

National Academy of Sciences To Study NPS Science Programs

On Sept. 29, 1989, the NPS signed a cooperative agreement with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to conduct a study on "Improving the Environmental Science and Technology Programs of the National Park Service." Congress asked for the study because it believed the science program "gives the appearance of being developed in a haphazard fashion in response to specific problems and absent any general framework."

The project, to last 18 months, will be carried out by the Board on Environmental Studies and Toxicology (BEST) of the Commission on Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Resources of the National Research Council. BEST will convene an interdisciplinary committee, which will gather information by holding workshops or public meetings, using *ad hoc* panels or consultants, and interviewing appropriate NPS personnel.

The study will address "historical development and evolution of (science and technology) programs within the NPS; the range and scope of environmental problems of concern to the NPS; the scope and organization of the current NPS science and technology programs; the extent of coordination of these programs with other NPS programs and missions; the need for monitoring, inventories and related studies to determine the status of the parks and the effects of internal and external stresses; budget and financial programming aspects of NPS science and technology programs; systems for quality control and quality

assurance of research activities; NPS outreach efforts and collaboration with the external scientific community; and options for enhancing productivity, efficiency, quality, and management relevance of the NPS science programs."

This study will "build on improvements already made (in NPS science programs) and . . . recommend new regional and national goals." The NAS committee will be able to draw on a series of studies of NPS science dating back to 1933, when the NPS published Fauna Series No. 1: *A Preliminary Survey of Faunal Relations in National Parks*, by George Wright, Joseph Dixon, and Ben Thompson. Other significant studies were conducted by the National Research Council (the Robbins Report, 1963), A. Starker Leopold and others (1963), and Durward Allen and others (1971).

The findings and recommendations of the study will be presented by the NAS to the Congress and to NPS for implementation. Michael Ruggiero, Chief, Wildlife and Vegetation Division, will be the NPS project leader for the study, responsible for managing the agreement and providing liaison with the study committee.

Director Ridenour has said, "One of the things that I would hope to leave as a legacy is the creation of a solid, scientifically generated data base upon which we can make sound natural and cultural resources decisions." With the prospect of global warming and other national and international issues, that task becomes ever more complex and important. The Director looks to the NAS study as a strong helping hand in meeting the old and new challenges to our science programs.

References

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