
superintendent's corner

Some years ago, as operating increases became more difficult to come by, we decided here at Whitman Mission that the easiest, most durable increase possible was from our own improved efficiencies. We designed and implemented a Management System that caused the staff to learn where resources (dollars and manpower) were being used. The system also allowed us to begin to compare one work task against another work task, and evaluate the desirability of continuing unchanged into the future. This was a great eyeopener: we learned more things than we wanted to know.

We used that good information, and made adjustments to more effectively use available resources for the high priority work. We learned that a disproportionate share of grounds maintenance dollars and FTE's were being used to accomplish work in non-visitor use areas . . . also, work that was called for by others (e.g. to abide by county weed control ordinances, and in response to threatened lawsuits caused by our negative impact to our neighbors).

Our desire to be good resource stewards was helped immensely by our inability to afford to continue being bad resource stewards.

Dr. Jim Romo's work (see article on page 9) is the culmination of our desire to save money, be a good neighbor, and provide for the long-term preservation of the park resources. It is also the culmination of outstanding support from the Pacific Northwest Regional Office.

The final step by the park in the study process has been the development of an action matrix spreading the revegetation over a number of years. Some of the recommended herbicide treatments are expensive, as are the specialized seeds. The reduced level of maintenance needs are offsetting only a small part of those up front costs.

This is a pilot project with wide application for the results. Because of the total investment and breadth of application, we have arranged through Bob Dunnagan at Mount Rainier for Resource Management trainee Janet Edwards to develop a simple method to determine if the use of herbicides in the concentration applied are achieving the desired effect. By measuring the effectiveness and success early in the vegetative effort, we think we will be able to make adjustments in following years, further streamlining the program.

As a result of Dr. Romo's advice and counsel, we are actively managing for the desirable grass and saving money in the process.

Robert C. Amdor, *Superintendent
Whitman Mission National Historic Site*