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National Park Service

News Release

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National Park Service Releases Final Decision On Benefits-Sharing

WASHINGTON - The National Park Service (NPS) has finalized a plan which allows the public to receive some benefits from commercial products or services arising from research originally conducted on public lands.

This Record of Decision (ROD), recently signed by NPS Director Jon Jarvis, implements elements of the Benefits Sharing Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which was released in late 2009.

This decision does not change the existing strict NPS research permit process, which remain separate from any benefits-sharing negotiations. The commercial use or sale of park specimens is still prohibited, as is damage to or the consumptive use of park resources.

Regulations continue to prohibit issuing permits for activities that would adversely affect, impact, or damage public health and safety, visitor use activities, proper use of NPS facilities, scientific research, environmental or scenic values, or a park's natural or cultural resources. Typically, very small amounts of natural materials are removed under a research permit for study under laboratory conditions.

“Implementing these changes is not about commercializing the parks,” said NPS Director Jarvis. “This decision is about the public receiving some benefit from commercial projects that result from analysis of samples collected in national parks.”

Under this decision, parks could negotiate for monetary or non-monetary benefits with researchers who wish to commercialize results of research originally conducted in the park. Any compensation received under such agreements will be dedicated to the conservation of resources protected and managed by the National Park Service. Typically, negotiations will not occur until after research has already been conducted.

Approximately 270 national park sites issue research permits under current policies and procedures. Only a small portion of NPS sites and research permittees are expected to be affected by benefits-sharing.

The Final EIS and ROD are both available online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov> by selecting the “Washington Office”. They are also available on CD or in hard copy by writing the Benefits Sharing Team, Yellowstone Center for Resources, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming 82190.

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