



# Collaborative Forest Management Seminar

## Philadelphia, PA

## March

The New River Gorge National River, located in southeastern West Virginia, is situated within a large ecological zone that biologists identify as a mixed mesophytic forest. Many families residing in and around the park engage in traditional cultural practices of harvesting and using forest resources acquired through hunting, fishing and gathering. Some resources are consumed by households for food, medicine and craft production, while others (particularly ginseng and moss) are gathered in larger quantities for commercial purposes. Planning for a new general management plan, and the results of a recently completed Ethnographic Overview and Assessment, have called attention to traditional uses of park resources by existing and former park residents and neighbors. Very little is known about the identity, intensity and geographical concentration of contemporary patterns of resource acquisition, the groups who harvest them, and the cultural practices of harvest and use. The park plans to conduct a social science research project to investigate these questions.

This seminar will assist the park to examine another set of questions regarding the involvement of knowledgeable local harvesters in assessing the resources and their uses, and in planning and implementing appropriate management strategies and approaches. The park's forest resources have been managed effectively according to standard NPS practices associated with the protection and preservation of biological resources. Senior park managers are interested in exploring management concepts and approaches that are collaborative, that bring knowledgeable local resource experts together with park biologists and



Flowing northward through deep canyons in a forested landscape, the New River is among the oldest rivers on the continent.

managers in developing a more effective resource management regime, while remaining within the parameters of federal laws, regulations and NPS policies. This seminar will present several case studies, including positive and negative examples, of approaches used to accomplish similar goals and objectives at NPS and other federal land management units.

The seminar will begin with a presentation by Dr. Mary Hufford, Director of the Center for Folklore and Ethnography at the University of Pennsylvania, who was the PI for the ethnographic study. She will discuss the research findings about traditional use and her recommendations for collaboration in forest management practices. This will be followed by the presentation of several case studies of issues involved in developing cooperative management approaches by NPS and other federal agencies, and of strategies and approaches that have proven to be effective or ineffective in developing and institutionalizing such management approaches. Presentations will include a discussion of the history of the case beginning with how it came to the attention of managers, describing responses, and discussing outcomes. The lessons learned from each case that are relevant to similar situations will also be summarized. Case studies will be drawn from Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. In conclusion, these presentations will be discussed and additional observations will be provided by Darryll Johnson, Pacific Northwest Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Co-leader and NPS Research Coordinator, at the University of Washington.