

Guest Editorial

By William Penn Mott, Jr., Director
National Park Service



It is a real pleasure for me to have the opportunity to share some of my thoughts on natural resources with readers of *Park Science*. I feel that the wise management of natural resources is almost synonymous with public expectations of the National Park Service. My interest in and commitment for natural resources has been an integral part of my 50 year career as a park professional. As we move forward together as a team, I will need your help, advice, and counsel so that we can build on the excellence that has already been achieved by the Service. Some of the areas that I feel we should focus on initially are:

Develop a long-range plan or strategy to better protect our natural resources.

It is absolutely essential for us to develop broad, new concepts for better protection of our resources for future generations. The directions that we gain from these concepts should ultimately be viewed as the "hallmark" of contemporary thought concerning resource protection. It should be the very best that we can do.

I expect us to involve the best minds both within the Service

and outside to produce in a highly professional manner, the concepts that will give focus to our management decisions and provide guidance for expanding our research efforts to meet critical needs.

Effectively share our understanding of critical resource issues with our public(s).

Obviously, we don't know all the answers to solve the critical resource issues we face, but we have an obligation to share what we do know. On many complex natural resource issues, such as acid deposition, critical habitat loss, and endangered species management, we can present these concerns in a context of public understanding. A public that understands, and shares its understanding with our elected officials, is a powerful force.

Seek a better balance between people management and resource management.

We have areas, in my judgment, that may be out of balance. It seems that we unintentionally ignore the public in some areas and we err in others by ignoring the resource. I feel this lack of balance often creates issues that put the Service in adversary roles with some segments of the public. In carrying this out, I will review closely our management philosophies for balanced visitor use and resource protection. Research will have to provide the information to determine this balance.

In the months ahead, I hope to meet personally with many of you in an effort to better understand the critical natural resource issues we face. Together we can put into motion an agenda that will build on the outstanding traditions of the Service and, at the same time, incorporate new visions of parks and our continued commitment to resource protection.