

Tetons Sponsor Resource Training

By William Supernaugh

A Bootstrap Program – that is the best description of Grand Teton National Park's "Orientation to Natural Resources Management" held April 26-28, 1983. The 24-hour course is a fresh approach to meeting a specific park's objectives and training needs. While modeled in part after Albright Training Center's 40-hour course, "Natural Resource Management – Midlevel," course coordinator John Daugherty modified the agenda to conform to the resource management program of Grand Teton. The 35 attendees were representative of the park staff in general – coming as they did from maintenance, protection, interpretation, and administration.

The impetus for the training course arose during early 1982 while the park staff was grappling with the evolving Resource Management Plan. As Project statements were developed, the authors detected a sense of unsureness regarding interdivisional responsibility for carrying out various portions of the plan. The whys and hows of backcountry and river management, wildlife control programs, restoration of acquired land, and similar specific programs were not always understood by members of the staff who were not directly involved with a particular endeavor. Supt. Jack Stark and Asst. Supt. Bill Schenk endorsed the proposed training course as a means of building a parkwide understanding of their resource management objectives, an awareness of administrative and legal constraints on management alternatives, and a greater familiarity with the nitty-gritty details of many of the monitoring, management, and research activities being carried on within the park.

The three-day course gave park employees an opportunity to learn of the evolution of natural resource management within the Park Service as presented by Yellowstone Supt. Bob Barbee; the planning process and resource management responsibilities were explained by Denny Galvin, Denver Service; NEPA and complementary environmental protection laws and regulations were covered by Bill Supernaugh, WASO. A panel discussion of public involvement responsibilities and strategies in developing support for resource programs leaned heavily on the past experiences of Superintendents Stark and Barbee.

Regional Chief Scientist Jim Reid covered the Significant Resource Problem (SRP) submissions and the role of research in managing park resources. Teton Resource Specialist Bob Woods, along with park biologists Bill Barmore and Pete Hayden, addressed specific projects included within the park's draft plan, thus giving a better understanding of what was needed in the way of personnel and logistical support, maintenance requirements, potential user conflicts, items of local concern, and alternative ways to solve problems – including those which were considered and rejected.

Additional coverage included human use and occupation of Jackson Hole, status of the grizzly bear, and an introduction to the ecology of the area.

I was greatly encouraged to see a class of such diverse background focus on the resource management theme, as each member of the staff viewed the program from the perspective of his/her job. Open discussions among Division Chiefs can only help

clarify the role and responsibility each may have for implementing or supporting part of an integrated program. The apparent value of such a course is that it meets the basic "need-to-know" requirement of employees working in a medium to large park with scattered work sites and duty stations and having a fairly complex resource management operation. Secondly, communication ladders and bridges become established, permitting freer information transfer up and down the chain of command as well as back and forth among divisions. Lastly, there was strong evidence of improved "team building" with staff members coming together to lend their talents, interests and job skills to the development and implementation of a park-wide resource management effort.

Persons interested in developing a similar course for their park are encouraged to contact John Daugherty or the Training Committee at Grand Teton National Park.

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