

Science Conferees Urge Closer Communication

By Jean Matthews

Closer communication and more intensive education efforts both inside and outward from natural resource management agencies was the theme that surfaced at almost every session of the George Wright Society conference on science and resource management in national parks and equivalent reserves.

"Parks and Neighbors Maintaining Diversity Across Political Boundaries" was the stated title of this fifth in the series of science in parks conferences that began in 1976 and third to be arranged by the George Wright Society. The weeklong meeting, from Nov. 14-18, in Tucson, Ariz., attended by 300, was carried out in cooperation with the National Park Service and co-sponsored by the American Water Resources Association, Friends of Pronatura, the National Parks and Conservation Association, the North American Riparian Council, and the University of Arizona School of Renewable Natural Resources.

From the delivered papers and the poster sessions, it was apparent that tighter ties are forming, at both interdisciplinary and interagency levels, as federal, state, and local agencies and concerned citizen organizations gear up to meet the growing challenges posed by population growth, world climate changes, and rampant technology. The need to foster and quicken these ties and the educational outreach that will keep the public informed and involved was evident, both in the information presented and in the urgency of the presentations. The message seemed to be "We're practicing synthesis and outreach, but we need to do it even more vigorously and more effectively."

A "bullet treatment" of highlights from the conference follows, with full coverage of several of the major plenary session addresses to appear in forthcoming issues of the George Wright FORUM. The FORUM also will carry the titles, names and addresses of all the papers, posters, and those who delivered them so that interested persons may contact the authors directly.

● "I'm pleased to see the cultural emphasis in this conference. All parks are cultural in the sense that they serve the particular norms of the social matrix of the moment. The resources belong to the people as a whole and this affects how we should do the research. Bill Brown will assert, later, that culture drives the science effort. I agree.

"Examples of this are the recent Yellowstone fires and



Top: Tucson's Holiday Inn rolls out the welcome marquee for the George Wright Conference on Science in the Parks. **Second from top:** Saguaro NM field trip enlightened six busloads of conferees. **Third from top:** GWS banquet speaker Milford Fletcher (left), the SW Region's Chief Scientist, finds a rapt audience in NCR Chief Scientist Bill Alexander (center) and NPS Associate Director Eugene Hester. **Bottom:** Conference notables (from left), Kathy Hiatt, assistant conference coordinator; George B. Hartzog, Jr., former NPS director; Mrs. Hartzog; Alston Chase, author of *Playing God in Yellowstone*; Christine Schonewald-Cox, GWS President; Mike Kunzmann, U/AZ CPSU biologist and conference assistant; Roy Johnson, chief conference coordinator, and Ted Sudia, founder of the GW Society.

the development of the Williams Center tract at Manassas. The Yellowstone fires brought in 10,000 fire fighters and about 1,000 media members. The anguish/tragedy factor was high. This whole experience could have a profound effect on NPS fire policy.

"At Manassas, the 'hallowed ground' argument prevailed: Here, troops died; therefore, no exploitation. But this tract is just a chess piece in a much larger board of Civil War parks. If those larger issues aren't solved in the basis of the Williams Center decision, it will be a very hollow victory. The real danger is that an exhausted Congress will declare victory and walk away when the battle hasn't yet been joined.

"Because the NPS management decisions must be made in the public arena, the science on which they're based must be clearly articulated and easily available to the public mind. Thus, the two components of our scientific effort are quality (of the research) and acceptance (by the public)." **Denis P. Galvin**, *Deputy Director NPS, Washington Office*

● "Diversity – genetic, species, and community – demands a conservation network of all lands under federal stewardship – 740 million acres, managed for the most part as natural systems. This is an appropriate size, geographically. BLM and National Forest lands, at 43 and 25 percent respectively, are multiple use areas. National Parks (10%), National Refuges (12%), and 'other' such lands (10%), make up the special use areas – roughly one third of these federally administered lands. We need agreement from all the agencies on national goals, agency roles, and interagency strategies." **Dr. Winifred Sidle**, *USFS ecologist Director of USFS middle management education*

● "Our cultural resources are largely uncatalogued and our museum system is not yet up to the tasks it faces. We have four broad goals: to identify and strategize the resources, to protect them, to interpret them as part of the larger cultural context, and to develop preservation guidelines and make them available to management.

"And perhaps just as importantly, we need to quit saying everything is just wonderful and start advocating and urging." **Jerry Rogers**, *Assoc. Dir. for Cultural Resources, NPS, Washington Office*

● "Until recently the NPS has excused its own lack of knowledge of the resources on the basis of our mission, which was to absolutely protect these resources. It's only since the pressure of outside events and decisions that affect our park resources that we have moved to find out exactly what we have and determine how it is threatened and how to protect it." **Eugene Hester**, *Assoc. Dir. for Natural Resources, NPS Washington Office*

● "Ecosystem management calls for recognition that ecosystem boundaries will change over time. It recognizes that fee ownership up to a boundary and beyond is no longer relevant. We need to develop and practice ecosystem management, to synthesize our understanding of the ecological and cultural dynamics of the system, to professionalize the management of the system, and to interpret, at every opportunity, the story that only a strong science program can write. It is a major educational task to communicate both the natural and cultural values of ecosystems, and the NPS has looked too much inward to its own needs rather than outward to educate the nation.

"The National Park Service should be a leader in

establishment and expansion of the ecosystem paradigm. Research must be pursued jointly by NPS scientists and those of other agencies and universities. Professionalization of NPS research is necessary – it's an outgrowth of the System and it should reach out and help solve problems *outside* as well as within the National Park System.

"Research should *drive* the management and the interpretation of the natural and cultural resources of the System."

Jerry Franklin, Ecologist
University of Washington

● "The changes in science/management policy being discussed here are going to require a fantastic marketing strategy within the Service if such a changed mission is to be accepted and implemented."

Dave Parsons, Research Scientist
Sequoia/Kings Canyon NPS

● "There must be multiple roads to the 10 autonomous NPS regions. A budget line item is one road. Accountability of Regional Directors for the quality of their parks and the research therein is another. But these roads must stem from a strong central voice at the top."

Dr. Erv Zube, Landscape Architect
University of Arizona

● "The idea that people are separate from, and not a part of, nature is the dualistic cornerstone on which the conservation movement has been built. This dualism encourages a fortress mentality in parks (and a fiefdom by superintendents.) Congress must speak unambiguously on this matter, and thoughtful individuals should discuss it publicly. Research people should remember that truth transcends institutional loyalties; it's the parks, not the Park Service, you're supposed to protect."

Alston Chase, Author

● "Congress should establish a National Register of Natural Places and a President's Council on Nature Preservation to resolve often conflicting public and private uses of lands adjacent to park boundaries that threaten ecological survival of our national parks. The Council should be empowered to promulgate 'compensable land use regulations' and aggrieved landowners should be allowed to sue the U.S. Government in their

local federal courts. Acceptance of the ensuing settlement decision would constitute acquiescence with the compensable land use regulations."

George B. Hartzog, Jr.
NPS Director, 1963-1972