

Biodiversity Workshop Leads to NPS Strategy

By John McCrone

An intensive workshop on biological diversity, involving selected university scientists, NPS managers, scientists and Washington office personnel, and representatives from the National Science Foundation, the Office of Technology Assessment, USFS, the USFWS, and the Park Service-Environment Canada, was held in Gatlinburg, Tenn. on May 3-5, 1988.

The workshop was sponsored by the National Science Foundation, the National Park Service, and the Society for Conservation Biology and hosted by Great Smoky Mountains NP.

Six focus groups were organized around these topics: (1) management, (2) inventory and monitoring, (3) viable populations, (4) dynamic processes, (5) human disturbance, and (6) integration into larger units. The hard-working, product-oriented groups, after spirited discussions, turned in reports containing a wealth of material for further evaluation and action. The reports were delivered by group leaders or their designees to NPS Assoc. Director for Natural Resources Eugene Hester, SE Regional Director Bob Baker, Alaska Regional Director Boyd Evison, Timothy Lawlor (representing the NSF Directorate), and Peter Brussard (representing the Society for Conservation Biology).

The day after the workshop, at the request of NPS Director Mott, most of the NPS participants met to discuss an NPS strategy for developing a plan in biodiversity that would respond to the issues and challenges raised at the workshop. Three groups were formed: two reviewed the reports produced by the focus groups, the third considered questions of missions, goals, and objectives.

Reports from these three groups were used to craft a letter to Director Mott, outlining the recommendations of the NPS participants in the workshop and will be used as a basis for development of a more detailed and comprehensive biodiversity program for the NPS.

Organizers of the biodiversity workshop (Brussard, SE Regional Chief Scientist Dominic Dottavio, and John McCrone of the Clemson University NPS-CPSU) are presently compiling all the material presented at these sessions and are preparing a series of articles that will be published in **Park Science** and other appropriate outlets.