

From the Editor,

Science is stirring and reaching out beyond its own. Three National Park science conferences are reported elsewhere in these pages, and a fourth allied conference is scheduled by the George Wright Society. Most of them have been arranged with the idea of management transfer built in; at least one of them, contains a primary thrust toward bringing in and involving the citizens who live around and react to the host park and its resources and problems.

A key phrase in one of the conference announcements is "anyone who has conducted research in parks or is interested in National Park Service research and resource management, including administrators, scientists, students, and laypersons." According to the brochure, "That's WHO it's for."

If general systems principles can be held to apply in human systems as well as the better understood, so-called "natural" systems of earth, then this move toward better communication between science and management and between parks and the surrounding communities was predictable. Both the aim and the outcome involve tighter connections, improved feedback, enhanced efficiency – all the responses systems tend to display when faced with diminishing resources and/or energy.

So it speaks well for parks, for park science, and for park management that these joint efforts, based on research into and management of one of the nation's most admired Systems should be occurring "within the house of science," so to speak.

If human society could be expected to exhibit something beyond the unconscious self-designing of nature's systems, it might be the self-insightful notion that communication with the whole of society should accompany the exchange of information between two segments within the system (in this case, scientists and managers.) Thus, it is a matter of some reason for pride that we find "the outside world" specifically invited to attend, to contribute, to participate in the scheduled proceedings.

Heaven knows, the park-based people have much to tell the world. Heaven probably also knows that the "laypersons" who view things from a slightly different angle, may have something valuable of their own to toss into the conference pot.