

National Academy Report on NPS Science Released

The National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences released its long-awaited report entitled "Science and the National Parks" at a Washington, DC press conference on Aug. 19, 1992. The Council summarized its report with the following statement, "*Science and the National Parks* is a critical assessment of the problems hampering the current Park Service science program, providing strong recommendations to help the agency establish a true mandate for science, create separate funding and autonomy for the program, and enhance its credibility and quality."

The report outlines 10 major recommendations for the Service to improve its science program, as follows: 1) seek legislation establishing explicit legislative authority for an NPS science program, 2) create an independent research program where all scientists are supervised by scientists, 3) seek a strategic funding increase for science, 4) develop an independent line item in the NPS budget for the science program. 5) establish a Chief Scientist position and recruit a national stature scientist for the position, 6) establish a basic re-

sources information system, 7) establish a competitive grants program, 8) establish an external, high-level Science Advisory Board reporting to the Director, 9) establish a "parks for science" program, and 10) provide for more involvement of researchers in resource management planning.

Asst. Secty. Mike Hayden, Dir. James Ridenour, and Assoc. Dir. Gene Hester jointly hosted a well-attended press conference on August 19 and gave enthusiastic initial responses to the report. Director Ridenour has assigned Dr. Hester to work with Regional Directors Stan Albright and Bob Baker in appointing a working group of senior superintendents to assist them in formulating a series of action items that will help the Service accomplish the recommendations of the National Research Council report. This group began work in early September to accomplish their assignment.

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