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OIA Has New (Unwatered) Turf

No people, very little land, and no fresh water.

That's a pretty accurate description of Navassa, which lies about thirty miles off the coast of Haiti. The currently uninhabited island is not new to the United States, which has claimed it continuously since 1857. But it is new to the Office of Insular Affairs.

Navassa has had a checkered past. In the early days it was a pirates' hideout, but given the lack of potable water, they did not stay there very long. Haitian fishermen have been known to dry their catch there, and Haiti still lays claim to the islet.

The United States acquired Navassa through the operations of 19th Century's Guano Act, which said that an American entrepreneur wanting to mine solidified bird droppings from an otherwise uninhabited, unclaimed island could do so, and that the U.S. Government would claim islands that were, in fact, mined for this once highly-valued fertilizer.

Navassa was so mined, for decades, under the grimmest of working conditions; once, the Americans lured into this desolate island carried out the ultimate industrial action—they murdered their bosses.

OIA is currently working out the regulations for visiting the island, which is 100 percent controlled by Interior. Several individuals as well as groups have expressed interest in visiting the island. There are no harbors, and no beaches.

If you want to land on the island—which no OIA staffer has yet done—you have to bring your vessel up to one of the island's cliffs and clamber up a rope ladder of unknown vintage. There are some ruins of the old mining camp and the now-deactivated Coast Guard lighthouse, but there is no other place to take shelter.

The draft regulations for visitors are based on those used by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for its Pacific islets. The underlying notions are dual:

- 1) OIA wants to make sure that only the physically hardy and well-prepared attempt a visit; and
- 2) the agency wants to make sure that the current ecosystem is not damaged by the introduction of exotic plants and wildlife.

OIA contact is **Joseph McDermott** at (202) 208-6816.



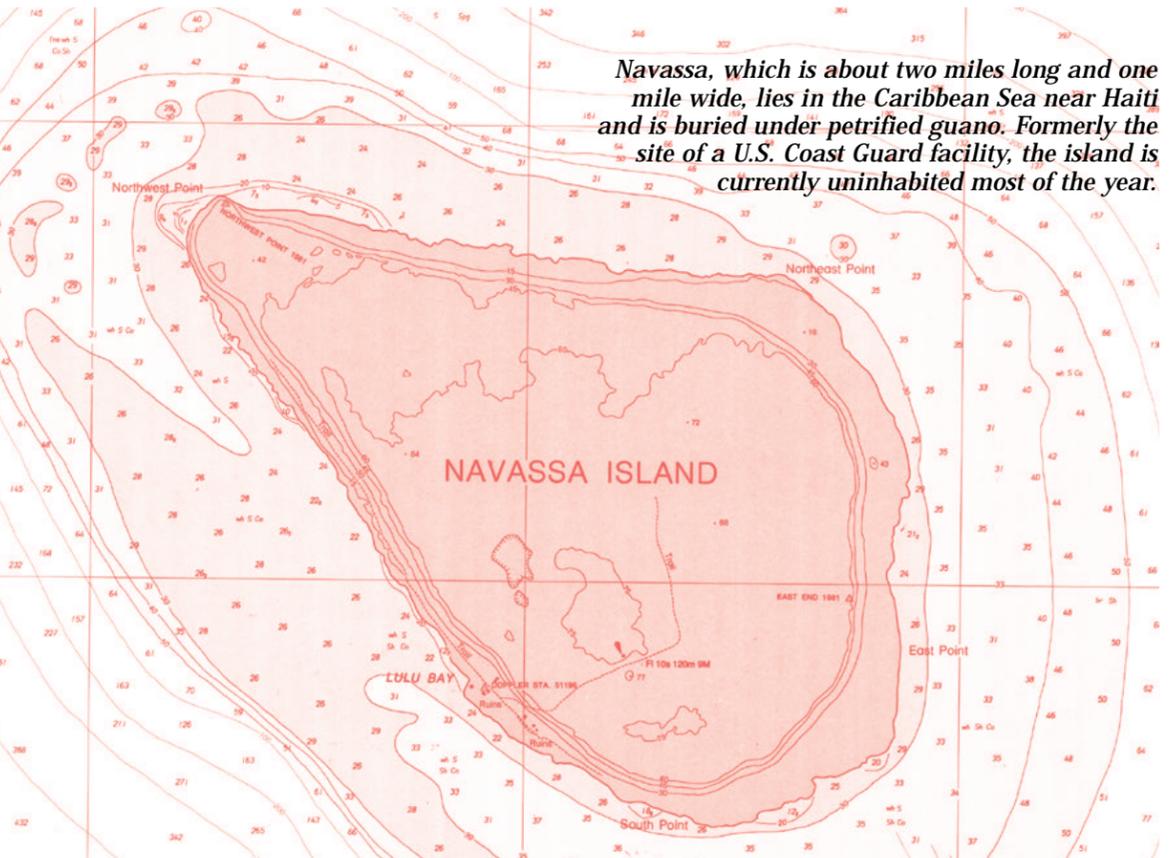
OIA Web Site

Internet users can secure a great deal of information on the United States insular areas and the freely associated states by calling up the Office of Insular Affairs' new home page on the internet.

The address is WWW.DOI.GOV/OIA/INDEX.HTML

Currently at this site are the full text of the OIA's annual publication *A Report on the State of the Islands*, complete with tables and reports on various governmental programs; economic and demographic statistics are also included.

The site also includes factsheets on American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and other insular areas as well as on the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. Other data will be provided later, as the site expands. OIA contact is **Nancy Boone Fanning** at (202) 208-6816.



Navassa, which is about two miles long and one mile wide, lies in the Caribbean Sea near Haiti and is buried under petrified guano. Formerly the site of a U.S. Coast Guard facility, the island is currently uninhabited most of the year.

Territories Bill Reported Out of Senate

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee voted out S.210, an Omnibus Territories Bill on May 21. The measure would provide for greater access by the Government of Guam to excess U.S. lands on the island, and would authorize or make modifications to a series of programs of interest to the insular areas.

With regard to several thousand acres of U.S. military lands on Guam that have a wildlife refuge overlay and may become excess in the future, a 180-day process would be established whereby Guam and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would attempt to agree on terms of the transfer to Guam.

If there is agreement, the transfer to Guam would take place. If there is no agreement, the land would be transferred to the federal General Services Administration, awaiting congressional action.

Other sections of the bill provide for:

The extension by five years of a program providing foodstuffs to the residents of the

four atolls in the Marshalls that were affected by the U.S. nuclear weapons testing program;

The retention of the powers of the Governors of Guam and the Virgin Islands while on official travel;

The division of the land grant university in Micronesia into three institutions, one in each freely associated state (FAS);

Giving the territories and the State of Hawaii the responsibility for reporting on the impact of immigrants from the freely associated states to the U.S. territories and Hawaii;

Extending federal housing eligibility to FAS citizens on Guam, as long as all U.S. citizens have been served; and

Creating Commissions on the economic futures of American Samoa and of the U.S. Virgin Islands.



Northern Mariana Islands Labor Immigration Bill Introduced

Congressman George Miller of California, the ranking member on the House Resources Committee, has introduced a bill that would provide additional labor standards and immigration protections in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

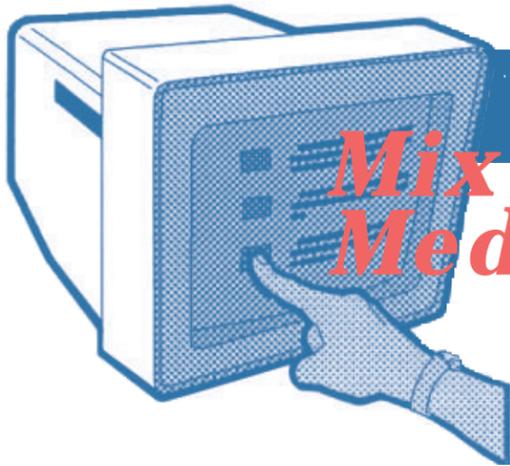
The measure, which has 25 co-sponsors, calls for immediate federal control of immigration and thus the use of laws and regulations used by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, rather than those of the Commonwealth. A second provision would provide that only garments made by manufacturers abiding by the new federal minimum wage could use the "Made in the USA" label.

Under the bill, the minimum wage in the islands, (now \$2.90 for garments and construction, and \$3.05 for other industries) would, on enactment, go to \$3.55 an hour. On January 1, 1998, it would increase by 50 cents an hour, and every six months a 50 cent-an-

hour increase would be repeated until the federal minimum wage was equaled. Currently, the Northern Marianas legislature sets the local minimum wage.

The federal wage (now \$4.75 an hour) does not apply in the Northern Marianas because of a special exemption the islanders negotiated in their political status agreement with the United States. The islands had been administered by the United States as a United Nations trusteeship before the Northern Marianas electorate opted for a U.S. commonwealth status. Nationally, the federal minimum wage is scheduled to go to \$5.15 an hour on September 1 of this year.

In a related development, the May issue of *Readers' Digest*, one of the most widely distributed and read publications in the United States, featured an article on alleged labor abuses in the Northern Marianas' garment industry. OIA contact is **Steve Sander** at (202) 208-4754.



Mix & Match Media Magic

This is the third and final installment in a series on the use of interactive multimedia for training, education, and outreach programs.

The most important factor in accomplishing your intended purpose for an interactive multimedia program is how all of the elements—containing all of the information that you want to impart—are put together, laid out, interrelated, and presented. That's the role of program authoring, and that's where Interior's AudioVisual Center can help most.

An interactive program is not like a movie or a video. People using an interactive program have to be motivated to peruse it; they have to be engaged in it. It has to be informative, of course; but it also has to be interesting; it has to pull people in; it has to be easy to navigate—rational, logical, intuitive.

And it has to look good. It can't simply contain all the information you want to have in it; that information has to be arranged attractively and interrelated in ways that users quickly understand or discern and want to pursue. That's done through a combination of authoring and design.

If you are contemplating an interactive program, there are a few things that will clarify whether such a program is appropriate for you and, if it is, help speed the process. The first step, of course, is to define clearly the purpose or objective of the program. It's best if you can do this in a brief, simple sentence, e.g., "Management programs at certain National Parks clearly show how plant and animal species are protected and preserved throughout the nation."

The second step is to specify the intended primary audience. For you that may be the public, for instance, or high school students. Or it could be professionals in a selected field, or agency personnel, or any of a number of other groups. But you should clearly target a specific audience.

Third—and this may require consultation with our communication experts—determine whether a traditional linear presentation, such as a video, or an interactive program would provide the desired information to accomplish your objective in the most effective manner for your audience.

Once You've Decided on Interactive Media

Then, if you decide that an interactive program is the way to go, some preliminary judgment about the level of interactivity to be involved should be made: How many parts of the program should be inter-connected? How much freedom of exploration through the program do you think is desirable?

A general outline of the program's desired content—the information you want to make available—is the next step. Then an initial determination should be made regarding the media elements that should probably be included in the program for maximum impact elements, e.g., text, graphics, photographs, video clips, and narration. With all of that out of the way, a valuable next step is to find out what media elements may already be available for the program.

Much of the above can be done with the help of the AudioVisual Center, and we will work closely with you through the production of your program. With the information you provide, we will draw up a production schedule and—using your outline and estimation of the desired level of interactivity—provide an outline of the program's presentation. Together with you, we can then determine the preferred method of delivery, e.g., a hard drive in a kiosk or CD-ROM discs for wide distribution. With an understanding of the extent and complexity of the program—and the media elements to be included—we will then select the authoring software to organize the program.

Authoring software consists of programs that do basically two things: they interrelate and synchronize media elements for an interactive multimedia presentation, and they provide ways for users of the presentation to navigate through it. They let users call up, refer to, or branch out to any of the subjects or elements of the presentation in a way that seems most natural, helpful, or enjoyable for them—or in some other way best for them.

Authoring programs are generally text-based, object-based, or time-line-based, with most today being object-based. In these programs, icons representing objects (elements of the presentation, such as text segments or video clips) are selected by the author and interrelated in various ways to other icons by simply connecting the icons, using the computer mouse.

This may sound simple enough, but one secret to success in interactive programming is recognizing the ways that users may want to move from one topic to another and to make provision for this. And the author must remember to keep in mind the need to make certain that information is presented in a meaningful way for the targeted audience.



If you have information that you need to convey and you're wondering whether an interactive multimedia program is the way to go, contact the Department's AudioVisual Center. We'll work through the question with you. Call **Liz Shugrue** at (303) 236-2001; fax to (303)

Computers and Your Vision

Visual discomfort is the most frequent health complaint reported by computer users. However, there is no scientific evidence that using a computer can damage the eyes.

Based on available scientific evidence, the American Academy of Ophthalmology considers video display terminals to be safe for normal use and to present no hazard to the eye. There is no convincing experimental or epidemiological evidence that exposure to video display terminals results in cataracts or any other organic damage to the eye. The National Research Council and the American Medical Association came to the same conclusion.

Using a computer, however, can sometimes cause eyestrain, including such temporary symptoms as burning, itching, fatigue, aching, dryness, soreness, watering, redness, headaches, and blurred vision.

People who spend four or more hours a day at a computer and people over the age of forty are more likely to experience these symptoms. Here are some generally recommended suggestions for preventing eyestrain:

The top of the monitor should be at, or slightly below, eye level. The distance from the eyes to the display screen should be approximately 18 to 30 inches.

Rest your eyes by occasionally looking away from the display screen to focus on distant objects. Avoid prolonged, concentrated work at the computer. Take frequent breaks or do alternative work throughout the day that does not require the use of a computer.

Uncorrected, or improperly corrected, vision is a major cause of eyestrain. You should have regular eye examinations, and be sure to mention that you use a computer.

Adjust the monitor for brightness and contrast to suit your viewing preference. Clean the display screen and your eyeglasses (if you wear them) regularly.

Avoid glare by placing the display screen at a right angle to windows. Tilting the screen slightly downward may also be helpful. A glare-reduction filter (screen) should be used only as a last resort because it can degrade the quality of the screen image.

Pulling the Media Elements Together

The author must also assure that if a user gets into a presentation topic in a way that might be confusing or unhelpful, he or she has an easy and logical way to get back quickly to a part of the program that is more understandable or useful.

With authoring of the presentation underway, we do whatever is necessary to obtain all of the media elements that will be used in the program. These elements could include any of the media—video, text, graphics, narration, sound bites, sound effects, music, 3D objects, animation—and they may be created by the Center or be obtained from libraries or stock houses. For your program, you may already have information that will speed up this process.

The design of the program, the way it looks on screen, is important, too. Regardless of the complexity of the program, it should look inviting and logically laid out to users, and that look should be consistent throughout. This should make navigating through the program more comfortable for users and should help them know where they are in it. If you have suggestions or requirements for program design, we will incorporate those in the program.

Once authoring has properly interrelated all of the elements and incorporated the selected design, a proof of the final program is made to make certain that all the elements are properly included and that the program works as you want it to. This proof will ordinarily be a CD-ROM, but it could be some other format.

Changes that are necessary in the program can still be made. When a proof is approved, the program is transferred to its final delivery format. If that format is CD-ROM, a glass master is made and copies struck from that—much as LP records used to be made. Then, the program is ready for delivery.

Through *Scene Three*, the Center's contract media producer, we have the capability to make informative and easily navigable interactive multimedia programs, whether simple or complex. That capability includes not only the two most advanced interactive multimedia authoring programs—Director and Authorware—but personnel whose specialty is authoring interactive multimedia programs.

These personnel are supported by on-staff and on-call experts in every medium that can be involved in the programs—writing, graphics, 2D animation, 3D modeling, 3D animation, film, video, and sound (narration, effects, and music composition and performing). The combination of all of this expertise provides a great deal of assurance that the interactive multimedia programs will be entertaining as well as informative, logical as well as comprehensive, and easy to navigate, even if they are complex.

Legislative Update

H.R. 1420 Defines Compatible Public Uses for Wildlife Refuges

Janet Tennyson

On June 3, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved far-reaching legislation that, for the first time, clearly defines the mission and priority public uses of the 92-million acre National Wildlife Refuge System, the nation's only federal lands specifically dedicated to wildlife conservation. H.R. 1420, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 passed by a vote of 407 to 1. The measure now goes to the Senate for action.

The bill, sponsored by **Congressman Don Young**, chairman of the House Committee on Resources, was supported by **Secretary Babbitt** who hailed its "strong and singular conservation mission" for the refuge system and provisions defining compatible wildlife-dependent recreation on refuges as legitimate and appropriate public uses.

The legislation defines compatible wildlife-dependent recreation as, "... a legitimate and appropriate general public use of the [refuge] system." It establishes hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation as priority public uses to receive enhanced consideration over others. The legislation states that these uses should be facilitated when compatible but does not mandate these activities.

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"The sportsmen wanted legislative recognition of their role in the refuge system," Secretary Babbitt said in an interview with the Anchorage Daily News. "They've had an enormous one, but they've never had a formal legislative acknowledgment, and they've been getting uneasy as they hear some environmentalists say refuges are not a place for hunting and fishing. They were looking for some security."

(Of the 509 units in the National Wildlife Refuge System, 283 allow hunting and 276 allow fishing.)

"Environmentalists wanted formal recognition that the refuges' raison d'être was the protection of wildlife, and that whatever recreation was permitted in the sanctuaries must be compatible with that primary goal," said Jim Waltman, a wildlife specialist with the Wilderness Society in Washington, D.C.

These uses also were defined as priority public uses in Executive Order 12996—Management and General Public Use of the National Wildlife Refuge System—signed by President Clinton in March 1996. Other key provisions of H.R. 1420 that mirror the Executive Order include the refuge system mission statement, and a requirement that the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the refuge system be maintained.

The new legislation also includes provisions requiring that all new public uses and any renewal of existing uses comply with a public involvement process spelled out in the bill. It also mandates public involvement in the development of refuge management plans. The plans must identify the purposes of each refuge, data on wildlife populations, archaeological and cultural values, suitable visitor facilities, any problems that affect wildlife and actions to remedy them, and opportunities for compatible wildlife-dependent recreation.

H.R. 1420, which has been described as "a rare display of bipartisan cooperation on major environmental legislation," culminates intense negotiations to develop legislation that would address the varying concerns of refuge users and interest groups, including hunting and fishing organizations, in management and public use of the refuge system.

The bill was introduced in the House on April 23. The Committee on Resources voted unanimously April 30 to approve the bill for consideration by the full House.

The negotiations involved **Congressmen Young** (Alaska), **John Dingell** (Michigan), **Jim Saxton** (New Jersey), and **George Miller** (California); and representatives of the National Audubon Society, Wildlife Management Institute, International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and Wildlife Legislative Fund of America.

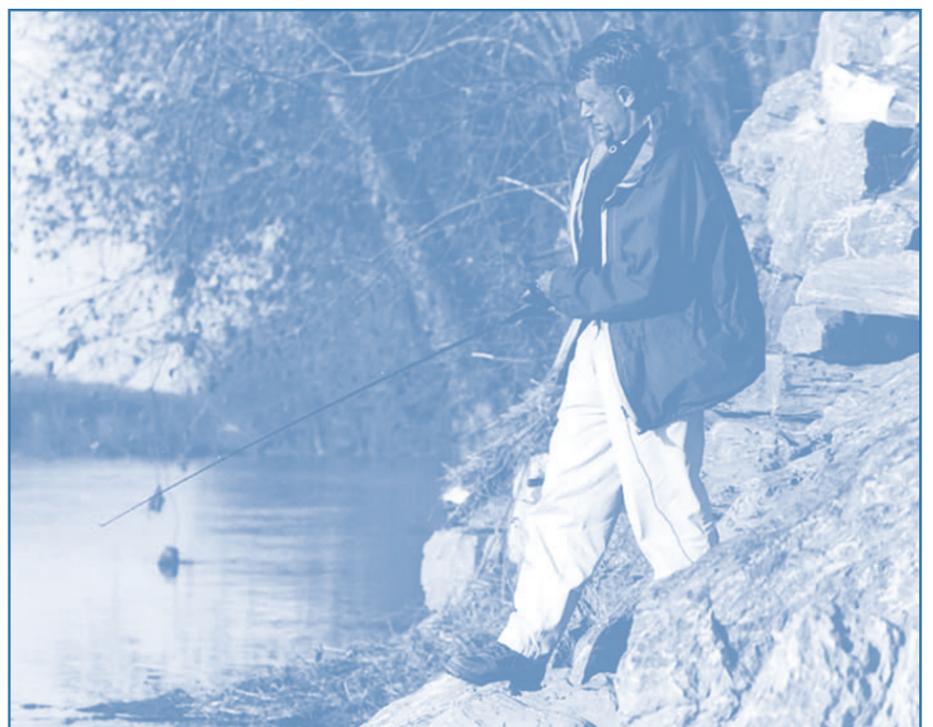
"I sincerely hope that this bipartisan approach to problem-solving can be a model for resolving other natural resource issues which may otherwise divide us," Secretary Babbitt concluded in the letter to Congressman Young.

"This legislation represents an historic moment for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by reinforcing the National Wildlife Refuge System's long-standing commitment to

wildlife conservation," said **Acting Service Director John Rogers**. "And this conservation mission goes hand-in-hand with the outdoor pursuits refuge visitors enjoy. When we do our wildlife conservation job well, plenty of opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation result."

The only previous legislation defining the 94-year old refuge system came in 1966 with passage of the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, which H.R. 1420 amends. This law provided that all of the individual refuges become the National Wildlife Refuge System and established a compatibility standard for permitting public uses of individual refuges.

However, the 1966 law lacked a unifying purpose or mission for the refuge system and a specific process by which compatibility determinations should be made. H.R. 1420 is designed to address these issues and provide the refuge system with an "Organic Act" to govern its management and use into the next century.



Secretary Babbitt enjoys fishing along a Northern Virginia stream.
Photo by Tami Heilemann, ISC