



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

**Wednesday, May 24, 2017**

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### **Incidents**

#### **Ozark NSR**

#### **Areas Of Park Reopen Following Flood**

Some camping areas and access points along the Jacks Fork and Current Rivers have been reopened following April's disastrous flood.

"This was a very different incident, nothing like what we have handled in the past," said Superintendent Larry Johnson. "We are transitioning from the overwhelming back to normal flood recovery operations, except the impacts of this event are more widespread than we've had to deal with in the past."

Midwest Region's incident management team has turned flood recovery operations over to the park and has departed. Teams have been working long hours to get at least some of the river access points and camping areas open. Safety of the public and the recovery team has been the top priority; the park will not open areas until they have been deemed to be safe.

The historic flood affected nearly all of the park's resources. Condition assessments are continuing and to date approximately 84% of the park's resources have been assessed. Of those assessed, 33 structures have been destroyed and another 99 have been reported to have sustained critical or serious damage. Widespread flooding is another factor in this event – the water level is not dropping as quickly as in the past, as the water literally has nowhere to go.

The following areas had reopened as of last Friday. Areas not listed below are still closed to the public.

- Campgrounds – Round Spring and Pulltite. Reduced rates will be posted at campgrounds where all amenities, such as showers and flush toilets, are not on line yet.
- River Access – The Upper Current from Tan Vat to Round Spring is open for floating. The Jacks Fork is open for floating from Buck Hollow to Alley boat launch, but closed from Alley boat launch to Two Rivers until safety hazards can be mitigated. The Lower Current is open for power boating but closed to floating due to persistent high water.
- Launch Areas – Tan Vat, Baptist, Cedar Grove, Akers, Pulltite, Round Spring, Buck Hollow, Rymers, Alley, and Big Spring.

- Alley Mill – The Alley Mill parking area, grounds around Alley Mill and Storys Creek School, and Alley General Store. Alley Mill remains closed due to flood damage, and restrooms there are closed due to issues with the sewage system. Chemical toilets are available. Burr Oak pavilion and picnic area remain closed due to damage and debris. All hiking trails are closed due to hazardous conditions.
- Devils Well – Open for day use and picnicking. Cave Spring trail is open for hiking, and the vault toilet is open.
- Rocky Falls – Open for day use and picnicking. The vault toilet is also open.
- Klepzig Mill – Open for day use and picnicking.
- Akers Ranger Station – Public restrooms are open.

Phone service is back on at Park Headquarters. For public information and status updates information desks will be staffed at Round Spring Contact Station, Alley Spring General Store, and Park Headquarters in Van Buren, daily from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. As conditions change 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.

Source: Press Release, Pamela Barnes, Ozark NSR. [More information.](#)

### **Cuyahoga Valley NP Man Pleads Guilty To Attempted Murder**

DeZay Ely, 28, has entered a guilty plea in federal court to charges of attempted murder and discharging a firearm during a crime of violence. Ely was arrested last August for the July 2016 shooting of a teen in the park.

Court documents detail how Ely attempted to kill a woman by shooting her repeatedly in the head. Ely wanted to test a gun "before he robbed somebody." He and an accomplice drove the victim to the park where Ely shot her. The woman was found near a park trail by passers-by and was transported to a hospital, unable to speak and in critical condition.

The US Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Ohio prosecuted the case following an interagency investigation by Cuyahoga Valley NP rangers and special agents from the NPS Investigative Services Branch, the FBI, and the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation.

Sentencing is scheduled for August. Ely faces up to 30 years incarceration. In a separate, pending case, the alleged driver also faces federal charges.

Source: NPS Investigative Services Branch. [More information.](#)

### **Great Sand Dunes NP Search In Progress For Missing Park Visitor**

A search for a missing visitor was scaled back last Thursday because of snow and strong winds.

The search effort, which started on Sunday, May 14th, covers 14 square miles of rugged terrain in the Sangre de Cristo Wilderness Area around Mount Herard, a 13,345-foot peak in the preserve.

Operations were scaled back because snow and high winds were impacting the safety of search teams, the ability of search dogs and flights by search aircraft.

The visitor, who has not yet been identified, entered the park on May 8th, but did not obtain either a backcountry permit or an overnight parking pass, which would have established a travel route and planned return date.

Source: *Denver Post*. [Full story](#).

### **Sequoia-Kings Canyon NPs Six Arrested In Interagency Operation To Suppress Marijuana Plantations**

A ten-day, multi-agency law enforcement operation investigating illegal marijuana plantations in the two parks lead to six arrests last month.

The investigation concentrated on foothill canyon roads where marijuana growing sites have been located previously. A total of 30 officers logged nearly 1,000 work hours and made more than 100 motor vehicle stops.

Over the last 14 years, nearly 300,000 plants with an estimated value of \$850 million have been eradicated from these two parks.

The law enforcement agencies and other parks participating in the operation included the Bureau of Public Lands, California Fish and Wildlife, California National Guard Narcotic Task Force, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Point Reyes National Seashore, Tulare County Sheriff's Department, Whiskeytown National Recreation Area and Yosemite National Park.

Source: *Visalia Times-Delta*. [Full story](#).

### **Blue Ridge Parkway Elderly Woman Falls To Her Death**

An 83-year-old Nancy Ann Martin of Richmond, Virginia, fell to her death from the East Fork Overlook last Friday morning along.

Martin's companion called Haywood County 911 to report the accident about 10:45 a.m. Her body was recovered just after 1 p.m. by the Haywood County Sheriff's Technical Rescue Team. Rescuers found Martin's body about 150 feet below the overlook, near the Pisgah National Forest.

The incident remains under investigation.

Source: WYFF News. [More information](#).

### **National Fire Situation**

#### **National Interagency Fire Center NIFC Goes To Preparedness Level 2**

The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) is now at Preparedness Level 2, the second of five preparedness levels. PL 2 goes into effect when:

- Several geographic areas are experiencing high to extreme fire danger.
- Wildland fire activity is increasing and large fires are occurring in one or more geographic areas.
- Minimal mobilization of resources from other geographic areas is occurring.

- There is moderate commitment of national resources with the potential to mobilize additional resources from other geographic areas.

Twelve large fires are burning in five states. One new large fire has been reported in New Mexico. Firefighters continue to make progress toward management objectives on the West Mims Fire in Georgia.

As of May 19th, 22,910 fires had been reported nationwide, just under the average year-to-date annual total of 23,846 fires for the period from 2006 to 2016. Those fires had burned 2,112,672 acres, considerably more than the annual year-to-date average of 971,833 acres for the same period.

Source: NIFC. [More information.](#)

### **Big Bend NP Crown Mountain Fire Fully Contained**

On the morning of May 14th, a wildland fire was spotted. Lightning from the previous evening was the presumed cause of ignition.

International and interagency response included Big Bend National Park fire crewmembers, the Los Diablos fire crew, helitack crews, five Forest Service hotshot crews, and a Type 3 wildland fire team. In all, the fire was worked on by 162 personnel, and burned an estimated 944 acres. No park structures were damaged, and no injuries were reported.

The Type 3 Incident Management Team has transferred incident command back to the Big Bend NP Type 4 IMT. As of Friday, May 19th, the fire was 100% contained.

All facilities in the Chisos Basin are now open to visitors. The Chisos campground main loop and group campground have reopened.

The National Park Service has also reopened Juniper Canyon, Pine Canyon roads and campsites, the Outer Mountain loop trails and camping (Dodson, Juniper Canyon, and Blue Creek), and all Chisos Mountains trails.

Source: InciWeb. [More information.](#)

### **Natural and Cultural Resources**

#### **Washington Office NPS Cultural Resources Climate Change Strategy Available Online**

The Service's [Cultural Resources Climate Change Strategy](#) has been posted to the Service's Climate Change webpage. It sets out "a vision and broad approach for managing impacts to and learning from cultural resources under modern climate change."

The webpage provides a brief summary of the report by way of introduction: "Cultural resources are our record of the human experience. Collectively, these archeological sites, cultural landscapes, ethnographic resources, museum collections, and historic buildings and structures connect one generation to the next. The National Park Service is charged with conserving cultural resources so that they may be enjoyed by future generations. Climate change is adding challenges to this role, and will continue to affect cultural resources in diverse ways. At the same time, through the tangible and intangible qualities they hold, cultural resources are also part of the solution to climate change."

“The Cultural Resources Climate Change Strategy connects major directions for action from the [NPS Climate Change Response Strategy](#) (2010) and the [NPS Director’s Policy Memo Climate Change and Stewardship of Cultural Resources](#) (2014) to create four overarching goals for cultural resources and climate change:

- Goal 1 - Connect Impacts and Information: Set the broad scope of cultural resources and climate change response by connecting the concepts of impacts and information with the four pillars of climate change response: science, adaptation, mitigation, and communication.
- Goal 2 - Understand the Scope: Coordinate science, management, and communication to identify and improve understanding of the effects of climate change on cultural resources.
- Goal 3 - Integrate Practice: Incorporate climate change into ongoing cultural resources research, planning, and stewardship.
- Goal 4 - Learn and Share: Collaborate with partners to grow and use the body of knowledge and practice for cultural resources and climate change.”

Source: NPS Climate Change webpage. [More information.](#)

## **Agency Management**

### **White House**

#### **Webpage Solicits Comments On Agencies To Reform Or Eliminate**

On March 13th, the president signed an executive order on a “[comprehensive plan for reorganizing the executive branch](#).” The White House has followed that up with a webpage where you can specify which agencies you’d like to reform or even eliminate – including the National Park Service – and has blocks where you can enter your ideas for reorganizing or reforming the government.

The page, entitled “[Reorganizing the Executive Branch: We Need Your Input!](#),” solicits “your ideas and suggestions on how the government can be better organized to work for the American people.”

Comments are due by June 12th.

Source: White House. [More information.](#)

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

### **NPS Alumni**

#### **Passing Of Retired Yosemite Woodworker Horst Remmling**

Horst Remmling, 86, a retired woodworker who worked for the National Park Service for 13 years, passed away at his home in Encinitas, California, on April 22nd. Horst is survived by his wife of 65 years, Gisela, and his sons Herb and Erich Remmling.

Born in Dessau, Germany, he emigrated here in 1952 by sneaking out of East Germany. He started his life long career in woodworking as an apprentice in Germany at the age of 15 and was a custom cabinet maker in North San Diego County for many years.

Horst’s passion for trout fishing and photography led him to Yosemite National Park, where his talents landed him his dream job – restoring historical buildings and backcountry cabins in the park.

He continued his woodworking as a hobby in his retirement, turning bowls on his lathe. He often exhibited his creations at the San Diego County Fair and was part of the San Diego Wood Turners Club, which gave woodworking exhibitions at the fair and made spinning tops for children.

There will be a celebration of his life at their home in Encinitas on July 15th. Condolences can be sent to their home: 410 E. Glaucus St., Encinitas, CA 92024.

Source: *San Diego Union Tribune*, via Legacy.com. Submitted by member Dave Pannebaker. [More information.](#)

## **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:

- **Katahdin Woods and Waters NM** – According to the *Bangor Daily News*, Maine Governor Paul LePage, who is firmly opposed to the new national monument, is refusing to put signs along state roads showing the way to the monument pending the outcome of a federal review. [Full story.](#)
- **National Monuments** – On May 18th, *The Nation* posted a story by Zoë Carpenter on the national monument review with this headline: “After Promising A ‘Fair Hearing’ On Monuments, Secretary Zinke Shuts Out The Public.” The subtitle reads: “As the Interior Department considers unprecedented changes to protected lands, avenues for public input have been curtailed.” [Full story.](#)
- **National Monuments** – An article appears in a recent issue of *The Conversation*, “an independent source of news and views from the academic and research community, delivered direct to the public,” in which four law professors argue that presidents can create national monuments but that only Congress can undo them. Here’s the key paragraph: “President Trump calls recent national monuments ‘a massive federal land grab,’ and argues that control over some should be given to the states. In our view, this misrepresents the law. National monuments can be designated only on federal lands already owned or controlled by the United States.” [Full story.](#)
- **National Monuments** – The May 20th edition of the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune* has an article by Steve Scauzillo on the comments received on the national monument review website as of last Friday. “There were 50,392 comments received as of Friday afternoon,” says Scauzillo. “I could not find one that said, ‘I would not mind Chevron or Shell sinking an oil derrick here or fracking for natural gas next to my favorite picnic spot.’ Instead, the American people wrote eloquently about their public lands. I’m urging the president to read some of these responses.” The article then cites about a dozen comments. [Full story.](#)

### **Systemwide**

#### **Upcoming Events**

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

- **May 26** – Due date for comments in DOI review of Bears Ears National Monument. [More information.](#)

- **May 29** – The centennial of President Kennedy’s birth will be celebrated with an array of events at John F. Kennedy NHS in Brookline, Massachusetts. [More information](#).
- **June 12** – Due date for comments in the White House review of federal agencies, which solicits public “ideas and suggestions on how the government can be better organized to work for the American people.” [More information](#).
- **July 10** – Due date for comments in DOI review of all national monuments but Bears Ears NM. [More information](#).
- **August 4** – The Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s Maine 2017 Conference will be held in Waterville, Maine, on the week of August 4th. [More information](#).
- **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. [More information](#).
- **October 18-22** – Ranger Rendezvous 40, Association of National Park Rangers, YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park, Colorado. [More information](#).

### **Systemwide Weekly Park Status Update**

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

- **Zion NP** – As a result of dry grass contributing to high fire danger in the lower elevations of the park, restrictions were instituted on May 23rd prohibiting campfires in Zion Canyon and smoking in vegetated areas. [More information](#).
- **Ozark NSR** – See the incident report above for details on the park’s current status.

Source: NPS.gov News Release website.

### **A Closing Observation**

"I earnestly recommend the establishment of a Bureau of National Parks. Such legislation is essential to the proper management of those wondrous manifestations of Nature, so startling and so beautiful that everyone recognizes the obligations of the Government to preserve them for the edification and recreation of the people...every consideration of patriotism and love of Nature and of beauty and of art requires us to expend money enough to bring all of these natural wonders within easy reach of our people. The first step in that direction is the establishment of a responsible bureau, which shall take upon itself the burden of supervising the parks and of making recommendations as to the best method of improving their accessibility and usefulness."

[President William Howard Taft](#)

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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.”

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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