

NCRN Inventory and Monitoring Program

Newsletter June 2004 (Number 008)

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1. Modeling Is For Everyone

The I & M Program isn't just trying to model for anyone, instead, we are trying to model for everyone. Some of you may recall that the I & M Program has been working closely with the Science Advisory Committee to graphically demonstrate the relationship among the region's critical resources and the main threat they face. The modeling exercise helped us identify a variety of vital signs that we should be monitoring including deer, vegetation, amphibians, water quality, and much more. In order to enhance the models, the I & M Program just hired Dr. Todd Lookingbill through a CESU partner. Todd will be based at Frostburg and will work closely with the I & M staff to provide the scientific basis of the models and create an array of models that speak to different audiences. His revised models will be presented in a future draft of the NCRN Monitoring Plan.

For more information about our new staff contact Shawn Carter (202-342-1443 x227; Shawn_Carter@nps.gov). You may also take a look at our website <http://www.nature.nps.gov/im/units/ncrn/index.html>.

2. Invasive Plants

Exotic and Invasive plants are a huge concern to the parks in this region. Invasives appear to be taking over the parks and in some cases well over 15% of the species diversity consists of plants that are not native to this region and perhaps not even native to this continent. While the Exotic Plant Management Team (EPMT) is working hard to eradicate as much as possible, the I & M program has been working to figure out ways to monitor exotics. The program is currently taking two approaches. Monitoring exotics is becoming part of the Forest Health Monitoring Program that will be able to monitor long-term changes in vegetation through plots that are spaced throughout the parks. In addition, the I & M Program in Fort Collins, is working with USGS to come up with a effective ways to detect new incursions into the parks so that they can be addressed before they become rampant.

For more information about the inventories, contact Mikaila Milton (202-342-1443 x225; Mikaila_Milton@nps.gov).

3. New Nature Guides!

Have you seen the new Nature Guides? Maybe not yet but they are coming soon to a website near you. The National Park Service has set up an agreement with the National Wildlife Federation to develop Nature Guides for each park. The Nature Guides were designed in coordination with the I & M Program to provide detailed natural history information about the species found in each park. The web sites will also provide range maps, sounds, and pictures. To get an idea of what the Nature Guides will look like take a look at the Acadia National Park website which already has them running.

Go to: <http://www.nps.gov/acad> and click on the Nature Guide in the bottom left corner.

For more information about the progress planning process, contact Marcus Koenen, Monitoring Coordinator (202-342-1443 x 216; Marcus_Koenen@nps.gov).

4. The Ozone Season is Here!

Don't all rush out at once...in fact, don't rush out at all before checking the DC Council of Governments (COG) website to see what the air quality will be tomorrow. COG puts out its forecasts the day before (usually late afternoon). Code yellow and code green days do not violate EPA standards for human health, but during code orange and code red days, EPA recommends that sensitive individuals curtail or cease their outdoor activities. New to our air quality rainbow this year is code purple, which indicates very unhealthy conditions in which even healthy individuals should avoid prolonged outdoor activities. During the summer of 2003, we only had two days would have qualified for code purple. For daily air quality forecasts go to: <http://www.mwcog.org/environment/air/forecast/>. Details for what actions to take for which codes are at the COG action guide page: http://www.mwcog.org/environment/air/forecast/airquality_guide.asp

For more information about air quality in the National Capital Region parks contact Lee Tarnay, Air Quality Specialist (202-342-1443 x 214; Leland_Tarnay@nps.gov).

This Newsletter is sent out quarterly by the National Capital Region Network Inventory and Monitoring Program. The staff is based out of the NPS Center for Urban Ecology, 4598 MacArthur Blvd. NW, Washington DC 20007. Please pass it on to interested individuals. If you would like to be added to or deleted from the mailing list, please contact Marcus Koenen (Marcus_Koenen@nps.gov; 202-342-1443 x 216).

