

Rotating Resource Base Program Gets Western Tryout

By Thomas M. Gavin

A new entry into the resource management field, referred to as the Rotating Resource Base (RRB) program, implemented in FY 1985 by Western Regional Director Howard Chapman and funded for \$50,000, was established under management of the Division of Natural Resources and Research. Distribution of funds to Western Region field areas is based on meeting all of the following project criteria:

1. Projects are critical to restoring processes or eliminating threats to ecosystems or other park resources.

2. Projects are small – of limited scope or intent.

3. Projects are non-recurring and can be completed in one year.

4. Lack of flexibility in the park's budget necessitates provision of base funding for the project.

5. Project is low budget, generally requiring \$6,000 or less.

6. Project was either proposed or referred to in the approved Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP).

This program is designed to supplement other resource management funds which, in the past, have seemed to emphasize only the most competitive, complex, and expensive resource management projects typical of the larger and/or more heavily visited parks. As with similar programs, a comprehensive list of project proposals was ranged according to priority by the Regional Office staff. The following were funded and completed in FY 1985:

1. Fort Bowie National Historic Site: Control of mesquite vegetation, which threatens cultural resources.

2. Walnut Canyon National Monument: Study to determine and restore historical water flow through the park.

3. Tonto National Monument – Elimination of honey-bee threat to visitors at the cliff dwellings.

4. Montezuma Castle National Monument – Elimination of exotic Asiatic clams.

5. Coronado National Monument – Removal of graffiti from cave resources.

6. Joshua Tree National Monument – Construction of a greenhouse to be used in borrow pit and old road rehabilitation.

7. Lava Beds National Monument – Burning and reseeding to native vegetation for wildlife habitat improvement on NPS acreage adjacent to Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

8. Saguaro National Monument – Hazard fuel reduction burn at historic Manning Camp.

9. Whiskeytown National Recreation Area – Hazard tree removal in and around park developments, including mechanical removal and the use of prescribed fire.

10. Organ Pipe National Monument – Improvement of water line to Quitobaquito Oasis to maintain historic flow from spring to pond and enhancement of the current pupfish populations.

11. Hawaii Volcanoes National Park – Repair of goat fence.

12. Point Reyes National Seashore – Removal of Coast Creek dam to restore anadromous fish populations.

Although all funding allocated for the program ultimately was obligated in field areas, \$6,000 was withheld within the Regional Office until August, as a contingency fund for emergency resource management needs as they might occur throughout the year. Although this feature of the program was not needed in FY '85, it will be utilized in the future and will allow for flexibility and management discretion to be exercised by the Western Region Division of Natural Resources and Research.

In retrospect, the RRB Program is seen by the Western Region as a great success. A review of the program this year determined that the qualitative cost/benefit ratio used to evaluate program effectiveness increased with the completion of each funded project; the benefits of completing the proposed work have far outweighed the cost with respect to improved morale of field managers and reduction of Resources Management Plan project backlogs. The projected costs of many proposed projects displayed in Resources Management Plan project statements were reduced from original estimates by managers who used innovative tactics and/or volunteer labor. Contributing to the overall success of the program was the funding of project proposals oriented toward *immediate mitigation* of a problem. Thus, a highly visible display of resources management accomplishments was established Regionwide.

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