



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

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### **Incidents**

#### **Ozark NSR Park Remains Closed Due To Extensive Flood Damage**

Ozark National Scenic Riverways remains closed due to extensive damage to facilities and unsafe conditions caused by the widespread flooding in the region. This closure includes all facilities, campgrounds, and river access points located within the park.

At the height of the flood the Current and Jacks Fork Rivers crested almost ten feet above historic highs, causing unprecedented damage to park facilities and surrounding communities. The park has received no reports of lives lost or major injuries within its boundaries.

The National Weather Service contacted the park at 2:30 a.m. on April 27th and advised that flooding was being forecast for the Alley Spring Campground area. Park rangers evacuated two campers and closed the campground. Due to weather predictions of continued rising waters, all developed campgrounds were closed the next day.

As rain continued to fall throughout the weekend, rangers and maintenance staff prepared for anticipated flooding by securing areas and equipment. Park rangers working cooperatively with local emergency response agencies conducted multiple evacuations in local communities. Welfare checks continued through Monday in flooded areas.

The Service's Midwest Region IMT (Dan Morford, IC) is in the park to assist with recovery operations. More than 120 NPS employees – 40 from outside of the park – are working every day to assess conditions, plan for next steps, stabilize facilities, and protect resources in the park.

Initial recovery efforts include assessing all areas and facilities to address immediate health and safety concerns, and to manage compromised structures. As of this past Sunday, there were some areas of the park that still remained inaccessible. Here's a general overview:

- All park water systems, electrical systems, and most roads and trails have been compromised.
- Sand, mud, and gravel along with heavy debris have been deposited into campgrounds and some facilities and onto roads, parking areas and trails.

- Phone and internet service are inoperable parkwide.
- The rivers are unsafe for any type of use. River assessments will be made over the coming week to get a better idea of what it will take to open them back up for use.
- The water level was still above average throughout the park and was four feet above flood stage at Van Buren. The rivers are cloudy and have many hidden submerged structures, trees, and vehicles.
- Contaminants and natural and manmade debris remain in and along the rivers.
- Inactive power lines were hanging down and in some cases were submerged in the water.

The situation in separate areas of the park was as follows:

- Big Spring – The spring retains its integrity. Water is cloudy and flowing at high levels. Big Spring Bridge is closed; it was completely submerged and must be evaluated by a civil engineer. There is significant damage to Highway 103. There is still water on Peavine Road. Every restroom in the Big Spring area was significantly damaged. Big Spring Lodge is being cleaned and dried out. Standing water has been pumped out and mud is still being removed from the basement. The water level was eight feet high on the main floor of the lodge during the peak of the flood.
- Round Spring – The spring retains its integrity. Water is cloudy and flowing at high levels. The parking lot and boat ramp are still covered with water.
- Alley Spring – The spring retains its integrity. Water is cloudy and flowing at high levels. Story’s Creek School had four feet of water in it, which has not happened in previous floods. The school is drying out now and its condition is being evaluated by a skilled historic architect. A team of conservators will help clean and repair damage. Alley Mill had a foot of water on the main floor of the mill. Water has been pumped out of the basement, and the building is drying. Damage is being evaluated by a skilled historic architect and a team of conservators will help clean and repair damage in an effort to have Alley Mill open by the June 5th launch of the Ozark Riverways quarter.
- Akers Ferry – The river was still too high to assess conditions there. The ferry will not be operable until it has been evaluated and any repair work is done.

As areas become safe for visitors, that information will be posted on the park website at [www.nps.gov/ozar](http://www.nps.gov/ozar), on the park Facebook page, and at the visitor contact stations. As of May 4th, phone and internet service were still down parkwide.

Source: Press Release, Alexandra Picavet, IMT Information Officer. [More information](#).

### **Crater Lake NP Park Puts Water Shortage Action Plan Into Effect**

The park is putting its water shortage action plan into effect following the state’s call to cease withdrawing water from Annie Creek.

The main water supply for the park comes from Annie Creek, a tributary of the Wood River located in the Klamath Basin of southern Oregon. Despite above average snow and precipitation in Oregon this winter, stream flows in the Wood River are not at the levels determined necessary to maintain healthy and productive riparian habitats for native plants and fisheries in the Klamath Basin. As a result, a call for water has been issued and validated on the Wood River, and Crater Lake must use an alternate source of water for park needs.

Like most western states, Oregon follows the “prior appropriation” doctrine of water use, often referred to as “first in time, first in right.” This means that when there is insufficient water to satisfy all water rights, water users with senior priority dates make a “call” to receive water,

and users with junior water rights are shut off until the rights of the senior users making the call are satisfied.

Under the Treaty of 1864, the Klamath Tribes have the right to hunt, fish, trap and gather on former reservation land. The tribes have legally determined claims that provide for instream flows sufficient for the protection of riparian habitat during spring runoff months. The priority date for these instream determined claims is "time immemorial," making them senior to all other rights.

On April 13th, the Klamath Tribes called their claim on the Wood River. On May 1st, the Wood River was regulated to "time immemorial," the earliest available water right. On May 3rd, the Oregon Water Resources Department informed park staff that the park had to cease withdrawing water from Annie Creek, the park's primary water source.

Park staff are asking all visitors and employees to use water wisely during the water supply shortage.

Source: Press Release, Craig Ackerman and Marsha McCabe, Crater Lake NP. [Click here](#) for a copy of the press release; [click here](#) for answers to frequently asked questions about the water shortage.

### **Yosemite NP Search In Progress For Missing Hiker**

Rangers are searching for Alexander Sevier, who was last seen in Yosemite Valley on the morning of Wednesday, May 3rd. Sevier, an active member of the U.S Navy, traveled to Yosemite alone, and arrived in the park on Monday, May 1st. He was staying at Housekeeping Camp and neighbors in the camp told rangers that he would go out for day hikes each day. He would hike alone and return to Housekeeping Camp in the evening.

Sevier is 24 years old, 5'6" tall, and weighs 128 pounds. He has black hair, brown eyes, and may have been wearing Aeropostale, Abercrombie, or Hollister brand clothing. He works at the Navy Medical Center in Portsmouth, Virginia.

Operations include rangers looking on and around popular hiking trails, searches by YODOGS SAR dogs, and searches by a helicopter from the California Highway Patrol out of Fresno, California. Search efforts have concentrated on popular hiking trails that originate in Yosemite Valley such as the Upper Yosemite Fall Trail and the Mist Trail. About 30 people are currently involved in the search.

Source: Press Release, Yosemite NP. [More Information](#).

### **Buffalo NR Body Of Missing Canoeist Found**

The body of 65-year-old Rick Norber was found in the Buffalo River last Saturday morning, four miles downstream from where he was last seen on April 26th. Searchers in a jet boat from Hasty Volunteer Fire Department found his body late on the morning of May 5th.

Norber's canoe capsized when he and the people he was canoeing with were trapped in floodwaters in an area known as "Hell's Half Acre" above Kyles Landing. In the days after he went missing, searchers found articles of clothing and gear from the two canoes that overturned

A number of agencies and organizations were involved in the search, including the Newton County Sheriff's Office, the National Park Service, the Harrison Fire Department, the Harrison Office of Emergency Management, Tri-County Search and Rescue, Mennonite Disaster Services, Christian Aid Ministries, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and their dive team, Arkansas Forestry Commission, Mt. Sherman Volunteer Fire Department, Hasty Volunteer Fire Department, Lost Valley Canoe Rental, the Arkansas Canoe Club, Carroll County OEM, K-9 units from around the state, and the American Red Cross.

Source: *Springfield News-Leader*. [Full story](#).

### **Rocky Mountain NP Injured Hiker Rescued From East Inlet Trail**

On the evening of Friday, May 5th, rangers received a cell phone call reporting that a man had fallen and been injured on the East Inlet Trail on the west side of the park.

A 19-year-old Tennessee man and two friends were backpacking about three-and-a-half miles from the trailhead, scrambling over steep terrain, boulders and downed trees, when a large boulder fell on the man's leg. His friends were able to free him from under the rock and summoned help.

Search and rescue team members reached the man at approximately 11:30 p.m. He was found to be in steep terrain – cliffed-out on one side and with a steep scree slope on the other side. Due to the terrain and darkness, the 15-member team stayed with him through the night, providing advanced medical care, before evacuating him the next day. A helicopter hoisted him up and flew him to Harbison Meadow, where he was transferred to a park and taken to Middle Park Medical Center.

A number of agencies assisted the park on this incident, including Grand County EMS, Grand Lake Fire Protection District, Grand County Sheriff's Office and Grand County Search and Rescue.

Source: Press Release, Kyle Patterson, Rocky Mountain NP. [More information](#).

### **National Fire Situation**

#### **National Interagency Fire Center Fire Activity Continues In Southeast And New Mexico**

The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) remains at Preparedness Level 1, the lowest of five preparedness levels.

Six new large fires were reported last week and another nine were contained. Large fire activity was reported in Florida, Georgia and New Mexico. The West Mims Fire in Georgia continues to grow and had burned a total of 111,650 acres as of this past weekend.

As of May 5th, 20,482 fires had been reported nationwide, just a bit under the average year-to-date annual total of 20,779 fires for the period from 2006 to 2016. Those fires had burned 1,998,139 acres, considerably more than the annual year-to-date average of 841,462 acres for the same period.

Source: NIFC. More information.

### **Natural and Cultural Resources**

Nothing this issue.

## **Agency Management**

### **Department of the Interior**

#### **DOI Announces Public Comment Period For Antiquities Act Monuments**

On May 5th, DOI announced a formal public comment period for members of the public to officially weigh in on monument designations under the Antiquities Act of 1906. DOI also released a list of monuments under review (list below) under the President's Executive Order 13792, issued on April 26th.

A public comment period is not required for monument designations under the Antiquities Act, but Secretary of the Interior Zinke and the president "both strongly believe that local input is a critical component of federal land management."

The Department will shortly publish a notice in the *Federal Register* officially opening the public comment period. Written comments relating to the Bears Ears National Monument must be submitted within 15 days of publication of that notice. Written comments relating to all other designations subject to Executive Order 13792 must be submitted within 60 days of that date.

Comments may be submitted online after May 12th at <http://www.regulations.gov> by entering "DOI-2017-0002" in the search bar and clicking "Search," or by mail to Monument Review, MS-1530, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

Here's the list of the 27 monuments to be reviewed. DOI has subdivided them into three categories, but for our purposes they are all listed together in alphabetical order:

- Basin and Range, Nevada
- Bears Ears, Utah
- Berryessa Snow Mountain, California
- Canyons of the Ancients, Colorado
- Carrizo Plain, California
- Cascade Siskiyou, Oregon
- Craters of the Moon, Idaho
- Giant Sequoia, California
- Gold Butte, Nevada
- Grand Canyon-Parashant, Arizona
- Grand Staircase-Escalante, Utah
- Hanford Reach, Washington
- 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
- Upper Missouri River Breaks, Montana
- Vermillion Cliffs, Arizona

Meanwhile, Secretary Zinke is on a “listening tour” regarding Bears Ears National Monument and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. He began on Sunday and will end the tour today, holding sessions at four locations.

Source: Press Release, DOI. [More information](#) on national monument review; [more information](#) on Secretary Zinke’s listening tour.

[Note: CPANP has spoken on this issue. Click on this link for our statement on the president’s executive order: [Coalition Statement on Recent Executive Order](#). The Coalition has also joined 450 organizations in a joint letter to the president asking that he continue to protect national monuments; the text can be found at [Coalition Among Groups Urging President Trump to Protect National Monuments](#)].

## **Park People, Friends and Allies**

### **Cape Cod NS Superintendent George Price Has Retired**

On Wednesday, May 5th, Superintendent George Price retired, bringing to a close a 44-year career with the National Park Service.

George joined the Service in 1973 as a seasonal ranger at Morristown National Historical Park. By 1976 he was dressed up as a Revolutionary War soldier playing his drum and giving presentations to visitors.

In 1978, George moved to Minute Man National Historical Park and then to Lowell National Historical Park for 15 years. In 1996, he was the first superintendent of Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area. He moved to Cape Cod National Seashore in 2005.

A retirement party will be held for him in Eastham on May 11th. Two hundred people are expected at the farewell event.

Click on the link below for additional details and photos.

Source: *Cape Cod Times*. [Full story](#).

## **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:

- **Yellowstone NP** – On May 1st, the *New York Times* ran a story in its science section entitled “The New Threat to Wolves in and Around Yellowstone.” Here’s an excerpt: “In March, a United States Court of Appeals paved the way for Wyoming to join Idaho and Montana in allowing wolf hunting. Wildlife officials are now planning a hunting season on gray wolves for this fall, based on the court’s ruling that the state’s plan to manage

wolves was adequate to ensure that the once-threatened species would not be imperiled again by hunting wolves near the park or those that leave it.” [Full story](#).

- **Cape Cod NS** – The *Cape Cod Times* reports that meetings of the park’s advisory commission, which has been in existence since 1961, have been canceled until further notice as part of the transition to the new administration – an action that evidently applies to all such commissions Servicewide. [Full story](#). [Submitted by member Maria Burks]
- **Katahdin Woods and Waters NM** – *Central Maine.com*, the website of the *Kennebec Journal* and the *Morning Sentinel*, has published an editorial in favor of the monument and in opposition to efforts to deauthorize it by the administration and Governor LePage, calling it a “step backward.” The editorial notes that the monument is already drawing tourism, business and investment to an economically depressed area. [Full story](#).
- **National Monuments** – The May 6th issue of *Government Executive* has an article entitled “National Monuments: Presidents Can Create Them, But Only Congress Can Undo Them.” It examines the history of national monuments and the authorities behind their creation and concludes with the following observation: “The aesthetic, cultural, scientific, spiritual and economic value of preserving them has long exceeded whatever short-term benefit could have been derived without legal protection. As Secretary Zinke begins his review of Bears Ears and other national monuments, he should heed that lesson, and also ensure that his recommendations do not overstep the president’s lawful authority.” [Full story](#).

## Systemwide Upcoming Events

Upcoming events and activities of potential interest to members of the Coalition:

- **May 20** – Memorial ceremony for past Yellowstone superintendent Bob Barbee at Old Faithful. For details, click on [this link](#). [Submitted by member Joan Anzelmo]
- **August 4** – The Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s Maine 2017 Conference will be held in Waterville, Maine, on the week of August 4th. For more information, click on [this link](#) to the conference website. [Submitted by member Sarah Peskin]
- **August 3-4** – Along with the above, an Art and Land Conservation Symposium will be held on August 3rd and 4th at Colby College in Waterville, Maine. For more information, click on [this link](#).

## Systemwide Weekly Park Status Update

Here’s a listing of newly-announced extended area and facility closures and reopenings from across the Service:

- **Ozark NSR** – As noted above, the park remains closed due to extensive damage to facilities and unsafe conditions caused by the widespread flooding in the region. This closure includes all facilities, campgrounds, and river access points located within the park. [More information](#).
- **Sitka NHP** – Construction of the new Indian River pedestrian bridge began on May 8th. The bridge will remain closed through August 15th. Visitors will be rerouted through the Sheldon Jackson Campus to reach Sawmill Creek Road and the Alaska Raptor Center. [More information](#).
- **Big Bend NP** – Rio Grande Village Campground will be closed for maintenance to the water and waste system from May 22nd through September 1st. The Rio Grande Village Camp store will remain open for business. [More information](#).



Source: NPS.gov News Release website.

### **A Closing Observation**

"Our national parks system is a national museum. Its purpose is to preserve forever...certain areas of extraordinary scenic magnificence in a condition of primitive nature. Its recreational value is also very great, but recreation is not distinctive of the system. The function which alone distinguishes the national parks...is the museum function made possible only by the parks' complete conservation."

[Robert Sterling Yard](#), 1923

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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. Tips on and links to park-related stories are appreciated; please send to Bill at [BHalainen@gmail.com](mailto:BHalainen@gmail.com).

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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