

# Shenandoah National Park Science Advisory Board

The need to expand and strengthen the NPS science program has been recognized for years. This need was highlighted in the 1988 National Park System review conducted by the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA). Volume 11 titled, *Research in the Parks*, contained 14 major recommendations, one of which was that Congress should establish a Science Advisory Board (SAB) to provide an expert assessment of NPS natural, cultural, and social science needs and programs.

This need also has been recognized at the field level. Glacier NP has had a review board in operation for several years with very good results. Shenandoah NP established its 7-member Science Advisory Board (SAB) in May 1990. The first board meeting was held in conjunction with the Park's 12th Biennial Research and Resource Management Symposium held in May. The membership is made up of subject matter experts in a wide range of areas including the social sciences. They elected their own chairman, Dr. Robert Adams, head of the Department of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Initially four of the members will serve two year terms and the remaining three members will serve for three years, thus maintaining program continuity during the first few years. All second terms will be for three years.

The goal of the SAB is to assist the Park Superintendent in the effective protection and management of the natural and cultural resources of the park. As stated in the SAB by-laws, the primary focus will be on providing an annual assessment of the effectiveness of the park's research program and how scientific information is used to make important decisions. Although the Board will not be asked to conduct peer reviews, an examination of the peer review process would be appropriate. The Board may also be asked for input or evaluations on specific management problems or decisions. In response to the SAB's annual report on their findings, the Superintendent agrees to reply in writing to specific recommendations within 60 days. This process will assure timely feedback to the SAB on how their efforts are affecting and contributing to the decision making process.

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Shenandoah NP