



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

Wednesday, December 20, 2017

Volume 1

Number 32

Editor's Note

Due to the holidays, there will be no Weekly Report either next week or the week after. The next edition will come out on January 10, 2018.

Incidents

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park Beach Area Closed Due To Sea Lion Attacks On Swimmers

Two swimmers in the San Francisco Bay wound up hospitalized with sea lion bites over a less-than-24-hour span last week. Both swimmers were in the San Francisco Aquatic Park Cove area. The incidents prompted the closure of the area to swimmers by Golden Gate National Recreation Area officials.

On Thursday afternoon, a man was bitten on the arm by a sea lion and received a "serious" injury, according to the San Francisco Fire Department. The man said that he thought the sea lion trailed him from the beach to the Aquatic Park area. After he was bitten by the animal, a sailboat came to his rescue and brought him to shore.

On Friday morning, a second swimmer was bitten by a sea lion. He was taken to an area hospital and is reported in serious condition.

Both swimmers are expected to recover.

Source: [News story](#), *Sacramento Bee*, and other news sites.

Golden Gate National Recreation Area Body Of Missing Hiker Found Near Stinson Beach

A body found this past Sunday in the ocean waters near Stinson Beach has been identified as a hiker reported missing in early December near Muir Beach

Tyler Silva, 21, was on a hike with his girlfriend near Pirate's Cove Trail at Muir Beach on December 3rd when he ventured off trail and became separated from her.

Crews from the National Park Service, Marin County Fire Department, Marin County Search and Rescue, Marin County Sheriff's Office and Southern Marin Fire Protection District searched roads, trails and the coastline between Muir Beach and Tennessee Valley, a small, undeveloped area near Mill Valley. The search for Silva was suspended on December 5th.

Silva's body was found in the ocean Sunday about two miles west of Stinson Beach. A post mortem examination and toxicology testing have been scheduled.

Source: [News story](#), *Mill Valley Patch*.

Kalaupapa National Historical Park Two Seriously Injured In Falls From Mules On Kalaupapa Trail

Two people were airlifted from Kalaupapa Trail on Moloka'i after falling from the mules they were riding while descending the trail on the morning of December 14th.

A 54-year-old California man was taken to the Moloka'i Airport, then transferred to a helicopter medevac that flew him to Maui Memorial Medical Center in serious condition. He was knocked unconscious during the fall and suffered head injuries.

A 36-year-old woman who is an employee of the Moloka'i Mule Tour was transported to Moloka'i General Hospital in serious condition for treatment of head and torso injuries sustained in the fall.

The accident happened after the mule that the California visitor was riding on ran into the mule in front of it, causing the woman to fall off.

The area where the incident occurred was about halfway down the 3.2 mile cliff side trail. While firefighters worked their way down from above, three rangers made their way up from the bottom. They reached the injured parties first and provided initial treatment.

After reaching the scene, firefighters secured the man in a stretcher basket and prepped him to be airlifted topside by the fire department's Air 1 helicopter. After transferring the man to paramedics on Kalae Highway, they returned and airlifted the woman to the landing zone near the highway.

Source: [News story](#), *Maui Now*.

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.

Capitol Hill

New Public Laws

On December 8th, the president signed into law H.J. Res. 123, to make further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2018. The law extends funding for federal agencies, including the Department of the Interior, through December 22nd. (P.L. 115-90).

On December 12th, the president signed into law H.R. 2810, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction,

and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, and to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year. (P.L. 115–91). Of interest to the National Park Service are the following provisions:

- Sec. 317 – to authorize the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, to participate in a Sentinel Landscapes Partnership, which is intended to encourage federal agencies, private organizations, and private landowners to engage in voluntary land management and conservation activities that contribute to the sustainability of military installations, ranges, and airspaces.
- Sec. 352 – to authorize the Second Indianhead Division Association, Inc. to place additional commemorative elements or engravings on the existing Second Division Memorial in Washington, DC, to further honor the members of the Second Infantry Division.
- Sec. 1095 - to honor those who died during World War I, those who served in World War I, and to call upon all Americans to participate in activities to commemorate the centennial of World War I.
- Sec. 2863 – to authorize the secretary of the interior to establish restroom facilities in the vicinity of the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial within George Washington Memorial Parkway, VA.

Senate

On December 12th, the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard held a hearing to examine national ocean policy, focusing on stakeholder perspectives. There were no administration witnesses at this hearing.

On December 12th, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held an oversight hearing to examine the permitting processes at the Department of the Interior and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for energy and resource infrastructure projects and opportunities to improve the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of federal decisions for such projects. James Cason, associate deputy secretary of the interior was the witness for the department.

House

On December 12th, the House passed:

- H.R. 2872, to amend the Federal Power Act to promote hydropower development at existing non-powered dams, and
- H.R. 2880, to amend the Federal Power Act to promote closed-loop pumped storage hydropower.

On December 13th, the House Natural Resources Committee approved, among other bills, the following:

- H.R. 1349, to amend the Wilderness Act to ensure that the use of non-motorized bicycles, motorized wheelchairs, non-motorized wheelchairs, strollers, wheelbarrows, survey wheels, measuring wheels, and game carts are not prohibited in Wilderness Areas.
- H.R. 1350, to modify the boundary of Voyageurs National Park, MN, by transferring administrative jurisdiction over several small tracts of land managed by BLM to the National Park Service, and to authorize a land exchange between the state and NPS for other small parcels on the edges of the park.
- H.R. 2888, to establish the Ste. Genevieve National Historic Site, MO.

- H.R. 3400, to streamline the process for the sale of federal land recreation passes, and encourage greater access to outdoor recreation.
- H.R. 4266, to clarify the boundary of Acadia National Park.

On December 14th, the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on H.R. 4558, to codify the president's recent proclamation reducing the boundary for the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument. Among other provisions, the bill would establish within the reduced national monument boundary an Escalante Canyons National Park and Preserve of undetermined size since the map is unavailable; a 212,000-acre Grand Staircase National Monument; a 551,000-acre Kaiparowits National Monument; and a 243,000-acre Escalante Canyons National Monument. A management council would be established to develop a comprehensive management plan for the park, preserve, and national monuments, with seven total members. One member would be from the Department of the Interior, five members would be from the local counties in Utah, and the remaining member would be appointed by the president. In the park and preserve, the council is required to allow hunting, fishing, and trapping, and grazing is required to be allowed in perpetuity. The only thing the NPS is authorized to manage is grazing. There are no requirements that the park and preserve be managed in accordance with the Organic Act. It is unclear if NPS or BLM is responsible in any way for management of the named national monuments. There was no witness from the Department of the Interior at the hearing.

Park People, Friends and Allies

NPS Alumni

Passing Of Benn Ladd

Career NPS ranger and park manager Ben Ladd, 85, died on December 12th at St. Charles Medical Center in Bend, Oregon.

A graveside service was held on Saturday, December 16th, at the Canyon City Cemetery in Canyon City, Oregon.

Condolences may be left at the Driskill Memorial Chapel webpage, which can be found [at this link](#). Charitable donations may be made to Blue Mountain Healthcare Foundation, 241 S Canyon Blvd, John Day OR 97845.

Source: Member Roger Rudolph, with available details from [Driskill Memorial Chapel](#).

Other News And Notes

National Park System

The 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.

- **Researchers Study Movement Of Underground Water At Grand Canyon** – The *Arizona Daily Sun* posted an article on December 14th on studies underway to track underground water movement throughout the park: “The data gathering is one of several components of a large-scale study being undertaken by researchers at Grand Canyon National Park and Northern Arizona University to study how water makes its way through faults, fractures, caves and porous rock deep underground to eventually emerge as springs and seeps along the canyon’s walls. The work is focused on the North Rim, which is the source of most major springs in the park. While the Colorado River is,

for many, the defining water feature of the Grand Canyon, the aquifer-fed springs and seeps are equally important to life in the canyon.” [Full story](#).

- **Lake Mead Rangers Take Over Boulder Dam Security** – The police department that has overseen dam security since 1931 has been dissolved due to various administrative problems. Through an agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation, reports the *Boulder City Review*, the park has created a new ranger district, with additional staffing, to provide enforcement and emergency services within the Hoover Dam Security Zone. [Full story](#).
- **Traditional Native Village Being Recreated In Yosemite** – An article in the *Fresno Bee* for December 15th tells the story of the recreation of a native village in the park: “A traditional Native American village is being rebuilt at the site of the last native village in Yosemite Valley. The original village was destroyed by the National Park Service nearly 50 years ago.” [Full story](#).
- **North Cascades Grizzly Bear Recover Work Halted By DOI** – The *Missoulian* reports that a grizzly bear recovery effort in North Cascades has been stopped by DOI – specifically, that park staff have “been asked to stop work on its environmental impact statement by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke’s office.” The story can’t be read on the *Missoulian* website due to a subscription requirement, but a reprint can be found in Tennessee’s *Citizen Tribune*. [Full story](#).

Department of the Interior

The Department of the Interior In The News

These days, DOI is generating almost as much news as the National Park Service, with much of it concerning the Service either directly or indirectly. This section will capture those stories.

- **Zinke Reprimanded Joshua Tree Superintendent For Climate Tweets** – According to *The Hill*, a Washington-based publication that reports on Congress and the government, Secretary Zinke called David Smith, the superintendent of Joshua Tree National Park, into his office last month “to reprimand him for climate-change related tweets the park had sent via Twitter.” No disciplinary action was taken against him and the tweets weren’t deleted because they violated no DOI or NPS policies, but “Zinke made it clear to Smith that the Trump administration doesn’t want national parks to put out official communications on climate change.” [Full story](#).
- **Thousands Of DOI Employees Report Workplace Harassment** – “Thousands of the Interior Department’s employees reported that they had experienced harassment or intimidation at work, a department-wide survey conducted earlier this year and released Thursday found,” reports the *New York Times*. “Of the nearly 30,000 employees who reported on their experiences, about 35 percent said they felt some form of harassment and intimidation, often related to their age or gender. More than 85 percent of those employees said they had to continue to interact with the person responsible for the mistreatment.” See the full article for details and the entry below for more on DOI’s response. [Full story](#).
- **Four DOI Senior Managers Fired For Harassment** – Several news outlets reported last week on four senior DOI managers being fired for “inappropriate conduct, including sexual harassment.” The ABC story includes a three-minute-long video that Zinke recorded and posted to DOI’s web page in which he spoke of his resolve to eliminate such behavior: “I’ve already removed four senior leaders that were guilty of inappropriate behavior and I will remove four hundred more if necessary. Intimidation,

harassment and discrimination is a cancer to any organization.” The video can be found at the main story link. [Full story with video.](#)

- **DOI Agent Alleges U.S. Misconduct And Cover-up At Bundy Ranch Trial** – The *Arizona Republic* has reported that the Bundy Ranch standoff trial has been suspended “over concerns that prosecutors withheld potentially mitigating and exculpatory evidence from the defense, a violation of court procedures that could lead the judge to declare a mistrial.” In an 18-page memo, Special Agent Larry Wooten, a lead investigator and case agent for the Department of Interior and the Bureau of Land Management, who was charged with reviewing the operation, wrote that he “routinely observed ... a widespread pattern of bad judgment, lack of discipline, incredible bias, unprofessionalism and misconduct’ among agents involved in the 2014 armed standoff...” and said that his investigation “indicated federal agents engaged in excessive force, civil rights and policy violations.” [Full story.](#)
- **Future Of ‘War On Public Lands’ Will Be Checked By Their Supporters** – The December 6th edition of *The New Yorker* has an article on the administration’s “war on public lands” that argues that “the President may find a way to erase the boundaries established by his predecessors, but he can’t erase the constituencies they inspired.” Those constituencies will ensure that every such action is fought, many successfully. [Full story.](#)

Systemwide Park Operations Update

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

- **Ozark National Scenic Riverways** – The public comment period for the preliminary alternatives for the park’s roads and trails management plan has been extended through January 15th. This one-month extension of the comment period will allow additional opportunity for the public to review and provide comment during the holiday season. The preliminary alternatives may be reviewed online [at this link](#). Comments may be submitted at this website through January 15th. Source: [News release](#), Ozark NSR.
- **Lassen Volcanic National Park** – The park has issued a prospectus for a concession contract to operate overnight accommodations, campgrounds, horse services, food and beverage, retail, and other visitor services. Proposals are due by April 4th. Source: [News release](#), Lassen Volcanic NP.
- **Grand Canyon National Park** – Construction will begin as early as January 2nd at the Hermit Road interchange to resurface and improve the intersection. This is the first part of a 2018 Federal Highways Administration project to improve several intersections and about 15 miles of roads in the park. Details can be found in the news release. Source: [News release](#), Grand Canyon NP.

Acknowledgements

Thanks this week to members Mark Forbes, Roger Rudolph, Dennis Burnett and Joan Anzelmo for passing along a tips and/or articles.

A Closing Observation

"We have nowhere to live except in nature. Ruin that which is natural and we will soon lose entire track of ourselves. Lose contact with that which is wild and we fall out of touch with all that this animal we are is able to understand as actual."

[William Kittredge](#) in [Testimony: Writers of the West Speak On Behalf of Utah Wilderness](#)

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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 member Steve Pittleman.

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."

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