

RESOURCES INFORMATION TRACKING SYSTEM (RITS)

Inadequate information flow is without doubt a significant problem affecting every facet of National Park Service activities. The demand for and quality of information exceeds the present capability of the Service to provide it. This shortcoming affects every phase of management in the parks, regions, and the central office. It leads to delays, redundancies in efforts and costs, and inadequate planning and decision-making. Examples include: 1) the majority of information requests received at the central office and regions, originating from the Congress, Secretary and various publics, require information that is presently available only at the regions and/or parks, and must be obtained either by telephone conversation or written requests that usually involve considerable time, energy and excess paperwork, and requires an unnecessary time lag; 2) decisions on a wide variety of subjects are made without adequate information that lead to resource and facility degradation and impairment of visitor and employee health and safety; 3) research is undertaken on various issues that have already been completed elsewhere, thus leading to dollar and time waste; and 4) numerous reports are required to document the status of the various activities, and that take considerable time and effort at each level of responsibility.

RITS is proposed to fulfill the Servicewide need for:

1. Increasing the availability and speed of access to information at all levels of the Service; terminals will be utilized at all major parks, each region, and the central office.
2. Reducing duplication of efforts and costs by eliminating redundant projects in management and research.
3. Providing for an adequate database for planners and decisionmakers by making current information readily available when needed.
4. Eliminate or greatly reduce paperwork relating to status reports on a wide variety of issues. RITS will replace the Investigator's and Superintendent's Annual Research Reports (forms 10-225 and 10-226), Resource Management Program Survey (form 10-401), Annual Aquatic Resources Report (forms 10-751 and 10-751a), Forest Insect and Disease Control Accomplishment and Expenditure Report and Regional Summary (forms DI-45a, 45b, 45c), White Pine Blister Rust Control Accomplishment and Expenditure Report and Regional Summary (forms DI-45d, 45e, 45f, 45g), Annual Report of Forest and Windbarriers Planted (narrative), Annual Report of Supplemental Soil and Moisture Conservation District Agreements (narrative), and Surplus Wildlife Disposal Report (narrative).

RITS is designed to fulfill a Servicewide need for tracking all natural resource activities of management, monitoring and research. RITS is designed to track resource projects throughout their existence, beginning with the documentation of a program or activity with each area's Resources Management Plans as Project Statements (see flow chart attached). The system will track each project through the various phases of management, monitoring and research as they occur, to the implementation stage, and to the revisions of the specific Project Statements. RITS is designed to provide up-to-date information and tie together the functions of planning, research, monitoring, reporting and management into a cohesive and integrated program.

RITS terminals will be available at the major parks for use by park personnel. Field areas can readily determine where like problems occur and what methods were utilized to resolve the problems. Data obtained for all the parks will be available through the terminal; detailed reports can be obtained through the NTIS reference file. Project status, personnel and costs will be accessible to assist the park with problem assessment and developing prevention/mitigation measures.

Regional offices will have all of the same available information that will be conducive for better analysis and planning and, therefore, better decisionmaking.

The central office will have all of the above information available as well, and be able to provide better and faster answers to pertinent queries, to obtain a better Servicewide perspective of the natural resources program, and thus better serve the parks and regions.