

# At Your Service

## The collaborative nature of soundscapes research and management

By Lelaina Marin, Peter Newman, and Jeff Selleck

### THE NATURAL SOUNDS PROGRAM

Office, located in Fort Collins, Colorado, is part of the National Park Service's (NPS) Natural Resource Stewardship and Science Division. The program, which resides within the Natural Resource Program Center's Air Resources Division, was established in 2000 to help parks manage the acoustic environment in a way that protects park resources while providing for educational and inspirational visitor experiences. The Natural Sounds Program addresses sound-related matters raised by Congress, NPS management policies, and NPS director's orders. The general mission of the program is to protect, maintain, and restore acoustical environments throughout the National Park System by working in partnership with parks and others to increase scientific understanding and public appreciation of the value of soundscapes.

The program provides technical services to parks in the form of recreational planning assistance, acoustic monitoring, data collection and analysis, describing acoustic conditions, a military liaison, outreach and education, and research projects in areas of acoustics and social science. Program planners assist parks in the development of air tour management plans (working jointly with the Federal Aviation Administration), soundscape management plans, general management plans, wilderness plans, transportation plans, and visitor use plans. Planners also help parks plan for and manage specific noise source concerns. Acoustic specialists and technicians on staff help with acoustic monitoring, data analysis, instrument development, wildlife acoustics, and perceptual acoustics. The program's military liaison works with parks to mitigate impacts from military overflights. Parks can report



**Staff of the Natural Sounds Program. Top row: Chad Moore (Night Skies Program), Randy Stanley, Frank Turina, Lelaina Marin, Kurt Frstrup, Dave Stack. Bottom row: Karen Treviño, Ericka Pilcher, Emma Lynch, Charlotte Formichella, Damon Joyce, Vicki McCusker.**

military overflight concerns to the program liaison, who will contact the military to try to rectify the issue. Outreach and education efforts include development of outreach materials, guidance for interpretive programs, and Web site design. In addition, the Natural Sounds Program works in cooperation with various universities (e.g., Colorado State University, University of Vermont, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, University of Montana, and Southern Utah University) to complete both wildlife and social science research focusing on the acoustic environment.

Colorado State University (CSU) and the NPS Natural Sounds Program have a special relationship based on their cooperative research agreement and proximal location to each other in Fort Collins. This partnership has helped shape a research agenda and bring it to the forefront in addressing park management issues related to wildlife, social psychology, and visitor

management. Faculty from the Warner College of Natural Resources and the Department of Psychology at CSU have written several peer-reviewed journal articles and produced master's students who have gone on to work for or in partnership with the National Park Service (table 1, next page). The vibrance of this partnership is evident in the number and variety of staff and faculty with the National Park Service, Colorado State University, and other universities responsible for the content of this special edition of *Park Science* (table 1, next page).

If you are interested in receiving assistance from the Natural Sounds Program please submit a technical assistance request (TAR) through the annual technical assistance call (contact your region for deadlines). Projects can also be submitted throughout the year by using <http://nrpcstar>.

**Table 1. Contributors to the *Park Science* issue on soundscapes management**

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