



Coalition To Protect America's National Parks Weekly National Park System Report

Wednesday, June 28, 2017

Volume 1

Number 12

Incidents

Fort Pulaski NM Park Reopens Following Recovery From Tornado Damage

The park, which has been closed since it was hit by an [EF 2 tornado](#) on May 23rd, will reopen to the public tomorrow.

According to the [Savannah News](#), the wind speed for the tornado that began near the Wilmington Park neighborhood reached 116 mph. The tornado continued several miles over marshland, eventually crossing U.S. 80 and passing about 50 yards from Fort Pulaski on Cockspur Island.

The tornado then progressed across the fort's parking lot, just north of the fort itself, where it exited into the Atlantic Ocean as a strong waterspout. The tornado also damaged 34 homes on Wilmington Island.

Two Fort Pulaski employees were about to leave work for the day when the tornado came through. They hid in a room under the demi-lune near the fort's entrance, which was originally used to store black powder. Neither was injured during the tornado, but one of their cars, a yellow Jeep, was damaged by flying debris. A slideshow of the damage inflicted on the park can be found on the [WSAV webpage](#).

Following a month of recovery operations conducted by the park's staff, assisted by the Service's Eastern Incident Management Team and other National Park Service resources, Cockspur Island and Fort Pulaski will be accessible to visitors in time for the Fourth of July.

The park's operating hours will return to normal (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily). While the visitor center will remain closed to the public, a visitor contact station and bookstore will be open inside historic Fort Pulaski. Water and restroom facilities will be available near the visitor center and at the picnic area.

For information, go to www.nps.gov/fopu; www.instagram.com/FortPulaskiNPS; www.twitter.com/FortPulaskiNPS; or www.facebook.com/FortPulaskiNPS.

Source: [Fort Pulaski NM](#).

Grand Teton NP Climber Rescued After Fall On Disappointment Peak

On Monday, June 19th, rangers rescued a climber who fell after slipping and falling on snow. Robert Henderson, 68, was descending the Southeast Ridge of Disappointment Peak when he fell. Rangers responded quickly and transported him to St. John's Medical Center in Jackson.

Henderson's fall, which took place just before 1:30 p.m., was witnessed from below by two hikers in the Amphitheater Lake area. Those hikers were the first to call Teton Interagency Dispatch Center and report the accident. Shortly thereafter, Henderson's climbing partner, Dan Matzke, called the dispatch center and reported that Henderson had lost his footing and slid on the snow before disappearing from view. Henderson's fall carried him a total of 400 feet downhill, including a 60- to 80-foot-high cliff, to a location amongst snow and trees approximately 300 feet above Amphitheater Lake.

A ranger who was climbing on Disappointment Peak met up with Matzke, assisted him on the technical descent to Amphitheater Lake, and reached Henderson's location at about 3:00 p.m. The ranger assessed Henderson, who was alert but had suffered leg and shoulder injuries. Matzke continued downhill with a bystander.

At 4:20 p.m., the Teton Interagency contract helicopter lowered two rangers to Henderson's location via short-haul. The rangers loaded Henderson into a rescue litter and prepared him for extraction by short-haul. One ranger attended Henderson during the short flight out to the Lupine Meadows Rescue Cache. While he was taken to the hospital, the helicopter returned to retrieve the remaining two rangers.

Though Henderson and Matzke were planning to climb on snow and had all the necessary gear to do so, park rangers recognize that many visitors to the Tetons may not be expecting wintertime conditions in June. Rangers advise that elevations above 9,000 feet are mostly still snow-covered, and appropriate knowledge and experience using an ice ax and crampons is necessary for traversing steep terrain.

Source: [Grand Teton NP](#).

Rocky Mountain NP Rangers Make Several Same-Day Rescues

The park's rescue team had a busy day this past Saturday, with one of several incidents not resolved until Sunday morning.

On Saturday afternoon, an 18-year-old man from Kansas was rock hopping on a section of the Roaring River above the Alluvial Fan when he became stuck on the west side of the river, with his family on the east side.

Rangers were notified at 2:30 p.m. They assessed the situation with members of Estes Valley Fire Protection District's Dive and Swiftwater Rescue Team; after considering the complexity and length of time the rescue would likely take, they determined that it would be safest to conduct the rescue on Sunday morning. They provided the man with warm clothes, a sleeping bag and food. A ranger stayed overnight on the other side of the river from the young man.

At 5:30 a.m. Sunday morning, rescuers gathered and at 7 a.m. a highline rescue operation was begun. The young man was rescued at approximately 10:20 a.m. Over 20 people were involved in the operation.

In a second incident on Saturday, a 15-year-old girl fell in the St. Vrain River in the Wild Basin area. She tumbled downstream approximately 50 yards, over an eight-foot-high waterfall, and through significant rapids. Bystanders and family members were able to rescue her before rangers arrived. She sustained leg injuries and was carried out via a wheeled litter to the Wild Basin trailhead, where she was taken by ambulance to the Estes Park Medical Center.

Rangers also assisted an injured 24-year-old man who'd been bouldering in the Chaos Canyon area and had injured his leg in a fall, a 27-year-old woman who'd suffered a knee injury on the Gem Lake Trail, and a 26-year-old man who'd had a seizure after taking a small fall at Emerald Lake.

Source: [Rocky Mountain NP](#).

Death Valley NP

Woman Suffers Third-Degree Burns In Barefoot Walk Across Sand

A woman walking barefoot in Death Valley suffered third-degree burns to her feet earlier this month.

The woman lost her sandals in the Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes and walked about a half-mile barefoot on the sand. An ambulance took her to a hospital for treatment.

Rangers say that the temperature of the sand was not recorded, but ground temperatures in Death Valley are frequently higher than official temperatures, which are recorded about four feet off the ground in the shade. Ground temperatures above 200 degrees have been recorded in the park.

Death Valley hit 126 degrees on Tuesday, June 20th, and a high of 125 degrees was forecast for Thursday. The Wrangler Restaurant at Furnace Creek in Death Valley was forced to close on Tuesday when its air-conditioning system broke down.

Rangers are warning visitors not to stray from air-conditioned vehicles for more than 15 minutes, avoid activity in the middle of the day, wear a hat and sunscreen, and drink plenty of water. They also advise visitors to spend more time at higher, cooler, parts of the park.

Source: [The Sacramento Bee via EMS1.com webpage](#).

National Fire Situation

National Interagency Fire Center

Large Fire Activity Continues In Southwest

NIFC remains at Preparedness Level 2.

The 17 large fires still being fought as of yesterday have so far burned more than 122,000 acres. Firefighters in the Southwest Area continue to make good progress toward containment goals on the 10 large fires in Arizona and New Mexico. The Encino, Bar X, Lincoln Beach, and Dry Hills fires were contained on Monday.

No large fires are burning in National Park Service areas. A number of parks, however, have introduced fire restrictions due to high temperatures and dry conditions:

- Southern Arizona – Saguaro NP, Casa Grande Ruins NM, Coronado NM, Chiricahua NM, Fort Bowie NHS, Tumacácori NHP, Organ Pipe Cactus NM. [More information.](#)
- Arches NP. [More information.](#)
- Southwestern Utah/Northwestern Arizona – Zion NP, Bryce Canyon NP, Cedar Breaks NM, Pipe Spring NM, Glen Canyon NRA and Rainbow Bridge NM. [More information.](#)
- Sequoia and Kings Canyon NPs. [More information.](#)

The 2017 fire season continues to record fewer – but much larger – fires:

Category	2017 YTD Total	2006-2016 YTD Ave	2017 Variance
Year-to-Date Fires	28,453	31,157	- 2,704
Year-to-Date Acres	2,660,301	1,776,491	+ 883,810

Source: NIFC Situation Report, plus individual park press releases.

News From Around Washington

Reports from Capitol Hill, the White House, the Department of the Interior, the National Park Service and other related agencies and NGO's. Prepared by members Don Hellmann, former assistant director, legislative and congressional affairs for the National Park Service, and Bill Halainen, newsletter editor.

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Secretary Zinke Testifies On 2018 Budget Request

On Wednesday, June 21st, Secretary Zinke testified before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee regarding the president's FY 2018 budget request.

In its coverage of the hearing, *Washington Post* reporter Lisa Rein said that Zinke "plans to shrink his department's sprawling workforce by 4,000 employees — about 8 percent of the full-time staff — as part of budget cuts to downsize the government's largest public lands agency."

Zinke would then rely on a combination of attrition, reassignments and buyouts to make the cuts. Depending on how fast and effective those strategies are, the department would then determine the need for further action to reduce staffing. [Click here](#) for the full text of his testimony, which runs to about 12 pages.

Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), chair of the committee, thanked Zinke for his testimony, but offered a realistic perspective on the proposals it contained.

"We will be reviewing all of the cuts this budget proposes very carefully," she said in her opening remarks. "I do not expect many of them to become reality, especially those targeting popular programs. But I will also say that the positives, in my opinion, outweigh the negatives. For every item that many of us will not be able to support, there is another that we can. And I haven't been able to make that statement for quite some time." [Click here](#) for the text of Senator Murkowski's comments.

The only additional comments made at the hearing were by Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Washington), ranking member on the committee. They do not appear on the committee's web page, but can be found in a press release that she later issued.

Cantwell raised concerns about what she called "baseless and dangerous budget cuts." The press release continues with this passage on the NPS:

"During Secretary Zinke's confirmation hearing, he stated that providing frontline professionals with the tools and resources they need was one of his top priorities. Sen. Cantwell questioned how a proposed \$378 million cut to the National Park Service budget would accomplish that priority. 'Just one year after the National Park Centennial, this budget would cut almost \$400 million from the Park Service budget. It would result in cutting more than 1,000 full-time employees,' said Sen. Cantwell. 'And according to the Department's own math, "nearly 90 percent of parks would reduce their current staffing levels, leading to the reduction of services to the public.'"

Cantwell also criticized the proposed massive cuts to other DOI agencies, to the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and in particular to earthquake and volcano early warning monitoring systems.

Regarding the proposed reductions in national monuments, Cantwell had this to say: "It took the Trump Administration less than 100 days to launch its unprecedented war on 111 years of bipartisan land conservation—which began with President Roosevelt's leadership. The most glaring example is the ongoing attacks on the Antiquities Act in general, and Bears Ears National Monument in particular." [Click here](#) for the full text and for a video of Cantwell's testimony.

Sources: [Washington Post](#) for the news story; [Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee webpage](#) for an overview of the hearing.

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Zinke Testifies On Budget Before Senate Appropriations Subcommittee

On June 21st, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies held a hearing to examine the president's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of the Interior, including the National Park Service.

Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke was the witness for the department. [Click here](#) for his testimony. [Click here](#) to read the opening statement by Senator Murkowski, the subcommittee's chair. A video of the hearing is available at [this link](#).

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Hearing Held On Collaborative Landscape, Watershed Management

On June 21st, the Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing to examine collaborative initiatives, focusing on restoring watersheds and large landscapes across boundaries through state and federal partnerships.

Senator Mike Lee (R-UT), chair of the subcommittee, summarized the theme of the hearing in his opening statement.

“Millions of acres of watersheds and critical landscapes across the country are deteriorating,” he said. “Invasive species, catastrophic wildfires, and inadequate management have badly damaged these lands and continue to threaten their health. These problems are not exclusive to federal lands – many state and private lands face similar threats.

“Healthy watersheds are essential to our environment, our economy, and our wellbeing. They support everything from water quality and wildlife habitat to livestock grazing, timber harvesting, and recreation. We must find innovative ways to restore these lands to ensure they can support these vital functions in the future.”

He concluded by saying that cooperative management of these areas holds the key to their future protection.

“Collaborative initiatives are true state-based solutions to the problems we face,” he said. “When we let states take the lead, we avoid the partisan bickering and red tape that can bog down projects by the federal government.

BLM Assistant Director for Resources and Planning Kristin Bail was the witness for the department. Her testimony can be found at [this link](#).

House of Representatives Committee On Natural Resources Holds Hearing On DOI Budget

On June 22nd, the Committee on Natural Resources held a hearing entitled “Examining the Department of the Interior's Spending Priorities and the President's Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Proposal.” Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke was again the witness for the department.

The hearing went well beyond just the particulars of the budget. Here’s the full text of the committee’s press release on it, which shows the issues of concern to its majority members; their plans for the future are implicit.

“Today, the Committee on Natural Resources held an oversight hearing with Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to examine the Trump Administration’s budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2018 and new policy priorities of DOI and its sub agencies.

“The shared priorities of balancing our budget, improving land management and expanding access can’t be fully achieved without broader reforms,’ Chairman Rob Bishop (R-UT) said. ‘I look forward to hearing your thoughts on how this Committee can provide the administration with the tools for it to succeed.’

Last year DOI only generated \$2.6 billion in revenue from offshore development, a significant decrease from \$18 billion in 2008. According to Secretary Zinke, the revenue loss ‘could have made up our entire backlog plus three billion dollars of additional investments to fund programs and schools.’

‘When you put 94 percent of all offshore holdings off limits, it has a consequence. When you decide you’re not going to cut any timber, it has a consequence. When you decide you’re not going to do anything onshore, it has a consequence,’ Zinke argued.

In light of President Trump’s executive order to comprehensively review recent monument designations under the Antiquities Act, a number of Members asked Secretary Zinke about his vision for public lands, monument designations and the limits of executive power.

‘There are areas within monuments that are better suited in my judgement to be national recreation areas, conservation areas,’ Zinke responded. ‘The authority does not rest with the executive. The authority rests with [Congress].’

As litigation is often one of the most cited reasons for project delays, Members also questioned how excessive lawsuits impact the DOI’s ability to fulfill its core mission and address our nation’s infrastructure needs.

Members praised the Administration for putting forward a responsible and strategic budget that leverages the nation’s natural resources.

‘The Department of Interior touches the lives of more Americans than any other Department,’ Zinke stated. ‘Interior is not a partisan issue. Our public lands is an American issue.’”

[Click here](#) to view full witness testimony.

Department of the Interior Secretary Announces Delisting of Yellowstone Grizzly Bear

On June 22nd, Secretary Zinke announced that Yellowstone’s population of grizzly bears has recovered to the point where federal protections can be removed and overall management can be returned to the states and tribes.

According to his statement, “the population has rebounded from as few as 136 bears in 1975 to an estimated 700 today and meets all the criteria for delisting,” adding that “this decision by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was informed by over four decades of intensive, independent scientific efforts.”

In addition to this final rule, Fish and Wildlife will also release a final supplement to the 1993 Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan for the Yellowstone grizzly population. The conservation strategy that describes management of the grizzly bear following delisting was finalized by the Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee of the IGBC in December of 2016. That document can be found [at this link](#).

The final rule and its supporting documents will be published in coming days in the *Federal Register*. The rule will take effect 30 days after publication. More information can be found [at this link](#).

Source: [DOI News Release](#).

Park People, Friends and Allies

Joshua Tree NP Former Ranger And Desert Advocate Susan Reilly Dies At Age 101

Former seasonal interpretive ranger, park supporter and desert advocate Susan Luckie Reilly passed away on June 23rd – her 101st birthday.

Reilly was born in 1916, the same year the park service was founded and worked at Joshua Tree National Monument as a seasonal ranger-naturalist in 1965. She maintained a close relationship with the park for the subsequent 50 years.

Reilly was the daughter of Dr. James B. Luckie, a Pasadena physician who recommended the healthy, dry, desert climate to WWI veterans suffering from the effects of mustard gas. The Luckie family spent time at the family home in Twentynine Palms when not in Pasadena.

It was during these family visits that Susan developed a lifelong love and passion for the desert environment. A graduate of Stanford University, Reilly and others founded the Morongo Basin Conservation Association, which successfully fought off an initiative by the utility company to run a massive power transmission corridor straight through the heart of the Morongo Basin.

Reilly received the Minerva Hoyt Award in 2004. She also received the Woman of Distinction Award, given by Congressman Paul Cook in 2013, and was a driving force for preservation and protection of the Southern California desert.

“Susan was one of the very first women to become a ranger at Joshua Tree National Monument,” said David Smith, the park’s superintendent. “She has inspired a generation of young women to become stewards of our public lands. Her final legacy will be the Reilly Research Center, which will allow the park to make decisions based on science as we face global climate changes and other threats to the park. She will be missed.”

Source: [Joshua Tree NP](#).

Washington Office

Passing Of Former NPS Architect Richard Anderson

Former HABS/HEAR historic architect Richard K. Anderson, Jr. passed away at home on Saturday, June 17th, following a two-year battle with a very rare cancer.

Richard was born on May 21, 1951, in Newport News, Virginia, to the late U.S. Navy Capt. Richard K. Anderson and Mary Greenleaf White Anderson, both of Stateburg. He graduated cum laude from Sidwell Friends School of Washington, D.C., prior to attending Princeton University, where he graduated with a bachelor of arts with honors in 1973 with a major in architecture. He then received his master’s of architecture from the University of Pennsylvania in 1976.

In 1978, he married Amelia Elizabeth "Betty" Harper of Sumter, South Carolina. They made their home in the Washington, D.C., area for 11 years while he worked for the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) program of the National Park Service, during which time he established the standards of excellence in measured drawing documentation in the fields of engineering, maritime and architecture preservation. For his contribution in these areas, he was awarded a citation for meritorious service by the Secretary of the Department of the Interior in 1990.

Returning to South Carolina in 1989, he continued his documentary work as cultural resource documentation services, recording numerous industrial, maritime and architectural sites and artifacts around the nation for HABS/HAER, the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, and many other organizations. He also prepared technical illustrations for books and journals.

Richard taught HABS documentation standards, guidelines and techniques at Savannah College of Art and Design as an adjunct professor from 1991 to 2001. He also served as an advisory member of the Sumter County Historical Commission for a number of years. He was a member of The Society of the Cincinnati of the State of South Carolina and also a member of the Society for Industrial Archeology, serving for 15 years as its recording secretary. He received their highest honor in 2011.

Online condolences may be submitted to www.sumterfunerals.com.

Source: [The Sumter Item](#).

Other News And Notes

Systemwide National Park Service In The News

A selection of additional recent news stories pertaining either directly or indirectly to the operation of the National Park Service:

- **Death Valley NP** – CNN posted a news story to its web page last Wednesday entitled “They Came, They Camped, They Baked at Death Valley ... On Purpose.” The reporter talks to several people who visited the park to experience the current “monster” western heatwave, including a couple taking selfies next to the digital thermometer outside the Furnace Creek VC (it got to 130 degrees) and the sole camper in the nearby campground. [Full story](#).
- **Yosemite NP** – The Tioga Road remains closed to all vehicular traffic, including bicycles, because melting snow is causing water to run over the road in several locations, creating a safety hazard. Park staff and partners continue to conduct necessary repairs to power, communications, water, and sewer systems along the road following a record-breaking year for winter snowpack. April snow surveys indicated that at its highest elevations the park had the highest snowpack on record. In many locations above 8,000 feet, the snowpack measured over 200 percent of average (based on water content). [Full story](#).
- **National Mall** – According to a *BuzzFeed* news story posted on Monday, an investigation by DOI’s Office of the Investigator General has revealed that “the National Park Service didn’t alter records of Trump’s inauguration crowd.” The article also includes a window where you can scroll through the entire report. [Full story](#).

Systemwide Upcoming Events

Upcoming events and activities of potential interest to members of the Coalition, including relevant House and Senate hearings:

- **June 28** – The House Committee on Natural Resources’ Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations will hold an oversight hearing entitled “Examining Policy Impacts of Excessive Litigation Against the Department of the Interior.” 10 a.m., Room 1324 Longworth House Office Building. [More](#).
- **July 3 – July 7** – Senate in recess.
- **July 3 – July 10** – House in recess.
- **July 10** – Due date for comments in DOI review of all national monuments – including Bears Ears NM. DOI posted a [news release](#) on June 15th announcing the extension, which means that reviews on all national monuments now conclude at the same time. [More](#).
- **July 31 – September 1** – House and Senate in recess.
- **October 18-22** – Ranger Rendezvous 40, Association of National Park Rangers, YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park, Colorado. [More](#).

A Closing Observation

"Thousands of people go to the national parks because they want the things which are peculiar to the primeval wilderness and, what is more, peculiar to a particular wilderness - such as Glacier or Yellowstone or Grand Canyon or some other one. To make possible the great joy to be found in the infinite variety of the wilderness - not to thwart the desire to discover more and more of its ways - and the moral obligation to leave it unimpaired for new discoveries tomorrow, these are the functions of the national parks in our general scheme of wilderness use. Our national parks are a great philosophical venture in which we are attempting to pry open for ourselves the intricate and delicately balanced system of wilderness values essential to full and intelligent enjoyment of the wilderness. The success of the venture is going to hinge largely upon our understanding of the values at stake, our knowledge of recreational psychology, and our ability to meet the biological requirements of wilderness management."

Ben Thompson, *Fauna of the National Parks of the United States* (1935)

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The *Weekly National Park System Report* is a publication of The Coalition To Protect America's National Parks. It is prepared by Coalition member Bill Halainen, former editor of the *NPS Morning Report*, and produced and disseminated by Coalition staffer Susannah Albert-Chandhok.

The Coalition is a non-profit organization of past and current NPS employees and their allies that "studies, educates, speaks, and acts for the preservation and protection of the National Park System and mission-related programs of the National Park Service."

To receive a copy of this free publication, join the coalition. Any current, retired or former salaried (GS, wage grade, seasonal, temporary, or SES) employee of the National Park Service can join the Coalition. For more information, click on [this link](#).

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