

## Computer Support

In 1998, the Computer Support Services staff consisted of five full-time employees supporting a network of about 400 computers in offices throughout the park. The ability of park staff to communicate with each other and with the outside world is still limited due to outdated hardware and software, wiring systems, and lack of training. While elsewhere “surfing the web” has become commonplace, this means of research is still largely unavailable to park employees.



**Out with the old.** Since the NPS established Microsoft Office as its standard software beginning November 1, 1997, Yellowstone has had to make a substantial investment in computer hardware capable of running the new application. But by late 1999, all of the park’s personal computers were capable of running Windows, permitting access to the Department of Interior’s network and the variety of reference and communications services available through the Internet.

**Preparing for the millenium.** Congress provided funds for government agencies to inventory their computer system hardware, software, and data files and prevent their electronic systems from experiencing the Y2K bug. In 1998, park staff indentified potential problems in communications, emergency management, and utilities systems, and began implementing contingency plans to keep the park running smoothly.

**In with the Intranet.** As a subset of the Internet, a new park Intranet provides many employees with immediate access to the park’s enormous information resources and makes it easier for them to share data ranging from road opening dates to research results.

The park’s goal was to have 80 percent of its computers connected to the Intranet by November 1999, and the remainder by 2000. To meet these goals, in addition to the computer upgrades mentioned above, the park will need to have most outlying areas connected via a 256k-line to the main server in Mammoth or to a secondary server; Bechler and the Northeast, East, and South entrances will have dial-up access. Park offices are often located in historic buildings with massive walls and high ceilings, making wiring difficult and expensive to replace and service. To bring the Intranet to outlying areas, park staff must also deal with rugged topography and distances that span the size of a small state.

An employee hired in late 1998 and assigned to the Interpretive Division is focussing almost exclusively on improving the park's website and making more park information available via the Internet.

Rewiring of several old buildings in Mammoth had begun by late 1997, permitting a switch to Ethernet and improved information transfer. A plan to phase in parkwide connectivity is expected to take another year to complete. By then, technology is likely to have already outpaced the park's progress, and the goal is to implement a cyclic maintenance program similar to that needed for the park's buildings, roads, and vehicles.



### *Program Needs*

Information management staff have a four- to six-month backlog of work just to implement planned system upgrades and install recently purchased hardware and software. As use of the Intranet and other computer services grows, the park needs to hire additional computer specialists to trouble-shoot immediate problems, convert information and make it widely accessible to users, and manage the complex wide-area network. Additional equipment is needed to connect park headquarters to all stations in the park interior.



## COMPUTER SUPPORT

### STEWARDSHIP GOALS



Professionally trained staff keep Yellowstone up to standards for use of computers, electronics, and information management systems to provide current data in support of the park's primary missions.



Yellowstone passes into the new century with no major system failures.



Appropriate public access is provided to Yellowstone data in up-to-date, user-friendly formats.

### CURRENT STATE OF RESOURCES/PROGRAMS



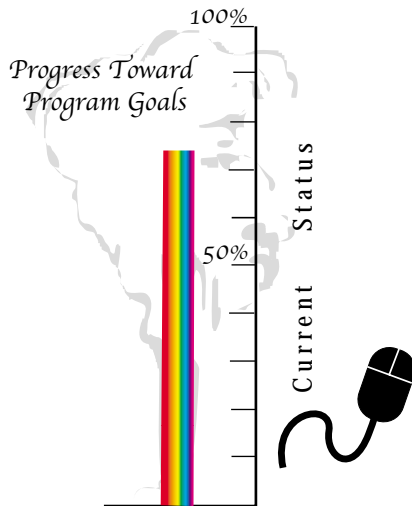
Park staff keep computer systems operating to provide communications, information storage and retrieval but despite substantial recent investments in hardware and software, systems are not up to industry standards for database management and Internet access.



Staff are addressing "Y2K" concerns and have requested funds to upgrade equipment.



Public access to park information via computer technology is very limited.



### 1998 FUNDING AND STAFF

<b>Recurring Funds</b>	
Yellowstone N.P. Base Budget	\$ 283,400
<b>Non Recurring Funds</b>	
One-time Projects	\$ 27,600
Capital Improvements	\$ 27,000
Staff	5 FTE

The human resources and funding necessary to professionally and effectively manage the park to stewardship levels will be identified in the park business plan.