

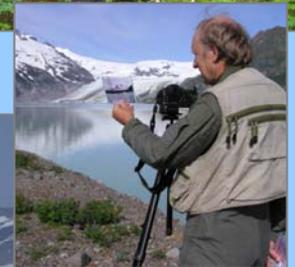
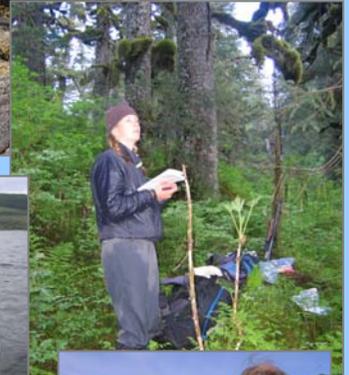
Executive Briefs

Vital Signs Monitoring- Southwest Alaska Network



Importance / Issues

Vital signs monitoring is the collection and analysis of repeated observations or measurements to evaluate ecological changes in the condition of park resources. Informed decisions in support of protecting and managing national parks are predicated upon a long-term monitoring system capable of generating accessible, relevant data and timely reports of the status and trends of park ecosystems at various scales of resolution. The broad-based, scientifically sound information obtained through vital signs monitoring has other applications such as education and promoting public understanding of park resources. The primary audience for the results of vital signs monitoring is park superintendents and natural resources management staff. However, other key audiences for monitoring results include park planners, interpreters, researchers and other scientific collaborators, the general public, and Congress.



Executive Briefs

To be most effective, monitoring data must be analyzed, interpreted, and provided at regular intervals to each of these key audiences in a format they can use, which means that the same information needs to be packaged and distributed in several different formats. Executive briefs are part of the SWAN information reporting system and their purpose is to provide highlights and key findings in a concise and easy to read format. While each executive brief may address a single vital sign or provide insight into one aspect of park ecosystem health, it is important to remember that they are all interconnected. Executive briefs are designed to be web-posted and updated annually. Web-posted versions of these documents will have links that allow the reader to access more detailed or technical information such as annual reports, final reports, photographs, or databases. Information contained in executive briefs will be used by park interpreters and may be incorporated into newsletters, posters, and presentations.

Status and Trends

Pilot monitoring for some SWAN vital signs was initiated in 2006 and additional monitoring projects will be phased in each year until 2011 when full implementation is anticipated. As data accumulates, executive briefs will contain status and trend information, interpretation of results, and implications of any observed changes as they relate to managing and protecting park resources. A summary of the other reporting outlets for information produced from the SWAN vital signs monitoring program is presented on page 94 of the SWAN vital signs monitoring plan.

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