

It must be true that what you do, you come to love. The wisdom of the ages has it so, and so, I see, it has become with me.

Since the early days of Jack Kennedy and Stewart Udall, when I was a writer of speeches and press releases in the Secretary's Office of Information, I have been drawn ever more deeply to the National Parks...so much so, that after 6 years of writing the Departmental Conservation Yearbooks I was lured away from my comfortable GS-15 position by NPS Director George B. Hartzog, Jr., and have never once looked back.

My initial attraction to the National Park System led to active involvement and eventually to love, with all the anxious concern that inevitably occurs with the full-blowing of that emotion. I have watched the cyclic struggle to define and control the uses and care of that unique set of resources—a natural, cultural, and spiritual asset whose fate today is teetering on the brink between treasure and tragedy.

I have observed and participated in many of the attempts to understand, interpret, and care for this awesome System. These various attempts have both flourished and languished in the short run, but over the long haul they have stubbornly persisted—even through extended periods of what can only be seen in retrospect as massive ignorance and deliberate destruction.

One of the great joys of recent years has been the sturdy growth of park-based research and science-based resource management. It was a development woefully long in coming and desperately needed. The current well-intentioned effort to strengthen science-based decision-making across the board at Interior has launched—not for the first time (see page 21 for Gerry Wright's review) a consolidated science effort. That effort, once again entitled National Biological Survey, has a chance this time of fulfill-

ing its bright promise without undermining the NPS science program.

But this re-formation of Interior's science program must not be allowed to focus rigidly on "pure" science as opposed to applied research that responds in a timely manner to the crying needs of a System under incredible pressures.

The NPS scientific research program grew out of a desire to understand and document the National Park System's priceless resources and to apply the results of research to the needs of enlightened management. The Park System can profit from the added light that a consolidated cadre of scientists can throw on its makeup. But the feedback into the System from the results of such research must continue as strong support of System management.

No matter how lofty the aim or how high-minded the instigators of the NBS, the National Park System—vulnerable and irreplaceable—must not be allowed to lose its science support, its access to informed input into management decision-making.

As the only editor of this bulletin, which I started 14 years ago, I have tried always to maintain a positive attitude, reporting on the hopeful signs and celebrating news of promising trends. But as I prepare to depart, I have asked myself if I want to be remembered (if at all) as Pollyanna, or would I rather sound the warning note that more faithfully reflects anxieties lying not far below surface bravado. I came to the conclusion that I could not go without one word of caution.

Looking back can be as important as looking to the future. Regrettable events that have happened in the past should be faced, recognized, and not allowed to overtake us again. Once, we lost our way. It happens. But twice? Please, not again!