



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

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Incidents

Southeast Region

Hurricane Irma Recovery Operations Underway

The Service's Eastern Incident Management Team, now in its second week of operations, is working in parks throughout South Florida, the Caribbean, and along the Atlantic coast, coordinating the bureau's response to Hurricane Irma. Immediate objectives are to support employee emergency needs, conduct damage assessments, and remove debris in the affected areas.

As of yesterday, all national parks in the Caribbean remained closed in preparation for Hurricane Maria. Assessments and recovery efforts there have been put on hold until it passes. Currently, 305 NPS employees from outside the affected parks are assisting, representing 88 parks in 35 states.

The safety and support of all NPS employees working in the parks is the top priority for the NPS response. As cleanup from Hurricane Irma continues, preparations are underway to relocate NPS employees and their families from St. John to Puerto Rico as Hurricane Maria approaches the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Information from damage assessments and updates on the recovery efforts are listed below:

Caribbean National Parks

All national parks in the Caribbean are closed in preparation for Hurricane Maria.

- *Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument* – Assessments and recovery efforts will resume once Hurricane Maria has passed.
- *Virgin Islands National Park* – The National Park Service has afforded employees and their families the opportunity to move off island in advance of Hurricane Maria, which was forecast to pass over the U.S. Virgin Islands late yesterday and today. Assessments and recovery efforts will resume once Hurricane Maria has passed.

South Florida National Parks

- *Big Cypress National Preserve* – Facility management staff have moved heavy equipment from Cooks Camp so that it will be available for use. It's estimated that power will be restored by Friday, but could be delayed until October. Park staff have cleared the paved section of the Loop Road (approximately six miles), but the gravel portion of the road remains completely blocked. Water testing has begun; a "boil water" advisory remains in place. Damage assessments are continuing.
- *Biscayne National Park* – Assessment teams are continuing to assess islands and underwater resources. The water treatment plant is down; staff are overseeing water system repairs and addressing water treatment. A Southeast Region Arborist Incident Response team is working in the islands. Debris removal continues.
- *De Soto National Memorial* – Power, phone service and water have been restored. Staff are continuing to remove debris. Docks that have washed up on the park's north shore will need to be removed. A Florida county forester will be assessing the park's notable gumbo limbo trees.
- *Dry Tortugas National Park* – The park is only partially closed. Land areas of the park, including all areas at Garden Key and Loggerhead Key, remain closed to the public. Users of mooring balls are advised that they assume all risks. Marine waters of the park, including Garden Key Harbor and Bird Key Harbor, are open, but a marine advisory has been issued for hazards in park waters. The park has not fully assessed its maritime infrastructure and has limited emergency response capabilities at this time. A saw team has begun clearing trees and debris on Key West. At Fort Jefferson, staff are clearing debris and conducting a buoy survey. The gate at Fort Jefferson was damaged.
- *Everglades National Park* – All employees returned to work yesterday. A notice to mariners has been posted regarding hazards in Florida Bay. In the Gulf Coast area, cleanup efforts utilizing heavy equipment are continuing. Fuel has been delivered, and, with the assistance of a generator, several employees are returning to park housing. At Shark Valley, park signs on Highway 41 were destroyed; trees are partially blocking the entrance gate, access road, and parking lot. Portions of the Tram Road are impassable due to downed trees and high water. The tower restrooms are blocked and port-a-johns are damaged. The entrance station has standing water and a storage shed was destroyed. Efforts to clear the Flamingo road continue. At Key Largo, there is extensive debris scattered throughout Florida Bay. Numerous vessels are grounded or have been pushed into mangroves, causing severe damage. Vessels were boarded to confirm no casualties. Facilities at north Nest Key, including the dock and port-a-johns, have been destroyed. Monroe County remains under a "boil water" advisory.

Atlantic Coast National Parks

- *Castillo de San Marcos National Monument* – The grounds and fort are now open. Debris cleanup operations continue. Downed trees remain on site. An assessment team is on site surveying damage; an archeological assessment has been completed.
- *Cumberland Island National Seashore* – The park remains closed. Cleanup operations along the St. Mary's waterfront are being undertaken by the Coast Guard. Saw crews and Arborist Incident Response team crews are working on site. Assessment teams continue their work on the island. Staff are continuing to clean up and remove debris.
- *Fort Frederica National Monument* – The park remains closed. The main and back entrances have been cleared and power has been restored throughout the park. An

Arborist Incident Response team and saw team are continuing to clear hazardous trees near the visitor center and on the back road.

- *Fort Matanzas National Monument* – The park remains closed. Full access to the historic fort will be dependent on extensive repairs to both NPS-owned passenger ferries and repair of the park visitor center ferry dock. An archeological assessment has been completed. An assessment team is on site. Grounds cleanup continues.
- *Fort Pulaski National Monument* – The park remains closed. The bridge at the demi-lune is back in place and needs some minor adjustment. A temporary sally port bridge will be constructed to provide access to the fort to start cleanup and repair the roof; the original sally port bridge was to be inspected yesterday and plans are underway to retrieve it from the marsh. The visitor center well has been tested and treated. Park trails have been inspected and numerous downed trees have been found; a saw team is needed.
- *Fort Sumter National Monument* – Removal of debris and mud at Fort Sumter continues. The fort itself remains closed, but all other sites are open. Staff are working to get electricity restored to the dock, repair damaged dock railings, and repair septic at the fort.
- *Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve* – The Fort Caroline visitor center and Cedar Point boat launch are open, but the Cedar Point trail system remains closed until downfall is cleared. Staff and volunteer cleanup crews have cleared the Fort Caroline visitor center area and trails of debris. The Kingsley Plantation District remains closed, with cleanup underway.

Additional closures exist throughout Southeast Region, but local park employees are handling cleanup efforts. A full list of affect parks and updates on the status of these parks can be found at <http://go.nps.gov/irma>.

Source: NPS Incident Management Team Hurricane Irma Update for September 18th, found at the [NPS Hurricane and Severe Weather Response website](#).

Death Valley National Park Storm Blows Roof Off Historic Building, Causes Other Damage

A powerful storm system brought heavy rains and wind to the park on September 11th.. Extremely high winds in the Cow Creek administrative area blew the roof off of a historic office building dating back to the Civilian Conservation Corps era of the 1930s. Windows were blown out of four vehicles belonging to staff living at Cow Creek. Roofs of five other buildings at Stovepipe Wells were also damaged.

Although the wind speed was estimated to have reached 100 mph, it didn't last long. After the winds died down, rangers discovered the missing roof and covered up computers and office equipment to protect them from the rain.

“The atmosphere during this storm was very dry below the storm cell,” said National Weather Service Meteorologist Alex Boothe. “Microbursts occur when rain falls into very dry air causing evaporational cooling. The cooled air sinks rapidly and spreads in all directions as it hits the ground.”

As the winds blew and heavy rains fell, rangers were called to the Inn at Death Valley to respond to a tree fire – a palm tree had been struck by lightning and was smoldering in the

crown. Rangers were able to quickly extinguish the fire burning in the garden area west of the Inn.

Several roads and a campground were closed due to the storm – North Highway/Scotty’s Castle Road, Titus Canyon Road, and Mesquite Campground. All other roads and facilities are open.

Source: [News Release, Death Valley National Park](#).

Glacier National Park Stabilization Work Begins On Sperry Lodge

The park has begun urgently needed stabilization work at the Sperry Chalet dormitory building to prepare for winter. This is a critical first step in preserving the original structure and rebuilding the historic building.

On August 31st, the building burned when the Sprague Fire significantly expanded and surrounded the Sperry complex. Early last week, Secretary Zinke ordered an independent investigation into the disaster and expedited the inspection of the remaining structure.

While most of the buildings in the Sperry Chalet complex, including the dining room and a trails and utility cabin, weathered the extreme fire behavior with sprinkler systems, fire resistant wrap, and wildland firefighters defending the exteriors of the buildings, the dormitory building suffered extensive damage.

The purpose of the stabilization work is to protect the walls and chimneys from excessive snow and weather damage throughout the winter. Next spring and summer, the park will conduct additional structural analysis and a review of the site area to help inform decisions about the future of the chalet complex.

The stabilization recommendations come from DCI + BCE Engineers out of Missoula, and were paid for by the Glacier National Park Conservancy. The engineering firm had previously done work at the chalet when it was heavily damaged in a 2011 avalanche. Donations to the conservancy have funded the work of the engineering firm and will fund initial stabilization materials and needed labor this fall.

Source: [News Release, Glacier National Park](#).

Yellowstone National Park Park Staff Kill Aggressive Bear

On September 8th, National Park Service biologists captured and killed a bear near Heart Lake in the southern part of Yellowstone National Park. The immature, male grizzly was repeatedly involved in conflicts with humans.

This bear began exhibiting bold behavior around people in 2015. At that time, Wyoming Game and Fish personnel captured the bear, tagged it, and relocated it to the Caribou-Targhee National Forest. In 2016, the same bear entered campsites in the Heart Lake area of Yellowstone and destroyed backpackers’ tents, sleeping bags, and sleeping pads.

National Park Service staff attempted to change the bear’s dangerous behavior through the use of electric decoy tents, electric food sack decoys, and by hazing with bean bag rounds, rubber bullets, and cracker shells. These efforts failed. Attempts to trap the bear also failed.

Hikers reported observing the bear around campsites and investigating tents in the Heart Lake area this past summer. On the evening of August 26th, the bear forced a group of three backpackers out of their campsite near Heart Lake and consumed all of their food.

In response, Yellowstone closed the area to backcountry camping on August 27th and set traps for the bear on September 1st. The bear was captured and killed on the morning of September 8th.

Source: [News Release, Yellowstone National Park](#).

National Fire Situation

National Interagency Fire Center NIFC Remains At PL 5, But Resource Commitments Drop

Synopsis

NIFC remains at PL 5, its highest preparedness level.

More than 17,000 firefighters are currently assigned to wildfires across the country. The 47 large fires currently active have together burned more than 1.6 million acres.

National Park Service Fires

- *Wind Cave National Park* – The lightning-caused Rankin Fire, which burned 2,133 acres, is now 100% contained. Command of the fire has been turned back to the park. [Rankin Fire incident information](#)
- *Mount Rainier National Park* – The Sunrise and White River areas reopened on the morning of September 13th after being closed due to fire activity outside of the park. Facilities in the area, including the White River Campground and area trails, are now also open to normal use. [News Release, Mount Rainier National Park](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* – The Empire Fire, located a mile east of the Badger Pass ski area, has burned 6,256 acres and remains 55% contained. It’s being managed by a Type 3 IMT (Greg Jones); 30 firefighters and overhead are assigned. Glacier Point Road has reopened; some trail closures remain in effect. [Empire Fire incident information](#)
- *Glacier National Park* – The lightning-caused Sprague Fire was reported the evening of August 10th and is burning above Crystal Ford on the Gunsight Pass Trail. It has burned 16,790 acres and is 60% contained. The Going-to-the-Sun Road is closed from Apgar to Logan Pass, but Logan Pass is still accessible from Saint Mary. The Adair Peak Fire was reported the evening of August 12th and is located south of Logging Lake. It has burned 4,034 acres and is 50% contained. The Inside North Fork Road is closed from Polebridge Ranger Station south to Camas Creek. This closure also includes the Logging Creek and Quartz Creek Campgrounds. A Northern Rockies Type II IMT (John Thompson) is managing both fires. A total of 174 firefighters and overhead personnel are committed to the two fires. [Sprague Fire incident information](#), [Adair Peak Fire incident information](#)

Active Incident Resource Commitments

Category	September 5th	September 12th	September 19th

Area Command Teams	2	4	1
NIMO Teams	2	4	3
Type 1 Teams	14	13	7
Type 2 Teams	26	20	26
Crews	581	474	346
Engines	1,924	1,271	733
Helicopters	200	187	147
Total FF/Overhead	27,792	22,974	16,007

Fires/Acreage

Category	2017 Total	2006-2016 Ave	2017 Variance
Year-to-Date Fires	49,669	52,851	- 3,182
Year-to-Date Acres	8,491,446	5,774,397	+ 2,717,049

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.

White House

Two Month Appropriations Bill Signed

On September 8th, the president signed P.L. 115-56 into law. The bill continues appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, which includes continuing appropriations for the Department of the Interior and other federal agencies through December 8, 2017.

United States Senate

DOI Assistant Secretary Nomination Approved

On September 13th, the Senate approved the nomination of Douglas W. Domenech of Virginia to be Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs at the Department of the Interior.

United States House of Representatives

SHARE Act Approved By Natural Resources Committee

On September 12th, the House passed H.R. 2611, to modify the boundary of the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site to include seven historic structures across the street from the high school and make them eligible for financial and technical assistance from NPS, by a two-thirds yeas-and-nays vote of 390 yeas to 0 nays.

On September 12th, the House Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on H.R. 3668, the Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement Act" or "SHARE Act". There was no witness from the Department of the Interior. Please "National Park Service In The News" below for an article on DOI's response to draft NPS comments regarding this bill.

On September 13th, the House Natural Resources Committee approved, by a vote of 22 to 13, an amended version of H.R. 3668, the Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement Act" or "SHARE Act." Among other provisions, various titles of the bill concern NPS as follows:

- Title I – Precludes federal agencies from having a stricter standard than a state for lead content in ammunition and fishing tackle used on public land. The Park Service recommended this title be stricken from the bill because of its concern that this title may conflict with NPS responsibilities to preserve wildlife under the Organic Act, but the department overrode this objection by striking it from the memo NPS sent to the department expressing its concern about the draft version of the bill prior to its introduction, which is linked here.
- Title IV – Requires BLM and the Forest Service to support and facilitate recreational fishing, hunting, and shooting opportunities and exempts these activities from NEPA review in agency planning documents. The Park Service recommended the NEPA exemption be stricken from the bill because of its concern that this exemption may result in negative consequences to actions taken by sister bureaus and agencies, and it effectively removes NPS as a cooperating agency in the planning process, or removes its ability to provide critical data during public comment periods. The department, again, overrode this objection. This title also requires all federal land management agencies, including NPS to consider the use of qualified volunteers from the hunting community to cull excess animals on NPS lands. The committee also adopted, by a vote of 21 yeas to 14 nays, a Westerman (for Young) amendment to Title IV that would require the Secretary to withdraw the rule for hunting and trapping in Alaska National Preserves published in the Federal Register on October 23, 2015. The Park Service recommended that this language be stricken from the draft bill as it would restrict NPS from managing hunting and trapping on national preserves by subordinating federal law to state law. The department, yet another time, overrode this objection.
- Title VI – Authorizes the transportation of bows and crossbows in vehicles on NPS lands, without a permit, and encourages NPS to establish hunting access corridors through park lands to contiguous federal lands open to hunting. NPS recommended striking this title as unnecessary since current NPS regulations already allow for the transport of a bow in a motor vehicle if a permit is obtained. Any actions taken under this title would also be exempt from NEPA review. The Park Service recommended the NEPA exemption be stricken from the bill because of its concern that this exemption may result in negative consequences to NPS resources and values. The department also overrode this objection.
- Title VIII – Prohibits the Secretary of the Interior from restricting fishing in federal waters, unless the relevant state agency approves the restriction. NPS asked that this title be stricken from the bill as it would allow state agencies, with different priorities that could affect the NPS' ability to protect and manage fishery resources and associated ecosystems while providing for recreational opportunities. One more time, the department overrode this objection.
- Title IX – Requires NPS and other federal agencies to develop a process for eligible organizations and individuals to conduct good Samaritan search and rescue missions. NPS previously had expressed some technical concerns about the 48 hour requirement to process such requests, but the 48 hour limit was kept in the bill.
- Title XIV – Requires the Secretary of the Interior to reissue the final rules delisting the gray wolf in both Wyoming and the Great Lakes region from the Endangered Species list.
- Title XVIII - Directs the Secretary of the Interior to issue permits and assess fees of no more than \$200 on an annual basis for commercial filming on federal land for crews of five people or fewer.

- Title XX – Requires the Secretary of the Interior to publish within six months of enactment, a management plan to reduce by culling by skilled public volunteers the bison population in Grand Canyon National Park.
- Title ___ - Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to issue special recreation use permits and charge fees for outfitters and guides using federal lands for recreational purposes. While the language is intended to apply only to the Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, BLM, and the Bureau of Reclamation, the NPS is reviewing it to see if it also may affect some aspects of NPS permits and fees because it is drafted as an amendment to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLERA).
- The following amendments were offered to H.R. 3668 and rejected:
 - Grijalva amendment to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund – rejected by a vote of 15 yeas and 20 nays;
 - Lowenthal amendment to strike the requirement in Title VIII for state approval of the restriction of fishing made by a federal land manager for any area of federal waters – rejected by a vote of 14 yeas to 23 nays;
 - Gomez amendment that sought to strike language in Title IV that found providing opportunities for recreational fishing, hunting, and shooting in wilderness areas is consistent with meeting the minimum requirements for administration of the wilderness area – rejected by a vote of 13 yeas to 23 nays;
 - Beyer amendment to strike Title XIV related to gray wolves – rejected by a vote of 13 yeas to 22 nays;
 - Grijalva amendment that sought to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the effect a wall or other barrier on the international border of the U.S. would have on recreational hunting and fishing and other recreational activities – rejected by a vote of 12 yeas to 22 nays;
 - Tsongas amendment stating that nothing in the act would preclude the Secretary of the Interior to include climate change as a consideration in making a decision related to conservation and recreation on federal land – rejected by a vote of 13 yeas to 21 nays.

On September 14th, the House passed H.R. 3354, the FY 2018 Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, which includes funding for the National Park Service. This bill is the vehicle for the House to pass the remaining eight appropriations bills for various federal agencies that had not already passed the House this year. A summary of the provisions of the act that affect the National Park Service, as previously reported, can be found in the [July 19th edition](#) and [September 13th edition](#) of this newsletter.

**Department of the Interior
Zinke Directs Managers To Use “Robust” Fuel Reduction, Pre-Suppression Techniques**

On September 12th, Secretary Zinke issued a memorandum directing “all Department of the Interior bureaus, superintendents, and land managers at all levels to adopt more aggressive practices, using the full authority of the Department, to prevent and combat the spread of catastrophic wildfires through robust fuels reduction and pre-suppression techniques.”

Here are the first few paragraphs of the press release announcing the memo:

“This year-to-date, 47,700 wildfires have burned 8 million acres across the country, with the majority of the devastation in the states of California and Montana. High-profile fires in Yosemite and Glacier National Parks have caught national headlines, however millions of acres of forest and grassland have burned in recent months.

“This Administration will take a serious turn from the past and will proactively work to prevent forest fires through aggressive and scientific fuels reduction management to save lives, homes, and wildlife habitat. It is well settled that the steady accumulation and thickening of vegetation in areas that have historically burned at frequent intervals exacerbates fuel conditions and often leads to larger and higher-intensity fires,’ said Secretary Zinke. ‘These fires are more damaging, more costly, and threaten the safety and security of both the public and firefighters. In recent fire reviews, I have heard this described as “a new normal.” It is unacceptable that we should be satisfied with the status quo. We must be innovative and where new authorities are needed, we will work with our colleagues in Congress to craft management solutions that will benefit our public lands for generations to come.’

“The Secretary is directing managers and superintendents of units that have burnable vegetation to address the threat of fire in all of their activities, and to use the full range of existing authorities, to reduce fuels.

“Bryan Rice, Director of the Office of Wildland Fire, said, ‘It is critical to fully consider the benefits of fuels reduction in the everyday management activities that we carry out for our public land management objectives, such as clearing along roadsides, around visitor use areas like campgrounds and trails, near employee housing areas, and within administrative site areas subject to wildfire.’

“The Department has lost historic structures in wildfires like Glacier National Park's historic Sperry Chalet lodge. In an effort to help prevent future losses, the Secretary is also directing increased protection of Interior assets that are in wildfire prone areas, following the Firewise guidance, writing: ‘If we ask local communities to ‘be safer from the start’ and meet Firewise standards, we should be the leaders of and the model for Firewise-friendly standards in our planning, development, and maintenance of visitor-service and administrative facilities.’”

The press release (below) also includes the full text of Zinke’s memorandum and comments on Zinke’s memo by Senator Murkowski (R-AK), Congressman Bishop (R-UT), Senator Daines (R-MT), Senator Risch (R-ID), and Congressman Westerman (R-AR).

Source: [News Release, Department of the Interior](#).

**Department of the Interior
Zinke Issues Secretarial Order Expanding Hunting, Fishing Access To DOI Lands**

On September 15th, Secretary Zinke signed [Secretarial Order 3356](#), which “will support and expand hunting and fishing, enhance conservation stewardship, improve wildlife management, and increase outdoor recreation opportunities for all Americans.”

The first few paragraphs of the related press release follow – the full text can be found at the link below:

“Secretarial Order 3356 is an extension of Secretarial Order 3347, issued on Zinke's first day, March 2, 2017. That order identified a slate of actions for the restoration of the American sportsmen conservation ethic, which was established by President Theodore Roosevelt.

“The new order comes days after the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced a survey that found there are 2.2 million fewer hunters in America now than in 2011. The order seeks to improve wildlife management and conservation, increase access to public lands for hunting, shooting, and fishing, and puts a new and a greater emphasis on recruiting and retaining new sportsmen conservationists, with a focus on engaging youths, veterans, minorities, and other communities that traditionally have low participation in outdoor recreation activities.

“Hunting and fishing is a cornerstone of the American tradition and hunters and fishers of America are the backbone of land and wildlife conservation,’ said Secretary Zinke. ‘The more people we can get outdoors, the better things will be for our public lands. As someone who grew up hunting and fishing on our public lands - packing bologna sandwiches and heading out at 4 a.m. with my dad - I know how important it is to expand access to public lands for future generations. Some of my best memories are hunting deer or reeling in rainbow trout back home in Montana, and I think every American should be able to have that experience.

“Today’s Secretarial Order is the latest example of how the Trump Administration is actively moving to support hunting and other forms of outdoor recreation on public lands. This means finding ways to expand hunting and fishing on public lands, improving access, and taking necessary actions to facilitate the enjoyment of these time-honored activities by any member of our society.”

“Secretarial Order 3356 directs bureaus within the department to:

- Within 120 days produce a plan to expand access for hunting and fishing on BLM, USFWS and NPS land.
- Amend national monument management plans to ensure the public's right to hunt, fish and target shoot.
- Expand educational outreach programs for underrepresented communities such as veterans, minorities, and youth.
- In a manner that respects the rights and privacy of the owners of non-public lands, identify lands within their purview where access to Department lands, particularly access for hunting, fishing, recreational shooting, and other forms of outdoor recreation, is currently limited (including areas of Department land that may be impractical or effectively impossible to access via public roads or trails under current conditions, but where there may be an opportunity to gain access through an easement, right-of-way, or acquisition), and provide a report detailing such lands to the Deputy Secretary.
- Within 365 days, cooperate, coordinate, create, make available, and continuously update online a single “one stop” Department site database of available opportunities for hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting on Department lands.
- Improve wildlife management through collaboration with state, Tribal, territorial, and conservation partners.”

Source: [News Release, Department of the Interior](#).

Other News And Notes

Systemwide

National Park Service In The News

A selection of additional recent NPS news releases and public news stories pertaining either directly or indirectly to the operation of the National Park Service.

Thanks to members Carl Christensen, Joan Anzelmo, and Don Hellman for sending along articles for this compilation.

- **National Monuments** – The *Wall Street Journal* was one among many publications to report that Secretary Zinke is proposing “that six of 27 national monuments under review by the Trump administration be reduced in size, with changes to several others proposed.” The *New York Times* subsequently published an article that summarized the

proposed changes, monument by monument, including photos of each. [Wall Street Journal story](#), [New York Times story](#).

- **National Park System** – Earlier this summer, the National Park Service sent a memorandum to DOI’s legislative counsel expressing its concerns with a draft bill before Congress entitled the Sportsmen’s Heritage and Recreational Enhancement Act. Almost all of the Service’s serious concerns were overridden by DOI, which sent the memo back with sections crossed out. The McClatchy newspaper chain has now posted a copy of said memo on its web page, complete with big X’s. [Full story](#).
- **National Park System** – *Undark*, “a non-profit, editorially independent digital magazine exploring the intersection of science and society,” has posted a story by Madeline Ostrander on its webpage entitled “For The National Parks, A Reckoning.” The ‘reckoning’ is climate change and what to do about it in an administration that denies that it’s occurring. “For decades, the national parks have been the country’s environmental conscience, the places that reminded us what nature is supposed to look like and who we are by extension,” says Ostrander. “For at least the next three and half years, the problems faced by the park service could get gnarly indeed. Even if the federal government tries to suppress research, education, or public outreach on climate change, there’s no getting around what’s already happening in the parks. Even if they don’t ‘go rogue,’ national park staff will continue to find themselves on the frontlines of a series of ethical dilemmas — about science and the future of nature, which species to save or to relocate, and when and whether to speak out about the changes they are witnessing every day in the American landscape.” [Undark story](#).
- **Wildland Fire** – *High Country News*, in collaboration with CityLab, published an article on September 13th that concerns the West’s “dramatic fire season.” Philip Higuera, a professor of fire ecology at the University of Montana, talks about “the fires raging across the West, what we can do about them, and why this year’s big burn might be the new normal.” It’s particularly interesting to read this in tandem with Secretary Zinke’s memorandum (above). [High Country News story](#).
- **Canada’s Great Trail** – So you’ve hiked all of the Appalachian Trail, the Pacific Crest Trail, and sundry other long trails throughout the United States and are seeking another challenge. Look no further than across our northern border. This issue of *The Smithsonian* reports that “organizers have stitched together the missing links in Canada’s [Great Trail](#), connecting up a 14,000-mile hiking, biking and paddling route that stretches coast-to-coast...[thereby creating] the longest recreational trail system in the world.” The trail was completed a few weeks ago. [Smithsonian story](#).

Systemwide

Notes On Park Operations and Maintenance

Short reports regarding the National Park System’s 400 plus parks and its central, regional and training offices:

- **Denali National Park and Preserve** – The NPS will be awarding multiple concession contracts for mountaineering guide services to the public within Denali National Park and Preserve. The proposed contracts will have a term of January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2028. [Full story](#).
- **Grand Teton National Park** – Biologists with the Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team will be conducting grizzly bear research and trapping operations in the park through November 15th as part of on-going monitoring efforts required under the 2016

Conservation Strategy for the Grizzly Bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. [Full story.](#)

- **Grand Teton National Park** – Jenny Lake Boating, Inc., has been selected to provide boat shuttle service, scenic interpretive boat tours, and non-motorized boat rentals at Jenny Lake. The new ten-year concession contract is anticipated to begin January 1, 2018. The company holds the current contract for those services. [Full story.](#)

Systemwide Upcoming Events

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

- **September 27** – The Senate Subcommittee on National Parks will hold an oversight hearing entitled “Encouraging the Next Generation to Visit National Parks.” It will be held in Room 366 of the Dirksen Building at 2 p.m. [More information.](#)
- **September 30** – National Public Lands Day. The event, sponsored by Toyota Motor North America, is the nation's largest, single-day volunteer effort for public lands. [More information, including registration of events.](#)
- **October 18-22** – Ranger Rendezvous 40, Association of National Park Rangers, YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park, Colorado. [More information.](#)

A Closing Observation

"In the national parks, there is no harvesting of timber. There is at present no hunting of wild animals. There is no mining of minerals. There is, or should be, no grazing of domestic animals. There are no shows, or what are commonly known as 'amusements.' There is no attempt to make profits. The parks are operated on funds appropriated by Congress, and the receipts from visitors go into the miscellaneous receipts of the Federal Treasury, so that the balancing of income and outgo, common to business enterprise, does not exist. This scheme of land use, so far removed from the average person's economic experience, may glancingly seem strange and remote. And so it is. It is a new theory in the world, of management of the public land for a superior kind of pleasure and profit; for the perpetuation of the country's natural and historic heritage, untarnished by invasion and depletion other than that of invincible time. No wonder, then, that it is a difficult story to tell."

[Freeman Tilden](#), *The National Parks* (1951)

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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

salaries (GS, wage grade, seasonal, temporary, or SES) employees of the National Park Service can join the Coalition. For more information, click on [this link](#).

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