

Subject: Monthly Report

**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, NATURAL RESOURCE
STEWARDSHIP AND SCIENCE
MONTHLY REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2001**

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

DC-Based Natural Resource Personnel are back in Main Interior (for the time being) and their telephones and most of their computers work. Many Natural Resource staff were out of touch for much of September while being moved to 1800 G. St. and then moved back again.

Integrating Resource Stewardship in Planning and Design of NPS Built Environments - The first meeting of the Roundtable on Design Quality and Resource Stewardship was recently held at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park. The purpose of the Roundtable is to explore ways to better integrate natural and cultural resource stewardship in the planning and design of NPS's built environment. This effort is timely given the pending significant increase in backlog funding and the requirement to make impairment findings with respect to NPS development activities. For more information, contact Dan Kimball of the Water Resources Division at 970-225-3501.

PROGRESS

CESUs The Great Basin CESU and Chesapeake Watershed CESU became operational in August, bringing the total number to 10. The NPS is a partner to all 10 CESUs. The Pacific West Region is in the final selection process (over 100 applicants) for the NPS Pacific Northwest CESU Coordinator position. The Pacific West Region had over 75 applicants for the NPS Great Basin CESU Coordinator position (the vacancy announcement closed in late September).

Department of the Interior Endorses EPA BART Guidelines: The ARD drafted comments that endorsed the EPA's proposal for implementing the best available retrofit technology (BART) requirements under the regional haze rule. Based on ARD's comments, the Department endorsed the rule as proposed; citing that the procedures outlined by EPA would reduce air pollution and have substantial benefits to national parks and refuges. To ensure that BART is applied consistently throughout the United States, DOI recommended that EPA require the use of the guidelines for all sources contributing to visibility impairment. DOI also encouraged EPA to establish a "BART Clearinghouse" similar to existing clearinghouses for other technology determinations. Contact: Bruce Polkowsky (303-987-6944).

HEADS UP

Reports Due A reminder that accomplishment and completion reports for projects funded through Natural Resources are due October 30. Information about these requirements was in the

July 3, 2001 memorandum announcing project decisions and is posted at <http://www1.nrintra.nps.gov/SCCResults/index.htm>. Memoranda about reports on Natural Challenge-related park base increases, Learning Centers, Inventory and Monitoring and CESUs have recently been sent to regions. These reports are also due October 30. These reports will be used to provide a required report to Congress on FY 2001 Natural Resource Challenge-funded activities.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Geological Society of America Annual Meeting Update - The Geological Society of America will hold its annual meeting in Boston, MA, November 5-8. Sixteen papers, including topics such as mapping in parks, parks as classrooms, and remote sensing the bottom of Lake Mead, have been submitted for the General NPS session, chaired by GRD geologists Bruce Heise and Jim Wood. Seventeen papers were submitted for the Coastal Geology of the National Parks session co-chaired by GRD coastal geologist Rebecca Beavers. Most of these talks will focus on coastal research in Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean parks.

Conference Regional Haze and Global Radiation Balance - The Air and Waste Management Association and the American Geophysical Union are holding their third jointly sponsored conference on the effects of atmospheric aerosols on Regional Haze and the Global Radiation Balance in Bend, OR, October 1-5, 2001. Air Resources Division (ARD) staff (William Malm and Kristi Gebhart), contractors, and research associates will be presenting 19 papers at this conference on findings derived from visibility monitoring activities and, in particular, the results of the 1999 Big Bend NP visibility study.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Ocotillo Energy Project: Intergen Corporation submitted an application for the Ocotillo Energy Project, an electric generating facility proposed only seven miles from Joshua Tree NP. This proximity raised serious concerns regarding potential impacts on air quality and related values at Joshua Tree, which already suffers from high air pollution levels. In addition to strong concerns voiced by the NPS, the project was also under scrutiny by the California Energy Commission, local environmental groups, and concerned residents in nearby Palm Springs. Because of these air quality concerns, as well as zoning issues, Intergen withdrew the application. The withdrawal is significant because the facility was one of the first projects in California to face serious opposition on environmental issues since energy concerns first began. Contact: Don Codding (303-969-2076).

—