

Pollution, Politics, Procrastination Are Triple Threat to U.S. Environment

One of the most impressive efforts ever mounted to document environmental concerns and match them with recommendations for remedial or preventive actions was carried out in 1988 by a steering committee and a task force whose members and chairpersons read like a scientific and environmental *Who's Who*. Their product, entitled *Blueprint for the Environment: A Plan for Federal Action*, edited by T. Allan Comp, is now available in book form.

The reader of this 335-page paperback (\$13.95 from Howe Brothers, P.O. Box 6394, Salt Lake City, Utah 84106) will find 511 approaches to national environmental problems, each one a reasoned solution for a specific concern best addressed by the federal government. Outlined in 90 "topic chapters" is "the massive effect of federal action on our environment and the remarkable range of those effects."

Checklist For Action

According to Editor Comp, *Blueprint for the Environment* "becomes a checklist for responsible federal action, a guide to the complex workings of our government, and a clear indication of the astounding impact of federal environmental action – or inaction ... Yielding to the smaller concerns of polluters, politics, or simple procrastination will only allow the problems to multiply."

Of the 92 recommendations to the Department of the Interior, 26 directly address the National Park Service and/or activities in which its engagement is recommended. Comprehensive boundary studies, completion of wilderness studies, implementation of appropriate visitor carrying capacities for all NPS units (as now required by law), updating of the 1972 National Park System Plan, improvement of concessioner regulation, and improved protection of park resources from the effects of mining are among the specifics addressed.

Section on Research

In a separate section on research, the NPS is urged to "help develop and support a specific legislative mandate for National Park Service research which recognizes the unique scientific value of the national parks, defines the role of research, and directs the Service to conduct natural, cultural and social science research as an essential element of its mission." In a related section entitled "education," the report calls on the NPS director to "seek legislation to provide a statutory mandate for park-based interpretation and education as fundamental to the mission of the national parks."

Personnel from the top echelons of 18 of the nation's most prestigious and influential environmental organizations were actively engaged in shaping the report and many of them were present at a 45-minute breakfast meeting in the White House to present it to President Bush.