

NPS-75: Guideline For the Service

By Gary Williams

In September 1992, The NPS issued **Natural Resource Inventory and Monitoring Guideline (NPS-75)**, a document developed by the A/D for Natural Resources to provide Servicewide policy, guidance, and direction to parks designing and implementing comprehensive natural resource inventory and monitoring (I&M) programs. NPS-75 represents official NPS policy and I&M efforts at all NPS organizational levels should be consistent with guidance provided in that document.

The NPS-75 guideline is largely conceptual in nature. It is not, and was not designed to be, a "how to" manual. Rather the I&M Program National Committee, which guided NPS-75 development, determined that technical protocols on how to implement specific steps of the I&M process should be developed independently over time and provided in the form of supplements to NPS-75. The Prototype Monitoring Park component of the Servicewide I&M Program represents one major effort designed to develop those protocols in a scientifically valid and expeditious manner.

In this and a previous article published in the Fall 1992 issue of *Park Science* (pp 1-4), June Rugh and Dave Peterson offer some conceptual ideas on how an I&M program might be planned and implemented by individual parks. In several respects, their ideas parallel and complement the I&M project planning and development process outlined in NPS-75 (Fig. 1). For example, whereas NPS-75 suggests a Science Advisory Team as an effective way to develop an I&M program for a given park, Rugh and Peterson promote the use of Regional interdisciplinary teams. There is no reason those could not be essentially one and the same.

Regarding the identification of individual I&M projects, Rugh and Peterson advocate the use of "brainstorming sessions" whereas NPS-75 suggests a structured, step-down process might be used. Lastly, in their current article, Rugh and Peterson describe how the Analytic Hierarchy Process might be used to prioritize individual I&M projects to insure consistence with established park goals and objectives. Guidance in NPS-75 is much less quantitative but recommends that a risk analysis involving an assessment of the nature of resource threats and the vulnerability of resources to human-induced impacts be an important basis for establishing monitoring priorities and objectives.

There are no universal techniques for I&M efforts related to total ecosystem management. Many different ideas and approaches need to be tested. Readers should realize that the ideas provided in these articles describe a research approach being field tested in the Pacific Northwest Region for implementing the guidance provided in NPS-75. As the Servicewide I&M Program progresses, additional approaches will likely be field tested elsewhere in the Service as well.

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