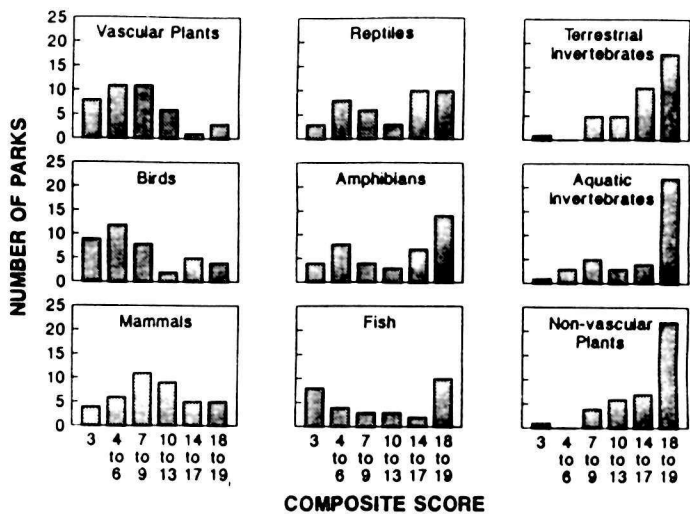


The Problem

The Park Service is faced with an interesting dilemma. Public interest historically has focussed on a few large national parks, but the Park Service's mission is to protect resource integrity and biological diversity in all national park units -- most of which are small. And, most of the biological diversity on NPS lands is in small parks.

Through a series of publications [i.e., technical reports (available), Park Science (in press), Natural Areas Journal (accepted for February 1992), and Issues in Science and Technology (in prep)] large segments of the public and public officials will soon be told that about **80% of our natural area parks have inadequate species inventories:** lists for vascular plants and vertebrates are only 50 to 80% complete (or less)!



<u>Composite Score</u>	<u>Completeness of Species List</u>
3	> 95%
4-6	80 to 95%
7-9	50 to 80%
10-13	< 50%
14-17	Good information on a few taxa
18-19	Inventory poor to nonexistent or unknown

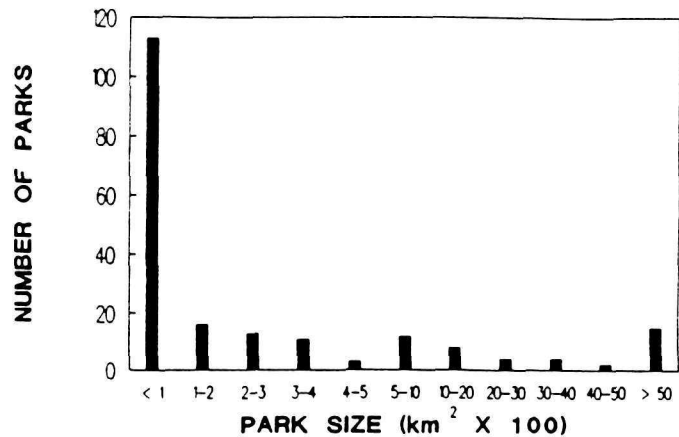
We should be prepared to answer two important questions:

1. What are we doing as an agency (and as the I&M Program Committee) to gather baseline inventory data to improve this situation?, and
2. If little is being done (or is planned) what are the costs to society (and to the Service) by postponing action?

The Facts

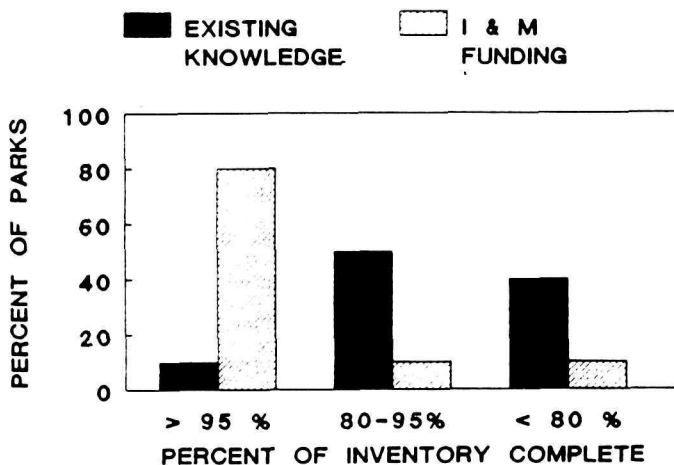
1. Most natural area parks (n = 202) are small: 56% of the parks are < 100 km², 77% are < 500 km².

Most of these small parks historically have received little research and resource management attention. There are exceptions (e.g., Channel Islands, Indiana Dunes, Organ Pipe Cactus), but for the most part, small parks know little about their natural resources.



2. Only a small fraction of the NPS I&M Program is currently committed to improve baseline inventories in the parks that need them most.

In fact, the criteria used to rank prototype monitoring parks praised parks in which "relatively little money or time would be spent on inventorying." If the vast majority of parks have inadequate resource inventories, how can these atypical prototype monitoring parks have immediate "Service-wide or Multi-Park Applicability" (Criterion 7)?



3. A small investment in small parks will have greater returns in biological conservation than large investments in large (or previously well-funded) parks.

Small parks combined can have far greater biological diversity than large parks. Recently, we discovered that six small northern California parks (Lassen Volcanic NP, Muir Woods NM, Point Reyes NS, Redwood NP, Whiskeytown NRA and Lava Beds NM) combined had

	Sequoia and Kings Canyon	Six N. Cal. Parks
Size (km ²)	3431	1485
<u>No. Species</u>		
Vascular Plants	1402	1951
Birds	195	434
Mammals	90	125

