Congress, DOI, & OMB have basic questions

- ✓ How well are we managing natural resources in parks?
- ✓ Can we document results for our efforts and funding?
- ✓ Are new programs, priorities, or strategies needed?

They Expect Performance-Based Management

Federal agencies need to develop "…timely, useful, reliable, and transparent information…to facilitate strategic planning, assess progress, inform decision-making and strengthen accountability."

[GAO Comptroller General; 2004 Remarks on Key National Indicator Systems]

NPS is Taking Steps Toward Implementing Performance-based (Condition-based) Mgmt

Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)
NPS Management Policies
NPS Planning Guidance

All Require that Parks…

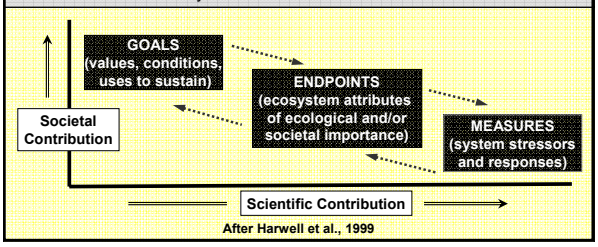
- **Define Park Mgmt Zones & Desired Conditions(DCs)**
- **Identify Supporting Indicators & Targets for DCs**
- **Develop Strategies & Timelines for Monitoring and Reporting Progress in Achieving DCs**

From Harwell et al., 1999,"A Framework For an Ecosystem Report Card", BioScience 49(7)

A Similar Take on Conservation Planning (from Science Perspective)

…Ecosystem Management is a structured process for society to define what ecological condition is desired at each part of a region, and to develop and implement management policies designed to achieve that mosaic of desired sustainable ecological conditions.

…This Framework is driven from the top down by the societal goals for ecosystem integrity and from the bottom up by detailed scientific measurements of ecosystem conditions.



After Harwell et al., 1999

Example Product From A Resource Stewardship Strategy (RSS)

Table 7: *Draft* RSS for Herbert Hoover NHS (May, 2006)

NATURAL ZONE						
Fundamental Resources and Values	**Attributes**	**Beneficial Influences**	**Detrimental Influences**	**Indicators**	**Target (=Desired Condition)**	**Current Condition**
Serene and Simple Setting	Integrity & Physical Condition (cultural landscape)	Landscape design	Traffic	CLI Assessment	Good	Good
			Local land use	FMSS Asset Condition	Good	Unknown
	Acoustic Condition			Sound Conditions	dB < 3600	Unknown
Other Important Resources and Values	**Attributes**	**Beneficial Influences**	**Detrimental Influences**	**Indicators**	**Target (=Desired Condition)**	**Current Condition**
Reconstructed Prairie Plant Community	Plant Diversity	Native volunteers Fire management	Disturbance Exotic invasion	Shannon Index	Native Plants > 2.63	1.51
	Native Plant Dominance			Invasive Plant Relative Cover	< 8%	11%
	Wildlife Populations Diversity			Presence of Grassland Obligate Species	Species Breeding = 5	5
Stream and Riparian Community	Vegetation Erosion/Deposition Soil Water Quality Plant Community		Disturbance Local land use Exotic invasion	Proper Functioning Condition	Functioning	Nonfunctional
				State Water Quality Standards	IA Class A Standards = Met	Not Met
				Potential Plant Community	Present	Absent

Watershed Condition Assessment (WCA) Program
Natural Resource Condition Assessments

- Broad scope: park wide, ecological (not just water)
- Based on existing data and information (I&M, other NPS, USGS, etc.) combined with best professional judgment
- Modest budget and short timeframe (270+ parks by FY2014)
- Interdisciplinary synthesis and translation of current data and knowledge: to address today's planning & reporting needs
- As much as possible, emphasize spatially-based evaluation and report-out for park resource conditions

"Overview Assessment" due to:
Broad Scope + Existing Data Emphasis + Modest Budget

Project Evaluation Criteria

1. Did it result in specialized data and information products directly useful for planning and reporting?
(what were they)

2. Were the assessment process and findings scientifically credible, in the context of an "existing data plus professional judgment" approach to assessment?
(logical and transparent basis for key findings; assumptions, level of confidence, and critical data gaps documented)

3. Did parks view assessment findings as relevant and useful to their needs in terms of data sources used, management issues highlighted, and judgments and recommendations provided to park managers?
(what products were most useful)