

Subject: Re: Weekly Report, Oct 16

----- Message Contents -----

NRSS TELECONFERENCE AND WEEKLY REPORT
(There was no report last week)

MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1995

UPDATE/FYI

NPS Involvement in the New World Mine EIS Continues to be a Challenge - Attempts to initiate technical work groups continue to flounder as the Forest Service and the Montana Department of State Lands continue to have "mishaps" in coordinating with the NPS. Most recently the Forest Service distributed a draft write up of the buy out option and failed to copy the NPS, although the NPS has been the main proponent of the inclusion of the buy out option in the DEIS. Superintendent Finley is planning on discussing coordination on the EIS process to the Forest Service and the states of Montana and Wyoming. (Geologic Resources Division)

Resource Protection Possibly at Risk in Carlsbad - According to Frank Deckert, Superintendent, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, the BLM, DOJ and DOI (Dennis Daugherty, Solicitor) have drafted a "takings" settlement agreement with Yates Energy that would permit Yates to drill a directional oil and gas well from just outside the Lechuguilla Cave Protection Zone. However, the drilling and well completion operation would not be subject to "enhanced precautionary measures" deemed appropriate in the BLM Dark Canyon EIS Record of Decision. The measures were crafted to afford protection to Lechuguilla Cave and associated karst features. NPS did not participate in the settlement discussions. Superintendent Deckert has requested GRD assistance in delaying DOI and DOJ approval of the settlement prior to NPS evaluation of the technical issues. (Geologic Resources Division)

Gold Industry AML Initiative - We are moving one step closer to a Mining Industry Funded Abandoned Mine Initiative. Homestake Mining Company is attempting to convince its sister mining companies that it would be a good thing to set aside some monies to help clean-up a portion of the legacy of past mining. Homestake is working on the members of the Gold Institute and they would like to start with a project that would clean-up some abandoned gold mines in a National Park Service unit. The talks are still preliminary, but the industry may want to meet with the Director in the next couple months. (Geologic Resources)

Second International Air Issues Workshop - David Welch and Erik Hauge, Canadian and U.S. co-chairs of the recent Second International Air Issues Workshop held in Waterton Lakes National Park and Lethbridge, Alberta, met in Denver Wednesday and Thursday October 11 and 12 to assemble and edit the workshop materials (presentations, papers, etc.). The materials will be presented to the DSC Publications and Graphic Design Branch, which will prepare and print the workshop proceedings. The proceedings will be distributed widely in Canadian and U.S. national park units as a training tool, as well as to workshop participants and other appropriate agencies and individuals. (Air Resources)

Commission Air Toxics Steering Committee - David Welch and Erik Hauge were introduced to the Great Lakes Commission Air Toxics Steering Committee on Wednesday October 11 via its bi-weekly teleconference. The Commission recently unanimously endorsed the establishment of a Great Lakes International Air Quality Partnership, and assigned Carol Ratza, chairperson of the Air Toxics Steering Committee, to work with Parks Canada and NPS representatives on this project. Welch and Hauge were invited to attend the next committee meeting and make presentations about the proposed partnership. (Air Resources)

Air Quality Information Management System (AQUIMS) - The NPS-Air Resources Division and FWS-Air Quality Branch, in association with the NBS-National Air Quality Research Program and Penn State University, have developed a prototype computerized Air Quality Information Management System (AQUIMS). AQUIMS uses a user-friendly graphical interface to efficiently access bibliographic, photographic (color), general park/refuge information, air pollution effects information, and various resource databases (internal and external to USDI). This information is then passed to either an ozone or acid deposition effects expert system. This electronic form of captured expert knowledge processes the information and provides decision support to natural resource and policy personnel. The AQUIMS prototype was demonstrated in Denver on October 5, 1995, to representatives from other government agencies, the state of Colorado, and Colorado State University. (Air Resources)

Director's Awards Related to Natural Resources - A memorandum setting in motion the process for selecting the 1995 Director's Awards for Natural Resource Management, Natural Resource Research, and Superintendent of the Year for Natural Resource Stewardship, will be mailed out this week to the field director's with a copy ccMailed to regional contacts and posted on the Natural Resources bulletin board. Nominations are due to Washington January 5.