

RMP's — The Next Step

By Bill Supernaugh

"Let's see now, if the park's GMP or DCP's have an approved EIS, then the SRP's which get written up in the RMP only need an EA, but . . ."

The new year brings new anagrams and, we believe, a renewed commitment and directive to carry out our primary mandate to preserve and protect the natural and cultural resources that are integral to the existence of the 320 or so units of the National Park System.

December brought forth the long awaited guideline for dealing with resource planning and programming in a uniform manner. It became policy to treat both natural and cultural resources in a common document and the required content of Resources Management Plans (RMP's) was set out along with a time frame to be met.

The Plan, in effect, becomes a compendium of management decisions proposed to be carried out in order to meet a legislative, regulatory, or policy requirement. The accomplishment of any single action might be for the benefit of a specific cultural resource or of a type that will affect several resource components in both natural and cultural categories. *The important element to be grasped is the need for the decision official to be able to project what the cumulative effect of the action will be on the entire park's resource inventory.*

It is therefore necessary to include project statements on *all* of the park's ongoing and anticipated activities which involve manipulation of the resource. This will require the manager to evaluate the resources under his/her stewardship and make accountable decisions based on an awareness of how maintenance, protection, monitoring and research will ultimately affect all resources.

This long range goal will be accomplished through a time-phased program to be carried out in 1981. During January, park staffs articulated Significant Resource Problems (SRP's) that warranted special identification and emphasis. Prioritized SRP's (cultural and natural), supported by 1D-237/238 funding requests were reviewed and integrated into Regional SRP listings.

The Regional Directors and Directorate met in February to develop a Servicewide list in priority order — used as a component of the FY83 budget submission. It follows then that the SRP's also will indicate the projects to which the FY83 research budget submission will be directed. Those research activities that need to be carried out in order to deal with the Service's highest priority resource management problems will be given primary emphasis for WASO funding. Regions and parks are expected to make the same sort of decisions with regard to discretionary funds for research at every level.

The SRP's thus identified will, in most cases,



Charles L. Douglas is shown here radio tracking burros in Wildrose Canyon, Death Valley National Monument.

become the core of complex action issues documented in the area's Resources Management Plan, which should be completed and approved by Regions prior to Dec. 1, 1981. Emphasis and support should be given to completing RMP's in each area where no approved Plan now exists. Regional staff and parks should identify those areas having Plans which require major changes or have not received updates, and see that those areas are given the direction needed to meet the due date.

Where the Regional Director finds that a currently approved RMP adequately addresses the action plans, a comprehensive narrative summary — which is the decision-support component — must still be submitted. The five-year strategy for accomplishing recommended resources management actions must include a schedule of proposed accomplishments and staffing and funding needs (in sufficient detail to allow annual progress evaluation), in priority order. After all, commitment, accomplishment and accountability are the name of the game!

The Resources Management Plans are but a single element surfacing during the 1981-82 budget years which will tie together a Servicewide effort — crossing all Divisional lines — and involve us all in an integrated effort to rebuild, rededicate, and reinforce our perspective of resources for the future.

Bill Supernaugh is a resources management specialist, Division of Natural Resources, WASO.