

MINING AND MINERALS BRANCH - WASO
Monthly Report - October and November 1994

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GENERAL

Branch has New Reporting Lines - Under the proposed NPS Washington Office reorganization, the Mining and Minerals Branch will be moved under the Natural Resources Directorship as part of the new Geologic Resource Management Division, with broadened responsibility for geologic management concerns such as paleontology, caves, and shorelines. Effective September 23, 1994, and pending final approval of the Washington Office reorganization, interim reporting lines have been established for the Mining and Minerals Branch. The Branch Chief now reports directly to the Associate Director for Natural Resources. This interim measure does not affect the internal structure or functions of the Branch.

Branch Welcomes Lindsay McClelland as New WASO Liaison - In October, Lindsay McClelland, was detailed to the Mining and Minerals Branch as the liaison to represent the Branch in the Washington Office. Lindsay, a member of the Wildlife and Vegetation Division since 1993, has a master's degree in geology and formerly worked for the Smithsonian Institution where he specialized in volcanism and earthquakes. Lindsay will be our eyes, ears, and feet in WASO to facilitate Branch programs. In addition, while on the detail Lindsay will continue to coordinate servicewide natural resource programs on geology, paleontology, and cave resources, with particular emphasis on working with the USGS on geologic research in parks. When the WASO reorganization is approved, Lindsay will be a key individual in carrying out the new geologic resource management functions. Lindsay is now located in Main Interior and can be reached at 202-208-4958. We welcome Lindsay to the team!

New Judge Holds First Hearing in Oil and Gas Lawsuit - NPS Team Prepares Strategy - Since March, the NPS has been engaged in a lawsuit over NPS regulations at 36 CFR Subpart 9B, governing non-Federal oil and gas development in parks. Specifically, owners of certain mineral interests underlying Padre Island National Seashore filed suit in Federal District Court in Corpus Christi, Texas, against the National Park Service, and the park's Superintendent. The owners claim, among other things, that the

National Park Service lacks authority to regulate non-Federal oil and gas operations inside the park because Texas law is supreme. Their position is contrary to well established legal principles under the U.S. Constitution regarding the Federal Government's authority to protect Federal property and the relative power between the Federal Government and the states. Because of the precedent setting nature of the case, an attorney from the Department of Justice (DOJ) in Washington, D.C. represents the Federal Government. At a rather uneventful hearing in early October, the parties appeared before Judge Jack to seek her ruling on certain pretrial motions filed by the Plaintiffs. Generally, motions are documents filed in the court by either party regarding particular issues in the case that are in dispute. The judge ruled on the motions as expected. Both park and Branch staff attended the hearing. The DOJ attorney's main focus now will be preparation of a Motion to Dismiss the case with assistance from the Branch's staff. The Federal Government will base this motion on certain fundamental defects in the Plaintiffs' Complaint.

During the third week in November, key representatives from Padre Island, the Department of Justice, and the branch met in Denver to exchange information and ideas concerning the active lawsuit against the National Park Service. Last March, a group of private mineral owners filed suit challenging, among other things, the authority to promulgate regulations governing nonfederal oil and gas operations. The November meeting's agenda included: the status of the litigation to date, litigation deadlines, work product presentations, and overall strategy discussion. The team developed a two month plan to address the immediate issues facing Defendants, and discussed other issues that could face Defendants should the case go to trial. Trial is scheduled for June 5, 1995. Another meeting is likely sometime shortly after the first of the year so that the team can revisit the case and perhaps discuss alternative strategies to those developed in November. (Kassman, McCoy, Shaver, Woods, O'Dell, Heise, Boucher)

NPS Finds Second Go-Round of BLM Oil & Gas Performance Review Productive and Informative - The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is currently in the midst of an effort to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its Federal oil and gas program. As part of that effort, the NPS is a member of the Bureau's Performance Review Team focused on improving the Bureau's planning function and compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The team met in October to review and modify draft issue statements to better reflect the nature of the different issues and to incorporate additional comments. The team will meet again the last week of November to finalize the issue statements and identify a list of recommended actions to be implemented by a Phase 2 team. While no determination has been made yet as to who will participate on that team, the NPS hopes to gain a seat at the table.

At the request of the Rocky Mountain Oil and Gas Association, representatives from all the Performance Review teams met with the association to facilitate in an information exchange and to update industry on the status of the Bureau's performance review. Each team leader gave a short update on where the team stood and where they were headed. Unfortunately, the meeting was poorly organized and did not stimulate an active dialogue between team representatives and the association. With respect to the planning/NEPA team's presentation, the association seemed disappointed that the team was not engaged in an effort to rewrite NEPA. This reflected a fundamental misunderstanding of the Bureau's charge to the team and the relative roles of the executive and legislative branches of the Federal Government. The latter branch is vested with the authority to rewrite legislation. The planning/NEPA team intends to offer the same opportunity to the coalition of environmental groups that originally wrote Babbitt about their concerns with the review process. (Heise)

Examination of Reclamation on DOE Tracts Proves Beneficial - At the invitation of the Department of Energy (DOE), Branch and BLM staff visited four DOE uranium lease tracts in Western Colorado to observe and discuss recent reclamation efforts. DOE manages forty-three tracts that were withdrawn from the public domain as sources of domestic uranium ores for defense purposes. DOE is now reclaiming these sites to return them to the BLM. DOE is currently backfilling abandoned mine openings with the "hotter" material on-site, then recontouring the remaining waste rock to create a basin which should prevent storm water runoff from carrying radiological contaminants off-site. Although radiation at reclaimed sites is often as much as ten times background values, DOE believes that radiation at these sites is naturally elevated anyway and their reclamation has achieved "NORM." NORM stands for naturally occurring radiological material. The site visits prompted informative discussions on radiation and general guidelines for evaluating radiological data, but raised the following concerns: 1) DOE's approach falls short of establishing NORM because radiologically-elevated bedrock material has been fractured, brought to the surface, and spread out over a broad area where it is more leachable into the environment; 2) the creation of a basin to prevent storm water runoff may increase contamination of groundwater; and 3) while DOE's effort to reclaim abandoned uranium sites is commendable, it may be premature given that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) may release regulations and cleanup standards for abandoned mine sites in the near future. The practice of mixing radioactive material with the surrounding topsoil and spreading it over a broad area greatly increases the amount of contaminated material to be addressed if it exceeds future EPA standards. DOE has received similar criticism from EPA staff, who were also invited to the field trip, but declined. Until cleanup standards are set, the NPS will continue its current policy of closing hazardous mine openings with minimal disturbance to spoil piles. (Burghardt, Higgins)

Assistance Provided to Other Agencies Grappling With How to Handle Radioactivity at Abandoned Uranium Mine Sites - After working on abandoned uranium mines in Utah over the past six years and with several radiation specialists in the Denver area, John Burghardt with the Branch has amassed a solid knowledge base and experience on the mitigation of radiation and safety precautions at abandoned uranium mine sites. As a result of a widely distributed paper he wrote on this topic, requests for his assistance have been received from organizations across the country. This month, John provided help to the Bureau of Land Management in writing the radiation section of their national abandoned mine inventory form and accompanying handbook. He also conducted a two hour training session in Salt Lake City for the Utah Department of Natural Resources Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining. During the session he discussed radiation issues pertinent to abandoned mines in Utah and demonstrated the proper use of radiation monitoring equipment. (Burghardt)

Former Staff Employee Receives NPCA Award - Frank Buono, former Branch employee and instructor at the Park Service's Albright Employee Development Center at the Grand Canyon, recently received the National Park and Conservation Association (NPCA)'s Stephen Tyng Mather Award. The annual award recognizes an outstanding NPS employee who has risked his or her job or career for the principles and practices of park stewardship. We congratulate Frank and wish him well in his future endeavors.

NPS Inactive and Abandoned Mine Reclamation in Six Western States - The Branch prepared a summary report for the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining (UDOGM) to provide information on abandoned hardrock mines in National Park Service (NPS) Units in Western States with currently active Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) Abandoned Mine Land (AML) programs. The material was used as part of a briefing package for the Director of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE). For the six states considered in this report, Alaska, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming, the National Park System has 34 units with abandoned hardrock mines. There are 722 abandoned mine sites with 909 openings or hazardous features such as highwalls. The NPS, either on its own or in cooperation with states or other federal agencies, has reclaimed or partially reclaimed 17 mine sites which include 93 mine openings or safety hazards. The total cost for the reclamation work conducted to date is \$189,750. (Higgins)

Review Completed of the Natural Resource Protection Aspects of State Oil & Gas Regulations - Oil and gas development may occur in many park units via outstanding private property rights. Currently, 13 units in 7 states have over 580 active oil or gas wells. The NPS can effectively regulate only 35% of these operations because of exemptions contained in the regulations

governing nonfederal oil and gas rights (36 CFR 9B). However, most states have specific regulations that govern the conduct of all oil and gas operators. Branch staff recently compiled a listing of the natural resource protection provisions of oil and gas regulations for the seven states where operations occur in park units. The seven states are Texas, Tennessee, Ohio, New Mexico, Louisiana, Florida, and West Virginia. State regulations concentrate on conservation of the oil and gas resource and protection of ownership rights. Where state regulations do address natural and cultural resources, the Branch found them generally inadequate to protect the nationally significant resources of the National Park System. The good news is that some of these state rules have improved in recent years and can provide some degree of resource protection from operations exempt from the 36 CFR 9B regulations. For more information, contact Pat O'Dell on CC:Mail or at (303) 969-2013. (O'Dell)

Office of Surface Mining Receptive to NPS Input on Draft EIS for Valid Existing Rights Proposed Rulemaking - Branch staff continue to participate in formulation of the draft EIS for the Office of Surface Mining's proposed rulemaking on valid existing rights. The NPS is directly affected by the proposed rulemaking because coal operators are prohibited by section 522(e) of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act from surface mining coal in a park or in an area that would adversely affect a park subject to valid existing rights (30 USC 1201). For this reason the rulemaking that will define exactly what constitutes a valid existing right is of paramount importance. Branch staff are now gathering acreage figures for park units, NPS administered Wild and Scenic Rivers, and NPS administered National Trails located in coal bearing regions of the country. These acreage figures will provide the Office of Surface Mining with a basis for determining how much coal may become unavailable for mining under different EIS alternatives. Branch staff will also soon ask specific parks in coal bearing regions to provide a short summary of anticipated environmental impacts that could result from surface coal mining or subsidence from underground coal mining in the park or adjacent to the park. The Branch will submit this information to the Office of Surface Mining for inclusion in the EIS. More to follow as the EIS process continues into 1995. (Moss, Geniac)

Writer Preparing Article on Non-Federal Oil and Gas Development in Parks for the NPCA "National Parks" Magazine - Branch staff provided a freelance writer background information on non-Federal oil and gas development in parks. The writer is preparing an article for the March 1995 issue of "National Parks," a National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA) publication. The Branch presented him with information that included: why outstanding private oil and gas rights exist in parks; the Constitutional protection afforded these rights while at the same time allowing the Federal Government to regulate them; the mechanics of oil and gas development and the application of the Service's non-Federal oil and gas regulations at 36 CFR Subpart

9B; parks affected by non-Federal oil and gas development; and market conditions affecting industry-wide interest in oil and gas development. The writer also contacted staff in several parks for information regarding the specific impacts and the handling of operations. (McCoy, Woods)

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

Pyrite Mine Reclamation Underway at Prince William - NPS staff met with a representative from the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy, to finalize a reclamation plan for the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine in Prince William Forest Park in Virginia. The mine site consists of approximately 70 disturbed acres, a 600-foot-long highwall, a main shaft measuring 2500 feet deep, two additional shafts, mine structure foundations for more than 20 buildings, and an abandoned narrow gauge railroad track. The site also contains five acres of tailings. The tailings are unvegetated and generating acid mine drainage. Quantico Run, a perennial creek, cuts through the tailings area and, consequently, is contaminated with acidity and heavy metals. The NPS hopes that the reclamation project will succeed in improving the water quality of Quantico Run to meet Clean Water Act standards and create a soil substrate that will support a mixed hardwood forest in the long term. The NPS also hopes that the site can be used as an environmental interpretive site for school children participating in the park's environmental camp and for other park visitors. The site could be used to illustrate concepts such as historic land uses, water protection, reclamation, and the legacy of abandoned mineral lands. Reclamation work will commence in early summer of 1995 and will cost approximately \$135,000. The work is funded by a combination of monies from the non-point source program (section 319) of the Clean Water Act; the Water Resources Division; the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy; and other non-federal organizations. (Smith, Steensen)

PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION

Discussions Continue Regarding Mineral Development on Wilderness Beach at Olympic - Private individuals purporting to own mineral interests at Shi-Shi Beach in Olympic National Park in the State of Washington continue to press the NPS for a buy out or authorization to conduct mining operations. Their mineral development proposal covers all conceivable mineral types from oil and gas to gold. To date, the purported owners have failed to prove that they hold legal title to the minerals underlying federally owned surface in the park. In response to a recent letter to the Superintendent, Branch staff prepared a draft letter notifying the individuals that the Service would consider entering into negotiations to acquire the outstanding mineral rights once they provide clear documentation as to their legal ownership rights in the property. In addition, the draft letter reiterated the Service's belief as to the nominal value of the mineral estate, the legal constraints governing access in

designated wilderness areas, and the Federal Government's ownership of the sand and gravel in the area. In the letter, the acting Superintendent also offers to discuss this matter in person with the purported owners. If such a meeting takes place, Branch and Regional lands staff will likely be in attendance. (Kassman, Moss)

MIDWEST REGION

Meeting Scheduled to Discuss Viewshed Analysis of Theodore Roosevelt National Park - A mere 23 months ago, staff from the Branch, Theodore Roosevelt, and Rocky Mountain Region met with local and regional US Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) staff to discuss the park's longstanding dissatisfaction with the protection afforded park viewsheds from oil and gas development on the Little Missouri National Grasslands. Since that meeting, park resource manager, Roger Andrascik, has met several times with NEPA and visual quality specialists from the USFS to try to resolve NPS concerns. The USFS has requested a meeting with the NPS and BLM in December at which the Custer Forest Supervisor will present her decision on whether to accommodate NPS concerns. The park has invited staff from the Branch and Midwest Region to participate. Branch staff will arrive one day early to tour the park and outlying area to become familiar with the viewshed concerns prior to the meeting. (Heise, Woods).

Company's Right to Explore for Lead Outside Ozark National Scenic Riverways Expire - On October 28, 1994, the Doe Run Company's right to explore for lead in the Mark Twain National Forest in Missouri ended. The NPS has been concerned with the potential impact to park water resources from lead exploration and potential commercial development in the nearby forest. Under BLM regulations, the company now has 60 days (i.e., December 27, 1994) to file an application for preference right leases in the forest. To be entitled to such leases, the company must show that it has discovered a valuable deposit of lead through its exploration. The NPS continues to believe that hydrologic studies need to be conducted to ascertain the potential impact that lead mining could have on park water resources before any development rights are granted in the forest. Because of its concerns regarding earlier irregularities in the handling of the company's right to collect additional data, the NPS will closely follow BLM deliberations on whether to grant the company preference right leases. (McCoy)

Plans Assist Reclamation at Sleeping Bear Dunes - Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, in Michigan, is preparing to reclaim six abandoned sand and gravel pits. Sleeping Bear inherited the pits as part of the original boundary establishment in 1970. A Gravel Pit Management Plan, prepared by Sleeping Bear, identifies restoring all the sites to conditions that fit the surrounding land use as closely as possible; such work requires heavy equipment. Despite limited funds, Sleeping Bear has successfully

reclaimed one site and is actively working on two others. At this rate, and assuming present levels of funding, it will take Sleeping Bear several decades to complete all work. To shorten that interval dramatically, Sleeping Bear is preparing to enter an agreement with the Michigan National Guard. Guard engineering units can complete the work in less than two weeks.

To facilitate this effort, Branch staff evaluated the sites and produced detailed plans. The final version of the plans, including any changes recommended by Sleeping Bear, will be available for use during actual operations. The Michigan Guard can probably do the work during the summer of 1995. Two other pilot agreements with National Guard engineering units, one with Wyoming and another with New Mexico, are in the works. (Steensen, Wood)

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION

Viking Oil Proposes New Survey in Glen Canyon - Viking Oil, the holder of a Federal oil and gas lease that predates the park which was established in 1972, sought to delay again compliance with the lease's "due diligent" requirements. The lease has been on the verge of expiring on several occasions but the lessee has always been successful in having the BLM temporarily suspend the lease thereby avoiding expiration. The BLM is the Federal Government's mineral leasing agent. Most recently, Viking was given a time frame to complete natural and cultural surveys in support of the preparation of an application to drill. One week after agreeing to the deadlines established at a NPS/BLM Escalante meeting in August and obtaining a Special Use Permit to stake and survey a proposed access road, Viking Oil requested permission to run a geochemical sample line across the company's lease in the Circle Cliffs area by using an all terrain vehicle with a power auger. Viking asked the park to simply amend the Special Use Permit to include the sample line. The Branch, park, and the BLM Utah State Office conducted a teleconference to discuss the implications of this proposal. Following a long and complicated discussion of different timing scenarios, participants agreed that:

- driving an all terrain vehicle on BLM and NPS land is not casual use, and therefore will require an EA;
- relocating the proposed well has major implications on the drilling unit Viking formed years ago;
- the special use permit cannot be amended to anything other than permission to stake and survey the proposed line; and
- despite the company's position that this survey is needed before a final pad location can be determined, the original time frames remain in effect and must be met to keep the lease in suspension.

The NPS advised Viking Oil of the park's position. Although uncooperative, Viking agreed to adhere to the original time frames and agreement. All staking and surveying must be completed by mid-November. (Heise)

New World Draft EIS Skips Over Important Facts - Branch staff commented on the "Alternatives" appendix of the draft EIS for the proposed New World mine adjacent to Yellowstone. Appendix A of the draft EIS summarily dismissed several alternatives the NPS deems extremely important. These alternatives include:

- Off-site disposal of all tailings to outside the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem;
- Off-site disposal of the tailings pyrite fraction to outside the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem;
- An expanded no action alternative including factual and detailed figures representing the fair market value of the proposed New World project should a Federal buyout become the logical outcome of this alternative;
- Future amendments to expand mining operations to include surface mining and the possible use of cyanide.

Branch comments stressed that due to the unique circumstances involved with mining at high altitude in the fragile environment of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, the permitting agencies should accept that extraordinary measures to protect the environment are necessary and deserving of in-depth analysis. (Moss)

SOUTHWEST REGION

Branch Gives Plans for Oil and Gas Operations at Padre Island the Twice Over - Branch staff reviewed two proposed plans of operations that had been amended by operators in response to earlier NPS comments. EP Operating Limited Partnership's plan of operations to drill a new well and Vantage Point Energy's reclamation plan for an older gas well site are both nearing the decision stage in the process. Also, the Regional Director formally approved Bright and Company's plan of operations to drill a new well. The first quarter of 1995 could see all three plans implemented. NPS enforcement and operator compliance with the plans should provide excellent resource protection while allowing operators to exercise their nonfederal oil and gas rights.

Company Seeks a Waiver from NPS Regulations at Big Thicket - The Southwest Regional Office requested Branch assistance in evaluating the merits of granting a waiver to Hardy Oil and Gas USA under the Service's non-Federal oil and gas regulations at 36 CFR Subpart 9B. Specifically, the company, which is planning on directionally drilling a well from outside the park to private oil and gas inside the park, seeks to obtain a waiver from the Service's plan of operations requirements. Section 9.32(e) of the regulations allows the NPS to grant a waiver provided that the proposed directional drilling will not pose a significant threat of damage to park surface and subsurface resources. In this case, park resources do not appear to be at risk. If the NPS grants the waiver, Hardy USA will not be relieved of the duty to comply with the regulations should the company decide to modify its operation in the future. Furthermore, in the event that the NPS later determines that adverse impacts to park

resources are or may result, the NPS retains authority to shut down operations until the company mitigates the problem. (McCoy, Woods, Heise)

State of Texas Raises the Need For NPS to Comply with State Relinquishment Act of 1919 - In the context of the non-Federal oil and gas operation proposed by Hardy Oil and Gas USA in Big Thicket National Preserve discussed above, the State of Texas asserts that the National Park Service needs to comply with the state's Relinquishment Act of 1919. Under the Relinquishment Act, surface owners for particular lands act as the agents of the state in negotiating and executing state oil and gas leases in return for a 50% share in lease bonuses and royalties. As a condition of sharing in revenues, the surface owners agree to hold the state harmless for any damages to surface resources that occur due to drilling and production operations. From the state's perspective, the Act has been triggered because Hardy Oil and Gas USA needs to obtain a state lease for state owned oil and gas in the park in order to meet state spacing requirements. In coordination with the Southwest Region, the Branch has informally requested a Regional Solicitor's opinion as to the applicability of the Relinquishment Act to Federal lands. Based on the Branch's in-house analysis and conversations with Department Solicitors in Washington, the NPS is barred from engaging in activities under the Relinquishment Act for the following two reasons: 1) the NPS cannot act as the agent of the state whereby the NPS puts the interests of the state ahead of those of the Federal Government. To do so would put the NPS at odds with its explicit Congressional mandates regarding park management, and 2) per Comptroller General instruction memorandums, Federal Government officials cannot enter into indemnity agreements unless explicitly authorized by Congress. No such authorization exists with respect to the hold harmless requirement of the Relinquishment Act. (McCoy, Kassman)

WESTERN REGION

Branch Drafts Temporary Approval Letter to Mining Claimants to Continue Operations in the New California Desert Parks - On October 31, President Clinton signed into law the California Desert Parks Protection Act. This statute created Mojave National Preserve and expanded and changed to National Park status both Death Valley and Joshua Tree. All three units consist mainly of lands previously managed by the BLM and open to the location of mining claims under the 1872 Mining Law. While the lands are now closed to such location, they are encumbered with approximately 5000 (?) outstanding mining claims, creating a management challenge for the NPS. The BLM estimates that about 170 (?) of these claims are covered by an approved BLM plan of operations. Under the Act, existing and prospective operators must comply with NPS regulations at 36 CFR Part 9, Subpart A in order to undertake mineral extraction activities in the new or expanded units. Because of the time involved to prepare plans of operations in conformance with NPS requirements and to review

such plans, NPS members of the team responsible for the transition between BLM and NPS management of the areas, requested the Branch's help in devising a workable strategy for handling operations on mining claims prior to the submittal and approval of plans of operations under NPS regulations. The strategy agreed on and contained in a draft letter to claimants grants all operators with BLM approved plans the right to continue operations for a 6 month period. During that period, the NPS encourages claimants to submit new plans of operations in compliance with the 9A regulations if they desire to continue operations. The letter also informs them that temporary approval can be revoked for violations of approved BLM plans or if necessary to protect park resources. Section 9.10(g) of the Service's 9A regulations allows for continued operations so long as impacts to park resources are minimized and a halt to operations would create an unreasonable economic burden or injury to the operator. (McCoy, Shaver, Ziegenbein, Covington)

Branch Recommends Mineral Related Changes to Strengthen the General Management Plan for Grand Canyon - The Branch supplied Western Region, Grand Canyon National Park, and the Denver Service Center with comments on the Draft Grand Canyon General Management Plan. The plan examined management of some abandoned minerals sites (AML) and the park's internal extraction of sand and gravel for use on trails. The Branch suggested that the plan address management for additional AML sites and reclamation of existing and future sand and gravel pits. Branch comments also recommended that the emphasis given to the concept of sustainable design in the context of buildings, also be given to road systems and sewage systems. In light of the fact that quality sand and gravel supplies are dwindling locally, and that extraction may impact the park's greater ecosystem, sustainable design should be applied to the roads, trails, and sewage systems. The Service's demand for sand and gravel needs to be minimized. Application of sustainable design to these systems will ultimately protect park resources. The Branch also noted that the plan should include a description of external mineral development that may impact the park and avenues for park managers to get involved in external decision making. Increased awareness of and participation in external decision making offers an opportunity for park resource managers to influence those decisions on behalf of park resource protection. (Geniac)

Branch Staff Visit Bureau of Land Management California Offices, San Bernardino County Office and Riverside County Office. Since the California Desert Protection Act of 1994 was passed and signed by the President on October 31, Branch staff have been actively engaged in assessing the availability of information from the BLM and counties concerning mining operations, bonding, noncompliance, mining claims records and status, trespass cases and leases in the newly created Mojave National Preserve as well as in the expansions to Death Valley and Joshua Tree National Parks. Staff met with the Planning Department of San Bernardino and Riverside counties to determine the status of mining and

reclamation plans filed with the counties under the California Surface Mine and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA). Staff also met with BLM staff at the California Desert District Office in Riverside to discuss the status of mining plans, bonds, etc. and with the BLM California State Office, Sacramento, to discuss database status and availability. This trip was preliminary to a more extensive trip in December to county and BLM Resource Area offices to receive and copy files. (Covington, Burghardt, Ziegenbein)

AML Training and Mine Closures at Lake Mead - At the request of the Western Region Minerals Coordinator, Branch staff developed and taught a course entitled, *Abandoned Mineral Lands Series: Underground Mine Closures and Issues*. The course was designed around the closure of two underground mine openings in Lake Mead National Recreation Area. The goals of the class were: to teach the participants the physical and environmental concerns related to underground mining sites, to teach closure methods, to design appropriate closures, and to provide a demonstration of two different underground closure methods. The course was 2-½ days in length. The mornings of the first 2 days were spent in the classroom and the afternoons as well as the third day were spent in the field. Participants included National Park Service staff, a representative from the Arizona Mine Inspector's Office, and representatives from the Bureau of Mines and the Office of Surface Mining. The diversity of the group added to the classroom and field discussions. The class also toured the South Telephone Cove mine site at which the park, in cooperation with the Marines, blasted seven openings closed in 1992. Bill Burke gave an excellent overview of the project goals, logistics, design, and implementation. Foam Concepts, Inc. donated the foam packs (\$4,000) and the 8-foot-thick plug was completely installed in 2 hours.

The Branch thanks Bill Burke, Bryan Moore, and Lynda Doucette of Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Mel Essington of Death Valley National Park, Phil Moyle of the Bureau of Mines, and Chuck Sayon of the Western Regional Office. All of these people worked beyond the call of duty to make this course a success. (Smith, Cloues)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Branch Staff Attend a Course on Applied Fluvial Geomorphology - Branch staff attended a week-long course on stream morphology and restoration given by Dave Rosgen, hydrology consultant and ex-Forest Service hydrologist. The course covered the following topics: river morphology and geometry, role of sedimentation, analysis and prediction of river stability, stream classification, stream restoration techniques, and watershed management implications. Field work and field techniques were stressed throughout the entire course. The instructor emphasized instream gravel mining, including observing the effects of active and abandoned instream mines, and designing instream mining

methods that *maintain* river stability. We recommend this course highly to resource managers, land use planners, hydrologists, etc., with the caveat that the instructor assumes a working knowledge of hydrology/geomorphology. (Smith)

Oil and Gas Symposium Set for 1995 - Branch staff met with representatives from the Bureau of Land Management, the Colorado School of Mines, and industry to establish dates and costs for a 1995 symposium jointly sponsored by the Bureau and the Colorado School of Mines entitled, "The 1995 Rocky Mountain Symposium on Environmental Issues in Oil and Gas Operations--Practical Solutions for the 90's." The cost per attendee will remain at \$395, with committee members receiving a \$50 discount. The discount will also apply to any group of four registering together. Individuals interested in the conference need to keep the following deadlines in mind: Nov 1, call for papers; Feb 1, abstracts due; April-1, acceptance notification; July-1, papers due; and Oct 16-18, conference dates. While the deadline for paper topics has passed, those wishing to submit papers probably can obtain a waiver of the deadline. Call Bruce Heise at (303) 969-2017 for more information. (Heise)

Branch Employee Receives Education Grant - The NPS awarded Judy Geniac, an Environmental Protection Specialist with the Branch, a \$2000 Albright-Wirth Employee Development Grant. She will use the money to attend three University of Denver graduate courses to enhance her ability to evaluate mineral development proposals in and adjacent to parks. Specific courses include: Environmental Risk Assessment and Management, Environmental Economics, and Applied Statistics for Environmental Managers. Congratulations Judy! (Geniac)