on direction and status of various programs (most notably the Wildland Urban Interface Initiative, Hazard Fuels Reduction and the National Fire Plan) and numerous requests for information with extremely short deadlines. Problems were also identified with delays in distribution of pertinent or critical information about specific programs; for example, information is received routinely from interagency partners before it filters through the NPS. Although there seem to be numerous requests for information, often it is unclear why or how the information is being used, and what the results are.

Email meets a basic need for transferring information but the volume overwhelms wildland fire (and other) staffs. Several staffs emphasized that simply forwarding a message is not effective communication. A number of individuals commented that the volume of information coupled with uncertainty about its relevance results in significant portions of messages being deleted or ignored. With minimal effort, program managers or the individual passing on information to FMOs could provide the context and importance. This is particularly true with the distribution of notes from the numerous work groups. Those items that require immediate response or attention should be identified and distinguished from general information.

There is a clear desire expressed by the fire community to find ways to ensure that the broader NPS understands and is well informed about the FMPC fire policy and practices as a means to build support in the agency. The internal fire communications system needs to be structured so that everyone in the agency can be knowledgeable about fire. At the field level, this will result in broad-based understanding of the fire program, which is essential to parks supporting the development of staff resources to respond to fire incidents.

Generally, a mix of employee development strategies related to fire should be assessed and implemented – in fire communications and beyond – which address internal understanding and

support of the fire program and target its success in the future. These may range from ensuring that superintendents support employees in detail positions on fires to gain critical experience, to building information about the FMPC and wildland fire into a multi-disciplinary array of Servicewide training opportunities, to supporting focused training for both fire and resource professionals to meet more complex compliance needs.

Recommendation 9.1.2:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should assure that an integral part of the fire communications strategic plan is designed to build widespread internal understanding of the roles and functions of the Division of National Wildland Fire and the FMPC.

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

This should include (but not be limited to) the following:

- *Immediately implement a basic wildland fire intranet site to provide ready access to the full spectrum of NPS fire information.* (See additional detail in Recommendation 10.1.1)
This project (Fireline) is already underway under the direction of the Information Resources Management Staff at the FMPC, and will serve as one important tool to keep NPS staff informed of fire activities within the agency. This site will serve as a strong complement to the public site (Firenet) already available on the NPS website.
- *The development and refinement of an NPS wildland fire management intranet is widely supported.* This intranet should greatly reduce email, improve the efficiency of collecting, reviewing and updating information requests and simplify communicating the results from information requests. Once the intranet is in operation, email can focus on sharing generalized information. As described in the article¹³, "Knowledge Center:" "By policy, if it is something to be conducted for business, we asked that it be conducted on the web." The intranet should be used to conduct organization business. For example, pertinent policy memoranda should be centrally archived for retrieval by the field, thereby eliminating the need for hundreds of employees to store that information on their computers. Thus the most recent information is readily available, eliminating the need for individuals to search through their filing systems. This also will function for information requests, reviews and updates.
- *The Division and the FMPC should take an active role with the training community to develop information about the linkages between the NPS fire program and Servicewide resource objectives, and ensure that this basic information is a component of all NPS orientation training.* There are numerous venues within the NPS employee development system to provide basic orientation information annually, including Servicewide and regional entry-

¹³ Computer World, October 15, 2001

level and mid-level intake programs and leadership development programs, along with a variety of discipline-specific training opportunities which could and should include fire information. Fire should be a standard component of basic resource orientation courses such as Fundamentals.

- *The Division and the FMPC should make a concerted effort to host NPS meetings/conferences at the FMPC when possible to deepen the field's understanding of the FMPC, particularly park managers.* This would serve to better inform non-fire staff of the complexity and capabilities of the FMPC, and could heighten interest in and recruitment for the program. It would also help build park management understanding of the complexity of the FMPC operation, which is a basic component to building field level understanding and support.
- *Regional FMOs and the FMLB should take an active role in keeping park managers up to date about all appropriate fire-training opportunities.* A focused effort on getting managers exposure to the language of fire and the issues that surround it, including managing fire communications, is critical to building internal support as well as ensuring that managers are equipped to carry out their responsibilities.
- *Fire professionals need to consistently tap into the Morning Report, which is perhaps the single best Servicewide communication tool.* The Morning Report is a powerful internal communications tool that reaches all levels in the organization daily. If used well, the fire program could build widespread understanding of and support for the program through effective use of the Morning Report. Specific actions include:
 - During the fire season, it should be standard operating procedure for FMOs/ICs to submit the information that the FIO is putting out to the Morning Report. It is imperative to ensure that the language is clear, concise, lacks jargon, and is understandable to non-fire staff.
 - To build understanding and support for the prescribed fire program and the resource benefits that result, the Morning Report should be a venue for success stories. Park and Regional FMOs, working with communications and/or interpretive staff, could submit concise, readable descriptions of their actual program goals and successes.
 - There may be broader avenues in the Morning Report format to include better reporting about the National Fire Plan is affecting NPS fire program management on a park and regional basis.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS:

DISCUSSION.

Discussions with a wide range of NPS managers and communications professionals revealed a common sentiment that the NPS does not speak with one voice on fire policy and practices, and a consistent belief that we send conflicting or incomplete messages to the public. This inconsistency reaches from the management of communications on individual fires to our broader communications across agency lines, with the public, the media, the Administration, and the Congress. While this sentiment is tempered with the certainty that each of these constituencies understands wildland fire far better than they did five years ago, all agree that we need to do a much better job on external communications.

Recommendation 9.1.3:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should assure that an integral part of the fire communications strategic plan is designed to build widespread public knowledge and education about the NPS wildland fire management goals, policies and practices as they integrated into the broader goals for managing resources and protecting life and property.

This should include (but not be limited to) the following:

- *The NPS fire community should continue to improve its use of the Internet as an important tool to foster external (and internal) communications.*

The NPS does not use the Internet as effectively as other agencies, although it is an important tool. The power of the Internet as a tool in communications is undeniable: there were 345 million hits on the NPS website last year, as compared to 110 million visits to NPS visitor centers. The potential of the Internet to educate the public about fire is unlimited.

- *Fire communications staff should continue their efforts to develop templates for parks with significant fires to post consistent information on the web. Some parks already have sophisticated Internet capabilities for fire information. These capabilities should be made as accessible as possible to all parks with fire communications needs, and should relay consistent messages defined in the strategic plan.*
- *Fire communications staff should expand their use of the media in "getting the NPS message across," through media releases, public service announcements, appearances on relevant television programs, and contributions to television educational programs.*

Recommendation 9.1.4:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should assure that an integral part of the fire communications strategic plan is designed to clarify the roles and functions of the disciplines in the NPS that have major responsibilities for communications as they relate to fire.

RATIONAL AND DISCUSSION

There is a perception that the fire community does not understand the central role of communications in a successful fire program, and does not effectively use communications professionals, such as interpretive specialists and public affairs specialists available within the agency.

The purpose of fire communications, regardless of the process or media, is to educate. The scale or level of education can range from merely providing information to provoking appropriate action on the part of the recipients.

Strong external communications require strong internal communications, and since that must be the goal, better ways to link fire professionals with communications professionals at many levels in the organization need to be explored so that the appropriate communications can be crafted and delivered to obtain the desired scale of education.

On the ground, communications is everyone's responsibility, and often the "face of a fire" is a park manager or fire professional in the command structure rather than the fire information officer. Anyone who may be in that position should have professional training in both communications and fire. As an agency, we need to work on fostering the concept of "fire affairs officers," not just fire information officers. Public affairs denote a higher level of responsibility and critical thinking, issue analysis, and message formulation.

10. DATA AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

FINDING 10.1: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT, DATA/INFORMATION ACCESSIBILITY, APPLICATIONS DEVELOPMENT AND INTEROPERABILITY IS NOT EFFECTIVELY PLANNED, INTEGRATED, OR IMPLEMENTED.

DISCUSSION:

The wildland fire management program not only requires and produces a significant amount of data and information but also requires substantially more data/information from other NPS programs, interagency partners, and research entities to accomplish fire and resource management objectives. The demand for current and historical information continues to increase. Large sums of money are spent annually to collect, produce, use and maintain this information.

Information management requires complete coordination and collaboration with all program areas in the management of Wildland Fire. Cooperative efforts are critical within the NPS as well as within the interagency community. The scope of Information Management varies depending on the activity, project or subject being addressed. The level of cooperation with regards to Information Management is directly related to the level of success at maintaining a scientifically based wildland fire management program that meets NPS and NFP objectives.

Information management equals knowledge management. Knowledge management is the art or science of collecting organizational data and, by recognizing and understanding relationships and patterns, turning it into usable, accessible information and valuable knowledge. The knowledge information model implies that those organizations best able to collect, index, store, and analyze knowledge have an advantage in meeting management objectives into today's world. Knowledge management systems have always relied on data management technologies such as relational database management systems, data warehousing, and data cleansing.

Wildland fire and ecosystem management requires a vast amount of scientific data as well as intuitive knowledge. Science based management requires a recognition and acceptance of valid data to ensure sound management decisions. Because the wildland fire management program does not generate large amounts of data the focus on scientific data coming from many different sources becomes increasingly more important in the NPS efforts to manage fire in our ecosystem. Our interdisciplinary and interagency partners will provide most of this data critical to the management of fire.

A case in point is the Wildland Fire Use Management Teams use of advanced fire management applications and Geographic Information Systems, using data from a variety of NPS and interagency sources to manage fires for an extended period of time with significant effects on the ecosystem.

The delivery of products within the NPS and to the interagency community becomes more confounding based upon existing interdisciplinary and interagency boundaries. Dom Nessi, NPS Chief Information Officer, recently identified that the NPS continues to collect data and develop applications that are totally independent, not readily accessible, do not take advantage of existing data, and are not coordinated with other applications of NPS programs. This is further complicated for the wildland fire management program by the demand for interagency cooperation and exchange. The wildland fire management program needs to orchestrate interdisciplinary and interagency information management to take advantage of new technologies. The interagency partnership is critical to the success of fire management just as our internal ties to programs such as PMIS are critical in order for fire management projects to be supported within the NPS.

Historically, connections across applications have been so expensive and so difficult to create that applications were massive or all encompassing in scope because they did not want to have to connect them. Application developers tried to imagine every task that might need to be accomplished and design them all in. The end product was applications that could do most things but could do nothing extremely well and required extensive data input even if information existed in another system.

With the current and future web-enabled processes available to us such as interactive planning, it allows much easier and cost-effective connections across applications or technology resources so you can get access to the best-in-class applications, wherever they reside, in a much more flexible way.

E-Learning is the delivery of remote training over the Internet or a corporate intranet via a Web browser. Benefits of E-learning are rapid delivery of content, student – progress monitoring and cost savings. Shortly universal interoperability between learning management systems and courseware will be perfected which will add to the cost savings for this type of training. E-learning is an opportunity but not a replacement for valuable face-to-face employee training and not necessarily cheaper, better or more effective than other forms of training.

The wildland fire management program has been well served by aggressively implementing advanced technology. Today, however, the real changes that need to be looked at are not technology, but how do the business models improve the efficiency and effectiveness of information management in the wildland fire management programs and NPS.

Recommendation 10.1.1:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should clarify the roles, functions and relationships between the Office of Wildland Fire Strategic Communications and the Branch of Wildland Fire Information Technology with regard to development and use of the intranet and Internet (Generally, the Information Management Branch's role should be the development and oversight of a website, but not its content.) (See also Recommendation 9.1.2)

RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

The use of the Internet and intranet to communicate to external and internal audiences needs to be viewed and utilized in the same light as other forms of communication tools such as billboards, newspapers, brochures, posters, books, etc. Usability is critical in design.

Determine who is responsible for website content development, or website portions based upon the requirements and the audience. The involvement of the Information Management Branch with various program areas varies depending on the requirements of the projects being addressed.

Informational websites should be self-cataloging (similar to browsing a library bookshelf).

Also important is the incorporation of document archiving so the most recent version of information request, policy statements, and guidance can be obtained without contacting program managers. This is particularly important since in a number of cases an information request with instructions is released followed by a series of corrections or additions. The August 2001 Wildland Urban Interface Coordinators meeting at the FMPC identified a number of topics/items that should be addressed on the intranet site. Additional needs will be identified by the regions and field once the intranet site is up and running. It is important that this intranet site is viewed as an internal worksite for the wildland fire program practitioners not for public information. Information developed or refined on this site may at some point be moved over to the public information site. Evaluation criteria and timeframes should be established, so revisions can occur systematically.

Recommendation 10.1.2:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should assure that efforts to incorporate fire effects and fire ecology data into the Natural Resource Information Management system continue, and support the concept that the imagery and results from the Burn Severity program will ultimately be archived in the same location.

Recommendation 10.1.3:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should assure that the use of E-learning technology is actively pursued to keep our employees current on wildland fire management applications, technological advances, and operational methods at a reduced cost and time expenditure for the individual.

Recommendation 10.1.4:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should work to improve collaboration in terms of accessibility to core data by all NPS employees and partners. Improve access to information by providing tools that reduce or eliminate proprietary management of data and decrease reliance on systems that enables individuals or programs restrict access to information.

Recommendation 10.1.5:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should provide an infrastructure - data warehouse, clearinghouse, archival of wildland fire management information - to provide data internally and externally. The wildland fire management program will provide stewardship for information it produces. The infrastructure may be provided by the wildland fire management program or preferably as part of the NPS information management infrastructure being developed.

Recommendation 10.1.6:

The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should promote the use of video conferencing and streaming videos. The evolution of these tools will allow for reduced training and meeting costs, by enabling individuals to conduct meetings, provide updates and training sessions of duration that do not justify travel expenditures. Archive of streaming videos will allow individual to review the information on their timeframe.

Recommendation 10.1.7:

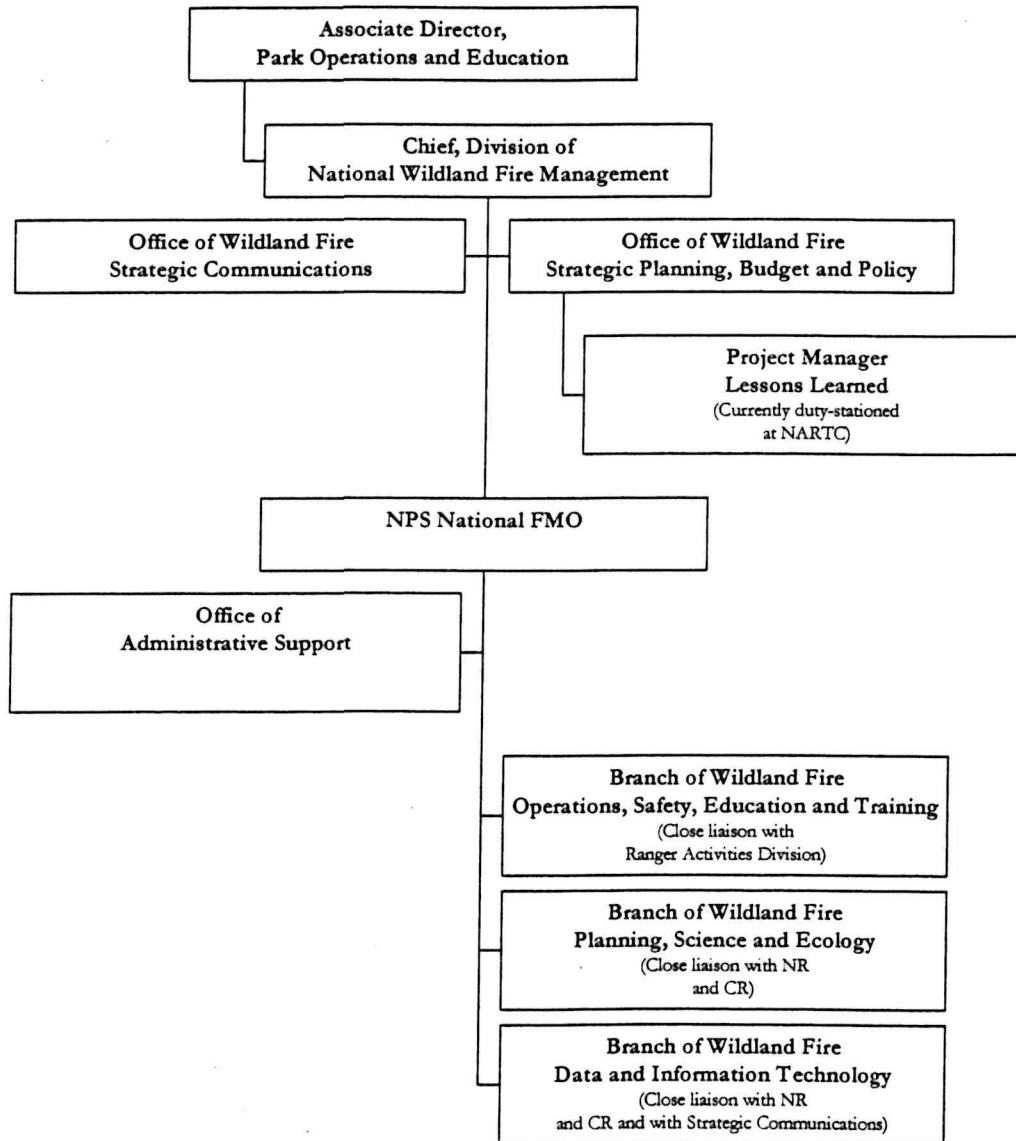
The Chief, Division of National Wildland Fire Management should work to increase the use of spatial data vs. tabular data. Recognize which type of data is most useful based on your need particularly in light of the rapid move toward the geospatial environment. Many of the wildland fire management and resource management applications as well as the anticipated new interagency budget process depend or will depend on geospatial information¹⁴.

¹⁴ The report to the National Fire Plan Coordinators on developing a single, interagency, landscape-scale budget planning framework and analysis tool (previously referenced) appears to address this issue also.

APPENDIX A

PROPOSED ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

National Park Service Division of Wildland Fire Management



DIVISION OF WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT GENERAL ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

Office of Wildland Fire Strategic Communications:

- Generally develops the “mighty messages” in coordination with other agency partners and the Branch Chiefs. Serves as principal spokesperson, as designated by the Division Chief, for information dissemination to other NPS entities, interagency partners, DOI and the public.

Office of Wildland Fire Strategic Planning, Budget and Policy:

- Generally carries out all roles and functions currently performed by the Fire Program Planning Manager and at least some of the roles and functions performed by the Program Management Specialist. Manages the “Lessons Learned” program (although a case might be made to retain this program under the National FMO). Program Analyst (position 070) probably appropriately assigned to this office.

National FMO:

- Generally duties as currently performed and as amended by the realignment of FMPC finally implemented.

Office of Administrative Support:

- Provides complete administrative support to FMPC and Division either through assigned staff or agreements with external units. Possibly incorporate at least some of the roles and functions currently performed under the Program Management Specialist.

Branch of Wildland Fire Operations, Safety, Education and Training:

- Generally incorporates all roles and functions currently performed under the Fire Operations and Safety Program, the Training, Qualifications and Business Management Program, and those components of the Communications and Education Program not strategic in nature and assigned to the Office of Wildland Fire Strategic Communications. Coordinates closely with relevant staff in the Division of Ranger Activities.

Branch of Wildland Fire Planning, Science and Ecology:

- Generally incorporates all roles and functions currently performed under the Fire Science/Ecology Program and includes the Fire Planner (position 015). Coordinates closely with the Natural Resource Program Center and appropriate staff in Cultural Resources.

Branch of Wildland Fire Data and Information Technology:

- Generally incorporates all roles and functions currently performed under the Information Resources Management Program and the newly developing functions of the Intranet and technology related to geospatial planning and analysis. Coordinates closely with appropriate staff in the Natural Resource Program Center, in Cultural Resources and in Strategic Communications.

APPENDIX B

DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES CONSULTED

- **Study of the Implementation of the Federal Wildland Fire Policy: Phase I Report – Perspectives on Cerro Grande and Recommended Issues for Further Study.** National Academy of Public Administration. December 2000.
- **Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health, Committee on Resources, House of Representatives: THE NATIONAL FIRE PLAN – Federal Agencies Are Not Organized to Effectively and Efficiently Implement the Plan.** United States General Accounting Office (GAO-01-1022T). July 31, 2001.
- **GAO Report: Park Service: Agency Is Not Meeting Its Structural Fire Safety Responsibilities** (GAO-RCED-00-154) May 22, 2000.
- **Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy** (released by Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior as “2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy”). January 2001.
- **Internal National Park Service Documents:**
 - National Park Service: Fire Management Leadership Board Charter.
 - Structural Fire Steering Committee Role and Function.
 - National Park Service: Incident Management Program Steering Committee Charter.
 - Incident Management Program Steering Committee FIVE YEAR PLAN.
 - FMPC Organization Charts (11 Evolutions – dated from June 1998 to June 2001).
 - FMPC Roles and Functions.
 - FMPC Strategic Plan: 2000 – 2004.
 - National Park Service: Review of National Fire, Aviation and Emergency Response. January 20 – May 18, 1998.
 - National Park Service: Director’s Order #58 – Structural Fire
 - National Park Service: Director’s Order #18 – Wildland Fire Management (and affiliated Reference Manual)

- National Park Service: Director's Order #60 – Aviation Management (and affiliated Reference Manual in draft).
- “Rangers of the 21st Century.” – Working paper of the Ranger Advisory Council. May 1, 2001.
- Structural Fire Program Briefing Paper, November 2, 2000.
- Review of WASO Ranger Activities Division and RAD Response and WASO RAD Organizational Structure (Desired Future Conditions). ????
- “2001 Appropriations Implementation Strategy: National Fire Plan.” November 10, 2000.
- NPS “Green Book” for FY 2001 (especially Committee Comments on GAO Report on Structural Fire Base Increase).
- NPS “Green Book” for FY 2002.
- NPS Structural Fire Program Plan and Funding Requirements
- NPS Response to the GAO Cerro Grande Report.
- NPS Response to the GAO Structure Fire Report.

APPENDIX C

PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Adams	Bill	Fire Management Specialist	NPS - FMPC
Anzelmo	Joan	Public Affairs	NPS - GRTE
Bahr	Dick	Fuels Use Specialist	NPS - FMPC
Baker	Vaughn	Superintendent	NPS - LARO
Beasley	Mike	FMO	NPS - OZAR
Berg	Dean	Program Management Specialist	NPS - FMPC
Bird	Debbie	Chief Ranger	NPS - SEKI
Bird	Fred	Regional FMO	NPS - MWRO
Blaszak	Marcia	Superintendent	NPS - AKSO
Botti	Steve	Program Manager, Fire Program Planning	NPS - FMPC
Boucher	Don	Regional FMO	NPS - NACR
Broyles	Paul	Program Manager, Fire Operations & Safety	NPS - FMPC
Bundock	Holly	ARD - Communications	NPS - PWR
Burnett	Dennis	Acting Chief Ranger	NPS - RAD
Canzanelli	Linda	Superintendent	NPS - BISC
Castro	Ken	FMO	NPS - LAVO
Chetwin	Cliff	Aviation Manager	NPS - IMRO
Cinnamon	Steve	Chief, Natural Resources. Stewardship & Science	NPS - MWRO
Clark	Dean	FMO	NPS - BAND
Coffman	Randy	Park Ranger	NPS - RAD
Crabtree	Gladys	Program Manager, Information Resources Mgmt.	NPS - FMPC
D'Amico	Roberta	Program Leader, Fire Communications & Education	NPS - FMPC
Davin	Mike	FMO	NPS - LAME
Davis	Kathy	Natural Resources Manager	NPS - SOAR
Dean	Frank	Assistant Superintendent	NPS - PORE
Dems	Len	Wildland Fire Specialist	NPS - IMRO
Ditmanson	Dale	ARD - Operations	NPS - NER
Douglas	Jim	Trust Office	BIA
Dudgeon	Greg	Chief Ranger	NPS - NWAK
Eck	Art	Superintendent	NPS - SAMO
Elenz	Lisa	Assistant FMO	NPS - GRTE
Englesby	Lee	Group Manager, Fire Operations	BLM
Erb	Roger	Director, Fire Management	USFWS
Everhart	Ron	Deputy Regional Director	NPS - IMRO
Findley	Lynn	Group Manager, National Aviation Office	BLM
Finnerty	Maureen	Superintendent	NPS - EVER
Fister	Kris	Public Affairs Officer	NPS - SEKI
Forbes	Mark	Chief Ranger	NPS - CCSO
Freet	Bruce	Chief of Resource Management	NPS - NOCA
Frye	Steve	Chief Ranger	NPS - GLAC

Gabbert	Bill	FMO	NPS - WICA
Garvin	Ken	Regional FMO	NPS - SERO
Gasser	Erv	Natural Resources Specialist	NPS - PWR
Gleeson	Paul	Chief, Cultural Resources Division	NPS - OLYM
Grovert	Hal	ARD - Operations	NPS - IMR
Halainen	Bill	Management Assistant	NPS - DEWA
Hamilton	Larry	Director, Fire & Aviation Management	BLM
Hartzell	Tim	Office of Wildland Fire Coordination	DOI
Head	Paul	Regional FMO	NPS - NERO
Henderson	Marsha	FMO - Eastern Areas Alaska	NPS - YUGA
Holder	Steve	Project Manager, SAFE	NPS - Retired
Hudson	Laura	Plant Ecologist	NPS - IMRO
Jarvis	Jon	Superintendent	NPS - MORA
Johnson	Merrie	Program Manager, Training, Quals, Business Mgmt	NPS - FMPC
Johnson	Gary	Aviation Operations & Safety Mgr	NPS - FMPC
Jones	Trinkle	Supervisory Archeologist	NPS - WACC
Jones	Randy	Superintendent	NPS - ROMO
Kaage	Bill	FMO	NPS - SEKI
Kerr	Linda	Fire Ecologist	NPS - IMRO
Kimball	Dan	Chief, Water Resources Division	NPS - WASO
King	Al	Safety & Prevention	NPS - FMPC
Kitchen	Jim	FMO	NPS - MEVE
Ladd	Skip	ARD - Natural Resources Stewardship & Science	NPS - IMRO
Leicester	Marty	ARD - Operations	NPS - PWR
Liggett	Jay	Regional Chief Ranger	NPS - AKR
Losson	Rod	Concession Fire Specialist	NPS - GRSM
Marote	Corrina	FMO	NPS - SAMO
Martin	Dick	Superintendent	NPS - SEKI
Martin	Mary	Superintendent	NPS - MOJA
Martin	Bob	Regional Chief Ranger	NPS - NER
Masica	Sue	Associate Director - Admin.	NPS - WASO
Mayo	Corky	Chief, Division of Interpretation	NPS - WASO
Mazzeo	Joe	Reg. Structural Fire Mgt. Officer	NPS - NERO
McElveen	Scot	Chief Ranger	NPS - JODA
McIntosh	Bob	ARD - Planning, Resource Stewardship & Science	NPS - NERO
Mihalic	Dave	Superintendent	NPS - YOSE
Miller	Abby	Deputy Assoc Director - NR Stewardship & Science	NPS - WASO
Minassian	Jack	FMO - Pacific Islands Group	NPS - HAVO
Murphy	Tim	Deputy Director, Fire & Aviation Management	BLM
Nasiatka	Paula	Chief Ranger	NPS - SAGU
Nemeth	Donna	Fire Education, Information and Prevention Specialist	NPS - GRCA
Nichols	Tom	Regional FMO	NPS - PWRO
Nicholson	Diane	Curator (Reg. CRAC co-chair)	NPS - GOGA
Northup	Jim	Chief Ranger	NPS - GRSM
Olivarius	Tim	BAR Implementation Leader	NPS - MEVE
Olsen	Brian	Safety Engineer	NPS - DSC

Olsen	Einer	Regional Chief Ranger	NPS - NACR
Oltrogge	Dan	FMO	NPS - GRCA
Paleck	Bill	Superintendent.	NPS - NOCA
Panko	Bob	FMO	NPS - EVER
Parris	Marilyn	Superintendent	NPS - LAVO
Pavek	Diane	Botanist	NPS - NACR
Pendleton	Dennis	Director, Fire Operations	USDA - FS
Pergiel	Chris	Chief Ranger	NPS - KATM
Petersburg	Steve	Resources Management Specialist	NPS - DINO
Pflaum	Mike	Chief Ranger	NPS - MORU
Pierce	Bill	Assistant Superintendent	NPS - GLCA
Powell	Dick	Program Manger, Risk Management	NPS - WASO
Quinn	Pat	Chief Ranger	NPS - PEFO
Reeburg	Paul	Fire Monitoring Program Specialist	NPS - PWR
Reynolds	John	Regional Director	NPS - PWR
Riley	Doug	FMO	NPS - DEWA
Ring	Dick	Associate Director - Operations & Education	NPS - WASO
Robertson	Sarah	Fire Planner	NPS - FMPC
Sauer	Curt	Chief Ranger	NPS - OLYM
Sevy	Elaine	Deputy Chief, Office of Public Affairs	NPS - WASO
Sexton	Tim	Fire Ecologist	NPS - FMPC
Shackleton	Steve	Superintendent	NPS - PINN
Sharp	Devi	Chief, Resources Management	NPS - WRST
Sharp	Hunter	Chief Ranger	NPS - WRST
Shaver	Chris	Chief, Air Resources Division	NPS - WASO
Sherald	Jim	ARD - Natural Resources	NPS - NACR
Shevlock	Jim	ARD - Stewardship & Partnerships	NPS - PWRO
Soukup	Mike	Associate Director - NR, Stewardship & Science	NPS - WASO
Spencer	Hal	Structural Fire Training & Education Officer	NPS - FMPC
Spruill	Bill	Aviation Management Program Leader	NPS - WASO
Stevenson	Kate	Associate Director - CR Stewardship & Partnerships	NPS - WASO
Stires	Jim	Director, Fire & Aviation Management	BIA
Stubbs	Tim	FMO	NPS - CAVE
Supernaugh	Bill	Superintendent	NPS - BADL
Swain	Linda	Administrative Officer	NPS - FMPC
Swed	JD	Chief Ranger	NPS - INDU
Swift	Bryan	Regional FMO	NPS - IMRO
Toothman	Stephanie	Team Leader - Cultural Resources	NPS - PWR
Tranel	Jane	Public Affairs Specialist	NPS - AKSO
Turnbull	George	Pacific-Great Basin SO Superintendent	NPS - PWR
Van Horn	Fred	FMO	NPS - GLAC
Vap	Sue	National FMO	NPS - FMPC
Vequist	Gary	ARD - Natural Resources Stewardship & Science	NPS - MWRO
Walters	Bill	Deputy Regional Director	NPS - PWR
Warren	Mike	Structural Fire Program Manger	NPS - FMPC
Wells	Jay	Regional Chief Ranger	NPS - PWR

Wilking	Dale	Chief, Park Facility Maintenance	NPS - WASO
Williams	Jerry	Director, Fire & Aviation Management	USFS
Williams	Sheila	Project Coordinator	NPS - FMPC
Worstell	Aaron	Air Resources Specialist	NPS - WASO
Yancy	John	ARD - Natural Resources	NPS - SERO
Yarborough	Jerry	Superintendent	NPS - FODA
Young	Chuck	Chief Ranger	NPS - GLBA
Ziemann	Denny	Chief Ranger	NPS - WICA
Zimmerman	Tom	Program Manager, Fire Science/Ecology	NPS - FMPC

**ATTEMPTED TO CONTACT OR "DECLINED" TO BE
INTERVIEWED**

Card	Beth	FMO	NPS - THRO
Carlstrom	Terry	Regional Director	NPS - NACR
Deckert	Frank	Superintendent	NPS - BIBE
Devine	Mona	Staff Park Ranger	NPS - YELL
Eckert	Lisa	Superintendent	NPS - KNRI
Fernandez	Josie	Superintendent	NPS - WORL
Floray	Steve	Museum and Cultural Resources	NPS - WASO
Forte	Judy	Regional Chief Ranger	NPS - SERO
Furney	Mary	Chief Ranger	NPS - HUTR
Galvin	Deny	Deputy Director	NPS - WASO
Gottlieb	Judy	ARD - Research, Stewardship and Partnerships	NPS - AKRO
Highnote	Dee	Senior Concessions Analyst	NPS - WASO
Kohler	Ruth		NPS - SOAR
Loach	Jim	ARD - Operations	NPS - MWRO
Mannel	Don	Chief of Facilities	NPS - GOGA
Orlando	Cindy	Chief, Division of Concessions	NPS - WASO
Prevey	Jeff	Wildland Fire Specialist	NPS - EVER
Rust	Marie	Regional Director	NPS - NERO
Stephen	Doug	Fire GIS Technician	NPS - IMRO

APPENDIX D

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¹⁵ Added to the Review Team on September 24, 2001 to provide specific review of the administrative functions at the Fire Management Program Center.