

To the Editor:

This past April I had the opportunity to serve as an instructor at Albright Training Center for the week-long "Natural Resources Management" training courses for Superintendents and for Mid-Level Managers. As a typical NPS scientist who'd never had the opportunity to *receive* any training at Albright, I was more excited about what I could learn from the other instructors, staff, and "students" than about my 3-hour opportunity to try to convince managers that there was an appropriate and effective role for research in the Park Service.

The experience exceeded my most optimistic expectations. Most striking was the serious and professional approach taken by all participants. Training Specialist Doug Morris had seen to it that the course content was meaty, but the interest and concern of attending managers was an attitude that they brought with them. Chalkboards filled, pencils churned, and students and instructors debated one another in an amicable but energetic fashion. For someone like me whose orientation to the Park Service is almost single-mindedly fixated on natural resources while it oftens feels that everyone else is more interested in budget, personnel, and visitor services, it was exhilarating to be reassured that we have not lost sight of our mission.

I walked into my own session with a small chip on my shoulder, the consequence of feeling that most

managers view NPS science as either an extravagance or an expensive nuisance. I was provocative, even confrontational in my argument that high-quality scientific research is an essential element of responsible resources management. I said that if managers were unhappy with the quality or the relevance of scientific work performed in their Parks, it was their own fault for not stating what they wanted in advance and then following through with enough interest to get what they had paid for. The challenges and conversations that ensued from my presentation were stimulating and educational for me, and went far to persuade me that resources management in the National Park Service is viable and in increasingly supportive hands. The whole experience made me proud to be a part of this organization, and optimistic about its future.

David Graber
Research Scientist