

## Crossing boundaries in park management: conference opening remarks

Bob Krumenaker, Valley Forge National Historical Park, P.O. Box 953, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania 19482-0953; bob\_krumenaker@nps.gov

Welcome to the biennial conference of the George Wright Society, the 11th Conference on Research and Resource Management in Parks and Public Lands. The George Wright Society has been the sponsor and principal organizer since the third conference. I'm Bob Krumenaker, president of the George Wright Society.

I would like to express my appreciation to the conference co-sponsors, the natural resources and cultural resources directorates of the National Park Service (NPS)—thanks, Mike Soukup and Kate Stevenson—and the U.S. Geological Survey Biological Resources Division (USGS-BRD)—thank you, Denny Fenn. Also to Eastern National (thank you, Chesley Moroz), who is also providing financial support, and the many volunteers from the Denver area, local NPS areas, and beyond, who will be working behind the scenes.

This conference has evolved in a remarkable way since the early days.

In its early years, this was primarily a meeting of National Park Service natural resource specialists and research scientists, who put aside their own squabbling every two years to get together in search of common ground. While they disagreed on many things, the scientists and resource specialists could agree on one thing: if only park managers (those people) would listen to them, things would be different.

Now, however, this has become the pre-eminent meeting of not just those interested in park-related natural resource issues, but also cultural resource professionals, superintendents, and other managers. It is widely regarded as the place to put forth and debate ideas about how to most effectively protect parks and other protected areas, using the best science and scholarship. The presence of park managers as well as the specialists makes this a meeting where common ground is about we, not about them.

I want to share a little about the Society, something we have not talked much about in these conferences in the past.

As the conference has evolved, so has the George Wright Society, to be widely and internationally recognized as the most important organization of park and protected area professionals of all disciplines. Our niche is to bring people together, to foster the network of people and the places we care about so deeply.

We organize this conference, we publish The George Wright Forum, and in the last year have branched out to provide conference-organizing services to the NPS and other agencies. Our membership consists primarily of NPS and BRD professionals, academics, and a small number of folks of similar interests from other U.S. and international agencies and organizations.

I'd like to ask all those of you who support this idea of exchanging the best ideas on park research and resource management, to stand. Congratulate each other: what you do and what you believe in, is a high and honorable calling. Please stay standing.

Those of you who are members of the George Wright Society, please remain on your feet. There are 722 of you around the world, a good percentage in this room. On behalf of the Society, I thank you. And I ask that those of you who join every other year in order to lower the price of your conference registration to now consider re-upping in non-conference years. The rest of you, I invite you to join these outstanding people and this organization. You clearly support its goals, or you would not be here. If you want to see these gatherings and the work of this organization

continue, we ask for your membership in addition to your participation in our conferences. (It does take money to do all this good work, so your membership helps.) You can sit now.

Members get to determine the direction of the organization and help assure the future relevance, and hopefully success, of our collective goals. Members, of course, vote for the Board, and are encouraged to run for the Board, and be part of the leadership team.

To extend a welcome on behalf of the co-sponsoring agencies, I am delighted first to introduce Karen Wade, NPS Intermountain regional director and a great supporter of the GWS and exemplary park resource management. [Karen Wade spoke briefly.]

Now I'm pleased to introduce Denny Fenn, chief biologist of the USGS-BRD, former NPS scientist and natural resource program manager at the highest levels, board member of the GWS, and member of the conference committee. [Denny Fenn spoke briefly.]

Finally, to introduce our opening plenary speaker, Nora Mitchell, director of the NPS Conservation Study Institute and also a member of the conference committee. [Nora Mitchell introduced David Lowenthal, geographer, historian, and biographer of George Perkins Marsh, who gave the opening plenary address: "Repair the past, reform the future: the watershed stewardship of George Perkins Marsh."]