

In 1988, Lois Winter, an NPS interpreter, opted to take a two-year leave of absence to return to graduate school and complete a two-year NPS field research project aimed at bridging the communication gap that

she felt exists among NPS interpreters, resource managers, and researchers.

In April, 1990, she wrote an article on the subject that has been accepted by the NPS's *Interpretation*. She did her work with the help of a Horace Albright research grant and earned a Master's in Wildlife Conservation. Her field research was at Acadia NP.

Her four recommendations, (the guidelines for accomplishing them appear in her *Interpretation* article) are:

1. Designate a "research liaison" in the Interpretive Division of each park, with the formalized duty of forging an effective link between resource managers, researchers, and interpreters.

2. When drafting research proposals, Regional Office Science Divisions should incorporate specific requirements to assure that park interpreters have access to important information from researchers.

3. Because research may have significance in parks other than the one where it was carried out, every Regional Chief of Interpretation should stay in touch with the Region's Chief Scientist. By maintaining a basic awareness of ongoing nationwide NPS research, the Regional Chief of Interpretation can alert each park's "research liaison" of potentially relevant research elsewhere in the NP System. The liaison persons in the parks can pursue worthwhile leads by communicating directly with the appropriate parks.

4. To emphasize its importance, incorporate a section in the Statement for Interpretation detailing interesting research results and describing progress and stumbling blocks in establishing and maintaining the interpreter-researcher connection.

Lois suggests that "only when visitors understand the critical problems that threaten park resources can we expect them to play a role in minimizing those problems. Interpretation is a vital tool in focusing attention on resource issues the confront the parks.