

Northern Great Plains Network

Inventory and Monitoring Monthly Report

February 2002

Northern Great Plains Inventory Study Plan: I'm happy to report that the Washington Inventory Coordinator has accepted our revisions to the study plan we originally submitted last September. In other words, the study plan is formally approved and our funding has been authorized. The only remaining step is for me to get approval signatures from superintendents of all 13 parks in the Network. I will be circulating a signature page soon.

Status of Field Inventories: I am busy preparing the inventories for this field season. The status of the taxa inventories is as follows.

Birds: I am very pleased with how the bird inventories are proceeding. I have an oral agreement with the non-profit Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) to conduct the work. The RMBO has monitored birds for the Black Hills National Forest and will be conducting fieldwork this summer on some National Grasslands. The lead contact is Arvind Panjabi (970 482-1707). Those parks scheduled for inventories can expect Arvind and/or his crew to visit their park for about 2 days this June, and the same for 2003 and 2004. (You may recall that this is a slight modification of the original study plan which called for all bird work to be conducted in 2003.) Arvind and/or I will coordinate with you prior to the field inventories. I will be drafting a cooperative agreement over the next couple weeks.

Herps: I am pleased to announce that Dr. Brian Smith (605 642-6879) of Black Hills State University, located in Spearfish, South Dakota, will be the lead on the herpetofauna inventories. Dr. Smith has already conducted herp studies at some parks in the NGP Network and is completing work with the Black Hills National Forest. Dr. Gary Beauvais of the University of Wyoming is a co-PI on the project. Funding will be transferred from the Great Plains CESU to the U. of Wyoming who will subcontract with Dr. Smith at Black Hills State University (the latter is waiving all overhead costs). Field work should begin in April or May of this year and continue through next summer.

Fish: As you know, the fish inventories were conducted last fall by Dr. Bob White at Montana State University. I have recently received 7 copies of his final report. I have distributed a copy to each park where the inventories were conducted (contact me if you haven't received a copy). That should meet our 90% objective for all parks in the Network (although we have a few park-lists where we need to revisit the data).

Mammals: I am still hoping to begin mammal field work this summer. However, due to the delay in getting review comments from the Washington office we may not be able to start this year. I was in discussions with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to conduct the work, but I'm now looking at other options because it's getting to late for them to bring on a grad student for this summer. Although unfortunate, it does not have any

serious ramifications on the budget if we don't start this year since we have moved our bird inventories up a year.

Plants: Plant inventories are not scheduled to begin until next year.

USGS-BRD: I have heard from several sources that the USGS-BRD Jamestown office is now committed to putting someone in the Black Hills. Indeed, I've been contacted by one prospective applicant inquiring about the type of projects we have in mind. This of course is great news.

Voucher Storage: As agreed to at our January meeting, I have formed a voucher committee. Sometime over the next few weeks I will convene the committee to explore voucher needs and options. The lucky committee members are Bruce Weisman, Audrey Barnhart, Ruthann Knudson, Carmen Blausey, Eddie Childers, and Valerie Naylor. Thanks.