

# FACT SHEET

## NPS MUSEUM COLLECTIONS AND MAB

Did you know that . . . ?

1. National Parks and similar protected conservation areas form core zones in the Biosphere Reserve Program. These zones are informational resources providing benchmarks of environmental quality and genetic repositories. Information contained in the environmental samples and scientific specimens from these areas document this period of environmental change. These collections must be systematically archived and preserved for use by future generations of scientists. The NPS museum program is initiating action to address the specialized collection preservation needs of these areas.
2. The NPS has approximately <sup>25</sup>~~10~~ million museum objects in park collections, of which only <sup>9.8</sup>~~10~~% are estimated to be natural history. In the past, most natural history collections made in parks became the property of other institutions, which made the collection. The NPS does not have good records on these specimens, which form an important part of the natural resources baseline data for many parks.
3. Effective April 30, 1984, the Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR 2.5g) requires that specimen collection permits issued for National Park Service areas contain the following conditions:
  - a. Specimens placed in displays or collections will bear official NPS museum labels and their catalog numbers will be registered in the NPS National Catalog.
  - b. Specimens and data derived from consumed specimens will be made available to the public and reports and publications resulting from a research specimen collection permit shall be filed with the superintendent.
4. The NPS National Catalog and museum record-keeping system was recently revised to include a new natural history catalog card and classification system. These revisions will facilitate the documentation of natural history specimens and environmental samples in all park areas, including Biosphere Reserves.
5. The Man and the Biosphere Program Coordinator is a member of the NPS Museum Handbook Steering Committee that is revising NPS standards and procedures for management, preservation, storage and use of natural history specimens and environmental samples.

6. The NPS Curatorial Services Branch, WASO, is establishing a Natural History Advisory Committee, a standing committee, to provide advice to the Chief Curator on issues pertaining to management of natural history collections. Of paramount concern to this committee will be the management of collections in Biosphere Reserve parks.
7. Standardized specimen labels, mounting and preparation supplies, catalog cards and specialized storage equipment for natural history collections are available for NPS museums from the Curatorial Services Branch, WASO.
8. Collection Management Plans and Collection Storage Plans, programmed and requested through the NPS regional offices, will assist a park in planning for management and storage of natural history and environmental collections.
9. Many NPS park collections, including those in Biosphere Reserves, are woefully inadequate in terms of providing representative examples of natural resources found within park boundaries. Greater recognition needs to be given to the importance of collecting, documenting and archiving natural history specimens and environmental samples to establish baseline data and monitor environmental change.

For further information on the role of NPS museum collections in Biosphere Reserves contact the Chief Curator, WASO, FTS(202)343-8138.