

Meetings of Interest

2006

Oct. 28–31 As an educational institution, the National Park Service has innumerable opportunities to share with park visitors the results of research and its application to park management. One avenue is through the network of research learning centers that serves national parks across the nation. The annual conference of the Association of Science-Technology Centers in Louisville, Kentucky, may provide insights into this important role. Titled “Appropriate Growth: Sustaining Institutional Advancement,” the gathering will explore how educational organizations dedicated to furthering public understanding of science plan for and manage institutional advancement. “A science center that is engaged in appropriate growth has a strong mission and vision, is keenly aware of its strengths and weaknesses, is highly creative, makes good choices, is engaged with its community, and can readily adapt to a rapidly changing local and global environment,” according to the conference Web site (<http://www.astc.org/conference/index.htm>). Conference sessions will explore selecting appropriate learning strategies for science education, developing one’s audience, choosing relevant science and research topics to develop into educational messages, the use of technology, and taking science centers to the next level.

Nov. 28–30 Concerned about declining water quality and quantity, expanding population centers, invasions of nonnative species, altered fire regimes, and various human uses of the land, researchers and land managers from multiple agencies and institutions are sponsoring the “Workshop on Collaborative Watershed Management and Research in the Great Basin,” in Reno, Nevada. The intent of the gathering is to expand opportunities for researchers and land managers to be more collaborative and efficient in developing solutions to critical ecological and socioeconomic issues affecting the region. They hope to build on the rich legacy of collaborative work already begun, identifying new issues and associated research needs, and developing mechanisms to improve coordination of management and research activities through a collaborative approach. The workshop Web site (<http://www.cabnr.unr.edu/GreatBasinWatershed/>) shares additional information.

2007

Apr. 16–20 The George Wright Society is gearing up for a thought-provoking week of resource management-related discussions at its biennial conference on parks, protected areas, and cultural sites to be held in St. Paul, Minnesota. Titled “Rethinking Protected Areas in a Changing World,” the conference will feature six plenary sessions, more than 100 concurrent sessions, an expanded three-day poster session, field trips, and numerous other special events. Though “change” is a common theme in the lives of park and protected area managers, this conference will highlight the scope and speed of changes in social, political, and economic systems and how they interrelate to transform natural systems. Among the topics to be explored are global climate change, effects of globalization, shifting demographics among park users, incorporating various perspectives into heritage interpretation, erosion of biodiversity, park operations in a time of heightened national security, the decline in historical literacy, and deepening the intellectual engagement of park visitors. For those who cannot attend, proceedings of the conference will be published. Student travel scholarships are offered by the society to encourage greater diversity in the conference and related conservation professions (the application deadline is 10 November 2006). The conference Web site (<http://www.georgewright.org/2007.htm>) shares more details of the coming event.

Aug. 5–10 The Ecological Society of America (ESA) and the Society for Ecological Restoration International (SER) are planning their biennial joint meeting, “Ecology-based Restoration in a Changing World,” to be held in San Jose, California. Symposia will encompass setting goals for ecological restoration and measuring its success. As the ESA Web site (<http://www.esa.org/sanjose/>) explains, paleoecology, long-term studies, and ecological modeling call attention to the fundamentally dynamic nature of ecological systems, which can make predicting change difficult. Baselines are not easily defined and the effects of climate change and human land use further complicate the matter. Conference organizers stress that more sophisticated consideration of the goals and standards of restoration are needed. The meeting will delve into the issues of identifying ecosystem attributes to be restored and conserved, the role of research in setting these priorities, and assessing the effectiveness of restoration. Additional information is available at the SER Web site (<http://www.ser.org/events.asp>). 

