

From the Editor,

In the interests of shortening, sharpening, causing words to conform to editorial policies regarding length, relevancy, etc., Ray Herrmann's Letter to the Editor (p. 5) now reads briskly to the point made by James B. Thompson in the prior issue – the need for a science/management dialogue that will work toward synthesis of these two essential efforts on behalf of the National Park System.

What fell under the editorial pencil were three paragraphs from the letter – paragraphs that seemed peripheral at the time of editing, but that in retrospect seem absolutely essential to the whole rationale for holding a dialogue in the first place. They are three paragraphs that deal with "information."

Almost no one argues with the idea that decisions are best when they are **informed**. Take apart the word "information" and you find it has to do with the meaning – the relevance – of something the observer discerns "in form." Thus, the scientist discovers in the form of his subject matter certain meaningful in-form-ation that is relevant to management. The dialogue therefore, consists of communicating and agreeing upon that relevancy.

The shortest way to remedy what probably was an ill-advised excision of Herrmann's letter is simply to restore those paragraphs, and here they are:

"One might attempt, using modern principles, to answer the questions pertaining to the requirements for survival of the black bear in the Great Smoky Mountains; but who can identify the larger requirements for the survival and natural succession of the diverse fauna and flora of the Great Smoky Mountains?"

"Preservation of the 'natural area' requires active management of the total resource. Under some pristine conditions, it is best that an area be left completely alone, but when protective management is required, it will be to a lesser degree than that practiced on lands dedicated to commercial enterprises. The problems of today are determining what management practices are actually necessary, what management tools should be utilized, what degree of management control should be exerted, and what timing is proper for management actions.

"We lack up-to-date research. As managers begin to employ ecosystem concepts, which involve entire arenas of hypotheses, research priorities must be set to encompass these new dimensions. Our new perceptions have given us the ability to set priorities and the direction to attempt to obtain answers."

Even in days of shrinking budgets – perhaps especially in such days – these paragraphs suggest alternative ways-to-go that deserve careful attention.