



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

National Capital Region
Natural Resources and Science
Center for Urban Ecology
4598 MacArthur Blvd., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20007

You are cordially invited to attend a 3-day monitoring workshop sponsored by the National Capital Region Inventory and Monitoring (I & M) Program. We are seeking your valuable input to help us develop an integrated and comprehensive long-term monitoring Plan for the national parks of the National Capital Region. The monitoring plan will provide information essential to preserving and enhancing the region's most important natural resources. The workshop will be held at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, West Virginia July 9-11, 2002. National Capital Region parks include Antietam National Battlefield, Catoctin Mountain Park, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Manassas National Battlefield, Monocacy National Battlefield, National Capital Parks – Central and East, Prince William Forest Park, Rock Creek Park, Wolf Trap Farm Park, and the local segment of the Appalachian Trail. These parks cover over 31,000 hectares and span 4 physiographic regions.

Background

As a result of the Natural Resource Challenge, The National Park Service is implementing an Inventory and Monitoring Program at over 265 national parks that are organized into 32 networks sharing geographical and ecological characteristics. Program goals are to develop basic natural resource inventories and implement long-term monitoring of ecosystem health. For more information, visit the National Inventory and Monitoring program web page (<http://www.nature.nps.gov/im/>).

Natural Resource Inventories

The I & M program's short-term goals are to inventory vertebrates and vascular plants at each park and to determine relative abundance and distribution for species of concern. A review of existing data and new field surveys began in 2000. Inventories will continue until their expected completion in 2005. In addition to biological inventories, the I & M program is completing inventories of air quality, base cartography, geologic resources, soils data, vegetation communities, water classification and quality, and meteorological data. These data are being managed centrally and will be incorporated into searchable online databases and geographic information systems that will become essential components to park natural resource management.

Monitor Vital Signs

Long-term goals of the I & M program are to monitor physical and biological resources to better understand the status and trends of the park's natural resources. Each network is designing a single, integrated program to monitor both physical and biological resources

such as air and water quality, geologic resources, weather, fire effects, threatened and endangered species, exotic species, and other flora and fauna. Much of this work will be implemented in coordination with partnerships including neighboring universities, Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units, local, state, and federal government agencies, and non-profit organizations. A detailed monitoring plan will be developed through the collaborative work of the I & M program's staff, Science Advisory Committee, and monitoring workshops such as this one. For more information on the National Park Service Vital Signs Monitoring Program, visit <http://www.nature.nps.gov/im/monitor>.

Products

The I & M program will provide needed information to park managers to make well-informed management decisions. Much of the information will become available to the public through online databases (e.g. NPSpecies) and through park web pages at <http://www.nps.gov>.

Purpose of the National Capital Region Monitoring Workshop: *Planning for the future*

The workshop will provide a forum to exchange technical ideas on what should be monitored in the National Capital Region and how the program could be implemented. It is also designed to foster partnerships with regional conservation groups and agencies to enhance and protect the region's most valuable natural resources.

After exploring the I & M program's goals, the region's ecological context, and most important natural resources, workgroups focusing on each of the most important resources will meet to identify the critical threats to the resources, identify vital sign indicators to be monitored, develop monitoring priorities, and consider protocols used to most efficiently monitor critical resources.

Space is limited. Please return the attached registration form as soon as possible to enroll in the workshop. There is no registration fee for the meeting. Lodging and board can be provided by the NCR I & M program if necessary as indicated on the registration form. More detailed materials including lodging information will be sent to participants after registration.

For more information, please contact me at the number below or contact Marcus Koenen, Monitoring Coordinator, at (202) 342-1443 ext. 216.

We look forward to a fruitful collaboration.

Sincerely,

Ellen van Snik Gray, Ph.D.
Inventory and Monitoring Coordinator,
National Capital Region
(301) 668-4443
(202) 342-1443 ext. 223
ellen_gray@nps.gov