

Editorial

How do we go about changing systems for the better?

One way is to provide payoff points for processes or behaviors that benefit the system. A brand new provision for such new payoff points is one of the most exciting aspects of the new “Director’s Awards” for science and for management. (See back cover.)

We take it for granted that the National Park Service is in the business (or preferably in the *profession*) of promoting excellence throughout the National Park System. What we sometimes fail to realize is that the National Park Service is also, *itself*, a system. The things we do for the resources of which we are the designated stewards – things calculated to improve, enhance, upgrade, preserve, perpetuate, whatever – can be of great benefit in maintaining a high level of performance in the Service as well as maintaining a high level of excellence in the System.

Natural systems such as those that can be found within the National Park System presumably work “unconsciously.” Nobody has to tell a turtle or a leaf where to go or how to function. They just do it, “naturally.” Their “rewards” are built in to the systems in which they live and function.

In the National Park Service system, we like to think that we function at the conscious level. Every manager knows that there are people in his/her service who – unfortunately – need plenty of clues as to where and how to function. And sometimes just telling them isn’t incentive enough. Rewards are necessary as strong motivators, even at the exalted level of “consciousness” at which we all work.

So a new “pathway” in the systems functioning of the National Park Service has now been added. The two initial recipients, Chuck Stone and Jeri Hall, obviously didn’t need these incentives. Their dedication to excellence clearly was enough to motivate these outstanding two. But from here on, there will always be that little extra incentive hovering over the NPS system, recognition of performances that stand out from the crowd – signals that tell career personnel that excellence in scientific research and resource management is a rewarding rung on the ladder of upward mobility.

Excellence Recognized



NPS Director James Ridenour presented the 1989 Director's Award for excellence in Science to Dr. Charles Stone, research scientist at Hawaii Volcanoes NP at the January 1990 Regional Directors' meeting in San Antonio, TX. The same award, but for excellence in Natural Resource Management, went to Jeri Hall of George Washington Memorial Parkway. Stone was nominated by the Western Region for his work in alien and endangered species research and his application of science in becoming a significant figure in Hawaiian natural resource conservation and education. Hall, the National Capital Region's nominee, was recognized for her establishment of a GIS capability at the Parkway.