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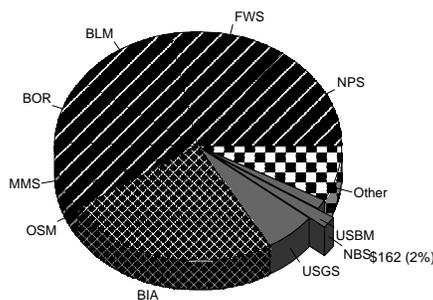
National Biological Service

In 1995, the National Biological Service (NBS) made great progress in pursuit of its mission, which is to work with others to provide the scientific understanding and technologies needed to support sound management and conservation of our Nation's biological resources.

In carrying out this mission, the NBS is dedicated to excellence in science and technology. It does not manage or regulate use of lands or biological resources, nor adopt advocacy positions that might compromise the objectivity of its research. In its quest for scientific excellence, NBS is also improving the relevance of its products to public and private entities engaged in managing the use of biological resources.

Figure 23

1995 National Biological Service Budget Authority
(\$ in millions)



Total DOI Budget Authority - \$9,744 million

While continuing to meet the traditional needs of the bureaus from which it was formed, the NBS is looking ahead and applying innovative strategies and initiatives to address future challenges.

STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES

Ecosystem Focus - Conducting research that encompasses whole ecosystems rather than only fragments or single components.

Partnerships - Involving interested or affected Federal, state and private partners.

Information Needs Identification - Improving the relevance of its research by involving its clients/partners in developing and listing present and future needs in priority to guide research.

Multidisciplinary Science - Involving the Nation's best scientists and technicians from diverse disciplines, both from within and without the NBS, in collegial research.

Prevention of "Train Wrecks" - Developing the capability to anticipate the consequences of human activities on ecosystems, and recommend ways to prevent or remedy negative consequences, while simple and cost effective solutions remain available.

Peer Review - Expanding the use of scientific peer review of research proposals, plans, project execution and manuscripts; and including more highly qualified external scientist on peer review panels.

Electronic Technology - Using the power of recently developed electronic and computerized technology to facilitate rapid analysis and communication of data among partners, colleagues and clients.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Although its 1995 budget, \$161.8 million, represented a reduction of \$5.1 million from the previous fiscal year budget, the NBS achieved noteworthy progress toward its goals and objectives. Among its significant accomplishments were:

Information and Publications

"Our Living Resources" - Publication of this report to the Nation on the distribution, abundance, and health of U.S. plants, animals and ecosystems plus special issues, is truly a significant milestone in fulfilling NBS' mission. It contains over 200 articles written by the top experts in the fields.

National Biological Information Infrastructure - NBS completed several components of this electronic network linking Federal and State government agencies, universities, museums, libraries, and private organizations enabling them to share data and information electronically worldwide. It will grow in the future as more participants and more information are added. The components made available for use during 1995 were:

- **A National Link to State Natural Heritage Databases** - This computer network will facilitate the ability of clients on Internet to obtain biological information on all State Natural Heritage Programs through the World Wide Web.
- **A Standardized Taxonomic Information System** - NBS collaborated with five other Federal agencies to provide electronic access to standard scientific names, synonyms, common names, origin and general distribution of all North American plants and animals.



Catching zebra mussels in Lake Erie (North Central Research Group). Photo credit - National Biological Service.

- **National Biological "Metadata" Standards** - NBS collaborated with Federal and State agencies, and the American Institute of Biological Sciences in developing a proposed standard format for describing biological databases, which will allow users to identify and access information more readily.

Prince William Sound CD ROM - NBS offered interested parties a free compact disc containing geographic features, land ownership, land use, roads, pipelines, extent of oiling, natural resource information, and additional information necessary to the restoration of Prince William Sound. This compact disc is a compilation of information from 35 State and Federal geographic information system databases.

Zebra Mussel Distribution Tracking System - This system stores information and produces maps on the growing distribution of this small "clam like" creature introduced into the U.S. from Europe in the late 1980s. It spread rapidly throughout the Mississippi River drainage and is beginning to show up in other river systems and inland lakes.

Research and Monitoring

Species at Risk Initiative Wins Award - *Renew America* awarded its Certificate of Environmental Achievement to this NBS Initiative intended to reduce the number of species becoming endangered or threatened. It was also selected for listing in the *Environmental Success Index*. Several of the projects under this initiative were completed and provided information to resource managers.

National Park Natural Resource Monitoring - NBS scientists collaborated with the National Park Service in providing recommendations to strengthen and improve the applicability of natural resource monitoring activities in and around National Parks.

Contaminant Monitoring on Public Lands - NBS tested and recommended a process to monitor threats to biological resources from contaminants on National Wildlife Refuges.

Partnerships

State Partnerships - In 1995, NBS became partners with 15 States, committing \$1,162,380 through cooperative agreements to achieve common objectives.

Ecosystem Studies - NBS identified 12 ecosystems to demonstrate collaborative research involving Federal, State and private partners in identifying and describing ecological dynamics. Such collaborative efforts build

upon the multidisciplinary, partnership approach to scientific excellence.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

As the biological science and research arm of the Department, the NBS provides information and technologies to the Department's other bureaus responsible for managing or regulating public lands and resources. The NBS also meets similar needs of other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and even private entities involved in land and resource management.

During 1995, the NBS tracked the level of satisfaction for clients who received products and services through its Information Transfer Center in Fort Collins, Colorado. These products and services include NBS information bulletins, NBS series publications, literature searches, and workshops. Figure 24 displays client satisfaction with NBS products:

Figure 24

