



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

Wednesday, August 8, 2018

Volume 2

Number 25

Editor's Notes

This week's report is somewhat abbreviated due to time constraints. Full editions will resume on August 15th.

Incidents

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park

Message From The Superintendent Regarding Closure Impacts

Most of the park remains closed due to frequent damaging earthquakes, corrosive volcanic ash, and continuing explosions from Halema'uma'u, the summit crater of Kilauea Volcano. At the editor's request, Cindy Orlando, the park's superintendent, composed and sent along a note on how things are going in the park itself:

"Our volcano continues to erupt and the ground shakes at the summit. Unlike the lava which you can prepare for and see coming, 600 earthquakes a day in the park have become the norm for us though slightly less predictable.

"Right now we are managing a closure and the status quo until we can begin to assess damages, prepare a recovery strategy and begin repairs to reopen. There's not much else we can do until the eruption/related earthquakes end.

"All of our permanent staff are working, with sister federal agencies serving as work sites, venues for outreach opportunities and temp office space. Only 33,000 acres of the park's 330,000 acres are in the eruption zone so there are still a lot of places to get things done in the park. [We're] talking a bit more [about] shuffling of priorities, funding, etc. and a big concern is there is no fee money coming in. We'll see how it all goes. Some buildings will have to be relocated or rebuilt."

For more information on the status of the eruption, go to [Hawaii Volcanoes NP](#) and/or [Hawaii Volcanoes Observatory](#).

Source: Cindy Orlando, Superintendent, Hawaii Volcanoes NP.

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve

Non-Fatal Plane Crashes Occur In Park On Consecutive Days

On the afternoon of Wednesday, July 18th, the Coast Guard notified the park of a plane down near Crillon Lake southeast of Lituya Bay on Glacier Bay's outer coast. Initial Coast Guard reports

indicated that a mid-air collision had occurred, but follow-up from the USCG helicopter that responded to the scene identified a single plane down.

The 34 year-old pilot, who had exited the plane and swam to shore, was rescued successfully and taken to Sitka. The park was preparing to respond at the time, but stood down. The Coast Guard reported that the plane was “wheels up” and submerged to the wings in Crillon Lake. A salvage operation is anticipated to recover the downed plane.

On Thursday afternoon, the park received a relayed radio call from the cruise ship *Island Princess* reporting an aircraft down in front of the Grand Pacific Glacier at the head of Glacier Bay’s Tarr Inlet.

Rangers responded and contacted the uninjured pilot, Thorsten Kampe of Germany. Kampe reported landing due to an apparent engine malfunction. The nose of the plane subsequently buried, breaking the propeller as he taxied through soft sand. The pilot was taken to Bartlett Cove on a park boat. Temsco Helicopters plans to salvage the aircraft.

Sources: Glacier Bay NP&P news release of [July 19th](#) and [July 20th](#).

Grand Teton National Park Ranger’s Recover Woman’s Body From Jackson Lake

Rangers and Signal Mountain Lodge employees recovered the body of a kayaker from Jackson Lake on the night of July 23rd.

Lodge employees found a single overturned rental kayak approximately 100 feet offshore in the Signal Mountain Marina early that evening. The kayak was unoccupied, but contained a life jacket and some personal items. They began a search of the surrounding waters and found the body of the 36-year-old woman about 30 feet away under approximately 15 feet of water at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Three rangers arrived at the marina shortly thereafter. One of them dove from a boat and attempted to swim back to the surface with the woman, but was unable to do so. The ranger returned and wrapped a rescue rope around her; the rangers and lodge employees were then able to pull her back to the surface and into the boat.

She was pronounced dead and her body was transferred to the Teton County coroner. Initial indications are that her death was a suicide. The investigation continues.

Source: [Grand Teton National Park](#).

Mount Rushmore National Memorial Man Dies In Fall In Popular Park Climbing Area

A 58-year-old Illinois man died in a hiking accident in on Thursday, July 19th.

Anthony Rashid died of blunt force trauma after an accidental fall. His body was found by hikers at the base of a cliff not far from the memorial the following day. The hikers said that it appeared he had fallen while climbing on the rocks in that area.

Rangers and Pennington County Sheriff’s Office deputies responded to the initial call. The FBI is assisting with the ongoing investigation.

Source: [Rapid City Journal](#).

Fire Island National Seashore Two Bitten In Shark Attacks Off Park Beaches

Two young beachgoers were bitten in shark attacks off two Fire Island beaches on Wednesday, July 18th.

The attacks happened within minutes of each other off Sailors Haven and Atlantique Beach that morning. The two beaches are about four miles apart.

The victim in the first attack was a 12-year-old girl who was in the water off Sailors Haven. Her leg was injured but she was otherwise okay. In the second attack, a shark bit a 13-year-old boy on the leg in the waters off Atlantique Beach, according to a spokesman for the Town of Islip. Responders found a tooth lodged in the teen's leg and are analyzing it to try to determine the species of the shark responsible.

Ocean beaches along the island reportedly were closed in the wake of the attacks.

Source: [New York Post](#).

Death Valley National Park Hiker Dies Of Hyperthermia, Injuries Suffered In Fall

Peter Rhoad, 57, died while hiking in the park on Monday, July 16th.

Rangers learned that the man was overdue from a hike in the park when his fiancé called and said that he'd failed to return as planned. She gave rangers a list of hikes that Rhoad was considering and they subsequently found his car at the Panamint Dunes trailhead.

On Tuesday morning, a California Highway Patrol helicopter began searching and spotted his body a little less than a mile east of his car. It was taken to the Inyo County Coroner's Office in Lone Pine, where an autopsy revealed the cause of death to be a skull fracture caused by a fall, compounded by exposure to the elements. Temperatures exceeded 115 degrees on the day he was reported missing.

Hikers are discouraged from going into low elevations at Death Valley during the summer due to the excessive heat.

Source: [KSNV News](#).

National Fire Situation

National Interagency Fire Center NIFC Moves To PL 5; More Than Sixty Large Fires Burn Across West

Synopsis

NIFC has elevated the national preparedness level to PL 5, its highest level.

More than 1.5 million acres have burned in large fires currently active across fourteen states. Firefighters in Oregon and Washington are making progress toward containment goals on many fires. Fires in California continue to burn actively, with several gaining thousands of acres on Monday.

Firefighters are being supported by military personnel and fire line managers from Australia and New Zealand.

National Park Service Fires

Significant fires are currently burning in these national parks:

- *Yosemite NP* – The Ferguson Fire, which had burned over 90,000 acres as of Monday, is having a major impact on the park, although it is almost entirely on the Stanislaus National Forest. On Sunday, it was announced that Yosemite Valley, Wawona and a number of other locations within the park will be closed indefinitely. Yosemite Valley and Wawona have been closed to visitors since July 25th. The fire continued to be active Sunday up to a half-mile within the

park, with spotting occurring near Chinquapin. Firefighters have begun to set up contingency lines around the park. The fire on Friday jumped Highway 41 and was heading towards Badger Pass amid the evacuation of Yosemite Valley. Big Oak Flat Road between Crane Flat and the Big Oak Flat road entrance of Yosemite National Park remain closed to help facilitate firefighting efforts. The entrance to the park through Highway 41 is closed for the same reason. The only open entrance to the park is through Lee Vining to Crane Flat. Tioga Road from Tioga Pass to White Wolf is open to all visitors and vehicles. The evacuation order for the Wawona community was lifted on Monday morning, but only residents are being allowed in. Wawona remains under a "fire advisement," meaning that the area could still be evacuated. Residents must use the south entrance to Yosemite on Highway 41.

- *Whiskeytown NRA* – The Carr Fire, which burned down so many buildings in and around Redding, California, also caused major damage to the park and employee homes, though that information has mostly been lost in the reporting on the fire. When it began on July 23rd, a full-scale suppression response was immediately begun under the unified joint command of the National Park Service and Cal Fire. The fire burned almost the entire park along with much of the surrounding region. Fifteen park employees lost their homes to the fire. Five were park residences; the remaining ten were outside of Whiskeytown. Eleven park buildings also burned and the Oak Bottom Marina suffered significant damage. Park headquarters and the park visitor center were spared. The park remains closed and is not expected to reopen this summer.
- *Mesa Verde NP* – The lightning-caused Moccasin Mesa Fire has so far burned 185 acres in pinion-juniper forest. It's being managed by a local IMT 3 (Gustafson). Full containment is expected by Friday.
- *Grand Canyon NP* – The Obi Fire has grown to about 3,550 acres. Growth today was primarily in the northern and eastern portions of the fire perimeter. Located on the Wahalla Plateau, the Obi Fire started on July 21st. Fire managers plan to continue the strategy of confining and containing the lightning-caused fire in a predetermined area while providing for point protection of identified sensitive natural and cultural resources. The park has temporarily closed Cape Royal Road, Cape Final Trail, Cliff Spring Trail, the northern section of the Ken Patrick Trail from Point Imperial to Cape Royal Road, and the southern section of the Ken Patrick Trail from Cape Royal Road to the old Bright Angel Trail. The road to Point Imperial and all other North Rim trails and facilities are open at this time.
- *Crater Lake NP* – The Timber Crater 10 Fire has burned 193 acres and is 95% contained.

Sources: [Sacramento Bee](#); [KRCR News](#); [Fresno Bee](#); [Redding Record Searchlight](#); [Grand Canyon NP](#);

Active Incident Resource Commitments

Category	July 15th	July 24th	August 7th
Area Command Teams	0	0	0
NIMO Teams	0	0	0
Type 1 Teams	2	3	13
Type 2 Teams	4	11	15
Crews	172	428	552
Engines	496	873	1,944
Helicopters	74	123	170
Total FF/Overhead	7,994	15,489	27,543

Fires/Acreage

Category	2018 Total	2007-2017 Ave	2018 Variance
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Year-to-Date Fires	39,122	41,497	- 2,375
Year-to-Date Acres	5,279,931	4,074,826	+ 1,205,105

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

News From Around Washington

Reports on official actions and activities from Capitol Hill, the White House, the Department of the Interior, the National Park Service and other related agencies and NGO's.

Capitol Hill Weekly Legislative Roundup

New Public Laws

Nothing to report.

Senate

On August 1st, the Senate passed H.R. 6147, making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, by a vote of 92 yeas to 6 nays. See [the June 20th edition of this report](#) for a summary of the bill's provisions. During consideration of H.R. 6147 on the Senate floor, the following amendments were adopted that affect the National Park Service:

- By 97 yeas to 1 nay, to provide for a report on facilities of the Department of the Interior damaged by certain volcanic eruptions.
- To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to provide technical assistance relating to a disaster caused by a volcanic eruption.
- To provide \$3 million in additional funds for grants from the Historic Preservation Fund for historically black colleges and university to bring the level up to the same as FY 18.
- To provide that the Secretary of the Interior shall designate the rest area bounded by Alexandria Avenue, West Boulevard Drive, and the George Washington Memorial Parkway on the Mount Vernon Trail within the George Washington Memorial Parkway as the 'Peter B. Webster III Memorial Area' and to require the installation of a plaque honoring Peter B. Webster III at the site.

Section 116 of the bill extends the authorization of appropriations for the Tennessee, Augusta Canal, and South Carolina National Heritage Areas for an additional two years through September 30, 2019.

On August 1st, the Committee on Foreign Relations held a hearing to examine the nomination, among others, of R. Clarke Cooper, of Florida, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Political-Military Affairs). Clarke formerly was the Assistant Director, Legislative and Congressional Affairs, National Park Service, for the first few years of the administration of President George W. Bush.

House

On July 23rd, the House passed the following bills:

- H.R. 1220, to establish the Adams Memorial Commission, a federal commission, to carry out the provisions of Public Law 107-62, which had previously authorized the Adams Memorial Foundation to establish a memorial on federal land in Washington, D.C. to honor the legacy of President John Adams and his family and their service to the nation.
- H.R. 3045, to amend the National Trails System Act to extend the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

- H.R. 5979, to establish the Mill Springs Battlefield National Monument as a unit of the national park system upon the donation of sufficient lands to constitute a manageable unit.
- H.R. 5613, to designate the Quindaro Townsite in Kansas City, Kansas, as a National Commemorative Site, which shall not be a unit of the national park system.

On July 24th, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform's Subcommittee on the Interior, Energy, and Environment held a hearing entitled "Preserving Opportunities for Grazing on Federal Land". There was no witness from the department at the hearing.

On July 26th, the House agreed to the conference report on H.R. 5515, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2019 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, by a vote of 359 yeas to 54 nays. There were eight provisions included in the House or Senate versions of the bill that would have affected the National Park Service. However, all eight provisions were dropped from the conference report adopted by the House and by the Senate a couple of days later. It appears the House and Senate conferees dropped these provisions as many of them involved individual bills that had passed either the House or Senate and were still pending final action by the other house of Congress. It is likely that the chairmen of the respective House and Senate committees wanted to require the bills to follow the regular legislative process instead of having them included in an unrelated bill. The dropped provisions included:

- a section to amend the boundary of Shiloh National Military Park and to establish the Parker's Crossroads Battlefield as an affiliated area of the national park system;
- a section to extend the authorization of appropriations for the National Aviation Heritage Area in Ohio through September 30, 2025;
- a section to require the secretary of defense to provide for the inclusion on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in DC the names of the 74 crew members of the *USS Frank B. Evans* killed on June 3, 1969;
- a section to designate the Mormon Peak Microwave Facility within Death Valley National Park, as potential wilderness;
- a section to establish a grant program for the preservation of some specific historic battleships;
- a section to authorize the Society of the First Infantry Division to make modifications to the First Division Monument located in Presidents Park in DC;
- a section to modify the boundary of White Sands National Monument and to rename it as White Sands National Park; and
- a section to authorize the secretary of the interior to establish fees for medical services provided inside and outside of units of the National Park System.

Source: Don Hellmann, former assistant director, legislative and congressional affairs for the National Park Service.

Park People, Friends and Allies

Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park NPS Firefighter Brian Hughes Killed On Ferguson Fire

Brian Hughes, 33, captain of the Arrowhead Interagency Hotshots, which is based in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, lost his life in an accident on the fire line on July 29th.

At the time the accident occurred, Hughes and his crew were engaged in firefighting operations in an area with a lot of dead trees on the east side of the Ferguson Fire. Hughes was struck by one of them. He was treated at the scene, but passed away before he could be transported to a hospital.

Brian Hughes was born on August 1, 1984, in Hilo, Hawaii. He grew up near Akaka Falls and attended Hilo Union, Hilo Intermediate, and Hilo High School. As a child, Brian loved running around and playing sports. He enjoyed swimming and surfing, and was most at peace in the ocean. He started his own yard business at age 13, with the hopes of saving up to buy a car. The business was a

booming success, leading Brian to set higher and higher goals for himself, and to work hard at everything he set his mind to. He loved outdoor adventure and learned to be self-reliant in the wilderness. In high school, he was a star athlete in varsity soccer, track, and cross-country.

Aside from a brief, youthful aspiration to become a stunt man, Hughes' career goal was always to become a firefighter. His first professional job was with the Larimer County Yellow Jackets, an emergency fire and rescue unit in Fort Collins, Colorado. Two years later, in 2006, he was hired as a seasonal hotshot in Alaska on the Midnight Suns crew. After that first taste of hotshot life, he was hooked. The next year he joined the Roosevelt hotshots, where he worked from 2007 to 2009. It was there that he met Joe Suarez, who would later recruit Brian for the Arrowhead crew.

In 2010, Brian joined the Monterey hand crew on the Los Padres National Forest. His dream was to build that crew to hotshot status. During his years on the Los Padres crew, he served in a number of detailed positions to get captain experience, and completed every task book he could get his hands on. After four years with the hand crew, he joined the BLM in Alaska as a specialist. During that year, he enthusiastically took on the tasks and details needed to achieve captain's qualifications.

Brian moved to Squaw Valley, California, in March 2015, and assumed the title of captain of the Arrowhead Interagency Hotshots. As captain, Brian was a trusted leader and mentor to the crew. He led by example, inspiring others to train hard, develop their skills, and understand not just how, but why, things are done the way that they are. He intuitively grasped big-picture strategies and was able to effectively break down these strategies into actionable steps. His crew looked up to him and loved him as a brother.

Brian always put others first, stopping to help people no matter what. He was positive, funny, and selfless. A man of strong morals, Brian had a clear sense of the right thing to do at the right time. He loved the camaraderie of the team, and drove himself to contribute as much as he could to the group. He was sharp, savvy, and loved to learn new things.

Around his friends and family, Brian was relaxed, carefree and silly. He had a dry sense of humor and would crack himself up when he let his guard down. He was a friend to everyone he met, and everyone who interacted with him walked away with a smile.

Brian is survived by his parents, Peter and Suen Hughes of Hilo, Hawaii; his sister, Meriel Hughes; and his fiancée, Paige Miller, who is expecting their child in February. Brian will be sorely missed by these loved ones, and countless others whose lives he touched.

In lieu of flowers the family suggests memorial contributions be sent to either the Wildland Firefighter Foundation in memory of Brian Hughes or to the official GoFundMe page set-up by the Arrowhead Hotshots that will support Paige and their child. Links to each can be found on [this webpage](#).

Letters of condolence can be sent to his parents and/or to his fiancée at the following addresses: Peter and Suen Hughes, 65 Kuikahi Street, Hilo, HI 96720; Paige Miller, 8346 Marina Greens Way, Sacramento, CA 95826. Condolences may also be left at the above-noted webpage.

A memorial service was held in Fresno this past Saturday.

Source: [Sequoia Parks Conservancy](#).

Acknowledgements

This newsletter comes to you through the efforts of a number of people:

- Production: Steve Pittleman
- Regular Correspondents: Don Hellmann, Dennis Burnett, Rick Smith, Bill Wade and Duncan Morrow
- Issue Contributors: Dick Marin, Mark Forbes, Mike Warren

If you see something that might be of interest to Coalition members, send it to Bill Halainen at the Weekly National Park System Report: BHalainen@gmail.com. Please don't submit them via his personal email address or Facebook page.

A Closing Observation

"The money we spend for effective conservation work is a sound investment in better living for ourselves and our children. We will not be dismayed by those who say the cost of such investments is too great. The cost of not making them would be far greater."

President Harry S Truman

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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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