

Department of the Interior

Departmental Manual

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Part 145: National Park Service

Chapter 6: Associate Director, Natural Resources Stewardship and Science

Originating Office: National Park Service

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6.1 Associate Director, Natural Resources Stewardship and Science.

This associate director develops servicewide policies, national level guidance, and direction for the protection and enhancement of natural resources and related values of park units; fosters NPS cooperation with public and private entities in conservation planning and the management of park natural resources in a broad, ecosystem and landscape context; and provides servicewide program development, technical assistance, and leadership in the natural resources management and the use of science. This associate director also ensures that senior National Park Service management has readily accessible advice from top-level scientists who understand the Service's mission. To this end, this associate director utilizes visiting chief scientists in the natural and social sciences who provide scientific advice and manage relevant programs and projects in the natural and social sciences. The associate director also coordinates National Park Service participation in the interagency Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units network.

A. Deputy Associate Director. This office supervises the Natural Resource Program Coordination Office and the Natural Resource Program Center. This deputy also supervises staff in the Associate Director's office in formulating and distributing policies related to natural resources, supporting Man and the Biosphere and the National Natural Landmark programs, and undertaking other policy and program-related activities that affect multiple natural and social science disciplines.

B. Natural Resource Program Coordination Office. This office provides administrative support to the Natural Resources Stewardship and Science programs stationed in Washington, DC. It coordinates information, evaluations, and other activities with servicewide offices.

C. National Natural Resources Program Center. This national program center is located in Denver and Fort Collins, CO, and Washington, DC. It provides support for natural resources programs. It assists field units in protecting National Park System resources and with interagency and partnership stewardship efforts.

(1) Air Resources Division. This division, in partnership with parks and others, works to preserve, protect, enhance, and understand air quality and other resources sensitive to air quality in the National Park System. These resources include visibility and all resources dependent upon and affected by air quality. This division provides air resource management, policy, technical, planning, and operational support and research assistance to parks and conducts legislative, regulatory, and environmental reviews related to air quality. It assists the field in air quality management activities.

(2) Environmental Quality Division. This division coordinates activities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other related environmental mandates, in cooperation with other divisions having specific responsibilities related to environmental mandates. It develops guidelines and provides training for environmental impact assessment requirements in servicewide resource management, planning and decision making processes and for preparation of conservation planning and impact assessment documents, impact mitigation, and public involvement strategies. This division provides a central point of contact for evaluation and participation in the environmental documents and related activities of other state, local and federal agencies that may impact on areas under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service or in areas of special expertise within the NPS. This Division is also responsible for policy development and recovery of costs and monetary damage awards under CERCLA, the FWPCA, the Oil Pollution Act and the National Park System Resource Protection Act and for restoration activities undertaken as a result of recoveries under those acts. It also provides training and advice in the implementation of Section 2402 of the Energy Policy Act concerning hydroelectric projects within NPS units and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licensing activities within NPS units.

(3) Water Resources Division. This division is responsible for the preservation and protection of National Park Service water resources and water dependent environments through a watershed management program. It provides water resource management policy, planning, and operational support to Service personnel. It formulates water resources policy recommendations and conducts legislative, regulatory, and environmental reviews related to water resource protection. It assists the field in water resources activities.

(4) Geologic Resources Division. This division in partnership with parks and others, works to protect, preserve and understand the geologic resources and processes of the National Park System and to protect park resources from incompatible mineral development in and adjacent to parks. It formulates policy recommendations, regulations, guidance and legislative proposals related to geologic resources and minerals management. It assists park personnel in assessing needs, impact mitigation, engineering services, interpretation, research, planning and policy and

regulatory application relating to geologic processes, issues and activities. This division also provides technical and financial assistance to parks in restoring disturbed lands and is responsible for program guidance and oversight in the area of minerals management.

This division represents the NPS on Departmental mining claim validity issues.

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(5) Natural Resource Information Division. This division is responsible for policies, guidance and planning, for natural resources inventory and monitoring programs throughout the Service, as well as for directly acquiring 12 basic natural resource data sets and for prototype monitoring programs in selected parks. It also maintains and analyzes servicewide data bases for critical crosscutting natural resource and programmatic data. It transfers technical information about natural resources and natural resource programs to other users in NPS and to interested portions of the public. It maintains a program to assess and report on the condition of natural resources in parks, based on monitoring data.

(6) Biological Resources Management Division. This division provides policy, planning, and operational support to Service personnel concerning the management of native vegetation and wildlife resources, the control of nonnative species, and the biological restoration of disturbed ecosystems. It formulates biological resource policy recommendations and conducts legislative, regulatory, and environmental reviews related to biological resource protection. It assists the field in vegetation and wildlife resource management activities.

D. Social Science Program. This program is focused on understanding the relationship between people and parks to protect resources and to provide for the public's enjoyment of America's national parks. Using NPS staff and university personnel through cooperative agreements, this program identifies the social science needs of parks and National Park Service programs; conducts and sponsors social science research using universities and other means; oversees an urban-focused research program; administers the Visitor Services Project, which conducts detailed visitor studies, as well as customer service for the National Park Service; and provides technical assistance to parks, regions, and senior management of the National Park Service.

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