

Global Change Sites Selected

On Feb. 27, 1990, the Director announced the National Park Service's Global Change program. This announcement included a call for park-based bioregional areas to submit statements of capabilities and research interest for inclusion as core areas in the program. To evaluate the Capabilities and Interest Statements of the 27 potential core research areas that submitted proposals, the NPS convened a workshop in New Orleans, the week of May 14. At the workshop, representatives for the candidate areas presented their areas' capabilities and research interests to the NPS Global Change Program Committee (GCPC), established by the Associate Director for Natural Resources in April, and to a group of outside reviewers representing major fields of global change science.

The NPS GCPC and the outside experts evaluated the written proposals and oral presentations with respect to the following criteria:

1) Potential resource sensitivity to global change; 2) Availability of relevant basic data; 3) Scope of the existing science program; 4) Support capability; 5) Existence of scientific, management, and educational linkages; and 6) Relevance of proposed scope of work to both Committee on Earth Sciences (CES) priorities and objectives and NPS mission.

For each core research area, one FTE and base funding of \$60,000 for operational support of a long-term global change research program will be provided shortly following the enactment of FY 1991 Congressional appropriations. Each core area will be eligible to

compete on a Servicewide basis for additional global change program funds for research projects.

The GCPC recommended that NPS consolidate its focused FY 1991 Global Change Research Program in six subject areas:

- Monitoring of Potentially Sensitive Species and Ecological Communities
- Research on Potentially Sensitive Species and Ecological Communities
- Ecological Research in Small Watersheds
- Resource Ethnography
- Interdisciplinary Studies of Historical and Prehistorical Ecosystem Change
- Dynamics of Coastal Systems

The first five areas comprise a single program, "Integrated Studies of National Park Ecosystems." The program will encourage research of species, community, and landscape levels to develop a predictive understanding of the effects of global change on the ecosystems represented in NPS units and their surrounding ecological regions. The sixth area of study focuses on potential changes in the dynamics of coastal processes in response to sea level rise and the frequency and intensity of coastal storms. This thematic program builds upon the long history of NPS research on coastal barriers and other coastal areas to improve our capability to predict the effects of global change.

Each of 11 core research areas will prepare, by Sept. 1, 1990, a Global Change Operations and Conceptual Research Plan, identifying staffing, funding, logistic, and other operational requirements for the core area's

long-term global change research program. This plan also will describe proposed research concepts in greater detail. The GCPC will review these plans at its next meeting in mid-October, and will recommend proposed research concepts to be developed as full proposals. The allocation of program funds is expected to be complete by May 1, 1991.

In addition to the core area programs, NPS will develop global change research initiatives based on several cross-cutting "themes." An initiative to study the dynamics of coastal barrier systems will be developed, and a symposium held. Other themes to be studied include assessing opportunities for NPS participation in research on glaciers, and the potential impacts of global change on urban national parks, with a focus on understanding the climate change effects on horticultural plants.

As a result of the New Orleans workshop, the GCPC recommended 11 research areas to the Associate Director (AD) for Natural Resources as core sites for FY 1991. Based on this review and recommendation, the AD has identified these 11 core research areas, in no priority order, for inclusion in the FY 1991 Global Change Research program: Colorado Rockies, Florida Keys, Glacier NP Area, Great Basin, Northwest Alaska, Olympic Peninsula, Ozark Highlands, Sonoran Desert, Southern Blue Ridge, Southern and Central Sierra Nevada, and Western Lake Forest.

The Fall issue of *Park Science* will include a tear-out supplement concerning the global change program.