# Natural Resource Year in Review

## 1996

*A report of the National Park Service, summarizing and analyzing the year in natural resource stewardship in the national park system*

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**Water rights preserved at Zion.** *See page 7.*

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**Flood experiment builds beaches at Grand Canyon.** *See page 34.*

Kerry Moss

**President Clinton shields Yellowstone from mining.** *See page 39.*

Mojave National Preserve

**Mojave National Preserve takes on threats.** *See page 41.*

© Noah Poritz, Bio-control of Weeds

**Insects control thistles at Wind Cave.** *See page 51.*

© Earl Nottingham, Texas Parks and Wildlife

**Kemp's Ridley sea turtles return to Padre Island.** *See page 55.*

*United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service*

*In memory of John Christiano, whose contributions to the Air Resources Division over the past 17 years helped lead the way to increased protection and preservation of air quality and visibility within the national park system.*


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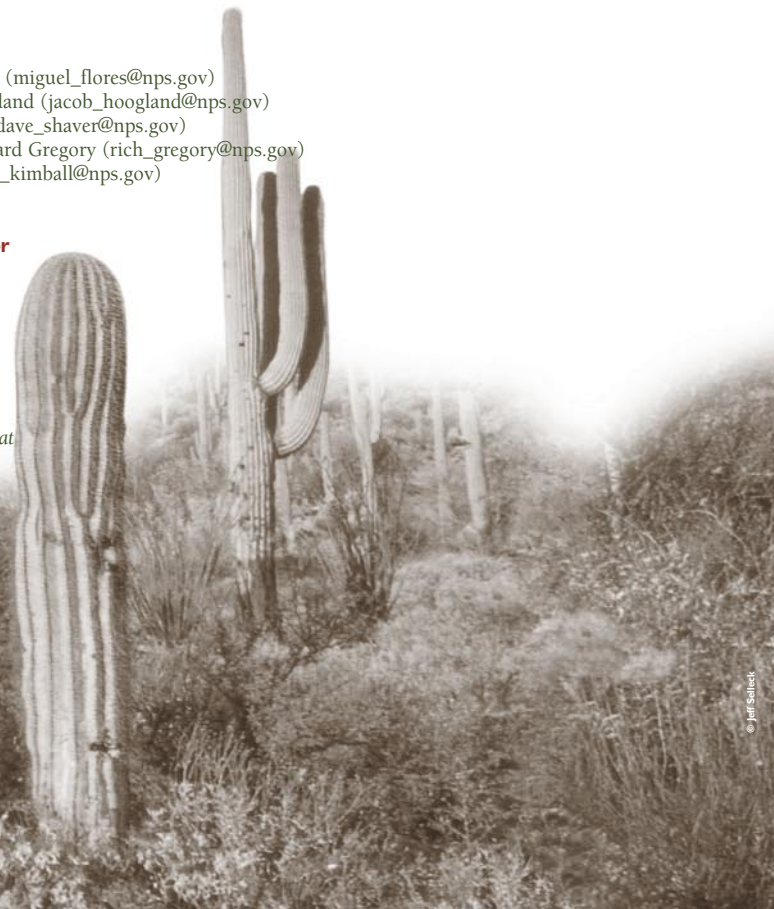

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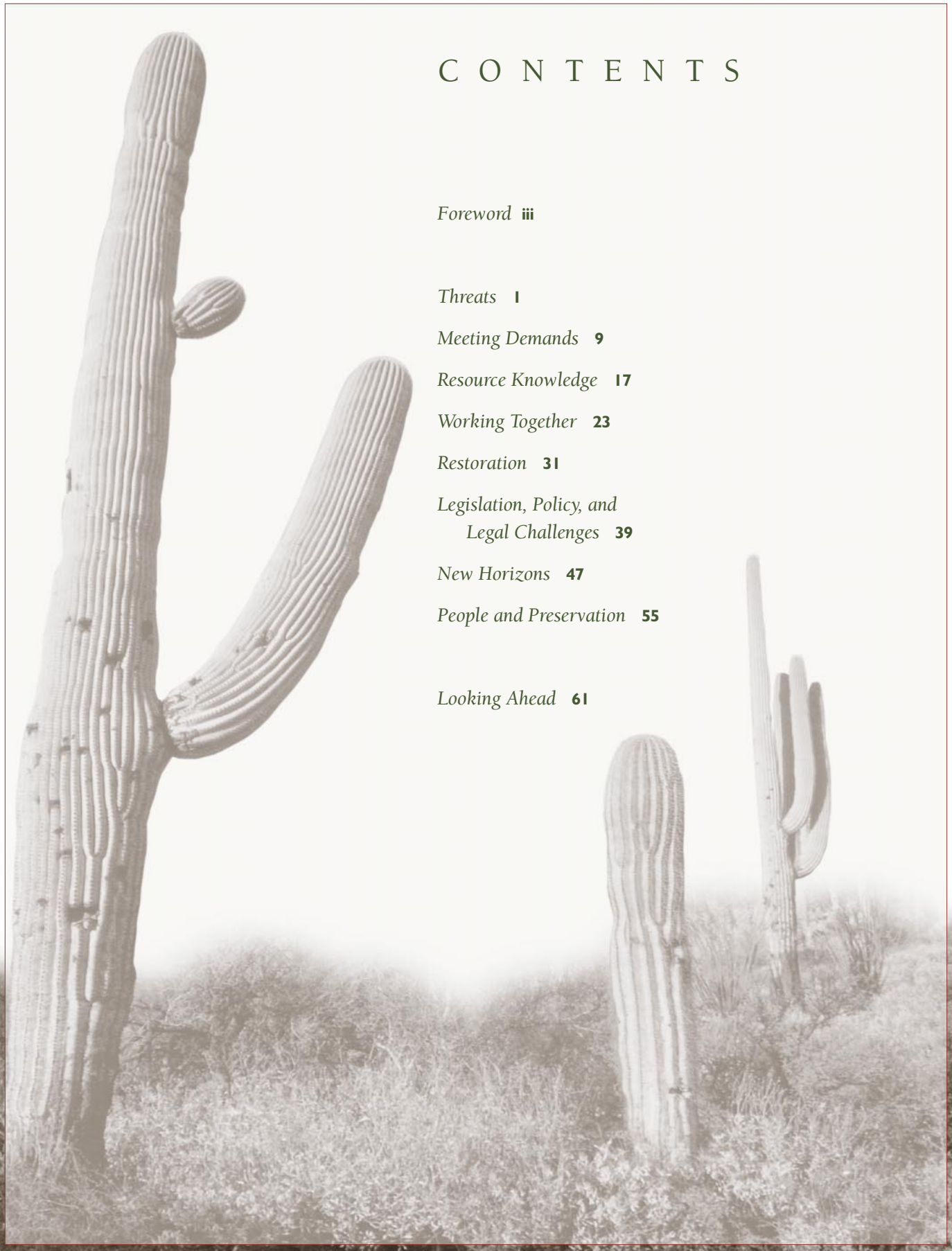
**Saguaro National Park, Arizona** *(right).*

*(Cover)* **Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming.**



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# FOREWORD

As the 21st century approaches, the natural resources of our national parks face increasing uncertainties. As our nation's population and economy grow, national parks are subject to greater internal and external pressures—and potential impacts. As the American public grows more engaged in national parks, natural resource management must keep pace with our success in accommodating visitors.

To understand and counter the effects of an increasingly human-dominated landscape and high levels of visitor use, we must provide national parks with a science effort consonant with long-term preservation. Bringing adequate science to bear on the complicated task of resource preservation must be a top priority for the National Park Service. Our science effort (both the procurement of new information and its application) must be of sufficient sophistication, professionalism, and magnitude to match our task—preserving 83 million acres of America's richest natural systems. To reach this goal will require a thorough reassessment of the scope of our task and the current level of effort.

Are time and opportunity slipping away from us? Perhaps we can best answer this by keeping better logs of where we have been. This report is our first attempt to take stock of the natural resource events in national parks in the preceding calendar year. Herein you will find annual achievements, science highlights, and perhaps ample testimony to the complexity of managing national parks in modern landscapes.

We hope this annual log will be enjoyable and informative to those concerned with the state of the natural resources in our national parks, and our ability to achieve the task of preserving our national parks for the enjoyment of future generations.

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