

Resource Management Ranks Due for Boost

The May 1980 report to the Congress on the State of the Parks "revealed unexpected problems throughout," NPS Director Russell E. Dickenson told the Association of National Park Rangers at the Ranger Rendezvous October 22, 1981, at Lake Tahoe.

The report, he said "suggested that some of the basic resources, for which the parks had originally been established, were being seriously threatened by a wide assortment of both internal and external activities."

The Director described in a general way a program currently under development in Washington "designed to place a cadre of highly qualified natural resource management specialists in as many as 30 park areas." Trainees for these positions, ranging from GS-7 to GS-11, would complete 18 to 24 months of training, in a move to widen the manpower pool in this crucial management area.

He described natural and cultural resource training courses and workshops that would include natural re-

sources management courses for managers and mid-level employees, three courses for preservation and protection of cultural resources and objects, and two workshops for natural resource specialists on threat identification, assessment and mitigation. He also announced greater emphasis on acquisition of baseline information, conceding that "few parks presently have an adequate inventory of their natural and cultural resources" of the kind needed "to implement enlightened management strategies. Good knowledge of the identity and location of park resources," he told the rangers, "is prerequisite to wise stewardship."

The skeletons of the natural parks – the Grand Teton, Half Dome, Denali – show no perceptible changes, Dickenson said. "But close up, and usually not evident to most park visitors or the uninformed, changes are taking place. And some of that change is affecting park resources in ways that, if continued, will seriously degrade the natural and cultural resources for which we are held accountable."