

Profile



Associate Director Mike Soukup with his wife and children.

NPS/RICK LEWIS

Legacy of an intellectual leader

By the editor

After serving for 12 years as associate director of Natural Resource Stewardship and Science, Mike Soukup retired from the National Park Service in November 2007. During his tenure he led the National Park Service through a period of tremendous growth in its applied science programs. Through the Natural Resource Challenge initiative he helped obtain broad support and funding for the addition of important scientific capabilities. This included building a national network for inventory and monitoring that is fundamental to understanding the condition of park resources. His involvement in a wide variety of management issues has helped the National Park Service become a leader in conservation science. He argued persuasively for science as the basis for sound park management decisions, and engaged

world-class scientists and NPS managers in the discussion of advancing National Park Service science in the 21st century. To help park managers meet their research needs and to increase the use of parks for general research, he nurtured an atmosphere of partnership with the academic community. Through a prestigious awards program, he celebrated the excellent work of staff and colleagues and recognized their achievements. Though realistic in his approach to science administration, Mike also is a visionary. His many speeches and articles often articulated the concept of a National Park Service with the responsibility of educating the citizens of this country about living compatibly with nature. His energetic, approachable, and cosmopolitan manner engendered support of the National Park Service and the professional care of the national parks.