



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

Wednesday, August 9, 2017

Volume 1

Number 18

Editor's Note

There will be no issues for the next two weeks. The next edition will be out on August 30th.

Incidents

Crater Lake National Park Roads And Trails Closed, Evacuation Planning Begun Due To Fires

Crater Lake National Park has issued a Level 1 evacuation notice for Rim Village and Park Headquarters, effective as of 5 p.m. last Saturday. The Level 1 notice informed residents and visitors to “be ready” for a potential evacuation of Rim Village and headquarters in the event that the Spruce Lake Fire approaches these areas. Mazama Village and other areas in the park are not affected by this notice. Residents and visitors have been asked to monitor emergency services websites and local media outlets for information regarding potential evacuations.

There are three evacuation notice levels: Level 1 asks people to “BE READY” for potential evacuation, Level 2 directs them to “BE SET” to evacuate, and Level 3 directs them to “GO” now.

Park visitors will be advised as conditions change and are encouraged to check the park [website](#), Facebook, and/or Twitter, and have been instructed to go to the [relevant InciWeb site](#) for current status reports and updates.

The Spruce Lake Fire was started by lightning on July 24th and is being managed collectively with the [Blanket Creek Fire](#), which is also burning within the park.

Due to potentially hazardous conditions created by the Blanket Creek Fire, the following road and trails in are closed to entry and use until further notice:

- Pacific Crest Trail, from the park boundary to Highway 62
- Union Peak Trail
- Stuart Falls Trail
- Pumice Flat Trail

The following road and trail closures due to the Spruce Lake Fire continue to be in effect until further notice:

- West Rim Drive from Munson Valley Road to North Junction
- Pacific Crest Trail, from the intersection of Dutton Creek Trail north to the North Entrance Road
- Boundary Springs Trail
- All of Bald Crater Loop Trail
- Bert Creek Trail
- Discovery Point Trail
- Lightning Springs Trail
- Rim Trail from Discovery Point to North Junction

These closures will remain in effect until further notice. Visitors are not at risk. All other roads and trails in Crater Lake National Park remain open as well as all park entrances, facilities and services.

Source: [Evacuation preparedness news release](#) and [trail and road closure news release](#), Crater Lake NP.

Cape Hatteras National Seashore Park Campgrounds Reopen On Hatteras And Ocracoke Islands

Cape Point, Frisco, and Ocracoke Campgrounds reopened at noon last Friday. The three park campgrounds were temporarily closed after Dare County and Hyde County issued mandatory non-resident evacuation orders for Hatteras and Ocracoke islands in an effort to protect life safety during a period of lost and unreliable electrical service.

Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and the park's visitor centers, off-road vehicle permit offices and other facilities on Hatteras and Ocracoke Islands remained open to permanent residents and non-resident property owners while electrical service was being restored.

Source: [News release](#), Cape Hatteras NS.

Rocky Mountain National Park Seriously Injured Man Rescued From Pagoda Mountain

On the morning of Saturday, August 5th, two hikers came upon a 34-year-old man who'd been seriously injured in a 15- to 20-foot fall on Pagoda Mountain and used their SPOT GPS location device to notify the park.

Due to the reported nature of the man's injuries, his location in difficult terrain, and the time it would take for rescuers to reach him, park SAR team members sought assistance from the Colorado National Guard to extricate the injured man from his location.

A National Guard helicopter soon arrived and lowered a litter and medic to the location. The medic and injured man were then evacuated via a hoist operation using a winch-operated cable. The helicopter then flew him to an alpine tundra site in the Wild Basin area and transferred him to a Flight For Life air ambulance that took him to St. Anthony's Hospital. Inclement weather during the operation provided additional challenges for air operations.

The aid provided by the two hikers who found the injured man and the updates they provided to park SAR team members were critical to the patient's survival.

Source: [News release](#), Rocky Mountain NP.

Grand Canyon National Park Body Of Missing Woman Found By Searchers

A search was launched last week for a 38-year-old Texas woman who failed to return from a hike as planned on Tuesday, August 1st.

Sarah Beadle had reservations to stay at the Bright Angel Campground on Tuesday, but failed to arrive. She was hiking down the South Kaibab Trail and her backpack was found near the junction of the South Kaibab Trail and the River Trail. Beadle was hiking with two children, ages 10 and 11, who are safe.

Search and rescue crews located a body believed to be hers the following afternoon. The body was found near Black Bridge at the bottom of Grand Canyon, approximately three-quarters of a mile from Phantom Ranch.

An investigation is being conducted by the National Park Service and the Coconino County Medical Examiner's Office.

Source: [News release](#) on search and [news release](#) on recovery, Grand Canyon NP.

Joshua Tree National Park Search In Progress For Missing Hikers Scaled Back

Search teams have been looking since July 28th for two missing hikers – Rachel Nguyen, 20, and Joseph Orbeso, 21 – who have not been seen since they headed out on a hike on July 27th. Efforts to find them have so far been fruitless and have been scaled back.

A special regional overhead team made up of investigators from Yosemite and Sequoia/Kings Canyon have arrived on scene to assist. Drone specialists from Grand Canyon have joined JOSAR canine teams to continue the search whenever current scorching temperatures permit.

At its height, the search involved units from the NPS, San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, JOSAR, San Bernardino County Search and Rescue, the Bureau of Land Management, Orange County Sheriff's Department, San Diego County Sheriff's Department, California Highway Patrol, Riverside County Sheriff's Department, US Border Patrol, and the California Rescue Dog Association.

The couple's vehicle was found at the trailhead of a popular hiking trail known as the Maze Loop. Anyone who might have been hiking or stopping in the area and recalls seeing a couple in their early twenties or has other pertinent information about the two are asked to contact San Bernardino Dispatch at 909 383-5652.

Source: [News release](#), Joshua Tree NP.

Rocky Mountain National Park Man Who Pushed Wife Off Cliff Loses Appeal For New Trial

On Wednesday, July 26th, the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the conviction of a Colorado man who shoved his wife off a cliff to her death at Rocky Mountain National Park on their 12th wedding anniversary as part of an insurance scam.

Harold Henthorn was convicted and sentenced to life in a federal prison in late 2015 in the murder of his wife, Toni Bertolet Henthorn. He had argued in his appeal that the judge should not have allowed evidence in the death of his first wife, Sandra “Lynn” Henthorn.

Henthorn was convicted of killing Toni, who plunged 128 feet off a cliff during a hike to celebrate their anniversary in September 2012. A map with an X at the location where Toni Henthorn was killed was presented as evidence, as were details about the \$4.7 million in life insurance policies he took out on his wife.

Evidence was introduced at the trial to suggest that Henthorn killed Sandra Henthorn in a staged accident in May 1995 beside Colorado 67, about 8½ miles west of Sedalia. Just as in the death of Toni, Henthorn had collected large insurance claims on his first wife.

The appeals’ judges agreed with Jackson that prior incidents in which Henthorn’s wives were killed or injured were “extraordinarily similar to the charged offense.”

For example, the circumstances in both Toni’s and Sandra’s deaths were suspicious, including his decision to immediately cremate the bodies of both women. In 1995, Henthorn stopped to change a tire shortly before Sandra Henthorn was crushed as the Jeep fell on her, but the front passenger tire was only low, not flat. Other tires were just as low. He then yelled at good Samaritans who wanted to help to stand back.

The appeals court also noted that Toni Henthorn suffered numerous injuries from the fall off the cliff — brain hemorrhaging, a fractured neck, blunt trauma to the chest, abdomen and pelvis — but there were no signs typically associated with CPR, including anterior rib fractures. Henthorn had said he tried to revive his wife.

“Toni’s lipstick was not even smeared from the alleged mouth-to-mouth resuscitation,” the decision says.

Henthorn’s dishonesty was so firmly cemented that his own attorney virtually apologized to the jury in closing arguments that his client “can’t tell the same story twice.”

Source: [News story](#) with photos by Kirk Mitchell, *Denver Post*. Submitted by member Mike Warren.

National Fire Situation

National Interagency Fire Center Two Large Fires Burning In Crater Lake National Park

Synopsis

The national preparedness level remains at PL 4. The 42 large fires currently burning nationwide have burned more than 772,000 acres in seven states. More than 16,000 firefighters and support personnel are assigned to wildfires across the West.

Crater Lake National Park

As noted in the incident section above, the park is dealing with two wildfires, the Spruce Lake Fire burning entirely within the park and the Blanket Creek Fire crossing into the southern section from the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest.

- *Spruce Lake Fire* (Monday update) – The fire was discovered on July 29th, burning near the park’s western boundary. Suppression efforts were hampered by persistent high

temperatures, unstable atmospheric conditions and poor access. Northwest Incident Management Team 13 (Brian Gates, IC) began managing the fire on August 1st. During this first operational period, the fire displayed extreme behavior and made a significant run to the east, spotting up to a mile ahead of the main fire and deeper into the park. The fire is now estimated to be 4,681 acres and is 13% contained. Cooler temperatures are currently slowing the fire's spread, allowing firefighters to work more aggressively toward containment. A public meeting is being planned later in the week to brief residents and visitors. The fire continues growing in a southeasterly direction toward West Rim Road. On Sunday, crews hiked seven miles in to begin establishing fire lines along the northern boundary of the fire. Ground crews were not able to approach the south side of the fire due to steep terrain and thick areas of standing dead or dying trees. Helicopters continue to drop water in that area. A total of 397 firefighters and overhead were assigned to the fire as of Monday. For more information, including maps, click on this [InciWeb site](#).

- *Blanket Creek Fire* (Monday update) – Fire line personnel made progress on containment goals Sunday, while the leading edge of the fire burned actively in heavy dead fuels. It was estimated to have burned 4,739 acres as of Monday morning. It is 31% contained and has a fire perimeter of approximately 32 miles. The extreme eastern tip of the fire is burning in the park. For more information, click on this [InciWeb site](#) – for a map, however, go to the Spruce Lake Fire webpage.

Active Incident Resource Commitments

Category	July 25th	August 1st	August 8th
Area Command Teams	0	0	1
NIMO Teams	1	2	2
Type 1 Teams	5	6	6
Type 2 Teams	8	10	16
Crews	293	284	377
Engines	953	678	849
Helicopters	101	92	119
Total FF/Overhead	13,174	11,502	16,004

Fires/Acreage

Category	2017 Total	2006-2016 Ave	2017 Variance
Year-to-Date Fires	40,408	43,872	- 3,464
Year-to-Date Acres	5,962,283	4,103,753	+ 1,858,530

Sources: [National Interagency Fire Center](#), [InciWeb](#).

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.

Department of the Interior

Update On National Monument Review

On May 5th, the Department of the Interior announced a formal comment period for members of the public to officially weigh in on monument designations under the Antiquities Act of 1906 in accord with President Trump's Executive Order 13792, issued April 26th. Comments were due at different dates, but the last of them had to be in by July 10th.

Since then, DOI has issued press releases regarding the following – links are provided to the relevant releases. In all five cases, the secretary has recommended no changes and removed the national monument from the list:

- Upper Missouri River Breaks, Montana – [News release](#).
- Grand Canyon-Parashant, Arizona – [News release](#).
- Canyons of the Ancients, Colorado – [News release](#).
- Craters of the Moon, Idaho – [News release](#).
- Hanford Reach, Washington – [News release](#).

Here's a list of the remaining monuments to be reviewed:

- Basin and Range, Nevada
- Bears Ears, Utah
- Berryessa Snow Mountain, California
- Carrizo Plain, California
- Cascade Siskiyou, Oregon
- Giant Sequoia, California
- Gold Butte, Nevada
- Grand Staircase-Escalante, Utah
- Ironwood Forest, Arizona
- Katahdin Woods and Waters, Maine
- Marianas Trench, CNMI/Pacific Ocean
- Mojave Trails, California
- Northeast Canyons and Seamounts, Atlantic Ocean
- Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, New Mexico
- Pacific Remote Islands, Pacific Ocean
- Papahānaumokuākea, Hawaii/Pacific Ocean
- Rio Grande del Norte, New Mexico
- Rose Atoll, American Samoa/Pacific Ocean
- Sand to Snow, California
- San Gabriel Mountains, California
- Sonoran Desert, Arizona
- Vermillion Cliffs, Arizona

Source: News releases, Department of the Interior.

Capitol Hill

Senate – Legislation and Hearings

The Senate passed H.R. 873, to authorize the Global War in Terrorism Memorial Foundation to establish the National Global War on Terrorism Memorial in the District of Columbia to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of the Global War on Terrorism. The bill is now cleared for the president's signature.

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing to examine federal and non-federal collaboration to reduce wild land fire risk to communities. Bryan Rice, director of the Office of Wildland Fire, was the witness for the Department of the Interior.

The Committee in Energy and Natural Resources approved the nominations of Susan Combs of Texas to be assistant secretary of the interior for policy, management and budget, and Douglas Domenach of Virginia to be assistant secretary of the interior for insular affairs.

The Senate is in recess until September 5th.

Capitol Hill

House of Representatives – Legislation and Hearings

The House is in recess until September 5th.

Park People, Friends and Allies

Washington Office

Ranger Geoff Walker Of Mount Rainier Receives Yount Award

Geoff Walker of Mount Rainier National Park is the recipient of the annual Harry Yount National Park Ranger Award, one of the National Park Service's most prestigious honors. Walker received his award at a ceremony yesterday in Washington, D.C. sponsored by the National Park Foundation, the official charitable partner of the National Park Service.

Much like Harry Yount, who patrolled Yellowstone National Park in the 1880s and is recognized as the world's first park ranger, Geoff Walker is well regarded for his dedication to the preservation of public lands. Walker is a skilled law enforcement officer, EMT, criminal investigator, wildland firefighter, wilderness expert, helicopter crewman, training coordinator, supervisor, mentor, and rescuer.

Walker has participated in scores of incidents, from upper mountain rescues to wilderness searches to roadside accidents. As an experienced EMT, he has responded to all manner of medical issues, including severe injuries and fatalities. Among his accomplishments, he initiated the longest successful CPR save in the state of Washington. Walker also manages the park's wild land fire program, protecting the park's 236,000 acres.

Walker began his career with the National Park Service as a seasonal park ranger at Mount Rainier National Park from 1995 to 1999. After spending time as a as a park ranger at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial and as a U.S. Customs inspector, he returned to Mount Rainier National Park as a permanent employee in 2002 and currently serves as the park's East District Ranger.

The peer-nominated Yount Award is bestowed on a park ranger whose overall impact and record of accomplishment have promoted a high degree of awareness and appreciation of the ranger profession. Photos and additional information about the award are available at [this link](#).

Source: [News release](#), Washington Office.

Glacier National Park

Park Volunteers Receive Wes Henry Award

The Glacier National Park Volunteer Associates (GNPVA) received the 2016 National Park Service Wes Henry Excellence in Wilderness Stewardship Award during a ceremony last week in Washington D.C.

Cheryl Klein, GNPVA president, accepted the award on August 1st on behalf of the 27-year-old group, which was recognized for outstanding contributions to wilderness stewardship by a non-governmental partner.

With a membership of more than 100 volunteers, GNPVA has accomplished many projects to support park operations and preservation, including approximately 7,000 hours of service to Glacier National Park annually.

“The Volunteer Associates play an essential role in the park’s backcountry and wilderness areas,” said Superintendent Jeff Mow. “Collectively they hike almost 5,000 miles each summer and reach out to nearly 12,000 visitors along the trail. Without them, our ability to provide routine visitor safety information and wilderness management in our park’s most remote places would be significantly diminished.”

The volunteers contribute to every function of backcountry patrol, including monitoring compliance with backcountry regulations, assisting with emergency functions, providing minor maintenance at backcountry campsites, and sharing information about Leave No Trace principles.

Additionally, the organization supports the backcountry GNPVA Ranger Intern program, which provides one college student with a backcountry ranger internship for the summer, stationed at the Walton Ranger Station. This program is supported by the backcountry Schubert Memorial Fund.

Though the award specifically recognizes Taggart program, the organization also supports a number of other critical park functions including working in park visitor centers, the GNPVA’s Nature Center, the native plant nursery, the backcountry permit office, Apgar campgrounds, citizen science, trails, and historic preservation and general maintenance.

To learn more about the backcountry projects or to get involved, visit gnpva.org.

Source: [News release](#), Glacier NP.

A Closing Observation

"While we're trying to preserve in our natural parks a record of biological and human history, we're also trying to preserve something a little harder to understand: A foundation for the rediscovery of North America, the perpetuation of the idea that a resource does not have to be used in order to be valuable, and that the land has a dignity and a power all its own. It does not require anything from us. Parks preserve the idea that something does not have to have a purpose to have life."

Author and naturalist [Barry Lopez](#)

* * * * *

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](#).

--- ### ---