

Changes Bring Greater Opportunities for Resource Managers to Write for *Park Science*

By the editor

At a time of great change for the resource management and science programs of the National Park Service, I foresee a need to develop a cadre of *Park Science* contributors primarily from among the resource management ranks. The establishment of the NBS, the proposed combination of natural and cultural resources under one associate director for resource stewardship, streamlining, and the continuing professionalization of resource management challenge us to improve our skills, work more effectively, develop ourselves as leaders, and refine the role of resource management and science in the parks. In order for *Park Science* to continue its relevance and usefulness, we must look to our resource managers to become principal writers for this publication to keep apace with these developments.

The transfer of our scientists to the National Biological Survey has had great ramifications for the role of resource management and will probably begin to affect the numbers and kinds of articles that are submitted to *Park Science*. Staff scientists will no longer be the central source of material for this publication. Cooperative Park Studies Units scientists, contract researchers, and affiliated university investigators studying local questions will, of course, continue to be excellent sources for articles and assistance. To be sure, I encourage article contributions to continue from these sources and from the NBS, but also want to extend an invitation to resource managers to submit items for publication.

While we expect to be well served by the NBS, USGS, and other research organizations in meeting our research needs, resource managers may now recognize opportunities to begin filling some of the niche formerly held by our scientists. Resource managers will have to carry out monitoring protocols that, in the past, often fell to researchers. As long as good scientific design is employed and results are repeatable, resource managers may also be able to forge ahead into new areas, discovering new ways to make progress with research needs through reduction and analyses of monitoring results.

Resource managers are also beginning to coordinate the larger activity of defining the role of science for the parks. This important responsibility gives resource managers the opportunity to work with scientists to identify the most critical research questions; they must also deal effectively with regional offices and WASO to generate research initiatives through the park planning process.

This role as research broker, prioritizing local research needs and figuring out how best to accomplish them, is likely to become more important without staff scientists. Opportunities to write about these maturing roles in *Park Science* may prove both valuable and relevant as innovative approaches to research are tried, projects are completed, and professionalization of the resource management division continues.

While on a recent trip to several parks, I discovered another argument for encouraging article submissions from a broader corps of writers. Many readers perceive that contributions to *Park Science* must comprise hard research to be eligible for publication. While research is welcome, the *application* of research in implementing a local resource management project (along with its results), for example, is of equal interest and importance. Similarly, an article need not concentrate on an especially popular or timely issue, such as wolf reintroduction, but might simply do a good job detailing an approach to solving a routine problem. The recent studies at Mount Rainier on visitor responses to signs requesting that they stay on trail are

a good example of this. New data or followup information about existing resource management projects might also make good articles.

In general, submissions to the publication may include natural and social science research and associated recommendations, resource management project implementation summaries and results, inventorying and monitoring updates, public affairs strategies for handling controversial resource management issues, even the use of interpretation as a management tool to involve the public in a resource management program. I suspect that we also will publish more articles (or cross reference them with the CRM) having to do with cultural resources as we move toward integrating natural and cultural resource management into a single division. As long as articles discuss the management implications of research and resource management activities they are suitable for submission to *Park Science*.

With all their variety, parks challenge us with complex and diverse resource management problems. Our response to these problems, through resource management as detailed in *Park Science*, distinguishes this publication. As we meet the challenges ahead, *Park Science* will continue to be the vehicle that tracks our successes, gives us feedback on our failures, demonstrates our effectiveness, and measures our progress toward sound science-based resource management. Let's continue to use this publication to celebrate our development and distinguish ourselves as we adapt to the big changes that are upon us.