

To the Editor:

We read with great interest the letter written by William E. Brown, Regional Historian, Alaska Regional Office, which appeared in the Spring 1983 issue of *Park Science*. We certainly support Mr. Brown's views that "on site" natural resource managers are needed throughout the National Park Service. Furthermore, we are pleased to report that the Regional Director of the Western Region has taken necessary steps to satisfy this need.

In a recent audit of our field positions we determined that 60 full time and less-than-full-time permanent employees in the Western Region manage natural resources on an uncompromised basis. This figure excludes seasonal employees and Regional Office people who also work full time on natural resources related issues. These 60 positions represent approximately half of the total number of all Natural Resource Management positions in the National Park Service. Properly managing natural resources in parks is much more of a complex problem than simply writing such responsibilities into a position description. Responsibility should be inseparable from action, requiring full-time dedication and effort. Other park workloads should not dilute efforts and attentions of the natural resource manager.

In light of all the discussion over how to recruit natural resources management specialists, potential career ladders for the individuals and how to fund such positions in those parks which demand such expertise, we continue to experience similar confusion and consternation as do some others. The National Park Service remains extremely fragmented in its approach to these problems, and concrete national consistency on this issue continues to elude the Service. It is hard to conceive that there appears to be less than 100 percent support nationally for the new Natural Resources Management Trainee Program. We fail to understand how some individuals can question the merit of the program and its goals. Some are apparently agreeable to dilution of its efforts and supportive of pessimistic talk with respect to future continuation of the program. In short, many disparaging contradictions surface when we discuss the needs for preserving ecological processes through concerned active management of the natural resources of parks.

In summary, we applaud Mr. Brown's recognition of this problem and are enlightened to know that others feel as we do. Recognition of our deficiencies in natural resources management expertise within parks is the first step toward emphasizing a viable solution. Prioritizing our limited dollars in such a way that natural resource management specialists and the where-withal to do a job be placed in parks where sufficient demand exists, is the task at hand.

Sincerely,

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