



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

Wednesday, December 19, 2018

Volume 2

Number 43

---

### Editor's Note

This is the last issue for 2018. The next edition will be posted on Wednesday, January 9, 2019.

Sincere thanks once again to the newsletter's principal contributors for their time and efforts – all volunteer – in submitting materials for the 43 issues that came out this year. Kudos go to newshounds Dennis Burnett, Duncan Morrow and Rick Smith, to Congressional correspondent Don Hellmann, and to publisher and IT whiz Steve Pittleman.

Thanks also to the many members who sent in stories over the course of the year. If you haven't noticed, they're acknowledged in the "Acknowledgements" section in each issue.

See you next year.

Bill Halainen, Editor

### Incidents

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

There's not much new being reported these days, so we'll conclude the year with short follow-ups on incidents previously reported in this newsletter:

- *Hawaii Volcanoes NP* – Staff from the U.S. Geological Survey's Hawaiian Volcano Observatory and other scientists have published the first detailed summary of this year's months long eruption. The report, entitled [The 2018 Rift Eruption And Summit Collapse Of Kilauea Volcano](#), was published in the journal *Science* this week. It provides a timeline for the eruption, considered the most destructive in the volcano's recorded history, and shows that it contained a combination of volcanic events that has seldom been observed. The *New York Times* article on the report (link follows) also provides "a summary of key volcanic events in Kilauea's 2018 outburst, in the order in which they occurred." Source: [New York Times](#).
- *Cape Cod NS* – Following last summer's fatal shark attack in the park, the first on Cape Cod in 80 years, park staff and cape authorities have been looking at ways to improve shark detection and reporting. Earlier this month, an Australia-based company, The Ripper Group, demonstrated its drone technology at Nauset Beach. Their drones are being used at beaches

throughout Australia and have proven their ability to differentiate between sharks and sixteen other marine species. Source: [Cape Cod Times](#).

- *Santa Monica Mountains NRA* – “Hikers are eager to get back to their favorite trails in the Santa Monica Mountains,” reports KCAL News in Los Angeles, “but park rangers say it will be a while before the area that burned in the Woolsey Fire is safe for visitors.... With 500 miles of trails, National Park Service rangers say they have received many inquiries about when some of the more popular ones will reopen, but park rangers say its not a question they can answer yet. According to the National Park Service, roughly half of the 67-mile Backbone trail that traverses the peaks of the Santa Monica Mountains has burned, along with many more miles of trails and their support facilities at trailheads, such as toilets, barrier fencing and informational signs.” Source: [KCAL News](#).
- *Apostle Islands NM* – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has released its final report in the investigation of a kayaking accident last August that took the lives of four out of five members of a single family. Investigators have concluded that the accident occurred because of overloaded boats, inexperienced kayakers, hazardous conditions on Lake Superior, and “passenger behavior.” Source: [Wausau Daily Herald](#).
- *Statue of Liberty NM* – The woman who scaled the Statue of Liberty on the Fourth of July to protest the Trump administration's immigration policies was convicted on Monday and faces up to 18 months in prison. The Justice Department announced that Therese Okoumou was convicted in a bench trial for what it deemed a "dangerous stunt." Source: [The Hill](#).
- *Gulf Islands NS* – On December 12th, the park reopened Highway 399, the road between Pensacola Beach and Navarre Beach through the Santa Rosa Area. It had sustained significant damage from Hurricane Michael. Source: [Gulf Islands NS](#).
- *Blue Ridge Parkway* – A new federal indictment has added two counts of aggravated sexual abuse resulting in death to the charges already filed against 21-year-old Derek Shawn Pendergraft in last summer's rape-murder of concession employee Sara Ellis. He is now charged with first-degree murder, which could bring the death penalty. Pendergraft was previously charged with second-degree murder, which would have carried a maximum of life in prison. Source: [WHSV 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 December 7th, the president signed into law H.J. Res. 143, making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2019. This bill funds a number of federal agencies, including the Department of the Interior, through December 21, 2018 (P.L. 115-298).

#### ***Senate***

On December 12, the Senate passed S. Res. 444, recognizing the heritage, culture, and contributions of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women in the United States.

On December 12th, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks held a hearing on:

- S. 2394, to amend Title 54, United States Code, to authorize the provision of technical assistance under the Preserve America Program and to direct the Secretary of the Interior to enter into partnerships with communities adjacent to units of the National Park System to leverage local cultural heritage tourism assets. The department opposed the bill as being duplicative of existing authorities.
- S. 2894 and H.R. 5613, bills to designate the Quindaro Townsite in Kansas City, Kansas, as a National Historic Landmark. The department expressed its opposition to the bills and said the town site should pursue the landmark designation through the usual administrative process rather than through legislation.
- S. 3291, to reauthorize the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route. The department opposed reviving an authority that has been inactive for the past seven years.
- S. 3439 and H.R. 5532, bills to redesignate the Reconstruction Era National Monument in South Carolina as the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park. The bill also establishes the Reconstruction Era National Historic Network to consist of any federal, state, local, or private sites related to the Reconstruction Era where educational materials can be produced and disseminated, where additional research on the Reconstruction Era may be conducted, and where the National Park Service may provide technical assistance through cooperative agreements.
- S. 3468, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate segments of the Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers as components of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.
- S. 3505, to provide for partnerships among state and local governments, regional entities, and the private sector to preserve, conserve, and enhance the visitor experience at nationally significant battlefields of the American Revolution, War of 1812, and Civil War. The department opposed the bill saying additional appropriations for preserving these battlefields are unneeded.
- S. 3527 and H.R. 5585, bills 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. The department opposed the bills as it saw no compelling reason to reauthorize the commission.
- S. 3533, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain river segments within the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System,
- S. 3534, to redesignate the New River Gorge National River in the state of West Virginia as "New River Gorge National Park", while allowing hunting to continue in the national park. This would be the first time hunting would be authorized in a park unit designated as a "national park". The department said it could support the bill if it were amended to confer a title for the area that is consistent with standard NPS nomenclature for parks that allow hunting, such as a national preserve, a national recreation area, etc.
- S. 3571 and H.R. 5420, bills 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.
- S. 3646, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to accept any property within the boundaries of the St. Genevieve National Historical Park in St. Genevieve, Missouri, for inclusion in the park boundaries instead of only nationally significant property identified in the NPS study of the site. The specific site targeted by this language would be used as a visitor center, but it was not identified in the study as being nationally significant. The bill also would modify the boundary of the Harry S Truman National Historic Site to authorize the acquisition of approximately one acre of land from the city of Independence, Missouri, for use as a visitor center.
- S. 3609 and H.R. 801, bills to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Route 66 National Historic Trail,
- S. 3659, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to annually designate at least one city in the United States as an "American World War II Heritage City". The department opposed the bill as being duplicative of existing efforts to recognize our nation's history.
- H.R. 1220, to establish the Adams Memorial Commission, a federal commission, to carry out the provisions of Public Law 107-62, which had previously authorized the Adams Memorial Foundation to establish a memorial on federal land in Washington, D.C. to honor the legacy of President John Adams and his family and their service to the nation.

- H.R. 3607, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish fees for medical services provided in units of the National Park System. Under current law, fees collected for medical services provided to visitors and park employees in about a dozen remote western parks must be returned to the treasury. This legislation establishes a fund within the treasury for these fees, which can then be used at the parks where they are collected. However, the fees would still have to be appropriated by Congress each year, making this legislation less than optimal for the parks involved. The department asked that this appropriation provision be changed so that parks can retain fees automatically for providing these medical services.
- H.R. 3961, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate segments of the Kissimmee River and its tributaries in the State of Florida for study for potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The department recommended deferring action on the bill until the Kissimmee River Restoration Project is completed.
- H.R. 5005, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the birthplace of James Weldon Johnson in Jacksonville, Florida, as a unit of the National Park System. The department opposed the bill saying the site would unlikely meet the criteria to be a unit of the national park system.
- 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. However, the department expressed concerns that the redesignations of these two sites would leave only the Tule Lake Segregation Center and the battlefield sites on the Aleutian Islands in the national monument and that "Valor in the Pacific" is not an appropriate name for a site where Japanese Americans were incarcerated. The department asked that the bill be amended to establish the Tule Lake Unit of the national monument as a national historic site and the Aleutian Islands Unit as its own national monument and to abolish the existing Valor in the Pacific National Monument. This would allow each of the three areas currently included in the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument to have its own identity and recognition in the history of the United States' role and activity in World War II.
- H.R. 6077, officially designates the National Comedy Center in Jamestown, New York, as the National Comedy Center. The department expressed concern about confusing visitors to the center by labeling it a "national" center, which could imply its association with the federal government.
- 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. The department said it could support the bill if the one-year sunset provision for the authority provided by this bill be removed as that would only cause confusion for employees and would not take care of the problem in future years.
- H.R. 6687, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to manage Point Reyes National Seashore in the state of California consistent with Congress' long-standing intent to continue to authorize working dairies and ranches on agricultural property as part of the seashore's unique historic, cultural, scenic and natural values.

P. Daniel Smith, deputy director, exercising the authority of the director of the National Park Service, was the witness for the department.

### **House**

On December 10th, the House passed:

- H.R. 6108, to increase the authorization of appropriations for the American Battlefield Protection Grant Program from \$10 million to \$15 million through FY 2028, and to provide funding for interpretation and restoration of preserved battlefields.
- H.R. 3008, to authorize the Department of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the childhood home of former President George W. Bush, which is located at 1412 West Ohio Avenue in Midland, Texas to determine its suitability and feasibility to be a unit of the national park system. The bill passed by a vote of 382 yeas to 4 nays.
- 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. Res. 792, urging the Secretary of the Interior to recognize the historical significance of Roberto Clemente's place of death near Pioneros in Loiza, Puerto Rico, by adding it to the National Register of Historic Places. The resolution was passed by a vote of 385 yeas to 1 nay, with two voting present.

On December 11th, the House passed S. 3119, to allow for the taking of sea lions on the Columbia River and its tributaries to protect endangered and threatened species of salmon and other non-listed fish species. The bill now goes to the president to be signed into law.

On December 11th, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Affairs held a hearing entitled "Examining 'Backdoor' Spending by Federal Agencies". Tranchau T. Nguyen, Director of Strategic Issues, Government Accountability Office; and Julia C. Matta, Managing Associate General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, Government Accountability Office were the federal witnesses at the hearing.

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

## **Park People, Park Friends**

### **NPS Alumni Passing Of Keith Flanery**

Retired protection ranger Randall "Keith" Flanery, 62, died in Tucson on December 10th.

Keith graduated from the University of Kansas with a degree in photojournalism in 1982. He worked as a photojournalist for *The Newton Kansan* and received awards for his feature and news photography from the Associated Press in their regional photography competition. He later started his own photography studio in Kansas City, concentrating on medium format product photography.

In 1991 he joined the National Park Service at Olympic National Park. He worked as a backcountry ranger at the Queets River Ranger Station and in 1995 he saved the life of a 12-year-old boy who nearly drowned in a river crossing. Keith was presented the Valor Award from the Department of Interior in 1996 for his heroic act.

Keith worked at other areas, including Great Smoky Mountains and Big Thicket, and retired from Chiricahua National Monument.

Condolences can be sent to his daughter, Aileen Flanery at PO Box 1721 Durango, CO 81302. Memorial donations in memory of Keith may be made to St Paul's UMC in Tucson, the National Park Foundation, or to the University of Kansas Alumni Association.

Source: [\*Park Hills Daily Journal\*](#).

### **National Park Service Recent NPS Management Changes**

Here's a listing of recent personnel changes in the NPS. Click on the links following the brief summaries for additional details:

- *Virgin Islands NP* – Nigel A. Fields has begun a one-year appointment as the park's superintendent. Fields, who has a combined federal career of more than 20 years of public service, arrived on St. John and took over as the acting superintendent for Virgin Islands National Park on Monday, December 10th. Source: [Virgin Island Daily News](#).
- *Mammoth Cave NP* – Lora Peppers, the park's chief ranger, will retire at the end of the year. Her 33-year career included stints at Castillo de San Marcos, Fort Matanzas, Everglades, Great Smoky Mountains and Shenandoah. Source: [Bowling Green Daily News](#).
- *Cedar Breaks NM* – Kathleen Gonder, currently the chief of interpretation and visitor information at Bryce Canyon National Park, has been named superintendent of Cedar Breaks National Monument. Gonder, a 29-year National Park Service veteran with broad experience in park administration and leadership, will begin her new duties on February 3rd. Source: [Cedar Breaks NM](#).

## **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 and Government**

**Agencies Begin Preparations For Possible Shutdown** – Although at the moment (Tuesday afternoon) it looks like some sort of compromise is in the wings to avoid a federal government shutdown, potentially affected agencies have nonetheless begun preparing for such an eventuality. The following is extracted from an update in *Government Executive*: “Congress has until Friday to approve a bill to fund the departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, State, Interior, Agriculture, Treasury, Commerce, Homeland Security and Justice, as well as other independent agencies. Otherwise, most of those entities will be forced to shut down some or all of their operations and furlough at least some employees, depending on how those operations are funded, their role in national security and public safety, and other factors. On Friday, the Office of Management and Budget warned agency leaders in a phone call that they should begin to prepare for a lapse in appropriations...” The article also included this assessment: “According to an analysis by *Government Executive*, of the 850,000 civilian employees at unfunded agencies, about 41 percent, or 345,000, would be subject to furloughs if lawmakers miss the Dec. 21 deadline. While some agencies, like the National Science Foundation, would see the vast majority of their workforces furloughed, others, such as the Environmental Protection Agency, could see as little as 1.8 percent of employees sent home. That is in part due to a 2017 change in shutdown guidance from OMB, which encouraged departments and agencies to use ‘carry-forward funding’ and ‘transfer authority’ to mitigate the potential impact of a lapse in appropriations.” Source: [Government Executive](#).

**Federal Employee Job Satisfaction Drops Significantly** – “Job satisfaction tumbled this year at a majority of federal agencies,” reports Lisa Rein in the December 12th *Washington Post*, ascribing the drop, not surprisingly, to failing morale and performance brought on by the Trump administration. “After three years of steady improvement as the economy rebounded from the recession, the number of employees who would recommend their agency as a good place to work dropped at 60 percent of federal offices, the annual [Best Places to Work in the Federal Government](#) rankings found. Less than 40 percent of agencies improved their ratings on the scorecard of job satisfaction at federal workplaces, compared with more than 70 percent in the Obama administration's final years and Trump's first.” Source: [Washington Post](#).

### **Department of the Interior**

**Conclusion Of “The Continuing Adventures of Ryan Zinke”** – As you are no doubt aware, our long-running and popular series, “The Continuing Adventures of Ryan Zinke,” has come to an end. The secretary could always be counted on to provide material for this regular feature, ranging from the tragic (offering up public lands to the robber barons in the extractive industries) to the comic (riding horseback down Constitution Avenue or flying his own flag over Main Interior). When he leaves in January, he’ll join less-than-illustrious prior secretaries like [Albert Fall](#) and [James Watt](#). Zinke’s parting shot came in a tweet this past Saturday: “I love working for the President and am incredibly proud of all the good work we’ve accomplished together. However, after 30 years of public service, I cannot justify spending thousands of dollars defending myself and my family against false allegations.” Farewell, Mr. Secretary – but we’ll likely see you around in the future, as those investigations and appearances before Congress will continue even if you’re no longer in office.

## **National Park Service and System**

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

**Director Jarvis Offers Perspectives On Zinke** – Past Director Jon Jarvis provided his assessment of the Zinke years in an article in a recent issue of *The Guardian*: “Now that Zinke’s flag has been unfurled for the last time over the Department of the Interior, many of us who care deeply about our national parks and public lands have breathed a collective sigh of relief.” Following an itemization of Zinke’s shortcomings and ill deeds, Jarvis notes that his likely successor, David Bernhardt, will be more of a problem because he’s “smart, shrewd, low-profile and effective.” Despite this administration’s impact on federal agencies and the environment, Jarvis says that he’s optimistic about the Service’s future because the millennials who are now coming into their own “are smart, diverse, innovative and fired up, forming not only resistance, but a movement that will stand up locally and nationally for the future of our parks and public lands for all, forever.” Source: [The Guardian](#).

**London National Park** – On December 4th, *Esquire* ran a story entitled “London Is the World’s First City to Be Named a National Park” and subtitled “Can We Do Cleveland Next?” “A National Park City,” writes Sarah Rense, “is a city that makes a dedicated effort to provide its citizens with park space, encouraging green living among the urban sprawl. The idea came from a former geography teacher named Daniel Raven-Ellison, who started a crowdfunding campaign on London’s behalf five years ago. London’s mayor Sadiq Khan announced his support last summer, and the designation will become official in July 2019.” But Raven-Ellison’s work is not done. His London National Park campaign led to the development of a National Park City Foundation, “which is eyeing San Francisco, Glasgow, and more as future National Park Cities.” Source: [Esquire](#).

**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.

- *Katahdin Woods and Waters NM* – New trails are being constructed in the park as a part of a \$120,000 project to improve visitor access to scenic ponds and other natural highlights. The Appalachian Mountain Club was contracted to do the work, which began in October. It has been put on hold for the winter months but will resume in late spring and continue throughout the summer of 2019. Source: [WGME News](#).
- *Martin Luther King, Jr. NHS* – After 30 years of tending to the upkeep of the Auburn Avenue home that Martin Luther King Jr. was born in, the NPS finally has the deed. In late November, the King Center for Nonviolent Social Change Inc., negotiated a sale of the property, which has been controlled by the King family for a better part of a century. The sale was facilitated by the National Park Foundation. Source: [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#).
- *Timucuan E&HP* – In a ceremony on December 14th, the North Florida Land Trust formally transferred the deed to a Spanish-American War fortification to the park. The fortification, which sits atop St. Johns Bluff, was built in 1898 as part of a U.S. coastal defense strategy in preparation for a possible naval assault on American ports. Although no such assault occurred, the gun emplacement stands as a monument to the strategic importance of the

region. This history stretches from Fort Caroline's infamy as the first European conflict in the U.S., to the establishment of a British fort on the bluff, through the Civil War and the Battle of St. Johns Bluff, into the 20th century. This Spanish-American War fortification is the only one remaining. The site will be employed to interpret that war. Source: [Timucuan E&HP](#).

- *Yellowstone NP* – Steamboat Geyser set a new record over the weekend when it erupted for the 30th time this year. The previous record of 29 documented eruptions was set in 1964. A major eruption of Steamboat may reach 300 feet. But the geyser is extremely unpredictable — the time between eruptions historically has ranged from days to years, including a 50-year dry spell from 1911 to 1961. Source: [Casper Star Tribune](#).

## **Climate and Conservation**

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

### **National and Worldwide Issues**

**Climate Negotiators Reach an Overtime Deal to Keep Paris Pact Alive** – That’s the headline on the *New York Times*’ report on the recent climate change conference in Poland. “Diplomats from nearly 200 countries reached a deal on Saturday to keep the Paris climate agreement alive by adopting a detailed set of rules to implement the pact,” reports Brad Plumer. “The deal, struck after an all-night bargaining session, will ultimately require every country in the world to follow a uniform set of standards for measuring their planet-warming emissions and tracking their climate policies. And it calls on countries to step up their plans to cut emissions ahead of another round of talks in 2020.” There was also a surprising footnote: “The United States agreed to the deal despite President Trump’s vow to abandon the Paris Agreement. Diplomats and climate change activists said they hoped that fact would make it easier for the administration to change its mind and stay in the Paris Agreement, or for a future president to embrace the accord once again. The United States cannot formally withdraw from the agreement until late 2020.” Source: [New York Times](#).

**NOAA Reports That ‘Arctic Amplification’ Continued In 2018** – On December 11th, NOAA issued its 13th annual [Arctic Report Card](#), a summary of a range of land, ice, and ocean observations made throughout the Arctic during a given year. This year’s report, which contains a series of 14 essays written by more than 80 scientists from a dozen countries, focuses on both the impacts of warming on the Arctic and on lower latitudes (like the United States), where weather changes have been significantly altered. Here’s the first paragraph: “In 2018, surface air temperatures in the Arctic continued to warm at roughly twice the rate relative to the rest of the globe, a phenomenon that has been termed ‘Arctic Amplification.’ The year 2018 was the second warmest year on record in the Arctic since 1900 (after 2016), at +1.7° C relative to the long-term average (1981-2010). Arctic air temperatures for the past five years (2014-18) have exceeded all previous records since 1900. Growing atmospheric warmth in the Arctic results in a sluggish and unusually wavy jet-stream that coincided with abnormal weather events in both the Arctic and mid-latitudes. Notable extreme weather events coincident with deep waves in the jet-stream include the heat wave at the North Pole in autumn 2017, a swarm of severe winter storms in the eastern United States in 2018, and the extreme cold outbreak in Europe in March 2018 known as ‘the Beast from the East.’” Other impacts include an explosion of harmful algal blooms, the continuing decline in the size of reindeer and caribou herds (down 50% over the last two decades), and a dramatic increase in microplastics contamination. Source: [NOAA Arctic Program](#).

### **National Park System Issues**

**Invasive and Exotic Species** – News on exotic or invasive species that have appeared or may soon appear in NPS areas and efforts to counter them:

- *Eastern Areas* – “An invasive tick capable of causing a newly emerging deadly disease has been spotted in the United States, and researchers believe it’s here to stay,” reports The Weather



Channel. The East Asian tick, also known as the longhorned or bush tick, was first spotted in November 2017 on sheep in Hunterdon County, New Jersey. According to the CDC, it's since been found in New York, Virginia, West Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Maryland. This rapid dispersion is worrisome because the tick has the potential to transmit a virus known as [SFTS](#), which stands for severe fever with thrombocytopenia syndrome. Incidentally, CDC reports that overall mosquito, tick and flea bites are on the rise in the United States. According to a [recent CDC press release](#) alluded to in the TWC article, "illnesses from mosquito, tick, and flea bites have tripled in the U.S [over the past 12 years]., with more than 640,000 cases reported during the 13 years from 2004 through 2016. Nine new germs spread by mosquitoes and ticks were discovered or introduced into the United States during this time." Source: [The Weather Channel](#).

**Native Flora and Fauna** – Recent news pertaining to the protection, propagation and advancement of species now or formerly native to the national parks:

- *Wind Cave NP* – Twenty-five elk have been fitted with GPS collars to help monitor the incidence of chronic wasting disease (CWD) within the park. A study is being conducted by a USGS scientist to determine whether or not it is possible to reduce the prevalence rate of CWD in the park's elk herd by reducing herd density. Over the last two years, the park has culled 286 elk from the herd. The recently installed collars will be used to help monitor elk movements, mortality, and habitat use as part of this CWD study. This brings the total of elk currently collared in the park to 66. Source: [Wind Cave NP](#).
- *Presidio of San Francisco* – On December 14th, a nonprofit group called Archangel Ancient Tree Archive that creates "living libraries of old-growth tree genetics," planted 75 redwood saplings in the park. Each of them came from one of five ancient stumps in Northern California, remnants of redwoods that were all larger than the largest tree standing today. "Because they're clones of trees that were larger than any currently living redwoods," writes Russell Mclendon on the Mother Nature Network webpage, "the AATA is calling these saplings 'champion trees,' a term for the largest tree of a given species. There's no guarantee they'll live up to that title, but their genes and protected location at least give them a chance." Together, these trees will "carry on a valuable genetic legacy that dates back thousands of years." Source: [Mother Nature Network](#).

**External Pressures** – Management issues related to usage or development in culturally or naturally sensitive areas abutting parks:

- *Chaco Culture NHP* – On December 5th and December 6th, portions of the Greater Chaco Region were sold off to the highest bidder as part of a BLM oil and gas lease sale despite the presence of "irreplaceable cultural resources worthy of careful and meaningful land use planning and protection," writes E. Paul Torres, chairman of the All Pueblo Council of Governors, in the *Santa Fe New Mexican*. Although the council and individual pueblos have "repeatedly alerted the BLM to the presence of irreplaceable Pueblo cultural resources and sacred sites" on these lands, BLM has not responded to their offers to assist in identifying them, as required by the National Historic Preservation Act. "To date, our offers of assistance and calls for pueblo participation in the process have fallen on deaf ears, even as the steady drumbeat of development moves forward. It is shameful it has come this. It has never been our intent to stop all development...Development should not be to our detriment and should not mean silencing our voices. We deserve better. Chaco Canyon – that incredible monumental record of early Pueblo civilization – deserves better." Source: [Santa Fe New Mexican](#).

## **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.

- *Sequoia NP* – Around noon on December 11th, a large limb - approximately ten inches in diameter and 25 feet long - fell from a giant sequoia and struck the gift shop in the Giant Forest area. The building was occupied by several concession employees at the time but no one was injured. The area was immediately secured and warnings were posted. The park's forestry crew is in the process of removing another threatening limb and assessing whether there is potential for more such failures. No structural damage assessment has yet been made. On August 7th, a giant sequoia twelve feet in diameter fell in front of the old lodge registration desk in Giant Forest. No one was injured in that incident, but the sequoia took down several large trees, damaged several others, and caused minor damage to a vehicle, the lodge entrance sign and the pavement at the entrance to the parking lot. A hazard evaluation was completed at that time and three severely damaged trees that were still standing in the area were removed. Reported by Alan Schmierer.
- *Olympic NP* – Heavy rains which fell in the Quinault area late last week have caused significant damage to park roads and trails. The Graves Creek road is closed at the Quinault River bridge until several large trees (80 to 100 feet long and five feet in diameter) can be removed. The Bunch Creek bridge on Quinault South Shore Road has been partially washed out. Several large trees upstream of the bridge washed under it and became pinned there, causing a log jam and forcing water over the bridge and road to a depth of three feet. The road's width at the bridge has been reduced to about one lane. A large tree fell on and damaged the Rapids Loop trail bridge, closing it to the public. Slides and washouts have also damaged the trail itself. Park personnel are in the process of inspecting other facilities to determine the extent of damage to them. Reported by Jack Galloway.
- *Death Valley NP* – On December 14th, three people were indicted in federal court in northern California for poaching federally protected butterflies between 1983 and 1992 in Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Death Valley, Point Reyes and Golden Gate. More than 2,200 butterflies, including 210 protected under the Endangered Species Act, were taken for commercial gain over the past nine years. The case was developed after U.S. Fish and Wildlife agents and Grand Canyon rangers and investigators began an investigation last year into poaching of a rare species of butterfly from that park. If convicted, each defendant faces five years federal imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, and a term of supervised release. Reported by Carl Christensen.

## 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: Joan Anzelmo, Mark Forbes, Maureen Finnerty, Ann Rasor

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

"National parks are not playgrounds, nor theme parks, but sanctuaries, meant to be forever; they are priceless time capsules for tomorrow that we are privileged to know and enjoy today. By that I mean a national park is ideally suited to exercise the body in a test with nature, stimulate the mind with new learning, and challenge the spirit of the individual to connect with something larger than himself or herself and more lasting than all the mechanization of life and work at home."

Environmentalist and author [Dr. Michael Frome](#)

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](#).

--- ### ---