



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

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Incidents

Santa Monica Mountains NRA Park Takes Stock Following Devastating Woolsey Fire

Information is now available from various sources on the damage inflicted on the park by the [Woolsey Fire](#), which has to date burned almost 100,000 acres and destroyed about 1500 structures.

- The park now estimates that 86 percent of all of its land was burned by the Woolsey Fire. Those 20,000-plus acres include Cheeseboro Canyon, Paramount Ranch, Peter Strauss Ranch, Solstice Canyon, Zuma Canyon, parts of Circle X Ranch, Arroyo Sequit and other areas. According to one estimate, cited in the *Los Angeles Times* (below), 616 structures burned down within the park.
- The *San Francisco Chronicle* (below) has posted a series of before and after photos of historic movie sets lost in the fire. *Variety* (also below) reports that the NPS intends to rebuild Western Town at Paramount Ranch within two years and will be looking to Hollywood to help contribute to a fundraising campaign.
- Money is still being collected for the park employees and families who lost their homes in the fire. Click here to go to the [GoFundMe site](#) established for them. The *Hot Springs Sentinel-Record* has a story about one of the affected rangers and his family – Coby Bishop, who comes from the Hot Springs area, and his wife Catharine, who also works for the NPS, and their children Henry, Tucker and Ben. It provides details on what the experience has been like for them and also provides a link to a [GoFundMe site](#) established for the family.
- Scientists have determined that 12 of 13 mountain lions being tracked via radio collars survived the fire. But there are concerns about how all wildlife will fare in the future, given that it will take an estimated 10 to 20 years for vegetation to grow back. Said NPS fire ecologist Seth Riley: “The big question now is this: What happens when a huge wildlife refuge hemmed by freeways and development abruptly loses more than half of its habitat to wildfire?”

Additional updates will appear as more information becomes available.

Sources: [Ventura County Star](#), [Hot Springs Sentinel-Record](#), [San Francisco Chronicle](#), [Variety](#), [Los Angeles Times](#).

Blue Ridge Parkway Section Of Parkway Closed Due To Tunnel Ceiling Damage

Tanbark Tunnel, located at Milepost 374.4 on the parkway, has been closed to all uses until further notice due to a piece of the tunnel's natural rock ceiling coming loose.

The park and FHA are in the process of assessing the issue and will determine what repairs are needed. The closure extends from Milepost 355.3 at N.C. Route 128 to Milepost 375.6 at Ox Creek Road.

The detached rock fragment, discovered during last weekend's weather related closure, is approximately four feet by three feet and up to 12 inches thick. The rock has not fallen to the road and is currently being held by a steel netting and rock bolt safety system installed on the tunnel ceiling to catch any falling rocks. Due to the significant weight of the rock and the stress it is currently putting on the safety system, repairs must be made before the tunnel can be reopened to visitors.

Weather permitting, Mt. Mitchell State Park will remain open and accessible while tunnel repairs are underway. Specific information regarding daily closures related to Tanbark Tunnel, weather, or any other reason can be found at www.nps.gov/maps/blri/road-closures/.

Source: [Blue Ridge Parkway](#).

National Park System Follow-ups On Previously Reported Incidents

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

- *American Memorial Park* – The park continues to recover from Super Typhoon Yutu. Over the course of two days last week, an off-island NPS sawyer team cleared trees from Micro Beach Road and the Outer Cove Marina area. Source: [Saipan Tribune](#).
- *Haleakala NP* – On October 18, 2017, Matthew Berckmann threatened his wife with a large kitchen knife while pinning her to the ground by holding his forearm against her throat. Two witnesses called 911 and he was arrested by rangers and local officers. Last week, Berckmann was found guilty of assault with a dangerous weapon and assault on his spouse by strangulation and sentenced to 41 months in prison. Following his incarceration, Berckmann will be on supervised release for three years. Source: [KHON News](#).

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.

Congress Weekly Legislative Roundup

New Public Laws

On October 11th, the president signed into law S. 3508, to reauthorize and amend the Marine Debris Act to promote international action to reduce marine debris. (Public Law 115-265).

On October 23rd, the president signed into law S. 3021, to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and to provide for water pollution control activities. Among other provisions, this bill includes projects to help restore the Everglades in south Florida, to preserve the Great Lakes, and to restore Jamaica Bay in Gateway National Recreation Area. (Public Law 115-270).

On November 3rd, the president signed into law H.R. 1037, to authorize the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs. (Public Law 115-275).

Senate

On November 15th, the Senate passed S. Res. 698, designating November 3, 2018, as National Bison Day.

On November 15th, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing to examine the nomination of Raymond David Vela, of Texas, to be Director of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

On November 15th, the Committee on Environment and Public Works held a hearing to examine funding needs for wildlife conservation, recovery, and management. There were no witnesses from any federal agency at this hearing.

House

On November 13th, the House passed:

- H.R. 2615, to authorize the exchange of certain land located in Gulf Islands National Seashore, Jackson County, Mississippi, between the National Park Service and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, after agreeing to the Senate amendment to the bill. The bill passed by a vote of 375 yeas to 1 nay. The bill now goes to the president to be signed into law.
- 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.

On November 13th, the House passed 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.

On November 15th, the House Committee on Natural Resources approved:

- H.R. 3593, to amend the Wilderness Act to authorize the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to conduct border security activities in designated wilderness areas. These authorized activities include granting access to existing structures, permitting the use of motor vehicles and aircraft, and allowing for the deployment of temporary infrastructure in emergency situations. The legislation requires these activities to be carried out in a manner that protects the wilderness character of the area to the greatest extent possible. The committee approved the bill by a vote of 19 yeas to 12 nays.
- H.R. 6507, to reauthorize the Oil Region National Heritage Area through Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 and update the name of the management entity for the Heritage Area.
- H.R. 6602, to reauthorize National Park Service participation in the management of the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route through 2025.

On November 16th, the House passed 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, by a vote of 196 yeas to 180 nays.

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

Park People, Park Friends

NPS Alumni

Passing Of Bob Proudman

Bob Proudman, 69, a career trail manager for the Service's Appalachian Trail Office, died of cancer on October 18th.

Bob dedicated nearly 50 years of service to the Appalachian Trail, beginning in 1965, when he began working on a trail crew for the Appalachian Mountain Club. Beginning at age sixteen, Bob, or "Bobe" (as he was known on the trail), rose through the ranks, becoming the first full-time, club-wide supervisor of trails in 1972.

Bob was on the former Appalachian Trail Conservancy board of managers from 1975 to 1978 and joined the National Park Service Appalachian Trail Park Office in 1979. From 1981 until his retirement in 2017, he worked at the ATC office in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.

Bob was a master trail builder, leader and mentor, working with ATC, the National Park Service, other government agencies, and local communities to protect the entire trail from Georgia to Maine. He founded and inspired trail crews, ridge runners, caretakers and land managers; his work included extensive boundary survey programs, park law enforcement, and search and rescue operations along the Appalachian mountain range. He authored, with others, *Appalachian Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance* (first and second editions).

In 2016, Bob went to Lake Hovskol National Park, Mongolia, to assist in park conservation and trail building, traveling on horseback to remote areas. Bob's background as a rock climber and mountaineer (which included first ascents in the White Mountains of New Hampshire and on Mt Katahdin in Maine) and his many, varied outdoor adventures, gave Bob the ability to sleep almost anywhere (hence his other nickname: "Bivouac Bob").

After retirement, Bob served as president of the Trail Crew Association.

Bob's family and friends will greatly miss his kind and gentle demeanor, his deep wisdom and wide smile, and his witty, generous spirit. A long-term, active member of Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church, where he loved to sing in the choir, Bob also devoted his time to the needs of his family, friends and the wider community.

In memory of Bob's long-term stewardship and commitment to those that continue to conserve the trail, donations can be made in his memory to the Trail Crew Association (PO BOX 100, Washington, VT 05675 or www.amctca.com) and Appalachian Trail Conservancy (www.appalachiantrail.org). A service in celebration of Bob's life will be shared at a later date.

Source: [Martinsburg Journal](#).

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.

Administration

Trump Policy Changes Lead To Fracking Boom On Federal Lands – The *New York Times* ran a story in late October on how the administration is auctioning off millions of acres of drilling rights and rolling back regulations in order to do so. "Reversing a trend in the final years of the Obama presidency, the Trump administration is auctioning off millions of acres of drilling rights to oil and gas developers, a central component of the White House's plan to work hand in glove with the industry to

promote more domestic energy production,” write authors Eric Lipton and Hiroko Tabuchi. “Seeing growth and profit opportunities at a time of rising oil prices and a pro-business administration, big energy companies like Chesapeake Energy, Chevron, and Anschutz Exploration are seizing on the federal lands free-for-all, as they collectively buy up tens of thousands of acres of new leases and apply for thousands of permits to drill. In total, more than 12.8 million acres of federally controlled oil and gas parcels were offered for lease in the fiscal year that ended on Sept. 30, triple the average offered during President Barack Obama’s second term...” The number of drilling rigs operating in the state has doubled since 2016, they report, with more on the way. Example: As many as 5,000 new oil wells are being planned in one Wyoming county of about 14,000 people, along with 1,970 miles of new roads. The article details the full scope and environmental impacts of this incredible boom. Source: [New York Times](#).

Funding Shutdown Still Possible For DOI, Other Agencies – More than 300,000 federal workers could face furloughs if a deal is not reached before the December 7th deadline on funding for a number of agencies, including Interior, Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, State, Agriculture, Treasury, Commerce, Homeland Security and Justice. “(They)” are now pawns in a battle between the president, who wants funding to build a wall on the border with Mexico, and those who believe it would be an ineffective and costly mistake (most in Congress, including many Republicans),” reports *Government Executive*. The president’s comment on the subject, made on November 17th, was not reassuring: “This would be a very good time to do a shutdown.” Source: [Government Executive](#).

Federal Government

Federal Salaries Lag Significantly Behind Private Sector – The Federal Salary Council has reported that employee salaries on average lag behind those of the private sector by almost 31 percent, numbers consistent with other numbers it has released in recent years. “Those figures, based on two Labor Department surveys covering some 250 occupations, stand in contrast to assessments of some conservative and libertarian organizations that have concluded that the advantage is about the same or even greater in favor of federal employees,” reports Eric Yoder in the November 14th *Washington Post*. “The Congressional Budget Office last year essentially split the difference. It found an average advantage for federal workers of 3 percent, although within that average it said there is a wide range by educational level: from a 34 percent advantage for federal workers with a high school education or less to a 24 percent shortfall for those with a professional degree or doctorate.” Source: [Washington Post](#).

NARA Preparing To Destroy Huge Inventory of DOI, NPS Documents – A colleague has sent along a note being disseminated by the Sierra Club concerning “a request by the Department of the Interior to destroy massive amounts of records of various agencies including FERC, Energy, Fish and Wildlife, Environmental Enforcement, etc.” The planned action will pertain to every agency within Interior, including the NPS. The request covers documents – paper and digital – going back more than 50 years. It’s not clear whether this is a normal or extraordinary request, but, given the times, it seems wise to assume the latter until proven otherwise. A group called AltGov2 asked for and received details on the proposed action by the National Archives and Records Administration – a PDF file with [a summary memo on the planned action](#), a PDF file with [a request for records disposition authority](#), and a PDF file with [a detailed guide to the planned action](#). NARA has extended its comment period on this proposed action until November 26th. Comments should be addressed to the National Archives at request.schedule@nara.gov, referencing DAA-0048-2015-0003, which is the relevant action or case number.

Department of the Interior

The Continuing Adventures Of Ryan Zinke – More recent news stories on the Secretary of the Interior from the nation’s media:

- *Zinke and Environmental Radicals* – Secretary Zinke has blamed “environmental radicals” for the California fires, saying that they have blocked forest management practices that could have stopped them. Here are some observations he made in an interview with [Briertbart News](#): “I will lay this on the foot [sic] of those environmental radicals that have prevented us from managing

the forests for years. And you know what? This is on them...We have dead and dying timber. We can manage it using best science, best practices. But to let this devastation go on year after year after year is unacceptable, it's not going to happen. The president is absolutely engaged." Our secretary is not one to harbor a grudge, though, at least at present. Showing his magnanimity, Zinke, having just pointed his finger at environmental radicals, added that "it's not the time for finger-pointing" on the causes of the fires. Source: [CBS News](#).

- *Zinke and the "Provocative New Tragedy"* – *The Guardian* has an article about the secretary by Joel Clement, former director of DOI's policy office, entitled "Interior Department Whistleblower: Ryan Zinke Hollowed Out The Agency." Although Zinke seemed competent and showed respect for public lands in his confirmation hearing, says Clement, he was in effect handed a new "script" by the oil, gas and mining industries when he took over Interior. This, says Clement, led to "a provocative new tragedy in three acts" – first, "erase the past" by overturning existing environmental protections; second, hollow out the agencies by "exiling" the experts through SES reassignments; third, choose the rules you follow, excluding those that don't benefit you. His conclusion: "Americans, and the civil servants who work at Interior, deserve a secretary who respects ethics, transparency, science and the mission of the agency rather than an actor reading from an industry-prepared script. When the time comes, the Senate must hold Ryan Zinke's successor to a higher standard." Source: [The Guardian](#).
- *Zinke and the "Zinke Effect"* – Another article in *The Guardian* this month analyzes "the Zinke effect" and the secretary's efficacy in executing the administration's agenda: "Despite his public persona as a folksy Montanan with a Boy Scout's penchant for pennants and horses," writes Jimmy Tobias, "Zinke has taken shrewd and aggressive steps to transform from the inside a department whose 70,000 employees manage the country's treasured national parks and its endangered species, in addition to overseeing vast energy and mineral deposits on at least 500m acres of public land." Zinke's most significant action has been to place "a slew of conservative operatives and industry sympathizers in key positions throughout the agency." None required Senate approval, so few are known outside DOI; nonetheless, they "wield immense power and are responsible for much of the day-to-day work at the interior department." Although Zinke may be moving on, his appointees will likely remain. Source: [The Guardian](#).

National Park Service and System

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

Senate Committee Will Report Favorably On David Vela As NPS Director – Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), chair of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, spoke favorably of David Vela at his confirmation hearing last week: "Our national parks are some of our nation's greatest treasures," Murkowski said. "In order to ensure our parks are here for future generations, we must balance our ability to enjoy and explore them while preserving the natural and cultural resources that are part of the system. The Park Service needs a leader who can find that balance and address the deferred maintenance backlog, while also overhauling the internal culture of harassment of all kinds." Murkowski announced she intends to hold a business meeting to report Vela and two other nominees who appeared at the hearing to the full Senate shortly after Thanksgiving. At that point, the committee will have up to ten nominees pending on the Senate calendar, including many who are not considered controversial, and Murkowski expressed her hope that they will be confirmed before the end of the Congress. [Click here](#) to see a video of a the section of the hearing on Vela's confirmation – the segment begins around 36:30. Source: [Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources](#).

Head Of Branch Studying Climate Change Impacts Resigns – "The woman in charge of studying climate change's effects on U.S. managed cultural resources for the National Park Service has resigned, citing that the administration's unequal attention to natural resources," reports *The Hill*. "Marcy Rockman, the first person to hold the position of Climate Change Adaptation Coordinator for Cultural Resources at NPS, resigned in early November after seven years in the position. In a resignation letter she shared on Twitter Thursday, Rockman claimed she routinely saw the agency

struggle to offer resources to her area commensurate with its emphasis on natural resources...”

Source: [The Hill](#).

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:

- *Christiansted NHS* – The park is seeking public comments on a proposal to repair and improve its wharf bulkhead. The project is needed in order to prevent damage from more frequent and more powerful seasonal hurricanes and to mitigate and remediate the effects of historic and continuing storm damage to the park waterfront cultural landscape and visitor and vessel uses. Comments are being taken at the [park’s PEPC website](#) until November 24th. Source: [Christiansted NHS](#).
- *Curecanti NRA* – On Friday, October 26th, Denver & Rio Grande Western Engine 278, its tender, a boxcar, and a caboose were returned to the truss bridge at Cimarron. The engine and cars, as well as the bridge, have been undergoing extensive restoration over the last eight years. Engine 278 and the tender, owned by the City of Montrose and on long-term loan to the NPS, were restored by Mammoth Locomotive Works of Palisade, Colorado. The caboose, also part of the agreement with Montrose, was restored by Wasatch Railroad Contractors of Cheyenne, Wyoming. Work on the box car was done in Durango, Colorado by the Durango and Silverton Railroad. The news release includes a good photo of Engine 278 at its restored home. Source: [Curecanti NRA](#).
- *First State NHP* – The Conservation Fund has thwarted developers' plans to build high-end homes in Beaver Valley by acquiring a 254-acre tract that borders First State National Historical Park in Delaware. The land will eventually be transferred to the NPS. The victory was made possible by grassroots fund-raising that brought in \$8 million to “Save the Valley.” Source: [Philadelphia Inquirer](#).
- *Indiana Dunes NL* – Access to the beach at the Portage Lakefront and Riverwalk has been closed due to continued erosion. All other areas of the lakefront remain open to the public, including the pavilion, trail, riverwalk and breakwater. At more than 580 feet above sea level, Lake Michigan’s water level remains well above the long-term average. The higher lake levels in combination with recent storm waves have resulted in continued erosion and narrower beaches along the Lake Michigan shoreline. Source: [Munster Times](#).
- *Redwood N&SP* – The NPS, California State Parks, Save the Redwoods League, and the Redwood Park Conservancy have announced plans to build a new \$3.5 million trail system to the Grove of Titans, located just south of the Oregon-California state line. The project includes a rerouted trail system, an elevated walkway, and rehabilitation of the backcountry of Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park. The Grove of Titans, discovered in 1998, is home to some of the world’s largest redwoods, with trees 320 feet tall and 26 feet in diameter. The unofficial publication of the grove’s location led to a huge spike in visitation, creation of many social trails, and the inevitable impacts – destruction of understory plants, erosion, and soil compaction that is inhibiting the uptake of water and nutrients by the shallow roots of the redwoods and threatening their long-term survival. Source: [KTVU News](#).
- *Statue of Liberty NM* – On November 15th, the original torch from the statue was moved to the new Statue of Liberty Museum, which is currently being under construction on Liberty Island. In 1984, as part of the statue’s centennial restoration project, the torch was removed from atop the monument and placed on display inside the statue’s pedestal. A replica of Bartholdi’s original torch was installed a year later and formally dedicated during the site’s centennial on July 4, 1986. A special hydraulically stabilized transporter vehicle took the torch 470 feet across the island to the museum, where it was lifted by crane and placed in the new building. Source: [Statue of Liberty NM](#).

- *Yellowstone NP* – The park is taking public comments through November 30th (via its [PEPC site](#)) on a proposal to replace the bridge over the Lewis River. The bridge was built in 1960 and is in poor condition. The proposed new bridge would be located directly east of the existing bridge on the park's South Entrance Road between the South Entrance and Grant Village. The proposal also includes reconstruction of the adjacent Lewis River Falls parking area. Construction would begin in 2020 and continue into 2022. Source: [Yellowstone NP](#).

New Area And Re-Designation Proposals – At any given time, there are proposals in the works for new areas or changes in designation for current NPS units. Here are the latest:

- *Willamette River* – A feasibility study laying out a detailed case for making a 56-mile stretch of the Willamette River near Willamette Falls a national heritage area has received initial approval from the NPS. According to the *Portland Tribune*, “the idea behind the Willamette Falls heritage area is to tell the story of the falls – which were a crucial gathering place for the first Native Americans to settle in the area – and how they influenced the growth of culture and industry up and down the Willamette River.” Source: [Portland Tribune](#).
- *Pearl Harbor* – On November 13th, the House of Representatives voted to create a separate Pearl Harbor National Memorial in Hawaii to mark the attack on the U.S. naval base there by Japan on December 7, 1941. The bill would create a distinct national memorial separate from World War II Valor of the Pacific NM. Source: [Washington Examiner](#).

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.

Assaults On Science At EPA Continue – Christopher Zarba, the staff director for the Scientific Advisory Board at EPA until last February, has an opinion piece in the *New York Times* on the “latest assaults on science at an agency that depends on science to protect Americans’ health, safety and quality of life.” These included the disbanding of a panel on microscopic airborne pollutants that helped the agency determine what level of pollutants are safe to breathe and the scrapping of plans for a similar panel of experts to help assess another dangerous pollutant, ground-level ozone. “The approach [applied by scientific review] committees — transparent and balanced, with meetings that are open to the public to provide opportunities for public input — helped give the public confidence that it is being protected from harm, and industry the assurance that corrective actions are justified and reasonable,” says Zarba. “All of that is now in jeopardy as the agency purges scientists from its review panels and purposely disregards scientific research.” His concluding observation: “Independent, honest science is the backbone of environmental regulation. It also threatens people who want to hide the truth.” Source: [New York Times](#).

The Conservation Crisis

This section covers the myriad interconnected, conservation-related threats that are transforming the national parks, their ecosystems, and the world ecosphere, often simultaneously.

Climate Change Fuels California Fires – Vox, an American news and opinion website, posted a story last Thursday about the causes of the recent wildfires that have left behind so much severe destruction and death in California. The article focuses in part on the Carr Fire, which devastated Whiskeytown NRA, and the Camp Fire, which did the same to Santa Monica Mountains NRA. “Though the Camp Fire resulted from a perfect set of extreme fire conditions that all coincidentally came together at the same time, some of those conditions were years in the making,” reports Vox. “It’s an example of how forces in the climate that build up over decades can act on the scale of days, even hours, creating a terrifying scenario the likes of which we have never experienced before: The largest, deadliest, and most destructive fires in California history were all within three months of each other this year...Though climate change will never cause any individual event, scientists reported in 2016 that about 55 percent of the dryness in western forests between 1979 and 2015 could be attributed to

warming due to human activity. This ongoing warming converges with seasonal variations in temperature and rainfall.” Together, they accelerate the impacts that fire, insect infestations, disease outbreaks and drought have on forests (California’s long drought has killed an estimated 129 million trees). And the situation is expected to worsen steadily in the future. Source: [Vox](#).

National Parks: Threats and Remedies – Here’s a summary of news stories about park-specific conservation and climate-related issues:

- *Everglades NP* – The Audubon Society has posted an article by Chris Sweeney entitled “Invasive Reptiles Are Taking Over Florida – and Devouring Its Birds Along the Way.” Sweeney opens the piece at a local [Repticon](#), one of about 60 live-reptile trade fairs that take place in the U.S. each year, then goes on to talk about the harm they cause in South Florida if they escape or are set free. In much of the country, such cold-blooded creatures don’t fare well outdoors, but that’s not the case in the subtropics of South Florida. So far, Florida “has identified 50 types of non-native lizards, turtles, crocodilians, and snakes within state limits, more than anywhere else in the world.” Many of them predate on birds. Such species found in and around the Everglades include the notorious Burmese python, Nile monitors, and egg-eating Argentine tegus. All made it to Florida via the reptile trade. “Scientists, state regulators, and land managers are already stretched thin in the battle against invasive reptiles, and the challenges are only growing. A recent federal court ruling rolled back enforcement of the Lacey Act, which for nearly three decades has largely prevented the importation of brown tree snakes, yellow anacondas, and other ‘injurious wildlife’ species. Now anyone can transport them across state lines...” The article outlines all the approaches being employed to find and eliminate these exotic species before they destroy bird and other species populations. Source: [Audubon Society](#).
- *Hawaii Volcanoes NP* – Staff have discovered little fire ants (LFA), an “extremely noxious invasive species,” at two locations in the park. Intensive sampling is currently underway to determine if the ants are more widespread. Park scientists are working with partners to respond quickly to the threat and evaluate control options while ensuring visitor safety and protecting native ecosystems. No bites have been reported, and no ant-related closures are in effect. LFA can have devastating impacts on native ecosystems and human health. Since 2014, the park has sought to prevent their introduction by monitoring equipment, construction material, and the vehicles that transport them before they enter the park. So far this year, they’ve been intercepted a dozen times. Source: [Hawaii Volcanoes NP](#).
- *Yellowstone NP* – The November 15th *New York Times* carried a story by Marguerite Holloway entitled “Your Children’s Yellowstone Will Be Radically Different” that focuses on ways in which climate change is altering the park’s landscape and regional ecosystem. “Over the next few decades of climate change, the country’s first national park will quite likely see increased fire, less forest, expanding grasslands, shallower, warmer waterways, and more invasive plants — all of which may alter how, and how many, animals move through the landscape,” writes Holloway. “Ecosystems are always in flux, but climate change is transforming habitats so quickly that many plants and animals may not be able to adapt well or at all.” The article includes this observation from Michael Tercek, an ecologist who has worked in Yellowstone for 28 years: “By the time my daughter is an old woman, the climate will be as different for her as the last ice age seems to us.” Source: [New York Times](#).

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; “submitters” are those people who originally submitted the incident report.

- *Olympic NP* – On October 29th, plea agreements were reached with two men from Forks, Washington, on charges of shooting up the Mora ranger station and endangering a seasonal ranger naturalist who was in the building at the time. The incident occurred on September 1st and caused extensive damage to the station, both inside and out, and destroyed a nearby pay

telephone and street light. The ranger was not hurt. The two men pleaded guilty to reckless endangerment and vandalism; a charge of possessing a weapon in a national park was dismissed. Each was sentenced to six months in jail (suspended) and 200 hours of community service and ordered to pay a \$1,000 fine, about \$500 in restitution to the park, and another \$350 to the local phone company. The two would not have been apprehended if ranger Bob Lineback hadn't immediately set up a roadblock on the main road to the Mora area after he heard the shots fired. Reported by Kym Hunter.

- *Yellowstone NP* – Around 10:30 p.m. on November 3rd, Mammoth ranger Keith Young spotted a car in Gardiner, Montana, which matched the description of a vehicle reported stolen in Bozeman earlier in the day. When Young turned to follow the vehicle, which was occupied by three males who were reported to be armed, the car took off into the park. A controlled pursuit ensued in which Young unsuccessfully attempted to maintain visual contact with the stolen Q45 Infinity, which at times hit speeds over 80 mph. Rangers prepared to intercept the vehicle at Norris junction and force it toward a roadblock at Madison junction, but the driver of the Infinity turned the car around when he saw their cruisers and headed back north toward Mammoth. It was eventually found abandoned near Apollinaris Spring. A ground search was begun which employed over 20 Yellowstone rangers and a police dog team and negotiator from the Gallatin County sheriff's office. One suspect, a 15-year-old boy, walked out to the road and was captured without incident. Just before 3 a.m., the dog team located the other two suspects, aged 14 and 18, in a wooded area not far from the road. Although initially unresponsive to demands to surrender, the pair gave up when confronted by the barking dog and the armed rangers. State charges for grand theft auto are pending. Reported by Chief Ranger's Office.
- *Scotts Bluff NM* – A four-year-old boy was climbing in some loose rocks along Saddle Rock Trail while on a hike with his father on the afternoon of October 21st when he was bitten three times on the fingers of his left hand by a juvenile rattlesnake. He was taken to a local hospital, where he was given 20 vials of anti-venom and placed in the ICU. He had surgery on his left hand and arm several days later, and is now making a complete recovery. An unusual aspect of the incident is that the snake was still active despite two measurable snowfalls and subfreezing temperatures earlier in the month. Reported by Robert Manasek.

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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

"One of the great ironies of the American park system is that it was assembled without benefit of a blueprint. What we enjoy today has been stitched together over more than a century like a giant quilt, park by park, by the loving hands of thousands of people who wanted to save something precious for their children and grandchildren."

Stewart L. Udall in Dwight Rettie's *Our National Park System: Caring for America's Greatest Natural and Historic Treasures*

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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.”

To receive a copy of this free publication, join or support 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 (click on [this link](#)); Coalition supporters can also join and receive the newsletter (click on [this link](#)). If you need to contact the Coalition office on other matters, including changes of address, click on [this link](#).

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