

Ecological Restoration Society Organized

"Restoration: The New Management Challenge," the first conference to be conducted by the now one year old Society for Ecological Restoration and Management (SERM) was held Jan. 16-20, 1989, at the Claremont Hotel in Oakland, Calif. It was attended by over 400 professionals in the field of ecosystem restoration. Represented were universities, nurseries, private consulting firms, landscaping companies, and local, state and federal governments. A conference proceedings will be published in 1989.

Because of the pre-conference interest generated within the National Park Service, the meeting organizers chose to highlight the Service at this year's meeting and they were not disappointed. Of the 89 contributed papers presented, 14 (ca. 16%) were by the NPS. Most of these contributed papers dealt with descriptions of individual restoration projects. The NPS areas represented included Channel Islands, Denali, Indiana Dunes, Lake Mead, North Cascades, Olympic, Redwood, Rocky Mountain, and Sequoia/Kings Canyon. Reflecting the size of their restoration/rehabilitation program, Redwood NP presented the largest number of papers. In addition to contributed papers sessions, the conference included two half-day symposia. The first was on the aftermath of this summer's fires in Yellowstone and the second was on Standards for Restoration projects.

A number of workshops featured computer applications and restoration methods. One of these was conducted by Bill Weaver of Redwood NP, dealing with removal of roadbeds and restoring natural slopes and drainages. At one poster session, Glacier, Mount Rainier, and Redwood participated.

The formal meeting concluded with a banquet at which Alston Chase discoursed for an hour on his belief that Yellowstone has been and continues to be mismanaged. Much of what he said to this group was from his book, *Playing God in Yellowstone*, but directed at the point that restoration or management is extremely difficult without good scientific information and without clear goals. In this regard, he lamented the fact that NPS support for research is so meager (approximately 2% of the NPS budget). As did others at the conference, he spoke enthusiastically against the "let nature take its course" school of management, believing that the world has been too dramatically altered by the hand of man to allow a "hands off" approach to be effective in long-term maintenance of ecosystems.

Society business discussions included the need for a journal for articles in restoration and management of natural ecosystems and for the Society to take a role in improving the standards that govern restoration and mitigation projects. These topics will be primary concerns for the Society as it seeks members and ways to focus the growing interest in natural area restoration and management.

The next SERM meeting will be in the spring of 1990 in Chicago. Anyone interested in further information or in joining may write the Society for Ecological Restoration and Management, University of Wisconsin Arboretum, 1207 Seminole Highway, Madison, WI 53711.

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