



The National Park Service

Natural Resource Information Division
Fact Sheet Series

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BASE CARTOGRAPHIC DATA (UPDATED)

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The Natural Resource Inventory and Monitoring (I&M) Program was established to help with preventing the loss or impairment of significant natural resources in more than 250 of the 376 units of the National Park System¹. Many natural resources in the system are subjected to unfavorable influences from a variety of sources, for example, air and water pollution, urban encroachment, and excessive visitation. Left unchecked, such effects can threaten the very existence of many natural communities in the units.

The principal functions of the I&M Program are the gathering of information about the resources and the development of techniques for monitoring the ecological communities in the National Park System. Ultimately, the inventory and monitoring of natural resources will become integral parts of park planning, operation and maintenance, visitor protection, and interpretation. They will enhance the preservation

and protection of natural resources and improve the stewardship of natural resources by the National Park Service. The detection of changes and the quantification of trends in the conditions of natural resources are imperative for the identification of links between changes in resource conditions and the causes of changes and for the elimination or mitigation of such causes. Inventory and monitoring provide important feedback between natural resource conditions and management and trigger specific management and evaluation of managerial effectiveness. Base cartographic data are a basic requirement of documentation.

Base Cartographic Data

The systematic monitoring of natural resources requires park-specific maps of surface features and boundaries. The scale of basic cartographic products is 1:24,000 for NPS units in the lower 48 states and 1:163,360 for units in Alaska. All products are in digital format that is suitable for import into a geographic information system (GIS).

Partnerships

The cartographic products are made possible by a cost-sharing arrangement with the U.S. Geological Survey and by procurement contracts.

Program Status

Since 1993, complete or partial base cartographic data for more than 240 parks with significant natural resources have been acquired. A status database of all cartographic data by park and 7.5-minute quadrangle is maintained on the Intranet at <http://aqsun.aqd.nps.gov:82/quad/quad.html>.

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¹ National parks and other entities of the National Park Service such as national monuments, national rivers, wild and scenic riverways, national scenic trails, and others are called *units* and collectively constitute the *National Park System*.