

**Southeast Region Training Institute
for Resource Management
Held at Clemson University**

By Brian J. Mihalik

The need for continued professional training has always been known within the National Park Service. The Mather and Albright Training Centers were established for such a purpose. However, with training facilities at only two locations within the National Park System, it is difficult to provide training opportunities for everyone needing further education. To help continue in-service training in view of these restrictions, NPS representatives in the Southeast Regional Office turned to the university sector with its established educational history for some of its training needs.

G. Jay Gogue, Southeast Regional Chief Scientist, and Steve Smith, Southeast Regional Resource Management Specialist, met with Bert Brantley, Associate Dean, and myself, from the Clemson University Department of Recreation and Park Administration. Our task was to plan a useful resource management training course for Southeast Regional park rangers and technicians. Planning information was first generated from a questionnaire mailed to all 53 park units in the Southeast Region. In this survey, park superintendents were asked to indicate their preferences for a workshop — the time of year it should be held, the desired grade and series of the workshop participants, and the topics in which more training was needed.

From this information, plans were made and a week-long training institute was held at the Clemson University Outdoor Recreation Research Laboratory on Sept. 28-Oct. 1, 1981; 31 NPS rangers and technicians participated. The course utilized a unique format of concurrent educational sessions headed by representatives from NPS, the U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and university faculty from Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Syracuse, Louisiana State, Tennessee, and Clemson Universities. These instructors spiced their lectures with "hands-on" field exercises dealing with resource management issues.

The sessions included the human side of resource management, addressed by Southeast Regional Director Robert Baker; mandates, policies, programs, commitments, barriers, approaches, and case studies dealing with integrated pest management, presented by George Gardner and William and Olga Olkowski of the John Muir Institute for Environmental

Studies; and critical aquatic problems in the south-east national parks, composition of aquatic communities and energy flow, and monitoring contaminant problems in aquatic habitats and tidewater ecosystems, given by several aquatic specialists.

Wildlife management topics also were covered and included the development of a management plan, census techniques, sex and age determination, habitat survey, and deer and endangered species management. NPS speakers Dave Butts and Scott Erickson of the Boise Interagency Fire Center conducted fire management sessions on the physical components of fire and NPS fire policy guidelines and planning. They concluded their sessions by asking students to develop a practical fire management plan for Cumberland Island. Other concurrent sessions dealt with vegetation management – front and back country considerations, design implications, monitoring of vegetation use, the decision making process in vegetation management and human impacts on stream bank vegetation.

The training institute concluded with sessions on water quality monitoring and mapping. Don Cherry of Virginia Tech gave an overview of water quality monitoring and spoke on specific water quality monitoring approaches. Bill Shain of Clemson University addressed remote sensing in resource mapping, using the third dimension of aerial photography in planning

and developing various resource maps.

Other than the concurrent educational sessions which required pre-registration, all participants were brought together twice a day to hear one-hour presentations from a variety of speakers. These presentations included threats to the parks, basic ecological principles, environmental laws, the NPS budget process, evolution of science in the Park Service, the relationship between science and resource management, research methods and the need for cooperation with other agencies.

Throughout the institute, participants were able to spend more time listening than taking notes due to the prior preparation of two reference notebooks which included handouts related to the courses. These two notebooks provided excellent references containing hundreds of pages of resource management information on all subjects covered.

After the course, a review of participant evaluations indicated that the training institute: (1) was one of the best programs each participant received, (2) will prove beneficial in the future job performance of each participant, and (3) warranted continuation. Because of the success of this institute, a second training program is planned for May 17-21, 1982.

Mihalik is Coordinator of Extension at Clemson University, Clemson, SC.