



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

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### Incidents

#### **National Park System Hurricane Florence Recovery Operations Continue**

The National Park Service incident management team brought in to assist staffs of parks impacted by Hurricane Florence has demobilized, but local recovery efforts continue:

- *Cape Lookout NS* – Seven cabins at Great Island will reopen on October 5th. Long Point cabins will remain closed for the rest of the season, but the area will reopen upon completion of dredging operations. The Harkers Island Visitor Center and Beaufort Visitor Information Center have reopened. Beach camping will again be permitted on South Core Banks on October 4th, but North Core Banks will remain closed to camping.
- *Moore's Creek NB* – The park remains closed. Flood waters continue to recede, but park roads remain flooded. Formal assessments and stabilization work cannot begin until water recedes. Patriots Hall can now be accessed by road. Crews continued to remove hazard trees and limbs from near the visitor center.

Source: [IMT Update, October 1, 2018](#)

#### **Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve Search Suspended For Three People Missing In Helicopter Crash In Park**

The Coast Guard has called off a two-day search for three people missing from the wreckage of a helicopter that crashed in the park. Josh Pepperd, 42, the president of Anchorage's Davis Constructors and Engineers, his 11-year-old son Andrew, and Palmer helicopter piloting company owner David King, 53, are presumed dead in the crash.

The new Airbus helicopter crashed sometime Friday in a tidal zone near Lituya Bay. Some pieces of wreckage, including parts of the engine and seats, washed up on the shore. Pepperd's older son Aiden, 14, was rescued from a beach about three miles from the bay and is being treated at a hospital in Anchorage.

Pepperd and his sons were bringing the Airbus H125 helicopter to Alaska after picking it up at an Airbus facility in Grand Prairie, Texas. They were expected to arrive in Yakutat on Friday night but never made it.

Source: [Anchorage Daily News](#).

### **Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Major Marijuana Plantation Found And Eradicated**

On September 5th, local, state and federal officials raided an illegal cultivation site within the park's designated wilderness and found 3,500 marijuana plants valued at \$5.25 million.

The cultivators caused major damage, including thinning and removing vegetation, and diverted about 10,000 gallons of water daily to their plantation. Crews also reported finding large amounts of trash, fertilizers and pesticides.

Authorities said they have eradicated nearly 300,000 plants worth about \$850 million in the two parks over the past 14 years.

Source: [KTLA News](#).

### **Great Smoky Mountains National Park Search In Progress For Missing Hiker**

A search is underway for a 53-year-old woman who disappeared while hiking near Andrews Bald on Tuesday, September 25th.

Mitzie Sue "Susan" Clements, was hiking with her daughter when the two became separated. She is described as a 5-foot-6-inch tall white female with light brown hair and blue eyes. She weighs 125 pounds and was wearing a green zip-up sweater, black workout pants over black leggings, a clear rain poncho, and white tennis shoes when she was last seen.

The National Park Service is asking anyone who saw Clements on Tuesday afternoon or since to contact the agency's investigative branch through email at [nps\\_isb@nps.gov](mailto:nps_isb@nps.gov) or to call them at 1-888-653-0009.

Source: [ABC News](#).

### **George Washington Memorial Parkway Selfie Nearly Costs Man His Life**

A selfie nearly cost a man his life after he accidentally slipped into the turbulent Potomac River near Olmstead Island this past Sunday. A number of bystanders had to pull the man out of the river, which was at a high level due to recent heavy rains. Flood warnings were in effect at the time for the areas around the Potomac River in Virginia and Maryland.

Local fire department rescuers treated the man for serious injuries and got him to the hospital. He's expected to fully recover. Park Police officers and park rangers are investigating.

Source: [WTOP News](#).

### **Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Lost Hiker Found In Good Condition**

A woman who was reported missing after hiking in Kings Canyon National Park last Friday has been found alive.

Diane Salmon, 63, who was hiking with two family members and planned to cross Bishop Pass, exiting at South Lake in the Inyo National Forest, was spotted by other hikers.

More than 50 responders searched for Salmon with support from the Inyo County Sheriff's Office and Yosemite National Park Search and Rescue.

Source: [Fox News](#).

## **National Park System Follow-ups On Previously Reported Incidents**

The following are short follow-ups on incidents previously reported in this newsletter:

- *Buffalo NR* – The *Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette* has published details about the incident in August, 2017, in which a ranger shot and killed a man who was threatening him with a gun that later proved to be a realistic and improperly marked BB gun. The information comes from the 1,106-page-long investigative report conducted on the shooting, which was recently released after a request was filed under the Freedom of Information Act. Source: [Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette](#).
- *Grand Canyon NP* – Visitor Mike Howard and his wife were swept downriver after disembarking from their boat near Clear Creek on September 7th. Howard's wife was rescued and taken to a hospital, but Howard disappeared. A multi-day search proved fruitless. On September 14th, a body was found below Granite Rapids; positive identification is pending, but evidence found with the body indicates that it's Howard. Source: [Arizona Daily Sun](#).
- *Joshua Tree NP* – A federal judge has sentenced a Twentynine Palms man to five years in federal prison for setting a fire at the Oasis of Mara in Joshua Tree National Park. George Graham, 26, was arrested in the park in the late hours of March 28th, the day the fire was started, when park rangers found him watching the blaze. Investigators determined the fire was arson. When he started the blaze, Graham was on parole for two prior arson convictions, which had together resulted in a four-year prison sentence. Source: [Palm Springs Desert Sun](#).
- *Yellowstone NP* – The Colorado man who was arrested by rangers for walking up to Old Faithful and stepping into the cone was arrested again last week, this time in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Officers received a report of a reckless driver and ended up pursuing the man for some time before employing spike strips to flatten two tires on his SUV. Although the man kept driving, the vehicle eventually caught fire from the sparks issuing from the wheel rims. Source: [KGAB News](#).

Sources: As indicated above.

## **National Fire/Incident Situation**

### **National Interagency Fire Center Wildfire Situation Continues To Slowly Moderate**

#### **Synopsis**

The national preparedness level remains at [PL 2](#).

A total of 64 large wildfires are currently active nationwide; together, they have burned approximately 949,964 acres.

#### **National Park Service Fires**

The following significant fires are burning in NPS areas:

- *Glacier NP* – Two fires continue to burn in the park. The [Howe Ridge 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) had been overseeing this fire and the Boundary Fire, but

turned management over to a Type 4 IMT last Friday. The [Boundary Fire](#), which began on August 23rd, has burned 2,911 acres (no change from last issue) and is now 82% contained.

- *Bryce Canyon NP* – The Lonely Fire has burned 872 acres and is 2% contained. No further information is available.
- *North Cascades NP* – The Little Fork Fire has burned 445 acres; the Arctic Jim Fire has burned 880 acres. No further information is available.
- *Yosemite NP* – The Indian Fire has burned 104 acres. No further information is available.

### Active Incident Resource Commitments

Category	September 18th	September 25th	October 2nd
Area Command Teams	0	0	0
NIMO Teams	0	1	1
Type 1 Teams	6	4	2
Type 2 Teams	14	8	3
Crews	193	165	111
Engines	498	431	269
Helicopters	84	79	49
Total FF/Overhead	9,842	8,142	5,530

### Fires/Acreage

Category	2018 Total	2008-2017 Ave	2018 Variance
Year-to-Date Fires	49,432	52,394	- 2,962
Year-to-Date Acres	7,755,181	5,943,527	+ 1,811,264

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 26th, the Committee on Environment and Public Works held a hearing to examine cleaning up the oceans and reducing the impact of manmade trash on the environment, wildlife, and human health. There were no witnesses from any federal agency at the hearing.

On September 26th, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs approved the following bills:

- S. 3137, to provide approval for the Trump administration's reorganization plan for federal agencies. This is the first time this authority has been used in the federal government since a similar authority was provided by Congress in 1984 during the Reagan administration.
- S. 3484, to modernize Federal grant reporting.
- H.R. 1132, to provide for a two-year prohibition on employment in a career civil service position for any former political appointee.

## **House**

On September 25th, the House passed the following bills:

- H.R. 6687, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to manage the Point Reyes National Seashore in the State of California consistent with Congress' longstanding intent to maintain working dairies and ranches on agricultural property as part of the seashore's unique historic, cultural, scenic and natural values.
- H.R. 6599, to modify the application of temporary limited appointment regulations to the National Park Service. The bill would restore the ability of seasonal employees to work in one park in summer and another in winter, overturning the Office of Personnel Management's interpretation of seasonal hiring rules that stymied seasonal recruiting and hiring and prohibited seasonal employees from working for more than six months per year.
- H.R. 5585, to extend the authorization for the Cape Cod National Seashore Advisory Commission to September 30, 2028. The bill language makes the reauthorization effective on September 26, 2018, to ensure there is no lapse in its current authorization.
- 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. The House agreed to concur in the Senate amendment to the bill. The bill now goes to the president to be signed into law.
- H. Res. 418, urging the Secretary of the Interior to recognize the cultural significance of Rib Mountain, Wisconsin, by adding it to the National Register of Historic Places.
- H. Res. 460, requesting the Secretary of the Interior to recognize the rich history of the logging industry and the importance of lumberjack sports by adding the Lumberjack Bowl in Hayward, Wisconsin, to the National Register of Historic Places.

On September 26th, the House passed the following bills:

- H.R. 5420, to authorize the acquisition of the 89-acre Morgan property for addition to the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site in the State of New York. The bill passed by a vote of 394 ayes to 15 noes.
- H.R. 4887, to modernize Federal grant reporting.

On September 26th, the House agreed to the conference report to accompany H.R. 6157, to make appropriations for the Department of Defense, the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and to make continuing appropriations for the Department of the Interior and the remaining federal agencies without an annual appropriations bill that had passed for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019. The bill passed by a vote of 361 yeas to 61 nays. The continuing resolution is effective through December 7, 2018. Section 130 of the bill authorizes an extension of authority for the federal public lands fee program through September 30, 2020, so that all federal land management agencies can continue to sell the annual pass for another year. The bill now goes to the president to be signed into law.

On September 26th, the House Natural Resources Committee approved the following bills:

- H.R. 4644, to withdraw specified National Forest System land in the Custer Gallatin National Forest in Park County, Montana, north of Yellowstone National Park from location, entry, and patent under mining laws; and from disposition under all laws pertaining to mineral and geothermal leasing.
- H.R. 5706, to establish the Pearl Harbor National Memorial in Hawaii and to remove it from the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument; and to redesignate the Honouliuli

National Monument in Hawaii as the Honouliuli National Historic Site. Prior to being redesignated as part of the larger national monument, the NPS had managed the Pearl Harbor Memorial for decades under an agreement with the U.S. Navy, but the site was one of the few within the national park system that never had its own congressional authorization. This bill would provide that authorization for the first time as well as removing it from the national monument.

- H.R. 6118, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to annually designate at least one city in the United States as an "American World War II Heritage City", and to designate Wilmington, North Carolina as the first American World War II Heritage City.
- H.R. 6666, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to grant to States and local governments easements and rights-of-way over Federal land within Gateway National Recreation Area for construction, operation, and maintenance of projects for control and prevention of flooding and shoreline erosion.
- H.R. 6784, to provide for removal of the gray wolf in the contiguous 48 States from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife published under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

On September 26th, the Committee on Natural Resources held a hearing on the following bills:

- H.R. 6344, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to encourage voluntary conservation efforts by allowing for payments to individuals by the federal government for entering into species recovery agreements.
- H.R. 6360, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to provide for greater certainty and improved planning for incidental take permit holders.
- H.R. 6346, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to revise the process by which the Department of the Interior or the Department of Commerce, as appropriate, reviews an agency action to determine whether the action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of an endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of the critical habitat of the species. Specifically, the bill requires the appropriate department, when making such a determination, to consider the offsetting effects of protection or conservation measures that are already in place or proposed to be implemented as part of the action.
- H.R. 6354, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to prohibit the Department of the Interior and the Department of Commerce from designating as critical habitat an area in a water storage, diversion, or delivery facility where habitat is periodically created and destroyed as a result of changes in water levels caused by the operation of the facility.
- H.R. 6345, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to revise the process for listing, delisting, or reclassifying a species under the Act. Before submitting to the Department of the Interior or the Department of Commerce, as appropriate, a petition to list a species as a threatened or endangered species, the petitioner must notify each county and state in which the species is located of the intent to submit a petition. Upon finding that the petition may be warranted, the appropriate department must solicit advice from each county and state in which the species is located. If a state or county advises that the listing is not warranted, then the appropriate department may not proceed with the listing unless the department demonstrates that the information submitted in support of the advice is incorrect and that the listing is warranted. The appropriate department must justify a final regulation that conflicts with the advice of a state or county.
- H.R. 3608, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to require publication on the Internet of the basis for determinations that species are endangered species or threatened species, as well as providing to Congress an annual report detailing Federal Government expenditures for covered lawsuits during the preceding fiscal year under the act.
- H.R. 6364, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to revise requirements governing cooperative management agreements to manage areas established for the conservation of endangered or threatened species. Under current law, the agreements are between states and the Department of the Interior or the Department of Commerce, as appropriate. This bill allows the appropriate department to enter into agreements with local governments, Indian tribes, or nonfederal persons; and agreements to manage areas established for the conservation of species that are candidates for listing. The bill exempts the actions of preparing, approving, and entering into an agreement from environmental review requirements under the National

Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The departments may delegate authority under the ESA to states that establish and maintain an adequate program for the conservation of endangered or threatened species that reside in the state, and provide financial assistance to a state that has entered into an agreement with the department or to a state with delegated authority.

- H.R. 6356, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to provide for improved precision in the listing, delisting, and downlisting of endangered species and potentially endangered species.
- H.R. 6355, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to revise the process by which the Department of the Interior or the Department of Commerce, as appropriate, reviews petitions to list a species on the endangered or threatened species list. Specifically, the bill establishes a process for the appropriate department to declare a petition backlog and discharge the petitions when there is a backlog.

Gregg Renkes, Director, Office of Policy Analysis, was the witness for the Department of the Interior.

On September 27th, the Committee on Natural Resources approved the following bills:

- H. Res. 792, urging the Secretary of the Interior to recognize the historical significance of Roberto Clemente's place of death near Piones in Loiza, Puerto Rico, by adding it to the National Register of Historic Places.
- H.R. 3608, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to require publication on the Internet of the basis for determinations that species are endangered species or threatened species, as well as providing to Congress an annual report detailing Federal Government expenditures for covered lawsuits during the preceding fiscal year under the act.
- H.R. 6108, to increase the authorization of appropriations for the American Battlefield Protection Grant Program from \$10 million to \$20 million through FY 2028, and to provide funding for interpretation and restoration of preserved battlefields.
- H.R. 6345, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to revise the process for listing, delisting, or reclassifying a species under the Act. Before submitting to the Department of the Interior or the Department of Commerce, as appropriate, a petition to list a species as a threatened or endangered species, the petitioner must notify each county and state in which the species is located of the intent to submit a petition. Upon finding that the petition may be warranted, the appropriate department must solicit advice from each county and state in which the species is located. If a state or county advises that the listing is not warranted, then the appropriate department may not proceed with the listing unless the department demonstrates that the information submitted in support of the advice is incorrect and that the listing is warranted. The appropriate department must justify a final regulation that conflicts with the advice of a state or county.
- H.R. 6346, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to revise the process by which the Department of the Interior or the Department of Commerce, as appropriate, reviews an agency action to determine whether the action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of an endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of the critical habitat of the species. Specifically, the bill requires the appropriate department, when making such a determination, to consider the offsetting effects of protection or conservation measures that are already in place or proposed to be implemented as part of the action.
- H.R. 6355, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to revise the process by which the Department of the Interior or the Department of Commerce, as appropriate, reviews petitions to list a species on the endangered or threatened species list. Specifically, the bill establishes a process for the appropriate department to declare a petition backlog and discharge the petitions when there is a backlog.
- H.R. 6434, to amend section 7 of Public Law 100-515 (16 U.S.C. 1244 note) to promote continued use of the James J. Howard Marine Sciences Laboratory at Gateway National Recreation Area by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

On September 27th, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform approved the following bill:

- H.R. 6891, to strengthen and enhance the authority to discipline officers and employees of the federal government for violating the Anti-Deficiency Act.

On September 27th, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on the Interior, Energy, and Environment held a hearing entitled "Restoring Balance to Environmental Litigation". Jonathan Brightbill, deputy assistant attorney general, Environment and Natural Resources Division, was the witness for the Department of Justice.

On September 27th, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure approved H.R. 5158, to direct the Secretary of Transportation to request nominations for and make determinations regarding roads to be designated under the national scenic byways program.

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

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

### **NPS Alumni**

#### **Passing Of Dr. John Lemons**

Former Yosemite/Tuolumne Meadows park ranger-naturalist Dr. John Lemons has died. He was living in Homer, Alaska, at the time of his death.

John was an outstanding park ranger-naturalist. He worked in Yosemite/Tuolumne Meadows from the late 1960's through the mid 1970's and was one of the few given the honor and privilege of leading the prestigious seven-day loop hike through Yosemite's high country.

John was a graduate of the University of California at Santa Barbara. He went on to earn his doctorate in zoology and physiology from the University of Wyoming in 1975, then entered academia. He published over 100 peer-reviewed articles and edited eight books; served as editor-in-chief of *The Environmental Professional*, the official journal of the National Association of Environmental Professionals; served as environmental science book series editor for Blackwell Science, Inc.; and directed numerous grants and international projects.

In addition to being the recipient of various research awards and fellowships, John received the Career Distinguished Research Award from the University of New England and was an elected Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

John was a dedicated advocate of wilderness values, higher education, environmental ethics, the role of scientific uncertainty in policy decisions, and human-caused climate change as a global threat to natural systems.

National park policy was a subject that remained among his personal and academic interests. Among his many publications, John authored articles about historic legislation that mandated NPS management to give priority to resource protection over visitor use.

Details are not currently available on funeral or memorial arrangements.

Source: Owen Hoffman via Rick Smith.

## **Coalition News**

News about CPANP and kindred associations and allies.

**Coalition Executive Council Sends Letter To Congress On LWCF** – The eleven members of the executive council have sent a joint letter on the need to reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation



Fund to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer, House Speaker Paul Ryan, and House Minority Leader Pelosi. The full text follows:

“The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has been our nation’s primary source for preserving nationally significant public lands and providing recreational opportunities in local communities throughout the country for over 50 years. Congress’ failure to reauthorize the LWCF will have long-reaching and devastating impacts at national, state, and local levels. State and national parks will lose millions of dollars in direct support. Residents in all 50 states and our territories will lose money and jobs from a reduction in tourism and related industries that depend on a vibrant park system.

“The LWCF has a long history of support across party lines. It was created by Congress in 1964 as a bipartisan commitment to safeguard natural areas, water resources and our cultural heritage, and to provide recreational opportunities to all Americans. National parks, wildlife refuges, national forests, rivers, and lakes have been set aside for conservation and public enjoyment thanks to funds from the LWCF. Matching grants have been issued to states for planning, land acquisition, and the development of recreational opportunities. Local communities across the nation have relied on these funds to create playgrounds, swimming pools, trails, and ball fields.

“This funding is a critical investment not only in our quality of life, but in the American economy. Every state and territory has benefited from the LWCF. Outdoor recreation, conservation, and historic preservation activities contribute more than a trillion dollars annually to the U.S. economy, supporting 9.4 million jobs.

“Just weeks ago, the House Natural Resources Committee unanimously approved H.R. 502, a bipartisan agreement that would permanently reauthorize the LWCF. This positive, bipartisan action was a nod towards upholding our obligations to ensure that our public lands are protected and maintained. Conservationists and preservationists, outdoor recreation enthusiasts, political leaders, and residents of every state in America support this critical fund. Despite overwhelming levels of support, the LWCF was not reauthorized.

“The LWCF is America’s most important tool for meeting communities’ conservation and recreation needs, from legendary national parks and critical wildlife refuges, to hallowed battlefields and historic sites, to working forests and endangered habitats, and to community baseball fields and playgrounds. The Coalition to Protect America’s National Parks urges Congress to fully fund and permanently reauthorize the LWCF without delay. Our natural and cultural resources are for everyone, and our leaders must rise above partisan discourse to protect them and best serve the interests of the American people.”

**ANPR Rendezvous To Be Held Next Month In Bowling Green** – The Association of National Park Rangers’ 41st annual Ranger Rendezvous will be held at the Holiday Inn University Plaza in Bowling Green, Kentucky, from November 7th through November 11th. ANPR has put together an excellent program of presentations, training sessions and “after-hours” activities. The draft program, registration information and hotel reservation information can be found at [www.anpr.org](http://www.anpr.org) (go to “events” and “ranger rendezvous 2018”). Discount registration expires on September 29th; the hotel room block expires on October 7th, after which rooms will be available at the regular rate. Source: Bill Wade.

## **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).

**DOI Doors Keep Revolving** – To no one’s surprise, two DOI appointees left the department last month for positions with businesses that they formerly ‘regulated.’ “Vincent DeVito, who served as an energy adviser to Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, is joining Cox Oil Offshore LLC as executive vice president and general counsel,” reports the ThinkProgress web page. “During his tenure with the Interior Department, DeVito pushed for ‘energy dominance’ and sought to expand oil and gas leases on public lands, as well as within federal waters, where companies have lobbied for relaxed offshore drilling opportunities.” Another edition of ThinkProgress reported on a second departure. Downey Magallanes, former deputy chief of staff and a top adviser to Secretary Zinke has left for a position with BP: “During her time at the Department for the Interior, Magallanes worked on policy and operations, including a push to open up public lands and federal waters to more fossil fuel extraction. Specifically, she led the review which resulted in Zinke’s plan to shrink Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments in Utah last December. As documents released in March and July confirm, accessing oil, gas, and coal reserves were key factors in the decisions made by DOI [on shrinking the two monuments.” Sources: ThinkProgress.org stories on [Vincent DeVito](#) and [Downey Magallanes](#).

## **National Park Service and System**

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

**Guide To Staying Alive In The National Parks** – A web publication called [Deadspin](#) has posted an article entitled “A Simple Guide To Staying Alive In The National Parks.” Author Brian Lauvray begins by putting visitor risk in perspective: “There’s only a minuscule chance that you, an enthusiastic nature enjoyer, will actually sprain an ankle or get struck by lightning or becoming dehydrated during a trip to the parks. But there are still plenty of ways to seriously mess yourself up in the wilderness, so let’s run through a few handy pointers on how to stay safe and alive.” He follows this observation with a summary of good tips for visitors. Source: [Deadspin](#).

**Article Features Parks With Prime Fall Colors** – Autumn is here and it’s time for articles and media pieces about the best places to go to see the annual changing of colors. Fox News’ summary includes seven national parks (Acadia, Shenandoah, Blue Ridge, Great Smoky Mountains, Cuyahoga Valley, Grand Teton and Denali), with several of the remaining areas in national forests or state parks. Source: [Fox News](#).

**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.

- *Badlands NP* – The park is considering renovations and new construction to improve its visitor center, headquarters, lodge, campground and other facilities in the Cedar Pass area. The concept plan and EA can be found [at this link](#). Comments are being taken via the [NPS PEPC webpage](#) through November 2nd. Source: [Rapid City Journal](#).
- *Death Valley NP* – The park is offering a limited number of opportunities to visit Scotty’s Castle to see the flood damage and learn about repairs to the building and grounds. Scotty’s Castle has been closed since a massive flood on October 18, 2015 caused extensive damage to utilities, buildings, and Bonnie Clare Road. While most of the tour route is outdoors, it includes entering the Great Hall of Scotty’s Castle. Furnishings are now in temporary storage off-site, revealing architectural details including ornate woodwork and tiling that was previously obscured by the furniture. Source: [Death Valley NP](#).
- *Gateway NRA* – Ninety-six hatchlings of the world’s most endangered sea turtle crawled out to sea last week on West Beach on the Rockaway Peninsula. Kemp’s ridley is the smallest of all sea turtles and critically endangered. These sea turtles are found primarily in the Gulf of Mexico. Juveniles, probably carried by currents, can be found as far north as Nova Scotia along the Atlantic Coast, but this is the first recorded case of a Kemp’s ridley nesting and depositing eggs in New York State. On July 12th, beachgoers saw a Kemp’s ridley sea turtle crawl up the beach from the ocean and excavate a nest. Park staff later excavated the nest to save it from

extreme high tides. Staff were able to save and incubate 110 eggs and returned 96 hatchlings to the sea. Source: [Gateway NRA](#).

- *Hawaii Volcanoes NP* – A lawsuit filed by a Big Island group seeking to limit helicopter traffic over the island will go before a federal court of appeals in November. The Hawaii Island Coalition Malama Pono will submit oral arguments in a lawsuit against the FAA on November 1st. The group is seeking an injunction requiring the FAA to implement an existing air tour management plan over the park, something the FAA has failed to do since the plan was signed into law 18 years ago. Source: [West Hawaii Today](#).
- *Isle Royale NP* – A pair of wolves was caught and airlifted to Isle Royale last week, kicking off an effort by the National Park Service to replenish the predators. More wolves mean a better chance of keeping the island's growing moose population in check before Isle Royale's wilderness can be over browsed. Up to 30 wolves are expected to be caught in Minnesota, Michigan's U.P. and even Ontario, Canada as part of this relocation effort. Isle Royale's moose population was last estimated at 1,600 and accelerating. Source: [MLive.com](#).
- *Olympic NP* – A total of 98 mountain goats were captured in the park this year and moved to new homes in the North Cascades. This first phase of the operation is now complete; the next will take place in 2019. The park is seeking to relocate as many of its 725 goats as possible and will use lethal removal for those that cannot be captured. Source: [Seattle Post-Intelligencer](#).
- *Yellowstone NP* – Steamboat Geyser's eruption on September 17th was its 19th this year, making this Steamboat's most active calendar year since 1982. "If the geyser maintains its newfound regularity, it will be almost unprecedented for the modern era in which the Norris Geyser Basin has been observed with some consistency," writes Eric Mack in *Forbes*. "Perhaps Steamboat's most active period came between 1963 - 1965 when the geyser erupted at least 22 times during each calendar year, according to the National Parks Service. This followed a 50 year dormant period between 1911 and 1961. The geyser was also quiet for most of the 1970s and 1990s." Source: [Forbes](#).

## **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 To Propose Weakening Mercury Emissions Rule** – The misnamed Environmental Protection Agency continues its efforts to endanger and imperil the environment. The following is from the September 30th *New York Times*: "The Trump administration has completed a detailed legal proposal to dramatically weaken a major environmental regulation covering mercury, a toxic chemical emitted from coal-burning power plants...The proposal would not eliminate the mercury regulation entirely, but it is designed to put in place the legal justification for the Trump administration to weaken it and several other pollution rules, while setting the stage for a possible full repeal of the rule. Andrew Wheeler, a former coal lobbyist who is now the acting administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, is expected in the coming days to send the proposal to the White House for approval. The move is the latest, and one of the most significant, in the Trump administration's steady march of rollbacks of Obama-era health and environmental regulations on polluting industries, particularly coal. The weakening of the mercury rule — which the E.P.A. considers the most expensive clean air regulation ever put forth in terms of annual cost to industry — would represent a major victory for the coal industry. Mercury is known to damage the nervous systems of children and fetuses." Source: [New York Times](#).

## **The Conservation Crisis**

This section covers the myriad interconnected, conservation-related threats that are transforming the national parks – 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**

**Global Warming Is Destabilizing Mountain Slopes** – "It's not just the atmosphere and the oceans that are heating up," reports *Inside Climate News*. "An ever-denser blanket of greenhouse gases is also sending warmer air and water deeper into the planet's rocky bones." Such subsurface warming is increasing the possibility of landslides: "The warming, combined with other climate effects like extreme rainfall, is speeding up some basic geological processes. Softer rocks and soils that used to stay frozen most of the year, like permafrost, are thawing and eroding faster. Seemingly monolithic slabs of solid granite are peeling off mountainsides like the layers of an onion. And powerful rock glaciers—wide swaths of slow-moving ice and rock rubble that can pulverize granite—are speeding up, in one case from 40 feet per year to 226 feet per year." Source: [Inside Climate News](#).

## **Oceans and Freshwaters**

**Rising Oceans Threaten Coastal Historic Sites** – WABE, a public radio station in Atlanta, has been running a series on the impacts of sea level rise on southeastern coastline and elsewhere. The second part, entitled "How Sea Level Rise Threatens Our History," focuses on historic sites, including Fort Pulaski NM and sites within Savannah NWR. "When Pulaski was built, in the 1840s, it was supposed to be invincible," says reporter Molly Samuel. But improved weaponry is no longer the problem: "Now, 150 years later, nature is catching up to Fort Pulaski...Tides are inching higher and higher. The sea level has been rising at a rate of about a foot a century at Fort Pulaski, and it may speed up. Sea level rise threatens not just the fort, but historic and cultural sites up and down the Atlantic Coast. Native American history, the places where slaves lived and worked, historic neighborhoods, cemeteries and sites of battles are all at risk." Source: [WABE](#).

## **Flora, Fauna And Habitat**

**Protection Reinstated For Grizzlies Around Yellowstone** – "A federal judge has restored Endangered Species Act protections for grizzly bears living around Yellowstone National Park," reports National Public Radio. "In his ruling, U.S. District Court Judge Dana Christensen said the federal government didn't use the best available science when it removed the bears from the threatened-species list last year. [The September 24th] ruling puts a stop to proposed grizzly hunts in Wyoming and Idaho, which were on hold while Christensen mulled his decision." Source: [National Public Radio](#).

## **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.

- *White Sands NM* – On September 18th and 19th, portions of the White Sands/Alamogordo hot air balloon festival were held in the park. An event known as a "Moon Glow" was held on Saturday evening. By 8 p.m., over 8,000 visitors had arrived in the park, and a three-mile-long line of cars was waiting to enter. The event had to be canceled, however, due to strong winds blowing the tethered balloons over. It took about three hours to clear the area of the 2,000+ vehicles parked there. A dawn ascent by over 40 balloons on Sunday morning drew several thousand visitors. All balloons ascended without incident, but landed on U.S. Highway 70 on the park's southern boundary, blocking all four lanes intermittently for over two hours. Two teenagers who were part of a balloon crew followed the balloons into the dunes, but failed to return to the staging area. A search was begun; the teenagers walked out two hours later. The entire event was managed under ICS.
- *Mount Rainier NP* – On the afternoon of September 26th, the park communications center was advised of a serious multiple vehicle accident on Mather Memorial Parkway near Deadwood

Creek. Responding rangers found that two people had been killed and that four others required advanced life support. All four were medevaced by helicopter. Accident investigators determined that a 25-passenger, privately-owned bus had been heading north on the highway when the driver lost control as it came upon a construction site where a line of traffic was waiting at a stop light. The bus collided with three southbound motorcycles from a Tacoma motorcycle club, then struck three northbound vehicles - a Chevy Blazer, a compact pickup and a passenger sedan - that were waiting at the light. Twenty-three NPS employees responded to the accident along with Washington State Patrol officers, three ambulances, two military MAST helicopters, a commercial air ambulance, and a state vehicle inspection team.

- *Yosemite NP* – On September 25th, a patrol ranger driving through the South Entrance area observed a man standing directly alongside one of the entrance booths, which was closed during a lunch break. As the ranger watched, the man gestured to the operator of a motorhome, who handed him what appeared to be money. This was subsequently confirmed after the motorhome was stopped and the driver questioned. He said that he had paid the man three dollars to enter the park, but that he had wondered why the fee was only three dollars and why vehicles in the other traffic lane were not paying a fee. The man was subsequently arrested at the scene while attempting to charge another visitor three dollars to enter the park (or four dollars if they wanted to park their vehicle). He was dressed in a white shirt and tie, and it is believed that he had just begun this fraud when observed. Only four visitors are believed to have paid him. Prosecution is pending on charges of impersonation of a federal officer and misappropriation of property.

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- Issue Contributors: Mark Forbes, Mike Murray, Cathy Halainen

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](mailto:BHalainen@gmail.com). Please don't submit them via his personal email address or Facebook page.

## **A Closing Observation**

“Each generation has its own rendezvous with the land, for, despite our fee titles and claims of ownership, we are all brief tenants on this planet. By choice, or by default, we will carve out a land legacy for our heirs.”

[Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall](#)

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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.

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