

OSU Computer Digests Data, Cuts Costs

Ed Starkey, Project Leader of the Oregon State University CPSU, recently completed an analysis of bitterbrush utilization at Lava Beds NM. The monument is an important winter range for mule deer, and levels of utilization have been recorded since 1963. However, no comprehensive analysis had been made, largely because of the great volume of data. Starkey entered the data into a computer at OSU and for less than \$150 obtained summary statistics for the entire period of record.

Utilization was found to be extremely low (10-15%) and there was no discernable trend. Therefore, it was recommended that the monitoring program be suspended indefinitely. Periodic surveys will be conducted to determine whether more intensive monitoring programs should be reinitiated.

This analysis illustrates the cost effective support which can be provided by university based science programs. Park based environmental monitoring often generates more data than can be conveniently managed without the use of a computer. Generally, neither computers nor statistical expertise are readily available in small parks. Thus, data analysis and management provide another linkage in the symbiotic relationship between CPSU's and Parks.