

Southwest Region

A cave research program and a study of the feasibility of establishing a cave research institute have been undertaken by the Southwest Regional Office Asst. Regional Director for Planning, as directed by Public law 101-578, dated Nov. 15, 1990. The study will result in a report to Congress covering the need for an institute, its purposes, what elements the facility should include, recommended location, its cost and management.

The Division of Natural Resource Management and Science staff is assisting with the study and will incorporate the input of cave specialists from BLM, USFS, USGS, and from the private sector and several universities. The study is slated for completion by Spring 1993.

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Training remains a high Regional priority. Jerry Mc-Crea assisted Dr. Terry Cacek, the new Servicewide IPM Coordinator in presenting a 40-hour IPM course at Albright in June; the Southwest Region offered an IPM class for Africanized honeybee management in August; and in September the Region's staff joined forces with the Midwest Regional Office staff to present an IPM course for museum curators in Lawrence, KS. Personnel from the Pacific Northwest and Rocky Mountain Regions also attended.

In addition, the Regional Technical Support Center at U/NM provided a 3-day GIS training workshop in August on the use of Environmental Planning and Programming Language (EPPL7).

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Africanized honeybees are continuing their northward advance. On Aug. 3, 1992, the staff at Big Bend NP was notified that a positive Africanized honeybee identification had been made on bees collected within the park. Identification was made by a specialist at the USDA Bee Research Lab in Beltsville, MD.

The bees were collected on July 21, 1992, from a swarm trap located at Rio Grande Village. Due to genetic variability, this subspecies has a range of behavior; this particular swarm's behavior was not overly aggressive.

Big Bend NP is the second park within the Region to have a confirmed identification of this bee. Amistad NRA was the first. San Antonio Missions NHP probably will be the third, as a confirmed identification has taken place at nearby Fort Sam Houston.

Considerable emphasis will be placed on education, prevention of infestations in and around structures, and management of singular colonies and/or swarms in developed areas. Quarantine of infested counties will sharply reduce the practice of moving beehives and will require significant changes in agricultural practices in Western states, which are quite dependent on migratory beekeeping.