

# Department of the Interior

## Departmental Manual

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**Effective Date:** 8/11/04

**Series:** Organization

**Part 145:** National Park Service

**Chapter 6:** Associate Director for Natural Resource Stewardship and Science

**Originating Office:** National Park Service

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### 145 DM 6

**6.1 Associate Director, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science.** This Associate Director develops, disseminates, and utilizes the tools of natural and social science to enable the National Park Service to fulfill its core mission: the protection of park resources and values. This directorate provides leadership, expertise, and scientific support such that the natural resources of the National Park System are unimpaired for future generations. In addition, the Associate Director coordinates and oversees policy, guidance, and planning for all natural resource and science-related issues, manages the National Natural Landmark program, and coordinates and supports Service participation in the international Man and the Biosphere program and the interagency Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit network. Major units within the directorate include the following:

A. Social Science Program Office. This office conducts and promotes state-of-the-art social science research related to the NPS mission, including surveys of visitor enjoyment and understanding; administers a program of competitive research grants for high priority national needs; oversees the Urban Recreation Research Center; provides research and technical assistance to park and program managers, the scientific community, and the public related to social sciences; and supports the acquisition of public use statistics for the National Park System.

B. Natural Resource Program Center. This national program center assists field units in protecting park natural resources, both directly and through interagency and partnership stewardship efforts.

(1) Air Resources Division. In partnership with parks, the Air Resources Division works to preserve, protect, enhance, and understand air quality, resources sensitive to air quality, and natural sound conditions in the National Park System. Through monitoring air quality, including visibility, studying its effects on park resources and values, modeling, and reviewing permit applications for proposed emission sources, the division works to protect park resources from visibility impairment and such pollutants as sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and ozone. The division also formulates policy for protecting park air quality and works with States and other federal agencies on plans and legislation related to improving air quality in national parks and ensuring compliance with the requirements of applicable federal laws. The division also formulates policy and guidance to protect and restore natural sound conditions in parks and

provides assistance to parks with planning for sound conditions, including air tour management plans.

(2) Biological Resources Management Division. This division develops policy and program guidance to preserve, protect, and manage biological resources and related ecosystem processes in the National Park System in partnership with parks and others. It helps identify investigations, techniques, and tools necessary to manage biological resources in parks, develops ecosystem management and restoration strategies, including the control of plant and animal invasive species in parks, and funds and oversees exotic plant management teams in national parks. It provides technical assistance and other services to address animal health, integrated pest management, and federally listed threatened and endangered species managed in parks.

(3) Water Resources Division. This division develops policy and program guidance and provides direct services to preserve, protect, and manage water and aquatic resources in national parks. It focuses on water quantity, water quality, water rights, wetland and floodplain protection, aquatic biological resource management, and water resources planning. It works with parks to assess water resource conditions, reduce contaminants and potential contamination, establish protection for sufficient water quantities to meet park and visitor needs, protect endangered aquatic species and wetlands, manage fisheries, and develop sound water resources management plans.

(4) Geologic Resources Division. This division provides policy, program guidance, and technical assistance to park units to protect, preserve, and understand the geologic resources in national parks and to protect park resources and values from incompatible mineral development in and adjacent to parks. It assists parks with geologic and related technical information, evaluates the technical adequacy of proposed mining plans, assists in the restoration of disturbed lands, and provides assistance using regulatory and other tools and specialized services to effectively manage park geologic and mineral resources.

(5) Environmental Quality Division. This division works with parks and others to ensure that National Park Service activities are consistent with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and to restore park resources that have been damaged by certain types of human activity. Its restoration activities under the National Park System Resources Protection Act and other statutes include developing policies, guidance, and training; carrying out damage assessments; recovering damages from responsible parties; and assisting with restoration plans. Its NEPA-related activities include developing policies, guidance and training, working with outside agencies and organizations on environmental planning activities, providing related technical assistance, and coordinating National Park Service reviews of other agencies' environmental documents.

(6) Natural Resources Information Division. This division develops policy and program guidance on acquiring and disseminating natural resources information concerning parks. It oversees and provides technical assistance and support for the inventory and monitoring of natural resources in parks, as well as directly acquiring inventory data. It also supports natural resource databases and information systems for National Parks. It assists in distributing usable knowledge on natural resources to parks and the general public, developing

and implementing appropriate communication methods and media for the public, educators, park visitors, and other stakeholders, including supporting Internet-based information services addressing park natural resources.

8/11/04 #3646

Replaces 10/1/02 #3531