

letters

To the Editor:

In June (23-25) a meeting entitled "Giant Sequoias: Their Place in the Ecosystem and Society" was held in Visalia, Calif. The National Park Service played an extremely important role in the development and presentation of the agenda. Many of the talks were presented either by NPS folks or by university scientists who have been funded by NPS. It was obvious from the presentations that we were far ahead of the other agencies in understanding the factors influencing sequoia mixed conifer forest dynamics.

This conference was called by the Forest Service largely in response to the enormous protests from environmentalists over the logging of all but the monarch sequoias within USFS groves. It was a politically hot session that culminated in mid-July with President Bush's visit to the nearby Sequoia National Forest (Sandra Key is the new supervisor there!) to endorse the concept of long term protection of the groves. Nevertheless, legislation continues to wind its way through Congress that would actually create a National Monument or similar status for the USFS groves.

The 13 presentations given either by NPS scientists or NPS-funded researchers were part of the following panels: Natural Values, Public Values, and Public Perceptions; Natural Perspectives, Genetic Characteristics, and Ecological Considerations; Giant Sequoia in a Disturbance-Driven Environment; Management Strategies; and Influences on Grove Development. Sequoia and Kings Canyon NP (SEKI) Supt. Thomas Ritter participated in the windup panel on Symposium Results: Views from the Agency Leadership.

I am also extremely proud of the involvement of the SEKI and Yosemite NP staff and cooperators at the Aug. 9-14 meeting in Honolulu of the Ecological Society of America. I am especially pleased to see NPS science starting to become more actively involved in such meetings.

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Sequoia and Kings Canyon NPs