

From the Editor . . .

The National Park dilemma, whether it looms over the whole System as it does in documents like State of the Parks or simply squats in some back-country corner as a single overused campsite, is how to make the best use of what we know about the System in order to perpetuate its treasures for future generations.

Computer banks are bursting with data; scientists talk to one another of their research findings; the mounds of information, the management that uses it, and the public that benefits – all are growing in richness and sophistication. A cursory look suggests that the weakest part of this developing synthesis lies in its linkages. A recent TV documentary on information – from Gutenberg to the computer – left no doubt that humanity now has the means, in effect, to create another almost complete version of the world around us in the form of computer printouts describing every detail. The documentary made much less evident whether or how this fantastic factual array is being used for the ultimate good of human kind.

One thing did seem clear: That more effort is needed to communicate research findings so that the non-scientific world can locate pertinent information and assess it in the light of the human processes that tend to determine how that information is used.

If science and management can each make its own central core of operating knowledge understood by the other, the chances are excellent for narrowing the gap between "what the world is ready for" and "what society is ready for." With all the current emphasis on science – from the new

magazines like *Discovery* and *Science 80* to the hiring of science editors by the non-scientific media – it is doubtful indeed that the drama so mourned by Carl Sagan in “Cosmos,” (the burning of the library at Alexandria) will be repeated in this age. However, it is worth noting that it was the failure of science to communicate its message and its worth that led the public of that third century day to sack and burn the library and all it stood for.