

Reveg Notes

Western Region Organizes Task Force

The Western Region has become pro-active in managing its lands in recent years. Rehabilitation of disturbed areas is a common practice, presently accomplished through revegetation. Projects range from rehabilitating roadcuts to eradicating roads and trails, and from landscape restoration of scenic or cultural values to replacing alien species with indigenous (in some cases threatened or endangered) species.

Many standards guide resource management in NPS. However, for revegetation and restoration management these standards are essentially principles with little information on application (particularly the depth of investigation necessary for ensuring each standard is met). As a result there is considerable variation in the way individual projects are covered, and some efforts apparently do not even attempt to meet the standards.

Moreover, there is a need to adapt the new NPS Management Policies for special needs existing in the Western Region, and prepare Regional policy statements where necessary. Finally, projects crossing agency boundaries need to be identified early in order to assure that selected techniques and project implementation are complementary.

Consequently, Western Region has organized a Task Force to address these needs. The core team is composed of research scientists and natural resource managers representing coastal, tropical, montane, and arid ecosystems. Its efforts will be reviewed periodically by a larger working group (composed of WR Parks and Denver Service Center representatives) which first met in April 1988 at Golden Gate NRA.

This project will produce a Handbook of guidelines that will help managers develop plans for and carry out revegetation programs. Current research will be applied to assure that these guidelines are state-of-the-art. The Handbook will describe each guideline and list all factors that must be considered. Each factor will be discussed, normally acceptable results (and monitoring techniques) described, and significant reference materials cited or placed in an appendix.

The Handbook is expected to be available to other Regions sometime in CY90. Topics will include prescriptions, propagation, planting, erosion control, tree hazard replacement, genetic conservation, and monitoring. It will address contracting, planning links with the Denver Service Center, funding (including sources such as Federal Highways), and services available from agencies such as the Soil Conservation Service. Finally, the project will distinguish between routine revegetation and ecological restoration, and address issues such as whether a planting project should manipulate habitat for federally listed threatened, endangered, or candidate species.

The aim is to provide guidance for managers in preparing revegetation proposals and to facilitate management applications of all applicable research. Also, it will achieve a cooperative approach to cross-boundary needs, through linkages with coalitions such as the High Sierra Inter-Agency Wilderness Managers Group.

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