Data Management

Introduction

Managing natural resource data involves many steps including collecting, entering, reviewing, archiving, protecting, and integration. Data management is a continual cycle of adding, editing and updating as new data is collected and computer software and hardware advance. A mixture of local and Service- wide data management tools and applications are used to keep the databases current, useful and usable by NPS personnel, their cooperators and the general public.

The current goal is to move data into an integrated database as much as possible to take full advantage current relational database designs. The centralized database with its established relationships would be available to users to explore and utilize for cross- discipline summaries and geographic information system (GIS) applications.

There are many aspects to data management.

Management Needs

Knowing that there is usable data available is the first step in being able to use it to help make decisions. Typically raw data will be summarized by a program specialist into reports that can be used to help make decisions. The natural resource program also works continually with other user groups in the park to help integrate current summarized data and new information into park publications, programs, and procedures.

Accomplishments

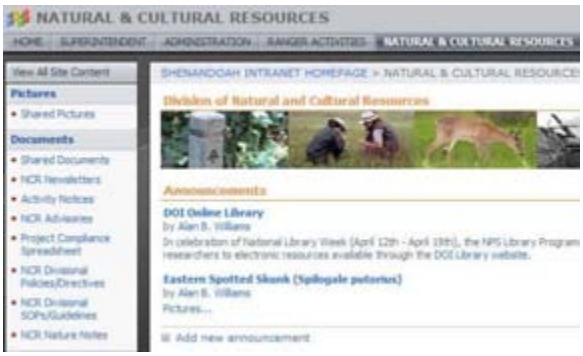
Currently about 95% of the monitoring data has been converted from historical sources and placed into individual Microsoft Access databases with consistent design and naming schemes. Customized "Front- end Applications" are being developed to meet the needs of each program individually, with data entry, summary reports, and data checking. A consistent "look and feel" is being applied to this conversion to facilitate planned integration of related program elements. Related spatial data is reviewed in consultation with the park- wide GIS specialist to confirm compatibility and to plan for eventual linkages. This process is ongoing and is being carried out by the current data manager in close consultation with the program managers.

Service- wide applications such as NPSpecies, NatureBib, and DataSet Catalog are populated and used for managing their particular portions of the data. These online tools will also be used to facilitate standardized public access to park data.

A tool for managing natural resource related projects is being developed that will track and link the many different pieces of data and products produced during a project.

A number of searchable web databases have been developed to help share information more easily with park staff:
• A SharePoint site for managing calendars, shared documents, and useful links is being developed for staff use.
• A digital photo library as been developed to centralize and make available good photos for staff to use in presentations and publications.
• A tool for tracking "safety meetings" is on the park intranet to allow workgroups to keep track of meetings to help comply with annual safety meeting / briefing requirements.

The skills and resources in this program have also been put to use on a number of other projects outside of the natural resource program area including: fire risk assessments, maintenance assets inventory and interpretation survey/comment databases.



Natural and Cultural Resource SharePoint portal.