Gauging Progress

Fifteen years ago this fall, Pacific Park Science, the precursor to this publication, made its debut with the goal of exploring, amplifying, and relating the links between research and resource management. This focus has been the hallmark of the publication since its inception, and the articles have traced our development in bringing science to bear on the resource management activities in the parks. This issue, we pay homage to our roots by looking back on two stories carried in that premier issue in a new department called, "Fifteen Years Ago in Park Science."

Appearing from time to time, this section will revisit natural resource and science issues that commanded our attention 15 years ago. These brief follow-up articles will point out how far we've come since then, whether we've changed much in our application of science, which resource management techniques have proven to be especially useful, and in which areas we've progressed or lost ground. At their best, they will provoke thought on where we're headed, based on where we've been. Most of the time, however, they will simply be fun and interesting to read.

In some cases, as with computer technology (the subject of a special Park Science issue in 1984), we are sure to chuckle as we remember the venerable and frustratingly slow 8088 processor machines that were state of the art then. On the other hand, issues like bear management (the main follow-up story this issue) illustrate a more substantive point. An unfolding story 15 years ago about Sierra Nevada bear management reads very differently from the version told today, due to improvements in both resource management techniques and the information available to managers from further research. Resource management tools and the science that supports them only develop given time, and this new department will allow us to tell the rest of the story.

Following up on early articles, is no more important, certainly, than reporting new research and resource management work as it occurs. This is our bread and butter, our focus, and I want to encourage everyone to continue contributing to Park Science. As always, we need your input on feature articles, case studies, brief highlights of park happenings, and bits that apply broadly to the park system. Also of interest are research and resource management travel opportunities, reviews of books and other articles that you would like to share with others.

This publication is about sharing. We share what we know, what we don't know, what we would like to know, how we go about getting the answers, and what we do with them once we've got them. The question we begin to investigate today, like the resource management technique we begin to employ, is an investment that pays dividends as we learn more and perfect our use of these tools. Looking back is one way to gauge our progress.

