

A MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE

This issue of *Park Science* combines the skills and energies of over 50 people in reporting on research and its application to resource management. Naturally, this variety reflects a multitude of fascinating and critical studies and applications going on in the national parks. Bit by bit this work adds to our understanding of park ecology and improves park management. In this issue, for example, we find two approaches for dealing with the problem of exotic vegetation. In the first, Tom Gardali and his co-authors focus on songbirds as indicators of ecological recovery following the eradication of exotic plant species at Golden Gate National Recreation Area, California. In the other, Kathleen Reeder and Brian Eick describe a partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to first understand and then systematically control two species of knotweed at Johnstown Flood National Memorial, Pennsylvania. Each provides useful insights into the complex process of striving to foster the return of native vegetation and ecological function following exotic plant control.

Two articles provide international perspectives, reminding us that we are part of a broad, international network of scientists and managers endeavoring to conserve parks for people. In particular, John Dennis' report on the meeting of the Man and the Biosphere Program of UNESCO points out how we might improve the participation of the National Park Service in the U.S. portion of this program by learning from examples of several international biosphere reserve models. Also, German forester Thomas Meyer profiles the national parks of Germany in an enjoyable article comparing the history, goals, and resource management issues of the German parks with our own park system. The comparison is fascinating and, along with the MAB report, demonstrates that natural resource management is a global commodity, at times exported and imported by the National Park Service.

I am especially pleased to run a profile, albeit brief, of the recent book, *Yellowstone in the Afterglow*, by Mary Ann Franke of the Yellowstone Center for Resources. The book summarizes the many scientific investigations about the effects of the fires of 1988 on the park and concludes that for the most part the park and its resources are quite durable in response to fire. I certainly was not surprised to hear this but was very happy to read about it in a popular, science-based publication. Thirteen years ago I spent 23 days in Yellowstone as an information officer relating details of the North Fork fire to media and offering hope about the ecological resilience of the ecosystem. By summer's end—fires still burning and emotions hot—this story had worn out its welcome. Nevertheless, renewal would again become the theme of news reports the following spring. Nearly half a career later the information on the lessons learned from the fires is refreshing, relevant, and valuable. Not only does it deepen our understanding of long-term effects of fire on a natural ecosystem, but it also will help us manage future demands for fire information more effectively.

Many other articles appear in these pages, too, echoing individual and group efforts alike to link science and park management. The variety is altogether impressive and enjoyable, and the people behind the science are indeed a most valuable resource in their own right.


Jeff Selleck
Editor