

superintendents' corner

Crater Lake is listed as one of the natural wonders of the world, and its status as one of the superlative crown jewels in the National Park System is not questioned. This magnificent beauty and interesting geological creation has entranced people for nearly a hundred years. Yet we scarcely have begun to comprehend the characteristics and life of this unique resource.

We easily recognize and accept the fact that our mission as custodians of this priceless scenic and scientific wonder is to preserve it for present and future generations and to assume that natural processes dictate the continuing nature of the lake. It was with this recognition that, during the past three years of preparation of our natural resource management plans, we placed the need for increased research and monitoring of the lake as our highest priority. Our concern for this matter was heightened in 1979 when results of lake clarity studies indicated some loss had occurred since 1968.

As we finalized our natural resource management

plan in 1981, we realized the necessity for establishing a developed, long-range research and monitoring program for the Crater Lake ecosystem. With the cooperative assistance of the Regional Science and Technology office, and the Cooperative Park Studies Unit at Oregon State University, we scheduled a Crater Lake Research Workshop on January 27 and 28, 1982 at OSU. The purpose of this workshop was to explore means by which existing information can be applied to our understanding of the Crater Lake ecosystem and to formulate a research/monitoring program to fill critical data gaps in response to short-term and long-term management needs.

From this productive session developed an action plan that already is underway. The 1982 season will see a research boat (a new purchase this year), a new research technician (seasonal) to assist the various research data collection activities, and the technical limnological research services of Dr. Douglas Larson. Additionally, we will be obtaining a few specialized scientific instruments for necessary data

collection. Along with temperature and clarity studies, information will be collected on water pH, and analysis of the phytoplankton and chlorophyll amounts.

There will continue to be geological studies of the caldera and analysis of information that investigators now have, which tells us there are thermal springs that are discharging into the deep water and that have a dramatic effect on the temperature, stratification, circulation and chemistry of these waters.

All of these complex limnological and geological processes contribute to an exciting and perhaps mysterious life style of Crater Lake . . . which leads back to our need to learn all we can of what is happening naturally within the lake and whatever may be indirectly caused by man. Once we begin to understand better these vital signs – to comprehend the forces that are “driving” the lake – we will be in a more knowledgeable position to make sound management decisions about actions that could affect the lake ecosystem.

In the meantime, park management will continue to exercise the highest protective measures possible to assure that Crater Lake is perpetuated and preserved undisturbed for the enjoyment of future generations.

**James S. Rouse, Superintendent
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