

From Grand Canyon

Grand Canyon NP has a Datapoint 1800 microprocessor with 120K of user memory, 10MB hard disk, printer, and two floppy disk drives. The park's River Subdistrict has both a teleprinter and an 8200 Datapoint terminal, which is currently linked to the USGS DEC PDP-11 system in Flagstaff. The park also has had a centralized word processing system for several years.

The park recently acquired two IBM PC's (with most of the optional bells and whistles) for the Resources Management Division. The plan is to develop several data bases pertinent to cave inventories, backcountry use/impacts, research permit issues, cultural resource inventories, ad almost infinitum, using the data base management system dBasell. There is also the potential for a third IBM PC in the park, assigned to the Maintenance Division, for in-house applications as well as remote access to large maintenance-related data bases currently maintained at Boeing Computer Services.

We're currently struggling with our most comprehensive software/hardware proposal to date: automating our backcountry reservation and permit system. Our average number of permits issued per year is currently 14,000 totalling more than 84,000 user nights and encompassing an advance reservation period of 15 months. It's a tough proposal because the resultant system must be the most "user friendly" available (due to the number of temporary seasonal staff that will use it) and virtually fail-safe (we already have fist fights in the permit waiting lines, can you imagine what would happen if we had to say our com-

puter system went down?)

What we feel we need in a data base management system and the extent and type of files access suggests a hardware configuration beyond IBM PC/Apple/etc. options, but the jury is still out. We also want to assume responsibility for our own backcountry use statistical analyses, currently performed for us by the University of Washington CPSU on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis.

Finally, we derive several positive benefits from our mutual agreement with the USGS Computer Branch in Flagstaff. While our time-sharing on their DEC PDP-11 system (for river use statistical analyses is not cheap, we derive the benefits of top-notch expertise and sincere interest in the park's natural resources from the USGS ADP staff. Having their facility within driving distance has provided technical assistance at little or no cost upon occasion. And there is just no substitute for their level of ADP capability/knowledge when you're living on limited money.

Pat Phelan
Grand Canyon NP
AZ 86023