

# BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN US

**O**PPORTUNITY AND PROGRESS DESCRIBE MY SENSE OF THE NINTH GEORGE WRIGHT SOCIETY conference that took place in Albuquerque last March. From the showing of 560 resource managers, scientists, and administrators (50-60% from this agency), we clearly embraced this important biennial gathering of colleagues dedicated to preserving resources through research and management. Three regional directors attended, and at least 36 park superintendents or assistant superintendents were there contributing to the lively session and hallway discussions that characterized this upbeat professional science and resource management conference.

While this level of participation apparently reflects a strong concern for resource preservation at present, it come in cycles. The 1976 conference in New Orleans was also well attended by managers, but in 1990, some managers questioned the legitimacy of sending members of their own resource management staffs to the El Paso meeting!

This was a wonderful opportunity to learn about new research and discuss its application in park management. Over the course of 5 days, nearly 200 formal presentations took place and 70 posters were presented. Hallway discussions were numerous and productive, with conference-goers getting acquainted or exploring solutions to parallel problems from different parks. "The conference provides a connection that is a tonic for insularity," noted past George Wright Society President Gary Davis. "It makes us feel better about our own world."

George Wright was a revolutionary. He briefly succeeded in bringing a biologist's viewpoint to park management in the 1930s before his untimely death at a young age. Up against a deep-rooted tradition of providing for the enjoyment of parks by tourists, Wright sought to incorporate research into park management thinking. The relatively high turnout of managers at this meeting is an encouraging demonstration of support for resource preservation. Now we must try to keep this level of interest from waning.

