United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Performance and Accountability Series

January 2001

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks

Department of the Interior

GAO

Accountability * Integrity * Reliability

GAO-01-249

Contents

Letter 3

Overview 6

Major Performance and Accountability Issues 12

Related GAO Products 42

Performance and Accountability Series 46

GAO
Accountability * Integrity * Reliability

Comptroller General
of the United States

United States General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

January 2001

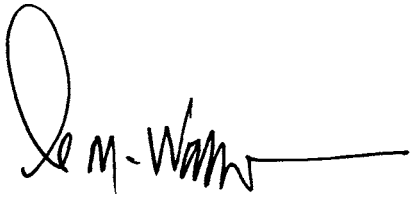
The President of the Senate
The Speaker of the House of Representatives

This report addresses the major performance and accountability challenges facing the Department of the Interior as it seeks to strike a balance between its two basic mandates—to protect and preserve the nation's resources for the benefit of future generations while at the same time accommodating demands for their greater use and consumption. It includes a summary of actions that Interior has taken and that are under way to address these challenges. It also outlines further actions that GAO believes are needed. This analysis should help the new Congress and administration carry out their responsibilities and improve government for the benefit of the American people.

This report is part of a special series, first issued in January 1999, entitled the *Performance and Accountability Series: Major Management Challenges and Program Risks*. In that series, GAO advised the Congress that it planned to reassess the methodologies and criteria used to determine which federal government operations and functions should be highlighted and which should be designated as "high risk." GAO completed the assessment, considered comments provided on a publicly available exposure draft, and published its guidance document, *Determining Performance and Accountability Challenges and High Risks* (GAO-01-159SP), in November 2000.

This 2001 *Performance and Accountability Series* contains separate reports on 21 agencies—covering each cabinet department, most major independent

agencies, and the U.S. Postal Service. The series also includes a governmentwide perspective on performance and management challenges across the federal government. As a companion volume to this series, GAO is issuing an update on those government operations and programs that its work identified as "high risk" because of either their greater vulnerabilities to waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement or major challenges associated with their economy, efficiency, or effectiveness.

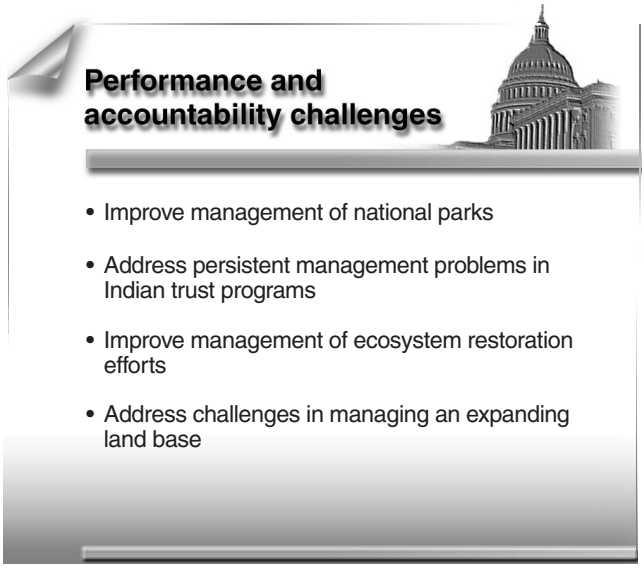


David M. Walker
Comptroller General
of the United States

Overview

The Department of the Interior has jurisdiction over about 450 million acres of land—about one-fifth of the total U.S. landmass—and about 1.5 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf. As the guardian of these resources, the Department is entrusted to preserve the nation's most awe-inspiring landscapes, such as the wild beauty of the Grand Canyon, Yosemite, and Denali national parks; our most historic places, like Independence Hall and the Gettysburg battlefield; and such revered national icons as the Statue of Liberty and the Washington Monument. At the same time, Interior is to provide for the environmentally sound production of oil, gas, minerals, and other resources found on the nation's public lands; honor the nation's obligations to American Indians and native Alaskans; protect habitat to sustain fish and wildlife; help manage water resources in the western states; and provide scientific and technical information to allow for sound decision-making about resources. In recent years, the Congress has appropriated about $7 billion to $8 billion annually to meet these responsibilities. With these resources, Interior employs about 66,000 people in eight major agencies and bureaus at over 4,000 sites around the country.

Interior's management of this vast federal estate is largely characterized by the struggle to balance the demand for greater use of its resources with the need to conserve and protect them for the benefit of future generations. GAO and others have identified management problems facing the Department and have made many recommendations to improve its agencies and programs. In some cases, Interior has made significant improvements; in others, progress has been slow. As a result, several major performance and accountability challenges remain.



The National Park Service

The National Park Service, with almost 300 million visitors to its national park system annually, provides the public with some of the best recreational opportunities in the country. In recent years, as demands for its services have increased, so have the budgets of the Park Service and the number of units in the national park system. Among other things, these trends have placed new strains on the National Park Service's ability to meet visitors' recreational needs in a safe and enjoyable manner while simultaneously protecting, preserving, and maintaining the natural, cultural, and historic treasures in its care.

The Park Service acknowledges its shortcomings in many areas and has taken steps to adopt fresh approaches to address its considerable needs. Our work, however, has shown that these efforts have fallen short in several significant areas. First, the Service must place a higher priority on collecting more comprehensive

scientific information on the condition of the resources in its care to ensure that its planning and funding processes focus on the most pressing needs. Second, the Service needs to gather more accurate data on its backlog of maintenance problems to better set priorities for projects and to budget accordingly. Third, it should improve park managers' accountability for achieving results. Current Park Service policy allows individual park managers to determine whether their priorities and budgets are consistent with overall departmental and agency priorities and goals. Fourth, the Service needs to address persistent management problems in its concessions program. Specifically, the Service needs to ensure that concession specialists and contracting staff are adequately qualified and trained and should discontinue its use of outdated practices to manage its chronic backlog of expired contracts.

Finally, the Service needs to better manage its structural fire safety program for the over 30,000 structures under its responsibility. The Service should, at a minimum, perform risk assessments at each unit within the park system, develop plans to correct identified needs, and ensure that all new construction complies with generally accepted fire codes. Whereas visitor and employee safety remains a high priority within the Department and the Service, park managers have yet to emphasize this program in their operating and budget priorities.

Indian Trust Programs

Although the Department of the Interior manages over $3 billion in Indian trust funds and over $1.8 billion in budgeted resources for tribes, it cannot assure trust account holders that their balances are accurate or that their assets are being properly managed. In our last report on the Department's management challenges, we demonstrated that problems continue to plague the trust fund program despite recent improvements. Our work has shown that the Department needs to continue updating its trust fund management information systems

and to ensure the accuracy of its trust fund records by correcting thousands of inaccurate, incomplete, or outdated entries.

In addition, the Department continues to struggle with budget formulation problems impeding tribal self-determination policy—a national policy providing for tribal participation in and management of federal Indian programs. Specifically, the Bureau of Indian Affairs—the primary federal agency charged with providing tribal services—needs to target future budget increases to tribes to ensure that the hundreds of millions of dollars allocated directly to them meets their most pressing needs. Furthermore, the Department and the Bureau need to work with the Congress to find ways to alleviate budget shortfalls in tribal self-determination contracts. According to tribes, these shortfalls in contract support costs limit their ability to contract for and manage their programs.

Ecosystem Restoration

Management problems hinder the Department's ability to effectively direct its efforts to maintain healthy natural systems. These efforts range from restoring significant ecosystems, such as the Florida Everglades, to managing the use of fire to reduce the accumulation of hazardous fuels, such as small trees and underbrush in forested ecosystems. These ecosystem management projects, which focus on ecological, scientific, economic, and social factors that extend beyond the administrative jurisdiction of Department agencies, require collaboration with outside entities, such as other federal agencies, states, and private landowners.

Our past work found that the Department needs to take several actions to improve its ability to manage these efforts. First, the Department needs to work with outside entities to develop plans and strategies that will achieve restoration and management goals. Second, the Department needs to improve its coordination with the

multiple entities involved in these efforts by ensuring coordination procedures are in place and that a means to resolve conflicts exists. Lastly, to prepare for the expected attrition of its most experienced personnel, the Department needs to develop a succession plan for replacing the individuals who currently manage and suppress fire outbreaks on federal lands.

Land Exchanges

The Department oversees transactions to exchange, acquire, or dispose of lands in the federal land base. It now manages about 450 million acres of federal lands reserved for such purposes as parks, wildlife refuges, recreational areas, forests, and historical and cultural sites. The Department currently does not list the sound management of its land transactions as a strategic or a performance goal. However, the number of land transactions has the potential to increase dramatically, particularly under the Department's new Lands Legacy Initiative and the recently passed Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act. We believe that as the number of transactions increases, the Department's efforts to manage these transactions will become more challenging.

In the last year, our work has shown that the Department, particularly the Bureau of Land Management, needs to better demonstrate (1) that the land exchange is necessary and (2) that exchanged lands are of approximately equal value. If these conditions cannot be met, the Congress should consider discontinuing the program. Additionally, the Bureau needs to guarantee that funds used in the exchange transactions are properly managed and controlled. Finally, the Department should highlight the need for increased funding to operate and maintain newly acquired lands when reporting its budget to the Congress.

Follow-Through Needed

Interior has acknowledged the need to address many of these challenges, and for the most part, has begun taking steps to rectify these shortcomings. To meet its management challenges the Department and its agencies need to make fundamental improvements in areas such as strategic planning, human capital, organizational alignment and control, and financial management and internal controls. Actions already taken by the Department to meet the Government Performance and Results Act will move the Department and its agencies in the right direction. However, much remains to be done, such as completing financial and information systems for Indian trust funds, for park resources, and for operation and maintenance costs for acquired lands. It is still too early to determine if some corrective actions that the Department has undertaken will be effective.

In order to ensure that Interior follows through on its efforts to deal with the major performance and management challenges that we and others have identified, the Congress needs to monitor the Department's progress by reviewing the Department's and agencies' annual performance plans and reports. In some instances, such as the need to improve accounting for Indian trust funds, management problems are long-standing, and will take several years to improve. In other cases, such as problems with ensuring the value of federal lands exchanged, the Congress may need to pursue legislative remedies, such as providing alternative means of federal land disposal or prohibiting lands exchanges outright.

Major Performance and Accountability Issues

As caretaker of the nation's most precious natural and cultural treasures and steward of trust responsibilities to American Indians and native Alaskans, the Department of the Interior helps define the nature and spirit of our common national heritage. In this capacity, Interior's programs and activities affect the lives of Americans and the world community in many ways. The public lands, parks, and waterways under Interior's jurisdiction provide recreational opportunities for over 400 million visitors annually. Commodities such as oil, natural gas, minerals, and timber—with a combined market value of over $20 billion—are extracted from land and water resources under the Department's purview each year. In addition, Interior provides educational, social, and other services to more than 550 Indian tribes.

The overarching management challenge that faces Interior is the constant need to maintain a balance between its two basic mandates—to protect and conserve resources for the benefit of future generations while at the same time accommodating the demands for their greater use and consumption. To fulfill its basic mandates, the Department has developed strategic goals that include protecting the environment and preserving our nation's natural and cultural resources; providing recreation opportunities for America; managing natural resources for a healthy environment and strong economy; and meeting trust responsibilities to Indian tribes and commitments to island communities.

Each year, the Department establishes performance plans to achieve these strategic goals and associated long-term goals. In recent years, our work has identified a number of management challenges facing Interior that limit its progress in achieving these goals. Many of these challenges are the result of Interior's agencies trying to manage the difficult trade-offs inherent in achieving its two basic mandates. However, in today's climate of smaller federal government, the need to reexamine past

approaches to help achieve increased effectiveness and efficiency is imperative. We have made a number of recommendations to Interior on how to better accomplish its goals in this climate.

Improve Management of National Parks

The Department, and specifically the National Park Service, has strategic goals to protect and preserve the natural, historic, and cultural resources entrusted to its care while providing the public safe and enjoyable visits. However, the Park Service continues to face several significant management challenges, and we have recommended that it take the following actions in order to achieve these goals:

- First, it should give higher priority to collecting better scientific information on the condition of its resources to ensure that its planning and funding processes address the most pressing needs.
- Second, the Service needs to obtain more accurate data on its backlog of maintenance problems to better set priorities for projects and to budget accordingly.
- Third, it should improve park managers' accountability for achieving results. This is especially important for the Park Service, which lets individual park managers determine local priorities and budgets that may or may not be consistent with overall departmental and agency priorities and goals.
- Fourth, the Service needs to address persistent management problems in its concessions program. Agency concession specialists and contracting staff are not adequately qualified and trained, and the Service still uses outdated practices to handle its chronic backlog of expired contracts.
- Finally, the Service needs to better manage its structural fire safety program for the over 30,000 structures in its care, including hotels, motels, cabins, visitor centers, and historic buildings.

Although visitor and employee safety remains a high priority within the Department and the Service, park managers have not emphasized this program enough in their operating and budget priorities.

The Park Service has made progress in addressing each of these management challenges, but, as discussed below, more remains to be done.

Park Service Does Not Know Condition of Many Resources

A fundamental part of the Park Service's mission is to be the caretaker of many of this nation's most precious natural and cultural resources, ranging from the fragile ecosystems of Arches National Park in Utah, to the historic structures of Philadelphia's Independence Hall, to the granite faces of Mount Rushmore in South Dakota. Although the Park Service acknowledges, and its policies emphasize, the importance of managing parks on the basis of sound scientific information about resources, such information management is seriously deficient. Frequently, baseline information about natural and cultural resources is incomplete or nonexistent, making it difficult for park managers to clearly ascertain the condition of resources and whether resources are deteriorating, improving, or staying the same. At the same time, many park resources face significant threats, including air pollution, vandalism, and nearby land development. However, even when these threats are known, the Park Service has limited scientific knowledge about their severity and possible impact on affected resources. For example, as figure 1 shows, while the Ellis Island immigration hall has been beautifully restored, other structures on the island have deteriorated and are in serious need of repair.

Figure 1: Some Park Service Resources Like Those on Ellis Island, New York, Remain in Need of Repair

The Immigration Museum is one of a few buildings that has been beautifully restored.

About 20 other structures, however, remain in seriously deteriorated condition.

Some artifacts are stored in rooms that have leaking roofs and peeling walls.

Source: GAO photographs

To reduce threats to park resources, we have recommended, among other things, that the Park Service identify the number, types, and sources of threats; set priorities and develop action plans to

mitigate these threats; and monitor the results of these actions and revise them as needed.

According to the Park Service, initial steps have been taken to improve the situation. Specifically, in fiscal year 2000, the Congress increased funding for the Service's Natural Resources Inventory and Monitoring Program by $8 million, to a level sufficient to fully fund all basic natural resource inventories. In addition, in fiscal year 2001, a $1.75 million increase for vegetation mapping more than doubles the Service's capacity to produce these vital inventories. The Service also received $4.2 million to establish the initial phase of a vital signs monitoring program in parks with extensive natural resources. The Park Service has also noted improvement in its efforts to catalogue cultural specimens and has begun efforts to preserve prehistoric and historic desert sites.

Undoubtedly, additional progress in improving the scientific knowledge base about park resources will be costly. Dealing with this challenge will require the Park Service, the administration, and the Congress to make difficult choices about how parks are managed and how budgets are formulated. However, unless it acquires better information on the condition of its assets, the Park Service will continue to face difficulties in its efforts to (1) shift existing resources among competing priorities to accomplish its goals and objectives; (2) rank priorities so that the most pressing issues receive the most attention; (3) link the planning process directly to budget decisions to have a greater impact on the allocation of new limited resources; and (4) measure program results aimed at preserving and protecting the resources entrusted to it.

Park Service Does Not Know Extent of Maintenance Problems

Interior also needs to safeguard its key resources. Currently, the Park Service maintains 16,000 permanent structures, 8,000 miles of roads, 1,500 bridges, 5,385 housing units, about 1,500 water and wastewater systems, 200 radio systems, more than 400 dams, and more than 200 solid waste operations. These facilities include numerous cultural historic buildings and structures, complex utility systems, and an extensive network of roads and trails to be maintained at an operational level that ensures continued protection, preservation, and serviceability.

Despite the importance of its maintenance program, the Park Service has yet to accurately assess the scope of its maintenance needs. For example, in January 1997, the Park Service estimated its deferred maintenance backlog to be about $6.1 billion. Most of this amount—about $5.6 billion, or 92 percent—had been budgeted for construction projects, which, for the most part, were meant to correct maintenance problems at existing facilities. However, we found that over 21 percent of the Park Service's estimated maintenance budget had been used to construct new facilities, such as $24 million for a bike path at the Colonial National Historic Park in Virginia and $16.6 million to replace a visitor center and construct a park entrance at Acadia National Park in Maine. While we did not question the need for these facilities, we did question whether these new construction projects should have been included in the estimate of the maintenance backlog. We concluded that the Park Service's lack of a common definition for what should be included in the maintenance backlog contributed to an inaccurate and out-of-date estimate. We also noted that the Department's efforts to standardize such a definition for all of its agencies should, if implemented properly, address this problem.

In September 1999, however, Interior's Inspector General reported that the Park Service's September 1998

estimate of $3.6 billion for deferred maintenance did not comply with federal accounting standards or departmental guidance. As a result, the Park Service had little assurance that its deferred maintenance accounting and budget data were current, complete, and verifiable. According to the Inspector General, this condition occurred because the Park Service did not (1) conduct all needed assessments to identify asset conditions, (2) document its estimated deferred maintenance costs, or (3) establish adequate controls to ensure compliance with federal and departmental deferred maintenance guidance.

Park Service officials stated that they have initiated actions to correct deficiencies in their maintenance program. First, the Service established a universal definition of deferred maintenance. Second, the Service replaced existing facilities management computer software with a commercial package that, according to Park Service officials, has been successfully pilot tested. Park Service officials stated that the new software provides, among other things, an accurate, consistent, and updated list of priority backlog maintenance projects; nationwide data on asset quantity and condition; and performance measures for linking expenditures with defined outcomes and results. In fiscal year 2001, the Park Service will test this software at additional parks. The Service believes the software will help it to adhere to the Department and federal accounting standards and reporting requirements. In addition, the Department and the Park Service are developing a 5-year plan for funding priority projects and evaluating alternative methods to maintain historic structures.

These efforts should, if properly implemented, help the agency better manage its maintenance program. However, acquiring the necessary data and setting up the needed processes will take several years. Since the processes to support these initiatives are now being

developed and implemented, the Congress may wish to continue emphasizing the importance of their effective implementation.

Accountability of Park Managers Needs Improvement

Historically, Interior has been a highly decentralized agency. For the most part, it has allowed its component agencies to develop their own systems and processes for managing their programs. Within the Park Service, individual park managers reach spending decisions and operating priorities within their respective parks. The limitation of this approach is that the Park Service does not accumulate data on results achieved or funds spent. Our past work has shown that regional or headquarters staff rarely, if ever, discussed with park managers the Service's operating priorities or the results accomplished with the funds provided. Key components were missing to hold park managers accountable, such as processes for setting results-oriented expectations or monitoring outcomes. No expectations were established for the goals that are to be achieved in the parks. As a result, the agency lacked any means to monitor progress toward achieving its goals and to hold park managers accountable for the results of park operations. Accountability for results is especially important for an agency like the Park Service, which sets priorities and develops budgets at the park-unit level.

The Park Service has issued plans and reports consistent with the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). It now has a strategic plan that sets forth its mission, long-term goals, and means of measuring progress toward those goals. Furthermore, individual parks are expected to establish the strategic and annual performance plans needed to implement the agency's strategic plan. However, because the Park Service is decentralized and provides broad discretion to park managers, it faces significant challenges in implementing the top-down accountability system required by GPRA. As we discussed in our last

performance and accountability report, to fully integrate GPRA's management approach, Park Service managers must begin to define, in measurable terms, how activities at their park contribute to achieving Service-wide goals established in the Park Service's strategic plan.

According to Park Service officials, beginning in fiscal year 1999, park superintendents are being held accountable for their accomplishments against their park's annual performance plans in their annual performance evaluations. We believe that sustained congressional attention to the agency's implementation of GPRA would underscore the importance that the Congress attaches to the success of this process and improve the accountability of park managers.

Management Problems Continue to Plague the Concessions Program

Concessionaires play a critical role in providing services to many of the almost 300 million visitors to the national park system each year. Concessionaires are private businesses that operate under contracts with the National Park Service to provide facilities and services, such as lodging, food, merchandising, marinas, and various guided services. In 1998, the latest year for which data are available, 630 concessionaires provided visitor services in park units that grossed about $765 million in revenues.

For many years, we have joined the Congress, Interior's Office of the Inspector General, and Park Service staff, in raising concerns about the need for better management of the agency's concession program. In March 2000, we identified basic problems with the Park Service's overall approach to managing the concessions program. These management problems center on three areas: (1) human capital issues, including inadequate qualifications and training of the agency's concession specialists and concessions contracting staff; (2) acquisition management issues, including the agency's

out-of-date practices in handling its contracting workload and chronic backlog of expired contracts; and (3) organizational control issues, including a lack of accountability within the concessions program. Because of these management problems, the Park Service frequently has difficulty managing the performance of its concessionaires to ensure a consistent level of quality and safety in the services and facilities they provide.

To increase the effectiveness of the Park Service's concessions management program, we recommended that the Service improve the qualifications of its concession staff (including improving their training in writing and administering contracts), contract for these services, or use some combination of the two approaches. The agency could contract for expertise in certain functions while developing expertise in-house for other functions. However, both options require that the agency better manage its human capital to ensure it selects, trains, develops, and manages concession staff with the skills needed to realize improvements in the program.

Interior generally agrees with these proposals, and the Park Service has already begun to take actions to address some of its concessions program management problems. For example, the Park Service has contracted with a private firm to analyze its organizational structure and advise it on reengineering its business processes. The Service is also developing a certification program in hospitality management with a focus on business and financial skills and a contracting certification program. Park Service officials also stated that they are aggressively recruiting students from top business schools to hire as full-time concession personnel where needed. In addition, the Service is considering out-sourcing complex financial components of the concession program, developing a funding strategy to address the need for centralized and consistent program oversight, and updating its contracting practices to

include performance based contracting. We believe that these actions are a positive step and, if completed and implemented, will help improve the program.

The Park Service Is Not Meeting Safety Responsibilities in Many of Its Structures

The Park Service is responsible for ensuring that the buildings and artifacts entrusted to it are protected and that the people who visit or work in them are safe from undue hazards or risks. Today, the Park Service is the steward for over 30,000 structures and over 80 million artifacts nationwide. These structures include hotels; motels; cabins; visitor centers; interpretative centers; and historic buildings, such as many former presidents' homes. However, structural fire safety efforts in several national parks we visited were not effective. The Park Service's structural fire activity lacks many elementary components required for any effective fire safety effort. These gaps include such fundamental things as inadequate fire training for employees, inadequate or nonexistent fire inspections, and—for many buildings—inadequate or nonexistent fire detection or suppression systems. These situations create many fire safety hazards. As a result of these conditions, the safety of park visitors, employees, buildings, and artifacts is being jeopardized, making the structures and artifacts vulnerable to fire that could inevitably cause damage, destruction, severe injury, and even the loss of life. (Fig. 2 illustrates this problem at the Ford National Theatre.)

Figure 2: Boxes Impeding Effectiveness of Fire Sprinkler in Storage Area of the Ford National Theatre, Washington, D.C.

Source: GAO photograph

Parks lack an effective structural fire safety effort because the Park Service (1) has not fully specified the minimum standards individual parks must meet and (2) has placed little emphasis on structural fire safety. As a result, park managers have assigned this aspect of the operations a low priority, which is inconsistent with the Park Service's strategic goals and its assertions that health and safety issues are a top agency priority. To enable the Park Service to meet its structural fire safety responsibilities, we recommended that the Service complete and implement initiatives that should, at a minimum, (1) establish minimum structural fire safety requirements throughout the park system, (2) provide a fire safety risk assessment at each unit of the park

system, (3) develop plans to correct identified needs, and (4) ensure that all new construction complies with generally accepted fire codes. Furthermore, to ensure that park managers elevate the priority given to addressing structural fire safety needs, we recommended that park managers be held accountable for developing and implementing effective structural fire safety programs.

The Park Service is aware that major weaknesses exist in its structural fire safety effort and has begun to address them. For example, the Service has contracted with an engineering firm to conduct structural fire assessments of selected high-priority buildings. It has also committed to filling structural fire management officer positions in each region. In addition, in accordance with Interior's fiscal year 2001 appropriations bill, the Service has developed a plan and funding estimate for upgrading all its facilities to meet structural fire safety requirements. Although these recent initiatives should help correct the deficiencies in the Service's structural fire safety program, they will require sustained follow-through and sufficient funds to complete.

We found another safety concern in the national park system's lodging facilities. Each year, the Park Service provides visitors to our national parks a variety of overnight lodging accommodations, including deluxe, mid-scale, and economy rooms. In some cases, these lodging facilities are the only ones located in or near the park. Concessionaires manage these lodging facilities under contract with the Park Service. Although the Park Service has standards for lodging facilities in national parks, similar industry standards impose additional requirements, including more safety measures. For example, smoke detectors, dead-bolt locks, and door viewports—all required by the lodging industry—are not required by Park Service standards. Although most rooms we inspected had safety and security devices,

some rooms either contained devices that did not function or had none at all. To improve lodging accommodations throughout the park system, we recommended that the Park Service establish a formal process for performing periodic independent inspections of the concessionaires' lodging operations.

The Department acknowledged the need to repair, rehabilitate, and upgrade some of its lodging facilities, and stated that these situations will be addressed as funding becomes available. In addition, the Park Service is conferring with the hotel industry to revise its existing lodging standards. These revised standards include additional safety requirements. However, the Park Service has been attempting to revise these standards since 1998; as of October 2000, the new standards were not yet final. We believe that the Congress may wish to monitor the agency's progress in this and the structural fire safety area.

Key Contact

Barry T. Hill, Director
Natural Resources and Environment
(202) 512-3841
hillb@gao.gov

Address Persistent Management Problems in Indian Trust Programs

As the department responsible for administering the federal government's trust responsibilities to tribes and individual Indians, Interior manages $3 billion in Indian trust funds and provides more than $700 million annually for basic tribal services such as social services, police, and natural resource management. Over the years, we have reported on Interior's poor management of these trust funds and programs. In the last 2 years, Interior has taken specific actions to address management problems, but significant challenges remain. Despite Interior's efforts, inadequate accounting and information systems, poor record-keeping and

internal controls, and other weaknesses prevent the Department from ensuring the funds are properly managed. In addition, management issues impede the tribes' progress toward self-determination, that is, tribal participation in and management of programs previously administered on their behalf by the federal government.

Indian Trust Funds and Assets Need to Be More Effectively Managed

The Secretary of the Interior is responsible for administering the government's trust responsibilities to tribes and individual Indians, including about $3 billion in Indian trust funds and about 54 million acres of Indian lands. Management of Indian trust funds and assets has long been characterized by inadequate financial management, such as poor accounting and information systems; untrained and inexperienced staff; backlogs in appraisals, determinations of ownership, and record-keeping; the lack of a master lease file or accounts-receivable system; inadequate written policies and procedures; and poor internal controls. As a result, account holders have no assurance that their account balances are accurate, or that the fund's assets are being managed properly.

In April 1998, Interior launched a major initiative incorporating 11 subprojects to solve these problems. The initiative called for correcting administrative records for trust accounts, clarifying land title and resource management information, eliminating probate backlogs, and reviewing and changing the appraisal system for trust lands. In February 2000, the Department issued an update on its progress in implementing the 11 subprojects. According to the report, the Department completed one subproject, which established a new trust fund accounting and investment system, and continues to make progress on the other subprojects, including record management improvements to be completed in May 2002. While the Department has taken

steps in the right direction, its many management problems persist and will take several years to resolve.

In September 2000, we reported on the progress of another of the subprojects included in the initiative—the acquisition of a new system to manage trust assets. We found that Interior had taken key steps to instill the processes, practices, and discipline to successfully guide the acquisition. The officials responsible for managing the trust now recognize the importance of disciplined system acquisition, development, and testing processes. Interior has adopted a life cycle-model for the system, which defines the management expectations of the system from conception to deployment and support. It has also developed several plans and policies to enhance system management; strengthened test processes for the system; and begun developing systems architecture.

Still, we found some shortcomings and recommended that the Department develop key components of an information systems technology architecture. Interior has not yet issued complete policies and procedures on trust fund management or cleaned up thousands of inaccurate, incomplete, or outdated trust fund records. In addition, the Department disagrees with our position that the business processes that the system will support need to be reengineered. Until these matters are addressed, the Department will continue to face significant challenges to ensuring that the system will operate efficiently and effectively.

Management Issues Impede Progress Toward Self-Determination

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is the primary federal agency charged with implementing federal Indian policy and administering the federal trust responsibility for 1.4 million American Indians and native Alaskans. BIA provides basic services to the tribes throughout the United States, including social services, child welfare services, and natural resources management. The 556

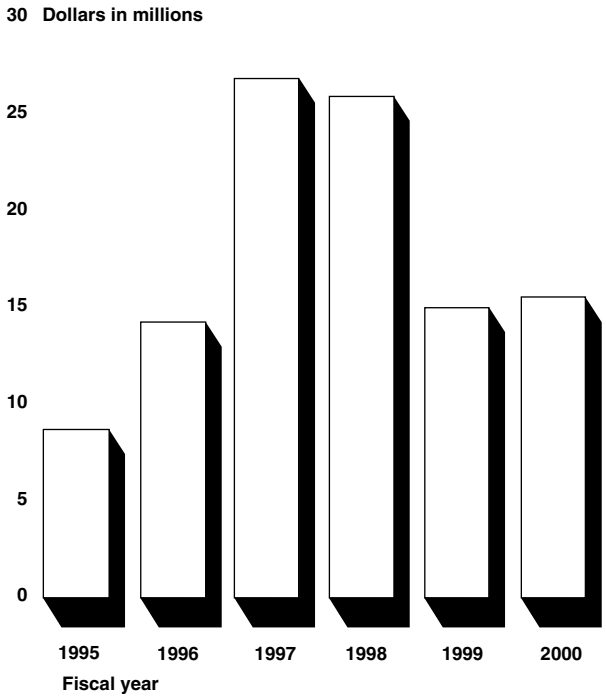
federally recognized tribes have two ways of influencing the programs that affect them. First, they can work with BIA to allocate a portion of the Bureau's budget to programs that the tribes choose. The funds, which account for nearly half of BIA's budget, are distributed through a process called tribal priority allocations. Second, under the Indian Self-Determination Act, tribes can establish self-determination contracts to manage some of the programs that BIA has traditionally managed on their behalf.

BIA's budget formulation and execution process, specifically its distribution of tribal priority allocation funds, is not responsive to changes in the relative needs of the tribes. Furthermore, there is no assurance that the funds are effectively targeting the most pressing needs among tribes. In fiscal year 2000, about $700 million was allocated with the participation of individual tribes. In 1998, we found that BIA's distribution to each tribe was based largely on historical factors, that is, the amount available to a tribe generally remained unchanged from year to year. This method did not consider a tribe's changing needs.

In response to our report, the Congress directed BIA to develop alternate methods of distributing tribal priority allocations. In its 1999 task force report on tribal priority funds, BIA acknowledged that funding inequities exist among the tribes but decided—with the concurrence of the tribes—that the current distribution of funds should not be changed to address those inequities. Instead, BIA concluded that future increases in funding should be targeted at tribes that need greater funding. To accomplish this, we believe BIA would have to develop criteria for determining tribes' needs and to establish the factors that will determine funding levels. BIA has not done this, and until it does, funding inequities will persist.

To compound the tribes' difficulties in collecting funds for self-determination, tribes have not received adequate funds to cover the costs of supporting Indian self-determination contracts. Over half of BIA's budget, including some tribal priority funds, is provided to tribes through contracts. Tribes use these funds to help pay for the indirect and administrative costs for contracts. However, total shortfalls in this area reached about $25 million in fiscal year 1997. These losses reflect a trend underway since 1995. [See fig. 3]

Figure 3: BIA's Contract Support Cost Shortfalls, Fiscal Years 1995-2000



Source: GAO analysis of BIA data.

According to tribes, these shortfalls have either forced a reduction in the services available to tribal members or caused tribes to use their own limited resources, thereby prohibiting the further development of tribal businesses or supplemental services. Most significantly, these shortfalls led the Congress to place a moratorium on contracting for BIA programs for fiscal year 1999. Although the Congress did not implement a moratorium in fiscal year 2000, one was contemplated, and remains likely in the future unless a remedy to these shortfalls is found. To avoid further moratoriums, we developed alternatives for the Congress to consider in funding contract support costs. In 2000, the Congress considered an alternative funding mechanism but did not pass such legislation. Unless this problem is resolved, we believe the matter will continue to impede tribal contracting of programs.

None of these management issues will be resolved easily or within a short time frame. Interior will need to continue its efforts to resolve deficiencies in its management of Indian trust funds and place a high priority on solving these problems. In addition, in response to reports from BIA, the National Congress of American Indians, and us, the Congress has held hearings in the last few years and proposed reform legislation to address some of these issues. Indian self-determination will stay at the forefront of annual appropriations' debates, as will the long-term debate over the course of federal Indian policy.

Key Contact

Barry T. Hill, Director
Natural Resources and Environment
(202) 512-3841
hillb@gao.gov

Improve Management of Ecosystem Restoration Efforts

To achieve its strategic goal of protecting and preserving the nation's natural resources, Interior established a long-term plan to restore and maintain healthy natural systems. This effort includes the restoration of significant national ecosystems, such as the Florida Everglades, and the reintroduction of fire to forested ecosystems such as those located in the western states. The Department has adopted an ecosystem management approach intended to protect and maintain healthy ecological systems.

Ecosystem management focuses on ecological, scientific, economic, and social factors that typically extend beyond the administrative boundaries of the Department's agencies and other entities. Ecosystem management requires the collaboration of the Department and its agencies with each other and other entities, such as states and private landowners, to develop a common vision for the future conditions of the lands, waters, habitat and overall ecosystem. Currently, the Department has several large ecosystem management projects underway, including the Wildland Fire Management policy; the restoration of the South Florida ecosystem, including the Everglades; the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project; and the Northwest Forest Plan.

Since 1995, the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture-which manages the Forest Service-have sought to return fire to the forested ecosystems of the western states, yet managment problems have hindered this effort. The accumulation of vegetation, which provides fuels for large, intense, uncontrollable, and destructive wildfires, remains one of the most extensive and serious problems in these forests. The danger of increased fuels was evident in the Cerro Grande fire of May 2000, when a prescribed burn to reduce fuels got out of control and burned 48,000 acres and many homes.

In 2000, the need for fuels reduction was reemphasized after huge wildfires in the western United States burned 6.9 million acres, or twice the 10-year average. Our work has shown that fuel reduction will take several years and will require the departments to target the efforts of the land management agencies. The Congress directed the departments to develop fuel reduction plans in response to the 2000 fire season. However, neither department has issued a final strategy for targeting fuel reduction efforts without causing short-term damage to ecosystems. According to Interior officials, in December 2000, the departments reported to the Congress their plans to address excess fuels in high-risk areas and communities.

The Cerro Grande fire highlighted management problems inherent in the prescribed burns program to restore the forested ecosystems of the West. It also raised concerns about the readiness of the federal land management agencies to support and administer prescribed burns. The management problems involve procedural gaps or a lack of clarity about how policies are to be implemented. Specifically, the plan for the prescribed burn was not independently reviewed by someone with technical competence; sufficient resources for fighting the fire once it got out of control were not readily available; and more effective coordination and cooperation between federal agencies and nearby jurisdictions was needed before the burn got underway. We recommended several changes to the interagency fire policy developed in 1995, including (1) peer review of fire plans, (2) better coordination among federal agencies in developing plans, and (3) documentation and analysis of the decision to proceed with a prescribed burn. In response to the 2000 fire season, the agencies requested an additional $1.6 billion in funding but did not clarify how they planned to resolve these management problems.

We have also identified potential human capital concerns related to personnel shortages that could limit the agencies' firefighting abilities in catastrophic events and recommended the agencies develop a succession plan to deal with this matter. As with many other federal agencies, a large number of experienced personnel will retire in the next few years. Replacements are difficult to find for several reasons, including the risks of the job and a waning interest of some employees to continue taking the training required. Developing a cadre of qualified fire management personnel could take many years, because an individual must receive 600 to 700 hours of training to become an incident commander. Although the agencies reported in September 2000 that their priority would be to ensure all necessary fire suppression efforts are available, these recommendations depend on budgets received. Interior's human capital problems can be seen as part of a broader pattern of human capital shortcomings that have eroded mission capabilities across the federal government. See our *High-Risk Series: An Update* (GAO-01-263, January 2001) for a discussion of human capital as a newly designated governmentwide high risk area.

Management problems could also hinder one of the most significant environmental restoration initiatives undertaken by the Department—the restoration of the South Florida ecosystem. The restoration seeks, over at least 20 years, to increase the quantity of water and improve the quality of water currently being drained or polluted in the ecosystem. The restoration initiative also seeks to increase and restore natural habitats and to make urban and natural systems more compatible.

Because the ecosystem covers 18,000 square miles and overlaps many jurisdictions, the restoration requires the joint coordination and collaboration of many entities—federal, state, and local governments; Indian tribes; and private groups—to ensure the success of its various ecosystem management efforts. Interior, as chair of a

multi-agency task force on the restoration, facilitates and coordinates these multiple efforts. In 1999, we recommended that the task force develop a strategic plan to identify how the restoration will occur, what resources will be used, and how the overall restoration goals link to annual goals and resources. Although the task force established three goals for the restoration, it did not develop a strategic plan for how the restoration would be accomplished until July 2000. Congress, which requested the development of the strategic plan in response to our recommendations, has also requested that we review the plan.

In addition, the task force has yet to complete other actions to improve the organizational alignment and control of the restoration initiative. Specifically, we recommended in 1999 that the Department, as chair of the task force, develop a conflict resolution process to improve coordination among those participating in the restoration initiative. In 2000, we also recommended that the Department and the task force develop a joint plan to coordinate multiple land acquisitions. We believe that without such coordination, individual restoration projects and the overall progress of the restoration could be delayed. For example, a critical project to restore the South Florida ecosystem, underway since the early 1990s, has yet to be completed. A major component of the project, which will send more water through the lower end of Everglades National Park, has been built and operated under emergency conditions but has not received final state operating permits because of disagreements over the amount and quality of water that will be involved.

According to Department officials, the task force has contracted with the Florida Conflict Resolution Consortium to provide conflict resolution services to the task force. The task force heard the results of the Consortium's initial work in November 2000 and is scheduled to take action to approve a method in

January 2001. The Department and the task force are still considering our recommendation to coordinate multiple land acquisitions. Until final decisions are made on these issues, we cannot determine whether the actions will be sufficient to resolve our concerns.

The ecosystem management approach, which provides a solution to several management challenges facing the Department, also presents new difficulties. The approach requires the Department to be involved in efforts that may entail actions beyond its control and will require continued efforts at coordination. The Northwest Forest Plan was one of the first broadly scoped, ecosystem-based plans to be developed and implemented by the Department's Bureau of Land Management and the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service. The use of the ecosystem management approach, coupled with a sense of urgency and strong leadership, enabled the agencies to resolve planning problems and achieve their goal of removing an injunction on timber cutting in the Northwest.

The application of ecosystem management principles has, however, raised organizational alignment and control matters for Interior. Our work has shown that problems arise when assessments and plans for large-scale ecosystems focus on small-scale issues like limited-range plant and animal species. Ecosystem assessments and plans should be conducted for geographic areas that coincide with the issues being addressed. In reviewing Interior's final Columbia River Basin Plan, which was released in April 2000, we recommended that the agencies include these issues in plans for smaller geographic zones.

Increased demand for goods and services on federal lands means that the Department is likely to experience continuing conflicts and face many resource deterioration problems. In their attempts to protect and

restore natural resources, the Department and its agencies will likely continue to apply and refine the concepts of ecosystem management. Currently, land management laws focus on particular resources. Legislation to resolve conflicts in long-term planning and resource use, which would make the sustainability of the ecosystem a management priority, has been considered but not passed. This matter will continue to influence the debate over how federal lands should be managed.

Key Contact

Barry T. Hill, Director
Natural Resources and Environment
(202) 512-3841
hillb@gao.gov

Address Challenges in Managing An Expanding Land Base

The Department manages about 450 million acres of federal lands for many different purposes, and, as part of its duties, oversees transactions to exchange, acquire, or dispose of lands in the federal land base. While the sound management of land transactions is not one of the Department's strategic or performance goals, the Department continues to encounter several difficulties when managing these transactions. With the potential for increased federal land acquisition under new initiatives, such as the Department's Lands Legacy Initiative, prudent management of federal land transactions will become increasingly important.

Land Exchanges and Appraisals Have Not Always Ensured Value and Protected the Public Interest

The Department is the steward of numerous parks, forests, grasslands, wetlands, and other natural areas, some of which are interspersed with state, local, or privately owned lands. The National Park Service manages about 80 million acres of parks, historic sites, monuments, and preserves. The Bureau of Land Management manages 264 million acres of public lands and the subsurface minerals on more than 560 million

acres. The Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible for 92 million acres of refuges and wetlands. To protect and preserve the health of our public lands and to improve efficiency and remove barriers to resource protection and management, Department agencies seek to consolidate and protect federal lands by acquiring, exchanging, or, in some cases, receiving donated lands. Land exchanges involve the mutually agreeable trading of federal lands for those owned by corporations, individuals, or state and local governments.

In the last few years, Interior's Inspector General and we have determined that the land exchanges completed by the Department's Bureau of Land Management to date have not ensured the lands being exchanged were appropriately valued or protected the public interest. In exchanging lands, federal agencies are required under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to determine, among other things, whether the estimated values of the lands being exchanged were approximately equal or if the exchange served the public interest. Poor financial management and controls have prevented the Bureau, and the Department, from ensuring the equal value of the lands being exchanged. From 1995 through 1997, in several cases documented by the Inspector General and us, the Bureau of Land Management did not always appropriately value the land it exchanged because the appraisals used to determine the land's value were not valid or were not completed in accordance with federal standards. For example, the Inspector General estimated that the value of about 5,000 acres of federal lands in four different exchanges was underestimated by as much as $24 million. In some cases, the Bureau could not demonstrate the need for the land it received.

Furthermore, under the umbrella of its exchange authority, the Bureau actually sold federal land, retained the cash in escrow accounts, and then used the funds to buy nonfederal lands. We found that the funds were not

tracked in the agency's financial systems and determined that this practice was not allowed under federal law. Six of the agency's state offices had a total of $4.3 million in 20 such escrow accounts at the end of fiscal year 1999.

In 1998, the Bureau formed a team to review proposed exchanges that are of high value or are considered controversial. Beginning this year, all land exchange proposals are reviewed by the state director and receive a technical review by the land exchange team. In addition, the Bureau has recommended changes to its internal guidance on land exchanges and increased training of its personnel. However, land exchanges are inherently difficult to manage because the lands being exchanged have to be of approximately equal value and because estimates of market value are difficult to determine, especially when the properties being valued are unique or when the market is speculative.

This inherent difficulty, when combined with the deficiencies the Inspector General and we found with the program, led us to recommend that the Congress consider discontinuing the Bureau's land exchange program. As this has not yet occurred, we believe this matter warrants continued attention from the Department. The Congress has recognized the difficulties inherent in land exchanges. In 1998 it passed the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act to facilitate sales of federal land in one of the areas troubled by high land prices and speculation, and to provide up to 85 percent of the proceeds to acquire environmentally sensitive lands in southern Nevada.

Not only are land exchanges difficult to manage, but the use of appraisals as a financial or internal control over the land exchange and acquisition process may be insufficient to ensure that federal interests are protected, particularly in cases where the property is a

large, unique tract of land of significant national interest. The Department, under the President's direction, initiated a program called the Lands Legacy Initiative to save nationally significant parks, refuges, and other public lands from encroaching development by purchasing surrounding tracts of land. However, in our review of one of the Bureau's acquisitions in 1999, and of two similar acquisitions by the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service in 1998 and 2000, we found that although the appraisal process was followed, the assumptions used in the appraisal could have increased the value of the property.

Problems with the acquisition of lands by other agencies, such as the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service, indicate that proper management of land transactions is also a concern for other agencies in the Department. For example, in a 1998 audit, the Inspector General found that the Fish and Wildlife Service might have overpaid for parcels it acquired because of problems with the appraisals of the land. The Inspector General reported in 1999 that the National Park Service did not ensure that just compensation was properly established before purchasing easements in some of its regions.

The pressure for growth and development on lands adjacent to public lands will continue to increase in the foreseeable future as will the pressure and cost to the Department of protecting and preserving these resources. A market approach to managing the acquisition and sale of federal lands, as was put in place in Nevada, may be better than the approach used in exchanges, but neither we nor the Department have formally reviewed the results of the Nevada program. The Congress will continue to be involved and interested in the matter of federal land acquisitions and exchanges. It recently passed the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act, which authorizes the Bureau (and the Forest Service) to sell particular lands

and to use the proceeds to acquire inholdings or lands adjacent to federally designated areas that contain exceptional resources. The Department will need to ensure that its organization and processes are in place both to protect singular pieces of land and to ensure the public's financial interests.

Expanded Land Base Creates Budgetary Difficulties

As the Department acquires new lands through acquisition or exchange, it faces the additional challenge of finding funding for the increasing amount of operations and maintenance required for the lands and any facilities on them. For fiscal year 2001, the Department received $1.6 billion to fund federal and state government land acquisitions, conservation grants, and historic preservation. The Department is seeking to buy lands in the New Jersey-New York watershed, in South Florida, in the Chesapeake watershed, and in the California desert. As the federal agencies acquire new lands, they incur additional costs for managing the resources on them. Such management includes conducting resource surveys and management plans; identifying resource problems that will need to be treated, such as exotic species infestation; developing appropriate environmental impact statements to support management of the lands; and making appropriate improvements on the lands.

In some cases, the Department has not kept the Congress informed of potential operations and maintenance needs for new lands. For example, in February 2000, we found that the Fish and Wildlife Service did not report estimated future operations and maintenance costs to the Congress when it established refuges, particularly when these refuges were created from donated lands. We recommended the Department instruct the Fish and Wildlife Service to provide this information during budget deliberations. The Service is taking actions to improve its reporting of costs, but these improvements will not be completed for 3 to 4

years. According to Department officials, its bureaus cannot yet identify operation and maintenance costs for all their lands, or the costs that will be incurred to manage additional lands. However, the officials stated that the agencies are developing automated systems to track these costs and have begun to document the increased needs for operations and maintenance on expanded federal lands. For fiscal year 2001, the Department received $100 million for maintenance of acquired lands.

Key Contact

Barry T. Hill, Director
Natural Resources and Environment
(202) 512-3841
hillb@gao.gov

Related GAO Products

Managing National Parks

Federal Lands: Agencies Need to Assess the Impact of Personal Watercraft and Snowmobile Use (GAO/RCED-00-243, September 15, 2000).

Park Service: Need to Address Management Problems That Plague the Concessions Program (GAO/T-RCED-00-188, May 24,2000).

Park Service: Agency Is Not Meeting Its Structural Fire Safety Responsibilities (GAO/RCED-00-154, May 22, 2000).

Park Service: Need to Address Management Problems That Plague the Concessions Program (GAO/RCED-00-70, March 31, 2000).

National Park Service: The Condition of Lodging Facilities Varies Among Selected Parks (GAO/RCED-98-238, August 6, 1998).

National Park Service: Efforts to Identify and Manage the Maintenance Backlog (GAO/RCED-98-143, May 14,1998).

Park Service: Managing for Results Could Strengthen Accountability (GAO/RCED-97-125, April 10,1997).

National Parks: Park Service Needs Better Information to Preserve and Protect Resources (GAO/T-RCED-97-76, February 27, 1997).

Managing Indian Trust Responsibilities

Indian Trust Funds: Improvements Made to Strengthen Management of New Asset and Accounting System but Significant Risks Remain (GAO/AIMD-00-259, September 15, 2000).

Indian Trust Funds: Challenges Facing Interior's Implementation of New Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (GAO/T-AIMD-99-238, July 14, 1999).

Indian Self-Determination Act: Shortfalls in Indian Contract Support Costs Need to Be Addressed (GAO/RCED-99-150, June 30, 1999).

Indian Trust Funds: Interior Lacks Assurance That Trust Improvement Plan Will Be Effective (GAO/AIMD-99-53, April 28, 1999).

Indian Programs: Tribal Priority Allocations Do Not Target the Neediest Tribes (GAO/RCED-98-181, July 17, 1998).

Indian Trust Funds: Status of Department of the Interior's Plan for Improving Trust Fund Management (GAO/AIMD-98-169R, May 28, 1998).

Financial Management: Recommendations on Indian Trust Fund Strategic Plan Proposals (GAO/AIMD-98-37, November 26, 1997).

Preserving and Restoring Ecosystems

Reducing Wildfire Threats: Funds Should Be Targeted to the Highest Risk Areas (GAO/T-RCED-00-296, September 13, 2000).

Fire Management: Lessons Learned From the Cerro Grand (Los Alamos) Fire and Actions Needed to Reduce Fire Risks (GAO/T-RCED-00-273, August 14, 2000).

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration: A Land Acquisition Plan Would Help Identify Lands That Need to Be Acquired (GAO/RCED-00-84, April 5, 2000).

Federal Wildfire Activities: Current Strategy and Issues Needing Attention (GAO/RCED-99-233, August 13, 1999).

Federal Land Management: Comments on Selected Provisions of S. 1320 – A Bill to Revise Federal Land Management Planning (GAO/T-RCED-99-270, July 22, 1999)

Ecosystem Planning: Northwest Forest and Interior Columbia River Basin Plans Demonstrate Improvements in Land-Use Planning (GAO/RCED-99-64, May 26, 1999).

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration: An Overall Strategic Plan and a Decision-Making Process Are Needed to Keep the Effort on Track (GAO/RCED-99-121, April 22, 1999).

Western National Forests: A Cohesive Strategy is Needed to Address Catastrophic Wildfire Threats (GAO/RCED-99-65, April 2, 1999).

Prudently Managing Federal Resources in Land Transactions

BLM and The Forest Service: Land Exchanges Need to Reflect Appropriate Value and Serve the Public Interest (GAO/RCED-00-73, June 22, 2000).

Federal Land Management: Land Acquisition Issues Related to the Baca Ranch Appraisal (GAO/RCED-00-76, March 2, 2000).

Fish and Wildlife Service: Agency Needs to Inform Congress of Future Costs Associated with Land Acquisitions (GAO/RCED-00-52, February 15, 2000).

Federal Land Management: Appraisal of Headwaters Forest Properties (GAO/RCED-99-52, December 24, 1998).

Federal Land Management: Appraisal of Crown Butte Mines' New World Property (GAO/RCED-98-209, May 29, 1998).

Performance and Accountability Series

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: A Governmentwide Perspective (GAO-01-241)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Department of Agriculture (GAO-01-242)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Department of Commerce (GAO-01-243)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Department of Defense (GAO-01-244)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Department of Education (GAO-01-245)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Department of Energy (GAO-01-246)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Department of Health and Human Services (GAO-01-247)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Department of Housing and Urban Development (GAO-01-248)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Department of the Interior (GAO-01-249)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Department of Justice (GAO-01-250)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Department of Labor (GAO-01-251)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Department of State (GAO-01-252)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Department of Transportation (GAO-01-253)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Department of the Treasury (GAO-01-254)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Department of Veterans Affairs (GAO-01-255)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Agency for International Development (GAO-01-256)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Environmental Protection Agency (GAO-01-257)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (GAO-01-258)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Nuclear Regulatory Commission (GAO-01-259)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Small Business Administration (GAO-01-260)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Social Security Administration (GAO-01-261)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: U.S. Postal Service (GAO-01-262)

High-Risk Series: An Update (GAO-01-263)

Ordering Information

The first copy of each GAO report is free. Additional copies of reports are $2 each. A check or money order should be made out to the Superintendent of Documents. VISA and MasterCard credit cards are accepted, also.

Orders for 100 or more copies to be mailed to a single address are discounted 25 percent.

Orders by mail:
U.S. General Accounting Office
P.O. Box 37050
Washington, DC 20013

Orders by visiting:
Room 1100
700 4th St. NW (corner of 4th and G Sts. NW)
U.S. General Accounting Office
Washington, DC

Orders by phone:
(202) 512-6000
fax: (202) 512-6061
TDD (202) 512-2537

Each day, GAO issues a list of newly available reports and testimony. To receive facsimile copies of the daily list or any list from the past 30 days, please call (202) 512-6000 using a touchtone phone. A recorded menu will provide information on how to obtain these lists.

Orders by Internet:
For information on how to access GAO reports on the Internet, send an e-mail message with "info" in the body to:

info@www.gao.gov

or visit GAO's World Wide Web home page at:

http://www.gao.gov

To Report Fraud, Waste, or Abuse in Federal Programs

Contact one:

- **Web site: http://www.gao.gov/fraudnet/fraudnet.htm**
- **e-mail: fraudnet@gao.gov**
- **1-800-424-5454 (automated answering system)**

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548-0001

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use $300

Address Correction Requested

Bulk Mail
Postage & Fees Paid
GAO
Permit No. GI00