



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

Wednesday, September 26, 2018

Volume 2

Number 32

Incidents

National Park System Hurricane Florence Recovery Update

A National Park Service incident management team is assisting staffs in parks impacted by Hurricane Florence. At this time, 69 NPS employees from 29 parks and 18 states and the District of Columbia are assigned to the incident. The team is focusing on the two parks most affected by the hurricane:

- *Cape Lookout NS* – All visitor facilities and services are closed; no date for reopening has yet been set. Minor roof damage to the Harker's Island Visitor Center has been repaired, and power has been restored to the building. Harker's Island trails are 80% clear, but the boardwalk remains closed due to damage. Temporary repairs on the Harker's Island Visitor Center Harbor docks are underway. The U.S. Coast Guard is repairing the Cape Lookout Lighthouse, which is currently out of service. The Les and Sally dock has been repaired. Initial assessments at Les and Sally, Cape Lookout Lighthouse, and Historic Cape Village are complete; stabilization, including installation of tarps on roofs, has begun. Natural resources staff have begun sea turtle surveys on Shackleford Banks. A survey of horses there is also underway. Crews have surveyed and flagged three miles of backroad on North Core Banks. Reservations for Long Point Cabins have been cancelled for the remainder of the season; reservations for the Great Island cabins have been canceled through October. Cancellations may be extended depending on the results of full assessments. An update will be provided once assessments are complete.
- *Moore's Creek NB* – The Black River appears to have crested, but water levels have just begun to recede; formal assessments and stabilization cannot begin until water recedes. Five of the six battlefield monuments are located within flood waters. Historic cannon were moved to higher ground prior to the storm and are in good condition. A reopening schedule has not yet been developed.

Source: [IMT Update, September 23, 2018](#).

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park Park Reopens Following Months-Long Eruption, Quakes

The park reopened on Saturday, Public Lands Day, following a 135-day closure caused by eruptions, quakes, ash clouds, and the collapse of the Halemaumau crater.

Outside the park, lava flows consumed entire neighborhoods, filled an ocean bay and created miles of new shoreline with fresh black sand beaches and jagged rocky outcrops, reports NBC News. Inside the park, molten rock drained from the summit lava lake and vanished from view as the landscape underwent a monumental change. The summit crater floor sunk 1,500 feet and the overall Kilauea caldera quadrupled in size as lava drained out of the active vent. One of the park's biggest draws, though, has disappeared – the red glow from the lava lake inside Halemaumau,

Public access to the volcano remains limited because of damage to its infrastructure. But visitors can once again hike around some parts of the summit area and see the aftermath of the historic eruption.

While volcanic activity has slowed significantly in the past month and no lava is reaching the surface at Kilauea, scientists aren't ready to declare the latest eruption over.

The park has prepared [a list of FAQs](#) that provide additional information on the reopening. A video of an illustrated September 12th USGS lecture showing the changes in the crater can be found at this [Big Island News webpage](#).

Source: [NBC News](#).

Whiskeytown National Recreation Area Park Officially Reopens, Though Much Remains To Be Done

The park has officially reopened, almost five weeks after one of the largest wildfires in California's history burned 39,000 of its 42,000 acres. "After enduring an extremely trying and overwhelming time," said Whiskeytown's spokesperson, "the park laid down one more brick in a new foundation."

When the Carr Fire began within park boundaries on July 23rd, residents and staff in all operations were immediately impacted. By the time it was contained, thirteen park employees had lost their homes and more than half of park staff was displaced for periods from three to twenty-one days. Park law enforcement rangers were assisting with community evacuations while their own families were also being evacuated. Volunteers and colleagues in the cooperating association, friends group, and concessions were also facing hardships resulting from the fire.

Long before the smoke settled, the Whiskeytown community stepped into action to provide assistance. Homes were opened to those displaced, donations collected, and meals shared with affected neighbors and response crews. Neighboring Lassen Volcanic National Park rearranged housing and took in five seasonals for several weeks.

Despite personal challenges, park staff, and partners have largely returned to work, regularly going above and beyond and taking on unique tasks in the post-fire recovery efforts. The visitor center has reopened, as has day use at the Whiskey Creek boat ramp and picnic area, East Beach, and the Shasta Divide Nature Trail, but the rest of the park, including trails, parking areas and marinas, remain closed to public use due to hazard trees. The majority of the park remains closed as emergency repairs, cleanup, and stabilization continue.

Two incident management teams were brought in to assist the park in the initial post-fire recovery. A Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team and park staff have been assessing infrastructure and natural and cultural resources impacted by the fire.

Source: [Whiskeytown National Recreation Area](#).

Zion National Park West Rim/Angels Landing Trail Reopens

The popular West Rim Trail, including the route to Angels Landing, reopened last Saturday morning. It had been closed since an intense thunderstorm on July 11th caused flooding, mudslides, and rockfalls (see the [July 18th edition](#) of this newsletter for the original report).

The heavy rainfall caused major damage in the area of Refrigerator Canyon on the West Rim Trail, which visitors pass to and from on their way to Angels Landing. A section of retaining wall failed, as did several protective check dams that were built over 100 years ago to protect the trail. The flash flood opened an 18-foot gap in the trail that was over five feet deep. To reopen the passage to Scouts Lookout, Zion’s trail crew stabilized both ends of the trail and built a new custom bridge to span a 30-foot section where the trail and the retaining wall had been damaged or washed away. The crew also built four new check dams to protect the trail from future storms.

The Kayenta Trail, Upper Emerald Pools Trail, the terminus of Lower Emerald Pools Trail, and Hidden Canyon remain closed. Park staff and engineers continue to identify strategies to repair or reroute the trails safely. Closures are being enforced due to unstable and unreliable trail integrity.

Source: [Zion National Park](#).

National Fire/Incident Situation

National Interagency Fire Center National Preparedness Level Drops To PL 2

Synopsis

NIFC has dropped the national preparedness level to [PL 2](#).

Favorable weather conditions are helping firefighters meet their containment targets.

Emergency responders and support personnel continue to assist with relief efforts in North Carolina.

National Park Service Fires

Glacier NP – Two fires continue to burn in the park:

- Howe Ridge Fire – The fire, which was started by lightning on August 11th, has burned 14,522 acres (no change from last issue) and is 79% contained. A Type 2 IMT (Sampson) is now overseeing this fire and the Boundary Fire (below); 67 firefighters and overhead personnel are currently committed. For information on the fire, evacuations and closures, see the IMT’s [September 24th update](#).
- Boundary Fire – This fire, which began on August 23rd, is being managed by the above noted Type 2 IMT. It has burned 2,911 acres (no change from last issue) and is now 82% contained. For additional details, see the IMT’s [September 24th update](#).

Active Incident Resource Commitments

Category	September 11th	September 18th	September 25th
Area Command Teams	0	0	0
NIMO Teams	1	0	1
Type 1 Teams	5	6	4
Type 2 Teams	12	14	8
Crews	330	193	165
Engines	813	498	431
Helicopters	122	84	79
Total FF/Overhead	14,089	9,842	8,142

Fires/Acreage

Category	2018 Total	2008-2017 Ave	2018 Variance
Year-to-Date Fires	48,584	51,344	- 2,760
Year-to-Date Acres	7,367,251	5,874,317	+ 1,492,934

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

Official 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.

Capitol Hill Weekly Legislative Roundup

New Public Laws

Nothing to report.

Senate

On September 18th, the Senate passed H.R. 46, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of Fort Ontario in the State of New York to determine its suitability and feasibility to be a unit of the national park system.

House

Nothing to report.

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

Park People, Friends and Allies

NPS Alumni Passing Of Doug McChristian

Doug McChristian, 71, passed away on September 14th in Tucson.

Doug was the son of Allen and Eileen McChristian and was a native of LaCrosse, Kansas. He was a 1969 graduate of Fort Hays State University.

During his nearly 35 years as a career employee of the NPS, Doug served at various time as a field ranger and historian, park manager, interpretive specialist, and research historian. He was an award-winning author of numerous articles and several books, including *Fort Bowie, Arizona: Combat Post of the Southwest, 1858 - 1894*.

Doug is survived by his wife, Frances; a brother, Ray A. McChristian of Hutchinson, Kansas; a daughter, Kim R. Velez, and two grandchildren, who reside in Thornton, Colorado.

A memorial service will be held at 1 p.m. on Friday, October 12th, at Tortolita Church, 10710 N. Thornydale Road. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Casa de la Luz Foundation, 7740 N. Oracle Road, Tucson 85704. Cards may be sent to Frances McChristian at 405 E. Wetmore Rd., Ste. 117-484, Tucson, AZ 85705-1792.

Source: Rob and Elvira Arnberger.

News Reports and Releases

A brief summary of recent news stories, web postings and agency press releases pertaining to the Service, the federal government, the administration, DOI, and other public land management agencies that have bearing on the NPS.

Federal Government

Stories and articles pertaining to the administration, DOI and other federal agencies and organizations, except for the National Park Service (below).

Administration Moves To Weaken MBTA – The Migratory Bird Treaty Act is about to be weakened by the administration, reports *The Guardian*: “In a striking new stance on a longstanding law protecting migrating birds, the federal government will essentially allow the ‘incidental’ killing of birds via buildings, energy production and other developments that act as avian death traps...Until now, this law has prevented the intentional killing of these species while also requiring that industries ensure they take reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable, unintended harm, such as covering oil pits that birds mistake for water, restricting the use of some poisons or making electrical lines and wind turbines more visible to creatures on the wing.” It’s estimated that 700 million birds die annually from industry-related causes. Action is being taken to reverse this decision. The Audubon Society has joined with the attorneys general of eight states in an legal attempt to halt the Trump administration from reinterpreting the act. Source: [The Guardian](#).

National Park Service and System

Stories and articles pertaining to the parks, regions, technical and training centers, and WASO.

USPP Shooting Incident Response Intensifies – The shooting of unarmed 25-year-old accountant Bijan Ghaisar by Park Police officers last November – and the subsequent ten months of complete silence about the incident – continues to draw criticism from the public, most recently by the editorial board of the *Washington Post*: “[Ten] months later, not a word of explanation has been offered — not by the Park Police, which reports to the National Park Service, nor by the FBI, to which the Park Police referred the investigation. Nor have the Park Police officers who opened fire been identified — an increasing rarity in an era when police departments nationally, under growing public pressure, have handled shootings with a greater sense of accountability.... The wall of official silence, cover-up and unaccountability has so far not been breached.” This issue, the *Post* says, should be the top priority for Dave Vela once he’s confirmed as director. “Because until and unless Mr. Vela addresses that event,” says the *Post*, “he will likely find himself at the helm of an agency irredeemably stained by Ghaisar’s senseless death.” Source: [Washington Post](#).

Congressional Committee Considers Increased Leasing Of Historic NPS Buildings – On September 17th, the House Natural Resources Committee held a hearing to “consider a broad expansion of leasing historic buildings in national parks to private entities like businesses,” reports the *Washington Post*. But Rep. Bishop, the committee’s chair, has something else in mind beside raising revenues for parks. “[Bishop] said historic building leases could provide new revenue and resolve questions about ‘how we can get local communities more involved in their public lands.’ Often, managers are brought in from other places to manage national park property with scant input from local residents, he said. But with local participation, ‘I think in the future, that will bring a better way of managing the lands,’ Bishop said.” Source: [Washington Post](#).

Around The Parks – Brief reports on parks and regions, culled either from park press releases or from newspapers, with links to the source news articles. The reports are in alphabetical order by park name.

- *Acadia NP* – The park is looking into partnering with a private developer to create workforce housing for some of its seasonals. Acadia has 33 seasonal housing units in 15 different

locations with a total of about 80 beds, but that's only enough to accommodate about 60 percent of the summer seasonal staff. The park hopes to put out a request for information (RFI) this fall to determine if there's interest in such an opportunity in the private sector. Source: [Mount Desert Islander](#).

- *Blue Ridge Parkway* – A motorcyclist is suing the park for \$1.7 million over an accident that occurred on the parkway in 2016. Dallas Fisher, 57, says in the lawsuit that he had nearly no warning when he struck a bump on a curvy section of the parkway, causing him to wreck and to suffer multiple broken ribs, a broken finger, and a punctured lung. Fisher contends that the NPS and DOI were negligent in failing to properly install adequate traffic signs, properly maintain safe roadways, and properly warn of unsafe conditions on its roadways. See the article for details. Source: [Asheville Citizen Times](#).
- *C&O Canal NHP* – The park will be moving its headquarters to Williamsport. The Washington County Board of Commissioners has approved a grant agreement for \$1.25 million to acquire a former lumber yard property that will be redeveloped into the park's headquarters. Once the county acquires and demolishes the former lumber yard, it will enter into a ground lease with MEDCO, which will invest about \$11.5 million to build the new headquarters building. The NPS has agreed to put \$5 million toward the project and enter into a lease with MEDCO for 30 years. Design work and construction is expected to take the better part of two years. Source: [Herald-Mail Media](#).
- *Curecanti NRA* – The park has discovered cyanotoxins in the Iola Basin section of Blue Mesa Reservoir in concentrations that exceed safe exposure levels. Certain types of algal blooms can produce cyanotoxins, which can be harmful to humans and animals. The park has recommended that visitors avoid any contact with shallow and near-shore waters in the basin and to avoid areas with suspected algal mats. Source: [Curecanti NRA](#).
- *Glen Canyon NRA/Grand Canyon NP* – An EA has been prepared for an expanded non-native aquatic species management plan in Glen Canyon and in Grand Canyon below Glen Canyon Dam. The purpose of this action is to provide additional tools to allow the NPS to “prevent, control, minimize or eradicate potentially harmful non-native aquatic species, or the risk associated with their presence or expansion, in the action area,” including green sunfish, brown trout and other harmful non-native aquatic species that threaten downstream native aquatic species. The EA is available for review and public comment through October 11th. Source: [NPS PECP website](#).
- *Hawaii Volcanoes NP* – The park has acquired a 1,952-acre oceanfront property in Ka'u from a Florida real estate developer. The \$1.95 million purchase of the “Great Crack Property” I is the last piece of a settlement in a foreclosure claim concerning a defaulted mortgage on the then-Naniloa Volcanoes Resort. The property gets its name from a six-mile-long crack along Kilauea's Southwest Rift Zone, which is a popular hiker destination. Source: [The Garden Island](#).
- *Isle Royale NP* – Six to eight wolves will be trapped in Minnesota and Michigan and flown to Isle Royale this fall as part of an effort to return the top predator to the island. Four of the animals will be trapped at the Grand Portage Band of Chippewa Reservation in northeast Minnesota and two others will come from Michigan. This reintroduction will mark the first phase of an effort to reestablish wolves as a means to control the rising number of moose on the island. The park hopes to establish a population of 20 to 30 wolves. Source: [Minneapolis Star-Tribune](#).
- *Mount Rainier NP* – The park has issued [a decision and FONSI on its fish management plan EA](#). Under the selected alternative, the park will update fishing regulations emphasizing catch and release of native fish species and retention or harvest of nonnative fish species, implement nonnative fish suppression and/or eradication from selected streams and rivers in bull trout habitat, remove fish from up to ten lakes, expand research and monitoring, and allow adaptive

management. A no action alternative (status quo management) and a more expansive action alternative were also considered. Source: [Mount Rainier NP](#).

- *Pinnacles NP* – Volunteer pilots from [LightHawk](#), an organization that advances conservation causes through the use of aircraft, have flown California condors from the World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise to release sites in Pinnacles National Park and Big Sur. On September 23rd, LightHawk employed seven planes to transfer nine condors to the two locations, where the birds will be released. Source: [Pinnacles NP](#).

Environmental and Land Management Agencies

Stories on federal and state agencies that are responsible for environmental oversight or the management of America's public lands.

EPA Continues Efforts To Weaken Laws Checking Greenhouse Gas Emissions – On September 21st, the *Washington Post* ran an article on the so-called Environmental Protection Agency's latest effort to weaken laws that limit emissions that are fueling climate change. Reporter Dino Grandoni wrote the following: "First it was carbon dioxide, when the Environmental Protection Agency proposed in August relaxing pollution standards for coal-fired power plants meant to curb emissions of that most common greenhouse gas. Then it was methane, when both the EPA and Interior Department each took steps in recent weeks toward replacing Obama-era rules regulating the leaking of that climate-warming gas from oil and natural gas infrastructure. Now, the Trump administration is trying to replace regulations for an even more obscure set of greenhouse gases in an effort apparently aimed at slowing down the Obama administration's efforts to deter global warming." This time they're looking to weaken rules meant to prevent the leaking and venting of a set of organic compounds called hydrofluorocarbons, or HFCs, from large refrigerating and air-conditioning units. "In the case of HFCs," writes Grandoni, "even tiny amounts leached into the atmosphere pack a wallop of a punch to the climate. On a pound-for-pound basis, those compounds have a warming potential thousands of times greater than that of carbon dioxide." Source: [Washington Post](#).

The Conservation Crisis

This section has been enlarged and renamed to cover the myriad interconnected, conservation-related threats that are transforming the national parks that we collectively have spent so many years protecting – climate change, invasive species, habitat loss, newly-arrived diseases, pressure from extractive industries, population pressures, increasingly damaging fires, etc. All are linked together under the heading of conservation, defined by Webster's as "a careful preservation and protection of something; especially planned management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect."

Climate Change

Climate Change Impacts On National Parks Exceed Other U.S. Lands – On September 24th, the *Miami Herald* ran a story with this headline: "National Parks Are Getting Hotter And Drier. What's The Outlook For 2100?" Here are the lead paragraphs: "America's national parks are warming up and drying out faster than other U.S. landscapes, threatening iconic ecosystems from the Everglades in Florida to Joshua Tree in California to Denali in Alaska. That's the conclusion of a [new climate change study](#) published [on September 24th], the first to examine rainfall and temperatures in all 417 national parks sites. The study also forecasts the degree that parks could become hotter and more drought-stricken by century's end, depending on whether nations undertake efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, or continue with business as usual." Parks are more affected than other areas because they tend to be in more extreme environments, from deserts to mountain tops: "The study found that, between 1885 and the year 2010, areas that are now national parks warmed by 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit, twice the U.S. rate. It also found that annual precipitation in national parks declined 12 percent, compared to 3 percent drop in the United States overall, during that same period." Source: [Miami Herald](#).

Study Conducted Of Relationship Of Temperature And Visitation To Parks – *PLOS One*, a peer-reviewed open access scientific journal published by the Public Library of Science, recently posted a report by Nicholas Fisichelli and NPS colleagues on the potential impacts of climate change on visitation to the national parks. The results: Visitation may go up with increasing temperature in temperate areas, but may drop with temperatures rising over 80 degrees. The authors evaluated historical monthly mean air temperature and NPS visitation data at 340 parks from 1979 to 2013 and projected potential future visitation from 2041 to 2060 based on two warming-climate scenarios and two visitation-growth scenarios. Of the original 340 parks, over 80% showed strong relationships between visitation and temperature. Visitation generally increased with increasing average monthly temperature, but decreased strongly with temperatures over 77 degrees. Future visitation varied across parks, but the authors found that many high-latitude and high-elevation parks showed increases in potential visitation, especially during the spring and fall seasons. Parks with historically warm temperatures showed a potential future decrease in visitation during the hottest months, and tropical parks with small temperature variation throughout the year showed no relationship to temperature. Source: [Phys.org](#).

Oceans and Freshwaters

Colorado River Flow Has Dropped 15% Over Last 100 Years – “Warming temperatures are sapping the Colorado River, the water source for more than 40 million people in the southwest,” reports KUNC, a Colorado radio news station. “A new study finds over the last 100 years the river’s flow has decreased by more than 15 percent...” Warming temperatures throughout the river’s watershed accounted for more than half the decline in flows, with other factors including changes to precipitation patterns and loss of snowpack in high altitudes. Source: [KUNC](#).

Flora, Fauna And Habitat

Animal Populations Crashing At Alaskan NWR – According to an article in *National Geographic*, Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, a 4.9-million-acre wildlife sanctuary in the Bering Sea, is losing many of its residents. A 2017 NOAA fisheries survey revealed that bird, fur seal, sea lion, and whale populations are all dropping in the region. Multiple mass bird die-offs have occurred in the Bering Sea ecosystem since 2014, and a 2015 USFWS report on breeding status and population trends revealed that 13 percent of Alaskan seabird populations declined from 2006 to 2015 and 31 percent of eggs hatched earlier than normal. In 2017, Audubon Alaska placed 36 Alaskan bird species on its “red list,” which indicates that the population is currently declining or depressed from a previous decline. And the NPS has determined that hundreds of thousands of seabirds, mostly common murrelets, died of starvation along the Pacific coast, the Gulf of Alaska, and in the Aleutian Islands in 2015 and 2016. Climate change is the leading suspect: “[A] continually warming Bering Sea is putting so much stress on the food chain there that its residents can’t find enough to eat...” Source: [National Geographic](#).

Tree Planting Project Helping To Diminish Atmospheric CO2 – The National Forest Foundation has planted 2.8 million trees so far this year as part of its effort to keep up with a commitment NFF made on Earth Day to plant 50 million trees throughout America’s forests by 2023. The NFF is the nonprofit partner of the U.S. Forest Service and works with the service to restore priority sites on America’s 193-million-acres of national forest. Along with improving watersheds and habitat, this aggressive planting program will have a positive effect on the influx of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere due to the ability of trees to capture CO2. Each tree planted by NFF will sequester an average of 11 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere every year, meaning that in the next 100 years, these 2.6 million trees will sequester more than 13 million tons of carbon dioxide – equal to the annual emissions from more than 280,000 cars. The American Forest Foundation and the Arbor Day Foundation have joined with NFF in an effort to increase the pace of plantings. Source: [Our Daily Planet](#).

Saltmarsh Sparrow May Be First Species Driven To Extinction By Sea Level Rise – “[The saltmarsh sparrow], which breeds in coastal marshes from Maine to Virginia and lives only on the Atlantic Coast, has always been at the mercy of time and tide, nesting between the highest spring tides, reported the *New York Times* on September 17th. “But now a sea level rise of a fraction of an

inch a year caused by climate change is pushing tides higher and higher, threatening the birds' survival. Their population has been declining about nine percent a year since the late 1990s." Scientists estimate that they will soon reach a threshold wherein the highest spring tides will come too often to raise their young. "The turning point may arrive sometime between 2030 and 2060, potentially giving the saltmarsh sparrow the distinction of becoming the first bird to go extinct as a direct result of rising sea levels." Source: [New York Times](#).

Earlier Springs Due To Rising Temperatures Imperiling Migrating Birds – *Inside Climate News*, "a non-profit, non-partisan news organization dedicated to covering climate change, energy and the environment," reports that new research shows that "climate change is bringing spring earlier to three-quarters of the United States' federal wildlife refuges and nearly all North American flyways used by migratory birds, a shift that threatens to leave them hungry as they are preparing to breed..." Researchers compared two time periods – from 1901 to 2012 and from 1983 to 2012. They and found that spring in the more recent period came earlier to 76 percent of all wildlife refuges, and that warmer weather arrived extremely early in nearly half the refuges, especially those along the Pacific coast and in the Mojave Desert, northern Great Plains and upper Midwest. Can birds cope with such dramatic and rapid change? "It remains unclear whether migratory species can adapt as quickly as they need to in order to survive," say the researchers. Source: [Inside Climate News](#).

From The Archives

This section contains incidents taken from *Morning Report* issues published during the corresponding week (approximately) 25 years ago in 1993. All entries appear in the original verb tense.

- *North Cascades NP* – On Saturday, September 11th, a six-person climbing team was ascending the north face of 9,127-foot Mt. Shuksan. While cramponing up Winnie's Slide, a steep approach to the Upper Curtis Glacier, the lead climber of a three-person team began to fall. His two partners were unable to arrest the fall, and all three fell approximately 200 feet. One climber suffered a lower leg fracture; a second suffered severe lacerations to a leg; the third climber received only minor injuries. Two climbers descended the mountain via Fisher Chimneys and reported the accident to park personnel. The park and Whatcom County sheriff's office established a unified ICS command and began a rescue operation. Because severe weather prevented helicopter flights, a party of rangers and volunteers from Bellingham Mountain Rescue started overland to the remote location. The injured climbers endured a night of thunderstorms, hail and five inches of new snow at their bivouac site. On Sunday morning, the weather cleared, and a helicopter was able to land and evacuate the injured climbers.
- *Everglades NP* – On September 10th, Pine Island rangers investigated two separate instances of men collecting native plant fruits for commercial purposes. In the first instance, four migrant workers from Guatemala were found with 250 pounds of fruit that they'd collected from palmetto bushes. Later that afternoon, a park maintenance worker spotted another 11 Guatemalans collecting palmetto fruit in the pinelands about five miles from park headquarters. They had 350 pounds of fruit in their possession. A total of 31 mandatory appearance citations were issued in the two incidents; the Guatemalans were charged with illegal business operation (36 CFR 5.3), violating the regulation on preservation of natural features (36 CFR 2.1), and traveling off the established roadway (36 CFR 4.10). Park researchers positively identified the fruits; the researchers will be used as witnesses in magistrate's court to establish the adverse impacts such commercial sales operations could have on park resources. The suspects in both incidents identified the same wholesale produce dealer in Immokalee, Florida, as the intended buyer of the fruit. They said that the fruit was to be mashed and shipped to a buyer in New York for use in a cancer drug.
- *Badlands NP* – Rangers received a report of two backpackers trapped by flooding in the Sage Creek area of the Badlands Wilderness on September 29th. They contacted two men who were returning from a three-day "vision quest" and were mildly hypothermic, dehydrated and famished from self-imposed fasting. The normally benign Sage Creek had been swollen to a

depth of ten feet and width of 60 feet by the two inches of rain which had fallen over the previous 24 hours. A Tyrolean traverse was set up and the men and their equipment were safely evacuated. This was the first water-related rescue in the park's 54-year history. Badlands has received almost 23 inches of precipitation so far this year. The park record, which was set in 1982, is 25 inches.

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, and Duncan Morrow
- Issue Contributors: Mike Murray, Rob and Elvira Arnberger

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

“Over the long haul of life on the planet, it is the ecologists, and not the bookkeepers of business, who are the ultimate accountants.”

[Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall](#)

* * * * *

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.”

To receive a copy of this free publication, join the coalition. Any current, retired or former salaried (GS, wage grade, seasonal, temporary, or SES) employee of the National Park Service can join the Coalition. For more information, click on [this link](#). If you need to contact the Coalition office on other matters, including changes of address, click on [this link](#).

--- ### ---